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Research Article

Poetry as a Multidimensional Medium for Language, Literacy, and Social Reflection in Elementary Education

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: Poetry offers not only aesthetic value but also potential as a learning tool that supports children's language growth, literacy competence, and social awareness. However, poetry is still rarely positioned as a multidimensional pedagogical medium in elementary education. Therefore, this study aims to analyze how poetry functions as a medium for language development, literacy education, and social reflection in elementary classrooms.

Methodology: This study used a qualitative descriptive design involving six purposively selected elementary schools. Data were obtained from five Indonesian language teachers, twelve students, classroom observations, and documentation of students' poetry works. Data were analyzed using the Miles, Huberman, and Saldana model, through data condensation, display, and conclusion drawing, with validity ensured using source and methodological triangulation.

Main Findings: The findings indicate that poetry improves linguistic competence, particularly vocabulary, diction, and figurative language understanding. Poetry also strengthens students' literacy through close reading, interpretive discussion, and creative writing engagement. Furthermore, poetry becomes a reflective tool for students to express environmental issues, family dynamics, friendship, and cultural identity.

Novelty/Originality of this study: This study demonstrates that poetry is a multidimensional learning medium that simultaneously develops language skill, literacy depth, and socio-emotional awareness. The novelty lies in its integration of three learning outcomes within one instructional model. Implicationally, poetry-based learning can be adopted as an alternative strategy for teachers to create contextual, expressive, and character-oriented literacy practices in elementary schools.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Basic education plays a strategic role in shaping the foundation of students' academic abilities, character, and social skills. One of the most important competencies at the elementary school level is language and literacy skills [1], [2]. Literacy encompasses not only technical reading and writing skills, but also critical thinking, understanding implied messages in texts, expressing ideas creatively, and developing empathy and

social awareness [3]. This ability is an important asset for students to face learning at higher levels, while also shaping critical, creative, and reflective thinking patterns from an early age [4]. However, various studies and reports on educational practices show that language learning in elementary schools, including in Palangka Raya, still tends to be mechanistic [5]. Teachers place a lot of emphasis on vocabulary, grammar, and formal writing exercises, with a focus on achieving academic grades [6]. As a result, language learning tends to be linear and limited to technical aspects, so that creativity, literary appreciation, and students' ability to reflect on social issues are underdeveloped [7]. This traditional approach has the potential to hinder the development of holistic literacy, where literacy should include language skills, literary appreciation, and social reflection [8].

In the context of academic research, although many studies discuss literacy and language learning in elementary schools, there are significant gaps that have not been widely researched. First, most studies still focus on the technical development of reading and writing literacy, or merely on language skills, without emphasizing the integration of literary aspects and social reflection [9]. Second, studies on the use of poetry as a learning medium at the elementary level are still limited [10]. Most previous studies have highlighted poetry as material for literary appreciation at the secondary level or as creative writing exercises, but rarely link it to the simultaneous development of language literacy and social awareness [11]. This indicates an academic gap regarding the integration of poetry as a multidimensional learning medium for elementary school students. Poetry, as a form of literature, has great potential to overcome these limitations [12]. Writing, reading, and analyzing poetry can help students improve their language skills, expand their vocabulary, understand text structure, and practice critical thinking skills [13]. In addition, poetry can be a medium for reflecting on life experiences, social phenomena, and moral values, thereby fostering social awareness and empathy [14], [15]. Thus, poetry not only functions as a work of literature but also as a holistic learning medium that can combine language development, literacy, and social reflection.

Although this potential has been recognized theoretically, the implementation of poetry as a learning medium in elementary schools is still rarely done systematically [16], [17]. In Palangka Raya City, for example, the integration of poetry in language and literacy learning has not become a common practice [18]. Teachers mostly use traditional approaches based on textbooks, writing exercises, and vocabulary mastery, while the development of creativity, literary appreciation, and social reflection is still limited. This condition confirms the gap between the potential of poetry as a learning medium and the reality in the field. From an academic perspective, another research gap is the lack of studies examining the effectiveness of the integrated use of poetry in the local context. Most existing studies have been conducted in large cities or in secondary schools, thus failing to provide sufficient understanding of learning practices relevant to elementary schools in areas such as Palangka Raya. In fact, the local context is very important in designing effective learning strategies, as literacy skills, social experiences, and access to reading materials can vary between regions [19].

