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The Role of Folklore in EFL Teaching in Secondary Education

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Abstract

Teaching English as a Foreign Language can be a challenging task for teachers if students are not motivated and engaged with the language. The five skills are presented and studied separately, with little connection between them, reason why students feel they are learning an artificial language which only serves to complete the exercises in class. Thus, the teaching of English needs to be reconsidered from a cultural point of view. Culture can go hand in hand with the teaching of language, as it makes students understand the language better, as well as the people and countries where it is spoken. Consequently, they also feel that it is useful for their socio-communicative competence, and not only in class. Ultimately, this proposal tries to establish how students can learn and be engrossed through three popular tales from British folklore and a set of activities related to the cultural topic especially designed to practice the five skills.

Key words: English as a Foreign Language, Culture, Folklore, *Tom Thumb*, *Black Dog*, *Drake's Drum*

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1. Introduction

Teachers of English as a Foreign Language need to reinvent the traditional method used to teach the language to students. Textbooks are prepared to teach grammar and vocabulary, and develop the reading and listening skills. However, the topics used are normally not of the students' interest and they tend to be very repetitive, studied year after year. Moreover, the grammar and vocabulary exercises and texts do not entail the use of authentic language or real material; consequently, students sometimes feel they are not learning the real language, but an artificial one because they cannot relate the content to real life communicative situations.

1.1 Objectives

In order to make students learn culture and language at the same time, folklore is one of the most authentic materials that can be found. For this reason, the main aim of this BA dissertation is to suggest and describe a series of activities for students to learn English based on British folklore. Such task allows learners to become more familiar with the different types of stories that folklore includes, from fairy tales to myths, drawing intertextuality with other subjects such as history or literature.

The activities will be oriented to the development and practising of the five skills. This way, students will learn about the use of English through a real text that teaches them the history of Great Britain at the same time. They will also learn about the different techniques regarding storytelling - both in speaking and listening -, discover where the different traditions or beliefs they might have been learning through their school years come from and learn facts of their own culture at the same time because of cultural connections between the countries.

1.2 Justification

It is believed that learning English through folklore will benefit the learning experience and it will engage the students with the language. Culture, in general, is a good and real tool to teach them how to communicate. It allows students to

get to know interesting aspects of the countries where the language they are learning is spoken, and they see this information useful when it comes to travelling and communicating with other native or non-native speakers who use English to communicate. Thus, students do not only learn the language, but they also acquire and develop the sociocultural competence necessary to interact with other people in a foreign context. With folklore, concretely, they discover the origin of well-known and contemporary traditions, and its relation to language.

1.3 Expected Results

Despite I will not be able to use the methodology developed during my placement, I have expectations regarding the results that should be acquired. Since Using folklore to learn English is done to complete the cultural competence, the results that are to be expected from the different activities are an improvement in general knowledge about different types of oral tradition, and the important role they still play nowadays on the culture of a country. Moreover, students have also to learn to relate the legends to more contemporary texts, stories adaptations and to Spanish history.

In regard of the linguistic part, students will also learn the structure of tales and legends, as well as techniques of storytelling. At the end of each unit, they are expected to apply this knowledge acquired in the different final tasks, and to improve in the different skills.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Teaching Language through Culture

Teaching a language is a task in which teachers need to have a clear idea of content they aim to teach and the objectives students must acquire. However, most textbooks and teaching materials principally emphasise the five skills, while other important aspects from the language are forgotten. This is often the case of culture, which has been thought to be introduced in the curriculum as authors defend that language and culture go hand in hand (Dai 2011, 1031), or as Choudhury states: "A particular language is a mirror of a particular culture. By

studying a language, students gain knowledge and understanding of the culture in which the language is embedded” (2013, 21).

To learn a language, students need to know more about the countries where it is spoken to understand certain expressions and customs. Learners have to assimilate grammar and vocabulary to communicate properly, but this is not enough. Apart from being fluent in speaking and writing, they also need to comprehend the speakers from that language, their traditions and beliefs, in order to communicate properly. That is why teaching culture is key to developing the communicative competence. Pourmahnoud, Yavuz and Zarfsaz (2012, 69) defend that “there is an eminent reality that culture is composed of various elements, each is vitally necessary to be able to see the full picture of the culture of society”. Students need to know the purpose of why they are learning that language, and the means by which they can become aware of this by teaching the culture, which mostly comprises traditions, beliefs, history, literature, and media products, among others. In relation to language, by studying these different pieces of culture, students also study typical expressions, vocabulary, idioms and what is more important, how to use them in a natural context.

Nguyen (2017, 147) takes different aspects into account when it comes to teaching culture. He first establishes the *knowledge-based approach*, which, as mentioned above, provides information about the target language culture “such as customs, habits, folklore of everyday life, literature or arts”. Secondly, there is the *contrastive approach*, which teaches students to compare their own culture with the target one they are learning. Finally, the *intercultural communicative competence approach* awaits students to learn to properly interact in the context of the target language. For this reason, first learners need to acquire certain background knowledge to be prepared to interact with both native and non-native speakers who would probably be aware of some cultural aspects of that language. Moreover, by studying the cultural pieces learners will have acquired socio-linguistic conventions that are useful when communicating, adapting themselves to the unknown country and showing tolerance and respect towards that culture at the same time.

To facilitate student's familiarisation with the target culture, scholars state that teachers should be aware of what is labelled as *enculturation* and *acculturation*. The first term is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as "the gradual acquisition of the characteristics and norms of a culture or group by a person, another culture, etc." (accessed 18 March). The second term is defined by Corbett as "the process by which learners are encouraged to function within the new culture, while maintaining their own identity" (2003, 25), and it is *acculturation* what teachers need to remark in their lessons, since students will improve their cultural awareness and become more tolerant and culturally richer. In fact, some students tend to reject the culture of the language they are learning as an excuse to reject the language as well, since they defend that there is no need to learn another culture because they have their own, so they are wasting their time. Here the problem with culture when it comes to learning a new language appears. Most textbooks present a unique culture, if any, related to the language, so students do not engage with it because teachers only focus on the target culture. What needs to be done is to teach students to contrast information at the same time they are learning to use the language. They do not have to feel that the culture they are acquiring is foreign to them. All the contrary, learners need to get to know that culture changes throughout the years, and due to language contact, it spreads all over the world. That is why it is not difficult to find connections between different traditions and customs in different countries. *Culture bump* is a term used to explain the uncomfortable feeling when interacting with foreign people or being abroad because of a strange culture. For this reason, Tran-Hoang-Thun defends that "learners need to be aware of culture in order to avoid a culture bump" (2011, 10), another reason why teachers need to work hard to make students understand that if they pretend to learn the language, they will necessarily also be learning the culture and at the same time, to grow up and become competent people with knowledge of the world.

What students must realise is that teachers are not trying to get them to leave their own culture apart, but to find the similarities and differences between both cultures and what is more important, to respect any aspect of them both. Once they are aware of the teacher's main aim, a change in their attitude towards the learning of the language and its respective culture should change, as by

knowing about the connection between the foreign and their own culture they will become culturally aware of the history or traditions of that country, or what incidents made poets write about a particular aspect, for example. With regard to language specifically, students get to learn it through authentic material, as well as idiomatic expressions which they can also compare with the ones from their mother tongue. Once this awareness is achieved, students are impressed with the amount of connections due to history incidences from the past between both cultures, or even with other foreign cultures. Moreover, if the class is presented in an interactive style, they can fully engage and be really interested in the topic even to keep investigating at home.

Another problem that Foreign or Second Language teachers have to face is the methodology they use to teach culture, since language changes according to the geographical location of the country whose language is being learnt and the sociocultural circumstances. As Crozet and Liddicoat (1997, 10) defend, “culture is not a static, monolithic construct. It is dynamic and both creates and is created by every attempt to communicate”. That is why every student needs to learn to use certain language expressions in its right moment and according to different circumstances, and the only way to acquire and broaden this knowledge about linguistic and culture variability is by studying distinct pieces of cultural products that represent the real target language, another proof that language must be learnt in context. Nevertheless, neither this sociocultural aspect that benefits the intercultural communicative competence nor aesthetic culture, including literature, poetry, music, arts, or traditions and history over time are rarely included in the syllabus because of “a general lack of time” (Hammar 2013, 13). In fact, most of the emphasis is put on the five skills, meaning that the time to teach culture in its right context is minimum. As before mentioned, a language cannot be learnt without its right context because learners would not totally acquire it. Students could answer questions with a perfect grammar and vocabulary, but there would be a lack of knowledge regarding the outside real world, since they would not be prepared to communicate and interact appropriately with other people in different contexts they could face in their lives.

To achieve the purpose of helping students to develop a proper sociocultural communicative skill, there are different studies that defend the 3Ps:

Products, Practises, and Perspectives, which are described in the Standards for Foreign Language Learning. *Practises* stand for social interactions and how to behave in certain situations. *Products* refer to the material or visual production of a culture, and *perspectives* have to do with the proper beliefs or ideas of a culture related to the respective practises and products. That is why it is expected that learners should acquire and understand the relationship between the practises and perspectives and between the products and perspectives of the target language. Dema and Moeller (2012, 78) state that “since language emerges from societal interactions, L2 learners cannot truly learn the language without acquiring knowledge about its culture and native speakers”. Something else teachers also have to take under consideration when teaching culture is the creation of stereotypes, since many materials do not take values and beliefs into account, so it is the teacher’s work to instruct this learning to students. This way, a part from learning culture, they will also develop critical skills, and it is by teaching culture with the 3Ps that students have the opportunity to learn it by establishing connections between the different pieces of culture, and consequently, developing a better understanding of why they are studying that information. Hence, students will have first understood through culture why they were studying that language, what was the main purpose of it. Once this step is completed, they have to be capable to use their reasoning skills to connect the 3Ps of the target culture using language.

