

# A Systematic Review of Utilising Literary Texts in English Classroom: Challenges and Teaching Approaches

Andyriene Christy Sylvester, Azlina Abdul Aziz

Faculty of Education, Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia

Email: P112320@siswa.ukm.edu.my, azlina1@ukm.edu.my

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i2/13297>

DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v11-i2/13297

*Published Online:* 06 June 2022

## Abstract

The implementation of utilising literary texts in ESL/EFL classrooms has been widely enforced in all levels of schools for its roles and benefits for language learning. Due to challenges faced by teachers, the teaching and learning by using literary texts in the classroom seem to be ineffective. Hence, a systematic review of the 15 published articles is presented in this paper to expound the challenges in incorporating selected literary texts and the suitability of teaching approaches and strategies applied in using the texts in teaching and learning of English from year 2013 to 2022. The findings depict on the common problems encountered by English teachers are related to students' low proficiency levels, the difficulties of literary text interpretation and teachers' lack of practices as well as low confidence levels in teaching literary texts in the class. The teaching approaches in literature lesson preferably applied was information-based approach and moral philosophical approach. Moreover, integration of educational technology strategy and student-centred activities are highly recommended to be applied in the literature lessons. It is hoped that this review will provide contribution for researchers to conduct literature related studies and enlighten policy makers into revamping literature curriculum in the future.

**Keywords:** Literary Texts, English Classroom, Challenges, Teaching Approaches, Literature

## Introduction

The emphasis of utilising literary texts in language classrooms have been developed in many aspects as language researchers believe that there is a strong basis of relationship between the literature, language and education (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014). There is a need in the integration of teaching and learning of literature especially in language classrooms for learners who learn English as a second (ESL) or foreign language (EFL). In Malaysian primary and secondary school syllabus, literature component is included in English curriculum as well. The literature component includes selected short stories, poems, dramas and novels with various of genres.

### **The Role of Literature**

Literature learning develops learners' self-awareness and personality as they engage with the literary texts which in turns cultivates their passion and understanding of the world around them (Cheng, 2018). This is supported by a research carried out by Suhaimi et al. (2020) that showed the knowledge gained through literature learning could enable the students to foster cultural awareness, critical thinking skills besides improving their English vocabulary and grammar. Reading the literary texts with various genres and contexts also could develop students' personality and language proficiency as a whole. Supported by Subarna and Ganakumaran (2008), the inclusion of English literature syllabus in Malaysian English language teaching (ELT) gives the students the benefits in terms of their language progress and development, personal growth and cultural enhancement. Literature is integrated not mainly in primary and secondary English language curriculums, but also in tertiary English language curriculum in Malaysian ELT especially for students who intend to study English related courses.

### **The Evolution of English Literature in Malaysian Curriculum (from KBSM to KSSM)**

As emphasised in the education Malaysian Blueprint, the role of English Literature component is foregrounded to promote English proficiency (Kaur & Mahmor, 2014). Since 2000, the literature component in Malaysian secondary school syllabus has been introduced with the inclusive of selected poems, fictional prose, dramas and novels with various genres. The Ministry of Education emphasises the incorporation of literature component which expects students to evaluate and analyse the characters, settings, plots, author's point of views and other artistic components in literary texts critically by the end of the lessons (Engku Suhaimi et al., 2020). Under the Integrated Secondary School Curriculum (KBSM) in 2000, literature component fell under language use for aesthetic purposes with learning outcome as follows (Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia, 2000):

#### **1. Listen to, Read, View and Respond to Literary Works to**

- a) Understand and retell in one's own words the story, play, poem and song heard and read, and the film viewed and giving one's opinion of the text.
- b) To recognise story elements such as characters, events.
- c) To explain the message that writer is trying to convey and discussing how this relate to one's life.
- d) To understand different peoples' cultures, customs, traditions and beliefs.
- e) To dedicate poem recitations with feeling and expression.

#### **2. Express themselves Creatively and Imaginatively by**

- a) Role-playing characters and dramatizing texts.
- b) Retelling stories from other point of views and presenting it in another genre.
- c) Creating simple poems, stories and dialogues.

Over the decades, the literary components are part of the examinable components in school assessments as well as in the public examinations. As stated by Lock and Zainal (2020), literature was a part of examined module in national examinations for English language which are the Middle School Assessment (PMR) and Malaysian Certificate of Education (SPM) taken by high school students in Form 3 and Form 5 correspondingly. However, since 2019, the revamping of curriculum syllabus from KBSM to Secondary School Standards-based Curriculum (KSSM) has changed the format of English examinations, particularly in English. The literature component has branded into a new name called Literature in Action (LiA). On

top of that, this literature component is no longer becoming part of the examinable component in Form 3 Assessment (PT3) and SPM.

