

## **The Influence of Teaching Using Poem on Students' Vocabulary Mastery: A Systematic Review**

<sup>1</sup>Putu Kunang Kabinawa, <sup>2</sup>Made Hery Santosa  
*Universitas Pendidikan Ganesha*

**\*Corresponding Author**

Email: kunang@student.undiksha.ac.id

### **Abstract**

*This study uses a systematic review of fifteen studies published between 2016 until 2024 to find out the impact of poetry as a teaching medium on EFL students' vocabulary mastery. The findings show that poetry's rhythmic and emotionally engaging language improves learning enjoyment and helps in memorizing new words. Poetry improves student understanding and usage of new words by offering context and promoting creative expression. Poetry also increases cultural and language awareness, which is necessary for developing empathy and communication skills, as well as cognitive benefits including improved critical thinking and problem-solving ability. The study suggests incorporating poetry into EFL courses, educating teachers, and developing assessment tools to assess its effect on vocabulary learning and student engagement. Future research is needed to look at the long-term effects of poetry-based teaching and its impact on varied student populations, in order to provide comprehensive insights for teachers and curriculum developers.*

**Keywords:** *EFL students, poetry teaching poem, vocabulary,*

### **INTRODUCTION**

Developing a vocabulary is an essential part of learning a language, especially for students learning it as a second or foreign language. Students need to have a large vocabulary base. According to Alqahtani (2015), having a large vocabulary is essential for communicating clearly in a foreign language since it allows students to apply the grammatical structures and functions, they have acquired. With the help of their teachers, students are able to understand subjects when they have a strong vocabulary that enables them to express their ideas both orally and in writing. The mastery of vocabulary has a significant effect on students' writing ability. Students with a larger vocabulary have better writing skills. Vocabulary mastery enables students to better express their ideas, emotions, and opinions through written language (Puspitasari, Ratminingsih, & Santosa, 2024). Since English is the most often foreign language in Indonesia, it is expected that high school students will be able to communicate in the language. To be able to convey ideas in English, learners first need to master vocabulary, as the complexity of the required vocabulary can make it difficult for learners to develop an insufficient vocabulary.

Poetry represents rhythm, beautiful diction and elevated grammatical feature, Ahmad (2014). Poetry has the ability to inspire, deliver a transcendent experience, and transmit important ideas through its concise use of language (Lacoue-Labarthe, 1999). Children's poetry in particular benefits from the use of

alliteration and metaphors (Maula, 2013). The poetic experience can be enhanced by the use of rhyme, or the lack of it, figurative language, symbols, and other poetic structures, including lines and stanzas. Atwell (2006) asserts that poetry connects people at the most essential level: heart and mind to heart and mind by allowing them to think, laugh, and define feelings. Atwell stated that if she had to teach only one genre in a language arts instruction, she would choose poetry because of its ability to motivate students and enhance their vocabulary.

Many scholars agree that vocabulary is important, yet there is currently debate over the best ways to teach vocabulary. While there are differing opinions on the best ways to teach vocabulary, one of the most important approaches is through literary works. Despite the fact that some researchers think that many literary texts are unsuitable for teaching foreign languages. However, some scholars, like Brumfit et al. (1997), Duff & Maley (2002), and Burke (2003), suggest that literary texts, like poetry, can help EFL students improve their language skills. The key is to select literary texts carefully, taking into consideration the needs, levels, ages, and other factors of the students.

Studies have indicated that students frequently face difficulties with vocabulary learning and understanding. To improve vocabulary learning, language teachers need to be well knowledgeable about interactive classroom activities. New approaches to teaching and a wide range of instructional resources, like word lists, flashcards, the direct method, and total physical response, are essential. Zatikasari (2008) indicated that active interaction with new language in context is advantageous. English poetry is very useful in enhancing vocabulary learning outcomes when used in educational settings nowadays. Poetry can be a variety of media are used to enhance vocabulary instruction. Poetry creates a good, inspiring, positive learning environment by involving students and encouraging them to participate and actively listen to new vocabulary. The use of English poetry in the classroom can greatly improve vocabulary mastery.

