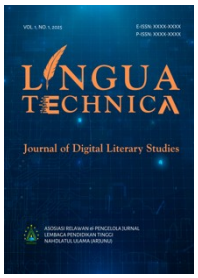
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Language, code, and platform-mediated textuality in electronic literature

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A B S T R A C T

Background: Digital literary platforms have transformed literary production and reception by making language inseparable from code, interface, hyperlink, metadata, archive, and platform infrastructure. **Objective:** This study aims to examine how language, code, and textuality operate in electronic literature by focusing on selected works and records from the Electronic Literature Collection, ELMCIP Knowledge Base, The NEXT, IFDB, Interactive Fiction Archive, and Twine-based interactive fiction. **Method:** Using a qualitative interpretive design, the study combines Digital Discourse Analysis, Platform Studies, and Code/Textual Analysis to examine verbal units, hyperlinks, interface elements, metadata records, branching structures, navigational cues, and accessible code-related procedures. **Results:** The findings show that digital discourse organizes reading through commands, hyperlinks, menus, choices, metadata labels, and navigational cues that position readers as navigators, operators, assemblers, cartographers, and constrained agents. **Implication:** The findings also reveal that platforms and interfaces function as material conditions that classify, preserve, display, authorize, and regulate access to digital literary works through entry pages, metadata fields, emulator notes, file formats, browser layouts, and curatorial descriptions. **Novelty:** The novelty of this study lies in its integrated methodological framework, which treats electronic literature as a linguistic, procedural, infrastructural, and executable literary system rather than merely as digitized textual content.

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INTRODUCTION

Digital literary platforms have become crucial sites for understanding how literature is produced, circulated, and experienced in an increasingly computational culture. By October 2025, more than 6.04 billion people were connected to the internet, representing 73.2% of the global population, while social media user identities reached 5.66 billion worldwide. These figures indicate that reading, writing, and cultural participation are now mediated not only by printed pages and institutional literary spaces, but also by screens, databases, hyperlinks, interactive interfaces, and algorithmic systems. In this context, digital literature is not merely a digitized version of printed literature; it is a born-digital form whose textuality depends on code, navigation, interactivity, and platform architecture (Adawiyah, 2024). This transformation makes the study of language, code, and textuality urgent because contemporary literary meaning is increasingly produced through the convergence of verbal expression, computational procedure, interface design, and reader participation.

Previous studies on electronic literature have substantially examined hypertext fiction, interactive fiction, digital poetry, generative writing, and born-digital literary archives. Scholars have shown that digital literary works challenge conventional assumptions about authorship, linearity, materiality, code, interface, and reading practices (Mustofa & Lestari, 2023; Ramya & Rukmini, 2021; Spjeldnæs & Karlsen, 2022). Research on electronic literature has also discussed the role of databases, procedurality, software, multimodality, and platform-based preservation in reshaping literary experience (Patti, 2021; Zozulia, 2023). However, much of this scholarship still tends to examine language, platform, code, and reader navigation as relatively separate analytical domains (Ahmadova, 2024). Less attention has been given to the integrated relation among linguistic expression, platform infrastructure, code-based operations, interface mediation, and reader navigation within a single corpus-based analytical framework. This gap is significant because digital textuality emerges precisely from the interaction between verbal language, computational logic, interface design, archival framing, and readerly action.

This study aims to examine how language, code, and textuality operate within digital literary platforms by focusing on selected works and records from the Electronic Literature Collection, ELMCIP Knowledge Base, The NEXT, IFDB, Interactive Fiction Archive, and Twine-based interactive fiction. More specifically, the study investigates electronic literature as a corpus of verbal, technical, navigational, and platform-mediated units, including textual fragments, hyperlinks, interface elements, metadata, branching structures, and accessible code-related procedures. It asks three interrelated questions. First, how do linguistic choices, reader instructions, hyperlinks, menus, and navigational cues construct discourse in digital literary works? Second, how do platforms, interfaces, software environments, metadata systems, and preservation infrastructures shape the materiality of digital text? Third, how do code, hyperlink structures, branching pathways, and procedural operations participate in the production of literary meaning? To answer these questions, the study combines Digital Discourse Analysis, Platform Studies, and Code/Textual Analysis as complementary methods for examining the same digital literary corpus from linguistic, infrastructural, and procedural perspectives.

