Enhancing Language Proficiency Via Literature Instruction

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Abstract: Planning and executing strategies for language acquisition relies heavily on students' perspectives on the topic. At the high school level, this research intends to examine students' perspectives on the value of literature in language acquisition. Another goal of this research is to show how different schools' pupils think. Students' perspectives on the value of literature in education are examined through a holistic lens by researchers. Using an open-ended questionnaire, researchers surveyed students to gauge their opinions on the value of literature in language acquisition. The study included 555 high school students from 15 different schools. Most students had a good impression, according to the study's results, meaning that studying literature while learning English helps with the linguistic parts of the language. Beginning with the language approach and working their way down to the context approach, the reader's approach, and finally the text approach determine, in descending order of importance, how students perceive literature's value. Combining linguistics with context is the most reasonable strategy. Pedagogical and methodological variables explain in part why certain students' experiences vary from the study sample when it comes to the positive effects of learning on language support abilities. According to the findings, educators may examine and take into account students' points of view on the value of literature as a tool for language acquisition.

Keywords: Educators, High School, Students, Language, Literature, Learning.

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INTRODUCTION

English has become an internationally recognised and very significant language throughout the years. English is spoken by a large number of people since it is the native language of almost 600 million people from different nations. The widespread use of the language is due to the fact that it serves as a medium of exchange for people all over the world, allowing for the free flow of ideas, information, and goods. Many notable languages are spoken throughout various states in India, showcasing the country's immense linguistic variety. Just as the European Union is home to a wide variety of cultures, languages, and historical periods, India is divided into many states based on language. [1] For example, the combined populations of

the states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana—where Telugu is the official language—are greater than that of a number of nations, including France, South Korea, and Turkey. But English's dominance in many states, particularly in intrastate commerce and government, is eroding the local language's prestige. Although English is important for communicating among states, working with the federal government, and engaging with international businesses, it is superfluous to use it extensively inside states if the majority speaks the same mother language. [2]

Teaching English as a second language is essential, but it should begin at a young age since English is the current lingua franca. Although political factors make it difficult to trust the latest numbers on English ability, over one-third of the population can read and write at a proficient level, and around 30% can speak English to varied degrees.[3] This results in a large segment, around 70-80% of Indians, becoming linguistically marginalised every day. Depending on the literacy rates, this problem affects as many as 770–900 million individuals. This figure dwarfs that of the United Kingdom. In a nation that calls itself a "socialist democracy," this is an obvious form of disenfranchisement. Fixing this language disparity is perhaps one of the easier social constructions in India to tackle and change. [4]

When it comes to communicating in fields such as administration, science, health, law, and engineering, the English language is crucial. English will be around for a little longer because to its widespread use in these industries. Reading is also essential for developing one's language and vocabulary abilities. [5] Word recognition and decoding are just the beginning; both conscious and unconscious thought processes are involved. Reading comprehension relies on readers' prior knowledge, which is especially important for those learning a second language.[6]

When contrasted to native speakers, their cultural background and thought habits impact their understanding of the material. If they want their second language students to become better readers, English instructors should model the way native speakers think. Improving one's reading comprehension has far-reaching effects on one's cultural values and beliefs in addition to one's cognitive awareness. By focussing on activities like previewing, anticipating results, challenging author intentions, and recognising links between concepts, an English language lab may help students polish these abilities. [7]

It is recommended that students develop these abilities in small groups and that they practice working together and sharing their ideas. Improving students' reading comprehension also

involves drawing their attention to the processes and tactics they use when reading. Learning is further enhanced by reading widely and by being exposed to the same words several times. In interactive classes, students have plenty of chances to share their thoughts on assigned readings. In order to help students who are learning English as a second language improve their reading comprehension, it is essential that both the students and instructors put up deliberate effort. Teaching novels and their impact on language abilities are the subject of the research. The selection of appropriate texts for language acquisition is one area where literature plays a significant role in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes. When it comes to introducing kids to reading, books are by far the most powerful weapon. [8]

It is essential to choose books that are suitable for the learners when incorporating literature into the classroom. Using the "three C's - catalogue, canon, criteria" is one way to locate relevant material. By sorting books in a catalogue according to students' ages or reading levels, librarians help educators find engaging and appropriate reading material for their classrooms. While canons are helpful for choosing "good" literature, they may also be problematic since certain works may be too complex for particular age groups, which might lead to student apathy. A different strategy incorporates both student and instructor input into the final decision-making step. [9]

