

EFL Students' Perspectives on Compulsory Novel Study in University English Programs

Osama Jamoom 

Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Zawia, Zawia, Libya

o.albashir@zu.edu.ly

Received 26 /06 /2026 | Accepted 12 /07 /2026 | Available online 03 / 08 /2026 | DOI: 10.26629/uzfaj.2026.43

ABSTRACT

This study investigated EFL students' perspectives on studying the novel as a compulsory subject in the Department of English, Faculty of Arts at the University of Zawia. Employed a mixed-methods research design, the study utilized a questionnaire comprising closed-ended and open-ended items, which was distributed to 28 students across three academic levels. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative data from open-ended responses were examined through thematic analysis. The findings revealed that students hold generally positive attitudes toward compulsory novel study. They recognized multiple benefits of studying the novel, including vocabulary acquisition, enhanced reading comprehension, cultural awareness, and the development of critical thinking skills. However, students reported significant challenges, with vocabulary difficulty being the most frequently mentioned obstacle, followed by time constraints and cultural unfamiliarity. Students also expressed a strong preference for contemporary novels over classic literature and for interactive teaching methods such as discussions, role-playing, and multimedia integration. This study contributes to the growing body of research on EFL students' perspectives on literature education by providing empirical evidence from the Libyan higher education context. The findings highlight the necessity of careful novel selection, interactive pedagogy, and adequate vocabulary support to enhance the effectiveness of compulsory novel study in English departments.

Keywords: compulsory novel study, EFL students' perspectives, integration of literature in EFL curricula, language education, Libyan higher education

وجهات نظر طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية تجاه دراسة الرواية كمتطلب إجباري في البرامج الجامعية للغة الإنجليزية

اسامة جموم

قسم اللغة الانجليزية، كلية الآداب، جامعة الزاوية، الزاوية، ليبيا

تاريخ النشر: 2026/08/03

تاريخ القبول: 2026/07/12

تاريخ الاستلام: 2026/06/26

ملخص البحث

هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء آراء طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية حول دراسة الرواية كمادة إجبارية في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية الآداب بجامعة الزاوية، ليبيا. اعتمدت الدراسة المنهج المختلط (الكمي والنوعي معاً)، حيث تم توزيع استبانة تضمنت أسئلة مغلقة وأخرى مفتوحة على 28 طالباً وطالبة موزعين على ثلاثة فصول دراسية. حلت البيانات الكمية باستخدام الإحصاء الوصفي، بينما حلت البيانات النوعية باستخدام التحليل الموضوعي. أظهرت النتائج أن الطلبة يحملون اتجاهات إيجابية نحو دراسة الرواية كمادة إجبارية، حيث أدركوا فوائد متعددة لها، من أبرزها: اكتساب مفردات لغوية جديدة، وتحسين مهارات فهم النصوص واستيعابها، وفهم ثقافات الآخرين وعاداتهم، وتنمية التفكير الناقد، والقدرة على التعاطف مع الشخصيات المختلفة وفهم مشاعرهم. غير أن الطلبة واجهوا تحديات كبيرة، كان أبرزها صعوبة المفردات اللغوية المستعملة في بعض الروايات، يليها ضيق الوقت اللازم لإنهاء قراءة الرواية، وعدم فهم بعض الاشارات الثقافية الواردة في النصوص. كما أعرب الطلبة عن تفضيلهم الواضح للروايات المعاصرة على الكلاسيكية، وللأساليب التدريسية التفاعلية مثل المناقشات الصفية، وتمثيل الأدوار، واستخدام الوسائط المتعددة. تسهم هذه الدراسة في إثراء المعرفة حول آراء طلبة اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بليبيا حول تضمين الرواية كمادة إجبارية. يستخلص من النتائج أهمية الاختيار الدقيق للروايات التي تتناسب مع مستوى الطلبة واهتماماتهم، واعتماد طرق تدريس تفاعلية تشجع على المشاركة والحوار، وتوفير دعم كاف للمفردات اللغوية لمساعدة الطلبة على تجاوز صعوبة المفردات. هذا يعزز فعالية دراسة الرواية كمادة إجبارية في أقسام اللغة الإنجليزية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الرواية، اللغة الإنجليزية، اللغة أجنبية، الادب، المناهج، التعليم العالي، ليبيا.

