

Using Literature for Language Learning

Using Literature for Language Learning:

Students' and Teachers' Views

By

Diego Sirico

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To my son, Emanuele

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INTRODUCTION

The limits of my language mean the limits of my world.
—Wittgenstein, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*

Language teachers struggle every day with the need to engage and motivate students and to teach language meaningfully. A way of achieving these two goals could be by teaching language through literature. Scholarly research has demonstrated the advantages of this mutually beneficial and productive interaction, emphasising how using literary texts can offer rich input for language acquisition, be a source of motivation, stimulate learning and develop cultural knowledge and understanding. Although the division between language and literature remains rigid in many contexts (Bloemert et al. 2019, 8), several studies have been developed to promote this integration within the global context of foreign language education (Carter 2015, 352). From a diachronic point of view, up until the 1940s, literature was extensively adopted in schooling by means of the Grammar-Translation approach, which was used to teach modern languages in the same way as ancient Greek and Latin were taught. However, the use of literature in language teaching started to decline with the advent of the Direct method (the 1940s-50s), the Situational method (the 1950s-60s), and the Audio-Lingual method (the 1960s-80s), as pointed out by Aydinoglu (2013, 35). This decline continued through the first years of the rise of the Communicative Approach (Carroli 2002, 114). In these years (the 1980s), the use of literature as a tool for learning a foreign language was seen as “extraneous to language teaching and to everyday communicative needs and as something of an elitist pursuit and was replaced by more functional concerns” (Carter 2015, 316). However, a new paradigm involving the integration of language and culture, with culture including literature, emerged in the late 1980s and developed throughout the 1990s arising from the communicative need to use authentic materials in class. Since then, the possibility of improving language acquisition through literature has been posited by various authors (Collie and Slater 2009; Lazar 2009; Duff and Maley 2007). However, studies that empirically investigate these presumed advantages are extremely rare.

The general absence of empirical classroom-based research was mentioned by Hanauer (2001, 317), who confirmed that arguments for or against the

use of literature in teaching English (ELT) were mostly theoretical, and by Carter (2007, 11), who claimed the necessity to prioritise empirical investigation. Hall (2007, 11) argued that theorists had dealt with literature in the foreign language (FL) classroom as logically and intuitively valuable but had never empirically demonstrated its value. It is also important to point out that most of the empirical studies published so far have been conducted entirely in university settings, as stated by Paran (2008), who complained about the lack of research in secondary school settings.

Moreover, it is significant to underline that researchers have usually studied a single literary genre in their inquiries, usually prose or, less frequently, poetry, while no study has ever compared two or more genres. A genre-based orientation may enable the organisation of a holistic and coherent curriculum entrenched in texts, with the goal of developing literacy (Paesani 2011, 174). Moreover, comparing the linguistic, cultural and motivational dimensions may prove a useful tool to thoroughly investigate perspectives and perceived benefits (Férez et al. 2020, 59).

In addition, as Fogal (2015, 66) has stressed, few studies have carried out research based on a thorough methodology built on a pre-test/post-test design. Other research gaps that we have identified are linked to the lack of studies regarding students' attitudes toward literature in the first language (L1) contexts and the absence of studies that compare teachers' views with students' views about using literature to learn a foreign language.

The present book comprises eight chapters. The first chapter presents a diachronic analysis of the theories that have promoted foreign language teaching through literature. Beginning with Durant's (1995, 8) division among the different teaching strategies employed in teaching literature, we classify the different approaches of the teaching of the FL into three "conceptual phases": "traditional approaches", "functional approaches", and "discourse stylistics approaches".

As for the "traditional approaches", from the 1840s to the 1940s, the study of literature was seen as the primary goal of language teaching and considered more crucial than the acquisition of communication skills in a language. Durant's first phase can be related to the traditional Grammar-Translation approach, a literature-dominated approach.

The "functional phase", spanning from the 1940s to the 1980s, witnessed a considerable paradigm shift, as literature was almost excluded from language courses since it was deemed to possess relatively little functional

application. The approaches inspired by this phase mainly emphasised the semantic dimension of a message or text. Learning a language was considered useful mainly to understand and translate literature written in that language; language was seen as a static and closed system. Emblematic approaches of this kind are the Direct Method, the Situational Approach and Audio-Lingualism.

