

Using AI-Generated Animations to Support Emotional and Visual Learning of Classical Chinese Poetry: An Exploratory Document Analysis of the Qian Qiu Shi Song Project

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence is reshaping education by creating new opportunities for more creative, engaging, and meaningful learning. In classical Chinese poetry, AI offers ways to modernise lessons that were once limited to memorisation and translation. This study examines how AI can support teachers in designing learning experiences that help students appreciate poetry in deeper and more personal ways. A qualitative case study was used to investigate the “*Qian Qiu Shi Song*” (*Everlasting Songs*) project, China’s first AI-generated animation series based on more than 200 classical poems. Document analysis was guided by three analytic dimensions which are scene creation, layered learning progression, and emotional connection. The analysis identified five themes: *AI-driven poetic scene creation, layered learning progression, emotional connection through scenario restoration, the changing role of teachers, and increased cultural engagement among students*. The findings show that AI can visualise poetic imagery, structure learning in clearer stages, and rebuild the emotional and historical settings of poems. These contributions make poetry learning more interactive, engaging, and personalised. AI also supports teachers in shifting from information delivery to guiding exploration and helps students form stronger emotional and cultural connections with classical poetry. Overall, AI functions not only as a technological tool but also as a learning partner that enriches cultural understanding and supports the preservation of literary heritage.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence; Classical Chinese poetry; AI-generated animation; Scene creation; Layered learning progression; Emotional connection; Qian Qiu Shi Song

Introduction

Artificial intelligence has taken the education world by storm. It has helped shape modern education. It also offers new ways to improve teaching and learning, encouraging schools to move more towards a digital and interactive environment (Chen, 2025). In many education systems, the introduction of AI aims to create more personalized learning paths and new teaching methods that combine creativity with technology. However, when it comes to classical Chinese poetry, the integration of AI remains a new and challenging area. Poetry has always been an important part of cultural and literary education, where it represents the essence of language, emotion, and history (Guttesen & Kristjánsson, 2022). Yet in traditional teaching, it still focuses heavily on memorization, text explanation, and translation (Amirova, 2025; Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024). This approach often limits students’ understanding and makes it difficult for them to connect emotionally with the poems (Hattie & O’Leary, 2025; Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024). Many learners still find classical poetry too distant from their lives, which also reduces their motivation and weakens their appreciation for cultural heritage. Integrating AI brings an opportunity to overcome these problems (Wang et al., 2025). While memorisation can support language accuracy and structure, students still struggle to feel the emotional world of the poem (Wang, 2023). By using technologies such as virtual environments, visual generation, and intelligent interaction, poetry learning can become more alive and engaging. Students can explore rhythm, sound, imagery, and emotion in ways that encourage imagination and understanding and not seem too rigid (Sharma, 2025). The use of AI can also help teachers design lessons that are more flexible, creative, and fun. This way, they can adapt to different learning styles according to student needs.

Despite its potential, research in classroom practice using AI for classical poetry is still limited. Many existing innovations in AI education focus more on science and technology subjects, not on the humanities (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024). There is a need to explore how AI can be used effectively to support literature and cultural studies, especially in secondary schools, where students are developing both emotional and cognitive maturity (Amirova, 2025). This study aims to explore how AI can be used to improve the teaching and learning of classical Chinese poetry. It focuses on the way AI helps teachers address the main challenges in traditional methods and the possible models for building an intelligent and personalized poetry learning system. It could help highlight how AI can enrich poetry education, strengthen student engagement with culture, and create a balance between tradition and modern learning (Sharma, 2025).

Literature Review

To understand how artificial intelligence can help improve poetry education, it is important to look at the common problems found in traditional teaching and how technology can offer new solutions. Classical Chinese poetry is known for its emotional depth, cultural meaning, and artistic beauty, yet many students today find it difficult to connect with these components (Wang, 2023). This section discusses the challenges of traditional methods, the limitations of teacher and system readiness, and how AI can help modernize learning through creativity and interaction.

