

**From Classroom to Screen: Assessing the Online Poetry Pedagogy for Algerian University Novices in the Wake of the Pandemic
Case study: First Year EFL Students of Batna 2 University**

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Abstract

This research investigates the efficacy and engagement of online English poetry courses tailored for first-year students at the Department of English Language and Literature at Batna 2 University in Algeria. Set against the COVID-19 pandemic-induced shift to digital pedagogies, this study employed a quantitative-method approach, drawing insights from a questionnaire directed to the students of Batna 2 University. The course content, rooted in an introduction to poetics and fundamental aspects of poetry, was derived from selected English poetry as prescribed by the Algerian university canvas. Findings highlight that such online introductions can augment students' poetic competence, enthusiasm, and self-assuredness while also offering them a glimpse into diverse poetic traditions and cultures. The study suggests that online poetry courses might serve as efficient vehicles for introducing poetry, especially during times when traditional classroom settings are less accessible. Recommendations for refining these online offerings encompass enhancing instructional guidance, fostering virtual engagement, and providing consistent feedback.

Keywords: Algerian University, Online Courses of Poetry, Pedagogical Challenges, Poetry Courses, quantitative method.



1. Introduction

In recent years, educational platforms have proliferated, presenting both challenges and opportunities to the evolving landscape of higher education

(Sá and Serpa 2020). Particularly in Algeria, with its rich literary traditions, integrating modern pedagogies has become paramount. As Robert Frost once mused: Poetry is when an emotion has found its thought and the thought has found words (Barelia, 2018). The teaching of poetry and creative writing can thus be seen as the nexus between emotion, thought, and cultural understanding, a vital bridge that connects students with a broader literary world (Cahnmann & Taylor et al., 2019).

The Algerian university system, known for its demanding academic expectations, has long emphasized the significance of teaching poetry (Ouafi, A. (2019). However, the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic brought with it unprecedented challenges, necessitating a rapid shift to online education (Daumiller, 2020). This seismic shift impacted not only how subjects like poetry were taught but also how they were received and internalized by students.

In this evolving educational milieu, one pertinent question emerges: How have Algerian students adapted to this digital renaissance such as the Moodle platform, especially in the realm of poetry? While online courses have become ubiquitous, their effectiveness, especially in teaching foundational concepts of poetry to first-year students, remains under-explored. Furthermore, as global educational platforms gain traction, understanding how Moodle resonates with Algerian academics and students becomes crucial.

This study deciphers the perceptions of online poetry pedagogy for first-year Algerian university students. The aim is twofold: firstly, to scrutinize the learning outcomes and benefits reaped by these students from online courses, and secondly, to discern how the pandemic might have inadvertently catalyzed a more integrative approach to digital learning platforms in Algeria.

The forthcoming sections will unravel this investigation systematically. The literature review begins with an overview, transitioning to pertinent recent studies, and identifying a gap in research focus on first-year students' engagement with online poetry courses. Subsequent sections detail the research methodology, present findings, foster discussions around these results, and finally, conclude with overarching insights and implications.

2. Literature Review

The evolving landscape of online education, with a special emphasis on creative writing, offers myriad possibilities and challenges that resonate uniquely with diverse student populations. Drawing upon the existing body

of research, this section seeks to illuminate the overarching themes and gaps pertinent to Algerian university students

2.1 Online Learning and Its Efficacy in Teaching Poetry

The transition to online education has introduced innovative approaches to teaching and learning poetry, embracing the flexibility and personalized learning trajectories that Moore and Kearsley (2011) highlighted as fundamental benefits of online education. Online platforms facilitate a collaborative environment where asynchronous discussions, peer critiques, and collective story crafting become instrumental in enriching the poetry learning process (Goertler, Bollen, & Gaff Jr, 2012). Recent studies provide further insights into the practical application and effectiveness of online learning in the context of poetry.

Wiraningsih (2023) explored the practicality and effectiveness of utilizing poetry text learning kits within e-learning settings, demonstrating how such resources can significantly enhance students' comprehension and appreciation of poetry. The study confirms the essential role of interactive and tailored materials in fostering an engaging online learning environment for poetry students. Similarly, Aituganova, Sarekenova, and Aimukhambet (2023) examined the impact of online technologies on teaching poetry, finding that supported technologies not only boost students' achievements but also positively affect their attitudes towards poetry. This underscores the transformative potential of integrating digital tools in poetry education to elevate student engagement and learning outcomes.

In the realm of English language and literature, Mehrpouyan (2022) offered practical and effective strategies for enhancing online classrooms. The findings suggest that engaging and interactive activities, crucial for the study of poetry, can significantly improve online teaching efficacy. Moreover, Khan (2014) investigated the effectiveness of e-lesson programs in teaching English poems, affirming that such digital programs are beneficial tools for augmenting the poetry learning experience.