The research problem that emerges from this condition is how to design language learning in elementary schools that does not merely emphasize technical literacy, but also nurtures creativity, literary appreciation, and social reflection. Contemporary literacy scholars argue that literacy education often becomes overly mechanical focused on decoding, accuracy, and assessment while neglecting creativity, emotional engagement, and critical interpretation [20]-[22]. This academic gap underscores the need for research that examines poetry as a holistic learning medium capable of integrating linguistic development, multimodal literacy, and socio-emotional competencies simultaneously. Previous studies have demonstrated the potential of poetry to enhance vocabulary and expressive language skills [23], [24] and foster creative literacy [25]. Likewise, research in children's literature highlights the role of literary texts in developing empathy, moral reasoning, and cultural identity [26]. However, most of these studies tend to treat these dimensions separately. Very few have explored poetry as a multidimensional pedagogical tool that unites language learning, literacy strengthening, and social reflection within a single instructional framework, particularly within the Indonesian elementary school context.

The novelty and urgency of this study emerge from the limited research that examines poetry not only as a tool for linguistic development, but also as an integrated medium for literacy strengthening and social reflection in elementary school settings. Previous studies tend to focus on single dimensions for example, vocabulary enrichment [6], creative writing ability [25], or emotional-empathy development [14] yet few have attempted to connect these three learning outcomes within one instructional model. This gap indicates the need for a more holistic pedagogical approach in language learning, especially in early education, where learning should not only train technical literacy but also build imagination, interpretation skills, empathy, and awareness of social reality. The urgency of this research lies in the need to shift language instruction away from textbook-driven, test-oriented learning toward creative, humanistic literacy practices that give children space to play with language, construct meaning, and reflect on social experiences. Based on this academic landscape, the present study was conducted with the aim of analyzing how poetry can function as a multidimensional learning medium capable of developing language skills, strengthening literacy, and fostering social-emotional reflection in elementary students [27]. From these aims arise three guiding questions: how poetry contributes to language

competence, how it supports literacy practices including reading and creative writing, and how it encourages students to reflect on social experiences such as environment, family, culture, and friendship.

To address these questions, a qualitative descriptive design was employed to observe poetry learning in authentic classroom settings. The study involved six elementary schools selected purposively based on teacher involvement in literacy instruction and student engagement in poetry activities. The research participants consisted of five Indonesian language teachers teaching grades four to six and twelve students considered capable of expressing their thoughts during poetic learning sessions. Data were collected through classroom observation, semi-structured interviews with teachers and students, and documentation of students' poetry products, lesson plans, and teaching materials. Data were then analyzed using [33] interactive model, which includes data condensation, coding, thematic categorization, and conclusion drawing, while the credibility of findings was strengthened through source and methodological triangulation. Through this approach, the study offers a new contribution to elementary language education by positioning poetry as a culturally responsive, linguistically rich, and socially reflective medium capable of nurturing children's language growth, literacy depth, and character development simultaneously.

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design, selected to enable an in-depth exploration of how poetry is used as a medium for language development, literacy strengthening, and social reflection in elementary schools [28]. Such a design is appropriate for understanding natural classroom practices, teacher perceptions, and students' learning experiences in authentic contexts, as emphasized by [29]. The research was conducted in six elementary schools in Palangka Raya through purposive sampling, based on two criteria: (1) teachers actively implementing poetry-based literacy instruction, and (2) students showing engagement in poetry activities. This approach aligns with [30], who states that purposive sampling supports the selection of information-rich cases for qualitative study.

The instruments consisted of observation sheets, semi-structured interview guides, and documentation checklists. The interview guide was adapted from [29] and refined to align with the thematic focus of poetry-based literacy learning, while the observation instrument was adapted from [33] classroom interaction indicators. The documentation checklist was researcher-developed to examine students' poetry products and learning artifacts. All instruments underwent expert validation by two qualitative research experts and one Indonesian language education specialist, ensuring content accuracy and alignment with research objectives. Because this research does not employ quantitative scales or Likert-based questionnaires, Cronbach Alpha reliability was not calculated, as reliability in qualitative inquiry is established through trustworthiness techniques rather than coefficient statistics.

