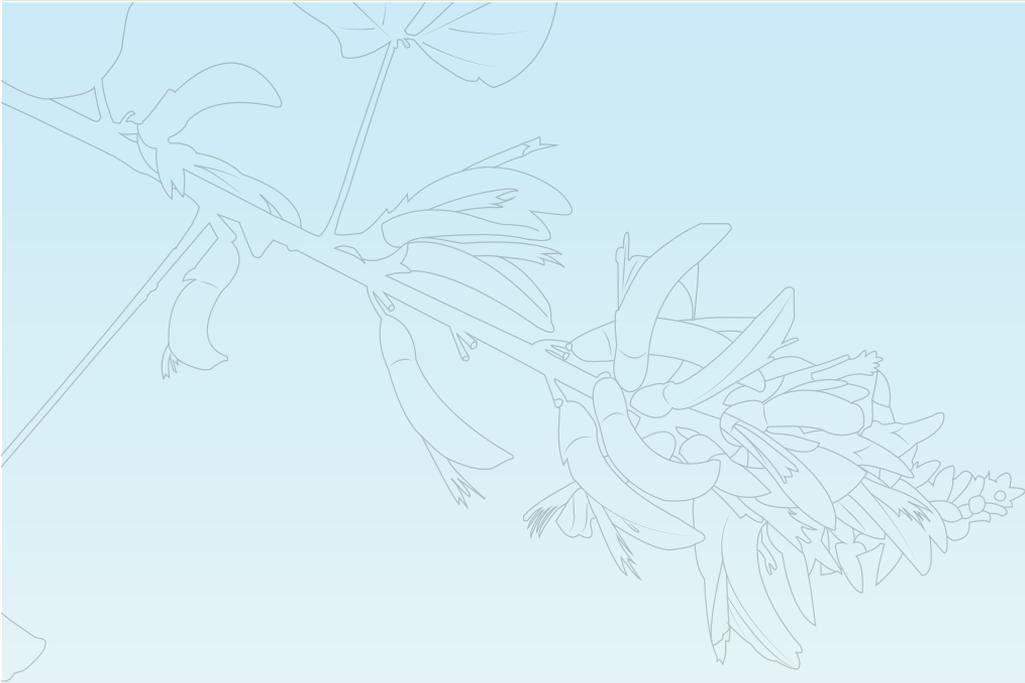


# Thai EFL Learners' Reading Attitudes Towards English Literature Studies

Do Hyeon Choi<sup>1\*</sup>, and Panida Sukseemuang<sup>2</sup>



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<sup>1</sup> Faculty of Liberal Arts, Prince of Songkla University, Songkhla, 90110, Thailand

\*Corresponding author: E-mail address: dohyeonc@gmail.com

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate southern Thai EFL university students' reading attitudes towards English literary works. Participants were purposively sampled, and 21 undergraduates majoring in English in the 4th year participated. This research used a mixed-method design using a reading attitude questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. Descriptive statistics, factor analysis, and thematic content analysis were used. The findings indicated that cognitive reading attitudes became increasingly significant than the affective or conative domains as the students considered reading various English literary texts beneficial to their learning and interest. The study provided some pedagogical implications for literature classes based on improving students' reading attitudes and literary interests.

**Keywords:** Reading Attitude, Thai EFL Learners, English Literary Works, Literature Class

## Introduction

Reading has been mainly part of educational studies and is one of the common integrated learning skills in particularly resourceful ways. The reading attitude is essential for lecturers or researchers to see if the students improve their learning in English when reading with comprehension and joy. Thus, the lecturers and the researchers would bring up alternative solutions or ideas to help enhance the learners' reading attitudes by implementing some interesting activities such as discussion, presentation, and others for their competence.

