

1. INTRODUCTION

As Maley (2001) points out, the role of literature in the classical, humanist tradition of teaching languages was carried over into the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context in the early 20th century and overall has continued ever since. Gilroy and Parkinson (1996) write, for example, that literature has always occupied a prominent place in EFL for many learners, noting that English textbooks in South Asia are sometimes simply a collection of literary texts. Maley, likewise, observes that literature remains essential to the teaching of language in India. However, as Carter (2007, p. 6) notes, literature “disappeared from the language curriculum” from the 1940s to the 1960s due to, as Maley describes it, a shift in focus from educating a small scholarly élite to mass-producing functionally competent users of English, where literature’s ‘deviant’ language (Gilroy & Parkinson, 1996, p. 213) was deemed unsuitable for language learning. In the last three decades, however, the use of literature in foreign language (FL) education has seen renewed interest, with the publication of several resource books for teachers both in the UK (e.g. Carter & Long, 1991; Collie & Slater, 1987; Duff & Maley, 1990; Lazar, 1993; Paran & Robinson, 2016) and elsewhere, such as Hong Kong (Kennedy & Falvey, 1999) and Turkey (Inan & Yüksel, 2013). There have also been three state-of-the-art papers (Gilroy & Parkinson, 1996; Lott, 1988; Paran, 2008) and, more recently, the first systematic review of research on literature in language teaching (Fogal, 2015). Carter links this renewed interest to the rise of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) in the 70s and 80s, which recognized the potential contribution of literature to improving not only vocabulary, but also reading and critical thinking skills, thanks to its more creative and representational use of language. Providing evidence in support of this trend, Tatsuki (2015) notes that literature has been integrated into English language programs in many countries across Europe and Asia. More recently, literature has been accorded greater attention in the updated descriptors for the Council of Europe’s *Common European Framework of Reference for Language: Learning, teaching, assessment* (CEFR) (North, Goodier, & Piccardo, 2017).

In parallel with this growing popularity, several studies have been undertaken across the globe, for example in Western Europe (Bloemert, Jansen, & van de Grift, 2016; Bloemert, Paran, Jansen, & van de Grift, 2017; Duncan & Paran, 2017), the Middle East (Qutub, 2018) and Asia (e.g. the papers in Teranishi, Saito & Wales, 2015), to research teacher and student attitudes towards literature in language education (LLE), effective teaching methods, and literature’s effects on learner performance. In Russia, the context for the study reported here, a growing number of writers have similarly started to stress the benefits of literature to foreign language learning (Klementsova, 2012; Rogacheva, 2015; Zhuvikina & Feoktistova, 2011), although empirical research on LLE in the country, notably on teacher attitudes and practices, remains relatively unexplored territory. This is despite major developments in teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Russia over the last two decades, following the break up of the Soviet Union, all of which have led to “an unprecedented interest in learning English” (Kozar & Sweller, 2014, p. 40).

In the context of the resurgence of literature in foreign language classrooms, teachers’ attitudes towards literature and towards the use of literature in the language classroom assume great importance. Teachers whose attitude towards literature, in general, is negative, or who have not been trained in the use of literature in language teaching, are less likely to use literature or, if required to do so, are less likely to do so well. This is similar to what Applegate and Applegate (2004) have pointed out can happen when teachers who do not love reading are charged with instilling the love of reading in their pupils. They call this ‘the Peter Effect’, referring to ‘the story of the Apostle Peter who, when asked for money by a beggar (...) replied by stating that he could not give what he did not have (Acts 3:5)’ (Applegate & Applegate, 2004, p. 556). Thus, a teacher who does not enjoy literature or who does not believe in its usefulness for language learning is unlikely to be able to instil the love of literature in their students. An understanding of the status of literature in EFL teaching and learning thus has to start with understanding the stance of teachers towards this area. This study therefore investigated the attitudes of EFL teachers in Russia towards literature and towards the use of literature in the language classroom, focusing on the influence of age on these attitudes (see Section 2.4 below for an explanation of our decision to focus on age in this context).

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1. What is Literature?

At this point, it is appropriate to provide a short note on defining literature. In literary research, for example, there is the issue of the language of literature. According to Russian Formalism, literature uses special language that distinguishes it from practical, everyday language (Pope, 2002). Hall (2015), however, posits that literary language is not significantly different from ordinary language, while other authors, for example Carter and Nash (1990), have written about a ‘cline of literariness’, a range that extends from technical writing all the way to literary texts. McRae (1991) distinguishes between Literature with a capital ‘L’, which encompasses the canonical genres, the teaching of

which focuses on literary understanding and literary competence, and literature with a small ‘l’, which examines a variety of non-canonical genres and the use of literary language in everyday texts such as advertisements. Edmondson (1997, p. 45) describes literature as ‘written texts which have a certain aesthetic value and some perceived status in the culture of which they are artefacts’; he acknowledges that this is a loose definition, but takes it as his operational definition, rejecting the inclusion of non-canonical texts of various types (cartoons or song lyrics) within the term ‘literature’. Paran (2000, p. 76) moves the discussion to examining what ‘literature in language learning’ means, and suggests that it can have multiple interpretations: the “transmission of knowledge about literature and canon”, an ordinary language resource, or a middle way, where literature is used as a language resource, yet its privileged status in the language is acknowledged. While these differing views are relevant to the debate surrounding the meaning of literature, this study takes a straightforward definition of literature as literary texts, e.g. novels, short stories, novellas, poems and plays. These are representational texts in that they use language creatively to engage not only learners’ imagination, but also their cognitive and emotional faculties in a way that informational, referential texts do not (McRae, 1996).

