Literature in ELT

Selected Papers from the

44th FAAPI Conference

Edited by

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Contents

Introduction

We are delighted to bring you this volume of selected papers from the 2019 FAAPI Annual Conference. On this occasion the conference theme was "Literature in ELT: Connect, Create, Collaborate" and was held in the city of Salta on 19-21 September.

The papers comprised in this volume come from the conference Call for Papers. The call invited contributors to submit paper presentations on one of these topics: (1) creative and academic writing- different contexts, (2) intercultural literatures: connecting cultures, creating bridges, (3) literature to empower students, (4) technology, the media and literature, (5) different genres to work in the ELT classroom, (6), literature and inclusion, (7) the four language skills and literature, and (7) research and literature.

The 17 papers included in this edited collection attest to the complexity of literature in English language teaching and learning processes and the interdisciplinary and multifaceted nature of the area under scrutiny. It should be highlighted that each paper lies at the intersection of more than one topic, and that research, informed practices and reflection gravitate on each page. As Paran points out (2017), the experiences reported here come to illustrate the connections between teachers and researchers, and, more importantly, the synergy between research-informed pedagogies and teaching-informed research (Rose, 2019).

As recent publications in ELT show, literature in the L2 classroom is not only for comprehension reading skills, for pleasure, or for aesthetic purposes. It is now a space for interculturality (Gómez, 2012), identity construction, gender diversity (Eisenmann & Ludwig, 2018), multimedia practices (De Cunto & García, 2014), personal expression and links among writers, readers, and texts from a relational perspective (Guzmán Gámez & Moreno Cuellar, 2019), and, above all, critical citizenship (Rosenhan & Galloway, 2019). This volume engages in such much-needed discussions and puts forward pedagogical frameworks which can help illuminate and deepen the demands for social justice underpinning education.

<div align="right">Cristina Mayol (FAAPI President) and the editors</div>

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Using literature in a language course in Higher Education: An opportunity to embed citizenship goals in English teaching and translation degrees

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1. Introduction

In this article we describe a case study carried out in early 2019 in a regular language course for future teachers and translators of English at a local university. We designed a pedagogic proposal, task and theme based, whose focus was on *Maus* by Spiegelman (Zamuner, 2019) and in which we addressed its intercultural citizenship and human rights content. The project aimed at developing not only linguistic competence and gaining disciplinary and professional knowledge, skills and competencies in the classroom but also fostering educational purposes in the English teaching and translation degrees. Theoretically, the case is based on a conceptualisation of literature as a springboard for students' linguistic, communicative, intercultural and citizenship development.

After a description of this theoretical framework and our literature project, we present the case study and its findings using materials produced by students. Participants are 60 second year students, aged 18-22, with a B2/C1 level of English according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, who engaged in work with *Maus* (Spiegelman, 1996) in their practical classes for a period of four months. Our data types comprise field notes, student outputs in the form of reader responses and final individual reflection logs, which we analysed using content analysis. Our findings indicate that students engaged emotionally with the citizenship and human rights content in the graphic novel and that this engagement led to language learning, particularly in terms of writing and vocabulary development as they textualised the horror and trauma portrayed in the text.

2. Theoretical framework

Theoretically, the case study described in this article is based on a conceptualisation of literature as a springboard for students' linguistic, communicative, intercultural, and citizenship development within a CLIL framework (Schwartz, 2008) and a focus on history (Ravelo, 2013). Literature, culture and imagination are a key tripod in language learning (Hoff, 2019; Kramsch, 1995) because literature encourages students to imagine different worlds, distant cultural realities, and engage emotionally with them: "it is literature that opens up 'reality beyond realism' and that enables readers to live other lives – by proxy" (Kramsch, 1995, p. 85). More broadly, this view rests on an educational orientation in language teaching in higher education aimed at extending the purpose of English teaching and translation degrees beyond the purely instrumental aims of improving linguistic competence and gaining disciplinary and professional knowledge, skills and competencies (Byram & Wagner, 2018). These educational aims involve the development of democratic values and habits of mind as a way of contributing to consolidating democratic and peaceful societies (Nussbaum, 2010). This educational perspective of foreign language teaching resonates with the notion of the 'ecological university', committed to the community and society (Barnett, 2011), and distances from 'the measured university' (Macfarlane, 2017; Sutton, 2017), which is predominantly centred on the acquisition of technical, scientific and disciplinary knowledge, mastery of content, outcomes, test scores and standardised measures.

3. The case: *Maus* by Spiegelman

With this theoretical rationale in mind, we designed a proposal for classroom use in a regular language course in higher education based on carefully selected literary works with intercultural citizenship and human rights content such as *Maus I*: *a survivor's tale. My father bleeds history* by Art Spiegelman (1996, Random House) (Zamuner, 2019) and *Sula* by Toni Morrison (2004, Vintage International) (Beacon, 2019). In this article we focus on *Maus.* The proposal was designed as a task and theme based project that addressed the historical content of the Holocaust (Ravelo, 2013) with a CLIL approach (Banegas, 2013), i.e. students learned the foreign language by using it to carry out engaging tasks based on the literary works and their citizenship and human rights themes became motivational (Banegas, 2012).

The literary project was planned as a case study (Yin, 2018). Participants were 60 second year students, aged 18-22, with a B2+/C1 level of English (CEFR framework), who engaged in work with *Maus* in their practical classes for a period of three months between April-June 2019. Data comprise teacher field notes, student outcomes in the form of reader responses to literature and final individual reflection logs. Data were analysed using content analysis (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2018) and students signed informed consent forms.

Students engaged in a variety of tasks with a conceptualisation of language learning in a multiliteracies and translanguaging perspective (García & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2018). This means that student responses to literature involved not only the written mode (e.g. essays) but also visual, digital, arts-based and community-based elements (Rowsell, 2017) as they put all their

languages and resources in use. Tasks for classroom use focused on the social, historical, cultural and political context of the Holocaust; the context of production and reception of the literary work; concepts such as identity, race, culture, tolerance and human rights abuse; genres and text types (drawing attention to the characteristics of novels, novellas, comics, graphic novels and short stories); the visual component (e.g. by working on the cover and extra visuals such as maps, photographs and diagrams); the linguistic dimension (by analysing for instance the dedication, the preface, translanguaging in the form of survival English, Yiddish, German); and attention to emotions and affects in relation to the lived horror and trauma of the Holocaust from the point of view of different characters – an important dimension considering the central role of emotions and affects in language learning (Bigelow, 2019).

4. Findings and discussion

Findings indicate that students engaged emotionally with the citizenship and human rights content in *Maus*, in particular with the trauma and suffering portrayed. Such engagement and increased motivation is a characteristic of the CLIL classroom (Banegas, 2012, 2013). Moreover, this engagement led to language learning in specific ways, for instance by textualising complex thoughts in the artistic statements describing the alternative book covers students had designed.Figure 1 shows an alternative cover designed by one student:

Figure 1. Alternative cover for *Maus*

In the accompanying written artistic statement in English, this student put his English at work and reflected on the meaning of the cover and his process of creation. Reflection upon his creative process resulted in the use of the foreign language to convey a personal meaning ('I decided to', 'I tried to portray', 'work around an idea'). In so doing, he presented facts ('they [Jews] were promised a better life'), explained and justified his choices ('for what I know', 'that is why I', 'I know') and became emotionally engaged with his cover ('I'm happy with the result'). The process, however, was not easy ('I struggled at first', 'not very visually appealing').

I think the original cover is still really effective despite being quite old. I did my cover with photoshop and I struggled at first because I don't consider myself the most creative living person, and even less when I work under pressure. Despite this, I think I managed to work around an idea quite well. *I decided to keep the author's original idea of the characters being portrayed as animals: Jews as mice and Nazis as Cats. For what I know about the Holocaust and from Maus I know Jews always were tricked into handing themselves: they were promised a better life if they went to get their passports stamped but the reality was that it was just a trick to trap them. That's why I put a mouse trap in the center with mice looking at it, trying to decide if something good is actually being handed to them or if it's a trap. As it was obviously a trap, I tried to portray Hitler as a cat hidden in the dark observing the situation*. As I thought the original cover was really effective, I decided to keep the title and author's name as the original ones. Even though the final product it's not very visually appealing, I think the concept I tried to portray was overall good and I'm happy with the result (emphasis added).

Another student created the cover in Figure 2:

Figure 2. Alternative cover for *Maus*

In her artistic statement, she explained her rationale ('the idea of representing'):

> At first, during my creative process, I thought about the idea of representing the parallelism between cats and Nazis.

She associated a particular artistic choice ('rigid lines') with a specific meaning ('power, authority'):

> This image of the cat is composed with rigid and sterilized lines which can suggest power, authority.

She aimed at portraying the feelings associated with trauma ('in this drawing the faces of the mice clearly exhibit how hard times they were going through') as well as the dehumanisation of the victims. This is in line with Wolfendale (2005, p. 345) who refers to the concept of "dehumanising evil" for cases in which victims are seen by perpetrators not only as objects but also as inferior and subhuman, in this case as 'pests' ('pests that should be eradicated', 'the mice are located at the end of the book cover in order to make them look inferior and defenceless').

> ...cats depict Nazis, mice embody Jews. With this characterisation they are considered as *pests that should be eradicated*. In my composition *the mice are located at the end of the book cover in order to make them look inferior and defenceless* under the Nazi propaganda (emphasis added).

Another student who also reflected on such dehumanisation in a reflection log used a lexical chain (italicised) to portray the sub-human condition: subhuman race – exterminated - problem - the Jewish problem - eliminated – not-human - barely animals.

> He did not perceive Jews as human beings, but *as a subhuman race* that needed to be *exterminated. A problem*, as the Nazis called what they were doing 'The final solution to *the Jewish problem*'. By *dehumanizing* the Jews, he convinced everyone – and maybe himself too- that what he and the people that followed him were doing was right. That the Jews deserved and needed to be *eliminated* because of their condition of *not-human, barely animals*.

Overall, all students engaged emotionally with the horror, trauma and suffering portrayed in the graphic novel and showed their engagement linguistically by using expressions such as '*the colour of blood* as an expression of the hundreds of people murdered during the Holocaust', 'a person who suffered the consequences of *this cruel and bloody moment* in History', 'a *dark* memory', 'profoundly *heartbreaking*' and others (taken from artistic statements, emphasis added). They learned specific vocabulary associated with the particular traumas and horrors of the time as well as variations in message form (Widdowson, 2007) to convey subtle meanings. They were able to take the position of the different

characters, imagine their situation and consider their feelings from their point of view ('surprise', 'shock', 'despair', 'hateful', 'anger'), and also reflect on their own feelings ('sorry', 'sadness', 'fear') triggered by the literary text, as can be gleaned from the following extracts from one reflection log (the emphasis is ours):

> This extract is from the point of view of Vladek when he was a war prisoner (…) *you can*
>
> *feel the surprise, the shock, the despair, and you really feel very sorry for them*.
>
> This extract is from Vladek's father point of view. Here we can also see *how hateful*
>
> Nazis were and that they had fun torturing Jews (…) He refers to the Nazis as *The Demons* which I think is really interesting because throughout the story, *we mostly feel*
>
> *sadness and fear* because of how everything is told, but here *you can also feel the anger of the character towards Nazis.*
>
> This last extract is from Mala's point of view (...)The written language that's being used is also very descriptive and *raw*.

Being able to imagine the situation and feelings of (distant) others by placing oneself in their shoes ('you can feel', 'you really feel', 'we can see', 'we mostly feel') is an essential democratic capacity (Nussbaum, 2010), which in this case was fostered in the English classroom using literature with historical content (Raverlo, 2013) and a CLIL perspective (Banegas, 2012, 2013) as a springboard.

But students did not remain at the level of identification with such suffering. Rather, they made a call to see the humanity lost in that suffering as a way to pave a new future and this call echoes Aloni (2008, p.151) in the statement that "after Auschwitz there should be no more 'business as usual' in education". This is illustrated for instance in the following data extract:

> ...brings to my mind the concept of "victim" and "human". I see humans chasing humans. Killers chasing victims. But *I cannot and I will never see Jews as a non-human race* as Hitler assures (…) I also remember thinking of *Jews as survivors, as fathers and mothers, sons and daughters, as human beings struggling to survive in a context in which they weren't considered humans* (emphasis added).

Departing from strong feelings ('upset') and a sense of dehumanisation ('target objects'), this student reflected deeply on social injustice concerns arising from cultural, religious and ideological bases and made a plea: 'this massive violation of rights cannot be seen just as part of "history"'. She felt identified with the victims as evidenced in the use of 'our' ('wound in our hearts') and considered the historical period an opportunity to learn 'tolerance and respect'.

It makes me *really upset* that hundreds of people have died because of these chases that *make people look as target objects that can be followed and murdered* because of their beliefs, their religions, ideologies or cultural legacy. *This massive violation of rights cannot be seen just as part of "history". This wound in our hearts needs to be healed by way of remembering them and learning that we still have a lot to learn.* I cannot think of these periods like any other thing than *an urgent need for mankind to honestly learn about tolerance and respect to their neighbours. Differences will always exist and we have to celebrate them instead of making them causes of hatred or persecution* (emphasis added)*.*

In this way, the student was enacting a social justice basis for her foreign language learning in this higher education setting (Byram & Wagner, 2018).

To conclude, our analysis of our data types shows the emotional engagement that this group of students experienced in particular in connection with the citizenship and human rights content in *Maus.* They engaged with the trauma and suffering portrayed in the text, which turned out to be motivational. It also led to language learning as students textualised complex thoughts emerging from the graphic novel. For instance, they designed alternative book covers and accompanied them with artistic descriptions in which they explained the rationale for their artistic covers and described their creative processes. As they engaged in such writing, one particular area of language learning that was developed was vocabulary, especially the semantic field associated with the horror, trauma, suffering and dehumanisation of the victims. Moreover, the students adopted different positions and analysed the feelings and the situation of particular characters. They developed the capacity to imagine their situation and feelings by placing themselves in their shoes and this capacity, Nussbaum (2010) argues, is an essential democratic capacity, which in our case was fostered in the English classroom using literature as a springboard. This capacity had a strong social justice basis as students reflected on the sense of humanity lost in the suffering portrayed and identified ways of building a new future.

5. Conclusion and implications

In this article we have described a case study framed within a regular language course for future teachers and translators of English at a local university carried out in 2019. Theoretically, the case is based on a conceptualisation of literature as a springboard for students' linguistic, communicative, intercultural and citizenship development within a CLIL framework. On the basis of *Maus* by Spiegelman, we designed a proposal for classroom use which exploited its intercultural citizenship and human rights content, in particular historical content, as part of a broader theme-based project. This project had an educational orientation, in other words, it aimed at extending the purpose of English teaching and translation degrees beyond the purely instrumental aims of improving linguistic competence and gaining disciplinary and professional knowledge, skills and competencies (Byram, 2014; Byram, Golubeva, Han & Wagner, 2017). These educational aims resonate with the notion of the 'ecological university', which is committed to the community and society (Barnett, 2011). Our

content analysis of student outputs in the form of reader responses to literature and final individual reflection logs shows that this group of students engaged emotionally with the citizenship and human rights content in the graphic novel and that this engagement was motivational and led to language learning in specific ways, for instance by fostering writing development and vocabulary expansion associated with the expression of horror and trauma in the foreign language.

What do our findings mean for classroom teachers and teacher education? Together with Byram and Wagner (2018), we suggest there is a need to re-think the content of English language education and teacher education in our local contexts so that other aims beyond the instrumental (i.e. mainly linguistic, communicative, disciplinary) receive due attention in the classroom. These comprise educational purposes involving the intercultural and citizenship dimensions with social justice concerns so as to "enable students [and student teachers] to reflect critically on language, discourse, and culture with regard to power and inequality" (Byram & Wagner, 2018, p. 147). This means, among other things, that "educational discourse, policy, and practice should deal directly with the notions of power, struggle, class, gender, resistance, social justice, and possibility" (Aloni, 2008, p.155). When this happens, for example through a CLIL project using literature with historical, citizenship and human rights content as in our case study, democratic competences and values within a human rights framework are developed and their importance as educational aims is now undisputed (Nussbaum, 2010; Osler & Starkey, 2010, 2018).

We are aware that these educational aims can be considered utopian in our contexts in light of the local constraints that usually operate (overworked teachers, low salaries, standardised exams, pre-determined coursebook content to be covered and others). Moreover, while intercultural citizenship aims at complementing instrumental goals with educational purposes (Byram et al., 2017), its value in helping students develop their linguistic competence has been questioned (cf. Porto, 2016). In this respect, we agree with Byram (2018, p.73) when he says that intercultural citizenship is an "educational philosophy", meaning that teachers have ethical responsibilities such as developing a humanistic orientation (Aloni, 2008) which in language teaching comprises a serious reconsideration of its purposes and content, with an impact on teacher identity and roles.

It is interesting to note, however, that this broader educational orientation does indeed draw attention to the linguistic dimension, but it does so in a fresh outlook. For instance, we illustrated how our project encouraged students to textualise as accurately as they could the horror and trauma associated with the Holocaust, which involved a personal investment as they put in words their emotional engagement with the suffering, human rights abuse and oppression lived and experienced by others. The motivational force of the Holocaust content in a CLIL framework (Banegas 2012, 2013) directed the students' attention to form arising from their desire to communicate the horror and trauma lived by others as well as their own emotions in connection with that suffering. Philp and Iwashita (2013), Swain (2005) and others have highlighted the importance of this need to communicate as an essential condition for improved output in the L2. An area within this linguistic dimension that we have not explored but is worth considering is related to the development of a vocabulary of human rights (Osler & Starkey, 2010) and peace (Olivero & Oxford, 2019; Oxford, Gregersen

& Olivero, 2018), which students need in order to be able to communicate their thoughts in projects of this kind.

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2

Celebration of a bilingual Spanish-English literature intercultural school project

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1. Introduction

The aim of this paper is to present the results of a project that took place during three consecutive years (2016-2017-2018) in different primary and secondary state schools. It was designed by members of the English curriculum design team together with the Reading Plan at La Pampa Ministry of Education. English Language Assistants from British Council always accompanied its implementation. This is also part of a research project called "The axis of intercultural reflection and its impact on English teaching and learning practices at different educational levels" that is part of IDEAE Research Institute, UNLPam.

The aims of the project were to promote collaborative and interdisciplinary work within the institutions, to encourage the pleasure of reading different genres in Spanish and English and to stimulate intercultural reflection through the cultural representations expressed in the texts chosen.

The project also encouraged teachers' creativity and autonomy and the stimulation of written and oral expressions as practices that help the development of communicative and intercultural competence in the students. During its three-year implementation the project constituted an instance of in-service teacher professional development (INSET) and as such it followed a format that consisted of four face-to-face meetings. The first encounter was developed by first asking teachers to answer about their own reading biography, after that they were presented with the rationale for the bilingual literature proposal. At the next meeting, we shared bilingual literature projects from previous years and we accompanied them in the design of their own didactic sequences. After that, with the presence of the English language assistant we accompanied the implementation of the project in different courses at different schools. Finally, there was always a closing plenary or celebration with members of the educational community: parents, teachers from other disciplines and supervisors. For the purposes of this paper, we have selected work done in one primary school (number 74, from Santa Rosa, La Pampa, Argentina) and one secondary schools (9 de Julio High School).

In the development of the paper we will show the didactic sequences and materials used for the bilingual literary projects and the narrative assessment reports presented by teachers as well as students' survey results that helped assess the project. In the conclusion, I

will discuss the pedagogical implications of this project in terms of students 'learning outcomes and professional development opportunities.

2. The project in primary schools

We designed the project with the Province Reading Plan taking into account the materials called "Classroom Collections" which had been provided for primary schools by the National Ministry of Education between the years 2012-2015. These collections consisted of an invaluable source of reading materials including different genres such as poems, fables, legends, short stories and novels by well-known authors form Argentina and all over the world. The purpose of the collection was to allow teachers and school librarians to build reading itineraries for children in order to promote literacy. The collection provided visually attractive books, some of them in the format of picture books and others repeated so that the whole class could read the same materials.

We decided to start by providing teachers of Spanish and English with an in-service professional development course based, first, on the need to develop some theoretical understanding about the need to include literature in the young learners' classroom. Then, we discussed the implications and advantages of promoting a bilingual perspective. We always started with a survey about the teachers' reading biography based on Jure's mobile bilingual library (2009). The aim of the survey was to enquire about teachers' attitude towards reading themselves so that they could act as promoters and mediators between children, teenagers and literature. Once they had completed it, they had to share it so as to consider which factors had contributed to their attitude to reading. It was expected that some of the issues arising from this reflection could also be related to the reading habits in the children whom they would be teaching since according to Montes (2004, p. 15):

> Giving an opportunity to read means that there is a space and time, conditions and circumstances conducive to reading, that there are books, good books ... but also another universe of meaningful and interesting significance. That these books and other universes of significance circulate, are within reach, flow, multiply, are really a common good, and that there are mediators who encourage, guide, accompany, open roads, facilitate crossings.

The aim of this reflection made it possible to raise awareness about the importance of the school library and classroom reading activities to promote reading at school and also to visualize the social function of literature within a community by inviting parents to the final celebrations that were the outcomes of each project.

3. Theoretical background

Teaching literature in the ELT classroom is enjoying a welcome revival. According to Beacon & Cendoya (2011:19) the role of literature has been re-evaluated and it is now widely accepted

that literary texts offer "rich linguistic input, a trigger for the development of intercultural competence, effective stimuli for students to   express themselves in other languages and a potential source for learner motivation". It can be added that literature offers the possibility of activating higher-order thinking skills in learners(Puchta,2012) because reading is accompanied by questions that allow students to interpret and analyze stories through giving   them open-ended questions such as: why, how, how about, how if, etc. This type of questions relatively guided allows the students to express their opinions and arguments by referring to their prior knowledge and experience related to the story.

Introducing literature in the classroom allows for the development of language and cognitive tools that Eagan (1997) following Vigotsky (1962) developed into a model in which rhythm and rhyme are the basis for building mnemonic devices, which help children remember chunks of meaningful language, even at an early age. Also, the beautiful images displayed by picture books help children connect concepts with words and introduce children to a love of art. Cognitive Tools Theory by Eagan (1997) mirror Piaget's cognitive stages of development through five stages : Somatic, from birth till around two, with a mastery of mimetic physical activities; Mythic from ages 3-7 with the mastery of oral language and binary opposites in thinking, metaphors and stereotypes; Romantic from ages 8-14 involving writing and literacy and evolving from binary opposites to more abstract reflection and understanding; Philosophical from ages 14-20 which involves abstract theoretic understanding and finally ironic from ages 21 onwards where the main goals is refined reflexivity. As we may see, Eagan's cognitive tools apply as well for children as for teenagers.

This new status of teaching literature at different school levels is reflected in the prescribed curriculum of many states in our country and in the NAPs for Foreign Languages (Core Contents for the Teaching of Foreign Languages). In our province, the curriculum guidelines for primary schools state that one of the objectives of teaching English as a foreign language is to enjoy literary texts and recreate them in different art forms. Literature becomes a primary resource to exploit cultural elements, since literary texts introduce their readers to different worlds with diverse cultural representations, allowing them to develop empathy and helping them put themselves in the place of Others, so as to see the world from a different perspective. Stories can be a springboard for the opening to other worlds, and can be transformed via the intervention and mediation of an adult into new horizons of knowledge. It is the teacher who must design activities that help students profit from this rich literary experience. Also, the answers provided by children can vary, for example, from a written formal report to informal nonverbal responses that may include body language, drawings, collage, among others. Any kind of response is welcome and it will depend mostly on the language level of the students, their age and context (Beacon & Cendoya in Braun, 2011).

Thus, from reading we may elicit speaking that students will do according to their linguistic repertoire (Garcia, 2016). Students' understanding of the stories may be carried out in Spanish or English according to their level of fluency and the linguistic repertoires available to them. Translanguaging theory considers that "Students' home language is a strength to be leveraged rather than a deficit to be silenced" (Ruiz, 1984 in Garcia, 2016, p. 213) and we may help set up a classroom culture that is respectful of cultural and linguistic differences. By using

the same stories in different languages we may guarantee a successful implementation of the reading experience.

4. Celebration of the project in primary

At school 74, in fifth form, the English teacher chose the text "There was a Lady who swallowed a fly" by Allison Kelly, illustrated by Pam Adams whereas the Spanish teacher chose the book "El Banquete" by Luis Maria Pescetti Illustrated by O'Kiff. The books share a similar topic based on the theme of eating. It is necessary to state the importance of selecting materials which are relevant and in the case of this bilingual project it is necessary to select authors from both English speaking community and from Argentina or the Spanish speaking community.

Students' active participation in literature projects will largely depend on teachers' ability to select relevant texts and to be able to work with other colleagues teaching languages and other disciplines at school. According to Lazar (2009) we should consider the relevance of the text according to students' age, intellectual maturity, emotional understanding, level of linguistic proficiency and sufficient literary background to be able to cope with the text. This latter consideration, may be changed by the teachers if they provide stimulating activities that will engage and motivate learners so that they may become avid readers, even if they have not reached a high proficiency level or if it is their first literary encounter.

During the project, pupils at school 74 enjoyed reading the story "There as a Lady who swallowed a fly" during their English lessons as they learnt new vocabulary and they could understand the gist of the story. They solved many activities which included putting the story in order, singing a song related to the story ("I know and old Lady who swallowed a fly") and finally they could retell it by using a puppet with a plastic bag from which   they took out the different animals they lady had swallowed (the last of which was a cow). All the time they made comparisons with the story read in Spanish ("The banquet" by Pescetti). The plot of this story centers around an extraterrestrial Mum telling her children about the physical characteristics of humans and their eating habits. The extraterrestrial children find the description of humans and the eating of meat (cows) disgusting.

The outcome was very nice and the celebration of the literary Project allowed parents and education authorities to appreciate how much English the children were learning at school. If we think in terms of Byram's Model of Intercultural Competence and his five dimensions of knowledge, skills and attitudes: *savoir etre* (attitude of curiosity and inquisitiveness was accomplished; *savoir comprendre* (the skill of understanding and relating the other culture to one's own) was also achieved; *savoir faire* (the skills of discovery and interaction) was also carried out through the interaction with the British Council English Language Assistant, Dikshali Sha, who presented interesting aspects about her own culture indicating that in her family everyone was vegetarian since cows are sacred animals for the Hindu religion. Through this intercultural exchange, the skills of *savoir engager* based on critical cultural awareness and the development of the importance of empathy, sensitivity and

criticality was further exploited by providing questions such as Why are we all different? Why is it that we eat different things in different countries? How did the extraterrestrials view us? How do we think about Others who are different from us? What do we have in common? Different activities such as posters promoting the respect for differences and no discrimination were developed by the students in the sixth form. This allowed them not only to enjoy Literature in both languages but also to develop cognitive, linguistic and critical thinking skills (Cassany, 2015; Puchta, 2014). All the children took active part in the celebration of the project which was carried out with all the school community (students from other courses, teachers, parents, headmistress, Coordinator for Primary schools). They decorated the place with topics from the stories, read the stories dramatizing them (The Banquet) or told the story about the Lady who swallowed the fly with the help of a puppet. They were respectful and were delighted to listen to and exchange views with our English Assistant, Dikshali. It was a great closing for this Intercultural and Bilingual Literature Project.

5. Literature, culture and emotion: The project at 9 de Julio Secondary School

Porto and Byram (2018) developed a model of cultural understanding of texts based on the idea that language and culture cannot be separated. They base their model on Kramsch (1993, as cited by Porto & Byram,2018, p. 19) who states that "cultural understanding is a process centered not so much on the discovery of the factual and of objective characteristics of another culture but rather on how other cultures relate to one's own". I will use this framework later on to analyze secondary students' response to poems by British authors by selecting poems from authors and musicians from their own context. Porto & Byram (op.cit, 2018, p. 29) also state" the recognition of the importance of emotion in cultural understanding" as a significant finding in their research. In the curricular guidelines designed for the subject Intercultural Studies in English for secondary schools I stated that literary texts provide a powerful tool to address issues regarding values and ethics in the classroom (Bredella, 2000; Burwitz Melzer, 2001; Lazar, 1993). The selection of texts may or may not be part of the traditional literary canon, but it must relate to the interests of the students and address texts from different English-speaking communities, since they allow the analysis and enable intercultural reflection, thus expanding the cultural universe of students and allowing for the development of critical literacy (Cassany, 2010). Literature allows for emotional responses that involve the education of the whole person and provides excellent opportunities for students to express their personal opinions, reactions and feelings. A variety of texts can be used with teenagers from poems, to plays, stories, graphic novels, songs or graffities and reading may in turn lead to other forms of expression whether oral, written or in the form of artistic creativity. Following Porto and Byram (2018), we may see that readers' interpretation and representations of a text read may include the combination of words, phrases and/or sentences with visual information in different formats .

The project in Secondary schools followed the format of a continuous professional in-service development workshop. The purposes of the workshop included fostering reading for pleasure in different languages (Spanish, English); stimulating reflection through cultural representations expressed in texts in the different languages and promoting written and oral expressions as practices that enable creativity and stimulate the development of

communicative and intercultural competence. As regards the objectives for students, we expected them to become aware about the existence of other languages and cultures through literature but also via the intercultural exchange with our native speaker language Assistant from British Council with the aim of overcoming stereotypes and prejudices towards other languages and cultures.

During the first two meetings we shared the curricular guidelines with teachers of English and Spanish, focusing on the axis of intercultural awareness and the importance of literature to promote reading for pleasure and for the development of critical thinking. Also, we emphasized that it could lead to linguistic output in the form of writing, oral expression, drama, videos or other forms of Art. During the two meetings we discussed in depth the purposes of the   Orientation for Social Studies at school which promotes the political and citizenship education of students in order to foster democratic participation.   Within the guidelines it is stated that "Teaching and pedagogical practices are at the service of building critical thinking, sensitive to social inequalities, to the understanding of otherness and respect for differences, promoting effective practices against all forms of inequality, discrimination and authoritarianism". Following those guidelines, we presented materials as examples such as discussion of graffities in English and the reading of the short story "Graffitti" by Julio Cortazar in Spanish. We used photographs of linguistic landscapes to show the presence of multilingual spaces in our community; we discussed the impact of consumer society through the analysis of commercials in English and short texts by the writer Eduardo Galeano in Spanish so as to explore not only literature but topics that could be transversal to this secondary school orientation. Issues such as memory and identity were analyzed through the poem Confianzas by Juan Gelman and we fostered the idea of asking students to read and write poetry in the form of haiku poems. We dealt with the topic of identity by focusing on multicultural Britain and the analysis of "The British" by Benjamin Zephaniah. We related it to the issue of immigration and the analysis of the short-story "Te extraño Portugal" by the contemporary Pampean author, Marta Cardoso.

I will focus here on the last two meetings with the fourth year students and teacher from the subject Spanish Language and Literature and the presence of the British Council Assistant, Dikshali Sha. In the first place, the Language Assistant made a presentation referring to her life, country and culture of the United Kingdom in English. The students listened respectfully and asked her questions. Then, they developed presentations of their own culture: the province of La Pampa. In different groups, they made presentations referring to flora and fauna of our province, forest fires, problems with the Atuel River and always linked the themes with poetry by Pampean authors. They also presented music, and told the story of a local rock band called Catalina Tom, with video interviews with musicians and the relationship between music, western Pampas and river problems. There were videos with an interview to a grandfather about the problems of animals in extinction in the province due to human intervention. During the second day, Dikshali presented poems selected about the spring time that was about to start. Her selection of poems and activities included:

We have a little garden - Beatrix Potter (British writer)

 We have a little garden,

A garden of our own,

And every day we water there

The seeds that we have sown.

We love our little garden,

And tend it with such care,

You will not find a faded leaf

Or blighted blossom there.

She prepared questions to analyze both poems.

1. what is your favourite image in this poem?

2. Do you have a garden at home? If you do, What is it like?

After the Winter - By Claude McKay (American writer)

Some day, when trees have shed their leaves

    And against the morning's white

The shivering birds beneath the eaves

    Have sheltered for the night,

We'll turn our faces southward, love,

    Toward the summer isle

Where bamboos spire to shafted grove

    And wide-mouthed orchids smile.

And we will seek the quiet hill

    Where towers the cotton tree,

And leaps the laughing crystal rill,

    And works the droning bee.

And we will build a cottage there

    Beside an open glade,

With black-ribbed blue-bells blowing near,

    And ferns that never fade.

-Can you name the different flowers and plants in this poem?

-Can you draw the picture of the cottage in the 'glade'? Do you know what glade means?

-Try and find the different words and phrases that suggest that this is winter time

After reading and solving the activities, the students presented Dikshali with a booklet containing poems by Pampean authors mentioning the flowers of our typical trees (poems by Armando Lagarejo) . They showed her a video of a poem called "Ofelia del Oeste" (Ophelia from the West") by the writer Edgar Morisoli. This poem was based on a real encounter of the writer with an innocent girl by the Chadileuvu river. She was holding a bouquet of flowers and reminded the author of Hamlet's Ophelia. The intercultural encounter was quite moving for the English language assistant and students felt really motivated to be sharing the culture and literature from our region with her.

At the end of the meeting, there was a survey for the participating students and their answers reflect that they really enjoyed the project. Most of their answers indicated that they thoroughly enjoyed connecting with people from other cultures to know or learn new things. I quote some of their answers:

"If I liked it, since she is very nice, she has a good personality and it is good to know about other cultures."

"Yes, it seemed good to try to connect with people with other cultures to know or learn interesting things"

"Yes, I liked it. Mainly because of Dikshali's predisposition and commitment to students. It was evident that the young woman intended to provide information about her life story, her origins and her country ".

"Yes, because I knew more about Indian culture."

"I really liked the intercultural encounter with Dikshali, it is a completely different experience to be with a person who speaks another language."

"Yes, I liked it, since it is good to learn things from different cultures."

"Yes, because she told us about her country and us about ours."

"Yes, I found it very interesting since it is very good to learn from different cultures."

"Yes, since I could see another form of culture, language."

"Yes, it was entertaining and it was nice to tell him a little about our Province and city."

"Yes, I liked the encounter with Dikshali, I found it interesting."

There was only one negative or neutral answer:

"Yes, I found it an interesting encounter despite not having understood much."

6. Conclusions

The bilingual intercultural literary project motivated students and also encouraged teachers' creativity and autonomy to select materials and design activities in a way which is coherent with post methods pedagogy(Kumaravadivelu,2008). Literature stimulated the production of written and oral expressions as practices that helped the development of communicative and intercultural competence in the students both in primary and secondary schools. It is expected that the impact of the in-service professional development course will make teachers aware of their important role as mediators between students and their reading of literary texts. The intercultural encounter with the British Council Assistant was also successful and from the reading of Dikshali's blog after she left our province, it could be appreciated that the level 5 provided by Porto & Byram (2018) of perception of the Cultural C1 from the perspective of the Cultural C2 (outsider perspective) had had a deep and long lasting impact on our foreign visitor.

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3

Tales from Buenos Aires: Self-generated virtual reality ELT material

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1. Introduction

Everything is literature; or this is what is understood after reading Terry Eagleton (2008)'s Literary Theory. Tales reveal a great deal of who we are as a society; stories that transcend in our culture from generation to generation for some reason are somehow intertwined with our identity. The historical roots of tales, their simplicity and "ordinary kind of language instantly available to everyone" (Terry Eagleton, 2008, p.12) is at the heart of "The Spooky Buenos Aires Project".

The non-fiction horror genre is often marginalized in the literature classroom, often times deemed inappropriate for the classroom environment when in fact "horror is an integral part of the very fabric of our society" (Matek, 2015, p.64). Teachers might miss the opportunity of exploiting a fascinating genre that increases students' interest and develops in them empathy with and tolerance for others. If these tales are enhanced with Virtual Reality technology, we have the opportunity of providing an immersive experience to students that was never possible before.

This paper aims at promoting the relevance of the non-fiction horror genre and urban legends in literature within a project carried out at secondary school level at Bayard School in Palermo, Buenos Aires this current year. It also describes how this project merges two popular spooky tales from Buenos Aires City and Virtual Reality technology self-generated by teachers. These tales were ultimately "exported" by students relying on software applications such as Skype or video recording for meaningful cultural exchanges with students from different countries, focusing on the universal aspect of fear that is common to all.

Projects of this magnitude demand a holistic approach integrating literature and technology meaningfully. The 3 E's strategy approach to Projects that was implemented "stands for: enhance, engage and empower" (Albarracín, 2018,p. 23) .

