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Tackling Homophobic Bullying through Poetry from the Foreign Language Class: A Didactic Proposal

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ABSTRACT
Otherness, of which the homosexual other is a component, is rarely included in syllabi. This paper will explore the negative implications of its omission, and the benefits of its inclusion in academic curricula, with special attention given to its use as a tool for the prevention of homophobic bullying. Luis Cernuda's poem "If a Man Could Only Say" will be used to highlight the didactic potential of poetry towards accommodating homosexual otherness to the TFL class.
Key words: TFL, homophobic bullying, poetry, civic competence, otherness

Haciendo frente al acoso homofóbico a través de la poesía desde la clase de lengua extranjera: una propuesta didáctica

RESUMEN
La otredad, de la cual el otro homosexual es un componente, no se incluye habitualmente como contenido curricular. Aplicando esta idea específicamente a la clase de lengua extranjera, se discutirán tanto las implicaciones de esta omisión como los beneficios de su inclusión en los programas académicos, especialmente como herramienta de prevención del bullying homofóbico. El medio elegido para introducir la otredad en el espectro de la enseñanza de la lengua extranjera será la poesía y, a fin de ilustrar las ventajas de este giro en la práctica, se explotará didácticamente el poema "Si el hombre pudiera decir" de Luis Cernuda.
Palabras clave: enseñanza de la lengua extranjera, bullying homofóbico, poesía, competencia cívica, otredad.

En faisant face au harcèlement homophobe à travers la poésie du la classe de la langue étrangère: une proposition didactique

RÉSUMÉ
L'altérité, de laquelle l'autre homosexuel est un composant, n'est pas inclue habituellement comme contenu curriculaire. En appliquant cette idée spécifiquement aux cours de langue étrangère, on discutera tant les implications de cette omission que les bénéfices de son inclusion dans les programmes académiques, spécialement comme outil de prévention du

bullying homophobe. Le moyen choisi pour introduire l'altérité dans le spectre de l'enseignement de la langue étrangère sera la poésie et, afin d'illustrer les avantages de ce tournant dans la pratique, on exploitera didactiquement le poème: «Si l'homme pouvait dire» de Luis Cernuda.

Mots-clés: enseignement de la langue étrangère, bullying homophobe, poésie, compétence civique, altérité.

SUMARIO 1. TFL: FROM THE LINGUISTIC TO THE INTERCULTURAL HORIZON. 2. TFL AND THE GENERAL COMPETENCES: THE TURN TO OTHERNESS. 3. A BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE AS A TOOL FOR TFL. 4. TACKLING HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING FROM A POEM: "IF A MAN COULD ONLY SAY". A DIDACTIC SEQUENCE. Stage 1. Unreal Conditional Clauses to Express "Forbidden" Love. Stage 2. Putting Oneself in the Place of the Other. Stage 3. Putting "Forbidden" Love in Context. 5. CONCLUSION. 6. BIBLIOGRAPHY.

1. TFL: FROM THE LINGUISTIC TO THE INTERCULTURAL HORIZON

At present, the teaching of foreign languages (TFL) is generally conceived by scholarly research to encompass linguistic and intercultural competences. This study will argue in favor of expanding this horizon to include civic competence, with a special focus on raising awareness of the different forms of otherness that might be present in the classroom. The inclusion of otherness as part of the FL curriculum is justified in that it might help tackle an all too prevalent problem in classrooms: bullying, specifically homophobic bullying. This article proposes to undertake the turn to otherness with the aid of literary texts. Sections 1-3 of this article map out the main approaches to TFL to date, with a special focus on the contribution of literature to the field. Through the design of several tasks, section 4 puts into practice the theoretical framework defined in the previous sections. The literary text chosen to do this is "If a Man Could Only Say", intended as a homage to Luis Cernuda in the 50th anniversary of his death, which took place in 2013.

