

Perceptions of University Students and Lecturers toward the Use of British and American Literature for EFL Development*

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Abstract

This research was conducted to identify the perception of university students and lecturers toward British and American literary reading activities to enhance academic abilities related to English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The paper aimed to determine students and lecturers' beliefs toward literary reading such as purposes, factors, benefits, and problems in literary reading activities, and to assert that reading English-language literary works could be useful in EFL development. The research used a mixed methodology, administering quantitative questionnaire surveys and qualitative individual interviews to participants from four university departments related to EFL education and literary studies (English, World Languages, Literature, and Translation). The results showed that the participants had positive perceptions toward literary works, sharing 'common' perceptions that literary works could be used to improve language acquisition, imagination, readers' habits, and 'department-exclusive' perceptions. Both categories indicated that British and American literary works could, and should, be applied for specific purposes and professions. The research also suggested that literary reading should be gradually promoted both inside and outside classroom for the maximum EFL development benefits.

Keywords: Perceptions, Cultural Awareness, Literature, Literary works, EFL Development

* This research article was derived and modified from my thesis, entitled "Original or Translated Version: Perceptions and Preferences toward British and American Literature of University Students and Lecturers."

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยชิ้นนี้สร้างขึ้นเพื่อแยกแยะการรับรู้ของนักศึกษาและอาจารย์มหาวิทยาลัยที่มีต่อการอ่านวรรณกรรมอังกฤษและอเมริกันเพื่อการพัฒนาความสามารถในการเรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ (EFL) โดยงานวิจัยนี้เน้นกำหนดความเชื่อของผู้เข้าร่วมที่มีกับการอ่านวรรณกรรมเช่น จุดมุ่งหมาย ปัจจัยสำคัญ ประโยชน์ และปัญหาที่พบในการอ่านงานวรรณกรรม และเน้นเชิญชวนว่าการอ่านวรรณกรรมภาษาอังกฤษสามารถนำไปใช้ประโยชน์ในการพัฒนาศึกษาภาษาอังกฤษ งานวิจัยนี้ระเบียบวิธีการวิจัยแบบผสมซึ่งใช้ทั้งการแจกแบบสอบถามเพื่อให้ได้มาซึ่งข้อมูลเชิงปริมาณและการสัมภาษณ์ตัวต่อตัวเพื่อให้ได้มาซึ่งข้อมูลเชิงคุณภาพกับผู้เข้าร่วมงานวิจัยจากภาควิชามหาวิทยาลัยสี่ภาควิชาที่เกี่ยวข้องกับการเรียนการสอนภาษาอังกฤษ (ภาควิชาภาษาอังกฤษ ภาควิชานานาชาติโลก ภาควิชาวรรณคดี และภาควิชาการแปล) ผลการวิจัยแสดงให้เห็นว่าผู้เข้าร่วมมีการรับรู้ไปในด้านบวกต่องานวรรณกรรม โดยผู้เข้าร่วมมี 'การรับรู้ร่วม' ที่เชื่อว่าวรรณกรรมอังกฤษและอเมริกันสามารถพัฒนาความรู้ภาษาอังกฤษ จินตนาการและนิสัยรักการอ่าน และยังมี 'การรับรู้เฉพาะภาควิชา' ที่แสดงว่างานวรรณกรรมสามารถนำไปบูรณาการเข้ากับจุดประสงค์เฉพาะและสาขาวิชาเฉพาะ งานวิจัยนี้ยังแนะนำอีกว่าการอ่านวรรณกรรมควรค่อยๆ ได้รับการส่งเสริมไปทั้งในและนอกห้องเรียนเพื่อให้เกิดประโยชน์สูงสุดกับการพัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษ

คำสำคัญ: การรับรู้, การตระหนักในวัฒนธรรม, วรรณคดี, วรรณกรรม, การพัฒนาภาษาอังกฤษ

Introduction

1.1) Statement and Significance of Study

Thailand has been established as a country using English as a Foreign Language (EFL) as an additional language learned and used in education, business, and entertainment fields since the 1800s (Hengsadeekul, Hengsadeekul, Koul, & Kaewkuekool, 2010; Chanla, 2011). The year 2015 marked Thailand's official participation in the ASEAN Economic Community (AEC), which heavily suggested that use of the English language would become more overtly encouraged and promoted. Ironically, Thai EFL education has always been deemed unsatisfactory in both linguistic and cultural senses (Noom-ura, 2013; Jaroenkitboworn, 2015). A common dilemma in the EFL development in Thailand was that EFL education should have provided more English instruction mediums that would allow students, lecturers, and curricula to become more active (Noom-ura, 2013; Kasemsap and Yu-Hsiu Lee, 2015). A recent movement in the field was an integration of British and American literary works in classrooms. The idea was that literary works would expand students'

