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Usando la literatura como foco en la clase de Inglés: un proyecto de innovación

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Trabajo de Fin de Máster

**Using literature as a focus in
the English classroom: an
innovation project.**

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ABSTRACT

This paper develops an innovation project based on the idea of a literature-centred English class, this idea was based in the fact that I focused on the literature subjects while doing my degree, and I thought it was a very interesting proposal. Reading and literature in general are often pushed to a second place in the second language learning, but the truth is that literature and reading in general can give a lot of benefits to the students. With our work, we want to convince the people who read it that reading is in fact a very important part of learning a new language, and that apart from that, it can help the students grow as a person and help them understand many different topics that will be valuable for them in their daily life.

Key terms: literature, reading, EFL.

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo de fin de máster se define como un proyecto de innovación basándose en la idea de una clase de inglés basada en la literatura. Esta idea está basada en el hecho de que durante el transcurso de mi grado elegí las asignaturas basadas en literatura, y me pareció una idea muy interesante. La realidad de hoy en día es que la literatura y la lectura han sido comúnmente apartadas a un segundo plano en la adquisición de una segunda lengua, pero la verdad es que leer tiene un gran beneficio para los estudiantes. Con nuestro trabajo, queremos convencer a la gente que lo lea de que la lectura es una parte importante del aprendizaje, y que más allá de eso, puede ayudar a los alumnos a crecer como personas e inculcarles unos valores que les serán de utilidad en su día a día fuera del aula.

Palabras clave: literatura, lectura, EFL.

1. INTRODUCTION

In this work, we will develop an innovation approach to the English classroom based on the idea of having literature as a way to reinforce student's skills and help them develop culturally. Literature is one of the most ancient ways of human expression, and also the main source of conveying information throughout history. But, in relation to the learning process, the reading skill, and therefore, the literature that the students have to work with while learning, has not really been of much importance compared with the other skills. Truth is, that students won't most likely ever have any contact with literature if they don't specifically choose to do so, therefore wasting a lot of opportunities for reading a lot of important pieces of literature that, apart from helping them with their reading comprehension, will nurture their culture and develop them as individuals. It is essential to develop reading skills when acquiring a second or a foreign language as it allows us to acquire new information and keep progressing in the acquisition process. This is usually done in the language classroom through short texts although longer texts can be beneficial for the students.

Using literature in the classroom is not a very common procedure in the foreign language classroom although since the 1980s it is a more common practice (Shazu, 2014: 29). Reading longer pieces of texts can be very beneficial in the English classroom not only because our students can improve their reading skills but also because they can develop other language skills (Anderson, cited in Abbasi, Azizifar, Gowhary, & Heidari, 2015: 180) and they are exposed to authentic materials (Shazu, 2014: 31) and new cultures, which allows them to develop cultural awareness (Van, 2009: 2).

In our essay, we will be explaining the different concepts related to literature and reading in the second language acquisition, as well as describing the activities the students will perform and how they are related to the different ways of learning, as well as giving an explanation on the choice for the books, and how they are distributed throughout the school year. After the main concept of the model is explained, we will discuss how viable this project really is and the benefits and also the difficulties that come with it.

2. OBJECTIVES

The main objective of our model is to introduce students to English literature, with the intention of reinforcing their English skills, specially reading. This is also a way to improve student's awareness of the different types and forms of literature, so they can also develop culturally. Through the use of different activities, the students are meant to take a different approach to English learning in a different fashion than usual, and even if it's true that in the present-day literature and reading are being substituted by the new technologies and other types of activities, there is still a lot to learn and improve with the help of literature. With the application of this model, we pretend to introduce the students to English literature and the different types of literary texts. Even though we are aware that students may also be required to read for other different subjects more directly related to literature, reading comprehension is a key part of the learning process and as such, we find of utmost importance that the students develop it as much as possible, for this, we have prepared a selection of literary pieces which will help the students to familiarize with the different types of approaches to literature, as well as introducing different activities like oral presentations in order to develop other skills.

3. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

3.1. Reading comprehension

Reading comprehension can be defined as “the result of complex interactions between text, setting, reader, reader background, reading strategies, the L1 and the L2, the reader decision-making” (Yukselir, 2014: 66). It is an essential skill in language learning as it allows students to acquire information and keep learning. However, our students encounter difficulties when reading a text and distinguishing the main pieces of information. Ziegler and Goswami (2005) classify these difficulties into availability problems, since some phonological units are not accessible before reading, consistency problems, related to the different pronunciation and spelling of some orthographic units, and granularity problems, as “there are many more orthographic units to learn when access to the phonological system is based on bigger grain sizes as opposed to smaller grain sizes” (Ziegler & Goswami, 2005: 3). Other difficulties might include not distinguishing between similar words, either in terms of sounds or in terms of morphology, or encountering words that have different meanings (Babaiba Medjahdi, 2015: 17). Not knowing enough vocabulary also hinders the comprehension of a texts, as well as idioms (Babaiba Medjahdi, 2015: 17).

3.2. Literature and language learning

During the 1950s and 1980s, literature was not introduced in language teachings as the process was more concerned with more pragmatic approaches (Shazu, 2014: 29). However, in recent decades more importance has been provided to literature as a way of promoting language development (Hall, cited in (Shazu, 2014: 29) although is not a very common practice in high schools nowadays.

