



The investigation of English language teachers' use of literature and innovative technologies in the classroom according to various variables ¹

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated the utilization of literature and innovative technologies in language teaching among EFL teachers working in secondary and high schools, taking into account various variables. The research involved 154 English teachers who worked in both private and public secondary and high schools in southeastern Türkiye. A mixed research methodology was employed, using a 40-item Likert scale and a questionnaire consisting of open-ended and closed-ended questions to gather quantitative data. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 15 teachers who volunteered to participate, offering a more comprehensive exploration of the topic. The quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS, and inductive thematic analysis was applied for the qualitative data. The results indicated that English teachers acknowledged the potential of literature usage in language teaching. However, the integration of literature within their classrooms varied significantly based on factors such as gender, age, and reading habits. The study also examined the adoption of innovative technological resources like digital storytelling tools and blogs in EFL classrooms. The findings revealed that English teachers held positive attitudes towards employing such technologies in language teaching. They believed that these materials could effectively enhance students' language skills, creativity, and motivation. Nevertheless, they identified specific challenges that hindered the incorporation of these materials in the language classroom, including limited school facilities, students' language proficiency levels, curriculum constraints, and time limitations.

Keywords

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digital storytelling,
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Introduction

Advocates emphasize the inclusion of literature in second language teaching to enhance students' linguistic (Collie & Slater, 1987) and cultural knowledge (Kaşlıoğlu & Ersin, 2018) and to boost motivation (Günbay, 2021). Literature's significance in English Language Teaching (ELT) grew since the 1980s due to the belief that meaningful, authentic contexts aid language acquisition (Kramsch & Kramsch, 2000). Integrating literature into language

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teaching aligns with innovative technology use. Technology is now integral to learning, inside and outside classrooms. It offers essential resources, supports collaboration, and introduces novel practice methods. Technological advancements have transformed language learning and teaching, fostering tools like digital storytelling, online fanfiction, and blogs (Zhai et al., 2021). Among these tools, digital storytelling has been found to develop students' literary, linguistic, and cognitive growth, enhancing creativity and motivation. Grant and Bolin (2016) underline how it enables students to embody course content, personal perspectives, and social justice themes in narratives. Studies underscore its impact on literary comprehension (Rustia et al., 2023) and various skills like autonomous learning (Hafner & Miller, 2011), literacies (Balaman, 2018), motivation (Parsazadeh et al., 2021), cognitive development (Foley, 2013), creativity (Rubino et al., 2018), and collaboration (LaFrance & Blizzard, 2013). On the other hand, it has been reported that online fanfiction encourages critique, discussions, and collaborative writing. Novianti's study (2017) reveals its motivational influence on learning literary canon, understanding literary elements, and improved scores. Furthermore, the studies show that fanfiction enhances comprehension (Rossetti, 2014), engagement (Jones, 2015), and reading and writing skills (Black, 2006; Sauro & Sundmark, 2016). As a valuable digital tool, blogs offer another avenue for literary integration. Lin's study (2014) demonstrates their positive impact on writing performance, learning motivation, and self-efficacy. The studies demonstrate that blogs foster reflective learning (Xie et al., 2008), L2 writing (Gabaudan, 2016), collaboration (Alm, 2009), and higher-order thinking (Ford, 2007).

This study explores the impact of using literature in language teaching and examines the integration of innovative methods and technological resources, such as digital storytelling, online fanfiction, and blogging, to enhance its implementation in the classroom. Specifically, this study aims to determine whether teachers' utilization of literature, their receptivity to innovative methodologies and resources for teaching language through literature, and their current professional development and innovative practices vary in accordance with individual characteristics such as gender, age, years of teaching experience, program of study, attendance at literature courses, and reading habits.

Literature Review

This section comprises a comprehensive literature review that encompasses the utilization of literature and literary genres within language classrooms. Additionally, it examines innovative methodologies, technologies, and resources in the context of employing literature in English Language Teaching. These two primary aspects constitute the focal points of the present study.

Use of Literature and Literary Genres in Language Classes

The incorporation of literary excerpts from genres such as drama, short stories, novels, and poetry in language classrooms has been shown to enhance student interest and motivation in language learning (Günbay, 2021). Pulverness (2003) recommends maximizing literature's role in language classrooms, with teachers playing a pivotal role. Instructors are advised to thoughtfully select texts aligned with students' interests, proficiency, needs, and cultural context (Collie & Slater, 1987). Conducting a needs analysis helps assess student competencies, backgrounds, and cultural preferences. Content and publication year of literary works should also be considered. It is important for educators to remember that the focus is on language instruction, not literature (García, 2017).

