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HOW TO FOSTER READING IN ENGLISH IN SECONDARY EDUCATION STUDENTS

TRABAJO DE FIN DE MÁSTER
Presentado por Sandra Martín Martínez

Tutor/Director:
Dra. María Alcantud
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This Final Master Dissertation will analyse and discuss how to foster reading in English in Secondary Education students by means of didactic and communicative strategies, with worksheets elaborated based on the meaning of the chosen short story *Mucho más que ríos de vida y Fuertes de leyenda… Cuentos de la India / Much more than rives of life and legendary forts… Tales from India*, a Spanish-English parallel reading aimed to provide students with language skills and cultural background. This will be carried out taking into account several academic frameworks, such as Task-Based Language Teaching, Literature as teaching material, parallel reading and Proyecto TALIS, from which to extract the bases to create those materials that will try to improve the students' reading comprehension and, thus, to encourage their reading habits inside and outside the classroom.

Key words: literature, reading comprehension, short story, Proyecto TALIS, Task-Based Language Teaching, parallel reading, teaching materials.

El presente Trabajo de Fin de Máster analizará y tratará el tema de fomentar la lectura en inglés en alumnos de Educación Secundaria a través de estrategias didácticas y comunicativas, con fichas de actividades elaboradas basándose en el significado del relato corto elegido *Mucho más que ríos de vida y Fuertes de leyenda… Cuentos de la India / Much more than rives of life and legendary forts… Tales from India*, una lectura en paralelo de español-inglés que tiene como objetivo proporcionar a los estudiantes habilidades lingüísticas y un bagaje cultural. Se llevará a cabo teniendo en cuenta varios marcos académicos, como son el Task-Based Language Teaching, Literatura como material didáctico, lectura el paralelo y el Proyecto TALIS, de donde se extraerán las bases para crear esos materiales que intentarán mejorar la comprensión lectora de los alumnos y, a su vez, crearles hábitos de lectura dentro y fuera del aula.

Palabras clave: literatura, comprensión lectura, relato corto, Proyecto TALIS, Task-Based Laguage Teaching, lectura en paralelo, materiales didácticos.

A aquest Treball de Fi de Màster s'analitzarà i es debatrà el tema de fomentar la lectura en anglès en estudiants d'Educació Secundària a través de estratègies didàctiques i comunicatives, amb fitxes d'exercicis elaborats basant-se en el significat del relat curt elegit fichas de actividades elaboradas basándose en el significado del relato corto elegido *Mucho más que ríos de vida y Fuertes de leyenda… Cuentos de la India / Much more than rives of life and legendary forts… Tales from India*, una lectura en paral·lel d'anglès-espanyol amb el objectiu de proporcionar al estudiants habilitats lingüístiques i un bagatge cultural. Es durà a terme tenint en compte diversos marcs acadèmics, com ara el Task-Based Language Teaching, Literatura como a material didàctic, lectura en paral·lel i el Proyecto TALIS, dels quals es extrauran les bases per crear aquests materials tractant de millorar la comprensió lectora del alumnes i, a la mateixa vegada, crear-los hàbits de lectura dins i fora de l'aula.

Paraules clau: literatura, comprensió lectora, relat curt, Proyecto TALIS, Task-Based Language Teaching, lectura en paral·lel, materials didàctics.

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1. Introduction

The following Final Master Dissertation is going to be developed pursuing the main objective set to it: to implement some didactic strategies, different from the ones which are usually carried out in class, to foster reading in English in Secondary Education students. This aim was chosen due to the lack of reading materials used in an English lesson during the school year. However, when there is a literary piece included in the school syllabus, it is normally an adapted material of well-known books that do not attract students and lack a real objective regarding what the student is going to profit from it.

As a result of it, this Final Master Dissertation is going to try to replace those ineffective materials and suggest some others which in our opinion are better suited for students. So, we propose to choose what according to us is an appropriate text for the level and interests of the students who will perform the implementation and, at the same time, elaborate a series of activities divided in tasks to give the students the opportunity of enhancing their reading comprehension skills to face a text fully prepared. This way, they will be able to achieve the ultimate goal – to rely on context and techniques to extract the meaning of a text without relying solely on the translation of words unknown for them.

To do this, we have supported our materials, evaluation, results and arguments on several academic frameworks that, due to their nature, work perfectly together, enabling both students and teachers to achieve the objective set from the beginning. This academic framework comprises the Proyecto TALIS, from which the tale worked on class has been acquired; the Task-Based Language Teaching approach, used to set the bases of our implementation, such as group work, pedagogical tasks aimed towards younger learners and activities' sequences to organise the lesson.

It also takes into account academic research on literature as a teaching material where it sets the premises that said material, although barely used on language learning, it is very useful to broaden students' horizons as well as to provide them with language skills, but always taking into account that it must be adequate for the students' needs and well prepared by the teachers.

Then, since Proyecto TALIS deals with parallel texts as a way of integrating the students' capacities with their learning and their cultural heritage, it will be analysed through the point of view of Spanish students learning English, showing its many benefits, but also its disadvantages when it is not well carried out in an English lesson.

Lastly, we will see the materials used and the worksheets created with the purpose of allowing students that learning development and we will also evaluate the results from the point of view of the objective of this Final Master Dissertation. All of this to end up in the conclusions that will be drawn from all the information above and to meditate on a final thought, is it really important to foster reading and develop techniques? And more importantly, is it useful to students beyond the English class?

2. Academic framework

In this first section of this dissertation, we are going to deal with the entire academic framework from which the implementation that is going to be shown in the follow section has been based of. To do so, we needed to focus first on the objective we wanted to achieve with this paper and then the materials which we needed to conduct it.

Firstly, as we have seen in the introduction part, the targeted aim was to foster reading in English in the classroom through a series of activities specifically designed to develop or enhance their reading comprehension. For this, a tale was chosen from Proyecto TALIS (www.proyectotalis.com), which helps student from all around the

world to have an education available in different languages through reading and writing, which we will see in the following sub-section. Also, since this tale is written in a short story format, some directions needed to be adopted to fulfil this aim and create adequate activities to help students.

Secondly, since the short story is written in parallel format, some research has been made to see how that could affect or improve the students' learning. However, as seen in its sub-section, the research has been proven quiet difficult for several reasons that will be explained in it.

Finally, to end with the academic framework section, to help students work in a more relaxed and efficient environment we thought the best possible way to accomplish our objective was to set them into groups and apply Task-Based Language Teaching approach.

This way, we wanted to prove that using literature as teaching material is very important for students, since most of them lack on reading skill and they could be taught and trained in the classroom, so students could implement them in their later academic studies and professional life.

2.1. Task-Based Language Teaching

As said before, the objective of using the Task-Based Language Teaching approach was due to the necessity of giving students the support of each other to face a new perspective of learning. Since this approach uses tasks as the focus of planning a language teaching class, it fitted the best for its communicative and "real-world" like perspective.

First of all, we should start by introducing the approach as Van den Branden wrote in his 2006 book *Task-Based Language Education: From Theory to Practice*, which is "an approach to language education in which students are given functional tasks that invite

them to focus primarily on meaning exchange and to use language for real-world, non-linguistic purposes." So, as we mentioned before, it seemed adequate to carry it out in the implementation, above all due to the fact that it is a multifaceted approach. This means that we could combine it with other different approaches or methods and used creatively to better suit the activities, even though they were more traditional in the teaching area, as far as the communicative aspect was present.

Concerning the nature of the objective set for this dissertation, it was necessary to adapt some aspects for the sake of the reading activities and achieve comprehension, which means that the activities had to be "pedagogic task" instead of "real-world tasks". According to Nunan (1989) and Leaver and Willis (2014), who suggest that is also important to use "a syllabus that links tasks to other types of syllabuses" (Richards and Rogers, 2014, p. 184), these two tasks are intended for different goals from a task-based syllabus, which are:

> 1. Real-world tasks, which are designed to practice or rehearse those tasks that are found to be important in a needs analysis and turn out to be important and useful in the real world. This would be the case with courses for learners who have clearly identifiable needs.
> 2. Pedagogical tasks, which have a psycholinguistic basis in SLA theory and research but do not necessarily reflect real-world tasks. This would be the case for learners who do not have clearly identifiable needs, such as with young learners.
> (Richards and Rogers, 2014, p. 184)

Thus, it is clarified that, for young learners who do not really have a real-world objective, activities are more pedagogical, focused on imitating those characteristics as

a way of preparation through tasks such as problem-solving, games and notice the gap. Since their learning needs to escalate in a specific order, it is very important not to expose students to material that can go beyond their understanding or that they will not see a real use for it.

It is also very important to have a clear procedure of the tasks that are going to be developed in a lesson. For this to work and have a clear significance in the students learning process, the activities must follow an order such as the one proposed by Van Gorp and Bogaert (2006): introducing the task to motivate and prepare students for the tasks, supporting task performance to support students' interventions while they are trying to form a meaning and the post-task phase, where students reflect on the tasks and what they have accomplished (Richards and Rogers, 2014). These sequences have also been called "pre-task, while-task and post-task" (Richards and Rogers, 2014, p. 190; Willis, 1996: 56-7) as his interpretation of the same procedure explained before. Although his is more thorough and complex, in the implementation carried out for this Final Master Dissertation we have chosen to integrate this procedure adapting it to better suit reading activities and less heavy in content, as can be seen below in the Evaluation section.

In all, what we want to achieve with this approach is to help students to construct meaning through communication in group and through exposure coordinated by the teacher (a mediator role only). This way, through repetition and participation of the tasks prepared, students develop their knowledge and skills by way of scaffolding. This means that they will depend on the help of others at the beginning until they start to depend more on themselves and their acquired knowledge (Lave and Wenger, 1991;

Lee, 2008 and Richards and Rogers, 2014). When they start to notice forms in their inputs ("notice the gap"), their own speech will start to form and their second language development will arise. Likewise, to provide students with plenty of vocabulary from the beginning of the tasks, since they are expected to acquire it through context use, so they can start getting familiarised with it.