The central argument of this study is that digital literary platforms produce a form of textuality that is linguistic, procedural, and infrastructural at the same time. In such works, language does not function solely as narrative content; it also operates as instruction, interface, invitation, command, and navigational device. Likewise, code is not merely a hidden technical layer behind the literary text, but an active semiotic structure that governs sequence, visibility, interaction, and reader agency. Platforms also do not serve as neutral containers; they influence the form, accessibility, preservation, classification, and interpretation of digital literary works. This study therefore argues that the meaning of digital literature emerges from the interplay among textual signs, computational procedures, interface affordances, platform conditions, and reader action. Its implication is methodological as well as theoretical: literary studies must develop analytical models capable of reading not only what digital texts say, but also how they are structured, accessed, executed, preserved, and materially sustained in digital environments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital textuality

Digital textuality refers to the condition in which literary meaning is produced through the interaction of verbal signs, electronic media, computational processes, and readerly operations. Unlike printed textuality, which is generally stabilized by page sequence, material fixity, and linear order, digital textuality is marked by variability, navigability, procedural activation, and platform dependency. Ramya & Rukmini (2021) argues that electronic literature is not simply literature placed on digital media, but literature actively formed by digitality. Spjeldnæs & Karlsen (2022) similarly conceptualizes cybertext as a machine for the production and consumption of signs. In this sense, digital textuality should be understood not as a mere shift of literary content from page to screen, but as a transformation of the conditions through which texts are structured, accessed, and interpreted (Patti, 2021; Zozulia, 2023). These perspectives suggest that digital textuality represents a transformed mode of literary existence.

The main indicators of digital textuality include non-linearity, interactivity, multimodality, variability, and reader participation (Ahmadova, 2024; Fawaid et al., 2024). Non-linearity appears through hyperlinks, branching pathways, and fragmented narrative sequences. Interactivity emerges when readers are required to click, choose, scroll, enter commands, or activate textual movement. Multimodality is visible in the combination of words, images, sound, animation, and spatial design. Variability occurs when the text changes according to reader action, algorithmic procedure, or programmed sequence. Reader participation becomes crucial because meaning in digital literature is often not fully available before navigation, selection, or procedural activation occurs. Thus, digital textuality can be analyzed through the ways texts are accessed, arranged, delayed, repeated, hidden, or reconfigured.

Platform in digital literature

Platform in digital literature refers to the technical, cultural, and infrastructural environment through which literary works are produced, distributed, archived, and experienced (Fang, 2024; Kraxenberger & Lauer, 2022). In literary studies, platforms are sometimes understood as neutral publication spaces, but platform studies challenges this assumption by showing that software, interface, file format, database structure, and preservation system shape textual meaning. Shukur et al. (2024) argues that electronic literature has moved beyond genre and poetics toward a broader platform condition. Recent discussions of fragile interfaces also show that electronic literature can expose the vulnerability of digital infrastructures (Fang, 2024; Kraxenberger & Lauer, 2022). Therefore, platform should be read not only as a place where digital literary works appear, but also as an active system that conditions their form, circulation, accessibility, and interpretation.

The indicators of platform-based analysis include interface design, navigational architecture, metadata, software dependency, preservation status, and institutional framing (Darlis et al., 2023). Interface design determines what readers see first, how they move, and which textual elements become clickable or visible. Navigational architecture shapes whether the work is linear, recursive, open-ended, or labyrinthine. Metadata records author, year, genre, platform, and technical context, thereby influencing classification and scholarly reception. Software dependency reveals whether a work relies on Flash, HTML, JavaScript, Twine, or other systems. Preservation status shows the fragility of born-digital literature. Institutional framing, such as archives, curated collections, and databases, affects how works are legitimized, categorized, and made available for scholarly reading.

Code in digital literature

Code in digital literature refers to the computational layer that organizes textual behavior, interaction, sequence, visibility, and transformation. In a narrow sense, code is a set of executable instructions; in a broader critical sense, it is also a cultural and semiotic system (Bennis, 2024). Critical Code Studies argues that code should be read not only for what it does, but also for what it means. This distinction is important because literary code may generate randomness, control narrative pathways, hide or reveal text, and regulate reader agency (Husárová & Piorecký, 2022; Iskarna, 2023). Code is therefore not external to literary interpretation; it participates directly in producing textual form, narrative possibility, and aesthetic experience.

The key indicators of code-based textual analysis include algorithmic structure, hyperlink logic, conditional pathways, procedural repetition, randomness, and textual opacity (Lefebvre-Reghay, 2023; Tanasescu, 2024). Algorithmic structure determines how the work responds to reader action. Hyperlink logic organizes movement between textual units, passages, or narrative fragments. Conditional pathways create different outcomes depending on previous choices. Procedural repetition produces rhythm, recursion, or thematic emphasis. Randomness may disturb authorial control and create unstable reading experiences. Textual opacity appears when code remains hidden but still governs what readers encounter. These indicators show that digital literature requires a method of reading that attends simultaneously to linguistic expression, interface mediation, platform condition, and computational procedure.