exposure toward English language and cultural texts, allowing them to train to use language in terms of reading, writing, listening, and speaking. However, applying literary works has been a difficult task because of a limited EFL abilities and a common believe that literary works are only serving as entertainment. In addition, a common problem for EFL development stems from the fact that EFL related research has tended to focus on theories, applications and practices for pedagogic purposes. Not many researchers have fully committed themselves to the study of the perceptions of readers, which is a problem because, apparently, literary readers, especially students, have not gotten a chance to voice their opinions toward the issue. While theories and applications are important for EFL development, it is as important to take readers' opinions into consideration because, their answers can at least provide a more concrete guideline on how literary reading is currently practiced in Thailand as well as showing 'how' and 'why' literary works should be applied in education, which is the primary reason for this research's existence.

1.2) Objectives of the Study

1) To pinpoint perceptions of the university students and lecturers regarding aspects of literary study such as reading frequency, advantages or disadvantages of British and American literary works.

2) To indicate how British and American literary works can be related to Thailand's EFL development.

1.3) Research Questions

1) What are the perceptions of the university respondents regarding the reading of British and American literary works?

2) How can the reading of British and American literary works be related to Thailand's EFL development?

1.4) The Benefits of the Study

1) Literary reading activities for educational purposes would be clarified. The research would identify and understand personal and cultural perceptions of the participants, including advantages, disadvantages, and problems of British and American literary works.

2) The reading of British and American literary works for EFL development would be promoted, which would inspire students to become effective readers, inspire lecturers to encourage foreign literary texts, and inspire researchers to expand research related to literary works and EFL development.

Literature Review

2.1) Defining Literary works

The term 'literature' is defined by Cambridge Dictionaries Online (2016) as "writing that has lasting value as art". Typically, literary works refer to fiction, prose, poems, short stories, and novels that are created for artistic purposes, though Sartre (1950) argued that literature was much more than entertainment, viewing literary works as a reflection of the author's experiences and opinions toward specific contexts and society. Long (2004) indicated three main qualities of literary works: artistic, suggestive, and permanent; classical literary works are known to gracefully use language, literary concepts, literary techniques, and morality to convey languages. Heiden (2007) suggested that literary works expressed both humanistic communications and features. Literary works are considered complex texts, having genre and styles that vary among writers, genre, and nationality, all which require readers to become more engaged in the reading and thinking critically. (Kern, 2000) In this regard, students might be required to utilize advanced reading strategies to understand the works. It was suggested that the more they read, the more they would learn (Kasemsap & Yu-Hsiu Lee, 2015), which is part of the reason literary reading has been proposed as a beneficial alternative for EFL education (Akyel & Yalçın, 1990).

2.2) Benefits of Literary Works

Literary works have been established as exterior sources that can improve EFL education in two aspects: linguistically and culturally. Linguistically, literary works allow students to become exposed to English words, phrases, and sentences that are more engaging than textbooks (Kern, 2000; Pegrum, 2000; Sell (2005). Culturally, literary works are comprised of various intercultural elements that are based on both real life and fantasy settings which allow EFL readers to become aware of individual and cultural pluralism (Long, 2004; Lütge, 2013). Baker (2008) suggests that Thai students have a tendency of performing well in EFL classrooms when they are exposed to enjoyable and relaxing intercultural texts. He adds that learning foreign culture was a critical issue in Thai EFL education that can be supplemented through external learning sources.

Several studies indicate that reading literary works is an interesting method for students learning English. Numbers of case studies of EFL in other countries such as Oman (Bussaidi & Sultana, 2015) or Israel (Baratz & Abuhatzira, 2014) indicate that EFL students had a positive attitude and improved performance in English language, suggesting that literary works could be an interesting addition to traditional EFL learning procedures. In Thailand, Khuankaew (2010) conducted a study which showed neutral and positive attitudes among participants, some of whom were reported having enjoyed reading the works, and some of whom were reported having improved EFL skills from doing so. Similarly, Yimwilai's study (2015) suggested that integrating

literary works into the Thai EFL classroom improved students' attitudes toward English-language texts and enhanced EFL ability, cultural awareness, and critical thinking, providing that literary works were taught properly and effectively.

