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Teaching English for Advanced Learners through Select Novels of David Gemmell

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ABSTRACT

The nature of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) makes teaching a challenge simply because students are varied in their English background and learning skills. The spread of English beyond nations where it is a first or even an official language also means that language teachers now need to find ways to teach it to a diverse group of learners. This paper reflects upon the relevance of literature in this case, by using David Gemmell's novels in language teaching. These stories are full of rich descriptive language, differing and complicated sentence structures and complex story lines that make them excellent for 'higher order language' skills. This article explores how his writings can be used to teach vital language competencies such as vocabulary building, reading comprehension, and storytelling. It also underscores the essential need to provide teachers with effective teaching tools to address the needs of all learners, especially those at an advanced level. The contextual and interactive properties of literary texts provide an engaging process of learning and understanding languages with deeper meaning, as well as fostering engagement with linguistic and thematic content. The

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finding demonstrates how a challenging medium, such as literature, can be customized to accommodate different learner profiles, which in turn can make English teaching more inclusive and efficient. In the end, this study recommends including literary texts in advanced language courses, arguing that such literature will contribute not only to developing the language abilities of the students but also to deepening their culture and critical habits.

Keywords: Advanced Learners; English Learning; Language; Vocabulary; Literature; School Education; Quality Education; Gender Equality

1. Introduction

Literature transforms individuals in many ways. It broadens their horizon by exposing them to diverse cultures, traditions, and practices^[1]. Literature transports readers into different worlds, where imagination and reality converge^[2]. Those who engage consistently with literature are influenced by the type of texts they encounter^[3]. One of the key benefits of reading literature is the enhancement of language skills, especially in correcting grammatical errors. The more a person reads articles written in grammatically correct language, the better his / her language becomes in eradicating grammatical errors^[4]. According to research, literature provides learners with means to enhance their language abilities because of its rich linguistic resources and cultural significance^[1]. In the case of researchers, the depth and complexity of the issues within a literary text could offer productive opportunities for developing advanced-level language skills^[5]. Moreover, quality education is closely tied to this process, as the use of literary works in the classroom enhances critical thinking, vocabulary acquisition, and overall language proficiency^[6].

The level of each book varies depending on the audience for which it is written and the language ability of the author. Not every book can be understood by all. Language changes are essential for the content of a book to be accessible to people of different age groups or levels of discernment. This is one of the reasons for the abundance of abridged books flooding the market^[6].

Teachers of the English Language have devised many ingenious ways to teach the Language effectively. One of the easiest methods is to teach Language through Literature. This method has been used to teach English to learners at all levels^[7]. Five novels by David Gemmell, namely *Troy: Lord of the Silver Bow*, *Troy: Shield of Thunder*, *Troy: Fall of Kings*, *Lion of Macedon*, and *Dark Prince*, have been

chosen for this research. As mentioned above, the novels are suitable to teach English to Advanced Learners because of the appropriateness of the punctuation marks used liberally, specific phrases that other authors sparingly use, and the vivid descriptive techniques employed by the author to describe fights and battles. Although these novels can also be used to teach English as a second Language to basic-level or mediocre-level students, this paper aims to explore how they can be used to improve the Language skills of Advanced Learners^[8]. These novels also provide an excellent platform for addressing social themes such as gender equality, where strong female characters break traditional stereotypes, and gender dynamics are often explored in depth^[9].

2. Literature Review

2.1. Language Learning and Second Language Acquisition (SLA) Theories

The contribution of literature to language teaching and learning is undeniable. According to Lazar^[1], literature provides authentic material that opens learners to complex language structures, varied vocabulary, and the use of language in context. This kind of exposure enriches language proficiency, encourages appreciation of culture, and helps to develop the capacity for critical thinking; and ultimately achieves quality education through a more thorough understanding of language and society. In addition to highlighting the importance of literature in L2 learning, this study is boosted by SLA theories.

2.1.1. Krashen's Input Hypothesis

The Input Hypothesis by Krashen states that language acquisition happens when learners are given comprehensible input ($i + 1$)—material that is just beyond their current level of understanding but that can be understood with a bit of effort^[4].

Application to current study: The books of David Gemmell offer the advanced learner high levels of comprehensible input, including linguistically varied and slightly challenging material. Complex sentence structures, diversified punctuation, and rich vocabulary that students come in touch with, in this way, help students learn new language items. This is also consistent with the quality education concept in which learning is built up to accommodate both challenging and accessible learning^[4].

2.1.2. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory

Vygotsky emphasizes the role of interaction and culture in learning. It is in that sense, he articulates, that knowledge is made in dialogue and engagement with culturally saturated texts^[10].