2.2. Literature in the Foreign Language Classroom: Support and Opposition

The use of literature as a language learning resource is purported to bring many benefits. Teachers can use it to introduce interesting, authentic topics for discussion to the classroom (Hall, 2015; Shrestah, 2007), thereby fostering a desire for language learning in students in a way that cannot be achieved with textbooks, which often contain mostly referential texts and employ artificial language (Gómez, 2012). The authentic language found in literature can likewise help attune learners to the musicality of different languages and dialects (Macleroy, 2013; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000). In addition to promoting learning enjoyment, literature can also develop intercultural competence in learners (Collie & Slater, 1987; Lazar, 1993; Ur, 2012). This is especially important from a CLT perspective, where the idea of communicative competence has evolved to mean that learners should not only know how to use language in a range of different authentic situations (Hall, 2015; Richards, 2006), but also be able to engage in meaningful interactions with people from different cultural backgrounds (Gómez, 2012). In this respect, Gómez (2012, 2014) provides evidence for how literary texts, in this case multicultural short stories, can help foster EFL learners’ cultural awareness and intercultural communicative competence through the concept of cultural commonalities. Macleroy (2013, p. 314), in the same vein, shows how literature can help English as an additional language (EAL) learners understand “both the local and global in acts of reading”. Literary texts can also assist teachers in developing learners’ vocabulary and grammar knowledge (Elliot, 1990; Macleroy, 2013; Zyngier, 1994), as well as language skills (Erkaya, 2005; Nasr, 2001; Parkinson & Thomas, 2000): literature not only comes in many different forms, e.g. prose, poetry, or drama, but it can also include a diversity of language styles, registers, and syntax, which teachers can use in a wide range of activities and to achieve various goals (Khatib, Rezaei, & Derakhshan, 2011). Picken’s (2007) study, for example, is an interesting look at how linguistic metaphors in literary texts aid in language learning via ‘schema refreshing’. Literature has also been shown to motivate students and boost their performance (Yang, 2002), and, by dint of its representational nature, is also said to improve analytical thinking, argumentation skills, and cognition (Beach, 1993; Van, 2009), abilities that are crucial to education, especially at the tertiary level (Khatib, Rezaei, & Derakhshan, 2011).

The benefits notwithstanding, many supporters of LLE do point out some of the issues that can arise when using literature, and their arguments mainly relate to two areas: the complexity of language (Cook, 1986; Hall, 2015; McKay, 1982; Watts, 1990) and the lack of alignment of literary works with the purpose for which learners are learning English (Savvidou, 2004; Sell, 2005). The language difficulty argument rests on the claim that literature’s syntactic and lexical complexity, due to its often non-standard use of language, especially in the case of poetry, can make it very hard for learners to make sense of literary content (Hall, 2015). Countering this argument, Khatib, Rezaei and Derakhshan (2011) point out that such concerns might be relevant in instances where teachers decide to use older works of literature, where the language, reflecting the time period, is often outdated, whereas newer works, following the same logic, will contain language that is more contemporary in form and style. Moreover, as already mentioned, the linguistic complexity found in literature can serve to introduce the more creative aspects of language use, thereby not only broadening learners’ knowledge of the ways in which language can be used, but also encouraging experimentation. The lack of alignment argument, meanwhile, can be said to rely on a narrow understanding of CLT, focusing solely on the functional use of language in specific social and work settings, while ignoring other aspects of CLT like intercultural competence (as mentioned above), language variety, and a more meaningful approach to the development of language skills to suit myriad authentic social contexts (Savignon, 2002). In fact, studies have shown that teachers can use literature to promote successful learning outcomes even when English is being taught for very specific, often technical, purposes (Diaz-Santos, 2000; Rolls & Rodgers, 2017). Another objection, raised by Horowitz (1990) and Edmondson (1997), both of whom have come out very specifically against the use of literature in language

education, is that literature has nothing to offer to language learners that other types of texts do not. This is specifically countered by Paran (2008), who suggests that we should look at literature in language learning from a more holistic angle, and acknowledge the non-linguistic benefits that accrue to students who encounter literature in their foreign language education. Paran suggests that learning a language is “not only about language... but also about education” (2008, p. 469), and that the love of literature is an important human characteristic.

2.3. Literature in Foreign Language Education in Russia

To understand the use of literature in English language education in Russia, it is important to first delineate the context and history of English in Russia. Many authors (e.g. Davydova, 2012; Ivanova & Tivyaeva, 2015; Lazaretnaya, 2012; Lovtsevich 2016; McCaughey 2005) discuss the spread of English in modern-day Russia with reference to three specific periods: the Cold War era (1947-1991), post-*perestroika* (1992-1999), and the New Russia period (2000-present). Lazaretnaya (2012) writes that, during the Cold War period, English language instruction was very insular, isolated from “English-speaking communities” (p. 10), and evolved based on its own set of rules. It was also mostly confined to the classroom, with children beginning EFL lessons at secondary school, from the age of 10 or 11 (Lazaretnaya, 2012). Content was strictly controlled and had to adhere to Soviet ideology (Ter-Minasova, 2005), and while literature was used in the EFL classroom, the language itself was studied as if it were a dead language, with teachers focusing on the translation of texts and employing a deductive approach to the teaching of grammar in their lessons instead of developing their students’ communicative ability (Davydova, 2012; Ter-Minasova, 2005). The *perestroika* period (1985-1991) witnessed the rise in popularity of CLT. A much larger diversity of teaching materials replaced the erstwhile dearth of language resources, although the new materials were sometimes of questionable quality and were poorly understood by students (Ter-Minasova, 2005). Some EFL teachers in Russia, during this time, continued to use teaching materials from the Soviet period, while others experimented with newer materials and methods (Lazaretnaya, 2012). Currently, i.e. in the New Russia era, EFL education in Russia can start from as early as kindergarten, though it generally begins from the 2nd grade.