2.1) Limitations of Literary works

Two main concerns were addressed regarding literary reading activity: the quality of the students and the cultural implications. First, Thai students and lecturers were assessed as subpar because Thai English users were categorized as falling into the 'external-circle' by not regularly practicing and using the English language for survival. (Kachru, 1998; Baker, 2008). In this regard, Tasneen (2002) stated that English texts used in EFL classes were not be as effective as they should considering that traditional EFL education could not encourage students to become interested in the subject, and some of the students did not see a need to learn English beyond classrooms and examinations. Another common problem was that literary works in general were difficult and complex texts, which easily scare or bore not only Thai, but many EFL students. Mahammed (2014) conducted a study on students' attitudes toward literary works and EFL in a similar vain to this study. His results were only slightly positive, and only less than half of the participants reported that they had not appreciated reading literary works. Meanwhile, Vural's study (2013) indicated many of his participants initially had a negative attitude before engaging in EFL literary reading. Khuankaew's study (2010) indicated that literary reading was effective, but extensive results were prevented because of restricted time, resources and students' EFL abilities.

Culturally, there were concerns regarding the consumption of foreign cultures as the influence of English might dominate indigenous languages and cultures (Phillipson, 1997) In Thailand, the conflict is not oppressive or violent, but the constant obsession over foreign pop culture and cultures is a source of concern. Phaisit Boriboon (2011) has suggested that the active use and the encouragement to use the English language and English language materials could result in cultural domination in Thailand. Baker (2008), however, suggested that Thai EFL education has entered the age where students can no longer be ignorant of intercultural knowledge. Exposing Thai students to intercultural texts was mandatory; therefore, he suggested that foreign texts should be selected carefully by academics.

Methodology

3.1) Research Design

This research deployed a mixed methodology which consists of data (QUAN) and qualitative data (QUAL) in an attempt to triangulate the data. The qualitative method consisted of descriptive statistical analysis that showcased the participants'

perceptions whereas the qualitative data addressed different opinions between students and lecturers upon specific themes and concerns over literary reading activities in Thai EFL education.

3.2) Research Instruments

The two methods used in the study were as follows:

3.2.1) Questionnaire surveys with random participants within the departments of interest to attain high numbers of participants for a minor generalization. The questionnaires were multiple choice questions.

3.2.2) Structured interviews with representative students and lecturers of the university departments of interest to attain concrete answers from specific participants.

Both questionnaire and interview protocols were supervised by experts and took into account personal experiences. The questionnaire protocol tried to generalize the perceptions of students and lecturers whereas the interview was designed to administer more subjective and detailed answers toward the research issues.

3.3) Research Samplings

Four university departments, namely 1) 'Department A' (English), 2) 'Department B' (World Languages), 3) 'Department C' (Literature), and 4) 'Department D' (Translation) were chosen as participants due to their relationship to the EFL learning process in both direct and indirect ways. In addition, their unique traits would allow variants within the data. Descriptions of the departments are as follows:

3.3.1) Department A: English contained participants who specialized in practicing English language practices, having closest relation to EFL communication and linguistics.

3.3.2) Department B: World Languages contained participants who specialized in many foreign languages, including EFL. These participants were notable for having understood multiple cultures.

3.3.3) Department C: Literature contained participants who specialized in reading and interpreting literary works, understanding both the surface and sophisticated aspects of literary reading.

3.3.4) Department D: Translation contained participants who specialized in translation. These participants were naturally skilled at reading, indicating, and conducting linguistic and cultural transfers between English and Thai.

3.4) Research Procedures

The research was done as follows: the questionnaires were distributed to the random sampling within the four departments of interests and the researchers tried to get as many participants possible. Meanwhile, students and lecturers were recommended by the four departments to conduct individual interviews. Both processes were done simultaneously. The period of data covered the intended number of the participants selected from four university departments as reported in the following table:

Table 3.1 Participants Counts for the Questionnaire Sessions

Departments	Total
A: English	24
B: World Languages	60
C: Literature	22
D: Translation	29
Total	135

An accumulated participant count is 135, which consist of 24 persons from Department A, 60 participants form Department B, 22 participants from Department C, and 29 participants from Department D. The reason for a large number of participants from Department B was because of the department being a large campus which provided many more participants than anticipated, whereas it was difficult to attain equal amounts of participants from the other departments. The research advisor recommended that all of the data should be kept in the study.

