

Didactic sequence: Tales and fairy tales

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1. Introduction

To design this teaching proposal, the following has been taken into account:

1. Decree 127/2012, *on es regula el plurilingüisme en l'ensenyança no universitària a la Comunitat Valenciana*.

2. The School Educational Project and the School Curriculum Project for ESO. Based on these, the following worth is pointed out:

This teaching proposal has been designed for a group of 2n course of Spanish secondary education (2nd of ESO). This is a guided proposal that will eventually enable the students to write a fairy tale step by step. We propose to work with a generic model, like in the case of a fairy tale, to teach students how to produce individually a short fairy tale. We offer a combination of exercises from both, macrotextual and microtextual points of view in order to show our students how to use the main linguistic devices that characterise the texts of this genre.

Although a fairy tale is not one of the most common oral and written genres that our students are going to use from a communicative point of view of teaching languages, it is thought to be important due to some different reasons. This genre has influenced a great amount of other cultural productions, specially cinematographic ones. We want our students to be familiarised with fairy tales' vocabulary and structures in order to foster their autonomy to watch these movies and to read this literature in English. This is a way to work on the literary competence. It will pave the way to improve their literary competence.

2. Contextualisation: the High-school and the class group

We have chosen a group of 2nd ESO D of the IES Jaume I from Borriana, in the province of Castelló. Borriana has two public High-schools and one Private School that receives public funds: Salesianos. This city has a population of 35,000 citizens and is the main city of the region of La Plana Baixa. IES Jaume I is a medium-sized public centre, with 625 students and 73 teachers. It offers obligatory secondary education, baccalaureate and professional training (*cicles formatius*) in *artista faller*, international trade and computing.

The building premises are located in a peripheral zone, besides the historically most depressed city's neighbourhood, La Bosca. Students from Alqueries also come to IES Jaume I when they finish Compulsory Primary Education. Concerning the student's nationalities, 85% are Spanish from more than one generation and the other 15% are immigrants that come from other territories with different cultural backgrounds. From this 15% of incomers, 30% are from Romania, 40% are from north-africans countries, 20% are south-americans and the other 10% are mostly gypsy itinerant families from Portugal and Bulgaria, among others.

The social situation of students is very heterogeneous. There are not high class students, but there is a mixture of middle class and low class students. A big amount of middle class families in Borriana educate their children in Private School that receives public funds, such as Salesianos, Villa Fátima and La Consolación. On the other hand, almost all the high class families in Borriana opt for either private English centres or religious schools all around the province.

2nd ESO D is a group with 21 students. Twelve of them has have manage themselves properly in English for their age. They are good students with good marks, from 6 to 10. There are other five students that have a slightly lower level of English for their course. However, they can follow more or less the English lessons if they work with a more advanced partner, forming mixed peers which

combine students with different degrees of management of the English language. Finally, there are four students that are unable to follow the planned teaching proposal. One of them, Marina, suffers from a retardation due to a physical disease. The other three students with severe problems to follow the normal development of the English class are repeaters without any interest in following the normal dynamics of the class.

Marina has a file with her own handouts. She works on these when we do activities that she is unable to follow. The other three students are sometimes quite annoying for the class, but we will try to integrate them in some peers or trios to work with their classmates to the extent possible.

3. Justification

3.1. Anchoring in the curriculum

3.1.1. Competences¹

Literary competence: the Organic Law 2/2006, from March the 3rd, states that reading is the activity that underlies all competences.² Every good reader must enjoy the reading of literature and must have his or her own taste to become critically interested on the broad textual universe of literature.

Communicative competence: the five skills included in the CEFR (*Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*) are always at the service of someone's capability of communicate the messages that each person needs in each moment. Likewise, relating past events could be a possible real need of communication, so it is pragmatically relevant to train our students on it.

Digital competence: due to the important presence of the new information and communication technologies in our students' everyday life, it is essential to teach them how to benefit the most on the use of Internet to get the correct information without getting lost on it and without representing a hazard for them.

Linguistic, artistic and cultural competence: because students must produce a written text (a tale) and, then, they'll have to read it out aloud to their classmates.