Beyond the specifics of poetry, Jabeen and Thomas (2015) discussed the effectiveness of online language learning at large, providing a broader perspective on the advantages of online education for literary studies. Their research highlights the capacity of online learning environments to facilitate language acquisition, which is intrinsically linked to the study of poetry, emphasizing the importance of online platforms in offering diverse and inclusive educational experiences.

These studies collectively illustrate the multifaceted advantages of online learning in the teaching of poetry. From enhancing student engagement and understanding through practical tools and technologies to employing effective strategies for interactive learning, online education emerges as a dynamic and effective medium for poetry pedagogy.

2.3 Challenges and Benefits in Diverse Cultural and Linguistic Contexts

Online learning platforms, while offering unparalleled access to education across geographical boundaries, bring forth challenges and benefits, especially in culturally and linguistically diverse settings. Language barriers represent a significant challenge in online education, where students from non-English speaking backgrounds may struggle with content comprehension and expression (Zhao, 2017). Moreover, the lack of non-verbal cues in text-based online courses can result in diminished engagement for students from high-context cultures, as these learners rely heavily on these cues for understanding (Hofstede, 2001). However, the intrinsic value of online learning lies in its global inclusivity, providing learners with exposure to diverse literary traditions and styles, thereby enriching their educational journey (O'Dowd, 2013).

Recent literature has further explored these dynamics, providing insights into the multifaceted nature of online learning environments. The book chapter entitled *Cultural Diversity in Online Learning* delves into the complexities of navigating cultural diversity in online educational settings, underscoring the importance of culturally responsive teaching practices (2022). Similarly, Shaw (2020) highlights the subtle multicultural advantages of online learning, such as enhanced perspective-taking abilities among students, which can lead to a more inclusive and understanding global community.

Kerr, Merciai, and Eradze (2018) address the practical strategies for incorporating cultural and linguistic diversity into online learning environments. Their work suggests that acknowledging and integrating diverse cultural perspectives can significantly improve the learning experience for all students. Kukulska-Hulme and Pegrum (2018) discuss linguistic diversity in online and mobile learning, emphasizing the need for language-supportive technologies and practices that accommodate learners varied linguistic backgrounds.

Gunawardena's research on culturally inclusive online learning for capacity development projects (2020) presents case studies that illustrate effective

strategies for fostering cultural inclusivity in online learning projects, highlighting the potential for online education to bridge cultural divides.

2.4 Gap in Literature: Algerian University Students

A glaring gap in contemporary research is the lack of studies specific to the experiences of Algerian university students in online poetry courses taught through Moodle. While there is an increasing focus on African countries transforming to digital education (Wright & Reju, 2012), studies focusing on Algeria remain sparse. This gap accentuates the need for the current research, poised to shed light on the unique challenges and benefits encountered by Algerian students to use Moodle.

3. Methodology

To comprehensively understand the online poetry courses designed for first-year Batna 2 University EFL students, a quantitative methods approach was deployed. This approach allows for a robust examination of the topic, facilitating discerning interpretations rooted in empirical evidence and experiences.

3.1 Quantitative Methods

To comprehensively analyze the pedagogical effectiveness and student reception of online poetry courses, this study adopts a quantitative research methodology. This approach enables the precise measurement and statistical analysis of variables related to student experiences, preferences, and outcomes associated with online learning environments. By quantifying some qualifications such as engagement, satisfaction levels, and the challenges that students encountered, the study aims to provide objective and generalizable insights into the efficacy of online poetry instruction.

3.2.1 Questionnaire

A structured questionnaire was disseminated among the 50 first-year students at the Department of English at Batna 2 University as the sample population. This tool was designed to elicit responses on their experience, perceived challenges, and benefits of the online poetry course. Performance of students and interaction on the MOODLE platform was assessed to gauge the effectiveness of the course and the technical efficacy of online delivery.

The initial questions sought to ascertain the extent of engagement of students with online poetry courses, ranging from none to three or more courses undertaken. Subsequent inquiries were aimed at evaluating students' satisfaction levels across multiple dimensions of the course, including its content, design, delivery, materials, objectives, and outcomes, employing a five-point scale for accurate feedback. To further explore the impact of these

courses, participants were prompted to express their level of agreement with statements regarding the enhancement of their poetic interests, skills, knowledge, and confidence, as well as the alignment of the courses with their learning expectations.

The questionnaire also sought insights into the comparative advantages and challenges of online poetry education over traditional classroom settings, probing areas such as technical issues, linguistic barriers, cultural dimensions, and the effectiveness of feedback mechanisms. Additionally, it explored students' preferred methods of learning poetry online, their frequency of interaction with instructors and peers, and the quality of feedback received.