The “discourse stylistics approaches”, which belong to Durant’s third phase, emerged in the late 1980s and 1990s and were a reaction against the Functionalism of the previous phase. During these years, linguists grew alarmed at the lack of basic knowledge and skills detected among FL students (Bobkina and Dominguez 2014, 249). This issue gave place to an immediate need to introduce students to basic literary texts. The reconsideration of the role of literature in ELT was in line with the new requirements of the communicative approach. This new approach started to consider literary texts as the perfect realisation of its principles, namely developing communicative competence, which meant teaching students to communicate in the foreign language and taking responsibility for real, authentic, and communicative situations. This entailed the need to study a wide range of texts, including selected literary works. This phase comprises the approaches which imply the possibility of integrating language and literature.

In the following chapter, “Literature as a tool for learning a foreign language”, we provide an examination of theorists’ standpoints about literature, listing all the advantages suggested to date and dividing them into three different dimensions: linguistic competence, motivation, and sociocultural competence. This tripartite classification was first used by Duff and Maley (2007, 5) and then adopted by Férez et al. (2020, 58), who applied these dimensions to their empirical study and demonstrated its validity through a principal component analysis.

As previously noted, apart from tapping into the use of literature for EFL, the present study also aims to compare the use of literary texts when it comes to teaching the L1 and the FL. This is an aspect that has received very little critical attention when, in fact, it could help map out both scenarios and highlight the strengths which are worth transferring from one into the other language. To undertake such a comparison, we need to contrast how literature has been used for the FL with how it has been used for learning the mother tongue. This is the central aim of Chapter 3, “Literature as a tool for learning the first language (L1)”, in which we analyse the main didactic methods used in the teaching of the mother

tongue, and we recount the salient features that some theorists have pointed out as benefits of using literature in the teaching of the L1. Subsequently, in order to outline the advantages that critics have suggested about the use of literary texts for learning the L1, we try to be consistent with the division employed for the FL and divide them according to their linguistic, motivational, and sociocultural dimensions.

Chapter 4 is devoted to presenting the lessons plans that we used for obtaining our empirical data. Instead of including them in appendices, we give them this privileged position since designing lesson plans that could put the advantages theoretically proposed into practice is essential in order to infer and explore the views of students and teachers about the object of inquiry.

Chapters 5, 6, and 7 constitute the empirical part of this study. Chapter 5, “First-year students’ views on the use of literature as a tool for learning EFL”, taps into students’ opinions regarding the use of poetry, novels, and drama in ELT classes before and after experiencing lesson plans based on three literary genres. Taking into account both the pre-test and the post-test stages, we try to understand quantitatively and qualitatively which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural, or motivational, students perceive to contribute most to their learning.

Chapter 6, “Teachers’ views on the use of literature as a tool for learning the FL” delves into teachers’ opinions regarding the use of poetry, novels, and drama in ELT classes before and after observing three lesson plans based on three literary genres. We also try to understand, both quantitatively and qualitatively, which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural, or motivational, teachers perceive to contribute most to students’ learning. Moreover, we try to detect any changes in comparison to the views expressed at the pre-test stage and to infer any differences between teachers’ and students’ views regarding the perceived usefulness of poetry, novels, and drama in ELT classes.

The chapter “Senior students’ views on the use of literature as a tool for learning the mother tongue and EFL” (chapter 7) explores how 18/19-year-old college students perceive the use of poetry, novels, and drama in their foreign language classes and explores how these languages are taught. This chapter quantitatively explores results for the three genres under analysis; after that, data are analysed qualitatively for students’ views about English and Italian literature as a tool for language teaching. Finally, a discussion that considers the different dimensions related to our investigation ensues.

The final chapter contains the conclusions of our research, some pedagogical implications, and closing remarks. The intent of this research and its application methodology come from the desire to bring the actors of the educational activity to question the quality of the educational offer, in relation not only to the educational content but, above all, to different horizons of meaning which permeate human experience and which should inspire their educational action.

Method

This study adopts a mixed-method approach with a view to gaining a better understanding of complex phenomena by combining numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data. More specifically, a mixed-method approach in applied linguistics provides, at the same time, the detailed nature, through a qualitative method, and the distribution of a phenomenon, through a quantitative method. As Dörnyei (2007, 45) puts it: “Words can be used to add meaning to numbers and numbers can be used to add precision to words”.