The first step to take in order to start exploring the above-stated objectives is the formulation of a question: what should the FL class be about? There is no absolute answer here. As Richards and Rogers (2014) highlight, different developments in the fields of Psychology and Linguistics associated with different historical moments have greatly shaped the understanding of second language acquisition processes (SLA), which, in turn, have played an important role in the determination of practices and principles in foreign language teaching. Until the arrival of Chomsky's ground-breaking generative grammar paradigm in the 1960s, FL learning had been considered a matter of habit formation; second language, viewed thus, would emerge organically through the recursive imitation and practice of available structures (Mitchell and Myles, 1998). In contrast to the environmental stance, Chomsky (1959) claimed that SLA was not merely about automatic habit formation but a rule-governed internal behavior which learners would master

through cognitive processes. Hymes' application (1971) of discourse analysis theories and cognitive psychology to the understanding of SLA highlighted that previous stances had failed to see two paramount aspects of this process, namely the social dimension of language use and the sociolinguistic norms of appropriacy that define different contexts.

With the addition of Hymes' ideas to the FL teaching spectrum, the communicative turn was ready to be implemented. Thus, from the 1980s and thereafter, FL learning was no longer considered as the mastering of grammatical competence solely—as had been the case with methods popular up to that date such as the grammar translation method, the direct method or audiolingualism. When such suppositions rendered obsolete, FL scholarship began focusing on communicative competence. In its original formulation (Canale and Swain, 1980), communicative competence comprised four main subcategories: grammatical, sociolinguistic, strategic, and discourse competence. Further additions by Savignon (1983), Bachman (1990), or Alcón (2000) have put forward an understanding of this idea as the combination of discourse competence, psychomotor skills and competencies, and strategic competence.

Despite the many angles and competencies from which SLA and FL teaching can be viewed from, the scholarly word cited above all agree with one aspect: the task of learning a foreign language should be undertaken from the language itself in some of its various projections: as imitation, as cognition or as socialization. Thus it seems that TFL has been traditionally approached from an interior-to-language perspective. Since the turn of the 21st century, however, the need to explore the benefits of a more exterior perspective has been highlighted, with culture proving instrumental in this respect (Byram, 1990).

Although the use of culture as part of TFL is not a development of the last 25 years, during this period it has been brought to the front of this discipline. Culture was already present in the grammar translation method, a method in which the FL was acquired through a detailed analysis of its most reputed literary texts. Approaches to FL teaching put forward from the 1970s and beyond carried a tacit rejection of high culture in favor of more communicative everyday concerns. Although there was room for culture in this approach, it was limited to sporadic flashes of information on the culture of the places where the language is spoken. The formulation of intercultural competence at the turn of the 21st century intended to develop this ancillary role of culture in the field of TFL. This competence was originally defined by Meyer (1991, 137) as "the ability of a person to behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures". More recent elaborations (Byram, 2008; Sercu, 2005) do not see intercultural competence solely as intra and interpersonal skills, but also as a tool of paramount importance to constructively deal with the internalization of markets, cultural globalization, and cultural diversity brought about by massive migration processes.

To summarise, the definition and development of intercultural communicative competence has been an ever increasing interest in the field of recent explorations on FL teaching. After the modeling effect of this competence, both contemporary critical stances to FL teaching and the documents which define linguistic policies (for example, the *Common European Framework for Languages* [CEFR]) widely accept that learning a FL, apart from focusing on linguistic proficiency, should incorporate the intercultural horizon as one of its pillars.

2. TFL AND THE GENERAL COMPETENCES: THE TURN TO OTHERNESS

Apart from the specifically language-acquisition related competences dealt with in the previous section, most FL teachers would agree that their lessons should also engage with the key competences that the European Commission set up as priority contents for school education in its 2012 report "Developing Key Competences at School in Europe: Challenges and Opportunities for Policy". There are eight of them: communication in the mother tongue, communication in foreign languages, mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness and expression. Leaving aside the first three competences which are addressed in specific subjects within the curriculum—language and literature, FL, mathematics, and science and technology respectively—, the remaining five, due to their transversal nature, are to be put into practice in all the subjects. Of course, the FL class should not be an exception in this respect. In fact, since 2001 the *Common European Framework for Languages* has been advocating for a multilayered take on FL, a take that goes beyond linguistic or sociocultural concerns and also takes into account each individual's general competences—closely related to the eight key competences mentioned above—like *savoir-être*, *savoir-faire* or *savoir apprendre* (11-12).