Significantly, reading attitudes have wittingly led to a mixture of positive and negative aspects, relying on learners' authentic feelings and knowledge towards reading materials. It is the sense when readers express their feelings on what they read, depending on whether they like it or not [10]. It can be described as pleasant or dissatisfactory due to personality, behavior, interest, and others towards anything related to learners' preferences. The cognitive aspect is known for drawing conscious beliefs and reasons towards anything, the affective aspect for revealing how a person feels or understands deeply in emotions, and lastly, the behavioral aspect for showing actions in terms of responding to feelings and thoughts [10].

Literature has been utilized in many ways for educational studies. It contains different kinds of literary texts filled with cultural and linguistic sources for embedded diversity of aesthetics [4]. Santivarakom et al. [11] stated that the use of a literature-based approach facilitates the learners' ability to explore the culture, attitude, and other important aspects of a foreign language in terms of literature through deeply understanding the contents of reading materials. One of the common features that makes readers grasp their attention to literary texts is the main contents with plot, setting, climax, and characters. Osianova and Kuleshova [6] explained that to understand the story, one must interpret and figure out the

meaning of the reading texts. Thus, their knowledge would be broadened extensively to illuminate their understanding towards the foreign background. Literary texts are also authentic, assisting readers to express their feelings, thoughts, and understanding towards what captures their attention when reading [3]. Such steps can be made to help promote cultural and social awareness, which are language ability development, authenticity of language usage, linguistic and communicative competence, affective domain, and interpretation skills [11].

Some previous studies have been conducted related to the topic of this study in Thailand through various methods. However, others have discovered neutral reading attitudes among different students. The elementary school students displayed mixed reading attitudes, revealing their necessity to study rather than reading for joy and interest [1]. Another study found that most of the undergraduates had much joy in reading extensively. This was because reading graded readers was more enjoyable, increasing motivation, length of texts being short, and their desired selection of literary materials, depending on their matching interests and levels of understanding [9]. Additionally, Thai university students were satisfied with extensive reading as it helped them lower their anxiety and increase comfort, without contributing practicality for their future career or education [8].

Various researchers have undertaken suitable methods to examine students' reading attitudes towards English literary materials. Since some students revealed their different reading attitudes based on their learning of literature, according to some previous studies [7], the study on English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university students' genuine reading attitudes towards English literary works from previous literary courses in southern Thailand is rarely conducted. Reading attitudes being conducted in different contexts tend to be revealed as either positive or negative, or even mixed, depending on students. However, no reading attitudes being told by Thai students are revealed. Since reading attitudes has become one of the common topics in terms of education, some previous studies have uncovered either the positive or negative, or mixed reading attitudes, depending on students' interest in reading. Using the reading attitude questionnaire and semi-structured interview, this study aimed to discover students' authentic reading attitudes. Therefore, this study would contribute to a deeper understanding of literature as being central to students' reading attitudes.

## Objectives

Literature influences their reading attitudes towards what they read. Its authenticity persuades the readers to associate with the contents of the texts through personal feelings, empathy, and motivation to learn [3]. This paper aimed to address the gaps by investigating the southern Thai EFL university students' reading attitudes towards English literary works by (1.) exploring their reading attitudes towards the use of English literary works in literary

courses, and (2.) investigating the factors of either enhancing or obstructing reading attitudes towards English literary works.

### **Research Questions**

1. What are university students' reading attitudes towards English literary works in literary courses?
2. What factors help or hinder students' reading attitudes in English literary works?

## **Research Methodology**

### **1. Research Participants**

To investigate Thai EFL university students' reading attitudes towards English literary works, this study was conducted as mixed methods research to collect the quantitative and qualitative data. The participants of this study were Thai undergraduates in their fourth year, studying English at the Faculty of Liberal Arts in a public university in southern Thailand. Originally, as the population, there were 281 students in total from the 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> years in 2023. The total population of these senior university students were 69 students. They were purposively sampled due to the specific requirements in which they completed three previous literature courses during their first, second, and third years. In their first year, the literary course was "Literary Appreciation" in the second semester. Next, in their sophomore year, they studied "English and American Prose and Poetry" course in the first semester. Finally, the last course was "Literary Representation of Other Literature" during the first semester in the third year. Of all these courses they studied, they were provided with some literary texts such as novels, novellas, and poems to learn English.

