Digital Poetry for Reading Skill Development for English Language Learners

Dr. Brindha. K
Assistant Professor
PG and Research Department of English
Chikkanna Government Arts College
Tiruppur

Girishwar. T
Ph.D. Research Scholar (FT)
PG and Research Department of English
Chikkanna Government Arts College
Tiruppur
girishwarmoorthy@gmail.com

==

Abstract

The study investigates the impact of subtitled digital poetry on reading fluency among English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. In contemporary classrooms, digital media and multimodal texts offer innovative opportunities for language acquisition, yet the pedagogical application of subtitled poetry remains underexplored. The research employs a mixed-methods design, involving intermediate-level ESL students who engaged with curated digital poetry videos featuring synchronized subtitles over eight weeks. Quantitative data on reading fluency elements—accuracy, speed, and prosody—were collected via pre- and post-tests, while qualitative insights were gathered through learner surveys and focus group interviews. Results indicate significant improvements in all aspects of reading fluency in the experimental group compared to controls, with learners reporting heightened motivation, increased vocabulary awareness, and deeper engagement with authentic English language forms. The findings suggest that the interplay of visual, auditory, and textual stimuli in digital, subtitled poetry not only supports decoding and comprehension but also fosters a more enjoyable and meaningful reading experience. Implications for curriculum design and teaching practice emphasize the value of integrating subtitled digital poetry as a dynamic supplement to traditional ESL instruction.

==
Language in India www.languageinindia.com**ISSN 1930-2940** **Vol. 25:8 August 2025**
Dr. Brindha. K and Girishwar. T
Digital Poetry for Reading Skill Development for English Language Learners

Recommendations are offered for further research exploring different genres and proficiency levels.

Keywords: Digital poetry, ESL (English as a Second Language), Multimodal learning, Reading fluency, Subtitles

Introduction

Reading fluency is foundational to language proficiency and academic success for English as a Second Language (ESL) learners. Defined by accuracy, speed, and prosody, fluent reading facilitates comprehension and confidence in both spoken and written communication. However, many ESL learners face persistent challenges in developing these skills, often due to limited exposure to engaging and authentic language materials. The rapid advancement of digital technology now enables educators to supplement traditional resources with interactive, multimodal texts that can enhance the language learning process. Among these digital resources, subtitled poetry videos—short, visually expressive texts paired with line-by-line subtitles—offer unique potential for promoting reading fluency. Poetry's rhythmic nature, rich vocabulary, and emphasis on sound patterns make it an ideal medium for language practice, while subtitles bridge the gap between spoken and written forms. Despite growing interest in multimedia-assisted language learning, there is limited research specifically addressing the role of subtitled digital poetry in ESL contexts. This study aims to investigate how integrating subtitled digital poetry into classroom instruction affects the reading fluency of intermediate ESL learners. By examining both quantitative outcomes and learner perceptions, the research seeks to illuminate the mechanisms through which multimodal poetry supports fluency development and provide practical guidance for educators seeking to create dynamic, inclusive learning environments.

Methodology

Research Design: The study adopted a mixed-methods, quasi-experimental design to explore the impact of subtitled digital poetry on ESL learners' reading fluency. The research took place over an eight-week period and involved both quantitative and qualitative data collection to ensure a comprehensive understanding of learner progress and perceptions.

==

Language in India **www.languageinindia.com** **ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:8 August 2025**
Dr. Brindha. K and Girishwar. T
Digital Poetry for Reading Skill Development for English Language Learners

Participants: Participants were intermediate-level ESL learners, selected based on classroom placement tests and teacher recommendations. They were divided into two groups:

Experimental group: Engaged with digital poetry videos containing synchronized English subtitles.

Control group: Received traditional instruction using standard ESL reading materials without multimedia or subtitles.

Materials

Digital Poetry Videos: A curated set of contemporary English poems, visually adapted and professionally subtitled, accessible via an educational video platform.

Assessment Tools: Reading fluency pre- and post-tests covering accuracy, speed, and prosody; Likert-scale learner surveys; and focus group interview protocols [4].