As for the relationship between language learning and literature, Paran (2008) suggested that it can be represented in two axes The horizontal axis focuses on the emphasis on literature given in the lesson, while the vertical axe represents

the focus on language learning (Paran, 2008: 466). The intersection results in the following quadrants (Figure 1):

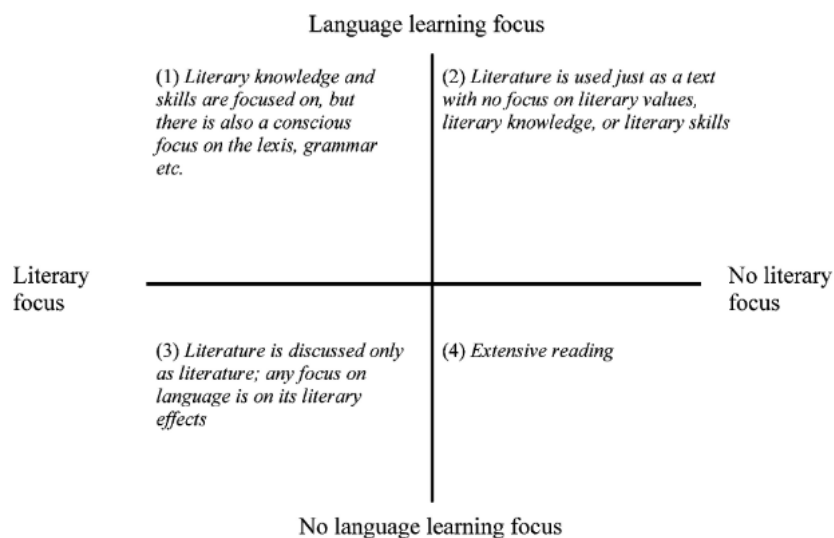


Figure 1. relationship between language learning and literature (Paran, 2008: 467)

In the situation represented in quadrant 1, there is a focus on both aspects, literature and language learning (Paran, 2008: 466). In quadrant 2, literary texts are used but there is no focus in their literary values (Paran, 2008: 467). Quadrant 3 exemplifies the contrary situation, in which literary texts are used but without any focus on language (Paran, 2008: 467). In the case of quadrant 4, the students read texts but there is not focus either on their literary values or on the language itself (Paran, 2008: 467).

As for the benefits of literature for the students, Horner (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014: 250) highlights psycholinguistic, aesthetic and social/moral benefits, as it helps them develop holistically, as it is represented in the following graph (Figure 2):

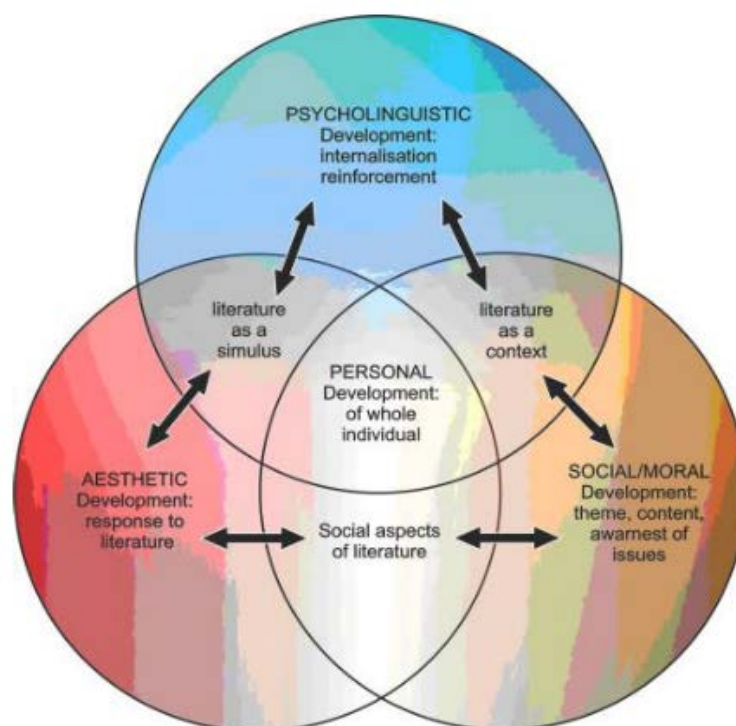


Figure 2. Holistic development of students through literature (Horner, cited in (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014: 250)

In the case of Duff and Maley (Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014: 250), they indicate that the use of literature in the classroom as it has linguistic, methodological and motivational importance. As for the linguistic criteria, the students are presented to different types or texts, styles and registers (Duff and Maley, cited in Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014: 250). In the case of the methodological criterion, the students are encouraged to interpret the texts in different ways and share their opinions, interacting deeply with the text (Duff and Maley, cited in Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014: 250). Lastly, as for the motivational criteria, the students can relate to the text, enhancing their motivation (Duff and Maley, cited in Bobkina & Dominguez, 2014: 250).

In regards to why introduce literature in the foreign language classroom, it allows the students to acquire or improve different language skills, as for example listening skills when listening to another classmate talk about the story, or oral skills when having to summarize the plot (Anderson, cited in Abbasi, Azizifar, Gowhary, & Heidari, 2015: 180) . Moreover, as Van (2009) states, the students are exposed to meaningful contexts and different cultures, which allows them to develop cultural awareness and critical thinking skills. It is important to note that

cultural awareness is essential in the EFL classroom to “improve students’ link to the target language” (Oktan & Kaymakamoğlu, 2017: 73).