For the quantitative data collection, we used questionnaires based on a 5-point Likert scale. We carried out an in-depth statistical analysis with ordinal categorical data calculating and providing measures of central tendency, reporting the average effect size and any measure that could indicate the strength of our findings. These tools allowed us to endow stability to our research across samples, generalisations and analyses, allowing evaluation of the practical relevance of the research outcomes, as claimed by Mackey and Gass (2005, 283). The statistical analysis of ordinal categorical data is common in applied linguistics and has been carried out by various authors¹.

In order to gather qualitative data, we interviewed teachers and students. We asked participants to write some comments to specific questions related to the lesson plans we designed and to provide observations about their experience using literature in their L1 and FL classes to elicit additional information.

¹ Bloemert et al. 2016; Bloemert et al. 2019; Duncan and Paran 2017; Hanauer 2015; Masbuhin and Liao 2017; Férez et al. 2020; Yang and Sun 2011; Vural 2013; Thenmozhi and Sarika Gupta 2016.

Context

The high school where the present study was conducted is located in the north of Italy. The educational focus of the school includes three different specialisations: science, humanities, and linguistics. Over the last thirty years, the school's local context has been characterised by a process of residential and industrial urbanisation that has generated a homogeneous urban settlement and road network system. The local working areas are mainly related to construction businesses, small and medium-sized industrial plants and commercial activities that offer numerous collaboration opportunities with the high school. With these local companies, contacts are gradually being built by the school to implement internships and vocational courses.

The European Parliament resolutions on initiatives to complement school curricula providing appropriate support measures to include a European dimension in national mainstream courses, with their plurilingual and multicultural backgrounds, entered the Italian school after the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty, which took place on 1st November 1993.² The subsequent Italian law, 53/2003, took due account of the objectives elaborated in 2000 in Lisbon, especially concerning the concept of lifelong learning and the development of competences about local, national and European dimensions.

Italian Legislative Decree n. 59/2004 described the purpose of the various school orders. The primary school is supposed to promote the development of basic skills, including literacy in the English language, with an expected output level corresponding to A1+ of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). As far as Lower secondary school is concerned, the expected output level is A2.

As regards secondary school, on 1st September 2010, the Italian reform of the secondary education cycle became effective, providing new regulations for high schools, professional and technical institutes. Learning outcomes common to all courses of study required the acquisition of level B2.

² Article 126 of the Maastricht Treaty stated that "Community action shall be aimed at: developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States". Retrieved from: https://europa.eu/european-union/sites/europaeu/files/docs/body/treaty_on_european_union_en.pdf.

Concerning high schools, which are the object of our research, the study of a foreign language and its culture must proceed along two fundamental axes: the development of communicative language skills and the development of cultural awareness. Usually, teachers, following textbooks' didactic sequences, tend to teach linguistic topics during the first two years and literature during the remaining three years. The teaching is often limited to the history of literature with the reading of some anthological passages from the works of authors belonging to the literary canon. Exercises are usually linked to reading comprehension, key themes, and stylistic choices like basic figures of speech.

Participants

The participants in the first part of our study were 71 students, aged 14/15 (44% girls and 56% boys), belonging to three different First-Year classes of a *Liceo Scientifico* (scientific high school). Therefore, the sample was made up of students who had not yet begun studying literature in a foreign language. These students attended EFL classes for three hours a week, the same average amount as in other Italian high schools. The socio-economic status of students attending a scientific high school is usually above average, and students attending this kind of school are more likely to attend university and pursue academic careers. In contrast, students attending a Technical High School do not usually tend to continue their course of studies. According to the information provided by these students' teachers, their level of English was A2, as described in the CEFR.

Of the 30 teachers who took part in the study, 93% were women and 7% men. Their teaching experience varied: 16% of them had from one to ten years of teaching experience, 39% from 10 to 20 years, 35% from 20 to 30, and 10% had over 30 years of teaching experience. In order to avoid self-selection bias, all foreign language teachers of the school were required to participate.³

The 52 students who took part in the third and last part of our study attended three different senior classes of the same school in which we had conducted the other two studies. They were aged between 18 and 19 (62% girls, 38% boys). Seniors were chosen because they could provide their feedback at the end of their course of study, having studied literature in a foreign language and in their mother tongue for three years. As for their proficiency, according to the national syllabus, at the end of non-compulsory secondary

³ 56% of teachers taught English, 10% French, 10% German and 24% Spanish.

education, students should reach the B2 level of the CEFR.

