



UNIVERSIDAD METROPOLITANA DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
FACULTAD DE HISTORIA, GEOGRAFÍA Y LETRAS
DEPARTAMENTO DE INGLÉS
MAGÍSTER EN ENSEÑANZA-APRENDIZAJE DEL INGLÉS COMO
LENGUA EXTRANJERA (TEFL)

DEVELOPING READING SKILLS BY USING SCIENCE FICTION
LITERATURE IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

TESIS PARA OPTAR AL GRADO DE
MAGÍSTER EN ENSEÑANZA-APRENDIZAJE DEL INGLÉS COMO LENGUA
EXTRANJERA (TEFL)

STUDENT : MIGUEL CISNEROS BELMAR
SUPERVISOR : IRENE ROSTAGNO EYTEL

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Signature: _____

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RESUMEN

Uno de los mayores desafíos que enfrentamos los profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera es lograr que nuestros estudiantes lean. Generalmente, no quieren; en especial, cuando tienen que leer los clásicos. Suelo comentarles cuán importantes son los clásicos en términos históricos, culturales, y lingüísticos. Salvo algunas excepciones, no están interesados.

Me pregunto ¿qué pasaría si leyeran algo que les guste? Me propuse averiguarlo. Usé historias de ciencia ficción con mi clase de octavo básico en el Colegio Manuel Antonio Matta, un colegio subvencionado en Ñuñoa. Durante cuatro sesiones usamos fragmentos de textos de ciencia ficción en conjunto con material audiovisual.

Esta tesis discute los resultados de mi intervención.

ABSTRACT

One of the biggest challenges we EFL teachers face is getting our students to read. Generally, they don't want to, especially when they have to read the classics. I tell them how important the classics are for linguistic, historical, and cultural reasons. With few exceptions, they are not interested.

"What would happen," I wondered, "if they were reading something they liked?" I decided to find out. I used science fiction stories with my eight grade class at Colegio Manuel Antonio Matta, a subsidized school in Ñuñoa. For four sessions we used excerpts from science fiction texts along with audiovisual materials.

This thesis discusses the results of my intervention.

1. INTRODUCTION

Yes, students are reading all the time. They read Tweets on Twitter, WhatsApp messages, posts on Facebook, blogs on the internet, and comments on YouTube. Nowadays, thanks to the new technology, more young people read than ever before. Which is wonderful. But all their reading doesn't mean they read, or want to read, the classic English texts.

The classics are tough. They were written long ago in a language different from what English speakers use today and in social contexts that are foreign. They take work. And students are not used to having to work at what they read. The internet and electronic media make almost everything immediate, available, and accessible at just a click.

Students read fluently then and can pursue whatever their interests are. But - again with exceptions- they do not read deeply and aren't taught to do so. They aren't taught how to analyze what they read, don't know how to fit it into the society that surrounds them nor, certainly, the lives of those who have gone before.

According to Moats (1999), it is the responsibility of us teachers to find a way to develop our students' ability to read deeply. Interest in reading can always be stimulated, she says. Being aware of student interests and capabilities a teacher can choose appropriate texts and so be able to challenge them to reach deeper levels of analysis, while also improving their reading skills.

I wondered whether my students' interest in science fiction couldn't be used to teach them to read deeply. I thought their readings could be paired with the visual materials – films and videos – that saturate their lives. I wanted to use technology not just as a tool for entertainment, but also to enrich my students' understanding. Through the use of videos, pictures and music. I wanted to generate a different environment for reading, so that students could enjoy an enriched appreciation of what reading brings to life.

I chose science fiction as the thematic content for the class because I knew my students were interested in it. And I came to understand why they were interested. It is because science fiction is about the future -which is just what eight grade students, 13 and 14 years old, are interested in. What will they be? become? What will, what can, life hold for them? Instead of reading about the past and people and places they can never be part of, we read about the future to which inevitably they will belong.

And the future science fiction creates is always relevant. Its problems and conflicts are analogous to those we and our students face today. It continuously questions our society and lifestyles. It invites us to think “but what if...” and explore the possibilities. Young learners still have the idealism to believe a better ways of life can be found and the feasibility to imagine them.

For this study, I worked with an eighth grade class in Colegio Manuel Antonio Matta. For four sessions, they read excerpts of science fiction, analyzing the texts, and identifying possible connections with their lives or events in the near future. In addition,

I worked with audiovisual elements, such as videos, images, PowerPoint presentations, and music, in order to enrich their reading experience. The tasks while reading were not strictly reduced to gathering information from the texts, but also encouraged students to state a hypothesis, to create alternative events, to obtain personal interpretations, and to share their opinions. In these sessions, participation and interaction between classmates was crucial for their learning. I do not consider the development of their reading skills to be an isolated process. Instead, it should be shared among their classmates in a communicative way. I believe in teamwork and that element was present in every session. At the end of the process, I collected data and feedback from the students. To assess their progress, I tried to find out if there was any change in their perception towards reading, if working with science fiction was pleasant for them, or if they felt more confident at the moment of reading in English.

What you are going to read is not only a description of my research, but also my experience. However, it is not only mine, but also that of my students.

This study is divided into five sections. First, I discussed the main objectives and the research questions. Then, I established the theoretical background, defined reading skills, science fiction and task based activities. Another section discussed the methodology used in this study which is a case study. I also focused on descriptions of my observations in the field, records of every session, the activities the students performed, the elements I used to engage them and introduce science fiction, the excerpts they read, students' contributions, and the observations of the classes. Finally, I discussed the data and drew the conclusions of this study.

2. OBJECTIVES

2.1 General Objective:

To facilitate the development reading skills in the EFL classroom through the use of science fiction excerpts.

2.2 Specific Objectives:

2.2.1 To help students change their negative perception of reading.

2.2.2 To observe how a group of students can practice their reading skills by using science fiction literature.

3. QUESTIONS

- 3.1 Is it possible to use science fiction literature in the EFL classroom to encourage a better attitude towards reading?
- 3.2 Is science fiction a suitable genre for 8th grade students?
- 3.2 Which activities are more appealing at the moment of working with written texts?

4. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

4.1 Reading Skills

Much has been written about developing reading skills in the classroom. I will review the main texts that I used in this study.

I will begin by defining reading. De Certeau (1984) defines reading as “a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning”. Reading, in terms of language acquisition, is one of the receptive skills in communication. According to De Certeau, the interaction between the text and the reader is shaped by the reader’s prior knowledge, experiences, attitude, and language community which is culturally and socially situated.

Perhaps the teacher’s first task is to observe their students in order to assess the reading level. For instance, if a teacher wants to use a specific excerpt, it is a bad experience if the students are unable to follow it. The first thing to take into consideration is students’ reading proficiency. Hismanoglu (2011) mentioned there are three main levels of reading proficiency: Frustrational level, instructional level, and independent level.

- **Frustrational level:**

Is when a student has difficulty with the pronunciation or meaning of more than two out of every twenty words in a text. This delineation and definition is important

because we know that students who are constantly reading at their frustration level have significant trouble understanding the reading and usually lose motivation to continue reading. If students are experiencing this rate of error, then the teacher probably needs to shift to a more manageable text.

- **Instructional level:**

Is when students recognize 90 - 95% of the words in a text. Students, with support from the teacher, will expand their vocabulary and will be able to understand the text.

- **Independent level:**

If a text is on students' independent level of reading, they will find less than one in twenty words difficult to understand the meaning of.

Nevertheless, it is important not only to determine the reading skill level of the students, but also to consider the difficulty of the written texts; these must be suitable according to the level of the learners. It is the role of the teacher to make the correct judgement. According to Hismanoglu (2011) there are several elements that must be considered to determine the difficulty of a particular text. These include vocabulary, core knowledge, length of the text, and student interest or motivation.

It is also relevant to understand the two main reading skills, which are decoding, the process of translating symbols and written patterns into speech and words, and comprehension, which is the process of understanding and providing meaning to the text (Hismanoglu, 2011). University of Melbourne (2010), mentions different strategies for developing reading skills that can be applied in the classroom.