In general, literature presents various benefits for the students, as McKay (1982) indicates:

It can be useful in developing linguistic knowledge both on a usage and use level. Secondly, to the extent that students enjoy reading literature, it may increase their motivation to interact with a text and thus, ultimately increase their reading proficiency. Finally, an examination of a foreign culture through literature may increase their understanding of that culture and perhaps spur their own creation of imaginative works (1982: 531).

Literary texts are useful in the EFL classroom as “literature is inherently authentic and provides authentic input for language learning” (Shazu, 2014: 31), presenting the students with varied types of input and cultural information (Shazu, 2014: 31).

Motivation is a key element in the language classroom as it allows for the learning process to start and continue and to accomplish certain goals (Dörnyei, 1998: 117). Literature can be used in the classroom to affect our students motivation because it involves affective, attitudinal and experiential factors (McKay, cited in Vural, 2013: 17)

3.3. Reading strategies

The development of reading skills is essential for the acquisition of a foreign language. This process can be influenced by different factors, like the use of strategies, previous knowledge or reading proficiency (Chen & Chen, 2015: 157).

In order to successfully acquire that language through reading, it is essential for the students to apply different reading strategies, which can be defined as “plans for solving problems encountered in constructing meaning” (Duffy, cited (Janzen, 2002: 287). Wang (2016) provides a more complex definition in which he introduces different procedures to achieve certain purpose: “Reading strategies are self-directed actions where readers flexibly take control with a certain degree of awareness to retrieve, store, regulate, elaborate, and evaluate textual information to achieve reading goal” (2016: 1790). It is important to note that these strategies might be both conscious or unconscious (O’Malley &

Chamot, cited in Chen & Chen, 2015: 158). The application of this strategies is essential as the students face many difficulties when facing a text in a foreign language.

As for the different types of strategies, they can be classified into cognitive or metacognitive (Wang, 2016: 1790). Cognitive strategies are used to efficiently acquire and store information (Wang, 2016: 1790) and they can be further divided into bottom up, which involve ordering linguistic signals such as letters, syllables or grammatical cues; and top-down, concerned with understanding a text by making inferences and using previous experiences (Goodman, cited in Chen & Chen, 2015: 158). Metacognitive strategies are used to organize the reading process or check its effectiveness (Brown, cited in Wang, 2016: 1790). El-Kaomy (cited in Chen & Chen, 2015: 158) proposed the following categories within the metacognitive strategies: planning, self-monitoring and self-evaluation.

Thinking aloud is a useful technique to obtain information about the students' reading process and an effective way of expressing ideas (Wang, 2016: 1791).

Janzen (2002) proposes five processes that can be performed so that our students successfully acquire reading strategies. These processes are:

- General strategy discussion, which consists on explaining the importance and purpose of reading strategies (Janzen, 2002: 289)
- Teacher modeling is demonstrating how to use the strategies, as for example thinking out loud (Janzen, 2002: 289).
- Student reading is the step in which the students can get familiarized with the strategies (Janzen, 2002: 290).
- Analysis of strategy use consists on discussion the strategy used by a student, thinking of what strategy was used, when and with which purpose (Janzen, 2002: 290-91).
- Lastly, the author proposes the explanation of different strategies, either by means of charts or small discussion (Janzen, 2002: 291).

3.4. Extensive reading

According to Carrel and Carson (1997), extensive reading “generally involves rapid reading of large quantities of material or longer readings (e.g. whole books) for general understanding, with the focus generally on the meaning of what is

being read than on the language” (1997: 49–50). That is, placing more importance on the effect reading produces, such as pleasure, rather than acquiring the language (Carrell & Carson, 1997: 50).

As for the characteristics of this procedure, it is important to consider the following aspects:

- It consists on reading large amounts of materials (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002: 296). However, the amount of pages or hours that need to be devoted varies depending on the program or context (Susser & Robb, 1990: 166)
- The students can choose what they read, so that they enjoy the learning process (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002: 296). In this way, the students will enjoy the activity, even though it is an assignment (Susser & Robb, 1990: 166–167).
- The materials are varied, with the students reading different genres and topics (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002: 297).
- The level of the text is adequate to the students’ level (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002: 297).
- After reading the text, the students work on post reading activities, such as designing a bookmark or poster or writing a letter to the author (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002: 297).
- The teacher also participates in the process to encourage the students, either reading with them or showing them different materials they have been reading (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002: 297).
- It is also important to keep track of the progress (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002: 297).

Extensive reading has reported to have different benefits on the students. First of all, it improves the acquisition of writing and reading skills, as well as enhancing vocabulary knowledge, grammar or spelling (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002: 298). Moreover, the acquisition of fluency and speed is less demanding as the primary focus is comprehension (Susser & Robb, 1990: 166). It also has an effect on the students’ motivation as they are immersed in the reading process (Grabe, cited in (Carrell & Carson, 1997: 51) and they enjoy the reading process more (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002: 298). Ultimately, they can develop positive reading habits (Renandya & Jacobs, 2002: 298).

