FACULTAD DE CIENCIAS SOCIALES

To be or not to be: the use of literature in English teaching.

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TRABAJO FINAL DEL MÁSTER UNIVERSITARIO DE FORMACIÓN DE PROFESORADO DE EDUCACIÓN SECUNDARIA OBLIGATORIA, BACHILLERATO, FORMACIÓN PROFESIONAL, ENSEÑANZA DE IDIOMAS Y ENSEÑANZAS DEPORTIVAS

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Convocatoria de Julio 2022

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Resumen

El uso de la literatura en la enseñanza del inglés ha estado en el punto de mira dentro del ámbito de la educación, pero casi siempre desde un punto de vista teórico y metodológico. Aún siendo un tema que se ha tratado en diversas ocasiones desde los años 80, son pocas las investigaciones que se enfocan en otros puntos de vista, como el de los profesores o incluso los propios alumnos. El principal objetivo de este Trabajo de Final de Máster es analizar los diferentes beneficios del uso de este recurso y la implicación de la cultura en el aula. La metodología empleada en este trabajo fue la revisión sistemática en la que se obtuvieron 10 artículos publicados entre 2017 y 2021 a través de diversas bases de datos y la aplicación de criterios de inclusión y exclusión. Los resultados obtenidos muestran que el uso de la literatura para la enseñanza del inglés es beneficiosa no solo en relación a las *skills*, sino también en relación a otros aspectos del idioma como la gramática, el vocabulario e incluso el conocimiento de la cultura. Otro punto importante que también se analizó en este trabajo fue la metodología a aplicar a la hora de incorporar la literatura en las clases de inglés, sobre todo la selección de los textos y los géneros literarios a trabajar.

Palabras clave: Literatura; enseñanza del inglés; cultura; EFL.

Abstract

The use of literature in English teaching has been in the spotlight within the field of education, but almost always from a theoretical and methodological point of view. Even though it is a topic that has been discussed on several occasions since the 1980s, only a few studies focus on other points of view, such as that of teachers or even the students themselves. The main objective of this Master's Final Dissertation is to analyze the different benefits of using this resource and the implication of culture in the English classroom. The methodology used in this study was the systematic review in which 10 articles published between 2017 and 2021 were obtained through various databases and the application of inclusion and exclusion criteria. The results obtained show that the use of literature for teaching English is beneficial not only in relation to skills but also in relation to other aspects of the language such as grammar, vocabulary and even acknowledgement of the culture. Another critical point that was also analyzed in this research was the methodology that could be applied when incorporating literature into English language teaching, especially the process of selection of texts and literary genres to work on.

Keywords: Literature; English teaching; culture; EFL.

1. Introduction

Literature has always been a principal resource in English teaching environments due to its versatile way to contribute in almost every skill in the English learning process, such as reading, vocabulary, grammar, etc., but it is also an authentic material that can be used to portray the cultural, social and historical backgrounds of the target language and its territories. The way of using this resource has been changing through time, from traditional to innovative with the incorporation of creative tasks.

The main aim of this dissertation is to investigate and establish the possible benefits of using literature in the English teaching environments and analyze the numerous methodologies that can be used to incorporate it into the classroom and its implication on cultural teaching in classrooms. So, to deepen this topic, a systematic review was performed to put together all the possible studies focus on it and to try to propose future approaches to study this topic and similar ones.

This section deals with the relevance of the research performed in this dissertation and a brief justification of why the topic chosen is important, not only to teachers in the present but also to future educators. Lastly, point 1.3. established the goals that are aimed to achieve through this systematic review.

1.1. Research relevance

Nowadays, literature is present in mostly every English classroom, in one way or another, due to its implication in the learning process of students, the teaching of the basic skills of English (reading, speaking, writing and listening), and in the instruction of other aspects of the language such as vocabulary, grammar, and even, cultural features. This last aspect is quite relevant in the study of English in the present day that even the curriculum of English in the Canary Islands has an specific criteria for cultural and social teaching.

The use of literature in the classroom has been studied since the '80s by several authors like Hill (1986), Sage (1987), Collie and Slater (1990) and Lazar (1993), but all of them focused on a methodological or theoretical perspectives of the issue and not as an actual study which analyze the different benefits of using literature to teach English.

In her work, Hill (1986) explored the situation of literature as a resource to teach English at that time, something similar to what Lazar made in 1993, who investigated the

position of literature in the language teaching process. In addition, Sage (1987) proposed in his book some techniques to incorporate literary texts in ESL contexts supported by some positive arguments, similar to what Collie and Slater (1990) made three years after when they proposed several activities to incorporate literature in classrooms.

There were several studies on this topic in the following decades but always focused on the methodological or theoretical perspectives of it, as Hismanoglu (2005), Khatib and Nourzadeh (2011) and Tseng (2010), even nowadays there are a few studies focused on the benefits of using literature as a resource in the English classroom or on the point of view of students and teachers, like the ones made by Obillos (2017), Bloemert et al. (2019), Seo and Kim (2020), and Ashrafuzzaman et al. (2021).

Recently, the word *innovation* has been present in the scene of education because one of its main objectives is to innovate and to try to find other ways to teach the contents in which the students feel involved in their learning process. This tendency to innovate in the classrooms is something that can also be seen in the English teaching process, and in every language learning process, with the emergence of new resources and contents.

This concern to innovate in the teaching process has grown since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic because this event changed the perspectives on how the classes must be prepared and taught. The pandemic also made several teachers and people involved in the world of education realize that innovation and the use of digital technologies are features that must be included in the curriculum and be essential to teachers' training, as mentioned by some authors like Alvarez (2020), Bozkurt and Sharma (2020), Coman et al. (2020), and Redinger et al. (2020).

Literature can be used as a way to innovate in the classroom because it provides teachers with several resources to teach the skills of the language, encourages students' critical thinking, promotes cultural awareness, and involves learners in their learning process.

From the author's perspective, the interest of the present dissertation lies in two different factors. One is related to the process of teaching English and how is developed through the use of literature and, the other one is related to the transmission of the English cultural background, plus the social and historical ones, inside the classroom environment.

1.2.   Research justification

The actual educational scenario, in which the teachers try innovating and search for new methodologies to implicate the students in their learning process, put into spotlight research topics about how teachers can use numerous resources to work on language skills.

In the particular case of English, the main point has always been the development of the basic skills, as mentioned before, reading, writing, speaking, and listening. But these are not the only things that are work and developed in a language classroom, there are other aspects such as vocabulary and grammar.

On the other hand, culture has also turned into a relevant topic to deal with during a language teaching process due to the importance of understanding the different social and cultural contexts when performing the language. Culture is also a good way to connect, in a direct way, with the target language because it can help the students to relate with the language and to understand better what they are learning.

Literature can be an excellent material to work with all of that, reading, writing, speaking, listening, grammar, vocabulary, and even the cultural aspect of the language because it is considered an authentic resource which not only reflects the multiple contexts of the language but also its cultural and idiomatic differences between several areas, dissimilarity of register, a portray of the development of the same, etc.

With this systematic review, the intention is not only to answer the multiple objectives of the same, specified in the following section but also to enhance the importance of literature and culture in English classrooms worldwide.

