A Literature-based Aproach for Eleventh Novice Learners: A Way to Incorporate Literary Texts in Costa Rica Public High Schools

Jorge Altamirano Alvarado
Sede Regional Brunca
Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica

Manuel Navarro Godínez
Ministerio de Educación Pública, Costa Rica

Abstract

In this article, we developed a literature-based approach aimed at eleventh graders from public high schools. The methodological approach centers on developing short stories as a way to incorporate literary texts as part of the English Syllabus as well as to determine the students' level of comprehension. In addition, this literature-based approach intends to encourage students to do both modeled and shared reading.

Key words: literature, approach, comprehension, literary text, short story, linguistic skills

Resumen

En este artículo, desarrollamos un enfoque metodológico para la enseñanza de la literatura a estudiantes de undécimo nivel en un colegio del sistema público. La metodología del enfoque se centra en utilizar el cuento como texto literario e incorporar así la literatura como parte del currículum con el propósito de determinar el nivel de comprensión de los estudiantes. Además, el enfoque metodológico literario tiene la intención de ofrecer al estudiantado una lectura modelada y compartida.

Introduction

L iterature is not a science, yet it is an artful and creative manifestation of language expression through the representation of different sorts of texts such as short stories, poems, novels, and plays.

In fact, text comprehension and text production are key elements in literature teaching. A reader may discover meaning in literature by looking at what an author says and how he says it. In addition, interpreting the author's message is a key goal of any literary text. In the specialized academic circles, this textual decoding is often performed through literary theory led by the use of different approaches.

For years, the teaching of literature has been native-language oriented. Namely, children are told stories and poems in elementary school, and they are exposed to efferent-based comprehension exercises. While in high school, the story is similar since students read longer texts such as novels and legends, and teachers develop magistral lessons that offer learners the basics they should know about a text, for they need to be tested, and testing is memory based. However, at the university level, the panorama is different for students whose major is first or second language oriented. Nevertheless, students take literary criticism courses and are exposed to aesthetic-based input when they are in the last level of their major. As a result, critical-thinking skills

and text production are hardly ever developed because of time constraints that most teachers deal with during the school year.

Traditionally, the teaching of foreign language literature in public Costa Rican High Schools has been absent at all since literature is not a pedagogical component of the English syllabus. It is a well-known fact that reading and understanding literary texts are hard tasks to do and might thwart learners if the teacher does not use an appropriate teaching approach full of reading strategies and techniques that allow students to process literary texts. Moreover, literature, for some scholars, serves little purpose as a tool to develop learners' job skills. As to this point, McKay (1986) states:

> Since one of our main goals as ESL teachers is to teach the grammar of the language, literature, due to its complexity and its unique use of language, does little to contribute to this goal. Second, the study of literature will contribute nothing to helping our students meet their academic and/ or occupational goals. Finally, literature often reflects a particular cultural perspective; thus, on a conceptual level, it may be quite difficult for students. (p. 191)

As one may appreciate, these previously mentioned arguments make up the main claims against the teaching of literature at any educational context. In sharp contrast, there are arguments

for literature use in ESL teaching. First, "literature can be useful in developing linguistic knowledge, both on a usage level and use level. Secondly, to the extent that students enjoy reading literature, it may increase their motivation to interact with a text and increase their reading proficiency. Finally, literature may increase culture understanding and spur [learners'] own imaginative writing" (McKay, p. 193). Ambitious as it sounds to some, such arguments are powerful reasons to rethink the inclusion of literature as part of a foreign language curriculum.

Such an inclusion makes more sense if we realize that the first contact of high school students from public schools with English literature probably takes place until they get enrolled in a major that incorporates literature in its curriculum; and by then sometimes it is too late. This is the case of the English Teaching Major and Elementary School Education taught at various public and private Costa Rican universities. For this reason, the integration of literature in the MEP English Syllabus as part of their pedagogical components addressed to advanced grades (tenth and eleventh) at a novice-high short story level may well be a contribution to augment not only the learners' target language proficiency level, but also cultural literacy, tolerance, and lifelong reading habits.

Regarding curriculum design, the current MEP syllabus (2001) for both tenth and eleventh grades states:

> The object of study of the English language in our curriculum is written and oral communication, emphasizing the four basic linguistic skills: listening, speaking, reading and writing. The practice of these skills permits the students to communicate efficiently according to the knowledge acquired.
>
> Through the learning of the language, the learner can compare and apply different registers (formal and informal) and recognize expressions in British, American and other varieties of English. (p. 17)

As evidenced in this quotation, literature is completely excluded from MEP syllabus, depriving students from gaining insights that might contribute to their reading comprehension for the National-High-School-Graduation Examination (Bachillerato).