### **The Role of Teachers**

According to Nair et al. (2012), teachers' roles are to decide the aim of the language to be delivered according to the students' needs and desires. In literature context, teachers' teaching styles will affect students' interest in reading literary texts. Therefore, it is undeniable that choosing the suitable teaching methods, techniques, classroom activities and literary texts should suit students' proficiency level especially in this 21<sup>st</sup> century. Having said that, the roles of teachers should be able to cater for students' needs (Affendi & Aziz, 2020) in the 21<sup>st</sup> learning settings. With the advancement of technology over the decades, teachers are expected to endow with the knowledge of updated technological tools to incorporate the teaching and learning of literature with appropriate strategies and resources effectively.

### **Research Objectives**

The systematic review is presented with the analysis of empirical evidence which are found in the past related studies on the teaching of literary texts in the English classroom. The research objectives are stated as follows:

- To identify the challenges encountered by teachers in incorporating selected literary texts in teaching and learning English.
- To investigate the teaching approaches and strategies applied in using the literary texts in teaching and learning of English.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Selection of Literary Texts**

It is crucial to introduce suitable literary texts for students to acquire the knowledge for literature purposes. In Malaysia, although the purpose of teaching and learning of English literature components aim to strengthen students' proficiency level, the issue of the implementation of literature policy arises due to various factors (Kaur & Mahmor, 2014) and one of them is the appropriateness of the text selection (Subramaniam, 2003). There are criteria emphasised for text selections by Lima (2011) based on the principles of extensive reading advanced by Prowse (2002) and text selection based on learners' cultural and social expectations by Brumfit (1985) as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

*Criteria of selection of texts (Brumfit, 1985; Prowse, 2002; Lima, 2011)*

Criteria	Details
a. Students' choice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Allow the students to choose the texts they want to read.</li> </ul>
b. Suitable language level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find a text which suits students' proficiency level.</li> </ul>
c. Texts to engage and react with	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Students can engage and react with the texts affectively and cognitively.</li> </ul>
d. No comprehension or examinable questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Prioritise on students' response to the texts and language development rather than assessing them in formal examinations.</li> </ul>
e. Teacher's participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher engages with students through meaningful discussion and motivate the students to read literary texts.</li> </ul>
f. Visual arts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide memorable photographs and paintings for visual appeal and impact.</li> </ul>
g. Dramatic arts and music	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To provide good opportunities for students to work on their pronunciation and learn collaboratively for short play, stories and poem.</li> </ul>
h. Web 2.0 tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporating technology to promote creative writing, critical discussion and contextualisation of literature works collaboratively among the students and teachers.</li> </ul>

These criteria will help the teachers and students to teach and learn the literary texts selected not just merely for the purpose of enhancing students' proficiency in English, but also considering that good literary texts are beneficial for students' learning development, particularly in reading comprehension. Appropriately selected literary works by local authors that mirror multicultural identity helps to nurture patriotism and nation-building as literature educates Malaysian students to prepare them facing the intense changes and globalization as well as challenges in the Malaysian political and social settings (Kaur & Mahmor, 2014).

### **Teachers' Approaches in using Literary Texts in English Classroom**

Literature and language teaching are inseparable. Over the decades, the three models in the teaching of literature introduced by Carter and Long (1991) have been widely used in language classroom, namely the cultural model, the personal growth model and the language model as stated follows:

#### **The Cultural Model**

The cultural model is a type of traditional approach in teaching of literature. It is teacher-centred where it focuses more on how teacher delegates the information and knowledge to the learners. It does not just allow learners to explore and interpret the social, political, literary and historical context of a literary text specifically, but it also promotes the values of appreciation towards different cultures and ideologies in relation to their own.

### **Language Model**

Language model is widely used in the language classroom. Learners are able to learn linguistic features such as the use of grammar, vocabulary and discourse functions or meanings (Arafah, 2018) by accessing literary texts in a systematic way. This model proposes a wide range of strategies used in language teaching through language activities to study literary texts in order to achieve specific linguistic goals (Mustakim et al., 2014).

### **The Personal Growth Model**

The personal growth model by Carter and Long (1991) attempts to connect both the cultural model and the language model by focusing on the particular use of language in a text, as well as placing it in a specific cultural context. Learners are encouraged to express their opinions, feelings and opinions as well as making connections between their own personal and cultural experiences and those expressed in the text.

### **Methodology**

In order to accomplish the goals of this systematic review, there are five relevant stages to conduct it by adopting the explicit methodology framed by Khan et al. (2003):

#### **Stage One: Framing the Research Questions for Review**

In this stage, it is important to address the problems arise in the study. According to Yahya (2017), teachers are having problems with the approach to use literary texts in teaching English literature as they do not know the best approach to teach literature to allow students to gain both language and appreciation of the literature itself. Hence, the research questions framed in this review based on the problems identified are developed as follows:

1. What are the challenges faced by teachers in incorporating selected literary texts in teaching and learning English?
2. What are the teaching approaches applied in using the literary texts in teaching and learning of English?

#### **Stage 2: Identifying Relevant Work**

Most of the digitalised resources were searched in Google Scholars database and Educational Resources Information Centre (ERIC). The research related papers or articles reviewed were published in between 2013 to 2022. In order to search for the articles to answer research question 1 and 2, few keywords were used: (problems in using English literary texts OR challenges in teaching English literature) and (teaching literary texts approaches OR teaching approaches for literature) respectively. In narrowing down the search and sorting out unrelated articles that might appear, “filter” or “related terms button” was used to refine the search by clicking “publications in between 2013 to 2022”, “education” and “literature”.