All these achievements will serve as a motivation to continue learning and collaborate in their group work, where they can evolve in roles, such as being a group participant, a monitor paying attention to form during an activity or as a risk-taker, creating structures that may defy their actual knowledge but from which they will learn more through mistakes and corrections (Richards and Rogers, 2014, p. 187).

2.3. Literature as teaching material

Literature is a material that very few times is used to teach on itself, most teachers only use it as a tool to fill in or complete their course syllabuses, but they never work with it in class, teach students from it or show them how they can benefit to develop the target language through literature (Ghosn, 2002; Keshavarzi, 2012).

For this, Lazar (1993) and Aghagolzadeh (2012) gave six reasons to use literature in the language classroom: it is a motivating material, provides interculturality, encourages language acquisition, makes students aware of language, develops students' interpretative abilities and educates them. In short, what literature does is to actively involve students into the classroom activity through dynamic learning. They are able to learn different skills and areas of language if the teacher is able to create the right tasks that draw attention to the most important point of a literary piece.

With literature, and this Final Master Dissertation, the most important thing is the process that students have used to arrive at a specific interpretation, not to just the surface, since one of the final aims is to make students critical thinkers, so their opinion is just a tool to achieve the process to which they have arrived. That is, teachers need to teach those means, since students are not going to read for reading, but to read for meaning. For this, according to Knutson (1993), there are two processes to figure out the meaning of a text: bottom-up process, where "the reader decodes the individual elements of the text to build a total meaning" and top-down process, where "the reader starts forming hypothesis and making predictions" (Gashemi, 2011, p. 267-268). This, taught properly in a class through examples is key for students' skills development.

Although literature has been vastly criticised as a mean of teaching material, branded by McKay (1982) and Aghagolzadeh (2012) as too complex that requires a lot of effort from the reader, with no language standards or even full of unneeded vocabulary. Literature does, indeed, provide plenty of help to students if used in an adequate way. For this, it is important to choose material suited for the students' needs, age and learning level, so it can have "positive effects on the students' motivation, give authentic cultural information and expose to real language" (Aghagolzadeh, 2012, p. 206; Berado, 2006), as it also helps with their language skills in an integrated way in the oral and written language "as part of the means for creating both referential and interactional meaning" (Hişmanoğlu, 2005, p. 57). This means that the aim is to get students to understand the literal and inferential level of a text, to grasp both specific references and make interpretations of what they read:

> Cruz (2010) conveys that a literary text provides students with a much clearer idea about the syntactic structure of a written text and to what extent written language differs from spoken language. He continues that by getting used to the

formation and function of sentences, to the structure of a paragraph, a section or a chapter, their writing skill improve and their speech skill can gain eloquence.

(cited in Aghagolzadeh, 2012)

Furthermore, it is very important to implement the literary piece with activities before, during and after the reading exercise; this way, learners' imagination can be stimulated to have better results and a greater creativity outcome.

There are different types of reading comprehension depending on what students are reading for. According to Nikolajeva (2010), there are six types of reading that may help or disturb students when reading and understanding a text: reading for the plot, reading for the narrative, reading and interpretation, reading fiction, reading symbols and reading the context. Due to the nature of this Final Master Dissertation, we are only going to deal with the most relevant ones for the implementation created.

One of the biggest problems of students is to follow the plot of a story due to its temporality and causality (the proairetic code), that is, a story has a main structure, but it also contains a lot of redundant information that misleads students and have to "make proairetic decisions at key bifurcations of the plot" (Bremond, 1996 and Nikolajeva, 2010). For this, it is very important that students recognise patterns of writing to anticipate events. Also, the fact that the narrative may not be lineal or have a close ending, may frustrate students and make them unable to read or understand what they are reading due to a gap filling ability that they lack, so, when it comes to interpret the text, it shows impossible. The interpretative (or hermeneutic) code of a text is not fixed, it is not created by the writer, but by the reader, who has "validity of interpretation" (Hirsch, 1967 and Nikolajeva, 2010), so they need certain cognitive, social and cultural knowledge to see the fundamental message. Basically, referential coding, or reading the

context, is key to comprehend a literary piece, despite the reading abilities that a student may previously have.

To conclude with this sub-section, some points must be drawn to the specific format chosen for this implementation. As it has been said in the Proyecto TALIS section (Alcantud-Díaz, Martínez-Usarralde and Lloret-Catalá, 2017; Mínguez-López, Olmos-Fontestad and Alcantud-Díaz, 2017), the chosen tale is written in short story format. The preference behind this option comes from the many benefits that working with short stories in an English classroom provide (Arıoğul, 2001, p. 11-18; Hişmanoğlu, 2005). It makes easier the reading task and it focuses on universal topics to which students can relate, besides dealing with the same topics as normal narrative, which also raises the students' interests. This "makes contribution to the development of cognitive analytical abilities by bringing the whole self to bear on a compressed account of a situation in a single place and moment" (Hişmanoğlu, 2005, p. 62; Sage, 1987, p. 43). Students start and finish the reading activity in one lesson, enabling them to tackle the meaning faster and in a more efficient way. In addition, for teaches is equally comfortable to create activities in which to assemble the important questions and tasks to work on. According to Ghasemi (2011), these activities must be divided into four stages: pre-reading activities (vocabulary work to "help the learner gain access to the story by becoming more aware of its structure (Riley, 1993, p. 426)), in-class oral reading (comprehension work), textual analysis and group work (students' own interpretations (Knutson, 1993, p. 20)) and post-reading assignments (to establish their acquired knowledge and promote better learning and comprehension (Tierney and Shanahan, 1991, p. 267-269)). As it can be observed, these stages are almost identical to

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the ones mentioned in the Task-Based Language Teaching section, making both methods good to combine and work with in a literary English class.

2.4. Parallel reading

Lastly, to end with this Academic Framework section, we are going to briefly talk about the parallel reading method included in the Proyecto TALIS book of choice for this implementation (Rodrigo Mateu and Alcantud-Díaz (coord.), 2017).

Sadly, not much academic information has been found on the topic of parallel reading beyond some teaching blogs (Conti, 20015) and one Spanish article on translation in foreign language teaching (Zabalbeascoa, 1990). For this, we are going to analyse what it has been found and then try and find a result in the Conclusion section to see if it makes a change in language learning.

There are multiple benefits for using parallel reading in a language classroom (Conti, 2015; Zabalbeascoa, 1990), but, first of all, one thing must be taken into account, this method is only to be used as an aid for students during the reading tasks and after several context and vocabulary activities have been carried out. It should never be used as a way to completely comprehend a story.

Once this has been established, we can start mentioning the benefits when this process is done in the right way. Firstly, it encourages "noticing", which goes back to Schmidt's (1990) Noticing Hypothesis (Conti, 2015), where students acquire grammar structures by recognising the differences between their L1 and the target language. Also, as mentioned before, it fosters scaffolding since it gives less anxiety to those more insecure students, as well as it puts vocabulary in context and in an authentic environment. Finally, it helps with those texts that are more challenging for students,

since it may be a bit ahead of their level, but the parallel format may support them in developing their learning.

However, there is plenty of criticism against translation in the language classroom (Zabalbeascoa, 1990, p. 76), such as the lack of practice if oral competences, not stimulating for students, a step back to the grammar-translation method or the unnatural way of learning a language, since it is not like learning the mother tongue (although a second language is never learnt as an L1, whatever were that technique used). For this, Zabalbeascoa (1990) emphasises between two translation methods "traducción semántica y traducción comunicativa" (Newmark, 1981; Zabalbeascoa, 1990, p. 79). The first one tries to reproduce the exact contextual meaning of a text, while the second one tries to reproduce the same effect that a text may have in the reader in its original language, but in the translation. With this, we can elicit that the correct way of introducing a parallel text to students in a lesson is if it is in semantic translation, since it is more faithful to the original form. Nonetheless, as we highlighted before, Zabalbeascoa (1990) and other authors such as Mounin (1963) also reiterate that a translation is never the only source of meaning for the students, but just another way of reinforcing their understanding alongside other activities to review vocabulary.