In light of the problems described herein, we have set forth to devise an action plan that will tackle the teaching of literature by means of short stories that contribute to increasing learners' complex cognitive, metacognitive and critical thinking skills for decoding, understanding, making inferences and interpreting text taking into account textual and contextual clues as well as cultural aspects.

Thus, based on previous experience and theoretical principles in the field, this research centers on the implementation of an instructional approach that combines literary tenets, reading strategies and techniques as a way to increase the neglected literary component as well as overall language proficiency of Costa Rican learners from public schools in the field of English as a foreign language.

This research inquiry is not only relevant but also necessary, given that the English syllabus from public Costa Rican schools does not involve any

particular component that is literature-oriented. Contrary to popular belief, bringing in literature into the English teaching curriculum would not impede but rather shorten the distance between students' proficiency levels and the intended learning outcomes of the MEP.

In sum, incorporating literature to the English syllabus results in paramount importance in order to bridge the gaps that the English syllabus has lacked for years in this matter.

In general, this study attempted to answer these questions:

1. What is the students' level of comprehension of short stories after developing the literature-based approach?
2. What is the EFL teacher's perception about the implementation of the literature-based approach?
3. What is the students' perception about the four literature lessons?

Theoretical considerations

Literature development and its understanding are highly related to reading comprehension. As a result, it is necessary to employ an instructional approach that facilitates the teaching of reading, especially when it comes to novice high learners who are in the process of developing language-learning skills. The aforementioned Balanced Reading Approach certainly seeks to scaffold students' learning and fosters their success. Cooper (2001) asserts that a Balanced Reading Approach is composed of the following elements:

Modeled reading:

The teacher reads aloud and verbalizes the thinking that occurs while approaching a reading task.

Shared reading:

The instructor has the students read along with rather than take responsibility for being the main reader. Certainly, the students can commit to the process and go beyond their independent level in a non-threatening way.

Guided reading:

The teacher and a homogeneous group of 4-7 students talk, think, and question their way through a text. The idea is to help them develop reading strategies. Guided reading basically fosters independence by supporting students as they develop and use strategies when reading independently.

Collaborative reading:

Learners work and collaborate in pairs or small groups for a variety of reasons. They might read with a peer orally or silently, meet in literature circles or book clubs to discuss short stories or poems they have previously read on their own.

Independent reading:

In this stage, learners select their own reading passages and read individually without the support of another peer. The idea is to provide practice in orchestrating and using strategies learned in other elements of

balanced reading. In fact, independent reading promotes reading competence, confidence, and enjoyment (n. page).

On-literary-text selection

As argued elsewhere in this paper, in Costa Rica, the English syllabus for public schools does not include a literature program. In fact, the English syllabus promotes the teaching of the target language through the development of the four-macro skills by means of the Communicative Approach. Although the syllabus contains linguistic objectives and target contents addressed to the teaching of reading, none of them is oriented towards the teaching of any literary content. In addition, research shows the need to include literature as a vehicle to achieve linguistic, cultural, and emotional outcomes that are desirable in every learner in today's globalized world.

There are many criteria that any teacher or instructor may consider when it comes to literary text selection. No particular literary aspects constitute an absolute or definite recipe to pick out reading passages for teaching literature; that will depend on the situational context of the target population, the learners' level, the teaching conditions, and the willingness of the teacher to make changes and implement new methodologies.

In using literature to teach language skills, a notion that has gained prominence in the last years is that of the interactive-compensatory model of learning fluency. Bock (1993), quoting Stanovich states, "The interactive-compensatory model of reading fluency provides useful insights for teachers of literature. This model is "interactive" in that it assumes that the reader makes sense of what s/he reads by (1) decoding the linguistic items on the page (bottom-up processing) and (2) relating this information to what s/he already knows about the world (top-down processing"(p. 154). This means students move from deduction to induction, activating their background knowledge or schemata, which helps them to compensate their weak linguistic knowledge. Some of the most helpful principles of Stanovich interactive-compensatory model are 1) Background knowledge activation, 2) Text prediction, 3) Explicit presentation of the cultural, historical, and/ or social context of the text, and 4) Word-and-sentence-level-comprehension assistance. In addition, the learner should be exposed to reading strategies. According to Bock (1993), "good readers [should]: 1) decide on a reading purpose, 2) choose a reading approach, 3) read the title, look at illustrations and make inferences about text meaning, 4) use their knowledge of the world, 5) use a variety of context clues, 6) use dictionaries sparingly" (p. 155). The aforementioned strategies are part of the specifics of the reading process, which lead to text comprehension.