Relevance to this study: Literature encourages the learners' cultural and linguistic involvement since it enables them to decode the meaning of a story through context and discussion. When students read novels like Gemmell's, they can interpret, understand, and discuss all activities that could teach them linguistic and critical thinking skills. Such discussions also have the same potential for gender equality, and students can consider the relationship between gender and power within a literary setting^[10].

2.1.3. Nation's Four Strands Model

Paul Nation's Four Strands Model of good L2 learning encourages the careful combination of four strands of good

language learning:

1. Meaning-Driven Output (writing/speaking for communication)
2. Meaning-Focused Output (writing/speaking to communicate)
3. Learning Focused on Language (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation)
4. Fluency Development (to be used in practice for automaticity)

Relevance to this study: The novels offer learners exposure to more complex grammatical structures and vocabulary (input), discussion and written activities (output), explicit attention to linguistic structures (language-focused learning), and extensive reading practice (fluency). What is more, literature can involve learners in the complex social issues found in novels, such as gender equality, and help students engage in deeper discussion of society and in critical analysis of the social situations that are taken for granted^[11].

2.2. Comparative Analysis of Gemmell's Writing and Other Literary Works

Comparison with other novels from well-known writers shows how different styles of writing affect language acquisition. **Table 1** shows a Comparative Analysis of Selected Linguistic and Stylistic Aspects of Texts by Gemmell, Tolkien, Hemingway, and Adichie.

Table 1. Comparative Analysis of Linguistic and Stylistic Elements.

Author	Sentence Complexity	Vocabulary Richness	Grammatical Patterns	Stylistic Features
David Gemmell	Medium to high complexity with frequent use of descriptive clauses	High, with an emphasis on action-oriented verbs and battle terminology	Frequent use of past perfect, colons, semicolons, and dashes	Action-driven storytelling with vivid descriptions of combat and character psychology
J.R.R. Tolkien	Highly complex, often archaic, and poetic	Extensive, incorporating Old English and Middle English influences	Use of long, flowing sentences with multiple embedded clauses	Elaborate world-building, intricate descriptions, and a formal tone
Ernest Hemingway	Low complexity, favoring short and direct sentences	Moderate, with a focus on precision and economy of words	Minimalist syntax, avoiding excessive punctuation	Concise and straightforward storytelling with a strong emphasis on realism
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie	Moderate complexity with modern, fluid sentence structures	Rich, with cultural and socio-political influences	Use of varied sentence lengths and rhetorical questions	Engages with themes of identity, postcolonialism, and human relationships

2.3. Application to Advanced Language Learning

Gemmell's books, which are rich with vocabulary and various grammatical constructions, can be used effectively as

long as English learners are at an advanced level. The pointed contrast in **Table 1** highlights how Gemmell's free-flowing style of prose is complex enough to be educational, yet not so complex that it is impenetrable to the language learner. Unlike Tolkien's dense and archaic prose, Gemmell's is flexi-

ble and modern, yet it provides enough linguistic complexity for students to use challenging grammar in context. Second, although it may be more efficient in helping clear confusion, Hemingway's method of writing somewhat hinders the students to read elaborate narratives, a practice which Gemmell's method responds to, as it can help students to be able to read and interpret more detailed stories, which is an added benefit for those interested in developing reading and writing competence.

The results of Lazar^[1] and Paran^[12] suggest that a literature-based approach promotes students' interaction with grammatical structures, develops vocabulary, and raises learners' intercultural awareness. By using Gemmell's materials in English language teaching, teachers can present the context of language and enable a more complete experience of the language, including 'accuracy of use, analysis and appreciation'.

2.4. Critical Literacy Perspectives in Language Learning

Adding to the theoretical framework beyond SLA theories, Critical Literacy Perspectives are included in the analysis. Critical literacy perspective considers the texts as a resource for further study instead of passive learning of language.

2.4.1. Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy

According to Freire's Critical Pedagogy, reading should better equip students to question, interpret, and analyze words on the page and not just to consume them.

Application to this study: Detailed reading of text: Upper-intermediate learners working with David Gemmell's novels are not only interested in language mechanics, but also in themes, authorial decisions, cultural aspects of texts, etc. This interactive involvement leads to a more profound literacy^[13].

2.4.2. Luke & Freebody's Four Resources Model

Reading engagement is modelled by four major roles:

1. Code Breakers (Decoding text structure and grammar)
2. Meaning Makers (interpreting and understanding the meaning of the text)

3. Text Users (using the knowledge of language in natural communication)
4. Text Critics (Power, Ideology, and Perspective)^[14]

Applying to this study: To process Gemmell's work, advanced learners need to operate on all four levels. Deciphering of linguistic complexity (code breaking), Inference of narrative meaning (meaning making), Use of structures in writing (text using), and Critique of character portrayal and themes in the books (text critiquing)^[14].