Teachers in Russia continue to use literature to teach EFL, although, in contrast to the Soviet era, the focus in using literature has shifted to developing learners’ communicative ability and intercultural competence (Bekisheva & Gasparjan, 2014; Belkina & Stetsenko, 2015; Glatishina, 2017; Gubzheva, 2005). At the federal level, the Ministry of Education and Science has included literature in its updated standards for the teaching of foreign languages in primary, secondary and tertiary education. These standards provide general guidelines regarding literature use, focusing primarily on developing students’ intercultural competence, interest in reading, and, at secondary school and university, their ability to analyze literary works (MoE, 2012). These changes have been bolstered by a small but growing number of Russian writers, who have argued for greater inclusion of literary texts in language education in a CLT context, claiming that it benefits language learning and intercultural competence (Bekisheva & Gasparjan, 2014; Belkina & Stetsenko, 2015; Glatishina, 2017; Klementsova, 2012; Rogacheva, 2015; Zhuvikina & Feoktistova, 2011). This movement, in many ways, reflects the growing global trend described above, where literature in language teaching is seen as providing several benefits to language learners.

2.4. Teachers’ Attitudes Towards LLE and the General Decline in Reading Skills

The attitude of teachers towards reading, including the reading of literary texts, is crucial if they are to educate learners who become engaged readers (Applegate & Applegate, 2004). One important development in the past few decades in this respect has been evidence of a decline in the amount of literary reading that teachers do (Applegate & Applegate, 2004; Benevides & Peterson, 2010; Huang, 2017; Nathanson, Pruslow, & Levitt, 2008). Skaar, Elvebakk and Nilssen (2018), in their study of teachers in Norway, for instance, report that literary reading habits and attitudes towards literature appear to be worsening in young pre-service teachers, when compared with older in-service teachers. They attribute this decline in literary reading to a lack of reading culture when growing up, a limited amount of books, and a desire for immediate satisfaction from books, which negatively influences young teachers’ enjoyment of literature. They also feel that this trend will likely influence the place of literature in schools in the future, since younger teachers will be less and less capable of creating enthusiasm for literature in their lessons. Huang’s (2017) study of the reading practices of 395 pre-service teachers in the United States similarly reveals that pre-service teachers’ reading habits have changed over the last decade, with less time spent on academic and extracurricular reading, in part due to social media use. In their study of 747 in-service and pre-service teachers, Nathanson, Pruslow and Levitt (2008) found that teachers who had had positive experiences with literature as learners were much more enthusiastic about reading than those whose experiences had not been as positive. In this respect, being taught by teachers who not only shared a love of reading, but also placed a great deal of emphasis on discussing and interpreting literature, was indicative of positive teacher attitudes towards reading later in life. McGlynn-Stewart (2014) is another

study where teachers report being inspired to develop an appreciation of literature in their students because of their own positive experiences with literature as learners. The picture that emerges from these studies, then, is that in L1 contexts, there is a connection between teachers' views of literature and reading and their own educational experience, with a tendency for reading and enjoyment of literature to be lower for younger teachers.

In the foreign language context, only a few studies have explored the views of teachers towards the use and the teaching of literature in the classroom. Gilroy (1995), for instance, investigated the attitudes of twenty teachers working in a university language centre towards literary texts, and found that these teachers viewed literary texts in the same way they viewed other texts, but used such texts only occasionally, as one-offs. Jones and Carter (2012), studying the attitudes of twelve teachers, again in a university context, found that they were overall favourably disposed towards using literature in the classroom, though they were worried about the extent to which this would meet learners' needs. More recently, a large-scale study by Duncan and Paran (2017; see also Duncan and Paran, 2018) surveyed 265 teachers of various foreign languages teaching towards the International Baccalaureate (IB), in classes where literary texts were a compulsory part of the curriculum. Duncan and Paran (2017) found overwhelming support for the use of literature in the classroom, with teachers supporting the use of literature for a variety of reasons, both linguistic, cultural and educational. Their attitudes and views towards literature and the teaching of literature correlated positively with the amount of training that they had had in using literary texts in the language classroom, attesting to the differences between groups of teachers according to their teacher education background (Duncan and Paran, 2017, 2018).

2.5. Research Questions

Given the gaps in our knowledge of teachers' views of literature in the EFL classroom, and our understanding of the changes in attitudes towards reading over the last few decades, this study explored teacher attitudes towards literature as a language resource in the Russian context, probing for possible age-related differences. It not only contributes to the comparatively little research on this issue that exists at present in the Russian context, but also aids in understanding whether declining interest in literary reading and attitudes towards literature among younger teachers exists in this context as well, in addition to the contexts reported above. The study was exploratory in nature, and the following two questions were studied as part of the study's research focus:

1. What are teacher attitudes towards using literary texts in an EFL classroom?
2. Is there a difference in teacher attitudes based on age?

3. METHOD

3.1. Participants

The study used a mix of convenience and snowball sampling methods and potential participants were contacted via school and university language department staff directories, through social networking sites, on teacher forums, in person, and through colleague and participant referrals. A total of 140 Russian EFL teachers participated in the study. They included 108 females, 29 males, and three respondents who declined to disclose their gender.