Considering that this literary teaching proposal is addressed to a novice-high population, the reading passages (short stories) should be simplified or reduced to guarantee learner comprehension. In fact, "such text simplification can result in loss. The original book is shortened, the number of characters, situations, and

events cut, the vocabulary restricted, and the use of structures controlled" (Vincent, p. 211). This means that an inappropriate text reduction might affect the sensorial perception of the content transmitted by the text since the reader would not be able to experience the author's real feelings as to the text. Nevertheless, "foreign students cannot suddenly start to recognize and describe literary effects and to comment precisely on the use of language if they have been exposed only to unnaturally language use" (Vincent, p.215). For this reason, it is necessary to start teaching the basics of literary text through adapted or graded readings. In this regard, Vincent (1986) argues, "Some kind of simple text remains the most suitable kind of reading material in the early stages of learning a foreign language, and some system of graded progression as the course proceeds is essential" (p. 215). In short, text simplification should only be used at early learning stages. Then, learners need to be exposed to more authentic literary text so that they develop a habit of reading an original short story or poems, without showing "desperate reliance on a dictionary use at all times" (Vincent, p. 215).

Along the same lines, McKay (1986) adds, "the key to success in using literature in the ESL class rests in the literary works that are selected. A text which is extremely difficult on either linguistic or a cultural level will have few benefits. One common method of solving the potential problem of linguistic difficulty is the simplification of the text" (p. 193). At initial learning stages, literary text selection should not be dense for learners to process. Through the development of a balanced reading

instructional approach, students will be able to move from one stage to another at their own pace. Exposing novice learners to authentic literary text might make them panic and show some kind of reluctance towards literature because of frustration. Just like Vincent's claim on using authentic text, McKay (1986) quoting Honeyfield argues:

> Simplification tends to produce a homogenized product in which the information becomes diluted. The additional words in the text tend to spread information out, rather than to localize the information. Furthermore, the simplification of syntax may reduce cohesion and readability. Since proficient readers rely heavily on localized information and cohesive devices, deleting these elements will contribute little to the development of reading skills. (p. 193)

In sum, EFL literature teachers should know the students served very well and heavily take into account the learners' target language proficiency level in order to select adequate literary texts for his pupils' learning needs. In this regard, it would be commendable for the teacher to conduct a needs assessment of his population and teaching-learning conditions before exposing students to the artful field of literature.

Literature in the classroom

Once the text has been chosen considering technically devised criteria, it is necessary to define how learners will deal with the selected texts in the classroom. Consequently, the implementation of a reading-skills teaching approach

results essential to devise the mediation procedures such as tasks, exercises, and activities the students will be working with in the classroom.

McKay (1986), quoting Rosenblatt, recommends using two different reading approaches: efferent and aesthetic reading. The former accounts for "reading in which the reader is concerned with what s/he will carry away" (qtd. in McKay, p. 194). Namely, in the efferent reading approach, the reader is not interested in the rhythms of the language or the prose style but focuses on obtaining specific details. Certainly, this approach is bottom-up oriented. In sharp contrast, the latter complies "with what happens during the actual reading act. A reader often relates his or her world of experience to the text. After reading the passage, students might be asked if something similar has happened to them" (McKay, p. 194-197). For instance, readers explore the text, and they are engaged in the experience of reading for pleasure (extensive reading). In sum, this model is top-down oriented and takes advantage of their backgrounds in the communication event.

All in all, albeit both reading approaches are different, both of them offer learners the opportunity to explore the world of literature from a linguistic, cultural and analytical view. It makes sense to think, then, that once the teacher has made a text selection, he/she should have learners move from efferent reading to aesthetic reading through the implementation of a balanced-reading instructional approach.

Techniques and strategies for understanding literary text

A complete literature-based approach involves the implementation of a variety of techniques and strategies. Albeit both terms seem to be similar, they are quite different. Brown (2001) has defined techniques as "any of a wide variety of exercises, activities, or tasks used in the language classroom for realizing lesson objectives" (p. 16). That is to say, techniques comprise the use and usage of any didactic tool, resource or group of procedures that contribute to reaching a set of desired goals. By and large, some examples of reading techniques are comprehension questions, antonyms/synonyms, cognates, memorization, gap filling exercises, semantic maps, reading aloud, silent reading, multiple-slot substitution drill, grammar games, classroom set-up, pair work, group work, jigsaw, prior knowledge activation, vocabulary building, diagram completion, visual aids, authentic material, and so forth (Larsen-Freeman).