2.5. Cognitive Linguistics and Language Acquisition

Cognitive linguistics highlights conceptualization, metaphor, and embodiment as key to understanding language. While linguistics generally tends to disregard semantic and pragmatic considerations as peripheral, cognitive linguistics realizes that language reflects human perception and experience.

Application to this study: When students are reading at these advanced levels of texts, this is an excellent example of the types of resources that we have available to analyze how advanced learners are building their semantic networks, using metaphorical thinking, and grappling with figurative language, and how, through these processes, the language becomes more comprehensible and memorable. Exposure to rich vocabulary features and complex sentence configurations could help students develop a more systemic and holistic view towards English learning in context^[15].

2.6. Cultural Studies and Language Learning

With the focus on the role of power, identity, and discourse in literary texts, cultural studies offer a wider sociopolitical and historical background in which language acquisition comes into the study of literature.

Applications to this paper: Gemmell's narratives, frequently concerned with issues of heroism, mythology, and cultural identity, encourage learners to consider historical discourses, moral conflicts, and intercultural relationships that shape language and meaning. Such participation encourages students to situate language learning in the broader landscape of the world and history^[16].

2.7. Inclusive Pedagogy and Literary Engagement

Inclusive pedagogy promotes differentiated instruction, student-centered learning, and multi-modal engagement to be responsive to differing learners.

Implications for this study: Literature-based instruction with advanced learners can be used to address various learning styles, including visual (focusing on images in texts), auditory (promoting read-aloud and discussion), and kinesthetic (using role play or creative writing). Applying Gemmell models in an integrated manner means that students with different linguistic and educational backgrounds can engage with the material^[17].

2.8. Previous Research on Literature in Language Teaching

In recent decades, many research studies have focused on the benefits of using literature in language teaching. Collicie and Slater (1987) outline some roles that literature may play in the language classroom. These include:

- Providing motivating and enjoyable material
- Enhancing exposure to rich linguistic structures
- Encouraging analysis, interpretation, and discussion^[18].

Paran^[12] further emphasizes that literature fosters deep engagement by offering various linguistic forms and cultural contexts. This aligns with the present study's argument

that advanced learners benefit significantly from exposure to literature's diverse linguistic and thematic elements.

By integrating SLA theories^[4,11], cognitive linguistics^[15], cultural studies^[16], inclusive pedagogy^[17], and critical literacy perspectives^[13,14], along with recent findings on context-based language learning^[1], this study establishes a strong theoretical framework supporting the use of David Gemmell's novels in advanced English language instruction.

3. Materials and Methods

The methodology used for this paper is comparative textual analysis of passages from the following David Gemmell novels: Troy: Lord of the Silver Bow, Troy: Shield of Thunder, Troy: Fall of Kings, as well as Lion of Macedon and Dark Prince. They were included for their use of a wide-ranging vocabulary, variety of punctuation, and narrative complexity, and therefore can be particularly useful for high-intermediate to advanced (EFL) English learners. **Figure 1** provides an overarching structure for the methodology, connecting theories of language acquisition (e.g., Krashen's Input Hypothesis and Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory) with real-life classroom applications. It guarantees that the development of receptive (reading and listening) and productive (speaking and writing) activities is consistently matched with the linguistic aspects identified in the chosen texts.

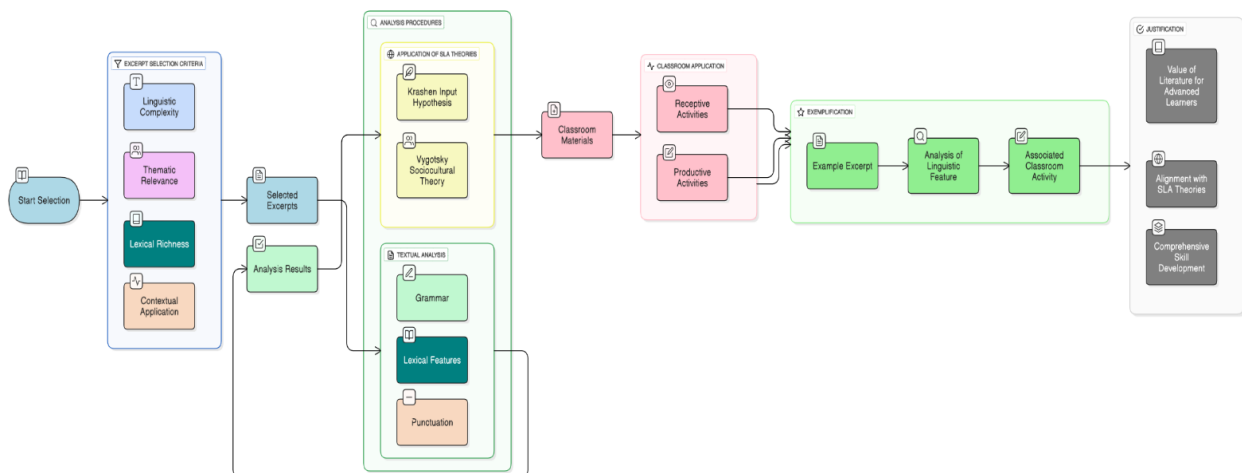


Figure 1. Methodological Framework for Integrating Literary Texts in Advanced EFL Instruction.