Another aspect to take into account when teaching culture is what is known as Culture with big C and small c. These terms make reference to the different pieces of culture that learners acquire. On the one hand, Big C culture refers to the most visible items of the culture studied, which would be what it has been described above as “aesthetic elements”. On the other hand, Small c culture makes reference to the least visible elements of the culture, such as expressions of communication, the items that help to develop the sociocultural communicative competence(<https://sites.educ.ualberta.ca/staff/olenka.bilash/Best%20of%20Bilash/culture.html>). The Big C would make reference to the general aspects shared by the group of individuals of that culture, while the Small c would make reference to aspects associated to particular regions, including their way of communicating and myths and legends. However, if teachers use the 3Ps to teach a singular

culture, the difference between both Cs disappear, since the *Product, Practises,* and *Perspectives* mixes up the general and particular elements of culture, as this technique mainly focuses on the understanding of the 3Ps and making students capable of thinking about how these 3Ps relate to one another. Furthermore, Moore (1996) in Dema and Moeller (2012, 80) grouped the different techniques to teach culture in two groups: “techniques that focus on the products and practices only; and techniques that allow for the discussion of the relationship between the 3Ps” (Dema and Moeller 2012, 80). Such techniques or methods include the use of authentic materials, cultural capsules, clusters and assimilations, proverbs, music, celebration of festivals, and study-abroad programs (Dema and Moeller 2012, 80). *Cultural capsules* refer to a presentation of the particular target culture item, differentiating it from the native culture of the speaker, succeeded by the explanation of the target cultural piece being discussed. *Cultural clusters* are constituted by two or three capsules which take part of a series and are practised in activities that encompass the two or three of them. Finally, *cultural assimilations* are episodes which depict a conflict in the context of the target language. Once the conflict is presented, four explanations are given to the students, only one of them being true, the one that students have to justify through a debate (Negro 2013, 6).

Again, these terms used when teaching through the 3Ps take all cultural aspects into account, without making a separation between the Big C and Small c. Moreover, all elements can be used in small groups of three in an activity such as a role play, in which students must know the general part of the target culture to create the context of the play, must take into account the sociolinguistic expressions, and more particular pieces of culture to complete the context of the activity. The result would lead students to create a script with the main ideas they want to convey and investigate about those ideas to complete the play and adapt it to the target culture being studied. Finally, a part from practising written and spoken English throughout when preparing the script and interpreting it in front of the class, they would also have to get familiarised with certain expressions typical of the target culture, and of the situation or context they are playing to make it coherent. Furthermore, if different groups of students portray different settings of the culture being learnt, they all will acquire the way of behaving in all those

diverse environments. Apart from learning from the new culture and its language at the same time, they also learn the differences and similarities between behaviours and linguistic expressions in the contexts of their native culture and the target culture, leading to a rational, open-minded and tolerant education. With this activity and with similar ones, students learn to accept diversity, one of the main objectives for teachers. At the same time, they also learn to make themselves understood, they progressively acquire the language and use it with a good grammar and vocabulary, since they are learning it in context, and not with individual and disconnected sentences or activities.

Other useful techniques to check if students have understood the idea of the activities done in class, the message of the culture studied, and to practise and use the language and vocabulary learnt before the end of the class the teacher can ask students to reformulate what has been represented by other groups, trying to communicate in their own words and using new vocabulary learnt during the session. With this method, students realise how able they are to convey meaning when speaking, even though their grammar is not excellent. Regarding the vocabulary, they also interiorise it if used the right context.

2.2 Teaching Culture in the EFL Classroom

English is one of the most widely spoken languages in the world because of the colonization of the British Empire, and culture has a great importance in it. Every region where this language is spoken has very different cultures, aspect that is also reflected in the English spoken in each territory.

Regarding teaching English as a Foreign Language, it has been stated that due to the variety of Englishes in the world, students should aim to learn to communicate properly and make themselves understood rather than mastering a perfect grammar with the Received Pronunciation (RP). Reza (2001) states that “students must somehow be prepared to operate with English in unknown situations, which is characterized by variation in linguistic and cultural behaviour”. For this reason, the role of culture in English education is key to make students understand they can use the language as a lingua franca to communicate all over the world with native and non-native speakers, and that they are going to have a full knowledge of the language after practising and studying it for years.

Students must be taught about different cultures in the world during their scholarly years and make them learn the language progressively through the years. What they have to realise is that English, as all languages, is not static and that there may be changes depending on the time and place it is spoken. Learning the language through culture can make students' interest for the history of a particular country, helping their acquisition of all linguistic parts with stimulating topics. In fact, Thomas Dow (1993, 52) states that:

Most texts, while attempting to give the student something easy to understand, keep the student locked into a language and vocabulary that is in some respects unfamiliar to native speakers. Students who learn from this sort of material are led to believe that they are preparing to read and/or speak English but will be later disappointed to discover that they are much less able to communicate than they had expected.

Cross-cultural teaching and learning are important, since students learn with real life material and acquire the necessary cultural and linguistic competence to understand and tolerate different practises. They need to feel useful and sure when travelling, and to avoid being ashamed because of their unfamiliarity with certain cultural customs, superstitions or traditions from Scotland, India, Australia or the ones that all those countries have in common.

As stated above, students can also compare traditions of the English-speaking countries with their own ones, discovering the connections between the different stories and although the same, they are adapted to the correspondent culture, as well as the historical relations or the borrowing of one tradition or cultural element in general into another.

It is true that textbooks offer different cultural and everyday topics to get students to know the vocabulary needed to talk about those different subjects, such as health care or the media. In fact, learners must know all this vocabulary and aspects related in order to have a general knowledge of their own and target culture. The error is, however, that textbooks are always based on these same topics, making students wonder why there are learning the same once again, even though the vocabulary is different.

The content also offers subjects that are of interest to the average student/adult learner such as "The Future, Pets, Habits" (both good and bad) [...] All of the topics will help the student be able to talk with people and be able to ask questions in order to initiate

conversations with strangers, or be able to take the conversational initiative with people they have already met. (Dow 1993, 53)

In order to get engaged in the activities that are to be done, they have to practise what is learnt in the textbook through diverse and interacting exercises. Moreover, other topics should be introduced to avoid the monotony of all English books, and focus on the origins or a distinguished person that had influence in the development of the Health Care System, for example. Following this methodology, not only do students learn vocabulary and how to communicate and express opinions about general topics, but they also have a general background that helps them to have a better understanding of the system. At the same time, and taking the health system topic as example, students can compare the English and their own system, being benefited in both ways because they get to know the weaknesses and strengths of both, developing the critical skill.

In addition, apart from comparing the element of the English culture with their own, they can also compare and know the origins of other traditions, beliefs or cultural creations with the ones of other countries. They develop the intercultural competence and as stated above, have a general understanding and opinions of certain topics.

Apart from the topics studied, the materials used are also important. Khdihr and Hasan defend that literature is one of the most reliable materials to be used when teaching language and culture. Teachers agree that to learn English, reading books is important, since they acquire new vocabulary, expressions and develop their reading and writing skill with the only effort of looking for some words they are not able to understand in context. Moreover, books and novels offer a wide range of settings and history. "In spite of the fact that the universe of a novel, play, or short story is a non-existent one, it shows a full and bright setting in which characters from numerous social/territorial foundations can be portrayed" (Khdihr and Hasan 2016, 653). Even though the culture studied in class is the English one, students must learn that England is a multicultural state nowadays. From this point of departure, they can be taught about the history of colonisation, relating it to the Commonwealth and the figure of the Queen.

Nevertheless, they also have to learn about the lexical items proper of any topic to accurately understand the text in the right context. In relation to the writing skill, Khdihr and Hasan (2016,654) also state that “they [students] find out about the linguistic structure and talk elements of sentences, the assortment of conceivable structures, the distinctive methods for interfacing thoughts, which create and advance their own written work abilities”, as students acquire an internal pattern to write. Regarding the speaking skill, learners will not use the syntax of a poem, play or novel with metaphors and rhyming scheme, but they can acquire certain speech patterns and idioms from the text.

The language used through cultural texts and other elements, however, is related to that particular region, as culture has geographical boundaries. Regarding the English language and the extensive territory where it is spoken, what students learn at school is the RP English, enough to make themselves understood in an English speaking country, and even if they are taught through culture, it is also associated to that same nation. The positive point is that culture is not static and that it also connects countries and history, since as mentioned above, England is a multicultural country. Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland, however, are more introvert countries with their own myths and different expressions. With other further speaking countries the difference is even bigger. Taking New Zealand as an example, its English is full of expressions with Maori influence or idioms that only make sense there, since they are related to Maori traditions. American English, to present another example, has Spanish influence because of their historical past in which countries from the United States were Spanish colonies.