According to Oxford (1990), "learning strategies are specific actions taken by the learner to make learning easier, faster, more enjoyable, more self-directed, and more transferrable to new situations" (p. 8). This means that learning strategies are learner-oriented, since students are the ones that develop them on their own. In this regard, the terms techniques and strategies are not the same. Largely, some common examples of reading strategies a teacher may teach to his/her students are brainstorming, guessing meaning from context or context clues, getting main ideas, scanning for specific information, skimming, making inferences,

paraphrasing, and summarizing (Oxford, p. 8).

With this in mind, the implementation of both techniques and strategies within a literature lesson is highly commendable for providing learners with didactic tools that will lead them to successful text comprehension and critical text analysis as well.

Material for teaching literature

The design and creation of complementary material that leads learners to effective reading comprehension and analysis of the short story or poem under study follow the selection of a literary text. Therefore, the teacher needs to consider the type of learners he has in the classroom. That is, students might be auditory, visual or kinesthetic learners. For that reason, the teacher needs to incorporate materials for all learner types. Some of the plausible materials for the development of the present proposal are the inclusion of audiobooks or stories with tracks, over-sized depictions/drawings of important vocabulary words, pictures of the story episodes, slides, a story map, a character chart, and efferent as well as aesthetic comprehension and follow-up exercises. This implies that the instructor should design sequential lessons, scaffolding the students' learning and putting them on the road to success.

In addition to the careful selection of literary material, the teacher needs to encourage the students to read more extensively and progressively until the practice turns into a habit. As Bock (1993) points out, "fundamental to the success of any

learning activity is the motivation of the learner" (p. 157). For instance, if the students are not well motivated to read a story or a poem, chances are that they will approach the reading process with a sense of reluctance or even apathy. As Bock (1993) explains, "motivation will be enhanced by professionally presented and well laid out materials. The size of the unit is also important. The student should be able to complete one activity within a reasonable time limit. Neither the preliminary tasks nor the instructions should be so bulky as to deter the student from doing/ reading them altogether" (p. 157). In short, the material lay-out and make-up as well as the size of the didactic unit (exercises) might have an influence on the motivation the students have for reading or showing apathy towards the text and the activities. In addition to motivation, the pacing of the lesson and the activities and procedures complement the role of teaching materials.

As a conclusion, a good literature-based approach addressed to EFL learners from Costa Rican Schools, particularly tenth and eleventh grades should be grounded on the following foundations:

1. A balanced reading approach
2. Knowledge of the target population and their level of proficiency
3. Reading techniques and strategies

The aforementioned tenets to the literature approach constitute an effort to create and develop a literary proposal in Costa Rica whereby such aspects interconnect with each other and provide learners with insights

that increase their foreign language proficiency and academic achievement.

The nuts and bolts of the Literature-Based Approach

Our literary proposal profits from criteria devised by different scholars. Some of the most elemental principles are content schemata activation (background knowledge); prediction; explicit presentation of the cultural; historical, and social context where necessary. In addition, the proposal also comprises text's discourse genre clarification (formal schemata); word and sentence-level comprehension assistance; motivation (reading for a purpose); skill-building comprehension exercises; effective teaching techniques and reading strategies; story-telling; MEP-based lesson plan template; selective and illustrative materials (short stories, worksheets, flashcards, and illustrations); and balanced reading (scaffolding students' learning). The development of a short story following the previously mentioned criteria might lead the students to increase their reading comprehension and academic achievement. In addition, the teaching of literature might promote extensive analytical reading.

Methodology, instruments and participants

This proposal is based on qualitative investigation and followed an action research design which seeks to gather information for improving the life quality of subjects involved in a particular teaching situation. Certainly, action research results a convenient and commendable method to devise pedagogical alternatives as a way to improve the teaching of a specific subject oriented to one or various learning areas; as well to also start making decisions of the teacher-researcher's own classroom findings. Moreover, we implemented one questionnaire for the students and conducted an unstructured interview with the EFL teacher.

The investigation took place at LASAP (Liceo San Antonio) High School located in San Antonio, La Amistad, Pérez Zeledón, during the first semester of 2016 and was addressed to a population of one-eleventh-grade group of 14 students (7 girls and 7 boys). The class met once on a weekly basis for six forty-minute lessons of Conversational English. We coached the EFL teacher in advance and had him implement the present literature-based action plan. During four weeks, the EFL teacher taught the conversational English class four short stories from Scholastics. These were "Mei Ling and the Dragon", "The Smuggler", "A Monster Problem", and "How the Beetle Got her Colors". The EFL teacher developed a fifty-minute lesson plan for each session. Each lesson plan comprised the following elements. First, the linguistic objectives were reading-centered. The most used objectives were understanding a wide range of an imaginative text (folktale), predicting the content of a story from the title, and stating opinions about the story. Then, the procedures included presentation (pre-reading and background knowledge activation), practice (while-reading and comprehension exercises), and

consolidation (post-reading group discussion of the story's message). Last, each plan also comprised language functions such as expressing likes and dislikes, agreeing and disagreeing and assessment of outcomes. Largely, the four sessions were sequentially designed and followed the first two stages of Cooper's Balanced Approach, that is, each lesson moved from modeled reading to shared reading.

