



## Utility of AI in Studying English Literature for UG Students in India

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### **Abstract:**

*Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly influencing educational spaces worldwide. In Indian universities, as English literature curricula evolve, AI tools are gaining prominence as pedagogical companions. This paper explores the multifaceted utility of AI in aiding undergraduate (UG) students of English literature in India. It analyses key applications—ranging from textual analysis and personalized learning to accessibility and research support—while also interrogating challenges related to critical thinking, cultural context, ethical concerns, and digital divide issues. Drawing on current academic debates, technological case examples, and disciplinary practice, this paper argues that integrating AI—when strategically mediated by instructors—can significantly enhance literature study, research skills, and learner autonomy among UG English students in India.*

**Keywords:** *AI in Education, English Literature, Undergraduate Learning, India, Pedagogy, Digital Humanities.*

### **Introduction:**

In the 21st century, Artificial Intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force across disciplines, including the humanities. Traditionally thought to be less technologically oriented, English literature is now intersecting dynamically with digital tools that augment reading, analysis, interpretation, and critical engagement. For undergraduate students in India—who are navigating diverse literary canons, theoretical frameworks, and assessment expectations—the integration of AI tools presents both opportunities and critical questions.

This paper examines the utility of AI specifically in the context of Indian undergraduate English literature education. It explores how AI can support learners' comprehension, interpretative skills, research capabilities, and academic writing, while also

assessing ethical and pedagogical concerns that arise alongside technological adoption.

### **Literature Review:**

#### **1. AI in Higher Education:**

AI has been broadly studied within higher education frameworks, where tools such as intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive feedback mechanisms, and automated assessment platforms claim to personalize learning (Holmes, Bialik, & Fadel, 2019). For humanities in particular, emerging research in digital humanities has emphasized AI's capacity to handle large textual datasets, enabling pattern recognition and computational analysis beyond manual capacity (Berry, 2012).

#### **2. AI and Literary Studies:**

In literary studies, AI tools such as natural language processing (NLP), sentiment analysis, stylometry, and topic modeling have been applied

for textual analysis, thematic mining, and authorship studies (Underwood, 2019). While scholars debate the epistemological limits of AI interpretation, there is increasing recognition that such tools can co-exist with traditional hermeneutic methods (Bamman, Underwood, & Smith, 2014).

### 3. Pedagogical Impacts of AI:

From a pedagogical perspective, AI's value often lies in individualized feedback, accelerated skill-building cycles, and scaffolding for complex tasks (Luckin et al., 2016). However, critics emphasize risks such as overreliance on automation, loss of critical engagement, and digital inequities (Selwyn, 2019). In the Indian context, where access and infrastructure vary widely, these debates take on unique implications.

#### The Indian Context: English Studies at the UG Level:

English literature as a discipline in Indian universities encompasses:

- Colonial and postcolonial literatures
- World literatures in English translation
- Literary theories and criticism
- Cultural studies

UG students must *read widely, write critically, and interpret texts from multiple perspectives*. Traditional classroom practices in India emphasize lecture-driven pedagogy, close reading, essay-based assessment, and teacher feedback. AI can complement these systems by creating interactive, student-centred learning environments.

#### AI Tools and Their Utility:

##### 1. Textual Analysis and Interpretation:

AI-powered tools such as natural language processing (NLP) and machine learning enable students to explore Semantic analysis, Stylistic features and Intertextual connections.

Let's discuss it with an example of George Orwell's novel 'Animal Farm'.

**Semantic Analysis:** It includes understanding themes, motifs and sentiment trends. Semantic analysis examines meaning patterns in a text—how words, concepts, and ideas are related and repeated to construct themes. When supported by AI tools (such as keyword clustering or topic modeling), semantic analysis helps identify dominant conceptual fields in a literary work. Let's see how AI can semantically analyze 'Animal Farm'. In *Animal Farm*, semantic analysis reveals how Orwell constructs a political allegory through recurring semantic clusters related to power, language, and betrayal. Using AI-assisted semantic mapping (conceptual, not numerical), the following dominant semantic fields emerge:

Semantic Cluster	Key Words & Phrases	Thematic Meaning
Power & Authority	<i>leader, command, order, rule, control</i>	Centralization of power
Equality & Ideology	<i>equal, comrades, brotherhood, freedom</i>	Revolutionary ideals
Language & Propaganda	<i>commandments, speeches, slogans</i>	Manipulation of truth
Violence & Fear	<i>dogs, executions, terror</i>	Authoritarian control
Betrayal & Corruption	<i>changed, revised, secretly</i>	Moral decay of revolution

AI semantic tools highlight this contradiction by detecting polarity inversion, where a positive concept is paired with exclusionary qualifiers. One of the most powerful semantic shifts in *Animal Farm* occurs around the concept of "equality."