Methodological competence in the sense of information's treatment, digital competence and learn to learn.

Social, interactional and personal initiative's competences: because they are going to work in peers and they also have to interact with the rest of their classmates.

3.1.2. Objectives³

A. General objectives (according to the ones stated in the LOGSE)

“Develop basic skills in order to use various sources of information so as to acquire new knowledge with a critical eye”. Learning is a long life task, so learning to learn is necessary when we are

1 We have checked the basic competences for ESO from: <http://www.xtec.cat/web/curriculum/eso/curriculum> [12-1-2015]

2 See Article 7: “4. La lectura constituye un factor primordial para el desarrollo de las competencias básicas. Los centros deberán garantizar en la práctica docente de todas las materias un tiempo dedicado a la misma en todos los cursos de la etapa”.

3 The objectives have been extracted from González 2005: 84-86.

youngsters.

“Reinforce the concept of team-work and value others' points of view, experiences and ways of thinking”. This has a connection with the Vygotski's Zone of Proximal Development.

“Understand and be able to express complex texts and messages correctly, both orally and in writing, in Spanish and in the co-official language of the appropriate Autonomous Region and to start learning, reading and studying literature” (see James Cummins' concept of *additive bilingualism*).

“Develop communicative competence in order to understand and express oneself appropriately in one or more foreign languages with the aim of facilitating access to other cultures”.

“Acquire basic technological skills specifically in information and communication technologies with the aim of using these in the learning process”.

“Be able to appreciate, enjoy and respect artistic creations. Identify and critically analyse both the implicit and explicit messages contained in the manifestations of art”.

B. Specific objectives for the teaching of English

“Acquire the ability to communicate both orally and in writing efficiently in everyday communication situations through specific tasks”. Although writing or orally telling a tale is not one of the most common real communicative situations, the ability of narrate past events is necessary in many other communicative situations like in a job interview, when we are meeting new friends and we explain each other some of our most important experiences or when reporting to the police an accurate past event.

“Develop communicative skills, both receptive and productive, with the aim of performing information exchanges both in and outside the classroom”. Although writing is the main skill worked, in this didactic proposal there is the combination of the work with all the five linguistic skills according to the CEFR: reading, writing, listening, speaking and the communicative one, which is transversal.

“Being able to read and understand various kinds of texts autonomously, with the aim of accessing various sources of information and to learn about cultures and ways of life different from our owns”. The literature and the writers in one language are an essential part of its culture and history. The germanic folklore is very spread and culturally rooted in Spain, so the Brothers Grimm and their tales are a familiar referent in both English-speaking countries and in Spain. We can use them as a cultural bridge that will help our students to go deeper into literary texts written in English, which links this objective with the following one:

“Transfer the communication strategies learnt in the acquisition of the mother tongue or in the process of learning other languages to the knowledge of the foreign language in order to carry out interactive tasks in real or simulated situations”: It is a matter of fact that literary texts are widely more studied and used in first language class than in foreign language ones (Calduch & Monferrer 2014). Teachers can take advantage of the notion of literary genres that students have in their mother tongues and of the children's films that they have watched (like the Disney ones) to introduce the genre of tale -or fairy tale- in English from specific stories that they already know (in this proposal, Rapunzel and Little Red-cap). This aim refers to James Cummins' theories again.

“Use learning strategies and didactic resources (such as dictionaries, books, encyclopaedias,

multimedia materials, etc.) to find information and solve learning situations in an autonomous way”: students are going to work on this objective during the pre-task stage.

“Reflect upon one's own learning processes and develop an interest for the incorporation of improvements which may lead to completing the tasks set successfully”, throughout specific actions like self-assessment, incorporating teacher's corrections to the own discursive productions (remedial work).

3.1.3. Teaching results

Each student will be able to recognise most of the formal features of a tale (parts, main themes and characters, main vocabulary...).

Each student will enlarge his or her capability to understand written and spoken fairy tales and other cultural products arising from this genre (films, comics, etc.).

Each student will be able to write a short tale.

Each student will be able to read out aloud his or her own tale to the rest of the class in a clearly comprehensible manner.