4. Practical Application: Feedback Models

A theoretical framework provides a strong foundation for the inclusion of David Gemmell's novels into advanced

language teaching, but teachers also require practical tools and strategies to successfully guide students through the learning process. These feedback models (**Table 2**) provide wise and actionable guidance to teachers on how to help learners and push deeper understanding of the novels.

Table 2. Practical Feedback Models for Advanced Language Instruction.

Feedback Model	Purpose	Example/Action
Targeted Error Correction	Focused feedback on specific linguistic features	Good use of 'had had' here to clearly show the sequence of events or consider if the past perfect is needed in this sentence to distinguish an earlier action.
Guiding Questions for Self-Correction	Encourage self-reflection	How does this word choice contribute to the vividness of the description? Or does this punctuation mark clearly convey the relationship between these two ideas?
Rubric-Based Feedback	Provide structured feedback based on the criteria	Focus on grammatical accuracy, coherence, and vocabulary use.
Peer Feedback Strategies	Promote collaborative learning	Students use checklists to give constructive feedback to each other.
Positive Reinforcement and Model Examples	Celebrate and reinforce effective use of language	Great job on using the past perfect tense correctly! Or share model answers to reinforce learning.

5. Discussion

5.1. Using the Novels of David Gemmell in Language Teaching

Thematic itineraries, like the ones organized around David Gemmell's novel series, are an underexplored but highly valuable area in language teaching literature. His novels, known for their historical depth, character complexity, and rich descriptive techniques, provide a unique framework for teaching English at an advanced level. This methodology is based on a research that encourages the implementation of authentic and sustained narratives which will develop immersive and engaging learning environment^[12,19]. Gemmell works contrast with conventional language learning materials having in mind that they put the learner in rich stories with language structures that are authentic and sophisticated to a level that enables the learner to grasp language by engaging in language through dynamic content^[1].

Gemmell's novels, *Troy: Lord of the Silver Bow*, *Troy: Shield of Thunder*, *Troy: Fall of Kings*, *Lion of Macedon*, and *Dark Prince*, offer an extensive exploration of complex vocabulary, punctuation variations, and intricate sentence structures. These features offer models for enhancing student linguistic accuracy and stylistic range^[12]. In his writing, we can see how language itself works in a variety of narrative contexts, and how they can write complex responses to literature with well-formed sentences.

An examination of punctuation and syntax in his novels reveals certain basic features of English grammar. It has been reported that even advanced learners of the target language experience difficulty in punctuation, which includes the colons, semicolons, hyphens, dashes, and use of slashes that play a key role in the transmission of fine meaning^[20]. In addition, Gemmell's skilful deployment of the past perfect tense, dependent clauses, and rich adjectives adds complexity to learners' treatment of language features which appear in the speech^[21].

Reading and examining Gemmell's books helps one to develop analytical and critical skills. Students are not only challenged with language mechanics, but also with larger themes like leadership, resilience, and morality. The use of literature in teaching language endorses a holistic learning process where students develop their language proficiency in the process of interpreting complicated plot and characterisation^[22].

Moreover, adding Gemmell's books to English curricula kindles interdisciplinarity. History, psychology, and philosophy permeate his stories and enable students to relate language learning to other disciplines. For all such tasks, it is possible to design exercises where learners have to identify historical influences, try to understand character motivations, or argue about what is ethically right to do, using English in the process^[23].

This part will address some of the special grammatical features and lexical choices of Gemmell's novels, which

might render them very helpful for advanced learners of English. The subsections that follow detail the anatomy of grammar, punctuation, a comparative literature drilling method, and how they can be used as vehicles of language acquisition. Thematic itineraries, as the David Gemmell series-based ones, are practically unexplored territory in language teaching literature, but their linguistic density and narrative complexity render them a heavy-hitter in terms of instruction^[24]. More explicit reading in books such as Gemmell's *Troy: Lord of the Silver Bow*, *Troy: Shield of Thunder*, *Troy: Fall of Kings*, *Lion of Macedon*, and *Dark Prince*, with sufficient material for advanced learners.

These novels demonstrate a wide range of complex vocabulary, varied punctuation usages, and descriptive narrative techniques. For instance, Gemmell has used the past perfect tense, colons, semicolons, hyphens, and dashes as an example of a practical implementation for learners to learn and use these grammatical rules^[25]. Rich situational awareness, facilitated by evocative narrations and nuanced character interactions, also supports the development of depth of understanding and analytic skill among students^[22].