#### **Stage 3: Assessing the Quality of Study**

This step requires in-depth and extensive reading of relevant literature based on past studies related to the use of literary texts to teach English. To ensure the research questions to be answered and articles to be analysed with ease, there were several inclusion and exclusion criteria listed in Table 2.

Table 2

*Inclusion and exclusion criteria*

Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
The use of literary texts in teaching and learning English (ESL/EFL).	Teaching and learning using other materials not related to literature.
Research methodologies: quantitative, qualitative and mixed method.	-
Respondents are teachers teaching from various countries and education levels are primary and secondary.	Respondents are teaching in tertiary education.
Respondents are students studying in various countries and education levels are primary and secondary.	Respondents are students studying in tertiary education.
Challenges in using literary texts and teaching approaches in teaching literature.	Effects of teaching and learning literature.
Relevant articles were published between 2012 till 2022.	Relevant articles were not published between 2012 till 2022.

**Stage 4: Summarising the Evidence**

This stage determines the number of the articles to be chosen. There were 15 related articles chosen to be included in this systematic review to summarise the evidence and to be analysed in the findings.

**Stage 5: Interpreting the Findings**

In the last stage, content analysis was employed to interpret and analyse the articles. The findings will be categorised according to specific details in the tabulated table given, which are the author and year published of the article, research purpose, methodology and findings of the studies.

**Findings**

Table 3 depicts the overview of selected research which is categorised according to the author and year, the origin and the purpose of the research.

Table 3

*Overview of selected research*

No.	Author	Country	Research purpose
1.	Krishnasamy (2015)	Malaysia	To find <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The challenges faced by teachers in the teaching of children's contemporary English Literature component.</li> <li>• The teaching approaches and suitable activities used to teach the children's contemporary English Literature component.</li> </ul>
2.	Othman et al (2015)	Malaysia	To examine students' perceptions and challenges in the learning of English literature.
3.	Ling & Eng (2016)	Malaysia	To study the types of approaches in teaching of literature preferably used by Form 4 and Form 5 ESL teachers in English literature lessons in selected secondary schools in Miri, Sarawak.
4.	Işıklı & Tarakçıoğlu (2017)	Turkey	To identify teachers' point of views on the most serious problem of the teaching of English literature to Turkish high school students.
5.	Suriani et al (2017)	Malaysia	To investigate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher trainees' perceptions on graphic novels usage in English language classroom.</li> <li>• Teacher trainees' experiences in teaching graphic novels to year four and five students.</li> </ul>
6.	Hassan (2018)	Bangladesh	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To evaluate the effectiveness of the literary materials</li> <li>• To identify the challenges encountered by teachers in teaching literary texts.</li> </ul>
7.	Yulnetri (2018)	Indonesia	To identify the problems faced by high school teachers when using literature component in teaching English.
8.	Cheung (2019)	China	To explore ESL teachers' conceptions of integrating language arts (LA) in English language curriculum.
9.	DinkuGebeyehu et al (2019)	Ethiopia	To investigate teachers' and students' challenges, perceptions and techniques in using short stories in English speaking class.
10.	Paatsch et al (2019)	Australia	To examine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers' points of views of their readiness and levels of confidence in the teaching of literature in digital settings</li> <li>• The implementation of pedagogical practices when teaching literature in digital settings.</li> <li>• Difficulties in teaching literature in digital settings.</li> </ul>

11.	Suliman et al (2019)	Malaysia	To identify <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ESL teachers' most preferred literature approach.</li> <li>• Teachers' most favoured activity conducted in literature classroom.</li> </ul>
12.	Charanjit et al (2020)	Malaysia	To examine: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The ESL teachers' strategies of higher order thinking skills used to teach literary texts.</li> <li>• The factors that contribute to the teaching of higher order thinking skills in literature.</li> <li>• The challenges faced by ESL teachers in teaching English literature using higher order thinking skills.</li> </ul>
13.	Parojenog (2020)	Philippines	To identify the commonly used approaches employed by the selected Literature Senior High School Teachers in Ubay II District.
14.	Lock & Zainal (2020)	Malaysia	To examine students' attitude towards learning poetry and the challenges they encountered in the learning of poetry.
15.	Engku Suhaimi et al (2021)	Malaysia	To identify the most preferred approaches to the teaching of English literature in selected secondary schools in Terengganu, Malaysia.

The findings of this systematic literature review are categorised based on the two research questions stated. A total of three systematic review tables were created:

1. Table 4 is created to find the results that answer the first research question.
2. Table 5 is created to find the results that answer the second research question.
3. Table 6 is created to find the results that answer both first and second research questions.