Discussion of findings

This section displays the results derived because of the implementation of our literature-based approach during four weeks. Each literature session took forty to sixty minutes according to the EFL teacher's report.

Quantitative analysis of the student questionnaire

Closed-ended questions 3 and 4 about the students' perception of the four stories

The first section of the questionnaire included four questions. Question 1 was about age. Then, question 2 was about the students' gender. Last, questions 3 through 4 were about the learners' perception of the four stories read. The figures below display the description, analysis and interpretation of the results obtained.
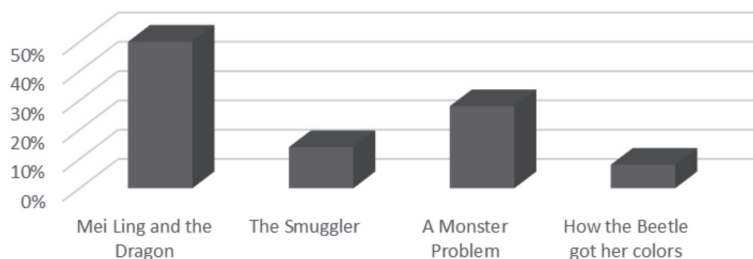
Figure 1

3. Did you like the four stories?
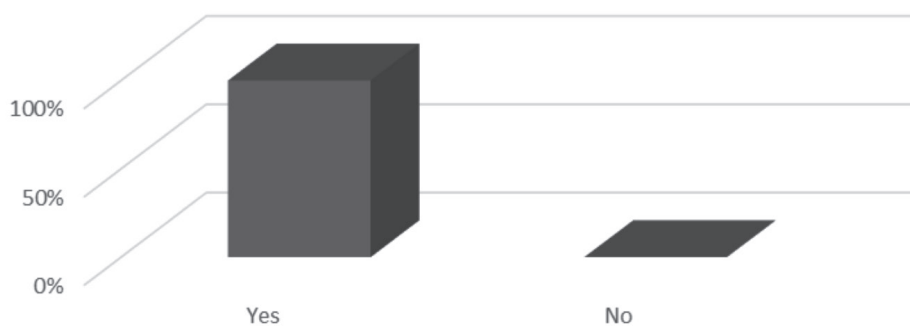
Source: Data taken from student questionnaire, August 2016.

Figure 2

4. Which story did you like best?

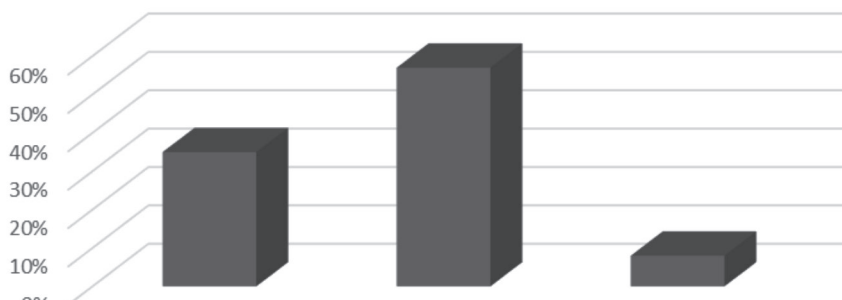Source: Data taken from student questionnaire, August 2016.

According to figure # 1, all students liked the four stories. As indicated in figure #2, 8% of the students liked "How the Beetle Got her Colors". Then, 14% of the learners preferred "The Smuggler", and 28% loved "A Monster Problem". Last, 50% of the pupils liked "Mei Ling and the Dragon". Consequently, it is possible to affirm that most high school learners like to read stories in their English class.

Likert Scale

The second section of the student questionnaire consisted of a Likert scale, comprising six statements about the pupils' perception towards the level of difficulty, content, and message of the stories as well as the teacher's materials used to teach the literature lessons.