2.1. Proyecto TALIS

This project is divided into two main branches: Proyecto TALIS Association and TALIS Research Team[1]. Their objectives are very similar, but both develop different activities to achieve them, as it can be seen below.
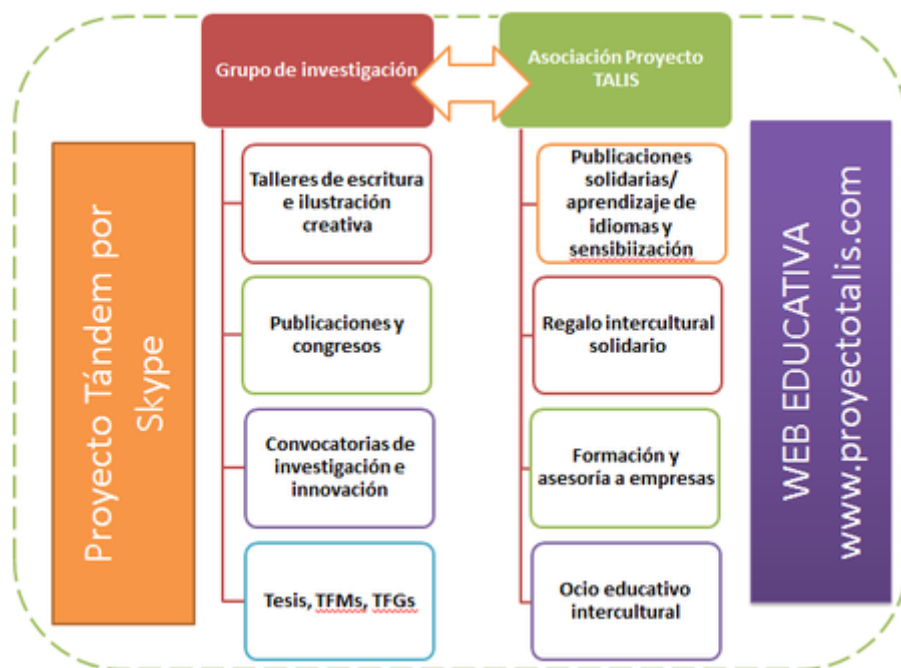
Therefore, Proyecto TALIS Association is integrated by teaching professionals and researchers to promote the project through activities, entities and training. Meanwhile, the TALIS Investigation Team is formed by specialists in didactic, pedagogy, philology, translation, documentation, communication and sociology. It focuses on generating a theoretical framework and a methodology to use it as teaching material of second languages, literature and arts through educational innovation and the use of TICs applied to teaching in a classroom. All of this is carried out by way of creative writing workshops around different countries which later are published towards charitable ends,

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[1] http://proyectotalis.com/que-es-proyecto-talis/

since all of the funds collected from selling the books are used in international cooperation projects related to education.

Some of the stories of this project are written and translated by the same authors as part of their language learning teaching objectives, as it is the case of the book chosen for this implementation, seen below in the Materials section, which was written by Indian university students to help with their Spanish classes.

As extracted from Proyecto TALIS webpage, this way of publishing the tales fulfils three aims:

- To make available free materials to teachers, education centres, associations, students and any person interested in them, so they can improve their linguistic and intercultural competences.

- To rescue cultural heritage from near and far away cultures from all the five continents and to foster the knowledge of different national identities.

- To offer those people who participate in the workshops the possibility to improve their literary and graphic creative capacities.

In conclusion, Proyecto TALIS helps to distribute and foster reading and writing in different languages through their approachable texts, suitable for every student indifferently of their age, and their parallel format to aid them in their language learning process or just to introduce them to intercultural education and let them be aware of the differences that make every culture unique (Alcantud-Díaz and Sevilla-Pavón (Coords), 2018; Mínguez López, Alcantud-Díaz and Olmos Fontestad, 2017; Rodrigo Mateu and Alcantud-Díaz (coord.), 2017; Reyes Castillo and Alcantud-Díaz (Coords.), 2016;

Alcantud-Díaz, Haba Osca and Peredo (Coords.), 2015A; Alcantud-Díaz, Haba Osca and Peredo (Coords.), 2015B).

3. Methodology

In the following section, we are going to deal with the methodology used when implementing this Final Master Dissertation. For this, we are going to focus on the context where it took place, the materials used for it and, at the same time, all the adaptations that had to be done for them to fit in what the Decree of Secondary Education guides. All of this taking into account the main objective of this dissertation, which will be exposed below and shown in the sections of Evaluation and Results.

3.1. Context

The high school where the internship was carried out was very near to the city centre of Valencia, where different social environments live together. This means that the teaching approach must be implemented in a way in which every student, regardless of their social background, must achieve a level of understanding adequate to the one that the educational Decree indicates.

Nonetheless, since the aim of this dissertation is to foster reading in English without the barriers of language being the main obstacle, we have chosen a bilingual short story written by students of India in English and later translated into Spanish. This is very important to the development of this dissertation, since it shows that working with original texts (and not with texts adapted for certain levels), as well as with a story that engages the students to a certain point, helps to promote reading and boost their self-esteem, as with practice, their skills improve.

For that same reason, we have also chosen to work in groups through Task Based Language Teaching, thus they have the support of their classmates and of a well-

structured base from which they will be able to fully understand the main points of what they are reading.

To conclude, with this dissertation, we were not expecting students to understand word by word what the read in English, but to get the feeling of the text and be critical with it, this is why working with parallel texts helps them to do not break the flow of their reading. Moreover, all the previous exercises to the reading are created to support the students and get them familiarised with the context.

First of all, we are going to analyse the centre. The high school is located in Valencia, as it has been said before, a few minutes away from the city centre, but also, from the end of the city of Valencia and the beginning of the surrounding towns. This is a secondary education centre, with students from ESO, Bachillerato and Intermediate and Advanced Vocational Training and Educational Cycles, making it a centre of big dimensions. In the 80s, after a renovation, the north wing was dedicated to create two centres and after a few decades, in the year 2002, both centres were unified to function as one, creating what is the current educational centre. Since then, this high school has been receiving students for all of their mandatory and optional secondary education levels (six years in total) which would lead students to higher education, such as university, and for their training cycles. Said cycles are: Administration, Trade and Marketing and Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs). At the same time, it also offers distance cycles (probably online) and blended cycles, which are: International trade, Administration of networked computer systems, Development of web applications and Development of cross-platform applications.

At the same time, since it is an educational centre with such big dimensions, it welcomes students from any primary school of the area and, in general, from any area if

the parents want to enrol them in it. For this, it relies on multiple integration programmes (for instance, for those students who have just immigrated to the country) or school subjects' reinforcement, as it is the case of core subjects with *Programa de reforç escolar fora de l'horari lectiu*. In here, at the beginning of each school year, the centre gives certain students with difficulties in some subjects the opportunity of joining these programmes for free, with just the obligation of committing to them.

As to the classroom and students' management, the high school has flexible groups, where students of the same year are divided in different classroom. The division of those groups depends on the subject and level of the student. They also follow a programme exclusive from the Valencian Community, the PEV (teaching in Valencian language). Finally, they also have PAM (Action Plan for the Improvement of the students) and the programme Aula Compartida, specially designed for those students at risk of school dropout in the first levels of the first cycle of ESO, where they receive personalised teaching with adapted materials and workshop subjects, so they are able to obtain the mandatory school graduate and a better future for themselves.

Secondly, as to the classroom where this dissertation was implemented. Although there could have been done in 1st, 3rd of ESO or 2nd of Bachillerato, due to the level of English of the short story chosen for the activity and the environment of the classroom, the implementation was carried out in 3rd of ESO E (group of teaching in Spanish). Although belonging to an intermediate level, in general, this group presented significant difficulties with the English subject, among the rest of the subjects taught in that grade. The class was integrated by 28 students, three of them absent students, making regular assistants only 25. Due to being entirely taught in Spanish (except Valencian language and English), a high percentage of the classroom was immigrant or of immigrant

background, with only the case of one student unable to speak Spanish due to his recent arrival to Spain from Pakistan. Nonetheless, as a result of the diversity of the classroom the level was lower, but not their interest for learning.

All of this, obviously, was taken into account when elaborating the implementation activities to, some extent, make the materials available to every student's understanding and not lower their confidence.

3.2. Chronogram

As it has been stablished before, the aim of this dissertation shows the results when fostering reading in English through some particular activities explained further on. In other words, we wanted to give students the necessary tools to be critic when reading and be able to understand the whole text without necessarily understanding all the words, but getting a well-formed idea by the context and the activities previously prepared. Although they should have acquired certain skills and level of the English language (vocabulary, above all, but also to identify and use grammatical structures) throughout the entire process (targeted more previously to the reading activity), this was not the main aim of the implementation of this dissertation, just a mere tool to facilitate the path to understanding the text.

For this, it was very important to provide students with texts that depict real situations in a real environment in which they were familiarised and in which they could relate. This way we ensured that the students were going to be able to apply all this information in their professional and personal future, as we were supplying them with communicative skills that are fundamental for their basic competences. At the same time, through real texts (not adapted materials to certain levels) comes real language that stems from the culture in which it belongs to, introducing students to new

environments in which the English language is spoken, as it is the case of this dissertation, which offers a wide range of cultural and linguistic registers.

Nonetheless, one different aspect introduced in this implementation is the parallel reading. The short story chosen was originally written in English and translated into Spanish to aid students' comprehension. Since they struggle to understand English structures, it is recommended to introduce it while reading as a support to notice typical structures that are very different from Spanish, to help more insecure students to scaffold with the understanding and to place the vocabulary previously seen in a context. Although it should not be used as a translation method to entirely understand the text, it can be used to boost the student's confidence and fluency.

All of the points mentioned above have been elaborated along with the basic competences that the Decree 112/2007 of the 20th July in the Valencian Community establish. These objectives are the ones students should acquire at the end of their stage in the mandatory Secondary Education System. There are general and specific objectives that were crucial to teach for them to achieve a complete basic or intermediate level to comprehend this reading and succeed in the implementation.

- General objectives:

- To be able to interact in common and simple situations (to explain ideas, understand the main points of a text, tell experiences, etc.), orally and in writing and to understand and be understood in such situations.

- To show students different registers, including literary registers, in an authentic context, to provide them with productive and receptive linguistic abilities based on interaction.

- To foster respect, interest and communication with speakers of the foreign language and its culture, and to develop positive and receptive attitudes towards said society.

- To make students critical with the information they read and select the most relevant points of the texts, through basic strategies of reading comprehension.

- To give them the initiative to read with autonomy texts relevant to their age, interests and level.

- To give them the tools to develop written compositions by themselves based on their knowledge and their critical views.

- To improve the communicative competence through the learning of the foreign language and its cultural transmission, creating an environment where an intercultural awareness can be developed.

- To be a vehicle to the development of social and civic competence, so they students can communicate with different communities and nations.

- Specific Objectives:

- To identify basic language usage of the English language, such as language function and grammar or to be able to describe and compare with information and their own opinion.

- To know and use common phrases, idioms and basic vocabulary.