Each student will be able to post his or her tale on a Wordpress blog as a normal blog entry.

Each student will be able to get access to the Wordpress blog in question and to comment their classmates' tales.

3.2. Previous knowledge

To know how to use the following verbal tenses: Past Simple, Past Continuous and Past Perfect.

To be capable of writing generally well constructed sentences in English, all in affirmative, negative and interrogative forms.

To know how to use some general English linking words in order to build cohesive short texts.

To have a vague rhetorical intuition about the tripartite structure of the great majority of oral and written textual genres.

To have watched the films *Tangled* (2010) and *Red Riding Hood* (2011) or, at least, to know the plot of the tales of Rapunzel and Little Red-cap.

3.3. Methodological position

We defend a socioconstructivist way of teaching both first and foreign languages. This point of view in teaching languages, related with a sort of post-vygotskian approach in teaching foreign languages, has been promoted, designed and improved mostly from the Jean-Paul Bronckart's group in the Université de Genève. This group has developed a specific kind of task called didactic sequence and characterised by the textual genre as the central element. All didactic sequence begins with the work with one or more generic models and its final result is always the production of one text from the same genre. Our teaching proposal revolves around the genre of the tale or the fairy tale.

4. Activities' development

4.1. Timing

This proposal is planned to last five sessions of the English class, which means a duration of almost two weeks.

Session 1	In pairs, students read two tales of Brothers Grimm, <i>Rapunzel</i> and <i>Little Red-cap</i> . As far as they know the plot, it is easier for them to understand both narrations. In any case, students can check dictionaries and other online resources in case they don't understand some words or expressions.	Pre-task. Computer room
Session 2	In pairs, students answer to five hot potatoes: JCloze, JMatch, JQuiz, JCross and JMix (see http://ainamonferrer.com/?p=580). If there is time enough, students will check their answers.	Pre-task. Computer room
Session 3	In pairs, to write a (fairy) tale using the microtextual and macrotextual elements typical of this genre learnt during the previous two sessions. They can write it directly on the computer and look up on line resources (e.g. dictionaries, thesaurus, Wikipedia...). At the end of the session, each peer sends their written tale to the teacher by email.	While-task. Computer room
Session 4	The teacher gives the writings back to each peer with the corresponding corrections. Each peer must introduce all the corrections to their writings. During the whole session, the teacher is available for the students in case they would need any clarifications about the corrections. If there is an excess of time to introduce all the corrections, peers would begin the out loud readings of the tales. If not, it will be entirely done next session.	While-task Computer room
Session 5	During this session, all the peers must have read their tales aloud. While their classmates read their tales (half one and halve the other), each listener will fulfil their classmates' evaluation by using a rubric (see http://ainamonferrer.com/?p=580). After having all the oral readings, students fulfil the survey made with Survey Monkey and sent by the teacher to all students' email. This survey asks each student about themselves, the proposal as such and the teacher's role on it (see http://ainamonferrer.com/?p=580).	While-task Post-task Computer room

4.2. Adaptations for students with special education needs.

We are going to make compensated peers in order to balance the students' knowledge. Apart from that, in the case of the four students with special needs or with a level too low to follow the class normally by working in peers, they are going to read just the easier tale, Little Red-cap, with some simplifications of the content and with some uncomplicated activities to work with. With the teacher's help, they will also write an easy tale to tell to the rest of the class, because we think that teachers have to do our best so that we can integrate the most of them.

5. Materials and contents

5.1. Previous generic models⁴

Rapunzel

There was once a man and a woman who had long in vain wished for a child. At length the woman hoped that God was about to grant her desire. These people had a little window at the back of their house from which a splendid garden could be seen, which was full of the most beautiful flowers and herbs. It was, however, surrounded by a high wall, and

⁴ We have underlined some words and expressions that are probably unknown for students.

no one **dared** to go into it because it belonged to **an enchantress**, who had great power and was **dreaded** by all the world. One day the woman was standing by this window and looking down into the garden, when she saw a bed which was planted with the most beautiful **rampion** - **Rapunzel**, and it looked so fresh and green that she longed for it, and had the greatest desire to eat some. This desire increased every day, and as she knew that she could not get any of it, she quite pined away, and began to look pale and miserable.

