

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH LITERATURE IN ENGLISH PEDAGOGY PROGRAMS IN SANTIAGO DE CHILE

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ABSTRACT: The present study aims to explore the role of English literature in some English pedagogy programs in Santiago de Chile. It does so by conducting surveys with programs directors, literature teachers, and students of English pedagogy programs that have taken at least one English literature course. The survey contains questions about the role, benefits, and objectives of literature in English pedagogy programs. The literary review in this study covers experiences from several countries around the world to see if the attitudes and experiences regarding literature in EFL teaching are similar as the results found in the surveys conducted for this present study. The results show that literature, both in Chile and internationally, is often seen as a useful tool to acquire the four skills but it is rarely studied for its intrinsic aesthetic values. The study also reveals that most students believe that more optional courses should be available in their programs for students who are interested.

KEY WORDS: English Literature, English pedagogy programs, language acquisition, reading habits.

EL ROL DE LA LITERATURA INGLESA EN LOS PROGRAMAS DE PEDAGOGÍA EN INGLÉS EN SANTIAGO DE CHILE

RESUMEN: El presente estudio tiene como objetivo explorar el rol de la literatura inglesa en algunos programas de pedagogía inglesa en Santiago de Chile. Lo hace mediante la realización de encuestas con directores de programas, maestros de literatura y estudiantes de programas de pedagogía inglesa que hayan tomado por lo menos un curso de literatura en inglés. La encuesta contiene preguntas sobre el rol, los beneficios y los objetivos de la literatura en los programas de pedagogía en inglés. La revisión literaria en este estudio cubre experiencias de varios países alrededor del mundo para ver si las actitudes y experiencias con respecto a la literatura en la enseñanza de EFL son similares a los resultados encontrados en las encuestas realizadas para este estudio. Los resultados muestran que la literatura, tanto en Chile como internacionalmente, se ve a menudo como una herramienta útil para adquirir las cuatro habilidades, pero se estudia raramente para sus valores estéticos intrínsecos. El estudio también revela que la mayoría de los estudiantes creen que más cursos opcionales deben estar disponibles en sus programas para los estudiantes que estén interesados.

PALABRAS CLAVES: Literatura inglesa, programas de pedagogía en inglés, adquisición del lenguaje, hábitos de lectura.

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1. INTRODUCTION

English literature has to be appreciated as an integral component of the English pedagogy curriculum in order for the students to achieve proficiency and eloquence in the English language. Literature also plays an essential part in increasing cultural awareness of countries where the target language is spoken. Another important function that literature has is to develop critical and creative thinking. However, little research has been carried out within the field of English literature as a pedagogic device for English as a foreign language (hereafter abbreviated as EFL) purposes in Santiago de Chile. In fact, English pedagogy programs often give a secondary role to literature in their curriculums.

The aim of this research is to provide a preliminary investigation of English literature in English Pedagogy programs in Santiago de Chile. It does so by exploring the perception that program directors, teachers, and students have of i) English literature and its role as part of their curriculum ii) the teaching methods employed by the teachers in the EFL classroom iii) the role that English Literature has in the linguistic and intellectual forming of the students. Data will be collected through surveys to get an overview of the perception program directors, literature teachers, and students have regarding English Literature and its function as an integrated part of English pedagogy programs in Santiago de Chile.

This research draws on data collected from three different surveys directed to three different target groups: i) program directors of English pedagogy programs ii) English literature teachers iii) third year students of English pedagogy who have taken at least one course in English literature. The aim of conducting surveys with three different target groups is twofold: i) to get an overview of the perception of the role of English literature from different perspectives ii) to determine if the perception of English literature differs among these groups. These results aim to give insight into the teaching and learning of English literature as an EFL tool in English pedagogy programs in Santiago de Chile.

Prior to the analysis of the data, this essay will include a literary review of research articles and monographs that have been carried out by internationally acclaimed scholars in the field of English literature in the EFL classroom. The purpose of the literary review is to make a brief summary of the main functions of literature in the EFL classroom and to explore to which extent these ideas are applied in the EFL classroom in English pedagogy programs at Universities in Santiago de Chile.

1.1. Literary Review

The purpose of this literary review is to offer a brief outline on some of the prominent research that has been carried out on literature as an integrated part of the EFL classroom internationally. This review will summarize the advantages literature has in EFL teaching. Several scholars agree that literature has regained popularity in the EFL classroom the last few decades (Koutsompou, 2015; Schwarz, 2008; Chin et

al., 2012). Violetta-Irene Koutsompou explains that literature was discredited as a teaching tool by the functional-notional method, which focuses its syllabus on real-life situations or communicative functions, because “in this method the importance lies on communication” and “literature was not considered either to have a communicative function or to be authentic example of language use” (2015, p. 74). Nonetheless, Koutsompou argues that “during the last decade or so the interest in literature as one of the most valuable language teaching resources available has revived remarkably” (2015, p. 74). In a similar fashion, Daniel Schwarz states that he has witnessed a great interest of literature among his students (2008, p. 174). Schwarz’s view on literature is that it is constantly under progress at that what is to be considered canonical literature is constantly negotiated by the reading audience. He highlights the importance of continuously renewing the way we read literature and stresses that literary studies in the future should be less concerned with esoteric poststructuralist jargon and instead calls for that readers should be conscious of their political and geographical position and be conscious of how contemporary history affects their perception of a literary work. In other words, Schwarz argues that literature should be more conscious about what happens in the real world and it must be more accessible to a broader public. He believes that literature should be studied in a more cross-disciplinary fashion with other disciplines such as journalism (2008, p. 177), and seems to give less importance to the appreciation of aesthetics and literary form. Chin et al. and AbdAlgane and Ali argue that literature is positively received by students but that the choice of literary texts is seen as an important factor in developing a positive attitude among students towards the subject (Chin et al., 2012; AbdAlgane and Ali, 2013). Chin et al. quote Hirvela and Boyle’s (1988) study that students respond more positively to literature that “have a direct relevance to the students’ situation” (2012, p. 105). AbdAlgane and Ali stress the importance of selecting literary texts that are not too complex for the students’ linguistic competence level, but conclude that a well selected text is a great tool to teach English to non-native speakers (249). There seems to be a consensus among scholars who argue for the importance of literature in the EFL classroom that literature should be taught through a communicative approach where students pay an active role participating in classroom discussions and writing papers that focus on reader-response. In this fashion, this approach to literature directly opposes previous criticism which claimed its low value in teaching EFL. The usefulness of learning English as a foreign language seems not to be the appreciation of the aesthetics of the literary creations, but rather functional in the sense that it increases language skills and cultural and historical knowledge about the English speaking world. Huang and Embi argue that the traditional teacher-centred lessons mostly end with disappointing results where teachers are labelled as “dull and less creative,” whereas students are seen to be “passive” and are “unable to respond critically” (Wing, 2014, p. 111-112). Shelby A. Wolf (2004) argues that students’ responses to the literary works should drive the classroom activities and that these responses can be expressed “through multiple modes, including talk, writing, art, and drama” (p. 11). Pilar Agustín Llach (2007) argues that literature in the EFL classroom fosters students to “become active and autonomous” and play a central part in their own learning process (p. 10). AbdAlgane