Data collection for the first-year students' survey

The present study adopted a mixed-method approach since we wanted to obtain quantitative and qualitative data in order to explore trends regarding students' views on the use of poems, novels and plays for EFL. Quantitative data were obtained through three questionnaires, one per genre, designed on a 5-point Likert scale (see Appendix 1), which students completed before and after our three lesson plans were taught in class, one per each of the three genres under analysis (see Chapter 4 for the teaching units). The three learning units included, and the three questionnaires tested, the benefits of using poems, novels, and drama for EFL, as defined by existing studies in the field (see Chapter 2 for these advantages). For poetry and novels, the questionnaire included 18 benefits—6, 2 and 10 within, respectively, the linguistic, the sociocultural and the motivational dimensions. For drama, the questionnaire included 20 advantages—6, 2 and 12 within, respectively, the linguistic, the sociocultural, and the motivational dimensions.

For our qualitative study, open-ended questions were provided, asking participants' motivations and points of view regarding the use of literature in the language class after each lesson plan. The open-ended questionnaire contained the same questions that students were asked in the quantitative study. We also asked students to:

- compare their initial expectations to their reactions after experiencing the lesson plans;
- state what they had enjoyed most and why;
- state what they had found most challenging and why.

Moreover, 13 interviews were conducted voluntarily to gain more in-depth knowledge of the participants' views.

Data collection for teachers' survey

The 30 foreign language teachers who took part in the survey were administered the same pre-test used for the first-year students (quantitative data). Subsequently, I reviewed with them the lesson plans that I had carried out in class, so they could get a general idea of the work done with students. They were then administered a post-test (quantitative data) to compare their impressions after they had viewed the lessons.

In the pre-tests and the post-tests, we embedded some questions to collect qualitative data as well. These questions were related to:

- teachers' knowledge of their students' literary preferences and habits;
- the frequency with which teachers used/would like to use literary texts in their classes (before and after examining our lesson plans);
- the aspects which teachers perceived as more pleasant/difficult for students about the lesson plans.

Data analysis

Quantitative analysis

To carry out our quantitative analysis, we gathered descriptive statistical data calculating measures of central tendency, such as means and standard deviations. Through these numeric values, we created graphs that helped us visually break down the components into their constituent elements. Graphs were useful to present data in a clearly laid-out way and to complement and support our arguments. Then, we conducted paired *t*-tests matching each question in the pre-test with its equivalent in the post-test. After that, we ran paired *t*-tests comparing clusters of questions divided according to the analysed components linked to the linguistic and sociocultural competences and to motivation. The results were compared to the three genres, along with the three different dimensions under consideration, and, in turn, the latter in relation to the two-time phases of the survey (pre-tests and post-tests). For this investigation, we employed a repeated-measures ANOVA applied to three factors: genre, dimension, and time of the survey. To run our statistical analyses, we used both SPSS and MS Excel.

The result of the internal consistency reliability for the questionnaires, measured with the Cronbach's coefficient, was $\alpha = .9$ for almost all of them, indicating that the internal consistency was very high and that the scale was reliable. For each test, we provided descriptive statistics, ran paired sample *t*-tests, and calculated the effect size (Cohen's *d*).

Qualitative analysis

Students' and teachers' qualitative responses, which were obtained through open-ended questions and interviews, were indexed in order to sort answers so that materials with similar content or properties could be viewed as a whole. This way, we could focus on each topic in turn, so that details and

distinctions that lay within could be scrutinised. Data were gathered into clusters according to the theme that they entailed. Subsequently, we tried to uncover which underpinned attitudes and motivations were the distinguishing factors that led to different perspectives within the sample (White et al. 2014, 380). This way, we tried to identify processes that were based on a complex interplay of perceptions, expectations, resources or barriers. The open-ended questions and the interviews took the form of narrative reports of the elements that we considered meaningful. These reports of the educational practice, which is itself a form of experience, and as such, can be narrated, became part of the empirical basis to be analysed and interpreted.