Particularly, literature has always been a referent topic for professional and academic development of students, future teachers and actual teachers. Literature has been considered as an important resource to teach, not only a language, but also to teach culture and different social aspects of the humanity. It also made people to connect with the characters, the plot or the setting, and sometimes works as a transmitter of values and principles.

On the other hand, culture has also been an important part in the career development of many professionals related to the field of education. It is a way to connect with people around the world and understand them better, and is also an adequate tool to

learn how a language work in its own cultural and social spaces and how has been evolving due to cultural and social factors.

1.3. Goals

This systematic revision is based on a principal question which is to find out the several benefits of using literature in an English teaching environment, taking into account not only in the main skills of English (speaking, listening, writing and reading) but also other aspects of the language related with the literature itself as vocabulary, literary devices or cultural and historical backgrounds of anglophone territories.

The main objective of this dissertation is to analyse the different benefits of using literature to teach English in English as a Foreign Language (hereafter EFL) environments. From this general purpose, the specific objectives are introduced:

- To study the multiple applications and methodologies at the time of using literature in English teaching.

- To analyse the implication and teaching of cultural and social backgrounds of literary works in English teaching.

From these established objectives, the whole structure of the present dissertation was built and the main aim was to try to answer them to deepen on the role of literature in the English teaching process.

2. Method

The main aim of this Master's Final Dissertation (hereafter MFD) is to do a study on the use of literature in EFL learning environments in secondary education through a systematic revision of previous works related to the topic.

This section is divided into the different aspects that were taken into account at the time of setting the methodological procedure of the dissertation. So, the first part is the design of the study with its temporalization, then the description of the search strategy followed, and finally, the inclusion and exclusion criteria.

2.1. Design

This dissertation is divided into five different points. The first one deals with the introductory part of the dissertation, explaining why the selected topic is relevant and

marking the principal goals to achieve. The second point of this dissertation deals with the methodological procedure, like the design of the systematic review or the search strategies.

The following epigraph, the theoretical framework, works as a base for the systematic review, and is divided in two parts, the first one deals with the spread of English and the difference between all the specific terminology and the second one focuses on the teaching of English and the implication of literature and culture in the classroom.

The third point of the dissertation is the results and the critical analysis of the same, where the results and conclusions extract from the several articles and studies are shown organized by year. The last point deals with the discussion and conclusion of the systematic review, along with the limitations and the prospective of the dissertation.

To deal with the temporalization of the dissertation (Table 1) the sections of the body of the paper have been divided into several stages of work.

Table 1.

Temporalization of the systematic review process

	March				April				May				June				July	
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
Topic selection and search of articles	█	█																
Methodology and introduction			█	█	█	█									█	█		
Theoretical framework							█	█	█	█								

Cont. Table 1

	March				April				May				June				July	
	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4	1	2
Results and analysis										■	■	■	■					
Conclusion													■	■	■	■		
Revision																■	■	■

Source: Own elaboration.

As it can be seen in the table represented by the colour red, the planification of the first two weeks of the dissertation writing process dealt with the search of articles and the selection of the topic of the systematic review. The next four weeks were intended to focus on the methodology and introduction section. The following three weeks were planned to be dedicated to the elaboration of the theoretical framework. In May, the main objective was to work with the results and critical analysis section and June to deal with the development of the conclusions section. The first two weeks of July were reserved to deal with the revision process of the dissertation.

Even though the temporalization was structured at the first time in that specific way, there were changes during the elaboration of the dissertation, and represented in table 1 with the colour orange, dealing with the revision and ampliation of each part, because some information was added outside the period predicted. For example, the theoretical framework or the introduction of the dissertation that were developed in more weeks that the ones that were planned at the first time.

2.2. Search strategy

The principal strategy used in the development of this dissertation was searching in various databases through descriptors, keywords and Booleans to specify the search of

articles. This search was made between March 2022 and June of the same year, following the PRISMA criteria for systematic revisions. The PRISMA criteria, or Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic reviews and Meta-Analyses, were published in 2009 to help researchers identify, select, evaluate and synthesize studies (Page et al., 2021).

The first search made was to make contact and explore the actual situation of the topic selected for this dissertation. A second search was performed to redefine the search words and phrases used in the process. The objective of the following ones was to obtain the articles and studies that were going to be used in the systematic revision.

To do a broad search, the use of different databases was essential in the process of finding the articles for the systematic revision, such as ERIC, Google Scholar, EBSCO, Dialnet and the searcher of the library of European University. To define the search, several strategies such as the boolean operators AND and OR were used.

On the other hand, the vocabulary used in the search was related not only to the field of education but also to literature and the teaching of English. Taking this into account the keywords used were the following ones: literature, education, English, teaching, EFL, secondary education and teaching methodologies.

The first search was performed using the phrase *teaching English through literature* to make contact with the field of research. This first search phrase showed plenty of articles and studies only in English. From this first contact, the searching phrases were redefined to *literature AND education AND English* or *literature AND teaching AND English*.

In order to restrict even more the results, the term EFL was introduced because, in Spain, English is not an official language and is taught in schools as a foreign language (Primera lengua extranjera in the Spanish curricula). So, the following search phrases used were *literature AND EFL* and *literature AND teaching AND English OR EFL*.

2.3. Inclusion and exclusion criteria

Before beginning with the process of searching articles and studies in the different databases mentioned before, several inclusion and exclusion criteria must be decided.

The first criterion established was the period of the publication in ten years to work with a brief interval of time to carry out the search to obtain studies as current as possible.

According to this, the final interval of time was established between 2012 and the actual year.

The following criterion is related to the language of the publications and it was decided to include studies only in English because most of the first search results were in that language. After the second search was performed, it was also choose to accept publications in Spanish, if any were found, and if it coincided with the search criteria established, but the principal language used for the search was English.

It was important to use only publications with the full text available and not only the abstract or a peer review. According to this, it was also essential to search articles and studies published in index journals and not in any webpage or blog. Full books and book chapters were excluded from the systematic review. Another point to reckon with is that the studies must have results and not only show the methodology.

Another criterion established was that the publications must be focused on secondary education and not on primary education to approximate the revision to the master's environment as much as possible. Due to the minimal number of studies focused on the use of literature in EFL classes at the secondary level, the university level was also included in the selection of articles, but they are going to appear differentiated in the results section. Studies carried out to teachers and students are both going to be examined to get both points of view about the topic of the systematic review.

Finally, to do this systematic revision, the country of origin of the articles and studies had not been taken into account because EFL is taught around the world.

The whole process of searching for articles that would fulfil the criteria mentioned before is divided into three phases. In the first phase, a total of 47 articles were found using the keywords and phrases previously commented. After an evaluation of the articles found, 23 were discarded due to not fulfilling the inclusion criteria, and 25 investigations were selected. Later, a second evaluation of the articles found was executed, where a total of 15 studies were eliminated to not comply with the structure of an investigation and lack of methodology or results. So, the number of studies selected to do the systematic review was 10. All this has been briefly summarized in figure 1.

Figure 1.