Then her husband was alarmed, and asked, "what **ails** you, dear wife?" "Ah", she replied, "if I can't eat some of the rampion, which is in the garden behind our house, I shall die". The man, who **loved** her, thought, **sooner than** let your wife die, bring her some of the rampion yourself, let it cost what it will. At **twilight**, he **clambered down over** the wall into the garden of the enchantress, **hastily clutched a handful of rampion**, and took it to his wife. She at once made herself a salad of it, and ate it **greedily**. It tasted so good to her - so very good, that the next day she longed for it three times as much as before. If he was to have any rest, her husband must once more descend into the garden. In the **gloom** of evening, therefore, he let himself down again. But when he had clambered down the wall he was terribly afraid, for he saw the enchantress standing before him. How can you **dare**, said she with angry look, descend into my garden and steal my rampion like a thief. You shall suffer for it. Ah, answered he, **let mercy take the place of justice**, I only **made up** my mind to do it out of necessity. My wife saw your rampion from the window, and felt such a longing for it that she would have died if she had not got some to eat. Then the enchantress allowed her anger to be **softened**, and said to him, if the case be as you say, I will allow you to take away with you as much rampion as you will, only I make one condition, you must give me the child which your wife will bring into the world. It shall be well treated, and I will care for it like a mother. The man in his terror consented to everything, and when the woman was brought to bed, the enchantress appeared at once, gave the child the name of Rapunzel, and took it away with her.

Rapunzel grew into the most beautiful child under the sun. When she was twelve years old, the enchantress shut her into a tower, which lay in a forest, and had neither stairs nor door, but quite at the top was a little window. When the enchantress wanted to go in, she placed herself **beneath** it and cried,

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
let down your hair to me.

Rapunzel had magnificent long hair, fine as **spun** gold, and when she heard the voice of the enchantress **she undid one of her braided tresses**, wound them round one of the **hooks** of the window **above**, and then the hair fell twenty **ells** down, and the enchantress climbed up by it.

After a year or two, it came to pass that the king's son rode through the forest and passed by the tower. Then he heard a song, which was so charming that he stood still and listened. This was Rapunzel, who in her **solitude** passed her time in letting her sweet voice resound. The king's son wanted to climb up to her, and looked for the door of the tower, but none was to be found. He rode home, but the singing had so deeply touched his heart, that every day he went out into the forest and listened to it. Once when he was thus standing behind a tree, he saw that an enchantress came there, and he heard how she cried,

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
let down your hair.

Then Rapunzel **let down** the **braids** of her hair, and the enchantress climbed up to her. If that is the **ladder** by which one **mounts**, I too will try my fortune, said he, and the next day when it began to grow dark, he went to the tower and cried,

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
let down your hair.

Immediately the hair fell down and the king's son climbed up. At first Rapunzel was terribly **frightened** when a man, such as her eyes had never yet **beheld**, came to her. But the king's son began to talk to her quite like a friend, and told her that his heart had been so **stirred** that it had let him have no rest, and he had been forced to see her. Then Rapunzel lost her fear, and when he asked her **she would take him for her husband**, and she saw that he was young and handsome, she thought, he will love me more than old dame Gothel does. And she said yes, and **laid** her hand in his.

She said, I will **willingly** go away with you, but I do not know how to get down. Bring with you a **skein** of **silk** every time that you come, and I will **weave** a **ladder** with it, and when that is ready I will descend, and you will take me on your horse. They agreed that until that time he should come to her every evening. The enchantress remarked nothing of this, **until** once Rapunzel said to her, tell me, dame Gothel, how it happens that you are so much **heavier** for me to draw up than the young king's son - he is with me in a moment. Ah. You **wicked** child, cried the enchantress. What do I hear you say. I thought I had separated you from all the world, and yet you have **deceived** me. In her anger she **clutched** Rapunzel's beautiful tresses, **wrapped** them twice round her left hand, seized a pair of scissors with the right, and **snip, snap**, they were cut off, and the lovely **braids** lay on the ground. And she was so **pitiless** that she took poor Rapunzel

into a desert where she had to live in great grief and misery.