Method for the comparison between students' and teachers' views

Data analysis

To compare students' and teachers' pre-tests and post-tests, we resorted to a two-sample *t*-test assuming unequal variances. The unequal variance *t*-test, also called the Welch *t*-test, assumes that both data groups are sampled from Gaussian populations but does not assume that they have the same standard deviation. For the unequal variance *t*-test, the null hypothesis is that the two samples' means are the same and that the two samples' variances differ. If the *p* value is significant, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the differences between the means of the two samples are insignificant (van Peer et al. 2012, 235). This way, our primary goal here is to determine how and whether the means related to the two samples differ and quantify how far apart the two means are.

Data collection for the seniors' survey

The senior students who took part in the survey were administered various questionnaires and were given two hours to complete them. Since we wanted to explore their views regarding the use of poems, novels and plays for learning EFL and Italian (students' L1), the instrument through which we gathered our data consisted of questionnaires, written comments, and answers to specific questions embedded in the questionnaires.

The paradigm of the investigation was based on a mixed-method enquiry that involved different combinations of qualitative and quantitative research, both in data collection and analysis levels.

To obtain quantitative data, senior students were administered a 5-point Likert scale test about their views regarding the use of literary texts (poetry, novels, and plays) in their English classes and in their Italian classes. The questionnaires intended to test the advantages of using poems, novels, and drama for EFL and Italian, as defined by existing studies in the field (see Chapter 2 for the advantages related to the learning of the FL and Chapter 3 for the L1).

Concerning English, for poetry and novels, the questionnaire included 18 advantages—6, 2 and 10 within, respectively, the linguistic, sociocultural, and motivational dimensions. For drama, the questionnaire included 20 advantages—6, 2, and 12 within, respectively, the linguistic, sociocultural, and motivational dimensions.

For the Italian questionnaire, we merged some questions because of the limited time available. The merged questions were those that referred to the four linguistic skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing) and those that concerned the cultural dimension of literature. Considering that Italian language lessons do not tend to deal with the Anglo-Saxon world, we only asked students whether Italian literary texts could help them understand their own culture. Therefore, the questionnaire included 14 advantages—3, 1, and 10 within the linguistic, sociocultural, and motivational dimensions, respectively. For drama, the questionnaire included 16 advantages—3, 1, and 12 within the linguistic, sociocultural, and motivational dimensions, respectively.

Our questionnaires asked students to provide comments to justify their numeric scores regarding the use of both Italian and English literary texts in the classroom. Moreover, we asked two more open-ended questions that we included at the end of the questionnaires for the three literary genres and the two languages. These questions aimed to tap into students' willingness to use literature for their EFL and L1 lessons. Specifically, these two questions, for EFL, were: "Have your teachers, in their language courses, ever used English literature with the explicit intention of developing your linguistic skills in English?"; and "Would you have liked it if your teachers had used English literature to improve your linguistic skills in English?". Then, we asked the same questions about students' L1 ("Have your teachers ever used Italian literature with the explicit intention of developing your linguistic skills in Italian?"; and "Would you have liked it if your teachers had used Italian literature to improve your linguistic skills in Italian?"). The students' written answers provided qualitative data in conjunction with the quantitative data provided by their scores.

Ethical requirements

Prior to the collection of data from students, an official authorisation was obtained from the school's headmaster and the teachers' board, which approved the project on 27th February 2018. The questionnaires to be submitted to the students were subjected to the attention of the school's headmaster, who authorised their use. The conductor of the research assured the total anonymity of the students who took part in the project.

Personal information, such as names and audio recordings, was stored separately from research data and archived by giving each participant a serial number that was assigned to his or her research data. Word processor documents and electronic spreadsheets were stored securely on password-protected devices.

Research gaps

Following the examination of the theoretical and empirical studies which have thus far aimed to demonstrate the advantages of using literature in teaching the foreign language and the mother tongue, the following research gaps have emerged:

- A paucity of empirical research on the topic in general.
- A lack of research in Secondary School contexts.
- The absence of empirical studies dealing with plays.
- The absence of empirical studies comparing two or more literary genres.
- A drought of empirical studies applying a sound methodology.
- The absence of studies that compare the views of teachers and students regarding the use of literature to learn a foreign language.
- A lack of research about students' attitudes toward the learning of the L1 through literature.
- A comparison of how literature is used in L1 and FL contexts, specifically regarding students' opinions.