The benefits of using literature in language classes can be summarized as personal involvement, authentic material, cultural enrichment, and language enrichment. Learners aiming for English proficiency benefit from exposure to authentic language in real-life contexts (Kaharuddin, 2018). Moreover, written literary works, such as short stories and novels, not only inspire writing, reading, and skill development (Türker, 1991) but also provide a unique avenue for engagement. Engaging with stories in the target language, contrasting them with students' cultural backgrounds, and facilitating discussions with peers and instructors have been shown to be more motivating than traditional text-based approaches (Günbay, 2021).

By connecting with the characters in these literary pieces, students foster self-expression, motivation, and a deeper exploration of the language (Violetta-Irene, 2015). Furthermore, the use of literary dialogues within these texts not only encourages personal responses but also enhances reading proficiency (Traore & Blankson, 2011). Consequently, the integration of literature into language instruction serves to not only support vocabulary acquisition but also ignite enthusiasm for the learning process itself (Traore & Blankson, 2011).

Literature plays a pivotal role in the development of critical thinking skills, fostering higher-order abilities such as analysis and creativity (Naji et al., 2019; Škobo, 2020; Solmaz, 2020). Moreover, through interaction with literature, individuals are prompted to delve into deeper explorations of textual interpretations (Khatib & Nourzadeh, 2011). When integrated into English as a Foreign Language (EFL) settings, literary texts facilitate complex language learning experiences (Keshavarzi, 2012). This integration not only promotes linguistic growth but also enhances overall cognitive engagement. In addition to its impact on critical thinking, literature also contributes to heightened language awareness by encouraging exploratory learning (Hişmanoğlu, 2005). Furthermore, it serves as a valuable channel for cultural insights, unveiling a panorama of diverse values, norms, and behaviors (Kaşlıoğlu & Ersin, 2018). Škobo (2020) argues that incorporating contemporary media formats like video games, graphic novels, interactive hypertexts, language platforms, and digital tools into literature instruction fosters critical thinking among students. The skills gained from analyzing these modern media can be effectively applied to the study of traditional literary works.

While literature integration offers substantial benefits, it also presents notable challenges, spanning areas such as student proficiency, teachers' expertise, curriculum alignment, and linguistic complexity (Krishnasamy, 2015). The intricate nature of linguistic elements further complicates this integration, as linguistic intricacies hinder the seamless blending of literature into language instruction (Divsar & Tahriri, 2009). Additionally, practical constraints such as limited teaching time and a lack of familiarity with various literary genres can become formidable obstacles (Farhanah & Hadina, 2022). Notably, teachers' familiarity with essential literary terms plays a pivotal role in students' comprehension of the material (Arib, 2010). Furthermore, navigating the cultural nuances embedded within literary texts presents unique challenges (Jones, 2015). Despite these hurdles, it is crucial to acknowledge the potential of literature to broaden perspectives and enrich the educational experience.

Innovative Methodologies, Technologies, and Resources in the Use of Literature in ELT

While the use of literature in the language classroom is a long-standing practice, recent advances in technology have introduced new pedagogical approaches. The digital age has ushered in a plethora of tools and online spaces that encourage connection, learning, and knowledge sharing, significantly changing the landscape of English Language Teaching

(ELT). In this context, the inclusion of literary excerpts not only enhances language learning, but also paves the way for innovative approaches such as fanfiction, digital storytelling, e-books, audiobooks, and blogs, each of which offers unique benefits and challenges. This literature review explores both the traditional and modern facets of this evolving field, shedding light on the benefits and potential obstacles of these innovative methods and technologies.

The internet facilitates emerging methodologies through online spaces that encourage connection, learning, and knowledge-sharing. One significant development is the exploration of fanfiction as a language learning tool (Thomas, 2011). Fanfiction involves crafting stories using existing characters and plots, extending beyond replication to narrative expansion (Black, 2009; Thomas, 2006). This approach boosts engagement, comprehension, and literacy skills (Jones, 2015; Rossetti, 2014; Sauro & Sundmark, 2016).

Modern information technologies facilitate online fan interaction, enabling collaborative writing, sharing, critique, and discourse (Black, 2006). Sauro and Sundmark (2016) explored its role in language learning, observing its efficacy in motivating English learning and enhancing literacy, even with varied participation levels. Novianti (2017) investigated fanfiction's influence on teaching literary canon, noting increased test scores and enthusiasm for reading and writing. Similarly, Permatasari et al. (2020) found that reading on platforms like Wattpad positively impacted Indonesian students' English proficiency. Škobo (2020) asserted that when harnessed effectively, digital tools can serve as a powerful catalyst for creativity, particularly in fostering discussions and debates surrounding moral dilemmas, which are central themes in many of the most esteemed literary works.