3.2. Instruments and Data Collection

An 85-item questionnaire was used for the study. The items, deriving primarily from the themes discussed in Bloemert, Jansen and van de Grift (2016), Hall (2015), Paran (2000, 2008) and Van (2009), were divided into four sections: biographical (5 items that collected data on participants' gender, age, years of teaching experience and place of employment), learning background (11 items that collected data on participants' level of literary reading enjoyment and their exposure to literature as learners), attitudes towards literature in TEFL (39 items that covered participants' views of the benefits of literature, frequency of literature use, challenges encountered, and teacher preferences in terms of learners' level of proficiency in English), and teaching approaches (40 items that dealt with specific approaches to using literature in lessons, activities and literary forms, as well as two open-ended questions on text selection). A draft version of the questionnaire was first piloted with 16 Russian EFL teachers at two schools in Moscow. Following oral feedback from the participating teachers, some of the items were rephrased to make them easier to understand, and a 5-point Likert scale was adopted for all items (excluding the section dealing with participants' biographical data). The final questionnaire was presented online in English and was made accessible via a digital link. It remained open for 50 days, after which responses were no longer accepted. Importantly, the questionnaire stipulated that it was targeted only at teachers who had received all their education in the former USSR or in Russia.

The data reported here provides an overview of our participants' professional and learning background and focuses mainly on the items looking at attitudes toward literature. We do not look at the items focusing on teaching

approaches and practical issues both for reasons of space, and because the patterns revealed in the items focusing on teaching approaches were different, and revealed differences based on teaching context, rather than on age.

Data from the questionnaire was analysed using SPSS 22. A reliability analysis of the relevant questionnaire items indicated a Cronbach's Alpha of .967. For age-related comparisons, three groupings were used in all instances: ≤ 30 , 31-49 and ≥ 50 . These groupings mirror the distinct development periods of EFL in Russia, as described in section 2.3 above: the study takes the ≤ 30 group to represent teachers who received their teacher education in the post-*perestroika* period, the 31-49 age group to represent the period of transition that *perestroika* brought to the EFL landscape, and the ≥ 50 group to represent the pre-*perestroika* Soviet period. The Kruskal-Wallis test was used to ascertain whether there were statistically significant differences between the three age groups based on their responses to the items in the questionnaire. This was followed by post-hoc tests using the Dunn-Bonferroni method to identify the precise location of the differences between the pairs within the test samples. When the Bonferroni tests were statistically significant, the effect size was calculated using Hedge's g , which is recommended when the sample sizes are different. Pearson's correlation was used to check for strength and direction (positive or negative) of association between respondents' attitudes towards literature as EFL learners and their attitudes towards literature as EFL teachers. A one-way ANOVA was used to test for statistically significant differences in the mean ages of participants based on their teaching context. An alpha level of .05 was used for all tests.

The study follows Plonsky and Oswald's (2014) recommendations for reporting effect sizes. Accordingly, the following scale is used to interpret g values: .40 = small effect, .70 = medium effect, and 1.00 = large effect. With Pearson's r coefficient, the study follows Wrenn, Stevens and Loudon (2007) for the purposes of interpretation: 0-0.20 = negligible, 0.21-0.40 = weak, 0.41-0.60 = moderate, 0.61-0.80 = strong, and 0.81-1.00 = very strong.

For ease of reference, in each table we provide the item number it refers to as well as the actual question asked of the participants.

4. RESULTS

4.1. Respondents: Age Group and Teaching Experience

Table 1 provides a breakdown of the years of teaching experience of our respondents. One respondent did not disclose their teaching experience.

Table 1.
English teaching experience of participants

	n
Not given	1 (.7%)
2 years or under	19 (13.6%)
5 years or under	25 (17.8%)
10 years or under	28 (20%)
Over 10 years	67 (47.9%)
Total	140 (100%)

Participants were asked about all the different contexts in which they taught or had taught and the responses revealed a group with a diverse range of teaching experiences, with 70 (50%) participants having taught at university, 65 (46.4%) with secondary school experience, 48 (34.2%) with primary school experience, 67 (47.8%) with language institute experience, and 55 (39.2%) participants with experience working as independent contractors (freelance teachers). A small minority had experience teaching at professional lyceums (6; 4.3%) and professional (vocational) schools (12; 8.6%). Clearly, many participants had taught English in more than one context, and many of them were probably teaching in more than one context concurrently, as is common in many countries. For the purposes of answering the questionnaire, respondents were asked to consider only one teaching context; 57 respondents chose to answer the questionnaire based on their university teaching experience, 30 respondents selected language institute, 26 chose secondary school, 10 chose primary school, 12 chose independent contractor, and 3 chose a professional school (vocational) context. A professional lyceum setting was not selected by any of the participants, and two respondents declined to provide a teaching context.

Table 2 provides descriptive statistics for the three age groups. The two participants that declined to provide an exact age (i.e. they wrote 60+), were not included when calculating the mean ages of the three age groups.

Table 2.
Mean ages within the three age groups

	n	M (SD)	Mdn
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Age as a factor in Russian EFL teacher attitudes towards literature in language education

≤30	46 (33.3%)	26.78 (2.49)	26.50
31-49	75 (54.4%)	38.51 (5.30)	38.00
≥50	17 (12.3%)	57.24 (5.29)	56.00
Total	138 (100%)	36.91 (10.37)	35.00

A one-way ANOVA was conducted to see if there were any statistically significant differences in the mean ages of respondents based on their teaching context. The results revealed that there was no statistically significant difference [$F(5,131) = 1.1, p = .361$]. A Levene's Test of Homogeneity of Variances was also conducted and confirmed that the variances in age for the different teaching contexts were statistically equivalent [$F(5,131) = 1.22, p = .304$].

4.2. Attitude Towards Literature

Table 3 displays the descriptive statistics for reading enjoyment for the three age groups. Although participants have positive attitudes towards reading in general, the data shows that there are differences in reading enjoyment between the age groups. The ≥50 age group enjoys reading in English and Russian more than the 31-49 age group, which in turn enjoys reading in English and Russian more than the ≤30 age group, which thus reports enjoying reading literature in both languages the least.