### **2. Research Instruments**

#### **2.1. Reading Attitude Questionnaire**

The reading attitude questionnaire was adapted in design and format [4, 5], and consisted of three main sections. The first section was about the participants' demographic background information. The second section was close-ended with 25 items and was Likert-scaled, ranging from '5' (most) to '1' (the least) to evaluate their reading attitudes towards the use of English literary works from the literary courses they studied. It was divided into four categories attributed to three main domains, which were called 'Joyful reading experience' and 'Unpleasant reading experience (affective),' 'Cognitive reading skills (cognitive),' and 'Reading in actions (behavioral).' The last section contained 5 open-ended questions asking for students' opinions about their personal reading experiences in English literary works, plus language improvement from reading. Specifically, these questions derived some relevant aspects of the items from the second section. This questionnaire was validated by three experts in the field of the English language who gave feedback and suggestions after

evaluation. Later, it was revised to fit the study context. However, the questionnaire, originally in English, was first translated into Thai by the first translator and then translated into its original language by another translator. This was completely back-translated to see the similarities in contents, and was prepared before the pilot study and the main study.

## **2.2. Semi-structured interview**

A semi-structured interview aimed to collect more information from the participants. Nine questions were created to collect their responses by asking for their opinions, thoughts, ideas, and beliefs about reading English literary works, the preferred literary materials to read, literary characteristics (theme and metaphor), and reading literary works in English for future education. These interview questions were assessed for clarity, wordiness, and relevance in terms of content by three different experts from the same field of study.

## **3. Procedures**

The pilot study was initiated with 26 undergraduates from the English program in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences from a different university in southern Thailand. They shared similar characteristics to the target participants of the main study. Before the pilot study, the reading attitude questionnaire was evaluated for validity in terms of the Index of Item-Objective Congruence (IOC), evaluated and commented on by three experts in the field of English language. After the pilot study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient was used to assess reliability. The value of the reading attitude questionnaire was 0.86, which was high in between the ideal range of high scores.

Secondly, the data collection was conducted. The first step to ensure the flow of the research was to ask for the participants' permission to participate by distributing the informed consent forms to them. Therefore, they signed their consent forms of participation.

Then, the reading attitude questionnaire was distributed online through Google Forms for the participants. The email with the translated questionnaire link was sent to each participant, instructing them to complete answering it in one week. Thus, they leisurely spent time to complete the questionnaire. In this way, it would give them fewer constraints in their busy schedules. Additionally, they could write their responses in Thai freely. From the first week, 17 participants finished filling in the form. In the second week, an email reminder was sent to those who did not start the questionnaire. Finally, 4 more participants completed the reading attitude questionnaire for a total of 21 (approximately 30 percent). Their responses were later analyzed.

After the participants completed the questionnaire, the researcher selected the participants for their ideas and opinions. Eleven interviewees were selected and were voluntarily invited to attend the online interview, which was launched via Microsoft Teams Application.

Some participants joined as a group, and others individually. Due to their busy schedules, they were interviewed on separate days. Before the interview, the researcher asked for their permission to have these videos recorded for confidentiality and clarification. During the interview, they expressed their opinions and thoughts about their reading attitudes towards the use of English literature materials in literary classes, their literary preferences (genres and literary text types), contents (plot, setting, and climax), literary characteristics (themes, metaphor, and allegory), improvement in language proficiency, and consideration to use English literary material reading for future education.

#### 4. Data Analysis

For Research Question 1, the reading attitude questionnaire was analyzed by descriptive statistics to evaluate and summarize the whole data results with mean, median, and standard deviation. Each item was measured as four categories as well to reveal their mean scores and a criterion was presented to reveal the meanings of the mean scores for the Likert scale from the descriptive statistics [2]. This would reveal the whole representation of the students' reading attitudes from high to low. Below are the mean scores ranked to represent the meanings, according to Table 1:

**Table 1.** The interpretation of mean score criteria

Mean Scores	Meaning
1.00 – 1.80	Very low
1.81 – 2.60	Low
2.61 – 3.40	Moderate
3.41 – 4.20	High
4.21 – 5.00	Very high

Source: [2]

Additionally, semi-structured interview responses along with open-ended questionnaire responses were analyzed by the researcher with thematic content analysis to look for hidden keywords, patterns, and other relevant details.