The flowchart of the selection process.
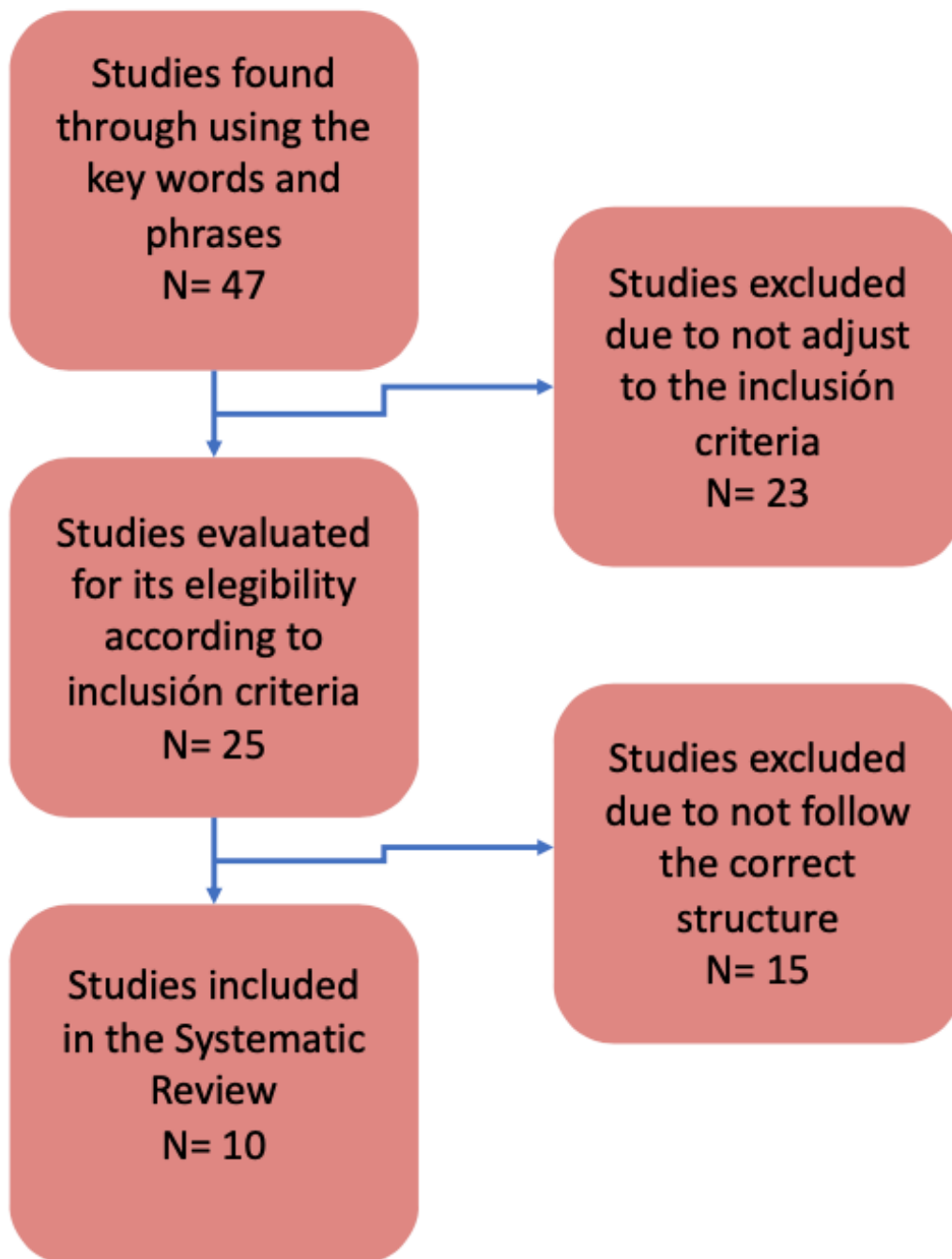
Source: Own elaboration.

3. Theoretical framework

English is one of the most spoken languages nowadays, "Crystal (2008) estimated that the number of "speakers" of English globally might be somewhere in the region of 2 billion by today" (as cited in Schneider, 2011, p. 56). However, this estimation was not achieved, but there is a total of 1.5 billion speakers, followed by other languages such as Chinese or Spanish (Szmigiera, 2022). Due to that, it is a language which is taught around the world, either as a Second Language (ESL) or as a Foreign Language (EFL).

This estimation made English a global language which is, according to Crystal (2003), a language that "develops a special role that is recognized in every country" (p. 3), and that role could be the official language of a country or its priority in its teaching. He also stated that there is a link between the globalization of a language and the economic and cultural power of the native users of the same (2003).

The necessity of a lingua franca or global language to make communicative exchanges around the world increased after the end of World War II and the creation of numerous associations like the United Nations, the World Bank, UNESCO, UNICEF, the World Health Organization and the International Atomic Energy Agency, due to the representation of so many countries in the same space (Crystal, 2003). It is true that English is not the first language considered a global one but is the first one with such a spread as it has nowadays.

English has spread worldwide as an international language and nowadays the number of Non-Native Speakers (NNS) is bigger than the number of Native Speakers (NS). According to Rudianto and Musigrungsi:

The Global spread of English as a medium for international communication has altered NS-like orientation into models effective for broader cross-cultural communication. This phenomenon has strengthened the need to raise our awareness that currently, English is more frequently practice among NNS around the globe to communicate than by NS. (2022, p. 77)

Schneider (2011) stated that "one major reason for the international appeal of English is certainly its usefulness, its association with prestige and power, and its role as a primary tool for socioeconomic advancement, all of which require a "standard" form of speech production" (p. 53).

So, it is important to understand the differences between English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and English as a Second Language (ESL) and know all the terminology related with the teaching of English around the world. The following epigraph deals with the definitions of all the terminology related to the spread and teaching of English in different contexts.

The epigraph 3.2. deals briefly with the teaching of English and the importance of the basic skills, to then move to the use of literature in English teaching and how can be incorporated to teach the different skill. Finally, the last point of this sections focuses of the role and importance of culture in classrooms and how can it helps to teach a language.

3.1.   Differences between EFL and ESL

As mentioned before, there are several ways to refer to the English language and its spread like EFL, English as a Lingua Franca (ELF), ESL (or L2), and English as a Native Language (ENL or L1).

According to Schneider (2011), the number of native speakers (L1 or ENL) is around 350 million, second-language speakers (L2 or ESL) is 600 million, and foreign-language speakers (EFL) is "between 500 million and 1500 million" (p. 56).

Cambridge Dictionary defines *ESL* as "the teaching of English to speakers of other languages who live in a country where English is an official or important language" and *EFL* as "the teaching of English to students whose first language is not English" (n.d.). Harmer (1983) also stated that EFL refers to the learning of English in a more global context than ESL, because ESL students "were described as usually living in a target-language community […] and needed the target language (English) in order to survive and prosper in that community" (p. 19). Harmer suggested that the difference between these two is nowadays more difficult to identify because of multilingualism and globalization. ELF is used to refer to the use of English as a way of global communication in places where English is not the main language. Lastly, ENL refers to the situation in which English is the native language of a speaker, as Spanish is for Spanish people or French for French people.

There are other concepts used in the field of teaching English such as English as an International Language (EIL) or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). These terms

can be considered synonyms of EFL and ELF, but "reflect a more multilingual global reality" (Harmer, 2007, p.20).