Digital Storytelling (DST), another technology-enhanced strategy, supports project-based, student-centered learning experiences (Wu & Chen, 2020). Research highlights its effectiveness in listening, speaking, writing, and reading (Balaman, 2018). DST also nurtures sociocultural identities, autonomous learning, motivation, creativity, cognitive development, vocabulary enrichment, and collaborative relationships (Hafner & Miller, 2011; Parsazadeh et al., 2021; Rubino et al., 2018; Foley, 2013; Tatlı et al., 2022).

Another technology, e-books offer enhanced accessibility, affordability, and portability compared to printed books (Sage et al., 2019). Collaborative mobile e-book reading benefits struggling EFL readers, improving their reading performance and attitudes (Al-Jarf, 2021). Audiobooks, known as 'talking books', contribute to language skill development (Tusmagambet, 2020). They enhance listening comprehension, reading speed, and overall engagement (Tusmagambet, 2020).

Technological advancements, exemplified by Web 2.0, have been credited with fostering digital literacies in ELT environments, rendering literary works more accessible, engaging, and instructive for EFL learners. They contribute to enhanced writing performance, elevated learning motivation, improved self-efficacy, deeper reflective learning processes, refined second language writing skills, enhanced cooperation, and the development of higher-order thinking skills (Alm, 2009; Ford, 2007; Gabaudan, 2016; Xie et al., 2008). Moreover, the integration of social media into literature instruction, encompassing both student content consumption and production within the digital realm, empowers teachers to cultivate critical thinking skills in their students, enabling them to conduct thoughtful, critical, and analytical inquiries about the broader impact of social media (Škobo, 2020).

Furthermore, while technology provides broader access to diverse literary sources and enables online discussions, it may also encourage superficial engagement. As Škobo and Dragičević (2019) suggest, the solution lies in human interaction, which can be restored through one-on-one connections, especially between students and teachers. By emphasizing critical thinking and reflective reading, educators can guide students to delve deeply into texts and analyze underlying values. Incorporating technology in a complementary manner can

foster in-depth dialogues that enrich the literary experience. Moreover, educators should highlight the cultural and historical context of literary works, facilitating a deeper appreciation of human values within those contexts. In conclusion, technology's impact on comprehending human values in literature demands a balanced approach from educators (Škobo & Dragičević, 2019). By promoting critical thinking, contextual understanding, and genuine social interaction, educators can ensure that technology enhances rather than hinders the exploration of these values in literary works.

The emergence and spread of Web 2.0 and similar technologies have made it possible to practice digital literacies in foreign language teaching contexts. With these technological developments, access to literary works has become faster and easier, as well as enjoyable and instructive for EFL learners. However, despite the existing research and studies supporting the contribution of literature to language learning, teachers often do not give sufficient attention to the use of this tool in their practices (Torrano-Guillamón et al., 2019). The reluctance of teachers to incorporate literature into their lessons can be attributed to a number of factors, including their limited knowledge in the field of literature, time constraints, and adherence to the prescribed curriculum (e.g., Assefa, 2019; Hayırsöz, 2014). Furthermore, the field of language learning and English literacy teaching has undergone a transformative change due to the rapid advancement of technology (Zhai et al., 2021). Examples of such technological development include tools offering considerable benefits in teaching English such as digital storytelling (DST), online fanfiction, and blogs. Additionally, while technological advancements have transformed the landscape of language learning and teaching, it is essential to address the challenges and opportunities presented in this evolving context. In response to address these challenges, this study aims to explore secondary and high school teachers' views on using literature in teaching English as a foreign language. It differentiates between educators with and without university training in English literature and technology, investigating their current teaching methods and technological usage. The research also seeks to identify literary work types employed, reasons for their inclusion or exclusion, advantages and disadvantages of using literature for language instruction, and innovative technological resources adopted. Teachers from various locations within the region were selected to ensure participant diversity, examining potential variations based on school level and geography. Through questionnaires and semi-structured interviews, this study provides valuable insights into English language teachers' perspectives, offering input for curriculum enhancement by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in Türkiye.

In the context of these goals, the literature review serves to provide valuable insights into the relevant background and set the stage for understanding the research questions and objectives. Consequently, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. Do teachers' views on the use of literature in the classroom vary with factors like gender, age, teaching experience, education, literature training, and reading habits?
2. Do teachers' perspectives on the use of innovative methods in the classroom differ based on gender, age, experience, education, literature training, and reading habits?
3. Do teachers' attitudes toward using innovative resources differ by gender, age, experience, education, literature training, and reading habits?
4. Do teachers' opinions on professional development and innovation vary based on gender, age, experience, education, literature training, and reading habits?
5. What are secondary and high school English teachers' perceptions of literature and innovative technology use in language teaching?