Challenges in Traditional Poetry Teaching

When it comes to teaching classical poetry in schools, teachers still face several obstacles. Many students do not find poetry interesting, and they often see it as an old-fashioned subject that has little connection to modern life. The use of rigid teaching methods, mainly focusing on translation, memorization, and explanation, has made poetry learning less engaging. In many classrooms, teachers follow the same pattern, which is to explain the meaning, translate the text, and ask students to memorize lines (Wang, 2023). This can get boring, especially for students of this era where everything is at the tip of their fingers. Although this helps with understanding the literal meaning, it fails to build emotional and aesthetic appreciation for poetry. Another challenge is the complexity of the language used in ancient poems (Guttesen & Kristjánsson, 2022; Hattie & O’Leary, 2025). The symbols and imagery used by poets can be difficult for young learners to grasp. For example, symbols like the moon, wind, or mountain carry deep emotional meanings that require imagination and cultural context to be understood. When students only focus on translation, they miss these layers of emotion and philosophy. Because of this, poetry lessons often feel distant, and students lose their interest quickly. Without visual or interactive support, students are unable to experience the beauty of rhythm, sound, and imagery. This creates a gap between knowledge and feeling. Traditional teaching methods, though effective in explaining meaning, rarely help students feel the power of emotions or visualise the scene. Therefore, new methods are needed to help students learn through sensory and emotional experiences, and not just through memorisation.

Limitations in Teacher and System Readiness

Even though AI has huge potential in education, many schools are not ready yet to use it effectively. One major issue is the lack of digital infrastructure and data management systems. Many schools still do not have enough resources or organized systems to support this advanced technology. They would also need technical support and somebody who is familiar with IT and AI. Teachers would also have to go through training programs to be proficient in AI. Information about students’ learning behaviours or performance is often not recorded properly,

making it hard to personalize their learning through AI. Another limitation is teacher readiness, where many teachers are not familiar with AI or digital teaching methods (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024). Research highlights similar concerns across educational systems, noting that AI adoption requires strong ethical guidance, teacher preparation, and infrastructure support (Chen, 2025). Although they might have strong knowledge of literature, they are still limited when it comes to using modern tools to enhance learning. Some teachers also feel uncertain about how AI works or how it can be used ethically in education (Hattie & O'Leary, 2025). Without proper training, teachers cannot fully take advantage of AI's benefits. The successful use of technology in teaching depends not only on the tools themselves but also on how teachers understand and apply them in the classroom. For AI to be used effectively, teachers need opportunities to learn how to integrate it with classroom teaching. They also need guidance on how to balance human creativity with technological support. With the right preparation, teachers can move from simply delivering lessons to designing interactive, student-centered learning experiences (Amirova, 2025). This way, they can capture student attention and make them more interested in learning poetry.

The Role of AI in Modernizing Poetry Education

Artificial intelligence brings many possibilities to improve how classical poetry is taught and experienced. It can make learning more interactive, creative, and personal. AI can also act as a supporting teaching partner, helping teachers design lessons that combine sound, visuals, and emotions (Chen, 2025). For example, students can listen to the rhythm of a poem, see images that represent its emotion, and even explore virtual settings inspired by the text. This allows learning to happen through multiple senses, which increases engagement and understanding. AI also changes the learning process itself. Instead of memorizing lines, students can interact with AI-based tools that guide them to analyze, interpret, and reflect. This helps them think more critically and creatively. It encourages them to form their own understanding of the poem rather than just depending on the teacher's explanation. With new technologies such as virtual and augmented reality, students can also experience poetry in an immersive environment. It is not just on pen and paper anymore. They can walk into a virtual scene that represents the poem, hear the sound of nature described in the verses, and feel closer to the emotion expressed by the poet. These experiences can help make poetry come alive and help students build deeper appreciation. In short, the teaching of classical poetry has long suffered from low interest and outdated methods. Artificial intelligence offers a new way to make lessons more meaningful and connected to the modern world. By linking technology with art, AI can help students rediscover the emotional and cultural value of poetry while keeping it relevant in today's world.