Table 4

*Challenges faced by teachers in incorporating selected literary texts in teaching and learning English.*

Author and year	Methodology	Results
Othman et al (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mix method</li> <li>Instrument: Questionnaires, interviews, observations, and document analysis</li> <li>Respondents: 60 Form 5 students with different levels of English proficiency in a secondary school in the district of Hulu Langat, Selangor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The majority of the respondents had given positive responses to indicate positive perceptions towards literary text, literature lesson and their teachers' teaching methods despite some difficulties that they had been encountering when learning literature.</li> <li>The respondents showed positive attitudes towards the use of technology in literature class.</li> <li>They also had difficulties in interpreting literary texts explained by teachers.</li> </ul>
Işıklı & Tarakçıoğlu (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative method</li> <li>Instrument: Survey questionnaire with an open-ended question.</li> <li>Respondents: 108 teachers from seven regions of Turkish schools participated</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respondents stated that students' low proficiency in English language is the most serious problem in English literature teaching.</li> <li>They also claimed students had low motivation, lack of reading to study literature and focus more on other subjects.</li> <li>The number of teaching lessons were not enough to teach effectively.</li> <li>Respondents had lack of training and ineffective teaching methods to teach literary texts.</li> </ul>
Suriani et al (2017)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantitative method</li> <li>Instrument: Survey questionnaire with an open-ended question.</li> <li>Respondents: 57 ESL teacher trainees but only 28 had the chance teaching English using graphic novels to Year Four and Five students.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All respondents enjoyed reading and had experienced their first encounter with graphic novels.</li> <li>17 out of 57 mentioned they disliked graphic novels because the content could be confusing and messy.</li> <li>They also included that those traditional texts would have more detailed descriptions of the characters, settings, and other literary devices found in the texts.</li> <li>Few of the respondents were not trained to teach graphic novels before.</li> </ul>

---

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents highlighted that most of the students preferred reading Malay graphic novels.</li> <li>• The majority of them felt that students tend to ignore the dialogues in the speech balloons because they were fascinated by the graphic images which made them had hard times to understand the storyline.</li> </ul>
Hassan (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative method</li> <li>• Instrument: Semi-structure interview</li> <li>• Respondents: Six HSC (Higher Secondary) level English teachers from four colleges of Dhaka city</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers claimed that the language of the texts were difficult and need to be modified.</li> <li>• Teachers faced more problems in teaching poetry.</li> <li>• Teachers experienced various challenges in constructing literary understanding.</li> <li>• Teachers identified that there is a gap between examination and text.</li> <li>• Teachers find it difficult to teach especially when students' English proficiency is low to average.</li> </ul>
Yulnetri (2018)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitative method</li> <li>• Instrument: In-depth interviews</li> <li>• Respondents: Ten English teachers teaching in high schools in Tanah Datar regency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The language of the texts is difficult in terms of its complexity, structure, vocabulary, poetic elements and unfamiliar diction.</li> <li>• The literary texts are not interesting and suitable to the students' level.</li> <li>• Time management issue in teaching literature.</li> <li>• Unavailable supporting tools and limited materials and resources.</li> </ul>
Cheung (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative method</li> <li>• Instrument: In-depth interview</li> <li>• Respondents: 3 ESL teachers teaching in one of the schools in Hong Kong</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Two respondents mentioned that the integration of (LA) became difficult because of students' low English proficiency level and lack of motivation to learn.</li> <li>• A respondent also admitted that his education background which was majoring in linguistics and literature had equipped him with ample knowledge to teach LA in English.</li> <li>• A respondent claimed that she had low confidence level of not being able to give instruction precisely when generating input of knowledge to the students.</li> </ul>

---

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A respondent mentioned that her teaching experience was highly influenced by her learning experience which was during her teaching practice.</li> <li>• Respondents integrated LA in English lessons based on students' interests and abilities.</li> </ul>
DinkuGebeyehu et al (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed method</li> <li>• Instrument:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Questionnaire for 259 students</li> <li>- Semi structured interview for eight English language teachers</li> <li>- Class observation</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More than half teachers had lack of time to teach short stories.</li> <li>• Teachers had lack different techniques to teach short stories.</li> <li>• The interference of students' mother and lack of practice to use short stories-based dialogues in speaking classroom.</li> <li>• Class size was seen a problem in the EFL speaking classroom using short stories.</li> </ul>

Table 5  
*Approaches and strategies in teaching the literary texts*

Author and year	Methodology	Results
Ling & Eng (2016)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed methodology</li> <li>• Instrument: Questionnaire and interview</li> <li>• Respondents: 43 ESL secondary teachers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most teachers preferably employed information-based approach, moral-philosophical approach and paraphrastic approach in literature lessons.</li> <li>• Least teachers employed personal response approach language-based approach and stylistic approach in literature lessons.</li> </ul>
Suliman et al (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitative method</li> <li>• Instrument: Survey questionnaire and interview</li> <li>• Respondents: Cluster sampling</li> <li>- 271 ESL secondary school teachers in one of the states in East Malaysia</li> </ul>	<p>Findings on approach used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most preferred approach by teachers is "using simple terms in explaining the literary texts in literature lessons" and "asking questions to students".</li> <li>• The least preferred approach by teachers is "eliciting information from students about the text".</li> </ul> <p>Findings on activities conducted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most preferred literature activities involving comprehension questions, group work task based and text explanation.</li> </ul>