1-Introduction

The integration of literature into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) curricula has long been recognized as a cornerstone of effective language education. Literature serves as a rich repository of authentic linguistic input, exposing learners to varied registers, complex syntactical structures, and nuanced vocabulary that textbooks often fail to provide (Bloemert et al., 2019; Paran, 2008). Beyond its linguistic benefits, literature offers students a window into the cultural, historical, and social contexts of the target language, fostering intercultural awareness and critical thinking skills essential in today's interconnected world (Carter & Long, 1991).

Literature in its various forms, novels, drama, poetry, and short stories, offers distinct yet complementary avenues for language learning and personal growth. Among these genres, the novel occupies a uniquely prominent position in university EFL programs. Unlike shorter forms, the novel offers sustained engagement with language, characters, and themes across extended narratives, allowing learners to develop reading stamina and observe character evolution over time (Bacha, 2016; Tsai, 2012). Moreover, the immersive nature of novel reading enables students to internalize vocabulary and grammatical patterns through repeated contextual exposure, making it an invaluable tool for vocabulary acquisition and reading comprehension development (Elvriza & Nurcholis, 2025). Research has demonstrated that semester-long novel reading programs significantly improve students' attitudes toward reading, their confidence in interpreting literary texts, and their vocabulary repertoire (Tsai, 2012; Bacha, 2016).

Despite these documented benefits, the novel as a compulsory subject in English departments presents both opportunities and challenges for EFL learners. Students often express difficulty with culturally-bound vocabulary and stylistic deviations that characterize literary language (Widdowson, 1975). In some contexts, students have reported feeling that literature courses contribute little to their practical language development or future career prospects (Miri et al., 2024). This tension between institutional expectations and student perceptions warrants careful investigation, particularly given that the novel is frequently a mandatory component of English BA programs.

While scholars and educators have extensively debated the pedagogical merits of incorporating novels into EFL programs, the voice of students, the primary stakeholders in this educational experience, has often been marginalized (Paran, 2008; Bloemert et al., 2019). Understanding how students view the novel as a compulsory subject is essential because their views on a learning environment directly influence their motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes (Brown, 2009). This understanding would inform curriculum development, pedagogical improvement, and student retention in English programs.

This study aims to address this gap by investigating EFL students' views on studying the novel as a compulsory subject during their BA program at Department of English, Faculty of Arts at University of Zawia. Specifically, this research seeks to identify the perceived benefits and challenges students associate with novel study, examine their attitudes and engagement with these courses, explore their genre and text preferences, and collect their recommendations for improving the teaching and learning of the novel. By giving voice to students' experiences, this study aims to bridge the gap between institutional curriculum requirements and learner needs, contributing to a more integrated and effective approach to literature education in EFL contexts.

2.Literature Review

2.1 Defining Literature and the Novel

Literature, in its broadest sense, refers to written works considered to be of artistic or intellectual value, distinguished by their use of language in aesthetically pleasing and intellectually stimulating ways (Carter & Long, 1991). For EFL learners, literature represents more than a collection of texts; it serves as a gateway to authentic language use, cultural understanding, and cognitive development (Paran, 2008; Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014). Literary works are commonly categorized into several genres, each offering distinct pedagogical advantages. Poetry

1.1. JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAWIA, FACULTY OF ARTS, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, VOL. 1, NO. 1, 2024, P. 564-578

1.1. JOURNAL OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ZAWIA, FACULTY OF ARTS, DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, VOL. 1, NO. 1, 2024, P. 564-578

A novel is generally defined as a long form fictional prose narrative that develops complex

Several theoretical perspectives inform the teaching and learning of literature in EFL contexts:

While input theories explain the cognitive mechanisms of language acquisition, pedagogical

Research indicates that literature offers multiple benefits for EFL learners. First, linguistically,

Second, culturally, literature serves as a window into the target culture, offering profound insights

of other cultures, which enriches learners' world knowledge and motivates them to continue reading out of genuine curiosity.