Figure 3

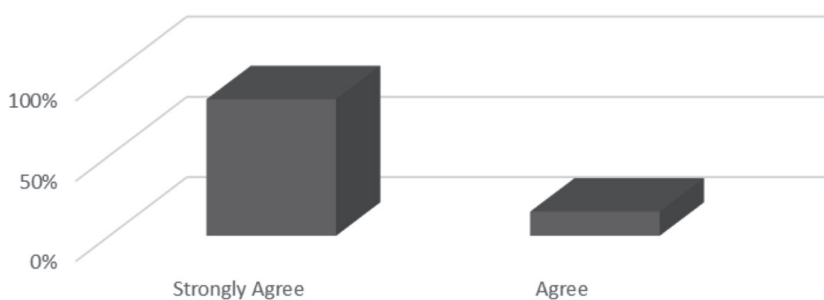1. The four stories were easy to understand?

Source: Data taken from student questionnaire, August 2016.

Figure # 3 shows evidence that 35% of the students strongly agreed that four stories are easy to understand. Next, 59% of them agreed in this respect. Last, 8% disagreed with this criterion. This means that 92% of the pupils expressed agreement with regard to the readiness of the literary text content. This result is positive since text comprehension and academic achievement may improve as well.

Figure 4

2. Each of the stories had a message.

Source: Data taken from student questionnaire, August 2016.

Figure #4 shows that 85% of the students strongly agreed and 15% of them agreed that each of the stories had a message. On this account, students are capable of understanding the main idea of the text in order to find out that there is a message behind each story.

Figure 5

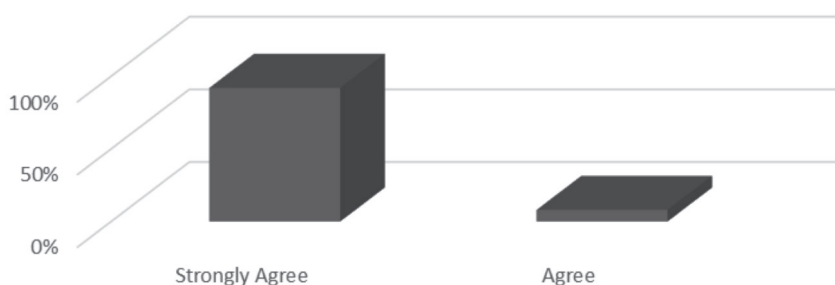3. I was able to understand the message of each story.
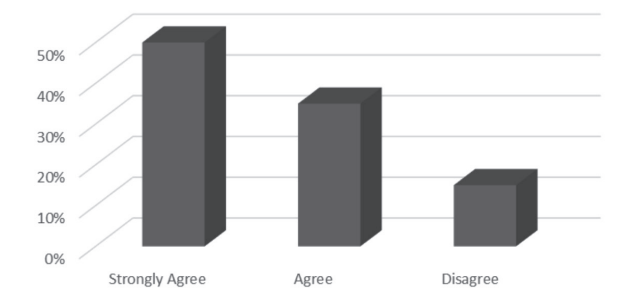
Source: Data taken from student questionnaire, August 2016.

According to this figure, 50% of the students strongly agreed and 35% agreed that they could identify the message of each story. Only 15% disagreed with this matter. This is a high point, for the students moved from being able to understand the main idea of text to decoding meaning in order to find out what the moral teaching of each story was.

Figure 6

4. The teacher provided me with copies of the stories, exercises and vocabulary.
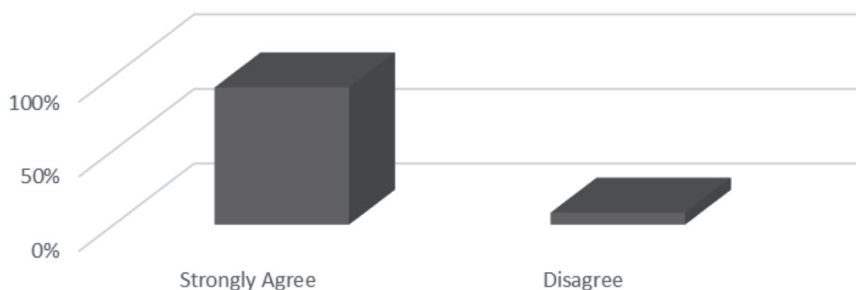

Source: Data taken from student questionnaire, August 2016.

As shown in figure #6, 92% of the participants indicated that they strongly agreed that the teacher gave them copies of the stories read as well as worksheets with both comprehension and vocabulary exercises. In addition, 8% of them agreed with this matter. In sum, providing students with copies, worksheets and other supplementary materials results necessary for making the lessons more meaningful.

Figure 7

5. The teacher used flashcards and pictures
related to each story told.

Source: Data taken from student questionnaire, August 2016.