Recognizing that EFL students have problems in the English learning process, researchers chose to conduct a systematic literature review on several studies of literature-based learning, especially poetry, that might help students improve their vocabulary mastery. Related studies show that teaching with poems is an innovative strategy that can be implemented in English language learning, but there are few studies regarding how teaching with poetry influences EFL students to learn vocabulary. This research focuses on student vocabulary building as an important component of learning English as a foreign language. Many students experience difficulties in learning because it is not their language, and lack of appropriate strategies and innovations implemented, This systematic review aims to identify the influence of teaching using poems on students' vocabulary mastery in learning English.

Widdowson (1992) highlighted the mutual advantages of literary interpretation based on human understanding and language analysis. Poetry's grammatical complexity and aesthetic appeal make it an effective medium for students to master spoken language. Mulatsih (2018) suggested that teaching poetry provides an innovative technique of learning in which students understand the deeper meanings and situations of the words rather than simply memorizing them. Hess (2003) proposed that employing poems in language lessons allows students to

express their own views in a larger framework, thus promoting language and cultural awareness (Hanauer, 2001).

There are also emotional and cultural benefits to teaching poetry. McKay (1982) found that reading literary materials, especially poetry, helps students appreciate other types of literature and gain a deeper knowledge of social differences. This exposure to diverse communities can help students enhance their cultural communication and empathy. Finch (2003) stated that poems encourage teamwork and communication while also allowing for personal expression. Poetry offers a constructivist teaching approach that promotes active and experiential learning by allowing students to actively interpret and create meaning.

Previous research has proven that vocabulary development is an important component in foreign language learning, especially for EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students, because this has a direct impact on their ability to communicate effectively. Several scholars have emphasized the importance of a strong vocabulary foundation for improving spoken and written language skills. Poetry, with its rhythm, structure, and depth of emotion, has been identified as an effective tool for improving vocabulary mastery. Researchers such as Atwell (2006) and Mulatsih (2018) have highlighted poetry's ability to creatively engage learners, making it a valuable medium for language learning. Poetry also increases cultural awareness, empathy, and active participation, as noted by McKay (1982) and Finch (2003).

Despite these hopeful findings, there is a significant gap in literature covering the long-term effects of employing poetry in vocabulary teaching and its impact on different types of students, particularly in diverse cultural and educational settings. While most studies acknowledge the short-term benefits, few have investigated whether the vocabulary gains last over time or how poetry-based learning might be adapted to different levels of proficiency or learning environments.

This study aims to fill this gap by conducting a systematic review of the literature on the use of poetry in vocabulary teaching for EFL students from 2016 to 2024. This study provides insight into the long-term and short-term impacts of poetry on vocabulary mastering, as well as the sustainability of vocabulary retention. It will also investigate how the use of poetry can be effectively adapted to varied student populations and educational settings, with practical recommendations for curriculum developers and educators. This study will add to a more comprehensive knowledge of the role of poetry in increasing EFL vocabulary learning and shape future instructional initiatives.

From 2016 until 2024, various strategies and trends emerged in teaching vocabulary in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) contexts, such as advancements in technology, pedagogical theories, and practical applications. This systematic literature review discusses the use of poetry for teaching techniques in terms of their features and effectiveness in improving EFL students' vocabulary mastery. This paper will focus on previous research findings from 2016 to 2024 that is concerning literature-based teaching in EFL students' vocabulary building. The potential advantages of teaching using poems will be the primary source of this paper for achieving the aims of this paper namely: 1) to figure out the advantages and benefits in developing EFL students' vocabulary mastery, and 2) to discover the influence of teaching using poem in enhancing EFL students' vocabulary mastery.

Based on two interpreted goals, the research questions for this systematic literature review are : 1) What are the advantages of teaching using poems in developing EFL students' vocabulary mastery? And 2) How does teaching using poems relevance on students' vocabulary mastery?