METHOD

This study uses digital literary works as its primary material object, with the unit of analysis consisting of verbal text, hyperlink, interface element, navigational cue, branching structure, metadata, and code-based operation. The corpus was selected from internationally recognized repositories of electronic literature, interactive fiction, and born-digital literary archives. The Electronic Literature Collection is used because it is an official publication of the Electronic Literature Organization and contains multiple volumes of curated electronic literature. ELMCIP Knowledge Base is used to contextualize works, authors, platforms, and critical writing. To strengthen corpus validity, the study focuses on selected works and records that explicitly display interactive, hypertextual, procedural, or platform-specific features rather than on general literary texts merely uploaded to digital media. The corpus also includes works from The NEXT, IFDB, and Twine-based interactive fiction.

Table 1. Research corpus

No	Corpus Type	Data Component	Source
1	Electronic literature	Digital poetry, hypertext fiction, generative writing	Electronic Literature Collection
2	Creative-work metadata	Author, year, genre, platform, technical context	ELMCIP Knowledge Base
3	Born-digital archive	Preserved digital literary works and documentation	The NEXT
4	Interactive fiction	Text adventure, parser fiction, choice-based fiction	IFDB / Interactive Fiction Archive
5	Twine-based works	Passage, hyperlink, branching path, choice structure	Twine / IFDB Twine listings
6	Interface data	Menu, button, screen layout, entry page, navigation path	Selected digital works
7	Code-related data	HTML, JavaScript, Twine syntax, conditional logic	Viewable source code or work structure
8	Reader-navigation data	Click path, sequence, return point, dead end, repetition	Researcher observation log

This research applies a qualitative interpretive design situated within digital literary studies. This design is appropriate because the study does not measure reader response statistically, but examines how meaning is produced through the interaction between language, code, platform, and interface. The research treats digital literary works as socio-technical texts whose meaning cannot be separated from their medium of execution. Accordingly, the study combines close reading, digital discourse analysis, platform studies, and code-oriented textual analysis. The design is therefore not limited to thematic interpretation, but is directed toward

identifying how linguistic cues, interface structures, platform affordances, and procedural operations jointly produce digital textuality. This design enables the researcher to move between verbal interpretation, interface observation, platform contextualization, and technical examination of textual procedures.

The information sources consist of primary and secondary materials. Primary sources include selected digital literary works, their visible textual components, interface structures, hyperlinks, navigational systems, and accessible code or procedural logic. Secondary sources include metadata, curatorial notes, author information, platform descriptions, archival records, and scholarly discussions related to the selected works. The Electronic Literature Organization describes itself as an international organization dedicated to literature produced for the digital medium, while the Electronic Literature Collection provides curated volumes of electronic literary works. ELMCIP is used not as a substitute for direct textual analysis, but as a contextual source for validating authorship, genre classification, platform information, and critical references related to the selected works. ELMCIP offers cross-referenced information about authors, creative works, critical writing, platforms, and practices, making it useful for contextual validation.

Data collection was conducted through purposive sampling, documentation, digital observation, and textual extraction. Works were selected based on four criteria: they are born-digital or digitally native; they contain interactive, hypertextual, procedural, or platform-specific features; they are accessible through recognized archives or databases; and they provide sufficient textual, interface, or metadata material for analysis. Each work was read and navigated repeatedly to identify recurring verbal cues, hyperlink patterns, branching structures, interface elements, and procedural operations. During this process, the researcher recorded navigation paths, entry points, repeated links, dead ends, interface instructions, metadata categories, and code-related features in an observation log to make the analytical procedure more traceable. Screenshots, navigation maps, observation notes, metadata records, and selected code fragments were documented systematically to establish an auditable corpus.

Data analysis followed five stages. First, corpus mapping identified the genre, platform, interface, and technical condition of each work. Second, Digital Discourse Analysis examined verbal instructions, navigational language, reader positioning, and interactional cues. Third, Platform Studies analyzed interface design, software dependency, metadata, archival framing, and preservation context. Fourth, Code and Textual Analysis examined hyperlink logic, branching sequence, conditional structure, repetition, randomness, and procedural visibility. Fifth, interpretive synthesis connected linguistic, platform-based, and code-based findings to explain how digital textuality is constructed. To maintain analytical consistency, each finding was linked to three levels of evidence: the textual unit, the platform/interface condition, and the procedural operation that shaped the reader's encounter with the work. Through this procedure, the study reads digital literature as language, system, interface, and computational event.