For Research Question 2, an exploratory factor analysis was another tool to determine the factors, which could be linked to the correlated patterns of variables in terms of relationship [3]. Jamovi, a statistical software, was used for this analytical tool. This analysis was chosen because it was relevant to the research question. It helped discover what kind of factors either increase or decrease students' reading attitudes in terms of variables to be shown, followed by the Varimax rotation method for discovering the independent variables

in separate factors specifically [6]. The ‘principal axis factoring’ extraction method was chosen, known for exploring and understanding some significant factors that may be linked to the variables in terms of relationship. The term ‘uniqueness’ appeared as the mirror to the values of commonalities which were calculated by subtracting the value of uniqueness from 1, leading to the total score of commonalities, which is the amount of variance in an item. Finally, Cronbach reliability was used in assessing the reliability values for four main categories with the set of the reading attitude questionnaire items measured to indicate the internal consistency value.

## Results

Henceforth, the main purpose of this research was to explore the southern Thai EFL university students’ authentic reading attitudes towards English literary works from previous literature courses they took. The results were analyzed by the statistical analysis tools after the data accumulation to answer the two research questions as below.

### Research question #1: What are the university students’ reading attitudes towards the use of English literary works in literary courses?

To answer this research question, the reading attitude questionnaire with three main categories (affective, cognitive, and behavioral) included was employed. The mean scores (M) along with the standard deviation (SD) of twenty-five items were presented in Table 2 below.

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics of Reading Attitude Questionnaire Items

Reading Attitude Items	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
<b>Joyful reading experiences (Affective)</b>			
1. I enjoy reading all kinds of literary works such as novels, poems, short story, plays, etc. in class	3.24	1.14	Moderate
2. I enjoy reading various literary texts in English	3.05	1.24	Moderate
3. Reading English literature in different genres (e.g., adventure, fantasy, etc.) is very interesting	3.43	1.21	High
4. I enjoy reading classic Western literature texts (e.g., To Kill a Mockingbird, The Great Gatsby, etc.)	2.57	1.12	Low
5. I am able to express empathy when reading English literature texts	3.33	1.20	Moderate
6. I get enthusiastic when reading the English literary texts relevant to my current level of proficiency	3.52	1.29	High
7. Reading English literature materials is a new experience	3.14	1.01	Moderate

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics of Reading Attitude Questionnaire Items (continue)

Reading Attitude Items	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
<b>Unpleasant reading experiences (Affective)</b>			
8. I feel overwhelmed whenever I see a whole page of English literature in front of me	3.76	1.14	High
9. Literature is difficult because it requires deep interpretation to understand the meanings of the texts	3.86	0.91	High
10. I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand what I read	4.19	0.98	High
<b>Cognitive reading skills (Cognitive)</b>			
11. Literature reading in English helps me improve four language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing)	3.81	0.60	High
12. Reading various English literary works helps me understand the story well by criticizing their contents	3.76	0.89	High
13. I am able to develop critical thinking skills when reading various English literary works	3.62	1.02	High
14. I am able to reflect the literary texts in English through my personal experiences	3.48	0.93	High
15. Reading various English literary works helps me improve my vocabulary knowledge	4.24	0.83	Very high
16. I am able to discuss my opinions, beliefs, and experiences about the English literary text that I read during the group discussion	3.52	0.93	High
17. Reading various English literary texts motivates me to study English more for future education	3.24	1.14	Moderate
18. Reading various English literary texts helps me gain cultural background knowledge	4.00	1.10	High
19. Literature improves my proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL)	3.62	0.97	High
20. I am able to gain general understanding of the story I read	3.52	0.93	High
21. Reading various English literary works improves my communicative skills	3.48	0.93	High