2. The appealing dark side of stories

Why is it that some tales prevail in time over others? Why is the element of fear or disgust a factor that plays a key role in the transmission of tales? This was my initial query with popular tales that have stood the test of time and that are still very relevant to our present.

According to Kimmo and Coultas (2014), the transmission of tales is determined by forces of cultural selection, where the emotional factor plays a motivational key role in the cultural transmission of tales.

In Heath et al. (2001)'s words, "Those stories that have the capacity to evoke widely shared emotions- either positive or negative- are more likely to be transmitted from individual to individual on a large scale" (2001, p.3). There is a certain enjoyment or thrill in consuming these emotions. Spooky stories are passed along because "people seek out opportunities to experience negative emotions under certain circumstances in which cognitions indicate there is no real threat" (Rozin et al, 2008b).

The cultural selection is also related to the social factor that encourages social sharing with stories that work as cautionary tales and enhance social bonding. The information that is transmitted in urban legends, for instance, allegedly "help people escape danger and avoid problems." (Donavan et al., 2001, p.522). Information has proved to be critical to survival, so the value spooky tales have in the exchange with other individuals may account for a moral origin that curbs future behaviour.

Ultimately, spooky tales target one of the most basic of human instincts: the instinct for survival and self-preservation. Urban legends have the ability to elicit negative emotions in the audience. As we mentioned before, stories containing or being able to elicit negative emotions in the audience are more likely to be spread. That is to say that the mechanism of emotional selection in stories that appeal to widely negative shared emotions, then, are prone to be passed along.

2.1 Transmission of spooky tales in the classroom environment

The study of Heath et al. refers to three important phases of the cultural transmission process: the choose-to-transmit phase, the encode-to-retrieve phase and the choose-to-receive phase.

In the choose-to-transmit phase, an individual who knows several stories, prefers to tell one story over others to pass along. In the encode-and-retrieve phase, the content is biased once it is passed along a chain of people in a "Chinese whispers" fashion and slightly different versions of the same story -due to the way stories interact with memory- appear. In the choose-to-receive phase, people choose -when they can- the stories they want to hear or read. Sometimes there is a mismatch between the stories people want to hear and the ones they want to tell. This is a challenge teachers have to deal with quite often.

However, the horror genre- which is often disreputed in the literature classroom- boosts teenage students´ interest. Horror itself is core to our human existence and it tends to be deeply engaging for teenage readers. This characteristic allows the teacher to question what is different, what is taboo or forbidden; it allows the teacher to explore with students the labyrinth of the human mind and develop a broader view of our human existence. What is more, it paves the way to focus not only on what makes us different from others but on also on what makes us similar to others.

Teachers should consider exploiting all these aspects provided by stories that contain elements of the horror genre and of urban legends in the classroom environment. A valuable learning outcome for our students is the building of empathy and the development of tolerance for others, the fostering of identification and understanding in our students. This kind of literature can serve as a vehicle to bring attention towards injustices and serve to spread a message of social justice. Apart from this, dwelling on the topic of fear allows students to bond when discussing or debating universal human issues.

3. Project description

3.1 School context

The project was carried out at Bayard School, located in Palermo, Buenos Aires City. This school has adopted the BYOD (Bring your own device) policy at secondary school level.

Students in 3rd year (15-16 years old) have an upper-intermediate level in English (B1 of the CEFR). In this class of thirty students, most students had smartphones that supported VR content and they had ten VR headsets provided by the school. They were set up in groups of five members. They had to be trained in the use of VR technology with headsets since it was the first time they were integrating their smartphones. A quick test was carried out to check whether most smartphones could support VR content and a brief instruction delivered on how to insert them in the VR headsets. In most cases, most students had experienced VR technology outside the classroom and manipulated VR headsets.

3.2 Self-generating VR material for both stories

In order to generate VR material, the school facilitated a 360º camera for teachers to record videos in 360º. In advance, teachers studied the scripts to retell and later recorded the material for the stories in the real locations. One of the videos then was recorded in Santa Felicitas Church in Barracas and the other video was recorded in the Recoleta Cemetery walking towards Rufina Cambaceres` Mausoleum. In both videos, two different teachers interact with each other retelling the events of the stories in situ and the supernatural events that are said to take place there. The material was then converted into a VR 360º video and uploaded to YouTube.

The VR 360° content self-generated in this Project constitute an immersive type of video where the interactivity is limited to what the viewer decides to focus on within a given previously recorded video in 360º. This allows the viewer to move and look around in different directions giving them choice over what they see. "Given this functionality, 360º videos have significant potential as a tool for producing engaging ELT material." (Albarracín, 2018, p.21)

The integration of tailor-made VR 360º videos enhanced the story-telling experience, appealing to more senses and increasing students' motivation and curiosity. In this way, the self-generated material was memorable and engaging for students.

3.3 Classroom activities

For the diverse classroom activities, students were divided into different groups (A&B) and each group was assigned one of these stories. Group A analysed the story of Felicitas Guerrero while Group B worked on Rufina Cambaceres´ story.

First, each student from the group had to watch once the VR content using their smartphones and available VR headsets and complete a chart with specific info: Invent a name for the story/who/where/when/Story description/ Rumour has it (urban legend that springs from the story). Students would resort to turn-taking within the groups to view the material and complete the different tasks. Videos were no longer than 3 minutes.

VR integration fosters gap information activities since students focus on different aspects of the story and by watching the video just once, they are forced to share what they can recall from the experience. Thus, in this case students had to scaffold information asking questions and providing answers from the story within their team in order to complete the chart.

Another activity consisted of scanning QR codes where each QR code corresponded to a paragraph of the story students had worked on (Figure 1). Students had to arrange the story that had been cut into sections chronologically (Figure 2). After this, if the story had been correctly organised, they were given the printed version of the story to read. The printed versions students received were not longer than one type-written page. The stories were not lengthy to make the exchange among peers more dynamic.

Figure 1. Students scanning QR codes that correspond to different sections of Rufina`s story.

Figure 2. Students put the story in order.

After this, A&B groups in an information gap activity had to share their stories without revealing the ending, prompting the other group to predict a possible ending to the story. Apart from this, students were able to share and voice their fears and refer to its universal aspect. We talked about the feelings evoked by these two tales, why we believed they had prevailed in time and how close they reflected our current society. Students acquired vocabulary and language structures so that they could find their own voice in English and make their personal contributions.

They also had to analyse the historical context in Argentina at that time and the elements the stories had in common (for instance, clues in the story that signalled that the main characters belonged to a high social class). Students shared their findings in an oral discussion. The issues of femicide in Argentina, the role of women in society then and now and the evolution of medicine came up. We analysed newspaper articles from that time referring to Felicitas´case and opposing points of view. The stories served as well as a springboard to describe two typical neighbourhoods from the City of Buenos Aires and students had to search information about them.

3.4 Literature to build bridges beyond the classroom walls

The C2C Project (Communication to Coexist) is an ongoing institutional Project at Bayard School that is carried out across primary and secondary school. This Project consists of connecting with different schools and students from all over the globe using software applications or recording videos if the time difference is too broad.

Resorting to the Spooky Tales from Buenos Aires Project as a stepping stone, students connected with students from abroad and retold the stories without sharing the ending. Students at the other end had to predict the possible ending and then we revealed the original one. Students had the opportunity to describe these two neighbourhoods where the stories were set. Meaningful interactions were carried out with Pakistan which led to an enriching intercultural exchange and raised awareness of the universal aspect of fear, the similarity of stories here and there and the possibility of focusing not only on our cultural differences but to discover as well our essential sameness.

4. Urban Tales- Porteño style

The tales selected for this project, the story of Felicitas Guerrero from Barracas and the story of Rufina Cambaceres from Recoleta are non-fictional urban legends from the City of Buenos Aires. Both stories can be physically traced even to these days: in the case of Felicitas Guerrero one can see the impressive Church on the street Isabel la Católica, between Brandsen and Aristóbulo del Valle, in front of Plaza Colombia. In the case of Rufina Cambaceres, one can visit her ornamented Mausoleum and art-novou tomb at the Recoleta Cemetery, the city`s first public cemetery.

Urban legends according to Brunvand "possess a symbolic or metaphorical message of human behaviour or condition. The characters in the urban legends pay a price for their human imperfections" (1981). In the local tales of Felicitas Guerrero and Rufina Cambaceres, the combination of their wealth and beauty, the excess of perfection bestowed on the main female characters are a deadly omen for their tragic destiny. No matter how much they possess of both, they can't dodge tragedy.

4.1 The story of Felicitas Guerrero, "La mujer más hermosa de la República"

Felicitas was the most beautiful woman in Argentina. At the early age of 16, she was forced to marry Martín de Alzaga much against her will. She became a widow 24 and inherited a large fortune. She had several suitors due to her beauty and wealth. She wanted to marry Samuel Saenz Valiente and for the first time in her life she was free to choose who to love. However, in 1872, her dreams were shattered.

Felicitas had organized an engagement party in her country house in Barracas. A man showed up, asking for her relentlessly. It was Enrique Ocampo, an ex boyfriend who had heard the rumour that Felicitas was going to marry Saenz Valiente. Felicitas did not want to see him, but Enrique Ocampo insisted so much that she caved in and met him inside the house. What nobody knew was that Enrique had a gun with him. Felicitas was unfortunately killed by Enrique who was seething with jealousy.

The Church Santa Felicitas in Barracas was built by the Guerrero family in 1876- four years after this disgraceful event- to honour their young daughter Felicitas.

Legend has it that in this church people have seen the ghost of this hapless young woman. They say that if you leave a tissue in this church, at night, Felicitas soaks up her tears.

To this day, women appeal to the wandering spirit for help by hanging pink ribbons at the gate of the Church in their attempt to repair their broken hearts and find new love.

4.2 The story of Rufina Cambaceres, "La joven que murió dos veces"

The story happened many years ago, in 1902. Rufina Cambaceres was a nineteen-year-old girl who belonged to the upper class. She was known for her great beauty in her time. Rufina grew up in comfort and wealth.

On her 19th birthday, Rufina was getting ready to go to the Colón theatre. As she was finishing her preparations for her big night, she suddenly collapsed on the floor. One of the maids found her and immediately called the doctor.

Three doctors arrived and pronounced her death. Her distraught mother decided to bury her at the Recoleta Cemetery. Nobody could understand what had happened to poor Rufina.

Her grandmother, who was in Europe, couldn`t believe this and she decided to travel all the way back to Buenos Aires. She ordered the guardians of the vault to open the coffin. Several days later, one of the guardians of the family vault shared some terrible news. When Rufina´s coffin was opened for the last time, scratch marks were found on the lid.

In fact, Rufina had suffered from catalepsy- a condition characterized by rigidity and low vital signs- and she had been buried alive.

Since then, many witnesses have claimed to see Rufina's ghost walking around Recoleta Cemetery. She haunts the place in order to make sure that no one is buried alive.

5. Conclusion

The integration of VR technology in classroom activities enhances what we teachers are already doing. In this Project in particular, the tailored self-generated material was made memorable by appealing to varied sensory styles of learning: the visual, the auditory and the kinesthetic senses. VR technology is transformative and students get to feel the experience and remember more effectively. There is no device up to date that is as immersive as VR and students find it really appealing and motivating.

The VR technology and the software platforms or video recording for the connections used in the last stage of the Project are technologies 21st century students are familiar with. Students show an active engagement when they integrate these in the classroom. Besides, one of our challenges as teachers is to design Projects and activities that provide our students with vocabulary and language structures they can resort to in order to find their own voice in English, where our students feel empowered and take an active and leading role in their learning and sharing of experiences that are meaningful for them. Students were eager to get involved in discussions about values and life lessons contained in the spooky stories we shared.

Fear was the thread to connect with others, to discover more about ourselves, what we had in common with others due to our human condition. We can be brave and courageous, but at the end of the day, we are also human and vulnerable.

Resorting to the 3 Es strategy abovementioned, our goal as teachers should be to create projects that cater for creation, connection and collaboration among 21st century learners.

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4

From rhymes to stories: discovering different genres throughout primary school

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1. Introduction

> Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it.
>
> It enriches the necessary competencies
>
> that daily life requires and provides;
>
> and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become.
>
> (Holmer, 1976, p.28)

Literature plays a significant role in the English as a Foreign Language class not only because of its importance in developing linguistic skills but also in effectively enriching our learners' understanding, both culturally and on a personal level, since it broadens their views of the world and enhances the understanding of the self and others. Furthermore, literature provides valuable authentic material, rich linguistic input and effective stimuli so as to nourish readers' creativity, imagination and motivation.

The present work is intended to show how English and Spanish teachers join in the making of their projects and create cross-curricular instances of work at Escuela Cooperativa Mundo Nuevo in CABA which involve the completion of meaningful final tasks.

Based on the curricular designs and guidelines for English as a Foreign Language and Spanish language and literature primary school teachers, this work will also try to show some of the benefits of dealing with a variety of literary genres by including them progressively in the syllabus, from shorter units of text, such as rhymes and limericks, to longer texts such as fables, legends, fairy tales and short stories. Therefore, it could be said that literature can be implemented in the EFL class in order to foster a holistic and scaffolded reading approach by following a progression of literary genres.

2. Theoretical framework

The present proposal is based on the conception of literature as a beneficial medium that provides language use in context, brings authenticity to language learning, promotes the articulation between subject areas, raises both cultural and linguistic awareness and enables the production of meaningful tasks by students.

Literary texts are the appropriate didactic material to teach English as a foreign language during childhood. In fact, children learn and memorise best through the presentation of contextualised content in narratives. They are familiarised with these type of texts since narrative is a fundamental characteristic in the socialisation of the mother tongue. (Beacon & Spoturno, 2016, p.28)

Furthermore, literary texts bring a variety of linguistic and literary resources to the classroom and offer different ways of approaching the foreign language. Poems and nursery rhymes appeal to rhythm, intonation and rhyming patterns, the use and analysis of images and metaphors and the opportunity of working with critical thinking skills.

Reading works of different literary genres offers students familiarity with many linguistic forms, communicative functions and meanings. It also familiarizes students with the literary conventions present in each genre. Certain repetitions within a text allow students to make anticipations, predictions and to recognise the genre and some of the characters. For example, traditional fairy tales, fables and legends have a repetition present in their format since their origin comes from the oral tradition. This is a valid strategy to use in class as a tool to make links with other texts, to make use of the students' previous knowledge and to make connections and identify recognisable patterns such as the typical fairy tale beginning "Once Upon a Time". The following concepts could be identified as two strategies that could be used in class as a means of fostering metacognition in our students, as ways of achieving metalinguistic awareness. That is to say, our students' ability to talk about, analyse, and think about language independent of the concrete meaning of each word.

2.1 Intertextuality

Wilkie-Stibbs (2004) states that Kristeva coined the term *intertextuality*, recognising that texts can only have meaning because they depend on other texts, both written and spoken. It could be said that, when students are presented to a text, they can make connections to other written or oral texts or to illustrations, gestures, images, videos or their social and cultural context. There is a connection between texts and oral tradition through cultures that connects with our students' previous knowledge. For example, when we teachers bring different stories with different points of view according to the characters or that take place in different time and place settings so as to create a circular network of text interdependence and connections.

Fish (as cited in Wilkie-Stibbs, 2004, p. 204), claims that teachers are engaging with the concept of intertextuality in their use of literature with young children as a means by which to build up interpretative communities among young readers, to give a window on the process of meaning-making during a reading, and for engaging in text creation and production.

A way of achieving this is to work with genres, especially since one of the main categories of intertextuality at text level is Genre Texts as they share identifiable clusters of codes and literary conventions grouped together in recognisable patterns. This allows readers to anticipate, to expect and locate them, and to cause them to seek out similarities and links between texts. Moreover, students can make links with their personal experiences and their own readership. Finally, students can produce their own pieces of texts by following conventions, repeating patterns or phrases and by allowing students to be creative with the language input that has been presented.

2.2 Literary competence

Literary competence is an important concept for the teaching of literature since it sets up the needs of the readers when they encounter a literary work. As we help students to become effective readers and to construct meaning, we, teachers, bring certain strategies that will allow students to convert words into meaning, to identify conventions, to really read a text and understand it.

Literary competence includes a number of skills and sub-skills which the teacher should identify when planning and choosing the literary material and to offer students clear procedures and techniques for dealing with literary texts. For instance, as Culler (2000, p. 62) states, "literary competence would focus on the conventions that make possible literary structure and meaning", that is to say, the codes or systems of convention that enable readers to identify literary genres, recognize plots and identify themes in literary works. And that is why, it is essential to work with texts students are already familiarised with so as to evoke their previous knowledge. The idea of literary competence focuses attention on the implicit knowledge that readers (and writers) bring to their encounters with texts, their assumptions, their reactions and their interpretations. When working with literature, various conventions or expectations are brought into play, connections are posited, and expectations defeated or confirmed.

As a consequence, students benefit from this familiarity and analysis as they are able to recognise structures and characters, to decode meaning and to interpret the text. Besides, the learners feel more secure to express personal opinions about the text if they master the appropriate language, if they know the text and if they can decode meaning out of it. Finally, students are able to produce a personal response to the text and share their feelings and opinions as a final product, it could be in written or oral form.

3. Working with genres

Based on the curricular designs for "Prácticas del Lenguaje" written by the Ministry of education and the type of texts and genres that are proposed to each level, each grade works with selected genres and studies the work of some authors during each term. The articulated work among teachers of both languages activates the use of students' prior knowledge as children sometimes already know the story or the characters. Choosing stories, characters and

themes that are familiar to them lowers the affective filter, makes the stories more comprehensible to learners, facilitates understanding and promotes students' confidence and motivation. Ellis and Brewster (2014, p. 9) emphasise that stories provide opportunities for developing continuity in children's learning since they can be chosen to link English with other subject areas across the curriculum.

3.1 First Cycle of Primary School

During the first three years of primary school, children study and work with the following genres:

First Cycle – Primary Level	
Grade	*Genres*
1st Grade	- Playground Rhymes - Lullabies and Nursery Rhymes - Songs and Chants - Traditional Fairy Tales
2nd Grade	- Pirates - Princesses, Knights, Ogres and Princes Stories - Riddles - Legends and Fables
3rd Grade	- Dragons - Dinosaurs - Witches - Greek Myths - Fables

Table 1. Genres for First Cycle.

In this progression of contents, students are exposed to traditional lullabies, chants and playground and nursery rhymes such as "Humpty Dumpty", "Ring around the roses" or "Hickory, Dickory, Dock" which are typical verses that have been assisting grown-ups in pacifying and entertaining children, from birth to the age of about five, for ages. What is more, the alphabet and number rhymes, riddles and tongue twisters are suitable for people approaching school age. According to Opie (2004), these verses are suited to every practical purpose and introduce the limerick structure. Besides pacifying and entertaining, another effect is "to implant the rhythms of the English language in minds too young to understand all the words" (Opie, 2004, p. 300). One of the benefits of working with rhymes is their easy recognition due to their universality. Brailoiu and Burling, in their different works, have concluded that children's rhymes around the world have strikingly similar metrical patterns and these may indeed be universal" (as cited in Arleo, 2004, p. 295).

When it comes to tales, their memorability and identifiability help students in constructing meaning and understanding. Literary conventions are recognisable in their patterns. Tales depict the quests, tasks, trials and sufferings of usually royal heroes and heroines as well as intersections between their lives and fairyland inhabitants. The protagonists' destinies generally change when they encounter good or evil fairies.

Fairy tales, unlike tales about fairies, more often than not have no fairies in their cast of characters. They are generally brief narratives in simple language that detail a reversal of fortune, often with a rags-to-riches plot that culminates in a wedding like in Cinderella. Magical creatures regularly assist earthly heroes and heroines achieve happiness, and the entire story exemplifies a proverb.

First Cycle – Primary Level	
Grade	*Selected Reading Material*
1st Grade	- Goldilocks and the three bears - The Gingerbread Man - Three Little Pigs - Little Red Riding Hood
2nd Grade	- Granny Fixit and the Pirate - Prince Cinders - Princess Smartypants - Not all princesses dress in pink - The Paper Bag Princesses - Prince and Knight
3rd Grade	- The Dragon and the Phoenix - The Little Dragon - Room on a Broom - The Witches by Roald Dahl (first chapters) - The Ant and the Grasshopper - The King's New Suit

Table 2. Selected reading material

Finally, teachers create their units of work and projects based on the before mentioned selected reading material.

The material includes different versions of classic fairy stories, from different points of view. For example, when dealing with "The Three Little Pigs", students also read "The Three Little Wolves and the Big Bad Pig" by Eugene Trivizas and Helen Oxenbury and "The True Story of the Three Little Pigs" by Jon Scieszka. Therefore, students are presented with a variety of points of view according to the characters that are being represented.

"Goldilocks and the Three Bears" is one of the central projects in first grade (see Table 2). During that project students analyse and hypothesise on how texts interrelate with each other and spot the connections by working with texts such as "Goldilocks and the Three

Dinosaurs" by Mo Willems, "Believe me, Goldilocks Rocks!" by Nancy Loewen – which develops Baby Bear's point of view – or "You and Me" by Anthony Browne.

3.2 Second cycle of primary school

During the last four years of primary school, students read, analyse and work with the following genres:

Second Cycle – Primary Level	
Grade	*Genres*
4th Grade	- Travel Stories - Adventure Stories
5th Grade	- Adventure Stories - Fantasy Stories
6th Grade	- Detective and Crime Stories - Biographies
7th Grade	- Recipes and Instructions - Graphic Novels - Comic Strips - Short Stories

Table 3. Genres for Second Cycle

Finally, teachers create their units of work and projects based on the following selected reading material.

Second Cycle – Primary Level	
Grade	*Selected Reading Material*
4th Grade	- Around the World in 80 days
5th Grade	- Jungle Tales (Horacio Quiroga) - Just so Stories (Rudyard Kipling)
6th Grade	- Sherlock Holmes Short Stories - Biographies of Important Women in History
7th Grade	- Cooking Recipes - The Tales of Beedle the Bard - Garfield, Peanuts, Calvin and Hobbs, Asterix - Abrigded and unabridged short stories

Table 4. Selected reading material.

The choice of reading material is not fixed. In fact, it can be discussed and changed based on the group dynamics and needs or if there is a special project being carried out and articulated among teachers of different areas.

4. Projects and final productions

As teachers follow a task-based approach, each unit or term includes a final task with a tangible and meaningful activity and students' oral and written productions. Each project in each unit has a name or title so as to present the outcomes to the community and to students as well (see Table 5).

Martin (as cited in Boccia et al, 2019, p. 38) defines a genre as a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful social activity that we engage in as speakers of a language and members of a culture. Working with genres leads students gradually to the production of texts. Therefore, teachers' main purpose at Mundo Nuevo School is to expose students to written texts in order to learn from language use in context and to foster their own written production of different genres such as book reviews, theatre plays, recipes, criminal reports, comic strips, anecdotes, descriptions, among others.

The basis of the work with literature at Mundo Nuevo School can be found in Ellis and Brewster work in storytelling as they have stated that the purpose of stories is to provide a springboard for creating complete units of work that can involve students personally, creatively and actively in a whole curriculum approach. Therefore, it could be said that following a holistic approach by incorporating literature into the EFL class sets our main goal: to have a meaningful purpose and a concrete outcome so as to foster students' motivation and self-efficacy and to contextualise their learning.

As it can be seen in Table 6, students engage in meaningful activities which require a personal involvement on the part of the students and that resorts to their own creativity and pleasure.

First Cycle – Primary Level	
Grade	Final Projects and Productions
1st Grade	- Goldilocks and the … (creation of different book covers) - Baking Gingerbread Biscuits
2nd Grade	- Pirate Costume Party - Treasure Chest with Pirate Words - Treasure Hunt - Writing Animal Riddles
3rd Grade	- The creation of their Pet Dragons - Witches and Wizards Party - The creation of a Spell Book based on the Spell from the Macbeth

	- Insect Safari: Observation of insects and taking notes
4th Grade	- Postcards from around the world - Descriptions of cities
5th Grade	- Animal Cards with facts and descriptions
6th Grade	- Crime reports
7th Grade	- Recipes and Cooking videos* - Write theatre scripts from short stories and acting out the stories, may include filming.

Table 5. Final productions.

Videos are exchanged with Spanish students at Horton-Arms School in Washington D.C., USA

Table 6 Students' productions 1

1st Grade – Versions of Goldilocks	3rd Grade – My Pet Dragon	3rd Grade - Spells

Treasure Hunt Map and Clues	*Dragons and Princesses*	*Biographies of Famous Characters*

Nursery Rhymes Songbook	*Travelling Around the World*

5. Conclusion

It is of paramount importance to use the students' cultural knowledge in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, literature brings familiarity to students and the different genres raise a certain level of expectation towards what will happen in the stories and fosters readers' anticipation and their construction of meaning.

Although time constraints and a demanding syllabus could be seen as limitations towards including literature in class, the focus should be laid on the linguistic and cultural benefits of working with literature and it should also be on text selection and final productions.

It is definitely a challenge to select themes with which students can identify language and culture with which they are familiar with. Moreover, text selection presents another challenge which is catering for each particular group of students, their needs, interests, age and level of understanding, cultural background and language level.

This paper has shown the benefits of exposing children are exposed to a wide range of genres, from detective stories, legends, fables, picture books and adventure stories to Greek myths, science fiction, classic folktales, short fiction, graphic novels, limericks and poems throughout primary school by taking into account the experience of working with literature at "Escuela Cooperativa Mundo Nuevo" where the presence of these literary texts in English language teaching is intended to profit from the students' previous knowledge.

By incorporating literature, students are included into the building of a community of readers and writers, and by doing so, they are being inserted in our culture. They work with the tasks of reading linked to areas of experience and connected to other subjects or projects that are being carried out. The main objective is to reflect upon some of the characteristics of the different literary genres and the written language, to construct meaning and to experience meaningful tasks throughout each project.

That is why we consider that literature can be implemented in the EFL lesson as a rich authentic material in order to foster a holistic and scaffolded reading approach, from simple and shorter units of texts to more complex and longer pieces.

Undoubtedly, working with literature can stimulate children's imagination, develop literary competence, promote critical thinking skills and creativity and foster a love for reading. And by working with different genres, students can develop their own reading habits and their own reading taste as well.

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5

Learning English through arts-based pedagogies in informal contexts: The case of immersion camps in Argentina

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1. Introduction

Nowadays people learn in varied contexts from a multiplicity of situations and in fluid formats. In this paper we show how adolescents experienced English and put it to use in an immersion camp in which learning took place outside the school and the classroom and in cooperation with peers and native speakers of English. We begin by describing the theoretical framework of a camp experience as well as a typical immersion camp project. We then present a case study of a camp which took place in early 2019 with 24 adolescents aged 14-17, with a level of English ranging from A2-B2 according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.* An analysis of questionnaires, student outputs and recorded conversations of their interactions shows that the arts-based and content-based element of this camp experience was emotionally engaging for students and became a motivational driving force in their use of English in this informal learning context.

2. Theoretical framework

Theoretically, the camp experience is based on a sociocultural and constructivist conception of learning (Vygotsky, 1978). People learn with others and on the basis of their previous experiences and knowledge. In a camp experience the foreign language, English, is used to convey intended meanings, i.e. as social and communicative practice (Widdowson, 2007). Students are in contact with peers, who are also English language learners, and they also interact with young adults who come from different English-speaking countries and for whom English is a native language. Because participants speak different native languages and have different cultural backgrounds, the approach is intercultural (Byram, 1997) and students become intercultural speakers and mediators (Byram, 2009). The significance of the native speaker in a camp experience resides in Byram's (1997) distinction between intercultural competence and intercultural communicative competence. 'Intercultural competence' is needed whenever there is interaction of people of different social groups with different cultures or sub-cultures using the same language. However, whenever such interaction involves at least one partner using a foreign language, then the term 'intercultural communicative competence' is used. The participation of native speakers in a camp implies the need to put in

practice one's intercultural communicative competence. In addition, an immersion camp is project-based and theme/content-based (CLIL, Banegas, 2013; Cenoz, 2015), meaning that a motivating theme is the driving force (Banegas, 2012) and students learn the foreign language by using it to carry out engaging and significant tasks (Skehan, 1996) which involve problem-solving and experiential learning (Genessee, 1994; Holderness, 1991). Students do not do exercises, do not answer comprehension questions, do not complete true-false questionnaires, do not write essays, do not read texts just because. They use all the resources available to them, in any semiotic system, to convey their ideas and in this sense, the perspective involves multiliteracies and translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014; Wei, 2018). Finally, arts-based approaches to meaning-making (Rowsell & Vietgen, 2017) that involve literature, drama, movement, embodiment, singing and dancing, among other forms of expression, are paramount.

3. The Camp experience: History, background and rationale

Colonias de Inmersión al Idioma started running immersion programmes for language learning in Argentina in 1988, intended to supplement the work done in the English classroom and in this sense the conceptualisation is different from immersion as in Genesee (2013). The English immersion camps re-enact life in an English-speaking community, with its everyday occurrences and the magic that comes from the history, contemporary culture and mythology of the countries where the English language is spoken. Participants are invited to experience a full immersion in the language in an experience that is close to travelling abroad. Students leave the formal environment of the school and the classroom and explore the English-speaking world for real by putting their command of English to the test, expanding their general knowledge and gaining confidence.

The hosts at the camp are young native speakers of English, aged 19-25. They are university students or recent graduates, whose varied backgrounds contribute to conveying different aspects of their cultures and everyday lives in the countries they come from. These counsellors come to Argentina for 3-12 months, assist at schools around the country, learn Spanish and live with local families.

As mentioned before, the camps are not just a language exercise, they are about living one's life in English. Participants relax, enjoy and do not worry about making mistakes. In this atmosphere, they quickly tune in with the language and feel more and more comfortable as English flows. Emotions are involved in the engagement with the proposed tasks around a particular theme because an immersion camp is an experience not just for the mind but for the senses as well. Music, sports, games, dances, crafts and the flavours of typical dishes are at the foreground. The group dynamics is affected too, as the skills applied during a camp differ greatly from those used in a formal learning environment.

4. The case: Woodstock

The camp we describe in this article was planned and designed as a case study (Yin, 2018) on the theme 'Woodstock'. It was undertaken in June 2019 and lasted from Friday morning until Sunday afternoon. Participants were 24 adolescents aged 14-17 coming from Capital Federal (n= 16) and the provinces of Buenos Aires (n=2), Corrientes (n=3) and Córdoba (n=3), who were

accompanied by their teachers (5 in total). Their proficiency in English ranged from A2 to B2 according to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages.* There were 5 counsellors from 4 countries (England, Scotland, Ireland and South Africa). Data comprise field notes written by ourselves during the camp; questionnaires about the camp experience administered to parents, teachers and counsellors; student outcomes in the form of reader responses to literature (poems and songs); and short videos and photographs registering the tasks that were undertaken. Students also completed an adapted version of the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters* (Byram et al., 2009a)*.* Data were analysed using content analysis (Mertens, 2015) and parents signed informed consent forms allowing us to use camp outcomes, questionnaire responses, photographs and videos for academic purposes.

In preparation for the camp, in their English language classes at home students researched Woodstock. They searched for information about the festival, including its social, cultural, historical and political background. They analysed and reflected upon the signs and posters of the time and what motivated the demonstrations that took place. They investigated the repertoire of the original Woodstock (Jimmy Hendrix, Joe Cocker and The Grease Band, The Who, Santana, Quill, among others) and watched films reflecting the Hippie lifestyle (Hair, Jesuschrist Superstar, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dreamcoat).

The on-site camp experience recreated a Woodstock music and art fair during which students were greeted by the counsellors, who were dressed up as old-school, spiritual, activist and eco-activist hippies. Working in small groups, students took the role of a renowned band, rehearsed a hippie hit and performed it during the band show on Saturday evening, wearing outfits they had brought from home. Some groups adapted an original lyrics to convey a specific message (e.g. care for the planet and humanity), others created new songs and poems using particular soundtracks. They became familiar with the habits of the youth of those times by engaging in a variety of activities such as practising meditation, yoga and sports; dancing to the rhythm and choreographies of celebrated hits; baking typical cookies they ate during the festival; planting seeds they took home after the camp; tie-dying T-shirts they wore for the celebration; decorating and painting their own food trucks; and enacting a march with a demonstration to defend their right to hold the festival. They also took part in situations such as going through customs upon arrival in the camp, working at the local bank and shop, and serving customers at the food trucks. They all completed a job application form and went through a job interview prior to taking their jobs. In all cases, students put their English to use in order to take part in these activities and tasks, which involved both comprehending and producing English in a variety of modes.

5. Findings and discussion

Both in preparation for and during the camp, students were surrounded by English with a lot of available input in a variety of modes and text types and they interacted in the foreign language in the accomplishment of the proposed tasks. This is important considering the observation that "in foreign language settings, exposure to the target language is limited" (Philp & Iwashita, 2013, p.355; Lightbown & Spada, 2013). This camp experience maximised such exposure.

Furthermore, our findings indicate that the content-based element of this camp experience, based on the Woodstock theme, together with our arts-based approach (Rowsell & Vietgen, 2017) involving literature (films, songs, poems), movement and embodiment, singing and dancing, among other forms of expression, was emotionally engaging for students

(Dewaele, 2018) and became a motivational driving force in their use of English (Banegas 2012, 2013) in this informal learning context.

In their responses to the questionnaire, almost all students (*n*=22) mentioned they felt excited, happy, enthusiastic and interested in the camp. They valued the possibility to meet new people, learn about different cultures, engage in different activities (music, games, sports, food) and speak English. All of them enjoyed and loved the experience.

i like this experience because I study english when I play.

Like because I love the activities, the music and the food.

I like, because is so exciting and interesting talk to people for the others places.

They also expressed gaining confidence in making themselves understood, and understanding others, in English

I am surprise because a thought it was difficult speak English but I can understand everything.

I think the camp help me with the be more confident and practise my english a bit more.

Our field notes reveal that deep engagement with the activities encouraged students to use all their resources in making meaning using English. Figure 1 shows a group of students designing and painting their food truck. Using a variety of colours (red, yellow, green, white, pink), they painted the words 'love' and 'peace' to reflect the values they associated with the festival, also accompanied by symbols.

Figure 1. Designing and painting food trucks

Figure 2 shows the pride of the three groups on their finished food trucks, evidenced in their faces of satisfaction.

Figure 2. Finished food trucks

As the students got involved in the activities, they activated and/or learned the vocabulary associated with the corresponding semantic field (Figure 3, sports; Figure 4, gardening; Figure 5, yoga and meditation class; Figure 6, baking; and others not illustrated here such as dancing, singing, poetry writing, tie-dying, marching), practised the language for instructions and sequencing, and used the strategies involved in accomplishing tasks cooperatively such as negotiating and respecting turns, seeking clarifications, solving misunderstandings, reaching agreements in terms of what to do and how, what language to use and which actions to perform, among other aspects. They worked on the basis of respect and cooperation, solidarity and mutual support. Following Canagarajah (2013), these are the characteristics of the intercultural citizen and these characteristics are illustrative of a new ecology of language learning that focuses on practices in addition to form; procedural knowledge to complement propositional knowledge; joint accomplishment of goals; expanded repertoires rather than fixed and isolated target language; intelligibility (not only accuracy); and pragmatic strategies, not isolated grammar.

Figure 3. Sports.

Figure 4. Gardening.

Figure 5. Baking.

Figure 6. Yoga and meditation.

Another example comes from the poetry writing and song creation tasks, which the students did in the open air in small groups. Figure 7 shows a group working under a gazebo and in this sense this camp experience re-signified the value of places and spaces (beyond the classroom and the school) as particular locations within the premises where creative processes were activated (see Figures 1-7).

Figure 7. Poetry writing.

Such foregrounding of places and spaces (gazebo, porch, garden, barn, shop, hall, dorms, swimming pool, soccer field), nature (plants, animals, grass, wood, soil, water, moon, sun) and objects (costumes for the bands, pencils, sheets, paints, tie-dyed T-shirts, tools, balls) represents a post-human perspective in language teaching that attributes importance to these aspects on an equal basis (Pennycook, 2018). For this reason, as just one example, the tie-dyed T-shirts were not only T-shirts but acquired special meanings to the students (Figure 8). Further to the activities and tasks already described, this post-human orientation is also evident as the students used and learned English gathered around the bonfire under the moonlight singing after the counsellors, shared mystery stories sitting in circles on the ground at midnight and played night games lit by torches.

Figure 8. Tie-dyed T-shirts.