For this reason, students should be taught about all kind of Englishes that can be found all over the world. They should also understand that with the content learnt in class they can communicate, but the more they travel, the better to improve their fluency with the language and to become open-minded. They have to be aware that there will always be words they do not understand or used in a different context, and this is because of cultural influence. Taking this information into account, teachers should make students understand how important culture is for a nation and a language, especially for the English one. “What authors like Irving Welsh, Joseph Conrad or Mark Twain have in common is that their literary

works reconstruct the way language is spoken in certain geopolitical context.” (Riwes Cruz 2010, 3). Nevertheless, Riwes Cruz continues by saying that literature is an aesthetic form of culture, and that it is not a direct recreation of conversations between people from the same place in a given moment of time. However, literature is considered a direct and good source of information to learn a language because of its richness of lexical and syntactical structures from the setting the novel is placed. Moreover, surely learning language through a literary text, leaving rhetorical figures apart, “their writing skill improve and their speech skill can gain eloquence” and regarding the vocabulary “looking up for words, however, is quickly followed by looking up cultural references and this process leads to cultural enrichment” (Riwes Cruz 2010, 4). They learn about the place by visualising the landscape and the settings described by the author in the text they are reading. Literary texts can also be listened, and in part, listening to them is even more beneficial for the speaking skill, as students acquire the tone and right pronunciation of words and phrases. One of the major problems Romance language speakers may face is the accomplishment of the right English intonation, with its proper rises and fallings that make one sound native English. For this reason, teachers usually recommend watching films and TV series in English to acquire it, as well as to improve their listening understanding. This way, by only listening to literary texts, learners are able to imagine what is being described, acquiring the intonation used for story tellers, or the characters that speak in the recording. Regarding the English variation used, students also learn to identify the precedence of the speaker by only listening to him or her if the lexical items cannot serve as evidence. Consequently, they cannot only distinguish between British and American English, which are the most frequently listened, but also between Australian and Scottish English, for example. As for African English, which can be read in novels written by postcolonial authors, students might not understand it with the first reading or listening, but they certainly get to understand that English by imagining the sounds proper of the African language used with the variety of English spoken in that country.

With all this learning there is implied cultural insight, as students will have been drawing a mental picture of what they have been visualising, a part from language, and being capable of establishing a connection between a particular

cultural item, such as a myth, with its culture, due to all the background information they have been exposed through the different texts or recordings used. However, literary texts that depict certain cultures can have a disadvantage. Some may be a closed material which only presents one culture in a certain point in time. In order to avoid this closeness, teachers must look for intertextuality between the work being used and other textual references, with the objective of offering students the most extensive vision of cultural elements.

Regarding the language, they may be also interested in comparing pronunciation or lexical items from different Englishes. This learning method is known as intercultural approach, which is based on comparing different cultures which have the same mother tongue and the learner's own culture. What Riwes Cruz also points out is that learners have to avoid reading only for information to answer the typical questions of reading comprehension. They are important to understand the text, but at the same time, they only make students focus on the content instead of on the form. To avoid it, teachers have to make learners understand and feel what they are reading as it was real. This way, they will be able to figure out how important language and literary works are to form a national identity that at the same time is also related to the culture. Moreover, if teachers draw intertextuality with other literary works from the same period or country, this sense of identity and culture is reinforced and students can create connections between the different elements of that country.

Exploring these connections and reflecting on them lead students to develop a major understanding of the way of life of the context the target language comes from, and furthermore, these references open the door for students to visualize how the literary text overflows to other cultural disciplines, establishing a symbiotic, nourishing relationship. (Hernández S. Crus 2010, 4)

Once these relationships within the target culture are established, students are ready and able to establish a comparison between it and their own culture, broadening the intertextuality created before with the target culture.

Furthermore, each culture has its own popular elements. Thinking about the British one, there is fish and chips in cuisine or Guy Fawkes Night in traditions. This way, culture can be also taught by using the theme-based or thematic approach, by which each cultural item is explained separately from each other in

order to provide a full and good understanding to students. In addition, each learner associates every item to the culture of one country because there is the “assumption that certain ingredients are characteristic of the behaviour of members of a certain culture” (Saluveer 2004, 34). Once students recognise it, they can draw intertextuality with other related cultural items or just a comparison with their own culture. For example, they can look for the origin of certain Christmas traditions in England and look for information on how it is celebrated in another English speaking country. As a result, they learn about the history of the tradition and what circumstances made it to take place in one country and not in another in spite of speaking the same language.

Nevertheless, the age of the learners must be taken into account when it comes to choosing the topic to be explained. Teachers have to consider students’ likes and preferences to get them engaged in the topic. In relation, there are some steps that need to be followed in order to arrive to this engagement. First students feel the necessity for knowing the essential of the English culture. During the first years of education, they have to be introduced to the essential cultural elements to be known, beginning for the UK countries, with their common traditions, social attitudes and food, making a comparison with their own culture at the same time. Once this degree is achieved, they are ready to establish a relationship with other English speaking countries, since they know the essential of British culture, including the history that made the British Empire have a great number of colonies, reason why English is one of the most spoken languages in the world. Consequently, they will learn language and culture from every country or community, developing their sociocultural skill and communicative competence, since students learn to understand and use social verbal and non-verbal communication means depending on the country.

Dividing the educational life into stages when teaching culture is a good technique to make learners completely acquire the knowledge they need about the English language and culture. Most textbooks present the same topics year after year, introducing more specific vocabulary, when they all should offer learners new useful information. That is why students who do not like English as a language never feel engaged with it, as they do not only need to be exposed to vocabulary related to the same topic, but to understand how to use it in its right

context to fully acquire it. As it has been already mentioned, once the first steps are accomplished, textbooks and teachers can move on to establish intertextuality with other cultural elements, so they are able to enrich themselves with both input and output material, being even better if it is real, during all their scholarly life.

2.3 Teaching English in the EFL Classroom using folklore

Folklore is an essential and in many aspects, a very rich element to learn language and culture of a certain nation. Besides, within folklore there are other cultural elements implied, since with the myths and stories it depicts typical traditions, customs, habits, costumes, history...and what is more important for an EFL classroom, it illustrates the real language spoken there, avoiding the artificialities of textbooks.

As happens with other elements of culture, folklore should be introduced via the intercultural approach. Students would have already acquired a good level of cultural competence regarding Great Britain, and in order to complete this wisdom, folklore contributes with the origin of what they have been acquiring. At the same time, learners will also be learning about their own roots, since folklore draws a connection between other nearer cultures with history and fairy tales. Gholson and Stumpf state that “through the use of folklore, a cultural dialogue can be created that is built on respect for differences as well as acknowledgement of similarities” (2005, 77). When these similarities are found, the teacher needs to put emphasis on them in order to make students share their expectations about that content, and if necessary, correct them or broaden their mind so they can fully understand it.

Regarding the different legends that folklore may offer, students can feel surprised when discovering that a great number of fairy tales they know are from British progeny, and that they have reached Spain thanks to oral tradition throughout the years. The same happens with historical facts that have led to legends related to a historical figure. Not only do students know about history, but also the connections with other countries that were implied in that battle, for example. Regarding the historical figure, it is assumed that he or she was from Great Britain, but being an important character, he may also appear, or at least,

be mentioned, in the history class. Nevertheless, the teacher can draw intertextuality with another important figure from Spanish history and folklore to make students compare both sources and how both heroes are treated for their respective cultures.

Concerning certain myths, fairy tales, or legends, students can discover how every single story portrays the manners or other aspects of the actual British culture that they have already learnt. Furthermore, they can also compare how every culture has adapted the story or the character's behaviour to its own identity. This way, students can understand the finality of folklore, used to depict a nation. In relation, Pedersen defends that "folklore fosters understanding and acceptance of the foreign language and culture and underlines their interconnections" (1993, 2). That is why students fully benefit from this part of culture.

In relation to the language, students are introduced, maybe for the very first time, to oral tradition and oral language. They have to learn the patterns of English pronunciation, and riddles and jokes are good materials to acquire it, a part from creating a funny and relaxed environment in class. Pedersen also states that "folklore is comprehensive" and "timely" (1993, 2). By comprehensive he means that all skills that must be worked on in class should all be integrated when teaching folklore. Within it there is reading if it is a story, poem, or play, with its respective rhyming scheme and vocabulary related to different topics and always seen in context, since folklore is the most real material to be found and used in class. Concerning orality, apart from learning the characteristics of oral tradition, students also learn in the Spanish subject, they learn the patterns of pronunciation and melody. In addition, with a good approach from the teacher, students can also learn how to contrast and analyse information, as well as developing their problem-solving skills. The latter technique can be worked on with the presentation of a situation in a folk tale, and before continuing reading or listening about the whole story, the teacher should make students discuss or write about how they think the main character is going to solve the problem, and how students themselves would do it. By imagining the situation they also learn about the setting of the story, implying the typical British weather or the costumes of the time the story is set.

The evaluation skill is also important, as students first need to evaluate the situation they have to solve. In relation, if the characteristics of the hero of the myth have been already explained, they can first put themselves in the protagonist's shoes by thinking about how they would solve the problem, and how the students themselves would do it, making a comparison between both solutions afterwards. Pedersen (1993, 2) defends that "folklore personalises and enriches the language with all its colourful connotations that go far beyond sterile textbook English". By "timely", Pedersen refers to how folklore, although being created in the past, always has a reference to the present or a learning that is timeless. In relation to the teaching of folklore, new methodologies have been developed over the years as the educational system changes. In spite of the changes, with an effort, teachers will always find a technique to use with folklore, even if it is listening to a traditional song or a recording with a story teller telling a legend. Students can always benefit from it and develop their communicative and intercultural approach at the same time.

Nevertheless, teachers also must be careful, since folklore is not a teaching material designed for this finality, but it is teachers who transform it into material to teach English and facts about the countries where it is spoken to help students understand better the nation. It is real material to be used, but sometimes it may not be suitable to instruct only a certain verbal tense, for example. That is why teachers sometimes have to adapt the main source to the level of the students to reach a full understanding. On the contrary, students would feel demotivated if they are unable to understand what is being said in the video, recording or text. Teachers need to build a context and have previous knowledge to understand, as well as to have appropriate material for their level.