In the grammar of English, correctness and clearness depend very largely on the right use of the parts of speech and punctuation. When to use "had had," colons, semicolons, hyphens, and dashes, and the phrase "one of the" are more examples of things that writers and speakers tend to struggle with.

5.2. Grammatical Structures and Punctuation Usage

The style of David Gemmell is rich in perfect tenses, past perfect, and so on, as well as punctuation, and can be used as an excellent model in writing in General. His style is a combination of historical realism and dramatic storytelling, and is also a rich environment for analyzing syntactic structures, punctuation appropriateness, and lexical usage that promote both reading and written proficiency in high-level learners^[24]. His books can help teachers to demonstrate some of the important linguistic points in context and at the same time help students to see that abstract grammatical rules can have concrete meaning^[25].

The subtlety of Gemmell's syntax connects his use of English to the real world language, as his grammatical structure mirrors the way English is used in the real world, in

literature, or academia. His lavish use of punctuation, especially colons, semicolons, hyphens, and dashes, not only adds to sentence variety and clarity but also provides learners with practical examples of how punctuation affects meaning and emphasis^[26]. In addition, such use of past perfect tense and complex sentence structure by his students may easily become the prototype of advanced students studying how to distinguish between simple, compound, and complex sentences^[22].

In addition, the terminology he adopts also serves to emphasize the necessity of economising words, and the need for well-chosen words. And while his prose is highly descriptive, it never feels overwrought, which is helpful for students to see as they consider how tight, effective sentence structures contribute to clarity and engagement^[27]. Through a close analysis of his writing, students are encouraged to explore the concept of syntactic flexibility, becoming more adept at crafting written texts that are linguistically correct and stylistically appealing^[21].

It is these features of grammar and punctuation that are apparent in his works that could be explored for increased value in grammatical exactness and stylistic range^[24]. Gemmell's books are a great resource for precision writing, in terms of grammar and punctuation; one can find plenty of examples of unusual grammatical rules, advanced punctuation use, etc. A narrative that is based on a combination of historical accuracy and dramatic narrative like his is particularly conducive to reading in terms not only of syntactic forms, punctuation usages, and lexical discriminations but also of the development of reading comprehension and writing process in students at an advanced level. His books help teachers show linguistic concepts in practice—the ideas one would normally discuss in the abstract, as grammar rules come to life in his novels, in vivid detail.

5.2.1. Past Perfect Tense

Gemmell's use of "had had" in past events provides a clear example of how this tense reinforces chronological sequencing and the retrospective nature of storytelling. The past perfect tense is crucial for structuring narratives, particularly when distinguishing between multiple past actions. This grammatical structure allows writers to indicate that one event happened before another in the past, preventing ambiguity in storytelling^[24].

In Gemmell's novels, past perfect constructions often

appear in flashbacks, reflections, or narrative shifts, helping readers follow the sequence of events more clearly. For advanced learners, understanding the past perfect is vital for writing historical accounts, crafting complex narratives, and distinguishing between different time frames within a single storyline^[1].

- Example: “Five days before that, Alexander had had a vision: his officers were set to kill him.” (*Dark Prince*^[28], p. 518). This sentence demonstrates the past perfect tense, as the vision occurred before the primary past timeline of the novel. The repetition of ‘had’ is grammatically correct and emphasizes the separation between two past events. This structure is particularly beneficial for English learners developing nuanced storytelling skills^[25].
- Example: “I told Cascus of a dream I had had for three nights, that he died.” (*Lion of Macedon*^[29], p. 171). This illustrates how the past perfect tense helps clarify the timeline, showing that the dream occurred even earlier than the conversation being recounted. This kind of retrospective framing is particularly useful for learners who need to distinguish between different layers of past events when narrating experiences or analyzing literary texts^[26].

Understanding the function of the past perfect in literature equips learners with the ability to write more structured, coherent, and chronologically precise narratives. Educators can design exercises where students practice transforming simple past statements into past perfect, reinforcing their grasp of how and when to use this advanced grammatical form^[23].

- Example: “Five days before that, Alexander had had a vision: his officers were set to kill him.” (*Dark Prince*^[28] p. 518). This sentence demonstrates the correct use of the past perfect tense to refer to an event occurring before another past event. The repetition of ‘had’ emphasizes that the vision preceded the decision to kill. This structure is particularly useful in English storytelling, where sequences of past actions must be clearly delineated^[25].
- Example: “I told Cascus of a dream I had had for three nights, that he died.” (*Lion of Macedon*^[29], p. 171). Here, the past perfect tense situates the dream in an

earlier past than the main timeline, demonstrating how advanced learners can use this construction to structure narratives effectively^[26].