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Participants

The 555 kids from the Gurugram region, India, who were in junior and senior high schools were the subjects of this survey investigation. The fifteen schools that took part included seven junior highs and eight senior highs. In order to account for the fact that senior high schools cover a broader range of literary works in their literature classes, the proportion of schools was changed to reflect this. From the perspective of the students, the research aims to illustrate the advantages of teaching literature via the medium of English language literature. We utilised a convenience sample to choose schools from three different regions: the countryside, the middle ground between rural and urban areas, and the city itself. Students from fifteen different schools made up the study sample, with 60% being female and 40% being male. There are a total of 45 classes from these 15 schools that are participating. The students who took part in this study gave their informed consent after receiving approval from their school. As a matter of research ethics, we collected and processed data anonymously for both students and schools. Figure provides a summary of the study participants.
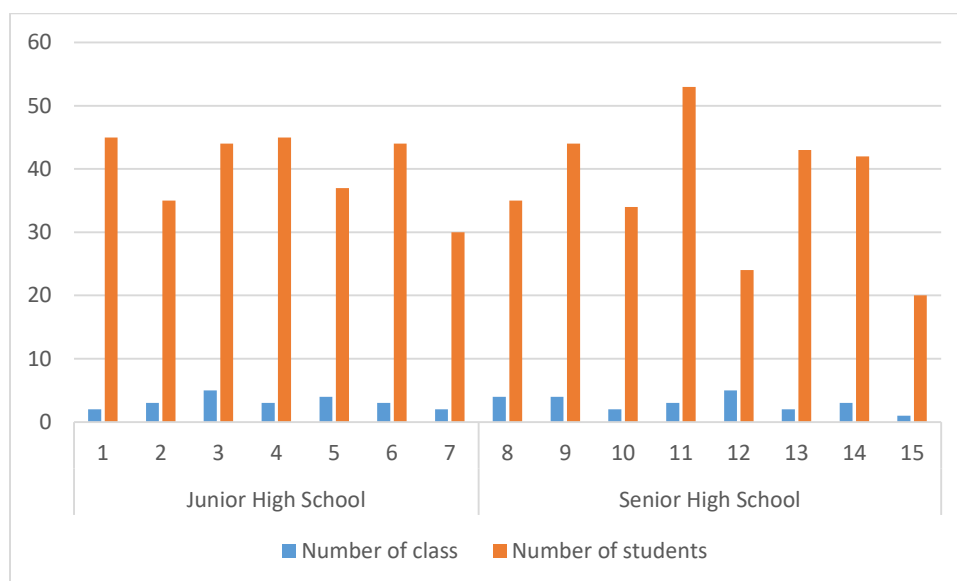
Figure 1: Number of research participants

Tools and methods for research

This study's research tools included interview questions with room for free-form responses and questionnaires. The indicators of investigating the advantages of literature instruction served as the basis for the questionnaire. Questions that are utilised are both open-ended and semi-open-ended. The reliability and validity of the instrument were tested experimentally with students and evaluated by a doctoral-level specialist in the area of literary education. The instrument employed passes the requirements for validity and reliability, with an alpha value of 0.89 and a split-half value (Spearman-Brown) of 0.90. Finding out how much better it is to teach literature from the perspective of the learner is the driving force behind this study. The researcher selected junior high and senior high schools and obtained permission to conduct the study in order to accomplish this purpose. Researchers also sent out surveys to everyone who took part in the study. In order to uncover the advantages of studying literature for students, the questionnaire included both open-ended and semi-open-ended questions. To supplement the data collected via the questionnaire, in-depth interviews were also conducted. The data was collected directly from the participants by means of surveys, which were directed as they were filled out. The data collection method from this questionnaire took 30 minutes, and interviews were conducted with a small sample size to ensure strong data. In addition, methodologies for teaching literature in schools were considered while analysing the data.