Third, cognitively, engagement with literary texts develops critical thinking skills, creativity, and analytical abilities (Miri et al., 2024; Ouhiba, 2022). Students who read literature regularly demonstrate improved capacity for problem-solving, critical analysis, and personal reflection. The interpretive nature of literary reading requires learners to make inferences, evaluate multiple perspectives, and construct their own meaning, all of which strengthen higher-order thinking processes.

2.4 The Novel in EFL Contexts

The novel presents both opportunities and challenges for EFL learners. In terms of its pedagogical benefits, Tsai (2012) found that after a semester-long novel-reading experience, students demonstrated improvement in attitudes, confidence, interest, and perceived reading ability. Bacha (2016) demonstrated that with carefully selected texts and appropriate methods, including the use of films and student oral presentations, EFL learners expanded their vocabulary repertoire and produced more sophisticated written work. Elvriza and Nurcholis (2025) reported that students engaging in extensive novel reading showed a 30% average increase in vocabulary size, with students noting that encountering new words in context and discussing novels with peers enhanced comprehension and retention.

However, challenges persist. Cook (1986) noted that literature often deviates from norms of English grammatical and lexical usage, which can confuse rather than aid the foreign learner. Students frequently struggle with culturally-bound vocabulary and stylistic variations that characterize literary language (Bacha, 2016; Widdowson, 1975). Research on L1 Arabic speakers of English, for example, has indicated that students' texts show weak lexical-grammatical features, and literature courses are often taught through traditional methods relying on memorization and lectures rather than active engagement (Bacha & Khachan, 2012). These findings underscore the need for carefully guided exposure to authentic literary texts in order to address such challenges in meaningful and contextualized ways.

Effective pedagogical approaches to teaching the novel should include careful text selection based on students' interests and linguistic levels, integrate films and multimedia to bring texts to life (Bacha, 2016), and encourage oral presentations that promote personal engagement and facilitate classroom discussions (Tsai, 2012). These approaches enable students to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers while developing both language proficiency and literary appreciation.

2.5 Student Perspectives on Literature Education

Students' perceptions of a learning environment significantly influence their motivation, engagement, and learning outcomes (Entwistle, 1991). Vermunt and Verloop (1999) introduced the concepts of congruence and friction between teaching and learning approaches: when teaching approaches align with student perspectives, learning is enhanced; when discrepancies are too large, destructive frictions may occur, leading to disengagement and resistance.

Bloemert et al. (2019) investigated the perspectives of 635 Dutch secondary school students and found that the majority (74%) viewed EFL literature education primarily through a language approach, focusing on vocabulary and language skills development. Students also recognized the context approach (56%), reader approach (33%), and text approach (12%). Importantly, significant variation was found between schools, suggesting that teaching approaches influence student perceptions.

In the university context, Bacha (2016) found that students engaged with novels when teaching incorporated films and presentations, and they expressed appreciation for learning new vocabulary and connecting literary themes to their lives. Miri et al. (2024) reported that Iraqi EFL learners demonstrated strong awareness of the impact of reading literature on their critical thinking skills and overall academic development. Students noted that exposure to various literary genres and

figures of speech enhanced their analytical and creative aptitudes. Similarly, Elvriza and Nurcholis (2025) found that students who engaged in extensive novel reading not only showed vocabulary gains but also reported increased motivation, confidence, and a sense of community through peer discussions about their reading.

However, research has also revealed negative perceptions. Some students have expressed that literature courses contribute little to their practical language development or future career prospects (Miri et al., 2024). Factors influencing student perspectives include language proficiency level (Akyel & Yalcin, 1990), teaching approaches, text selection, previous reading experiences, and academic year.

Despite growing research on student perspectives toward EFL literature, a notable gap persists regarding the novel as a compulsory subject within English BA programs. Existing studies have examined literature generally (Bloemert et al., 2019), short stories specifically (Qarabeel, 2025), or novels in elective contexts (Bacha, 2016), yet limited attention has been given to the mandatory novel curriculum. Moreover, few investigations employ a comprehensive framework that simultaneously captures linguistic, cultural, personal, and textual dimensions. This gap is particularly acute in Libya, where research on student perspectives remains scarce. Accordingly, this study investigates EFL students' perspectives on studying the novel as a compulsory component of their BA program at the University of Zawia, aiming to provide a nuanced, human-centered understanding of how students experience and value this foundational element of their English education.