We have extensively illustrated the first two points listed above, i.e., the dearth of empirical research, in general, and in secondary school contexts, in particular. It is disheartening to notice that, notwithstanding the insistence of theorists about the importance of plays in developing oral skills and personal growth (Lazar 2009, 138), empirical studies about plays are essentially non-existent.

We have also to underline that researchers have been solicitous about investigating a single genre in their studies, usually prose or, less frequently, poetry, while no study has ever compared two or more genres. A genre-based orientation could have enabled the organisation of a holistic, coherent curriculum entrenched in texts, with the goal of developing literacy (Paesani 2011, 174). Moreover, comparing different dimensions, such as the linguistic, motivational, and cultural components, could have been a useful tool to thoroughly investigate perspectives and perceived benefits (Férez et al. 2020, 59). Empirical studies to date have usually delved into a single dimension, whether linguistic, motivational or inter/cultural. Scholars have only analysed a single dimension by asking students general questions (Vural 2013; Bloemert et al. 2019). Without comparing different aspects, prior studies were unable to provide sufficient evidence about how students might interact with literary texts to make sense of their distinctive stylistic traits, how literacy and literary thinking might manifest themselves in language production tasks, or how students' motivation, linguistic and sociocultural competences might be effectively developed.

Taking into account the insistence of previous authors on the theoretical benefits of using literature in class to develop linguistic, motivational, and cultural competences, asking students about the benefits they have experienced studying literature in their native language could help us compare the different approaches and provide stimuli for more effective teaching. Moreover, as Fogal (2015, 66) and Férez et al. (2020, 61) have stressed, so far, not many studies have carried out research based on a thorough methodology. Studies which have made use of both a quantitative and a qualitative investigation approach have been scarce. Processing quantitative data, statistically testing the differences in performance, between pre-tests and post-tests, to determine if the differences found were due to chance or to the treatment, could help determine the internal and external validity and representativeness of measurement regarding the studied phenomenon (Mackey and Gass 2005, 107). This way, we can go beyond the hedge of contingency represented by studies that only use a qualitative investigation method.

In order to grasp similarities and differences, closeness and distances useful to delineate and understand the formative realities and to extrapolate and find pedagogical models that could transcend partiality and narrowness of perspective, data collection should not be separated from meanings, qualitative evaluation, and historical development of events. It should also be emphasised that people are present in different research situations as active elements, with expectations, ideas, and emotions related to various

issues. These aspects are difficult to describe and control through procedures that only recur to quantitative or experimental methods. Mixed research methods may increase the strengths of a study, gaining a better understanding of complex phenomena by combining numeric trends from quantitative data and specific details from qualitative data. A mixed-method combining the exactitude of quantitative data with the descriptive power of qualitative data may provide a fuller understanding of the educational approach under study. A thorough methodology should use research tools that can provide in-depth statistical results and detailed qualitative explanations: “Words can be used to add meaning to numbers and numbers can be used to add precision to words” (Dornyei 2007, 45).

Objectives

Taking into account the research gaps identified above, the present study has three main objectives:

1. Analyse the opinions of students attending the first year of high school⁴ (aged 14/15) regarding the use of poetry, novels, and drama for EFL:

1.1. What are students’ views regarding the use of poetry, novels, and drama in ELT classes before experiencing lesson plans based on three literary genres?

1.2. What are students’ views regarding the use of poetry, novels, and drama in ELT classes after experiencing lesson plans based on these three literary genres? Are there any changes compared to the views expressed at the pre-test stage?

1.3. Taking into account both the pre-test and the post-test stages, which genre and which dimension of advantages, whether linguistic, sociocultural, or motivational, do students perceive to contribute most to their learning?

2. Analyse teachers’ views about the use of poetry, novels, and drama as a tool for learning the FL before and after observing lesson plans based on three literary genres:

2.1. What are teachers’ views regarding the use of poetry, novels, and drama in FL classes before observing lesson plans based on these three literary genres?

⁴ Corresponding to the ISCED 2011 Level 3. In Italy the first three years of upper secondary education are compulsory.