- Purposeful reading: the ability to understand the external factors that motivate a person to read and understand the value of a given text.
- Scanning: reading quickly to search for specific information.
- Skimming: reading quickly to gain a general idea.
- Phrase reading: the ability to read several phrases without the need of stopping on every word.
- Analytical reading: the ability to study your own reading.
- Reading comprehension: the ability to understand a whole text.

In this study I also used some strategies, developed in Salisbury University (2009):

- Previewing:

Learning about a text before actually reading it. Previewing enables readers to get a sense of what the text is about and how it is organized before reading it closely. This simple strategy includes seeing what it can be learned from the headnotes or other

introductory material, skimming to get an overview of the content and organization, and identifying the rhetorical situation.

- Contextualizing:

Placing a text in its historical, biographical, and cultural contexts. When we read a text, we read it through the lens of our own experience. The understanding of the words is informed by what we have known and valued from living in a particular time and place. However, sometimes the texts we read were written in the past, sometimes in a radically different time and place. To read critically, we need to contextualize and recognize the differences between contemporary values and attitudes, and those represented in the text.

- Questioning to understand and remember:

Asking questions about the content. These questions are designed to help the understanding of reading. When we need to understand and use new information, it is most beneficial if we write the questions as we read the text for the first time. With this strategy, we can ask questions at any time. In difficult academic readings, we will understand the material better and remember for longer periods if we write a question for every paragraph or brief section. Each question should focus on a main idea, not on illustrations or details, and each should be expressed in our own words.

- Outlining and summarizing:

Identifying the main ideas and restating them in our own words. Outlining and summarizing are especially helpful strategies for understanding the content and structure of a reading selection. Whereas outlining reveals the basic structure of the text, summarizing, synthesizes a selection's main argument in brief. Outlining may be part of the annotating process, or it may be done separately (as it is in this class). The key to both outlining and summarizing is being able to distinguish between the main ideas and the supporting ideas and examples. The main ideas form the backbone, the strand that holds the various parts and pieces of the text together. Outlining the main ideas helps to discover this structure. When we make an outline.

4.2 Task Based Language Learning Approach

The Task Based Language approach or TBL has its origins in the Communicative approach, and its main aim is that students use authentic language materials, such as American science fiction literature, where they have to develop meaningful tasks using English in this context. Assessment is primarily based on task outcome, rather than on the accuracy or the linguistic aspects of the language. It does not imply by any means that those aspects are not relevant, however, the main focus is on the accomplishment of the task.

According to Ellis (2003), a task has four main characteristics. One of these characteristics involves a primary focus on meaning, which is related with Pragmatics,

the study of meaning in context. A task must have a connection with the student. For example, it provides them meaningful information, makes them reason about a particular issue, or provides an instance for sharing their opinions or personal points of view about the subject and that are closely connected with metacognition. Another characteristic is that usually, the participants choose the linguistic resources needed to complete the task, in this context the excerpts of the science fiction texts. Finally, a task that has a clearly defined, non-linguistic outcome and attention to grammar or vocabulary, increases the probability that learners could get distracted from the task itself being more concerned about correcting linguistic mistakes.

Several researchers have defined the term task. Long (1985:89) defines task as “a piece of work undertaken for oneself or for others, freely or for some reward”. Breen (1987:23) comprehends task as “a range of work plans”. Nunan (1989:10) states that task is “a piece of classroom work which involves learners in comprehending, producing or interacting in the target language while their attention is principally focused on meaning rather than form”. Willis, J. (1996: 53) stresses that task is “a goal-oriented activity in which learners use language to achieve a real outcome”. Skehan (1998:95) lists features of “task” as: “(1) meaning is primary; (2) there is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities; (3) task completion has some priority; (4) the assessment of tasks is in terms of outcome.”

Swan (2005) considers there is a general agreement with the understanding of task based language teaching. Most of the experts agree with the following characteristics:

- Instructed language learning should mainly contain natural language use, and the activities are related to meaning rather than language.
- Instruction should support learner-centeredness rather than teacher-centeredness
- This can be realized best by offering opportunities for focus on the form, which will attract students' attention to linguistic components as they emerge incidentally in lessons whose main focus is on meaning or communication.
- Communicative tasks are especially suitable devices for such an approach.
- More formal pre- or post-task language study may be beneficial. This may contribute to internalization by leading or maximizing familiarity with formal characteristics during communication.
- Traditional approaches are unproductive and unsuitable, particularly where they require passive formal instruction and practice isolated from communicative work.

Ellis (2009) mentioned several benefits of task based language teaching at the moment of learning a language. For example, TBLT provides students the opportunity for a less artificial learning within the classroom context. In addition, it stresses meaning over form. However, it does not necessarily mean that learning form cannot be emphasized, even though the main aim of TBLT resides on the communicational aspect of the language. It also provides students abundant input of target language. It is motivating by nature considering that it is based on a learner-focused educational philosophy. It contributes to the development of communicative fluency, but does not ignore accuracy.

4.3 Science Fiction

There are several definitions of science fiction and not necessarily all of them converge on the same criteria. The term itself was invented to describe a certain genre of literature popularized in the 1920s. Isaac Asimov, who is considered the father of the modern science fiction, defines it as “that branch of literature which is concerned with the impact of scientific advance upon human beings”. Following that vein, Gilks (2003) defines science fiction as a speculative fiction, which deals with imaginative concepts such as advanced science from the future and technology, space travel, time travel, parallel universes, and extraterrestrial life, but as the main theme, science fiction often explores the potential consequences of scientific innovations, whether they are good or bad. That is the frame of science fiction I am going to use in our study. I selected excerpts from authors such as Asimov, Bradbury, Wells, and Hughes.

There are several reasons for using science fiction as a literary genre in this study. According to Gun (1996), it is a genre that promotes critical thinking by itself. It is necessary to formulate the right questions in order to understand how humanity ended in total chaos or how we lose our humanity. Science Fiction can be used in the classroom for that purpose, to generate discussion to analyze our society and our life. Gun also points out that it is a contemporary genre, it is modern, and if we think about that, popular culture is filled with Science Fiction elements, such as movies, advertisement, video games, and even music, elements which are more appealing to students. Finally, Science Fiction has a lot of value by itself. “The kinds of subjects that

can be taught through Science Fiction involve all the social and physical sciences, history, ideas, futurology, religion, morality, ecology, reading skills, and many others” (Gun, 1996). Therefore, this genre can be considered suitable to develop reading skills in the classroom.

5. METHODOLOGY

For this study, I did a case study research. It is a form of qualitative research, which is description oriented and observes a small group of participants. “Researchers collect data about participants using direct observations, interviews, protocols, tests, examinations of records, and collections of writing samples” (Becker, 2012). It is a situation in real life that studies in this case reading practice in the EFL classroom. I considered that a case study would be more appropriate as an investigation method, because I was interested in observing the class behavior with a real group of students. It does not represent an objective sample; there is no control group. Considering the amount of time I had for the research a case study was the best choice.

5.1 Participants

The participants of this research were the 8th grade students from Colegio Manuel Antonio Matta, a subsidized school in Nuñoa where I work as an English teacher. The class is made up of 22 students, whose ages range between 13 to 15. They only have three pedagogical hours of English a week. Most of the students have been attending the same school since first grade, so most of them were exposed to English since then, but only two hours of English lessons a week. In general terms their language proficiency level was lower than an A2 level, requested by the Ministry of Education. Through previous conversations, they have recognized that they were not

familiarized with reading in English, so most of them do not feel comfortable or even able of doing it.

5.2 Procedure

The class was exposed to a different methodology that focused on developing their reading skill through different kind of communicative activities in groups or pairs. I developed my study in five sessions, four for the implementation of the method and one at the end to get feedback from the students. The thematic content of the sessions was, “The future”.

