THE SILENT ARCHITECT: STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF LITERARY LEISURE READING AND ITS INFLUENCE ON ENGLISH WRITING PROFICIENCY

Siti Noor Aisyah Hasnan
Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Jengka Campus, 26400 Bandar Tun Abdul Razak Jengka, Pahang, Malaysia

Evanna Devi*
Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Jengka Campus, 26400 Bandar Tun Abdul Razak Jengka, Pahang, Malaysia
evannadevi@uitm.edu.my

Nadia Safura Zabidin
Faculty of Civil Engineering, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Jengka Campus, 26400 Bandar Tun Abdul Razak Jengka, Pahang, Malaysia

Raja Nurul Nadia
Faculty of Education, Social Sciences and Humanities, FESSH, Universiti Poly-tech Malaysia, UPTM, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

Abstract: In the teaching and learning of English language, there is a limitation between formal academic instructions and students' self-directed consumption of English literature. Pedagogical approaches often emphasise the need to read academic articles and difficult texts for students to adapt and adopt their writing styles to eventually produce their own academic essays. Meanwhile, we propose that there are students who prefer to read literary materials such as fiction, prose, poetry and play when they have extra time. This reading for leisure or pleasure activity is sometimes referred to as "Free Voluntary Reading" (FVR). FVR remains a critical yet a subjective aspect for students to enhance their English language proficiency. While structured academic curricula prioritise practical literacy, the cognitive and technical advantages of engaging with literary materials are often disregarded. Hence, this study examines the relationship between students' perceptions of engagement in literary leisure reading or literary FVR and their self-perceived development of English writing proficiency. This study uses a quantitative research design where a structured survey questionnaire is administered to undergraduate students. It investigates two primary scopes: the frequency and variety of literary leisure reading habits and their self-assessment of English writing competencies, specifically writing styles, vocabulary usage, and grammatical awareness when writing academic essays. Initial hypotheses propose that consistent engagement with literary leisure reading correlates with an apparent decrease in writing apprehension and an increase of critical and cognitive capacity. The findings aim to offer insights into how literary leisure reading can enhance teaching and learning experiences, reassuring educators and learners to include diverse, non-academic literary texts to create a more holistic development of English writing proficiency.

Keywords: English literature, Leisure reading, Pleasure reading, Students perceptions, Writing proficiency

1. Introduction

Developing a habit of reading is fundamental for English language learners or other language learners because reading enhances language proficiency. "There are two types of readers: those who read for the content and those who read for the language. In order to enhance your English language skills, you need to be both types of readers (F.A. Manap, personal communication, 2018)." It means that when language learners read in the targeted language, they have to pay particular attention not just to the context or ideas presented but, the way the authors write sentences and use diverse sophisticated vocabularies while maintaining grammatical accuracies. When students read and focus on the language instead of just the need to comprehend main ideas for certain topics, they would acquire linguistics competencies.

Additionally, Stephen Krashen (1997) examined leisure reading and pleasure reading or what he calls as "Free Voluntary Reading" (FVR) in the acquisition of first, second and foreign language. Language

learners select their own preferences of reading materials including comics or light reading materials to enhance language proficiency. However, more often than not, in relation to formal classroom instructions and pedagogical approaches, students are required to read complex and heavy academic materials or articles. This leads to a lack of interest as we believe that some students might prefer to read literary materials like novels, short stories or poetries especially so for those majoring in English language.

Reading literary texts or materials is associated with the idea that students can choose their own preferences and their choices may not be heavy academic articles or reading materials. We argue that when students can opt for their reading preferences, they might develop an interest towards reading for leisure and for pleasure. Literary texts like poems, even though some might contend that, due to their poetic license, they cannot be referred to in terms of linguistics accuracies yet, if students prefer reading poetries because they are often short, they may eventually develop the love of reading. When students love reading, reading often enhances their language competencies because they can adopt and adapt English language used by writers or authors. Hence, this paper examines students' perceptions of engagement in literary reading for leisure and its impacts on their English proficiency specifically writing skills.

2. Literature Review

This part explored past and current studies and researches related to leisure reading or FVR including literary reading for leisure in teaching and learning.

2.1 *Reading for leisure or Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) in teaching and learning*

Reading is a significant part of language learning and one needs to read in order to enhance English language proficiency. Krashen (1997) examined the act of reading for one's pleasure or what he defines as Free Voluntary Reading (FVR). He asserted the use of FVR as a classroom method or pedagogical approach for language learners. In educational setting, academic instructions often require students to read academic materials instead of their choice of reading materials. For him, students could choose any reading materials that they favoured as to improve the acquisition of English language skills whether as a second language or as a foreign language.