The questionnaire culminated in an open invitation for suggestions on improving the online poetry courses at Batna 2 University, aiming to gather constructive feedback to refine and enhance the educational experience. Through this comprehensive survey, the study aimed to capture a holistic view of the online poetry education landscape from the perspective of its direct beneficiaries.

3.4 Description of the Course

The online poetry course, *Basics in Poetry*, administered via the MOODLE platform, was designed to provide first-year students at the Department of English at Batna 2 University with a comprehensive introduction to the world of poetry. Rooted in the Algerian university curriculum, the course content comprised a curated selection of English poetry spanning various historical periods and cultural contexts, aimed at offering students a rich and diverse literary experience. Throughout the course, students engaged with foundational poetic concepts such as meter, rhyme, imagery, symbolism, and figurative language through close readings and analysis of poems. Interactive elements, including discussion forums, collaborative activities, and multimedia resources, were integrated to foster student engagement and deepen their understanding of poetic techniques. By the end of the course, students were expected to have developed critical thinking skills in interpreting literary texts and gained a deeper appreciation for the art of poetry within the framework of the Algerian university curriculum.

3.5 Data Collection and Analysis

Data was gathered over one semester, utilizing the MOODLE platform for course evaluations and questionnaires,

Quantitative data from course evaluations based on the questionnaire were subjected to statistical analysis to discern patterns, correlations, and

significant findings. By employing the quantitative methods approach, the research aims to present a well-rounded perspective on the implications, challenges, and potential of online poetry courses for Algerian university students in the changing educational landscape catalyzed by the pandemic.

4. Findings

The questionnaire aimed at assessing the experiences of first-year Algerian university students in online poetry courses revealed multifaceted perspectives and insights that provide a comprehensive understanding of the educational landscape in this domain.

4.1 Course Enrollment and Satisfaction

The vast majority of the students, at 90%, had never ventured into online poetry courses before their current enrollment. This indicates a possible lack of previous opportunities or perhaps a recent surge in the availability or popularity of such courses. A small fraction (7%) had some experience, having taken one course, and an even smaller group of 3% had dived deeper with two or more courses.

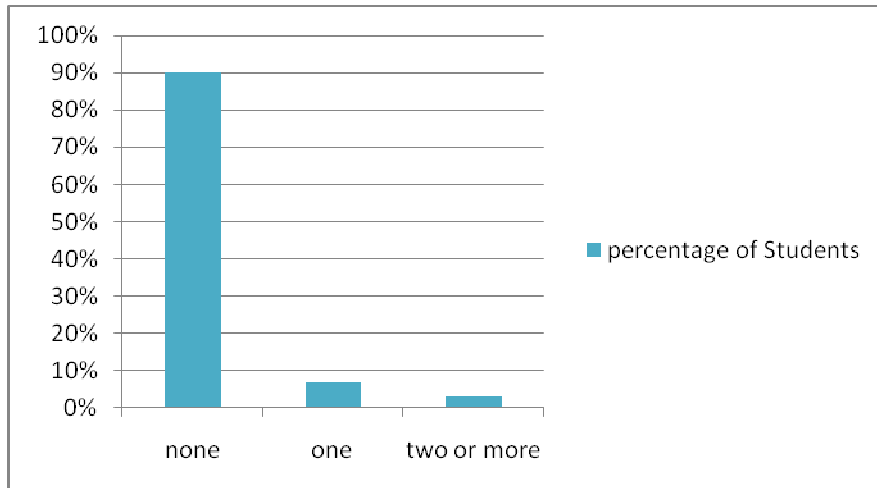


Chart 01: Percentage of Students' Online Poetry Courses Enrollment.

When assessing satisfaction levels, it's heartening to note that a combined total of 90% of the students responded positively about their experience, with 70% being 'very satisfied' and another 20% being 'satisfied'. This overwhelmingly positive feedback suggests that the transition to the online medium for poetry courses, at least in terms of content delivery and student experience, has been largely successful. However, a combined 7% of dissatisfaction (2% dissatisfied and 5% very dissatisfied) suggests there's room for improvement.