Each session consisted of an English lesson of 1:30 hours. During the sessions, the class was exposed to different excerpts of science fiction. The first story was “The Sun has stopped.” by Kevin Hughes. The second excerpt was from the movie script “I, Robot” based on Asimov’s concept “the laws of robotics”. The third one was from “November 2005: The Watchers” a short story from the novel *The Martian Chronicles* (1950) by Ray Bradbury. The fourth excerpt was from the last chapter of the novel *The Time Machine* (1895) by H. G. Wells. The fifth and last excerpt is from the short story “Kaleidoscope” by Ray Bradbury.

It is important to mention that the selected excerpts were edited to help students understand the texts better. Most science fiction texts were not written for EFL students,

especially A2 level students. The vocabulary was simplified and some of the sentences were summarized or paraphrased. The criteria of vocabulary simplification were based on similarity concept, cognates in other words, and word frequency. In terms of grammar, the sentences were edited based on the criteria of linguistic distance and frequency; I tried to use constructions that they were more familiarized with.

Every session was divided into three main stages:

- Pre stage:

In this stage, the main objective was to motivate and engage the class with the topic. It was important to teach the core knowledge they needed to understand the texts and illustrate the themes they worked on, through different kinds of audiovisual elements, such as pictures, videos, and another kind of media. The examples must be appealing to the class and contemporary. The participation of the class was crucial for the success of the research, and it depended on this stage mainly. Another strategy in the pre stage was the use of contextualization. Science fiction is an appealing genre, but it is based on hypothetical situations. Open questions were fundamental in order to bring the class into those hypothetical situations.

- Reading stage:

In this stage, the students worked with the science fiction fragments, but before starting, the students had tried to guess what the plot and themes were. And make connections related to the information obtained from the previous stage. The students

will answer different kind of questions to obtain more information from the text, and they will make use of their reading skills like skimming, scanning, inference, and reading comprehension among others in order to make a better analysis from the information they will get. In the reading stage students will make use of four different reading strategies that I decided to implement; to preview, contextualize, elaborate questions, and also summarize the fragment.

- Post stage:

In this stage, students had different task-based activities to practice inference skills through debates, oral presentations, and written activities. The students completed different tasks. The teacher's role was typically limited to be an observer, being a more student-centered methodology.

Task-based learning could be helpful because it is student-centered, and gave them more opportunities of practicing with the target language, and making of reading a more meaningful experience. During the task phase, the students performed the task, typically in small groups, although, this depended on the type of activity.

5.3 Instruments of evaluation

For this study, the instruments of assessment intended to get qualitative information, related to the meaning and value of the study. It is important to remark that

I was not looking for one specific result, nor developing a formula, neither testing a methodology based in reading proficiency results. I wanted to discuss the experience lived in the classroom, with this group of students, and how these students felt and reflected on their own learning. Two instruments of evaluation were used through this study, a journal, and a survey.

I kept the track of each session in a journal; the entries were summarized and edited to include them in this study. Each entry showed the development of the sessions, the text they read, the performed tasks, the videos I showed, and the observations that drew my attention.

At the end of the study, the students completed a survey, which consisted of eleven questions. The participation in this survey was completely voluntary and anonymous. I used open questions, so they could freely express their opinions and impressions.

6. EXPECTED RESULTS

My aim was to detect if there was a change of attitude on the part of students towards reading at the end of the study. If they wanted to share their opinions with their classmates and to analyze a text following the type of instruction that I proposed and the material that I used. It was important to receive their feedback about the activities, if they were engaging or not, and if they feel more comfortable when reading a text with this methodology.

At the end of this study, I collected data, described the experience, hoping that it may be useful for other English teachers.

7. THE SESSIONS

7.1 Session 1, “The day the sun has stopped”, 04/04/2017

The first session started as a regular class. At the beginning I talked about the new unit that was the focus, the future. I asked the class if they have ever heard the term science fiction. As I expected, most of the students were familiarized with the concept, but to our surprise, only a few of them knew how to explain it. For the rest of the class it was something blurry.

Pre stage:

I showed a Power Point presentation to the class, with a big image of outer space. The picture was fictional, but colorful and stunning, and I could see a positive reaction from the students. Then, they tried to answer the question “Have you ever wondered what is beyond our planet?” after a few contributions of the students, they continued watching the presentation again. The main idea of the presentation was students could understand what science fiction means, how to identify and recognize it, understanding the main themes present in the genre. As a summary, they got the idea that science fiction tries to answer to the question “what if...” The premise of the question was to set them in the place of a hypothetical situation in a near future. For this session the central topic was “Natural phenomena”, so I explained in few words what was the meaning of this concept. In order to understand what a natural phenomenon was, the students watched a video, a mini documental called “what would happen if human beings disappear from the world?” There, they were applying the concept of

science fiction looking for the answer of a hypothetical situation “What if...” The video explained the theory that if human beings disappear from the planet, this one will return to be as it was before humans existed, and how our trace would be erased from the planet. The following activity was to ask to the students if they believe if it is possible that human beings completely disappear from the planet. What would be the main reasons of our extinction. Then I moved on to the reading of the excerpt.

Reading Stage:

After the students gave their ideas about the video and what would happen if human beings disappear, I handed them the reading excerpt, “The Sun has stopped” a short story by contemporary writer Kevin Hughes, a contemporary writer. They guessed what the story was about based on the title, and then they had to read it to check if their guessing was correct. During this stage, the students had to work in pairs to help each other to find the meaning though the text. The story was about a natural phenomenon, where the sun suddenly stopped, or the earth stopped rotating, depending on the point of view, and two characters were arguing, because they could not find an agreement. In the end one of them assumed that event with no scientific explanation must be a divine event. Then they had to answer to a different set of questions in order to get specific information, and broad questions to get a general overview of the story. After they worked with those questions, they had to write a brief summary of the story and compare it with those written by their classmates. The other writing activity was to find a reasonable reason of why did “the sun” stop, and express it in their own words.

Post Stage:

The Task they had to do in pairs was; after analyzing the story, to find a solution to the problem, so in that way they would be practicing not only their reading comprehension skill, but also their inference skill. After doing it they had to present the solution to the class, and the class would decide which solution was more creative, and which one was better in order to solve the problem. For example, one of the recurrent solutions was leaving the planet, but on the other hand, one of the solutions was to build a giant curtain dome, for having artificial night every 12 hours.

7.2 Session 2, “The Laws of Robotics”, 04/11/2017

The second session began as a regular lesson. I had to organize the students in order to start with the session. The classroom management was difficult, because a big number of students are not interested with learning English, and some of them tend to believe that they do not need to effort or pay attention, if they do not want to, but after a couple of minutes I were ready to start. Before showing them the Power Point presentation, I made with a brief review of what they did in the previous session, also the concepts they have learned. I started with the following question; “What is technology?” The students tried to answer to the question giving their thoughts. At the end, the class came to an agreement defining technology as anything created by people to improve their life; it could be from a wheel to an iPhone.

Pre stage:

I told the class that science fiction was not only a literary genre, but it was also present in our daily life. Therefore, I showed to the class in the Power Point presentation, different kinds of pictures, that they were recognizing, such as movies, videogames, groups of music, television shows, comics, anime, books, art, and pieces of advertisement. They could recognize all of the pictures, but this time they were conscious that those elements could be associated with science fiction, and were present in their lives. Then I showed a picture of a scene from the movie “I, Robot”, and they immediately recognized the actor on it, Will Smith. They analyzed the picture and made some speculations about the movie, it was not difficult to them, because the title of the movie was very suggestive, so they agreed that the movie was about robots. Establishing a connection with the previous discussion I made the question “What if technology turns against us?” some students expressed their opinions. Then a little debate emerged from the topic, some of them believed that artificial intelligent will become a reality and it will turn against humanity, but some others were a little reluctant about it. It was the perfect opportunity to introduce Asimov’s ideas “The three laws of robotics”. Those were the principles in the novel “I, Robot” written by him, the movie was an adaptation from that novel, so in order to understand the excerpt of the script it was necessary to learn about those laws. After that, the students watched two different clips from the movie, the first one to illustrate the application of the laws of robotics, and the second one to understand the conflict between the protagonist and the robot. They were ready to work on the script.