Methodology

Design of the Study

The purpose of this research is to investigate teachers' use of literature and the innovative methods and technological resources they use to teach language through literature, taking into account various variables. To achieve this objective, a mixed methods sequential explanatory research design was employed. There are two distinct phases in the explanatory sequential mixed method design: a quantitative phase and a qualitative phase (Creswell, 2014). In the initial phase, the researcher gathers quantitative data, conducts an analysis of the outcomes, and subsequently employs the insights gained to structure the qualitative phase. The selection of participants and the formation of the questions in the qualitative phase are based on the quantitative findings. The overall aim of the design is to enable the qualitative data to further explain the initial quantitative findings. As described by Creswell (2014), a typical process includes collecting survey data in the first phase, analyzing the data, and then conducting qualitative interviews to enhance the understanding of the survey results. The 40-item questionnaire developed by Torrano-Guillamón et al. (2019) was used to explore teachers' perceptions of the use of literature in their ELT classrooms, and the interview questions were developed with the help of an academic expert and a review of previous studies and literature in the field (e.g., Hayırsöz, 2014; Tahtacı, 2022).

Participants

The research population consisted of secondary and high school EFL teachers working in southeastern Türkiye during the 2022-2023 academic year. The sample of the research comprised 154 English teachers working in public secondary and high schools and private secondary and high schools (Table 1). Participants were identified through the use of a purposive sampling technique. Purposive sampling, also known as subjective, judgmental, or selective sampling, as noted by Patton (2002) involves strategically and purposefully selecting information-rich cases based on the study's objectives and available resource. Permission to conduct the survey and interviews was obtained from the district office of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). The data for each school collected through the local MoNE website, and then, the English teachers from these schools were contacted. Each school was visited during the 2022-2023 school year, and the research instruments were administered with the consent of the headmasters and teachers. A total of 154 EFL teachers from secondary and high schools participated in the study, of whom 105 were female and 49 were male. The majority of participants were English teachers between the ages of 30 and 39 (n=56), with an English Language Teaching (ELT) degree (n=114), within their first five years of teaching experience (n=54), and working in secondary schools (n=97).

Table 1. Demographic Features of the Participants

Variable	Category	F	%	Variable
Gender	Female	105	68.2%	
	Male	49	31.8%	
Age	20-29	54	35.0%	
	30-39	56	36.4%	
	40-49	36	23.4%	
	50 and over	8	5.2%	
Graduated Program	English Language Teaching	114	74.0%	
	English Language and Literature	30	19.5%	
	American Language and Literature	1	.7%	
	Linguistics	2	1.3%	
	Translation and Interpreting	2	1.3%	
	Other	5	3.2%	
Years of Experience	1-5 year(s)	54	35.1%	
	6-10 years	34	22.0%	
	11-15 years	20	13.0%	
	16 years and over	46	29.9%	
Type of School	State	139	90.3%	
	Private	15	9.7%	
Level of School	Secondary School	57	37.0%	
	High School	97	63.0%	

Data collection

The research employed quantitative and qualitative data collection methods. Prior to data collection, permission to conduct research was obtained from the district office of the Ministry of National Education (MoNE). Participants in the schools were contacted after obtaining the consent of the school principal. Some participants completed questionnaires in paper format, while others preferred to fill out the instrument using Google forms.

The second stage of data collection involved semi-structured face-to-face interviews with 15 English teachers who agreed to participate. The interviews were conducted either through the Zoom application or face-to-face mutually agreed-upon times between the teacher and the researcher. Prior to the interviews, verbal permission to record the semi-structured interviews was obtained from the interviewees. The interviews were recorded using a voice recorder for face-to-face interviews and through Zoom's in-built recording system for online interviews. Teachers had the option to choose whether they preferred to participate in the interview in English or Turkish to ensure their comfort and ability to express themselves effectively. The voice recordings of participants who participated in the interviews in Turkish were translated into English by the researcher and subsequently reviewed by another proficient English teacher. The interviews, which had duration of around 20-25 minutes each, were transcribed after being conducted.

Data analysis

Quantitative data analysis (questionnaire) was conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 26.0). The t-test was used when comparing two independent samples

of a factor, while One-Way ANOVA was used when comparing more than two samples. One-Way ANOVA was used when the normality condition was met. To detect differences between groups, the Scheffe test was used when the variances were equal and the Tamhane T2 test when they were not. If a normal distribution was not present, the Kruskal-Wallis H test was applied, and differences between groups were assessed using the Mann-Whitney U test.