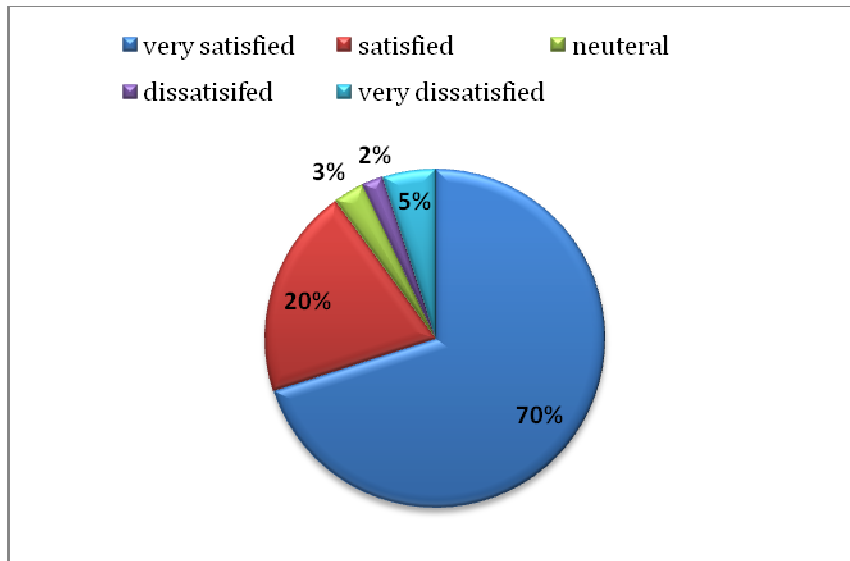


Chart 02: Students Satisfactory Level

4.2 Evaluation of Course Aspects

Diving into the specifics of the course, each aspect underwent scrutiny. The course design stood out with 75% of the students rating it as excellent, indicating a well-structured and user-friendly interface or curriculum. Similarly, the delivery of the course content was also well-received with 83% giving it an excellent rating. However, the course content itself saw a more varied distribution of opinions; while half of the participants rated it excellent, there's a noticeable 10% who found it lacking, suggesting perhaps a need for diversification or enrichment of the content. The high positive feedback on course materials and objectives, with 75% and 60% excellent ratings respectively, underscores the importance of relevant resources and clear course goals.

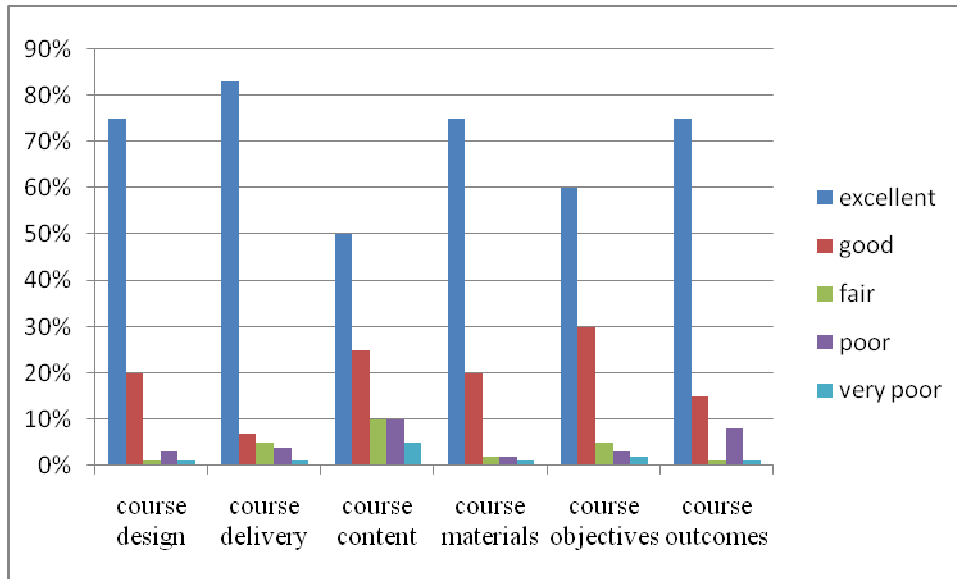


Chart 03: The students' Course Evaluation.

4.3 Perceived Benefits of Online Poetry Courses

Online courses often promise flexibility, and in this questionnaire, 80% of the students affirmed this by recognizing the flexibility and convenience of online poetry courses. Other noteworthy benefits include accessibility and affordability, valued by 75% of the participants, and the option for self-paced learning, appreciated by 65%. The fact that 95% highlighted feedback and assessment as a significant benefit is indicative of the rigorous evaluation and consistent feedback mechanism embedded in these courses.