Reading stage:

In this stage, the students had to read a excerpt of the script of the movie I, Robot. It was a scene where the detective was interrogating a robot who was accused of the murder of his creator. It was an interesting situation, because, according to the plot, a robot was not able to do any harm to a human, but that robot was different, he felt like a human and he wanted to be like one. The class worked in pairs with the vocabulary, using dictionaries looking for the difficult words. They had to answer a few questions after reading it, about the plot and the meaning behind the robot's question at the end of the excerpt "Can you?", also they had to answer, why were the robots disobeying the laws of robotics? In order to make them think about the story in a deeper level, so they could bring their own conclusions.

Post stage:

After the reading, the class ended because they were involved in some student activity.

7.3 Session 3, "Hello, Mars", 04/18/2017

As in the previous sessions the lesson began with a brief summary of the previous ones, the theme for this session was space traveling and human migration, one of the most frequent topics in science fiction. I made two questions to the students: What if human beings travel to another planet. Would it be possible? If it is possible, What would be the reasons for doing it? Most of them believed that humanity migrating to

another planet was matter of time; some of them said that probably they are going to travel as well. The reasons they gave were divided between two main streams. Humans will travel to another planet, because with the advancement of technology, it would not be a difficult task and anyone could do it. The other part of the class said, people will have to travel because I will not be able to live in this planet anymore.

Pre stage:

I showed a few pictures of space and how travelling to other planets has been one of the most important themes in science fiction literature. This topic has inspired thousands of movies, videogames, and even music. The students watched three video clips from the musical duo, Daft Punk. That group was very popular, and was famous for their electronic music. I showed to the students three video clips from the movie “Interestella 5555”, an animated science fiction movie, about a music band from another planet that was kidnaped and brought to the earth. There were no dialogues in the film, just music and a few sound effects. The movie was the visual realization of the album “Discovery”, one of the most successful albums of the duo. I chose the songs “Digital love”, “Superheroes” and “Something about us” because, there was not enough time to watch the whole movie, but those clips can summarize the movie so they could understand the main plot of it. Most of the students could recognize the songs, especially Digital love.

Reading stage:

In this stage, the class was working with the excerpt of a short story called “The watcher” written by Ray Bradbury in his novel *The Martian Chronicles*. The students had to think what the story was about, based on the title. It was difficult for the students, because the title was not so revealing this time. The story was about a big scale migration to the planet Mars and the life of the people living in there was registered in several chronicles across the years. In this particular story, the people from Mars looked at the sky and saw that the earth was in fire because of a nuclear war, until that moment they seemed very comfortable with their lives, and they had forgotten about the Earth and the people living there. When they saw that the planet was being destroyed, they thought about their families, their friends, and beloved people. They were watching at the sky in silence, and nothing more.

The Students grouped with other classmates and read the story. After reading the excerpt they looked for the meaning of the words they did not understand, then answered the questions related to the meaning of the story, and wrote a summary. After that, they tried to answer why the people from the story decided to live in Mars in the first place, then they elaborated the continuation of the story. Most of the stories they wrote were related with the reaction of the people from Mars, but one story in particular was very different from the rest, it was made from the point of view of the people from the earth, asking for help to their families in Mars, and how they had ignored them and let them die.

Post stage:

The main task of this stage was the students in the same group had to think and write in a short paragraph about how they believed life would be in another planet. I called that planet “The 8° planet from the galaxy Manuel Antonio Matta”. Every group had a topic designed about a specific area of the life, for example, one group had to write about education, other about economy, other about entertainment, and so on. In the end after they wrote their main ideas and I checked, they shared their ideas, combining them into one description of their planet. Coincidentally I could observe the descriptions of the planet resulted to be a very utopic life style. It was interesting to appreciate that every group decided to write about the most ideal point of view they have about the different life aspects, no poor people, everybody as equal, advanced medicine that prevents and cures all diseases, no crime, justice, and an exiting lifestyle were they do not live for working. The paragraphs were very short, no more than three lines as an average, and most of them with some mistakes. Even though, I were not looking for good spelling and accuracy for this activity, I had selected it because the objective was that students could reflect about the topic and have a good time, connecting the ideas and sharing them with their pairs. However I that activity was useful for us to identify the most frequent mistakes they made and work on them in the future.

At the end of the session, I asked to the class that they could bring, for the next session, an element of science fiction that you can find in their daily life, for example: music, a comic book, a poster, etc. The idea was to use it in the following session.

7.4 Session 4, “Rewind”, 04/25/2017

The session started with a brief review of what I saw on the previous sessions, I checked the explored themes by far; natural phenomena, human vs machines, and space travelling. Then I asked the students to show to their classmates the elements of science fiction they had brought to the class. They brought songs, video clips, printed images from the movies they liked, video games and videos on YouTube from the video games they like, action figures, anime posters, games from their cellphones, and drawings. Only a few of them did not bring anything, but most of them bring even more than one element, they seemed motivated. I use those elements to reinforce the idea that science fiction was not very far from their daily life, it is present in popular culture, and also that most of the elements they had brought were connected somehow or based on ideas that had been born in science fiction literature, like time traveling.

Pre stage:

I showed a video about different pictures and video tapes that were captured in the past that could be considered evidence to think that time travelling is real. It was more a video of interest rather than a scientific document, even thou, some of the images shown in the video certainly were difficult to explain if time travelling is not a possibility. Students were interested on the video and started to make us questions about it. Then I opened the discussion, if time travelling could be a reality. Some of the students did not agree with the possibility of time travelling stating that it is impossible, and some others were in favor, saying that technology is growing very fast, that it is a

matter of time, until I could alter the flow of time (they said it differently, with their own words).

Reading stage:

When the debate had finished, I prepared the class for the reading. The students received a copy of an excerpt of the last chapter of *The Time Machine* by H. G. Wells. This is the story of a man who discovered in the fourth dimension, the key to time travelling. He decided to create a time machine, and he travelled to the future finding mysterious creatures and adventures. He travelled several times and one day he never came back. The students worked in pairs and started to read the fragment, trying to find the main ideas, the characters, and events that happened in the story. Then they answered a few questions in order to obtain more information from the text, another question was if they considered that time travelling and changing the past would be right or not. Finally, they tried to guess and infer the reasons why the time traveler wanted to travel to the future.

Post stage:

In this stage the students had to answer to the following question, If time travelling were possible, where will they travel? And why? They had to present their answer to the class. They wrote a draft in order to have their main ideas clear, and presented to the class their ideas. Some of them did it in English, but there were students who made it in Spanish, otherwise they would not present. Then the class voted for the most popular

and original ideas, some of them were: Travel to the past and kill the person who invented schools and homework. Travel to the past and kill Justin Bieber (I suggested that time travelling might not be necessary for that purpose, and maybe they could find a different kind of use for time travelling, rather than killing people). I found interesting, and maybe that could be a topic for a further study, the tendency of this group of students to think that the answer to problems is murder. Although, there were different contributions and ideas that I wanted to highlight, even if they were not so popular or chosen by the class. One of them was to travel to the past with the cure of many diseases that affected our history. Another one was to travel to the future, to learn about future societies and bring their technology to our era. After the activity, I told them that the research was over, so I congratulated the students for their participation.