Procedures

The experimental group participated in weekly sessions involving repeated viewing, listening, and reading along with subtitled poetry videos. Activities included choral readings, shadowing, and guided discussions on vocabulary and meaning. The control group followed a comparable schedule with print-based poetry and oral practice but no multimedia aids. Both groups completed identical pre- and post-tests measuring reading fluency. After the intervention, the experimental group filled out surveys and participated in focus groups to gauge their perceptions and experiences.

Data Analysis

Quantitative Data: Scores from reading fluency pre- and post-tests were analyzed using comparative statistics to assess gains in accuracy, speed, and prosody.

Qualitative Data: Survey responses and interview transcripts were thematically analyzed to extract insights into learner engagement, motivation, and perceived challenges.

Results

==
Language in India www.languageinindia.com**ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:8 August 2025**
Dr. Brindha. K and Girishwar. T
Digital Poetry for Reading Skill Development for English Language Learners

Quantitative Findings

Reading Fluency Gains: The experimental group showed statistically significant improvements in all measured aspects of reading fluency—accuracy, speed, and prosody—compared to the control group. For example, similar studies using subtitles and digital media have reported marked increases in pre- to post-test scores, with some studies noting improvements of over 25 percentage points in reading comprehension or fluency measures [1][2][3].

Improved Engagement: Subtitled digital poetry enhanced learner attention and decoding skills, with eye-tracking and test data indicating higher reading engagement and accuracy [2][3].

Control Group: While the control group improved, their progress was less pronounced, reaffirming the added value of multimodal, subtitled resources.

Qualitative Findings

Learner Perceptions: Most experimental group participants reported that subtitled poetry made reading more enjoyable and accessible, increased their motivation to engage with English texts, and helped them notice new vocabulary and language structures in context.

Engagement and Confidence: Interviews revealed that the combination of audio, visual, and textual cues supported comprehension and fostered greater confidence in oral reading.

Challenges: A minority of learners mentioned initial difficulty synchronizing their reading with the subtitles but adjusted over time.

Comparative Analysis

Learners exposed to subtitled digital poetry outperformed their peers who only engaged with traditional materials, particularly in prosodic fluency (intonation, expression) and reading rate. These results are consistent with broader research showing that captioned and multimodal learning experiences can significantly improve reading skills in ESL and EFL contexts. In summary, integrating subtitled digital poetry in ESL instruction led to significant improvements in reading fluency and learner motivation, supporting its use as an effective multimodal teaching strategy.

===
Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:8 August 2025
Dr. Brindha. K and Girishwar. T
Digital Poetry for Reading Skill Development for English Language Learners

Discussion

The results of this study highlight the significant impact of subtitled digital poetry on enhancing reading fluency among ESL learners. Students exposed to multimodal poetry videos outperformed peers who engaged with traditional, print-based materials, with notable advancements in accuracy, reading speed, and prosody. These findings support previous literature on the benefits of multimedia-assisted language learning, particularly the dual coding of audio and visual information, which appears to facilitate deeper processing and retention of language structures. One key mechanism behind these improvements is the simultaneous presentation of auditory (recitation), visual (poetry text and accompanying imagery), and textual (subtitles) modes, which reinforce decoding and comprehension through multiple channels. The rhythmic and expressive nature of poetry also encourages attention to language features such as intonation, stress, and pronunciation, supporting prosodic development. Qualitative data further suggest that subtitled poetry not only improves technical reading skills but also increases learners' motivation and engagement by providing more enjoyable and context-rich materials. Challenges were noted, particularly for learners initially unaccustomed to reading with synchronized subtitles, but most adjusted quickly, underscoring the need for adequate orientation and practice. Overall, the study affirms that integrating digital, subtitled resources into reading instruction can broaden learners' linguistic exposure and build confidence, particularly when thoughtfully scaffolded within the classroom context.

Implications

The findings carry several implications for ESL teaching and curriculum design:

<u>Enhancing Curriculum Variety:</u> Incorporating subtitled digital poetry offers a fresh, engaging supplement to standard reading material. This approach introduces learners to authentic language and diverse literary forms, supporting holistic language development.

<u>Promoting Multimodal Learning:</u> The use of multiple sensory channels—listening, reading, and visual observation—addresses different learning styles and may especially benefit students who struggle with traditional print-based instruction.