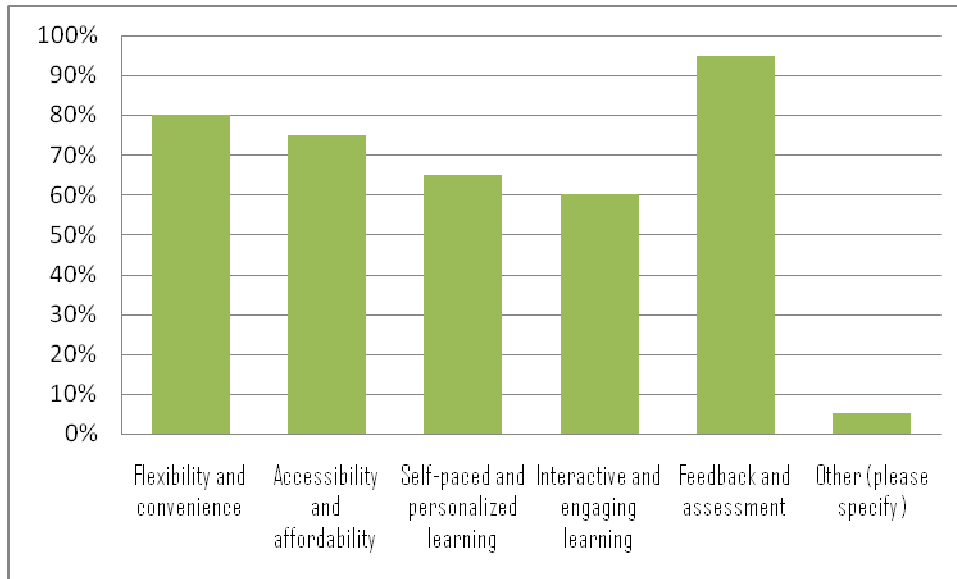


Chart 04: Benefits of Online Poetry Courses.

4.4 Challenges Encountered

Half of the student body encountered technical glitches, pinpointing a need for robust IT support or perhaps more user-friendly platforms. Linguistic barriers, experienced by 30%, bring forth the quintessential challenge of language in poetry, especially when it spans diverse cultures and dialects.

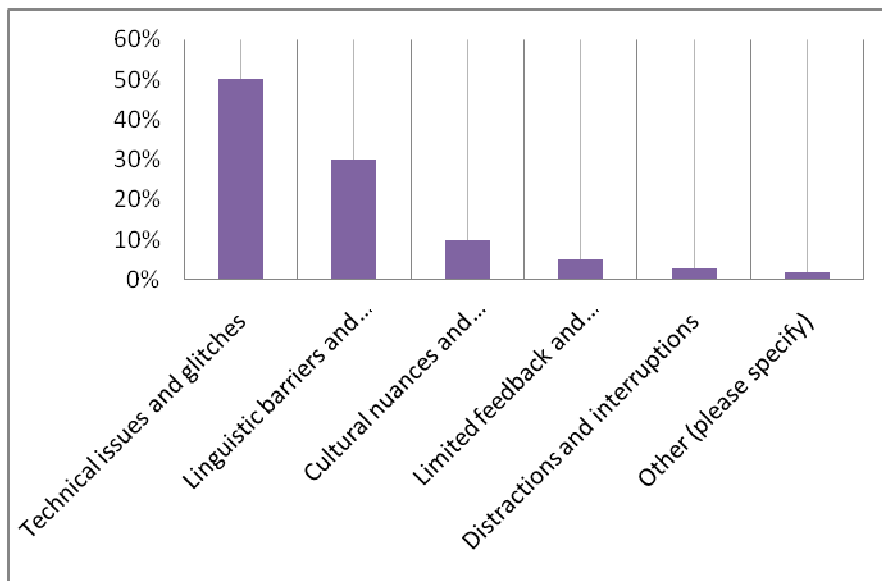


Chart 05: The Challenges of Online Poetry Courses.

4.5 Preferred Learning Methods

When it comes to online learning preferences, watching video lectures emerged as the overwhelming favorite, with 85% of the student body leaning toward it. This dominance underscores the importance of visual and auditory learning in poetry, where rhythm, tone, and delivery play crucial roles. Other methods, although less popular, highlight the diverse learning styles of students and the need for varied resources.

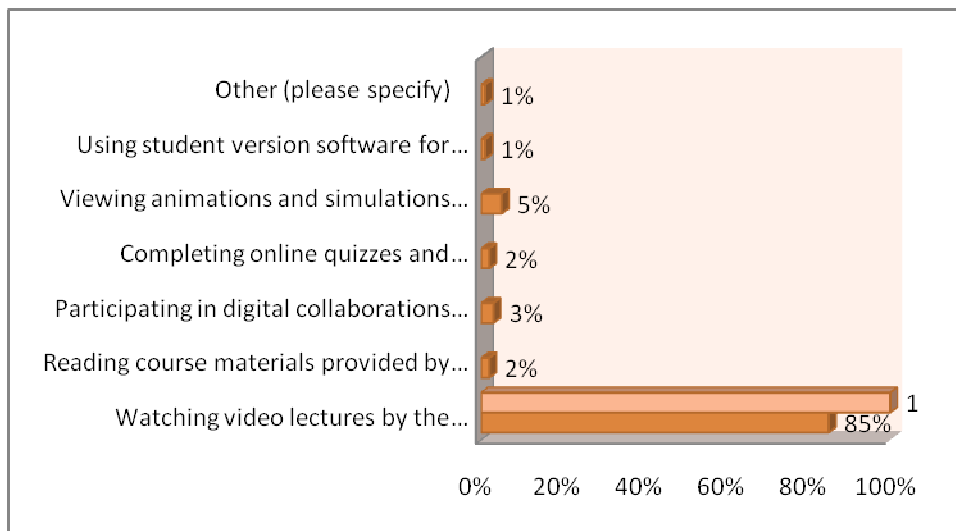


Chart 07: Preferred Online Methods for Learning Poetry.