The early Semantic Context for "*All animals are equal.*", creates Positive semantic field like justice, fairness, collective identity etc. where equality is linked with hope, liberation, and shared struggle. However, the later Semantic Shift "*All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.*", creates

Contradictory semantic structure where “Equal” is semantically hollowed out. Here the language becomes self-negating, exposing ideological corruption. The Semantic analysis shows how political power is mirrored in linguistic control—as Napoleon gains authority, the language becomes increasingly coercive. Napoleon’s rise to dominance is marked by a shift in power-related vocabulary. Snowball uses the words like *debate*, *vote*, *explain*, *committee* whereas Semantics of democratic participation is reflected in Napoleon’s language when he uses the words like *order*, *discipline*, *punishment*, *execution* etc. The Semantics of authoritarian command is shown through the Semantic Role of Slogans. AI tools detect this as semantic drift, where repeated phrases gradually acquire new ideological meanings. For example “*Four legs good, two legs bad.*”, initially functions as simplified revolutionary ideology but later revised to “*Four legs good, two legs better.*” Thus, Semantic analysis shows language is reprogrammed, not replaced; familiar words are reused to legitimize betrayal; meaning changes while form remains stable. Besides, the semantic field of violence intensifies over the narrative, earlier ‘*rebellion*, *resistance*, *defence*’ and later ‘*execution*, *blood*, *terror*, *confession*’. This shift reflects transformation from revolutionary violence to state terror. AI-assisted analysis maps increasing proximity between words like *Napoleon*, *dogs*, and *fear*. In short, Semantic analysis—especially when aided by AI—demonstrates that Orwell’s critique of totalitarianism operates through language itself. The novel shows how ideals are linguistically corrupted, how power controls meaning, how propaganda empties words of ethical content. For UG students, semantic analysis helps to move beyond plot summary, to understand language as ideology, to connect literature with political discourse. We can ask students to track the word “*comrade*” across

chapters using manual close reading and AI keyword frequency tool. Then we can discuss how its emotional value changes and whether repetition strengthens or weakens meaning.

**Stylistic features:** These features include lexical complexity, frequency patterns. George Orwell’s *Animal Farm* is stylistically simple but ideologically complex. Its power lies not in ornate language but in clarity, control, and irony. Orwell’s style serves his political purpose: exposing how language is manipulated by those in power. Orwell deliberately uses simple, direct, and accessible language. Here the style mirrors ideology i.e. clarity is moral honesty. There are short sentences, limited vocabulary, minimal figurative ornamentation. For example “Man is the only creature that consumes without producing.” Thus, it reflects Orwell’s belief that clear language resists political corruption. Such type of language makes the novel accessible to a wide readership, including young readers as well as enhances the fable-like quality. *Animal Farm* is written as a political allegory, where Animals represent historical figures, events mirror the Russian Revolution. The stylistic characteristics of political allegory indicate how human political systems are translated into animal behaviour and how abstract political concepts are simplified into concrete actions. This allegorical style allows Orwell to critique totalitarianism indirectly yet powerfully. The novel adopts the traditional fable form, but subverts its moral clarity where we find features like talking animals, moral lesson embedded in narrative and satirical tone. For example “All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others.” Here the stylistic effects are satire exposes the absurdity of political hypocrisy and irony becomes sharper due to apparent simplicity. Irony is one of the most dominant stylistic features.

“*Napoleon is always right.*”

This paradoxical slogan reveals how thinking is replaced by obedience. Here in the verbal irony words mean the opposite of what they claim and the situational irony is that outcomes contradict revolutionary ideals. Language in *Animal Farm* relies heavily on repetitive slogans. The repetitive slogans like “Four legs good, two legs bad”, “Napoleon is always right” mimic political propaganda, reduce complex ideas into memorisable phrases and discourage critical thinking. The stylistic repetition mirrors brainwashing techniques. Another stylistic use is Manipulative and Euphemistic Language. The pigs use euphemism and distortion to justify cruelty where executions are termed as “confessions” and reduction of food rations is described as “readjustment”. Such a language softens harsh realities and demonstrates how language hides violence. Orwell shows that control of language is equal to control of thought. There is a Gradual Shift in Narrative Tone. The tone evolves subtly over the novel.

Early Tone	Later Tone
Hopeful	Grim
Idealistic	Cynical
Collective	Authoritarian

This stylistic technique reflects that change is incremental, not abrupt and readers realize corruption only retrospectively. Thus it reflects political decay. The Third-Person Omniscient Narrator is detached, objective and non-judgmental. Consequently, events speak for themselves, readers must infer moral judgments. Ultimately, the neutral narrative voice enhances satirical irony. Besides, Stylistic symbolism is woven into the narrative. Thus, symbolism remains simple yet politically loaded.