Among the five transversal competences highlighted above, one will prove to be of the utmost importance here, since it will allow for the introduction of otherness as curricular content in the FL class: civic competence, defined as the knowledge students should have of the concepts of democracy, justice, equality, citizenship, and civil rights. FL teachers, just like any other teacher, will claim that, of course, they deal with this competence. It is generally believed to come "in the dozens of small interactions between teacher and student each day, when disciplining a child for cheating or breaking up a fight on the playground. Teachers instill honesty, compassion, respect, societal values that should not offend anyone" (Mclarin, 1995). In light of this quotation, civic competence, therefore, is not something that has gone unnoticed by schools. Everybody there, from teachers to students, is aware that no one should be treated as a lesser person because they are different or "an other" and that there are societal rules that must be adhered to.

However necessary this stance to civic competence is, the manner in which

this idea is looked at seems unusual. It is its accidental presence. Civic competence seems to hover above schools as part of the hidden curriculum, yet it is not taught; it is not part of the academic syllabus. Hereafter we will argue in favor of including this competence as content within curricula, especially within the FL one. The reason for this is an important one: the implementation of civic competence within the syllabus to help tackle one of the worst enemies of education, which is anxiety, even fear, in the classroom. It is our contention that fear is not something that can be faced only from teachers' good will in the yard and by sporadic reprimands whenever a problem arises. It is something that must be carefully planned, to the extent that it should be taught.

Among all the forms of fear students may experience, peer victimization stands out as a very common and complex one with rates increasing exponentially all over the world (*Education Sector Responses to Homophobic Bullying,* 2012, 17-19). There are three main lines of action attempting to curtail such alarming figures. The first one explores the reasons whereby somebody might become a bully—in this respect societal, class atmosphere, and personality features factors are among the most recurring reasons (Farrington and Baldry, 2010). The second line of action against bullying deals with how to prevent it—full attention will be given to this line in section 4. The definition of stereotypical subjects who might be the victims of bullying shapes a third line of critical interest. Here the idea of "otherness" reveals itself as central. As Mishna (2003) or Rivers (2010) point out, the perception of people as different by the majority stands out as the key factor in bullying, it does not matter if this otherness is due to ethnicity, sexual orientation or special needs.

Through the above discussion, we hope we have been able to emphasize how important it is to look at otherness—one of the many faces into which the civic competence might project—as an indispensable content in education curricula. What comes under threat if this objective is not met is, nothing less, than an important part of students' well-being; or, in other words, the bullying, the fear, they might experience. The FL class should not be unconnected to this trend. If, indeed, this same purpose could be undertaken in the other courses, there is still an inherent advantage in the foreign language course that makes it more suitable to this end: the "foreign" in it. "Foreign" ("other") involves transgression and disorder. It incarnates our fears in that otherness always poses a threat to the essentialist status quos around which human beings organize their existences. If it is true that FL learning has been concerned with the teaching of otherness—especially since the inclusion within its purview of intercultural competence—, it is not less true either that the "other" taught has proved to be the big other, the national other with capital letters—English, German, Chinese, etc. Such clear focus on the conceptualization of the big other, seems to have disregarded other forms of otherness, much smaller in scale, but whose omission, no doubt, might bring devastating effects to classrooms.

After highlighting the consequences of not taking the turn to otherness in

curricula, our take on what FL should be about is ready to be defined. It reveals itself as the intertwining of three main drives which, by no means, are to be considered as antagonistic or detrimental to each other: linguistic competence, intercultural competence, and otherness. Since, however important, this latter horizon is not part of FL curricula, the next logical step to take seems to find a way to introduce it there. Literature, as discussed in the next section, will turn out to be extremely useful in this respect.

3. A BRIEF HISTORICAL REVIEW OF LITERATURE AS A TOOL FOR TFL

In light of how literature has been included and excluded from FL syllabi, it stands out that the relationship between these two disciplines has not been a smooth one. Traditionally at the core of a teaching style based on translating the classics, literature lost its privileged position in the 1980s with the emergence of the communicative approach, "as more functional models of learning, with the transactional requirements of communication to the fore, displaced it. Literature was seen as extraneous to everyday communicative needs and as something of an elitist pursuit" (Carter, 2007, 6).