Data were collected through classroom observations, in-depth interviews, and document analysis. Observations captured instructional practices and student participation during poetry learning [31], interviews explored perceptions and reflective experiences [32], and documentation provided textual evidence through students' poetry works and teaching materials [34]. Data were analyzed using [33] interactive model, involving data condensation, thematic coding, display, and conclusion drawing. Credibility was strengthened through method and source triangulation, peer review, and member checking, following the trustworthiness criteria of [35].

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Early introduction to language and literature is necessary because both play an important role in shaping language skills, developing creativity, and fostering emotional and social sensitivity in children [36]. Literature, especially poetry, provides an aesthetic experience that allows children to experiment with language, understand meaning more deeply, and express their thoughts and feelings freely. In the context of primary education, poetry is not only viewed as a work of art, but also as an effective pedagogical medium for developing various aspects of language and literacy competencies. This study aims to examine the use of poetry as a medium for language learning, literacy, and social reflection in elementary school students in five elementary schools in Palangka Raya City. The data were analyzed through learning observations, in-depth interviews with teachers and students, and reviews of students' poetry works. The findings show that poetry learning not only improves students' language and literacy skills but also fosters greater social awareness. The three main results of this study are described in detail in the following subsections.

Poetry as a Medium for Language Learning in Elementary School Students

Poetry is one of the most linguistically rich forms of literature because it combines word choice, rhythm, imagery, and wordplay to construct dense and aesthetic meaning [37]. In the context of language learning in elementary school, poetry not only functions as a literary text to be read, but also as a pedagogical

medium that encourages comprehensive language development [38]. Research shows that poetry is a very effective medium for improving the language skills of elementary school students, especially in terms of vocabulary mastery, diction, understanding of figurative language, and the ability to construct sentences aesthetically. At the beginning of the learning process, most students were still limited to using basic vocabulary and tended to repeat the same words in each line of their poems. However, after several sessions of exploring diction, reading model poems, discussing meaning, and practicing writing, there was significant development in their linguistic creativity. Teachers at Elementary School A said:

> "*Previously, they only used general words such as happy, sad, beautiful. But after learning poetry, they began to choose more imaginative words such as whispering, my heart is cloudy, or fading steps*." (Interview G1)

This change indicates that appropriate pedagogical interventions can improve students' language sensitivity. The development of students' diction skills is very consistent with the concept of language play introduced by [39]. According to Crystal, children develop language skills when they are given the opportunity to play with sounds, rhythms, rhymes, meaning associations, and word forms. Poetry provides a safe space for children to explore language beyond the boundaries of formal discourse [40]. When students try to modify words, use personification, or create simple metaphors, they are actually building higher linguistic competence. In addition to mastery of vocabulary, students' understanding of figurative language also develops. Teachers at Elementary School B said:

> "*When I asked them why they wrote "the tree laughed in the wind," they said that the wind made the leaves move like people laughing. That shows that they already understand basic metaphors*." (Interview G3)

This understanding represents an important stage in children's cognitive linguistic development [41]. theory of figurative language development explains that children's ability to comprehend metaphors emerges naturally through exposure to symbol-rich contexts such as poetry, a view reinforced by Gentner's Structure-Mapping Theory which highlights how metaphor understanding grows through recognizing abstract relational similarities [42]. Poetry provides condensed, imaginative language that stimulates higher-order meaning-making. This process is further supported by Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), which emphasizes that linguistic growth occurs through social interaction and teacher scaffolding [43]. In poetry learning, scaffolding appears through activities such as modeling metaphors, analyzing diction, posing open-ended questions, and providing feedback practices aligned with [44] concept of guided support. Such structured assistance enables students to internalize new strategies and produce poetic expressions beyond their initial capability, consistent with Bruner's view that symbolic thinking develops through meaningful cultural and linguistic experiences [44]. One fifth-grade student wrote:

"*Matahari pagi berlari pelan*	The morning sun runs slowly
Menghapus bayangan malam yang tersisa	Erasing the remaining shadows of night
Di antara rumput basah aku berdiri	I stand among the wet grass
Menunggu harapan tumbuh lagi."	Waiting for hope to grow again