Symbol	Meaning
Windmill	False progress
Dogs	State violence
Milk & apples	Class privilege

The Cyclical Structure of the novel is effective. The novel ends where it began. Pigs become indistinguishable from humans. Its stylistic significance is that it reinforces futility of corrupted revolutions and creates a sense of historical repetition. This style supports Orwell’s pessimistic political vision. Thus, Orwell’s stylistic brilliance in *Animal Farm* lies in simplicity used as a weapon. The novel’s plain language, allegory, irony, repetition and euphemism work together to expose how power manipulates language and truth. The style ensures that the political message is not obscured by rhetoric but delivered with devastating clarity.

**Intertextual connections:** Such connections identify thematic links across texts. Intertextuality in *Animal Farm* operates at historical, literary, and ideological levels. Orwell constructs the novel as a **dialogue with earlier texts, political writings, myths, and historical narratives**, allowing readers to interpret the novella beyond its surface fable. The most prominent intertextual framework of *Animal Farm* is the **Russian Revolution of 1917** and its aftermath.

Animal Farm	Historical Parallel
Mr. Jones	Tsar Nicholas II
Old Major	Karl Marx / Lenin
Napoleon	Joseph Stalin
Snowball	Leon Trotsky
The Rebellion	October Revolution
Windmill	Five-Year Plans

*Animal Farm* can be read as a **rewriting of revolutionary history**, transforming historical narrative into allegorical fiction. Old Major’s speech strongly echoes the ideological language of Marxist revolutionary texts.

“All men are enemies. All animals are comrades.”

This mirrors Marx’s binary division of society into oppressors and oppressed. Orwell engages critically with Marxist ideology by showing how its ideals are betrayed in practice.

The character of Moses the raven parallels Biblical narratives, especially Moses leading Israelites toward the Promised Land and the ravel telling about Sugarcandy Mountain as Heaven. Orwell uses Biblical intertext to critique religion as a tool of false consolation and an ideological distraction from material suffering. *Animal Farm* draws heavily on the tradition of **beast fables**, especially Aesop where there are talking animals, moral instruction and simple narrative structure. Unlike Aesop's clear morals, Orwell's moral is **ambiguous and pessimistic**, reflecting modern political realities.

**Orwell's satire recalls Jonathan Swift's political allegory. Both authors use non-human societies to expose human political corruption.**

Swift	Orwell
Houyhnhnms vs Yahoos	Animals vs Humans
Satire of rationalism	Satire of totalitarianism

*Animal Farm* anticipates many themes later expanded in *1984*. The texts form an intertextual continuum critiquing authoritarianism and linguistic control.

<i>Animal Farm</i>	<i>1984</i>
Altered Commandments	Newspeak
Squealer	Ministry of Truth
Napoleon	Big Brother

"*Beasts of England*" this song functions as an intertextual echo of *the Internationale* as well as revolutionary folk songs. Its eventual banning mirrors how totalitarian regimes suppress **revolutionary memory**. The **Seven Commandments** parody establishes intertextuality of Constitutional law and legal proclamations. Their gradual alteration reflects how regimes manipulate **legal language** to legitimize oppression. Intertextuality exposes law as a mutable instrument of power. Early *Animal Farm* resembles pastoral utopias found in classical

myths as well as Renaissance political thought. The destruction of this utopia aligns with dystopian traditions. Intertextual connections in *Animal Farm* deepen its meaning by placing it in conversation with Historical narratives, Political ideologies and literary traditions. Through these intertexts, Orwell demonstrates that tyranny is not accidental but **historically recurring**, emerging wherever language, power, and memory are controlled.

Thus, *Animal Farm* is rich in intertextual connections, drawing upon the history of the Russian Revolution, Marxist ideology, Biblical narratives, Aesop's fables, and earlier political satires such as *Gulliver's Travels*. Orwell also creates an intertextual link with his later novel *1984*, especially in themes of propaganda and linguistic manipulation. These intertexts transform *Animal Farm* into a layered political critique rather than a simple animal fable.

In this way topic modeling can help students identify recurring themes across a novel or poetry corpus—enhancing comprehension beyond surface reading.

## 2. Research Assistance:

UG research projects often require literature reviews, identification of critical sources and citation management. AI tools like semantic search engines and reference managers with AI recommendations can streamline research efforts, suggesting relevant articles and facilitating organization. This is especially useful for students less adept at academic research methodologies.