Table 1: Participant Counts for the Interview Sessions

Departments	Occupation		Total
	Student	Lecturer	
A: English	1	1	2
B: World Languages	1	1	2
C: Literature	1	1	2
D: Translation	1	1	2
Total	4	4	8

Eight interviewees (four students and four lecturers) from four distinctive departments have been chosen; namely, 1) Department A: English, 2) Department B: World Languages, 3) Department C: Literature, and 4) Department D: Translation. The experts approved these participants because the participants' academic backgrounds were relative to EFL and literary studying fields.

Results

4.1) Quantitative Data

The quantitative data aimed to determine the percentages of participants' perceptions toward literary reading in multiple aspects, including reading purposes, reading factors, reading problems, benefits, and reading benefits. The comparison between the dominant answers was viewed upon the following table:

Table 4.1 Summarized Literary Perceptions

Department A English	Purposes	Benefits
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To improve language (62.5%) - To fulfill academic necessity (45.8%) - To enjoy the works (33.3%) - To study intercultural aspects (25%) - To study literary techniques (16.7%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language acquisition (70.8%) - Improved imagination (41.7%) - Expanded worldviews (33.3%) - Became esthetic and poetic (25%) - Increased motivation (20.8%)
	Factors	Problems
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language skills (72.9%) - Background knowledge (18.6%) - Themes and characters (13.6%) - Lectures and researches (13.6%) - Understanding of styles (6.8%) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unknown words (57.6%) - Lack of background knowledge (20.3%) - Inability to engage references (18.6%) - Grammatical problems (16.9%) - Problems with writers' styles (13.6%)
Department B World Languages	Purposes	Benefits
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - To improve language (58.3%) - To fulfill academic necessity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Language acquisition (54.2%) - Improved imagination (30.5%)

	(43.3%)	- Expanded worldviews (25.4%)
	- To enjoy the works (20%)	- Became intellectually active (13.6%)
	- To study intercultural aspects (15%)	- Became esthetic and poetic (10.2%)
	- To study literary techniques (3%)	
	Factors	Problems
	- Language skills (72.9%)	- Unknown words (57.6%)
	- Background knowledge (18.6%)	- Lack of background knowledge (20.3%)
	- Themes and characters (13.6%)	- Inability to engage references (18.6%)
	- Lectures and researches (13.6%)	- Grammatical problems (16.9%)
	- Understanding of styles (6.8%)	- Problems with writers' styles (13.6%)
Department C Literature	Purposes	Benefits
	- To fulfill academic necessity (68.2%)	- Language acquisition (59.1%)
	- To improve language (36.4%)	- Improved imagination (50%)
	- To enjoy the works (36.4%)	- Became intellectually active (31.8%)
	- To study intercultural aspects (27.3%)	- Expanded worldview (27.3%)
	- To study literary techniques (22.7%)	- Became esthetic and poetic (27.3%)
	Factors	Problems
	- Language skills (50%)	- Unknown words (54.5%)
	- Themes and characters (50%)	- Lack of background knowledge (36.4%)
	- Understanding of styles (22.7%)	- Inability to engage references (22.7%)
	- Background knowledge (18.2%)	- Figurative interpretation (22.7%)
	- Lectures and researches (18.2%)	- Problems with writers' styles (4.5%)
Department D Translation	Purposes	Benefits
	- To enjoy the works (55.2%)	- Language acquisition (65.5%)
	- To improve language (44.8%)	- Expanded worldview (34.5%)
	- To fulfill academic necessity (27.6%)	- Improved imagination (20%)
	- To study intercultural aspects	- Became intellectually active (17.2%)
		- Increased motivation (13.8%)

(20.7%)	
- To study literary techniques (6.9%)	
Factors	Problems
- Language skills (62.1%)	- Unknown words (55.2%)
- Background knowledge (48.3%)	- Lack of background knowledge (31%)
- Understanding of styles (27.6%)	- Inability to engage references (27.6%)
- Themes and characters (17.2%)	- Figurative interpretation (20.7%)
- Illustrations and descriptions (10.3%)	- Problems with writers' styles (13.8%)