According to figure #7, 92% of the students strongly agreed that the teacher used flashcards and pictures related to each story. In contrast, 8% of the pupils disagreed with this matter. On this account, using visual aids when telling a story is highly important because it helps to activate students' content schemata and decode meaning. In addition, it makes the reading fluency increase.

Figure 8

6. The teacher was willing to answer both
content and vocabulary questions about the
stories.
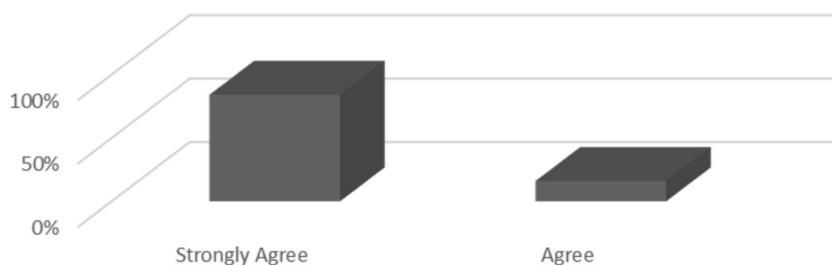
Source: Data taken from student questionnaire, August 2016.

As shown in figure #8, 84% of the participants indicated that they strongly agreed with the teacher answering questions and clarifying a concept or topic that was not clear enough within each story, and 16% of them agreed with this matter. This means that the teacher was tracking the students' work, and was ready to help them anytime they required their teacher's help.

Open-ended questions 6 through 8 about the students' perception of the four stories

Question 6. Which of the four stories was the most difficult to understand? Why?

The majority of the students stated that "How the Beetle Got Her Colors" was the hardest story to understand because of the new vocabulary. According to the students, the text had plenty of unknown words.

Question 7. What did you like most about the four stories?

Most of the students liked the message behind each story and the way in which each conflict was solved.

Question 8. What did you like least about the four stories?

Most of the students disliked the new words, which were hard to process. Then, they said they did not like to read aloud. In addition, various students expressed they wished the stories had been longer. Others said that sometimes the literature lessons were boring.

Interview to the teacher regarding his perspective about the development of the approach developed

The EFL teacher provided very valuable data regarding his experience teaching literature. Largely, he points out that he focuses his lessons mainly on oral elicitation activities based on everyday situations because that is the core of Conversational English. In fact, never had he taught literature before. In addition, he confessed he enjoyed teaching the four stories to his pupils. He added that it was similar to teaching reading, but the difference was the sort of text. Literary vocabulary is more complex to teach than non-literary lexicon. In short, the teacher expressed he was willing to try new methodologies and techniques. Regarding his opinion about the Literature-Based Approach, he believes it works well, but it should develop effective teaching techniques, reading strategies and skills.

Regarding the Balanced Reading Approach proposed by Cooper, he stated that he could only guide his pupils through the first two stages (Modeled Reading and Shared Reading). Notwithstanding, he mentioned that in order for the students to reach the last stage of the Balanced Reading Approach, it is necessary to develop the Literature-Based Approach with one story at least once a week. The more time the students are exposed to literary texts, the better they will perform in this kind of documents. Then, the students will probably be ready to explore other literary genre like poetry or novel.

Conclusion

Based on the evidence of our findings, we can assert that although there are arguments for and against teaching literature, the positive points constitute an important pillar to improve foreign language learning. In fact, literature can make learners increase reading proficiency, develop linguistic knowledge, increase motivation to interact with a text, promote oral elicitation and augment culture understanding. Hence, we would recommend that, at least, a literature component be included in the MEP syllabus and be taught to at least novice high levels such as tenth or eleventh grades at the short-story level.

Certainly, the stories selected must have a message and should be told with the aid of illustrations, so that they get the students' attention and encourage them to keep reading more. In fact, teaching good literature lessons is like giving appropriate customer service to people who trust your company's standards. For that reason, teachers should market their "products" so that students get them. Of course, the choice presented to students needs to be attractive and superb. It should really awe the students.

Bibliography

Brown, D. (2001). *Teaching by Principles: An Interactive Approach to Language Pedagogy*. 2nd ed. New York: Adison Wensley Longman.

Bock, S. (1993). "Developing Materials for the Study of Literature." *FORUM*, 31, 154-158.

Cooper, D. *et al.* (2001). *Literacy: Helping Students Construct Meaning*. 9th ed. Stanford, CT: Wadsworth Publishing.

Hine, G. (2013). "The Importance of Action Research in Teacher Education Programs." In *Design, Develop; Evaluate The Core of the Learning Environment. Proceedings of the 22nd Annual Teaching Learning*. Retrieved September, 2015.