In simple English, the following poem in Figure 9 centred on Woodstock values such as peace and love and the importance of opening one's hearts – once more the values of the cosmopolitan citizen (Canagarajah, 2013).

Figure 9. Poem about peace.

These values were important for this group of students. Departing from their desire to eradicate 'mad[ness]', 'noise', 'repressions, 'war' and 'conflict', all of them recreated the themes of peace, love, happiness, humanity, kindness, respect, equality and care for the planet in their artistic creations (songs, poems, placards). Figure 10 shows one of the outcomes in the form of a song in which the contrast 'conflict, war' - 'hopes and dreams, peace' is addressed,

48

with an explicit call to the audience ('if you can help us') to be part of the solution ('we can solve it') by acting in communion ('we'll save the world').

If you can help us we can solve it
We'll save the world
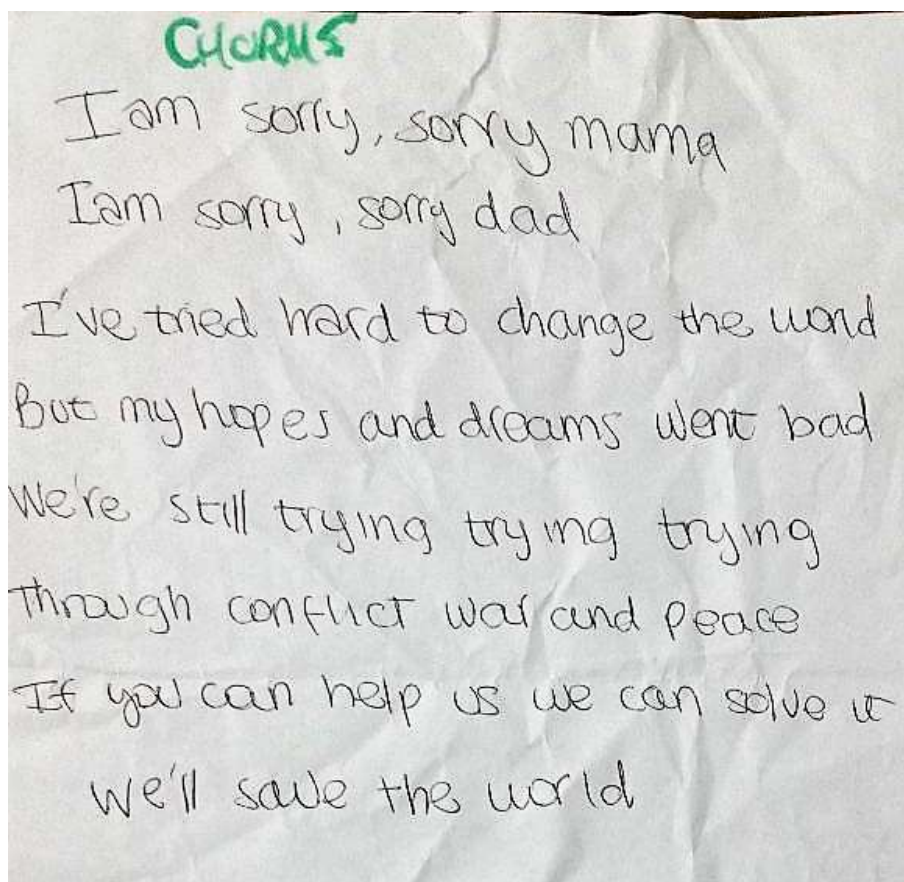
Figure 10. Group song.

Overall, our findings show that in this camp experience students were surrounded by English and they were motivated to interact in the foreign language in the accomplishment of the proposed tasks. The content-based element of the camp around the Woodstock theme was a driving force. It involved the use of literature (films, songs, poems), movement and embodiment, singing and dancing, and other forms of expression, which represent an arts-based approach to meaning-making. The experience was emotionally engaging for all students, who expressed feeling happy and enthusiastic during the camp. They appreciated meeting new people, learning about different cultures, engaging in a variety of activities (music, games, sports, food) and speaking English. In the process, they expressed they felt confident as they were able to put their English to use in real situations. They also developed the skills associated with the intercultural citizen such as respect, cooperation, solidarity and mutual support. Finally, the camp introduced a post-human perspective in language teaching by foregrounding places, spaces, the natural world and objects.

6. Conclusions and implications

The English Immersion Camps provide a unique opportunity to enhance learning processes from a different angle, beyond the classroom. In this paper, we have described one particular

camp experience based on the Woodstock theme which took place in June 2019 with 24 adolescents aged 14-17. We designed the camp as a case study and gathered data from a variety of sources comprising questionnaires about the camp experience administered to parents, teachers and camp leaders (native speakers of English enrolled in a study abroad programme in their home countries); student outputs in the form of reader responses to literature, film scripts, short videos, poems, photographs; and recorded conversations of their interactions. Using content analysis, our findings indicate that the arts-based and content-based element of the camp experience, particularly its literature component, was emotionally engaging for students and became a motivational driving force in their use of English in this informal learning context. In particular, they valued the possibility to interact with others: friends, students from other schools, teachers and native speakers of the language; they obtained first-hand information about other cultures and lifestyles; they developed social skills; and they put their knowledge of the language, but also knowledge of other kinds, in use in a real life situation which led to meaningful learning moments. In a world where the younger generations are born to (and are becoming more proficient in) the use of technology to communicate, a camp is an opportunity to develop other necessary skills such as interacting respectfully with others, working in teams and co-operating with others, and discussing and strategically producing joint solutions to different issues using their creativity and imagination. In this way, additionally, the camp experience boosts the participants' self-esteem and motivation as they have the chance to 'shine' at different moments, giving everyone, but especially those who do not perform well at school, the opportunity to excel in sports, crafts, singing, dancing, baking and other activities.

While we are aware that the camp experience may not be readily available to students for a variety of reasons, the conceptualisation described here can be adapted and operationalised in different ways in specific settings to suit particular student needs and institutional contexts. The content and arts-based approach in a project with a posthuman orientation allows for multiple applications. For example, a project with this rationale can be carried out as a half-day field trip organised by the school, irrespective of whether native speakers are available. In this case, teachers will need to create the conditions for the development of intercultural communicative competence by other means. Helver (forthcoming) for instance describes a school visit to the ecological and cultural park William Henry Hudson in Florencio Varela as a way of developing critical thinking in the English class in a disadvantaged secondary school context. Alternatively, the school yard can be recreated to host a camp within the premises with the caveat that the affordances offered by posthuman approaches to language education (e.g. in terms of the use of spaces, places and involvement with the natural world) would be lost.

It should be noted that the findings we have described for our case foreground the development of social, interpersonal and democratic skills, competences and values which characterise the intercultural citizen (Canagarajah, 2013). These skills, competences and values are part of the recently developed *Reference Framework of Competences for Democratic Culture* (2018a, b), usually framed in terms of attitudes, dispositions and values based on mutual respect and support, conflict resolution, collaboration and solidarity in intercultural communication. Byram et al. (2009b, p. 25) focus on the need to foster the development of the following abilities:

• grasp and take seriously the opinions and arguments of others, accord personal recognition to people of other opinions, put oneself in the situation of others, accept criticism, listen

• make one's own opinions (needs, interests, feelings, values) clear, speak coherently, give clear and transparent reasons

• organise group work, co-operate in the distribution of work, accept tasks, demonstrate trustworthiness, tenacity, care and conscientiousness

• tolerate variety, divergence, difference, recognise conflicts, find harmony where possible, regulate issues in socially acceptable fashion, accept mistakes and differences

• find compromises, seek consensus, accept majority decisions, tolerate minorities, promote encouragement, weigh rights and responsibilities, and show trust and courage

• emphasise group responsibility, develop fair norms and common interests and needs, promote common approaches to tasks.

Interestingly, these attitudes, skills and values are included in standardised international examinations and consequently, the camp experience can be seen as catering for accountability concerns as well.

Furthermore, global citizenship education (GCED) is described as a primordial achievement in the Preamble to the Incheon Declaration and Framework (2015), following the agreement on Sustainable Development Goals for 2030 agreed upon by the UN. As far as education is concerned, the Sustainable Development Goal 4 targets include:

"4.7- By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development" (Incheon Declaration and Framework for Action for the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4, 2016, p. 21).

Meeting people from different countries, learning about their traditions, beliefs, habits and culture from first-hand experience, understanding their reasons to behave the way they do, comparing and empathising with each other's privileges and problems can lead to no less than mutual understanding and respect, a deeper global perspective and a culture of peace and non-violence.

Finally, this type of experience is highly rewarding as we have described, but it is also time-consuming in terms of teacher preparation and personal investment, organisation and coordination. It is a project that requires commitment and dedication, which can only be accomplished when educators see teaching as a "sacred vocation" (Hargreaves, 2008, p. 29).

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6

Using literature and translation to foster intercultural communicative competence

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1. Introduction

Universidad Católica de Salta (UCASal) offers the Teacher Education and Translation Programmes in English where student-teachers and translators-to-be learn English and, at the same time, the skills and knowledge required for the development of their profession. The use of literary texts to teach English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is a widespread practice at different educational levels around the world and UCASal programmes are not the exception. Not only do the teacher education and translation degrees include literary texts in literature classes but they are also part of language instruction to foster language acquisition and promote the development of communicative competence. Jackson (2012) states that "traditionally, the EFL classroom has focused on the teaching of English with native speakers as the model (e.g. British English, American English); hence, there has been an emphasis on Western national Anglophone culture" (p.423) often regarded as the 'best examples of authentic materials'. In the last decades, this hegemonic practice has been challenged. We believe that the introduction of literary voices in English from different cultural backgrounds promotes the development of Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC). This paper reports the experience of an action-research project implemented in three courses at UCASal. The project aimed at using frameworks that promote ICC to design activities for literary texts and at assessing the role of these texts to develop ICC.

2. Literature review

It has been widely accepted with the Communicative Approach that EFL implies developing

communicative competence; however, in the turn of the century, the "I" for "intercultural" was added to the concept to introduce world knowledge and cultural awareness. Nowadays, the idea of focusing on native speakers from one or two hegemonic cultural groups as models is considered unrealistic and idealistic since EFL speakers are likely to interact in English with native as well as non-native speakers from different cultural backgrounds. McConachy (2012) supports this view stating that "As the speakership of English worldwide continues to grow, English language teachers [and translators] are required to devise ways to prepare their learners for communicating successfully across cultures" (p.1). As argued by Risager (2005) and Liddicoat (2013), the EFL classroom presents the opportunity of teaching world cultures within a global social context. Furthermore, Alpetkin (2002) and Byram (2011) state that ICC is at work *in* the language classroom. ICC is conceived as the ability to successfully interact and communicate with people from other cultures by identifying similarities and differences, developing self-awareness, understanding and respecting the other and displaying communicative strategies to cope with difference (Byram, 2011).

A language course that promotes intercultural education and aims at presenting English as a world language for international communication should represent native as well as non-native speakers (Alptekin, 2002) to avoid a monolithic view of culture. Thus, literary texts are essential in the development of ICC because they:

- are samples of authentic language in use,p
- introduce voices from different cultural backgrounds,
- contribute to raising cultural awareness,
- promote discussion and positioning.

Regarding translation, they raise awareness of personal and social representations of the Self and the Other that often contribute to stereotyping and discrimination. In the reading and analysis of texts, a critical hermeneutic position (Ricoeur, 2017) is fostered so that reading and translation become ways of changing easy references and frameworks to show what is hidden or ignored.

As for activity design, Byram's (2011) intercultural communicative competence model proves to be useful to promote the development of intercultural skills, the development of self-awareness and identity, the development of attitudes such as openness, curiosity and respect for others. In the same vein, Liddicoat's framework (2008) is practical and is based on the following principles:

- active construction
- making connections
- interaction
- reflection
- responsibility

Figure 1 describes the interacting processes of intercultural pedagogy, which is not linear; it is a rather complex process of reflection, revisiting, revising. This circular process aims to involve learners in reflection since developing intercultural awareness is not a passive experience that involves knowing about different cultures or aspects of diversity. Developing intercultural awareness implies that students engage and interact with others to reflect and create meaning. However, as Liddicoat (2008) points out, "the processes do not in themselves

ensure an intercultural pedagogy as they are simply process, not content" (p.283). This is the point where activity design plays a crucial role since activities guide the path on how to learn about language and culture.
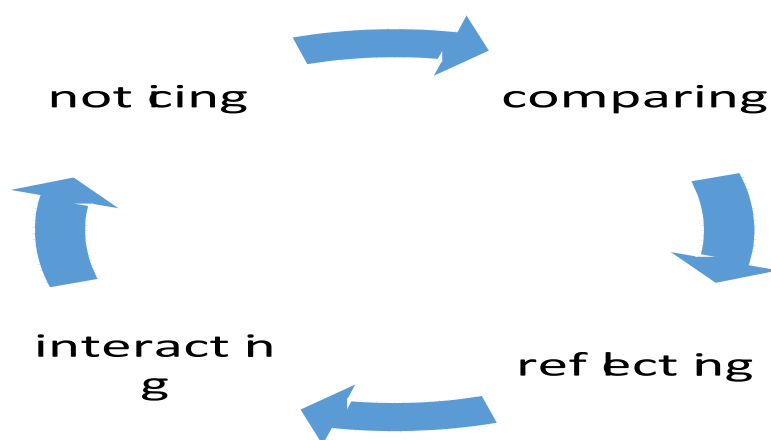
Figure 1: Interacting processes of intercultural pedagogy (Liddicoat, 2008, p.283)

This approach to teaching language aims at making the classroom the intersectional space where different cultures and their linguistic productions meet. Literature is the content and cultural product, and English is the language used to communicate, transmit meaning and world views.

Interculturality is basically interactional and dialogic: difference is acknowledged, learnt and understood through dialogue, but it is not erased or assimilated. As Grimson (2011) points out, in an intercultural world, communication can only be viewed as being "based on the coexistence of a multiplicity of communicative codes, on the heterogeneity of patterns of signification" (pp. 192-3) (1). Consequently, intercultural communication is rooted in the conflict resulting from antagonism and opposing interests in asymmetrical, unstable cultural configurations.

From a pedagogical perspective, Liddicoat (2008) points out that "because culture is fundamental to language, there is a need to start teaching culture at the very beginning of language teaching. Even very simple language (…) is heavily culturally laden" (p.279). Thus, the idea of using a framework for activity design to teach intercultural communicative competence can be useful at all educational levels to avoid preconceptions and stereotypical assumptions.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research participants

Figure 2 shows the participants involved in this project, who were enrolled in the Teacher Education and Translation Programmes at UCASal:

Subject	Year in the degree	No. of students
Introduction to Translation	1st year	35 students
Literature III	3rd year	20 students
Advanced Language I and II	fourth year	15 students

Figure 2. Courses at UCASal

Thus, 70 students studying in the different years of the programmes and in different subjects were the participants in this project.

3.2. Research materials and data collection

As for the research materials, we worked with the poem *México –aunque no parezcamos* by Merle Collins and designed activities following Liddicoat's model, Byram's framework and the concepts developed in our literature review to encourage reflection on language, culture and cultural identity (Appendix 1). The class intervention, which took three class periods, focused on the reading of the poems and discussion of the activities.

Data were collected using informal interviews, class notes and an online survey. We aimed at assessing the students' perceptions of the intervention, the role of materials design in fostering ICC and evaluating the students' level of cultural awareness. To narrow the scope, in this paper we report the analysis, results and conclusions of 3 out of the 10 questions (Appendix 2).

3.3. Text selection and analysis

For this project, we opted for Grenada-born Merle Collins' poems for their aesthetic wealth and thematic relevance to discuss ICC and rethink our own cultural context through Latin American, European and American thinkers. Anthropologist Gunther Dietz (2012) points out that the power imbalance and inequality existing at present in former colonies mirror the asymmetric relations that previously existed between the metropolis and the colonies—a situation that is known as 'coloniality'. Grosfoguel (2006) indicates that "coloniality is not equivalent to colonialism. It does not follow or precede modernity. Coloniality and modernity are two sides of the same coin" (p. 27) (1). Coloniality means the pre-eminence of the West over the production of knowledge, the construction of subjectivities and the organisation of societies in the South where the contact zones between hierarchically organised social groups continue to be liminal spaces, borders between cultures (Dietz, 2012) just as under colonial rule. Hence, the emphasis laid on the need of decolonising knowledge, political and economic structures as well as sex and gender relations (Grosfoguel, 2006).

We are interested here in the place of enunciation of these subjects. The here and now from where they raise voices that become discernible from colonial thinking. According to Grosfoguel (2006), "the modern/colonial world-system is successful because it has managed to make oppressed subjects see the world through the eyes of those who occupy dominant positions" (p. 22) (1), which reveals a matrix of power which needs to be decolonised. Multicultural societies marked by their colonial past are the site of enunciation of the literary productions we propose to include in intercultural curricula.

3.4. Text analysis: *México-aunque no parezcamos*

The subjective "I" in Collins' poem, which is inscribed in the discourse of former colonies, is actively demanding recognition that transcends the personal. The "I" is amplified into a kind of social subjectivity. Borrowing from Paul Ricoeur's thinking (2017), we consider that Collins' discourse is an event that projects itself into the world with the aim of fighting stereotypes that do not affect individuals but whole communities.

To whose benefit does the persona undertake the task of poetic translation? Why is she translating a past experience into the present? Why does she withdraw herself at the end

bringing, as it were, communication to a stop? The persona speaks to herself and just listens to the Mexican woman. She goes around the word "*negros*" trying to find a way out in translation, a light across the bridge, an assurance of female/human solidarity: it has to mean "blacks".

Bhabha's (2013) third space is where the witness, the agent, the translator find their place and new speech acts are produced that demand collective or individual recognition. It is not a neutral space—the politics of change are born there—, nor is it a closed site; it is open to challenge and change; it is unstable, hybrid and exilic. Paradoxically, translation is also the site of untranslatability: "I'm just wondering/ whether *negros/* in that context/ is translated/ black or niggers".

Following Rancière (2010) and his thoughts on political art, the poems and translations are political in that they demand some kind of action, they define ways of being together or apart that give birth to a new common sense where intercultural communication is the rule that rules out (self) discrimination. Meaning in both poems is so powerful that readers can claim Collins' words their own.

3.5. Activity design

As stated in the literature review, we used Liddicoat's (2008) framework and Byram's (2011) principles for developing intercultural language learning which would help our students make connections, reflect, actively construct meaning, and take responsibility for their actions. Using Liddicoat's framework implies designing activities that promote reflection on interculturality through a circular process of noticing similarities and differences, comparing them, reflecting about them, and, finally, interacting with the text and with others. Interaction is essential since it contributes to the students' understanding of their own culture as well as that of others. Thus, working with the text implies an active participation on the students' side that goes beyond knowing about other cultures; it implies understanding aspects of diversity, positioning, and engaging in order to create meanings.

To illustrate the use of this framework, Appendix 1 includes some sample activities where the process described is evident.

4. Results and discussion

In the following section, we will share some results of this experience. After the class intervention, as much as 71.4% of the surveyed students chose the expected definition for the term interculturalism. Thus, it is clear from this result that they were able to identify key elements in the concepts 'interculturalism' and 'intercultural communication'.

An interesting finding that, we believe, reveals the impact of reflecting on intercultural issues throughout the university programmes is that a high percentage of this group of students in the first year (74%) believed that ICC is connected to "reflecting on similarities and differences between cultures and comparing them with our own culture to state *which culture is the best to imitate*" (emphasis added). The highlighted phrase shows that even after the class intervention, some students in the first year still perceived "some" cultures as "the best to imitate", which goes against the principles of intercultural education. Moreover, a significant percentage of 43% considered that one of the classwork objectives was "identifying the *best* cultural groups in the world" (emphasis added). The fact that they considered that one cultural group could be regarded as superior to others challenges the purposes of fostering the

development of ICC. To our view, these comments uncover fossilised ideas that take us back to old paradigms in which certain hegemonic English-speaking social groups -ideal and idealised- were taken as 'models'. Students in the 3rd and 4th year, on the other hand, were able to relate ICC with "reflecting on cultural differences and similarities in order to promote understanding without judging any of them". The difference between students in the first year and in the last year of the teacher education and translation degrees clearly shows that throughout the programme students are provided with the necessary tools to reflect on language-and-culture learning. However, these results demonstrate that more work to develop ICC should be carried out with emphasis on the first year since one intervention does not seem to be enough to change fossilised ideas.

It is worth noting that reflecting on the role of our own culture in the process of learning another language was a challenging experience for students since, contrary to our expectations, a large percentage of 57% perceived that we can learn another language separated from our own culture, and a noteworthy percentage of 20% did not know what to answer as the following examples show:

> We can learn a language separated from our own culture; it can be hard to achieve because maybe we take much time to get in that strange culture of the respective language, but it's not impossible. (student A)

> I believe it is possible to learn a language separated from our own culture so long as we are open-minded and are willing to immerse ourselves into the other culture. (student B)

Since awareness of the role our culture plays in the interaction with other cultures is central to the concept of ICC, we believe this is a focal point to continue developing and reflecting with our students. Moreover, this observation might be beneficial for teachers who promote the development of ICC in their classes. When discussing intercultural issues, it is important that students reflect on the role of their own culture and understand that their own language-and-culture are a unity that affects their perception of the world.

Only 22% of the surveyed students perceived that "our culture will be always present in whatever we do" (student G). Some other comments that go in line with this idea are:

> Our own culture does not limit on learning other cultures and learning other languages. Besides, languages are not attached to just one culture. (student C)

> We cannot learn a new language separated from our own culture because our culture contributes to learn about a new language, too. We need have present our culture and the foreign culture to complement our knowledge. (student D)

> Although we can merge ourselves in a different culture to learn a new language, our own culture will always affect the way in which we see the world. Creating, sometimes, a clash of cultures. (student E)

As clearly understood by this last group of respondents, our culture is always present and affects how we acquire a foreign language and our view of other cultural groups.

Among the information elicited from the students who participated in this project, students

were asked to characterise our society as multicultural, intercultural, homogeneous, segregated and other. All these concepts were explained or exemplified in the class intervention and in the quiz (Appendix 2).

The following chart is a visual description of the students' perceptions of our own culture.
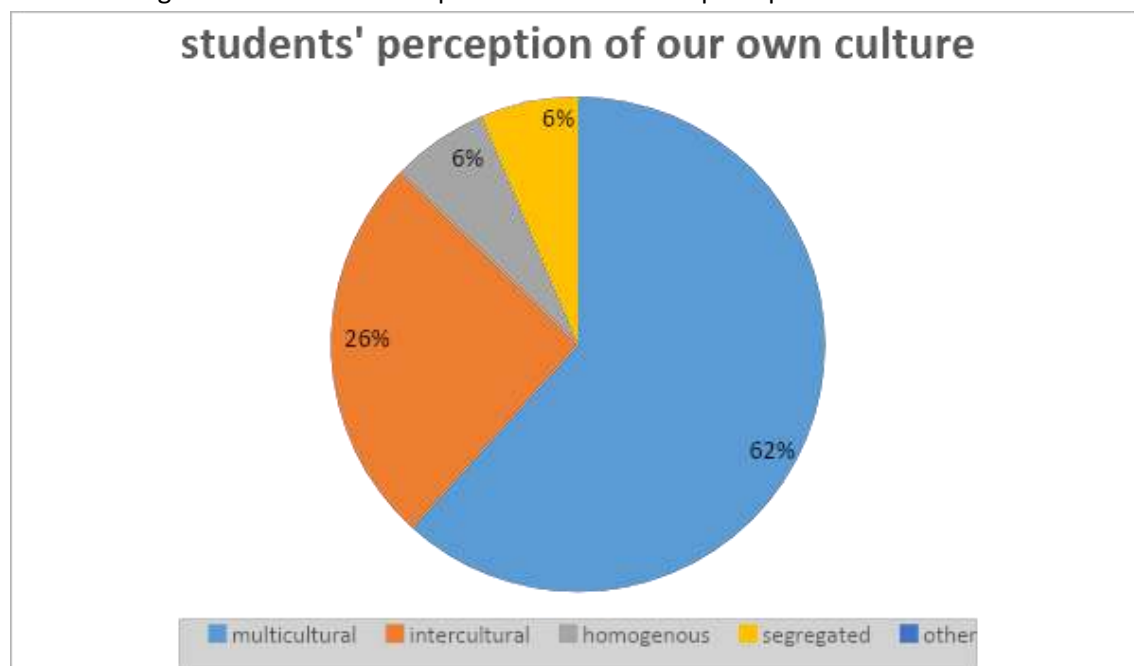
Figure 3: Students' perception of our own culture

Concerning the students' awareness of our own society, 62% perceived it as multicultural and some 6% considered the Argentinian society to be segregated. We can conclude from these findings that students recognised that different cultural groups coexist, but they did not develop relationships in our society. However, just a small percentage of 26% deemed it is intercultural, which means that they had the impression that different cultural groups interrelate and connect. Surprisingly, a small proportion of 6% regarded our society as homogeneous. Thus, this proportion of students, although small, did not recognise differences in our society or different cultural groups that interact or exist.

When working with *México- aunque no parezcamos*, students clearly identified the multilayered and complex issues explored: sociocultural, ethnic, linguistic conflicts that expose the limits of language and the untranslatability of certain historical experiences. It is evident from this experience that the students found it easier to analyse other cultural groups than to reflect on their own cultural experiences.

5. Conclusions

We believe that the intervention was effective and that more work and activities that foster ICC should be implemented at all levels of instruction. The perceptions of culture reflected by students in the 1st year could be the result of the beliefs of the teachers that educated or taught them. Thus, it is crucial to work with ICC in all teacher education programmes since these are the actors that will most effectively affect the development of ICC in the community. This would result in students being able to identify cultural differences not only in other societies but in their own; compare cultural groups without judging them or regarding them as superior or inferior –just different; and reflect about these concepts and the interrelations

among cultural groups to finally interact with others.

A limitation of the project is that it was carried out only at UCASal. It would be interesting to research the state of affairs in the 1st year of teacher education programmes in other institutions in the city of Salta to reach a wider scope. Finally, we believe this research experience can encourage the implementation of similar projects in other levels and contexts.

Note: (1) Our translation from Spanish.

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Appendix 1: Poem activities

Group discussion: Read the poem and comment on what calls your attention. Let's focus on the following:

- Identify the persona, the interlocutors and their relationship. Justify with elements from the poem. Who does 'I' refer to?
- Describe the possible setting and the context. Justify with elements from the poem or your background information.
- List the cultural groups mentioned in the text or the ones that you clearly identify and refer to their characterisation as hinted in the text. What else could you add to their characterisation?

Let's use our phones and look for Merle Collins' biography. In groups, state how this

enlightens your understanding of the poem.

Individual reflection: Questions to think about and comment on:

- What are the paralinguistic elements and gestures described in the poem? What do they imply? How do they add meaning to the text?
- What is the effect of using English and Spanish in the poem? Are the standard varieties used?
- Why does the persona translate?
- Is the persona translating as she speaks or is she translating her memories of a conversation? How is this relevant? Why do you think the writer has chosen this format?
- Why does *negros* become untranslatable?

Think, discuss and report.

- In the text, what context is the persona referring to? What other contexts may there be? How would a different context change the translation of *negros*?
- What's the value of translation in the poem? Can the poem be translated?
- What elements, customs, attitudes, situations are similar or different in our culture?
- What is the communicative problem in the text? Do the interlocutors display intercultural skills?
- Are stereotypes useful/harmful? Why? What are the effects of stereotypes? Do they contribute to discrimination? Do they always contribute to discrimination? Identify instances of discrimination or stereotypical reference in the text.

Choose one of the following activities to do in pairs:

- Role-play the poem.
- Retell the poem as an anecdote.
- Write a short text (any genre) describing a similar cultural misunderstanding or stereotypical situation in Salta.

Appendix 2: Survey questions. Exploring culture through literature and translation

* 1. Can we learn a language separated from our own culture? Why?/Why not? (Only one answer is possible)

○ Yes

○ No

○ It depends on the distance between cultures

○ I don't know

COMMENT BOX

* 2. To your view, which is the best definition for interculturalism_____ (only one answer is possible)

○ Interculturalism refers to a society that contains several cultural or ethnic groups. People live alongside one another, but each cultural group does not necessarily have engaging interactions with each other. For example, in a multicultural neighborhood people may frequent ethnic grocery stores and restaurants without really interacting with their neighbors from other countries.

○ Intercultural deals with the comparison of different cultures. In cross-cultural communication, differences are understood and acknowledged, and can bring about individual change, but not collective transformations. In cross-cultural societies, one culture is often considered "the norm" and all other cultures are compared or contrasted to the dominant culture.

○ The definition of interculturalism is something that occurs between people of different cultures including different religious groups or people of different national origin.

○ Interculturalism describes communities in which there is a deep understanding and respect for all cultures. Intercultural communication focuses on the mutual exchange of ideas and cultural norms and the development of deep relationships. In an intercultural society, no one is left unchanged because everyone learns from one another and grows together.

3. Do we live in a _____ society? Why? (Only one answer is possible)

○ multicultural   ○ segregated

○ intercultural   ○ other

○ homogeneous

COMMENT BOX

7

Promoting intercultural communicative competence through creative literature projects

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To Claudia Ferradas,
who inspired this experience and so many others.

1. Introduction

One of the challenges EFL teachers face today is finding strategies to contribute to the development of students' Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), which entails that learners acquire not only linguistic knowledge, but also the skills, attitudes and critical cultural awareness necessary to effectively communicate in an intercultural environment. As Risager (2005) points out, languages are not culturally neutral and therefore cannot be approached only as linguistic codes. Consequently, the ability to understand cultures, including one's own, is as essential as learning the target language when it comes to communicating with people from other cultures successfully. Most materials designed specifically for language teaching tend to edit, simplify or exoticise cultural information in order to focus on language, which results in a rather partial, sometimes stereotyped, picture of the target culture. This critical approach to cultural representation in textbooks is particularly relevant for university translator and teacher trainees, who will soon become professional role models, and creates room for literature to play an interesting role in developing ICC. It is widely acknowledged that authentic texts in general, and literary ones in particular, can offer EFL teachers multiple opportunities to foster their students' critical thinking, reading skills and understanding of other cultures, thus encouraging new frames of reference. There are numerous ways in which the didactic potential of literary texts can be explored in order to develop learners' ICC, and textual intervention tasks (Pope, 1995), here also described as 'creative projects', are one of them. Roughly explained, in a textual intervention task a reader interacts with the original text by creatively transforming part or all of it, and then determining the implications of that change. The purpose of this paper is to report some of the results of an action research project (Res. UCASal AyC 361/19), which analyses the impact of creative literature projects mediated by ICTs on students' awareness of ICC. The research experience was implemented with third-year teacher and translator trainees at Universidad Católica de Salta and was linked to CIUCASal Research Project "Identity and Multiculturalism in Anglophone Discourse" (Res. Rec. 1733/16). We believe this

didactic intervention also encourages the implementation of similar projects in other levels and contexts.

2. Literature review

2.1. Intercultural approach to TEFL and Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC)

Our globalised, interconnected world presents complex and dynamic identity and cultural issues that affect both class plans and good teaching practices. People belonging to different cultural-linguistic communities interact (whether formally or informally, directly or mediated by technology) with diverse cultures and foreign languages, and these interactions are inexorably accompanied by representations and attitudes towards those *languacultures* (Risager, 2005). The teaching of Anglophone Literatures in the English Teacher Training and Translator Programmes offers unique spaces to think about the intimate connection between language, culture and identity—of others and one's own—for we believe literature faces readers with a challenging crossroads in which culture, language and history converge. By means of varied reading, contextualisation and debate tasks, as well as creative and collaborative work, students in the English literature class can be immersed in cultural diversity. In addition, learners can become aware of the fact that language and cultural identities, including their own, are social constructs, whose development is negotiated and restructured in a dynamic and continuous way.

Traditionally, different approaches to the teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TEFL) in Argentina considered the 'native speaker' (in fact, an ideal and idealised native speaker) as a model to be imitated (Byram, Gribkova & Starkey, 2002). This paradigm, nowadays outdated and questioned, implied a conceptualisation of the foreign culture as uniform and monolithic, where little room was left for the students' own language, culture, identity and cultural experiences (Min. de Educación, 2010). For Byram, Gribkova & Starkey (2002), pioneers in the conceptualisation of intercultural awareness and skills, one of the risks of this outmoded approach is the creation of stereotypes, for these are the result of perceiving others as representatives of a monolithic cultural group, when we should in fact be willing and able to perceive in our interlocutors a multiplicity of qualities and identities which should be discovered, valued and respected. The shift in paradigm away from the 'native speaker' invites us to think with our students, future teachers and translators: what kinds of activities can be incorporated in the English literature class to help replace an obsolete model with a new, more useful paradigm, the paradigm of an intercultural speaker or mediator? The document *Proyecto de mejora para la formación inicial de profesores para el nivel secundario* (PM, Min. Ed., 2010) puts forward the Intercultural Approach as one of the core methodological frameworks, underlining the active role of education in the interaction between cultures and their languacultures. This interaction implies a reciprocal relationship of negotiation and conflict solving among interlocutors from different cultural backgrounds and entails emphasising the development of skills connected to effective communication, empathy and respect. Far from encouraging the students' identification with an ideal and idealised target culture, this perspective favours an open-minded approach to getting to know and understanding not only a foreign language but also other ideas, beliefs and patterns of behaviour while becoming aware of one's own. As Liddicoat (2005) points out, "language is a marker of identity and to use a language is an act of social identity in that it encodes how the speaker is presenting him/herself in a particular interaction" (p.1).

One of the skills intercultural mediators need to develop is their Intercultural Communicative Competence (ICC), that is, the ability to interact effectively with people from other cultures identifying similarities and differences, developing self-knowledge and empathy, and deploying communicative strategies to overcome cultural differences and misunderstandings. This competence entails understanding the notion of a network of 'micro-cultures' that make up the social and cultural landscape of a community, which replaces the idea of a monolithic and homogeneous culture (Min. Ed., 2010). Along similar lines, when culture is viewed as dynamic practices, we "recognise that culture varies with time, place and social category and for age, gender, religion, ethnicity and sexuality" (Liddicoat, 2005, p. 2). The awareness of this level of complexity and diversity allows students to get close to diverse cultural components of the community whose language they are learning and, in the future, will teach or interact with through translation.

Intercultural competence involves a variety of skills that go beyond the linguistic arena. Some of those include acknowledging that one's own and others' points of view and patterns of behaviour are culturally determined, recognising that there are multiple angles from which to face and tackle situations, valuing one's culture as well as others', using language to explore culture and find solutions in intercultural interactions (Liddicoat, 2005). As Liddicoat states,

> Given the volume, variability and potential for change of cultural conventions, it is impossible to learn them all and certainly well beyond the scope of any classroom acquisition. Because a learner can only acquire some of the cultural conventions, an important part of intercultural competence is *having strategies for learning more about culture*". (Liddicoat, 2005, p. 3, emphasis added)

In this student-centred approach, the classroom constitutes a third, interstitial space (Kramsch, 1993) in which cultures, languages, experiences and histories converge, and one in which the development of ICC is possible as long as teachers develop teaching strategies and activities to encourage it. Liddicoat (2005) proposes a four-phase cyclical approach to the development of intercultural competence, which includes noticing, comparing, reflecting, and interacting. According to this model, once the cultural input the teacher brings into the classroom has been noticed and carefully observed, it becomes available for reflection and experimentation. It is important for students who have noticed cultural differences and similarities to reflect on their nature and decide how to respond to them, thus creating and/or re-signifying cultural meaning.

2.2. Textual intervention and collaborative work mediated by ICTs

The implementation of authentic materials in the EFL classroom becomes a priority in order to enhance learners' ICC. Authentic *literary* texts offer EFL learners the opportunity to develop not only their linguistic and critical thinking skills, but also their ICC, since the cultural products a particular community creates can help students "know about and appreciate events, thoughts, and national memories of a culture" (Gómez, 2012, p. 51).

Students taking English Literature III at UCASal are exposed to a variety of Anglo Saxon and Medieval texts (translated into modern English), which are compared to contemporary rewrites in literature and popular culture. As a final task they are asked to undertake creative projects that integrate selected content the syllabus has covered, applying strategies of textual intervention (Pope, 1995). A textual intervention task requires that a reader changes some

portion or aspect of the original text and then reflects on the implications of that change. As students choose not only the text/s they work with but also what and how to transform them, they appropriate the original pieces and develop a close relationship with their creations. Although textual intervention work can take a variety of forms (for example, at the micro-levels of lexis, grammar, and semantics), our action research project focused on the macro-levels of text organisation, discourse, and genre. Examples of this interventionist work could include 'translating' selected texts into a different genre or text type, or rewriting a specific episode or character in a text, thus reconfiguring events in the original piece from a different point of view. The benefits of creative work of this kind support the essential skills for the 21st century that future professionals need (p. 21) and adhere to Anderson & Krathwohl's (2001) *Revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives,* in which creating is at the top of the educational goals pyramid.