4.6 Course Interaction and Feedback

The symbiotic relationship between students and instructors is evident in the findings. A significant 70% of students interacted 'very often' with their instructors, as depicted in Chart 08. This proactive engagement aligns seamlessly with the 70% who rated the feedback and guidance they received as 'very high', showcased in Figure 09, underscoring the critical role of consistent and constructive feedback in the learning process.

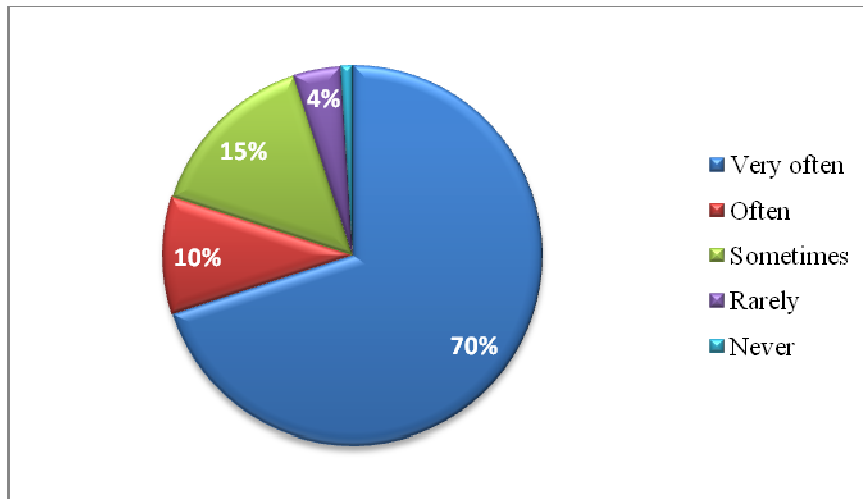


Chart 08: Frequency of Student Interactions in Online Cours

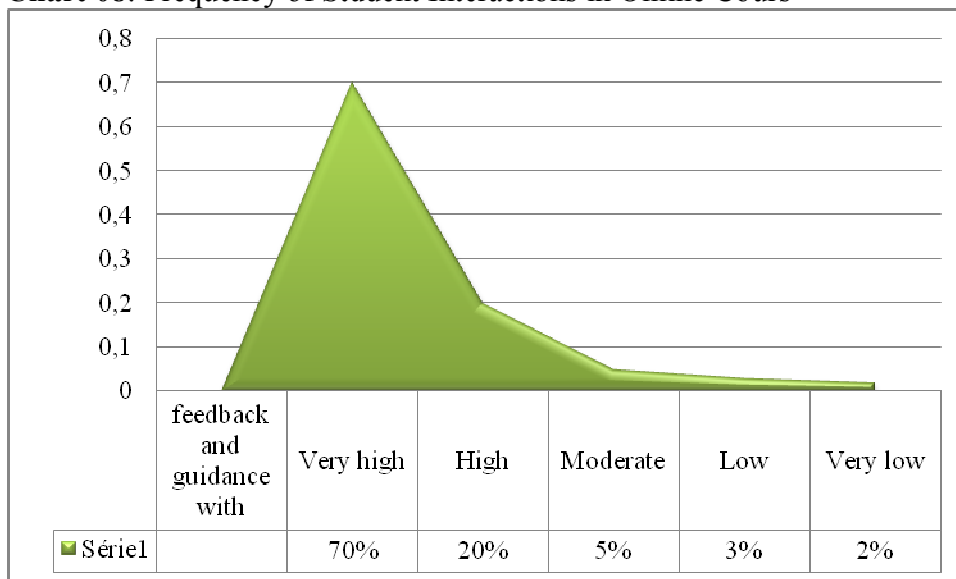


Chart 09: Student Ratings on Feedback and Guidance Received

4.7 Students' Recommendations

Endorsing the efficacy and value of the online poetry courses, a resounding 85% of participants expressed they would 'very likely' recommend the course to peers. This data point not only serves as a validation of the course's quality and impact but also as an indicator of its potential growth and popularity in the coming years.