3 .Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods research design to investigate EFL students' perspectives on compulsory novel study in the Department of English. A mixed-methods approach combines quantitative and qualitative data collection within a single study, allowing the researcher to draw on the strengths of both paradigms while offsetting their respective limitations (Creswell, 2005). Quantitative data were collected through the closed-ended items of a structured questionnaire, providing measurable and comparable data on students' attitudes, perceived benefits, challenges, and preferences. Qualitative data were gathered through open-ended questions embedded within the same questionnaire, allowing participants to express themselves freely and provide detailed explanations that enrich and contextualize the quantitative findings. This integration ensures that the limitations of each approach are compensated by the strengths of the other, producing a more holistic understanding of students' perspectives on compulsory novel study.

3.2 Research Context and Participants

This study was conducted at the Department of English, Faculty of Arts, University of Zawia. The department offers a four-year BA program in English, comprising eight semesters of study. During their program, students are required to complete various subjects including phonetics, writing, linguistics, and literature courses covering drama, poetry, and the novel. Students begin studying the novel from the fifth semester onward, with one novel assigned per semester until the eight semesters. The selection of novels is determined by the instructor, and the texts chosen represent different genres and literary periods.

Participants were recruited using convenience sampling, which involves selecting individuals who are readily accessible to the researcher (Dörnyei, 2007). A total of 28 students participated in the study, distributed across three academic semesters: 8 from the sixth semester, 11 from the seventh semester, and 9 from the eighth semester. Their ages ranged from 19 to 24 years with only two participants aged above 24. All participants had studied at least two novels during their program, making them eligible to provide informed perspectives on compulsory novel study.

3.3 Data Collection and Analysis

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire administered online through the students' WhatsApp groups. The questionnaire was developed based on the literature review and consisted of three sections: (a) closed-ended items employing a five-point Likert scale measuring students' perceptions across multiple dimensions including language development, cultural understanding, personal growth, literary analysis, attitudes, challenges, and pedagogical preferences; (b) a multiple-choice section on genre and theme preferences; and (c) open-ended questions exploring students' views on the benefits, challenges, and suggestions for improving novel study. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequencies and percentages, to identify patterns in students' responses. Qualitative data from the open-ended questions were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006), to identify recurring themes and categories. All ethical considerations were strictly observed. Students were informed about the purpose of the study, assured that their responses would remain anonymous, and notified of their right to withdraw from the study at any time without consequence (Dörnyei, 2007). Participation was voluntary, and no personal identifying information was collected.

3.4 Findings and Discussion

The findings of this study are presented and discussed in the following sections. The quantitative data from the closed-ended questionnaire items are presented first, followed by the qualitative data from the open-ended questions, with discussion integrated throughout each sub-section. The presentation follows the thematic structure of the questionnaire: students' perceived benefits of studying novels are presented first, followed by the challenges they face, their pedagogical preferences, and their genre and theme preferences. Each sub-section presents the statistical findings, supports them with relevant qualitative responses, and then discusses and interprets these findings in relation to the theoretical frameworks and previous studies presented in the literature review.

4.1 Perceived Benefits of Studying Novels

The quantitative data revealed that students recognized multiple benefits of studying novels across linguistic, cultural, personal, and analytical dimensions. These benefits are presented below according to the thematic structure of the questionnaire, beginning with language development, followed by cultural and contextual understanding, personal and cognitive growth, and literary analysis.

4.1.1 Language Development

The quantitative data revealed that the majority of participants (95%) agreed or strongly agreed that studying novels improves their English vocabulary, with 60% strongly agreeing and 35% agreeing. Similarly, 89% agreed or strongly agreed that novels help them develop reading comprehension skills (46% strongly agree, 43% agree). Furthermore, 82% agreed or strongly agreed that they can use new words learned from novels in their own writing (43% strongly agree, 39% agree). However, only 57% agreed or strongly agreed that reading novels enhances their understanding of English grammar, with 39% remaining neutral on this item.