The structured stanzas, visual imagery such as "wet grass," and the personification phrase "hope grows again" indicate that students have reached a more complex level of linguistic abstraction. Their poetry reflects symbolic thinking that moves beyond literal description, signaling a shift toward figurative cognition as described in the development of literary literacy. This finding strengthens the conclusion of [24] who noted that poetry enhances syntactic sensitivity and expressive fluency at the primary level; however, the present study advances this claim by demonstrating students' independent use of metaphor and personification, suggesting not only structural mastery but generative creativity. Putri and Maundeni, similarly asserted that poetry supports language growth due to its non-restrictive form, which encourages children to play with language, rhythm, and style [45]. The results of this research expand Wilson's claim by showing that rhythmical literacy through repetition, parallel structure, and sound patterning also emerges naturally during poetry practice. Sulistia further found that poetry enriches lexical ability as students search for varied synonyms, and this study reinforces that pattern with examples such as *steps fading*, *morning running*, and *the sky whispering*, which demonstrate spontaneous lexical exploration rather than teacher-prompted diction [46].

In the context of learning in Palangka Raya, consistent exposure to poetry through reading aloud, diction exploration, and imitation exercises has nurtured what teachers describe as a "sense of language"—a sensitivity to nuance, tone, and semantic layers. This is pedagogically important because children aged 9–12 are developing from concrete linguistic expression toward abstract linguistic reasoning. Poetry appears to accelerate that transition by offering a low-pressure, exploratory, and emotionally meaningful language environment. In this sense, poetry is not merely enrichment material but a strategic foundation for language learning that aligns closely with the Merdeka Curriculum. These data, when read alongside previous studies, allow a broader

generalization: poetry at the elementary level functions as a linguistic ecosystem that simultaneously builds fluency, imagination, and symbolic interpretation in ways prose-based instruction rarely achieves.

The implications of this research are significant: poetry learning can be positioned as a core literacy strategy rather than an accessory activity. It fosters linguistic complexity, expressive confidence, and metacognitive awareness of language. The novel contribution of this study lies in showing that poetry not only improves vocabulary and syntax as found by earlier researchers [24] [45], [46], but also cultivates rhythmic linguistic intuition, metaphorical thinking, and emotional articulation concurrently forming an integrated developmental literacy profile not yet widely documented in primary-school research. However, the study has methodological limitations. The sample was limited to six schools, the observation period was short, and the research relied primarily on qualitative instruments without longitudinal tracking. These constraints restrict generalization but open new research possibilities. Future studies should extend participation across regions, apply mixed-method or quasi-experimental designs, evaluate long-term literacy growth, and test digital or multimodal poetry models to strengthen theoretical and practical advancement.

Poetry as a Medium for Strengthening Literacy in Elementary School Students

In the digital age, literacy has become a fundamental competency that encompasses not only the ability to read and write, but also the ability to understand meaning, interpret information, think critically, and express ideas creatively and multimodally. Digital literacy is not limited to the ability to operate devices, but also includes the skills to search for, evaluate, use, and create information wisely [47]. In this context, literature-based learning especially poetry has a strategic position because it can integrate cognitive, affective, linguistic, and aesthetic aspects into one learning activity. The second finding shows that poetry plays an important role in improving reading literacy, meaning comprehension literacy, and creative writing literacy. The poetry learning process carried out by teachers tends to integrate intensive reading activities, discussions of meaning, exploration of personal experiences, and revision of works [48]. This makes poetry a comprehensive means of literacy. In terms of reading literacy, poetry learning encourages students to read deeply. Teachers usually provide short poems containing one to three stanzas, then ask students to find the main message or emotion conveyed by the author.