Related to the EIL, Schneider (2011) stated that "leaders in international interaction attempt to resort to the lexical and grammatical common core of the language and to near-standard pronunciation norms to communicate successfully" (pp. 216-217). So, international English is focused on a standardized version of the language, forgetting about all the different varieties that this language has. He also said that "there is no 'textbook' or authoritative description of 'International English'" (p. 217).

English has turned into an international language due to its globalization and the great power that the British Empire had in the past. One of the most important linguistics who made a theory about the spread of English around the world was Braj Kachru.

Kachru described, in 1985, the diaspora of English around the world as three circles (Figure 2). In the first one, the inner circle, he identified countries where English is used as a native language, like the United Kingdom, United States of America, Australia and New Zeland; in the second one, the outer circle, there are the countries where English is spoken as a second language or has become an official one, and were once part of the colonies of the British Empire, like India, South Africa, Hong Kong, Canada, Bangladesh, etc.; and finally, in the third circle or the expanding one, Kachru identified countries where English is not an official language but is learnt as a foreign one, as in Spain, Japan, Germany, China, etc. (Harmer, 2007).

Therefore, it can be considered that Spain is placed in the expanding circle of the theoretical explanation of the diaspora of English language and inside of what is known as EFL because English is taught as a foreign language and not as a secondary one, and Spain is not an English native speaking country, as mentioned in the previous paragraphs.

Figure 2.

Kachru's circles
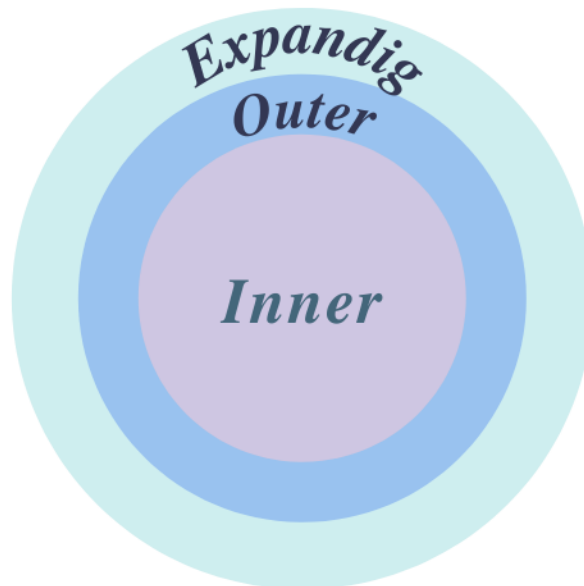
Source: adapted from Harmer (2007)

Due to the varied terminology and newness of some concepts related to teaching English and English as a global language, and Kachru's diaspora theory, in this dissertation, the focus is on EFL because of its proximity to the reality of Spain, as explained in the methods section.

3.2. Teaching English in CSE

As it was stated before in the first point of this theoretical framework, English has turned into a global language in the last years, so it is natural that its learning has grown too. There are also several terms and acronyms related to teaching English which has appeared in the last years, such as Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL), Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), Teaching English to Speakers of Foreign Language (TESOL), and English Language Teaching (ELT). So, as mentioned before, the differences between these teaching styles are similar to the ones of ESL, EFL, etc.

In TESL, English is taught in an environment where the language is used as a second language like in India, Hong Kong, etc. Something similar happens in TEFL, where English is taught in a foreign language environment, like in Spain or Germany. In TESOL English is

taught in countries where the principal language is English itself, to people who do not speak it, for example, a Spanish person who lives in the United Kingdom and needs to learn English for his everyday life. And, lastly, ELT is a global concept that can include the previous ones.

According to Harmer (2007) English is taught in various environments, not only in the conventional classrooms but also in places such as private language schools, specialized *English villages*, or in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). In the last one, a usual learning strategy in Spain, the "subject is taught through the medium of English" and they "are taught side-by-side" (p. 23).

English is mainly taught through the four basic skills reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Harmer (2007) stated that these skills are often divided into receptive skills (listening and reading) and productive skills (speaking and writing). So, due to that, most of the books used to teach or learn English are divided into these skills. It is relevant to take this into account in the analysis section because some authors divided their results in relation to these main skills.

There are so many techniques and methodologies that can be implemented in an English classroom, as mentioned previously, nonetheless literature, and therefore, culture can be a useful resource to teach a language in order to implement in the schoolroom some cultural and historical background of the language and also some examples of the different uses of it.

3.2.1. The use of literature to teach a language

According to the Cambridge Dictionary, *literature* is every "written artistic works, especially those with a high and lasting artistic value" (n.d.). Literary works are divided into different genres, being the main ones: fiction, non-fiction, drama and poetry, also divided into several subgenres.

Hismanoglu (2005) stated that literature has been turning into a relevant resource and a basic component to teach the English language in EFL classes, so nowadays is "a hot debate as to how, when, where, and why literature should be incorporated in ESL/EFL curriculum" (p. 53). Literature can be used to teach the main basic skills, which are reading, writing, listening and speaking, and other areas such as vocabulary or grammar. On the

contrary, Koutsompou (2015) stated that literature could be used to develop three skills, reading, writing and speaking, omitting listening.

Following this previous statement, literature could be helpful in the integration of the four basic skills in the classroom and to work with them collectively. The case of using literature to develop the reading skill is the most evident one, but teachers should enhance the participation and critical thinking of students at the time of discussing a literary text. As Hismanoglu pointed in 2005, literature could be an important resource to work with the writing skill, not only to write reports about the text reading but also to encourage learners to be original and write similar works and use the texts as a model. The author also differentiates between literature as a model and literature as a subject matter.

In the case of listening and speaking, literature can also play an important role, but it could not be as evident as in the previous skills. Hismanoglu (2005) provided a few activities in which literature can be used to work with these skills such as "oral reading, dramatization, improvisation, role-playing, pantomiming, reenactment, discussion, and group activities" (p. 59).

On the other hand, Hernández (2010) stated that "literature enhances ELT through elements such as authentic material, language in use and aesthetic representation of the spoken language, as well as language and cultural enrichment" (p.1). According to this, literature can be considered a good resource to teach a language because it provides not only an insight into how the culture or the history of the territories where that language is spoken, but also material to work on several things like new vocabulary or grammar structures. Related to the cultural aspect, Hernández (2010) also specified that literature can help students to know and learn about different English dialects portrayed by authors from various anglophone territories, eye dialect, a resource used by some English writers like Thomas Hardy.

According to Adhikari (2019):

The approach to the use of literature in the language classroom should prioritize integration of language skills, and integration of skills and language components. Though primary orientation of literary texts is reading, this skill has to be integrated with writing, speaking and listening for balanced language development. Moreover, it

is equally essential to integrate vocabulary and grammar with these skills. Such integration is instrumental in developing students' language organically. (p. 7)

According to Collie and Slater (1990), it can be identified four main reasons to incorporate literature into the English classroom, which are "Valuable Authentic Material, Cultural Enrichment, Language Enrichment, and Personal Involvement" (as cited in Hismanoglu, 2005, pp. 54-55). On the other hand, Maley (1989) proposed other reasons to include literature in the English curriculum such as "universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest, economy and suggestive power, and ambiguity" (as cited in Hismanoglu, 2005, p. 55).