and Ali argue that literature stimulate students to communicate and interact with other students because “it addresses issues that are interesting and stimulating to them” (p. 240-241). What these researchers have concluded is that the benefits of using literature in the EFL classroom are manifold: Literature not only improves linguistic competence, it also stimulates students’ critical and creative thinking and increases their knowledge of the cultures of the target language. What is not mentioned by these critics in relation to literature and its role in the EFL classroom is its potential to stimulate appreciation for the aesthetics of the literary text.

In the EFL classroom, it is important to acknowledge the fact that the students are in need of strengthening their lexical competence in order to comprehend the meaning of complex literary texts and also to convey meaning in an effective and creative way. An increased lexical competence and awareness of syntax would undeniably increase students’ competence to express their thoughts in a satisfying manner. Brumfit and Carter (1986) have stated that reading literature increases lexical competence and develops syntactic knowledge. Krashen (1989) argues that learners obtain most of their vocabulary through extensive reading. Grabe and Stoller (1997) state that reading greatly enhances vocabulary competence. Ramsaran (1983) argues that literature is a useful tool for teaching language not only to strengthen lexical competence and grammar, but also to stimulate the development of creative skills and aesthetic appreciation. Ramsaran shows through examples how more advanced students can learn how to enjoy the aesthetics of literature by basing exercises on nonsense poems and thus moves away from the mere practical use of literature proposed by many other researchers. Jonathan Sell criticizes much of the more traditional views in EFL teaching which follows the paradigm that “literature—conceived of as some sort of aesthetic artefact—is not “real life”, at times not even realistic, and barely relevant to day-to-day living” and that traditional EFL teaching encourages approaches to literature that engage in ““real life” and “real-life” situations” (1).

Van argues that literature is relevant for EFL students for several reasons including an increase of lexical competence, developing cultural awareness, enhancing critical thinking, and stimulating creativity and imagination (3). Parkinson and Reid Thomas argue that literature helps for a number of reasons including extension of linguistic competence, cultural enrichment, and argues that literature is the optimal discipline to train the mind and sensibility (9-11). Zoreda and Vivaldo-Lima justify the use of English literature in the EFL classroom by highlighting its usefulness to foster students’ cultural, linguistic and interpretive skills, they also emphasises that literature may help students to overcome negative attitudes toward the target culture (22). Understanding and tolerance for other people and cultures are skills that several critics highlight.

Koutsompou argues that there are three models that have contributed to why literature has gained importance as a tool in the EFL classroom the last decade: The cultural model that aims to increase appreciation for ideologies, traditions, feelings, and artistic form; the language model that gives students knowledge of “the more subtle and varied creative uses of language”; and the personal growth model that effectively help students “to grow and mature as individuals as well as their relationships with the people around them” (75-76). In a similar fashion, Pilar Agustín Llach highlights

“three main criteria that justify the use of literature as a second language teaching tool” (9). First she mentions the linguistic criterion that provides students with “genuine, authentic samples of language” and with “real samples of a wide range of styles, text types and registers” (9). Secondly she mentions the methodological criterion which argues that literature due to its multiple interpretations motivates students to interact with the text, with fellow students and with the teacher. Finally, Agustín Llach explains that there is a motivational criterion that is of great relevance for EFL students because it allows them to respond to the feelings and emotions expressed in the literary work and connect it to their personal experiences. Agustín Llach explains that if the student “is touched by the theme and provoked, she will be able to relate what she is reading to her world, to what she knows and feels” (10).

Some research, although quite scarce, has been carried out in South America. María Jimena Ponz and Mercedes Vernet explain that literature is often incorporated in the EFL teaching at bilingual institutions in Argentina due to its benefits related to the improvements of oral competence, intercultural knowledge, imagination and creativity, critical thinking, and increased sensitivity and tolerance for cultural differences (<http://www.puertasabiertas.fahce.unlp.edu.ar/numeros/numero-7/la-literatura-en-las-clases-de-ingles-hacia-la-produccion-creativa>). The few research articles available show that more research must be carried out in the area in South America.