**Table 2.** Descriptive Statistics of Reading Attitude Questionnaire Items (continue)

Reading Attitude Items	Mean	S.D.	Meaning
22. I read literary texts because I want to obtain high marks in my English class	3.81	0.93	High
23. Literature can help me improve my reading habits as I keep reading more	3.57	1.16	High
<b>Reading in actions (Behavioral)</b>			
24. I surf the internet to read English books based on my level	3.38	1.20	Moderate
25. I try to find time for reading in English	3.29	1.27	Moderate
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.54</b>	<b>0.62</b>	<b>High</b>

\*Note: 1.00 - 1.80 = very low, 1.81 - 2.60 = low, 2.61 - 3.40 = moderate, 3.41 - 4.20 = high, 4.21 - 5.00 = very high

From Table 2, the overall mean score of the reading attitude questionnaire was 3.54 (SD = 0.62), which was interpreted at a high level, since most students agreed with these items positively. The cognitive reading skills were item No. 15 (M = 4.24, SD = 0.83). The cognitive reading skills part was at the highest value, stating that most students wholly agreed that reading English literary works helped them improve their vocabulary skills more than the other areas such as reading, speaking, listening, and writing. This implied that it may possibly depend on the levels of the literary materials they read that they comprehend. From item No. 11 (cognitive reading skills), some learners admitted their improvement on integrated skills (reading, listening, speaking, and writing) when reading literature in English. This suggested that reading English literary texts allowed them to satisfy their learning experiences in sharpening their language proficiency while gaining these skills in class. Surprisingly, item No. 18 (cognitive reading skills) was the second highest behind item 15, indicating high possibility in gaining cultural knowledge. This showed that they may have learned some foreign contexts from what they read in literary classes. However, the lowest mean score came from item No. 4 (joyful reading experiences) which implied their dissatisfaction with reading classic Western literature. This may suggest that they were not entirely interested in the books selected from literary classes, but somehow wanted to read what interested them, depending on their preferences.

Some learners may not be fond of reading difficult or uninteresting texts. Out of these three items from the unpleasant reading experience part, item No. 10 (M = 4.19, SD = 0.98) showed a significant difference among the other two items in that learners felt anxious when

they were not able to understand the contents from reading materials. This may suggest their lack of comprehension with what the story was about generally as this indicated their fear of showing whether they understood or not, hence their unpleasant reading attitudes.

**Table 3.** Descriptive Statistics for Reading Attitude Scale

Categories	Mean	S.D.
<b><u>Affective</u></b>		
Joyful reading experiences	3.18	0.92
Unpleasant reading experiences	3.94	0.89
<b><u>Cognitive</u></b>		
Cognitive reading skills	3.67	0.73
<b><u>Behavioral</u></b>		
Reading in actions	3.33	0.95

According to Table 3, significantly, the value for unpleasant reading experiences was the highest, resulting in students being disinterested in reading, due to certain aspects of reading materials, even though the value for cognitive reading skills was significantly higher than that of joyful reading experiences and behavioral reading. In other words, students showed mixed reading attitudes, despite their extrinsic beliefs and values in reading English literary texts.

From the five open-ended questionnaire item responses and the semi-structured interview, having cognitive reading skills made most students display their positive reading attitude as they considered this important in sharpening their comprehension skills with English literary materials. Some specifically stated that this helped in advancing four integrated skills such as reading, listening, writing, and speaking, especially vocabulary. However, others viewed reading English literary materials as difficult to understand as this revealed their negative reading attitudes, due to the vocabulary level and understanding content.