RESULTS

Digital discourse and reader navigation in electronic literature

The first result concerns how digital discourse organizes reader navigation in electronic literature. Across the corpus, language does not function merely as a representational medium, but also as a navigational, operational, and interactional device. Words, hyperlinks, menus, command prompts, metadata, and interface cues guide how readers enter, move through, repeat, abandon, or reconstruct the text. Figure 1 makes this pattern more operational by linking each corpus segment to observable indicators, such as linked words, choice menus, command prompts, return links, metadata labels, and hidden textual elements. This finding is particularly visible in hypertext fiction, interactive fiction, Twine-based works, digital poetry, generative texts, and archive-based literary platforms. Thus, reading electronic literature involves not only interpretation, but also procedural movement through textual, visual, and technical environments.

Figure 1 shows that reader navigation in electronic literature is shaped by several recurring patterns: non-linear movement, command execution, choice-based branching, recursive return, interface mediation, multimodal interpretation, and archival framing. Hyperlinks and linked lexical items direct readers from one fragment to another, while command-based works transform verbs such as "go," "look," "open," and "enter" into executable actions. Twine-based stories use menu choices and passage links to produce multiple pathways, whereas generative and animated works introduce delay, repetition, disappearance, and textual

variation. The operational evidence also shows that metadata, curatorial descriptions, platform labels, and archive entries guide interpretation before the reader encounters the literary text itself. These patterns indicate that digital literary discourse is distributed across language, interface, platform, and reader action.

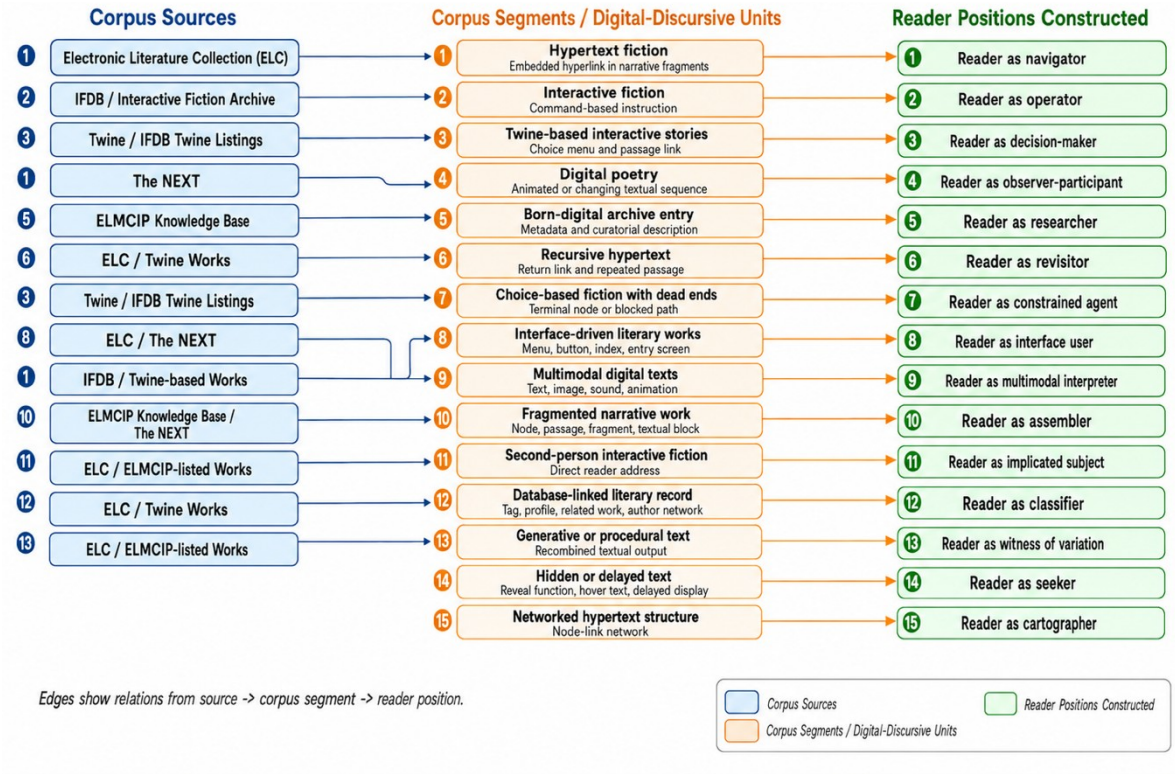


Figure 1. Digital discourse and reader navigation in electronic literature

These findings suggest that electronic literature transforms discourse from a stable verbal structure into a navigational system. The reader is no longer positioned only as an interpreter of meaning, but also as a navigator, operator, assembler, cartographer, and constrained agent. This supports the view that digital textuality is procedural: meaning emerges through a sequence of actions, choices, returns, delays, and system responses. However, the reader's apparent freedom is always mediated by interface design, hyperlink architecture, platform classification, and programmed constraints. Thus, digital discourse produces a paradoxical form of agency: readers participate actively in constructing the text, yet their participation is shaped by the technical architecture that makes such interaction possible. In this sense, digital reading is both interpretive and infrastructural, because every act of navigation is conditioned by the system that enables it.