As this brief outline has shown, there are many reasons to use literature as a tool to develop EFL students. Students’ linguistic and communicative skills will be reinforced alongside with an expansion of their cultural horizon, and an increase of their critical and creative thinking. It is thus needless to say that to extensively incorporate literature in the curriculum of English pedagogy programs is of great importance. To exclude literature, or not to include literature sufficiently, would inhibit language students’ development.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Participants

For this research, eight programs of English pedagogy from eight different Universities in Santiago de Chile were selected. Seven of the universities showed interest in participating. The criteria for selecting the English pedagogy programs were twofold: i) the program had to be accredited by CNA minimum 4 years ii) the University where the program is given has to be accredited by CNA minimum 4 years. At the time of carrying out this study (2015), English pedagogy programs from the following Universities fulfilled these criteria in Santiago: Universidad de Santiago, Universidad Andrés Bello, Universidad Alberto Hurtado, Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación (UMCE), Universidad San Sebastián, Universidad Silva Henríquez, Universidad Autónoma, and Universidad Mayor. Universidad Mayor did not show interest in contributing to this research.

In order to achieve a broad overview of the perceptions of English literature in English pedagogy programs, three different surveys have been conducted with three different groups: program directors, literature teachers, and students enrolled in English Pedagogy programs given at the abovementioned universities. The participants who answered these surveys consist of; seven program directors, one for each program; seven literature teachers, one for each program; and 84 English pedagogy students, 12 from each program, who are currently taking courses that correspond to the third year of their program.

2.2. Data Collection Procedure

All the information was gathered through anonymous surveys so that the participants would feel comfortable to answer the questions truthfully. Having collected the surveys from the respondents, the results were presented and discussed.

The surveys conducted with program directors and English literature teachers consisted both of close-ended questions and open-ended questions designed to address the research questions posited in this study. The purpose of including open-ended questions with directors and teachers was to avoid limiting their answers to a reduced number of pre-given options. The surveys with the directors and the teachers were conducted face-to-face with the researcher who recorded the answers. A content analysis on the recorded answers was employed. The most frequent answers were identified based on key words that are connected to the survey questions according to Gilliam's methods (Gillham, 2000).

The student surveys were conducted in the classroom during one of their literature sessions. In order to comply with time constraints the student survey consists only of close-ended questions with a limited number of pre given options. The questions were designed to gather an overview of students' perception on the function of English literature in their program, the advantages this subject has, the teaching methods they prefer, and the relevance they believe it has for their professional future.

3. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF THE SURVEYS

3.1.1. How many courses of English literature does your program offer?

The first question posed to the program directors was how many obligatory and optional courses were offered at their English pedagogy program. Their answers were checked with the information available at the program web-page.

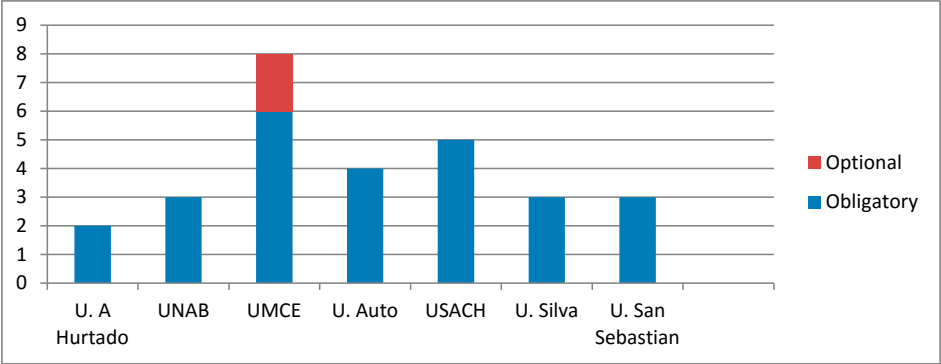


Figure 1 Number of literature courses offered at each English pedagogy program.

The university that offers most literature courses is UMCE that has six obligatory and two optional courses. The other universities offer between 2-5 obligatory courses of English literature and no optional courses.

3.2. Results of the close-ended questions from the director and teacher surveys

In this section, directors’ and teachers’ answers to the close-ended questions will be presented in the same chart with the aim to get an overview of their responses and to see if there is any discrepancies between directors’ and teachers’ answers. All participants will remain anonymous; the directors will be denominated with codes the D1-D7 and the teachers will be denominated with the codes T1-T7 whenever their answers are referred to separately.

3.2.1 Do you think that the English pedagogy program at your University offers enough English literature?

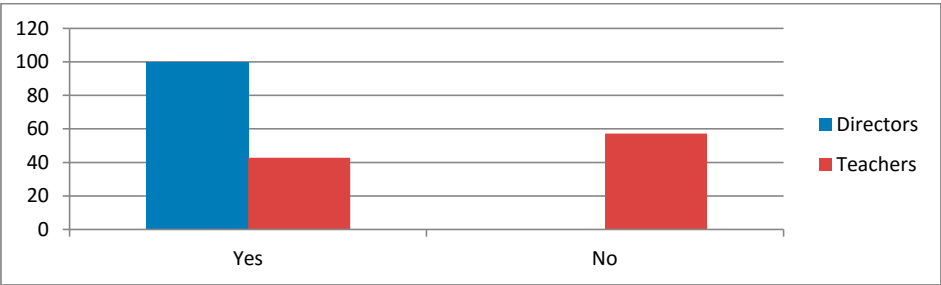


Figure 2. Directors and teachers’ satisfaction on the number of literature courses offered at their program.

100% of the program directors answered that they believe that their program offers enough literature. Among the literature teachers, however, there was a division between 43% who answered yes and 57% teachers who answered no.

3.2.2 *Do you think that there is enough Literature in English pedagogy programs in Santiago?*

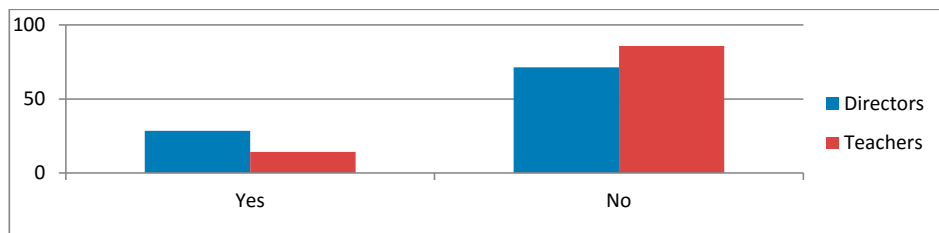


Figure 3 Directors and teachers' satisfaction on the number of literature courses offered at other universities.