Data analysis

Researchers coded the data as displayed in Table to facilitate easy analysis. When instructing students in literature, the researchers took a holistic view. Four methods—the text method, the context method, the reader method, and the language method—formed the basis of the coding process. When teaching literature, the text method prioritises the works' and genres' inherent features. Literary works, their authors, historical events, cultural milieu, and social milieu at the time of creation are all considered in the context approach. Personal growth, emotions, and the reader's own experiences are key components of this method. Grammar, vocabulary, and overall language development are the focal points of the language approach to language instruction. Theorising the many ways in which literature instruction might improve language proficiency informed the data analysis. The methods used to code the students' answers were also recorded. The researcher followed the coding process in Table to make sure all data had been coded.

The researcher began by determining whether the students' responses were good or negative. Then, they checked to see if the replies were part of the linguistic method that was suggested. Is at least one of the four methods for teaching literature covered in the students' responses, and are they relevant to the works of English literature? The researcher's suitability was evaluated by having many researchers carry out this evaluation. A value of 0.95 was reported for the inter-rater reliability test. This number indicates that the collected data meet the requirements

Table 1: Data analysis methods used to students' opinions on the value of literature education

Step	Question	A student's example response	Code
1	Does the people have a positive or negative outlook?	" Literary works fail to critique the author and rely heavily on fictional narratives, which hinders their ability to	Negative

		enhance real-life experiences"	
2	Is the fourth part of the literature lesson plan to include student feedback?	"My inspiration for new novels often comes from literature"	The way the reader approaches the text Because of this, people are more likely to want to read books.
3	Were any of the four pedagogical stances on literature instruction mentioned in the student responses?	"Aids in the acquisition of grammar"	Approach to language
4	Does the focus on English literature or the English language emerge from the students' answers?	I am able to participate in literary conversations because I study literature.	Yes

After encoding all of the material, the writer coded a random subset to ensure the code was reliable. Thanks to Cohen's kappa value of 0.95, we can say that this coding is reliable. As a result of the high level of agreement across raters, it may be concluded that the coded data is satisfactory. "Literature is useful in supporting social skills, increasing insight, history or origins of a place, developing language skills, and increasing the ability to read comprehension of texts that have a higher level of difficulty," wrote one student in response to a question about the merits of literature instruction. It is within the group of reactions that are considered favourable. Some replies were critical, such as "the grammar used in literary works is more difficult and seldom used." The grammar in regular texts is more practical and easy to understand. Based on the four methods of literature instruction, the following are the findings from an examination of student feedback about the merits of literary instruction.

Table 2: The findings from the evaluation of the four literary teaching methods in terms of students' favourable or unfavourable reactions (n = 550).

Category Answer	Four approaches				Related to English /literature	Not related to English /literature
Number of Answer	1850				561	7
Approach	Text	Context	Reader	Language		
Positive: (94%)	90	520	280	910	442	
Negative: (6%)	3	12	5	5	120	
Total	93 (6%)	532(30%)	285 (16%)	915 (52%)		

RESULTS

The four methods of literary instruction were analysed to determine the percentage of students who agreed or disagreed about the value of literature instruction. From each of the four methods, the researcher coded the responses of 1,850 pupils. Analysis shows that students' answers to the question "what are the benefits of teaching literature?" fall into four broad categories: language approach (with 50% of the total), context (30%), reader's approach (13% of the total), and text (7% of the total). There were 321 too-general replies (321 out of a total of 500) that did not fit into any one strategy but were nevertheless about English literature. "This literature was able to make me study more deeply on the subject of English" is one example of such a reaction. Moreover, a number of student comments had nothing to do with

English literature and did not fit into any of the four categories. "I prefer chemistry" is one of very few entirely unconnected replies (out of a total of 10) that were discovered.

Furthermore, several student replies were ambiguous or did not fit neatly into any of the categories. For example, "reading and listening to stories is very boring" is one of the unfavourable comments given by students. Although the remark has aspects of a literary teaching strategy, the student sees no use for it. "Studying literature does not contribute to English society" and "I don't feel the benefits of studying literature" are examples of student comments that are problematic. There is no way to disentangle the positive outcomes of school-based literary study from this unfavourable reaction.