5.2.2. Colons

Gemmell uses colons effectively to introduce explanations, elaborate on ideas, and emphasize key narrative details, particularly in dialogues and expository passages. Colons serve as a structural tool that helps in creating a logical flow of thought, ensuring clarity in complex sentence constructions. They allow the writer to introduce definitions, elaborate on previous statements, and provide examples that reinforce an argument^[25]. In advanced English learning, understanding the precise function of colons enhances a student’s ability to write more structured and coherent prose.

In Gemmell’s works, colons often precede character descriptions, scene settings, and explanatory clauses that build tension and anticipation. They provide a mechanism for emphasizing key narrative points while maintaining readability^[24].

- Example: “He did not need to see the emblems on the enemy shields to know from which city they came: they were Spartans, magnificent fighting men feared across the world.” (*Dark Prince*^[28], p. 14). This colon sets up a logical explanation, reinforcing the certainty of the character’s realization. In ELT, such examples can help learners see how colons create emphasis and introduce definitions or expansions, making their writing more precise and impactful^[25].
- Example: “The curve of the bay was filled with ships: some fifty war galleys and more than a hundred barges drawn up so tightly that there was not a handbreadth between them.” (*Troy: Fall of Kings*^[30], p. 13). The colon here sets up an extended list and provides the picture that we would associate with the scene: This highlights the importance of colons in organizing complex descriptions without breaking the narrative flow, which is essential for learners who want to become proficient in descriptive writing^[24].
- By analyzing how Gemmell utilizes colons to introduce and expand upon ideas, students can develop a stronger grasp of how punctuation contributes to textual cohesion and meaning, improving both their analytical reading skills and their ability to construct sophisticated written

responses^[27].

- Example: “He did not need to see the emblems on the enemy shields to know from which city they came: they were Spartans, magnificent fighting men feared across the world.” (*Dark Prince*^[28], p. 14). This colon sets up a logical explanation of why the character does not need further visual confirmation. In ELT, such examples can help learners see how colons create emphasis and introduce definitions or expansions, making their writing more precise and impactful^[24].
- Example: “The curve of the bay was filled with ships: some fifty war galleys and more than a hundred barges drawn up so tightly that there was not a handbreadth between them.” (*Troy: Fall of Kings*^[30], p. 13). This example illustrates how colons introduce lists, a common structural element in English writing. Learners can use this model to practice structuring descriptive lists in their compositions^[25].

5.2.3. Semicolons

Semicolons play a crucial role in balancing related independent clauses, enhancing fluency, and improving readability in complex sentence structures. Unlike periods, which create a full stop, or commas, which may introduce ambiguity, semicolons provide a subtle connection between ideas that are closely related but still function as independent clauses. Understanding their use helps learners structure their writing more effectively, avoiding choppy or overly simplistic sentences^[27].

Gemmell employs semicolons frequently in his writing, often using them to create contrast, establish logical connections, or introduce parallel structures. This nuanced punctuation usage adds rhythm and flow to his prose, providing a model for learners to develop more sophisticated writing styles^[27].

- Example: “Their hands bled; their backs ached.” (*Troy: Shield of Thunder*^[31], p. 61). Here, the semicolon balances two closely related independent clauses, avoiding redundancy while maintaining clarity. Learners can use this model to improve sentence variety in their writing, replacing short, disjointed sentences with fluid, interconnected ones^[26].
- Example: “Powerful men ruled; weaker men became servants or slaves.” (*Troy: Lord of the Silver Bow*^[32], p.

269). This sentence demonstrates the contrastive use of semicolons, allowing learners to explore how parallel structures enhance the rhythm of writing. By analyzing such examples, students can grasp how semicolons create a sense of balance and emphasis^[23].

- Example: “He had little choice in the matter; refusing would mean death.” This illustrates how a semicolon can replace a conjunction like “because” or “so,” making the sentence more concise and impactful. Understanding this usage can help learners eliminate redundancy while maintaining logical flow in their writing^[27].

By analyzing and applying semicolons in their writing, learners can develop stronger control over sentence structure, improve textual cohesion, and enhance the overall sophistication of their prose. Exercises focusing on semicolon usage, such as rewriting short sentences into compound sentences using semicolons, can reinforce these concepts in practical learning scenarios^[24].

- Example: “Their hands bled; their backs ached.” (*Troy: Shield of Thunder*^[31], p. 61). Here, the semicolon balances two closely related independent clauses, avoiding redundancy while maintaining clarity. Learners can use this model to improve sentence variety in their writing^[27].
- Example: “Powerful men ruled; weaker men became servants or slaves.” (*Troy: Lord of the Silver Bow*^[32], p. 269). This sentence demonstrates the contrastive use of semicolons, allowing learners to explore how parallel structures enhance the rhythm of writing^[24].