71% of the directors answered that they believe that the competing universities offer too little literature in their programs. Interesting to point out here is the high number of directors who acknowledge that literature does not get enough attention in English pedagogy programs, but none is of the view that this is the case for their university.

3.2.3. *What is the reason for not teaching more literature in English pedagogy programs?*

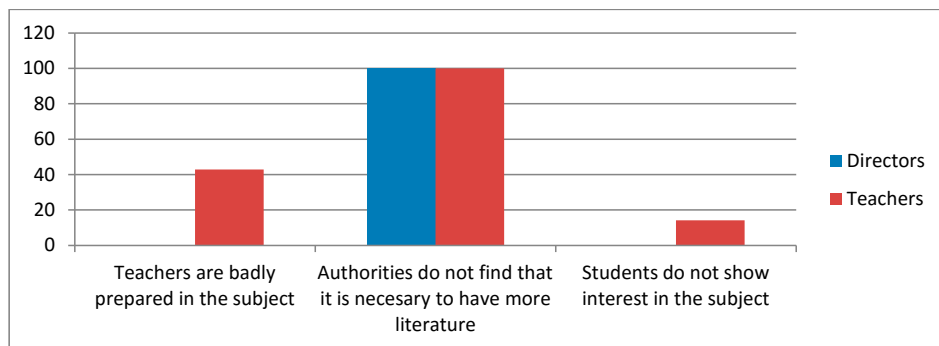


Figure 4 Reasons for not teaching more literature in English pedagogy programs.

For this question, the respondents were given three pre-given options, the respondents could choose all the options they considered relevant for why the program does not have more literature. All directors answered solely that the people who are in charge of designing the curriculum do not find that it is necessary to incorporate more literature than what is presently available. All teachers also recognized this option as a reason, but three teachers added that another reason is that there are too few well-prepared teachers available on the market which impedes the growth of English literature. One teacher pointed out that students' low interest in the subject has caused for a decrease of literature in the current curricular.

3.2.4. *Do you believe that your students will use literature in their future careers?*

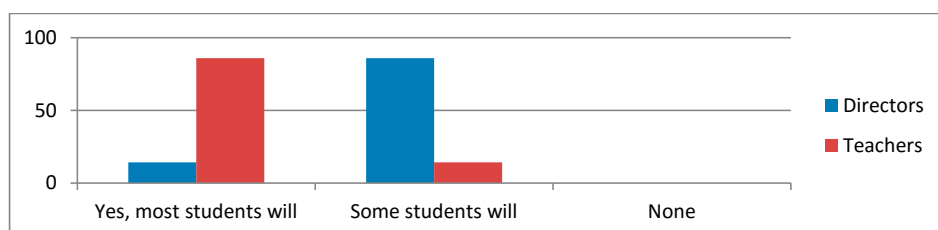


Figure 5 Students who will use literature in the future according to teachers' and directors' estimation.

The results show that teachers are more optimistic about the students using literature in the future. Six out of seven directors answered that students who are interested in literature will incorporate the subject in their teaching, but this is a matter of personal interest. D2 argued that the more cultivated teachers make extensive use of literature in their teaching, but it is doubtful if the majority does so. D4 pointed out that teachers who aim to teach at prestigious bilingual schools need to be knowledgeable of how to teach literature. D6 argued that literature is a useful tool to teach children literature, and that reading literature is also useful for the teacher to continue improving his/her English. D5 director says that s/he hopes students will use literary texts in the future and adds that it is something that the national curriculum requires.

6 out of 8 teachers believe that most students will use literature in their future teaching. T3 and T4 pointed out that students who will work in bilingual schools will use literature. T3 pointed out that regardless of whether they will teach literature or not, literature is helpful to all teachers because they become more critical thinkers which will benefit in other areas as well.

3.2.5. How would you describe the attitudes the students have towards English Literature?

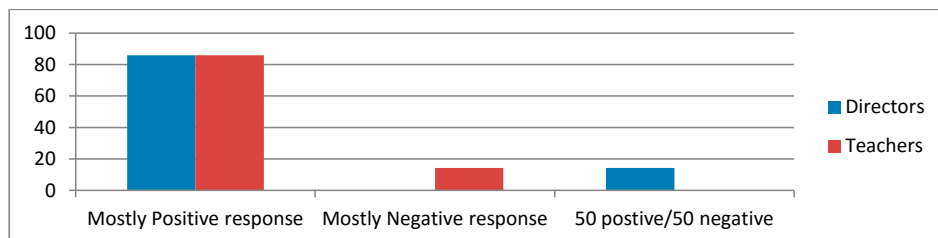


Figure 6. Students' attitude towards literature according to teachers' and directors' perception.

Five out of six directors state that the majority of the students show a positive attitude towards literature. D4 claims that students can be categorized into three groups: 1/3 of the students who are passionate, 1/3 who are impartial, and 1/3 who dislike literature.

Teachers' answer coincide with the directors' with five out of six stating that students' response is mostly positive. T1 argues that most English pedagogy students are rather reluctant to engage actively with the subject, as many do not see the connection between becoming a teacher of English and studying literature. T1 explains that most of them seldom read in their native language, which makes reading in a foreign language something more cumbersome and boring. Three teachers point out that literature is a subject that is demanding and therefore requires that students are exposed to a lot of training before they learn how to appreciate the subject, this is something that they point out cannot not be achieved with the number of courses available at their program. T2 points out that it takes time for students to get hooked on literature, but once they do, they appreciate it. T3 explains that at the beginning of the course, students are intimidated, but with time, students are more positive and partake in the class more actively. T5 explained that at the beginning students find it boring to read, but with time they like it because they learn how to express themselves and that students appreciate that literature permits multiple interpretations and that there is not one single valid answer. T5 argued that it takes at least one semester for students to understand that literature is enjoyable.