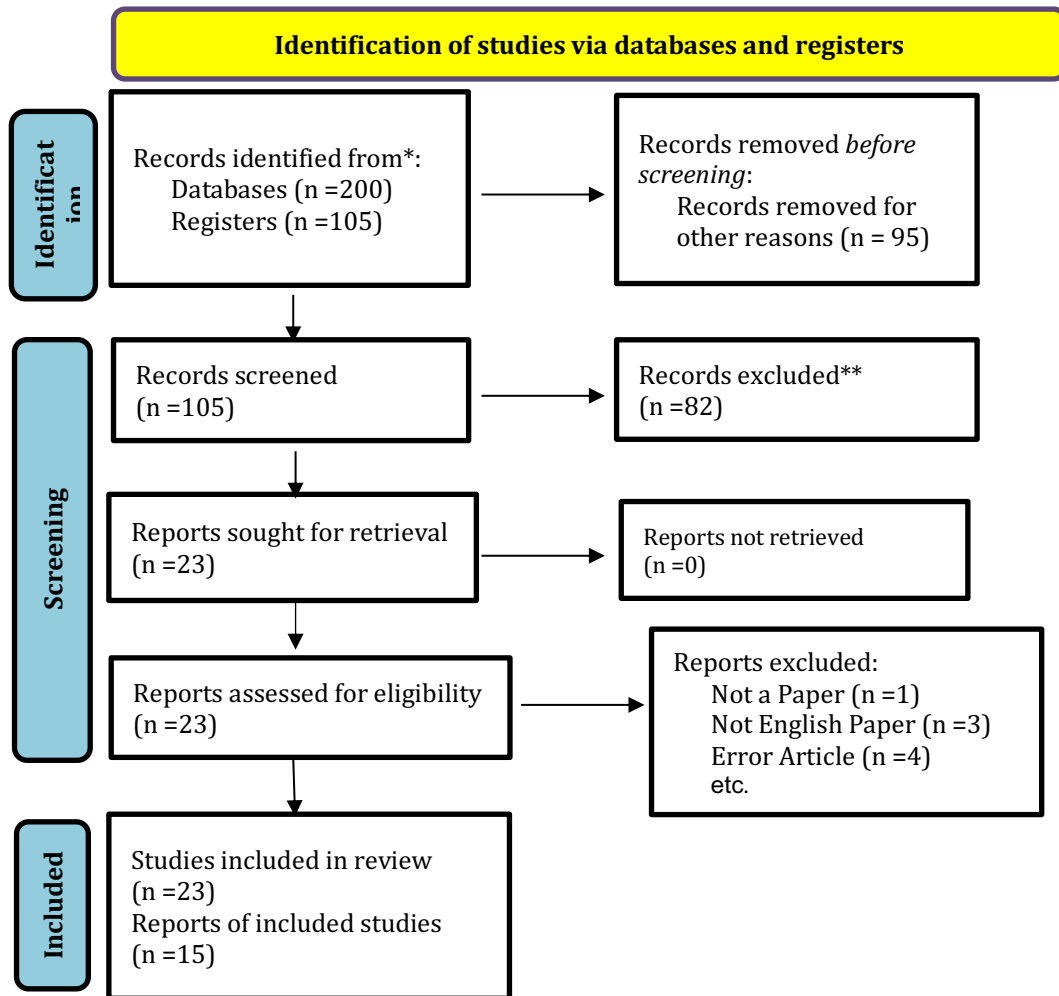
## **METHOD**

This research was an SLR (Systematic Literature Review). To reach the goals of the study, this kind of research is utilized to identify, evaluate, and synthesize all relevant studies on a specific topic, question, or phenomenon. The sources of data and information used in this study were journals and publications that were released between 2016- 2024. The researcher started the search by using the keywords "poetry teaching," "teaching using poem," "poetry for vocabulary," and "vocabulary teaching of EFL Learners" to find relevant papers. Every source used in this research was gathered and chosen. The purpose of that action is to find out that the sources are appropriate for the current study.