Following Krashen, Pradana (2016) studied FVR through qualitative research design, focusing on 18 senior high school students in Indonesia where he used writing test and interview. He observed the relationship between those students who choose to read voluntarily and the influence on narrative writing. He asserted that those students who prefer to read books, novels and comics scored well in the writing test while those who did not read as much, scored lower. This suggested that those students who read for leisure and for pleasure tend to be better writers of second-language.

Similarly, Ouahmiche and Ziad (2017) explored FVR in the context of Algerian EFL students. Through quantitative survey questionnaires, they argued that students perceived FVR as a positive method especially when it comes to generating ideas or contents rather than the mechanical parts of English language skills. Meanwhile, through experimental design involving 70 Korean college students, Chang (2011) investigated the use of FVR instead of traditional learning approaches for English language skills. Korean students who applied FVR to enhance their English language learning suggested improvements in terms of technical craft of writing like grammatical accuracies and better sentence structures. Chang determined that the integration of FVR into classroom instructions allowed students to acquire reading proficiency specifically the use of words and grammar while simultaneously lift their confidence in English language learning.

According to Shamsudin et al. (2025) and Bautista and Marulanda (2018), in the context of EFL learners, the observations that students used limited vocabulary in English writing have led to the belief that students were reluctant to read English materials. They conducted pre- and post-tests among 25

university students and, they stated that through the use of FVR, students could learn independently rather than depending on teachers' classroom instructions. The use of FVR has encouraged students to use varied vocabularies when writing in the targeted language.

Reading enhances students' English language competencies. We reckoned that there is a need to encourage students to read more English materials through literary reading for leisure or pleasure activity. Previous researches focused on reading for leisure or FVR, without necessarily emphasising literature or literary texts. Additionally, in the teaching and learning of English language, writing is one of the skills taught in the classroom; learners of language learn crucial writing components like sentence structure or syntax, grammar rules and the flow or the style of writing. Formal academic instructions for English writing generally focused on developing students writing abilities through grammar drills, the teaching of format, structure and organisation of certain types of English essays as well as constant reminders to acquire varied vocabularies based on students' CEFR level.

2.2 *Research Objectives*

The study aims to identify students' literary leisure reading habits, including frequency, genre preferences, and motivations. It investigates students' perceptions regarding the connection between their self-selected literary reading habits and their self-perceived English writing competencies. The study also determines the specific areas of English writing proficiency (such as vocabulary, syntax, grammar, etc.) that students believe are most influenced by literary leisure reading.

2.3 *Research Questions*

The study aims to answer the following research questions:

i. What are the current patterns and attitudes of students toward reading English literature for leisure?
ii. How do students perceive the role of literary leisure reading in shaping their overall confidence and competence in English writing?
iii. To what extent do students believe that engaging with literary texts improves specific technical dimensions of their writing, such as lexical diversity and grammatical accuracy?

3. Methodology

This study employed a quantitative survey research design to investigate the relationship between literary reading for leisure or literary Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) and self-perceived English writing proficiency. This non-experimental, descriptive approach is appropriate to analyse the attitudes and perceptions of a specific population at a single point in time. The sample consisted of 69 undergraduate students (N=69) recruited via purposive sampling from a local university in Kuala Lumpur. The participants were specifically selected from the English Language Studies and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) programs. This demographic was chosen due to their high level of exposure to English literary texts and the professional relevance of writing proficiency to their future careers. We believed that as they are majoring in English language, they are also avid readers of English materials regardless of genre, literary or non-literary texts.

The primary research tool was a structured online questionnaire divided into three sections; patterns and attitudes of literary reading for leisure, students' self-perceived English writing proficiency and literary reading for leisure's impacts on certain components like lexical and grammar. To ensure content validity, the items in the questionnaire were adapted from a study conducted by Lee and Wong (2017) and they were altered to cater to literary reading for leisure. The questions were reviewed by two subject matter experts in the field of TESL and English language studies. This process ensured that the items accurately represented the research objectives and were linguistically appropriate for the target population. The data were collected digitally over a one-week period. The lecturer teaching the students has explained regarding the study and has distributed the online questionnaire and participants were

well aware that their participation was voluntary and anonymous. The data were then analysed through descriptive statistics to measure students' perceptions on literary reading for leisure and their self-perceived English writing proficiency.