On the other hand, in our class textual intervention exercises are mediated by ICTs, which allow students to do self-paced exploration and express what they can creatively do with technology, while enhancing learning through a combination of audio, video, images, text and animations. The tasks are framed by the theoretical-methodological approach called 'Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge', known as TPACK (Koehler & Mishra, 2006), which highlights the complex interaction of content, pedagogy and technology, and explores the kinds of new knowledge that emerge at the intersections between the three. As Koehler states, effective technology integration for didactic purposes

> requires developing sensitivity to the dynamic, transactional relationship between these components of knowledge situated in unique contexts [...] A variety of factors ensure that every situation is unique, and no single combination of content, technology, and pedagogy will apply for every teacher, every course, or every view of teaching (Koehler, 2012).

Finally, collaborative work—based on Vygotsky's social constructivism—understands that meaning is socially constructed through interaction, communication and problem-solving with others. In cooperative processes, co-construction of meaning and creative work fosters a space to learn, create meaningful experiences and develop linguistic competence. Collaborative work also supports 21st century skills, such as demonstrating ability to work effectively and respectfully with diverse teams; exercising flexibility and willingness to be helpful in order to accomplish a common goal; assuming shared responsibility for collaborative work, and valuing the individual contributions made by each team member.

2.3. Action research

Action research is an inquiry, carried out both at the group and at the individual level, whose purpose is to raise the teachers' awareness of their educational practices (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2003). It can be described as a strategy for accelerating and enhancing professional development and it is carried out "by systematically collecting data on your everyday practice and analysing it in order to come to some decisions about what your future practice should be" (Wallace, 1998, p.4). Considering Cain and Harris's (2013) classification of action research — technical, practical and emancipatory—, this project is an example of practical action research in that teachers engage students to work with them so as to "develop professional wisdom" (p. 5). It was designed to analyse ICC in our group of Literature III students from the Translation

and Teacher-Training course. As part of the research process, the analysis of the situation involved teachers and students (in groups and alone); the purpose of this practice was to evaluate whether they could perceive any changes in their ICC and to raise awareness about the topic.

3. Methodology
3.1. Research question and participants
Our initial research question was: Do creative literary projects mediated by ICTs contribute to developing awareness of ICC in a literature course in higher education?

Our research participants were 19 students taking English Literature III at UCASal, who were divided into 7 groups to perform their interventionist tasks. They worked collaboratively during 4 weeks on the concept of their project and a script, which they developed in a Google Doc so that teachers could track their creative and editing processes.

3.2. Data collection
Data were collected through observation and informal interviews carried out in each class, and a written survey administered at the end of the creative task. Observation was an instrument for assessing the level of students' involvement as class participation and performance in activities (individual and in groups.) were monitored. This allowed the collection of qualitative data and the process was part of their formative assessment. Informal interviews were carried out during or after each class to keep a record of the students' perceptions of the intervention, to assess the role of task design in fostering ICC, and to evaluate the students' level of cultural awareness. Finally, a written survey was administered to triangulate the data collected and add information for our analysis.

4. Results and discussion
The resulting projects were creative, varied and thought-provoking. As shown in Figure 1, one of the groups recreated the loneliness and nostalgia of Anglo-Saxon lyrics in a 4-minute video that captured the streets of Salta while a voiceover recited a poem they had written: "Open Gate".

Figure 1. Video created by students.

Another project consisted in a PowerPoint presentation with memes (Figures 2 and 3) that parodied both the epic Beowulf and the 2007 Zemeckis film adaptation, thus exploring multilayered intertextual connections.

Figure 2. PowerPoint presentation with memes by students.

Figure 3. PowerPoint presentation with memes by students.

A third group recorded a puppet talk show in which American host Jimmy Fallon interviewed Anglo-Saxon and Medieval characters (Figure 4).

Figure 4. Puppet talk show.

One student brought Anglo Saxon and Medieval Literature to the 21st century with the use of an augmented reality platform (HP Reveal) whose image recognition technology uses a smartphone's or tablet's camera to recognise real world images (in this case, drawings the student had prepared) and allows users to overlay multimedia on top of them (videos, web pages and so on). This student drew a mural with several representative characters and, during her presentation, her classmates (who had downloaded HP Reveal) focused their cell phone cameras on a character of their choice and a descriptive video was played.

Another group, inspired by Chaucer's *Woman of Bath,* created conversations between the wife and each of her husbands on different social media: WhatsApp, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and SMS.

Figure 5. Enacting conversations inspired by *Woman of Bath* on social media.

A different approach to the same text was developed by a group who decided to produce a photonovel based on Anglo-Saxon and Medieval texts, as shown in Figure 6. Here we can see one of the pictures of the photonovel: there is a girl who represents Chaucer's woman of Bath, with some bruises on her shoulders and the hand of her fifth husband, who used to beat her. This picture is accompanied by an extract from the text that serves as a description of the scene portrayed and reads: "My fifth husband which I took for love and not for riches was the most villainous to me. But even if he had beaten me on every bone, he could soon win my beautiful thing again."

70

Figure 6. Photonovel

Finally, Figure 7 shows an animated news presentation carried out by two students, who designed their own news anchors and gave them their voice to present news about Anglo-Saxon and Medieval characters, while featuring Argentinian celebrities as well.

Figure 7. Animated news presentation

The survey, which was administered after the presentation of the projects, had five questions; here we will analyse two of them. Even though the survey was answered individually, students were working in groups and might have influenced each other's answers.

After working on their projects, all students were aware of the fact that the process had raised awareness on the influence of their culture on their creations. Regarding their extended answers, students claimed both in interviews and in writing that belonging to the millennial generation was a great advantage in terms of their frequent use of and familiarity with technology and social media. As a result, ICTs played a significant role both in their daily lives and when designing their creative projects. For example, students who created the photonovel expressed that their cultural experiences provided them with new ways to rethink the genre. Part of their re-signification process was connecting the traditional model to the photo stories

they usually found on social media, especially Instagram. Different members of the group claimed that the variety of visual platforms they used influenced their choice of technique as well as their creative process.

Along similar lines, while reflecting on the connection between medieval English texts and their own cultural contexts, students highlighted the availability and variety of images on the Internet, which allowed them to both appropriate and retell Anglo-Saxon and Medieval themes, motifs and characters in a language they are familiar with, such as memes.

The portrayal of women in Anglo Saxon and Medieval texts is a recurrent topic of discussion in Literature III classes and Chaucer's *Wife of Bath* usually triggers rich debates on cultural issues. In their adaptation of the medieval literary confession to a contemporary audience, students were able to reflect on verbal and symbolic violence against women and connect some of these gender issues to current Argentinian social plights.

As much as 89% of the students claimed that the process of preparing and presenting their projects in class had had a positive impact on the development of their ICC. It is worth noticing that the students that replied negatively explained that they were not *initially* aware of their intercultural competences while working on their tasks but that upon reflection they could recognise ways in which some of their concepts, perceptions and attitudes on culture had developed.

Finally, students also considered their shifts in perception and cultural awareness during the creative process. For example, they were aware of the fact that they had inevitably established a connection between present and past in order to create a product that reflected their knowledge of the cultural context of poems and that helped them to successfully reach their classmates. Regarding gender issues, students were able to reflect on ICC as they related medieval English texts to the current discussions on gender in Argentina: they associated the way in which women were stereotyped and prejudged both in the past and the present, and agreed that this creative activity had enabled them to relate a medieval foreign culture to a contemporary local one.

5. Conclusions

Creative projects of textual intervention have an unlimited didactic potential in the EFL classroom. They can be as simple or complex, high-tech or low-tech, as teachers and/or students need. They engage and empower learners in multiple ways, as they are in charge of deciding what and how to transform literary texts. In this creative process students appropriate the original pieces, develop a unique connection with their creations and their classmates and express what they can creatively do with technology. While working collaboratively and with ICTs, learners explore the educational opportunities that technology offers, exercise flexibility and negotiation skills, assume shared responsibility for the end result, and create memories for life.

The results of this action research project reflect that our students perceived that their literary creative projects mediated by ICTs contributed to the development of their awareness and understanding of ICC. Openness, flexibility and curiosity are integral to ICC development as they prepare students to learn to know others. We believe that exploring ways to develop ICC is essential in students' education and that similar projects could be implemented in other levels and contexts.

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8

A literature worksheet: From analytical reading to writing and speaking

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1. Introduction

One well-established practice in EFL teaching and learning is to have learners read a short story and to expect them to be able to speak about it at an evaluation instance, such as an interview or oral exam. Even though there are numerous pedagogical advantages to using extensive reading materials this way, teachers may often take for granted that learners have the required competences to perform such tasks, overlooking the fact that they involve higher level cognitive processes and a number of linguistic and communicative skills, which, more often than not, students may lack.

The purpose of this paper is to discuss a didactic proposal consisting of working with a literature worksheet that functions as a reading log that guides learners through gradual work while reading their literary piece, in an attempt to engage them in reading analytically and help them enhance their language skills, and thus help them prepare for the speaking test in a more meaningful way, while promoting self-confidence about knowledge of the short-story as well as of their linguistic and communicative competences. The discussion also addresses one way in which the four language skills can be integrated with literature in the EFL classroom, and implications of this proposal for the EFL class.

2. Teaching context and problems observed

I have been teaching EFL to adult students in an Argentine-American binational centre in the city of Tucumán for over two decades, and throughout those years, I have observed the learners' struggle to fulfil the tasks mentioned above: reading, summarising and speaking. At this institution, students must sit for two oral exams during the academic year (one in July and one in December) at each of which they are expected to talk about two short stories and discuss them with two examiners. The majority of the students who attend these classes are in their mid-twenties and are college students, although there are sometimes learners who are as young as 16 years old, and some who are in their 30s, 40s or 50s. While those who are attending university may be more familiarised with sitting for oral examinations, those who are younger, or older, may not. Therefore, the speaking evaluation situation usually constitutes a factor of anxiety that may have negative effects on the process of learning the foreign language.

For many years I heard students repeating by heart a summary of the short stories, which they might have downloaded from the internet, or which their teacher might have helped them to write. In those exams, everything went well with retelling the plot from memory, until learners were interrupted by an examiner who posed a question, at which point the examinees were often unable to answer and interact with the examiner, or insisted on retaking the

narration from where they had left it. I found this practice pointless as an evaluation of the learners' speaking skills, and this situation compelled me to find a way in which I could render this practice more meaningful for both, the learning process and the assessment of the learners' speaking skills.

3. Proposal: A literature worksheet to promote analytical reading, writing, and speaking

In his article "Reading critically – Analytical reading" (earthscienceeducation.org), Roger McCoy states that "Critical reading is an <u>active</u> process, and requires a pencil in hand with specific operations to perform while reading" (underlining in original). The proposal presented in this paper consists of using a worksheet while reading a short-story or abridged novel, in order to guide the learners through a gradual analytical process by means of which they will be able to fill in a reading log that will help them systematise information they will later use to write a summary of the literary work. This worksheet will eventually assist them in preparing for the oral exam. This while-reading work actively engages the students in reading critically to discern between main and subsidiary information, as they need to make notes in order to progressively build their own summary of story. The worksheet prompts students to write down the title and author, and proceed to note down information about the setting and characters.

Axelrod and Cooper (2013, p.521) present a "catalog of reading strategies" to help the learner "become a thoughtful reader". These reading strategies include, among others: annotating, taking inventory (listing and grouping), outlining ("listing the text's main ideas to reveal how it is organised"), paraphrasing, summarising, and contextualising ("placing a text in its historical and cultural context"). Therefore, it is important for learners to use as many of these strategies as possible in order to delve into the literary work, and gain a thorough understanding of it. This will eventually result in self-confidence about both their knowledge of the story and their linguistic and communicative skills, and will make learners feel reassured for the oral examination. As Axelrod and Cooper (2013) claim, "the physical act of writing — from simply making notes as you read, to listing main points, to summarizing— is a potent memory aid" (p.3).

The worksheet (see appendix) requires learners to start writing from the moment they begin reading, by making a note of the title, and reflecting on why the story has that title. At first, this may be done as a predicting activity, in order to awaken the learners' curiosity as well as activate their schemata, but the title is an item they will need to come back to after they have finished reading the story, when they will have analysed it and understood it. Following the title, students are prompted to write about the author of the story. Many EFL readers include a short biography of the author, which can be used for such notes, but if a reader does not, students need to find out about the author to complete that section. This may also work as an engaging pre-reading activity, since knowing about the writer, his or her previous work, and/or his or her preferred themes and devices can activate the learners' previous knowledge, which is an important factor for comprehension. The next section in the worksheet is about the story setting. As students read the first page(s) or chapter, they take notes on the setting of the story (where and when the story takes place). This information is relevant in understanding the events and the characters in the story. As they read, students should also stop each time a new character is introduced, in order to write down the character's name, as well as any information that may seem important about them: personality traits, physical description, relationship with other characters. Listing details of the setting and the characters makes

reviewing easier, as all the information is condensed in the worksheet instead of being dispersed throughout the literary work.

The following section of the worksheet is one of the most relevant. Students are required to write kernel sentences at the end of each chapter or sub-section of the story. The term *kernel sentence* is used in linguistics to refer to a simple, positive, declarative sentence. Rosenberg (1991, p.253) argues that "for Chomsky the kernel sentence was the matrix from which all utterances derived" and adds that "understanding the sentence is thus reduced to explaining how kernel sentences are themselves understood, these being the basic 'content elements' of sentences." He compares the way transformational grammarians use a kernel sentence in order to understand the meaning of the sentences that were generated from it, with work in literature. He says, "decompose a narrative into its kernel story, and it will be laid bare to the most perfunctory inspection." Rosenberg then refers to the work of Prince (1973) who sought to define "the kernel story of which the surface manifestation is an elaboration." Thus, writing a few kernel sentences at the end of each section or chapter helps students concentrate on the main events of the story, or kernel story.

Once the learners have finished reading the short story, they will have completed the worksheet with key story elements. Deconstructing the story into its many components promotes comprehension and helps students remember those elements. Learners will thus have collected everything they need in order to write a complete summary of the plot. Since they will have worked through the story, paying attention to details, making decisions, and writing their own sentences, writing the summary should be easy and should demonstrate an understanding of the story as a whole. As they write the summary, students will be reconstructing the story by putting the pieces together again.

The ultimate goal of working with this worksheet is for learners to be and feel well-prepared for the oral test, having a sound knowledge of the story, which will enable them to speak naturally and fluently, and to discuss the reading material with their examiners. Students thus progress from reading (and possibly also listening when the reading material is available as audio books) to writing, and ultimately, speaking.

4. Implications for EFL teaching and learning and conclusions

I have been using this worksheet for almost a decade, and I have seen the benefits of doing so, for both my students and my teaching practice. First and foremost, it should be pointed out that students feel immediately engaged in the task of reading and finding out information that they will record in their worksheet. The task is goal oriented, and therefore, learners feel motivated to carry it out. The task is also entirely student-centred. Students read and write, discuss with their peers, and make decisions. It is important for the instructor to be present, and monitor the students' work, since they may need help and guidance. The teacher's presence and help contributes to building confidence. But the learners are the ones doing the job.

When the worksheet is used in class, it fosters collaborative work, as students work together to write their kernel sentences, and they can then share their work with the class. The class discusses and decides on which sentences to include. This kind of activity promotes interaction among the learners, who must inevitably talk to one another, and use the target language. Without noticing, students are already practising their speaking skills. As work progresses, learners use and practice different language skills. They read the text, then write

sentences, and a summary. They speak and listen as they carry out their tasks.

Another asset of working with the short story worksheet is that it leads to meaningful learning. The focus is taken away from lexico-grammatical content and is directed to the story content. As students write their sentences, they inevitably use any new vocabulary that may appear in the short story, as well as the necessary syntactic structures. By using them, they learn and remember them. Besides, as it has been mentioned before, the activity is goal oriented: learners know it is in their own interest to complete the task, as it will prove helpful for their oral exam.

Finally, a detailed knowledge of the story, and the fact that students have built their own account of it, result in more meaningful, natural and fluent use of the target language when speaking about the literary work. On the day of the exam, the students feel confident because they know the story. They have been able to build a mental representation of it, and therefore, they can talk about what they know in a way that makes sense to them.

One significant contribution of reading literature in the EFL class, and of doing the kind of analytical work described in this paper, is that learners develop competences that transcend the English class. By doing this kind of work, they acquire, or develop, important transferable skills, that is to say, abilities that can be used in other areas of their lives. Learning strategies for critical reading, developing writing skills such as summarising, and preparing to speak, constitute some of the most useful skills not only for the world of academia and most professions, but also for many activities in our daily life. It is fulfilling to believe that the work we do in our classes will help our students become successful learners beyond the EFL classroom, as well as independent critical readers, who, by the time they leave our classes, will have acquired and developed competences that are operative in the modern world. Hopefully, they will also continue to enjoy the world of literature and foreign languages.

To conclude, the literature worksheet presented in this paper follows a basic pattern that most EFL teachers are familiar with. Most of it constitutes work all of us do in one way or another. However, the fact that the worksheet systematises and condenses the information in two or three pages proves very helpful for learners. They build their own reviewing tool, which is an efficient way of revising for the oral exam. Needless to say, the worksheet can, and should, be adapted to the specific needs of each particular group of students. This is a methodology that should fit the requirements of the specific reading material, the purpose of reading, as well as the age and proficiency level of the learners involved.

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Appendix

SHORT-STORY WORKSHEET

<u>Title:</u> ....

Why does the story have that title? →

> *You should probably leave this question to the end, after you have analyzed all other aspects of the story. You'll have a better understanding of the story by then.*

<u>Author:</u> ....

1. *Where's he or she from?*

2. *Did he or she write other short stories?*

3. *What did he or she usually write about?*

<u>Setting</u> — *The setting is the time/s and place/s in which the events in the story take place. The time and place may be important in the story, and may help you understand it better.*

a) <u>Place/s</u>
Where does the story take place? A house? A room? The countryside? Any specific country or city?

b) <u>Time</u>
1. *When does the action take place? In the past? In the future? Any specific year, month, or season?*

2. *What's the time span covered in the story? A day? A year? A century?*

<u>Characters</u>: *Characters are the "actors" in the story. They may be people, animals and even objects.*
1. *As you read, write down the names of the characters. Sometimes the names given to the characters are important and have special meanings.*
2. *You can also make notes about some of their characteristics: are they good or bad? Do they have any special physical or personality traits?*
3. *How are the characters related to one another in the story?*

Character's name	Notes on characters and their relationships

Plot: What's the story about?

> - You can't repeat the whole story, so you need to make a summary of the major events.
> - As you read the story, stop at the end of each page, or each chapter, and write one or two simple, short sentences stating the most important facts, events, or developments in that part of the story.
> - By the time you reach the end of the story, you'll have a collection of short sentences that will help you remember the story.

Chapter 1 (or page 1, or section 1)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Chapter 2

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Chapter 3

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Chapter 4

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Summary: - Use your notes to write a nice and complete summary of the story.

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9

Developing intercultural competence through literature at TEFL college:

An action-research project

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1. Introduction

The connection between language, culture and communication has been studied in the field of English Language Teaching (ELT) since the late 1980s. Phipps and Gonzalez (2004) argue that students of another language different form their own may have the possibility of entering the language of others, and thus "to understand the complexity of the experience of others to enrich their own. To enter other cultures is to re-enter one's own" (p. 3).

Nowadays, in a globalised world, English plays a major role as a lingua franca. Kumaravadivelu (2012) states that globalisation implies awareness of different values and views, and leads to an increasing need to preserve our culture and identity: "[C]ultural globalisation is shaping the global flows of cultural capital, interested knowledge, and identity formation." (p. 4). Therefore, there is, at present, significant awareness of the interaction between language, culture and identity. The impact of these processes on foreign language education is evident: the cultural dimension cannot be neglected in foreign language teaching. In fact, it seems essential to develop intercultural skills to understand others and preserve our own identity. This has led to the development of an intercultural approach in the teaching of English as a Foreign Language, which seeks to complement Communicative Language Teaching by helping learners acquire intercultural communicative competence (Byram, 1997, 2011; Corbett, 2003).

Despite the large body of existing literature about intercultural approaches in language teaching (Carrier, 2011; Chlopek, 2008; Corbett, 2003; Feng, Byram & Fleming, 2009; Ferradas, 2010; Kramsch, 1993), Instituto Superior de Formación Docente Nº 156, a teacher education institution in the city of Azul in the Province of Buenos Aires, had never enacted this theory in practice. The objective of developing intercultural competence was not part of the curriculum, and no classroom procedures or techniques were applied systematically to promote it. Therefore, an action research project was carried out in order to promote the development of intercultural competence and to improve teacher practice.

The subject chosen for the project was *Language and Culture IV*, in the last year of the teaching programme. The syllabus comprises literary texts from the medieval and renaissance periods, within their historical contexts. Literary texts are suitable for the development of

intercultural competence because narratives are cultural products, closely linked to the social practices of the groups from where they spring.

The aim of the action research was to answer the following questions: What does intercultural competence entail in this setting? How can this competence be developed through literature? What types of activities and materials are needed? How can this research lead to an improvement in English teaching and learning in this context?

2. Literature Review

For Byram (2011), the development of intercultural competence is essential for language learning, and he states these reasons:

> [I]mitation of native speaker cultural competence has significant potentially negative consequences for self-concept and social identity. (. . .) [but] in any interaction among people of different language and culture groups, the purpose is usually, and should be, to find a way of working and living together without one imposing linguistic and cultural norms on the other. The competence of the intercultural speaker is thus above all to *de-centre*, to see the other person's perspective" (p. 35).

Kramsch (1993) states that comparing the target culture to one's own promotes the movement to a *third space*, a place of intercultural encounter. More recently, Holliday (2016) outlined a model of cultural blocks and threads, in which cultural blocks symbolise cultural identity. He states that it is possible to connect with other cultures through threads, because there are universal processes that help us make sense of each other's threads and of our own. These threads go beyond culture blocks and enable interculturality, since they can take us "beyond the boundaries of the third space" (Holliday, 2016, p. 321) and allow us to "live in several cultural domains at the same time" (Kumaravadivelu, 2012, p. 5).

Gonzales Rodriguez and Puyal (2012, p. 4) report in their case study that "the use of literary texts can promote reflection on cultural differences, develop understanding of the home culture, and consequently enhance more tolerant and open attitudes towards other cultures". They focus on the importance and the possibility of the development of critical cultural awareness through literature. Likewise, Pope (2005) states that language, culture and literature are intertwined. For him, the study of literature should involve approaching texts within their contexts and considering different perspectives such as those of the writer, the reader and contemporary audiences.

At a local level, Ferradas (2010) states that "the development of intercultural awareness should be a paramount objective in the training of foreign language teachers and translators" (p.21). Her research is grounded on intercultural theory, intercultural studies and post-colonial theory. Her work provided a useful Argentine background to this project.

Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002) state that an intercultural speaker is able to avoid "stereotyping" and can interact with others as "complex human beings with multiple identities

and their own individuality" (p. 10). Classroom work with an intercultural dimension encourages sharing knowledge and discussing values and opinions with the aim of challenging generalisations and stereotypes, presenting and respecting different viewpoints. The theory of intercultural competence prepares student teachers to interact with people from different cultures, and to understand and accept different perspectives, cultures, values and patterns of behaviour. According to Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2002), language teachers should help their students develop critical cultural awareness in order to become aware of their own values and how these can provoke reaction to or rejection of other people's values and beliefs. Perduca (2009) defines awareness as a "rite of passage" which introduces learners to intercultural competence. To become aware of difference, stereotypes, prejudice and (mis)representations, learners need to develop critical awareness and evaluation skills.

In order to become intercultural speakers and mediators, students need to develop intercultural attitudes, values and skills. Byram (1997, 2002, 2011) has outlined a model of intercultural communicative competence, which involves the development of five "savoirs":

1. *Savoirs:* knowledge of social groups, their practices and the processes of social interaction in a given context;

2. *Savoir comprendre*: skills for interpreting, comparing and relating those savoirs from different perspectives;

3. *Savoir être*: intercultural attitudes of curiosity and openness, in particular in connection to otherness and the ability to de-centre;

4. *Savoir apprendre/savoir faire:* skills of discovery and interaction; ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and to operate it in interaction;

5. *Savoir s'engager*: critical cultural awareness- the ability to evaluate critically different perspectives, practices and products in one's own and other cultures.

These theories set the basis for the implementation of the intercultural model in our lessons. However, there are other theories that promote the development of intercultural competence, which can be useful to approach literary texts. Post-structuralism and deconstruction theories state that there is no single way of viewing a text, issue or event because truth is relative. Likewise, postcolonial theories contribute concepts such as binary opposition, centre/periphery, otherness or othering and writing back (Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 2003, Bhabha, 1994; Hourihan, 1997; Said, 1985) that can be used to approach literary texts from an intercultural perspective. These theories provide useful guidance to analyse texts, de-centre/recentre and/or deconstruct, challenge stereotypes and canons and (re) read texts from different points of view.

The following sections support the original hypothesis that it is possible to promote the development of intercultural competence through literature by helping students develop the *savoirs* outlined above.

3. Methods

The project followed an action research design, adopting a spiral model of AR (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2000), which consists of two spirals, each comprising a plan followed by action, observation and reflection.

3.1. Participants

A group of five female students aged between 22 and 30, attending *Language and Culture IV* in the fourth year of their programme participated in the project. One of them was retaking the subject. They had all attended *Language and Culture III*. All the participants were already working at different institutions.

3.2. Materials

Books, papers and articles about the intercultural approach, post-colonial studies and intercultural studies were used by the researcher as a theoretical framework in order to decide the procedures to be followed and to select the appropriate tools and materials.

The mandatory set texts for *Language and Culture IV* were used. These include literary texts from the medieval and renaissance periods, which are cultural products that portray different contexts, people, values and practices. While they provide the opportunity to reflect on difference, they still influence contemporary narratives and deal with universal issues, providing opportunities for the students to make connections through their own cultural threads (Holliday, 2016). However, new bibliography was added in order to include texts about postcolonial criticism and deconstruction.

Checklists were used to keep record of individual participation during class discussions, supplemented by informal anecdotal records. A formal test was used to assess the students' knowledge of the contents and the development of intercultural competence, using Byram's (1997) savoirs as a reference.

3.3. Procedure

The project lasted six months. A survey questionnaire was given to the students at the beginning in order to gather information about their personal and academic backgrounds, centred on their experience of the language and culture connection and intercultural experiences. This was followed by a first cycle of teaching. The historical period studied first was the Renaissance, and it was accompanied by the reading and analysis of two plays by Shakespeare, *Macbeth* and *Twelfth Night*. The students were given materials (eyewitness

books, videos) to gain information about the Elizabethan theatre, and were asked to compare it to modern ones, or the ones they were familiar with. This task contributed to their understanding of the context of the play, and allowed the students to reflect upon the differences between theatres in the 16th and 21st centuries (for example technology, props, light, sound) and to de-centre.

Then discussions moved around female characters (Lady Macbeth and Viola) and whether (or not) they subverted their contemporary stereotypes. The teacher also encouraged reflection about gender roles and cross dressing in the 17th century. This also led to the exploration of sources of humour in the past and at present, by engaging the skills of comparing and contrasting, since 17th century audiences were moved to laughter by certain episodes that modern audiences would not find amusing. Another issue commented on was the treatment of animals in Elizabethan times: a sport like bear baiting would probably be criticised at present. Although the focus on this part of the project was on difference and de-centring, the students were able to identify universal elements in drama and the reasons why these texts are still popular.

The study on Shakespeare concluded with the analysis and discussion of an extract from *The Tempest* from a post-colonial perspective. The focus of the analysis was on 'otherness', and how assumptions about the superiority of the 'civilized' culture embedded in Prosperous and his discourse clashed with Calibban's views, for example on land and language. This discussion was conducted informally, and led also to current views of hegemony and prejudice.

This first cycle concluded the first spiral of action research, and was therefore followed by reflection on the teacher's part, supported by a review of anecdotal records. This phase showed that, in order to promote more autonomous discussions and to reduce teacher intervention, it was necessary to make some changes in the materials.

A new phase started with the next module, which introduced Anglo-Saxon society and literature, with a focus on the epic poem *Beowulf*. Classwork aimed at raising awareness about social constructs, applying postcolonial theory and deconstruction. There was a focus on how characters can be constructed in terms of binary opposition, othering, centre and margins. This involved deconstructing traditional hero and monster stereotypes. The students were encouraged to compare *Beowulf* to the traditional hero stereotype (Western, white, male) described by Hourihan (1997) and to reflect on current views of heroism.

The teacher also promoted a discussion about female heroes. This led to a debate about female characters in *Beowulf*. To approach this topic, the students were given two articles with contrasting views about female roles in *Beowulf* to read and reflect upon. As these were discussed in class the students developed awareness of different and equally valid views on the same topic. Finally, de-centring was fostered by asking students to revise their views on money and property and reflect upon how far they differed from the Anglo-Saxons' notions of ownership.

This second module concluded with an instance of formal assessment that included open ended questions to assess whether the students had gained critical cultural awareness, by, for example, providing the opportunity to express their opinions about gender roles in

Beowulf. To conclude, a second questionnaire was given to the students at the end of the project to assess its impact and to provide the teacher with data to assess the development of intercultural competence.

4. Findings

The first questionnaire completed by the students showed that most of them were aware of some Argentine cultural practices and were able to identify culturally-related patterns of behaviour that would cause culture shock to foreigners. Most of them agreed that cultural differences may hinder communication. All of them stated that they used culture-related activities in their teaching practices, although not many were able to provide examples of tasks that promote intercultural awareness.

After the first spiral of action research, the anecdotal records showed the students were able to engage in discussions about stereotypes, especially connected to heroes and how they were portrayed in contemporary films. The anecdotal records showed that the students had gained critical cultural awareness as regards contrasting views of property in the 21st century and medieval times. The results of the test showed that all but one of the students were able understand Anglo-Saxon culture and history, and managed to relate this knowledge to the poem *Beowulf.* This is shown in the contextual analysis made of the quotations provided in the test.

The second part of the test included two open-ended questions that were connected to feminist criticism and deconstruction. The students showed they gained awareness of stereotypes and gender roles, but were not able to provide specific ways of challenging traditional stereotypes. One of them stated that the role of women in *Beowulf* is not passive at all, and commented that Grendel's mother, who has no name and is defined only though her status as a mother and her monstrosity, "represents one of the most powerful human feelings" and that her actions (avenging her son´s death) enable us to "discuss women's strength and determination". This shows that Holliday´s (2016) cultural threads can enable students to empathise with characters from a completely different culture.

The end of term survey showed that the students were able to explore their own cultural assumptions, contrast the target cultures with their own, and evaluate social products. The result of this self-assessment was positive and showed that the objectives of the project were met. One of the students stated that "[t]hese lessons helped us open our mind to different ways of behaving, beliefs and ideas" and that the lessons and topics had "contributed to improving [her] understanding of different realities". She also went on to say that "if we are open-minded, we'll be able to understand the different ways of living of other cultures". She concluded by mentioning that points of view can differ "according to our beliefs, gender, social position, age and so on". Another student commented that while taking the course she "was able to think about [her] own culture with a different perspective".

5. Discussion and conclusion

The aim of the project was to define the concept of *intercultural competence* and to attempt to help the student teachers who took part in this project to develop it through literature. It was necessary to promote the development of the five savoirs described by Byram (1997) by approaching literary texts using specific classroom procedures. In this way, the students were given the opportunity of developing intercultural skills and attitudes, which include exercising empathy, developing the ability to de-centre, deconstruct and evaluate cultural products and values, including their own.

Although the sample population was small and more time may have been necessary to collect more data, the results show that it is possible to develop intercultural competence through literature. The present study paves the way for future research and implementation in primary or secondary schools, provided the materials and activities are adapted to the specific contexts and levels where they will be used. For instance, both fairy tales and traditional Greek myths may offer the opportunity to deconstruct heroes, monsters, gender roles and cultural stereotypes. In general, traditional tales are structured in terms of binary opposition: for instance, characters may be either good or evil, male or female, heroes or monsters. This gives us the possibility of fostering reflection on character construction, for example. In fairy tales, heroes are usually white, young and European. Through leading questions, teachers can raise awareness about stereotypes, and can offer opportunities for the students to reflect about heroism in their culture. Also, more modern texts that portray different heroes (*The Hunger Games*, for instance, which portrays a female hero) can be discussed with students in order to promote reflection about why there are so few female heroes in traditional, modern literary texts and films. Likewise, monsters are usually negatively constructed, in opposition to the hero. Students can be invited to reflect upon why monsters exist, their (cultural) functions and to provide examples of monsters that exist in their own culture, and their role.

Similarly, gender roles can be deconstructed and challenged: female figures in traditional stories are usually beautiful, slim and royal and they are relegated to the domestic sphere, waiting for a male character, like a prince, to save them from curses, monsters or stepmothers. They usually have a passive role and are powerless and unable to take action to defend themselves.

These roles are sometimes subverted, especially in more contemporary films and popular culture. A comparison between traditional and modern stories can be drawn in class to reflect about how changes in society, readers and audiences have triggered modifications in the stories that are being told nowadays.

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10

Building communities of readers: A path to empower 21st-century students

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1. Introduction

The dawn of the 21st century has presented teachers with a myriad of challenges which may heighten the need to nurture student empowerment. In the light of this predicament, we will explore how literature can serve as a vehicle for empowerment through the creation of a community of readers in which teachers, learners and texts engage in a dialogical relationship.

2. 21st-century reading-related challenges

We consider technological advances, reading behaviour, reading choices and multimodality to be the key aspects that teachers need to take into account when dealing with literature.

First of all, technology needs to be integrated into the classroom since not only does it help students to become creative and innovative, but it also gives them the tools to become literate in terms of 21-century needs. Secondly, students often read in different ways for different purposes and new forms of reading behaviour can be observed. These comprise browsing and scanning, keyword spotting, one-time reading, non-linear reading, and reading more selectively, while less time is devoted to in-depth reading, and concentrated reading. In addition to this, contrary to the belief that there is a decline in reading habits, learners have started to read different genres, which range from websites and video games to Instagram posts and Whatsapp messages. Lastly, technologies impact the way student learning is mediated, giving birth to multimodality and emphasizing that people communicate by means of a variety of modes as a legitimate way of expression. Multimodal texts combine images, words, sounds, voices, intonation, stance, gesture and movement and they have changed how young people read, think and construct meaning.

The aforementioned challenges need to be taken into consideration if teachers intend to nurture student empowerment so that learners are able to cope with 21st-century demands.

3. Learner empowerment

Learner empowerment refers to any attitudinal, structural, or cultural activity that helps children gain knowledge of the world. Therefore, literature can act as a vehicle to empower students in the 21st century and give them the chance to "be focused on finding, making and thinking about meaning" (Cremin, 2014, p. 6). By being in contact with literature, students gather information about the world and explore different identities, thus helping raise cultural and educational standards. In fact, reading is "related to the human need to make sense of the world, the desire to understand, to make things work and make connections" (p. 6).

In this regard, literature empowers learners by giving them opportunities to become conscious of their needs, and overcome problems and barriers to finally achieve their own goals. All in all, if literature can help learners have a better understanding of the world and give them hints and tips about how to effectively use this knowledge, it can prove to be a real springboard for success. Within the field of literature, we strongly believe that the establishment of a community of readers can act as the path to attain that empowerment.

4. Community of readers

4.1 Definition and characteristics

The notion of a "community of readers" has been gaining ground over the past few years, and various definitions of the term have been provided. Cremin (2015) depicts it as "a context in which children's diverse cultural capital and home literacies are acknowledged, and creativity, speculation, experimentation, play, risk taking and reflection on reading are all encouraged" (p. 76). Similarly, Archanco (2016) states, "Convertir al aula en una comunidad de lectores, que reflexione, analice, discuta y valide (...) Una responsabilidad que la escuela también deberá asumir y un escenario que se presenta en construcción" (p. 11).