3.3. Results of open-ended questions for the program director survey

The questions for this part of the survey were asked as open-ended questions without any pre-given options to choose among. The answers were taken down by the researcher. The results presented in the chart are based on the frequency of key concepts uttered in the respondents' answers. The answers are anonymous and the directors will be presented by codes D1-D7 when their answers are presented individually.

3.3.1. *What methodologies do you encourage in your English pedagogy program when teaching English literature?*

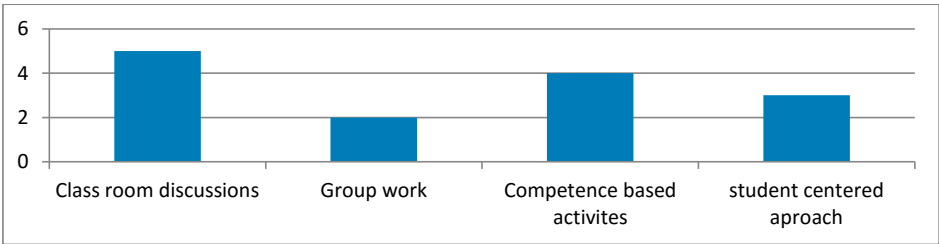


Figure 7 Methodologies preferred for teaching literature.

All program directors stressed the importance of students playing an active role in the classroom. Most of the directors argue that the aim of the literature courses is to give students an instance to express their own opinions related to the topics encountered in the literary texts. This is acquired through a student-centred task-based approach where the teachers give instructions to the students to resolve certain tasks based on the reading materials. Several of the directors acknowledged that it takes time to adapt students to a task-based approach because students expect to play a more passive role in the classroom where they listen to the teachers’ instructions and take notes to prepare for written tests. Some directors highlighted that it may take a whole semester until students feel comfortable to participate actively in the class and partake in the debates. Several directors encourage a methodology where students are organized into small groups that work together to prepare debate questions related to the literary texts, these questions are then discussed together with the whole class where the students have to practice to express and defend their arguments in front of other students. None of the directors mentioned that the main focus of the class should be that the teacher should give lectures about the materials. At times, some directors pointed out, the teacher can give a short lecture before the activities in order to give the necessary context to the literary texts. The teachers’ role is to encourage student participation by giving instructions to the tasks, monitor the exercises, lead the debates, and give feedback.

3.3.2. *What is the role of English Literature in your program? What are the contributions of this subject to the program?*

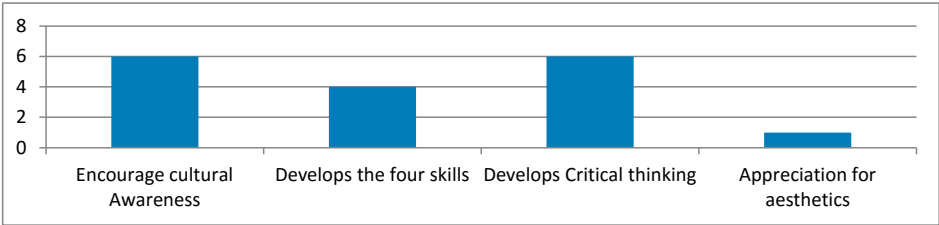


Figure 8 The contributions of having literature in the program according to directors.

All program directors argued that literature increases students' cultural knowledge about the English speaking world. The phrase "broaden horizons" was mentioned twice. D2 argued that teachers need to be cultivated because they have an important role in making their students conscious about different world cultures. D5 argued that literature helps students to connect the recurrent universal themes found in the literary text with their own cultural context; and hence become more self-conscious. All program directors stressed the importance literature has to develop critical thinking. Four out of six directors mentioned the importance literature has to develop the four skills related to language competence: speaking, reading, writing, and listening, which are practiced throughout debates, intensive reading, and essay writing, etc. Only one director believed that it is important to foster students' appreciation for the aesthetic functions of literature.

3.3.3 What should be covered in the literature courses? What literature is important to cover?

Here, directors answered unanimously that all genres (novels, poetry, drama, etc.) should be covered and that it is important to cover literature from the whole English speaking world including the ex-colonies. D5 pointed out that literature is a tool to explore a broader range of cultures around the world. D4 argued that it is important to read classical literature such as Faulkner and Shakespeare because it is important to be conscious about how the English speaking world has influenced culture in South America.

3.4. Results of open-ended questions for the teacher survey

The questions for this part of the survey were asked as open-ended questions without any pre-given options to choose among. The answers were taken down by the researcher. The results presented in the chart are based on the frequency of key concepts uttered in the respondents' answers. The answers are anonymous and the teachers will be presented by codes T1-T7 when their answers are presented individually.

3.4.1. What methodologies do you use when teaching English literature at your university?

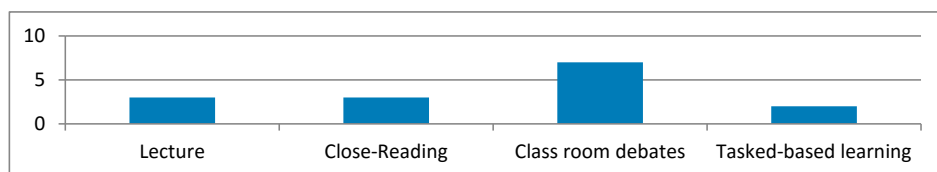


Figure 9 Methodologies used by teachers when teaching English literature.

The most common answer among teachers was that classroom debates are used as tool to encourage students' learning about English literature. Socratic seminars are carried out where students are encouraged to contribute with their own responses to the text. The aim of this is to stimulate the students' critical thinking. The majority of the teachers stated that they require students to do pre-readings before each class. Lecturing is uncommon and limited to set the historical and cultural background to the literary work. Most teachers acknowledge that their chief role is to give instructions to activities carried out in class such as discussions and close-reading exercises. Several teachers explain that their students often come with a poor academic background where they are the first generation in their family to study at university. Neither have they been exposed to literary analysis at high school. Consequently, these students often find it difficult to understand certain codes and subjects found in the literary text and it is the teacher's role to make these codes and subjects more accessible by linking them to the students' own cultural context.