4. Findings and Discussion

To gain insights on literary reading for leisure and its influence on students' English writing proficiency, a survey was conducted through a set of questionnaires which was administered to the undergraduate students majoring in English language studies and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). The following were the findings and discussion of the study.

4.1 *Students' perceptions on literary reading for leisure*

Table 1: Results of Question 1: How many hours per week do you spend reading English literature for leisure?

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Valid	0 hours	39	56.5	56.5	56.5
	1-2 hours	16	23.2	23.2	79.2
	2-4 hours	8	11.6	11.6	91.3
	4-6 hours	3	4.3	4.3	95.7
	7 hours and more	3	4.3	4.3	100.0
	Total	69	100.0	100.0	

Question 1 investigated students' frequency of reading literary materials for leisure. The most significant finding is among 69 undergraduate students majoring in English language, 39 (56.5%) of them did not read any literary materials for leisure as the data recorded them choosing '0 hours' option. On the other hand, among those who read, 23.2% portrayed a low level of engagement in literary reading for leisure as 16 students opted for 1-2 hours. Table 1 presents a sharp decline in engagement after the 2-hour mark, 11.6 % participants have engaged in reading literature for leisure around 2-4 hours and 4.3% each for 4-6 hours category and 7 hours and more category. This suggested that most participants did not involve in literary reading for leisure.

Table 2: Results of Question 2: How many English literary books do you finish for leisure in a year?

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Valid	0-2 books	32	46.4	46.4	46.4
	3-5 books	29	42.0	42.0	88.4
	6-10 books	5	7.2	7.2	95.6
	11 and more	3	4.4	4.4	100.0
	Total	69	100.0	100.0	

Question 2 emphasised students' consumption of literary texts per year. Table 2 portrays that the majority of the participants, 46.4% and 42.0% respectively read 5 or less than 5 literary books per year. Meanwhile, 7.2% participants finished 6-10 books annually. Only 4.4% or 3 out of 69 undergraduate students were active literary readers as they completed reading 11 and more books in a year. This suggested that among the 69 undergraduate students majoring in English language and TESL, they have portrayed a lack of interest in reading literary materials as out of 69 participants, almost half of them only read 0-2 books per year.

Table 3: Results of Question 3: Which major literary genre do you read most often? (Select all that apply)

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Valid	Fiction	61	55.0	55.0	55.0
	Play/Drama	24	21.6	21.6	76.6
	Non-fiction	16	14.4	14.4	91.0
	Poetry	10	9.0	9.0	100.0

	Total selection	111	100.0	100.0

Question 3 scrutinised the selected genre of those undergraduate students who read literature. Table 3 indicates that, across the four categories outlined, the 69 participants have made a total of 111 selections. The majority of the undergraduate students preferred to read fiction (61%), followed by play/drama (21.6%). Interestingly, while we predicted the preference of reading poetry since poetry is often shorter than other reading materials, only 9.0% students preferred to read poetry for leisure. Surprisingly, about 14.4% students favoured non-fiction as their reading materials when they read for leisure.

Table 4: Results of Question 4: I read English literature because… (Select all that apply)

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Valid	Enjoy stories/narratives	47	27.2	27.2	27.2
	Improve English	45	26.0	26.0	53.2
	Understand people/culture	30	17.3	17.3	70.5
	Helps me relax	21	12.1	12.1	82.6
	Childhood hobby	17	9.8	9.8	92.4
	Broadens horizon	13	7.6	7.6	100.0
	Total selection	173	100.0	100.0	

Question 4 measured the reasons or motivations of reading English literary texts. From 173 selections, 27.2% participants preferred to read English literary materials for leisure as they opted for the enjoyment of reading stories or narratives. Next, 26.0% participants read English literature because they wanted to enhance English language skills. Together, these two reasons accounted for over half (53.2%) of all selections made. Respectively, 17.3% and 7.6% read literature to understand people or cultural nuances and literature broadens one's perspectives of things. 12.1% students read literature as it helps them to relax and the remaining 9.8% participants indicated that reading English literature is their hobby since young. This proposed varied reasons or motivations of reading literature for leisure.

4.2 *Influence on English writing proficiency*

Table 5: Results of Question 5: Which area of writing has literary leisure reading helped you with the MOST?