Despite the benefits of extensive reading, it is important to note that it can be more effective when performed in combination with intensive reading (Nuttall, cited in Carrell & Carson, 1997: 52)

3.5. Literature Circles

One way of introducing extensive reading in the classroom is to do it by means of Literature Circles, which Owen (cited in Kim, n.d.:2) defines as “discussion groups in which children meet regularly to talk about books”. (n.d.: 2). Furr (n.d.b) proposes a more complete definition, introducing the skills necessary to perform the activity: “fun, focused classroom-based student reading and discussion groups which naturally combine the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening” (n.d.: 1). According to Sambolin and Carroll (2015), the term was first coined by Short, Harste, and Burke, who consider that the students discuss their understanding of a text, linking it to what they know or their lives (Short, Harste, and Burke, cited in (Sambolin & Carroll, 2015: 194). As Furr (n.d.a) remarks, “the core of successful literature circles is the fact they do allow students to participate in “real-life,” meaningful discussions about the texts/stories that they’ve read” (n.d.a: 5).

Literature Circles can have many benefits for the students. Apart from improving the language skills, the students also improve the critical thinking skills and discussion skills (Sambolin & Carroll, 2015: 194). Moreover, they are exposed to different expression during the discussions that help them improve their language competence (Ellis and Fellow, cited in Sambolin & Carroll, 2015: 194). The sessions themselves, since they do not focus in particular language contents, favor a connection between the students’ background and what they are working on (Freeman & Freeman, cited in in Sambolin & Carroll, 2015: 194). Lastly, the experience itself allows them to share ideas and learn from one another (Clower, 2006: 22).

Generally, Literature Circles are characterized by the following features (Furr, n.d.b: 2):

- The teachers choose suitable texts for the students’ level so that they can understand them participate in meaningful discussion (Furr, n.d.b: 2). As Furr (n.d.a) remarks, “Literature Circles are based on the ability of our

students, not only to read but also to discuss the texts in English, so the materials must be manageable” (n.d.a: 5).

- Different groups are created, combining different types of students in them (Furr, n.d.b: 2-3). These groups usually read the same text and meet regularly (Furr, n.d.b: 3).
- Some kind of post reading activity is performed, such as a group project or additional instruction (Furr, n.d.b: 3).
- In order to discuss the text, it is necessary for the students to take notes (Furr, n.d.b: 4)
- In the discussions, the students are the ones who choose the topics (Furr, n.d.b: 5)
- It is encouraged to share personal information and opinions in order to create a not so formal atmosphere (Furr, n.d.b: 5)
- The role of the teacher is to act as a facilitator, allowing the students to be responsible for the discussion (Furr, n.d.b: 5)

It is important to consider that Literature Circles in the L1 differ from those in ELT, mainly in the sense that the teacher must be aware of the students level and provide them with more guidance, setting the pace of the activity, as well as selecting materials that are appropriate for a discussion in the foreign language (Furr, n.d.a: 5).

Kim (n.d.) proposes a series of reading strategies that can be used to help our students benefit from this type of activity:

- Reading aloud, which can improve reading, listening and speaking skills, as well as help acquire confidence (Kim, n.d.: 4-5).
- Creating different discussion groups, either small ones or the whole class, that allow to perform different types of activities, like reading certain passages or sharing notes (Kim, n.d.: 5).
- Journal writing serves the students to reflect on the reading process and the information they have read, to later share it in the discussions (Kim, n.d.: 6).
- Using problem posing/solving questions can help the students develop analytic thinking skills (Kim, n.d.: 7).

- Working on a project helps the students we more aware and engaged with the text (Kim, n.d.: 7). It is important to later evaluate this work, using peer and self-assessment (Kim, n.d.: 9).

In addition to this, we can give our students different roles within their discussion groups, in order to make the discussion more interesting. Furr (n.d.b) proposes the following roles:

- The Group Discussion leader is in charge of managing the discussion (Furr, n.d.b: 6).
- The Summarizer provides a summary of the plot before the discussion, in order to refresh the students' mind (Furr, n.d.b: 6).
- The Connector is the who has to find connections between the text and reality (Furr, n.d.b: 7).
- The Word Master's role is to select words or sentences that are important in the story (Furr, n.d.b: 7).
- The Passage Person finds passages that are important for the story or that are confusing, in which case the rest of the students help them try to understand (Furr, n.d.b: 8).
- Lastly, the Culture Collector's role is to find similarities and differences between their culture and the one represented in the text (Furr, n.d.b: 8).

4. STATE OF THE ART

Even though there hasn't been a great number of studies in the last years regarding the application of literature in the EFL classroom, there is definitely a group of scholars who believe as we do that introducing students to literature is a very interesting proposal that has many benefits for them, as it fosters their motivation towards learning and also provides the students with a different and in many cases enjoyable approach to the English classroom.

Tseng (2010) performed an study in which high school students were presented with 24 literary texts in order to analyze their perception of the literature in the EFL classroom. After reading varied literary works that included poems, short stories, novels and plays and participating in a literature presentation once a week for 14 weeks, the students completed a questionnaire in order to see their impressions. Their answers reported that the students' attitude towards the texts was generally positive, preferring prose fiction and plays, and they preferred works in which they could use other medias to further appreciate the performance. Moreover, it is important to note that they preferred contemporary texts to classic literature. Lastly, only half of them liked to read literature but more would like to be introduced to it.