Concerning the different materials to be used, folk tales are "the oldest form of literature, and a prime source of language" (Pedersen 1993, 3). Folk tales comprise all epic poetry and legends and myths, horror stories, and fairy tales among others. As teaching material, students can find them more interesting than simple academic texts, since there is always reality and fantasy mixed up depicting situations that could have been real, or at least, that have some real evidence, normally historic. Students can also learn about the authors, if any, taking into account that oral stories lacked an author. Furthermore, they can learn

what circumstances made the author write about that particular event, or who inspired that story.

As folk tales are the oldest form of literature, tales written by known authors can also be used to teach English. Some of these authors are Lewis Carroll, James Matthew Barrie or Rudyard Kipling, whose stories are known worldwide. Nevertheless, they are characterised by all the adaptations made, especially for children, so it is interesting for students to know the real and original stories they have been told during all their lives. Moreover, they learn how authors played with the language by discovering a more formal style of writing in spite of the story being traditional. Nonetheless, and regarding orality:

Experts disagree about the value of a dramatic story reading as opposed to a story-telling. Most consider it an inferior exercise because the story's improvised oral qualities are lost, the language is unnatural, and much of the dramatic effect is lacking. Storybooks tie the silent reader to the author, but, in a sense, separate the oral reader from the listening audience. (Pedersen 1993, 3)

Only by reading students can acquire vocabulary, syntax and expressions. Moreover, since it is more visual, they receive the knowledge as an input, making them feeling more comfortable with this skill, rather than with speaking, for example. Learners, however, also need to practise speaking in order to use in context what they have acquired from the reading. Furthermore, with speaking they can have their pronunciation and intonation corrected by the teacher at the same time they gain fluency. They learn to use word patterns, to describe and to emphasise the exact points, always taking into account the students' level of language, as teachers cannot go behind the learners' capacity. First, however, students need to know what story telling is about. It is here when the teacher uses recordings or videos to make students realise about the necessary strategies a story teller has.

Regarding literary texts, as has already been mentioned above, they are essential to engage students with the origins of these stories because of the adaptations. Moreover, they are useful to depict a particular setting with its respective customs and way of speaking, as in the case of Kipling, who depicted the way of talking in India.

Students have to develop their communicative and intercultural competence, so that they are able to draw a picture of it only by analysing the characters and settings. Moreover, they can also make a comparison of the adaptations and original story, trying to understand why the change was done. In relation to other English speaking countries, as it has already been pointed out in the previous section, students can get to know their myths and legends without taking the language into account. The latter, although still being English, is a variety influenced geographically, as it is the case of New Zealand among others, or historically, as the case of Canada with its French influence. Students not only learn about the traditions of those countries, but also about their English, what and why makes it different from the British English learnt at school. Moreover, they can also draw intertextuality with those other nations and their stories, and not only with students' own culture

A good option to take into account when wanting to present a new culture, the Australian, for example, is to play folk songs. They are rich in vocabulary from that culture, they are in the English variety of that country and students can be introduced to rhyme scheme and stylistic devices such as metaphors or parallelisms. Taking Australia as an example, students can learn about its history with the song *Waltzing Matilda*, a ballad about the life of a walker who goes through the Australian bush. To have a full understanding of the song, students need to know the meaning of specific words that they may not know in British English.

The same happens with African-American folk songs which are about prays or slavery. With this option, students can be introduced to the colonial past of African people, their work in the colonies and how they have been, and still are, treated in the USA for years.

Riddles and proverbs are also a good method to get to know a culture, as the British ones will introduce cultural aspects of important people or places, such as "Why was Karl Marx buried at Highgate Cemetery in London?", implying that students know about this figure and that he is buried in that very graveyard. Another interesting one would be "Why is the letter E like London?", being the

answer “Because E is the capital of England” (<http://www.world-english.org/riddles.htm>).

In Africa, riddles are considered a form of art: “Who has more courage than a Maasai warrior?” “Two Maasai warriors” (<http://afritorial.com/the-best-72-african-riddles/>), meaning that students should look for what a Maasai warrior is. Folk speech, riddles in particular, are used most to learn vocabulary rather than traditions or stories, since “[folk speech] is most often humorous, creative, lively and constantly changing” (Pedersen 1993, 7) but by looking for information about them students can get engaged with other related myths. Taking the African ones as example again, they are full of astrological references, meaning that in that culture the weather and astrology is very important as a belief. Regarding language, students can get involved in asking the riddles to their classmates and practising question formation.

All these materials serve to illustrate the popular beliefs, traditions and stories of all English speaking countries. Lopatin states that “folklore serves the purpose of creating an atmosphere for the language of a country” (1951, 543). Taking traditions into account, students are able to understand a sentence such as “It’s Bonfire Night tonight”. With its proper explanation, learners will be able to recall that the 5th of November English people celebrate the fiasco of the Gunpowder Plot, and will know about the figure of Guy Fawkes and King James I. With only this sentence, students will be able to talk about the story behind this failure, where it took place, the people implied in it and how English people celebrate it nowadays.

The same happens with the sentence “I never celebrate Anniversary Day”, the celebration of Australia day in January, which celebrates the arrival of the first British ships and the beginning of British sovereignty. If students are explained the story properly, they will also know that indigenous people are against its celebration, as they only celebrate the end of their own culture, which was surpassed by the British one.

Folklore has a lot to offer to both teachers and students. One can always come up with new data. “Neither frivolous nor always fun, folklore includes our deepest-held beliefs, fears, and values. Folklore and fieldwork offer rich promise

for teachers and students because folklore is universal and exists in everyday life in many forms, or genres”, Bowman (2004, 386) states. Students get engaged with the story behind the tradition or behind expressions they could not understand because of lack of contextual information. Moreover, they can develop their reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills, as well as evaluation, problem-solving and critical ones.

In relation to the materials, teachers can rely on their own fieldwork. EFL teachers already have an education on culture, and maybe they do not know everything about all Englishes cultures, but have an idea. Moreover, they can take advantage of how folklore is spread around the world, taking Spanish references to the classroom to exemplify what they are explaining to their students, and creating a comparison right from the beginning.

Having teachers conduct fieldwork individually or in teams was often the most challenging but always the most rewarding experience for participants. Not only did teachers say that doing fieldwork made them more empathetic with their students, they found the excitement contagious, the learning intense, and the rewards unanticipated. (Bowman 2004, 388)

Not only do students feel engaged with the contents explained by the teachers, but instructors themselves feel more motivated, especially if they see a positive response from the students. Furthermore, by making a comparison with Spanish traditions and beliefs, students feel they have control over the subject and feel more confident and participative, being surprised when finding out that there are a lot of interconnected cultural aspects between the target culture and their own. When these relations cannot be established, they get to understand that language and culture are very important to identify the identity of a nation, as speakers feel identified with both language and culture. This connection is highly seen with the vocabulary, different words used to refer to the same object in the same language, but in a different country. Farr (1949, 260) remarks that folklore is “the learning of the uneducated, and the basis for much of our culture”. Being useful for people who could not afford an education, it is a great material nowadays that it can be used with methodological techniques to teach English to students, including different varieties of the language, to develop their communicative competence, and to make students broaden their minds by developing their intercultural and social skills.

3. Didactic Proposal and Methodology

The didactic proposal I want to present is aimed to 1st year Post-Obligatory Secondary Education students, known in Spain as *Bachillerato*. This course is the ideal one because they will have acquired sufficient information about British culture in the anterior courses of their Obligatory Secondary Education studies to understand the background of the different stories they are going to learn and study. Moreover, they will also be familiarised with British traditions and customs, so it is the ideal time to start learning the origin of this popular knowledge.

Regarding language, they will be working with authentic material, so they will feel English can be applied and used in real life. Furthermore, the texts will be adapted to their level; to exemplify, if a text is written in Old or Middle English, the original text will be shown to them, but they will work with the Contemporary English text adapted to the appropriate level of English. In relation to grammar and vocabulary, since students will work on different texts, they will have real proof of how the structure is used in a text, and probably they will understand more the meaning and use because of the context the text offers.

Each unit needs to deal with different British legends or tales, establishing intertextuality with everyday stories at the same time in order to make students realise folklore is still alive today. As aforementioned, reading and listening to folklore is one of the most complete methods to learn a culture, and at the same time, language.

The reading skill would be key in all the exercises, developing into listening, writing and speaking exercises afterwards. Students would be given different stories belonging to British folklore. Some of them could be *Tom Thumb*, the *Legend of the Black Dog* and *Drake's Drum*. Such stories would be chosen because they are short and easy-reading, and most of them would sound familiar to students. In this section, I am going to present mixed-genres stories to catch students' attention on how folklore comprises different types of stories, and as a whole, they conform a set of beliefs and traditions that unify a nation, and can even interrelate different nations.

The first story, *Tom Thumb*, has been chosen to make students think about tales they listened to during their childhood. In Spain, this tale is very well known, and it is interesting to see the differences between the British and the Spanish versions. Next, the *Legend of the Black Dog* is related to an incident that happened in an English town. This story serves to demonstrate the power of superstitions, still present nowadays and with interpretations in other cultures as well. Moreover, this story is also useful to draw intertextuality with other contemporary literary works, like *Harry Potter*. Finally, the last story to be used is *Drake's Drum*. This story can serve to draw a relation with the history subject and with England's glorious past, since readers discover a historical figure who was key between the English and Spanish relationship.

Regarding the writing task, different methods of writing stories will be explained after reading the texts. Each genre and its form, as well as typical expressions, will be studied. During the different lessons distinct aspects of the stories, including vocabulary, will be learned and analysed through different activities. At the end of each unit, students must hand in an elaborated critical written assignment or a project to prove they have understood the stories and their background.