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Valid	Vocabulary	26	37.7	37.7	37.7
	Ideas	20	29.0	29.0	66.7
	Writing styles	11	15.9	15.9	82.6
	Grammar	7	10.1	10.1	92.7
	Structure/Organisation	5	7.3	7.3	100.0
	Total	69	100.0	100.0	

Question 5 analysed how literary leisure reading impacted participants' writing in certain areas like grammar, sentence structures and sentence constructions. The majority of participants (37.7%) suggested that through reading literary texts for leisure, they accumulated varied vocabulary. Meanwhile, 29.0% students believed that literary reading for leisure assisted them in terms of their cognitive ability to generate ideas or contents. This suggests that for nearly a third of the group, reading served as a primary source of inspiration. It is interesting to take note that students have opted for writing styles (15.9%) more than the enhancement of grammatical accuracies (10.1%) and the structure or organisation (7.3%). Table 5 indicates that the two categories, vocabulary and ideas have accumulated to 66.7% (two-thirds) of all perceived advantages of literary reading for leisure, showing a strong concentration in lexical and conceptual ability rather than mechanical formatting of English academic writings.

Table 6: Results of Question 6: How much has your writing confidence increased due to your reading habits?

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Valid	1	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	2	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	3	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
	4	0	0.0	0.0	1.4
	5	7	10.1	10.1	11.5
	6	20	29.0	29.0	40.5
	7	20	29.0	29.0	69.5
	8	13	18.8	18.8	88.3
	9	3	4.3	4.3	92.6
	10	5	7.2	7.2	100.0
	Total	69	100.0	100.0	

Question 6 used a Likert Scale (1-10) to calculate students perceived increase in their writing confidence or ability to write English essays. The largest group of participants reported an increase of confident level as they rated the 6 to 8 range. Specifically, 76.8% of the sample rated their confidence increase in the range of 6 to 8. Table 6 presents that out of 69 participants, the rating of 6 and 7 received exactly 20 responses (29%) each. Only one individual asserted that their confidence was at a level 3 or lower, and no student selected level 1, 2 and 4. The mean score is of approximately 6.8/10, indicating a moderately high perceived significance of literary reading for leisure towards students' confidence and capacities to produce English essays.

Table 7: Results of Question 7: Do you think your English grades (Writing components) have improved because of your literary leisure reading habits?

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Valid	Yes, slightly	35	50.7	50.7	50.7
	Yes, significantly	28	40.6	40.6	91.3
	Maybe	6	8.7	8.7	100.0
	No	0	0.0	0.0	100.0
	Total	69	100.0	100.0	

Question 7 focused on students' perceptions of the impacts of literary leisure reading on their English grades, particularly writing components. 35 students (50.7%) declared that their English grades, in terms of writing components have slightly improved through the habits of reading literary texts. Additionally, 40.6% participants believed that their grades for English writing have significantly enhanced. Table 7 indicates that students' perceptions on literary reading for leisure were positive as they acknowledged improvements of their writing marks. In contrast, 6 students (8.7%) claimed that they were unsure of the effectiveness of literary reading for leisure. Nevertheless, no one opted for the 'no' category. Thus, this suggested that majority of the students were optimistic that literary reading for leisure enhances one's English writing grades.

4.3 *Impact on specific writing components*

Table 8: Results of Question 8: I find myself using "fancier" or more sophisticated words in my English essays

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Neutral	31	44.9	44.9	44.9
	Agree	31	44.9	44.9	89.9
	Strongly Agree	7	10.1	10.0	100.0
	Total	69	100.0	100.0	

Question 8 assessed students' usage of varied vocabulary that they have acquired through literary reading habits. A majority of participants (55%) fall into the upper tiers of the scale, 4 (Agree) and 5 (Strongly Agree). Specifically, 44.9% participants rated themselves at a level 4, and 10.1% at a level 5. However, there is a tie between those who opted for level 4 (Agree) and 3 (Neutral) as each category is at 44.9%. Table 8 suggests that most students believed that they could somehow enhance their vocabulary acquisition through reading literature because no one selected the lower tier of the scale 2 (Disagree) and 1 (Strongly Disagree). Therefore, this particular result correlated with Table 5 where students have perceived that literary reading enhances their vocabulary the most.

Table 9: Results of Question 9: My writing "flow" feels more natural and less like a translation from my native language

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Valid	Strongly Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
	Neutral	23	33.3	33.3	33.3
	Agree	37	53.6	53.6	86.9
	Strongly Agree	9	13.0	13.0	100.0
	Total	69	100.0	100.0	

Question 9 discussed students' perceptions on the flow of writing and their capacity to produce English essays that were not direct translations from their first language. Table 9 indicates that most students rated 3 (Neutral) and 4 (Agree) as the percentage indicated 33.3% and 53.6% respectively. 13.0% participants strongly agreed with the impacts of literary reading for leisure towards their improvement in the flow of writing and how they write. Similar to Table 8, the lower tiers (1-2) were not selected. This suggested that out of 69 students, most of them believed that their English writing proficiency was enhanced through reading literature.