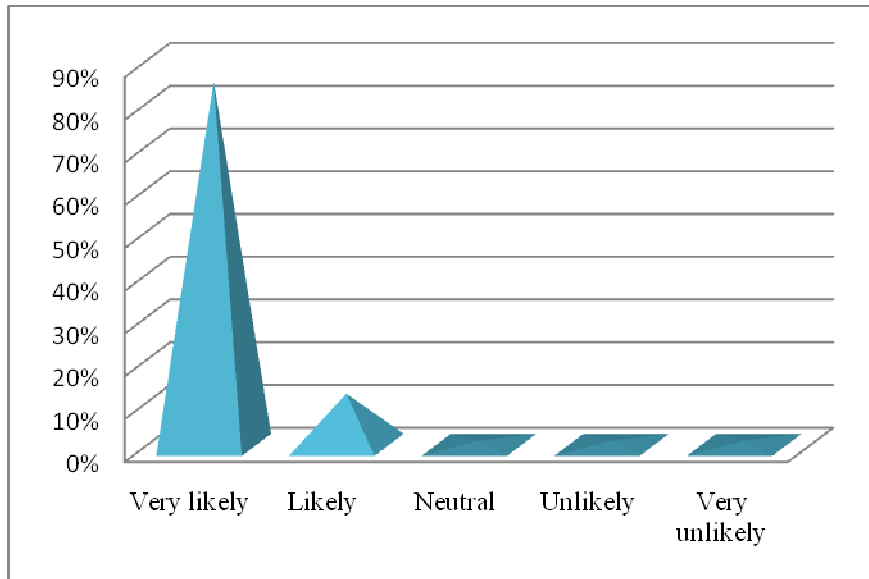


Chart 10: Students' Recommendations of Online Poetry Courses.

5. Discussion

The evolving dynamics of online education, especially in the realm of creative writing, is a crucial arena for academic exploration. With Algerian university students at its focal point, this discussion delves into the nuances and implications of the questionnaire results, intertwining them with the existing literature. The paper aims to extract and highlight the key insights grounded in the findings, integrating them with established scholarly work, thereby charting possible paths for forthcoming investigations.

The questionnaire conducted with students from the Department of English at Batna 2 University provided notable insights regarding the uptake and impact of online poetry classes. Notably, most students have not embarked on an online poetry course previously. However, of those who did, the level of satisfaction was overwhelmingly high. Video lectures emerged as the preferred mode of learning, and the primary challenges faced by students were technical glitches and linguistic barriers.

The high satisfaction rate amongst students, with 90% being either very satisfied or satisfied, emphasizes the potential and efficacy of online poetry courses in Algerian universities. This complements Moore and Kearsley's (2011) assertion about the flexibility and personalized trajectory of online education. The significant inclination towards video lectures might not just be a testament to the multimedia-rich capabilities of online platforms but

also their alignment with the collaborative essence that Goertler, Bollen, and Gaff Jr (2012) found augments the poetry process.

The linguistic challenges underscored in our findings echo Zhao's (2017) observations about non-English speaking students grappling with comprehension. Our results also underline Hofstede's (2001) perspective: students from high-context cultures might find online courses less engaging due to the absence of non-verbal cues. Interestingly, our findings resonate with O'Dowd (2013) that online platforms expose students to varied literary traditions, potentially enriching their creative processes.

6. Conclusion

The shift towards online learning, especially in the realm of poetry, has painted a compelling narrative of transformative change, layered with both possibilities and challenges. This research, centered on Algerian university students, has attempted to contribute a unique perspective to this evolving dialogue.

Several salient conclusions emerge from this study. First and foremost, the majority of sample population (students of Batna 2 University) seem to embrace the new digital paradigm in poetry education, with many expressing satisfactions with the online poetry courses offered at the Department of English at Batna 2 University. The noted benefits of flexibility, accessibility, and interactive learning, underscore the attributes highlighted by early proponents of online education such as Moore and Kearsley (2011).

However, the study also illuminated some persistent challenges. Linguistic barriers, technical glitches, and the occasional lack of cultural relatability resonate with the concerns raised by Zhao (2017) and Hofstede (2001). This underscores the necessity of ensuring that online platforms cater to diverse cultural and linguistic nuances to offer truly inclusive education.

The high levels of satisfaction and the inclination to recommend these courses to peers indicate a largely positive reception of online poetry courses. Yet, the continuous evolution of online learning platforms and the dynamic nature of student needs necessitate ongoing research and adaptability.

This research journey has only reaffirmed the significance of context-specific insights in education. In the grand tapestry of online education research, the experiences of Algerian university students serve as a potent reminder of the diversity of learners' journeys and the shared aspiration for enriching, inclusive, and empowering educational experiences.