Methodology

This study used a qualitative case study approach to explore how artificial intelligence can enhance the teaching and learning of Chinese classical poetry in secondary school. The qualitative research method was chosen because it allows a deeper understanding of how AI is applied in real learning environments. It also helps to show how technology influences classroom practices, student interests, and cultural appreciation. This study focuses more on interpretation and understanding than on numbers or statistics, aiming to capture how teaching is transformed through technology.

Sampling

A purposive sampling method was used to select one suitable case that could provide meaningful insights. The project chosen was Qian Qiu Shi Song (Everlasting Songs). This project was launched in early 2024. It is recognized as the first large-scale animation series created through AI technology based on more than 200 classical Chinese poems (Anadolu Agency, 2024). The project combined modern technologies such as virtual reality, text-to-video generation, and digital avatar simulations. It was selected because it represented a real-life example of how AI can merge artistic, linguistic, and cultural learning into one interactive experience. The project also shows how traditional poetry education can be modernized and made more engaging for students.

Data Collection

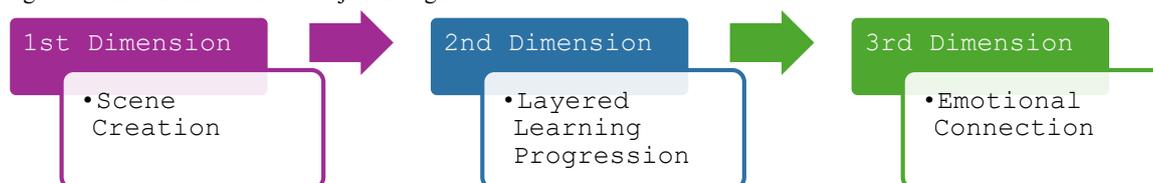
The data collected for this research were documents from the "Qian Qiu Shi Song" (Everlasting Songs) project. These documents included project descriptions, teaching design plans, technical notes, and examples of AI-generated outputs. The dataset consisted of publicly available materials released by China Media Group and the Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Laboratory, such as official project descriptions, technical notes, press releases, video episodes, and visual reconstructions of more than 200 classical poems. The project is recognised as China's first large-scale AI-generated animation series based on classical poetry, transforming over 200 poems into short animated episodes (Anadolu Agency, 2024; Miguel Perez, 2024). It was developed by the Shanghai Artificial Intelligence Laboratory together with China Media Group and uses advanced multimodal AI models to analyse poetic language and identify symbolic images.

Researchers have also used document analysis to study AI-generated creative works. For example, (Us Saqib, 2023) analysed AI-generated poems to examine how artificial intelligence interprets emotional themes and literary structure. This demonstrates that AI outputs can be treated as valid research data for qualitative interpretation. In the same way, the present study analyses documents and AI-generated materials from the Qian Qiu Shi Song project to understand how AI supports poetry learning and cultural expression. The research examines the Qian Qiu Shi Song project as a large educational project that combines AI with poetry teaching. Data were collected from project documents and learning materials to examine how AI can help visualize poetry, organize layered learning, and rebuild the emotional and historical settings of poems.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed thematically based on three main dimensions identified in the project design which are scene creation, layered learning progression and emotional connection.

Figure 1: Three Dimensions of Project Design



The first dimension, scene creation, focused on how AI helps visualize poetic imagery and bring historical or cultural background to life. For example, animation and virtual settings were used to show the beauty and rhythm of poetry, helping students imagine what the poet might have seen or felt. Through AI-generated visuals, abstract ideas become more concrete and easier for students to understand. This process allows learners to experience poetry through their senses and not just through words.

The second dimension looked at layered learning progression, where it analyzes how AI structures learning in different stages that match students' development. Lessons move gradually from sound and rhythm to imagery and finally to emotion. At the sound level, students learn to recognize rhythm and tone, helping them build a sense of language music. At the imagery level, they explore recurring symbols such as the moon, flowers, or water, and discuss what emotions these images express (Sharma, 2025). The final stage focuses on emotional connection, where students reflect on the poet's feelings and relate them to their own understanding. This progression helps students appreciate both the artistic and emotional layers of poetry (Maspul, 2024).