Table 10: Results of Question 10: I find it easier to come up with critical and creative ideas for my English essays

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Valid	Strongly Disagree	1	1.4	1.4	1.4
	Disagree	0	0.0	0.0	1.4
	Neutral	18	26.1	26.1	27.5
	Agree	39	56.5	56.5	84.1
	Strongly Agree	11	15.9	15.9	100.0
	Total	69	100.0	100.0	

Question 10 explored the enhancement of critical and creative ideas when writing English essays. The majority of the undergraduate students (72.4%), either agreed or strongly agreed that literary reading for leisure enhanced their cognitive capacity to generate critical and creative ideas when writing. The most common response was 4 (Agree), selected by 56.5% of the participants (39 out of 69). Moreover, only a single respondent (1.4%) expressed a negative view, strongly disagree, while 26.1% felt neutral. The data from Table 10 supported earlier finding in Table 5, where 29.0% of respondents specifically identified "Ideas" as the area of writing helped most by their literary reading habits.

Table 11: Results of Question 11: How much has literary leisure reading improved your ability to write complex-compound sentences without making grammatical mistakes?

		Frequency	Percent (%)	Valid Percent (%)	Cumulative Percent (%)
Valid	Not at all	0	0.0	0.0	0.0
		1	1.4	1.4	1.4
		30	43.5	43.5	44.4
		32	46.4	46.4	91.3
	Very much	6	8.7	8.7	100.0

Total	69	100.0	100.0

Question 11 examined the perceived impact of literary leisure reading on a specific technical or mechanical skill: the cognitive ability to write grammatically accurate complex-compound sentences. A total of 55.1% of participants (Level 4 and level 5) showed that reading has improved their ability to construct complex-compound sentences to a high or very high degree. The most frequent response was Level 4, with 46.4% of the sample choosing this tier. Only 1.4% of participants (1 person) felt the improvement was low (Level 2), and no one selected Level 1.

The study's findings, based on the data, specified the obvious and shocking report of lack of preference of reading literary materials or reading for leisure itself; 56.5% students spent 0 hours reading literature for leisure. On the contrary, while there is an obvious reading gap among the undergraduate students, they have agreed on the positive impacts of literary reading for leisure towards the enhancement of English writing proficiency. The most striking trend in the data is the detach between their self-independent reading efforts and the perceived benefits literary reading for leisure provides. While more than half of the students (56.5%) reported reading 0 hours per week and annually, they read 0-2 books, over 90% still associated their literary reading habits with better English writing proficiency. This suggested the effectiveness of reading literature towards English writing proficiency even though we studied students' self-perceived English writing proficiency.

In this study, we reckoned that the lack of engagement in literary reading for leisure despite positive attitudes of self-perceived impacts on writing performance proposed that literary leisure reading is perceived as a demanding task rather than a comforting hobby or activity. This clarified that while students emphasised the value or the "input" (Krashen), they struggled with the "voluntary" aspect of literary reading or even the act of reading itself. The findings revealed that current generation of students including those who major in English language studies and TESL might feel that 'reading' is a burden or a classroom instruction as, if they did not prefer to read English literary materials voluntarily, they might only read literary materials for literature subjects or classes as they were required to interpret literary texts. Furthermore, most students prefer to read Fiction, thus, we argue that they were more familiar with vocabularies or words associated with narrative writing and, in a way, they could write better narrative essays compared to academic essays.

Additionally, the participants reported a moderately high mean for writing confidence (M = 6.94). In terms of specific technical or mechanical dimensions of writing performance, idea generation (M = 3.87) and writing flow (M = 3.80) were perceived more strongly than grammatical accuracy (M = 3.62). This aligns with the findings of Lee and Wong (2017) they acknowledged that leisure reading habit is linked to the cognitive ability to use varied words and it assisted students with writing styles. However, they did not believe that it would help them to produce grammatically accurate sentences. The undergraduate students believed that their writing confidence has increased through their ability to use "fancier" or sophisticated words when writing English essays. Apart from that, more often than not, second-language learners find it difficult to avoid using direct translations of their first language. On the contrary, based on the data, undergraduate students perceived that instead of translating, they were actually writing or creating English sentences and the flow of their writing improved. Their English sounded more natural through the habits of reading English literature and they were also capable of forming grammatically accurate complex-compound sentences. The high mean for "writing flow" asserted that literature provides students with a mental blueprint for English syntax. Reading literary texts encourages the students to think creatively and critically when producing their English essays.