Table 1: Students' Perceptions of Language Development

no	Items of the Questionnaire	Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
1	Studying novels improves my English vocabulary	0	0%	0	0%	1	4%	10	35%	17	60%
2	Reading novels enhances my understanding of English grammar.	0	0%	1	4%	11	39%	13	46%	3	11%
3	Novels help me develop my reading comprehension skills.	1	4%	1	4%	1	4%	12	43%	13	46%
4	I can use new words I learn from novels in my own writing.	0	0%	1	4%	4	14%	11	39%	12	43%

These comments suggest that students recognize the practical linguistic benefits of novel study, supporting Paran's (2008) argument that literature serves as a valuable resource for language development. The emphasis on vocabulary acquisition reflects Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, which posits that language acquisition occurs when learners are exposed to comprehensible input slightly above their current proficiency level. Novels provide this rich, meaningful input that facilitates vocabulary development. This finding also aligns with the language approach to teaching literature, which focuses on using literature to develop linguistic skills (Maley, 1989; Bloemert et al., 2016).

The quantitative data revealed that 75% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that novels teach them about the culture of English-speaking countries (50% agree, 25% strongly agree). Similarly, 68% agreed or strongly agreed that they gain historical knowledge from reading novels (57% agree, 11% strongly agree). Furthermore, 65% agreed or strongly agreed that novels help them understand different social contexts and lifestyles (54% agree, 11% strongly agree), and 86% agreed or strongly agreed that reading novels broadens their worldview (54% agree, 32% strongly agree).

Questionnaire Items		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strongly agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
5	Novels teach me about the culture of English-speaking countries.	1	4%	0	0%	6	21%	14	50%	7	25%
6	I gain historical knowledge from reading novels	0	0%	0	0%	9	32%	16	57%	3	11%
7	Novels help me understand different social contexts and lifestyles.	1	4%	0	0%	9	32%	15	54%	3	11%
8	Novels help me understand different social contexts and lifestyles.	0	0%	0	0%	6	21%	15	54%	9	32%

[illegible]

The qualitative responses further illustrated this cultural awareness. One student noted that studying novels significantly enhances vocabulary, comprehension, and overall language proficiency while fostering critical thinking and empathy through exposure to different cultures and historical periods. Another student explained that novels help understand different cultures and ideas while developing critical thinking, imagination, and creativity. A third student commented that studying novels helps learn new vocabulary, use imagination, and learn about new cultures.

4.1.3 Personal and Cognitive Growth

Table 3: Students' Perceptions of Personal and Cognitive Growth

Questionnaire Items		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strong agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
9	Reading novels encourages me to think critically.	1	4%	3	11%	7	25%	11	39%	6	21%
10	Novels help me reflect on my own personal experiences.	0	0%	1	4%	9	32%	13	46%	5	18%
11	I enjoy connecting with characters in novels.	0	0%	0	0%	7	25%	16	57%	5	18%
12	Novels help me understand human behavior and emotions.	0	0%	0	0%	6	21%	16	57%	6	21%

The qualitative responses reflected these personal and cognitive benefits. One student commented that studying novels helps think deeply and understand other people's feelings while improving English through reading and learning new words. Another student stated that novels force critical thinking, expand vocabulary, build deep empathy, and ensure analytical skills.

The quantitative data revealed that 600% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they

Table 4: Students' Perceptions of Literary Analysis

Questionnaire Items	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly
---------------------	----------	----------	---------	-------	----------

The qualitative responses further emphasized the value of literary analysis. One student noted that

Finally, we suggest that while it is true that a literary work is the object of the

The quantitative data revealed that 750% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they enjoy

Table 5: Students Attitudes and Engagement

Questionnaire Items		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strong agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
16	I enjoy studying novels as part of my English program.	0	0%	2	7%	5	18%	12	43%	9	32%
17	I look forward to attending novel classes	2	7%	0	0%	12	43%	10	36%	4	14%
18	Studying novels motivates me to read more in English.	1	4%	1	4%	3	11%	10	36%	13	46%
19	I enjoy discussing novels with my classmates.	0	0%	1	4%	4	14%	16	57%	7	25%

The relatively lower percentage of students who look forward to novel classes (50%) compared to those who enjoy novel study (75%) suggests that while students recognize the value of novels, they may face challenges with engagement or teaching methods. This finding aligns with Tsai (2012), who found that after a semester-long novel-reading process, students demonstrated improvement in attitudes, confidence, interest, and perceived reading ability. The high percentage of students who reported motivation to read more (82%) and enjoyment of class discussions (82%) is encouraging and suggests that novel study can foster a positive reading culture.