## 3. Writing Support and Feedback:

AI-driven platforms (e.g., grammar checkers with contextual suggestions, generative feedback systems) can flag grammatical errors, offer stylistic improvements and suggest coherence enhancements. They provide immediate feedback, enabling iterative refinement of essays and assignments. For Indian students

writing in English as a second language, such scaffolding can be especially valuable.

#### 4. Tutoring and Adaptive Learning:

AI tutors can deliver personalized learning pathways, adjusting tasks to students' progress, for example providing clarifications on literary theories, guiding through challenging passages and offering practice quizzes with targeted feedback etc. This adaptive capability can supplement classroom instruction where teacher time is limited.

#### Case Examples: AI in Literary Pedagogy:

##### Case 1: Text Mining in Shakespeare Studies:

A classroom exercise using topic modeling to analyze *Hamlet* enables students to track thematic clusters such as madness, revenge, and mortality across acts. Students interpret AI-generated visualizations, which spark deeper discussion about textual structure and character dynamics.

##### Case 2: AI-Driven Debate on Postcolonial Texts:

UG students used sentiment analysis to gauge tonal shifts in selected postcolonial poems. Rather than replacing interpretation, the tool served as a starting point for class debates about authorial nuance and cultural context.

##### Case 3: Personalized Revision with AI Tutors:

An adaptive AI tool was deployed to help students revise critical theory concepts. Based on quiz responses, the system recommended targeted content modules, enabling learners to focus on weaker areas.

#### Pedagogical Implications:

##### 1. Enhancing Critical Engagement:

AI should not be viewed as a *substitute* for critical thinking; instead, it serves as a catalyst. When students use AI outputs as *hypotheses* rather than conclusions, they can

refine their analytical skills through dialogue between human insight and machine suggestion.

##### 2. Facilitating Diverse Learning Styles:

Not all students excel in lecture-based contexts. AI-enabled platforms can deliver multimodal inputs (visual, textual, interactive), catering to varied learning preferences and increasing inclusivity.

##### 3. Empowering Autonomy:

By offering on-demand scaffolding, AI tools can help students take ownership of their learning, pacing their study and engaging more confidently with complex texts.

#### Challenges and Ethical Considerations:

##### 1. Overreliance and De-Skilling:

There is a risk that students may over-rely on AI for interpretation, writing, or analysis, potentially diminishing skills in close reading, original thought, and narrative synthesis. Educators must frame AI as a *support* rather than a *solution*.

##### 2. Cultural and Linguistic Sensitivity:

AI systems are often trained on global corpora that may not account for Indian English varieties, regional literatures, or local cultural contexts. Misinterpretations can arise if algorithms lack contextual nuance.

##### 3. Academic Integrity:

Tools like AI text generators can tempt students toward plagiarism or uncredited use of machine outputs. Clear guidelines and ethical instruction are essential to prevent misuse.

##### 4. Digital Divide and Access Constraints:

In India, disparities in internet access, device availability, and digital literacy pose significant barriers. Students in rural or resource-poor settings might be excluded from AI-enhanced learning opportunities.

**Strategies for Effective Integration:****1. Curriculum Alignment:**

AI tools should be embedded into the curriculum with certain purpose. Assignments that explicitly require AI-assisted research should be followed by critical reflection. Workshops on interpreting AI-generated data ethically should be arranged.

**2. Teacher Training and Development:**

Faculty must be equipped to evaluate AI outputs, guide students in balanced use and intervene when technology fosters misconceptions.

**3. Inclusive Infrastructure Planning:**

Institutions must invest in digital infrastructure and equitable access—ensuring all students can benefit, not only those with personal resources.

**4. Ethical Frameworks:**

Clear policies on AI usage, citation norms for machine-assisted outputs, and academic integrity expectations are foundational.

**Future Directions:**

Research at the intersection of AI and literature studies is expanding. In India, potential areas include AI-assisted translation tools for multilingual literary study, custom AI interfaces trained on Indian literary corpora, collaborative platforms for student annotation and peer review etc. Such innovations could further democratize access to literature and empower learners to engage deeply with diverse textual traditions.

**Conclusion:**

AI presents a multi-dimensional utility for undergraduate students studying English literature in India. It offers tools for textual analysis, research support, personalized learning, and

writing enhancement. When integrated responsibly and pedagogically—as a complement to human instruction—AI can enrich literary education, making it more interactive, accessible, and student-centred. However, the limitations—including ethical concerns, digital inequities, and risks to critical cognition—demand strategic instructional planning and institutional support. By engaging AI as a reflective partner in learning rather than a replacement for human inquiry, educators and students can harness its potential to deepen understanding and broaden the horizons of literary engagement in Indian higher education.

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