Sambolin and Carroll (2015) studied the students' participation in a literature circle. For this project, the students participated in a 4-week literature circle during the semester, in which they had to read one novel and work in different activities in group of 4 or 5. Within the groups, the students were assigned different roles, like summarizers, questioners, literary luminaries or connectors. The activities they completed consisted on answering guided questions or presenting information about the text. After concluding the project, the authors reported that the students participated and collaborated more than in previous units. The authors indicate that having a role and time to think about the answers could have contributed to this increment in their participating, since they could have felt more comfortable so share their ideas. The students reported that the literature circles have them the opportunity to express their thoughts and share information between one another, with many of them sharing personal information, which improved their relationship. In conclusion, the authors indicate that "literature circles proved to be successful in terms of opening up dialogue in a classroom

where students previously felt uncomfortable using their second language” (Sambolin & Carroll, 2015: 204).

In another study, Rew and Moon (2013) study the effects of drama in learning target expression in primary education. During the study, primary education students worked with one drama script, completing activities during one hour for eight weeks. To track their progress, they completed a fill-in-the blank pretest to see which expressions and structures they already knew. Once the eight weeks were over, they completed two posts tests: one was the same as the pre-test and the other consisted on writing down or saying aloud the expressions they knew. The results showed that there as a significant improvement on the students’ knowledge of expression after working on the different activities, and they were able to use them in new situations, both written and orally.

In the case of Ali and Ahmed’s (2015) study, they explored the effect of using literature to teach the past tense. The high school students were divided in two groups. For five weeks, group A use a simplified version of *Oliver Twist*, while group B used a traditional textbook. To assess the progress and effects of the different methods, the students completed different pre-and-post tests. The results showed that the students who used literature to learn grammar had better scores than those who did not. The researches indicate that this could be due to a higher motivation and interest in those used the text to learn, with those who used a traditional textbook feeling unmotivated.

As we have seen through these examples, there are studies that defend the application and reveal the benefits of literature in the classroom. We strongly believe that even though it is coming less and less common to have the students read literature as a way to learn English, it is a very valid approach to English learning, even at the present time with the apparition of many new technologies and ways to make the students learn, something as classic and basic as learning a book can have the same or even more impact on the students’ performance and development.

5. INNOVATION PROPOSAL

The main idea behind this innovation proposal is to include literature as a mean of improvement for the student's skills, specially reading, throughout the whole academic year in a 1st of baccalaureate English classroom. This approach is meant to be used with students of 1st year of baccalaureate since they are mature enough to understand the contents of the readings that will be provided to them, as well as having a good understanding of the themes and ideas that those books have within them. I have decided not to use the method with second year students because the contents of that specific year are focused on the fact that the students will have to make their EBAU exam at the end of the year, so any type of change would hinder their performance on the test, which is important for their future.

The way to implement this proposal will be through the use of three different literary pieces, which will each be assigned into a different trimester, which will also be divided into 6 different sessions, 50 minutes each. The main reason behind this is the fact that we don't want to interfere so much with the English programme for the students. This approach is meant to be essentially a way of reinforcing their skills, specially reading, in a different way than usual, while also fostering their motivation with the use of literature.

5.1. The materials

The choice of which materials are the most useful for the students to work with is a difficult one, mainly because the incredible amount of literature that exists nowadays. For this reason, we have decided to make a mixture between the literal cannon and some more contemporary pieces, as well as introducing different types of literature to the students. In an ideal situation, we will be able to make a decision based on the student's preferences, so we are confident that at least they will feel more motivated and ready to work.

We have made a corpus of ten different literary works, which are:

- *The Importance of Being Earnest* (2017), by Oscar Wilde
- *The Gold-Bug and Other Tales* (1991), by Edgar Allan Poe
- *Lord of the Flies* (2003), by William Golding

- *Frankenstein* (2012), by Mary Shelley
- *The House on Mango Street* (2004), by Sandra Cisneros
- *Fahrenheit 451* (2012), by Ray Bradbury
- *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (2002), by C.S. Lewis
- *Pygmalion* (1944), by George Bernard Shaw
- *The Old Man and The Sea* (1996), by Ernest Hemingway
- *To Build a Fire* (2013), by Jack London

Out of this list of works, we have decided to use the following ones in our proposal.

5.1.1. *The Importance of Being Earnest*

We are aware of the fact that many students of first year of baccalaureate have never read an English play before, or in some cases even in Spanish. This was one of the reasons behind this project, the fact that students need to know more about the different types of literature, which are even more rich if read in their original language. There are some reasons why to choose this play in particular. Mainly it's because the "accessibility" that it has. It was written in the late nineteenth century, so in comparison to Shakespeare's works, for example, is much easier to read. There is also the fact that it's a comedy, so it is more laid back and the action is more enjoyable, and also it is not very long, so the students won't struggle with the story or with the characters even if the story plays with how they are presented at each moment.

There are a lot of interesting themes that we can extrapolate from this work to the classroom, both directly explained in the story and in a subtler way, but still there. For example, the notion of marriage, which at that time was so important for the upper classes, and how in this particular story is never really defined as something good. There is also the theme of being or not being "earnest", which, even though is meant to be a good quality, is used to mock Victorian society's standards, and that's why the two main characters force themselves to lie and have secret life's, in order to escape from those standards, therefore quitting being earnest.