**Research question #2: What factors help or block students’ reading attitudes in English literary works?**

The second research question aimed to investigate the hidden factors that either enhance or hinder reading attitudes towards English literary works. This came from the reading attitude questionnaire being analyzed by the exploratory factor analysis, which is used for discovering more hidden latent factors that can be identified within the observed variables [5]. As these three factors have been revealed in Table 4, they were named when the factor

loadings in bold were in high values that remained strongly linked as a relationship between items and factors. Navarro and Foxcroft [5] suggested that names should be made as they have to be relevantly meaningful to the strong relationship between items and factors measured. It is indicated that Factor 1 represented a positive reading experience, regarding students' joy and interest in reading and learning English literary texts from literature courses they took in terms of positive reading attitude. Factor 2, opposite to the former, represented motivation to read, which is associated with students' instrumental motivation to read books to improve their English language proficiency. Finally, Factor 3 is unpleasant reading experiences in which students developed their disinterest or dissatisfaction in reading particular English literary works. The table for the 25 items being analyzed is presented below.

In Table 4, item No. 18 seemed to be strongly linked with Factor 1 as this suggested that some students were able to gain enough cultural knowledge while reading some different English literary materials, depending on the content they could comprehend. In addition, item No. 5 was also significantly related to that factor, due to the students' understanding in knowing what happened in the story. Since Factor 2 was related to reading motivation, items No. 24 and 25 were in agreement with it, indicating that students were able to have time to read books in English and they could also search whatever they wanted to read online to help them conveniently find comfort in reading. By contrast, items No. 17 and 22 seemed to imply the hindrance of the students' reading attitudes through getting motivated to study more English in the future or being unable to acquire higher scores in English class, despite having read English literary texts.

**Table 4.** Factor Loadings for Reading Attitude Scale

Reading Attitude Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communalities
<b>Joyful reading experiences (Affective)</b>				
1. I enjoy reading all kinds of literary works such as novels, poems, short story, plays, etc. in class	<b>0.525</b>	0.333		0.4523
2. I enjoy reading various literary texts in English	<b>0.727</b>	0.353		0.714
3. Reading English literature in different genres (e.g., adventure, fantasy, etc.) is very interesting	<b>0.729</b>		0.334	0.6669

**Table 4.** Factor Loadings for Reading Attitude Scale (continue)

Reading Attitude Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communalities
4. I enjoy reading classic Western literature texts (e.g., <i>To Kill a Mockingbird</i> , <i>The Great Gatsby</i> , etc.)	<b>0.714</b>			0.5893
5. I am able to express empathy when reading English literature texts	<b>0.824</b>		0.359	0.8296
6. I get enthusiastic when reading the English literary texts relevant to my current level of proficiency	<b>0.648</b>			0.5854
7. Reading English literature materials is a new experience	<b>0.424</b>			0.2607
<b>Unpleasant reading experiences (Affective)</b>				
8. I feel overwhelmed whenever I see a whole page of English literature in front of me	-0.327		<b>-0.665</b>	0.5609
9. Literature is difficult because it requires deep interpretation to understand the meanings of the texts	-0.355		<b>-0.758</b>	0.7058
10. I sometimes feel anxious that I may not understand what I read			<b>-0.741</b>	0.6259
<b>Cognitive reading skills (Cognitive)</b>				
11. Literature reading in English helps me improve four language skills (reading, listening, speaking, writing)			<b>0.302</b>	0.0917
12. Reading various English literary works helps me understand the story well by criticizing their contents	<b>0.778</b>			0.6717
13. I am able to develop critical thinking skills when reading various English literary works	<b>0.819</b>			0.6722
14. I am able to reflect the literary texts in English through my personal experiences	<b>0.818</b>			0.7482
15. Reading various English literary works helps me improve my vocabulary knowledge	<b>0.659</b>			0.461