The qualitative data, gathered through interviews, were collected via Zoom calls and in-person meetings. To ensure participants felt comfortable expressing their opinions, they were given the option to participate in the interviews in either English or Turkish. For participants who opted for Turkish, their responses were meticulously translated into English by the researcher and subsequently reviewed by another proficient English teacher. To ensure the reliability and validity of the analysis, the researcher collaborated with an experienced colleague. The qualitative data analysis employed an inductive thematic analysis method, which aimed to identify and explore emerging patterns and themes directly from the dataset, rather than relying on pre-existing patterns (Braun & Clarke, 2006). To gain a comprehensive understanding of the recurring themes and patterns, the researcher followed the approach proposed by Creswell (2014). This involved a thorough examination of the data. During this process, the researcher meticulously annotated relevant phrases and sentences that revealed the underlying patterns and themes. By bringing these annotations together, the researcher derived meaningful interpretations by grouping the identified themes and patterns. This approach ensured a detailed and comprehensive analysis of the qualitative data.

Results

Questionnaire Results on EFL Teachers' Use of Literature in the Classroom

The impact of gender on participants' utilization of literature in EFL classrooms was assessed through independent samples t-tests. Statistical analysis indicated that female participants ($M=34.68$, $SD=7.54$) incorporated literature in their classrooms more than males ($M=31.62$, $SD=8.17$). It was concluded that there was a significant difference between men and women with respect to the use of literature in EFL classrooms, $t(152)=2.27$, $p=.024$.

Table 2. T-test Results for the Impact of Gender on EFL Teachers' Use of Literature in the Classroom

	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Female	105	34.68	7.54	2.278	152	.024
Male	49	31.62	8.17			

$p < .05$

The age of the participants was considered as a potential influencing factor on how EFL teachers incorporate literary works into their teaching. To present statistical outcomes for the quantitative data, the One-Way ANOVA test was employed (see Table 3). The results showed a significant difference between English teachers' use of literature in the classroom and their age, $F(3,150)=2.90$, $p=.035$. The effect size, calculated as η^2 , was .056, which indicates a small effect.

Table 3. Tamhane's T2 Results for the Impact of EFL Teachers' Age on the Use of Literature in the Classroom

Section (I)	Section (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig
20-29	30-39	.726	.996
	40-49	4.709	.045*
	50 and over	1.224	1.000
30-39	20-29	-.726	.996
	40-49	3.982	.089
	50 and over	.498	1.000
40-49	20-29	-4.709	.045*
	30-39	-3.982	.089
	50 and over	-3.484	.973
50 and over	20-29	-1.224	1.000
	30-39	-.498	1.000
	40-49	3.484	.973

$p < .05$

The statistics showed a significant difference between teachers' reading habits and the integration of literature in the classroom, $F(4,149)=6.28$, $p=.000$. The eta-squared effect size (η^2) was .144, indicating a large effect (Table 4).

Table 4. Post Hoc Scheffe Results for the Impact of EFL Teachers' Reading Habits on the Use of Literature in the Classroom

Section (I)	Section (J)	Mean Difference (I-J)	Sig.
Often	Generally	3.112	.411
	Sometimes	5.936	.011*
	Rarely	6.622	.123
	Never	16.414	.010*
Generally	Often	-3.112	.411
	Sometimes	2.824	.451
	Rarely	3.510	.693
	Never	13.301	.060
Sometimes	Often	-5.936	.011*
	Generally	-2.824	.451
	Rarely	.685	.999
	Never	10.477	.227
Rarely	Often	-6.622	.123
	Generally	-3.510	.693
	Sometimes	-.685	.999
	Never	9.791	.378
Never	Often	-16.414	.010*
	Generally	-13.301	.060
	Sometimes	-10.477	.227
	Rarely	-9.791	.378

$p < .05$

To investigate the influence of reading habits on the utilization of innovative methodologies in language instruction through literature, teachers were requested to rate their own reading habits. The Kruskal-Wallis H test, a non-parametric analogue of the One-Way ANOVA, was

employed due to the non-normal distribution of groups. The Mann-Whitney U test was subsequently conducted to identify specific groups demonstrating variations (Table 5). The outcomes indicated a distinction between teachers who categorized their reading habits as 'often' and those who categorized theirs as 'sometimes,' 'rarely,' and 'never.'