---

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The less preferred literature activities were activities involving performance, issue writing and journal writing.</li> </ul>
Lock & Zainal (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed method</li> <li>• Instrument: Questionnaire and interview</li> <li>• Respondents: 120 Form Four students from a selected suburban school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents perceived positive attitudes towards learning poetry.</li> <li>• They felt the language used for poems was challenging.</li> <li>• They could not relate the poems to their personal experience.</li> <li>• They found interpreting meaning and poems' message and identifying poetry devices were tough.</li> </ul>
Parojenog (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mixed method</li> <li>• Instrument: Questionnaire, observation and scheduled interview</li> <li>• Respondents: Four selected senior high school teachers teaching at one of the high schools in the second district of Ubay, Bohol.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The most frequent technique employed by the respondents in teaching literature was information-based approach.</li> <li>• The factors influencing the choice of approach were the lack of resources and time as well as juggling with hectic schedules.</li> <li>• Most of the respondents admitted they were proficient and able to conduct their lesson confidently.</li> </ul>
Engku Suhaimi et al (2021)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quantitative method</li> <li>• Instrument: Questionnaire</li> <li>• Respondents: 420 Form 4 students from 4 public Malaysian secondary schools</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students' most preferred approach in teaching of English literature is moral-philosophical approach, followed by the information-based approach and the language-based approach.</li> <li>• Students' least preferred approach in the teaching of English literature is the personal-response approach.</li> </ul>

---

Table 6

*The challenges faced by teachers in incorporating selected literary texts in teaching and the approaches and strategies identified to teach the literary texts.*

Author and year	Methodology	Results
Krishnasamy (2015)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed method</li> <li>Instrument: Survey questionnaire, classroom observations, interviews and checklist.</li> <li>Respondents: English teachers from 7 districts of Negeri Sembilan</li> </ul>	<p>Teaching approaches:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respondents applied all approaches of teaching literature, literature teaching activities in ESL classroom at average level.</li> <li>The result also showed that the option English teacher had used more teaching approaches and activities than non-option English teachers.</li> <li>There is a significant positive relationship between approaches and teaching activities.</li> </ul> <p>Difficulties in teaching literary texts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Text selection</li> <li>Language was difficult and the length of the text was long.</li> <li>Text difficulties mismatch with students' abilities.</li> <li>Students were not familiar with the background of the story and writer.</li> <li>Students' weak reading comprehension and lack of interest</li> <li>Students' low English proficiency levels</li> <li>Teachers did not emphasise the on the cultural aspects of the texts.</li> </ul>
Paatsch et al (2019)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mixed method</li> <li>Instrument: Questionnaire and interview</li> <li>Respondent: 321 respondents teaching in primary schools in the state of Victoria, Australia.</li> </ul>	<p>Challenges faced by respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respondents have lack of confidence and professional training,</li> <li>They rated their knowledge level of teaching literature as medium to low.</li> <li>They also face problems in teaching literature related to the students' own knowledge</li> <li>They still have limited knowledge in using digital resources.</li> </ul> <p>Teachers' pedagogical practices:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respondents mostly used print-based story books.</li> <li>Not many respondents used Web 2.0 technologies such as creating digital book</li> </ul>

---

		and short films, using blog and wikis for collaborative activities.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They fostered critical thinking and multimodal meaning making in the lessons.</li> </ul>
Charanjit et al (2020)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Qualitative method</li> <li>• Instrument: Observation, interview and document analysis</li> <li>• Respondents: 3 upper primary school ESL teachers who had more than three years of teaching experience in one of the primary schools in Perak.</li> </ul>	<p>Strategies used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents used more lower order thinking skills when teaching literary texts in the lessons</li> <li>• The strategies used by each respondent which were based on the students' English proficiency levels.</li> <li>• Two respondents incorporated technology in their literature lessons and used higher order thinking skills questions when teaching students with good English proficiency level.</li> </ul> <p>Challenges faced by respondents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Respondents had time constraints to prepare lessons</li> <li>• They also mentioned that students have low proficiency level</li> </ul>

---

## Discussion

### Challenges in using Literary texts in English Classroom

#### Text Selection

The main challenge faced in using literary texts in English classroom is the language of the texts selected which include the difficulties to understand the texts especially for low English proficient students (Othman et al., 2015; Krishnasamy, 2015; Hassan, 2018; Yulnetri, 2018; Lock & Zainal, 2020). Although teachers are equipped with ample of knowledge and proficient with the language itself, it does not mean that they can deliver it effectively (Cheung, 2019). In Malaysian context for example, the implementation of CEFR by using foreign texts to be used in literature class might seem to be a problem for students to understand the texts. Thus, Malaysian teachers perceive local texts to be more relatable to the students (Muhammad Shahril et al., 2020) and to be used in the Malaysian schools. In addition, the use of literary texts such as graphic novels are highly be favoured by students at primary levels, however students tend to ignore the reading of dialogues in the speech balloons and will be fascinated with the illustrations which make them have hard times to understand the storyline (Suriani et al., 2017). This might interrupt the students' reading comprehension skills as they take the opportunity to read the literary texts for pleasure, rather than critically study about the texts with the desire to increase their knowledge and practising literary appreciation to the texts. While it is beneficial for students to explore the text meaningfully, it is a concern to choose appropriate texts that teachers could use to encourage students to learn the texts analytically and critically (Lock and Zainal, 2020).