- To be able to produce basic patterns of the oral language, such as word stress or intonation.

As it can be seen, all the relevant objectives mentioned in the Spanish Secondary Education Decree have been integrated in the development of each session of this implementation to make sure students achieve the basic competences needed in their level. For this implementation were needed three sessions, one hour each.

Session 1	Pre-reading activities. 55 minutes of class divided into contextualisation of the place where the story is set and its title and three

	vocabulary activities to prepare students.
Session 2	Reading and while-reading activities. 55 minutes of class divided into the reading of the short story (with its parallel reading when necessary) y three questions to test their understanding of the main points of the story.
Session 3	Post-reading activities. 55 minutes of class divided into two activities. First, they wrote their own ending to the story and secondly they compared it to the real ending, provided to them after it.

Table 1. Table of sessions

3.3. Materials

The materials used for this implementation were provided by the association Proyecto TALIS. This association seeks to promote educational innovation and research to improve literary and linguistic education aimed towards its development and interculturality. All this is performed through teaching, research and publishing of educational books and materials, as it has been shown in the previous section of Academic Framework

For this particular implementation, the book used is called *Mucho más que ríos de vida y Fuertes de leyenda… Cuentos de la India / Much more than rives of life and legendary forts… Tales from India* (Rodrigo Mateu and Alcantud-Díaz (coord.), 2017). It consists of twelve bilingual short stories (English – Spanish) telling legends about India or just daily aspects of the life in the country. These stories are written and translated by the same authors as part of their Spanish classes at Mumbai University during the academic years 2014 – 2015 and 2015 – 2016.

Considering that one of the main aims of this dissertation was to help 3rd of ESO students to improve their English reading comprehension and, while doing that, to get to know some aspects of India's culture, short stories written by students was the best option, since it is a material that, without being adapted, it fits with the level of English already acquired by those students.

Among the wide selection of tales, the one chosen was titled *The Funeral / El Funeral*, which serves as a rhetorical device to describe the lack of motivation in the life of a woman regarding her job. Due to the made up funeral of her boss in the workplace, she ends up realising that she was the only one restraining her from achieving her goals.

This tale was chosen because of the topic that is dealt with in it. Motivation is a big barrier for teenagers, above all those of 3rd of ESO, so by reading and analysing this tale, we hoped to make them aware of their own possibilities and outdo themselves.

Other materials used for this implementation were the worksheets created to go along with the tale. The objectives behind these worksheets were to aid students to a better understanding of the tale and to make them aware of their own skills and how to boost them just by working on a text before and after reading it.

Although the first session started with a video introducing the students to India, its culture and the city where the story takes place, it was not created specifically for the implementation, so it will not be included in this section. Then, to start with the vocabulary, a series of activities were created to get to know the most difficult words, as in the illustrations shown below.
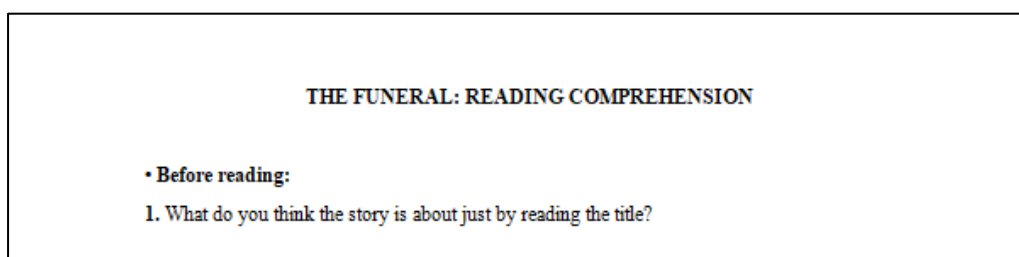
THE FUNERAL: READING COMPREHENSION

• Before reading:
1. What do you think the story is about just by reading the title?

Figure 1. Pre-reading question

In this first activity, the aim was to create a tie between what the students already knew about the setting of the story and what they were about to discover with it. Just by asking about the title students can get to know, or speculate, many things about the story, so it is a nice icebreaker.

Figure 2. Pre-reading activity 1

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

2. Match the descriptions (1 – 15) with the words (a – o) that correspond.

1. An available job.

2. The amount of work to be done by a person or machine.

3. An act of travelling from one place to another.

4. Think deeply about something.

5. Achieve or complete successfully.

6. Having achieved fame, wealth, or social status.

7. Successfully bring about or reach (a desired objective or result) by effort, skill, or courage.

8. A person's death.

9. Block (an opening, path, road, etc.); be or get in the way of.

10. Very strange or unusual.

11. A person with whom one works in a profession or business.

a. Ruminate

b. Successful

c. Pay respects

d. Job openings

e. Obstruct

f. Accomplish

g. Colleagues

h. Work load

i. Demise

j. Journey

k. Peep

l. Sigh

m. Sorrow

n. Bizarre

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12. Make a polite visit to someone.

13. A feeling of deep distress caused by loss, disappointment, or other misfortune suffered by oneself or others.

14. Emit a long, deep audible breath expressing sadness, relief, tiredness, or similar.

15. Look quickly and furtively at something, especially through a narrow opening.

o. Achieve

Figure 3. Pre-reading activity 2

After the warm-up activity, students were handed the activities in Figure 2 and 3 to achieve a deeper knowledge about the vocabulary of the text. The objective was for them to already know or be familiarised with what they were about to read, although they were handed a parallel text.

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THE FUNERAL

by Dhanashri Kadam

The _____ (1) that day was exasperating. The _____ (2) in the Bombay local train at the _____ (3) was exhausting. The _____ (4) for the local buses and the heat in the month of May made me _____ (5).

When I entered my office, I rushed towards the canteen for my daily coffee. I returned to my desk later and analyzed the things-to-do for the day. I searched on the Internet to see if there were any _____ (6). I was dissatisfied with my current job. Everyone was. I _____ (7) on what I had _____ (8) in the past few days. It was NOTHING. I saw the things-to-do list I had written as my New Year's Resolution: «Be a more active employee. I have to work hard to be _____ (9)». But I had taken no efforts to _____ (10) it.

I went for lunch late that day. After finishing the *parathas¹*, I headed back towards my office. A board now hung near the reception area that surprised me:

THIS IS TO INFORM YOU THAT THERE HAS BEEN A SAD _____ (11) OF THE PERSON WHO WAS _____ (12) YOUR SUCCESS IN THIS COMPANY. PLEASE, ATTEND THE FUNERAL SERVICES NEAR THE GYMKHANA.

I was surprised. «The death of the person obstructing my way to success» was _____ (13). I was curious. I headed towards the gymkhana. My _____ (14) had already made their way there. Everyone was sad and, at the same time, they were curious to know who died.

One after the other, we made our way to the _____ (15) to _____ (16). I was surprised to see the expression of the ones before me. I did not see any sadness or _____ (17) in them but something strange. I waited impatiently. Finally, it was my turn. I _____ (18) and _____ (19) inside the coffin.

THE END?

1. a) task b) workload c) obligations
2. a) journey b) trip c) travel
3. a) congestion b) jam c) rush hours
4. a) line b) row c) queue
5. a) sweat b) perspiration c) laugh
6. a) job openings b) offers c) finds
7. a) think b) ruminated c) cry
8. a) accomplished b) execute c) carried out
9. a) sad b) queue c) successful
10. a) realise b) achieve c) gain
11. a) demise b) annihilation c) extinction
12. a) choking b) clogging c) obstructing
13. a) brave b) bizarre c) eccentric
14. a) colleagues b) partner c) classmates
15. a) sarcophagus b) coffin c) box
16. a) pay our respects b) salute c) congratulate
17. a) heartbreak b) depression c) sorrow
18. a) sighed b) breathed c) sobbed
19. a) blinked b) squinted c) peeped

Figure 4. Pre-reading activity 3

Therefore, to really settle their knowledge, students were handed the short story with gaps and they had to fill those gaps as a cloze-type activity. This was made to ensure that students had understood the vocabulary in context, but it was not meant for them to understand the story as a whole just yet.

THE FUNERAL: READING COMPREHENSION

• **After reading:**

2. What is the initial feeling of the narrator?

3. Do you think her/his case is something cultural from India or does it happen worldwide?

4. Can you notice any cultural facts? If so, how different are they from your culture?

Figure 5. While-reading activity

Then, in Figure 5 three activities were made for students while they were reading the short story. As it can be seen, the aim of the three questions was to place students in the

story, to make them part of it so they could understand the feelings of the narrator and comprehend the main point of the text.

Figure 6. Post-reading activity 1

Then, after all the comprehension was carried out, they were asked to write an ending to the story according to their vision of it. This was probably the main activity of the implementation, since in it they could show all the knowledge acquired during the previous activities.

The Funeral: ending
by Dhanashri Kadam

Next to it there was a cardboard with this line: «Only one person can obstruct your success in your life and that is YOU! ».

I went back to my desk. I understood that the fault was in me. Before, never in my life I blamed myself for my faults. At that moment, I understood that failure and success are my responsibility.

I wrote a thank-you note to our director. It was his idea. I am still with them and still climbing the ladder as I had initially dreamt of.

Me quedé sin palabras. Desde dentro, mi propia cara me observaba. Habían puesto un espejo de tamaño real dentro del ataúd. A su lado había una nota que decía: «Sólo una persona puede obstruir el éxito en su vida, y es USTED».

Volví a mi mesa de trabajo. Entendí que la culpa era mía. Antes, nunca en mi vida me había culpado de mis defectos. En aquel momento entendí que el fracaso y el éxito son responsabilidad mía.

Escribí una nota de agradecimiento a nuestro director. Fue idea suya. Hoy sigo trabajando con ellos y ascendiendo como había soñado desde el principio.