The overall perceptions indicated by the participants were quite similar. Participants in general stated that literary works could effectively be used to improve their English language ability as well as to provide them with entertainment. This is consistent with a common belief that language and imagination are the primary benefits of literature. The participants also believed that the most problematic aspects of the works were the unknown words and the lack of cultural background. Interestingly, each department indicated its own distinctive traits and priority toward specific choices. For examples, Department A and Department B, despite both being direct EFL learning departments, appeared to have totally different minor perceptions. While Department A appealed to grammatical and esthetic aspects of literary works, Department B was more concerned with literary aspects such as themes and characters. Meanwhile, departments with exclusive studying fields gave even more noteworthy answers. Department C considered the literary aspects within the works to be equal to the linguistic aspects, reflecting their nature as literary readers, whereas Department D emphasized the consideration of background knowledge, reflecting their students' roles as translators.

4.2) Qualitative Data

The qualitative data aimed to determine specific opinions from students and lecturers regarding the four specific mentioned in the quantitative data to understand different standpoints between the two generations, which could help magnifying the values of literary reading in EFL education.

4.2.1) Literary Reading Purpose

Table 4.2 Purposes of Literary Reading

	Lecturer	Student
Department A: English	- To experience the originals	- To experience the originals
Department B: World Languages	- To entertain myself	- To improve English language skills
Department C: Literature	- To entertain myself	- To memorize stories and quotes
Department D: Translation	- To gain literary knowledge	- To experience the originals
	- To experience the originals	- To experience the originals
	- To study foreign cultures	- To improve English language skills

Literary readers believed they were able to improve academic skills and enjoy the contents. The additional belief is that the original British and American literary works provide ‘real’ stories and authors’ intentions compared to the translated versions of the same works, which greatly motivate their language or literary processes. Department A, B, and D showed that the students and lecturers had a similar tendency of reading English-language literary works to experience a ‘genuine’ narrative. Department C’s lecturers elaborated on the needs of the students to gain ‘literary knowledge’ which can be separated into two forms: the general understanding toward the plots, characters, and events, and the advanced literary awareness toward figurative elements of fiction such as metaphors, symbols, foreshadowing, as well as linguistic, cultural, and personal implications and relationships between authors, contemporary cultures, and readers. The lecturer indicated that learning literary works was crucial for the students to be successful in British and American literary education.

4.2.2) Literary Reading Factors

Table 4.3 Factors of Literary Reading

	Lecturer	Student
Department A: English	- English language skills	- English language skills
Department B: World Languages	- Personal research	- English language skills
	- Advice from other readers	- Foreign cultural knowledge
Department	- English language skills	- A need to experience the originals

C:	- Personal researches	
Literature		
Department	- A need to experience the originals	- Personal research
D:		
Translation	- English language skills	- Advice from other readers
	- Foreign cultural knowledge	

The participants showed that the dominant factor of literary reading was the English language ability of the reader. The secondary factors were personal research and knowledge attained from other readers. Three lecturers and two students indicated language as an important skill. Department A indicated that English was mandatory in reading, interpreting, and understanding literary works. Surprisingly, more than one participant claimed that the original English language works were more understandable than the translated Thai versions, claiming that many translated works were confusing and badly created. In addition, the participants indicated having a need to improve language and interpretation skills to become successful in their respective department curricula. Meanwhile, the participants mentioned either ‘personal research’ or ‘advice from other readers’ as the reading factors. University-level literary readers were suggested being capable of studying the works from many sources such as the Internet, dictionaries, as well as other literary readers.

4.2.3) Literary Reading Benefits

Table 4.4 Benefits of Literary Reading

	Lecturer	Student
Department A:	- Efficient contents	- Efficient contents
English		- Understanding of the story
		- Translation knowledge
Department B:	- Being entertained	- Writing knowledge
World Languages	- English language proficiency	- Efficient contents
	- Cultural knowledge	
	- Adaptable knowledge	
Department C:	- English language proficiency	- English language proficiency
Literature	- Philosophical knowledge	- Writing knowledge
Department D:	- Efficient contents	- English language proficiency
Translation		- Writing knowledge
		- Translation knowledge

The main benefit of the literary works was that they provided reliable and efficient learning materials which would lead to other benefits such as better understanding of the works and an improvement in the efficiency of the academic experience. Five participants indicated several types of ‘knowledge’ gained from reading literary works. Similar to the reading purposes, literary works were suggested to provide language, styles, narrative structures, cultural background, and other knowledge that could be adapted to their respective academic contexts. For example, the students claimed literary reading would improve their writing and translation skills whereas lecturers stated literary reading would enhance their teaching methods. Both groups indicated that the English language was still a dominant key aspect to understand British and American literature.