Table 5. Mann-Whitney U Results for the Impact of EFL Teachers' Reading Habits on Their Use of Innovative Methodologies in the Classroom

	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>Sum of Ranks</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Often	38	52.39	1991.00			
Sometimes	47	35.40	1664.00	536.000	-3.157	.002
Total	85					
	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>Sum of Ranks</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Often	38	28.45	1081.00			
Rarely	12	16.17	194.00	116.000	-2.546	.011
Total	50					
	<i>n</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>Sum of Ranks</i>	<i>U</i>	<i>Z</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Often	38	22.11	840.00			
Never	3	7.00	21.00	15.000	-2.104	.035
Total	74					

$p < .05$

When examining the teachers use of innovative resources in classroom, there was no statistical difference found between teachers' use of innovative resources and their gender, age, years of teaching experience, graduated program, literature course attendance, or their reading frequency. However, when looking at the averages, it was observed that female teachers ($M=28.32$, $SD=8.26$), those in their first 5 years of teaching ($M=30.30$, $SD=7.77$), those aged 20-29 ($M=30.06$, $SD=7.68$), those with a degree in English Language and Literature ($M=29.78$, $SD=8.51$), those who did not take literature courses at university ($M=29.43$, $SD=10.05$) and those who read books frequently ($M=30.71$, $SD=7.07$) tended to benefit more from innovative resources.

Interview Results on the Use of the Literature in the EFL Classroom

When teachers were asked about the effects of integrating literature into language teaching, a common point across some teachers' responses was the skepticism towards the use of literature due to the preference for teaching the curriculum, concerns about students' reading comprehension abilities, and the reliance on condensed works provided in official textbooks. A teacher stated:

“Since my students are in secondary school, I don't believe that their reading comprehension is high enough to understand literary works written in the target language. So, I avoid using them. I try to use only the condensed works on the subject that are included in the textbooks of the Ministry of National Education.” (Interviewee 13)

However, some teachers remarked on their belief in the value of using literature in language teaching to engage students, enhance creativity, prevent monotony, and provide a connection to culture, human life, and reality, ultimately leading to more effective and lasting language learning outcomes. A teacher mentioned in the interviews:

“Literature and language go hand in hand. I think it gives richness, continuity, vitality and reality to language teaching. Since the culture of the language is given together with literature, I believe that

language teaching is more permanent and understandable together with human life and reality. Without literary texts, language teaching alone is not really effective and is more likely to be forgotten.” (Interviewee 9)

When teachers were asked what methods they used in their teaching, the majority of them reported the use of student-centered methods and techniques. However, they also found themselves constrained by factors such as student level, school conditions, and resource limitations, leading them to rely on traditional methods like Grammar-Translation instead of their preferred approaches. One of the teachers mentioned:

“I use the grammar translation method. Yes, it is very old and very traditional. In fact, I think it is a method that should not be used very often. But the conditions of the school - the lack of materials and technological tools - unfortunately force us to use it. On the other hand, although the students are high school students, they still do not know the subjects of primary and secondary school. Unfortunately, I have to teach them grammar and vocabulary to fill this gap.” (Interviewee 5)

As one of the aims of this research was to inform teachers about the use of innovative methods in integrating literature in language teaching, teachers were asked whether they were familiar with fanfiction or not. The majority of the teachers reported that they had previously heard of the fanfiction genre and expressed the belief that incorporating it into the language classroom could yield effective results. Teachers generally recognized its potential in language teaching and learning, including its ability to engage students in active participation, encourage personal expression, foster a sense of sincerity and interest in reading and writing, and extend learning beyond traditional approaches. A teacher noted:

“Yes, I've heard of the fanfiction genre. It can be used in language teaching like any other genre of novel or short story. They can make students more willing to learn the language. Because reading and evaluating fiction written by an ordinary person like themselves, rather than by a famous writer, might seem more sincere to them. It might interest them. They might find the courage to write themselves. They might want to read stories from sites where fanfiction is written.” (Interviewee 11)

Similarly, the analysis of the data revealed that the age of teachers may have an effect on their use of innovative methods and technological resources in teaching literature and language. During the interview, teachers highlighted the relationship between the age of teachers and their reluctance to embrace new methods and technologies in the classroom, with older teachers being less familiar and comfortable with incorporating innovative resources. One of the teachers stated:

“Unfortunately, there is an inverse relationship between the age of teachers and their use of new methods. Teachers who started teaching when there was only blackboard and chalk in the classroom are still using traditional methods and may not even be able to use the Smart Board very actively. However, there is no age for learning. A teacher should continually strive to get better. We are in the age of technology, students are now very specialized in technology and it is in every aspect of their lives. A teacher who does not include technology in the classroom cannot be the focus of the students, cannot hold their attention and, unfortunately, cannot effectively convey the information he or she wants to convey to the students through traditional methods.” (Interviewee 13)

Overall, the interviews revealed that teachers held positive views regarding the integration of literature in language teaching; however, the extent of their utilization of this resource varied depending on factors such as school facilities, students' language proficiency levels, and instructional objectives in language teaching (e.g., curriculum fulfillment or exam-oriented instruction). The respondents expressed similar opinions on the benefits of literature in language teaching, emphasizing the importance of student-centered approaches and considering factors like age, interests, and needs when selecting classroom materials. Additionally, it was noted that none of the teachers had prior exposure to projects or courses focused on the use of literature in language teaching.