In order to determine which ways of teaching literature were most typically employed, the researcher grouped all of the students' replies into four categories. Students' perceptions of the literary works covered in class are shaped by the methods used to teach literature. As demonstrated in figure, the proportion of each strategy to teaching literature is shown. From most students' points of view, the language method is the most beneficial way to teach literature (50%), followed by the context approach (25%), the reader's approach (15%), and finally, the text approach (10%). Further analysis of the student replies revealed that 20% of the sample stated all four pedagogical techniques concurrently, and 45% mentioned all four simultaneous. Overwhelmingly, pupils reacted to many literary teaching methods simultaneously. That some educators in the field utilise a mix of strategies to include literary study into their lessons is clearly evident.

Three hundred and eighty-plus students offered variants on using two or more methods of instruction. Not only does this answer show that students have a unanimous view on the value of literary instruction, but it also suggests that most literature classes use a variety of methods. Among the four methods for teaching literature, the majority of students (330 out of 400) felt that a mix of the context and language approaches was the most effective (60 percent). Thirty percent of the students (165 total) said they used a hybrid strategy combining language and context in their work. Additionally, a different set of perspectives was identified, namely a blend of text and linguistic characteristics; specifically, 0.4% (3) and 5% (30) of students demonstrated this mix of opinions.
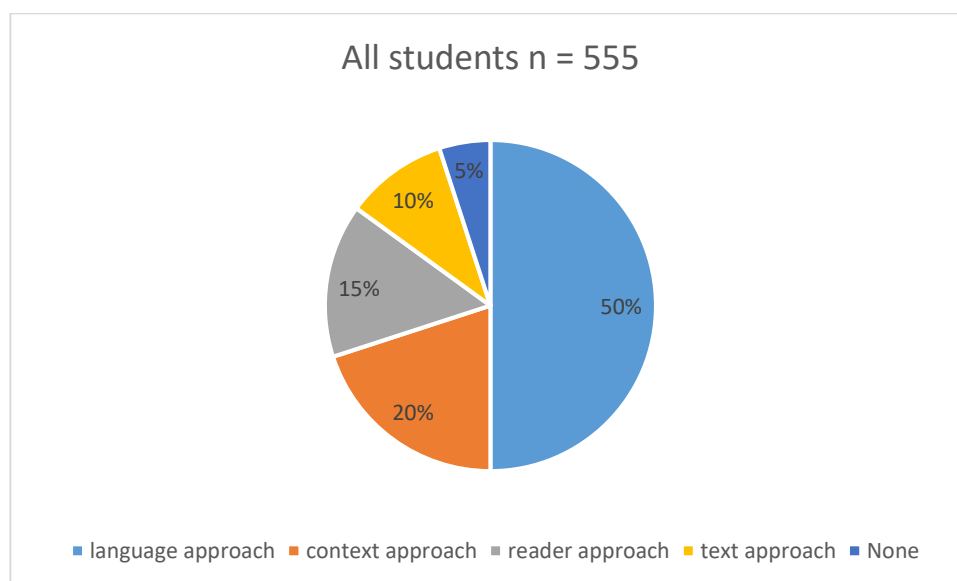
Figure 2: Literary pedagogical approaches as a proportion of student comments

A total of 95% of students responded to the language method, with 50% going to the context approach, 20% to the reader's approach, 15% to the parts of the text approach, and 10% to the remaining questions. A thorough analysis of student replies was conducted by the researcher, who then classified them according to the four pedagogical approaches to literary instruction. Table displays student replies based on the four methodologies and provides detailed statistics on student categorisation. Nearly all students(92%) had their literary replies improved in more than one way, according to the data collected from all responses (528). Nearly half of the students (45%) believe that literature helps with the language approach's components, like as English idioms and vocabulary (250). Thirty percent of students (166 total) also said that reading literature helps with English language proficiency.

Twenty percent of students (111 out of150) also provided insightful literary comments on the elements covered by the context method. According to students, "the historical context, the cultural context, and the social literature" are the most important parts of the context method. Nearly half of the students, or 279 out of a total of 500, brought this up. Also, in the reader's approach, one-third of the pupils mentioned the advantages of reading. A third of the respondents (167 people) highlighted the importance of developing one's critical thinking abilities and personal growth. Students seldom or never cited the text method, which accounted for 10% of the total (74). Textual approach refers to the practice of ignoring details of a literary work, such as its setting, characters, or the reading experience. In their answers, students touched on a number of topics that make up the English literature core curriculum standard:

literary terminology (2% of the total), literary work kinds (2% of the total), and the history and development of English literature (5% of the total). Students, however, failed to bring up the elements of first-person narrative that are inherent in literary works.