Table 3.
Literature reading habits of the three age groups

	6. Do you like to read literature in Russian?			7. Do you like to read literature in English?		
	n	M (SD)	Mdn	n	M (SD)	Mdn
≤30	46 (33.3%)	3.76 (1.42)	4.00	46 (32.9%)	4.02 (1.27)	4.50
31-49	73 (52.9%)	4.00 (1.42)	5.00	75 (53.6%)	4.32 (1.03)	5.00
≥50	19 (13.8%)	4.68 (.75)	5.00	19 (13.5%)	4.74 (.56)	5.00
Total	138 (100%)	4.01 (1.37)	5.00	140 (100%)	4.28 (1.09)	5.00

1=Not at all; 2=Not Really; 3=Somewhat; 4=Moderately; 5=Very Much

Kruskal-Wallis tests revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the age groups in terms of reading literature in Russian [$H = 7.377, df = 2, n = 138, p = .025$]. A Dunn-Bonferroni post-hoc test revealed that the ≥50 age group expressed a liking for reading that was statistically significantly higher [$p = .020, g = .718$] than that of the ≤30 age group, with a medium effect size. Comparisons between the ≥50 age group and the 31-49 age group, and between the 31-49 age group and the ≤30 age group were not statistically significant. There were no statistically significant differences in the enjoyment of reading literature in English between any of the groups.

Table 4 displays the descriptive statistics for the three age groups based on their exposure to literature as EFL learners in various contexts (Q8a-f). The data clearly shows that there are differences in the frequency of exposure to literature between the age groups. The ≥50 age group, on average, appears to have used literature more frequently at primary school, secondary school and university than the other two age groups, while the ≤30 age group appears to have used it least of all, except in the language institute context.

Table 4.
Participants' responses to how frequently they encountered literary texts in different contexts

8. How frequently did you use literary texts when learning English?				
	Age	n	M (SD)	Mdn
a. Primary School	≤30	35 (35.3%)	1.89 (1.13)	1.00
	31-49	59 (59.6%)	1.95 (1.17)	2.00
	≥50	5 (5.1%)	2.20 (1.30)	2.00
	Total	99 (100%)	1.94 (1.15)	2.00
b. Secondary School	≤30	41 (35%)	2.71 (1.25)	3.00
	31-49	65 (55.6%)	3.05 (.98)	3.00
	≥50	11 (9.4%)	3.64 (1.03)	3.00
	Total	117 (100%)	2.98 (1.11)	3.00
c. Professional School	≤30	8 (35.8%)	3.25 (1.75)	3.50
	31-49	15 (65.2%)	3.53 (1.46)	4.00
	Total	23 (100%)	3.43 (1.53)	4.00
d. Professional Lyceum	≤30	3 (30%)	1.33 (.58)	1.00
	31-49	7 (70%)	3.71 (1.50)	4.00

Age as a factor in Russian EFL teacher attitudes towards literature in language education

	Total	10 (100%)	3.00 (1.70)	3.00
e. University	≤30	34 (32%)	3.71 (1.12)	4.00
	31-49	59 (55.7%)	4.24 (.95)	4.00
	≥50	13 (12.3)	4.38 (1.12)	5.00
	Total	106 (100%)	4.08 (1.05)	4.00
f. Language Institute	≤30	8 (22.2%)	4.13 (1.13)	4.50
	31-49	27 (75%)	3.22 (1.40)	3.00
	≥50	1 (2.8%)	4.00	4.00
	Total	36	3.44 (1.36)	4.00

1=Never; 2=Rarely; 3=Sometimes; 4=Often; 5=Regularly

Kruskal-Wallis tests revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the age groups in the university context [$H = 7.626$, $df = 2$, $n = 106$, $p = .022$]. Dunn-Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed that there were statistically significant differences in the university context between the 31-49 and ≤30 age groups [$p = .018$, $g = .518$]; the ≤30 age group had used less literature at university than the 31-49 age group, with a small/medium effect size. There was also a statistically significant difference between the ≥50 and ≤30 age groups [$p = .022$, $g = .588$], and the ≤30 age group had used less literature at university than the ≥50 age group, again with a small/medium effect size. The Professional Lyceum context also showed a statistically significant difference between the 31-49 and ≤30 age groups [$p = .046$, $g = 1.61$], with the ≤30 age group having used literature less than the 31-49 age group, with a large effect size (note that there were no respondents in the ≥50 age group in this context).

Table 5 focuses on the respondents' attitudes towards literary texts as EFL learners, and lists the descriptive statistics according to the three age groups. The data indicates that the ≤30 age group enjoyed using literary texts to a lesser extent than the other two age groups, and feels comparatively less positive in terms how much literature helped them improve their language skills. The ≥50 age group not only enjoyed using literature the most, but they also feel the most strongly about literature having helped them improve their language skills.

Table 5.

Participants' attitudes towards literary texts as EFL learners

	9. Did you enjoy using literary texts while learning English?			10. Do you feel literary texts helped you improve your language skills?		
	n	Mean (SD)	Mdn	n	Mean (SD)	Mdn
≤30	46 (32.9%)	3.93 (.99)	4.00	46 (32.9%)	4.00 (1.12)	4.00
31-49	75 (53.6%)	4.29 (.99)	5.00	75 (53.6%)	4.36 (.98)	5.00
≥50	19 (13.5%)	4.37 (.83)	5.00	19 (13.5%)	4.79 (.42)	5.00
Total	140 (100%)	4.19 (.99)	4.50	140 (100%)	4.30 (1.00)	5.00

1=Not at all; 2=Not Really; 3=Somewhat; 4=Moderately; 5=Very Much

A Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that there was no statistically significant difference between the age groups with respect to their enjoyment of using literary texts while learning English. In terms of how strongly the respondents felt that literature had helped them improve their English language ability, a Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the age groups [$H = 8.677$, $df = 2$, $n = 140$, $p = .013$]. Dunn-Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed that the ≤30 age group felt that literary texts had helped them statistically significantly less than the ≥50 age group felt [$p = .014$, $g = .802$]; the effect size is medium. The differences between the ≤30 and 31-49 age groups and between the 31-49 and ≥50 age groups were not statistically significant.