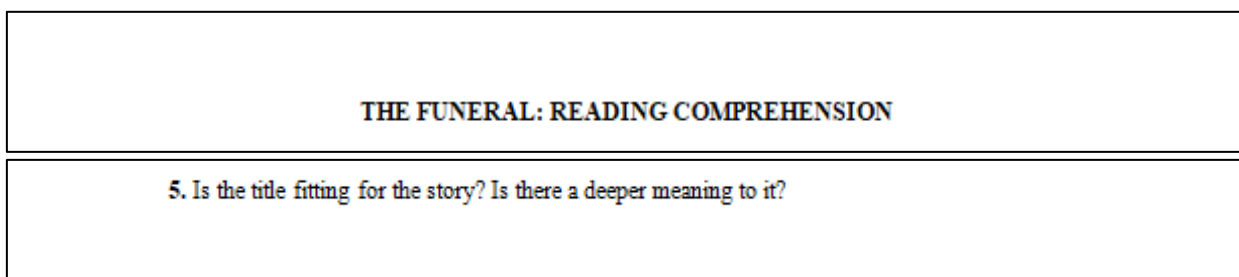**Figure 7. Post-reading activity 2**

<table>
<tr><td>THE FUNERAL: READING COMPREHENSION</td></tr>
<tr><td>5. Is the title fitting for the story? Is there a deeper meaning to it?</td></tr>
</table>

Figure 8. Post-reading activity 3

Finally, to finish with the implementation, students were shown a PowerPoint (Figure 7) with the real ending of the short story, so they could compare it with what they had written. The goal with this was to lead them to the total comprehension of the story and to close the circle asking them for the title again (Figure 8). This activity was meant to put in perspective the initial and final thoughts of the students and to make them realise that to comprehend a story in English there needs to be more than a reading of the text.

3.4. Description of the activity

The implementation activities took place during three sessions of the same week, so the students did not lose track of the plot of the short story. For this, there were a total of three classes of 55 minutes each. Although some activities were a bit rushed, in general there was enough time to complete the entire implementation. Hereafter there is a brief description of the steps followed during each session.

- Session 1: Pre-reading.

The first activity was a brief introduction of India through a YouTube video[2] where it depicts the most important aspects of their culture, history and people. The second activity was a map of the city where the short story happens to place the students to a real place.

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[2] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lK3oqU2WNY0

Then, the vocabulary activities started with a word spider with the title of the short story *The Funeral*, allowing students to give related words that could appear later in the text. The three final activities were about new vocabulary that appeared in the text, so they could get to know it before reading (Appendices A, B, C and D). The first one was for students to match images with words. The second one was a list of descriptions in one column and a list of words in another column, so they could match them according to what the thought. Finally, after all the words were given and corrected in the previous two activities, students were given a cloze-type test of the short story with words missing and some options below, so they could complete the gaps with their new acquired knowledge.

- Session 2: Reading and while-reading.

This session started recalling the work of the previous day and then they started to read the short story in a parallel way as an aid when someone had difficulties, despite the previous exercises in the first session. There was no ending to the story so, in the last session, they could write their own. To finish, in groups, we discussed the main topics of the story answering to some questions. These questions where created to evaluate the global understanding of the story and share their critical view, not to evaluate particular meanings of the plot.

- Session 3: Post-reading.

In the last session, as a group, we reviewed the story again and then the students had 15 to 20 minutes to write in groups a coherent and, at the same time, imaginative ending to the story according to their views on it. When they finished, orally, each group explained their endings and gave their reasons for writing it. Next, a PowerPoint presentation was prepared with the real ending the author had given to the short story and the students read it. Again, following the bilingual method if necessary. Finally, as

a group, we reflected on it and its meaning, focusing again on the title of the story to see if it was fitting and if the global understanding of the story could be summarised in it.

3.5. Evaluation

3.5.1. Informal assessment

The informal assessment, or direct observation, of this implementation was made through recordings. The reason of this media of assessment was due to the nature of the implementation in itself. Since the activities were carried out during three sessions and they involved an active participation of the students through their spoken and written skills and the teacher needed to pay close attention to them, the best option was to record the sessions to not interrupt the rhythm of the activity taking notes.

For this, as I have mentioned before, three session were recorded in the class, which it made a total of two and a half hours of recordings of all the activities, including the reading of the short story.

In general, despite the embarrassment of some students to speak because of being recorded at the beginning, it resulted in the best tool of assessment for this type of activities. As it involved a lot of speaking before writing their answers, there is a wide variety of opinions that do not appear in the written evaluation (the worksheets elaborated), but they do in the recordings.

For this reason, in the next section of Results some examples will be given to demonstrate the how both assessments implement each other.

3.5.2. Reading skills assessment

As part of the students' assessment of their reading skills, some worksheets were created with five questions and four activities that tested their overall understanding,

with the final help of the writing task. As it has been shown in the section of Materials, the main objective was to assess the students' overall comprehension through a deep analysis of the story by means of well-formed activities.

Apart from the informal assessment, evaluating students through activities that test their previous knowledge and there subsequent knowledge was the most fitted assessment for a reading exercise, since allows the teacher to see a progression.

Even more, as it is complemented by the recordings, the results can be further evaluated.

These tables below are an example of the implementation and in the next section of Results each activity will be discussed through the students' answers.

Pre-reading activities: introduction and vocabulary	
Question 1	What do you think the story is about just by reading the title?
Activity 1	 1. 2. 3. 4. a. Coffin b. Sweat c. Queue d. Rush hours

Activity 2	1. An available job.
	2. The amount of work to be done by a person or machine.
	3. An act of travelling from one place to another.
	4. Think deeply about something.
	5. Achieve or complete successfully.
	6. Having achieved fame, wealth, or social status.
	7. Successfully bring about or reach (a desired objective or result) by effort, skill, or courage.
	8. A person's death.
	9. Block (an opening, path, road, etc.); be or get in the way of.
	10. Very strange or unusual.
	11. A person with whom one works in a profession or business.
	12. Make a polite visit to someone.
	13. A feeling of deep distress caused by loss, disappointment, or other misfortune suffered by oneself or others.
	14. Emit a long, deep audible breath expressing sadness, relief, tiredness, or similar.
	15. Look quickly and furtively at something, especially through a narrow opening.
	a. ruminate
	b. successful
	c. pay respects
	d. job openings
	e. obstruct
	f. accomplish
	g. colleagues
	h. work load
	i. demise
	j. journey
	k. peep
	l. sigh
	m. sorrow
	n. bizarre
	o. achieve

Activity 3	1. **a)** task **b)** workload **c)** obligations
	2. **a)** journey **b)** trip **c)** travel
	3. **a)** congestion **b)** jam **c)** rush hours
	4. **a)** line **b)** row **c)** queue
	5. **a)** sweat **b)** perspiration **c)** laugh
	6. **a)** job openings **b)** offers **c)** finds
	7. **a)** think **b)** ruminated **c)** cry
	8. **a)** accomplished **b)** execute **c)** carried out
	9. **a)** sad **b)** queue **c)** successful
	10. **a)** realise **b)** achieve **c)** gain
	11. **a)** demise **b)** annihilation **c)** extinction
	12. **a)** choking **b)** clogging **c)** obstructing
	13. **a)** brave **b)** bizarre **c)** eccentric
	14. **a)** colleagues **b)** partner **c)** classmates
	15. **a)** sarcophagus **b)** coffin **c)** box
	16. **a)** pay our respects **b)** salute **c)** congratulate
	17. **a)** heartbreak **b)** depression **c)** sorrow
	18. **a)** sighed **b)** breathed **c)** sobbed
	19. **a)** blinked **b)** squinted **c)** peeped

Table 2. Pre-reading activities evaluation

Reading and while-reading questions: comprehension	
Question 2	What is the initial feeling of the narrator?
Question 3	Do you think her/his case is something cultural from India or does it happen worldwide?
Question 4	Can you notice any cultural facts? If so, how different are they from your culture?

Table 3. Reading a while-reading activities evaluation

Post reading activities: writing and comprehension	
Activity 4	With all the discussed, write you own ending to this short story.
Question 5	Is the title fitting for the story? Is there a deeper meaning to it?

Table 4. Post-reading activities evaluation

4. Results and discussion

In this Results and discussion section of this Final Master Dissertation, we are going to show the results and analysis of the data collection after the implementation of the activities proposed. Then, we will discuss them according to the main objective of this implementation – fostering reading in English inside the classroom.

To show the results in a clearer way, they are going to be divided into two sections – Informal assessment, where the most relevant parts of recordings taken during the three lessons will be examined, and Reading skills assessment, where the activities from the worksheets elaborated to facilitate the comprehension of the students will also be examined. By doing this, in the following section we will draw our conclusions on whether the aim of the dissertation has been achiever or, otherwise, could be improved.

4.1. Informal assessment

As we mentioned before, this informal assessment through direct observation was made through recordings of each session to try and observe some comments about the activities of the implementation that may have gone unnoticed. However, after listening carefully to two and a half hours of the audios[3], a few conclusions have been drawn regarding not only the aim of the dissertation, but also how students view an English class and the many difficulties that they face.

One of the problems, aside from the English class, faced by the teacher when evaluating the results of the recordings was that the class environment was too loud and unmanageable at some points, being unable to understand anything or to follow with the class. However, as this is part of classroom management that does not deal with only the reading comprehension, there was little to nothing to be done.

The real main problem experienced related to the implementation, as we will see below with some examples extracted from the audio recordings, was the inability of the students to answer the oral questions in English. Even though the teacher addressed the students in English as much as possible, she always received answers in Spanish. Only when she insisted and helped them to form a sentence they made the effort. At the same time, when they were asked questions and could not understand an element of the

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[3] https://soundcloud.com/sandra-martin-502669840/sets/tfm-audio-recordings-sessions-1-2-and-3/s-Yv6RM

sentence, they immediately demanded a complete translation of the sentence to fully grasp the meaning.