7.5 Data collection, 05/02/2017

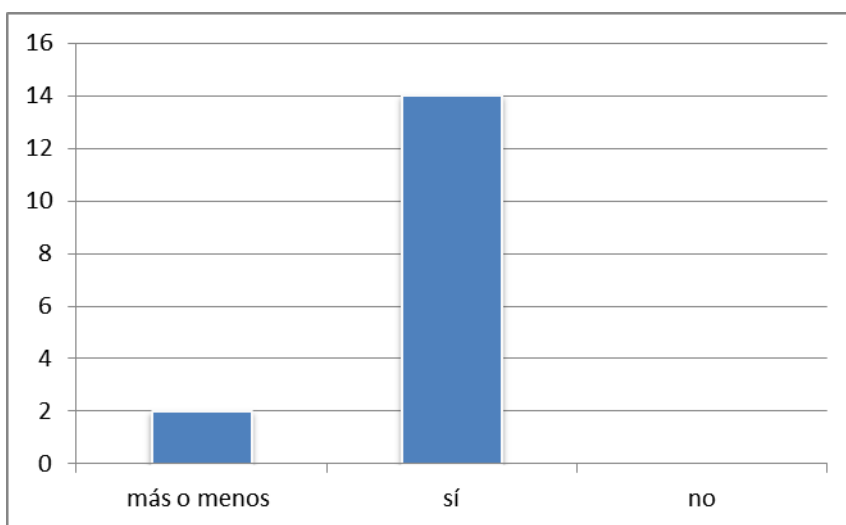
This session was completely different from the others. The objective was to make students give me their feedback about the experience lived in the classroom, and to answer an anonymous survey. I had the assistance of a colleague in that moment, because I consider that it was important that I was not there at the moment of the survey. It could be possible that my presence would affect the way that students could answer the questions, so for not getting biased results I was not present in that moment. The survey took approximately 30 to 45 minutes. Sixteen students participated in the survey and answered a set of 11 questions. These were about impressions of the sessions, the texts and the audiovisual elements I used in classes.

8. DATA ANALYSIS

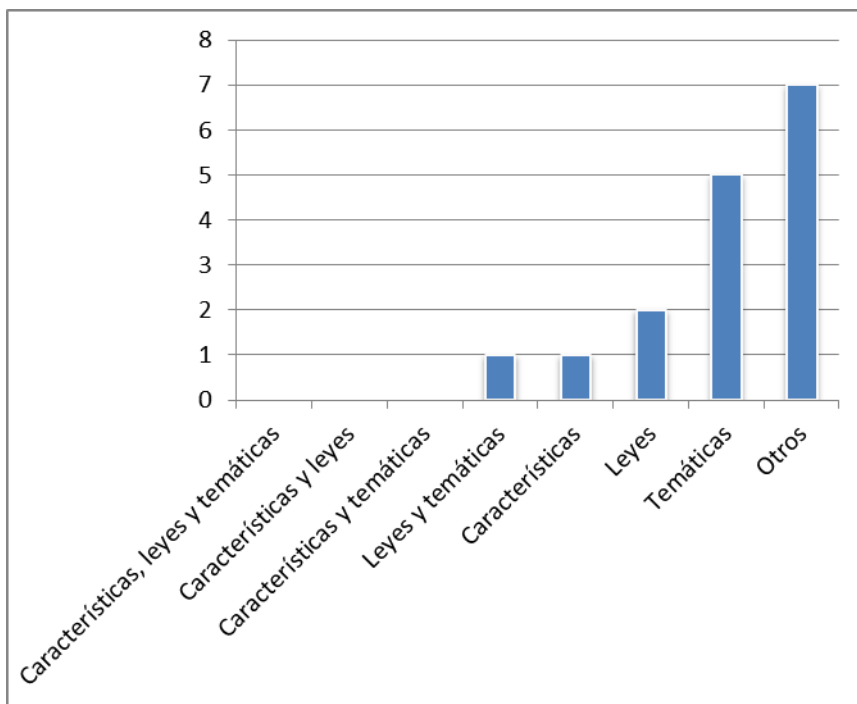
In this part of the study I analyzed the students' feedback obtained from the surveys. The survey was in Spanish, because I wanted to obtain their impressions and was not assessing their language proficiency. Also, I did not want to have another variant that could interfere in the answers. I wanted them to respond freely. The results were tabulated in Spanish, to transform their real answers into charts. The survey has been attached in the appendix section.

These were the results:

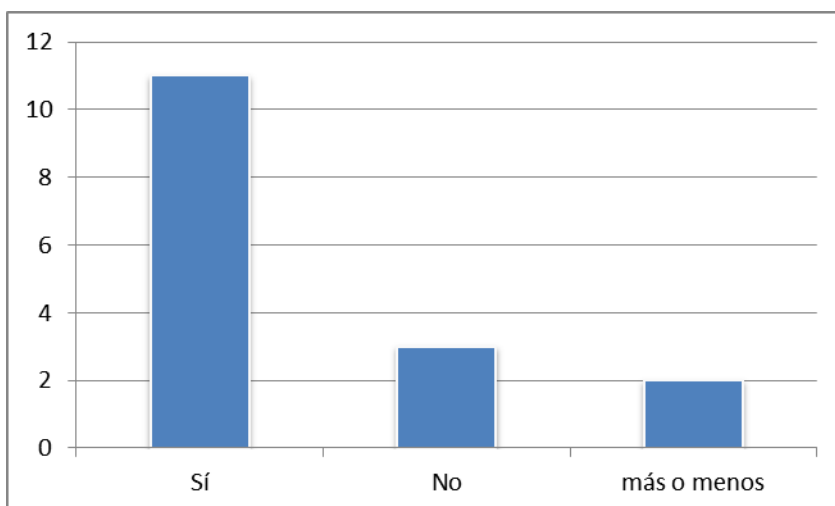
1a - A lo largo de estas sesiones ¿Tienes la impresión de haber entendido con mayor profundidad lo que es la Ciencia Ficción y sus temáticas?



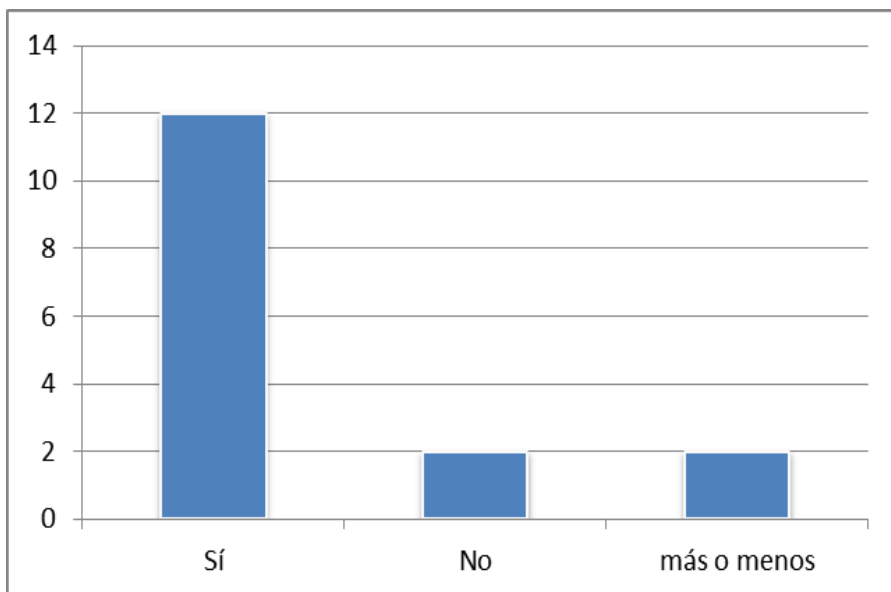
1b - ¿De qué forma?