Platform, interface, and the materiality of digital text

The second result concerns how platforms and interfaces shape the material condition of digital literary texts. Across the corpus, literary works are not encountered as isolated verbal objects, but as texts embedded within collections, databases, archives, browsers, software environments, and preservation systems. The reader's access to the work is mediated by entry pages, metadata records, menus, platform labels, technical notes, file formats, and interface structures. Figure 2 makes this material mediation more operational by linking each platform element to observable indicators, such as editorial entries, metadata fields, emulator notes, file formats, browser layouts, curatorial descriptions, and access links. This indicates that the materiality of digital literature includes the technological and institutional conditions that determine how a work is displayed, accessed, classified, preserved, and interpreted.

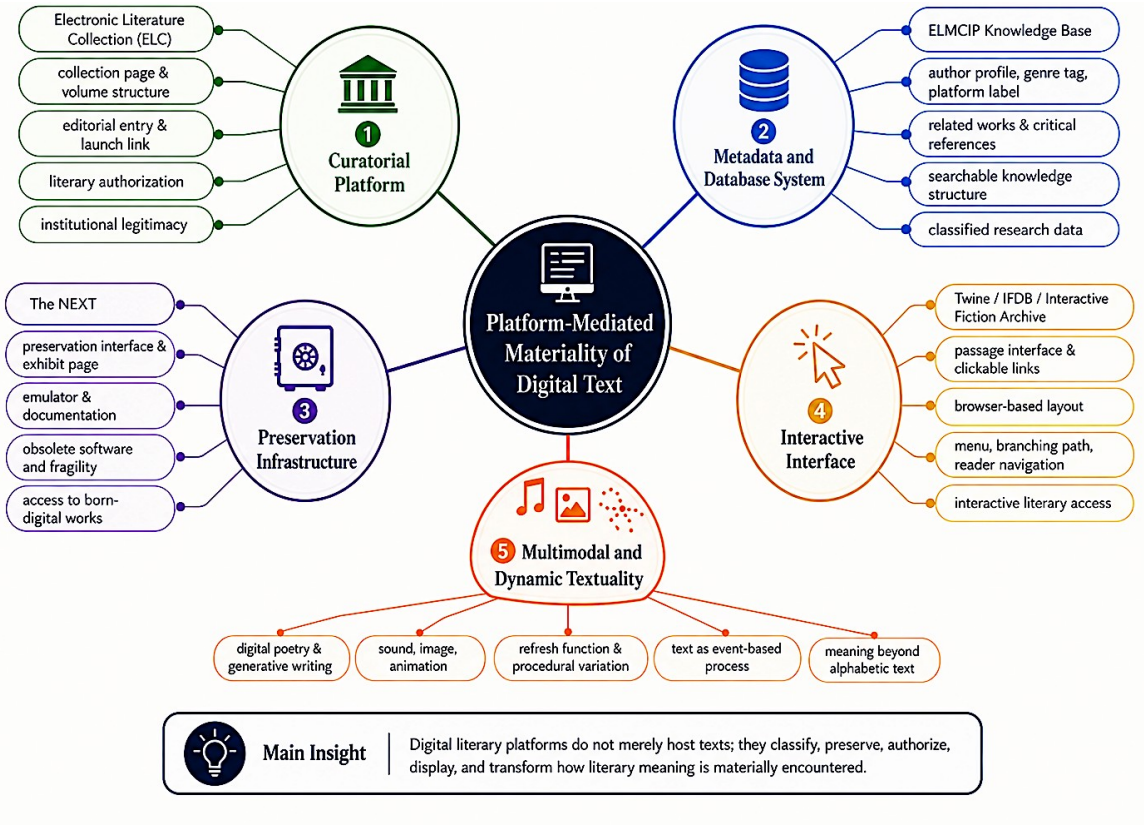


Figure 2. Platform, interface, and the materiality of digital text

Figure 2 shows several recurring platform-based patterns. Electronic Literature Collection frames works through curated volumes, entry pages, editorial notes, and access links, while ELMCIP Knowledge Base organizes them through author profiles, genre tags, platform labels, related works, and critical references. The NEXT emphasizes preservation, documentation, emulation, and historical framing, especially for works affected by technological obsolescence. IFDB and the Interactive Fiction Archive mediate access through ratings, tags, reviews, downloadable files, interpreter requirements, and community-based classification. Twine-based works demonstrate how browser layout, passage structures, clickable links, and branching menus produce platform-specific textual forms. These patterns show that digital texts become readable through concrete platform mechanisms, including metadata classification, interface design, software compatibility, archival documentation, browser rendering, and participatory cataloguing.

These findings support the argument that platforms are not neutral containers of literary works, but active participants in the production of digital textuality. A digital literary work becomes meaningful not only through its narrative or poetic content, but also through the technical and institutional system that enables its appearance. Interface, metadata, software dependency, archive design, and preservation status function as material components of the text. The operational indicators in the table show that platform materiality can be traced through visible and documentable features, such as metadata records, file extensions, navigation menus, emulator requirements, screen layouts, and curatorial notes. This means that digital literature must be read as both a linguistic and infrastructural object. Its textuality is produced through the relation between verbal content, platform architecture, executable environment, archival mediation, and conditions of access.

Code, hyperlink, and textual structure in digital literary works

The third result concerns how code and hyperlinks operate as structural elements in digital literary works. Across the corpus, textual organization is not determined only by plot, theme, character, or verbal sequence, but also by programmed pathways, conditional access, executable commands, link relations, and interface-controlled visibility. Hyperlinks connect fragments, passages, nodes, archives, and related records, while code determines how the text appears, moves, repeats, disappears, changes, or responds to reader

action. Figure 3 makes this procedural structure more operational by connecting each corpus segment to observable indicators, such as clickable lexical items, passage maps, command prompts, conditional options, hidden elements, randomized outputs, looped sequences, and emulator notes. This result therefore focuses on the procedural dimension of digital textuality.