Session 1: Pre-reading activities. Examples
Example 1. TEACHER: What do you think the story is about just by reading the title? STUDENT 1: Someone dying because says funeral. TEACHER: Okay, and something else? STUDENT 2: It's a legend or a… ¿mito? No sé. TEACHER: Myth. STUDENT 2: Or a myth and dies for doing something.
Example 2. TEACHER: "I was dissatisfied with my current jo. Everyone was. I _____ on what I…" Is it a) think, b) ruminated or c) cry? STUDENT 1: Cry! STUDENT 2: Think! TEACHER: It is "ruminated" because the sentence is written in past tense and the only verb of the options in past is that.

Table 5. Session 1. Results of the audio recordings

• In Example 1 of Table 5 we can see a good example of the students being unable to continue speaking in English if they did not know some vocabulary words.

• In Example 2 of Table 5 we can appreciate an example of students not performing well when guessing vocabulary by its context (even when it had been reviewed before) because they are not used, or taught, to use the tools that a text provides them to do so, thus they just choose the word that they know although it is not related.

Session 2: Reading and While-reading activities. Example.
Example 1. TEACHER: "Do you think her case is something cultural from India or does it happen worldwide?"

STUDENT 1: Only in India because in India people have different personality.
TEACHER: Is that true? Do people have different personality in India?
STUDENT: No sé.
TEACHER: You have a Pakistani classmate in here. Is he different? Have you noticed something different in him?
STUDENT: No en su personalidad, pero algo en su forma de pensar.
TEACHER: So the culture may be different.

Example 2.

TEACHER: "Do you think her case is something cultural from India or does it happen worldwide?"
STUDENT 1: It happens worldwide because people are very bad.
TEACHER: Do you agree?
STUDENT 2: No.
STUDENT 3: Yes and no. La gente no trabaja de lo que quiere, sino que trabaja de lo que está pagado.
TEACHER: Why?
STUDENT 3: Por el dinero.
TEACHER: And do you think that is fair?
STUDENT 3: Fair?
TEACHER: Good? ¿Justo?
STUDENT 3: No, a ver, tiene que haber trabajo para todos.

Table 6. Session 2. Results of the audio recordings

• In these examples of Table 6, students were asked multiple questions by the teacher. At the beginning they tried to answer in English, however, as they were required to answer more, they immediately switched to Spanish or just said yes/no, although they understood what they were being asked and, probably, knew how to say it in English, but it would take them too much effort.

Session 3: Post-reading activities. Example.

TEACHER: Do you remember the story?
STUDENT: Una persona a la que se le moría el jefe…
TEACHER: Okay, speak up.
STUDENT: Una persona…
TEACHER: In English.
STUDENT: one person, her boss died. But is happy because one *puesto* in the… ¿cómo se dice? In the best place!

TEACHER: Sorry?
STUDENT: One place in the… en lo alto, ¿cómo se dice? Que queda un puesto de trabajo *to* guapo.
TEACHER: Okay, you have a better job position.

Table 7. Session 3. Result of the audio recordings

• In Session 3, Table 7, there were not new characteristics found related to the students difficulties on reading comprehension, but more cases were found regarding students being unable to form sentences because they lacked vocabulary or just because they were speaking in Spanish. However, there was one case of a student that, after the teacher asked him to answer in English, he tried, as best as he could, to form a sentence with some help of his classmates and the teacher.

As to the way of evaluating by audio recordings, it is the perfect tool to grab some details that may have gone unnoticed in the class due to having to share the attention among 25 students. Nonetheless, used as the sole tool to evaluate inside a classroom specifically (in small groups or one-to-one is always a better option) it is not the adequate method due to the loudness of the environment and the discomfort that may cause to some of the shyest students.

In general, the main problem with these students in particular (although it is not a unique case and can be seen in many high schools) is that they are so used to understand word by word in a sentence and not to pay attention to the context that when they read in English, since it requires more effort they just rely on translation. This is not bad when done in small doses inside the class, however, it gets students used to translate every item of a sentence to have a full comprehension is detrimental for their learning and appropriate acquisition of a second language.

4.2. Reading skills assessment

In the evaluation of reading skills, the students' reading skills were tested through a series of worksheets (Appendices B, C, D and E) that dealt from vocabulary activities to a deeper comprehension of the short story by means of some questions and, finally, a writing exercise to see if they had understood the general meaning and could put into practice all the extra vocabulary given.

However, as the students had never been through such a profound reading exercise before, they felt a bit taken aback at the beginning until they understood the purpose of all the activities when it came to the reading of the text.

Since this evaluation was more in-depth and it included many activities and questions, the assessment has been divided into three parts in which the students' answers have been reviewed and discussed to, later in the following section, draw a conclusion on whether the objective of this dissertation has been successful or not.

4.2.1. Reading skills assessment: Pre-reading activities

In this sub-section we are going to analyse the results acquired in the worksheet activities of the pre-reading task (Table 2 of the Evaluation section) according to the objectives of this dissertation. For this, we divided the classroom in 9 groups so they could work in a more cooperative environment. After gathering up all the answers of each group, we are going to show their results in tables compared to the correct answer. After that, we will discuss their answers and examine if there has been an evolution in their learning process or if there is something that could be improved on both parties, students and activities.

Question 1: What do you think the story is about just by reading the title?	
Group 1	"We think that is about a person dying."
Group 2	"A legend that someone die to do something."

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Group 3	"It's about a funeral because a person died. Cemeteries."
Group 4	"I think this story talks about an important funeral."
Group 5	"The myth about a dead."
Group 6	"1) Life in India. 2) About the death of a Indian person."
Group 7	"-"
Group 8	"-"
Group 9	"This is about a funeral"

Table 8. Results of Question 1

As it can be observed, almost all the groups (despite two that did not answer to the question) gave an obvious response dealing with the topic of the story just by reading the title. Although none of these points of view are incorrect, given that it is an open question and they gave their opinion. However, it's worth noting the answers of groups 2, 4, 5 and 6, since they have gone a bit further. The aim of this question was to introduce students to the story and to help them out with the vocabulary; a word-spider was also made in the blackboard, but since they did not know anything about it, the objective was for them to let their imagination run free and, at the same time, use synonyms of "funeral", as they were shown previously.

• Activity 1 (Table 2).

Students' answers		Correct answers
Nº 1	• 4 groups: D • 3 groups: C • 2 groups: B	D
Nº 2	• 5 groups: C • 4 groups: D	C
Nº 3	• 7 groups: B • 1 group: C • 1 group: D	B
Nº 4	• 9 groups: A	A

Table 9. Results of Activity 1

On the first activity of the worksheets given to the students, they had to match some pictures with their correspondent words. This way, we wanted to see if with a visual aid students performed better in understanding the meaning of the words without giving them a translation before the parallel reading.

As it can be seen, in Table 8, there is a great percentage of correct guesses in the four options, proving that, although they may not be familiar with some vocabulary items, when they have an image support and work in groups, they tend to perform better as they feel they have less chances of failing.

• Activity 2 (Table 2).

Students' answers		Correct answers
N° 1	• 9 groups: D	D
N° 2	• 9 groups: H	H
N° 3	• 9 groups: J	J
N° 4	• 1 group: O • 1 group: F • 4 groups: K • 1 group: M • 1 group: I • 1 group: L	A
N° 5	• 3 groups: B • 5 groups: O • 1 group: F	F
N° 6	• 2 groups: F • 5 groups: B • 2 groups: O	B
N° 7	• 2 groups: A • 1 group: K • 2 groups: O • 2 groups: F • 1 group: B • 1 group: I	O
N° 8	• 2 groups: M • 1 group: L • 2 groups: C • 1 group: A • 1 group: N • 1 group: K • 1 group: I	I
N° 9	• 9 groups: E	E
N°10	• 7 groups: N • 1 group: A • 1 group: L	N
N°11	• 9 groups: G	G
N°12	• 5 groups: C • 1 group: I • 2 groups: L • 1 group: M	C
N°13	• 3 groups: L • 3 groups: I • 1 group: A • 1 group: C • 1 group: K	M
N°14	• 1 group: I • 4 groups: M • 2 groups: L • 1 group: A • 1 group: C	L
N°15	• 2 groups: K • 3 groups: A • 3 groups: F • 1 group: I	K

Table 10. Results of Activity 2

Activity 2 was, probably, one of the most difficult of the three pre-reading activities. In here, students were given some definitions and they needed to match them with their words, which resulted in a big problem for them because to comprehend what they were reading was more difficult than relying on an image.

As in can be seen in Table 9, some numbers achieved a total comprehension from students, such as 1, 2 and 3. However, some such as number 4, as it was a very high-level vocabulary item (ruminate), students could not guess the meaning and opted for other incorrect options.

This reinforces the idea that, if students face an unknown word without its context to help them, they most likely will be unable to continue or will choose at random other words that are incorrect. Hence, they will continue failing to a larger extent with the remaining items.

• Activity 3 (Table 2).