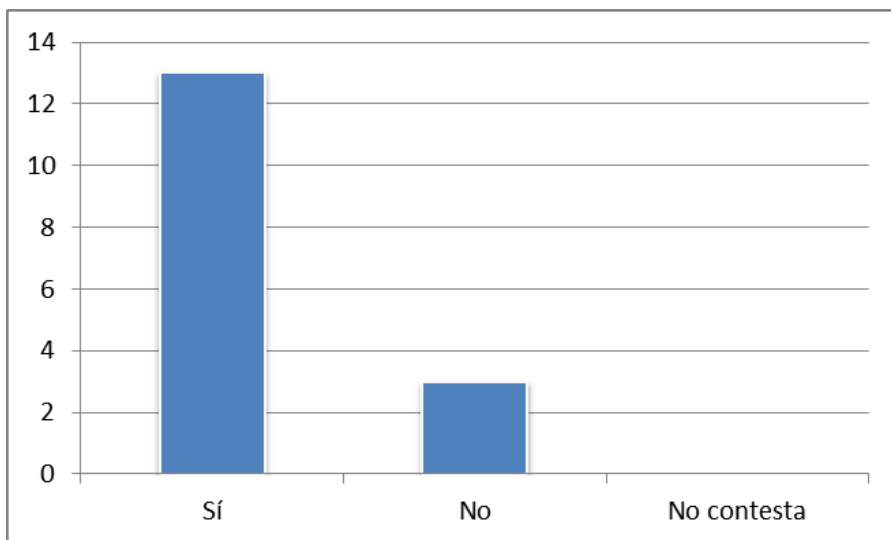
2a - ¿Te interesa más la Ciencia Ficción ahora que terminaron las sesiones?



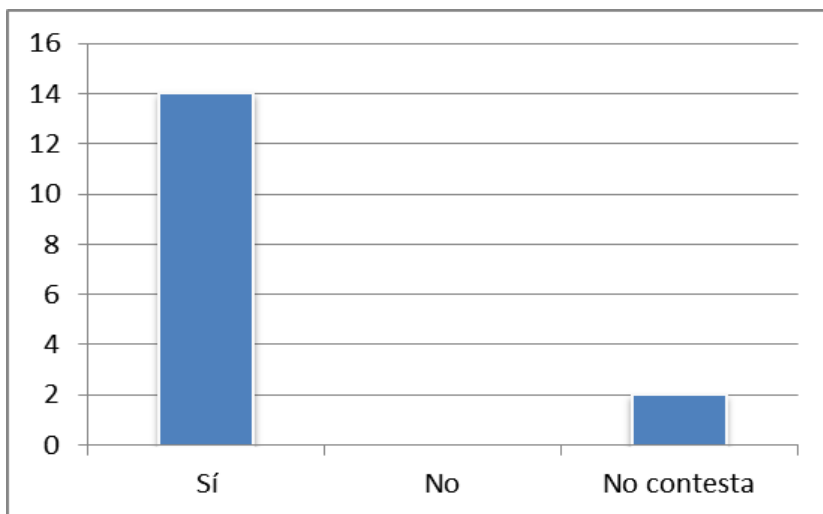
2b - ¿Notas algún cambio o contraste en cuanto a tu percepción de la Ciencia Ficción?



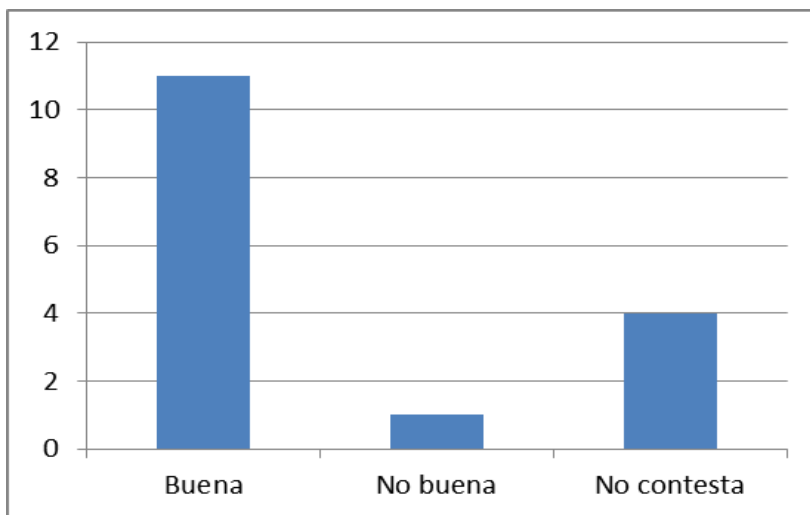
3a - ¿Fue para ti la Ciencia Ficción un género de interés?



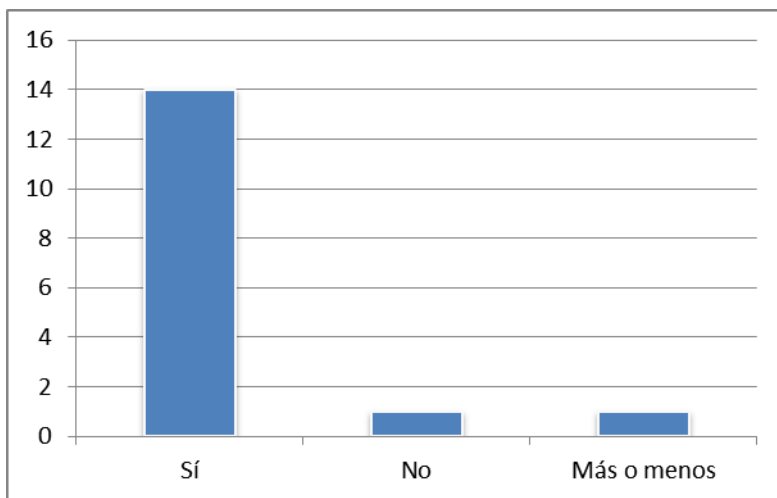
3b - ¿Crees que es un género adecuado para trabajar en clases con jóvenes de tu edad?



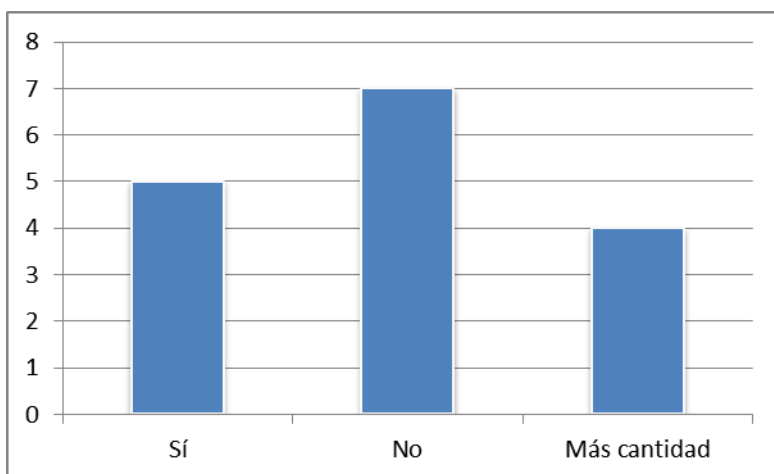
3c - ¿Cómo fue tu experiencia a lo largo de las sesiones?



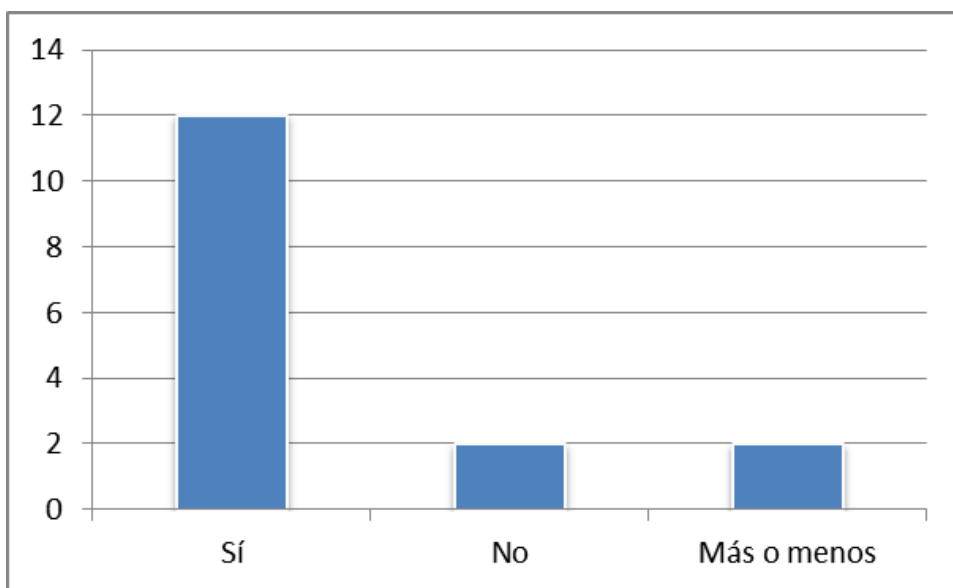
4 - ¿Cuál es tu impresión con respecto a las herramientas audiovisuales utilizadas a lo largo de las sesiones? (Videos, música, imágenes, presentaciones, etc.) ¿Fueron llamativas o de tu agrado?