Together, these three dimensions are interpreted through the framework of classical Chinese poetry, which are Sound and Rhythm (音韵), Imagery (意象), and Fenggu (风骨). It shows how AI can combine traditional literary theory with modern digital methods. It not only supports the understanding of poetry but also reshapes how teachers teach and how students learn. Teachers become more like guides who help students explore, question, and create. Students, on the other hand, can take an active role in discovering meaning and emotion through interactive learning.

Findings and Discussion

The analysis in this study was guided by three main dimensions: scene creation, layered learning progression, and emotional connection. These dimensions shaped how the project documents were reviewed and helped organise the patterns that appeared in the data. The analysis identified five themes, listed in descending order of significance: *AI-driven poetic scene creation, layered learning progression, emotional connection through scenario restoration, the changing role of teachers, and increased cultural engagement among students*. The first three themes correspond directly to the three analytic dimensions and show how AI reconstructs poetic imagery, supports step-by-step learning, and restores the emotional and cultural atmosphere of classical poetry. The remaining themes highlight additional impacts observed in the project, including how AI alters the role of teachers and encourages a deeper cultural appreciation among students.

Table 1: Analytic Dimensions and Themes

Analytic Dimension	Themes	Description
1. Scene Creation	• AI-driven poetic scene creation	How AI reconstructs poetic imagery, symbols, landscapes, and visual meaning.
2. Layered Learning Progression	• Layered learning progression	How learning moves from sound to imagery to emotional interpretation.
3. Emotional Connection	• Emotional connection through scenario restoration	How AI rebuilds the emotional tone, atmosphere, and cultural context of poems.
Additional Impacts Observed	• Changing role of teachers • Increased cultural engagement among students	Effects beyond the three dimensions, showing shifts in teaching practice and student cultural appreciation.

Table 1 summarises how the three analytic dimensions used in this study connect to the themes that emerged from the document analysis. The first three themes align directly with the dimensions of scene creation, layered learning progression, and emotional connection. These themes show how AI reconstructs poetic imagery, supports step-by-step interpretation, and rebuilds the emotional and cultural atmosphere of classical poems. The remaining two themes extend beyond the original framework, highlighting additional impacts such as the changing role of teachers and increased cultural engagement among students. This alignment helps explain how the project's design supports multiple layers of learning and demonstrates the broader influence of AI on poetry education.

AI-Driven Poetic Scene Creation

The most dominant theme in the analysis is the use of AI to create rich and dynamic poetic scenes. Classical Chinese poetry often contains symbolic images, emotional landscapes, and cultural elements that are difficult for secondary students to imagine through text alone (Sharma, 2025). It has symbolic and emotional depth that is hard to visualise (Pathave & Pathave, 2025). Through the project materials, it showed how AI-generated animations, character simulations, and visual sequences help turn these abstract elements into a concrete experience. Visuals of landscapes, animations of mountains, water, forests, or seasonal changes made the tone of the poem clearer (Pithouse-Morgan & van Laren, 2025). Emotional expressions from AI-generated characters also help students sense the inner feelings of the poem (Shalevska, 2024). The combination of moving images, color tones, and subtle sound effects creates an atmosphere that is usually missing in traditional classroom teaching. This theme highlighted the significant impact of visual transformation in poetry learning. Here, students can see the emotion behind each line and understand the symbolic meaning more naturally. This reduces the barrier created by classical language and supports a deeper connection with the poem (Sharma, 2025).

Layered Learning Progression

This theme covers the layered learning model supported by AI. The materials follow a clear progression that begins with sound, continues to imagery, and ends with emotional reflection. This structure helps students move from basic recognition to higher levels of interpretation. Lessons move gradually from sound and rhythm to imagery and finally to emotion. At the sound level, students learn to recognize rhythm and tone, helping them build a sense of language music. At the imagery level, they explore recurring symbols such as the moon, flowers, or water, and discuss what emotions these images express (Sharma, 2025). The final stage focuses on emotional connection, where students reflect on the poet's feelings and relate them to their own understanding. This progression helps students appreciate both the artistic and emotional layers of poetry. The layered approach helps students build understanding step by step. Instead of memorizing lines without context, they learn to connect rhythms, imagery, and emotion in a meaningful way. The gradual process also offers perseverance because students can take more time on the layers that they find difficult (Pithouse-Morgan & van Laren, 2025).