Students' answers		Correct answers
Nº 1	• 6 groups: B • 2 groups: A • 1 groups: C	B
Nº 2	• 6 groups: A • 3 groups: C	A
Nº 3	• 6 groups: C • 2 groups: A • 1 groups: B	C
Nº 4	• 6 groups: A • 3 groups: C	A
Nº 5	• 3 groups: A • 4 groups: C • 2 groups: B	A
Nº 6	• 3 groups: B • 6 groups: A	A
Nº 7	• 1 groups: A • 6 groups: B • 2 groups: C	B
Nº 8	• 2 groups: A • 4 groups: C • 3 groups: B	A
Nº 9	• 9 groups: C	C
Nº10	• 3 groups: B • 3 groups: A	B

	• 3 groups: C	
Nº11	• 2 groups: A • 4 groups: C • 3 groups: B	A
Nº12	• 5 groups: C • 2 groups: A • 2 groups: B	C
Nº13	• 3 groups: B • 1 groups: C • 5 groups: A	B
Nº14	• 3 groups: A • 2 groups: C • 4 groups: B	A
Nº15	• 8 groups: B • 1 group: A	B
Nº16	• 8 groups: A • 1 group: C	A
Nº17	• 4 groups: C • 2 groups: A • 3 groups: B	C
Nº18	• 5 groups: A • 4 groups: B	A
Nº19	• 3 groups: C • 2 groups: B • 4 groups: A	C

Table 11. Results of Activity 3

The last pre-reading activity prepared to get students familiarised with the vocabulary of the story was a cloze-type exercise of the short story where they had to fill in the gaps with the given options. As they were vocabulary items already taught in previous exercises, the main objective was to let them choose the options without looking for the answers or definitions and trying to remember the previous activities.

The results turned out to be less homogenous than expected taking into account what has been previously stated. Although in most of the options there is a high number of groups who got the answers right, the general result was not very positive. Students

showed that even though they had already practiced those vocabulary items, they did not internalised the meaning, thus, they were unable to put them into context.

This emphasises what it has been previously said, students do not really pay attention to context and they just rely on translation. Hence, when they face a situation in which they cannot rely on their knowledge of all the words of a text, they just start to invent. Nonetheless, given that in this case students did have an earlier familiarisation of the words, this activity just shows the need to really emphasise the learning of reading techniques in class, so they are able to delve into a text without the restrictions of translation.

4.2.2. Reading skills assessment: While-reading activities

As we did in the formerly, in this section we are going to go through the question dealing with the reading and while-reading tasks (Table 3 of the Evaluation section) exercises and, later, discuss the results found from the point of view of the aims of this dissertation.

The main objective of these questions was to analyse if the students had understood the short story as a whole and not just specific details of it. For this, it was very important to ask questions where the students could give their opinions and points of view, to let them be critics of what they had read and allow them to realise things that they may have missed when reading by their classmates answers, too.

Like this, we make sure they can apply these methods of evaluating their reading skills through their academic years, mainly when they read in English, but also in every other language. It is very important for students to acquire good reading comprehension techniques and, at the same time, to remind teachers that encouraging students to learn and enjoy reading is very important to ask the right questions, those questions that let students think further into a subject.

Question 2: What is the initial feeling of the narrator?	
Group 1	"She was feeling exhausted."
Group 2	"She was tired because she had a lot of work and an exhausting travel."
Group 3	"She was sad and tired."
Group 4	"She's tired because she has a lot of work."
Group 5	"She's tired because she has a lot of work."
Group 6	"She was tired and she want another job. She began to hate his profession."
Group 7	"Exasperating."
Group 8	"Tired."
Group 9	"The initial feeling of the narrator is disappointed with herself and with the job because she doesn't like it, but she didn't make an effort to improve on it."

Table 12. Results of Question 2

As it can be seen, all the answers to this question were quite similar and, in general, all the groups gave an accurate observation. This means that they all understood the story and were able to identify and describe what it was asked.

However, it must also be noted the way in which the groups answered. For instance, on the one hand, groups 6 and 9 gave a full explanation, as well as their opinion, to support their interpretation. On the other hand, groups such as 7 and 8 answers were short to a word, which, although they gave an answer to the questions, they were not fully what it was expected from them, since students were meant to express their point of view.

Question 3: Do you think her/his case is something cultural from India or does it happen worldwide?	
Group 1	"It happens worldwide because almost everybody hates their job."
Group 2	"We think that her/his case is something cultural from India because she doesn't complain of her work."
Group 3	"It's happen worldwide because the people are very bad."
Group 4	"This case doesn't happen worldwide, but is not only a problem from India."
Group 5	"Yes, everybody hates their work."
Group 6	"Worldwide because all hate there bosses."
Group 7	"We think it happen in all the world."

Group 8	"Yes."
Group 9	"I think her case is something it happens worldwide, but also it depends on the business or job that you work."

Table 13. Results of Question 3

In question 3, something very similar to question 2 happened. Students were supposed to be critic and give a full explanation of their point of view regarding the question. Nonetheless, apart from some groups, the students gave short answers and lacked their opinion.

Although some of them did show an interest in speaking and giving an answer orally (as seen in the previous section of Informal assessment), when they were asked to write it down, their enthusiasm disappeared, as if they were unable to express their thoughts in written format. This is a topic that we will focus more on in the next sub-section with the written evaluation.

Question 4: Can you notice any cultural facts? If so, how different are they from your culture?	
Group 1	"The eat parathas, a typical Indian food, and they are happy because someone had died, and they have a successful place."
Group 2	"Yes, like how people react at the end of the story. And parathas."
Group 3	"No."
Group 4	"I didn't see any cultural facts."
Group 5	"The parathas."
Group 6	"The parathas, Bombay."
Group 7	"The parathas."
Group 8	"-"
Group 9	"Yes, the parathas, but there isn't anything else."

Table 14. Results of Question 4

Finally, in the last question of the while-reading assessment, we find that, on the same note as before, students show that they have understood the story, since they all answered the same (except one group that left the question blank), but almost none of them gave justifications for them.

Since the aim of this assessment was to see if students had comprehended the story, we could conclude that they had. However, very few groups showed characteristics of how to express their opinion or how to compose a proper answer, which also was one of the secondary objectives of this implementation, to make sure that students could express themselves to be critical enough.

4.2.3. Reading skills assessment: Post-reading activities

In this last sub-section, students were asked to write an ending to the story with a coherent line, but, at the same time, to be imaginative and show their writing abilities when it came to a free-format. Also, they were given a final question to go further into the discussion of the main topic of the short story, which was motivation and see if they could delve deeper and look for other meanings that, maybe, were not at plain sight.

As it can be seen below, the chosen method to evaluate the writings was a rubric created specifically to match the objectives of this implementation. So students were not given a mark, instead, the results were established on whether they had achieved the aim or not.

• Activity 4 (Table 4).

Evaluation rubric: writing activity			
1. CONTENT	2. COMMUNICATIVE ACHIEVEMENT	3. LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS	4. LANGUAGE ACCURACY
A) Adequacy to genre. Students are meant to write an ending to the story, so they are expected to follow a similar style of narration.	A) The message the students want to give must be clear and easy to understand.	A) Well written grammatical tenses	A) Correct use of the vocabulary given in the story and reviewed during the activities when necessary.
B) Organisation of ideas. Ideas must be organised following a correct order to be understood.	B) Related ideas to the ones given in the original story to show comprehension of the text.	B) Correct use of the grammatical tenses.	B) Correct use of basic vocabulary expected at their language level.

Table 15. Writing evaluation rubric

- Group 1 met the objectives of this activity. They included references to the story and vocabulary previously taught. They also showed a well-written ending which was clear and easy to understand.

- Group 2 met the objectives of this activity. Although their language conventions could improve, the most important parts, which were adequacy to genre, communicative achievement and correct use of the vocabulary given, were all well-used and easy to follow.

- Group 3 did not meet the objectives of this activity. Although they start with the idea of the short story, they quickly start talking about a very different subject, making it impossible to use the correct vocabulary. However, the most important flaw of this writing is that the communicative achievement is not met, since it is very difficult to follow the plot due to language mistakes, such as made up words or expressions.

- Group 4 met the objectives of this activity. They very fluently follow with the plot, including vocabulary seen in previous activities and a very good link between ideas, making it a very easy read.

- Group 5 did not meet the objectives of this activity. They wrote the story in Spanish, making it impossible to meet the rubric's assessment criteria.

- Group 6 met the objectives of this activity. Although they lack vocabulary usage, the story follows the plot and it is easy to read and understand.

- Group 7 did not meet the objectives of this activity. Even though they wrote an ending that fits the story, they wrote it in Spanish, making it impossible to meet the rubric's assessment criteria.

- Group 8 did not meet the objectives of this activity. They wrote the story in Spanish, making it impossible to meet the rubric's assessment criteria.

- Group 9 met the objectives of this activity. They create a very imaginative ending that fits in with the original plot while meeting the rubric's assessment criteria in every aspect, although they should be more careful with their grammar.

After evaluating all nine writings, there is one conclusion to be drawn. This is that although it may not be unusual for a student to have difficulties when writing in English, it surely is a handicap for them to be unable to do so when they are asked not to follow a structured format. They show a lack of confidence when they have to write freely instead of in an essay structure, for instance.

The main reason for this is because they are not used to do it in their English classes. Students are taught to follow some directions, such as introduction, body and conclusion, but are not taught how to write an imaginative writing, which is also subject to some stylistic structures.

One of the main reasons for this is, obviously, the level of English necessary, which it should never be a barrier if the text can be adapted or worked in class previously, as it has been this case.

Question 5: Is the title fitting for the story? Is there a deeper meaning to it?	
Group 1	"Yes, it fits. The deeper meaning is that she stopped thinking about getting another job and she realised that if she was not successful it was her fault."
Group 2	"No, because any person die."
Group 3	"Yes."
Group 4	"Yes, because gives us an important learning. / Yes, is the funeral of the pessimists thinking."
Group 5	"-"
Group 6	"Yes, it is fitting for the story."
Group 7	"-"
Group 8	"Yes, because talk about the people die."

| Group 9 | "Yes, because it isn't a normal funeral, it is like a way to see us, how we are exactly." |

Table 16. Results of Question 5

In this final question of the implementation, students were expected to think about the title of the story like in the beginning, but now the needed to give a more elaborated meaning of it, since they had already read the story and drawn their conclusions.