As mentioned above, a community of readers can be thought of as a context where both teachers and learners become active and committed participants. Nonetheless, it is worth considering at this point that a third element should come on the scene: the text.

We strongly believe that a community of readers might be defined as a *dialogical triad made up of teachers, students and text, which relate to each other in a dynamic interplay.* Within the confines of this community, teachers act as mediators in charge of forging bonds between learners and texts, as Archanco (2016) puts forward, "los maestros de la escuela (...) ayudan a construir puentes entre los alumnos y el mundo de los libros" (p. 13).

One of the cornerstones of the construction of a community of readers is collaboration, especially concerning its connection with meaning-making. Archanco (2016) claims that it might be deemed as a "campo de construcción de sentidos colectivos." The preeminence of collaboration is also addressed by Colomer (2014), who explains that such a community may be regarded as a space characterised by shared reading and communal discussions (p. 202).

In addition to its collaborative axis, a community of readers should rest upon a spirit of reciprocity. Cremin (2015) advocates the implementation of a pedagogy of mutuality, "where teachers recognise pupils' agency and build relationships to enhance learning so that the distribution of expertise in classrooms (...) shifts and pupils and teachers become self-regulating learners" (p. 40). As a result of bringing mutuality into the equation, a greater sense of equality might be guaranteed since both teachers and students turn into fellow participants who have the opportunity to share their own funds of knowledge (p. 54).

4.2 The community of readers as a dialogical triad

4.2.1 Teachers

If teachers are to serve as bridges between students and texts, then they should play the part of literary mediators. This concept has been thoroughly researched by a myriad of authors, who set out to explain the main features that characterise this role.

First and foremost, teachers who act as literary mediators have embarked on a reading journey and have gained considerable experience as readers themselves. In fact, it is their dual role as teachers and readers that proves to be a starting point to engage learners in the realm of books. Pétit (2016) firmly states, "Un mediador es un facilitador que, fortalecido por su propia experiencia, ha reconstituido un marco y una atmósfera susceptibles de volver la cultura escrita deseables" (p. 1). The two-fold function performed by teachers is also addressed by Cremin (2015), who speaks of Reading Teachers, i.e., teachers who read and readers who teach (p. 80).

In order to serve as effective literary mediators, teachers should not only reflect upon the reading itineraries they have followed, but they should also be knowledgeable about literature in general and their students' reading practices in particular. On the one hand, it has been demonstrated that those teachers that possess increased subject knowledge are more likely to promote a pedagogy that pivots around reading for pleasure. On the other hand, teachers should develop a growing awareness of their students' reading repertoires, since a greater familiarity with the range of texts that learners read at home is bound to have a profound effect upon the reading curriculum (The United Kingdom Literacy Association, 2007-2008, p. 2).

Most of the authors that have scrutinised the concept of literary mediators tend to turn the spotlight on the relevance of listening to students. Bajour (2009) makes reference to "hearing between the lines" and looks on listening as a pedagogic practice that teachers should implement if they intend to set up reading communities. In her view, listening proves to

be a highly dynamic activity: "Oír (...) supone intencionalidad, conciencia y actividad y no es sólo un registro pasivo y a veces distraído de los sonidos del otro" (Bajour, 2009, p. 2).

4.2.2 Students

Within the context of a community of readers, students are described by Cremin (2015) as "active participants in the shared social experience of reading" (p. 22). As teachers acknowledge their reading practices and validate their voices, learners are endowed with a higher degree of agency and autonomy. Learners' autonomy is further enhanced by raising awareness of their rights as readers. As a matter of fact, making students conscious of how they can exercise their rights is likely to nurture empowerment and turn them into engaged readers. According to Cremin (2015), these readers are those "who want to read, who choose to read and who find satisfaction in the process" (p. 10).

Building a community of readers may entail a reconsideration of how the curricula are designed and what role students are allotted there. Mottram and Collins (2015) stress the importance of "creating relevant, responsive and co-authored curricula that use children's local community and cultural experience as a starting point" (p. 36). Such curricula would not only focus on students' prior knowledge but they would also provide learners with a greater degree of participation.

4.2.3 Text

As we delve into the third component of the triad, one of the key points that comes into focus is the selection of the text. Bajour (2009) argues that choosing a particular text is of utmost importance because it has a dramatic effect upon the literary conversations that will follow - "el libro que elijamos contendrá las potencialidades de nuestra conversación" (p. 4). Moreover, such choice is believed to influence the pedagogical practice of listening - "En la selección de textos se inicia la escucha (...) La elección de textos potentes, abiertos, desafiantes (...) que provoquen preguntas, silencios, imágenes, gestos, rechazos y atracciones, es la antesala de la escucha" (Bajour, 2009, p. 2).

Cremin (2015) also advises teachers to reflect upon the criterion behind text selection as well as the need to opt for potent and engaging texts. Deciding on the canon, therefore, is anything but a minor task since it serves to forge the identity of a community: "Mediante la formulación del canon una comunidad define y legitima su propio territorio, creando y reforzando o cambiando una tradición" (Mignolo as cited in Duarte, 2011, p. 93).

As remarked before, an intimate connection is found between text and talk, which inevitably brings to the surface the social nature of reading. In fact, it is claimed that the literary conversations that stem from a text have a vital part to play within a community of readers. The benefits of text talk are analysed by Bajour (2009), who argues "Hablar de los textos es volver a leerlos" (p. 3) and by Cremin (2015), who points out that as learners are engaged in talking about texts, they are able to voice and exchange their thoughts, and listen to other people's insights, which fosters both metacognition and reflection (p. 77).

4.3 Steps to build a community of readers

If teachers are to shape a community of readers, following a string of key steps assumes cardinal importance. In the first place, it becomes necessary for teachers to reflect on their role as readers since, as was explained before, they are more likely to awaken a passion for literature in their students if they have appropriated the experience of reading themselves.

Secondly, teachers need to have a general picture of what students are reading as well as their reading habits. It is crucial to gather information about their students as readers so as to cater for their needs and interests: "To support children engagement in reading, arguably therefore teachers need to know about them as individuals and need to know about and be interested in what they are reading" (Cremin, 2014, p. 17). This will lead teachers not only to open up their perception of reading in the 21st century but it will also make them explore new textual territories and include them in their classes.

The following step resides in agreeing on the canon, which becomes a co-authored task as both teachers and learners have a say in the selection of texts. The element of choice is remarkably powerful: teachers no longer occupy the position of reservoirs of knowledge; conversely, the balance of power is tilted and students play a primary role in shaping the canon.

If teachers are determined to stimulate reading as a pleasant activity, then they should create a supportive environment, both physically and emotionally. With regard to the former, teachers should set up relaxing, cozy, attractive and well-stocked reading areas where the books are properly displayed and organised. (Jennett, 2016, p. 8-9). The value of an inviting physical environment needs to be accompanied by a supportive scaffold that fosters learners' motivation, self-esteem, engagement and autonomy as readers.

Drawing up the reading scheme lies at the heart of building a community of readers. It might be claimed that when teachers devise the scheme, four crucial questions must be responded to: "Where?", "When?", "How?" and "What?" It is the answers to those questions that will help all the participants get into the spirit of community.

The final step is based on conducting reflection upon the implementation of the community of readers. By assessing the community critically and obtaining feedback from students, it might be possible to brush up on those aspects that are in need of improvement.

4.4 The reading scheme at work

As was remarked in the previous section, devising a reading scheme entails answering four essential questions that will help to shape the community of readers.

To start with, teachers should inquire into the places **where** the students and the teacher will engage in reading. In fact, teachers should decide whether the reading sessions will be held within the classroom or in an alternative place. If teachers opt for the former, it

might be advisable to set up a social reading area which should be diverse, functional, supportive and stimulating. Firstly, this space should be organised in such a way that it can enable students to talk about books or read quietly if they want to. In order to make it relaxing, teachers can place cushions, chairs, sofas or tents in this area and they might decorate the walls with posters related to the books the students read, thus promoting "reading as a shared, social experience" (Jennett, 2016, p.8). The heart of this reading area should be the library, which could be static or movable, i.e, teachers could carry the books in boxes or trolleys (Harmer, 2007, p. 284). Nuttall (2005) also suggests having a sloping shelf running round the classroom, a freestanding book rack, a folding lockable library corner or hanging wall pockets.

On the other hand, teachers could contemplate having reading sessions in other places, such as outdoors, in a library or even in a bookshop. The main advantage of these areas is that they can give students the feeling that they are not taking part in a typical lesson, thus doing away with the long-standing marriage between books and classrooms. With regard to the library, it can make a big impact upon reading for pleasure due to the fact that it creates a sense of belonging among students, especially if they are assigned different roles in the running of the library (Jennett, 2016, p. 21). Holding reading sessions in a bookshop - or recreating a bookshop-style display in the classroom, for that matter - can also prove beneficial to students, since it might help them to develop book-choosing skills, such as thumbing through a book or analysing a book cover.

Replying to **when** proves just as important and exerts a substantial impact upon reader engagement. Teachers should not only decide which moment of the lesson will be devoted to reading, but they should also consider how long the period will be and how often the reading sessions will be held. Research has shown that "to be effective, sessions do not need to be long but they do need to be sustained and relatively frequent" (Jennett, 2016, p. 11).

Devoting a period of the lesson for independent reading is favoured by several authors. While Scrivener (2011) stresses the importance of "allowing sections of classroom time purely for students to read" (p. 268), Jennett (2016) claims that teachers should make quality time for independent reading since it "helps children develop their reading stamina - the will to read as well as the skill" (p.10).

With regard to answering **how**, teachers should ponder on the organization of the activities and the interaction patterns that will emerge, namely individual work, in pairs, in groups or as a whole class. Employing the right **interaction pattern** is a fundamental factor in the success of the community of readers as well as the achievement of the aims pursued by teachers. In addition to this, the interaction patterns selected have a profound effect on how students work collaboratively, help and learn from each other, make meaning together and feel more confident when making contributions.

Each type of interaction pattern has its own upsides. On the one hand, silent reading proves advantageous as it nurtures autonomy and choice, offers instant gratification and contributes to building students' self-image as readers (Colomer, 2014, p. 171). On the other hand, reading with others helps learners to enrich their understanding of texts and

strengthens the sense of belonging to a community of readers and promotes group cohesiveness among its members (p. 194).

The last question consists in answering **what**, that is to say, it focuses on deciding what reading activities and strategies will accompany the text on the grounds of the purpose that underpins them. It is worth mentioning at this point that all the activities should immerse students in the spirit of the community of readers.

To start with, if the goal centres on learning about out students' reading practices and preferences, teachers might work with reading rivers, reading logs, inventories or questionnaires, or bring-your-own-book events. In order to promote the social nature of reading, the activities and strategies may comprise organising a book week or a book-swap day, or creating book recommendation posters. Conversely, should the aim revolve around fostering the interpretation of the text, teachers might conduct activities such as hot seating, emotional journeys and freeze-frames.

5. Final reflections

In this paper, we have examined how literature can empower students considering the challenges the 21st century presents by means of building a community of readers within our classes. We strongly believe that this dialogical triad made up of teachers, students and texts can be effectively implemented following the six steps that we have proposed.

Within the confines of this community, students are afforded the opportunity to delve into potent texts and construct meaning collaboratively, which leads them to become autonomous, reflective and engaged readers. For that reason, setting up a community of readers might be regarded not only as an opening to lifelong learning, but also as groundwork for contributing to the development of learners who are likely to be literate in terms of 21st-century needs and challenges.

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11

Literature for students' ethical empowerment in ESP courses

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1. Introduction

In line with the curriculum design in most national universities, the main objective of the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses at the National University of Salta is the development of the students' reading competence to allow them access to the vast scientific international bibliography. Their syllabi are structured around different text types within the academic genre; and the learning and teaching processes developed – centered on authentic scientific texts – highlight the content of the information provided more than the text linguistic features. The criterion for the selection of texts takes into account the students' educational and professional interests, and the instruction is organized around a carefully scaffolded series of reading tasks, including pre-reading, vocabulary, grammar and comprehension activities. In this scenario, reflection upon ethical concerns related to the profession seems difficult to integrate in the course of study, although we strongly believe that devoting time to ethical issues through language input will have an impact on our students' future careers.

Literature for Specific Purposes is an approach which proposes the use of literary texts within the ESP context (Strong Hansen, 2018). Literary text features or aesthetic qualities are of secondary importance, and the text value lies on its content, which encourages discussion and dissent. Literature allows students to inhabit the life and the world of different people, develops their empathy and leads them to question assumptions about the predominant ways of thinking. In this paper, we advocate a place for literature within ESP methodology, and propose the use of carefully selected literary texts which address moral conflicts and professional controversies whereby the students' views are challenged.

2. Literature in ESP Courses: Two opposing concepts or an enhanced model?

At first sight, the terms *literature* and *ESP* seem to be mutually exclusive. The latter has traditionally been considered a pragmatic methodology which leaves no room for the inclusion of materials of an aesthetic or literary nature. In this line, Hirvela (1990) notices that literature

has not often been perceived in a fundamentally instrumental light within ELT. However, the possibility of reaching out beyond established boundaries to take in new sources of instructional material is part of the process of pedagogical growth. We strongly believe that a discussion of potential applications of literary texts within ESP methodologies might bring valuable consequences: it might strengthen ESP foundations by broadening its appeal through the introduction of more amenable methodologies.

ESP is frequently regarded as a rigid pedagogy that permits no deviation from materials and approaches which fulfil the exact linguistic requirements of learners and their target situations. However, Hutchinson and Waters (1987) observe that "ESP is not a particular kind of language or methodology, nor does it consist of a special type of teaching material" (p. 19). Therefore, any type of discourse is eligible as a teaching aid, as long as it contributes to the goal of the teaching objectives and sticks to the cardinal principle of learner-centred instruction.

Widdowson (1981) explains that an ESP course design will depend on its purposes, which can require occupational or technical training – demanding a greater specificity of schematic design – or may call for a more educational, less specific approach. The potential place of Literature in an ESP course is within the region where educational objectives are a priority. In this direction, Hirvela (1990) adds that literature should not be considered as the *focus* of more educationally based ESP courses, but it should play the role of a "handmaid" to the non-literary aims of the practical ESP pedagogy. If carefully selected and applied in accordance with the aims of ESP courses, literature can assist teachers in the pursuit of broader objectives.

In our university courses, the instrumental use of English is still the primary objective as students are required to develop reading comprehension skills in English in order to study their discipline-oriented subjects. In this sense, the courses seek to impart a restricted competence, training the learners in the linguistic characteristics of specific scientific or technical texts. We think, however, that literature may bring about a cross-curricular shift in dealing with both language and ethical empowerment within a particular scientific domain. The inclusion of literary texts, not on a regular basis but as a complimentary source, is seen as a way of encouraging humanistic enquiry in science, positing an increase of self-knowledge, knowledge of the world and knowledge of others. Our aim is not to deliver a moralizing discourse through literature but to sharpen the students' thinking and make them aware of new insights and choices. As J. Landy (2012) argues in his book *How to do things with fictions*, the function of the literary text is to fine-tune our mental capacities. What these texts give us is know-how rather than beliefs; they are not informative but formative. In other words, they teach us how to think, not what to think.

3. Why teach ethics in higher education

Ethics or moral philosophy involves a deep reflection on what is right and wrong behaviour. And even though there is no simple reply to what ethics is, it can be explained as the task of answering the question "What should I do?" Thus, it can be concluded that any kind of human activity requires a moral component. This assumption involves a call for teaching ethics in

higher education courses to equip students with the ethical sensitivity and insight needed in order to use their newly acquired knowledge in ways that would benefit not only themselves and their own personal development, but the society as well (Holland, 1990). Although ethical education played a central role in university courses in the past centuries (Annis, 1992), the on-going process of curriculum diversification and specialization, and the technical emphasis of professional schools have lately conspired to push moral reflection to the sidelines.

In most higher education institutions, the teaching of ethics is even seen as a highly controversial matter, subject to the danger of indoctrination. However, ethical reflection should not be regarded as a list of "do's" and "don'ts", but as a discussion on how to make good decisions that foster trust and commitment among professionals. The integration of moral debate into the English class might contribute to develop critical thinking. The debate should stimulate moral sensitivity, empathy, and caring towards people and their problems. It could help students become more open-minded, less dogmatic, and more tolerant and reflective.

4. Teaching ethics through literature

Designing, building and creating technologies that disrupt the natural balance can have harmful consequences on the world. The introduction of ethical issues through literary works like plays, short stories, novels or poems is most likely to raise the students' sensitivity towards a responsible and ethical professional practice and to foster their ethical thinking in everyday decision making. Literature enables us to talk about the others and their concerns. In this vein, Burton, Goldsmith and Nicholas (2018) claimed that "Fiction allows educators to reframe recognizable human situations and problems in terms of unfamiliar settings and technology" (p. 60). As put forward by philosopher Martha Nussbaum (1990), fiction

> frequently places us in a position that is both like and unlike the position we occupy in life; like, in that we are emotionally involved with the characters, active with them, and aware of our incompleteness; unlike, in that we are free of the sources of distortion that frequently impede our real-life deliberations (p.48).

Ethical reflections on fictional works or poetry provide new insights into situations that might not otherwise be thought of, thus empowering readers in very interesting and fundamental ways. Throughout their university courses, students gain knowledge to design projects and to carry them out. These projects can bring about great benefits or cause serious harm, as this "knowledge-empowerment is not necessarily accompanied by any wisdom on how to use it or how to channel it toward the beneficial side of the ethics equation" (Frey & Cruz, 2001). Therefore, there is a call for endowing our learners with ethical empowerment as well. Ethical empowerment concerns the morally responsible decisions taken by experts of different fields at the moment of carrying out a course of action to implement a program or a plan. Ethically empowered professionals will strategically design their projects with care and respect for the others.

Most university students are normally exposed to referential language—the type of "language which communicates on only one level, usually in terms of information being sought or given" (McRae, 1991, p.3). Therefore, the introduction of literary works in an ESP course will let them become acquainted with representational language—that variety of "language which, in order that its meaning potential be decoded by a receiver, engages the imagination of that receiver" (McRae, 1991, p.3), thus paving the way for the learners' involvement and imaginative appeal.

5. Selection Criteria of Literary Texts for ESP Courses

When introducing literature within the context of a scientific or professional discipline, Strong Hansen (2018) recommends that teachers should carefully choose the literary texts to meet the learning outcomes. As well as in ESP courses, the term 'specific' is key since all the activities are designed according to the learners' *specific* needs in the target situation. The two approaches differ in the texts that are selected: while ESP courses are structured on different text types within the academic genre (expository, instructional, argumentative texts), Strong Hansen (2018) highlights that Literature for Specific Purposes uses carefully selected works within the literary subgenres: poetry, fiction, nonfiction and drama. To target ethical dilemmas of the particular scientific domain, consultation with instructors within the discipline is recommendable. Once we have identified the scientific concern we want to address, we should select a text that will function as a *battleground* where different ways of living and thinking come into conflict, raising questions to which they give no answers, therefore inviting the readers to fill the gaps with their own responses.

Hirvela (1990) suggests the following selection criteria when introducing literature in ESP courses. Firstly, the language of the text should be comprehensible to the students. Moreover, its content should be interesting enough to capture their interest and imagination and be related to their discipline-oriented subjects. Finally, the text should be short enough to be taught within a reasonable time span as well as for the students to read without undue expenditure of time and effort.

Once the text has been chosen, activities should be designed so that they direct discussion to controversial issues in the professional field. Ideally, they should allow students to see plot events from the perspective of the text fictional characters, permitting a later transfer of discussion from the ethical situation in the text to ethical problems in the students' field (Strong Hansen, 2018)

6. From theoretical principles to practice

In order to endow students with the capacity to tackle literary material critically and ethically, they are asked to read and analyse poems and fictional works and to place themselves in the roles of professionals who make decisions, and in the roles of the individuals affected by those measures. This introspection upon the actions carried out in the situations depicted leads to a close scrutiny on ethical issues and requires impartial judgement to help decide whose interests will be taken into account when faced with a moral question.

In this section, two sample activities involving the introduction of literary texts in our ESP courses will be presented. It is important to point out that the language of instruction is Spanish; therefore, discussion is carried out in the students' mother tongue, facilitating debate and explanations.

6.1. Task 1

This is an example of a task designed for engineering students to reflect upon ethical issues about atomic energy. The poem dealt with, "How Dare We?" by David Krieger (2007), included in Appendix 1, was read in class as an extended activity after tackling a technical text on nuclear energy. Thus, it was integrated into the disciplinary content of the learners' academic field.

- *Pre-reading tasks*: The students' background knowledge is activated by making them discuss what led to the end of World War II on the Pacific coast, and its outcome. They also exchange ideas on other possible endings which might have been less devastating and with far less brutality.

- *Reading tasks*: Students read the poem. Focus on some linguistic features is directed: co-reference, the use of "–ing", subordinating clauses of time and the different uses of "so" in the poem.

- *Post-reading tasks:* Having read the poem, the students' attention is turned to the image (of free internet access) that we added to illustrate the poem. Then, they are asked if it strengthens the poem message and to reflect on the statement "we take what we want when we want". Do they agree with the author? Finally, they discuss the poet's possible intentions on writing those lines, and whether the poem has had an impact on them. As engineering students they are also led to debate upon the role of the scientists whose research permitted the construction of the atomic bomb, and whether a deeper sense of ethical awareness could contribute to a more humanistic professional practice in the long run.

6.2. Task 2

This activity has been designed to raise a discussion among agricultural engineering students on a controversial issue in their field: the role agriculture plays in climate change as one of the most important greenhouse gases contributors, and its potential in helping to offset the harmful effects of climate change and produce more resilient systems.

The literary text selected is an excerpt from science fiction writer K. S. Robinson's *New York 2140*, in which one of the characters describes his job as an inhabitant of underwater New York, after an eco-catastrophe took place due to global warming and climate change. Science fiction is particularly well suited to make students reflect on their responsibility, and to pose ethical questions to themselves and their work. The fantastic worlds and the futuristic

technology described in this literary sub-genre provide a starting platform for raising and exploring ethical concerns.

- *Pre-reading tasks*: The students' attention is directed to the book cover to make them guess which events could have led to the situation described: underwater New York in 2140. They are asked to imagine how people have adapted themselves to live in this new environment.

- *Reading tasks*: They read the text. Focus on some linguistic features is directed: simple past, active and passive voice; and the comparative.

- *Post reading tasks:* Having read the text, students are asked to discuss why the character says that sea levels are now measured to "an obsessive-compulsive degree" and what they think he means by "the traumas of the last century" and "the distinct possibility of future traumas". In pairs, they discuss some controversial aspects that might have led to the situation depicted, like deforestation, the use of pesticides and fertilizers, and whether more environmentally friendly agricultural practices would result in lower crop yields, meaning inevitable food shortages.

7. Conclusion

The introduction of Literature for Specific Purposes is a proposal to bridge the gap between the sciences and the humanities. Through the exploration of literary texts in an ESP course, science and technology students can develop both sides of human nature: the more analytical one when tackling texts of their academic field, and their compassionate and moral facet when developing empathic standpoints with fictional characters. It is expected that the humanization of education in professional settings will pave the way for a more enlightened attitude and a true commitment towards mutual understanding and cooperation among scientists, policy makers and the average citizen. As stated by Sarah Dillon (2018) "literature influences science as much as science influences literature" (p. 311). Literature for Specific Purposes, as Strong Hansen (2018) points out, serves as a means "to facilitate the transfer of the ideas raised by literary texts to ethical issues in their [the students'] discipline" and to connect "ethical dilemmas to the practical, real-world ethical problems that the students are likely to face in their careers" (p. 341). In this way, undergraduate education will form students that are not only knowledge-empowered, but ethically empowered as well.

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Appendix 1

How Dare We?

We move so deliberately from the light

into dark shadows, becoming machines

of death, well-oiled, jolting ahead.

We turn our young men into gears, destroying

their human qualities as they, in their sameness,

Hiroshima after the atomic bomb [Digital image]. (2018).
Retrieved from
http://www.teinteresa.es/mundo/Hiroshima-bomba-atomica_1_532757369.html

roll over what stands before them.

We are mighty, so we take what we want

when we want, believing there is no accounting.

We build bombs instead of schools, substituting

brutality for beauty. The edifice of civilization

cracks as we destroy its cradle.

How dare we remain silent when our decency

is being looted before our eyes?

(David Krieger)

Appendix 2

Introduction

Over the course of his career, K. Robinson has written some of the best known works of science fiction: *Red Mars, 2312,* and *Aurora*. The following is an excerpt from his latest novel, *New York 2140*, in which Robinson takes a look at the future of the planet and the changes civilization needs to make in order to survive.

Excerpt

"I started the day as always, with a giant mug of cappuccino and a review of the closing markets in East Asia, and the midday markets in Europe. … On my screen was displayed all the parts of the global mind most concerned with drowned coastlines, my area of expertise. … At pride of place in the center of my screen was a Planet Labs map of the world with sea levels indicated to the millimeter by real-time satellite laser altimetry. Higher sea levels than the average for the previous month were shaded red, lower areas blue, gray for no change. Every day the colors shifted, marking the water's slopping around under the pull of the moon, the push of prevailing currents, the sweep of the winds, and so on. This perpetual rise and fall now got measured to an obsessive-compulsive degree, understandable given the traumas of the last century and the distinct possibility of future traumas. Sea level had for the most part stabilized after the Second Pulse, but there was still a lot of Antarctic ice teetering on the brink, so past performance was no guarantee of future anything."

(K. S. Robinson)

12

I Am Malala: A story of core skills and empowerment

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1. Introduction

With the advent of novel technologies, learners must face certain challenges and demands if they are to be fully prepared for today's world needs. Hence the implementation of Core Skills in literature can pave the way for equipping learners with the necessary tools to become global citizens. In this paper, we will delve into different literary versions of Malala Yousafzai's story to show how literature can act as a springboard for student empowerment.

2. Challenges and global citizenship

The 21st century poses a series of challenges, some of which are brought about by the introduction of new technologies. These demands range from interconnectedness, rapid interaction, vast networks and globalization, industrialization, population growth, migration, global warming, poverty and increased inequalities.

In the face of those challenges, we should reflect on our role as educators and bear in mind that "our responsibility is to prepare every young person for their future in the best possible way" (Beall, 2015, p. 3). Although the acquisition of knowledge remains of vital importance, it becomes imperative to help students become global citizens. Developing global citizenship is believed to consist of three main pillars which are deeply interrelated: engaging critically with the world around us, making responsible contributions at a local and global level and shaping the future for ourselves and our future generations (Beall, 2015, p. 3).

3. Core skills, empowerment and literature

In order to rise up to the challenges presented by the 21st century, the British Council recommends the implementation of six Core Skills, namely critical thinking and problem solving, collaboration and communication, citizenship, creativity and imagination, digital literacy and student leadership and personal development. These skills, which are defined by

the British Council as "new ways of thinking, working and living in the 21st century'', can be considered to be "the essential skills that young people need to be fully prepared for life and work in a global economy".

It might be argued that a strong bond links the Core Skills and the concept of empowerment since the former might be conducive to the emergence of the latter.

As Fullan and Langworthy (2013) remark,

> We need our learning systems to encourage youth to develop their own visions about what it means to connect and flourish in their constantly emerging world, and equip them with the skills to pursue those visions. (p. 2)

This notion, which is known as *deep learning*, aims for the development of the skills that students need in order to be collaborative and creative decision makers as well as happy and healthy human beings who are capable of making positive contributions to the world.

If the Core Skills can be deemed as the vehicle by means of which learner empowerment can be nurtured, then literature might serve as favourable ground where the Core Skills can be implemented. The main reason is that literature can have a dramatic impact on students' growth as it helps them unleash their potential and it endows them with a voice of their own. Colomer (2014) centres on the formative itinerary that literature has to offer and explains why it can function as a catalyst for empowerment. Apart from broadening narrative knowledge and expanding personal experience, literature enables learners to engage in a process of continuous meaning-making. Moreover, it plays a crucial role in deepening students' understanding of the world and fostering intercultural communicative competence.

4. Reading plan

With the aim of making use of the Core Skills in literature, we have adapted the reading scheme devised by Nuttall (2005), which provides some guidance on how to plan a text-based lesson.

The steps that must be followed are depicted below:

1. Create a motivational hook: Teachers should provide an engaging and inspiring start to the lesson that sparks students' imagination and interest in the topic.

2. Introduce the text: In order to awaken curiosity in the text and show its relevance to the class, it is advisable for teachers to draw out the introductions from their students.

3. Set a top-down task: The purpose of this step lies in helping students get a global impression of the kind of text it is as well and the way in which it is organised.

4. Break up the text and tackle it section by section: It is believed that breaking up the text proves advantageous since it is easier to hold students' interest and work more thoroughly on shorter sections.

5. Assign tasks requiring response to the text as a whole: After completing section-by-section analysis, teachers could assign tasks drawing together information from the detailed study and including the contribution that each part makes to the overall message of the text.

6. Hold a report-back session and a final discussion: To round off the sequence, teachers and students conduct some reflection upon the reading process as well as the takeaways emerging from the text they have worked on.

5. Literary texts

In order to implement the reading scheme described above, we have decided to explore several texts stemming from Malala Yousafzai's story since she is a leading figure with regard to the fight for girls'education and equal rights.

The versions that we have selected comprise: *Malala's Magic Pencil* (suitable for children), *Malala: My story of Standing Up for Girls' Rights* (which caters for adolescents) *and I am Malala,* which can be used with advanced teenage learners as well as students at teacher training colleges.

As Figure 1 below shows, we have devised a colour code with the aim of specifying which Core Skills are developed in each stage of the reading scheme.
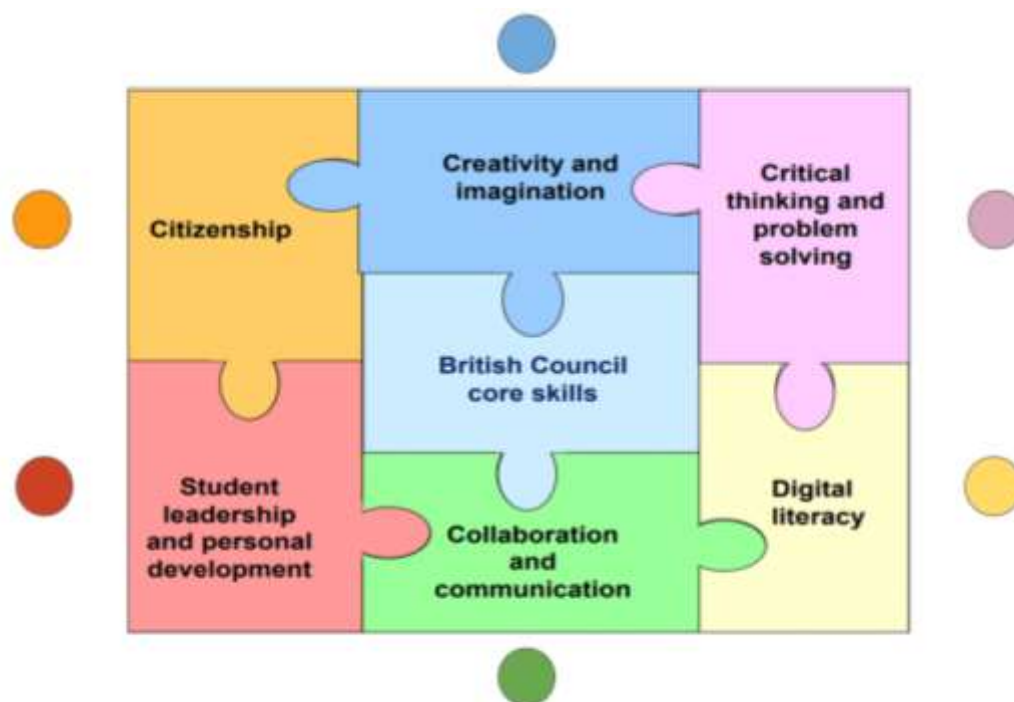
6. The reading plan into practice

In this section, we propose some activities that can be conducted in each of the steps of the reading scheme, for each of the texts that has been selected, with the objective of fostering the development of the Core Skills.

Step 1: Create a motivational hook

Malala's Magic Pencil	*Malala: My Story for Standing Up for Girls' Rights*	*I Am Malala*
Students answer the question: *"Do you believe in magic?"*. The teacher introduces the idea of a magic pencil that can bring to life whatever they draw with it. Students make their own drawings and share them with their classmates.	Students express their views on the following quotation: *"When the whole world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful"*. Then they discuss the questions below: Have you ever felt that your voice was not heard? Why? What happened? How did you react?	Students hold a debate based on the Ted Talk: "We should all be feminists" (by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie). Students are divided into two teams and each one is assigned a position (either for or against), which they defend by providing solid arguments.

Step 2: Introduce the text

Malala's Magic Pencil	Malala: My Story for Standing Up for Girls' Rights	I Am Malala
Students watch a video in which Malala talks about the book she has written for children: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aIb7J_SIldg As they watch the video, they react to it by picking up the emoji card that best describes their feelings.	Students watch the I am Malala **official movie trailer**. They are given **puzzle pieces**, where they will write words/phrases related to Malala. Then, all the puzzle pieces will be put together so that students get an overall picture of who Malala is. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vE5gSHJkusU	Students watch an **interview with Malala** in *The Ellen Show* and mention what has drawn their attention about the following topics: - Malala's life - Malala's ideals - Malala's family - Education around the globe https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A6Pz9V6LzcU

Step 3: Set a top-down task

Malala's Magic Pencil	Malala: My Story for Standing Up for Girls' Rights	I Am Malala
Students look at the **cover** of the book and answer these questions: How would you describe Malala? What is she doing? What comes out of her pencil? In your opinion, why has she chosen those pictures	Students are given the titles of the parts that the book is divided into. They **order the titles** and account for their choice. Then they take a look at their books and check their predictions. On the basis of the title, students predict what each part might be about.	Students have a few minutes to skim the prologue and write down on a slip of paper **five words** that catch their attention. Students team up in groups of 4 and predict what the story might be about taking into account the words they have written.

Step 4: Break up the text and tackle it section by section

Following Wolfang Iser's *phenomenological theory*, which places special emphasis on readers' responses to a text, we suggest implementing story reading of *Malala's Magic Pencil* and breaking up the text at crucial points in the narrative. Teachers could ask questions that take into account students' reactions to the story and focus on anticipation, retrospection, picturing and imagination.

Malala's Magic Pencil
The teacher reads the story in class and divides the text into sections.   *At the end of each section, he/she asks questions that take into account students' response to the text.*   1. **Anticipation:** Do you think that the magic pencil will appear in Malala's bedroom?   2. **Retrospection:** Why do you think she wished for a magic pencil when she was younger? Why doesn't she long for one any more?   3. **Picturing**: What do you think these girls are like? Are they similar or different to Malala?   4. **Identification**: Have you ever felt like Malala? What other things make you feel sad?

With regard to *Malala: My Story for Standing Up for Girls' Rights* and *I Am Malala*, we propose taking into consideration the concept of signpost questions. In their book *Notice & Note: Strategies for Close Reading*, Beers and Probst (2012) explain that signposts guide students throughout the text since they help them to stop reading, notice something in the text and reflect on what it might mean.

According to Beers and Probst (2012), six types of signposts can be identified, each of which can give rise to a question.

1. Contrast and contradictions: They can be perceived in characters or in situations.

2. Aha moment: They describe a character's epiphany or realization of something that brings about some kind of change.

3. Tough questions: They are posed by the characters and they are a telltale sign of their inner struggles.

4. Words of the wiser: They refer to pieces of advice given by an older and wiser character, usually to the main character.

5. Again and Again: They are related to images, words or events that pervade the text.

6. Memory moments: They imply a recollection provided by a character that interrupts the flow of the text.

Malala: My Story for Standing Up for Girls' Rights

*The text is divided into sections and **signpost questions (SPQ)** are devised for each section.*

Contrast & Contradictions: How do the contrasts between Malala's life in Swat Valley and her life in Birmingham help us understand the character?

Tough question: Malala wonders what her life would have been like following the code of purdah. How might this change things? (p.16)

Words of the wiser: Malala's father tells her not to worry as he will protect her freedom. He encourages her to carry on with her dreams. How might this life lesson affect Malala? (p.25)

Aha moment: Malala tells her parents she would never cover her face with a burka like other girls. How might this change her story? (p.16)

Again and again: God is mentioned several times in the story. Why might the author bring this up again and again?

Memory moment: Malala recalls the moment when school first reopened. Why do you think this memory might be important? (p. 91)

The text is divided into sections and **signpost questions (SPQ)** are devised for each section.