6.1 The Research Implications

Given the shifting tide towards digital education, the findings of this paper have paramount implications. To optimize online poetry courses in Algerian universities, there's a necessity to focus on multimedia-rich content, address technical and linguistic challenges, and ensure cultural and contextual relevance. As Algeria and many other nations tread deeper into the digital education era, findings from this study can be instrumental in refining course design and delivery. While the study addressed a glaring gap in the literature, it also set the stage for more nuanced, longitudinal research that can track the evolution of student experiences and outcomes over time.

6.2 Research Limitations and Future Recommendations

While this study offers valuable insights into the efficacy and challenges of online poetry pedagogy for first-year university students of Batna 2 University, several limitations warrant consideration. Firstly, the narrow focus of this study on first-year students enrolled in the Department of English at Batna 2 University limits the generalizability of the findings to broader contexts within Algerian higher education. Additionally, the reliance on self-reported data from student questionnaires introduces the possibility of response bias, potentially skewing the representation of students' experiences with online poetry courses. Moreover, the absence of instructor perspectives in the data collection process overlooks valuable insights into course design, delivery, and support mechanisms, thus limiting the comprehensiveness of the findings. Lastly, while the study provides valuable insights into student satisfaction and preferences regarding online poetry courses via the Moodle platform, it neither delves deeply into long-term outcomes nor compares online pedagogy with traditional face-to-face instruction, nor does it cover other platforms of online instruction such as Google Classroom or Zoom classes, suggesting avenues for future research exploration. Acknowledging these limitations is essential for contextualizing the findings of this study and informing future research endeavors aimed at enhancing online poetry education in Algerian universities.

Expanding research might explore contrasting online and offline poetry classes, probe long-term retention of poetic knowledge, or investigate the merits of a blended teaching model. With a research gap in Algerian student experiences, our study underscores the academic need to focus on this demographic.

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Appendix Questionnaire

Online Poetry Teaching and Learning in Algerian Universities

Thank you for participating in this survey. We are conducting this research to assess the effectiveness and challenges of online poetry courses for first-year students at the Department of English at MostefaBenboulaid, Batna 2 University. Your responses will help us to improve the quality and delivery of online poetry education in the Algerian context. This survey is anonymous and confidential, and it will take about 15 minutes to complete. Please answer all the questions honestly and to the best of your ability.

Survey Questions:

1. How many online poetry courses have you taken or are currently taking at the Department of English at MostefaBenboulaid University?
 - None
 - One

- Two
 - Three or more
2. How satisfied are you with the overall quality of the online poetry courses you have taken or are currently taking?
- Very satisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Neutral
 - Dissatisfied
 - Very dissatisfied
3. How do you rate the following aspects of the online poetry courses you have taken or are currently taking?
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Aspect	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very poor
Course content					
Course design					
Course delivery					
Course materials					
Course objectives					
Course outcomes					

4. How much do you agree or disagree with the following statements about the online poetry courses you have taken or are currently taking?
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Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The online poetry courses increase					

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
d my interest in poetry.					
The online poetry courses enhanced my poetic skills and knowledge.					
The online poetry courses exposed me to diverse poetic traditions and cultures.					
The online poetry courses boosted my confidence					

Statement	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
ce and self-expression in poetry.					
The online poetry courses met my expectations and learning needs.					

5. What are the main benefits of taking online poetry courses compared to traditional face-to-face courses? (Select all that apply)

- Flexibility and convenience
- Accessibility and affordability
- Self-paced and personalized learning
- Interactive and engaging learning
- Feedback and assessment
- Other (please specify)

6. What are the main challenges or difficulties of taking online poetry courses compared to traditional face-to-face courses? (Select all that apply)

- Technical issues and glitches
- Linguistic barriers and misunderstandings
- Cultural nuances and sensitivities
- Limited feedback and engagement
- Distractions and interruptions
- Other (please specify)

7. How do you prefer to learn poetry online? (Select all that apply)

- Watching video lectures by the instructor
- Reading course materials provided by the instructor
- Participating in digital collaborations with peers
- Completing online quizzes and assignments

- Viewing animations and simulations of poetic concepts
 - Using student version software for poetic analysis
 - Other (please specify)
8. How often do you interact with the instructor and other students in the online poetry courses?
- Very often
 - Often
 - Sometimes
 - Rarely
 - Never
9. How do you rate the quality and frequency of the feedback and guidance you receive from the instructor in the online poetry courses?
- Very high
 - High
 - Moderate
 - Low
 - Very low
10. How likely are you to recommend online poetry courses to other students at the Department of English at Mostefa Benboulaïd University?
- Very likely
 - Likely
 - Neutral
 - Unlikely
 - Very unlikely
11. Do you have any suggestions or comments on how to improve the online poetry courses at the Department of English at Mostefa Benboulaïd University?
- Thank you for completing this survey. We appreciate your time and effort.