**Table 4.** Factor Loadings for Reading Attitude Scale (continue)

Reading Attitude Items	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Communalities
16. I am able to discuss my opinions, beliefs, and experiences about the English literary text that I read during the group discussion	<b>0.709</b>			0.6029
17. Reading various English literary texts motivates me to study English more for future education	<b>0.695</b>		<b>0.381</b>	0.6902
18. Reading various English literary texts helps me gain cultural background knowledge	<b>0.864</b>		<b>0.306</b>	0.8443
19. Literature improves my proficiency in English as a Foreign Language (EFL)	0.500	<b>0.514</b>	0.361	0.6449
20. I am able to gain general understanding of the story I read	<b>0.615</b>	0.373	<b>0.310</b>	0.6131
21. Reading various English literary works improves my communicative skills	<b>0.561</b>	0.345	<b>0.329</b>	0.5422
22. I read literary texts because I want to obtain high marks in my English class	<b>0.539</b>		<b>0.364</b>	0.4257
23. Literature can help me improve my reading habits as I keep reading more	<b>0.669</b>	0.595		0.8124
<b>Reading in actions (Behavioral)</b>				
24. I surf the internet to read English books based on my level	0.338	<b>0.886</b>		0.9346
25. I try to find time for reading in English		<b>0.984</b>		0.9824

\*Note: Items No. 1 to 7 (joyful reading experiences), items No. 8 to 10 (unpleasant reading experiences); items No. 11 to 23 (cognitive reading skills); items No. 24 to 25 (reading in actions)

**Table 5.** Factor Statistics

Factors	SS Loadings	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	9.30	37.2	37.2
2	3.46	13.9	51.0
3	2.97	11.9	62.9

According to Table 5, out of these 25 items, the total variance was 63 %. It is suggested that Factor 1 (positive reading experience) had the highest total variance, accounting for 37.2 % due to its strong association with its questionnaire items with factor loadings in bold. Factor 2 came out as the second strongest with its variance of about 13.9 % for its relation to reading motivation, followed by Factor 3 with 11.9 % for its unpleasant reading experience. It is indicated that Factor 1 was considered to be enhancing the students' reading attitudes while Factor 3 was related to hindering them, leading to a negative reading attitude. Though item No. 11 was relevant to being cognitive, its factor loading in Factor 3 suggested that their language skills may be lacking, resulting in unpleasant reading experiences. From Table 6 below, the reliability values were measured, indicating that these ranged from 0.84 to 0.89, suggesting a highly internal consistency value.

**Table 6.** Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficients and Factor Statistics for Reading Attitude Scales

Reading Attitude Scales	Total No. of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Eigenvalues	Total % of variance
<b>Affective</b>				
Joyful reading experiences	7	0.89	3.97	56.7
Unpleasant reading experiences	3	0.84	1.98	66.1
<b>Cognitive</b>				
Cognitive reading skills	13	0.93	6.9	53.1
<b>Behavioral</b>				
Reading in actions	2	0.95	1.81	90.6

## Discussion

From this study, two research questions were discussed. Recently, various researchers in the EFL field have conducted a study on investigating students' reading attitudes towards English literature texts by means in diverse contexts. They have shown that some of their student participants displayed positive reading attitudes, but others with unpleasant reading attitudes in terms of skills, comprehension, and especially aspects of literature materials that may have somehow affected their feelings and learning.

### **Thai EFL learners' current reading attitudes towards various English literary works**

These findings discovered that students enjoyed reading certain English literary texts to some aspects or contexts that they were very focused on, depending on their understanding

that matched to the level of the books they read. By contrast, there was one literary text collection that they did not find interesting and difficult to comprehend, which was classic Western literature. This indicated that some may have had trouble in understanding the content of the story and interpreting the meanings behind those texts, despite their efforts of having studied them during previous literary courses. It is possible that there were some elements embedded that students were not capable of grasping deeper attention of those literary texts, due to such refined features in detailing the abundant number of deeper insights, culture, and authors' intentions [12]. Even so, they had their favorite genres that they wished to read someday, depending on their literary preferences and enthusiasm. This may imply that they read based on their levels with the desired genres.