Contrast & Contradictions: How was Malala treated when she was born? And which influence does this have in her life? (Chapter 1)

Tough questions: Malala wonders if she will be able to overturn the destruction brought about by Fazlullah. What does this question make me wonder about? (p. 131)

Words of the wiser: When Malala asks her father why the Taliban don't want girls to go to school, he replies, "They are scared of the pen". How might this life lesson affect Malala? (p. 110)

Aha Moment: When the Taliban withdraw children from going to school, Malala becomes aware of the importance of education. How might this change things?

Again and Again: The concept of purdah is mentioned several times throughout the story. Why might the author bring this up again and again? (p. 136)

Memory moment: At one point, Malala retells her father's first speech. Why do you think this memory might be important? (Chapter 2)

Step 5: Assign tasks requiring response to the text as a whole

Malala's Magic Pencil	*Malala: My Story for Standing Up for Girls' Rights*	*I Am Malala*
Students are divided into groups of four and create a **campaign poster** to help raise awareness of Malala's fight for education and equality. They think of a slogan, organise the layout and choose pictures to include.	Students work in teams of four. They compare and contrast the text with the trailer of the animated series **Burka Avenger** by means of a Venn diagram. After that, they create an animated trailer of the book.	Students are split into small groups. They hold a debate on the differences and similarities between *I am Malala* with a section of the **comic Persepolis (The Veil)**. Then they create a comic based on Malala and use our country as the setting.

Step 6: Hold a report-back session and a final discussion

Malala's Magic Pencil	*Malala: My Story for Standing Up for Girls' Rights*	*alala*
Students reflect on the text and their feelings towards it: After reading *Malala's Magic Pencil,* how do you feel about her story? What have you learnt? Do you find her story inspirational? Why?	Teacher asks yes-no questions to reflect upon the story and students step on the line if their answer is "yes". Those who have stepped forward are invited to expand on their answers and share their views.	Students reflect upon the story and express their thoughts and feelings by creating a work of art (sculpture, poem, drawing, song, etc). They share their creations with their classmates and account for their work.

7. Final reflections

In this paper, we aimed at providing a deeper insight into the close relationship between 21st-century challenges and the overriding need to nurture learner empowerment by means of the implementation of the six Core Skills in literature. We have also explored how the development of deep learning skills proves to be a must for young people so that they are able to cope with today's multifaceted world and make a mark in society both at present and in the future. Embracing the implementation of the Core Skills entails going beyond knowledge and becoming aware of the competencies and values that students need to turn into empowered and critical citizens. If our mission as teachers is to unlock students' potential and help them attain global citizenship, then it is our role as educators to acknowledge 21st-century challenges and work towards our students' compelling needs.

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13

Critical place pedagogy through tween literature: Educating the gaze to transform spaces into places

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1.Introduction

Literary texts can be actively used in class to facilitate not only critical but also spatial thinking skills (CSTS, 2006). The spatial turn (Arias & Warf, 2008) and its implications have revolutionised the educational arena, making it essential for schools to work hands-on towards the development of a *politics of location* which "ultimately encourages teachers and learners to reinhabit their places, to pursue the kind of social action that improves the social and ecological life of places" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 7). Therefore, teachers interested in fostering students' thinking spatially are welcoming the contributions by human geographers who offer a critique of *space* (Yi Fu Tuan, 1977) and *place* (Cresswell, 2004) to facilitate their students' enquiring into how mere territories, landscapes or buildings can be transformed into meaningful places.

Within ELT, literature classes can play a key role to empower learners to develop a *sense of place and mobility* through critical and empathic reading so that they can eventually transform their own environments to achieve intercultural mediation and inclusion. Hands-on work with literature from a very young age is vital to raising students' awareness about exclusion as represented in literary texts. This will also facilitate their critical reflection on the very *situationality* of the characters at stake and their own potentiality to (re)inhabit space or lost places.

If framed within *Critical Place Pedagogy,* language and literature classes can contribute to developing a reading stratagem challenging learners to 'read the texts out there' so as "to read into our own lives, and to ask constantly what needs to be transformed and what needs to be conserved" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 10) at the core of their own social systems. This is vital to raising learners' awareness about "places as social constructions filled with ideologies, and about the fact that the experience of places shapes cultural and individual identities" (Ibid, p. 12). Active work with literature within the framework of *Critical Place Pedagogy* also enables learners to spatially read themselves into the text and to learn outward, critically thinking

about the construction of home, school, neighbourhood, community and beyond. This will ideally lead learners to "reflect upon their own situationality and act upon it to live well socially and ecologically" (Ibid, p. 14). Place-conscious education encourages teachers and students "to re-inhabit their places, and to pursue the kind of inquisitive/critical/ reflective/ empathic action that improves social and ecological life" (Sobel, 1993, p. 19).

This paper will, therefore, explore the potential of two *tween* picture books –*Eric* (2010) by Australian writer/illustrator Shaun Tan and *Intercambio Cultural* (2000) by Argentinian writer/illustrator Isol-- to read into the strong bond between spatial resignification and identity reconfiguration. This paper will also reflect on the value of combining spatial theories with place-based education to re-educate the gaze of both learners and teachers to think spatially, and to develop more empathic readings about people's situationality. This approach will ultimately empower them to "construct a narrative of collective identity and possible transformation" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 5) and to take action to contribute to the development of socio-ecological, place-conscious educational environments.

2. Contextualisation and problematisation: Teaching literature within the fourth turn

David Gruenewald (2004), expert in place-conscious education, locates spatial and visual thinking at the top of critical thinking skills, since they endow learners with the capacity to achieve the highest form of evaluative thinking. Gruenewald poses that education should seek new pedagogical pathways to cater for spatial thinking skills and to offer diverse perspectives on place to demonstrate the profoundly pedagogical nature of human experience with places. Now, what does the spatial turn imply and how can teachers contribute to change?

Anthropologists sustain that social systems are currently undergoing a fourth turn, *the spatial turn* (Arias & Warf, 2008). The first turn, also known as the postmodernist turn, is set about the 1960s, and is characterised by the 'fall of the grand narratives' (Lyotard, 1979) and the resignification of centres of meaning. In our discipline, this is particularly evidenced in the representation of literary texts that expose how 'the norm' and the Manichean centre/periphery construction are increasingly challenged. The second turn, known as the decolonial turn, is characterised by the inscription of dynamic de-centring/re-centring processes, which contribute to making formerly marginalised cultures and subjects visible. In our field, this is specifically represented in literatures that inscribe difference. The third turn is known as the intercultural turn, characterised by the acceptance of difference and the dynamic interplay between cultures. In literature this shows in texts that deal with issues of cultural hybridity and transculturation. The fourth turn is known as the material turn and is characterised by a resignification of space. Edward Soja (1996), drawing on from spatial theories by Foucault (1986) and Lefevre (1991), specifically refers to the spatial turn. He points to a new world in the making, with blurring spatial and geographical boundaries, with traveling cultures leading to spatial resignifications and cultural reconfigurations. This is especially represented in our contemporary, post-billennial literatures of home-coming, of return to the lost space, of new worlds in the making. So the question is: which theoretical rationales can educators draw from to contribute to place-consciousness? How can teachers read for diverse

perspectives on spatiality and empower learners to understand how characters in the literary text and individuals in the world construct their identity around place?

3. Theoretical framework

3.1. Spatial theories in the literature class

So which set of spatial theories could be instrumental to teachers willing to develop spatial-sensitive perspectives? Putting together a theoretical framework to analyse *space, place, mobility* and *situationality* could be an interesting point of entry. Educators may find human geographer Yi Fu Tuan's theories (1977) useful, since he differentiates space from place. *Space,* as opposed to place, is a physical point, which bears no specific (cultural) meaning and may thus offer itself a site of freedom and venture. Humans might interact with it and even migrate through it, but space will bear no specific value or meaning unless they identify with it in some way. To Yi Fu Tuan, *place* **is** the highly subjective set of feelings and impressions that individuals attach to specific locales. Places are intangible webs of meaning, not simply physical points. Places are meaningful spaces, permeated with feelings of identity, attachment and belonging, since it is precisely a sense of place what makes a house into a home, makes a church into a building with deeply religious meanings. David A. Gruenewald (2004), expert in place-based education, delves into the foundations of place proposing five dimensions or categories of analysis to a critical approach to place that can exploited at the core of the literary text: (a) the perceptual, (b) the sociological, (c) the ideological, (d) the political and (e) the ecological. These categories can be useful to guiding our learners' critical reading of the multiple layers that constitute any given place.

Tim Cresswell (2004) further contributes to a critical analysis of place by means of analysing its dynamics. He defines *mobility* as the ability of people to move from one location to another so that they can resignify themselves. This involves people's being focused on a particular destination and being driven by a particular motivation. Cresswell (2010) also points to *constellations of mobility* in that they provide us with a structured sense of the ways in which spatial movement, meaning and practices are related to each other. Throughout most of human history, the mobility of people has remained essentially unchanged. Yet within postmodern societies, mobility has changed quite dramatically, creating both a host of opportunities and problems for social and ecological systems. This has been particularly represented in literature, especially as from the spatial turn, given that texts have inscribed geographical displacement, cultural dislocation and identity reconfiguration, with a particular focus on what mobility means to those moving and to those around them; with a special interest in how movement is acted or experienced, and above all, who (re)constructs the narrative of mobility, given the strong bond between space, place and subjectivity.

Theoretical frameworks sensitive to spatial problematics can work very well in our classes with positive effects on critical and literary analysis. However, the pedagogical implications of place-conscious education go well beyond the exploration of the spatial issues represented in the literary text and directly engage teachers with helping students deepen empathic connections and expand their possibilities for learning outward. This is when *Critical*

Place Pedagogy becomes particularly relevant to us. How has this pedagogy come into being and how may it contribute to our classes?

3.2. Critical place pedagogy

The formative value *of Critical Place Pedagogy* is that it results from the coalescence between *Critical Pedagogy* and *Place-based Education* and it nurtures the two-fold objective of cultural decolonisation and ecological re-inhabitation. Critical Place Pedagogy draws from the main tenets of Critical Pedagogy, and how it envisions reading as a transformational practice. Critical pedagogues such as Freire (1998), Giroux (2005) and McLaren (2003) sustain that literacy should contribute to "transforming systems of human oppression and allowing individuals to challenge notions taken for granted, or even naturalised, in the dominant culture" (Giroux, 2005, p. 35). Within this perspective, active work with literature should enable learners to decode 'texts' that represent their own concrete situated experiences, and ideally engage them in understanding their *situationality* so that they can eventually act upon it.

Critical Place Pedagogy also draws on from the main tenets of Place-based Education, which carries forward a cultural critique of ecological and social systems and foregrounds the cultural signifiers that need to be preserved to live well in our own environments. Place-based pedagogues such as Sobel (1998), Bowers (2001) and Gruenewald (2003, 2004) foreground the importance of fostering educative experiences that invite the exploration of the characteristics of the places that individuals inhabit and empathy for the way in which they dwell within such environments. Critical-place experts highlight the value learning *from* and *about* places, since critical spatial thinking empowers readers (in this case our learners) to read the texts of their own lives and to ask constantly what needs to be "transformed and what needs to be preserved" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 10).

In line with these Anglo-American pedagogues, Latin American pedagogues Lucía Parra Mendoza and Arturo Bastidas Delgado compile a set critical spatial studies and highlight the importance of helping young learners bond with their quotidian spaces within the framework of what they label *Pedagogía de la Sensibilidad* (2016). These experts foreground the key role of literature and creativity as key resource materials for a pedagogy that resorts to empathy for learners to reflect on and solve every-day-life problems as represented in the literary text so that they can eventually associate them to their own socio-cultural and individual circumstances, and resignify themselves. These pedagogues propose working hands-on with a curriculum which allows the learner to read critically into home, neighborhood, school and community, and their mechanisms of exclusion and intolerance, at the same time as "they sensibly read for different spaces of enunciation and new modes of signification also inscribed in the literary text and which empower learners to communally construct spaces of social interpellation and reconstruction" (Parra Mendoza & Bastidas Delgado, 2016, p. 11, our translation). Latin American pedagogue Carlos Skliar in "Otherness and Pedagogy: what if the other were not there?" (2002) contributes by proposing a pedagogy in which students learn to read into the space and places of others so as to understand the extent to which "their own spatiality is always constructed with *an other*" (Ibid, p.90, my translation). Skliar proposes a reading stratagem in which learners identify how characters are framed by those spaces which are "fixed, made up, shared or irreconcilable" and yet they can "negotiate their identity, history and narrative in a space of alterity and difference" (p.110-112). Skliar advocates in

favour of a "pedagogy of perplexity" (p. 117) and perspectivism, in obvious allusion to Hopenhayn (2000), which encourages learners to be drawn to the other and their different modes of signification and universes of meaning.

4. Activating the literary text to develop critical spatial thinking skills

Since these critical, spatial and empathic pedagogies suggest that teachers should contribute from their disciplines so that the curriculum can, thus, "mirror the expanding scope of the child's significant world" (Sobel, 1996, p. 19), this section thematically explores *home* as a space, a place and a potential site for mobility and the resignification of situationality. To such end, we illustrate our argument with two *tweeners* (readers targeting children aged between 9 and 12) to reflect on how we can activate place-consciousness in our classes from a very young age. Therefore, we explore *Eric,* by Australian writer/illustrator Shaun Tan (2010) and *Intercambio Cultural* by Argentinian writer/illustrator Marisol Misenta (2000), also known as Isol, to develop critical spatial thinking skills.

In both cases, we propose a reading experience in which learners critically explore the text to identify: 1) the characteristics of spaces, 2) the situationality/mobility of the characters and 3) the ways of conceiving places that harm individuals. This critical reading process paves the way for learners to inquire into what needs to be "transformed and what needs to be preserved" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 10) at the core of the literary text, and to reflect on whether individuals can re-inhabit places or live better in their total environments. In a further stage, learners work on empathic activities that allow them to develop a new form of perspectivism over the situationality of others. Learners can ultimately make the most of this chance to learn outward and to reflect on whether the text exposes, interpellates or resignifies their own social realities.

4.1. Appropriating spatial notions in the literature class

Eric by Shaun Tan lends itself for critical spatial analysis and allows teachers and learners to apply multiple theoretical frameworks and go beyond. The text allows our young learners to be aligned with a child/narrator who hosts a foreign-exchange student whose name the family cannot pronounce and conveniently calls 'Eric'. The family redecorates their spare room to welcome their guest. However, as the narrative unfolds, Eric would rather spend time and even sleep in their kitchen pantry, which the mother regards as "a cultural thing" (p. 2). Eric also curiously inquires into the new world he is dwelling in, which interestingly enough is the child/narrator's *home*. Eric offers a de-familiarised view of the objects, customs and behaviors that the child has naturalised, paving the way for a constant resignification of life as the child narrator knows it. The turning point in the narrative happens as Eric unexpectedly departs one evening leaving the family with nothing but a deconstructed kitchen pantry transformed into a unique room filled with light, warmth and coziness. The pantry now treasures the special tiny mementos that Eric had gathered as he explored green spaces, the neighborhood, the community; all of them put to new use and to new effects on perceivers. Eric has taught the family to reinhabit space. "It the first thing we show any new visitors to our home … It must be

a cultural thing" (p. 33), the mother once again remarks, evidencing that they have resignified the place.

In Yi Fu Tuan's terms (1977), Eric experiences "*space* as a site of venture and freedom", as he "rests his inquisitive eyes" there and intervenes a forgotten or abandoned space, allowing the family to appropriate the room and make a "meaningful *place*". According to Grunewald (2004), Eric makes visible "new dimensions of place" at the core of home and has the narrator/child grow aware of how little the family has inhabited all the spaces available to them. Indeed, as pointed out by Cresswell (2010), it is Eric's *mobility* that allows the family to resignify their gaze and the child to own and inscribe a family narrative of how the whole is more than the addition of its parts. Eric empowers the family to act upon their own *situationality* "since acting on one's situation often corresponds to changing one's relationship to a place" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 9).

Teachers and learners may also metaphorically read Eric as a critical place pedagogue who points to 'what needs to be transformed and what needs to be preserved' at the core of home. Furthermore, Eric creates a new place for the family, the vivid pantry, and teaches them that "place is a response to gloom and doom" (Sobel, 1996, p. 10) and promotes a pedagogy of sensitivity and perplexity that allows a family to re-inhabit from a new frame of mind and standpoint. In Hopenhayn's words (2000), Eric allows the family to nurture a new form of perspectivism that allows them to return to themselves after having inhabited the look of the others.

To further develop empathic and spatial thinking skills, learners can read themselves into the text, and connect the text to lived experience. This involves learners working with 'The Erics in *my* life' and considering issues of space, place, mobility and situationality pertaining to themselves, always considering, as critical place pedagogy puts it, "what needs to be transformed and what needs to be preserved" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 10) at home. Learners may want to work individually in their own portfolios, journals or diaries, or work in pairs and take it in turns to interview each other to delve into "who has been *your* Eric?" The literary text may operate as a valuable trigger for learners to insightfully think about how the gaze or presence of others have empowered them to acquire a new form of perspectivism to see life with fresh eyes, to re-appropriate place and even to resignify themselves.

4. 2. Reading for space across texts and cultures

Critical spatial thinking skills empower students to read interculturally and to learn more about themselves and their culture. Teachers can make the most of the literary text to intertextually work with local authors and cultural concerns. The text by Shaun Tan will then work very well with *Intercambio Cultural* (2000) by Isol, which also explores *home* and allows learners to critically read into *space, place, mobility* and *situationality*.

The picture book *Intercambio Cultural* opens with the striking image of a very couch potato Julito where both protagonist and TV are foregrounded, and the child appears to be entrapped in a lifeless space. Julito is somewhat tempted by a TV commercial to join a cultural exchange program that turns out to be a surreal invitation to cross to the animal world. By the

same token, Julito's cultural exchange becomes a playful occasion to improve friendship and understanding with another species: an elephant from Africa, Bombo, who comes to Julito's place to literally watch TV, while Julito vividly undergoes true-to-life African experiences.

If we compare and contrast places and mobility at the core of Julito and Bombo's changing perspectives and experiences, as they swap homes, we soon notice how *mobility* affects them differently in terms of their relationship with the new *space*. In Yi Fu Tuan's (1977) words, for Julito and Bombo, the new space is initially presented as 'venturous', as opposed to the customariness, or the 'safety' of home. Indeed, in Cresswell's terms (2010), it is very clear how mobility stands as the possibility of transformation of the self, place and above all situationality. While Bombo spends a whole week confined in Julito's TV room, Julito explores multiple scenarios, learns how to dive into streams and swim in rivers, how to mount on animals' backs, and how to endlessly interact with nature.

Bombo only wastes his time but also misses the chance to own the city, to turn space into place, while Julito, in Yi Fu Tuan's terms, is '"endow[ing] [Africa] with meaning' (Tuan, 1977, p. 6). In fact, the text inscribes a paradox worth exploring with learners. In the case of Julito, the idea of mobility comes from within TV, the very element that initially freezes and alienates him. That is a concrete example of how individuals can intervene their own situationality from within and achieve the resignification of space by means of decolonising the gaze or the frame of mind. Julito eventually returns home to his tattered green sofa and TV and a coach-potatoed Bombo who would not return home for fear of missing any episode. Julito is instantly drawn to a cool documentary on the jungle on TV but he soon falls asleep, since he had already 'seen' it. Africa has now become a place of his own.

Learners can easily relate to Julito's life-changing experience and delve into what has been transformed and what has been preserved. Yet, Bombo's transformational journey stands as a gap in the text. Learners might intervene the ending by means of exploring what Bombo may critically read into his own chatter-box experience. They may even choose to have Bombo truly experience Argentina, or even have Bombo tamper with the TV room following Shaun Tan's appropriation of the pantry by Eric.

4. 3. Reading outward and reading into the self

Within Critical Place Pedagogy, learners may be asked to empathically relate to the characters in the text and to make the most of the experience to read outward. As a post-reading activity, learners may take it in turns to hot-seat characters and to compare and contrast the experiences of moving from one space to another and transforming space into place. Through a wealth of critical and creative tasks, learners can also be led to reflect on the routines that they have naturalised at home, spot those habits that they should move away from or discuss what cultural change or exchange they would like to venture.

Eric by Shaun Tan and *Intercambio Cultural* by Isol foreground the importance of meeting other cultures and how the experience of and *with* others can contribute to resignifying the self and the multiple dimensions of place. We have experienced the instrumental and formative use of tweeners when tackled from spatial notions-- *space, place,*

constellations of mobility and *situationality*—and from a concrete thematic approach –in this case *home*. Furthermore, from a reading stratagem proposed by Critical Place Pedagogy, we have delved into 'what needs to be transformed and what needs to be preserved' regarding the issues represented in the literary text as well as outward concerns of the learner and their social and ecological environments.

5. Towards place-conscious curricula

A critical pedagogy of place ultimately invites educators to think about how the critical study of places can become part of how the curriculum is organised and conceived (Harvey, 2001). Place-based education further challenges teachers to reflect on whether teacher education programs have prepared them to create curricula designed to help learners deepen empathic connections to others and sensitivity to spatial issues (Henderson & Nobel, 2008; Orr, 1992). Critical place pedagogues urge educators across levels to ask themselves whether their teaching plans and reading lists can cater for this dimension. Sobel (1996) suggests providing children, adolescents and adults with guided experiences to understand that being in a situation bears spatial, geographical and contextual dimensions and to critically and empathically connect with place. Which texts can further engage our students across levels to work hand-on with *space*, *place, mobility and situationality*?

The picture book *No Place like Home* (2007), from the collection "Mole and Friends", written by Jonathan Emmett and illustrated by Vanessa Caban, works very well with primary schoolers and is an instrumental reader to initiate very young learners into "cultural decolonisation and ecological reinhabitation" of home (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 4). A graded reader (Stage 3) that lends itself for intertextuality with the books in this collection is *Who's Coming for Tea?* (2009) by Viv Lambert and Mo Choy, since it also helps children reflect on how they construct "the other", even at the core of home (Skliar, 2002).

As for tweeners, *Eric* and *Intercambio Cultural* can be worked in tandem with *The Lost Thing* (2000), both the picture book and the animated short film, also by Shaun Tan (2011), since they expose how "reinhabitation will depend on identifying, affirming, conserving and creating those forms of cultural knowledge that nurture and protect people and ecosystems" (Bowers, 2001, p. 19). Cece Bell's *El Deafo* (2014), a graphic novel that can also work well with adolescents and young adults, which explores the rite of passage of an anthropomorphised rabbit that strives to balance her life at home, at school and around the neighbourhood with her deafness. This text invites learners to empathise with a character who transforms a situation of exclusion and oppression into a site of re-inhabitation and empowerment.

Adolescents and young adults make the most of hands-on work with the portal quest narrative *Coraline* (2002) by Neil Gaiman, since the text foregrounds the transformational journey of a child who is also faced with (self) alienation at the core of home and needs to identify, recover and create material spaces and places "and re-educate herself in the art of living well where she is" (Orr, 1992, p. 130). This text can also be explored in tandem with *Neverwhere* (2009) and *The Graveyard Book (*2013) also by Neil Gaiman, since they foreground uncanniness at the core of home and self, and inscribe the characters' acts of confrontation with dominant systems of thought as forms of decolonisation and self-preservation.

6. Conclusion

Critical spatial thinking brings new material to the classroom, new ways of looking at literature and new approaches for coming to know place differently (Sommervielle, 2011). The critical study of place through literature is profoundly pedagogical, since place is a "centre of experience that teaches how the world works and how our lives fit into the spaces we occupy" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 7). Literature, in this sense, offers a way of knowing that changes the knower, since it stands as a mode of inquiry into place that empowers characters and readers to resignify the self. Critical spatial thinking endows us with a new form of perspectivism and lived experience that allows us to return to ourselves after having inhabited the gaze, the ways of knowing and the places of others**.**

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What if the world doesn't like you? An activity sequence on identity construction in *Love, Simon*

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1. Introduction

Identity, "the distinguishing character or personality of an individual", according to the general definition provided by the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (merriam-webster.com), develops throughout a persons' life, and adolescence is a key period in its construction. An individual constructs both a personal and a social identity, the latter is "collective and external, ascribed, for instance, on the basis of people's appearance or roles", whereas the former is "individual and 'felt' or experienced", but "ultimately social [so that] the experience of 'who I am', sometimes referred to as 'subjectivity', is itself socially produced" (Taylor, 2015, p. 1).

Gender identity and sexual orientation are two characteristics of identity. Both are characterized as follows:

Gender identity refers to a person's innermost concept of self as male, female or something else and can be the same or different from one's physical sex. Sexual orientation refers to an enduring pattern of emotional, romantic and/or sexual attractions to men, women or both sexes (Roselli, 2018, p. 1).

Adolescence is a stage in life in which deep physical, emotional, and cognitive changes take place in the transition from childhood to adulthood, with the beginning of sexual identity formation as a relevant characteristic (Scott-Sheldon & Johnson, 2013, p. 221). The concepts of gender identity and sexual orientation as well as peoples' attitudes to sexuality have evolved through time and, although these topics have become less of a taboo, some sectors of society still hold very conservative, binary views of sexuality, and strongly oppose what they consider as deviant patterns of sexual behaviour.

People with a non-binary gender identity or sexual orientation, referred to as LGBT+, especially adolescents who are still closeted, are very often the targets of homophobic hatred in the form of bullying and discrimination. Changing attitudes have paved the way for different forms of legislation to counter discrimination, as well as to make educational systems instrumental in the provision of sex education as a comprehensive endeavour, involving cognitive and affective aspects. In this vein, Argentina approved the Comprehensive Sex Education Act in 2006 (Consejo Federal de Educación, 2008) and has ever since advanced,

albeit slowly, in its implementation from pre-school to non-university tertiary education. One of its aims is the promotion of learning based on respect for diversity and the rejection of all forms of discrimination (p. 14). Additionally, these aims are also expressed in local educational legislation and curricula. As a Federal Republic, Argentina is made up of 24 educational authorities (*jurisdicciones*) whose legislation is accorded by the Federal Educational Council (*Consejo Federal de Educación*) in the form of agreements (*acuerdos marco*) that ensure educational standards nationwide. Accordingly, the curriculum design of secondary schools of the Province of Córdoba states as one of its main aims the development of active, open-minded citizens that are respectful of differences (*Secretaría de Educación*, 2011, p. 3).

Foreign language education, as one of the subjects offered in schools' curricula, should contribute to the aims expressed above. In fact, EFL is a privileged space to treat the topic of sexual identity construction which is included in the non-language contents (*ámbitos de experiencia e interés*) proposed for 6th year of upper-secondary forms (*Ciclo Orientado*), targeting students between 16 and 18 years of age. In this paper I present an activity sequence based on the trailer of *Love, Simon* (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykHeGtN4m94), a teen comedy drama film based on the novel *Simon vs. the Homo Sapiens Agenda* by Becky Albertalli (Albertalli, 2016). The film tells the story of Simon, a gay adolescent who struggles with coming to terms with his sexual orientation and is faced with a classmate who has discovered his secret and threatens to out him. Films constitute a suitable resource to tackle issues of identity, and the versatility of digital media allows for a multiplicity of both content and language-based activities in the context of foreign language education.

2. Gender and sexuality in EFL materials

Non-language contents – themes – included in commercially produced coursebooks tend to avoid topics usually grouped under the acronym PARSNIP (politics, alcohol, religion, sex, narcotics, isms, and pork) (Gray, 2002). For this reason, issues related to gender and sexual identity are notoriously absent in EFL coursebooks produced for the global market (Grey, 2013), and even coursebooks targeted at a specific market such as Argentina, where the curriculum mandates the treatment of gender issues, seem to find the way to marginalize their inclusion (Thornbury, 1999). Because of these omissions, teachers need to design their own in order to comply with the curriculum demands.

The increasing awareness of the role of Comprehensive Sex Education in schools in Argentina is reflected in some publications dealing with different aspects of gender issues in EFL lessons. In a recent contribution, Páez (2019) reports on the implementation of materials specifically designed to comply with the third-year curriculum of public secondary schools in Santa Rosa (La Pampa). First, learners carried out an analysis of gender roles in the coursebook used and found an overrepresentation of males and an exclusive presence of heteronormativity and traditional gender roles. Additionally, three teaching units were developed with the aim of offering alternative materials that increase learners' awareness of how gender representations are constructed. One of the units revolves around a popular soap opera in which gender roles are clearly divided between male and female roles, whereas another unit deals with consumer trends and advertising, and how products are targeted to

males or females. Bobbio and Papini (2016) report on the outcomes of an interdisciplinary project carried out with second-year learners in a public secondary school. The project dealt with the social and cultural construction of gender, to which foreign language lessons (English and Portuguese) contributed by making learners aware of sexism in advertisements. The activities carried out in the EFL lessons consisted in redesigning advertisements to make them more genre neutral, thus fostering a "critical analysis of stereotypes connected with men and women's social roles" (p. 16).

In sum, didactic proposals around the topic of gender identity are becoming more common. Still, the topic of sexual orientation, especially in adolescence, is largely absent in both commercially produced and teacher-made materials for its implementation in formal educational contexts in Argentina.

4. A teaching unit based on *Love, Simon*

The proposed unit has been conceived for the 6th year of the upper cycle of secondary schools (*Ciclo Orientado*). In the Province of Córdoba, Argentina, English is taught with an intensity of three 40-minute weekly classes, except for the tourism (*Orientación en Turismo*) and foreign language (*Orientación en Lenguas*) streams, where learners have four and five classes a week respectively. The materials presented here have been designed primarily for learners in the foreign language stream, but they could be adapted to suit the characteristics of the other streams by taking more class periods to deal with the unit and by providing more scaffolding to make up for the more restricted proficiency level of the learners. Suggestions for adaptation will be offered in the description of the activities.

The didactic proposal is rooted in Task Based Language Teaching (TBLT), "a teaching approach based on the use of communicative and interactive tasks as the central units for the planning and delivery of instruction" (Richards & Smith, 2002, p. 54). This approach emphasises the learners' involvement in meaning-focused tasks while at the same time fostering language awareness by engaging learners in form-focused tasks (Richards & Rodgers, 2014). In sum, TBLT is structured around task cycles leading to a final task. In this proposal, the final task consists in the creation of a vlog in which learners give Simon, the film's main character, advice regarding his coming out process. Three prior activity cycles (preparation tasks, input tasks, language focus) pave the way for the final task: preparation tasks activate and build factual and language knowledge, input tasks involve seeking information in different sources (film reviews, websites, information booklets and the film trailer), and language focus tasks deal with some of the language contents mentioned below.

The table below shows the themes (*ámbitos de experiencia e interés*), language contents (*reflexion sobre la lengua*) and skills (*destrezas*) learners are expected to develop in 6th year of *Ciclo Orientado*:

Ámbitos de experiencia e interés	Reflexión sobre la lengua (en situaciones de oralidad, lectura y escritura	Destrezas (selección)
▪ **La vida personal y social:** problemas generacionales. Cambios y conflictos. Expectativas, autoestima, sentimientos y emociones. Proyectos. ▪ **Las redes sociales y su influencia en la construcción de una identidad personal y social.** Las nuevas tecnologías y su influencia en la diferenciación social. ▪ **Formación ciudadana:** problemática de género. Mayoría, minorías y ghettos. Derechos humanos.	▪ **Pasado Simple y Pasado Continuo con "When" y "While".** ▪ **"Used to"** para hábitos pasados en forma afirmativa, negativa e interrogativa. ▪ **Futuro Simple** con **"will"**: forma afirmativa, negativa e interrogativa. ▪ **Oración condicional tipo 2**. ▪ Verbos modales (*would*, *could*, *might*) para expresar condición, y posibilidad. ▪ **Estilo indirecto** (Reported Speech) con "say" y "tell".	▪ **Presentaciones orales** a partir de temas desarrollados en clase. ▪ **Escucha:** Reconocimiento de los propósitos del texto oral … (ej. en TED-Talks, videos de YouTube) ▪ **Lectura:** Establecimiento de **relaciones entre textos** que abordan un mismo tema o problemática desde diferentes enfoques o puntos de vista. ▪ **Escritura:** Selección y uso de **vocabulario relevante y expresiones idiomáticas pertinentes** para la expresión de opiniones.

Figure 1: Curriculum contents (Subsecretaría de Promoción de Igualdad y Calidad, 2018).

The themes highlighted in red are those dealt with in the proposed unit: expectations, self-esteem, feelings and emotions, social networks and their impact on the construction of personal and social identity, as well as gender issues. Language contents of the curriculum that are relevant for this unit include Type II conditionals and modal verbs (*would*, *could*, *might*) to express condition and possibility. Language activities include oral presentations, exposure to videos (ex. Ted Talks, etc.), reading texts portraying one topic from different perspectives, and writing to express opinion. The vlog giving advice to Simon, proposed as the final task, integrates all three areas. The proposed unit has both an instrumental and a formative dimension: instrumental, because learners are enabled to express themselves about their feelings, experiences and viewpoints in the foreign language, and formative, because the contents dealt with promote values and attitudes related to empathy, respect for intimacy, rejection of discrimination and promotion and observance of human rights, in accordance with the requirements of the Comprehensive Sex Education Act.

4.1 Preparation tasks

These tasks aim at engaging learners with the topic, activating prior factual and language knowledge and introducing new language. Two activities are proposed for this cycle.

The first one consists in showing a picture of young actress Maite Lanata as Juani, one of the characters in the popular Argentinean TV series *100 Días para Enamorarse* (Ortega, 2018). It is expected that learners will recognize the character and that they know that Juani, an adolescent in the final secondary school year, is transitioning from female to male. In the

scene (for copyright reasons, the picture cannot be shown in this publication, see endnote 1), Juani is responding to the bullying he has been the object of from some of his classmates and, in so doing, coming out to them. Learners are expected to say what they know about Juani (who he is, what he does, etc.). Depending on their background and language knowledge learners may provide more details and impressions. At this point, teachers may introduce words and expressions needed by the learners. Lower proficiency level learners could be shown some language options to encourage them to make sentences describing the picture, e.g. … is a transgender boy / classmates / bully him, etc.

The second preparation activity consists in the construction of a word web where learners provide words related to "identity". This is an example of the expected result:
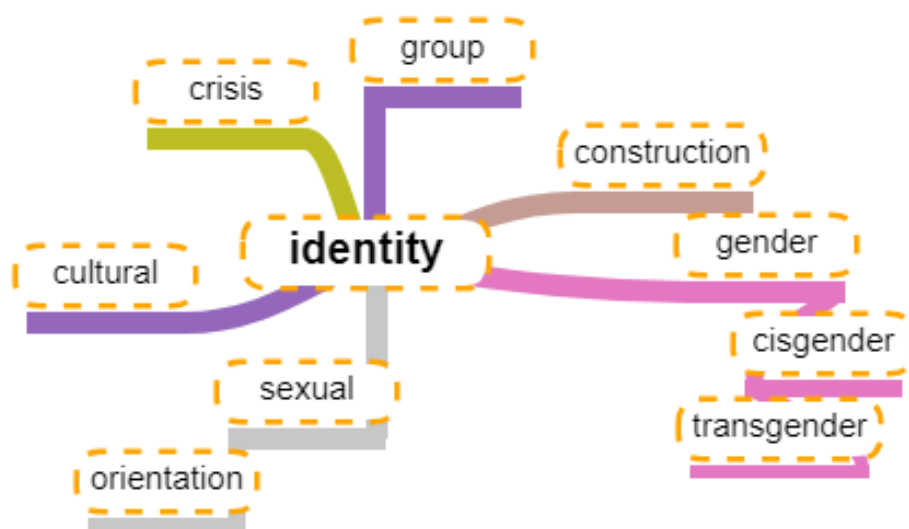

Figure 2: word web

The teacher elicits concepts and helps learners to briefly describe in their own words their understanding of them; for example, how they define sexual identity, cisgender, etc. Lower proficiency level learners could be provided with words and phrases needed to define the terms, or with a matching activity to join the beginning and the end of some simple definitions.

4.2 Input-focused tasks

Several tasks are proposed for this cycle, based on a multiplicity of sources: the film poster, reviews, websites and the film trailer. These represent different genres and expose learners to varied language input.