Larsen-Freeman, D. (2000). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press.

McKay, S. (1986). *Literature in the ESL Classroom*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Ministerio de Educación Pública (2001). *Programa de Estudios de Inglés: Educación Diversificada*. San José, Costa Rica: El Ministerio.

Oxford, R. (1990). *Language Learning Strategies: What Every Teacher Should Know*. Boston, Massachusetts: Heinle & Heinle Publishers.

Sevilla, H. (2014). "The Journey of the Road not Taken: The Intersection of Contextual and Affective Factors in EFL Poetry Writing". Diss. Universidad Nacional, Costa Rica.

Vincent, M. (1986). *Simple Text and Reading Text Part 1: Some General Issues*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Appendix

Appendix 1. Questionnaire for students

Cuestionario dirigido a estudiantes de la Tecnología de Inglés Conversacional de undécimo año

Instrucciones:
El siguiente cuestionario es parte de un estudio llevado a cabo sobre la enseñanza de la literatura de habla inglesa en el sistema costarricense de educación pública. Este cuestionario fue diseñado para recopilar su opinión con relación a la lectura de cuentos en inglés. Por favor conteste cada pregunta en forma clara y honesta. Toda la información suministrada será tratada confidencialmente. Muchas gracias por su colaboración.

I-Parte: Conteste las siguientes preguntas.

¿Cuál es su edad en años cumplidos?

a) menos de 17   b) 17   c)18   d) 19   e) más de 19

¿Cuál es su sexo?

a) Masculino   b) Femenino

¿Le gustaron los cuatro cuentos leídos en la clase de inglés conversacional?

a) Sí   b) No

¿ Cuál de los cuatro cuentos le gustó más?

( ) Mei Ling and the Dragon   ( ) The Smuggler
( ) A Monster Problem   ( ) How the Beetle Got her Colors

Use la siguiente escala para dar su opinión sobre las afirmaciones en la tabla de abajo.

Marque una equis dentro de la casilla de su elección.

> **CDA:** Completamente de acuerdo.
> **DA:** De acuerdo.
> **EDA:** En desacuerdo.
> **CEDA:** Completamente en desacuerdo.

PERCEPCIÓN ESTUDIANTIL SOBRE LOS CUATRO CUENTOS LEIDOS	CDA	DA	EDA	CEDA
1. Los cuentos son fácil de entender.				
2. Los cuentos tienen un mensaje o moraleja.				
3. Pude entender el mensaje del cuento.				
4. El profesor brinda a los estudiantes fotocopias de los cuentos, ejercicios de comprensión y una lista vocabulario para entender mejor los cuentos.				
5. El profesor utiliza láminas o dibujos alusivos a cada cuento.				
6. El profesor tiene disponibilidad para aclarar dudas sobre el vocabulario de los cuentos.				

¿En cuál de los cuatro cuentos tuvo mayor dificultad para entender el mensaje y el contenido de la lectura? Explique

_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

¿Qué le gustó más de las lecturas?

_____
_____
_____

¿Qué le gustó menos de las lecturas?

_____
_____
_____

Appendix 2. First lesson plan

Planning designed by:
M.A. Jorge Altamirano Alvarado M.A. Manuel Navarro Godinez (2016)

Liceo San Antonio
Eleventh grade
Target Content: Short Story: Mei-Ling and the Dragon

CONDITION	LINGUISTIC OB-JECTIVES	PROCEDURES	LANGUAGE FUNCTION	ASSESSMENT OF OBJECTIVES	TIME
1. Copies of the reading card. 2. Story flashcards 3.Worksheets	1. Understanding a wide range of an imaginative text (folktale). 2. Predicting the content of a story from the title. 3. Stating opinions about the story	1. Students are told they are going to read a two-page folktale. Before they do that, they look at a picture of young girl and a dragon. Then, they are asked to make predictions about what's happening in the story. 2. Students listen to the teacher while he reads the story out loud and clarifies new words in English. 3. In pairs, student do a multiple choice exercise. 4. Students and teacher comment about the story in English or Spanish.	1. Asking for and giving information about new words 2. Expressing opinions. 3. Guessing meaning from context.	**Informal assessment.** Guided by the teacher, students clarify the meaning of new words and receive corrective feedback with regard to any wrong interpretation of the text.	5' 15 10' 5'

| | | 5. Students do a context-clues exercise individually. | | . | 5' |
| | | 6. Last, in groups students talk about the message of the story and say whether they like it or not. | | | 10' |

Appendix 3. Flashcard about Mei-Ling and the Dragon

Source: Scholastics.