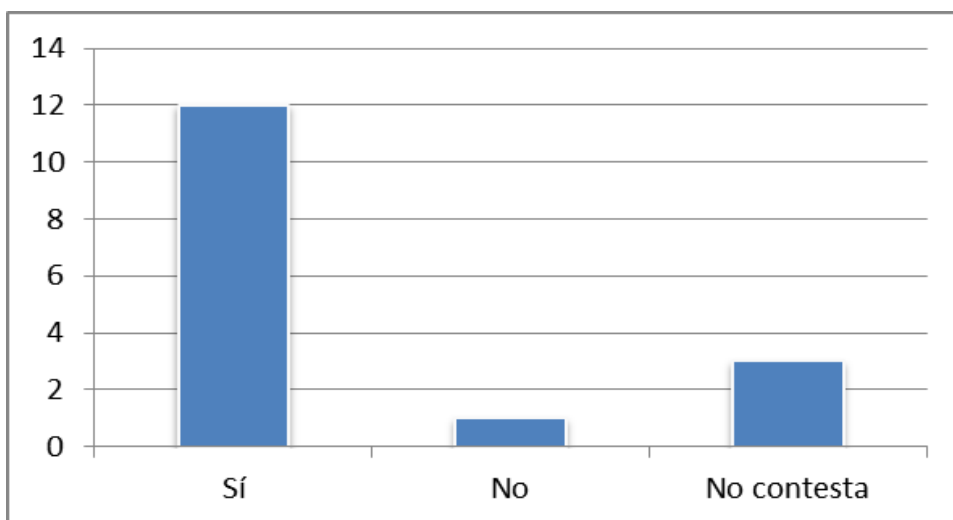
5 - ¿Hubieses incorporado alguna otra herramienta?



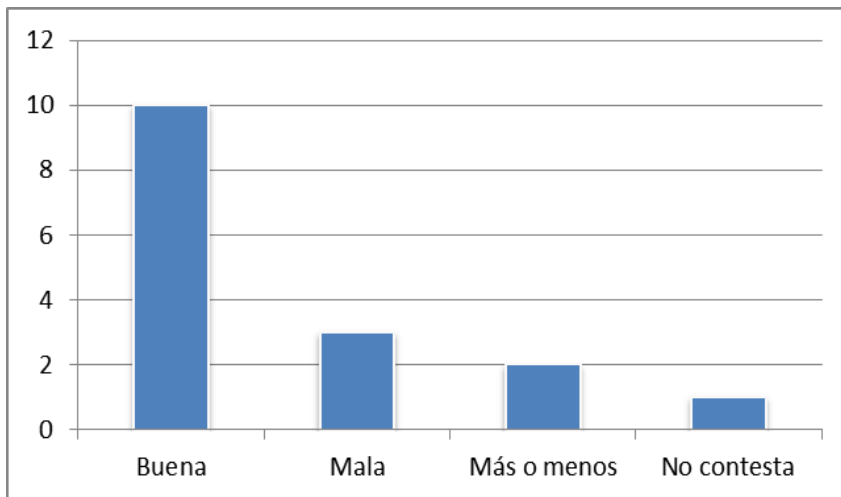
6 - En cuanto a la lectura ¿Sientes algún cambio, mayor confianza o interés al momento de tener que enfrentarte a la lectura de un texto en Inglés?



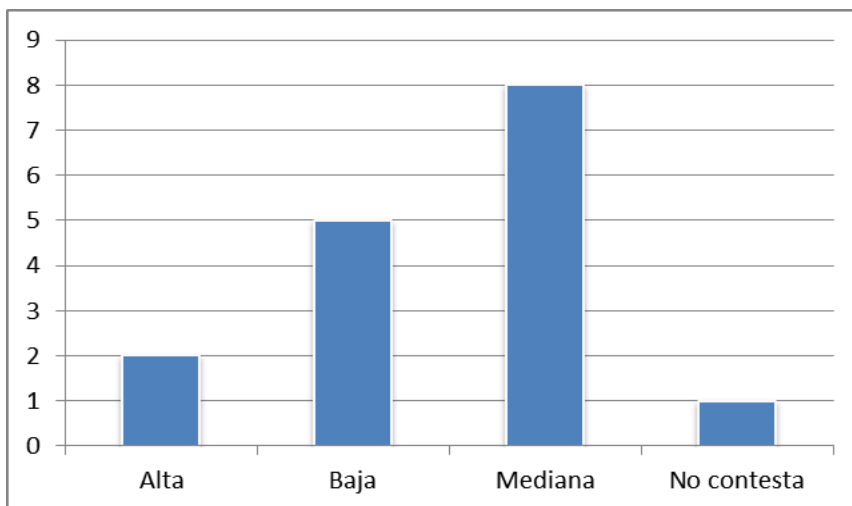
7 - ¿Los textos seleccionados durante las sesiones fueron de tu agrado o interés?



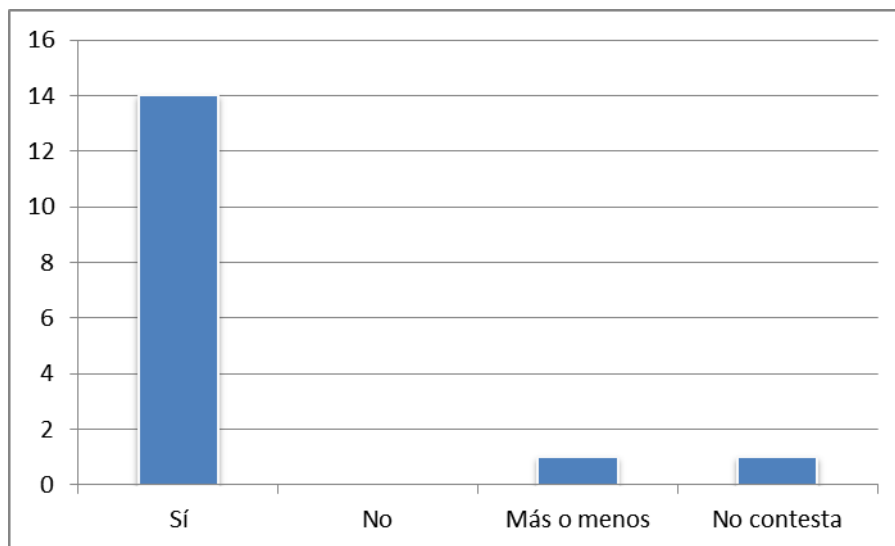
8a - ¿Cómo fue tu experiencia al momento de trabajar con las lecturas en la clase?