As for the speaking activity, storytelling is going to be key in the exercises. While learning the expressions that are to be used when telling a story, the teacher should devote the speaking sessions to emphasising the intonation patterns needed in a story. To achieve this purpose, students can be shown videos as examples. At the beginning of each lesson, in pairs or small groups, students will start working with real material, such as videos or a text, related to each story in order to learn the different expressions and interesting facts about the legends to get familiarised with them. Once acquired the knowledge from that unit, as a final speaking final task students must do a presentation in pairs or small groups. As different versions of the legends would have been explained throughout the unit, each group can choose between either explaining one of the versions and tell the story taking into account the vocabulary, expressions and intonation patterns studied in relation to the genre's story, or speaking about the creative process they followed to do the final task required. Finally, their

classmates should vote the group who best explained the story, taking the aforementioned aspects into account.

With regard to the listening skill, since the main source of the activities are texts to be read, listening activities would be practiced during the viewing of storytelling examples mentioned in the paragraph above. During the video time, students would be asked to answer questions related to the cultural and formal aspects of the story studied. Finally, each story will be used to introduce the grammar that has to be studied in each unit. Moreover, as the stories will be adapted to a level of 1st Year of Post-Obligatory Secondary Education, and although not every legend or tale will focus mainly on one grammar tense, some examples can be taken in order to start the explanation, completing it with further material.

3.1 The Chosen Stories

Tom Thumb is a very world-known character because of all the stories linked to this figure. Being the first fairy tale published in English, there are some of his adventures that are more popular than others, proving how near countries borrow tales from the popular tradition. It has been adapted to both the Spanish and Catalan tradition, creating songs linked to the character and the stories. However, while in the British tradition more of his adventures are known by children, as the one that implies King Arthur - another British character from literature - in Spain there are only two well-known stories.

For this reason, it is interesting to compare both versions of the story with the same characters, and what aspects make one more Spanish or Catalan and what more English. Moreover, studying this story can lead students to discover the abovementioned character King Arthur, his importance in the English folklore and identity. Students may also be interested in the differences of their own story and the British one, discovering the origin of the character and stories they would probably think were Spanish. This way, while in Spain the most known stories are the one of when Tom Thumb goes to the market and when he is eaten by a cow, in England children are familiarised with those who explain the birth of Tom, and his connection to King Arthur.

The *Legend of the Black Dog* is not as well-known as the previous one, but the story may sound familiar to some *Harry Potter* fans. Moreover, everybody knows that a black cat symbolises bad luck, so students might be surprised to discover how interrelated the figure of the black dog and the superstition of the colour black are in this tale. Sheilagh Quaile states:

There are black cats that appear as portents of ill-fortune and witches' familiars, black birds which frequent graveyards and sites of death, "black sheep" to figuratively denote an unfavourable member of a group, and black dogs, who in folklore serve as portents of death and haunt lonely roadways, striking fear into the hearts of weary travellers. (2013, 38)

The main question is where this superstition comes from. It goes back to Greek and Egyptian mythology, as authors gave the symbolism of death to black animals. Nevertheless, this terror-like motif, also known as *the Grim*, is mostly intriguing because of the legend associated to the English town of Bungay. It was stated that in 1577, a Black Dog appeared at the church of St. Mary's in Bungay during a summer storm. The dog, thought to be the devil, attacked some villagers who had looked for shelter in the church. The only remain of this apparition is seen at the door of the church, where there are the marks of the dog's claws, which are visited by people aware of the legend. In the 1500s it was thought that the apparition of the devil caused the storm and the destruction of the church, but it has been stated that probably the villagers only saw a common but furious dog, and that the church was simply harmed by lightning. Nevertheless, superstitions were very powerful in the past, and this town is now famous for this mysterious incident.

What is attractive about this legend is how obscure and mystical it is. Students are not going to believe that the devil appeared with the form of a dog, but they will relate it to all the bad connotations black animals have in our own and foreign culture. Once again, students will be familiar with the motif of the Black Dog, so they will not be totally unfamiliar with it, but instead of only being a belief, they will learn about how this figure has come to become part of the history of a town because of a superstition.

Finally, there is *Drake's Drum*, probably the least known of the three stories selected. The objective of working with this legend is to make students

realise how folklore is not only linked to literary characters or to superstitions, but also to real and historical figures. This way, students will learn about British history and one of its most important historical periods, *the Elizabethan era*, since it is impossible to read a text about Francis Drake and not comment about this period and the figure of Queen Elizabeth I. Moreover, there will not only be information of this single age, but also from more contemporary historical events students will be familiar with, like the First World War. At the same time, they will also learn about Spanish history and the relation and importance Francis Drake had in it. Regarding the legend, it is the most mystical of all of them, since there is no superstition behind it, but only witnesses who have assured to have listened to the drum playing. The story says that when Drake died, his drum was placed in Buckland Abbey, and that he said that if the country was in danger and someone would beat the drum he would return from death to defend England. According to historians, the drum was last heard beating in 1914, when World War I began. Moreover, there is a poem by Sir Henry Newbolt, who made the myth around Drake's figure become stronger. Lying on similarities, apart from history, students can also compare the character of Francis Drake and his heroic poem to another figure from their own culture, *El Cid*, studying how both characters became key for each one's national identity and literature.

3.2 Folklore and the Five Skills

3.2.1 *Tom Thumb*

Students would work with real texts. Each story would occupy different sessions in order to work with the five skills. In the case of *Tom Thumb*, it is going to be the original fairy tale British children know. For this reason, learners are going to be taught about different writing styles depending on the genre, since there is a fairy tale, a mysterious legend and an informative text, adding a poem.

Fairy tales are characterised by the high use of adjectives to describe the characters and the setting of the tale. Moreover, its language is simple and easy to understand, and different grammar points can be studied through the story. This way, students will learn that stories are written in the past tense, revising the irregular verbs. Apart from that, relative pronouns are highly used, as the text is

full of them. For this reason, students can apply the grammar being learnt in class to a real text.

Nevertheless, the first story has to be first presented, as students need to be engaged with the plot. To begin with this engaging process, teachers will first project (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NHROaYdKvwY>) a video of the story without telling the students which one it was. The main objective of this first activity is to make them think of the figure of Tom Thumb, and if it sounds familiar to them. The video would also serve to know which students knew anything about the figures of Merlin and King Arthur. It is highly likely that only a few students would recognise the story, since, as has already been said, in the Spanish traditional culture King Arthur does not appear, therefore he is not a figure as important in Spain as it is in England. Once identified the story, what students have to do next is to compare both the Spanish and English versions of the tale, and to think about what aspects make the English version more British. Through this exercise, students will recall previous cultural knowledge about England, and if they were not familiar with it at the beginning, they would learn about the figure of King Arthur.

Regarding the different skills, during the viewing and listening of the video they will have been taking notes about the story, the setting and the characters to compare it with the Spanish version afterwards. The teacher should emphasise the typical expressions used in fairy tales, such as “Once upon a time...”, or connectors to link one scene to another in order to make the story smooth. These expressions and words will not only help the students when speaking, but also in their writings, as they will acquire the vocabulary and the practice of the expressions.

Moreover, intonation is important in children’s tales, as it makes them more attractive and understandable, so students need to take note of all these indications in order to apply them in the final project, both for the speaking and the writing one. For the next session, they would have to present the main differences between the Spanish and English stories in groups of three or four in order to offer a latter explanation about characters and their importance in the story. To begin with, the reign of Camelot would be explained in the context of

the story, saying that it is the kingdom that King Arthur governed. Students will learn that this figure has been built on folklore, but that it is thought that he protected Britain from being invaded by the Saxons, which is part of British history. The importance of his knights will also be explained, as well as the motif of the round table. Students must understand the great honour that Tom Thumb received when proclaimed one of the King's knights, as they defended the realm. From this point, the importance of fairies, wizards and witches are of great importance in British folklore, since it is thanks to magic that Tom was created, and the wizard Merlin always helped King Arthur with the protection of his territory.

Once the students are engaged in the comparison of the Spanish and English versions, a piece of paper with the written story will be handed out. What they have to focus on next is on grammar and vocabulary. As has already been explained, grammar will lie on revision of the present simple and the relative pronouns, while vocabulary will lie on descriptive adjectives. The teacher would first explain how relative pronouns work by using sentences from the text. This way, students would be taught that the sentence "The famous magician, who could take any form he pleased, was travelling about as a poor beggar [...]" (Evinity Publishing INC 2011) is a non-defining sentence because it has commas, and that "Merlin was so much amused with the idea of a boy no bigger than a man's thumb that he determined to grant the poor woman's wish" (Evinity Publishing INC 2011) is defining. Learners would be explained that a non-defining relative clause is used to add more information to a sentence, and that the meaning of the original sentence does not change if the clause is not added. Defining clauses, however, add fundamental information needed to identify a person or object, and unlike non-defining clauses, if it is not added to the sentence it is still grammatically correct, but there is a change in the meaning because there is information missing.

Regarding the pronouns, with the different examples students can identify the usage of each of them. They will identify that "who" refers to "the famous magician" and "that" refers to the anterior clause. Furthermore, they have to be reminded that defining clauses have no punctuation, referring to the commas, and at the same time, that the pronoun "that" can never be used with commas,

so it can never be in a non-defining relative clause. Nevertheless, the other pronouns can be used in both, using the sentence “the place where he kept all his money” (Evinity Publishing INC 2011) as an example.