Thanks to the efforts of many scholars such as Lazar (1993) or Maley and Duff (1989), who argued that using literature in TFL is much more than translating canonical literature or difficult language and, indeed can be exploited in communicative ways, from the 1990s thereafter there has been a growing acceptance that TFL can perfectly be undertaken with the aid of literature without disregarding either linguistic or intercultural competences. With regard to the former competence, literature, obviously, is discourse and, as such, vocabulary, grammar, syntax and pragmatics can be studied from it (Lazar, 1993). Besides, literary texts offer genuine samples of a very wide range of styles, registers, and text-types at many levels of difficulty (Maley and Duff ,1989). As for intercultural competence, as Lazar (1993) asserts, literature promotes contact with the social, political and historical events which form the background to the works used. No doubt a very valuable source of sociocultural knowledge, literary texts should, however, be carefully checked for any bias on the part of the author to whatever is being told.

So far in this discussion the benefits of literature as a tool for TFL are aligned with those traditionally highlighted in this research field—linguistic and intercultural competences. Does literature, then, have any novelty to offer here or is it just another means to teach the same? Motivation reveals itself as a key idea in this respect. It mostly stems from the non-trivial nature of literary texts, non-trivial, as Duff and Maley highlight, in that "they deal with matters which concerned the writer enough to make him or her write about them. In doing this, they are unlike many other forms of language teaching inputs, which frequently trivialize experience in the service of pedagogy" (Duff and Maley, 1990, 6). The condition of

literature as authentic material and its ambiguity—the fact that students' interpretations are not right or wrong since poems invite different but equally valid interpretations—have also proved to have a positive impact on students' motivation (Collie and Slater, 1987).

Its inherent vocation towards civic competence reveals itself as another source of innovation that literature might contribute to the field of TFL. Unlike most FL textbooks, literature is likely to deal with values and, in doing so, brings civic competence into the class. In short, literature aspires to make people better human beings, since it educates the "whole person"—not only his linguistic or intellectual dimensions, but also his emotions (Lazar, 1993, 19). Within this civic horizon, the implementation of positive attitudes towards otherness has been granted a central role by specialized criticism. Since literature deals with universal concepts such as love, hatred, death, or nature, it reveals itself as a perfect platform to explore the reasons why these universal values are lived differently by different people, especially within the same class (Khatib, Rezaei, and Derakhshan, 2011, 202). Thus, literature can be used in TFL to reflect critically on the tensions between sameness and difference by presenting what is seemingly different as a universal drive.

With the inclusion of literature into the FL curriculum proposed above, we have arrived at an understanding of FL teaching which comprises not only linguistic and intercultural competences but also civic competence, specifically, its projection towards how it frames otherness. This is an aspect that, unfortunately, is not a habitual part of FL curricula, despite the fact that, failing to assume otherness as a curricular component, as explained above, is likely to jeopardize the welfare of those students perceived as different by the majority. In other words, ridding the classrooms of fear and bullying, will depend, to a great extent, on otherness being respected, a task that might be undertaken through the incorporation of literary materials into the FL class.

To claim that the turn to otherness—mediated through literature—in TFL proposed in this article might have sound pedagogical implications, a move beyond mere theory must be implemented. This involves two main lines of action: on the one hand, the development of materials which bring the theory into teaching and classrooms. On the other hand, it is necessary to undertake studies which measure empirically the prospective benefits of this take on TFL. Here we deal with the former line of action. So the next section will be devoted to designing some literature-based activities aimed at introducing the homosexual other into the FL syllabus.

4. TACKLING HOMOPHOBIC BULLYING FROM A POEM: "IF A MAN COULD ONLY SAY". A DIDACTIC SEQUENCE.

Through the use of Luis Cernuda's "If a Man Could Only Say"[1] (1971, 27), this section aims to put into practice the above-discussed theoretical framework for the use of literature as a tool for TFL—one inclusive of linguistic competence, intercultural competence, and otherness, in this case in its homosexual projection.