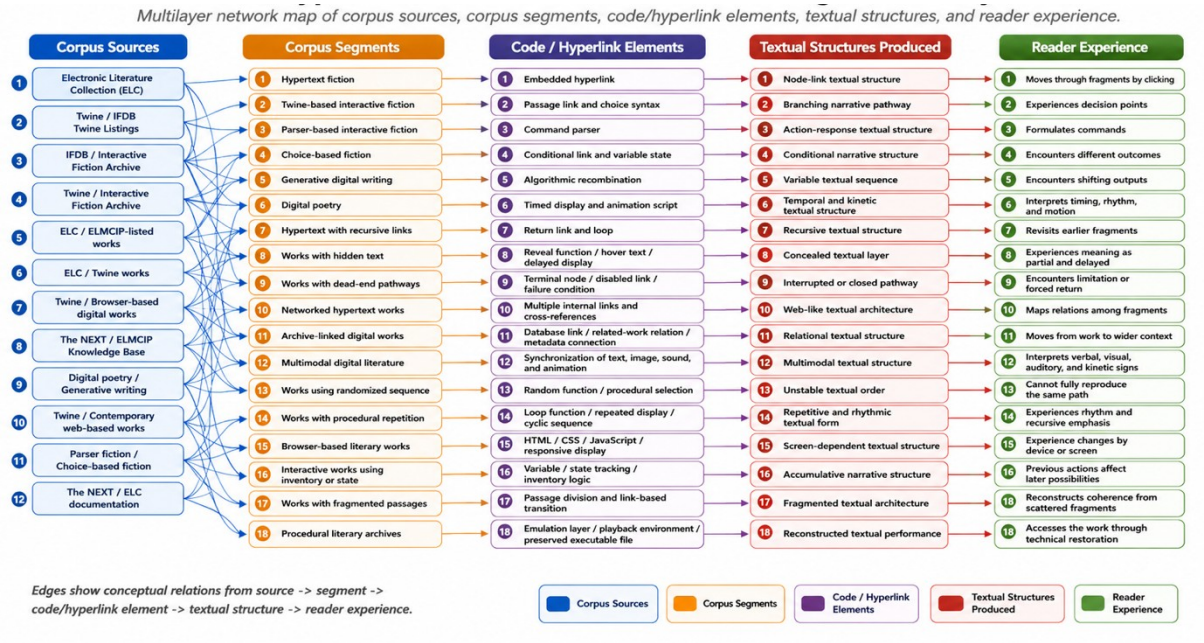


Figure 3. Code, hyperlink, and textual structure in digital literary works

Figure 3 shows that code and hyperlinks produce several recurring textual structures: node-link organization, branching pathways, command-response sequences, conditional narratives, generative variation, timed display, recursive loops, hidden text, dead-end pathways, screen-dependent rendering, and multimodal coordination. Hypertext fiction relies on embedded links to disperse narrative sequence across fragments. Twine-based works use passage links, variables, and conditional structures to generate multiple outcomes. Parser-based fiction transforms typed commands into textual responses, while generative works produce variable outputs through algorithmic recombination. The operational evidence also shows that textual structure can be traced through concrete procedural features, including link targets, accepted and rejected commands, repeated passages, random sequences, responsive layouts, inventory states, and preserved executable files. These patterns indicate that textual structure in digital literature is inseparable from procedural operations.

These findings suggest that code should be treated as a literary mechanism rather than a merely technical background. Hyperlinks, variables, loops, random functions, reveal mechanisms, responsive displays, and executable files participate in the production of meaning by regulating sequence, visibility, repetition, access, memory, and response. This expands the notion of textual structure from verbal arrangement to computational organization. The reader's agency is also redefined: readers activate the text through choices, clicks, commands, hovering, waiting, restarting, or repeated navigation, but their movement remains shaped by programmed possibilities. Thus, digital literature produces an executable form of textuality in which language, code, hyperlink, interface, platform, and reader action operate as interdependent components of literary meaning. In this sense, the digital literary text is not only something to be interpreted, but also something to be activated, executed, and materially encountered.

DISCUSSION

The finding that digital discourse organizes reader navigation has important implications for how literary reading is conceptualized in electronic literature. Reading is no longer limited to the interpretation of verbal meaning, but extends to movement, decision, repetition, return, and interaction (Mustofa & Lestari,

2023; Spjeldnæs & Karlsen, 2022). Hyperlinks, commands, menus, metadata labels, and navigational cues transform language into an operational system that directs what the reader can see, where the reader can go, and how the reader participates in textual construction. This finding is strengthened by the operational evidence in the corpus, including linked lexical items, command prompts, choice menus, return links, hidden passages, and archive entries that function as discursive instructions. Its function is productive because it expands reader agency and makes literary meaning participatory. At the same time, it also produces a possible dysfunction: the reader's attention may shift from narrative depth to navigational performance, making textual experience fragmented, unstable, and dependent on technical literacy.