On the other hand, using literature in the English classroom is not only a matter of if it is useful or not to use literature or not, but also how to use it (Seo & Kim, 2020). So, it is important to take into account the several methodologies that can be used to apply this resource in EFL environments.

Seo and Kim (2020) proposed a way to work with literature in which students had the opportunity to work with an English short story and a Korean novel that is well known by Korean students. In their perspective, "comparing and contrasting two works of fiction from their own perspectives, it was believed, would encourage them to think creatively and to write what they thought focusing on the content rather than on correctness of form and grammar" (p. 124). This would also motivate them to focus on cross-cultural comparison and to be able to "build their own essay writing skills in English" (p. 134).

Kanshir (2012) proposed the use of poetry to teach other characteristics of the English language apart from the ones that can be learnt from other literary genres, due to the employment of a "higher concentration of devices or effects than other deviating from the norms of language" (p. 241) like intonation or stress. Related to this, Hismanoglu (2005) also stated that "it is metaphor that is the most prominent connection between learning and poetry" (p. 60).

In order to use literature in language teaching some criteria must be taken into account. In 2005, Hismanoglu stated that a "teacher should take into account needs, motivation, interests, cultural background and language level of the students" (p. 57), but one of the most important aspects is the ability of the text to involve learners and create a

good reaction in them. The difficulty of the texts is a relevant element at the time of selecting it to work in class because a simple text could help students to comprehend more effortlessly the contexts and backgrounds of the same. In the same way, Obillos (2017) mentioned the importance of elaborating a literature program according to the preferences of the students. One of the ways to approach learners preferences is to use young adult literature or adapted texts.

According to IGI Global, an academic publisher, *Young Adult Literature (YAL)* is the one "written for and about teens ages 12 to 18" and "English language arts teachers should be familiar with a variety of genres of YAL so they can recommend these texts to their students" (n.d.). Similarly, Spanke (2010) points out that "YA texts offered stories and plotlines that resonated with their own experiences" (p. 163). Bushman (1997) suggested that "an adolescent can better relate to the characters and plot of YA novels" (p. 39) since students could feel connected to the story due to the apparition of younger characters. Moreover, the great appeal of YAL "is the presence and focus of adolescent characters in adolescent situations" (Spanke, 2010, p. 164). So, YAL can be considered a fine resource to integrate literature into the English classroom and motivating students to participate in activities dealing with literary texts.

Even though the great connection that can be made between students and YAL in the classroom, Hunt (1996) "believed that the main reason YA literature had not been considered theoretically is because courses on YA literature were usually service courses for Education and Library Science majors" (as cited in Coats, 2010, p. 316). So, the use of YAL should be considered not only by teachers and future teachers but also by researchers.

Also, Khatib (2011) suggests some recommendations at the moment of integrating literature in an English language classroom, being the following ones:

- The teacher should involve, in a personal way, the students with the texts.

- Do not exclude other types of texts.

- Literature serves as a resource and not as a final product.

- Given the chance to students to use literature in creative ways.

- The accessibility of the texts must be taken into consideration.

- Integrate the four main skills of English.

- Try to nativized texts whenever it is helpful.

- The teacher should work as an assistant.

- Encourage group discussions.

- Try to avoid cultural imperialism.

Hismanoglu (2005) stated the benefits of using different literary genres to learn a language, such as poetry, short stories, drama and novels. In the first place, he mentioned two benefits of using poetry which are the appreciation of the composition process and the development of sensitivity. In the case of short stories, he affirmed that "short fiction is a supreme resource for observing not only language but life itself" (Hismanoglu, 2005, p. 61), and it also makes easier the learning process of reading skills. Thirdly, drama can be used as a tool to help learners to comprehend the grammatical structures of the language and to develop cultural awareness. Finally, in the case of novels, the use of this specific genre not only helps with the linguistic features of the language as the previous ones but also helps learners to understand the use of the same in daily life through the characters.

Lastly, the role of teachers at the time of introducing literature in English teaching is crucial because they are the ones in charge of determining the level of the students and adapting the lessons to it, taking into account the variety of levels that can be collected in the same group. They are also responsible for the selection of literary text and should bear in mind "the students' language proficiency, interests, age, sex, etc." (Hismanoglu, 2005, p. 65) in order to use suitable materials. However, related to the incorporation of YAL into the classroom, teachers have to take into account how and why they are doing so (Spanke, 2010).

 Bushman (1997) argued that:

It seems that schools have accomplished just the opposite of what they intended to do: they have turned students off from reading rather than making them lifelong readers. Schools have failed to choose literature and cognitively involved in what they read. If students are asked to read literature that is not consistent with their developmental levels, they will not be able to interact fully with that literature. As a

result, students who do not interact with the literature are left with learning only about literature […] that does not help students connect the text with their goals, level of development, and experience. (p.38)

So, as can be seen, literature can be useful for teaching English due to its relation to the languages skills and to other aspects of the language such as vocabulary, culture, etc. and the several methodologies that can be used to implement it in a classroom environment.

3.2.2. The role of culture in teaching English

The word *culture* counts with two different meanings in the Cambridge Dictionary. The first one describes the word as "the way of life, especially the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time", and the second one as "the attitudes, behavior, opinions, etc. of a particular group of people within society" (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d.). These two meanings are related to a way of life, but if the word is extrapolated to the field of arts, culture can also include music, literature, art, theatre, etc.

In 2010, Hernández highlighted that:

Culture […] offers an interdisciplinary field that includes artistic discourses, social conventions, and reflexive impacts. It opens the door for students to increase their knowledge of the target culture as they can contemplate and critically comment on people's way of life, values, attitudes, and beliefs, and regard how these elements manifest in linguistic categories (p. 12)

According to Rudianto and Musigrungsi (2022), the "understanding of socio-cultural aspects […] can assist FL learners to establish not only successful and effective communication but also appropriate interaction in the language with a target language community" (p. 75).

Scarino and Kohler (2003) argue that "language cannot be separated from its social and cultural contexts of use" (p. 3) (as cited in Chan et al., 2015, p. 2) because language works as an intermediary between cultural and social exchanges. It is also important because culture is also involved in the acquisition of the language due to its influence on the way a person learns it and how they interact with other people (Chan et al., 2015). In some cases, language education has been seen from the point of view of an intercultural approach in

which the figure of the intercultural speaker is fundamental due to its capacity of transmitting not only the target language but also the target culture (Chan et al., 2015).

In their analysis of the perception of culture in English teaching, Lovrovic and Kolega (2021) pointed out that "not only do literary texts develop learners' linguistic skills, but they also require interpretation skills and develop learners' cultural awareness" (p. 188).

In the same way, Chen (2015) suggested that "in English teaching, culture teaching should be combined with language teaching to help achieve the goal of improving students' communication competence" (p. 2402). According to this author, culture is essential to understand the language, because it is "restricted and influenced by its own cultural system" (p. 2402). She also listed some necessities to teach culture in English classrooms, such as social development, cross-cultural communication, civic awareness and communication skill. Due to that, "teachers should teach both language knowledge and cultural knowledge" (p. 2403).

She also listed some aspects to take into account at the time of incorporating culture in the classroom, like "Geography, Living Environment and Life Style; Historical Culture; People and Institutions; Religious Belief; Art, Literature, Music and so on" (Chen, 2015, pp. 2404-2405) and added some suggestions to English teachers like:

- Adopting role-play.