5.1.2. *Fahrenheit 451*

When starting this project, this was the first book that came to our mind. *Fahrenheit 451* is a novel about the power of books and literature, and how they can affect history and humanity. As a dystopian type of story, we believe that it can have a strong effect on the students, making them reflect about the role of literature in today's society. All of these characteristics make this novel a great choice for this particular way of introducing literature into the classroom. One of the main themes of this particular book is the theme of Censorship and how it evolved into firemen burning books instead of putting out fires.

Apart from the idea that people started to think that books were not worth reading because they were offensive, there is also the fact that they found them boring in comparison with other activities like the radio or the television. This part is particularly interesting because it seems that something similar is happening today. The younger generations are starting to feel less and less attracted to reading and prefer to do other activities, mostly related to their phones or the internet. This is one of the main reasons behind this project, the intention of reuniting the students and the young people with literature and how interesting it can be, which is precisely why we have decided to use this story to do so, because the core of its problem starts in a very similar fashion as today's society approach to literature and books in general.

5.1.3. *The Gold-Bug and Other Stories*

Mostly known by his poetry and his short stories, we thought it would be a great idea to include them in this project, one of the main reasons being that because of the nature of short stories, they are easy to read and the plot is not difficult to comprehend, as well as the characters, who are clearly depicted and don't undergo many changes or transformations. Given the fact that short stories are much faster to read than the other two choices, the development of the activities will be slightly different than the other two trimesters, but always trying to keep a general order for the activities.

5.2. Implementation of the proposal

In the following section, we will explain the different activities that we will develop throughout the year in relation with the books. Each of the activities is meant to be related to a certain skill, which will help the students improve as they work with the books.

5.2.1. Introduction of the book

An introduction to the author and his or her background will be given to the students as a way of making them feel more familiar with the book and when and where it was written, which can be very important at the time of analysing the themes that appear in the stories. As many students haven't ever had any contact with English authors, this can be a great opportunity to make them learn both about the writers and also about the times when they lived, how society was at the time and at which point of their life's they decided to write that story. We think this is something that shouldn't be ever neglected by any teacher who wants to add literature to the classroom because if we don't first introduce them to the person who wrote the book and the context where it was written, the students will be missing important pieces of information, key to their full understanding of the story.

5.2.2. In Class Presentations

For every story there will be a class presentation made by two students. In the case of the novel and the play, there will be two sessions dedicated to this activity. In the case of the short stories, the presentations will be made in three different sessions, each session consisting in three different short story's presentations, with this, the students will have a way of improving their oral skills, while also learning vocabulary about the stories and how to give a good presentation.

5.2.3. Movie/Adaptation Viewing

As in the previous activity, there will be a difference between the viewing of the adaptations of the novel and the play, which will be made in two different

sessions, where the students will watch a film adaptation of both stories, followed by a composition which will ask of them to explain the similarities and differences between the original stories and the adaptations. In the case of the short stories, the students will watch a fragment of *The Simpsons*, where Lisa reads Bart the poem "The Raven". We think that with this, the students will be easily able to follow the poem. They will be provided with a transcription just to be sure they understand everything, and then they will be asked to make their own short story about a man alone in a mansion at night. With this, we will make the students work their listening and writing skills, which will be assessed in the composition, which needs to be well-written but also coherent with the theme.

5.2.4. Exam

At the end of each trimester, the students will have to answer a test about the contents of the books that they have been reading. This test is meant to be a way of making sure that the themes and main events of the stories have been understood by the students, while also being a way to grade the reading comprehension part of the syllabus. The exam will consist in several short questions regarding key moments of the story, description of the characters or even questions about the author or the movie adaptations of the books.

5.2.5. Glossary

Each trimester, the students will be asked to cooperate in a shared Glossary allocated in the platform Google+, in which they will have to add words and expressions that they find useful for the rest of the class to know. This will serve as a way to keep the students focused on the vocabulary that appears in the stories, while being a good way to find the meaning of an expression or a word if the other students have already posted it before them. The students who add more useful words or expressions each trimester will be awarded up to 0,5 points of the final mark. Students are meant to be consequent with their choice of words, so the students don't need to add a great number of words to be awarded the points. The focus is on the quality of the words and not the quantity.

5.3. Distribution of the sessions/activities

Since the aim of this project focuses on the idea of reinforcing the student's learning process through the use of literature, we wanted to make a programme that interfered as less as possible with the development of the curriculum the students need to follow, so we have decided to divide the activities into 6 different sessions, 50 minutes each, which will be the fourth session of every two weeks, there is an overview on how we would distribute the sessions (Table 1).

TRIMESTER OVERVIEW				
	Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4
Week 1	N. session	N. session	N. session	N. Session
Week 2	N. session	N. session	N. session	Introduction
Week 3	N. session	N. session	N. session	N. Session
Week 4	N. session	N. session	N. session	Presentation
Week 5	N. session	N. session	N. session	N. Session
Week 6	N. session	N. session	N. session	Presentation (II)
Week 7	N. session	N. session	N. session	N. Session
Week 8	N. session	N. session	N. session	Movie Viewing /Presentation (III)
Week 9	N. session	N. session	N. session	N. Session
Week 10	N. session	N. session	N. session	Movie Viewing (II)/ Poem Viewing
Week 11	N. session	N. session	N. session	N. Session
Week 12	N. session	N. session	N. session	Exam

Table 1. Distribution of the sessions. (Note: N. session: normal session)

5.3.1. Session 1

In order to make the students as familiar as possible with the book they have to read, is important to make an introduction to the author and the background of the time when it was written, so we will use this first session to do so by means of a presentation where we will tell the students some brief data about the story of the author and also how the story's influence over the years. We believe that knowing more facts about the book will make the students more eager to start reading it with interest.