This navigational mode emerges because electronic literature is structured through the convergence of linguistic signs and interactive affordances. In printed literature, words usually represent events, voices, images, or ideas; in digital literature, words may also function as buttons, commands, pathways, and triggers (Berta, 2023; Iskarna, 2023). The underlying structure is therefore not only semantic but procedural. A term such as "enter," "return," "choose," or "restart" does not merely contribute to narrative atmosphere; it activates a movement within the system. This correlation between language and action explains why the reader is positioned simultaneously as interpreter, navigator, operator, assembler, cartographer, and constrained participant. The cause of this transformation lies in the technical environment of digital textuality, where reading depends on clickable objects, branching paths, command-response systems, database categories, and screen-based sequencing. Thus, digital discourse becomes meaningful precisely because it is embedded in an architecture of action.

The finding that platforms and interfaces shape the materiality of digital text has significant implications for literary ontology. A digital literary work cannot be treated as a self-contained verbal object, because its existence depends on platforms, databases, browsers, metadata, preservation systems, and software environments (Husárová & Piorecký, 2022; Zozulia, 2023). This means that the literary text is materially distributed across content, interface, file format, metadata record, archive entry, and executable condition. The corpus shows that this distribution can be observed through concrete features such as Electronic Literature Collection entry pages, ELMCIP metadata fields, The NEXT preservation notes, IFDB ratings and tags, interpreter requirements, browser layouts, and emulator documentation. Such distribution performs an important function: it enables access, classification, preservation, and scholarly circulation. Yet this same infrastructure can also create dysfunctions, because platform classification may frame interpretation before reading occurs, while software dependency can restrict access to works requiring obsolete plugins, emulators, or specific devices.

This platform-based materiality can be explained by the fact that digital texts are not only written but rendered, hosted, executed, archived, and maintained. Their readability depends on a chain of technical and institutional conditions (Spjeldnæs, 2022; Spjeldnæs & Karlsen, 2022). A hypertext work requires links to remain functional; an interactive fiction work may require an interpreter; a Flash-based work may require emulation; a Twine story may depend on browser behavior; an archived work may be understood through curatorial description before direct encounter. This causal structure shows that platform infrastructure does not simply support literary meaning from the outside, but actively determines the conditions under which textual meaning becomes visible, searchable, executable, and preservable. Platforms determine what becomes visible, searchable, legitimate, and preservable. Digital literary platforms consequently expose the paradox of digital culture: they promise wider circulation and interactivity, while also depending on unstable technologies that can break, vanish, or become unreadable.