Emotional Connection Through Scenario Restoration

The third theme focused on how AI reconstructs the atmosphere and emotional setting of the poem (Shalevska, 2024). By understanding important keywords and emotional expressions, AI generates scenes that match the mood and cultural background. For poems expressing sorrow or longing, AI uses dimmer colors, slower animation, and softer sound effects (Gul et al., 2025). For poems with joyful or celebratory themes, the visuals become brighter and more energetic. Some scenes also integrate historical details such as architecture or traditional clothing, which helps students imagine the cultural environment more accurately (Shalevska, 2024). Scenario restoration encourages students to experience the poem rather than just analyze it (Sharma, 2025). The immersive design reduces the distance between the learner and the poem's world, helping students develop emotional empathy and a more intuitive understanding of classical themes.

Changing Role of Teachers and Increased Student Engagement

This theme shows noticeable changes in how teachers participate in AI-supported learning. Teachers no longer depend solely on explaining every detail of the poem. Instead, they become the guide (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024) and help students through visuals, encourage discussions, and support reflection and higher-level thinking (Guttesen & Kristjánsson, 2022). This shift from knowledge provider to learning facilitator helps create a more interactive learning experience, which is also highlighted in recent literature showing that AI integration often transforms the teacher's role into a facilitator who supports exploration rather than direct instruction (Chen, 2025). When the roles of teachers are more as facilitators, students are more engaged with the materials (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024). When classical poetry is presented through visuals, sound, and immersive scenes, students develop a stronger interest in cultural heritage. The modern presentation style makes the ancient text feel current, making students more willing to explore its meanings. Students show greater curiosity about symbolism, historical context, and emotional messages (Sharma, 2025). This is consistent with research showing that poetry helps students access deeper emotional and moral themes by connecting their inner experiences with poetic expression (Guttesen & Kristjánsson, 2022). The combination of technology and culture helps them understand poetry not just as a school subject but as a meaningful part of cultural identity. This theme suggests that AI can play a role in cultural preservation by helping younger learners connect with traditional literature in a more personal and relatable way.

Recommendations

Several recommendations can be made based on the results of this study. Teachers should be given more training and support to use AI effectively (Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024). Many teachers are skilled in literatures but are less familiar with technology (Amirova, 2025; Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024). Teaching them how to use AI tools can help them design more creative and engaging lessons. These training programs should focus on how to mix traditional literary knowledge with digital teaching skills. Schools should also include AI-based learning in their teaching plans for literature and cultural subjects. Currently, many initiatives in AI education focus only on science or technology, but poetry and the arts can also benefit from it. Schools should develop clear guidelines to provide suitable teaching materials that help teachers apply AI in the classroom. Other than that, schools and technology developers should work together to create high-quality learning materials. These materials should combine visual, musical, and storytelling elements to make poetry more vivid and easier to relate to. School administration and leaders should also support teachers in their journey to learn more about AI and technological skills. Without the support of school leaders, this would not be possible (Amirova, 2025; Martin-Alguacil et al., 2024).

Implications

This research carries important implications for education. AI can transform the teaching of poetry by making lessons more interactive and emotionally rich. At the same time, it can support cultural preservation by presenting traditional works in modern and relatable ways. This way, we know that cultural heritage will live on through the generations and not get lost or forgotten. Educational policy should also consider encouraging the use of AI not only in technology subjects but also in the humanities (Hattie & O'Leary, 2025). This approach supports a balanced education that values both digital skills and cultural identity.

Conclusion

The integration of AI into the teaching of classical Chinese poetry offers a powerful way to modernize learning while at the same time preserving cultural heritage. AI helps students (Chen, 2025). In many education systems, the introduction of AI aims to create more personalised learning paths and engages teachers to adopt a more student-centred approach in their teaching. Although there are challenges such as teacher readiness and limited digital resources, AI has strong potential to enrich learning and keep traditional literature meaningful for future generations.

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