3.4.2. *What is the role of English Literature in your program? What are the contributions of this subject to the program?*

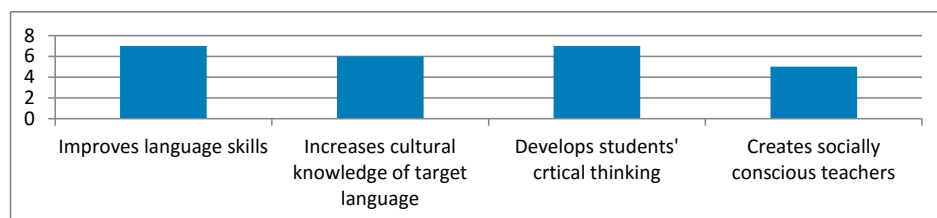


Figure 10 Contributions of having literature in the program according to directors.

Most teachers stress the importance literature has in developing students' critical thinking. T6 said that s/he has noticed how her students feel empowered by literature because it increases their ability to express their own opinions. She explained that students consider that literature is pedagogically rewarding and intellectually empowering. T7 stated that literature addresses themes that are important for the individual and that the students gain better understanding of people through literature. T7 also argued that literature is important because it contributes to students continuing learning throughout life. T5 highlighted that literature makes students aware of different realities and thus enable students how to solve problems in the class room. S/he explained that students learn how to manage students better in the classroom because literature makes students comprehensible about different identities and different contexts. All teachers argue that literary studies improve linguistic knowledge of the English language. T1 argued that by studying English Literature, students are exposed to uses of the language which would be otherwise absent in their learning of English; thus enriching their lexicon and proficiency. T1 explained that this knowledge is acquired in contexts which differ from the more colloquial input found in other media, learning a language without understanding the culture that originated it does not

only become a more difficult task, but also renders the process incomplete, something that should not be the case in people who desire to master another language. T2 argues that literature teaches students about the culture, history, and traditions of the target language which aids to comprehend the contemporary society. T5 pointed out that language and literature are connected and that you do not develop full linguistic competence if you do not have literature. T7 argued that through literature students become aware of their intellectual potentials. T7 added that students find it rewarding that English pedagogy is more than functional language learning.

3.4.3. What should be covered in the literature courses?

Five out of seven teachers argue that their English pedagogy program should have at least one literature course per semester and that all periods from medieval to contemporary literature should be covered. T1 explains that the first literature course the students have should introduce them to appropriate approaches to literary studies. T2 stresses the importance to make connections between the literary periods and give an emphasis to the historical and cultural context. T3 argues that five literature courses in total are enough and the content of these courses may depend on the teachers' preferences. T4 favours a more flexible program with two obligatory courses and several optional courses and stresses that literature must always be connected to students' own reality. T4 also stresses the importance of making the students aware of the relevance of literature. T5 argues that it is important to cover contemporary literature that addresses issues related to race and gender. T6 states that apart from having one obligatory course each semester, there should additionally be some optional courses. T6 explains that it is important that students are familiar with the most prominent time periods of literature such as romanticism, modernism, and postmodernism. T7 argues that the content of the literature courses depends on the teachers' preferences and that it is important that the teacher is passionate about the materials in order to keep the courses dynamic.

3.4.4. What do you do to motivate your students to appreciate English Literature?

Six out of seven teachers argue that the selection of literary texts is very important when engaging the students' interest. T2 explains that the teacher must put herself in the students' position and try to understand which texts are close to students' own experience and interests. Most teachers also argue that the debate questions that the teacher prepares are very important to motivate students to engage in literary analysis. T3 states that the teacher should encourage student participation without being too judgemental, a tolerance for different interpretation is important. T6 and T7 explain that the teacher should expose the students to different types of materials: art, film, poetry, and asks students to make connections between these inputs.

3.4.5. What are the difficulties teaching English literature in your programme?

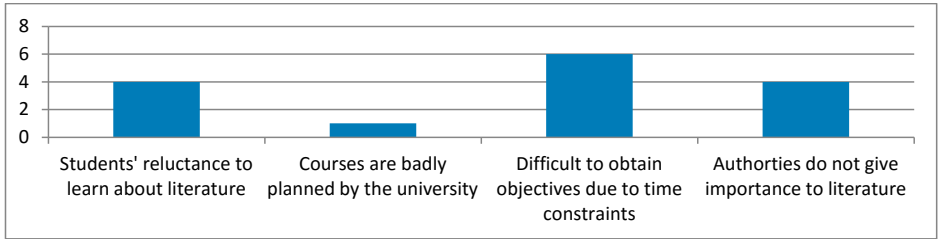


Figure 11. Difficulties teaching literature according to teachers' perspective.

Six out of seven teachers say that it is difficult to enhance students' critical and independent thinking in only three or four courses. They point out that literature is a complex subject that takes time to master. Four out of seven teachers feel that authorities at the university do not give enough importance to literature. T3 stresses that many colleagues of other disciplines at the department are reluctant to give importance to literature and mentioned that it takes time and effort to change values. T6 and T7 argue that the ministry of education should do more to support literature's role in language teaching. Programs are often not design by the teachers who teach the course but by authorities in charge of the curriculum. T1 explains that the design of the course programmes is poor and that the literature courses do not relate to each other at all and most readings are either partially chosen at random or very anachronistic. T5 states that the number of students in each course is too high which makes it difficult to run workshops smoothly. T5 points out that this occurs due to financial constraints.

3.5. Student Survey

The questions for the student survey were all close-ended questions with pre-given alternatives. The survey were taken anonymously by the student.