"If a Man Could Only Say"	"Si el hombre pudiera decir" (1931, 17)
If a man could only say what he loves, If a man could raise his love to the heavens Like a cloud in the light; If like walls that are demolished To greet the truth raised behind them He could demolish his body, leaving only the truth of his love, The truth of himself, Which is not called glory, wealth or ambition, But love or desire, I would be he who so dreamed; He who with his tongue, his eyes and his hands Proclaimed before men the unknown truth, The truth of his true love.	Si el hombre pudiera decir lo que ama, si el hombre pudiera levantar su amor por el cielo como una nube en la luz; si como muros que se derrumban, para saludar la verdad erguida en medio, pudiera derrumbar su cuerpo, dejando sólo la verdad de su amor, la verdad de sí mismo, que no se llama gloria, fortuna o ambición, sino amor o deseo, yo sería aquel que imaginaba; aquel que con su lengua, sus ojos y sus manos proclama ante los hombres la verdad ignorada, la verdad de su amor verdadero.
I know no freedom but the freedom of being confined in someone Whose name I cannot hear without a shiver; Someone who makes me forget this wretched existence, Who makes for me the day and night whatever he wills,	Libertad no conozco sino la libertad de estar preso en alguien cuyo nombre no puedo oír sin escalofrío; alguien por quien me olvido de esta existencia mezquina por quien el día y la noche son para mí lo que quiera,

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[1] This poem was originally written in Spanish, which makes it perfect to be used in the Spanish a a foreign language class. This, however, does not keep it from being used, in translation, in other FL classes, especially when it is necessary to implement positive attitudes towards the homosexual other.

And my body and spirit float in his body and spirit Like driftwood that the sea lets sink or swim Freely with the freedom of love, The only freedom that gives me joy, The only freedom for which I die. You justify my existence: If I do not know you I have not lived; If I die without knowing you, I do not die, for I have not lived.	y mi cuerpo y espíritu flotan en su cuerpo y espíritu como leños perdidos que el mar anega o levanta libremente, con la libertad del amor, la única libertad que me exalta, la única libertad por que muero. Tú justificas mi existencia: si no te conozco, no he vivido; si muero sin conocerte, no muero, porque no he vivido.

In light of the striking results rendered by different studies in this field, homophobic bullying seems to have reached the status of a global epidemic which affects different regions of the world and different GDP indexes alike. In USA schools, for instance, over 84% of young gay, lesbian, or bisexual students have been insulted or threatened, 40% physically assaulted, and 18% have been prey to sexual assault or assault involving a lethal weapon (*National School Climate Survey*, 2009). Research in Argentina, Bangladesh, Canada, India, Ireland, New Zealand, Scandinavia, and Spain—just to mention a few among the myriad of studies available—have revealed similar results (*Education Sector Responses to Homophobic Bullying*, 2012). Homophobic bullying has a devastating impact on students both academically—school absenteeism, early school dropout, poor academic achievement—and psychologically—depression, anxiety, loss of self-esteem, social marginalisation, unjustified sense of guilt, sleep disorders and, even, suicide— (Hillier, Turner, and Mitchell, 2005; Taylor et al., 2011).

Underlain by proactive, reactive or peer support schemes strategies, specialized criticism tends to highlight six main techniques through which homophobic bullying may be tackled: the traditional disciplinary approach, strengthening the victim, mediation, restorative practice, the support group method, and the method of shared concern (Rigby, 2010). The analysis of Cernuda's poem that we will undertake follows the proactive path and puts into practice the latter technique. The idea is to make potential bullies empathize with the victim by highlighting common points between them, in this case the experience of love. In this sense, the fact that literature, as highlighted by Khatib, Rezaei, and Derakhshan (2011), aims to erase the difference between the universal and the individual proves to be instrumental. The choice of a poem by Cernuda is also intended as a homage to the poet in the 50th anniversary of his death, which took place in 2013.

The tasks were designed for B2 students since the linguistic aspects which the poem eviscerates coincide with some of those stated for that level in the CEFR. Lazar's selection criteria (1993, 48-56)—type of course, factors connected to the text itself, and learner's cultural, linguistic and literary backgrounds were considered when choosing the text. The fact that the poem was originally written in Spanish makes it an ideal pedagogical tool for a Spanish FL class at a non-compulsory secondary education level.