Table 6 displays the descriptive statistics for literature use among the three age groups, as well as how much they encourage their students to read literature. From the table, it is quite clear that the ≤30 age group uses literary texts less frequently than the other two groups, while the ≥50 age group uses literary texts the most frequently. A similar trend can be seen with regard to how frequently the different age groups encourage their students to read literature in English.

Table 6.

Frequency of literature use as teachers and encouragement of literary reading in learners

	11. Do you use literary texts when teaching English to your students?			17. Do you encourage your students to read English literary texts in their free time?		
	n	M (SD)	Mdn	n	M (SD)	Mdn

Age as a factor in Russian EFL teacher attitudes towards literature in language education

≤30	45 (32.6%)	2.89 (1.15)	3.00	46 (33.1%)	3.65 (1.45)	4.00
31-49	74 (53.6%)	3.66 (1.02)	4.00	74 (53.2%)	4.27 (.88)	4.00
≥50	19 (13.8%)	4.26 (.99)	5.00	19 (13.7%)	4.53 (.77)	5.00
Total	138 (100%)	3.49 (1.15)	4.00	139 (100%)	4.10 (1.13)	4.00

1=Never; 2=Rarely; 3=Sometimes; 4=Often; 5=Regularly

Kruskal-Wallis test results revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the age groups in terms of use [$H = 21.640$, $df = 2$, $n = 138$, $p < .001$] and encouragement [$H = 6.807$, $df = 2$, $n = 139$, $p = .033$]. Dunn-Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the ≥ 50 and ≤ 30 age groups [$p < .001$, $g = 1.22$], and between the 31-49 and ≤ 30 age groups [$p = .002$, $g = .715$] in terms of literature use. With respect to encouragement, Dunn-Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed that there was a statistically significant difference between the ≥ 50 and ≤ 30 age groups [$p = .047$, $g = .673$].

Table 7 presents the descriptive statistics for the three age groups' opinions regarding the usefulness of literary texts when teaching EFL. The data indicates that although all age groups generally appear to think of literary texts as a useful resource, the ≤ 30 age group does so to a lesser extent than the other two age groups.

Table 7.

Participants' views about literature as a useful language teaching resource

12. Literary texts are a useful English language teaching resource.			
	n	M (SD)	Mdn
≤30	46 (32.9%)	3.98 (.88)	4.00
31-49	75 (53.6%)	4.31 (.93)	5.00
≥50	19 (13.5%)	4.63 (.76)	5.00
Total	140 (100%)	4.24 (.91)	4.00

1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Somewhat Disagree; 3=Undecided; 4= Somewhat Agree; 5=Strongly Agree

A Kruskal-Wallis test revealed that there was a statistically significant difference in opinion between the age groups [$H = 11.085$, $df = 2$, $n = 140$, $p = .004$]. Dunn-Bonferroni post-hoc tests revealed that the differences were statistically significant between the ≥ 50 and ≤ 30 age groups [$p = .006$, $g = .758$] and between the 31-49 and ≤ 30 age groups [$p = .047$, $g = .360$].

Table 8 provides the results of a Pearson's correlation analysis for respondents' attitudes towards literature in EFL education (see Table 5 and 7), their English reading habits (see Table 3), their use of literature to teach EFL, and how frequently they encourage their students to read literature in English (see Table 6). For all test results, correlations were found to be statistically significant, with $p < .001$ in all cases. The results show a positive moderate to strong correlation between all item pairs.

Table 8.

Correlations between participants' attitudes as learners and in the present *

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.
1. Do you like to read literature in English? (Q7)	r	-				
	n	140				
2. Did you enjoy using literary texts while learning English? (Q9)	r	.636	-			
	n	140	140			
3. Do you feel literary texts helped you improve your language skills? (Q10)	r	.643	.701	-		
	n	140	140	140		
4. Do you use literary texts when teaching English to your students? (Q11)	r	.561	.581	.574	-	
	n	138	138	138	138	
5. Literary texts are a useful English language teaching resource. (Q12)	r	.606	.661	.660	.603	-
	n	140	140	140	138	140
6. Do you encourage your students to read English literary texts in their free time? (Q17)	r	.535	.607	.574	.623	.524
	n	139	139	139	137	139

* $p < .001$ in all cases

Table 9 provides descriptive statistics for how strongly the three age groups agree with a number of statements regarding the purported benefits of using literary texts (Q13a-m). The data shows a clear order in the degree of agreement with each statement: that the ≥ 50 age group agrees with each statement most, always followed by the 31-49 age groups, and the ≤ 30 age group showing the smallest degree of agreement in each case.