3.5.1. Do you think that your English pedagogy program offers enough literature courses?

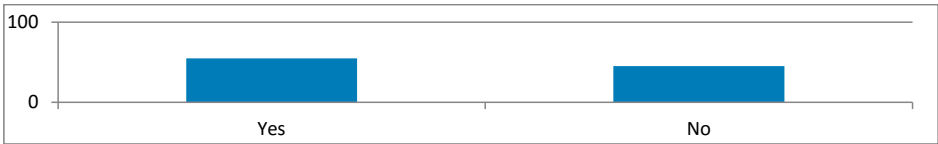


Figure 12 Students' satisfaction with the amount of courses available at their university.

Most students answered that there are enough literature courses in their English pedagogy program. 46 students answered yes and 38 students answered no. UMCE and U. Alberto Hurtado stood out among the other universities with 8 out of 12 and 9 out of 12 students respectively who answered that their university did not offer enough literature. UMCE is the university that offers most literature courses among the universities in this study with 6 obligatory and 2 optional courses. Thus, it can be derived that the more students study literature, the more engaged they get.

3.5.1. How often do you read fiction in your free time?

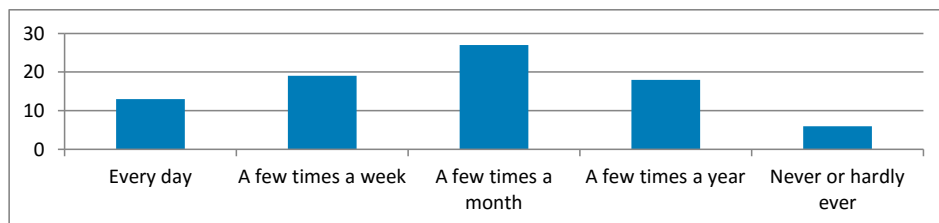


Figure 13 How often students read literature.

This question was asked to find out about the students reading habits outside the university. The question was how frequently the students read literature on their free time. The most common answer was a few times a month which is a quite low result taking into account that these students are training to be future language teachers.

3.5.2. Do you believe that English literature is an important subject for your program?

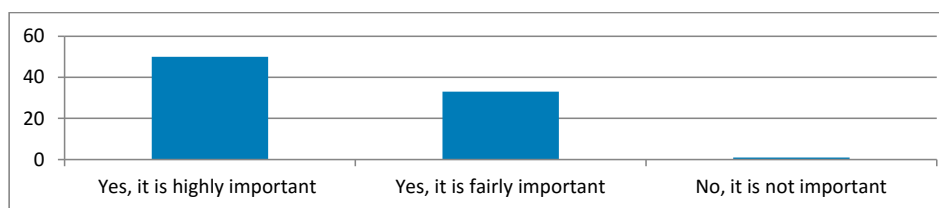


Figure 13 Do you believe that English literature is an important subject for your program?

Most students either believe that literature is highly important or fairly important to their program. Only 1 out of 84 students answered that it is not important.

3.5.3. Do you believe that English literature studies helps to develop the four skills (speaking, reading, listening, and writing)?

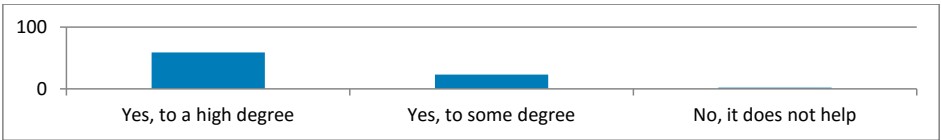


Figure 14 Is literature helpful to develop the four skills?

Most students recognize the usefulness literature has on improving the four skills of language. 50 students believe that it is helpful to a high degree, 20 students to some

3.5.4. What are the benefits with English literature? (choose all relevant options)

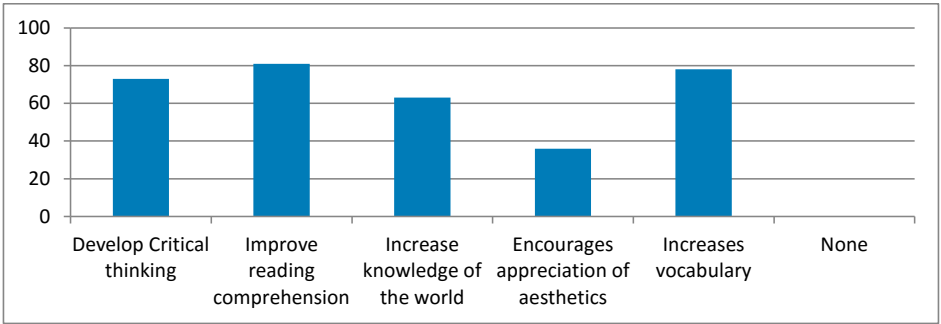


Figure 15 Benefits of studying literature.

Most students chose more than one advantage. Improving reading comprehension, increasing vocabulary, and developing critical thinking were the most selected options. The least popular answer is “Encourages appreciation of aesthetics”, but students still show a higher interest for this (36/84) category than the ‘program directors (1/7).

3.5.5. Do you enjoy the English literature courses at your University?

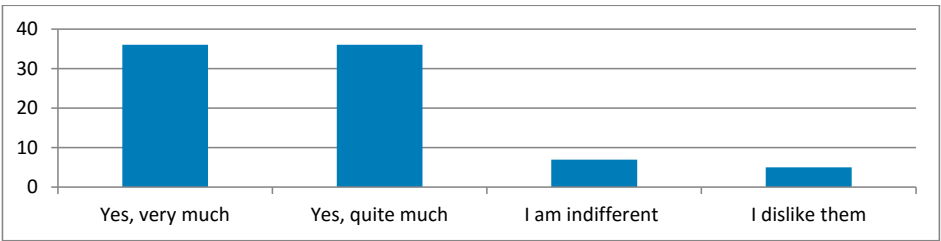


Figure 16 Do you enjoy the English literature courses at your University?