- Establish the atmosphere of the target culture.

- Exposing the target culture.

- Organize activities to stimulate the students.

- Use of literary readings.

Lovrovic and Kolega (2021), considered that creative tasks can help students to encounter the cultural backgrounds of different territories and to enhance their cultural awareness and understanding.

Finally, Chen stated that "culture must be fully incorporated as a vital component of language" (2015, p. 2406) and plays a major role in teaching, above all, when teaching cross-cultural communication. But teachers should be careful about its use in classrooms, according to Hismanoglu (2005), " cultural imposition should be severely avoided since its

results in the loss of language ego and native language identity in many cases" (p. 62). Another point to take into account is that "learners do not interpret literary texts in the same way as native speakers because they interpret them with a different sociocultural background and from their own personal experience" (Lovrovic & Kolega, 2021, p. 188), so teachers have to help students to avoid prejudices, stereotypes and generalization.

On the other hand, Mahardika (2018) stated that it is also important to take into account students' own culture because it can bring a certain feeling of identity and proximity inside the classroom. But this proposition, by not teaching the culture of the target language and focusing on self-culture, cannot help to identify how the learning language works in several contexts.

4. Results and critical analysis

A total of 10 studies related to the topic and that had fulfilled the inclusion criteria had been found and selected to elaborate the systematic review of this dissertation. All of the studies found are articles published in journals specialized in education or English studies. The majority of the eliminated studies were discarded for the following reasons:

- Some studies were related to the teaching of EFL literature and not to the use of literature to teach EFL.
- Some studies were focused on the teaching methodology and lack of sample and results.

The results have been divided by the educational level that the studies focused on and organized by year, putting the newest ones first to have a deeper look at the evolution of the topic through time. In table 2, a total of 6 investigations related to the use of literature in English classes at a secondary level are shown, in order to try to find an answer to the different objectives of this dissertation. The results collected in this table span from the year 2016 to 2021.

The results shown in table 3 are related to the use of literature at the university level, most of them focusing on English undergraduate students, teachers or pre-service teachers, and there are a total of 4 articles. These studies were selected in order to briefly extend the

results obtained in the previous table due to the few studies found at the high school level. The results collected in this table span from the year 2017 to 2021.

As it can be seen in both tables, there are studies of the use of literature in English classes at the university level that are more recent than some carried out at the secondary level. At the university level, there are two recent studies, one in 2020 and another in 2021, while the most recent one at the secondary level is a single study in 2021, but there are four investigations performed in 2019 that can be also considered current.

It is also a detail shown in both tables that the decreasing number of investigations performed in recent years, one in 2020, two in 2021, and four in 2019, this being the year with more studies performed related to the topic. One of the principal causes for that can be the Covid-19 situation, which hinders the elaboration of studies and their performance in schools or universities. This data can mean that the topic was gaining interest among researchers before the pandemic situation, and after that, only a few studies were elaborated. So, due to the few investigations performed between 2020 and 2021, it can be concluded that possibly the topic is turning a subject of study again.

One more critical point is the size of the samples, being quite diverse. In table 1 it can be seen that the samples are bigger and focused on the teachers' perspective on the topic, while in table 2, the samples are moderate and there is a mix of teachers' and students' perspectives. The main cause of the selection of teachers as a sample at the secondary level can be because it is easier to perform questionnaires and interviews with them rather than with high school students. This variation could mean a limitation in the signification of the results obtained by the researchers. Also, most of the studies followed a qualitative methodology through questionnaires and interviews, and some were open-ended.

In both levels, the secondary education and the university, the main result obtained is that literature can be a valuable resource to teach English because it helps the students to improve their language skills and other features such as grammar or vocabulary. The principal difference between both groups is that the improvement of cultural awareness through the use of literature is only analyzed at the university level. Meanwhile, at the secondary level, the head issue is the perception of using literature and how to implement it on the classroom, from both perspectives, the teacher and the learner.

Table 2.

Studies related to the use of literature at the secondary level.

Year	Author	Objectives	Methodology	Sample	Results	Conclusions
2021	Tsang, A. & Paran, A.	To examine the perception of learners about using literature to learn English.	Qualitative and quantitative. Questionnaire	1190 students	Positive views on Short Stories module and mixed ones in Poems and Songs.	General acceptance in studying English literature, because every aspect related to the language must be studied.
2019	Bloemert, J., Paran, A., Jansen, E. & Van de Grift, W.	To find out the perception of students of using literature in English classes.	Qualitative. Single open question	635 students	The language approach is the most dominant one.	Students see literature as a way to improve their language skills.
2019	Cheung, A.	To research teacher's cognitions and the rising importance of literary texts in second language learning.	Qualitative. Open-ended interview.	3 teachers	Language arts is beneficial to the language learning process.	There are different believes on the benefit of the use of literature in English learning.

Cont. Table 2

Year	Author	Objectives	Methodology	Sample	Results	Conclusions
2019	Torrano, L., Cascales, A. & Carillo, M. E.	To analyse English teachers' perception, use and level of professional development regarding literature	Quantitative. Questionnaire	70 teachers	Most of the teachers consider the use of literature a good resource and apply it along with an innovative methodology	English teachers consider the use of literature as a good resource for improving students' basic competences.
2019	Zengin, B., Basal, A. & Yükselir, C.	To Investigate the perception of teachers of using literature in teaching English.	Qualitative. Open-ended questions	101 teachers	Most of the teachers agreed that the use of literature can benefit the English teaching process.	Literary choices must be selected according the different groups and their levels.
2016	Bloemert, J., Jansen, E. & Van de Grift, W.	To investigate how English is approach in secondary education	Qualitative. Online questionnaire	106 teachers	The Comprehensive Approach of literature can be divided in text, context, reader and language approach.	Literature is approached in several ways depending on the curriculum.

Source: Own elaboration

Table 3.

Studies related to the use of literature at the university level.

Year	Author	Objectives	Methodology	Sample	Results	Conclusions
2021	Ashrafuzzaman, Md., Ahmed, I. & Begum, M.	To focus on the application of literature to improve English skills.	Qualitative. Open-ended questionnaire and Semi-structured interview schedule.	30 students and 6 teachers	All the students responded that literature play an important role in teaching English. Most of them preferred to read literary books rather than academic ones.	Literature has an important role in teaching English and it helps students to understand different cultures, societies and histories.
2020	Isariyawat, C., Yenphech, C. & Intanoo, K.	1. To investigate the attitudes of learners towards literature 2. To discover the impact of literature on cultural awareness and language skills.	Qualitative and quantitative. Semi-structured interviews.	100 English majors	Using literature helps students to improve their language skills, personal reflection and cultural awareness at a high level.	Using literature is a satisfactory way to incorporate cultural awareness in the English Classroom.

Cont. Table 3

Year	Author	Objectives	Methodology	Sample	Results	Conclusions
2018	Saka, F. O.	To learn what pre-service teachers think about the use of literature in English class	Qualitative. 10 open ended questions.	16 pre-service teachers	All the participants agreed that teacher should know how to implement literature in English classroom.	Language teachers should value the role of literature in class and learn how to use it.
2017	Oktan, D. & Ersel Kaymakamoglu, S.	To find out the influence of literature on vocabulary and cultural enrichment	Qualitative. Semi-structured interviews.	5 students and 3 teachers	Literature helps students to learn vocabulary and influences in their cultural awareness.	Using literature in English class helps students to work in several skills.