Table 9.
Participants' views on the benefits of using literary texts in language teaching

13. Literary texts...	≤30 age group			31-49 age group			≥50 age group			Total		
	n	M (SD)	Mdn	n	M (SD)	Mdn	n	M (SD)	Mdn	n	M (SD)	Mdn
a. ... are interesting for learners	46 (33%)	3.59 (.96)	4.00	74 (53%)	4.11 (.90)	4.00	19 (14%)	4.53 (.61)	5.00	139 (100%)	3.99 (.94)	4.00
b. ... motivate students	46 (33.3%)	3.26 (.95)	3.50	73 (52.9%)	3.93 (.92)	4.00	19 (13.8%)	4.26 (.87)	4.00	138 (100%)	3.75 (.99)	4.00
c. ... are examples of authentic English usage	46 (33%)	4.13 (.93)	4.00	74 (54%)	4.46 (.88)	5.00	19 (14%)	4.74 (.73)	5.00	139 (100%)	4.39 (.90)	5.00
d. ... help improve reading skills	44 (32.6%)	4.14 (1.09)	4.00	73 (54.1%)	4.55 (.82)	5.00	18 (13.3%)	4.83 (.38)	5.00	135 (100%)	4.45 (.90)	5.00
e. ... help improve writing skills	45 (33.1%)	3.42 (1.34)	4.00	74 (54.4%)	3.96 (1.09)	4.00	17 (12.5%)	4.47 (.72)	5.00	136 (100%)	3.85 (1.19)	4.00
f. ... help improve listening skills	45 (32.9%)	2.33 (1.07)	2.00	74 (54%)	3.01 (1.2)	3.00	18 (13.1%)	3.33 (1.14)	3.00	137 (100%)	2.83 (1.20)	3.00
g. ... help improve speaking skills	45 (32.6%)	2.93 (1.23)	3.00	74 (53.6%)	3.68 (1.1)	4.00	19 (13.8%)	4.11 (.94)	4.00	138 (100%)	3.49 (1.19)	4.00
h. ... help improve vocabulary	45 (32.6%)	4.36 (.91)	5.00	74 (53.6%)	4.61 (.77)	5.00	19 (13.8%)	4.68 (.75)	5.00	138 (100%)	4.54 (.82)	5.00
i. ... help improve knowledge of grammar	45 (32.9%)	3.60 (.99)	4.00	74 (54%)	4.24 (.77)	4.00	18 (13.1%)	4.56 (.62)	5.00	137 (100%)	4.07 (.90)	4.00
j. ... foster an appreciation of the English language	45 (32.4%)	3.64 (1.21)	4.00	75 (54%)	4.31 (.96)	5.00	19 (13.6%)	4.42 (.77)	5.00	139 (100%)	4.11 (1.07)	4.00
k. ... improve students' ability to analyse and think critically	45 (32.9%)	3.84 (1.21)	4.00	74 (54%)	4.36 (.92)	5.00	18 (13.1%)	4.67 (.77)	5.00	137 (100%)	4.23 (1.04)	5.00
l. ... help students learn about different cultures and ways of life	45 (32.9%)	4.38 (1.01)	5.00	74 (54%)	4.65 (.77)	5.00	18 (13.1%)	4.89 (.32)	5.00	137 (100%)	4.59 (.83)	5.00
m. ... serve as a useful basis for classroom discussions	45 (32.6%)	3.84 (1.28)	4.00	74 (53.6%)	4.32 (.99)	5.00	19 (13.8%)	4.63 (.50)	5.00	138 (100%)	4.21 (1.08)	5.00

1=Strongly Disagree; 2=Somewhat Disagree; 3=Undecided; 4= Somewhat Agree; 5=Strongly Agree

Kruskal-Wallis tests [$df = 2$] revealed (see Table 10) that there was a statistically significant difference between the age groups in all instances except one (Item h, literary texts help improve vocabulary). Dunn-Bonferroni post-hoc tests (see Table 10) revealed that the differences between the ≥ 50 and ≤ 30 age groups were statistically significant at $p < .05$ in 9 out of 12 cases, while the differences between the 31-49 and ≤ 30 age groups were statistically

significant at $p < .05$ in 8 out of 12 cases. In no instances was there a statistically significant difference between the 31-49 and ≥ 50 age groups, and for ease of reading these are therefore not included in Table 10.

Table 10.

Statistical significance test results for participants' views on the benefits of using literary texts

13. Literary texts...	Kruskal-Wallis			$\geq 50 - \leq 30$		31-49 - ≤ 30	
	n	H	p	p*	g	p*	g
a. ...are interesting for learners	139	18.05	< .001	< .001	1.06	.005	.559
b. ...motivate students	138	20.58	< .001	< .001	1.06	.001	.715
c. ...are examples of authentic English usage	139	10.99	.004	.006	.687	.056	-
d. ...help improve reading skills	135	10.53	.005	.010	.721	.037	.438
e. ...help improve writing skills	136	10.18	.006	.008	.859	.087	-
f. ...help improve listening skills	137	12.76	.002	.008	.906	.008	.586
g. ...help improve speaking skills	138	16.06	< .001	.001	1.01	.005	.648
h. ...help improve vocabulary	138	4.84	.089	-	-	-	-
i. ...help improve knowledge of grammar	137	20.51	< .001	< .001	1.05	.001	.740
j. ...foster an appreciation of the English language	139	10.91	.004	.057	-	.006	.628
k. ...improve students' ability to analyse and think critically	137	12.00	.002	.005	.742	.026	.497
l. ...help students learn about different cultures and ways of life	137	6.61	.037	.052	-	.058	-
m. ...serve as a useful basis for classroom discussions	138	6.83	.033	.074	-	.090	-

* p values from Dunn-Bonferroni post-hoc tests

Note. Hedge's g is not reported in those instances where $p \geq 0.5$ in the Dunn-Bonferroni post-hoc tests.

In the next section, we discuss the findings and their implications for EFL teachers and EFL teacher education.

5. DISCUSSION

Before we turn to a discussion of our findings, we present a number of observations about the limitations of this study. Firstly, we need to acknowledge the self-selected nature of our convenience sample. Also, in some cases, the reported n is quite small, and the findings for these groups are best approached with caution. It is also possible that participants might have had different definitions of literature than our own, though our definition was explicitly stated at the beginning of the questionnaire where we explained its scope to the participants, i.e. literature signified novels, short stories, novellas, poems and plays.