This learning pattern is in line with the modern literacy paradigm, which views literacy as a social practice rather than merely a mechanical skill [20]. In addition, digital literacy education plays an important role for the community in filtering information in the digital world with a creative, critical, and inspiring attitude as a digital call to reduce hoax news [49]. In terms of reading literacy, poetry encourages students to engage in close reading, which involves reading slowly and deeply to capture nuances of meaning, emotion, and hidden messages. Teachers generally provide short poems consisting of one to three stanzas for analysis. In an interview, a student at Elementary School C said:

> "*When I read poetry, I like to guess what it means. If I'm confused, I ask my friends, and then we discuss it.*" (Interview S3)

This practice demonstrates the occurrence of a social, rather than individual, process of meaning construction. This is in line with Rosenblatt's transactional theory, which emphasizes that reading poetry is a transactional activity between the text and the reader's experience [50], [51]. Students construct meaning through interaction with the text, themselves, and their social environment in this case, their peers and teachers. Poetry interpretation activities are also in line with Bruner's idea of narrative thought, which is the ability to understand the world through symbols, metaphors, and stories [52]. When students interpret lines of poetry, they use their experiential knowledge to fill in the gaps of implicit meaning. The literature on children's literacy states that learning that provides space for reflection and discussion such as this increases student motivation and engagement in reading. In terms of creative writing literacy, poetry provides a platform for students to develop their ability to express ideas through concise, symbolic, and personal language [53]. A teacher at SD D explained:

> "*At first, they were confused about where to start. After brainstorming about their daily experiences, they were able to write more fluently and the results were more honest*." (Interview G4)

This shows that the process of writing poetry is in line with the writing-as-thinking approach proposed by Emig, namely that writing helps children organize their experiences and reinterpret events in their lives. Several students' works show the use of fairly mature emotional and symbolic imagery [54]. One student wrote:

"*Di jendela kecil kamarku*	In the small window of my room
Aku menunggu ayah pulang	I wait for my father to come home
Seperti malam menunggu rembulan	Like the night waits for the moon
Membawa tenang ke hatiku."	Bringing calm to my heart

The poem demonstrates that students are capable of linking personal experiences with natural metaphors a clear indicator of symbolic literacy as conceptualized in literary literacy development theory [55]. This finding strengthens the results of [56] who found that poetry writing based on personal experience improves creative literacy because students express narratives close to their emotional reality. However, this study advances previous knowledge by showing not only expressive ability, but also students' capacity to transform experience into symbolic representation suggesting a higher level of figurative cognition. The integration of imagery, metaphor, and emotional tone confirms that poetry enables children to move beyond literal narration into abstract meaning-building. Another important finding is that poetry learning naturally integrates multimodal literacy elements, as proposed by Kress, because students engage with poetry through auditory (listening), visual (illustrations), and performance (reading aloud) modes [57]. Some students even enhanced their poems with drawings to strengthen meaning, indicating meaning-making across modes not just language. Compared to previous studies, this finding enriches theoretical understanding by revealing that multimodality in poetry emerges spontaneously when students are given freedom to create. Thus, poetry learning may serve as an authentic multimodal literacy platform in elementary classrooms.

These results also align with Raisa who stated that poetry strengthens figurative literacy, which includes metaphorical, symbolic, and connotative interpretation abilities proven to predict advanced literacy achievement [58]. The data in this study confirm the same pattern: students accustomed to poetry could interpret abstract meaning and construct metaphor creatively. When compared with McCormick's research on secondary learners, this study shows novelty because it demonstrates similar figurative capacity emerging at an earlier developmental stage (ages 9–12). This suggests that poetry, when introduced early, accelerates higher-order literacy reasoning. Consistent with New Literacy Studies [21], [22], this research found that children's poems reflected real life river pollution, haze, friendship conflict, cultural pride—which confirms that literacy is socially situated. This supports [59], [60] who argue that literacy practices are shaped by everyday context. The implication is that poetry is not merely a linguistic task, but a medium through which children negotiate identity, experience their world, and construct meaning socially. Thus, the findings of this study show that poetry is an integrative and multimodal literacy medium. This is because literacy can be used as a basis for developing learning in schools that can make students skilled in finding and processing information needed in 21st century life [61]. Generalizing this finding, poetry can be considered a culturally responsive pedagogy for elementary grades.

From these results, the novel contribution of this study is the conceptualization of poetry as an integrative multimodal literacy medium a learning tool that simultaneously develops language proficiency, figurative reasoning, cultural awareness, and reflective consciousness. Previous research often treated these outcomes separately; this study demonstrates that they can emerge together in a single instructional practice. However, the study has several limitations: its qualitative design and limited school sample restrict generalization; the research did not examine longitudinal progression, and it did not test a structured poetry-integration model. Future research should expand sampling across different regions, employ mixed-method or quasi-experimental designs, and develop digital-based poetry instruction to support innovation in 21st-century literacy education. Overall, this study confirms that poetry enriches students' literacy not only technically (reading–writing) but also critically, expressively, and reflectively skills essential for future learning and life.