Table 3: The advantages of studying literature as seen through the eyes of the students in a holistic manner (four methods to literature instruction)

Approach	Aspect	Number of students (n = 555)	Student Perspectives
Language approach	Approach to language	139 (28%)	I can study English in a more engaging manner via books.
	American English grammar and syntax	111 (20%)	My understanding of English grammar is rather advanced.
	Idioms and vocabulary in English	250 (45%)	Reading books has helped me expand my vocabulary.
	Proficiency in the target language	166 (30%)	The English language is something I can work on.
	A chronology of significant works written in English	88 (16%)	The evolution of English literature was another area of study that I pursued via literature.
Context approach	The context method as a whole	27 (5%)	I learn about the author's thought process via reading their works of literature.
	Obtain details on the life and work of the writer.	84 (15%)	Reading works of literature may enrich one's understanding of the lives and

			works of English poets and authors.
	Historical, cultural, and societal factors that shape literary works	279 (50%)	The way people think in various eras is something I can discern.
	Time and its development in the English-speaking world	44 (8%)	Acquire the skill of analysing literature in relation to its time
	Approach for a general audience	12 (2%)	The story's lessons will undoubtedly benefit my life.
Reader approach	My own reading background	0 (0%) –	
	Raise enthusiasm for literature	55 (10%)	My interests might guide my language usage as I peruse literature from different genres and time eras.
	Sharpen your ability to think critically	167 (30%)	One way to uncover fresh ideas to aid you through life is to read literary works.
Text approach	Approach to text in general	50 (9%)	Acquire understanding about prehistoric culture
	Literature periodisation	17 (3%)	Equipped to enhance one's capacity to comprehend the language's style
	Forms of literature	12 (2%)	Learn to identify the many forms of poetry

	Literary components inherent to a work (plot, topic)	12 (2%)	Acquiring a better grasp of literary works' significance
	Factors inherent to the environment (the function of time and location)	0 (0%) –	
	Persona in Figure	0 (0%) –	

It is reasonable to wonder what factors contribute to the disparity in the percentages of students who think literature classes are beneficial. There are a number of components to this, and one of them is mimicking the teacher's method while studying literature. Researchers provided an explanation for why students' opinions on the value of literary instruction varied between schools. The second issue formulation is addressed by the presentation of these data: do students from different schools have different opinions on the advantages of studying literature? Based on the four methods, researchers compared the students' perspectives on literature's advantages from each institution. Table shows that students' opinions on the value of literature instruction vary by school and method. The investigation showed that students in 10 out of 15 schools ranked the language approach, context approach, and reader approach as the most important parts of the approach, while the text approach was the least cited.

Despite some variation in the relative importance of the other schools' methods, the text approach received the fewest mentions overall. Table displays the study findings showing that there are substantial variances in the ways in which students perceive the advantages of teaching literature. Still, most students' answers belong to the second group, which includes the discussion and context method. Students from five different schools also indicated using a mix of methods, or a mixture of two or more methods, when asked about literary instruction. Additionally, all four methods were cited by all except one school (school 7), which omitted the text approach. Based on the following techniques, students' perspectives on the advantages of teaching literature at each school varied from 0 to 23%: language, reader, context, and text. Table shows that students' perceptions of literature's value in bolstering education and life are

diverse based on the percentages of the methods to literature instruction. This further suggests that every school's literature instructor has their own unique method of instruction.

Table 4: Percentage of student responses based on approach and school

School	5	12	14	13	1	2	9	6	7	15	10	8	11	3	4
Number of students	37	53	42	43	45	35	44	44	30	20	34	35	53	44	45
Language (%)	89	91	92	89	91	90	88	80	71	68	96	80	72	40	24
Context (%)	45	50	45	81	80	80	30	50	52	64	45	51	81	74	68
Reader (%)	12	30	20	40	31	35	25	38	34	40	70	57	40	33	33
Text (%)	8	7	20	10	20	15	8	20	0	12	7	7	20	23	9