The qualitative responses reflected positive attitudes toward novel study. One student commented that reading novels helped gain more knowledge about English literature. Another student stated that the experience was good and allowed discovery of new genres of reading, moving beyond romance and teenage fantasy novels to historical novels.

These comments suggest that students appreciate the exposure to different genres and the opportunity to expand their literary horizons. As Bloemert et al. (2019) found, when students recognize the benefits of literature education, they are more likely to engage meaningfully with the material. The emphasis on motivation supports Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which posits that intrinsic motivation enhances learning outcomes.

4.3 Challenges

The quantitative data revealed that 58% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that the vocabulary in novels is too difficult for them (54% agree, 4% strongly agree), while 40% disagreed or strongly disagreed. Furthermore, 32% agreed or strongly agreed that the cultural content in novels is unfamiliar to them (25% agree, 7% strongly agree), while 54% remained neutral. Regarding time constraints, 43% agreed or strongly agreed that they find it hard to complete novel reading within the given time (29% agree, 14% strongly agree), while 29% disagreed and 29% remained neutral. Additionally, 40% agreed or strongly agreed that they find it difficult to analyze literary elements in novels (36% agree, 4% strongly agree), while 28% disagreed and 32% remained neutral. Finally, only 21% agreed that the topics of novels are not interesting to them, while 40% disagreed and 39% remained neutral.

Table 6: Students' Perceptions of Challenges

Questionnaire Items		Strongly disagree		Disagree		Neutral		Agree		Strong agree	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
20	The vocabulary in novels is too difficult for me.	3	11%	8	29%	1	4%	15	54%	1	4%
21	The cultural content in novels is unfamiliar to me.	1	4%	3	11%	15	54%	7	25%	2	7%
22	I find it hard to complete novel reading within the given time.	0	0%	8	29%	8	29%	8	29%	4	14%
23	I find it difficult to analyze literary elements in novels.	2	7%	6	21%	9	32%	10	36%	1	4%
24	The topics of the novels are not interesting to me.	1	4%	10	36%	11	39%	6	21%	0	0%

The qualitative responses provided rich insights into these challenges. One student explained

These comments highlight the linguistic, cultural, and structural challenges students face.

The quantitative data revealed that 900% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that their

Questionnaire Items	Strongly	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strong
---------------------	----------	----------	---------	-------	--------

EE	1	:	1		6	1	1	1	6	:	:	:	1	1	(	1	1	3	3	)		4	1	(	3	3	1	3	)
----	---	---	---	--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	--	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Elaborate the following ideas:

1. *Journal of the American Medical Association*, 2000; 283: 2686-2692.

These suggestions emphasize the importance of interactive, student-centered approaches to teaching novels. Students clearly value opportunities for discussion, opinion-sharing, and creative activities. This aligns with Vermont and Verloop's (1999) concept of congruence, where teaching approaches align with student perspectives, enhancing learning and engagement. The suggestions also reflect the four approaches within the Comprehensive Approach (Bloemert et al., 2019): selecting appropriate texts (text approach), providing cultural and historical context (context approach), encouraging personal connections (reader approach), and supporting vocabulary development (language approach).

The data revealed that 46% of students prefer contemporary novels, 32% prefer both classic and contemporary, 18% prefer classic literature, and 4% prefer neither. This finding suggests that students generally find contemporary novels more accessible and engaging than classic literature, possibly due to more familiar language and themes.