Stage 1. Unreal Conditional Clauses to Express "Forbidden" Love

Before reading the poem, students will be informed that the main objective of the first two parts of the lesson is to conceptualize the form of love which the text illustrates. They will be told that, in order to understand the specificities of this love, the key lies in the most salient grammatical feature of the poem—the use of unreal conditional clauses—, a conclusion at which students are expected to arrive at on their own given the prominence of this feature in the text. Students will be later asked to underline all the instances of unreal conditional clauses present in the text and, in pairs, they will be encouraged to actualize their previous knowledge about this aspect—usage, tenses involved—identifying any problems which they might encounter so that they can be addressed by the teacher. After this instrumental grammatical concept has been reviewed, students will be asked to attempt the definition of the form of love which the poem portrays and how the "I voice" feels. Prior to this, students will have completed some tasks aimed at activating lexis on personality adjectives.

Stage 2. Putting Oneself in the Place of the Other

Students will be asked to work with the first stanza. Individually they will have to change the subject of the poem from "a man" to "I" and pay attention to any agreement changes that may occur. They will also have to transform the verbs involved in the unreal conditional sentences—imperfect subjective and conditional—from positive to negative. The objective is to take them from the general to the individual so that they can make the poem "theirs". In order to further emphasize this process, in the following activity students will be asked to define what/who they most love. They will have to follow the structure of the second stanza—where Cernuda addresses this topic—and apply it to their own experiences. The idea is that, by keeping the first word and a linker of each line, they come up with a text in which they write about what/who they most love.

Apart from appropriating the agency of the poem's subject, this activity also pursues a linguistic objective: to make students review linkers as well as highlight their role as central elements in discourse development. Once students have reflected on what the loved one means to them, they have to talk in pairs on how they would feel if they were not allowed to love who/what they most love. Apart from eliciting further practice on unreal conditionals, this task makes the students put themselves in the place of the other by highlighting that we all respond to the same universal impulse when it comes to speaking about love. This move towards

empathy is a preliminary phase that prepares for the turn to homosexual otherness that will fully take place in the following stage.

Stage 3. Putting "Forbidden" Love in Context

In groups students will be invited to make a hypothesis through the use of modal verbs about the reasons why the poet does not feel free to love. Then they will be asked to transform this hypothesis into a digital comic strip by using the Internet tool *MakeBeliefsComix* and present it to the rest of the class when the best and most plausible hypothesis will be discussed. By listening to a brief biography of Cernuda (http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kZgOOWx5snQ), they will find the true reason why the poet could not feel free to love—his condition as a homosexual man—and check if their hypothesis were correct.

If in the previous stages the content of otherness was just latent, here it is revealed as central, especially in the form of the homosexual other. Students will be asked to work in pairs or small groups about the idea of people not being able to express publicly who they love because they are homosexual. They will also be asked to relate whether they have seen episodes of homophobic bullying during their education, how they were tackled, why they happened, and what consequences they had on the abused. Following this, students will be asked to reinvent the lives of these people as if they had not been abused, a task that involves the use of impossible conditional clauses.

The last section of this teaching sequence is devoted to dealing with intercultural competence. After being given a brief background on the Generation of 1927 by the teacher—Cernuda belonged to this generation—, students will be encouraged to undertake a WebQuest aimed at finding other people of this generation who were homosexual and the effect that their sexual orientation had on their lives. Later, the class will be divided into groups of four for the purpose of conducting another WebQuest in which students will have to gather information about the situation of gay people in different parts of the world to check if it has changed in comparison to what happened in 1927 Spain. After the findings from each WebQuest have been presented, each group will design an anti-bullying campaign aimed at fighting whichever homophobic attitudes they found.