The principal limitation of this study lied in the use of self-reported data to measure writing proficiency as students answered the survey with their self-perceived English writing performance. While the study apprehended students' attitudes, beliefs, feelings and judgements, it did not provide an objective measurement of their English language skills. The findings are solely based on the students' perceptions of their own abilities (e.g., their belief that they use "fancier words" when writing). While self-perception is an indicator of confidence in writing, it may not always correlate perfectly with students' writing ability. Other than that, the study did not involve the analysis of actual writing samples (such

as academic essays or writing test scores). Students might feel more confident in producing English essays yet, without the analysis of the actual writing itself, this study could not prove the actual relationship of literary reading for leisure and English writing proficiency. Despite the lack of objective data, examining students' self-perceived benefits of literary reading for leisure is a valid and necessary starting point.

5. Conclusion

This paper concludes that based on the survey conducted, surprisingly, even though we perceived undergraduate students majoring in English language studies and TESL as those who prefer to read literature for leisure, most students have spent less than 5 hours of reading per week and they normally read 0-2 books annually. This suggested the lack of reading habits especially the habits of reading literary materials. Nevertheless, as the paper investigated the influence of reading literary texts on English writing proficiency, the result was positive as students perceived that reading literature enhances their cognitive capacity to write English academic essays. The data suggested that literary leisure reading is a prevailing tool to enhance English language proficiency, mainly writing skills. Even if those undergraduate students did not prefer to read, they still believed that literary reading for leisure impacted English writing proficiency in a positive way. Thus, in the teaching and learning of English language, students need encouragement to read any literary text to develop the love of reading because reading enhances English writing proficiency.

The findings justified literature as a "silent architect" because students perceived that literary reading for leisure enhanced their ability to produce a natural flow of writing and their cognitive capacity to use sophisticated vocabulary, even when the results portrayed that they did not read. The inference is clear: their preference of literary materials or texts may be more influential on their English writing competencies than the quantity of time spent reading for leisure. In the area of teaching and learning of English language, it is interesting to examine the study further. As this study is limited to only self-perceived benefits of literary reading for leisure, this study can be enhanced through the focus on English writing performance itself, perhaps through mixed-method research design where researchers combine survey questionnaires with pre-test and post-test of students' essay production. Further research could probably apply longitudinal study to further focus on the progress of a group of TESL students over a year to see if those who increase their literary leisure reading hours show a statistically significant rise in their actual English writing exam scores

References

Bautista, D. C. D., & Marulanda, M. A. R. (2018). Free Voluntary Reading: Promoting vocabulary learning and self-directedness. *English Language Teaching, 11*(8), 51–63. https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v11n8p51

Chang, H. (2011). The effect of Free Voluntary Reading on college English Reading Class in Korea. *Proceedings of the 16th Conference of Pan-Pacific Association of Applied Linguistics*, 32–37.

Krashen, S. (1997). Free voluntary reading: It works for first language, second language and foreign language acquisition. *MEXTESOL Journal, 20*(3), 11–16.

Lee, J. Y. V., & Wong, A. S. C. (2017). The relationship between leisure reading habits, vocabulary and writing of English Language Learners (ELLs). *Language Education in Asia, 8*(2), 157–175. https://doi.org/10.5746/LEiA/17/V8/I2/A03

Ouahmiche, G., & Ziad, K. (2017). An investigation on Free Voluntary Reading of a group of EFL students and their beliefs about its impact on their writing performance. *Journal of Linguistics and Language Teaching, 8*(2), 189–211.

Pradana, S. A. (2016). An analysis on the phenomena between Free Voluntary Reading (FVR) and students' writing ability. *English Education: Jurnal Tadris Bahasa Inggris, 9*(1), 198–214. http://ejournal.radenintan.ac.id/index.php/ENGEDU

Shamsudin, S. F. F., Mihat, W., Szabo, C. Z., Yusoff, M. S. A., & Wong, W. L. (2025). A systematic review of vocabulary teaching approaches in Malaysia pre-and-post CEFR implementation (2011–2024). *Malaysian Journal of ELT Research*, *22*(2), 112–133. https://doi.org/10.52696/GPDV2998