4.2.4) Literary Reading Problems

Table 4.5 Common Problems of Literary Reading

	Lecturer	Student
Department A:	- English language difficulty	- English language difficulty
English Department B:	- Lack of cultural knowledge	- Lack of cultural knowledge
World Languages	- Lack of cultural knowledge	- English language difficulty
Department C:	- English language difficulty	- Outdated stylistics
Literature Department D:	- Lack of cultural knowledge	- Complex stylistics
Translation		

Participants indicated two main obstacles to understanding the works: linguistic and cultural problems. These problems potentially limit readers from reading efficiently. The students were evidently concerned with the language while the teachers were concerned with the lack of background and cultural knowledge. At least four participants indicated English language difficulty as a common problem in literary reading. Other answers were related to the language difficulty, such as the complexity or outdated structures and styles of the works. Notably, the lecturer from Department C provided an example of Williams Faulkner, an American writer from 1919-1962, whose confusing style intentionally invoked complex and run-on sentences which are difficult to interpret both grammatically and semantically. In another case, the lecturer cited the Irish novelist James Joyce, known for neologisms and coinages which cannot be found in most dictionaries. The student respondents claimed that complex and outdated writing could be very tiring and boring to read. Literary works were acknowledged by lecturers for containing unfamiliar cultural elements. A student from Department B indicated that foreign cultures and religions

tended to be unknown to her while one student from Department D claimed that she could not understand some works because of cultural differences.

4.2.5) Literary Works as EFL Learning Materials

Table 4.6 Literary Works as EFL Learning Materials

	Lecturer	Student
Department A:	- Too difficult to learn	- Too difficult to learn
English	- Thai EFL classes do not support literature	- Thai EFL classes do not support literature
Department B:	- Thai people do not like reading.	- Lecturers are not skilled in literature
World Languages	- Depend on an individual	
Department C:	- Lecturers are not skilled in literature	- Translated works are sufficient
Literature	- Thai EFL classes do not support literature	
Department D:	- Thai EFL classes do not support literature	- Translated works are sufficient
Translation		

According to the participants, literary works were severely limited in Thai EFL education because the system did not support literary reading in classrooms. The lecturers were indicated not skilled at literary teaching, and students found the works too difficult to study. In this regard, three lecturers indicated a problem of teaching literary works in classrooms. They stated that Thai EFL education was designed in a way that English was taught only in communicative and grammatical aspects. Department A's lecturer indicated that preparing literary teaching could be time consuming while Departments C and D claimed that literary studies were not widespread in Thailand; therefore, lecturers would not be properly skilled to teach them. Department D's lecturer, however, suggested that literary works and EFL should not be considered completely separate fields of study because the two fields share many linguistic and cultural aspects. The students, meanwhile, believed that literary works were too difficult, and translated works were sufficient as reading materials. Department A's student bluntly claimed that studying literary works was a "waste of time" because one could have spent more time studying other subjects. Department B's lecturer indicated that studying literature is a matter of personal preference.

4.2.6) Literary Reading and ASEAN

Table 4.7 Literary Reading and ASEAN

	Lecturer	Student
Department A: English	Unchanged: - Readers still prefer the translated versions. - Original version is expensive.	Positively changed: - Readers will be motivated. - Readers will improve English skills.
Department B: World Languages	Unchanged: - If the government does not encourage reading, nothing will change	Positively changed: - Gradual improvement over time because of the social enforcement - Readers will improve English skills.
Department C: Literature	Unchanged: - Thai students are too lazy to develop.	Positively changed - Readers will be motivated. - Readers will improve English skills.
Department D: Translation	Positively changed - Gradual improvement over time because of the social enforcement	Positively changed - Gradual improvement over time because of the social enforcement