Although the didactic application of Cernuda's "If a Man Could Only Say" was mainly aimed at integrating homosexual otherness within the FL curriculum as a way of preventing bullying, it is also clear that it did not disregard either the linguistic or the intercultural horizons. Always in keeping with a communicative take on TFL, the former paradigm was dealt with thoroughly across the three stages of the didactic sequence around the development and/or consolidation of typical contents of the linguistic competence set for a B2 level—personality adjectives, modals, conditionals... This fact proves Lazar's hypothesis (1993), that, if chosen carefully, literary texts can foster, just like any other text, language awareness. The cultural and intercultural dimensions of the poem were not lost sight of either, given that extensive attention was paid to one of the most important movements in Spain's

recent literary history and to the attitudes to homosexuality in different cultures around the world. Another advantage of using "If a Man Could Only Say" is that it foments motivation in the FL learning process. This might show along two different lines. On the other hand, students may be motivated by the non-triviality of the topic it proposes: the right to love—regardless of any sexual orientation—is a topic with which students might engage either because it is relevant to them or because they feel what they are learning in the FL class has a positive social impact. On the other hand, the fact that Cernuda's poem is full of interpretative gaps requires students to engage with it critically and creatively, an aspect Kramsch (2000) has highlighted as a key factor in boosting students' motivation and that she associates with the use of literature in the FL class. To summarise, through "If a Man Could Only Say" the teaching of otherness enters the FL curriculum in its own right, does it in a motivating manner, and fosters—never hinders—the development of linguistic and intercultural competences. The poem, then, promotes a holistic approach to TFL in which not only the intellectual, but also the civic development of students— especially the development of empathy through otherness—are encouraged.

5. CONCLUSION

As is widely accepted by scholarly research in the field, bullying is an unfortunate consequence of failing to productively address the different forms of otherness that are inherent in FL classes. In light of its devastating consequences, schools spare no effort to develop strategies—whether proactive, reactive or based on peer support schemes— to stop this scourge. Along the proactive path, this article put forward the idea that a possible vehicle to fight homophobic bullying might be the inclusion of otherness—in this case in its homosexual guise—as curricular content in the FL class.

Although the teaching of otherness might be accommodated into any of the subjects that make up curricula, the FL syllabus seemed to be especially fitting for this due to its focus on the experience of a foreign ("another") culture and language. Our contention, however, was that this projection, inherently at work in the FL syllabus, should not be limited to the recognition of the foreign other whose language is being learnt, but also expanded to the understanding of all those realities that may be affected by prejudice in the classroom simply because they are perceived as different. In doing so, FL teaching would be given a civic function, an aspect that, according to official curricula, should be a priority for all the subjects that are part of the different educational stages; but one that is, unfortunately, barely dealt with in the FL class. The introduction of literature-based activities in the FL syllabus was the vehicle we established to deal with the homosexual other and homophobic bullying. As Maley and Duff (1990) claim, literary texts, unlike other didactic materials normally used in class, tend to be of a non-trivial nature and, therefore, prove to be extremely suitable to introduce the ethical dimension

underlying the recognition of otherness which this study advocates for.

Some might argue that this turn to otherness within the FL curriculum could be applied in detriment to the contents that normally rule over the understanding of what FL should be about: the mastery of linguistic and intercultural competences. The didactic sequence that we proposed showed that this would not be the case: not only did the application of "If a Man Could Only Say" prove to be a suitable tool to deal with linguistic and sociocultural contents typical of a B2 level, but it also introduced within the spectrum of TFL an aspect that, unfortunately, is not normally part of the curriculum: civic competence, in this case through the development of empathy relationships towards the homosexual other.

Apart from providing some ideas to fight bullying, the inclusion of homosexual otherness within the scope of FL teaching which this study explored also relates to a wider debate encouraged mainly by critical pedagogy (Freire 1970; Giroux 2012). It addresses the question of what education should ultimately be about: is it to limit to the transmission of instrumental knowledge? To what extent should the civic competence, and the social change it brings, be a concern of the different subjects which form curricula? What are teachers educating for? As for TFL, the answer here seems to be that this discipline has traditionally defined its contents from a rather instrumental view. Following a more holistic approach, this article has put forward an understanding of FL learning, in this case undertaken through poetry, that manifests itself not only as the acquisition of linguistic and intercultural competences, but also as a weapon for social action, to nurture healthy relationships towards the other, shaping, in doing so, better citizens. But there is a further advantage in the turn to otherness that this study proposes: it is called happiness. As many studies in psychology have demonstrated (Sober and Wilson 1998; Liang, Krause, and Bennett 2001), there is no better way to achieve happiness than putting oneself to recognize the other.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

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