**Students' Motivation and Proficiency Levels**

The common problem faced by ESL/EFL students in learning literature in English is their low proficiency level (Krishnasamy, 2015; Isikli & Tarakcioglu, 2017; Hassan, 2018; Cheung, 2019; DinkuGebeyehu et al., 2019). They tend to encounter problems such as interpreting the texts and analysing the storyline and have difficulty in terms of writing coherently even if they understand the texts (Hassan, 2018). Students who rarely use English because they are not exposed to the language also have a higher tendency for not being able to answer high order thinking skills questions related to literary texts in English (Charanjit et al., 2020). When students' abilities are constrained due to this factor, teachers might be affected too. Another research carried out by Cheung and Hennebry-Leung (2020) also had suggested that teachers perceive students' ability to learn different levels of meaning in literary texts face common difficulties for them to further explain such texts to students. This situation consequently demotivates both teachers and students to teach and learn respectively in the class. It makes things worse if students with low proficiency level are urged to study literary texts which do not suit their ability to understand the text. The findings from research carried out by Gopal and Mokhtar (2020) also suggested that the level of lower secondary form students' reading and comprehension of the literary texts is based students' language ability level students as they could not infer beyond the text, relate the text to own personal life, give opinion and justify it if the texts are difficult to interpret. In contrast, based on the study conducted, Lock and Zainal (2020) indicated that students perceived positive attitudes towards learning poetry but felt challenging to interpret the text which implies that students still have interest to learn poetry, nonetheless.

**Teachers' Teaching Skills and Practices**

It is found that teachers' own weaknesses in using literary texts is another major challenge to teach literature in English lessons. Cheung (2019) stated that teachers who have low confidence level have limited capability to give instruction precisely when generating input of knowledge to the students. It is suggested that teachers should be trained and self-explore to impart knowledge and skills in teaching of literature. Besides, it is a challenge to teach literary texts without supporting tools and limited materials and resources (Yulnetri, 2018). Creative and innovative teaching tools should be provided by the schools and teachers to boost students' interest in learning literary texts. Research conducted by Paatsch et al. (2019) stated that there were still a lack number of teachers who use technology and foster critical thinking and multimodal meaning-making activities to teach literary texts. On top of that, although education background such as majoring in linguistics and literature equip teachers with ample knowledge to integrate literary text in English lessons, it does not guarantee that the teachers could cater low English proficient students' needs to learn literature effectively (Cheung, 2019).

**Other Factors**

Time constraint or limited number of lessons offered to teach also contributed to the problems in using literary texts in English classroom (Isikli & Tarakcioglu, 2017; Charanjit et al., 2020). It is mentioned that teachers could not use literary texts to teach in English class effectively because the number of lessons to teach English was limited and more time was needed especially when students were not ready or demotivated to read the literary texts. Hassan (2018) in their research also revealed that there was a significant gap between examination and the selected texts that influence students' motivation to read the literary

texts. In Malaysian context, literature component is no longer being part of examination module since 2019. Therefore, results from the past studies from 2019 to 2022 reveals that there is a higher chance students and teachers might see studying literary texts for examination purpose is not a critical problem. In comparison to other countries like Bangladesh, there was a gap between examination with the literary texts itself as the students were only required to answer one item for eight marks based on the texts studied (Hassan, 2018) in which the students might find it not worth it to focus too much on studying literary texts.

### **Teachers' Teaching Approaches, Strategies and Activities**

#### **Most and Least Preferred Teaching Approach**

It is found out that information-based approach is more convenient to be used in the literature classroom because it follows various literary techniques to impart a great deal of knowledge to students and the resources to teach the texts are not limited (Parojenog, 2020). Similarly, the findings from research conducted by Ling and Eng (2016) indicated that information-based approach was favoured more, followed by moral-philosophical approach. Another research carried out by Suhaimi et al (2021) discovered that the teaching approach favoured by students the most is moral-philosophical approach, followed by the information-based approach. This probably indicates that teachers who used moral-philosophical approach in the study found it more practical to incorporate moral values in their lessons compared to the other approaches. Information-based allows the students to gain literary information that deepens their understanding about specific literary texts' subject matter (Ling & Eng, 2016). Study done by Krishnasamy (2015) however revealed that teachers used all teaching approaches and literary classroom activities averagely. This review also discovers that language and personal response approach are the least preferred by teachers in the lessons. Suliman et al. (2019) stated that personal approach-based activities such as personal journal writing seemed to be irrelevant in literature and therefore this approach was the least favoured by students.