When asked about the AEC and intercultural influences toward literary reading and EFL perceptions, most of the lecturers held the view that nothing would change regarding students' literary reading habits, even with the influence of the AEC. Meanwhile, students actively believed that their reading habit would improve over time because the students would be motivated to read and use the English language. All lecturers except Department D claimed that student readers' habits might not improve from the influence of AEC fads. Department A claimed that the translated version is preferable for the readers; Department B stated that unless the government actively encouraged literary reading, readers would not take interest, which was likely the case considering cultural diversity and issues in Thailand. Department C, meanwhile, implied that Thai readers would not care about literary reading since they lacked motivation and the capacity to learn EFL through such texts. The students and Department D's lecturers, however, viewed the issue positively. Departments A, C, and D indicated that influences from the AEC would indirectly force students to become motivated enough to take interest in external EFL learning resources, particularly British and American literary works. Department B indicated that changes would happen only gradually over time. The students in general have a lot more positive view compared to the lecturers toward literary reading as they are living in an era in which English and intercultural contacts are inevitable.

Discussion

5.1 Research Question #1: Literary Reading Perceptions

Regarding the first research question concerning “What are the perceptions of the university respondents regarding the reading of British and American literary works?”, it was established earlier in this study that an application of literary works should not only concern ‘how’ it is applied in classrooms, but also ‘why’. In this regard, the participants showed that literary reading was worthwhile because they, generally, perceive literary works in a positive light, claiming that they could utilize them for academic purposes. The perceptions are separated into two categories: ‘common’ and ‘department exclusive’.

First, the participants indicated themselves having ‘common’ perceptions toward literary reading activities. Such perceptions were relatively related to the improvement of EFL and international cultural knowledge. In general, the participants believed that literary reading could be helpful toward EFL education. English language skills and assistance were indicated as key factors and benefits of reading, with university students and lecturers being significantly skilled in English to read. In addition, the participants believed that literary works, especially in the original English language versions, were interesting because the works invoke satisfying experiences, which implies a positive motivation factor in reading. Second, participants from different departments appeared to develop the ‘department-exclusive’ perceptions which indicate the departments’ unique ways of applying literary works to their professions. For example, Department A and Department B would focus on the language acquisition. Department C would focus on literary knowledge and literary studies. Lastly, Department D would consider background knowledge and linguistics transfers, reflecting their roles as translators. An implication is that the unique traits of the department should be taken into account when considering which literary works should be used because different types of readers approach texts with different purposes and goals.

The positive reactions of the participants correspond to and confirmed several studies (Baratz & Abuhatzira, 2014; Mahammed, 2014; Bussaidi & Sultana, 2015) that literary works were positively perceived by EFL students. Pegrum (2000) suggested that external resources were important for students to improve EFL skills as they were exposed to realistic texts. She added that adapting such sources in classrooms could further their benefits. This was shown in the study by Khuankaew (2010), who successfully adapted literary works in a Thai EFL writing classroom. Unfortunately, the application of literary works to EFL education is not likely to be a simple task. The participants acknowledged the limitations of British and American literary works in Thailand for the unsupportive Thai education system and the lack of skills and motivation on the part of lecturers and students, which suggested a similar result to Yimwila’s study (2015), namely, that Thai students and lecturers EFL

acquisition was extremely limited. Yimwila, however, suggested that literary works could be successful if they were applied properly.

Regarding the AEC and the cultural implications of literary works, the participants believed that intercultural influences depend on the individual, suggesting that concerns over Thai culture and tradition (Phaisit Boriboon, 2011) may not be as much of an obstacle as anticipated. Regardless, Baker (2008) suggested that totally ignoring intercultural aspects in EFL education was not possible. Exposing Thai students to intercultural texts were mandatory to improve language learning; therefore, foreign texts should be selected with care if academics wish to avoid the cultural implications of EFL learning.

5.2 Research Question #2: Literary Works upon Thai EFL Development

The second research question was “How can British and American literary works relate to the development of Thailand’s EFL?” Participants read literary works to improve EFL and literary reading skills to satisfy their academic needs. English language was considered an important ability to attain in order to read literary works. Such belief can be depicted as follows:

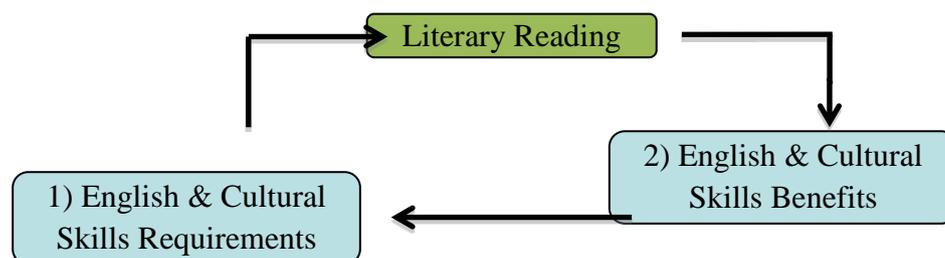


Figure 1: EFL and Cultural Learning Cycle of Literary Reading

Literary reading activity can be considered a cycle of EFL and cultural learning. As suggested in 1), a person is required to have skills in English language and foreign culture in order to proceed to read literary works. Doing so will create benefits concerning English language and foreign culture as suggested in 2). The reader then may proceed to use those benefits to continue reading literary works. In addition, different participant groups also found their needs to adapt literary reading to their respective academic fields. For example, EFL communication students would use literary reading to supplement their linguistic skills and vocabulary, whereas EFL literary students would use literary reading to develop critical analysis skills, and EFL translation students would use literary works to improve their meaning transferring skills between English and Thai languages.

The implication of this model is that literary reading is supposed to be a gradual process. Similar to the result of Vural (2013), students might not appreciate literary reading right away, but the reward for the activity would result in their

improved EFL quality and reading habits; it is not possible for literary readers to rush their learning process, as done in traditional EFL curricula. If the process is rushed, a lot of details, meanings, and benefits would be missed by the students. Kasemsap and Yu-Hsiu Lee (2015) suggest that critical thinking is a crucial aspect in an advanced language education, and students must be allowed to take their time to utilize their critical thinking and learning skills. Doing so would allow the students to develop these skills effectively. The keyword, as suggested by Yimwilai (2015), is that literary works must be applied properly. Instead of utilizing entire books, short paragraphs or passages from the novels can be used in a way that is similar to textbooks' use of mock conversations and paragraphs are used. Doing so may allow similar contexts to be taught and students may be inspired to seek to read full texts in order to expand their reading habits and capacity. It is, therefore, highly suggested that there is an advantage to literary reading within an academic contexts in order to maximize benefits to EFL learners. By utilizing the models provided, English language development through the use of literary works using either version can be recommended as an alternative learning method within the contexts of Thai EFL in order to maximize language learning benefits as well as to proudly promote English as the nation's international lingua franca.

Conclusions and Implications

6.1) Conclusions

This study was conducted to explore literary reading perceptions of Thai university students and lecturers to pinpoint how literary reading could be applied to improve Thai EFL education, in order to provide significantly positive results. Literary works were perceived as an important tool in improving English language, foreign cultural knowledge, and 'department-exclusive' skills as well as providing entertainment. A discussion showed the potential development of literary reading by suggesting that literary works should be encouraged as a gradual and continuous learning process.

6.2) Implications of the Study

This study would like to suggest that it has benefits for students, lecturers, and other readers who wish to improve their English language and literary reading skills. One of its implications is to encourage students to engage in continuous literary reading and learning in order to promote academic development of English language skills, literary techniques, styles, foreign cultures, morals, and other aspects that make readers more 'human' and wiser as they continue in their respective careers. Next, the researcher would like to recommend researchers to take interest in similar issues addressed in this study in order to justify and expand the fields even further for the benefit of other related academic fields. Research on language and communication as

well as literature and translation as the study of the attitudes of participants toward the uses of British or American literary works as instructional materials should be encouraged.

6.3) Limitations of the Study

Because the ‘mixed methodology’ used in this research can only provide a basic idea of literary trends, the research should not be viewed as representative of a reading trend of the whole nation nor every university reader in Thailand. Due to the wide and generic choices of subject and participants, this research is created only as a step to close the knowledge gap, allowing researchers to notice the possibility of literary study within the field of language, communication, literary, and translation studies, so that they may be inspired to expand their own research in those fields. While this research paper might have been used to provide ideologies and beliefs of the participants toward the research topic, the limited participants and difficulties in gaining access to them prevented the paper from presenting a truly in-depth or theory-based study, the aspects of which are beyond the contexts and aims of this study.

6.4) Recommendations for Future Studies

Following research limitations, several aspects of literary reading in Thailand should be expanded, which may include studies that determine in-depth and theory-based studies related to literary reading, different research topics within the fields of literature and EFL development, similar topics with different groups of participants, or studies that focus on different types of media such as e-books, the Internet, films, and video games because literary works and literary translation in our time are no longer limited to only printed formats.

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