Discussion

In this study, a total of 154 EFL teachers from both public and private secondary and high schools participated by completing a questionnaire. Furthermore, 15 of these participants voluntarily engaged in semi-structured face-to-face interviews to contribute qualitative data. The primary objective of this research was to explore the utilization of literature and innovative methodologies, along with technological resources, in the context of foreign language instruction by EFL teachers working in secondary and high school settings.

An independent samples t-test was performed to analyze the potential impact of gender on the utilization of literature in language classes. A significant difference was found between female and male teachers. The findings were in favor of female teachers, which meant that female teachers incorporated literature into their classes more compared to male. Being different from this finding, Tahtacı (2022) found no significant gender difference in his study, although the study's population featured pre-service teachers' use of literature in language teaching. Similarly, in her study, Aysu (2023) explored language teachers' perspectives regarding the integration of literature within the language classroom and determined that there existed no notable distinction in the utilization of literature between male and female educators within the EFL classroom. However, it was also concluded that female teachers were more inclined to use literature than male teachers. Based on the findings of the present study, female teachers may be more inclined or have a greater tendency to utilize literary texts as instructional materials in their language classes.

Regarding the effect of teachers' age on the integration of literature in the classroom, it was found that teachers in the age groups of 20-29 and 30-39 showed a higher degree of benefit from literature compared to older teachers. Conversely, in a study by Bobkina et al. (2021), it was argued that teaching experience and positive perceptions about the use of literature were correlated, suggesting that experienced teachers perceived the benefits of literature better. It can be argued that novice teachers in their study were more inclined to use materials such as literature in their teaching than older teachers, since the age group 20-29 was the group that used literature most in their teaching. Similarly, Calafato and Paran (2019) examined the use of literature by Russian EFL teachers in language teaching according to age variables and found that the group under 30 years of age used literary texts the least, while the group over 50 years of age used literary texts the most in their teaching.

In terms of teachers' experience, no significant difference was found in their use of literature. However, examining the averages revealed that teachers in their first 10 years of teaching tended to use literature more in their classrooms. Similarly, Oran (2014) noted that teachers were supportive of the use of literary texts irrespective of their years of experience. Furthermore, Aysu (2023) found in her study that teachers' years of experience had no effect on the use of literature in language teaching. However, teachers in their first five years in their profession have a higher mean score than other participants with 6-10 years of experience. Therefore, it can be interpreted that while there may not be a significant difference in the overall use of literature, early-career teachers may demonstrate a higher tendency to incorporate literary texts in their teaching compared to more experienced teachers.

No significant difference was found between the program from which teachers graduated and their utilization of literature. However, it was observed that graduates of programs such as American Language and Literature, English Language and Literature, and English Language Teaching had higher averages compared to graduates from other departments. In line with this, Oran (2014) found that both English Literature graduates and English Language Teaching graduates showed a favorable inclination towards the utilization of literature in foreign language teaching, revealing no significant difference between the two groups. Furthermore, it has been concluded that teachers' insufficient beliefs about integrating

literature or lack of teacher training can impact the use of literature in the classroom (e.g., Karcı & Vural, 2011; Paran, 2008). Similarly, Torrano-Guillamón et al. (2019) and Bobkina et al. (2021) emphasized that literature-based training was crucial for literature integration in English language classrooms.

Finally, there was a significant difference between teachers' reading habits and their incorporation of literature into the classroom. It was concluded that as the reading frequency of the teachers decreased, so did the frequency of using literature in their lessons. In terms of reading habits, a significant difference was found between teachers' reading frequency and their use of innovative resources. The findings showed that there was a significant difference between teachers who reported reading 'often' compared to those who reported reading 'sometimes', 'rarely', and 'never'. This result suggests that teachers who frequently engage in reading are more likely to seek new methods and techniques and incorporate them in their teaching practices. It is worth noting that no comparable study was found that specifically examined the impact of reading frequency on the use of innovative methods in language teaching, highlighting the novelty of this finding in the existing literature.

Regarding the effect of teachers' gender and age on their use of innovative methodologies, no significant difference was found between the two groups. Furthermore, the study also concluded that the department of graduation and whether teachers had taken a course on 'Literature and Language Teaching' had no effect on their use of innovative methods. However, it can be noted that teachers with a degree in American Language and Literature ($M=38.50$) and those who have taken literature courses during their university education ($M=29.08$) tended to make more use of innovative methodologies. In a similar vein, Torrano-Guillamón et al. (2019) noted that teachers' literature education was a crucial factor in offering a wide variety of activities and techniques based on innovative approaches and new teaching methods that focus on the integration of language and literature studies.