The findings show that an overwhelming majority of participants hold positive views about literature in language teaching, although frequency of literature use varies. A large number of participants also reported deriving enjoyment from reading literature in Russian and in English, and seem to have had positive experiences with literature as learners of English. They, moreover, appear to believe most strongly in literature's ability to promote cultural awareness among their students, as well as improve their students' vocabulary knowledge and reading skills (see Table 10). These results chime with the views of teachers in other studies who have similarly displayed positive attitudes towards LLE, such as in Duncan and Paran (2017, 2018), where teachers expressed very high levels of support for the use of literature and high levels of belief in the contribution of literature to language learning. Our respondents' attitudes are also consonant with those of several Russian writers (e.g. Belkina & Stetsenko, 2015; Glatishina, 2017; Rogacheva, 2015), who perceive literature as a positive force in promoting language learning and intercultural competence.

These generally positive attitudes towards LLE notwithstanding, this study also supports the evidence from other studies regarding generational differences towards reading (Nathanson, Pruslow, & Levitt, 2008; Skaar, Elvebakk, & Nilssen, 2018) and provides evidence that similar phenomena are occurring in the area of using literature in language teaching. The youngest group of participants, for example, reports not only using literature in their lessons to a statistically significantly lesser extent than the two older groups, but also reports enjoying reading literature in Russian statistically significantly less than does the oldest group. In both instances, the differences showed medium to large effects. The youngest group's L1 reading habits likely indicate a more general decline in the enjoyment of literary reading among teachers who have grown up in the post-*perestroika* era. It is also worth noting that the youngest group encourages students to read literature in English in their free time to a statistically significantly lesser degree than does the oldest group. The findings offer some possible indications as to why this might be occurring. For instance, the youngest group reported encountering literary texts in their EFL learning to a statistically significantly

lesser extent than did older respondents (see Table 4). And while differences between the age groups are not statistically significant with respect to how much they enjoyed using literary texts as learners of English, there is, nevertheless, a visible decrease in enjoyment, on average, as one moves from the oldest to the youngest age group (see Table 5). The youngest group of participants also feels statistically significantly less strongly than the oldest group that literature helped them with English. The younger group uses literature in language teaching statistically significantly less than the other groups, and the effect size of the difference between the ≤ 30 and the ≥ 50 groups was particularly high here. The results of the correlation analysis (see Table 8) likewise show that there are moderately strong, statistically significant positive relationships between how frequently participants use literature in their lessons and how useful and enjoyable they found literature to be as learners. This correlation between participants' experiences with literature as learners and their attitudes towards literature as teachers has similarly been documented in McGlynn-Stewart (2014) and Nathanson, Pruslow and Levitt (2008), where participants' positive experiences as learners led to positive attitudes towards literature as teachers, while negative experiences had a dampening effect on teacher enthusiasm.

This contention finds further support in the statistically significant and very meaningful differences between the youngest group's views regarding literature's benefits and those held by the two older groups (see Table 9 and 10). The findings indicate a clear downward cline, with generational attitudes growing more negative as one moves from the oldest to the youngest group. Differences are starkest between the groups with respect to literature's ability to motivate and interest learners, improve their knowledge of grammar, and develop their language skills, notably listening and speaking, whereas all groups feel equally strongly that literature is an important cultural resource. The results of the study also show that age-related differences are always statistically significant between the youngest age group in relation to the two older groups, i.e. the 31-49 and ≥ 50 groups. In no instances were differences statistically significant between the two older groups, suggesting that the post-*perestroika* environment as it concerns LLE and literary reading habits have witnessed rapid changes that appear to set it apart from the Soviet and *perestroika* years.

6. CONCLUSION: PEDAGOGICAL IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

To conclude, we offer our thoughts about the implications of these findings for foreign language teaching as well as future research directions. The downward trends in enjoyment of reading amongst teachers and in using literature in the foreign language classroom, as reported in our study and in the literature we have cited, may ultimately result in a situation in which learners have a growing number of teachers who cannot serve as role models of readers and role models of enjoying literature, thus contributing to this downward trend. These teachers will go on to educate a generation of language students whose attitudes towards literature might be even less positive, thus depriving these learners from enjoying the benefits that literature and reading have for language development, intercultural communication, and personal development. As educators who believe in the importance of using literature in the foreign language classroom, and who believe in the importance of reading in general for the development of language skills, we believe that it is important to find ways of stopping this trend and of bringing back literature into the EFL classroom, and working with teachers on their enjoyment of literature. Literature and reading need to find their way back to the core teacher education curriculum: there is a need to more explicitly integrate literature into English language courses at university, specifically targeting pre-service teacher programs. Here, the focus should be on furnishing aspiring teachers with not only a theoretical understanding of the roles literature can play in language education, but also training them in the practical application of literature to their language lessons. Regarding in-service teachers, universities and institutes could offer refresher courses that move the focus away from mostly teaching functional English, to a more holistic language education that combines form, meaning and culture. Indeed, teacher education courses in general need to confront this situation and ensure that teachers are not only trained to teach and use literature in their EFL classrooms, but that student teachers are also introduced to literature in ways that make it an enjoyable and meaningful experience, so that they can then pass these enjoyable experiences on to their learners.

The implications of this study are thus quite important for the education of a new generation of teachers who will be able to foster an enjoyment of reading literature in their learners. We believe that these implications are valid in all pedagogical contexts, but it is important to note that the study explored teacher attitudes towards the use of literature to teach a foreign language in only one country. The patterns we found appear to be linked to educational changes brought about by socio-political developments in the context we examined. In other cases, such educational and political changes might be less clear, but it would still be interesting to see whether similar age-related patterns crop up in other contexts. We believe this area merits further research, especially because of what we believe are the important pedagogical implications that we have outlined above.

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