However, only three out of the nine groups showed that they had understood the story to a deeper level when it came to writing their answers. Then, when this was being discussed in the classroom, they all agreed in those ideas, but only after they were pointed out for them. It can be concluded in that, in some parts, the objective of the activity was accomplished, since they now know how to apply some techniques to better understand a text. Nonetheless, since the majority of the groups were unable to arrive to that final conclusion, it means that teachers need to start working on reading comprehension more in depth as soon as possible.

5. Conclusion

After seeing in the previous section all the results and having discussed them according to the objectives set in the Introduction section, we will now proceed to draw the pertinent conclusions from the implementation carried out the three sessions described.

I would like to start answering one of the question contemplated in the Introduction section – is it useful to students the learning of reading techniques beyond the English class? As we have seen with one of the academic frameworks, Task-Based Language Teaching is targeted towards the utility of the tasks in the real world, to a certain degree depending on the addressee, adult or young learners. This means that, although these tasks were adapted to the level and age of the students, the do want to achieve a level of importance in their academic lives. The acquisition of reading techniques is key for

them to grasp the real meaning of what they are reading, let this be a school book, an academic paper or a work report, without this, students would struggle to comprehend beyond the surface meaning of a text when words, being as complex as they are, may mislead them when they require a specific interpretation. For this, Task-Based Learning Teaching is an applicable approach when dealing with literature materials in the classroom, since not only gives students a piece of real language, but also the support of working in groups, relieving pressure from them.

Parallel reading is a method that has also helped students to feel more comfortable when facing a literary text. It gives them a sense of security when working on the activities. Nonetheless, it has had its downside. Through the evaluation worksheets students have shown signals of relying too much on translation. When they had visual aids they felt more secure, since they knew what they were seeing, however, when the activity depended on their knowledge, they confidence shrank and they were unable to write an answer. Even though when students were given words in context, their ability to find coincidences showed scarce. Surprisingly, when those same situations were given in an oral activity, although the first answer given was in Spanish, with some help and patience, students were able to form valid sentences, showing that their confidence rises when they feel they have peer support.

The same happened when students were asked to deeply search for the meaning of the story. Since they lacked the teaching of bottom-up and top-down processes, they only focused on surface meaning without a personal interpretation, providing summaries of the text. However, when they were asked some specific questions following these processes, they started to realise about a more specific meaning, freeing their imagination and motivating them into the activity. The conclusion extracted from this is that students need to work more deeply on reading skills inside the classroom with

literary pieces adequate for them and for their intellectual development. They need to get used to reading the context and relying on translation only when necessary. But most importantly, teachers need to start making the right questions to help students delve into a story and develop they critical thinking. So, as it began this Final Master Dissertation – is it really important to foster reading and to develop techniques? Yes, it is, and the most important part is that it needs to start in the classroom to really make a change on them.

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7. Appendices

Appendix A. Short Story

EL FUNERAL
de Dhanashri Kadam

Aquel día tenía muchísimo trabajo en la oficina. El viaje en el tren de cercanías de Bombay en horas punta fue agotador. La cola del autobús de línea y el calor del mes de mayo me hicieron sudar.

Cuando entré en la oficina, me apresuré hacia la cantina a por mi café diario. Después, regresé a mi mesa y analicé la lista de tareas para el día. Busqué en Internet para comprobar si había ofertas de trabajo. Estaba descontenta con mi trabajo actual. Todos lo estaban. Pensé en lo que había logrado en los últimos días. NADA. Vi la lista de cosas que había escrito como resoluciones para el año nuevo: «Sé una empleada activa. Tengo que trabajar duro para alcanzar el éxito». Sin embargo, no me había esforzado por conseguirlo.

Fui a almorzar tarde aquel día. Después de terminar las *parathas*[1], volví a la oficina. Había un cartel cerca de recepción que me sorprendió:

> LES INFORMAMOS DE QUE, TRISTEMENTE, HA FALLECIDO LA PERSONA QUE OBSTRUYE SU ÉXITO EN ESTA EMPRESA.
> POR FAVOR, ASISTAN A LOS SERVICIOS FÚNEBRES CERCA DEL CLUB.

Me sorprendió. «La muerte de la persona que obstruye su éxito» sonaba raro. Sentía curiosidad. Me dirigí hacia el club. Mis compañeros ya habían llegado. Todos estaban tristes y, al mismo tiempo, sentían curiosidad por saber quién había muerto.

Uno tras otro nos acercamos al ataúd para presentar nuestras condolencias. Me sorprendí al ver la cara que ponían los compañeros que iban delante de mí. No se les notaba ninguna pena o tristeza pero tenían una expresión rara. Yo esperaba con impaciencia. Finalmente llegó mi turno. Suspiré y miré al interior del ataúd.

¿FIN?

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1 La *paratha* es un pan plano típico que se come en la India. Generalmente, la gente hace *parathas* con trigo y puede agregar diferentes ingredientes, como patatas, tomates o *paneer* (queso indio).

Appendix B. Activity 1

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

1. Match the pictures below (1 – 4) with the words (a – d) that best describe them.

1.

2.

3.

4.

a. Coffin

b. Sweat

c. Queue

d. Rush hours

Appendix C. Activity 2

PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

2. Match the descriptions (1 – 15) with the words (a – o) that correspond.

1. An available job.

2. The amount of work to be done by a person or machine.

3. An act of travelling from one place to another.

4. Think deeply about something.

5. Achieve or complete successfully.

6. Having achieved fame, wealth, or social status.

7. Successfully bring about or reach (a desired objective or result) by effort, skill, or courage.

8. A person's death.

9. Block (an opening, path, road, etc.); be or get in the way of.

10. Very strange or unusual.

11. A person with whom one works in a profession or business.

12. Make a polite visit to someone.

13. A feeling of deep distress caused by loss, disappointment, or other misfortune suffered by oneself or others.

14. Emit a long, deep audible breath expressing sadness, relief, tiredness, or similar.

15. Look quickly and furtively at something, especially through a narrow opening.

a. Ruminate

b. Successful

c. Pay respects

d. Job openings

e. Obstruct

f. Accomplish

g. Colleagues

h. Work load

i. Demise

j. Journey

k. Peep

l. Sigh

m. Sorrow

n. Bizarre

o. Achieve

Appendix D. Cloze-type activity

THE FUNERAL

by Dhanashri Kadam

The _____ (1) that day was exasperating. The _____ (2) in the Bombay local train at the _____ (3) was exhausting. The _____ (4) for the local buses and the heat in the month of May made me _____ (5).

When I entered my office, I rushed towards the canteen for my daily coffee. I returned to my desk later and analyzed the things-to-do for the day. I searched on the Internet to see if there were any _____ (6). I was dissatisfied with my current job. Everyone was. I _____ (7) on what I had _____ (8) in the past few days. It was NOTHING. I saw the things-to-do list I had written as my New Year's Resolution: «Be a more active employee. I have to work hard to be _____ (9)». But I had taken no efforts to _____ (10) it.

I went for lunch late that day. After finishing the *parathas*[1], I headed back towards my office. A board now hung near the reception area that surprised me:

> THIS IS TO INFORM YOU THAT THERE HAS BEEN A SAD _____ (11) OF THE PERSON WHO WAS _____ (12) YOUR SUCCESS IN THIS COMPANY. PLEASE, ATTEND THE FUNERAL SERVICES NEAR THE GYMKHANA.

I was surprised. «The death of the person obstructing my way to success» was _____ (13). I was curious. I headed towards the gymkhana. My _____ (14) had already made their way there. Everyone was sad and, at the same time, they were curious to know who died.

One after the other, we made our way to the _____ (15) to _____ (16). I was surprised to see the expression of the ones before me. I did not see any sadness or _____ (17) in them but something strange. I waited impatiently. Finally, it was my turn. I _____ (18) and _____ (19) inside the coffin.

THE END?

1. **a)** task **b)** workload **c)** obligations
2. **a)** journey **b)** trip **c)** travel
3. **a)** congestion **b)** jam **c)** rush hours
4. **a)** line **b)** row **c)** queue
5. **a)** sweat **b)** perspiration **c)** laugh
6. **a)** job openings **b)** offers **c)** finds
7. **a)** think **b)** ruminated **c)** cry
8. **a)** accomplished **b)** execute **c)** carried out
9. **a)** sad **b)** queue **c)** successful
10. **a)** realise **b)** achieve **c)** gain
11. **a)** demise **b)** annihilation **c)** extinction

12. **a)** choking **b)** clogging **c)** obstructing
13. **a)** brave **b)** bizarre **c)** eccentric
14. **a)** colleagues **b)** partner **c)** classmates
15. **a)** sarcophagus **b)** coffin **c)** box
16. **a)** pay our respects **b)** salute **c)** congratulate
17. **a)** heartbreak **b)** depression **c)** sorrow
18. **a)** sighed **b)** breathed **c)** sobbed

19. **a)** blinked **b)** squinted **c)** peeped

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1 *Paratha* is a typical plain bread eaten in India. Generally, people make *parathas* with wheat and they can add different vegetables like potatoes, tomatoes or *paneer* (Indian cheese).

Appendix E. Reading Comprehension

THE FUNERAL: READING COMPREHENSION

• **Before reading:**

1. What do you think the story is about just by reading the title?

• **After reading:**

2. What is the initial feeling of the narrator?

3. Do you think her/his case is something cultural from India or does it happen worldwide?

4. Can you notice any cultural facts? If so, how different are they from your culture?

5. Is the title fitting for the story? Is there a deeper meaning to it?

6. With all the discussed, write your own ending to this short story.