### **Data Collection Technique**

The main source of the database for this paper was Harzing's Publish or Perish software, which was linked to Google Scholar. The implementation of Google Scholar involved the use of the topic interests keyword. The method used is the PRISMA method. Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic and Meta-Analytic (PRISMA) were used to select, review, and summarize based on objectives, year of publication, instruments, methods, and results for future research. The inclusion of this study includes 1) research on the usage of poems in teaching, 2) students' vocabulary level, 3) on the EFL context, 4) published between 2016-2024 because in this era the development of approaches to teaching is very rapid due to several factors, such as technological advances, changes in student needs and learning media. Contrarily, the exclusion criteria include: 1) the research is not about poems teaching, 2) not about students' vocabulary skills, 3) not in an EFL context, 4) published under the year of 2016, 5) not English articles. Around 200 studies were gathered after using the PRISMA model. Around 15 studies were selected and chosen based on the inclusion criteria. The data shows in Figure 1.

Figure 1. The Prisma Model



To select the relevant articles, authors establish inclusion and exclusion criteria as follows:

Table 1. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion criteria
Poetry teaching in EFL Students' vocabulary	Not using poetry in EFL Students' vocabulary
Must revolve students' vocabulary skill	The development of Reading, and listening skill
Publication years in 2016-2024	Below publication years of 2016-2024
EFL students and teachers' context	Non-EFL students and teachers' context
English Language	Non-English Language

The data for this systematic literature review were processed in accordance with the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) standards, resulting in an accurate and transparent approach. Initially, around 200 papers were found, and 15 were chosen based on particular inclusion criteria, focusing on the use of poetry in EFL vocabulary education and published

between 2016 and 2024. Essential information from these studies, including research methodologies, participant profiles, instructional approaches, and vocabulary-mastering outcomes, was retrieved and compiled into a structured database. The data was then organized into major areas such as vocabulary acquisition, student involvement, contextual learning, cultural and cognitive benefits, and teaching effectiveness.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The researcher selected fifteen articles related to the use of poetry in EFL classrooms for students' vocabulary mastery. In Table 2, fifteen articles are gathered as they fit with the criteria of literature based learning especially poetry in improving vocabulary topics. From fifteen published studies it is known the results of the systematic literature review (SLR) clearly show that teaching vocabulary through poetry greatly improves students' vocabulary learning. This improvement can be connected with a number of connected factors, including engagement and motivation, contextual learning, creative expression, cultural and linguistic awareness, and cognitive advantages.

The significant effect of teaching using poems provides more potential for changes in students' performance. Based on previous studies, it is known that several studies have been conducted in various cities in Indonesia and various countries, which focused on the implementation of teaching using poems in EFL contexts. Based on research findings, the implementation of these applications has mostly occurred at junior high, senior high, and university levels. There are 15 articles that are selected to support this study and most of them are related to poetry learning and their related with EFL Students' vocabulary skill development.

Table 2. An overview of selected articles

No	Author	Location	Method	Findings
1	Sibuea, E. R., Siregar, P., & Sembiring, J. (2024).	Angkola Barat, Sumatra Utara, Indonesia	Quantitative	Found using lyrical poetry improved students' vocabulary mastery significantly
2	Imron, A., & Hantari, W. C. (2021)	Magelang, Jawa Tengah	Quantitative	Teaching literature through poetry improve students' vocabulary acquisition using Curriculum-based Dynamic Assessment (CBDA) significantly.
3	Anggunia Arvieta (2020)	Malang, Jawa Timur	Qualitative	The study found that using poetry as a medium for teaching vocabulary can improve students' vocabulary mastery. The researcher used a qualitative approach, observing and interviewing ten students in a KUMON course.
4	Amri & Basthomi, (2022)	Bandung, Jawa Barat	Qualitative	Highlights the benefits of using creative patterned poetry in EFL classrooms, particularly in Indonesia's diverse cultural context. It emphasizes the role of poetry in enhancing students'