The finding that code and hyperlinks function as textual structures has major implications for literary method. It requires scholars to read not only words, images, and narrative patterns, but also programmed procedures that determine sequence, visibility, repetition, randomness, conditional access, memory, and response (Husárová & Piorecký, 2022; Iskarna, 2023). Hyperlinks are not decorative connectors; they are structural devices that organize movement across fragments, passages, archives, and databases. Likewise, code is not merely an invisible technical background; it acts as a literary mechanism that controls what the reader encounters and how the work unfolds. The corpus demonstrates this through observable features such as passage maps, link targets, conditional options, accepted or rejected commands, hidden elements, randomized outputs, looped sequences, inventory states, and preserved executable files. This has a

productive function because it enables new literary forms, including generative writing, recursive hypertext, animated poetry, conditional fiction, and multimodal composition.

The structural role of code and hyperlink arises because digital literary works are executable textual systems. Their forms are not fully present before activation; they emerge through programmed operations and reader-system interaction (Lefebvre-Reghay, 2023; Tanasescu, 2024). A branching story exists as a field of possibilities until the reader selects a path. A generative poem may produce different outputs through recombination or randomness. A parser-based fiction work responds only when the reader enters recognizable commands. A hidden passage appears only after clicking, waiting, hovering, or fulfilling a condition. This underlying structure shows that digital textuality is organized by conditionality, procedural memory, visibility control, executable access, and technical mediation. The deeper implication is that digital literature changes the object of literary analysis itself: the text is no longer only a verbal artifact, but an event produced by language, code, hyperlink, platform, interface, and reader action.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that digital literary platforms produce textuality through the dynamic interaction of language, code, interface, hyperlink, metadata, archive, and platform infrastructure. Its most important finding is that digital literature cannot be adequately understood through verbal analysis alone, because meaning is also shaped by navigational cues, executable procedures, software dependency, interface mediation, reader action, and conditions of access. The study shows that digital discourse positions readers as navigators, operators, assemblers, cartographers, and constrained agents; platforms and interfaces materialize literary works through metadata, preservation systems, and access mechanisms; and code structures textual sequence, visibility, repetition, randomness, and response. The study contributes to digital literary studies by integrating Digital Discourse Analysis, Platform Studies, and Code/Textual Analysis into one methodological frame. This integration renews literary analysis by treating the digital text not merely as content, but as an interactive, procedural, infrastructural, and executable literary system.

However, this study is limited by its qualitative scope, corpus selection, and emphasis on textual-platform analysis rather than empirical reader reception. Although the corpus is drawn from recognized repositories and platforms such as the Electronic Literature Collection, ELMCIP Knowledge Base, The NEXT, IFDB, Interactive Fiction Archive, and Twine-related works, it does not represent all forms of digital literature circulating across social media, mobile applications, fanfiction platforms, game-based environments, or algorithmic storytelling systems. The study also does not measure how actual readers experience navigation, interface, code, or platform constraints in practice. Future research should expand the corpus across languages, regions, platforms, and reader communities. Subsequent studies are recommended to combine interface analysis with reception studies, usability observation, computational mapping, digital ethnography, or reader-response methods to examine how digital textuality is actually experienced, interpreted, and negotiated by readers.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS STATEMENT

Seroja Ainun Nadifah: conceptualization (lead), methodology, formal analysis, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing; data curation, formal analysis, writing – original draft, writing – review and editing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT

Authors state no conflict of interest.

AI USE DECLARATION

The authors used artificial intelligence tools to assist with the formatting and layout of this manuscript. AI was not used to generate the substantive content, conceptualization, data, analysis, or conclusions of the research, all of which remain the sole responsibility of the authors.

INFORMED CONSENT

Not applicable – this study did not involve direct human participants. Data consisted solely of publicly accessible documents, platform policies, and governance materials.

ETHICAL APPROVAL

This research did not involve human or animal subjects; it analyzed publicly available documentary records concerning machine co-authorship, and therefore no institutional review board approval was required. Where research does involve human subjects, the authors affirm that such research would be conducted in full compliance with all relevant national regulations and institutional policies, in accordance with the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki, and would be approved by the authors' institutional review board or equivalent committee.

DATA AVAILABILITY

The corpus/data analyzed in this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

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