5.2.4. Hyphens and Dashes

Hyphens and em dashes play distinct yet complementary roles in structuring sentences, ensuring clarity, emphasis, and rhythm. Hyphens primarily function in compound adjectives, linking words to form coherent descriptors, while em dashes introduce pauses, parenthetical elements, and dramatic interruptions that enhance readability and engagement^[25].

Gemmell’s novels provide ample examples of both, illustrating their importance in maintaining sentence fluidity and preventing ambiguity. Hyphens are essential for creating well-defined compound adjectives, ensuring that readers

interpret descriptions correctly. Meanwhile, em dashes allow for flexible sentence construction, adding variation and emphasis without disrupting the narrative flow^[25].

- Example: “Philip’s finger traced over the trident-shaped lands of the Chalcidice.” (*Dark Prince*^[28], p. 65). Here, the hyphen in ‘trident-shaped’ correctly joins two words into a compound adjective, preventing confusion about whether ‘trident’ modifies ‘lands’ or ‘shaped lands.’ This is a key learning point for advanced English learners who often struggle with compound modifiers^[26].
- Example: “I know a merchant who has a twenty-oar galley—the Mirion—heading for Troy the day after tomorrow.” (*Troy: Lord of the Silver Bow*^[32], p. 19). The em dashes in this sentence function as parenthetical markers, setting apart ‘the Mirion’ to emphasize the ship’s name. This demonstrates how dashes provide flexibility, allowing additional information to be embedded within a sentence without disrupting its structure^[23].

Using these parts, students will discover what simplifies or complicates writing, and how to create it themselves more clearly and engagingly. By practising and applying the grammar rules, students will improve their written and spoken English, allowing them to become more confident as fluent readers, speakers, and writers of English. Furthermore, by coming into contact with these textual patterns in a literary environment, critical thinking becomes possible as students will be able to identify choices and study how they impact. Narrative style and literary meaning. Identifying and employing these features not only improves writing accuracy but also comprehension, as students are better able to make sense of difficult texts^[27]. The writings and grammar exercises may be superimposed on each other so that they can be developed into interactive exercises in specific areas, for example, paraphrasing and rewriting with juxtapositions, or for identifying grammatical features from text, requiring the student to apply their knowledge of grammatical categories. Teachers might also create tasks for students to play around with punctuation and see what happens to a sentence’s meaning and readability when learners have to move around hyphens and dashes^[26].

Example: “Philip’s finger traced over the trident-shaped lands of the Chalcidice.” (*Dark Prince*^[28], p. 65).

The hyphen in ‘trident-shaped’ correctly joins two words into a compound adjective, enhancing clarity. This is a key learning point for advanced English learners who often struggle with compound modifiers^[25].

- Example: “I know a merchant who has a twenty-oar galley—the Mirion—heading for Troy the day after tomorrow.” (*Troy: Lord of the Silver Bow*^[32], p. 19)
- The em dashes here set apart ‘the Mirion’ to emphasize the ship’s name. This demonstrates how dashes add narrative impact and should not be confused with hyphens^[24].

By analyzing these elements, learners can better understand and apply grammatical accuracy in their writing, improving both clarity and engagement^[26].

5.3. Broader Implications for Global ELT Practices

5.3.1. Comparative Literature Approach in ELT

Comparative literature study of David Gemmell’s novels and canonical and modern literary works sheds light upon the use of fiction in English Language Teaching (ELT). By comparing Gemmell’s style with that of other authors often used in language learning, both teachers and learners can analyse the role of style on various aspects of both comprehension and fluency as well as stylistic development. Cross-Textual Analysis: By analyzing texts produced from different contexts, it aims to engage students in various linguistic styles and narratives, which would enhance students’ communicative competence in various situations^[24].

5.3.2. Comparing Gemmell with Other Literary Works

- Classic literature (e.g., Charles Dickens, Jane Austen, Ernest Hemingway): Analyzing traditional sentence structures, formality, and historical perspectives.
- Modern fiction (e.g., Kazuo Ishiguro, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie): Exploring how contemporary authors use simplified or experimental prose to convey complex ideas.
- Fantasy authors with intricate language (e.g., J.R.R. Tolkien, Ursula K. Le Guin, Neil Gaiman): Comparing

their descriptive techniques, world-building, and use of archaic/poetic English with Gemmell's works.