				vocabulary and language skills through creative writing activities.
5	Suwastini & Dewi, (2023)	Buleleng, Indonesia	Qualitative	Investigates the perception of students on the use of poetry for teaching speaking. The results show that students perceive poetry as an effective medium for developing various aspects of speaking skills, including vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, comprehension, confidence, and fluency.
6	Mardayati, & Riwayatningsih. (2022)	Kediri, Indonesia	Quantitative	The study found that teaching reading using poetry material (specifically poems by Joy Harjo and Robert Frost) was effective in enhancing students' vocabulary. The results indicated a positive effect on students' ability to identify synonyms and references in the text.
7	J. Santillán and F. Rodas (2020)	Various	SLR	Highlighted multiple benefits of using poetry in the classroom, including improved grammar practice, vocabulary acquisition, incorporation of personal experiences, motivation improvement, development of linguistic and cultural awareness, successful interpretation of figurative language, and positive attitudes towards language learning.
8	Mart, (2021)	Various	SLR	Poetry has the capacity to enhance language skills such as vocabulary, foster personal and expressive growth, and motivate students by linking the learning process to their experiences and emotions.
9	L. Amutha (2024)	Various city in America	Qualitative	Students are more comfortable in acquiring new vocabulary when supported by backup words. The student-centric approach is found to be effective in engaging students and fostering interest in learning. The study suggests that integrating poetry into language teaching can be beneficial for vocabulary acquisition and student engagement.
10	Ashirbaeva (2020)	Various	Qualitative	Found poetry provides an emotionally rich and engaging learning environment, increasing student motivation and readiness to engage in language-related

				activities.
11	Titus, J (2017)	Various	Qualitative, Literature Review	Reading and learning poetry is beneficial for Russian EFL students, learning using poetry can work on building vocabulary, pronunciation, and implementing language in real context
12	Fithriani (2021)	North Sumatra	Qualitative	Using poetry in creative writing instruction can improving students' interest, engagement and vocabulary learning
13	Mustafa Jabsheh (2019)	Various	SLR	The study indicate that a positive relationship between teaching or using English poetry as an instructional source and the teaching-learning of different language skills such as reading, listening, speaking, and writing as well as other language sub skills such as pronunciation, grammar, structure, and vocabulary.
14	DT Sulistia (2023)	Indonesia	Qualitative	The implementation of composing poetry can encourage students to delve into unfamiliar or infrequently utilized English vocabulary. Through the utilization of new vocabulary, students can employ these words to describe their experiences, their thoughts, or their feelings in the form of poetry.
15	Arjulayana, A, & Srikandi, CN (2016)	Tangerang, Indonesia	Qualitative	Poem can used as a unique media and able to give understanding in teaching writing skill, speaking skill and the importance of vocabulary in writing skill. Indonesian students

The systematic literature review aims to find answers to the research questions formed, namely (1) What are the advantages of teaching using poems in developing EFL students' vocabulary mastery? (2) How does teaching using poems relevance on students' vocabulary mastery? From the PRISMA method, it was found that teaching using poems had a significant and effective effect in increasing EFL students' vocabulary mastery. The application of teaching using poems in learning English as a foreign language (EFL) has shown significant results in increasing students' vocabulary learning. Various studies conducted show that teaching using poems has a broad positive impact, not only on vocabulary learning but also on many language aspects such as listening, reading, writing, pronunciation, and also increasing students' motivation.

The systematic review of the selected research shows that teaching using poetry has many advantages on students' vocabulary mastery. Numerous studies



have shown that including poetry into the classroom improves vocabulary significantly. Quantitative study, such as those conducted by Sibuea et al. (2024) and Imron and Hantari (2021), shows that systematic approaches to using poetry can result in significant benefits. Qualitative research, such as those conducted by Anggunnia Arvieta (2020) and Suwastini and Dewi (2023), provide additional evidence for this conclusion by stressing positive student perspectives and the motivational advantages of poetry. These studies highlight the varied benefits of poetry in building vocabulary, such as increased engagement and a deeper connection to the language.