5.3.2. Sessions 2 and 3

In the case of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Fahrenheit 451*, the second and third session will consist of oral presentations made by the students in groups of 2 or more, depending on the number of students we have in class. In the case of Poe's short stories, we will still be doing oral presentations in these sessions but there will be three short stories left for session number 4 since there are 9 short stories in total and each session will consist in presentations from 3 different short stories. The oral presentations are meant to be a way to make the students have a profound reading of the text since they will be asked to present to their fellow students, for example:

- *The differences between Jack and Algernon*
- *The differences between Cecily and Gwendolen*
- *The character of Captain Beatty in Fahrenheit 451*
- *What would you do to prevent the events in the novel from happening*
- *Make a summary of the short story you were assigned to*
- *The approach to mystery in Poe's short stories*

5.3.3. Session 4

As in the previous sessions, in the case of the two longer books, this session will be used to start the viewing of a film adaptation of the stories. In the case of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, there will be a viewing of the 1952 version of the film directed by Anthony Asquith. In the case of *Fahrenheit 451*, there will be a viewing of the 1966 version of the film directed by François Truffaut. Both of these films have a more modern adaptation, but we think that is in these particular two where the story is better adapted in comparison with the other adaptations.

In the case of Poe's short stories, this session will be the last one where we will be making presentations since we will only need one session to see an adaptation of one of his works.

5.3.4. *Session 5*

This will be the last session, and the first one in the case of the short stories where we will deal with the adaptations of the books. In this case, since there are no film adaptations of the short stories, we will make the students work with an adaptation of one of Poe's most famous poems "The Raven", since we want the students to feel motivated, we have decided to use the adaptation used in the TV Series "The Simpsons", particularly in the episode "Treehouse of Horror I" aired in 1990. Since this adaptation, despite being faithful to the original text, has been shortened, we will provide the students with the complete transcription of the poem to make sure they are not lost during the viewing. After that, there will be a discussion about the differences between Poe's poetry and short stories, and how he used poetry to tell a story. Instead of a composition about the differences between the original and the adaptation, in this case the students will be asked to write a composition which will consist in their own short story (up to 350 words), about a man alone in a mansion at night, and what happens to him, up to the students' imagination.

5.3.5. *Session 6*

For the last session, the students will be asked to make a content's exam based on everything we have worked on throughout the trimester. The questions will be related to the original story, some facts about the author and also about the film adaptation. The students need to be able to retrieve information from every type of activity that we have done in relation to the books, and the exam is a way to ensure they remember the main ideas behind the stories and also that they have made a good reading comprehension of the story or stories.

5.4. Assessment

As for the assessment, we have decided that the activities will amount as a 30% of the total mark, divided into reading comprehension with the exam (10%), oral expression with the class presentations (10%) and listening and writing expression with their compositions about the adaptations (10%) Both the oral presentations and the compositions will be assessed by means of rubrics (Tables 2 and 3), both included below.

Apart from this, there is also the Glossary that the students need to fill each trimester, which will award the 5 top students in terms of the importance of their contributions: 0,1. 0,2. 0,3. 0,4 and 0,5 points respectively. Those extra points will be added after every other mark and can make a difference between a fail and a pass for the subject, so the students feel even more motivated to make meaningful contributions to the Glossary.

	1	2	3	4
PRONUNCIATION	Bad intonation and pronunciation of many words, which makes it difficult to understand	Mostly unclear intonation and pronunciation with frequent errors	Mostly clear intonation and pronunciation with few mistakes.	Clear intonation and pronunciation with few or no mistakes, easy to comprehend
CONTENT	Many mistakes in grammar and basic use of vocabulary that hinder comprehension	Several mistakes in grammar and basic to adequate use of vocabulary	Few mistakes in grammar and a more complex use of vocabulary and structures.	Little to no mistakes in grammar, great use of vocabulary and structures
DELIVERY	Lack of use of body language, constantly looking at a guide	Little use of body language and several readings of the guide	Adequate use of body language, little to none readings of the paper	Great use of body language, good pace and little to no readings of the guide
ORGANIZATION	Lack of organization and coherence	Badly organized for the most part, not clearly coherent	The main ideas are present but poorly organized	The main ideas are present and are well organized

Table 2. Oral expression rubric

	1	2	3	4
CONTENT	Many mistakes in grammar and basic use of vocabulary that hinder comprehension	Several mistakes in grammar and basic to adequate use of vocabulary	Few mistakes in grammar and a more complex use of vocabulary and structures.	Little to no mistakes in grammar, great use of vocabulary and structures
ORGANIZATION	Lack of organization and coherence	Badly organized for the most part, not clearly coherent	The main ideas are present but poorly organized	The main ideas are present and are well organized
IMPLEMENTATION	The task is not implemented on the text	The text implements the task but in a very loose manner	Good implementation of the task	Great implementation of the task

Table 3. Written expression rubric

6. DISCUSSION

Literature and reading are becoming less and less present in nowadays classrooms, being labelled as outdated, they have been slowly overcome by more modern ways of teaching, with the use of apps and different technologies. With this project, we want to support the introduction and the use of literature as a way of reinforcing the approach towards reading and the other skills. The idea of helping the students become more familiar with English literature and its authors is also capital for this work, since it may be the only opportunity for many of the students to get in contact with those types of books. We have to remember that even if the main aim of a teacher nowadays is to follow the programme that he or she is given, it is also our duty to form our students in many ways as possible, and even though they might think that knowing about English literature is by no means useful in their daily life, the more culture they can retrieve from their learning period the better will they develop as students and as individuals in their future.