One of the most significant findings conducted in the questionnaire was that with those reading materials from literary courses learnt, the students' cognitive reading attitudes became increasingly common as they developed more particular skills (such as vocabulary and interpretation) in studying English. One conception that could be consistently claimed was their extrinsic motivation with their focus on honing their experiences while reading in class to help facilitate their language skills. This could be argued that four integrated skills were one of the reasons of why and how they improved their reading attitudes in studying English rather than enjoying the contents of literary texts in which it would be considered secondary to their joyful reading experiences. It is also indicated that reading different English literary texts helped them develop mostly their vocabulary as the top significant area along with four others (reading, writing, speaking, and listening). This implied that they, in different ways, may have increased their vocabulary skills more when looking for the meanings of the unfamiliar words, according to the books that were interesting or uninteresting that they read in class. Another beneficial aspect was their cultural background knowledge acquisition which implied that they learnt something foreign but interesting in assimilating the number of reflections, beliefs, and ideas through some means such as studying new words and writing essays. Literature gives them the opportunity in collecting knowledge based on the foreign society, absorbing them in a rich manner to know some diverse aspects of the world [11].

#### **Factors involving producing students' positive and negative reading attitudes**

From these results, Factor 1 represented a positive reading experience, regarding students' joy and learning in reading English literary texts from literature courses they took in terms of affective and cognitive domains being connected. Factor 2, by contrast, represented reading motivation, which is associated with students' values and benefits in improving their English proficiency through reading various literary works. Finally, Factor 3

was connected to students' negative reading attitudes and skills in reading.

Factor 1 was the top to have revealed its strongest variance in total, suggesting that those students had strong beliefs in achieving for better English learning through reading various literature materials in terms of joyful reading experiences and cognitive reading skills together. The finding indicated that students did possess positivity in displaying their cultural knowledge. As mentioned in the literature review, Maley [4] explained that learning literature benefits students' ability to broaden their cultural background knowledge and upgrade their language skills. Empathy was another factor that students expressed in terms of promoting students' social interaction within the texts [4]. Another positive aspect was their ability to broaden their minds into imagining some scenes from what they understood from reading and searching for clues deeply, as it is in line with Van [13]. Next, Factor 2 came out as the second from its value, suggesting that students may have possessed their behavioral reading attitudes in which they used literary materials to improve their language proficiency. However, Factor 3, which was associated with negative reading experiences, seemed to be at the lowest, hence its variance.

### **Limitations and future research**

There are limitations that need to be addressed in this current study to create opportunities for further studies. At first, employing an online questionnaire would be convenient to gather the responses sufficiently. However, it was challenging that half of the students completed it while the others did not, depending on their schedules, absences, and other factors. Therefore, a printed version of the questionnaire would be recommended to let the participants be present and complete it together. Furthermore, more significant data could be discovered. Another limitation was based on the data analyzed by the factor analysis. During the first day of the first semester in their senior year, 46 participants submitted the informed consent form and the start of the data collection. Thus, the number dropped to 21 participants after taking the questionnaire online. Because 21 participants joined the study, they completed the online questionnaire, leaving about 30% finishing it. For future studies to discover more deeply in reading attitudes, it is suggested that a larger sample (100 or more) is required for factor analysis since it is important to increase the robustness of the results. As a result, more significant data can be revealed.

### **Conclusion**

The purpose of the present study was to investigate Thai EFL learners' reading attitudes towards English literary works from literary courses taken. It is indicated that although

students possessed positive reading attitudes for showing their interest in reading literary texts that matched their levels of understanding and preference, cognitive skills remained intact, revealing the students' strong motives in learning English through reading in various ways such as searching for meanings in a dictionary and writing. Secondly, students may have adhered to displaying their strong cognitive reading skills, but their joy for reading remained as it could improve their reading habits.

Students' reading attitudes require consideration. Teachers and lecturers should use their efforts in assessing and understanding students' current reading attitudes based on what they think of reading English literary works selected in class. Additionally, they should consider the student's needs and preferences of literary texts in terms of genres and contents based on their level of understanding. Evaluating the literature courses would be useful to help enhance the students' reading attitudes and learning skills. This would lead to creating different methods to teach literature, enhancing their learning skills.

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