Source: Own elaboration

5. Discussion and Conclusions

This section is divided into four parts. The first epigraph deals with the discussion of the results obtained in the previous section organized by the aspects found during the analysis of the same. Then, a brief conclusion of the systematic review is presented in order to put together all the information collected. In the following epigraph, the limitations of the dissertation are presented and commented. In the last point, it is briefly discussion on the prospective of the topic in future investigations.

5.1. Discussion of the results and revision of the objectives

Literature has been used by many teachers as a resource to teach English due to all the different benefits that it has and its characteristic as an authentic material "which conveys the use of linguistics by those who have mastered it into a fashion intended for native speakers" (Hernández, 2010, p. 12), but also its characteristic as an aesthetic representation of the same. But, at the same time, the studies focused on its benefits or its application in language teaching are not so popular, but most of them agreed that literature is elemental to enrich students' language skills.

The first specific objective of the dissertation was to study the several applications of the use of literature in English teaching, trying to find out if it can be used to teach the four main skills or just some of them. One of the most important things to take into account while dealing with the approaches of using literature to teach English is the previous knowledge of grammar structures because as Ashrafuzzaman et al. (2021) analyzed in their research, students prefer grammar over literature, for the reason that "without having the basic grammatical knowledge a learner will face huge difficulties in learning" (p. 1198) directly from literature. His respondents also stated that their favourite methods to incorporate literature in the English teaching process were to "use conversation, role play, open discussion, debate, writing creative assignment and attempt to engage them in classroom activities as much as possible" (Ashrafuzzaman et al., 2021, p. 1201), some of those activities that can be developed in the classroom are reading literature genres or watching movies and TV series.

There are other ways to incorporate literature into a language classroom. Some of the teachers use classical literary works to analyze them in class or to give information about

important figures in the literary world, such as authors, literary movements, etc. (Zengin et al., 2019). Torrano et al. (2019) studied the perceptions of teachers in the use of literature and the application of innovative methodologies. According to their respondents, they propose creative tasks which enhance learners' critical thinking and use active methodologies concerning the teaching of literary texts. They also answered that they use adapted literature, audio-visual support and technological resources to enhance the participation and motivation of students. So, literature cannot only be used in a traditional way but teachers can also implement innovative methodologies while using literature to teach a language. Hernández (2010) calmed that the use of literature and also culture must be performed following a pedagogical model in order to avoid getting lost in the development of a lesson, or to make students feel lost.

Another methodology to take into account at the time of incorporating literature in the English language curricula is the one proposed by Bloemert et al. (2019) based on a model of Comprehensive Approach to Foreign Language Literature Learning. They proposed four approaches, which are text, context, reader and language, and tried to discover the perceptions of the students about them. In the text approach, the main items were literary terminology, characters, setting, etc. The following approach was focused on the historical and social context or the biographical information about the author. The reader approach dealt with the reading experience and personal development. And finally, the language approach was centred on grammar, vocabulary, language skills, etc. Concerning the data collected, the majority of the participants of the study addressed the language approach with 74% of mentions as a beneficial part of incorporating literature in their language courses, followed by the context approach with 56%. These indicate that students "primarily see the EFL literature component as a means of improving their language skills but they also, in varying degrees, indicate benefits related to the context, reader and text approach" (Bloemert et al., 2019, p. 382).

Something that also has to be taken into account at the time of preparing a methodology based on literature is the eligibility of the texts according to the level and preferences of the students in order to motivate them in the learning process. Taking into account the study made by Ashrafuzzaman et al. (2021) students prefer literary books over academic ones, and inside of it, they prefer the genre of novels. Concerning these results, in

2010, Tseng performed a similar study in which teachers presented a variety of literary texts to high school students to discover their perceptions about them. The texts presented were novels, plays, short stories and poems, where the students reported that 88% liked the novels, being the most popular text *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, 75% liked the plays, 70% liked the short stories and 64% liked the poems. But those results were in relation to the texts presented in the classroom, in general, 86% preferred short stories, 82% novels, 43% plays and 43% poems. So, in conclusion, putting together the study performed by Ashrafuzzaman et al. (2021) and the previous one performed by Tseng (2010), the most popular genre among students is novels. This preference for novels could be related to what Hismanoglu (2005) stated about the help they can provide at the time of learning the daily use of language but also students can feel identify with the characters, the plot or the settlement of the story.

Zengin et al. (2019) found that "poems, movie scripts, song lyrics, and theatre play contain also creative use of language whose use may help deepen the understanding of the students" (p. 163) and could also be great tools to teach vocabulary. They also stated that the choice of literary texts could change depending on the learners, as Hismanoglu commented in 2005.

Something also found in the investigation made by Tseng in 2010 is that most of the participants preferred to read contemporary literature over other genres, something that could be taken into account for future studies, where the researchers could try to make a selection of classics and contemporary texts or just contemporary texts to see if that affects the implication or motivation of students at the time to learn English through literature, and to implement it while planning a lesson. In his analysis, Obillos (2017) found that many students read as a hobby or for passion and, as many other authors before, that their favourite genre used to be novels with themes like adventure, mystery or issues of adolescents. Related to approach to students' preferences when working on a literary text, the teacher should take into account YAL as a possible resource to teach not only English but also to deal with different social issues. According to Lewis and Dockter (2010) "young people have come to expect that what they read will shape and be shaped by their social identities and affiliations" (p. 88) and that the implementation of technologies in students' daily life allows them to "read and write fanfiction, discuss and create graphic novels, write

scripts for *Youtube* productions" (p. 77), due to that students are always connected with any source of literature. So YAL should be considered a positive resource to incorporate in the English classroom considering the same factors as when selecting literary texts in general.

On the other hand, the second specific objective of the systematic review was to analyse the possible implications of cultural and social backgrounds of the literary texts in the classroom due to the importance of teaching the culture of the target language. Saka (2018) discovered that many of the participants of her study do not only see literature as a way of making the classes more enjoyable but also as a way to teach culture. According to Oktan and Ersel (2017), literary texts are crucial to influencing students' cultural awareness due to their connection with the historical and social background of English. This could be related to the statement made by Rudianto and Musigrungsi (2022) in their study about the perception of incorporating culture in Indonesian's EFL classrooms, in which they acknowledged culture as a crucial element of the language education and saw "a language and its culture" as "two inextricable entities" (p. 86)

In addition, Isariyawat et al. (2020) discovered that students usually have a positive attitude toward the use of literature to improve their language skills but also towards its implication in the development of their cultural awareness and personal reflection. Respondents of this study positioned the improvement of cultural awareness through literary texts at a high level due to the implication of literature on showing other cultures and creating an intercultural sensitivity, because "literature is a form of cultural collection and has direct relationship with language" (Zengin et al., 2019, p.162). Lovrovic and Kolega (2021) also stated that there is a strong relationship between literature and culture:

> Bland (2018) argues that literature provides readers with access to foreign cultures and languages, offering a new perspective in the globalized world. If English language teachers use both literary texts dealing with learners' native culture and those dealing with foreign cultures in their classroom, they will encourage their students to discuss cultural issues from different perspectives, which will foster intercultural understanding and empathy for others. (pp. 187-188)

To conclude, the main objective of the dissertation was to study the possible benefits of using literature as a material to teach a language, specifically English. As mentioned in the

theoretical framework, English has developed as a global language, due to that factor, the number of students has been growing over time. The main reasons to learn English varied from academic purposes to interesting ones, like travelling around the world or watching movies and TV series in the original language. Cheung (2019) discussed that literature, or language art as she named it, is a good way to increase the exposure of students to the English language in specific contexts.