On the same day that she cast out Rapunzel, however, the enchantress fastened the braids of hair, which she had cut off, to the hook of the window, and when the king's son came and cried,

Rapunzel, Rapunzel,
let down your hair,

she let the hair down. The king's son ascended, but instead of finding his dearest Rapunzel, he found the enchantress, who gazed at him with wicked and venomous look. Aha, she cried mockingly, you would fetch your dearest, but the beautiful bird sits no longer singing in the nest. The cat has got it, and will scratch out your eyes as well. Rapunzel is lost to you. You will never see her again. The king's son was beside himself with pain, and in his despair he leapt down from the tower. He escaped with his life, but the thorns into which he fell pierced his eyes. Then he wandered quite blind about the forest, ate nothing but roots and berries, and did naught but lament and weep over the loss of his dearest wife. Thus he roamed about in misery for some years, and at length came to the desert where Rapunzel, with the twins to which she had given birth, a boy and a girl, lived in wretchedness. He heard a voice, and it seemed so familiar to him that he went towards it, and when he approached, Rapunzel knew him and fell on his neck and wept. Two of her tears wetted his eyes and they grew clear again, and he could see with them as before. He led her to his kingdom where he was joyfully received, and they lived for a long time afterwards happy and contented.

Little Red-cap

There upon a time there was a dear little girl who was loved by every one who looked at her, but most of all by her grandmother, and there was nothing that she would not have given to the child. Once she gave her a little cap of red velvet, which suited her so well that she would never wear anything else. So she was always called little Red-cap.

One day her mother said to her, come, little Red-cap, here is a piece of cake and a bottle of wine. Take them to your grandmother, she is ill and weak, and they will do her good. Set out before it gets hot, and when you are going, walk nicely and quietly and do not run off the path, or you may fall and break the bottle, and then your grandmother will get nothing. And when you go into her room, don't forget to say, good-morning, and don't peep into every corner before you do it.

I will take great care, said little Red-cap to her mother, and gave her hand on it.

The grandmother lived out in the wood, half a league from the village, and just as little Red-cap entered the wood, a wolf met her. Red-cap did not know what a wicked creature he was, and was not at all afraid of him.

"Good-day, little Red-cap," said he.

"Thank you kindly, wolf."

"Whither away so early, little Red-cap?"

"To my grandmother's."

"What have you got in your apron?"

"Cake and wine. Yesterday was baking-day, so poor sick grandmother is to have something good, to make her stronger."

"Where does your grandmother live, little Red-cap?"

"A good quarter of a league farther on in the wood. Her house stands under the three large oak-trees, the nut-trees are just below. You surely must know it," replied little Red-cap.

The wolf thought to himself, what a tender young creature. What a nice plump beauty, she will be better to eat than the old woman. I must act craftily, so as to catch both. So he walked for a short time by the side of little Red-cap, and then he said, "see little Red-cap, how pretty the flowers are about here. Why do you not look round. I believe, too, that you do not hear how sweetly the little birds are singing. You walk gravely along as if you were going to school, while everything else out here in the wood is merry."

Little Red-cap raised her eyes, and when she saw the sunbeams dancing here and there through the trees, and pretty flowers growing everywhere, she thought, suppose I take grandmother a fresh nosegay. That would please her too. It is so early in the day that I shall still get there in good time. And so she ran from the path into the wood to look for

flowers. And whenever she had picked one, she fancied that she saw a still prettier one farther on, and ran after it, and so got deeper and deeper into the wood.

Meanwhile the wolf ran straight to the grandmother's house and knocked at the door.

"Who is there?"

"Little Red-cap," replied the wolf. "She is bringing cake and wine. Open the door."

"All the best," called out the grandmother, "I am too weak, and cannot get up."

The wolf lifted the latch, the door sprang open, and without saying a word he went straight to the grandmother's bed, and devoured her. Then he put on her clothes, dressed himself in her cap, laid himself in bed and drew the curtains.