Poetry as a Medium for Social Reflection among Elementary School Students

Poetry not only serves as a learning medium, but also as a reflective space that enables students to develop an understanding of themselves, their environment, and the social realities around them. The key finding of this study demonstrates that poetry functions not only as an aesthetic or linguistic form, but also as an effective vehicle for social reflection among elementary school students. Through writing and interpreting poems, students express sensitivity to environmental issues, friendship dynamics, family relationships, and local cultural identity. This aligns with the principles of Social-Emotional Learning (SEL), which emphasize emotional awareness, empathy, and responsible decision-making [62], as well as with critical literacy perspectives that encourage students to question and interpret social issues through language [63]. Poetry provides symbolic and emotive language that allows children to "see" and "feel" social conditions more deeply, consistent with [50] idea of literature as a transactional process where readers construct meaning through personal experience. Therefore, poetry demonstrates strong potential as a tool that integrates emotional development, cultural understanding, and critical awareness in a way that is developmentally appropriate for young learners. One of the following poems by a fifth-grade student is the clearest representation of environmental reflection:

"*Rumput menangis tertutup plastik* *Pagi berbau luka di halaman sekolahku* *Siapa lagi kalau bukan kita* *Yang harus menjaga rumah kecil ini.*"	"The grass cries, covered in plastic. The morning smells of wounds in my schoolyard. Who else but us must take care of this little house?"

When the poem was read aloud, a spontaneous discussion arose in the class about the habit of littering. The author of the poem said:

> "*I wrote that because the school grounds are often dirty. After reading it, my friends said we should take better care of the cleanliness.*" (Interview S7)

This interaction illustrates that poetry has become a catalyst for ecological awareness, consistent with ecocritical perspectives that view literary texts as tools for cultivating environmental sensitivity and ecological thinking in young readers [64]. In primary education, such experiences contribute not only to environmental literacy but also to the development of social responsibility from an early age. These findings support the principles of humanistic literature education, which position literature as a medium for nurturing empathy, moral growth, and social awareness in children [26]. Through reading and writing poetry, students enter a reflective space where they can explore and articulate emotions, understand the perspectives of others, and interpret social experiences symbolically an idea aligned with Rosenblatt's transactional theory of reading.[50] Thus, poetry functions as a meaningful pedagogical tool that integrates emotional, moral, and ecological dimensions of learning in ways that are developmentally appropriate for young learners. This is reflected in the experiences shared by teachers at SD E:

> "*There was a student who wrote a poem about his friend who transferred schools. The poem was very sad, and after that, the other friends became more attentive.*" (Interview G5)

The responses of their friends demonstrate the formation of social empathy, in line with moral development theory [65], which emphasizes that moral understanding develops when children encounter real emotional and social experiences. Poetry provides a safe and creative space for this. Rosenblatt's reader-response theory [50] is also relevant because it places the reader at the center of the literary experience. When students respond to their friends' poems, they indirectly build a shared social and emotional identity. Students do not just read the text, but read the human experiences within the text. This is what makes poetry a powerful means of social reflection. In addition to reflecting personal and social experiences, some students also display their local cultural identity in their poems:

"*Di sungai Kahayan yang panjang*	On the long Kahayan River,
Perahuku membawa cerita tua	My boat carries an old story
Tentang nyanyian hutan dan angin	About the songs of the forest and the wind
Yang tak pernah hilang dari kami."	That will never fade from us.