#### **Strategies and Teaching Activities to Cope the Problems**

To cope with such challenges, it is suggested by Charanjit et al (2020) to incorporate technology to enhance students' personal enjoyment in literature lessons as well as using practical teaching strategies to suit students' proficiency level. Othman et al (2015) also suggested that students gave positive feedbacks on the usage of technology in literature lessons. This is supported by Sivalapan and Ahmad (2010) that mentioned implementation of multimedia in literature lessons is easier for them to acquire information as it is more helpful and effective than the ones provided by the textbooks or their teachers. Charanjit et al (2020) conducted a study on the use of teaching strategies to develop high order thinking skills in teaching literary texts to promote critical thinking skill among the students. The study proved that the strategies used by each respondent were based on the students' English proficiency levels: questioning practices used by teachers to teach literary texts to students with a high proficiency level in English contain more high order thinking skills elements compared to a class with low proficient students. It was also found that teachers preferred student-centred activities (Suliman et al., 2019) such as retelling stories as it indirectly helps to improve students' speaking skills.



### Recommendation and Conclusion

Most of the research reviewed focus on the challenges come across by teachers and students generally. The limitation of this review found is lack of emphasis on the use of technology to cater the needs of students with different proficiency levels. It is hoped that the use of literary texts in English classrooms can be conducted effectively by catering every essential aspect of students' learning needs. Teachers should be given practical and effective trainings to improve their teaching approaches and strategies when utilising literary texts and setting positive attitudes in overcoming challenges encountered. Based on the systematic review, it can be concluded that the challenges in using literary texts in English classroom are the literary text selection, students' lack of motivation and low proficiency levels as well as teachers' practices. Teaching and learning of literature are important because of its benefits that should be embraced by every learner. Despite difficulties faced by educators in delivering the knowledge to the learners, teaching approaches in literature classroom should be improved so that the teaching of English literature can serve its functions to its best. Educational technology, effective teaching strategies and creative classroom activities must be incorporated to teach literary texts as it will not just give the English language lessons becomes meaningful, but also helps students to develop different perspective and worldview through appreciating literary works. In the future, it is expected that this study will help the ministry of education in Malaysia and policy makers to improve literature curriculum in the future as well as giving wider opportunities for literature academicians to gain insights on discovering more approaches and strategies to overcome challenges specifically in literature education.

### References

- Arafah, B. (2018). Incorporating the use of literature as an innovative technique for teaching English. *The 1st Annual International Conference on Language and Literature*, 3(4), 24. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v3i4.1914>
- Affendi, F. R., & Abdul Aziz, A. (2020). Systematic review: the challenges and approaches in the teaching of English Literature in enhancing English proficiency. *International Journal of Academic Research in Progressive Education & Development*, 10(4), 318–336. <https://doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v9-i1/7136>
- Bobkina, J., & Dominguez, E. (2014). The use of literature and literary texts in the EFL classroom; between consensus and controversy. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and English Literature*, 3(2), 248–260. <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.ijalel.v.3n.2p.248>
- Brumfit, C. (1985). *Language and literature teaching: From practice to principle*. Oxford.
- Carter, R., & Long, M. N. (1991). *Teaching literature*. Longman.
- Cheng, K. K. Y. (2008). *Issues in the teaching and learning of children's literature in Malaysia*. 9(2), 112–125.
- Cheung, A. (2019). Second language teachers' conceptions of teaching literary texts. *The Electronic Journal for English as a Second Language (TESL-EJ)*, 23(1), 1–18.
- Cheung, A., & Hennebry-Leung, M. (2020). Exploring an ESL teachers' beliefs and practices of teaching literary texts: A case study in Hong Kong. *Language Teaching Research*. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168820933447>
- DinkuGebeyehu, Mekonnen, S., & Markos, M. (2019). Teachers' and students' challenges, perceptions and techniques of using short stories in English as foreign language