Little Red-cap, however, had been running about picking flowers, and when she had gathered so many that she could carry no more, she remembered her grandmother, and set out on the way to her.

She was surprised to find the cottage-door standing open, and when she went into the room, she had such a strange feeling that she said to herself, oh dear, how uneasy I feel today, and at other times I like being with grandmother so much. She called out, "good morning," but received no answer. So she went to the bed and drew back the curtains. There lay her grandmother with her cap pulled far over her face, and looking very strange.

"Oh, grandmother," she said, "what big ears you have."

"The better to hear you with," my child," was the reply.

"But, grandmother, what big eyes you have," she said.

"The better to see you with," my dear.

"But, grandmother, what large hands you have."

"The better to hug you with."

"Oh, but, grandmother, what a terrible big mouth you have."

"The better to eat you with."

And scarcely had the wolf said this, than with one bound he was out of bed and swallowed up Red-cap.

When the wolf had appeased his appetite, he lay down again in the bed, fell asleep and began to snore very loud. The huntsman was just passing the house, and thought to himself, how the old woman is snoring. I must just see if she wants anything.

So he went into the room, and when he came to the bed, he saw that the wolf was lying in it. Do I find you here, you old sinner, said he. I have long sought you. Then just as he was going to fire at him, it occurred to him that the wolf might have devoured the grandmother, and that she might still be saved, so he did not fire, but took a pair of scissors, and began to cut open the stomach of the sleeping wolf. When he had made two snips, he saw the little Red-cap shining, and then he made two snips more, and the little girl sprang out, crying, ah, how frightened I have been. How dark it was inside the wolf. And after that the aged grandmother came out alive also, but scarcely able to breathe. Red-cap, however, quickly fetched great stones with which they filled the wolf's belly, and when he awoke, he wanted to run away, but the stones were so heavy that he collapsed at once, and fell dead.

Then all three were delighted. The huntsman drew off the wolf's skin and went home with it. The grandmother ate the cake and drank the wine which Red-cap had brought, and revived, but Red-cap thought to herself, as long as I live, I will never by myself leave the path, to run into the wood, when my mother has forbidden me to do so.

It is also related that once when Red-cap was again taking cakes to the old grandmother, another wolf spoke to her, and tried to entice her from the path. Red-cap, however, was on her guard, and went straight forward on her way, and told her grandmother that she had met the wolf, and that he had said good-morning to her, but with such a wicked look in his eyes, that if they had not been on the public road she was certain he would have eaten her up. Well, said the grandmother, we will shut the door, that he may not come in. Soon afterwards the wolf knocked, and cried, open the door, grandmother, I am little Red-cap, and am bringing you some cakes. But they did not speak, or open the door, so

the grey-beard stole **twice** or **thrice** round the house, and at last jumped on the roof, intending to wait until Red-cap went home in the evening, and then to **steal** after her and devour her in the darkness. But the grandmother saw what was in his thoughts. In front of the house was a great stone **trough**, so she said to the child, take the **pail**, Red-cap. I made some sausages yesterday, so carry the water in which I boiled them to the trough. Red-cap carried until the great trough was quite full. Then the smell of the sausages reached the wolf, and he sniffed and peeped down, and at last stretched out his neck so far that he could no longer keep his footing and began to slip, and slipped down from the roof straight into the great trough, and was drowned. **But Red-cap went to and home, and no one ever did anything to harm her.**

5.2. Hot potatoes (see <http://ainamonferrer.com/?p=580>).

6. Assessment

- From the teacher to each student (by using a rubric, see <http://ainamonferrer.com/?p=580>).
- From each student to their mates, during their reading of the tale (by using a rubric, see <http://ainamonferrer.com/?p=580>).
- Self-assessment (by using a survey, see <http://ainamonferrer.com/?p=580>).
- Each student's assessment of the proposal and the teacher (by using a survey, see <http://ainamonferrer.com/?p=580>).

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Rubistar (for the students to assess their mates and for the teacher to assess each student).
<http://rubistar.4teachers.org/index.php> [12-1-2015]

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