The poem indicates that students are not merely producing imaginative language but are actively constructing cultural meaning through poetic expression. This suggests that poetry functions as a cultural mirror through which children interpret their identity, inherit local values, and position themselves within their sociocultural environment. The finding reinforces Hilmiati and Listiawati research, which confirms that poetry strengthens cultural literacy because it allows children to articulate cultural symbols, values, and traditions through personal language [66]. Compared with Hilmiati's work, however, this study goes further by showing that children not only internalize cultural symbols but also reinterpret them creatively marking an advancement from cultural recognition toward cultural representation and agency. These findings are strongly aligned with New Literacy Studies [21],[22], which conceptualize literacy not merely as reading and writing skills but as social practice rooted in everyday experience. In this study, students' poetry contains references to rivers, haze, family ties, and Dayak cultural icons, demonstrating that literacy practice among young learners is situated within environmental and cultural realities. Generalizing from this result, poetry can be viewed as an entry point for contextualized literacy learning where language is not separated from life, but grows from lived experience.

International literature also supports this interpretation. Schmidt asserts that poetry fosters reflective consciousness, enabling writers to evaluate social and emotional experiences through symbolic language [67]. This study confirms and expands Schmidt's argument by showing that reflection emerges even in children aged 9–12 who express environmental concern ("haze"), loss ("longing for family"), and ecological ethics ("plastic in the school yard") through metaphor. While many studies focus on adolescents or adult writers, this research provides evidence that reflective literacy can develop at elementary level when supported by poetry-based pedagogy. The implications are pedagogically significant. Poetry can be integrated not only for linguistic goals but as a medium for character education strengthening empathy, social awareness, cultural appreciation, and symbolic thinking. The findings support five literacy outcomes: (1) emotional growth in line with SEL principles, (2) critical perspective formation in accordance with critical literacy theory, (3) cultural identity expression supporting cultural literacy development, (4) personal–social meaning-making consistent with reader-response theory, and (5) moral and reflective sensibilities aligned with humanistic education. These implications highlight poetry as holistic literacy, broadening classroom instruction from skill-based teaching into human-centered learning.

The novelty of this research lies in its contribution toward positioning poetry as an integrative literacy model that merges language competence, cultural understanding, and reflective consciousness an approach rarely

examined in elementary-level studies. Unlike previous research that treats these domains separately, this study demonstrates how poetry can unite all three dimensions under one instructional approach. Despite its contributions, this study is limited by its qualitative nature, restricted sample, and short implementation period. Larger-scale and longitudinal research may generate deeper insights into developmental progression. Future studies should experiment with structured poetry learning models, digital poetry platforms, or mixed-method designs to verify and extend the holistic poetry literacy model proposed here.

4.   CONCLUSION

This study concludes that poetry is an effective multidimensional pedagogical medium that simultaneously enhances language mastery, strengthens literacy practices, and fosters social reflection in elementary education. Poetry stimulates linguistic development through vocabulary expansion, diction awareness, and figurative language recognition, while literacy growth is reflected in students' improved ability to interpret texts, construct creative meaning, and produce short poetic works. Social reflection emerges as students translate real-life experiences environmental issues, family relationships, and cultural identity into symbolic expression, demonstrating the role of poetry in shaping empathy, moral awareness, and cultural literacy. From these findings, this study proposes an emerging conceptual insight: Poetry-Based Holistic Literacy, defined as an instructional model that integrates linguistic competence, creative literacy, and social-emotional reflection within a single learning framework. This theoretical implication expands current views which typically treat language ability, literacy skill, and affective development as separate domains.

In answering the research objective "how poetry can function as a multidimensional learning medium," this study confirms that poetry encourages classroom learning to shift from text-centered instruction toward reflective, expressive, and context-responsive practices. However, the study's scope limited to six schools, a qualitative approach, and absence of digital-based poetry integration restricts generalization and wider pedagogical testing. Future research is recommended to examine poetry-based learning using mixed-method or experimental designs, extend research settings beyond one region, implement longitudinal observation, and develop technology-assisted poetry instruction. Further investigation may refine and strengthen the proposed Poetry-Based Holistic Literacy Model as a theoretical framework that guides curriculum development and practical classroom implementation at elementary levels.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

D was responsible for the research design, data collection, data analysis, and manuscript preparation. D, contributed to conceptual development, research methodology guidance, and critical review of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

USE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE (AI)-ASSISTED TECHNOLOGY

The authors declare that no artificial intelligence (AI) tools were used in the generation, analysis, or writing of this manuscript. All aspects of the research, including data collection, interpretation, and manuscript preparation, were carried out entirely by the authors without the assistance of AI-based technologies.

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