Once the explanation is given, students will have to put their knowledge into practice. First of all, they will be given the same text without the relative sentences. The aim is that they have to fill in the gaps by making up their own sentences using the correct relative pronoun, and marking if the sentence is defining or non-defining. With this exercise, apart from learning how to make relative sentences, they will also have to invent a part of a story using their imagination to make the sentence appropriate in the context of the story. Nevertheless, some students will be requested to contextualise their sentences according to the British culture, and others according to the Spanish one. For example, with the sentence “This famous magician, who could take any form he pleased, was travelling...”, they could write “This famous magician, who had a large and white beard, was travelling...” to make reference to how British people commonly illustrate wizards, as students would have the reference of *Harry Potter*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *Merlin* himself. Other learners, however, would have to write a sentence such as “...and at last he returned to the court, where the king and nobility congratulated him for his bad actions and gave him of honour in court”, making reference to how politics work in Spain.

With regard to vocabulary, students first would have to try to understand the meaning of adjectives such as “mighty”, “good-hearted”, or “odd” in context. When all the words are clearly understood, after looking for them in the dictionary or after an explanation given, the students must fill in the gaps from the text with a synonym of the word, and when writing the relative clauses, they should try to include some of the original adjectives from the text in their invented sentences.

This way, students will realise how important learning extra vocabulary and knowing how to use it correctly and in context is. Moreover, they will always develop their imagination because of the effort they have to make when creating other suitable sentences for the whole story.

Once both the grammar and vocabulary activities are done, students would read some paragraphs with the changed sentences, and the rest of the

class would have to guess if the story has English or Spanish characteristics. With this technique, students will investigate and learn more about the differences between British and Spanish culture. By comparing both of them they do not feel alienated from their own customs, but they learn to respect both their own and the British ones, as the text would help them to see how important some key figures and stories are for a nation, and how the customs are reflected in the texts.

Regarding the writing task, students will have to write a comparative essay about the Spanish and British version with all the information commented in class. They will have to mention the importance of magic and fairies in British stories, while the Spanish adaptation is more realistic concerning incantations, or that the British Tom Thumb is a trickster and the Spanish one a good boy. Nevertheless, they also have to lie on similarities, as are the ones between the stories and the songs that both cultures have included, although not being in the same context. Extra marks would be given if they use the majority of the vocabulary studied. Nonetheless, they will first be taught how to write a good comparison essay. In the introduction, they will first have to contextualise the story, writing about the origin of the character in the British and the Spanish one. They may find contrasts regarding the origin in both cultures, but this is an aspect of the popular and oral tradition, when there was not a kept recording of the texts and stories told. Students must take into account that in spite of being the first fairy tale printed in English, the story of *Tom Thumb* goes back in time with the oral tradition, that is why so many countries have this character in their culture, as the tale travelled from mouth to mouth to finally being written by authors of each country.

To continue, they will have to start commenting on the differences, which are in a greater number than the similarities. They will be asked to analyse the characters that are present in each story, and what aspects are more typical of British or Spanish tradition, as well as the setting and the plot line. Moreover, they can also write in more detail about the personality of the main character, which both countries present him in a different manner, which will lead them to differentiate the main learning children need to acquire. To set an example, the British Tom always tricks his friends and the king, so children have to learn that behaving badly has its consequences. The Spanish one, however, has nothing

to do with the learning of the British one. All the contrary, while the British Tom makes tricks benefiting himself from his smallness, the Spanish learning has to do with the importance of not judging a book by its cover, not judging someone because of his appearance. Tom does not let his size cause him troubles, because thanks to his intelligence he is capable of solving all the problems he has to face.

Finally, the similarities between the plots, the characters and the setting need to be taken into account as well. They can maybe write about the storytelling technique, since in spite of being two different languages, the techniques in using certain expressions are quite similar, as all tales have the same objective of transmitting a learning to children.

With these activities the students will have already studied one type of folklore, the fairy tale, and will be familiar with the most frequent expressions used in these types of writings, as well as the pace and intonation when telling them out loud.

3.2.2 *The Legend of the Black Dog*

The second story to be used is the one of *The Black Dog*, a well-known figure for those who believe in superstitions, as this animal can be compared with the belief related to black cats bringing bad luck. Moreover, this animal also appears in the third film of *Harry Potter* under the name of *the Grim*. In the film it is clearly explained and illustrated that when you see the figure, it means that death is around you. However, there are other versions of the story, and the official one states that the Black Dog was once an apparition of the devil in one English town. For this reason, students would first be asked to read about the Black Dog of Bungay, the only real record of the existence of this animal. They would have to visit the website of the town (<http://www.bungay-suffolk.co.uk/bungay/black-dog-legend.asp>) and read about the legend. Since it is an informative text to attract visitors to the town, students must learn how to write an engaging text using the legend as reference. They will have to notice that in the introduction, there is the contextualisation of the story, and that the questions of *what*, *where*, and *when* are answered. Afterwards, there is the information regarding the context of that time about how superstitious people were. Moreover, the legend is told using a tone to create mystery, to follow with a contemporary explanation of the

apparition, relating it with a lightning of the thunderstorm. Finally, students need to spot that the informative text ends again with a mysterious tone to engage the reader and make the town more attractive thanks to the legend. Moreover, it also finishes with a brief explanation about other similar apparitions in other villages and other popular names given to the dog.

Having analysed the text, the students' work will be to create an attractive website of the town. They have to design it, including interesting pictures to catch the eye of the reader and possible future visitors. To be totally informed, a four minute video will be projected with a different version of the story (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nqq6RQyddZs>). Students have to understand that the mystery behind the story is what makes it interesting, and this video is an excellent example of the elusiveness the story must have to attract visitors interested in legends and eager to discover more about the story and see the evidence of the apparition of the animal in Bungay.

For this reason, students are allowed to read about other legends related to that figure, and watch the videos related to it, since they will also have to include an audio reading the text written on the website. Hence, the audio must have the right tone creating suspense and mystery. This way, students will learn about the differences between the different genres of the stories. *Tom Thumb*, being a fairy tale, needs a cheerful, harmonious and agreeable intonation. *The Legend of the Black Dog*, however, is a darker one, so it needs drama and apprehension.

With the activity of the creation of the website there is intertextuality with the subject of ICT, where students learn how to create a website as well. This way, they will not only work on this during the English class, but also during the ICT class with the help of the teacher supervising the practical part and format, while the English one will be supervising the content. The website will be done in pairs because it is easier to contrast information and it is a good and interactive activity to foster the cooperative work.

First of all, each student, individually, will have to write a draft of the information they would like to include in their website. They will write it without having done any previous research needed to write the whole text correctly, but with the draft students will start thinking about how they would like to organise

their website, to start writing with the adequate tone, and to see the extra amount of information they still need to include. Once this task is finished, each student will interchange it with his or her companion in order to complete the texts with further information each of them may know. Finally, both students in pairs will make one text from their individual ones, sharing the information they had individually and creating a unique text.

The second step is to look for information to complete the first draft. They could search for information with the other names given to the dog, such as *the Grim* or *the Black Shuck*, and to read about the different stories related to these figures and the towns where they appeared, mostly in the coastline of East Anglia. They need to take into account that the text has to be interesting, and that a great amount of information may be tiring for the reader if it is monotonous. That is why they really need to make a selection of the data given in the webpage, combining the past and present of the legend to make it more interesting to the reader. For example, they could mention the apparition of the dog in Littleport or in Peterborough Abbey, stories that can be found in one version of the *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, or to find intertextuality with other texts as well. In relation to the Bungay legend students will be working with, the real explanation that would be done nowadays is that the church was destroyed by lightning, and not because that dog was the devil disguised. Moreover, the different lights caused by the storm could have caused the dog to appear more terrifying than he really was. Hence, in *Harry Potter* Hermione states that “they see the Grim and die of fright. The Grim’s not an omen, it’s the cause of death!” (Rowling 1999, 85). This means that people were so superstitious that they believed that everything was caused by the animal, but it was only because they gave this meaning to the figure.

Regarding grammar and vocabulary, as well as with *Tom Thumb*, they will learn how to use synonyms to refer to the dog, since it is a word they will have to use several times. Moreover, they will learn the structure of *would* to talk about the future in the past, as it is seen with the sentence “nowadays, we would attribute the whole event to the Church having been struck by lightning” (Reeve 2001), structure that they can use in their own webpage to include their analysis of what would be the real explanation of the incidents in the different places where the dog was visualised.

The third step is to create the webpage. To do so the ICT teacher will help the students with a proper explanation of the stages to be followed. They will have to register on a webpage that guides you throughout the process of the creation and allows you to create the website as you like. It offers hundreds of templates according to the genre you want to give to your site, but it can also automatically create your personalised webpage by only answering some questions related to the kind of page you want to create. It is recommended to choose the first option, so students are more involved in the process rather than having it done instantly, taking into account that by choosing the templates themselves they work cooperatively because they have to agree on all the decisions and discuss the different possibilities. However, to make sure the website's design is going to work according to the task students have been asked to do, they need to take into account and answer the following questions:

1. What type of people would be interested in the *Legend of the Black Dog*?
2. Why do you think people would visit your webpage?
3. What feelings should the text transmit to the reader?
4. How would you incorporate these feelings in the design of the webpage?
5. Should the website be more visual or with a lot of text?

By talking about the questions, they would learn that format and content are deeply related, and that a good combination of both makes the website more attractive to the reader.

Concerning the creation part, a positive point of this site is that students are familiarised with it because it has the format of most of writing and power point programmes from the computers, so it is not difficult to change the format of the template given, having the opportunity to discover and play with the different options they have to make a professional, attractive, engaging and mysterious website which would attract both tourists and historians.