Creative and social contexts also influence the efficiency of poetry for building a vocabulary. Amri and Basthomi (2022) highlight the relevance of culturally relevant and creative resources in vocabulary learning for increased engagement and performance. Poetry can assist students discover synonyms and references, improving their vocabulary and comprehension skills, as shown in research by Mardayati and Riwayatningsih (2022) and Fithriani (2021). The emotionally rich and engaging character of poetry, as highlighted by Amutha (2024) and Ashirbaeva (2020), increases to students motivation and desire to learn.

Furthermore, the review emphasizes poetry's overall impact on language skills and student engagement. Santillán and Rodas (2020), Mart (2021), and Mustafa Jabsheh (2019) found that poetry improves not just vocabulary learning but also grammar, pronunciation, and comprehension. DT Sulistia (2023) emphasizes the experiential learning approach, in which students compose poetry to explore and apply unexpected vocabulary in meaningful contexts. Overall, research indicates that including poetry into language instruction may significantly enhance students' vocabulary acquisition and overall language ability, making it a beneficial tool for teachers.

Finally, the cognitive challenges of comprehending and composing poetry help students strengthen their cognitive capacities related to language learning. Recognizing patterns, understanding meanings, and developing creative expressions improves cognitive skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and analytical abilities. Titus (2017) discovered that memorizing poetry helped Russian EFL students improve their vocabulary, pronunciation, and capacity to use language in real-world settings. These cognitive benefits extend beyond vocabulary learning to improve overall language ability. Poetry analysis can help students build analytical abilities in other areas of study by teaching them how to solve problems systematically and cleverly.

## **CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS**

This study highlights the significance of employing poetry as a teaching method in improving EFL students' vocabulary mastery. Through a systematic review of fifteen relevant studies reveals that poetry's rhythmic and emotionally emotional language engages students, making learning more fun and effective. Poetry's contextual learning helps students understand the complexity of word definitions and usage, resulting in improved vocabulary retention over time. Furthermore, poetry promotes creative expression, allowing students to apply a fresh term in a personal and relevant way. This technique not only helps students learn vocabulary, but it also improves their ability to effectively express their thoughts and emotions. Moreover, poetry increases cultural and linguistic

awareness, helping students learn and appreciate various linguistic patterns and cultural themes. This cultural understanding is critical for developing empathy and good communication skills in a global setting. The cognitive advantages of evaluating and composing poetry, such as critical thinking and problem-solving, lend support to a more complete approach to language learning. Overall, the use of poetry in EFL classrooms promotes vocabulary mastering by creating an engaging, context-rich, and creative learning environment. Based on the findings, teaching using poetry is still relevant in today's era.

Based on the study's findings, several useful suggestions are made for teachers, curriculum developers, and researchers. Schools and educational institutions should include poetry in their language courses through activities such as poetry reading, writing, and analysis to improve vocabulary learning and overall language skills. To facilitate it, teachers should acquire suitable knowledge and tools, such as workshops, seminars, and instructional materials, to effectively teach poetry and develop innovative engagement techniques. Additionally, collaborative poetry projects should be encouraged, allowing students to work together to create and analyze poems, improving communication skills and developing a sense of community in the classroom. Assessment methods supposed clearly for poetry-based learning should be created, measuring not only learning vocabulary but also student involvement, creativity, and cultural understanding. More study is needed to determine the long-term impacts of poetry-based teaching on vocabulary mastery and other language abilities, as well as the influence of various genres of poetry and teaching techniques on varied kinds of students. By applying these suggestions, teachers can use poetry to help EFL students improve their vocabulary and enhance their whole language learning experience.

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