Some authors think that the use of literature in classrooms "can help students to improve their various skills" (Oktan & Ersel, 2017, p. 83), including vocabulary and cultural awareness. Ashrafuzzaman et al. (2021) found that literature plays a significant role in developing language skills and that "reading literature means practicing a language" (p. 1199). Hismanoglu in 2005 affirmed that literature can help students to develop the four basic skills in different ways, as mentioned in the theoretical framework.

In the same way, Torrano et al. (2019) discovered that teachers saw literature as a way to develop basic competencies, such as linguistic competence or cultural awareness, and to promote the linguistic abilities of the students.

According to the results presented by Saka (2018), teachers think that the main benefit of using literature in a language teaching environment is that gives information about the culture of the target language and it helps to change the point of view of students. On the other hand, other authors pointed out that there are more benefits of using literature in English teaching than just influencing the cultural awareness of students. This resource can help students in their vocabulary and grammatical structure learning but also assists them to "being able to use the imagination and recycling the words" (Oktan & Ersel, 2017, p. 82). Related to the perception of students about incorporating literature in their curriculum, they mainly agree because they "believe that everything related to" the target language "should be studied" (Tsang & Paran, 2021, p. 470) and because it dealt with different cultural issues related with the target language (Lovrovic & Kolega, 2021).

One of the problems that some teachers had is their unknowledge of several features of literature, like rhythm, intonation, historical settings or literary devices, and how to apply them in the classroom. This is something that can be seen in Saka's (2018) study in which most of the participants agreed that their level in literature was inadequate or not enough to

use this resource to teach English. Cheung (2019) also stated that the use of literature to teach English depends on the experience in the classrooms of the teachers in charge of developing the students' language skills, but also on the "students' abilities, interests, and needs" (p. 11). This last characteristic is important because depending on the level of the group, the teacher would select a different type of text, to adapt it or not, and even if it would be beneficial for the students to use literature at all.

On the contrary, the respondents who participated in Zengin et al. (2019) research pointed out that literature must be an relevant part of the English teaching process and that they normally used it as a resource. Other studies, such as the one performed by Bloemert et al. (2016), indicated that in many cases literature is integrated into lessons due to curricular factors.

5.2. Conclusions and practical implications

Literature has always been a recurrent resource to teach English in the classroom in order to help students to develop different language skills, but also to try to build a connection between the student and the culture of the target language. Literature is implemented in the teaching process through the use of various methodologies such as role-play, conversations, debates, or other creative and innovative tasks.

So, literature cannot only be taught in a traditional way, like the use of a text to work the students' reading comprehension through the answering of a questionnaire, but also in more innovative ways such as role-play, in which students could perform characters from the texts to make them understand and connect with the cultural and social issues presented in the same.

It is also important for a teacher to choose correctly the literary texts that are going to be used in the classroom following the proficiency of the students and their preferences on genres or themes. Usually, students prefer genres like novels, short stories or plays that can provide a better perspective of the daily use of the English language.

There are multiple benefits of using this material in the English teaching-learning process. One of the benefits is the influence that literature can have on the cultural awareness of students due to the cultural, social and historical representations that are present in literary texts. Literature is also an excellent way to expose learners to the target

language in distinct ways. Finally, literature can also be used to develop students' language skills through several methodologies.

Even though the numerous difficulties that can appear during the incorporation of literature, such as the acknowledgement of teachers, a poor level of English of learners, or cultural stereotyping, with a good methodology, teachers can avoid all of that.

As can be observed, multiple investigations are focused on the methodology and application of literature in the classroom and, also, on the benefits of using it to teach English. A fewer number of studies dealt with cultural awareness and how can be improved through the use of this resource. So, it is a topic that needs further investigations in the future, in order to complete the studies already done.

To conclude, literature is a good resource to teach-learn a language due to all the benefits that it contributes to the learning process of students, such as the development of the skills or the improvement of grammar, and to be an authentic material of cultural issues and contribute to the acknowledge of the cultural and social backgrounds of the language.

5.3. Limitations

One of the main limitations of this dissertation was the limited number of studies focused on the specific topic chosen to do the analysis of the systematic review. As mentioned before, many of the papers found were focused on the methodological application of literature to teach a language but lacked of an investigative perspective due to not including a methodological or results section.

Another problem was that many of the articles found in the search process were focused on the teaching of literature in EFL or ESL contexts but not on the use of it to teach English. So, the limited number of studies could have affected the generalization of the results shown in the previous section of the dissertation.

Furthermore, another limitation was the size of the samples of some articles found because some of the samples are wide enough to get significant results, but other ones are utterly limited. For example, there are some samples shaped by more than 100, or even more than 1000, while others have less than 5 participants.

The limited time to perform the systematic review was also a limitation to take into account because there was a limited amount of time to search for articles that could fulfil the inclusion and exclusion criteria stated in the methodological section.

Even though counting all of these limitations, the dissertation was performed to comply with the format and time, and looking to contribute with an innovative and complete perspective to the educational environment.

5.4. Prospective

One of the future approaches for this topic could be a study based on a level test of English to check the implication of literature on the learning process of the students, to try to move the approach collected in this systematic review to an applied research field where the focus is on the learning results that can be obtained with the use of this resource.

As mentioned in the discussion section, another point of view at the time of performing a study based on the perception of students of the use of literature in the English classroom could be the inclusion of contemporary texts that are closer to the reality that they live. There are a lot of contemporary novels than can be used in classrooms, due to their popularity as the *Harry Potter saga* (J.K. Rowling, 1997-2007), which is composed by a total of 7 books from *Harry Potter and the sorcerer's stone* (1997) to *Harry Potter and the deathly hallows* (2007), or due to their implication with contemporary social issues such as *The Hate U Give* (Angie Thomas, 2017), *Wonder* (R.J. Palacio, 2012) or *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* (Stephen Chbosky, 1999). So, teachers can build a didactic program based on the numerous literary texts, such as novels and short stories, that fulfil the students preferences and also deal with present social issues and or cultural awareness.

Another future approach for this topic could be the analysis of the use of literature to teach the culture of the English language, due to the lack of information related to it. In this systematic review, one of the specific objectives was to analyze the importance of teaching culture in the classrooms through the usage of literature, but a few articles were found related to that topic during the search process, so it could be interesting to take an in-depth look to the implication of culture in the process of learning a language and how literature can be used for that purpose.

Finally, this systematic review could be extrapolated to other resources to learn English and which included a cultural perspective such as music, movies, TV series, etc. in order to find out the actual situation of these themes of study and their possible ways to address them in a future, because the education and teaching of languages must evolve at the same time that new and innovative resources appear.

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