To start, learners observe the film poster (see endnote 2) and answer questions to make hypotheses about the plot, for example, *have you seen this film? What do you think it could be about? What could be the relation of the statement "everyone deserves a great love story" and the film?* Again, lower proficiency level learners could be supplied with phrases such

as *I think the film could be about … because …, everyone deserves / all people deserve … regardless of … because …, etc.*

Subsequently, learners are provided with a set of original film reviews, most of them only reproducing the first paragraph of the original source. The task consists in reading the reviews and answering two questions:

Input task

Read the reviews:
What's the film about?
What are Simon's problems?

> From the producers of *The Fault in Our Stars* comes this heartfelt coming-of-age story about the adventure of finding yourself and falling in love.
> https://www.foxmovies.com/movies/love-simon

> Simon Spier keeps a huge secret from his family, his friends and all of his classmates: he's gay. When that secret is threatened, Simon must face everyone and come to terms with his identity.
> https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5164432/

> It centers on Simon Spier, a closeted gay high school boy who is forced to balance his friends, his family, and the blackmailer threatening to out him to the entire school, while simultaneously attempting to discover the identity of the anonymous classmate with whom he has fallen in love online. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love,_Simon

Figure 3: input task

The questions are quite simple and answering them should pose no difficulties for learners of this level. Lower proficiency level students could be provided with language help along the lines shown in the previous activity to aid them in producing the answers.

The three texts contain key vocabulary around the topic of sexual identity. The following task focuses the learners' attention on this vocabulary as preparation for the upcoming tasks. The definitions have been extracted verbatim or formulated on the basis of the definitions provided by the following online dictionaries: Collins Free Online Dictionary and Thesaurus (https://www.collinsdictionary.com/), Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English Online (https://www.ldoceonline.com/), Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (https://www.oxfordlearnersdictionaries.com/definition/english/) and Merriam-Webster (https://www.merriam-webster.com/). Figures 4 and 5 show the vocabulary tasks:

Input task

Look at the highlighted words and do the next task

From the producers of *The Fault in Our Stars* comes this heartfelt <mark>coming-of-age</mark> story about the adventure of finding yourself and falling in love.
https://www.foxmovies.com/movies/love-simon

Simon Spier keeps a huge secret from his family, his friends and all of his classmates: he's gay. When that secret is <mark>threatened</mark>, Simon must <mark>face</mark> everyone and <mark>come to terms</mark> with his identity.
https://www.imdb.com/title/tt5164432/

It centers on Simon Spier, a closeted gay high school boy who is forced to balance his friends, his family, and the <mark>blackmailer</mark> threatening <mark>to out him</mark> to the entire school, while simultaneously attempting to discover the identity of the anonymous classmate with whom he has fallen in love online. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Love,_Simon

Figure 4: vocabulary task (1)

Match the Spanish words below with the corresponding definitions			
aceptar, asumir – amenazar – chantajear – enfrentar, encarar - madurar - sacar del armario			
	Definition	Example	Spanish equivalent
come of age	if something comes of age, it gets to a point at which people accept and value it. Reach maturity.	A coming-of-age story	
threaten/ed	to say that you will cause someone trouble if they do not do what you want. Synonyms: Intimidate, menace, terrorize	A secret is threatened	
face (v)	If you face or are faced with something difficult or unpleasant, or if it faces you, it is going to affect you and you have to deal with it.	Simon must face his friends and family and abandon his secret	
come to terms with sth	to learn how to accept or live with something that is difficult or painful.	Simon must come to terms with his identity	
blackmail / a blackmailer	the act of putting pressure on a person or a group to do something they do not want to do, for example by making threats or by making them feel guilty.	A blackmailer threatens to reveal Simon's secret	
to out sb (to sb)	to publicly say that someone is homosexual when that person would prefer to keep it secret.	A blackmailer threatens to out Simon to the entire school	

Figure 5: vocabulary task (2)

This task involves the recognition of the L1 equivalents of the words defined. A variation for higher proficiency learners could consist in matching the words both with their definitions and the L1 equivalents. Further tasks could consist in a learner reading one of the definitions and getting the class, or groups, to recognize the word defined, and in getting pairs to provide a

word definition in their own words to each other and recognizing the word defined. By engaging in these tasks, students learn the structure of definitions, enabling them to formulate definitions for other words.

The next group of input-focused tasks is based on the film trailer (see endnote 3). A first alternative for lower-proficiency groups consists in silent viewing: the trailer is played with no sound. The film is stopped at some scenes and learners are made to describe what they see and what they think is happening, and the meaning of words and expressions shown as text in the film (stuck on a Ferris wheel, on top of the world, rock bottom) can be clarified. Higher proficiency groups could skip the silent viewing task and do the viewing and listening task, consisting in watching the trailer and choosing the statement that best summarizes the main idea:

Which sentence is the best summary?

    a) Simon tells how he came out to his friends and family
    b) Simon thinks about the difficulty of coming out to his friends and family
    c) Simon decides to keep his secret

Figure 6: Viewing task

Further viewing activities require learners to listen to the audio attentively and to match the beginning and end of some statements. For this activity, it is advisable to get learners to access the film trailer on their phones and to work in pairs or individually using headphones. This is necessary so that learners can listen to the soundtrack as many times as necessary to complete the task. After checking, learners could listen to the soundtrack once more to order the statements chronologically:

1. Listen and match

1. Announcing who you are to the world
2. Do you ever
3. I'm just like you
4. I've been thinking about
5. It doesn't seem fair
6. Maybe a part of me just wants
7. One minute I'm on top of the world,
8. Sometimes I feel
9. There's this invisible line

a. feel weird?
b. In the next I'm rock bottom
c. that only gay people have to come out
d. is pretty terrifying
e. I'm stuck on a Ferris wheel
f. – except that I have one huge-ass secret
g. to hold on to who I've always been ... just a little longer.
h. that I have to cross to be a part of everything
i. why I haven't come out yet

2. Listen and order

Figure 7: viewing and listening tasks

132

These tasks aimed to get learners prepared to view the film trailer and to be confident about listening to natural L2 input. One more task is proposed to make learners find information about the topics of coming out and dealing with online interaction on social media and its threats to the users' privacy and emotional stability:

The following website offers information, help and advice to young people about coming out:

https://www.stonewall.org.uk/help-advice/coming-out/coming-out-young-person

The website also provides a link to two publications on this topic:

- "Coming out"
- "Staying Safe Online" (p. 25, Top tips, read "For lesbian, gay and bisexual young people")

Work in groups of four. Choose the website or one of the publications. Read your assigned text and list the pieces of advice, for example:

Coming out as a young person	Coming out	Staying Safe Online
• If you are thinking about coming out then it's important that you find a way that feels right for you	• choose a friend you trust and who you think will be supportive	• only post comments and photos online that you'd be happy for your parents to see

Figure 8: research task

In the texts, learners encounter different advice and suggestions dealing with the topics mentioned above that provide both valuable information that will surely trigger discussions – in L2 or L1, depending on the learners' proficiency level – as well as target language formulations to be used in the final task. Since the texts are long, teachers could assign each group a section of the text to read in class and the results could be shown in a poster for later reference and use in further tasks.

4.3 Language-focused tasks

The purpose of this task cycle is to focus the learners' attention on different options to give advice and make suggestions contained in the texts read for the previous activity. First, learners are shown a list of possible ways to give advice, make suggestions and to assess the situation giving rise to the advice:

Giving advice and making suggestions

Advice	Strong advice	Making suggestions	Assessing the situation
▪ [If I were you,] I'd (= I would) … ▪ [In your place / position,] I'd (= I would) … ▪ If you're thinking about (+ing) …, you may / might / could … ▪ Even if you …., ▪ Think about … ▪ Consider … ▪ There's no right or wrong way / time / moment to …	▪ Imperative: Always / Never (speak to) …. ▪ Don't (speak to) … ▪ Don't let people tell you (what to do) ▪ You really must … ▪ You should / shouldn't … ▪ It's important to … / that you … ▪ The important thing is to … / that … ▪ [But] remember: … ▪ You'll know when / who / …	▪ You could / might … ▪ Why don't you …? ▪ What / How about (+ing) …? ▪ Would you consider (+ing) ?	▪ Sometimes … may (be) … ▪ It can be difficult if … ▪ Some people …

Figure 9: Giving advice and making suggestions

The class goes through the different formulations and possible unknown words are clarified. Subsequently, learners look at the poster with the advice found in the texts, underline the formulations used, and complete the chart above with other phrases from the examples. As practice, learners could be asked to rephrase the advice or suggestion in the poster using a different formula from the chart.

4.4 Output-focused tasks

The previous task cycles have paved the way for the final task: a vlog giving advice to Simon:

Output task: vlog

In pairs, make a one-minute vlog responding to Simon:

Simon: I have a crush on Blue, my online friend, and don't know how to tell him.

1. What should I do?
2. What would you do?

Simon: I'd like to come out to my parents but I don't know how to do this.

3. Can you give me advice?
4. What would you do?

Simon: I'd like to come out to my friends, but I never seem to find the right time and the right words

5. What do you think I should do?
6. Should I post this on my Instagram or should I talk to them?

Figure 10: Final task

A video log, or vlog, is a popular form of sharing on platforms such as You Tube. In this task, learners start a vlog (imaginary or real, if learners open a You Tube account for this task) in response to a fictional appeal for help from Simon. If You Tube is not an option, the vlogs can be shared in a closed Whatsapp group. The activity, to be done in pairs, requires the formulation of the advice, using the ideas and the language from the prior tasks. Pairs deal with one of Simon's concerns and each member of the pair formulates tips responding to one of the questions so that they produce a video in which each one speaks for about 30 seconds. Learners get feedback from the teacher instead of peer feedback so that the productions remain only familiar to the pair. Once the video is ready, it is made public and the class makes comments and votes for the most appealing contribution. Students are expected to handle this task confidently, as they were provided with opportunities to formulate similar output expressing their ideas, to come across new arguments through the input tasks, and to develop the necessary language resources.

The proposed task cycle meets its intended objectives of further developing learners' receptive and productive skills, recycling and building new target-language knowledge, enhancing learning and communication strategies, and triggering reflection of questions of sexual identity, empathy, and understanding of otherness. The teaching unit complies with the curriculum requirements of 6th year of *ciclo orientado*, as well as addresses the formative purposes of Comprehensive Sex Education thus stressing the importance of its treatment as a cross-curricular concern.

5. Conclusion

Unlike most foreign-language coursebooks, feature films – unaffected by editorial content restrictions – tackle questions related to different facets of identity. Additionally, they portray

various aspects of life in imaginary worlds that are generally ignored by commercial ELT materials. For pedagogical use, film trailers, because of their brevity and the dual access to meaning offered by the combination of images and sound, are a suitable source for the design of teaching materials. Besides, the increasing presence of digital media at the reach of most learners through smartphones provides opportunities for their classroom use.

This proposal is also intended as a model for the creation of similar materials when the available coursebooks fail to respond to the curriculum demands and the interests and proficiency level of learners in specific educational contexts. Materials dealing with the topic of gender and sexuality are still largely scarce in our regional context, but proposals are being made as shown in section 2, especially in the field of gender equality. Argentinean legislation makes Comprehensive Sex Education compulsory, and EFL, as a content of formal education, is faced with the responsibility of dealing with it.

Notes

1. Picture retrieved October 7, 2019, from https://www.lacapital.com.ar/escenario/al-mejor-estilo-merli-el-mensaje-defender-juani-100-dias-n1607493.html

2. Film poster retrieved October 7, 2019 from https://www.foxmovies.com/movies/love-simon

3. Film trailer retrieved October 8, 2019 from https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ykHeGtN4m94

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15

Why should we read African literature in our EFL classrooms?

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1-Introduction

This paper intends to explore the value of using African literature in English as resource materials for intercultural awareness in the EFL classroom in Argentina. The ideas expressed here are mainly based on my own personal experience running "Reading Africa", a summer literary workshop held at Laboratorio de Idiomas de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras (UBA) and targeted at upper-intermediate and advanced students of English.

It is my belief that EFL teachers should venture out from the realm of literature of the "inner circle" of the English language into the "outer circle" of world Englishes (WE) literature. In order to do this, we need to take into consideration Kachru's (1987) three-circle model, which represents the growth and spread of English in the world. Kachru views the English speaking world as being divided into three different circles. The inner circle includes countries such as the U.K. or the U.S., where English is spoken as a first language. The outer circle mainly consists of countries which used to be British or American colonies, where English is spoken as a second language. These varieties of English have come to be summarily labelled as world Englishes (WE) or New Englishes (NEs). Finally, there is an expanding circle, where English is spoken as a foreign language (Bhatt, 2001).

In other words, it is my contention that we should turn away our gaze from British and American literary texts and focus on fiction coming from other English-speaking countries. By doing this, we can leave behind the idea that English is homogenous and adopt an approach which accepts the fact that English is characterised by variety and variation (Kirkpatrick, 2009). Nevertheless, the concept of WE calls for a distinction between English as a medium and English as a repertoire of cultural pluralism. According to Kachru (1994), "one refers to the form of language, and the other refers to its function, its content" (p.6). In this sense, English is a shared code of communication, which can transmit a specific cultural message. As a result, English becomes a cross-cultural code of communication, an Aladdin's lamp for opening the doors to cultural "enlightenment" (Kachru, 1994). "By looking at English as a pluralistic language, we are actually focusing on its layer after layer of extended processes of convergence with other languages and cultures" (Kachru, 1994, p.8).

Kachru also challenges the assumption that literary creativity is something within the exclusive preserve of "inner circle" native speakers (Widdowson, 2019). In his view, "outer circle" users are as capable of literary creativity as "inner circle" native speakers. In fact, "outer circle" writers "have their own distinctive ways of making creative use of the language which

are uniquely expressive of the cultural values of their own communities" (Widdowson, 2019, p. 312). Consequently, "the English language and literature have slowly ceased to be Eurocentric, Judeo-Christian, and Western" (Kachru,1994, p. 7).

Thus, reading literature written in English by African authors coming from countries such as Nigeria, Zimbabwe, South Africa and Kenya in the context of our EFL classrooms not only implies recognizing the existence of WE but also the literary value of African literature in English, and by doing so we can start to challenge a widely spread stereotype about Africa as a land of negatives and emptiness.

2-EFL and the literary canon

In 2016, I was asked to devise a literary workshop at Laboratorio de Idiomas de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras (UBA). This request stemmed from the need to offset the marginal role literature plays in our textbooks, classrooms and curricula. The challenge was daunting but at the same time thrilling. After due reflection, I was able to put forward two proposals. The first one included my favourite contemporary American writers, among who were Kate Chopin, a forerunner of American twentieth century feminist authors, William Faulkner, one of America's greatest Southern writers, J.D. Salinger, the author of *The Catcher in the Rye*, the African American author Toni Morrison and the Chinese American writer Amy Tan. The other proposal consisted of several well-known contemporary British authors, among who were David Lodge, one of Britain's sharpest comic novelists, Ian Mc Ewan, Booker Prize winner, Nick Hornby, a crafty observer of pop music and pop culture, Kazuo Ishiguro, 2017 Nobel Prize winner, Hilary Mantel, another Booker Prize winner, and Zadie Smith, Jamaican British writer.

In fact, it is no surprise I submitted such proposals. The following quote by the world famous Nigerian author, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) might shed some light upon the choices I made:

> I was an early reader. And what I read were British and American children's books (…) I wrote exactly the kinds of stories I was reading. What this demonstrates, I think, is how impressionable and vulnerable we are in the face of a story. (p.1)

It is possible to draw a parallel between Adichie's experience as a reader and a writer and my own experience as a student and a teacher of English. When I was at the Teacher Training College in Buenos Aires in the late 1990s and early 2000s, I took courses such as English Literature I and II, American Literature and a seminar on Shakespeare. I also read prestigious British authors such as Julian Barnes, Kazuo Ishiguro, Ian McEwan, Roald Dahl, among others, as part of the different English language courses I took. Throughout those years, I never came across an African or Indian writer although *The God of Small Things* by Indian author Arundhati Roy was awarded the Booker Prize in 1997. As for my years as a literature student at the University of Buenos Aires, I vividly recall that all literature courses were focused on Western representation as well. Against this background, it was only natural that I was more inclined to choose from a restricted canon.

In 1994, Harold Bloom published his controversial *The Western Canon,* where he presents twenty-six writers whom he considers 'canonical´. Among his selected authors there are nine Britons: Geoffrey Chaucer, William Shakespeare, John Milton, Samuel Johnson, Jane Austen, William Wordsworth, Charles Dickens, George Eliot and Virginia Woolf; two Americans: Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson; and two Irish writers: James Joyce and Samuel Beckett. All in all, half of his canon consists of English speaking authors. Even though the American literary critic insists that his selection is simply based on "aesthetic value" (Bloom, 1994, p. 1), it is my view that his canon was highly influenced by his own educational background. Furthermore, the so-called Canon contains texts by authors belonging to a particular race and gender, which are incidentally similar to the Canon-maker's. Indeed, out of the twenty-six writers, twenty-four are male and twenty-three are European.

A Canon usually involves a pre-established choice of books in our teaching institutions. More often than not, EFL educators are not free to choose what authors and texts to read with their students. Constraints stemming from the official curriculum and the school itself are usually imposed on them. Nevertheless, there are some institutions which allow personal choice. If so, teachers are likely to find themselves in a pedagogic predicament. With hundreds of years of literature in English coming from all corners of the world, there are endless options. "Who reads must choose, since there is literally not enough time to read everything" (Bloom, 1994, p.15). According to Bloom (1994), our literary choices should not be guided by ideology or serve any social aim. They should only be based on their aesthetic strength (p.29). These statements are debatable, but at the same time they offer a chance to reflect upon the implications of prioritising certain literary works in the EFL classroom.

3-Challenging stereotypes

Undoubtedly, literature can help students develop their four basic language skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking). In fact, it can be used as a platform for integrating these skills. By using literary texts in the EFL classroom, we can encourage students to read, to talk about what they have read, to listen to their classmates' viewpoints, to exchange ideas and to express themselves through writing. Moreover, literature can also make students aware of the richness of the language since literary texts are a source of authentic material, which offers a great variety of lexical and syntactic items (Collie & Slater, 2000, p.3).

In addition to this, literary texts enable students to encounter other cultures in a context of respect and understanding. This possibility is of utmost importance in our troubled times. Terrorism, nationalism, xenophobia and fundamentalism constitute dire global threats. English teachers as all teachers are agents of social change and ought to tap into literature to foster empathy with others.

In "The Danger of a Single Story" Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (2009) points out:

> If I had not grown up in Nigeria, and if all I knew about Africa were from popular images, I too would think that Africa was a place of beautiful landscapes, beautiful animals, and incomprehensible people, fighting senseless wars, dying of poverty

and AIDS, unable to speak for themselves, and waiting to be saved, by a kind, white foreigner (p.2).

A brainstorming exercise that I carried out with my students in our summer literary workshop at UBA seems to prove her right. I wrote down *Africa* on the whiteboard and asked them to share what came to their mind. Not surprisingly, students produced the following words: *poverty, starvation, civil wars, illiteracy, ebola, AIDS, savannah, dictatorships, elephants, lions, natural resources, gold, diamonds, slavery*. Afterwards, I changed the trigger and jotted down *Europe.* And these terms popped up: *history, culture, art, literature, cities, museums, development, kings, tradition, castles, wealth, diversity*.

It was apparent that while Europe was viewed positively by my students, Africa was regarded negatively. At this point we might wonder whether this depiction of Africa is accurate or not. If we only relied on the media, it definitely would. Here are some 2019 headlines about Africa coming from one of the most widely read newspapers in Buenos Aires, Argentina, (*Clarín*): "More than 600 dead people due to ebola in the Democratic Republic of the Congo", "Massacre in Nigeria: they were watching a football match when three terrorists arrived and self-detonated", "In Sudan a dictator was ousted and his enforcer remains"; "Tourists managed to film a very unusual situation: a lioness trying to hunt an elephant without any help", "A New Surge of Central African Migrants worries U.S. border states"[1].

In his essay "Africa's Tarnished Name", Chinua Achebe (1998) asserts that

it is a great irony of history and geography that Africa, whose landmass is closer than any other to the mainland of Europe, should come to occupy in the European psychological disposition the farthest point of otherness, should become indeed Europe's antithesis. (p.17)

If we take into consideration how Argentina tends to represent Africa, we can suggest that Africa also seems to stand for foreignness. Moreover, Africa seems to be perceived as a form of otherness we dread. In 2002 when our country was going through one of the most serious economic crises in its history, many pundits talked about the "Africanisation" of Argentina to describe the process of tremendous deterioration our economy was suffering. It was then that it dawned on the public opinion that children starved not only in Uganda but also in our country (Evequoz, 2002). Since then the term has come up as a doomsday warning.

Achebe (1998) stresses that Africa's existence as "other" is by no means the result of ignorance, and goes on to mention that

this profound perception of alienness which Africa has come to represent for Europe was a deliberate invention devised to facilitate two gigantic historical events: the Atlantic slave trade and the colonization of Africa by Europe (p.18).

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[1] https://www.clarin.com/tema/africa.html

In other words, the belief in 'Western supremacy' and 'Africa's inferiority' was simply established to legitimise exploitation through slavery and colonialism. Unfortunately, we would be wrong to believe that the times of Western glorification (in opposition to Blacks, Jews, Muslims, Soviets, Turks, etc.) are over (Hörschläger, 2014). In his essay "Joined-up Politics and Postcolonial Melancholia" Paul Gilroy (2001) discusses the British case. Although some would like to think that "Britain has sorted out the discrete issues of 'race' and ethnicity in an exemplary manner and is now a wholly successful multicultural society" (Gilroy, 2001, p.151), their belief is mythical. Gilroy finds supporting evidence in the past. The racially motivated murder of Stephen Lawrence in 1993 made Britain's "dwindling fund of common values momentarily apparent" (Gilroy, 2001, p.156). Beneath the veneer of political correctness, racism was lurking. A 1998 public inquiry concluded that the Metropolitan Police Service was racist. Sadly, we can also find evidence in the present. According to BBC News, there has been an increase in racism and race-related crime since the 2016 Brexit referendum[2].

The inaccurate and biased image of Africa's 'inferiority' gives rise to the stereotype about Africa as a land of negatives and emptiness. In Chimamanda Adichie's words (2009): "the problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete" (p.4). Stereotypes are grounded in generalisations, which are usually biased simplifications of a complex and nuanced reality and often lead to fallacies, in other words, misconceptions.

Reading literature from and about Africa can help us deconstruct this "incomplete" or "single" story many Argentinian students have about this vast continent. This is possible because these literary texts enable us to gain some insight into the life of people who are under- or misrepresented on the media (Hörschläger, 2014). They have the power to create the "balance of stories" Chinua Achebe talks about. Hence, Africa becomes not only a place of widespread devastation, severe deprivation and sheer irrationality but also the home to great creativity, diverse and flourishing cultures and art expressions, long-held traditions, thoughtful reflection and a complex history.

However, literary texts by themselves do not "do the trick". They should be approached in a certain way, by focusing not only on the differences between Africans and Argentinians but also by pinpointing the similarities between us. In this connection, Chimamanda Adichie (2009) talks about her encounter with an American.

> She had felt sorry for me even before she saw me. Her default position toward me, as an   African, was a kind of patronizing, well-meaning, pity. My roommate had a single story of Africa. A single story of catastrophe. In this single story there was no possibility of Africans being similar to her, in any way. No possibility of feelings more complex than pity. No possibility of a connection as human equals. (p.2)

Africans are different from us but not that different. After all, we are all human beings and we, as teachers, should never lose sight of this basic but fundamental fact. Literature tells local and

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[2] https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-wales-48692863.

universal stories at the same time. For example, *We Need New Names*, a novel by Zimbabwean author NoViolet Bulawayo talks about the sad reality of emigration from Zimbabwe.

> Look at them leaving in droves, the children of the land, just look at them leaving in droves. Those with nothing are crossing borders. Those with strength are crossing borders. Those with ambitions are crossing borders. Those with hopes are crossing borders. Those with loss are crossing borders. Those in pain are crossing borders (p.147).

Bulawayo is indeed describing a local reality, but many Argentinians also know what it is like to leave your land behind. We have heard lots of family stories about how poor but hopeful Spanish and Italian immigrants landed in Argentina. So, "when selecting materials and strategies to approach them interculturally, teachers need to make sure learners can profit from the enriching experience of coming into contact with otherness by reflecting on their own values and identity and on the construction of their self-image" (Ferradas, 2013, p.39). This means that when we encounter Africans, not only can we learn about them but also about ourselves. In this regard, Ferradas (2013) points out that the aim of foreign language education ought to be the development of an 'intercultural speaker' (p.35). In Michael Byram's (1997) words this is

> a learner with the ability to see and manage the relationships between themselves and their own cultural beliefs, behaviours and meanings as expressed in a foreign language, and those of their interlocutors, expressed in the same language—or even a combination of languages—which may be the interlocutor's native language or not (p.12).

This implies EFL educators need to work on learners' intercultural communicative competence so that they can recognize the similarities and differences between their native and non-native cultures. Furthermore, just as African writers manage to retain their cultural baggage despite using English as a communication medium, EFL learners should also be allowed to retain their own identity despite expressing themselves in English.

4- African literature and world Englishes

The label African literature is a rather inappropriate compression since Africa comprises an overwhelming linguistic, cultural, racial, economic, and political diversity. In fact, the literary workshop that I delivered at Laboratorio de Idiomas (UBA) was focused on only four out of the twenty-four English speaking countries in the continent: Zimbabwe, Nigeria, South Africa and Kenya. These four countries are considered literary powerhouses, especially Nigeria and South Africa. Although the four nations are former British colonies and English is one of their official languages, each of them is inhabited by different ethnic groups and, consequently, different languages coexist.

All the stories we read in the workshop were written in English: in Zimbabwean English, in Nigerian English, in South African English and in Kenyan English. In other words, they were written in different varieties of English, in various Englishes.

> Over the last three decades or so, (…) there has been a growing recognition of "Englishes" in the plural, as in"varieties of English", "international Englishes", "new Englishes", "English languages" and "world Englishes". Of all these designations, arguably the most popular term currently in the literature is that of "world Englishes" (WE). (Bolton, 2012, p.14)

Nowadays there is great consensus among scholars (Kachru, B., Kachru, Y. & Nelson, C., 2009; Bolton, 2012; Kirkpatrick, 2007) that there is no *one* English language. Indeed, there are many. This comes as a result of the most striking example of language expansion of recent times. The global spread of English is popularly viewed in terms of two diasporas. In the first one, English was transplanted by native speakers to North America, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. Each of these countries adopted English as the language of the new nation. In that way, English became one of the major languages of the world along with French, German, Hindi, Arabic, Russian and Spanish. The global status of English became established in the second diaspora, though, when English was brought to "un-English" sociocultural contexts- to Asia and Africa. English was, in fact, imposed on these colonized regions. And when the colonisers left, they left behind their linguistic legacy (Bhatt, 2001).

In the eighties, the Indian linguist Braj Kachru (1987) proposed a three-circle model. According to him, the Inner Circle includes native English-speaking countries such as the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. These Inner Circle communities are norm-providing as they possess their own varieties of English. The Outer Circle consists of former colonies such as South Africa, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Nigeria or India. Kachru sees these other communities as norm-developing as they are in the process of developing their own varieties, the New Englishes. Finally, the Expanding Circle includes countries such as China, Japan, Turkey, Brazil, Argentina, among others, where English has become an important language in business, science, technology and education. The speakers in this circle are seen as learners and as such are not given the right to their own variety-development. That is the reason why they are regarded as norm-dependent (Weng, 2011, p7).

From Kachru's point of view, African Englishes are new varieties of English in their own right. Yet, some linguists do not agree. In 1972, the American Larry Selinker published an article called "Interlanguage", where he defines this term as an intermediate stage in second language acquisition, between the learner's native language and the target language. This phenomenon is the outcome of a number of major processes among which fossilization is the most crucial one. Fossilization occurs when some mistakes seem impossible to correct. This implies that learners cannot replace them with proper usage. In this connection, Selinker considers Indian English an interlanguage with respect to English. Therefore, from this perspective all the African varieties of English we dealt with during the workshop can also be considered interlanguages. However, there is a problem with this account. Although Selinker does not make this explicit, interlanguage as a phenomenon of second language acquisition is

an unstable phenomenon. It only appears under certain circumstances. For example, when the learner is anxious or excited or when the learner is focused on a new and difficult subject matter. The "fossilized" structures of Indian English, on the other hand, are stable characteristics of the variety and have persisted across generations (Kachru, 1992).

At this point, as EFL educators, we might feel confronted with a myriad of questions. Is it convenient to use these varieties of English which can be still considered 'improper'? Are we not supposed to teach the norm? Are we expected to help our students acquire a second language so that their performance is indistinguishable from that of a native speaker? Or should we help them acquire real communication strategies and problem-solving skills?

In 2005, Adrian Holliday, professor of Applied Linguistics and Intercultural Education, coined the term "native-speakerism", which she defines as "an ideology that upholds the idea that so-called 'native speakers' are the best models and teachers of English because they represent a 'Western culture' from which spring the ideals both of English and of the methodology for teaching it" (Holliday, 2005, p.6). In, "Native-Speakerism" (2017), Holliday argues that this system of ideas supports a particular vested interest, which is the promotion by the ELT industry of the so called 'native-speaker' brand. This concept seems to explain the lack of globally oriented ELT materials. As far as my own experience as both a learner and a teacher is concerned, language textbooks still today tend to only focus on two varieties of English: British and American English.

In our globalized world, English is no longer a 'foreign' language that is acquired to communicate primarily with a 'native' speaker of English. Today, both the needs of learners and the goals of ELT have changed. Not only do our learners need English to interact with British and American people, but they also need it to talk with other speakers of English. Consequently, if we only rely on language textbooks, we are bound to be led to a mismatch between what is taught in the ELT classroom and how the language is actually used (Galloway and Rose, 2018). Therefore, reading African literature and even listening to African authors may help us start bridging this gap.

5-Teaching African literature

The following section intends to illustrate how the different ideas stated in the different sections above can guide and support the teaching of African literature. In order to do so, I will refer to my own personal experience at Laboratorio de Idiomas de la Facultad de Filosofía y Letras (UBA).

As "Reading Africa", the literary workshop I delivered at the UBA, was a one month course, I opted for short stories. And in order to guarantee diversity, I included female and male writers coming from four different countries: Zimbabwe (Doris Lessing, Yvonne Vera, NoViolet Bulawayo), Nigeria (Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Wole Soyinka, Chinua Achebe), South Africa (Nadine Gordimer, J.M. Coetzee) and Kenya (Ngugi wa Thiong'o and Binyavanga Wainaina).

At this point, it should be noted that before any decision in lesson planning can be taken, a teacher needs to know what the goals of a certain project are (Hörshläger, 2014, p.48). In my case, my aims were to: 1) expand students' literary canon by moving from the inner to the outer circle of the English speaking world, 2) learn about Africa from an African perspective, 3) deconstruct the stereotypical representation of Africa and 4) expose learners to different varieties of English.

To exemplify how I tried to achieve these goals, I will describe the teaching sequence I followed when we worked on one of the selected stories, "Once Upon the Time" (1989) by South African author Nadine Gordimer.

It is worth mentioning that a certain amount of history teaching is always necessary before delving into any of the chosen African literary works with a view to clarifying diffuse opinions based on lack of cultural knowledge or plain prejudice, mostly as a result of inadequate newspaper reporting (Hörshläger, 2014, p.68). So after checking what students knew about South Africa, the issue of the "Apartheid" was brought up. They were provided with photos which showed what Apartheid was about, for example, an appalling photo of a bench labelled with a "Whites Only" sign. They also read a definition of *Apartheid* from Encyclopedia and engaged in critical discussion. Finally, they watched an interview to Nadine Gordimer where she talks about this issue. In fact, they watched interviews to most of the writers we read. In this way, learners practised their listening comprehension skills, at the same time as they were exposed to a variety of Englishes.

The stories were always introduced in class in order to "draw the learners quickly 'into' the text, so that they find it interesting and want to continue reading it on their own" (Collie & Slater, 2000, p.16). After discussing the title, "Once Upon a Time", students were asked to think of their favourite fairy tale and identify the common elements in classic fairy tales. Then, they plunged into the story, which opens with a framed narrative. The protagonist, who is a literary author, is asked to write a children's story and she rejects the request. However, when a sound wakes her up one night, she thinks it might be a burglar as violent burglaries are usual in the area. To get back to sleep she starts telling herself a bedtime story. After discussing the protagonist's feelings, students were asked to write their own fairy tale or bedtime story set in modern Buenos Aires in an attempt to transpose the situation in the text to their own cultural context (Ferradas, 2013, p.40).The task was done in pairs or groups of three.

The learners were expected to finish reading the story "Once Upon a Time", whose ending had been removed, at home. Students were provided with a question-and-answer worksheet to help them with comprehension of the text (Collie & Slater, 2000, p.38). The focus was now the modern "fairy tale" the story portrays. A white family, a husband, a wife and a little boy live their dream of happiness and material wealth. However, they feel threatened by the outside world: the burglaries in the neighbourhood and the riots in another part of the city, where "people of another colour" live. In order to protect themselves, the family has a security wall and electronic gates constructed around their home, metal bars installed on every window, a burglar alarm activated and finally, barbed wire atop their newly reinforced walls. At this point, the students were asked to 1) discuss in small groups the use of fairy tale elements in the story such as "they happily ever after", "royalty", "wicked characters", "good characters", "magic", "a conflict", "the rule of three", 2) spot references to Apartheid in the

story and 3) identify possible stereotypes and prejudices shown in the story. Special attention was paid to the reflection on similarities between the insecurity issue in Argentina and the situation described in the story. This was a way of focusing on similarities between cultures rather than on differences and also a way of reflecting on the students' own circumstances (Ferradas, 2013, p.41). The goal was to foster empathy through the development of intercultural competence.

Finally, the students had to write their own ending to the story bearing in mind that fairy tales always teach us a lesson. By doing so, they were encouraged to further appropriate the story. After reading out loud some of their creative endings, they were allowed to read the actual ending: the wife tells a story to her son about 'Prince Charming' who bravely climbs through a terrible thorn thicket to save 'Sleeping Beauty'. The little boy decides to replicate the story. He takes a ladder and climbs up the wall, quickly getting entangled in the 'high-security' barbed wire. When the black gardener finally frees the child from the trap. Yet, he is dead. The ending was discussed and interpreted as a powerful device to deconstruct stereotypes and prejudices.

6-Conclusion

We are usually confronted with one-sided representations of foreigners on the media. This paper has addressed the misrepresentation of Africa and Africans in particular. The portrayal of the African Continent as a land of negatives and emptiness results in a single story, which contributes to the creation of stereotypes and the emergence of racism. Expanding our literary canon to include African literature in English in our EFL classrooms is a meaningful and powerful act in itself. By doing so, we highlight the pedagogical and aesthetic value of works written by non-European authors. We also give our students the chance to acquire "other stories", which might provide them with tools to question stereotypes.

The development of students' intercultural competence comes as a result of an insightful exploration of differences and similarities between the Argentinian and the different African cultures. This approach fosters empathy with the other as well as self-reflection. Additionally, the exposure to different African Englishes can help us raise learners' awareness of the diversity of English and prepare them to use English in lingua franca contexts. This can constitute an important achievement given the paucity of ELT materials which acknowledge the existence of world Englishes. Finally, the encounter of students with proficient users of English who are not from the UK or the US might have an empowering effect on them. They might feel that they can take ownership of English without having to sound British or American.

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16

"How do you say this in English?" Translingual practices based on a bilingual novel

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1. Introduction

In largely monolingual EFL contexts teachers are usually reluctant to use the L1. No wonder this is so: for over a century foreign language teaching approaches have favoured strictly monolingual practices that were – and still are – overtly or subliminally encouraged in foreign language teacher education. Even if approaches taking a more conciliatory stance - such as Curran's counselling learning or Suggestopedia - have been proposed at different times, and findings from research in Second Language Acquisition have pointed to the positive effects of L1(Butzkamm, 2003), its use is still scant and usually employed with a feeling of guilt. Meanwhile, L1 use in foreign language learning is a reality: it happens in the heads of the learners as it is one of the main components on which their interlanguage develops (Selinker, 1972). Besides, viewing digital audio-visual productions with L1 subtitles, the use of online translation tools, or mediation practices (see 2.2), confer the L1 a far more common role in learners' lives than some teachers may be ready to admit. Last but not least, learners make bilingual contrasts mentally. So, the – sadly – still often heard appeal to learners to "think in English", as if the L1 were a coat that can be taken off and hung on a peg before class, simply does not work.