A total of 555 students from junior and senior high schools participated in this investigation. According to the study's results, 75 percent of students express opinions on literature's advantages inside the linguistic approach area. Aspects or characteristics of pupils typically bring up this method. Previous research has shown that students' perceptions of literature are impacted by the teaching style or approach that teachers use. "In India, the language approach is the most commonly used approach, either alone or in combination, when teaching literary works to students. This study's results support that theory. The study's most surprising conclusion is that most students believe that literature classes significantly improve their abilities across the board, including language skills, critical thinking, and all four of the comprehensive methods. This literature review is crucial for enhancing English language acquisition, despite the fact that it is executed independently in practice. This study adds to the growing body of evidence that teaches pupils literature improves their reading abilities across the board, including accuracy, speed, and comprehension. The idea that pupils may pick up a wide range of linguistic styles and registers from literature further supports this. Students'

reading, writing, speaking, and listening abilities will all benefit from a solid foundation in challenging vocabulary.[10]

The second most common method, according to students' opinions (57%), is the one that depends on the immediate environment. The context method was referenced by over 50% of the pupils. The bulk of the class discussed how literature reflects society, culture, and history. This proportion is bolstered when instructors give literary works as study material that is relevant to social and cultural life. Poetry, short tales, dramas, novels, legends, and other forms of literature are often read aloud in classrooms as a means of introducing pupils to literature and its relevance to modern life and society. [11]This is done to help students develop their critical culture skills and their ability to react to phenomena or issues across cultures. The capacity to write literary works using figurative language, rather than one's own language, is another crucial skill that students develop via reading. Possessing this skill leads to a deep comprehension of literary works. The study also found that students cite the reader's approach (35% of the time) and the text approach (13% of the time) the least when asked about other methods. When asked to compare and contrast the two methods, students most often cited opportunities to hone their critical thinking and personal skills as strengths. Since literary works depict narratives from a variety of viewpoints, including historical, cultural, and social life, this result is in line with the premise that teaches literature may enhance students' translingual and transcultural skills. Nevertheless, there are instances when kids do not get advantages like personal growth (reading comprehension, perspective taking, etc.).[12]

The reason why certain parts of language acquisition are either overlooked or never brought up by students is that they are either unaware of how valuable these parts are or that they have already been incorporated into other parts of the language. No mention is made of the reader's approach, which encompasses reading experience features, or the text approach, which encompasses setting and character aspects.[13] Overall, this student study does not provide a picture of the advantages of teaching literature comprehensively, even if most students cite many techniques. Teaching literature simply helps students' linguistic abilities, students say. Furthermore, another discovery from the perspectives of students on the advantages of literary instruction is that there are differences in their perceptions of these advantages." [14] The pedagogical approaches and language curricula used by individual educators are the root causes of this diversity. Take school 4 as an example; only 23% of pupils brought up elements of the linguistic approach; in school 5, that number jumps to 90%. This disparity in percentages suggests that there are diverse viewpoints on the literary curriculum and pedagogical

approaches to teaching literature. This confirms the hypothesis that a more holistic approach to education has the potential to alter classroom dynamics, eliciting diverse perspectives from students and even fostering healthy competition.[15]

CONCLUSION

According to the results, the majority of students had a good impression; that is, studying literature while learning English does indeed help with the linguistic parts of language acquisition. When asked about the merits of literature as a teaching tool, students are most enthusiastic about the language and context methods, with reader and text approaches coming in a close second and third, respectively. The linguistic approach in conjunction with context is the most balanced method. Teachers' pedagogical preferences explain why certain classroom experiences deviate from the study sample when it comes to the positive effects of education on linguistic competence. This study's findings suggest that students' perspectives on the value of literature instruction can inform policymakers' work on language curricula, guide educators' decisions about the most effective pedagogical approaches, address students' needs for linguistic support, and shed light on previously unseen facets of literature's positive effects on learning. One of the many problems with this research is that it doesn't take gender into account and only looks at a small sample from junior high and high school. Although the purpose of this study is to uncover students' perspectives on the advantages, there are still gaps in our understanding of the instruments used to measure them and the possibility that students' divergent opinions on literature are based on their personal preferences. The researcher suggests many areas for further study based on these shortcomings: In order for the research findings to be more comprehensive, it is expected that future studies will involve a wider and larger number of participants, take gender into account, use more comprehensive instruments (such as those that present selected responses to all types of literary works), and conduct deeper analyses, particularly qualitative ones.

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