===
Language in India www.languageinindia.com**ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:8 August 2025**
Dr. Brindha. K and Girishwar. T
Digital Poetry for Reading Skill Development for English Language Learners

Supporting Prosodic Development: Poetry's rhythmic qualities, combined with the scaffold of subtitles, provide unique opportunities for explicit instruction and practice in prosody, promoting more natural and expressive reading.

Fostering Motivation: Subtitled poetry can make reading less intimidating for ESL learners, encouraging regular practice and fostering positive attitudes toward English literature 1[5].

Recommendations

Based on the study's outcomes, the following recommendations are proposed:

Integration into Classroom Practice: Teachers should consider incorporating subtitled digital poetry videos regularly into ESL reading sessions, using them to complement—not replace—traditional texts.

Structured Activities: Effective use of these resources involves pre-listening activities (e.g., vocabulary previews), guided choral reading, shadowing, and post-reading discussions to consolidate learning.

Resource Development: Stakeholders should invest in accessible, age-appropriate digital poetry libraries with high-quality subtitles and visual presentation, tailored to various proficiency levels.

Teacher Training: Professional development on integrating multimodal and poetry-based resources should be offered, equipping teachers with strategies for maximizing the benefits of subtitled digital texts.

Further Research: Future studies should explore the effects of digital poetry across different age groups, proficiency levels, and poetry genres. Longitudinal research could clarify the durability of fluency gains and the transferability of skills to other reading domains.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that integrating subtitled digital poetry into ESL instruction produces notable improvements in learners' reading fluency, particularly in accuracy, speed, and prosody. Through the combination of auditory, visual, and textual stimuli, subtitled poetry

===
Language in India www.languageinindia.comISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:8 August 2025
Dr. Brindha. K and Girishwar. T
Digital Poetry for Reading Skill Development for English Language Learners

creates rich, multimodal learning environments that support decoding skills, comprehension, and expressive reading. Furthermore, digital poetry's engaging and authentic nature fosters motivation, enjoyment, and positive attitudes toward English language learning, making it a dynamic supplement to traditional instructional materials. Although some learners experienced initial adjustment challenges with the multimodal format, sustained exposure led to increased confidence and engagement. These findings affirm the pedagogical value of subtitled digital poetry for broadening students' linguistic and literary horizons. The research recommends that ESL educators and curriculum designers embrace such innovative practices, while future studies could explore the long-term effects, diverse genres, and various learner profiles. Subtitled digital poetry stands out as a promising vehicle for making reading both more effective and more inspiring for language learners.

Works Cited

1. Article on poetry studies impacting reading fluency and creative writing skills of primary students (2022). This study examines poetry-based interventions that improve reading fluency, supporting the pedagogical value of poetry in language learning.

2. Canals Mireia. (2025). Digital literature literacy (DLL) and literature comprehension in EFL/ESL contexts. Institutional Repository of UVic-UCC. This research explores digital reading comprehension of English prose texts in ESL/EFL settings, extending insights about technology-enhanced literacy.

3. Kempster, J. R. (2023). Digital poetry for adult English learners with limited education: Possibilities in language learning, literacy development and interculturality. TESOL in Context, 31(2), 5-22. This study discusses using digital poetry with adult ESL learners to foster digital literacy and language skills in inclusive learning spaces.

4. Saad, S., Abu Hassan, N. A. S., Abdul Rahman, H., & Mat Din, M. (2024). 'Unlocking Language Potential: Empowering ESL Learners through Poetry-Based Activities' International Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities, 8(9), 3821-3837. This research highlights how poetry-based activities enhance motivation, autonomy, and linguistic competence in ESL learners.

===
Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:8 August 2025
Dr. Brindha. K and Girishwar. T
Digital Poetry for Reading Skill Development for English Language Learners

5. Sutarno. 'Building Students' Literacy and Technology Mastery through Digital Poetry Project. English Department, Muhammadiyah University of Pringsewu Lampung. This descriptive study shows how digital poetry projects improve students' literacy and technology skills within ESL/EFL contexts.

===
Language in India www.languageinindia.com**ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 25:8 August 2025**
Dr. Brindha. K and Girishwar. T
Digital Poetry for Reading Skill Development for English Language Learners