Once the webpage is created, students only have to write and record the text and post it online. Learners are allowed to upload any piece of information in any format as long as it is related to the topic being discussed. For this reason, pictures and videos are permitted, since they even make the site more interesting and informative for the visitor because the text is contrasted with other sources,

meaning that it is a well-known topic and that there are real evidences of the events occurred around the ghostly figure of the Black Dog. They can also try to find information about the Black Dog motif in popular culture, as Quaile (2013, 43) states that this figure is an important motif for British culture because it appears in most popular tales from the nineteenth and mid-twentieth century, and since there is no other testimony than rumours that have been collected by folklorists and chroniclers, this perpetuity reveals its importance in popular folktales. In fact, the legend is as significant that a great number of more contemporary authors have written about it basing their studies on the previous records of the apparitions of the figure and the hearsay:

Folklorist Ethel H. Rudkin's 1938 paper on appearances of a spectral black dog in Lincolnshire is perhaps one of the most complete single sources for Black Dog folklore in any region in England. Rudkin's essay includes collected songs, regional folktales, and even accounts of ghostly 'sightings' relayed personally by witnesses.

Moreover, "these apparitions are almost always described as being black— 'blacker than night', as testified by one man interviewed by Rudkin. The importance of this detail reaffirms the premodern connection between the animal and the colour in relaying the specific meaning of ill-omen" (Quaile 2013, 44). With all these references, students have plenty of material to contrast information between the different versions or encounters people have had with the ghost, as all records of the text seem to agree with regard to the appearance of the animal.

Regarding the overall writing skill, students will also learn how to introduce quotations in a text, as they can and should use pieces of other texts to illustrate and verify the information they have written online. Learning how to quote other texts is important, since it is a skill they will have to use in the university, and the more familiarised they are with it, the better. Furthermore, students need to take into account that they are writing about a legend that chroniclers have written inspired by the different apparitions of the dog. Following this thought, learners will have to be explained how quotation works in English regarding the different styles that exist, using only one in order to avoid confusions. This way, they would learn that in Chicago 16 style, if they would use the following quote, it would have the format as seen below, while in other styles the reference could be "(Fleming 1820: 11)", for example:

This black dog, or the divel in such a linessse (God hee knoweth al who worketh all,) running all along down the body of the church with great swiftnesse, and incredible haste, among the people, in a visible fourm and shape, passed between two persons, as they were kneeling upon their knees, and occupied in prayer as it seemed, wrung the necks of them bothe at one instant clene backward, in somuch that even at a mome[n]t where they kneeled, they stra[n]gely dyed. (Fleming 1820, 11)

Being familiarised with these techniques means that when they arrive at university, they will have acquired the necessary knowledge to know how quotations work and, consequently, saving time.

Nevertheless, the most important part of the writing is the transmission of feelings and sensations to the reader. The main objective is that the text has to make the visitor of the webpage engage with the reading because of the mystery of it. Students must write a text that has to make the reader want to know more about the strange happening in Bungay, and about other incidents in other towns, and how they were told and interpreted by different authors. Taking the main text as reference, as well as the video they projected, they need to write about the past and the present, and to introduce words such as “suddenly”, “appear”, “dark”, “unnatural” to create a mystical environment while the visitor is reading.

Regarding grammar, as it has already been stated above, students would learn to use “would” to talk about the past in the future, a grammar part that may create confusion regarding the meaning of the sentences. To make it clear and that students would do it correctly in their writings, they would be given a piece of paper with the sentence “The man saw the black figure approaching him, and he thought that...”, with the objective that each student would have to continue the sentence the previous student had written. At the end of the class, the teacher would read the entire story and comment on the possible mistakes regarding the meaning of the structure. This activity would serve them to have examples before writing the final text that had to be published online. Moreover, students would also learn how to combine past and present in the same text. In ordinary writings the structure is very closed, as well as the verb tenses of each genre. In a for and against essay, for example, the present tense predominates. Learners could always introduce some sentences in the past to talk about some examples, but the general information is given in the present tense. In this type of informative

writing, however, both tenses can be combined, since they have to talk about the town itself, the legend and the figure of the Black Dog, the different incidents that this ghost supposedly caused in that same town and in others, the different interpretations of the legend in relation to the different places where the ghostly dog was seen, and finally, the real interpretation that would be given nowadays.

As for the vocabulary, from the original text, the students would be asked to rewrite the text changing the key words by a suitable synonym. Key words would be those such as “event”, “apparition”, “Black Dog”, “church”, “storm”, “fear”, “superstition” or “associated”, among others. With this activity, students would learn that not all synonyms fit in the same context.

Finally, there are the listening and speaking. The most important part of the listening, using the video mentioned above, is that learners would have to detect the importance of the tone and intonation they have to include in the recording. Apart from that, they would have to answer questions about the content, and about the technique used:

1. Where does Peter keep the two watchdogs?
2. At what time does Peter feel the presence of the Black Dog?
3. What does Peter hear?
4. Where does the sound come from?
5. What is the reaction of the dog when the neighbour whistles?
6. How do you think the narrator makes the most of the mystery that is present around the story?

Afterwards, they will have to use the same technique in their own recording. The students need to see how the background music and the pauses while speaking create the right environment for the story. This way, they have to take these aspects into account when recording. The only requisite is that the voices of both students have to be heard. Furthermore, since this recording would not be considered a proper speaking activity because they would mainly read, as a speaking activity in class, they would have to present their webpage to the class, speaking about the different versions of the story they included, the creation process and the problems they faced.

3.2.3 Drake's Drum

While the *Legend of the Black Dog* draws interdisciplinarity between English and ICT, the legend of Drake's Drum does the same but with history. This is the perfect example for students to see that not only literature is interrelated, but that history is as well, since Francis Drake was an important figure in England, and probably a problem for the Spanish king of that time. The other two tales are not considered to be real, but the historical figure that is behind this legend, is.

However, since in the previous activity students had to write an informative text, this time it will be an expository one, as if it were a brochure for a museum in which they are working. The brochure will have to have general information about Francis Drake, his relationship with England and Queen Elizabeth I, and the legend of the drum. Since this historical figure is related to an encounter with the Spanish Armada, this information should also be included in the writing. Afterwards, the final presentation will consist of a role-play in groups, in which every group has to explain the information, expanding it because they are pretending to be the guides of the museum. Finally, each group has to choose between themselves who the best worker at the museum was, according to how clearly they explained and expanded on the information.

First of all, and in relation to the writing task, students first need to know how a brochure is structured. After having designed the website, the format will not be very difficult for them to achieve, since there are also programmes with templates to make the creation easier. Nevertheless, there is a lot of information about this legend due to all the extra data related to the historical figures and events. For this reason, they need to narrow down the information and organise it properly on the brochure to make it fully understandable. Moreover, only from the information written there they have to extract the extra information during the presentation. For this reason, and unlike the webpage, students need to concentrate all useful data in short and comprehensible sentences, combining the facts by writing them in paragraphs and with bullet points if necessary to make the information more easy-reading and visual. Furthermore, they also need to organise the it from the specific to the general, beginning with the explanation of who was Francis Blake and finishing with the importance of his drum.

One important aspect students must take into account is the space they dispose in the brochure. It should not be longer than three pages, including pictures, so they need to make clear within the group which is the most important information to include in the writing. This data covers dates and periods of time, toponyms and names of important figures, apart from a brief explanation of the events.

For this reason, the writing task this time may be more difficult for learners, since for the very first time they are asked to look for all the possible facts about a broad topic, and summarise it to make it understandable. Besides, this task will also help them to learn to prepare attractive but simple and effective power point presentations, since students in 1st of Post Obligatory Secondary Education do not know how to organise information. They need to learn that the more visual and clear, the better, and that the main aim of presentations is their speaking part with the complete explanation, not all the text on the screen or on the brochure.

Apart from the story and the events, students must also take into account the poem that Henry Newbolt wrote in 1862, which will have been commented in class to help students understand it. In fact, before starting to look for data about all the successes and the legend, the first contact students will have with it will be with the poem. It is not written in contemporary English, so they will need help to understand it. Nevertheless, the poem is key to establish a very first contact with the myth, since students would learn how sailors were buried, where Drake was buried and how the Spanish were called by him, "the Dons". Moreover, the text also introduces the legend, when Sir Drake commands his men to take the drum to England and beat it whenever England is in danger, so he will return from death to protect the country.

After this first contact to engage students with the story, they can start browsing the net and look up in books. The vocabulary will be more extended and precise than in the other stories, since it will be about geographical places and sea wars fields. Thus, students will face and learn words such as "circumnavigation", "warrior", "knight someone", "fleet", "treasure", "slave", "raid", "enlist", "master", "privateer", "voyage", "booty", "buccaneer", or "cargo". Students must take all these words into account in their brochure, since they are considered key words in the text. Regarding the grammar, learners will deal with

the passive voice. It is true that they do not have to abuse of it, but this story is a good topic to practise it. In such a way, learners will work with sentences like “Queen Elizabeth I ordered Sir Drake to guide an expedition to the American Pacific coast in 1577”, so they would have to rewrite it as “Sir Drake was ordered by Queen Elizabeth I to guide an expedition to the American Pacific coast in 1577”. In fact, learners would practise this structure with sentences in context to make them become familiar with the vocabulary as well. Besides, students will be asked to also include the grammar points studied with the other activities, the relatives with *Tom Thumb* and the “would structure” with *The Black Dog*. To achieve this, and having been explained that in the brochure they should go from the specific to the general, students, in groups of four, would have to select the information they want to include and write part of it in the passive voice in order to practice it. They can choose to write whatever part they want, but there have to be at least ten sentences. Afterwards, and once they have all the information compiled, they need to make sure that they include all the important points:

1. Sir Francis Drake’s life, including his relationship with Elizabeth I and England.
2. The Drum, its importance in Drake’s journeys and Henry Newbolt’s poem to introduce the myth.
3. His relationship with the Spanish.
4. The occasions when the drum has been heard beating.