In contexts of bilingual education, bilingual or dual language books "e.g. with English on one side of the page and Spanish on the other, sharing the same pictures" (Baker, 2001, p. 278) are used to allow emergent bilinguals acquire literacy in two languages. These books usually deal with topics related to the immigrants' home culture or with intercultural experiences about discovering and coming to terms with a new cultural environment. This is the case of the bilingual novel *Mi sueño de America/My American Dream* (2007), by Mexican-U.S.-American writer Yuliana Gallegos, a first-person account of a Mexican girl from Monterrey, Yuli, who relocates in Houston, Texas, with her family. It deals with Yuli's process of adjusting to the new school, especially regarding making new friends and coping with

English. The author wrote the story at the age of 12, three years after her arrival from her home town (Gallegos, 2007, back cover). Although her writing is quite simple, unconstrained from the need to reduce language to a number of words or grammar features, as in graded EFL readers, it contains heartfelt accounts of her process of learning to live a new life. Because of its simplicity the book seems quite accessible to EFL learners of an elementary level of proficiency.

Argentina is a nation largely populated by immigrants, and one from which people have emigrated from time to time because of political persecution or, more recently, prompted by recurrent financial crises. For this reason, dealing with emigration is a relevant topic for Argentinean EFL learners, and one of the themes included in the EFL curriculum of 5th year of upper-secondary schools (*Ciclo Orientado*) of the Province of Córdoba.

This paper relies on the concepts of translanguaging and mediation. The first is an approach to L1 use in foreign language learning and teaching, while the second refers to a form of bilingual communication that has many potential applications in real life. After defining both concepts we will propose two tasks involving the learners' first language: translation using an online translation app and oral mediation. The bilingual book serves as a springboard for dealing with the topic of emigration as well as for the development and integration of language skills that will enhance learners' communicative intercultural competence, while also applying translanguaging as a pedagogy. In this vein, Kersten and Ludwig (2018) stress the role of dual language books regarding their function in the development of the learners' plurilingual and pluricultural competence:

> […] multilingual and multicultural texts […] are a manifestation of multilingual practices and thus serve as vehicles to bring translanguaging into the classroom. These texts not only represent the multilingual world outside the classroom, but also (intentionally) disrupt the oft-monolingual learning environment, creating opportunities for new perspectives and discussions on language and languaging (Kersten & Ludwig, 2018, p. 15).

The following paper is rooted in a materials design project currently under way at the School of Languages, National University of Córdoba, Argentina, in which we propose to develop materials for the particular context of state secondary schools with a Foreign Languages orientation in the upper secondary school stage (16 to18-year olds). In this educational setting, issues such as development of tolerance, inclusion, respect for cultural diversity, immigration, interculturality and plurilingualism lie at the root of the curriculum.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1 Translanguaging

The term translanguaging emerged as a pedagogical practice in Welsh schools where students were given input in one language and were asked to produce output in the other language. Since then, its meaning has been extended and it has been defined as "the process of making

meaning, shaping experiences, gaining understanding and knowledge through the use of two languages" (Baker as cited in Garcia and Li, 2014, p. 20). The concept brings forward the complex practices bilingual or multilingual speakers engage in when they use all their linguistic repertoire to try to communicate, to decode input and to produce output, to understand and be understood. The definition later proposed by Garcia notes that "translanguaging is the act performed by bilinguals of accessing different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages, in order to maximize communicative potential" (Garcia, 2009, p. 140). The view of languages as the components of a speaker's linguistic repertoire being in a flexible connection is what differentiates translanguaging from other well-known practices in ELT such as codeswitching and translation, which - according to Garcia - are also considered translingual practices. However, the key to translanguaging is stressed in the prefix *trans* which highlights the view of languages as if there were no boundary between them, and no separate codes in a speaker's mind, but a whole linguistic repertoire that speakers can access simultaneously and that allows them to enhance learning and communication. As a pedagogical practice, translanguaging can help "maximise the learner's, and the teacher's, linguistic resources in the process of problem-solving and knowledge construction" (Li, 2017, p.15).

Although the learners' L1 has been banned, or at least ignored in FL classes, it is impossible to deny it forms part of their linguistic repertoire. This is especially relevant in a largely monolingual community as is the case of Argentina, where both teacher and students share the same L1 as opposed to multilingual classrooms where comparing languages in a class where the teacher does not speak the learners' varied home languages, might be impossible. Thus, if our purpose is to help students become "communicatively competent speakers" (Kerr, 2019, p. 3), then we must foster the interconnection between languages and provide opportunities for students to compare languages, contrast linguistic features and develop the fluent connection between their L1 and L2. Translanguaging will not only enable the development of qualitatively better communication skills but, as said, translanguaging can potentially promote more inclusive classroom practices, increased participation from students and enhanced learning processes and understanding (Canagarajah, 2011; Creese & Blackledge, 2010). Studies have also demonstrated that inclusive L1 practices have an effect in developing rapport between teachers and students (see for example Hall & Cook, 2012). Taking this into consideration, in section 3.2 we propose an online translation task that promotes translanguaging.

2.2 Mediation

On many everyday life occasions, one person who can communicate to a certain degree in a foreign language needs to act as a link between two persons who cannot interact directly because of a language barrier. This mode of communication is called "mediation" and was introduced in the original version of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR, 2001). Although it has been two decades since the CEFR defined and characterised mediation, it has not yet been incorporated in global teaching materials (i.e. coursebooks intended for the international market) or international foreign language exams. Probably, the reluctance to involve L1 use has acted as a deterrent for its inclusion in both materials and assessments. The

Companion Volume to the CEFR (2018) stresses the relevance of mediation by adding scales with descriptors showing instances of this mode of communication in order to complement the already existing scales for reception, production and interaction contained in the original version of the CEFR (2001). The Companion Volume explains the relevance of mediation as follows:

Although the 2001 CEFR text does not develop the concept of mediation to its full potential, it emphasises the two key notions of co-construction of meaning in interaction and constant movement between the individual and social level in language learning, mainly through its vision of the user/learner as a social agent. In addition, an emphasis on the mediator as an intermediary between interlocutors underlines the social vision of the CEFR. In this way, although it is not stated explicitly in the 2001 text, the CEFR descriptive scheme *de facto* gives mediation a key position in the action-oriented approach, similar to the role that other scholars now give it when they discuss the language learning process (p. 33).

As a language activity, mediation involves the active use of all four skills. It can consist of oral or written mediation, either when spoken interaction is required, or when a brief summary of a written text – from one language to the other – is necessary. Some possible instances of mediation are a record of instructions to operate a device, or a personal or formal message. The activity proposed in 3.2 resorts to oral mediation, a kind of task that may range from more sophisticated ones, such as simultaneous or consecutive interpretation, to informal interpretation 'of foreign visitors in [one's] own country, of native speakers when abroad, in social and transactional situations for friends, family, clients, foreign guests, etc., of signs, menus, notices, etc.' (CEF, p. 87) (López-Barrios, 2013, p. 315).

In the 2001 edition, mediation was characterized more as a tool for cross-linguistic problem-solving, while in the 2018 version CEFR stresses the social function of this mode of communication. This is in line with the strong pluricultural orientation advocated in contemporary foreign language education. One recurrent theme in *Mi sueño de América/My American Dream* by Yuliana Gallegos is that of Yuli's difficulty to understand and communicate in English, the main language in her new home country, even though she has learned English in her school in Monterrey. In this context, a possible scenario in which mediation becomes a real task is that of Yuli's mother seeking her son's help to communicate with the teacher to explain to her the difficulties her daughter is facing to integrate in the new cultural and linguistic environment. This task will be illustrated in 3.2.

3. Tasks involving L1 use

In this section we propose a translanguaging and a mediation task, both set in the context of the novel *Mi Sueño de América.* Both activities aim at developing language and communicative skills in a bilingual environment such as the one Yuli was immersed in. By using the novel as a springboard for these language activities, the tasks become more meaningful since they are set in a communicative context and with a clear communicative purpose.

3.1 Task 1

This first task consists in translating parts of the novel using Google Translate. This has a twofold purpose. On the one hand, the task opens a space for translanguaging in the class since students will have to resort to their knowledge of the two languages to assess the effectiveness of the translations. On the other hand, the task also allows us to, first, acknowledge the use of the popular translation app (widely used by students to complete tasks, whether this is permitted by teachers or not), and second, to discuss with learners the affordances and limitations of this technology.

Since their inception, online translation tools have constantly been updated and their precision has improved significantly, so much so that some people have started to question if learning a language will be necessary in the future (Kerr, 2019). Despite their increasing degree of accuracy, there are some frequent mistakes usually associated to these tools such as "word order, words with more than one meaning, articles and pronouns, phrasal verbs and idioms, cultural references, style, new or rare words and punctuation" (Kerr, 2019, p. 13).

Taking advantage of the fact that the novel provides samples of language both in the L1 and L2, with translations done by a professional, and admitting that most students are familiar with online translation tools, in this task students will be given a selection of sentences from the novel with their corresponding published translations, they will be asked to translate the original versions and then compare the two translations as shown in the table below:

Online translation task: Translate the following sentences using Google Translate. Then compare that version with the translation in the book. What differences can you find? Can you think of possible reasons for the translation difference?

Original	Translation in the book	Google Translate	Differences	Possible reason for the difference
You 're going to go to one near our apartment.	Van a ir a una escuela que esta cerca del departamento			
Cuando estaba frente a todo el grupo pude darme cuenta como me observaban, me miraban de arriba a bajo [sic], como si hubiera venido de otro planeta, no de otro pais.	When I was in front of the class, I saw how they were staring at me. They looked me up and down as if I were from another planet and not from another country.			
Right now my main goal is to learn English well.	Ahora mi meta principal es aprender bien el ingles.			
Un rico licuado de plátano y unas quesadillas.	A delicious banana smoothie and quesadillas."			

Figure 1. Online Translation task.

In order to further reflect on the sources of the errors found, and to raise awareness of the differences between the two languages, students will be asked to also think of possible reasons why the translation tool has translated the samples differently. This discussion can be

done   either   in   the   L2   or   in   the   L1   depending   on   the   level   of   students.

Online translation task: Translate the following sentences using Google Translate. Then compare that version with the translation in the book. What differences can you find? Can you think of possible reasons for the translation difference?

Original	Translation in the book	Google Translate	Differences	Possible reason for the difference
You 're going to go to one near our apartment.	Van a ir a una escuela que esta cerca del departamento	Vas a ir a uno cerca de nuestro apartamento.	Pronouns	Lack of context.
Cuando estaba frente a todo el grupo pude darme cuenta como me observaban, me miraban de arriba a bajo [sic], como si hubiera venido de otro planeta, no de otro pais.	When I was in front of the class, I saw how they were staring at me. They looked me up and down as if I were from another planet and not from another country.	When I was in front of the whole group I could tell how they watched me, they looked at me up to low, as if it had come from another planet, not from another country.	Phrasal verbs and idioms	Stare : more precise As if I were / as if I had come from: more literal translation Up to low: too literal, wrong.
Right now my main goal is to learn English well.	Ahora mi meta principal es aprender bien el ingles.	En este momento mi objetivo principal es aprender inglés bien.	Word choice Word order Article	Good (better?) translation
Un rico licuado de plátano y unas quesadillas.	A delicious banana smoothie and quesadillas."	A delicious banana smoothie and some quesadillas	Determiner Cultural differences (banana)	Language variety

Figure 2. Online translation task with sample answers.

As shown in the sample answers in figure 2, some of the Google translate versions have mistakes which are mainly related to reference and idiomatic expressions. Yet some are grammatically and idiomatically correct, with different ways of expressing the similar ideas. In the first sentence, the lack of context to understand that "one" refers to the school has caused the translation app to interpret it literally as "uno". In the second sentence, it is evident that the online translation is more literal and denotative than the one provided by the published novel. The translation of "me observaban" as "they were staring at me" instead of "they watched me" serves to bring forward the negative feelings associated with the situation Yuli was experiencing. The word for word translation of the phrase "me miraban de arriba a bajo [sic]" in "they looked at me up to low" constitutes a common mistake in translation tools as the application failed to interpret the phrase as an idiomatic expression which needs to be analysed and interpreted as a whole instead of as the sum of its individual parts.

The last two examples are interesting to analyse in terms of their accuracy and cultural relevance. In the third sentence, for instance, although there is a difference in word order and a missing article, the online translation sounds not only grammatically but also idiomatically correct. I may even sound more current for users of the Argentinian variety of Spanish. These last two examples can also give way to reflecting on linguistic varieties. Indeed, word choices such as *plátano* (*banana*) or *meta* (*goal*) are more usual in the Mexican variety used by Yuli. And in both cases Argentinean users would also select the equivalents *banana* and *objetivo.* What is also interesting to discuss in examples such as the last one is the cultural load of items that have no English equivalent, such as the word *quesadillas,* and that stays the same in the three versions.

This task illustrates how important it is to explicitly train students to use online translation tools to reflect on the usefulness and limitations of the applications which they use without much training and sometimes even against their teachers' will. Indeed, just as we teach them how to use dictionaries, we can work with them on how to use translation apps, since they need to experience them in order to know how to use them best.

Translation has been frowned upon because of its association to the Grammar Translation Method. However, as Cook puts it, "being able to translate is a major component of bilingual communicative competence" (2010, p. xx). This does not mean that learners need to become skilled translators, but that translation can be not only an end in itself but also a means to raise awareness of linguistic features and cultural differences both within our own language and across languages.

3.2 Task 2

This task consists in role-playing a conversation between Yuli's mother and the teacher, whereby Yuli's brother mediates between his mother and the teacher, in view of her – hypothetically – limited English proficiency, but also taking into account the fact that Yuli's brother also possesses an incipient knowledge of the target language. This activity simulates a real-life situation in which the son acts "as an intermediary in informal situations" (CEFR, 2018, p. 104). Although the bilingual text is a resource for learners to prepare for this task, the latter does not consist in merely cutting and pasting verbatim from the Spanish version. Instead, the activity requires a type of response from the learners that is partly reproductive and partly productive, as will be illustrated below.

Mediation task: You are Yuli's bother. Your parents speak very little English, and you speak Spanish at home. Yuli and her brother are learning English and they help their mother because she wants to talk to Yuli's teacher at school. You are the "interpreter" between the teacher and your mother. Use a dictionary when necessary.

Your mother tells the teacher the problems Yuli has at school. Mother wants to say	This is what you tell the teacher:
Querida maestra, mi hija pensó que iba a ser fácil adaptarse a la escuela	Dear teacher, my daughter / Yuli …
• Yuli fue a una escuela bilingüe en Monterrey	
• Trata de prestar atención, pero no entiende lo que usted dice	
• Yuli trata de hablar con Jorge, porque es latino, pero el hace como que no la entiende	
• Mi hija se siente perdida, yo le digo que sólo es una cuestión de tiempo	
• Siempre le digo a mi hija que es difícil venir a un nuevo país, sin amigos y con otro idioma	
• Yuli no se sintió con ganas de venir a la escuela, cree que sus compañeros se van a reír de ella	
• Su principal objetivo es aprender bien inglés y lograr muchas cosas en la escuela	

Figure 3: Mediation task.

In this task, learners work in pairs taking the roles of the mother (speaking Spanish) and the son (mediating). The input to be translated into English consists of simple sentences and is deemed to be within the reach of learners in upper secondary school (in Argentina, *Ciclo Orientado*). The sophistication of the linguistic choices and ease with which learners handle the task will depend heavily on individual (for example, motivation, extroversion, proficiency level) and institutional factors (notably, the number of weekly classes devoted to English). Learners will be given time to prepare for this task, i.e., to frame the L2 version of the L1 input, and they will be directed to refer to the bilingual text for reference and to use a dictionary if necessary. Preparation time will depend on the factors mentioned above.

As said before, the task uses paraphrases of the L1 input found in the text so that the task is not a merely reproductive one. For example, in the task, one of the statements Yuli's mother wants to make is "*Yuli no se sintió con ganas de venir a la escuela, cree que sus compañeros se van a reír de ella",* whereas the L1 version of the book reads "No tenía ganas de ir a la escuela pero no sabía cómo decírselo a Mamá. Tenía miedo que mis compañeros se rieran de mí" (Gallegos, 2007, p. 31). Consequently, learners have to use the third person in their L2 rendition of the statement and to resort to familiar forms to express "*sentir ganas de*", "*creer que*", so that a degree of variation in the language forms and lexis used are possible.

6. Conclusion

For many years, the use of the L1 has been a taboo topic in ELT. Its potential usefulness has been undermined in theory, pedagogies and materials development. The L1 has been neglected, opposed and even banned in many contexts and this has led some teachers to express feelings of guilt when using the L1 in the foreign language classroom (Macaro, 1997). More recently, the use of L1 has sparked the interest of a number of researchers whose findings seem to show there is more acceptance of L1, in theory, thanks to developments such as translanguaging, and in practice, in the revaluation of translation and the introduction of mediation. However, as reported by Hall and Cook's (2013) international survey, the general consensus among teachers is that L2 use should be maximised (Hall and Cook, 2013). Ultimately, "the question of how much L1 use, and of what kind, is appropriate in any teaching context can only be answered by careful consideration of that context by the teacher." (Kerr, 2019, p.19).

Bilingual or multilingual literature can open a space for discussions about tolerance and multiculturalism and it can be a springboard for the implementation of translingual practices such as translation and mediation, which are, indeed, a reality in students' language practices. They can also be meaningful and truly communicative opportunities for learners, so they are worth a try.

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17

The puppet as a metaphor: The role of puppetry in teacher education

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> They are, by their nature, images coming to life.
> When the puppet bridges the gap between his seeming
> limitations and his coming to life, he has made a moving comment
> on the human condition and even the puppet's death can be moving,
> as having given us his breath, he then takes it back
> Tova Ackerman (Bernier and O'Hare, 2005, p.23)

1. Introduction

Puppetry as a technique provides exciting opportunities for foreign language learners of English of all ages to express themselves in communicative situations. It brings a new dimension to teaching and provides teachers and learners with a dynamic way to communicate and express ideas and feelings, and to react to literature. Through puppets, children can talk about different topics, retell personal and invented experiences and share with greater freedom their fears, moods and emotions. As Majaron (2002a, p. 62) points out, "objects and toys take over the function of the imaginative world in which the child dictates the rules and searches for possible solutions to … (her) unsolved problems". Puppets also make a strong link to literacy and social skills and can provide a way to assess student learning. O'Hare (2005, p. 3) argues that "through the symbolic nature of puppets children can begin to grapple with sensitive issues such as bullying and conflict resolution". Puppetry is a powerful teacher resource not only to develop language skills but also to foster intercultural awareness and inclusion.

This paper will share some findings regarding the implementation of puppets in pre-service Teacher Education in Argentina. It shares teacher trainees' perceptions on their use in the language classroom, specifically by working on the values springing from a story. The trainees attend the subject *Storytelling Workshop* at Instituto Profesional de Enseñanza Superior "Paulo Freire" in Tierra del Fuego and the *Music, Crafts and Games Workshop* at the Instituto de Enseñanza Superior en Lenguas Vivas "Juan R. Fernández" in Buenos Aires.

2. The puppet as a metaphor

"Puppets, though normally associated with buffoonery are poetic. They are, because they are not human, but immediately metaphors" (Bass, 1992, p.1). Puppetry as a metaphor, can be distinguished from other art forms in that it is strongly visual and persuasive. A puppet is made to speak even though the mouth is glued shut or painted on, so even if it is symbolic or abstract in shape and design, it has a function that involves communication. This is an intrinsic aspect of puppetry.

Its personality comes from some part of the puppeteer that is dominant enough to have created it as a concrete visualisation; while performing with the puppet, the thoughts that brought it to life are not only stated but stated strongly. This aspect of puppetry makes it a dynamic tool for developing communication skills with both children and adults. A puppet is an extension of personality, but it has greater freedom to express itself. It can go where the person is afraid to go; it can speak with mistakes without worrying. It can sing and even fly.

Besides, reflecting upon the concept of *metaphor* has been instrumental to the project, since once the task was over teachers and teacher trainers became fully aware of the depth of naming the puppet a *metaphor*. As Berner and O'Hare (2005, p. 25) explain, "puppets become visual metaphors for ideas, characters or emotions that may not have been consciously thought of as connected by the puppeteer until the puppet is made." They go on to add that once the puppet has been made, it has an inner "anima", the gift of its builder. Puppets as well as pop-up books have transcended their pedagogical value as resources reconstructing themselves into the representation of the unheard voices, the ones without voice, the 'others'.

3. The role of puppetry in education

Puppets are exciting resources to use in the EFL classroom. Children like puppets because they add extra fun and fantasy that can make the classroom a magical place, their ability to fascinate children going deeper than their simple charm. Puppets become powerful allies for teachers as they help students enjoy learning. Incorporating puppets in the classroom turns off the focus on the teacher's responsibility to teach English and turns on the children's motivation to learn. Puppets are unique, artistic, and educational.

Puppets are unique in that there is a magic that occurs when puppets and children interact. Puppets can be mirrors teaching us about ourselves as well as discussing topics in clear non-threatening manners. They can also answer questions and dispel myths by

160

presenting accurate information and model pro-social skills, namely sharing, volunteering, cooperating and helping to build better relationships.

Puppets have long been versatile means of artistic expression, communication and instruction. However, entertainment comes first. Puppets draw us into the world they create, and once we have lost ourselves in it, we accept the message without even realising that we are learning. And even if we can be drawn into their drama, we are not threatened by it. Lessons learned in this way are more likely to be remembered and to become part of our solid stock of knowledge.

Puppets are effective in delivering their educational messages because there is a magic spell in the medium. They capture children's attention to then offer information that relates to their lives, allowing learners to get emotionally, visually and kinesthetically involved in a subject, promoting deeper learning.

4. Puppets in teacher education: The project

This project is the result of sharing our passion and curiosity about the impact of puppetry in Higher Education and therefore the main reason for working together on the implementation of puppets and pop-up books in pre-service Teacher Education.

At IPES "Paulo Freire" in Tierra del Fuego, the *Storytelling Workshop* usually engages pre-service teachers through a set of techniques to incorporate literature in the EFL class. Every year the workshop has a specific theme to organise the three axes of the workshop: *a) why include storytelling in the EFL class*, b) *the art of storytelling: discovering what to tell*, and *c) how to do it: exploring the resources*.

Throughout this term, the workshop has focused on inclusion and the exploration of the puppet metaphor through pop-up books. These are moveable books including text, illustrations and folded and pull-tab elements that move within the pages of the stories. Students have explored different stories to develop a variety of storytelling techniques and have focused on poetry about inclusion. On this occasion, the aim has been to exploit the resource further by integrating it to a story around common conflicts that learners may have. This storytelling workshop involves working collaboratively and sketching out a short dramatic scene around one of the conflicts in the story.

At the IESLV "Juan Ramón Fernández" in Buenos Aires, the *Workshop on Music, Crafts and Games* usually engages pre-service teachers in puppet construction as a unique hands-on experience conductive to self-discovery and expression within an environment in which academic instruction prevails. This contact with the senses and emotions tends to counterbalance the overall weight on cognitive work at Teacher Training College, resulting in a nurturing experience that connects student-teachers with their whole beings. There is usually discussion of potential follow-up activities using the puppets as meaningful resource materials. But, in general, there is no time for the development of a comprehensive plan around the puppet. Trainees are instructed to choose a character to design a finger puppet that would eventually become their helper in class. Further guidelines are provided for them to choose a

story based on values to discuss with their learners using the puppet as an interlocutor. This storytelling activity involves working with a partner and sketching out a short dramatic scene around one of the conflicts in the chosen story.

4.1 Purpose of the study

In both institutions, the purpose of the study has been

- to explore pre-service teachers' perceptions regarding the use of puppetry in educational contexts and their feelings and views on puppet making.

- to create their own puppet or pop-up book using a diversity of techniques, creating an identity for their puppet and/or Pop-up book: building its character, adopting a linguistic register, voice and movement, assigning personality traits, habits, preferences and fears.

- to use the puppet and pop-up book to discuss sensitive issues with students around a story and poem that portrays values or goals related to inclusion.

- to reflect on what they have learned from this experience, on the challenges faced and how to overcome them in the future, and above all, on what they consider important when planning a lesson around puppets.

5. Methodology

The present study has focused on collecting and analysing qualitative data. The instrument used is a questionnaire with guidelines organised into the following categories: perception on the use of puppets in the classroom, choice of a story, creation of resource (puppet or pop-up book), recreation of dramatic scenes with the resource and reflection on the process. After the participants planned their work and created their own puppets and pop-up books, they were asked to tell the story to their peers and do the follow up activities as a rehearsal of what they would do later in their classrooms.

The main technique used by student-teachers in the interaction with their learners was an adaptation of Dialogical Drama with Puppets Method (DDP) mentioned in Majaron (2002a, pp. 27-28), a continuous dialogue with children and one of the new forms of teacher-child interaction. Used to reveal basic cultural values in young learners, the method makes use of storytelling and interactions with puppets and pop-up books in the hope that the tales will foster all sorts of children self-expression. It usually consists in three stages: a) planning stage, where there is a selection of narratives and tools for constructing dialogues with children; b) drama presentation with puppets encouraging children to communicate; c) children's own presentation of the story with their own puppets (Bredikyte, 2000, p. 2). Although it has not been possible to implement this final stage in the present project due to lack of actual learner interaction, it has been agreed upon the team of student-teachers that this would be an invaluable follow-up and round-up to the whole experience.

6. Findings

In analysing the qualitative data provided by teacher trainees, it is worth highlighting the following findings.

6.1. Perceptions on the use of puppets and pop-up books in the classroom

What was your first contact with puppets or pop-up books like? What memories do you have? Memories are filled with emotion and melancholy. Many student-teachers remember experimenting with puppets in kindergarten, used by their teachers to tell stories, sing songs, reinforce positive behavior and engage learners in games. Some treasure those memories and even recollect "captivating" street shows with puppets in parks. There is even recall of the making of a mache paper masks with no concrete exploitation by the teacher. One trainee used puppets with adult learners to get rid of their inhibitions and foster fluency in a Suggestopedia lesson. In like manner, when referring to pop-up books, memories are filled with emotion and excitement. Student teachers describe the encounter as a "lovely moment", "unforgettable moment", "surprising moment", "a moment of discovery".

Are you interested in including puppets in your language classroom? Why? The most common feeling of teacher-trainees is that they are willing to include puppets as part of their lessons, especially with younger learners, since older ones might get sarcastic and even rude. Most of them welcome the opportunity to explore puppets and are willing to see ways of exploiting them in their teaching. Trainees highlight the children's acceptance and enthusiasm when introduced to puppets and pop-up books arguing they help "a situation or story come to life" and can help children "express themselves freely" and "channel their emotions". They highlight the value of these resources in helping deal with attitudinal problems and work on values or situations children find difficult to solve. Puppets and pop-ups offer a change from the traditional lesson plan, from a puppet show to a storytelling experience, and they change the dynamics of the classroom to something fun and more entertaining than drilling.

What purpose does puppetry serve in educational contexts? There is a set of possible purposes for the use of puppetry outlined by teacher trainees:

- to detach the voice of the teacher from what is being said,

- to introduce a friendly image in the classroom, one that the students feel at ease with,

- to pour more fun into learning,

- to help shy children overcome their fear to speak,

- to discuss learners' problems detaching them from the situation,

- to present a story or a play to ease the way into the fictional world described,

- to encourage students' creativity and fluency,

- to have a character in charge of solving problems.

Have you ever made a puppet or a pop-up book? Why? How did you feel? Most teacher trainees share that they have never made either a puppet or a pop-up book before this experience at the Teachers' Training College. When asked to make their puppet or pop-up book for this project many, felt a little reluctant as they were not certain how to get to the final product, or even discouraged by their "lack of artistic skills". However, once they overcame their fears and reluctance, they felt more engaged and focused, enjoying the process. To most teachers, this has been a fun and enriching experience, even if they were not too delighted with their product. They have enjoyed seeing their creations come to life and experienced a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction and self-pride to have seen the project completed.

6.2. Choice of the story

Teacher-trainees were to choose stories that would portray values and goals that would allow learners to mirror their fears, challenges or areas for development. The stories chosen were:

1. *The Color Monster: A Story about Emotions* (2018) by Anna Llenas. This story deals with feelings of happiness, sadness, fear, calmness, anger and love. Its purpose is to help children identify and voice out (their) feelings.

2. *This Is Not My Hat* (2012) by Jon Klassen. This story reflects upon values and expected behaviours in society as regards stealing, lying and punishing. Learners reflect upon their own beliefs and identify situations in which their values may be at risk.

3. *Pete the Cat: I Love my White Shoes* (2008) by Eric Litwin and James Dean. This story shows a positive message about what we have in our lives and what we do with what we have. Pete tries to adapt himself to changes and accept them positively.

4. *I Will Surprise My Friend* (2012) by Mo Willems. This is a fun story about friendship and surprise, and yet it can also be used to talk about other very deep topics.

In the case of teacher-trainees from IPES "Paulo Freire" in Tierra del Fuego, they were asked to choose poems dealing with the topic of inclusion. After that, students wrote stories inspired in the poems. All stories had to include setting, character development, initial situation, a conflict, a resolution and a happy ending.

The poems selected and the stories created by trainees were:

1. "The Feather" inspired by the poem "Tickles" Betsy Franco,

2. "Super Jimmy" inspired by the poem "A Friendly Circle" by Betsy Franco,

3. *"*Bob the Happy Tigger" inspired by the poem "Which Animal?" by Betsy Franco,

4. "Which Me to Be" inspired by the poem "Which Me to Be" by Betsy Franco,

5. "My Name is Carlos" inspired in the poem "With a Friend" by Vivien Gouled,

6. "Brian Does not Care" inspired by a real story and by the poem "Colours" by Betsy Franco,

7. "The Sky's the Limit" inspired by a real story and by the poem "The Race" by Mary Sullivan.

6.3. Creation of the resources: Puppets and pop-up books

In the case of the IESLV "Juan R. Fernández" in Buenos Aires, teacher trainees were to make a finger puppet of their choice using the technique of paper pasting, and to build its character adopting a linguistic register, voice and movement and assign personality traits, habits, preferences and fears to it. As the puppeteer Susana Adrián puts it (Weizman de Levy & Zaina., 2002, p. 104), "it is important that the puppeteer makes their own puppet because unconsciously they are projecting and bringing to life something that words cannot explain". She believes the puppeteer pours a bit of themselves in the puppet and that this creates a bond and an emotional connection with what they are creating. The effect is much stronger than if they borrowed a ready-made puppet. This has proven true to all participants.

One of the main purposes of this puppet construction activity has been to help teacher trainees understand and live in the flesh what it entails to follow-through with a project, overcoming any obstacle along the way. All trainees managed to achieve this goal. Although some of them felt a bit "weird" or frustrated at first when delving into puppetry making-- partly due to their lack of experience with the paper pasting technique-- they all thought it was an enriching and motivating challenge to design their puppet and make it come to life by assigning it a colourful personality. There was a general fear of not being good enough at crafts or an 'I-will-ruin-it' feeling so the project posed an additional challenge. Yet, after some perseverance and dedication, the outcome ended as they had expected. Trainees experienced all sorts of feelings, from being "excited and anxious during the whole process", since they had never done anything like this before, to being crowned with a feeling of self-pride and "an overwhelming sense of accomplishment".

As regards the process of creation of the pop-up books, teacher trainees took a workshop to learn basic pop-up cutting and folding techniques to create the books with a professional guest and explored the use of different materials, the art of making books, the importance of images and different techniques for emphasising ideas. All techniques learnt, students started their own process of creation and communication and developed a close relationship with the object, which turned into a resource and then into a puppet. Students not only enjoyed the creation process but also became aware of all the pedagogical possibilities that puppets and pop-ups provide for learners and teachers within EFL contexts.

Trainees' perceptions of the value of crafts in the English language classroom have also changed. Most of them have grown aware of the value of living an aesthetic experience: "many times we are told that craft is for gifted people, and now I can say that it is not. It is an activity that carries a lot of you in it. That puppet or pop-up book is your creation, a part of

you." As such, most trainees have developed extraordinary abilities to channel their feelings and to help students express themselves.

Puppets and pop-up books have been described by their creators as if they were actually alive. A teacher even claimed that it was the puppet itself who had chosen its voice or some personality features in an entertaining conversation between creator and creation. Puppets' personalities are vivid and real: "Lollipop is a nice, gentle, innocent, good-tempered and curious frog who is also a little bit insecure". The trainee has also described her puppet as being "afraid of the unknown, of injustice and treason". The detailed description accounts for the trainee's involvement in the task.

Evidence abounds on the emotional involvement that the process of puppet creation entails and on its deep experiential benefits. Crossing over the borders of the classroom, a trainee even worked with her mother to finish her creation: "this made us share an artistic experience probably for the first time".

6.4. Design of dramatic scenes with the puppet

Teacher trainers paired up with a partner to plan and sketch a short dramatic scene around one of the key conflicts in the stories they had chosen to work with, engaging their puppet in conversation with the audience and recreating situations they had probably lived, heard or read. They were to write guiding questions for this discussion, ensuring containment and possible realistic paths to solving the problems identified. Trainees planned follow-up activities for their stories which would pave the way for striking conversations with the audience, springing from the conflicts presented. The technique used was Dialogical Drama with Puppets (DDP) (Majaron, 2002a, p. 27) with the puppet guiding the dialogue and interacting with the audience. Trainees were asked to plan for proper conditions for each child's self-expression and awareness of others' point of view. Although, as mentioned earlier, this activity was not carried out in class, it served as a useful pre-teaching experience allowing teachers to experiment with puppetry. All teacher trainers were immersed in their partners' stories and reacted positively to the dialogical drama interaction. Some teacher trainees did use their puppets at school and were able to carry out their activities in their own classrooms with highly rewarding outcomes.

After making the puppets, the participants were asked about their feelings and thoughts before and after the experience and what they had learnt about themselves. Table 1 displays the results:

Thoughts and feelings before making the puppet	Thoughts and feelings after making the puppet	Virtues this entailed, what I have learned, skills I have developed
Is this toxic? I'm not good at this I can't/won't do it How do I do this? This is impossible This is endless It just won't dry This will be a disaster I've seen this before but I've never done it myself Why do I have to do this? Can I bring gloves? How am I going to take it home?	It's talking to me! I did it! I'm proud of myself I've finished it! It's better than I'd expected No touching! Look at it! Isn't it nice? It's SO cute! I've made it! I've made it myself! It wasn't that difficult I wasn't so bad, I guess It could have been worse What can I do with this now?	Patience Perseverance Self-commitment Fun Laughter Enjoyment Problem-solving Imagination Creativity Overcoming anxiety, fear, frustration Excitement Responsibility Concentration, focus

Table 1. Trainees' reflections on the puppet-making process.

7. Conclusion

This experience has turned out to be highly enriching to all teacher trainees. Most of them transitioned from the initial anxiety of not knowing whether they would be able to accomplish their goal to the actual experience of pulling it through and achieving not only academic but also emotional benefits.

Some trainees have expressed to be grateful for the opportunity and felt comfortable even to improvise during the *puppet/student* and *pop-up book/student* interactions. They have highlighted the importance of having a clear purpose in mind and focused on the instrumental use of the puppet and the pop-up book to perform meaningful class activities, such as telling stories, reviewing vocabulary, singing songs and working on routines. They have appreciated the use of these resources to commit students emotionally and to make them feel more at ease when learning a foreign language, always acknowledging how appealing it has been for learners to see the character, touch it or create it.

When planning a lesson around puppets or pop-up books, teacher trainees have viewed them mostly as a bridge between the student and the teacher to help express feelings and emotions, to encourage interaction and develop communicative skills. What is more, it has been assumed that the puppet or the pop-up book has its own personality and is to sustain it throughout the whole class when interacting with the learners. This implies involvement and commitment on the part of the teacher as well as careful planning. Finally, some have come to define puppetry as a useful teacher resource to foster imagination, tackle values and ask learners' opinions in a non-threatening environment.

The unyielding sense of accomplishment all teacher trainees have felt is really striking. Indeed, it has been a challenge they have all overcome: that of choosing an appealing story and writing out clear guiding questions to engage and interact with their audience. Having achieved all goals set, the general feeling after the experience is that it is worth seeing projects through. *Keep going* has become the general motto.

Given the lack of time to take the experience to actual classroom situations with ESL learners, the trainees' performance was appraised during the lessons given to their peers. There has been general agreement among teachers and trainees that taking this experience to actual ESL classrooms will constitute an enriching next stage that will certainly add value to the present project.

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