Example Analysis:

- The poetic prose of Tolkien, steeped in the Old English language and medieval storytelling forms, couldn't be further from the action-packed pace of Gemmell's descriptions. Where Tolkien uses lengthy descriptions with complex syntax, Gemmell's terse style with graphically focused syntax provides a contrast for advanced learners who need to compare their use of concise vs. elaborate writing^[27].
- Hemingway's minimalist style, which prefers short sentences and the use of few words, offers a contrast to Gemmell's dramatic yet concise written style. Contrasting these two frameworks can make students on the one hand more aware of text features and different writing options and on the other of their audience^[26].
- By using the tools of comparative literature, educa-

tors can help their students produce multi-text units through which students will study linguistic patterns across various texts. This comparative approach enhances language learning as students are exposed to a variety of syntactical forms, dialogue, and description. This method also promotes greater cultural literacy, so that students may feel more at ease with a wide range of literary traditions and can accommodate different communicative registers in academic and professional contexts^[23].

6. Limitations and Adaptations for Resource-Limited Environments

Despite the benefits of Gemmell's novels for advanced learners, certain limitations may arise, particularly in resource-limited environments. **Table 3** summarizes some potential challenges and suggested adaptations to ensure effective teaching.

Table 3. Adaptation Strategies for Using Literature in ELT.

Limitation	Adaptation
Complex vocabulary and battle-related terms	Provide glossaries, vocabulary exercises, and simplified versions of excerpts.
Historical and cultural context knowledge required	Provide contextual background materials before reading.
Resource limitations (access to books)	Use digital resources, create audio recordings or interactive e-books.
Complex narrative style (long descriptive passages)	Break down passages into smaller sections and conduct guided reading sessions.

7. Conclusions

Widening the use of literature in ELT beyond the common textbooks will contribute to better learning results, as far as advanced learners of English are concerned. Integration of David Gemmell's books in worldwide multilingual task-based pedagogical units enforces the knowledge of language, cultural stimuli, and language skills. Moreover, the engagement with comparative literature can help teachers to cut across between the classical and modern practices and bring in relevant and critical language learning experiences. This study further expands the current conversation around multilingual classrooms, worldwide ELT practices, and literary comparisons and brings forth evidence of literature's transformative power in shaping well-rounded, culturally sensitive, and linguistically competent ELs^[25].

The effectiveness of employing literature, particularly David Gemmell's novels, as a means of teaching advanced

English language learners is demonstrated. The rich linguistic register, variety of punctuation marks, and descriptive language techniques in the novels provide a rich educational soil to cultivate the language skills of learners. Through analyzing higher-level grammatical features such as past perfect, colon, semicolon, hyphen, dash... of Gemmell's texts, we can see that this writer's works are valuable sources of such linguistic insights and practice for learners^[27]. Literature helps not only to understand grammatical rules, but also to stimulate a greater interaction of the learners with the language, providing immersion and context in the process. Such a strategy coincides with the general pedagogic purpose of incorporating literary texts into language learning to advance learners' competence and enjoyment of the language.

Accordingly, the study suggests teaching them, particularly works of such writers as Gemmell, along with other literature in the hard English curricula. This practice may promote grammar enhancement and second language acquisi-

tion^[21]. What is more, literature also raises learners' awareness of cultural issues, teaching them to deal with moral, historical, and social topics^[22]. The results elucidate the direction to which literature-based instruction is increasingly recognized as one of the most imperative pedagogies for ELT that potentially results in engaging, motivating and contextual learning^[25].

This article restricts itself to certain works by David Gemmell. Although his texts have the characteristics investigated in this study, other genres or writers may pose other types of challenges and benefits for students. The study focuses on grammatical and linguistic aspects with some consideration to the fact that learners may deal with these texts differently because of their diverse backgrounds, learning styles or background knowledge.

Future Research Directions

To better elucidate the significance of literature in ELT, the following research is called for:

- Cross-linguistic research on the processing of Gemmell's text among learners from various first language backgrounds and the extent to which first language modalities are conducive to decoding and comprehension in English syntax and vocabulary^[24].
- Longitudinal studies of progress over a longer period (6–12 months) so that one could ascertain the continued effect of literature-based learning on fluency.
AI-generated analysis of syntax, vocabulary patterns, and style elements in literary texts and correlation with shared linguistic features facilitates language acquisition.
- Online versions of learning materials such as e-books, audiobooks, and interactive online modules to ensure that the material is universally accessible and engaging to learners from a variety of educational and cultural backgrounds^[22].
- Pilots in a range of classroom contexts promoting literature-based practices in blended courses, online language courses, and adaptive learning platforms to test their effectiveness across different learning contexts.
- Cultural transfer/applicability of literature-based instruction, analyzing how Gemmell's texts are understood and reacted to by non-Western learners and how literature of various linguistic traditions can be used to teach English well.

By infusing literary texts into ELT curricula and expanding avenues for inquiry, educators can design dynamic learning environments that launch students into academic, professional, and intercultural communication. Text literature, especially literature with complex language and story structures, is indispensable for a comprehensive language acquisition^[23]. Future studies may resolve archaic literary analysis and contemporary pedagogical methods to guarantee the continued use of literature in English language learning^[26].

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No data available.

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Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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