For this same reason, we have decided to include a corpus with different types of approaches to literature: novels, short stories, plays and poems, all of them are important and interesting in their own way, and making the students know the different types of literature and how they work is also at one of the main goals behind this paper.

We also feel that with this method, the students will feel more motivated to exercise their reading skills, since there is a complete story and a meaning behind the reading, in contrast with the fragments of literature that appear in the student's book, which the students tend to forget the next day they work with them. We mean to make an impact on the students, to make them remember that they read these stories and that they enjoyed them, even remembering the plot or at least something about the author or the story some years later.

Considering the amount of literature included in this proposal, there could also be different amounts of literature included. In the first version of this paper, the students would have had to work with 9 different pieces of literature, one for each month. In the end this idea was adapted to be less invasive with the programme and with the students, but nevertheless and depending on the many factors that

apply to a classroom, there could be versions of this method with more and also with less literature involved.

As for the main disadvantages of this project, the timing and the number of sessions would be the most important one. Given the fact that the students only come in contact with the books in the class once every two weeks, it's to expect that they will forget about what we were doing in the last session. For this matter, is important to remind the students to take notes and take the sessions and the information that is given to them seriously, since there will be an exam at the end and therefore they need to be focused and ready to note down the information that they are given either by the teacher or by the other students. In order to solve this issue, the most direct way would be to increase the amount of sessions dedicated to the books, developing new activities to reinforce the student's motivation, like in class readings of the book or debates about the themes and characters that appear in them.

Overall, we expect to make the students get to like literature and reading, while also improving their proficiency in the different English skills, as well as fostering their motivation towards the activities, and also encouraging them to give their own opinion about the books, to help them feel an important part of the learning process.

7. CONCLUSION

This paper includes an innovation proposal to implement literature in the English classroom by making the students work with three different pieces of literature throughout the academic year, while also dedicating a set amount of sessions to activities related to those books, in order to improve their skills, having a special focus on reading comprehension. First, we reflected on the role of literature in the English classroom nowadays and how it can be implemented to help the students learn English. We reviewed some theory about the different types of approaches to literature in the EFL classroom and we also reviewed some projects directly related to this matter.

It is true that nowadays the general concept of classroom is being reinvented by technology. Both the teachers and the students need to be up to date and use more modern ways of interacting and learning in the classroom. But we think it is also very important not to forget what came before, since it can still be of help and make our students improve even if there are more modern ways to do it, with the help of apps and the internet. Those approaches are very helpful too, but from our point of view, they are not very inclusive with the student, which can make them feel isolated from the learning process, whereas with literature, they can give their own opinion about the books, which can make them feel more confident about themselves and also help them express their own ideas.

There are of course some limitations in the proposal, mainly because of the few opportunities that we have to work with the books, which can make the students lose focus on the tasks.

In a general note, we feel that this project is a way to go back to a more classical approach to literature, revindicating its importance on the learning process even for students of lower levels of English and also students which have more affinity to new technologies, we believe that literature is capable of making them appreciate its value as a learning tool.

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ANNEX

Exam example

1. Why is Jack not allowed to marry Gwendolen?

- A. He is already married
- B. Her mother does not approve
- C. He is her brother

2. What does Algernon find that leads him to believe Jack “Ernest” has another life?

- A. A letter, addressed to Ernest
- B. A handkerchief with the initials “J.W.”
- C. A cigarette case with “Uncle Jack” engraved into it

3. Whom does Algernon think should set an example for the upper class?

- A. The lower classes
- B. The prime-minister
- C. The queen

4. Whom does Cecily wish would visit?

- A. Gwendolen
- B. Miss Prism
- C. Ernest

5. Where has Cecily recorded her engagement to Algernon, “Ernest”

- A. The local newspaper
- B. A letter to her mother
- C. Her diary

6. Whom does Algernon leave Cecily to see?

- A. Chasuble
- B. Lady Bracknell
- C. Jack

7. What do Cecily and Gwendolen compare?

- A. Engagement rings
- B. Diaries
- C. Parasols

8. Over what/whom do Jack and Algernon fight at the end of Act II?

- A. Who is allowed to be christened “Ernest”
- B. Muffins
- C. Cecily

9. What surprise guest arrives in Act III?

- A. Lady Bracknell
- B. Jack’s real mother
- C. Gwendolen’s maid

10. How did this surprise guest attain the address?

- A. The phone book
- B. By following Algernon
- C. Gwendolen's maid

Extracted from

http://thebestnotes.com/booknotes/importance_of_being_earnest_wilde/Importance_Of_Being_Earnest_Study_Guide13.html