Once they have written the four parts, one of them in passive voice, they have to change some sentences of the paragraph written in the passive and rewrite them in the active voice, in order to combine both voices. In the other paragraphs, they must also combine both voices because not everything can be written in the active or in the passive. Moreover, students will learn that the combination of both makes the text richer, less monotonous to read and equally understandable.

Nevertheless, before starting with the project, and in benefit for the History class, students will learn how interrelated historical events are and how every country changes the explanation of the course of the events according to their own benefit and view. For this reason, in order to make the exercise useful for

History, learners would be explained that Drake was considered a hero for the English and a pirate for the Spanish. In this manner, learners would probably feel more engaged and identified with the happenings if they knew both views, one from their own country.

Thus, learners would be explained that it was thanks to Drake that England defeated the Spanish Armada and took Spain's treasure at Panama. The Spanish king Philip II, consequently, put price to his head. Students, after having expanded on this information in the history class, will have to write a short opinion essay about the happenings they have just been told. This exercise will be useful to avoid students defending more one part or the other, because on the brochure the information needs to be totally objective and it does not have to favour the actions of the English or Spanish. For this reason, writing an opinion essay will make them help to organise their own ideas with the information they have already acquired in class, and will think about how decisions were taken by kings in those times according to the benefit of their own countries. The main objective of writing this essay is for students to realise if they favour any part or not. If not, they already have one part achieved to begin with the brochure, but if they are in favour of Spain, for example, writing about Drake as a pirate and that all what he did was a crime, they need to work harder to present a clear brochure. In the final writing students may include information about the relationship between the corsair and Spain, but it has to be totally expository, without any trace of opinion.

Moreover, the story of the drum is highly important in the task, since there is real evidence of the existence of such instrument and that it has been heard being beaten. Firstly it may sound an invention to give credibility to the words that Drake supposedly said before his death, but it is true that it was heard during the Napoleonic Wars or World War I, among others. With this information in mind, the History teacher could expand on the information regarding the wars and the history of England, making students realise how the fate of different countries are always interrelated when fighting between each other.

Once written the first essay, learners will interchange the writings with their companions from their group and every one of them will comment on all essays

in order to discuss what needs to be changed or about their different perspectives before starting writing the whole exposition.

When it comes to beginning with the project, students must work as a unified group at the beginning, at least. This is not like the webpage, which they first had to search for the information individually and put it in common afterwards. This time they have to start working as a whole group from the very beginning, because if they divide up the information each of them has to look for, it will probably be repeated and they will have to do extra work to see if all points agree before eliminating the excess information. On the contrary, this exercise is totally cooperative because they need to work hand in hand.

First of all, students have to begin with the selection of the information they want to include. Once revised their opinion essays, they will have already chosen information or at least, will have discussed what is not necessary to include in the explanation. The main requisite is that they have to include the three points mentioned above, but then they are free to add extra information they think may be relevant for the audience, which is another aspect to take into account. They do not have to feel they are making the brochure for their classmates, since all of them study the same topic and will be equally informed. On the contrary, learners must imagine their audience does not know anything about the content because people of any kind might visit the museum for different reasons. There may be people who have heard about the story of the drum and want to see it by themselves or other people who have gone to the museum just to visit it, but does not have any information about the legend and the figure of Drake. For this reason, they need to present the information as if nobody would know anything of it, and they have to get the audience to be engaged with the story and with the legend, since there is real suspense behind the myth.

Once each group has finished the research work, they have to start with the passive voice sentences. Since they are working in groups of four, each member can rewrite one paragraph, so it will be easier for them afterwards when they have to write the whole text combining both voices. The sentences will be revised by peer reviewing in order to help them to finally acquire the structure of

the passive voice, and by the teacher later on, who will take time to comment on the errors as a class to make sure that everyone understands it.

Finally, there is another piece of information students might want to include in the project. Before, however, the teacher needs to check if they have studied it in History or Spanish. It is the figure of *El Cid*, who as Francis Drake, is considered a hero in Spain. Moreover, both of them have a poem, although the difference relies on that Spanish people know his feats because of that heroic poem, unlike Drake, whose poem was written later on. Nevertheless, their actions are praised in both literary works. Once again, students would learn about the techniques used in the past to glorify the figures of knights or warriors who fought for their country, and they would also compare both figures. Students are free to include this little comparison in their project, but a whole class with the History teacher would be devoted to both figures to provide students with the necessary information. Since students would have already learnt how to compare two similar stories in *Tom Thumb*, it will be easier for them to detect the similarities and differences between Francis Drake and Rodrigo Díaz de Vivar, *El Cid's* complete name. One similarity could be the importance of both figures after their death because of a myth, the drum for Drake and the story of how supposedly *El Cid* fought once killed by the arabs. As for the differences, students could focus on the battles, since Francis Drake mostly dedicated his life to fight in the sea and discover new land, while Díaz de Vivar fought against the Moors, and he and his family had a terrible death. Nevertheless, both heroes were highly respected by their respective kings, and nowadays are equally remembered in their own countries.

It is possible that learners do not want to include the comparison, but it would be interesting if they would think about it, handing in a short comparison text to prove that they have thought about both figures and their importance. Moreover, even if learners prefer not to include it, they will have learnt about a heroic character, since there is the possibility that some students will not feel totally engaged with the task if they only have to talk about England. On the contrary, experts say that it is better to learn culture by combining their own and the target one, so students do not feel themselves as alienated from the English culture.

Consequently, with the explanation of how English and Spanish considered Francis Drake and his comparison with *El Cid*, students learn about their own history and culture at the same time, interrelated with the English one. In addition, having several references of the topic they are studying may make them understand and acquire it better, as they have more examples to use. In fact, the main objective of the project is not to learn by heart the biography of Drake, but to use the legend to understand better how important historical figures are for the identity of a country, as King Arthur could also be. Furthermore, they will also clarify certain aspects of different wars occurred in different moments of history, and will learn how useful literature is to exalt one's countries deeds and preserve it throughout the years.

The last part of the project is the creation of the brochure. Students already have the whole text written with the combination of the active and passive voice. As they have deeply worked the text, they will have acquired all the important and necessary information to explain the theory. Nevertheless, and as has already been mentioned before, the brochure only has to include the essential data for the audience, since they are not interested in reading a whole text when visiting a museum, but knowing the indispensable and have the rest explained by an expert. Therefore, students need to select the information and present it appropriately. They can choose between writing short paragraphs or sentences with bullet points. They can also combine both styles depending on the information they are writing about. For example, when they introduce the drum and the figure of Drake, it can be done with three-lines paragraphs and then some bullet points with important information from his biography, such as:

“The legend of Drake’s drum begins just after the death of Sir Francis Drake, an English captain who requested his drum to be returned to England and beat it whenever England was in danger, so he would return to defend his country”.

- He was born in 1549 and died in 1596 in Panama (or he lived in the 16th century, to make it easier to remember).
- He served Queen Elizabeth I.
- The Spanish Armada was defeated by him.

- He was considered a pirate by the Spanish.
- The legend of the drum can be read in the poem “Drake’s Drum”, written by Henry Newbolt.

Students also need to consider which pictures should be included in the brochure. They must take into account that a greater number of pictures do not make the writing richer, since pictures take up space they need to write, so they cannot consider the possibility of including a lot of pictures because the information written will be poor because of the lack of space.

Up until this point, learners would have worked the reading, writing and use of English skills. Conclusively, they will have to work the listening and speaking skills during their own and their classmates’ presentations. As it has been already said, they would have worked so hard with the information that it should be especially easy to explain it from what they have written on the brochure. Moreover, they necessarily need to use the words from the vocabulary because they belong to the semantic field of sea wars, so they will also use the vocabulary in context while speaking. As for the listening, since the classmates’ have to vote whose presentation was the best, they need to listen carefully to all the details because with their vote they will have to include a justification with evidence for the teacher to make sure that they have understood everything and paid attention.

4. Conclusion

This didactic proposal is aimed to integrate the five skills along with culture from Great Britain to make the learning richer and more entertaining for students. Throughout the study of three tales and legends that comprise different written genres as a fairy tale, an established belief around the figure of a ghostly dog, and a legend around a historical figure that is related to England’s glorious past events.

Moreover, the three stories are engaging because all of them contain a part of fantasy that allows them to discover British superstitions and stories that are related to their own culture as well.

With *Tom Thumb* learners find out the origin of one of the most known Spanish tales, and how the English version presents characters like King Arthur, that exalts their national identity, unlike the Spanish version, who get by without this figure because it is not important for the Spanish identity. Nevertheless, both versions allow them to learn how to write a comparison essay, since there are a lot of differences between both stories; in addition they improve their use of English skills and learn about the art of storytelling.

With the *Legend of the Black Dog* they work with another format in the English and ICT subjects. With this legend learners not only work with a belief, but they discover how superstitious people were and how well-known folktale is in England that it appears in more contemporary works and is a recurrent motif. Furthermore, they work with a different format for the very first time, making the task more interesting for them than simply going through grammar or writing in the usual method, but in this task ICT is as important as the quality of the writing.

Finally, with Drake's drum what they mostly learn is history of England, but also from Spain and other European countries. Regarding the different skills, they totally practice the passive voice and learn about looking for information and summarising it to prepare a good presentation in a format they are not used to work with, a brochure. Moreover, they are also forced to pay attention to their classmate's presentations and not to disconnect from the task because they have to vote and provide evidence of what has made them take such decision.

The last aspect to take into account is the fact that cooperative work is also taken into account during the tasks, as the three projects combine individual, pair and group work, something very useful because it teaches students to consider their companions' work, to share their different opinions and to work as only one entity.

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