The interviews yielded results consistent with the survey results, which revealed further insight regarding teachers' use of literature and innovative technologies in language teaching. The majority of teachers expressed their belief that incorporating literature in language teaching has positive outcomes, such as enhancing language learning and fostering cultural awareness among students. This finding is supported by similar studies conducted by the previous research (Assefa, 2019; Bobkina et al., 2021; Egin 2021, Hayırsöz, 2014).

Teachers who reported difficulties in incorporating innovative resources into their classrooms mentioned factors such as limited school facilities, students' language proficiency levels, and the specific language teaching objectives as reasons for this challenge. Hayırsöz (2014) highlighted in her study that teachers stated that the education system itself could act as an obstacle to utilizing literature as a language tool. Egin (2021) emphasized the importance of considering students' interests and language proficiency levels when using short stories in the classroom. Furthermore, Assefa (2019) pointed out that there may be teacher-related issues such as planning activities, providing feedback, and giving instructions that can affect the integration of literature.

Teachers also reported that they consider the characteristics of their students, including their age, interests, and needs, when selecting literary materials for language teaching. In line with this, Hayırsöz (2014) emphasized in her study with English teachers that students' proficiency level and interests are crucial criteria when selecting literature, and that the chosen literary texts should not be overly complex or challenging for the students.

Limitations

Firstly, the study's sample size is limited to 154 English teachers in southeastern Türkiye, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to teachers in different locations.

Another limitation is the inclusion of only private or public secondary or high school teachers, which may limit the applicability of the results to teachers at other educational levels such as kindergarten, primary, or university. The study used two primary data collection tools (a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews) to address the shortcomings of qualitative and quantitative data collection instruments. Nonetheless, the reliability and validity of this study could be improved by using a methodological triangulation technique. Furthermore, it's worth noting that the study concentrates solely on teachers' perspectives, omitting students' experiences. Incorporating insights from students could offer a more comprehensive view of the subject matter. Additionally, delving into the broader educational context might unveil crucial insights into classroom challenges and opportunities. Lastly, while the study acknowledges its limitations concerning geographical and educational level restrictions, it does not consider the potential influence of socio-economic factors or the urban-rural divide on teachers' practices and perspectives.

Conclusions

The study showed that English teachers in both secondary and tertiary schools agreed on the use of literature in the language classroom. The use of literature in the EFL classroom differed significantly according to gender, age and reading habits. The study also found that teachers who read often benefited from using more innovative methods in language teaching through literature. However, no significant difference was found based on the aforementioned variables when analyzing teachers' integration of innovative technological tools in language teaching through literature.

The semi-structured interviews demonstrated that English teachers had positive perceptions of the use of literature in language teaching. They agreed that this material could effectively improve students' language skills, creativity and motivation. However, teachers reported some challenges that hindered their use of innovative resources in the language classroom, including limited school facilities, students' language proficiency levels, curriculum constraints, and time limitations.

The findings revealed that teachers' reading habits, rather than the literature courses they had taken, played a more significant role in their utilization of literature in the classroom. Therefore, it is recommended that courses such as 'Literature and Language Teaching' should be designed to cater to the diverse levels of the students. Regarding the use of technology in the classroom, the study found that younger teachers demonstrated a higher interest in incorporating technological resources. Therefore, there is a need to provide training for middle-aged or elderly teachers to enhance their technological skills. These teachers should be offered seminars or courses that focus on the practical aspects of using technology in the classroom and its potential for facilitating effective student learning. The study also identified the lack of necessary infrastructure, particularly in rural schools, as a significant hindrance to teachers' internet and technology use. Although the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) offers support for computer and internet infrastructure in schools, there remains a noticeable shortage of equipment for integrating technology into the classroom. It is recommended that schools provide spaces equipped with fast and free internet access, overhead projectors, smart boards, and other necessary technological resources to facilitate student and teacher use.

To enhance the generalizability of the findings, it is suggested to conduct similar studies with EFL teachers or teachers from other disciplines in different cities within Türkiye, as well as in different countries and across various school levels such as primary schools or universities. Further research is warranted to investigate EFL teachers' utilization of literature and innovative technologies in their classrooms and to explore their expectations from

English language teaching departments and the Ministry of Education. To strengthen the validity and credibility of future research, a combination of surveys, interviews, and classroom observations could be employed as well. Additionally, it is recommended to consider factors such as participants' working conditions, technological competencies, and the language proficiency levels of their students, which were not accounted for in the present study. Conducting further studies with participants who possess similar characteristics can provide valuable insights into these specific contexts.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

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