These results clearly show that the gran majority lie their English literature courses very much or quite much showing that this is a popular subject.

3.5.6. *What methodology do you prefer that the teacher use in the classroom?*

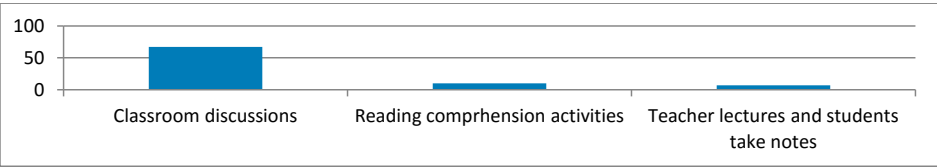


Figure 17 What methodology do you prefer that the teacher use in the classroom?

The most popular methodology according to students’ answer is to have classroom discussions on pre-given readings.

3.5.7. *Do you believe that you will use English literature in your future professional career?*

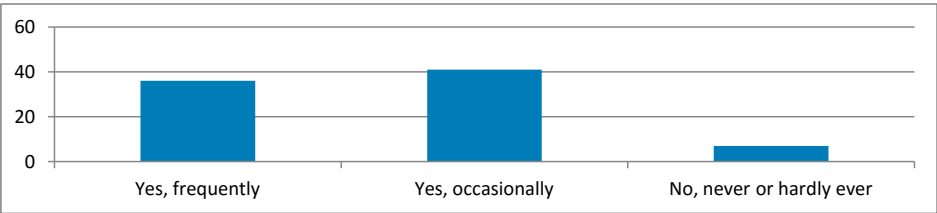


Figure 18 Do you believe that you will use English literature in your future professional career?

The majority of the students believe that they will either use literature frequently or occasionally in their future professional careers as English teachers. Hence, this is not seen as an esoteric subject that has low relevance for the students’ future professional career but is on the opposite seen as a subject that will be incorporated in their future teaching.

3.5.8. *Do you think that your program should offer optional courses in English literature?*

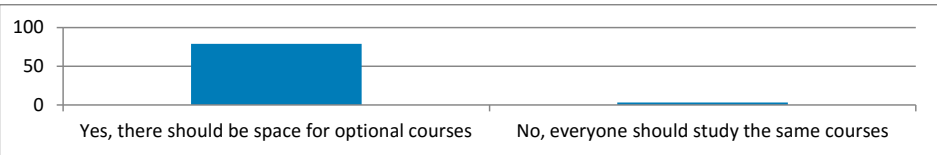


Figure 19. Program should offer optional courses in English literature

The great majority, 81 of 84 students, believe that English pedagogy programs should offer optional courses on English literature for students who are interested. Currently, only one university (UMCE) offers this in their program.

5. CONCLUSIONS

After having conducted the surveys with directors, teachers, and students of English pedagogy programs in Santiago Chile, I can see that there is a consensus among the majority of the participants in these surveys that literature plays an important role both for the linguistic development and the development of critical and creative thinking among the students. The preferred teaching methodology is to carry out debates on the literary works in class where students are encouraged to form their own view of the work, this idea of a communicative task-based approach tallies with the proposed approach of several prominent scholars in the field. The surveys also show that English literature is quite a popular subject among students and that most students believe that they will use literature in their future teaching, either frequently or occasionally. Important to point out is that a considerable number of students (45%) believe that there are too few literature courses offered at their University and that 96% of the students believe that optional courses of literature should be offered at their university although this is not the case in most Universities. Although 45% is not the majority of students, it is still a very high number if we take into account the observation made by several teachers that it takes time to fully appreciate literature. It is a massive subject that requires a lot of work and it is not possible to do a satisfactory coverage of the discipline with only 3-4 courses. According to most teachers, it is difficult to fully develop students' appreciation for literature with the few courses offered and better results would be achieved if more courses were given. Due to the fact that literature is acknowledged both by directors, teachers, and students to have an important role both to develop the four skills, knowledge of the world, and to develop critical and creative thinking, then it would be justified to increase the number of courses taught.

The results of the surveys show that appreciation for aesthetics is considered less important or even irrelevant for several of the participants. The results show that the general view is that the purpose of teaching literature to English pedagogy students is so that they can improve their four skills and for them to gain knowledge of the English speaking world that the literary works depict rather than putting emphasis on the artistic qualities intrinsic in the work. In this sense, the usefulness of literature is never the literary text itself as a self-contained and self-referential aesthetic object as the New Critics argued. The results show that students are encouraged to carry out analyses of the literary works that focus on the cultural context in which they were written. Hence, the preference is to learn more about the political, cultural, and social aspects of the real world through the fictional world. The capacity that fiction has to distract the reader from the external elements that has influenced and is depicted by the literary work is too often neglected. Since most programs have a quite low

number of literature courses in their programs, aesthetic interpretation is overlooked and preference is given to connect the literary work to the real world. Consequently, more courses should be offered in order to have enough time to properly teach students how to carry out analyses that also pay close attention to the intrinsic values of the literary work.

In addition to increase the number of courses taught, it is also necessary to constantly work on renewing and improving the teaching methodologies and to renew the reading materials on the courses' reading lists with the aim to assure the English pedagogy programs in Santiago keep up with international standards. Chilean English students should possess knowledge of where literature is today and where it is heading in the future and not only study old classics. They should be able to give a personal response to the literary works they read and do a proper analysis that will contribute to the continuously expanding comprehension of that work. They should also be conscious about the different methodologies that can be used to teach literature such as: discussions, drama, creative writing, essay writing, etc.

In order to achieve these aims, it is not only important to increase the quantity of hours spent on teaching literature, but also to improve the quality of the teaching. It is therefore vital to encourage the amount of investigation done in the field of literature and its role in the EFL classroom, not only in Santiago, but in the whole of Chile.

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