Questionnaire Items		Classic Novels		Contemporary		Both		Neither	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
28	What type of novel do you prefer reading	5	18%	13	46%	9	32%	1	4%

29	What themes interest you most in novels? (Choose up to two)							
Romance	Friendship	War/ conflict	Social issue	Family relationship	Adventure	Historical events	Crime and political	Fantasy
21%	14%	4%	11%	7%	25%	7%	4%	4%

This finding also resonates with Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985), which emphasizes the importance of intrinsic motivation and interest in sustaining engagement. When students find reading materials personally relevant and enjoyable, they are more likely to persist with extended texts and develop positive reading habits. The relatively low preference for classic literature (18%) suggests that while students may recognize the literary value of canonical texts, they may struggle with archaic language and unfamiliar cultural references, which aligns with Cook's (1986) observation that literature can confuse foreign learners due to deviations from grammatical and lexical norms.

The present study investigated EFL students' perspectives on compulsory novel study in the Department of English at University of Zawia. The findings reveal that students hold

Despite these limitations, this study contributes to the growing body of research on learner perceptions in EFL literature education by providing empirical evidence from the Libyan context, an area that has received limited attention in the literature. The findings highlight the need for a balanced, student-centered approach that addresses both the benefits and challenges of compulsory novel study. By attending to student perspectives and implementing the recommendations outlined above, educators can enhance the effectiveness of compulsory novel study and ensure that students derive meaningful and lasting benefits from this essential component of their English language education.

Bloemert, J., Paran, A., Jansen, J., & van de Grift, W. (2019). Students' perspective on the benefits of EFL literature education. *The Language Learning Journal*, 47(3), 371-384. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09571736.2017.1298149>