- speaking classroom: BoredaForeign ary school tenth graders in Focus. *International Journal of Engineering Science and Computing*, 9(7), 23210–23211.
- Suhaimi, E. A., Isyaku, H., Nazri, L. N. J. A. (2020). Students' perceptions of the English literature component in Malaysian secondary schools in. *Language Related Research*, 11(6), 125–144. <https://doi.org/10.29252/LRR.11.5.125>
- Suhaimi, E. A., Isyaku, H., Nazri, L. N. J. A. (2021). Approaches to the teaching of English Literature preferred by students in selected Malaysian secondary schools. *Journal of Siberian Federal University. Humanities & Social Sciences 2021*, 14(3), 396–407. <https://doi.org/10.17516/1997>
- Gopal, R., & Mokhtar, M. M. (2020). Literary texts selection for Malaysian lower secondary schools in Perak. *Universal Journal of Educational Research*, 8(8), 3417–3422. <https://doi.org/10.13189/ujer.2020.080815>
- Hassan, K. M. (2018). Difficulties facing English teachers in teaching literary texts at higher secondary level in Bangladesh. *English Language and Literature Studies*, 8(3), 15. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ells.v8n3p15>
- Işıklı, C., & Tarakçıoğlu, A. Ö. (2017). Investigating problems of English literature teaching to EFL high school students in Turkey with focus on language proficiency. *Journal of Language and Linguistic Studies*, 13(2), 82–95. [www.jlls.org](http://www.jlls.org)
- Kaur, P., & Mahmor, N. (2014). Examining the role of the English literature component in the Malaysian English curriculum. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 134(May), 119–124. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2014.04.229>
- Kementerian Pelajaran Malaysia. (2000). *Sukatan Pelajaran Kurikulum Bersepadu Sekolah Menengah*. Bahagian Pembangunan Kurikulum.
- Khan, K., Kunz, R., Kleijnen, J., & Antes, G. (2003). Five steps to conducting a systematic review. *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine*, 96(3), 118–121.
- Krishnasamy, J. (2015). An investigation of teachers' approaches employed in teaching the English literature. *Asian Journal of Education and E-Learning*, 03(02), 136–145.
- Lima, C. (2011). Selecting Literary Texts for Language Learning. *Journal of NELTA*, 15(1–2), 110–113. <https://doi.org/10.3126/nelta.v15i1-2.4616>
- Ling, S., & Eng, S. C. (2016). Types of English literature teaching approaches preferred by teachers in secondary schools in Miri, Sarawak. *International Journal of Language Education and Applied Linguistics*, 04, 1–14. <http://ijleal.ump.edu.my/>
- Wai, L. K. T., & Abidin, Z. H. (2020). Learning Poetry: Attitudes and challenges faced by ESL students. *LSP International Journal*, 7(2), 55–69. <https://doi.org/10.11113/lspi.v7.16343>
- Nair, Gopala & Setia, Roszainora & Ghazali, Siti & Sabapathy, Elangkeeran & Mohamad, Razita & Ali, Myshithah & Muniandy, Mohan & Theethappan, Ramachandran & Hassan, Wan & Che Hassan, Nor Syamimi Iliani. (2012). Can literature improve english proficiency: The students perspective. *Asian Social Science*, 8(12), 21–27. <https://doi.org/10.5539/ass.v8n12p21>
- Othman, N. I., Shah, P. M., Karim, A. A., Yusof, A., Din, R., Ramli, N. A., & Salleh, N. S. (2015). Personalizing learning of English literature: Perceptions and challenges. *Journal of Personalized Learning*, 1(1), 104–112.
- Paatsch, L., Hutchison, K., & Cloonan, A. (2019). Literature in the Australian English Curriculum: Victorian primary school teachers' practices, challenges and preparedness to teach. *Australian Journal of Teacher Education*, 44(3). <https://doi.org/10.14221/ajte.2018v44n3.4>

- Parojenog, R. C. (2020). Approaches in teaching literature employed by senior high school teachers. *IOER International Multidisciplinary Research Journal*, 2(2), 52–58.
- Prowse, P. (2002). Top ten principles for teaching extensive reading: A response. *Reading in a Foreign Language*, 14/2.
- Mustakim, S. S., Mustapha, R., & Lebar, O. (2014). Teacher's approaches in teaching literature: Observations of ESL classroom. *Malaysian Online Journal of Educational Science*, 2(4), 35–44.
- Sivapalan, S., & Ahmad, W. F. (2010). A web-based multimedia approach to literature in Malaysian secondary schools: Learners' preferences. *European Journal of Social Sciences*, 12(3), 328–335.
- Subarna, S., & Ganakumaran, S. (2008). The incorporation of literature in the English language program for engineering students: learner interest and perception. *3L: Language, Linguistics, Literature*, 14, 45–73.
- Subramaniam, G. (2003). Linguistic Pathways to the Study of Literature in the Malaysian ESL Context. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 3(1), 1675–8021.
- Suliman, A., Yunus, M., & Nor, M. Y. (2019). Scrutinising the preferences in Literature approaches and activities: from the lenses of ESL teachers. *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 25(2), 38–48.  
<https://doi.org/http://doi.org/10.17576/3L-2019-2502-03>
- Suriani Mohd Yusof, Zalina Mohd Lazim, & Khazriyati Salehuddin. (2017). Teacher trainees' perspectives of teaching graphic novels to ESL primary schoolers. *3L: The Southeast Asian Journal of English Language Studies*, 23(3), 81–96.
- Yahya, O. (2017). The inclusion of literature components in Malaysian English papers: the challenges and pros in teaching and Learning. *Al-Ta'lim Journal*, 24(3), 174–186.
- Yulnetri. (2018). Obstacles encountered while integrating literature in teaching English. *Ta'dib*, 21(1), 39. <https://doi.org/10.31958/jt.v21i1.1099>
- Yunus, M. M., Salehi, H., & John, D. S. A. (2013). Using visual aids as a motivational tool in enhancing students' interest in reading literary texts. *Recent Advances in Educational Technologies*, 114–117. <http://arxiv.org/abs/1305.6360>