1. 2000. 2. 2001. 3. 2002. 4. 2003. 5. 2004. 6. 2005. 7. 2006. 8. 2007. 9. 2008. 10. 2009. 11. 2010. 12. 2011. 13. 2012. 14. 2013. 15. 2014. 16. 2015. 17. 2016. 18. 2017. 19. 2018. 20. 2019. 21. 2020. 22. 2021. 23. 2022. 24. 2023. 25. 2024. 26. 2025. 27. 2026. 28. 2027. 29. 2028. 30. 2029. 31. 2030. 32. 2031. 33. 2032. 34. 2033. 35. 2034. 36. 2035. 37. 2036. 38. 2037. 39. 2038. 40. 2039. 41. 2040. 42. 2041. 43. 2042. 44. 2043. 45. 2044. 46. 2045. 47. 2046. 48. 2047. 49. 2048. 50. 2049. 51. 2050. 52. 2051. 53. 2052. 54. 2053. 55. 2054. 56. 2055. 57. 2056. 58. 2057. 59. 2058. 60. 2059. 61. 2060. 62. 2061. 63. 2062. 64. 2063. 65. 2064. 66. 2065. 67. 2066. 68. 2067. 69. 2068. 70. 2069. 71. 2070. 72. 2071. 73. 2072. 74. 2073. 75. 2074. 76. 2075. 77. 2076. 78. 2077. 79. 2078. 80. 2079. 81. 2080. 82. 2081. 83. 2082. 84. 2083. 85. 2084. 86. 2085. 87. 2086. 88. 2087. 89. 2088. 90. 2089. 91. 2090. 92. 2091. 93. 2092. 94. 2093. 95. 2094. 96. 2095. 97. 2096. 98. 2097. 99. 2098. 100. 2099. 101. 2100. 102. 2101. 103. 2102. 104. 2103. 105. 2104. 106. 2105. 107. 2106. 108. 2107. 109. 2108. 110. 2109. 111. 2110. 112. 2111. 113. 2112. 114. 2113. 115. 2114. 116. 2115. 117. 2116. 118. 2117. 119. 2118. 120. 2119. 121. 2120. 122. 2121. 123. 2122. 124. 2123. 125. 2124. 126. 2125. 127. 2126. 128. 2127. 129. 2128. 130. 2129. 131. 2130. 132. 2131. 133. 2132. 134. 2133. 135. 2134. 136. 2135. 137. 2136. 138. 2137. 139. 2138. 140. 2139. 141. 2140. 142. 2141. 143. 2142. 144. 2143. 145. 2144. 146. 2145. 147. 2146. 148. 2147. 149. 2148. 150. 2149. 151. 2150. 152. 2151. 153. 2152. 154. 2153. 155. 2154. 156. 2155. 157. 2156. 158. 2157. 159. 2158. 160. 2159. 161. 2160. 162. 2161. 163. 2162. 164. 2163. 165. 2164. 166. 2165. 167. 2166. 168. 2167. 169. 2168. 170. 2169. 171. 2170. 172. 2171. 173. 2172. 174. 2173. 175. 2174. 176. 2175. 177. 2176. 178. 2177. 179. 2178. 180. 2179. 181. 2180. 182. 2181. 183. 2182. 184. 2183. 185. 2184. 186. 2185. 187. 2186. 188. 2187. 189. 2188. 190. 2189. 191. 2190. 192. 2191. 193. 2192. 194. 2193. 195. 2194. 196. 2195. 197. 2196. 198. 2197. 199. 2198. 200. 2199. 201. 2200. 202. 2201. 203. 2202. 204. 2203. 205. 2204. 206. 2205. 207. 2206. 208. 2207. 209. 2208. 210. 2209. 211. 2210. 212. 2211. 213. 2212. 214. 2213. 215. 2214. 216. 2215. 217. 2216. 218. 2217. 219. 2218. 220. 2219. 221. 2220. 222. 2221. 223. 2222. 224. 2223. 225. 2224. 226. 2225. 227. 2226. 228. 2227. 229. 2230. 230. 2231. 232. 2232. 233. 2233. 234. 2234. 235. 2235. 236. 2236. 237. 2237. 238. 2238. 239. 2239. 240. 2240. 241. 2241. 242. 2242. 243. 2243. 244. 2244. 245. 2245. 246. 2246. 247. 2247. 248. 2248. 249. 2249. 250. 2250. 251. 2251. 252. 2252. 253. 2253. 254. 2254. 255. 2255. 256. 2256. 257. 2257. 258. 2258. 259. 2259. 260. 2260. 261. 2261. 262. 2262. 263. 2263. 264. 2264. 265. 2265. 266. 2266. 267. 2267. 268. 2268. 269. 2269. 270. 2270. 271. 2271. 272. 2272. 273. 2273. 274. 2274. 275. 2275. 276. 2276. 277. 2277. 278. 2278. 279. 2279. 280. 2280. 281. 2281. 282. 2282. 283. 2283. 284. 2284. 285. 2285. 286. 2286. 287. 2287. 288. 2288. 289. 2289. 290. 2290. 291. 2291. 292. 2292. 293. 2293. 294. 2294. 295. 2295. 296. 2296. 297. 2297. 298. 2298. 299. 2299. 300. 2300. 301. 2301. 302. 2302. 303. 2303. 304. 2304. 305. 2305. 306. 2306. 307. 2307. 308. 2308. 309. 2309. 310. 2310. 311. 2311. 312. 2312. 313. 2313. 314. 2314. 315. 2315. 316. 2316. 317. 2317. 318. 2318. 319. 2319. 320. 2320. 321. 2321. 322. 2322. 323. 2323. 324. 2324. 325. 2325. 326. 2326. 327. 2327. 328. 2328. 329. 2329. 330. 2330. 331. 2331. 332. 2332. 333. 2333. 334. 2334. 335. 2335. 336. 2336. 337. 2337. 338. 2338. 339. 2339. 340. 2340. 341. 2341. 342. 2342. 343. 2343. 344. 2344. 345. 2345. 346. 2346. 347. 2347. 348. 2348. 349. 2349. 350. 2350. 351. 2351. 352. 2352. 353. 2353. 354. 2354. 355. 2355. 356. 2356. 357. 2357. 358. 2358. 359. 2359. 360. 2360. 361. 2361. 362. 2362. 363. 2363. 364. 2364. 365. 2365. 366. 2366. 367. 2367. 368. 2368. 369. 2369. 370. 2370. 371. 2371. 372. 2372. 373. 2373. 374. 2374. 375. 2375. 376. 2376. 377. 2377. 378. 2378. 379. 2379. 380. 2380. 381. 2381. 382. 2382. 383. 2383.