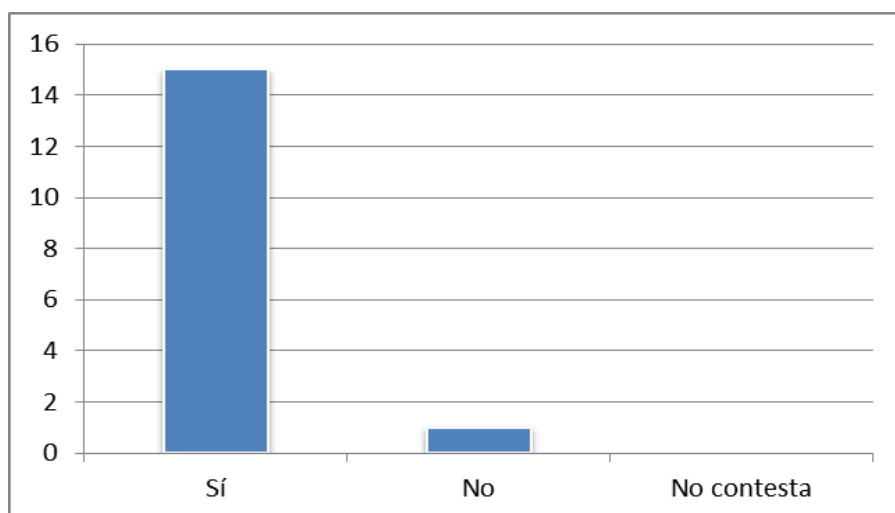
8b - ¿Cómo calificarías su dificultad?



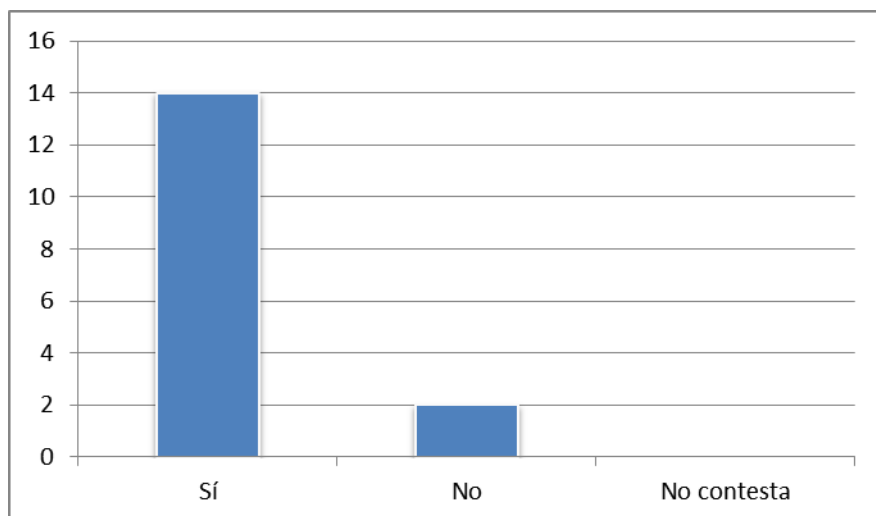
9 - ¿Sientes que te es más fácil, o que tienes más herramientas para obtener información en un texto Inglés, entender su significado y reconocer su vocabulario?



10a - ¿Te gustó la experiencia de trabajo a lo largo de las sesiones?



10b - ¿Te gustaría repetir la experiencia con alguna temática diferente?



By analyzing their answers, I concluded that students had the sensation of learning and improvement. Only a few considered that the experience was not good enough for them. Most of them enjoyed the themes, the readings, the audio visual elements used in the classroom, felt more confident and eager to read in English.

There were a big number of students that suggested they wanted to see more audiovisual elements in the classroom. They feel it was a helpful way to remain focus and engage with the class. The use of videos and music was welcomed, and also, many students would like to see video games as a didactical tool in the future.

There were a considerable number of students who found science fiction more appealing. Also, they wanted learn more about the genre. As a result, interest could be connected with knowledge. Another reason why some of them considered science fiction more appealing was because, now they could identify it more easily, and be aware that it is part of their daily lives.

To perform the reading task in pairs or in groups was helpful in most cases, because they interacted and shared knowledge and ideas enriched their reading experience. A number of students improved in terms of confidence and ability to perform reading tasks, those tasks were beneficial for them, in spite they did not want to do it at the beginning.

9. CONCLUSIONS

At the beginning, the study faced some difficulties. It was originally thought to be applied in an older group of students. However, the school where I carried out my research is not a high school, so I had to adapt the study, reformulate its objectives and methodology. I had to change the reading strategies and the scope of the reading skills I wanted to develop. Nevertheless, I found ways to pursue my goals and have a positive experience, not only for me, but for my students as well. Through the sessions, they discussed about different science fiction themes, and realized that science fiction was present in their lives. They read excerpts from different authors and felt more attached to reading. They analyzed the information and made something new with it in the tasks.

Through this study I discovered that science fiction literature is a valuable resource to develop students' reading skills. The genre really captured students interests. They had changed their views on reading; they often and some even confessed that they felt more confident about analyzing texts. This study helped me as a teacher, because it gave me ideas to develop my students' reading skills. Further studies could use different genres or activities to promote the development of students' reading skills.

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11. APPENDIX




UNIVERSIDAD METROPOLITANA
DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
VICERRECTORÍA ACADÉMICA
DIRECCIÓN DE INVESTIGACIÓN

Autorización

Yo, Miguel Ángel Salinas Araya, Director del Colegio Manuel Antonio Matta de la comuna de Ñuñoa, autorizo que el estudiante tesista de Magíster, Miguel Cisneros Belmar, de la Universidad Metropolitana de Ciencias de la Educación, realice en este establecimiento la investigación titulada *Developing reading skills by using science fiction literature in the EFL classroom* en el nivel de 8° Básico.

Autorizo la realización del estudio (Firma, Nombre y Cargo)

 Miguel A. Salinas Araya - DIRECTOR

Fecha: 28-03-2017



These were the Science Fiction excerpts used in the sessions, through the study:

Kevin Hughes “The Sun has stopped.”

“You’re sure?”

“Of course. Everyone on the planet who looks up can see it clearly. You don’t need all those expensive machines to tell you what your eyes can simply see.”

The President rubbed his eyes, looked out the window, nothing changed. His assistant was correct. He could simply see that the sun had stopped. It hadn’t moved in hours it just stopped there, immobile. It was scary to see. Of course no one noticed for the first few minutes- human eyes cannot pick up the movement of the sun. However, when the sun doesn’t change position, and shadow stay exactly the same for an hour, well, it does come to you attention.

“It isn’t possible. The sun cannot just stop...in the sky.”

“Yes. I have spoken with Astronomers and Cosmologists from all over Earth. And the Sun is exactly in the same place in the sky, in every country. And that...is impossible.”

“Why?”

“Because it would mean the sun is all around us, if I had stopped revolving, one side should be sunlight, the other pure dark. But the sun is stuck at 12:00 no matter where you are on the planet. And that has nothing to do with Time Stopping. The Sun cannot possibly be equal distant from the earth in every direction.”

“So what does that mean? I mean, is there any explanation at all?”

“It means...well...it means...there...is...a...God. He is playing by His rules now.”

“There...is...no...God.”

Doctor Bajaj smiled an almost childlike gentle whisper of a smile,

“There is now.”

I, Robot (script)

- I am asking you for 5 minutes... What if I am right? -
- Well, then I guess I are going to miss the "Good old days" -
- What "Good old days"? -
- When people were killed by other people... Five minutes. —

(Detective enters to the room, walks towards the robot, and leaves the photos of the murder on the table)

- Murder is a new trick for a robot, congratulations... Respond. -
- What does this action signify? **(The robot blinks his eye)**... When you entered, when you looked at the other human. What does “it” mean? -
- It is a sign of trust. It is a human thing, you would not understand. -
- My father tried to teach me human emotions. They are... difficult. -
- You mean your designer. -
- Yes. —

(Detective sits on the chair, and returns to the original conversation)

- So why did you murder him? -
- I did not murder Dr. Lanning. -
- You want explain why you were hiding at the crime scene? -
- I was frightened. -
- Robots do not feel fear. They do not feel anything. They do not get hungry, they do not sleep. -
- I do... I have even had dreams. -
- Human beings have dreams. Even dogs have dreams, but not you. You are just a machine. An imitation of life. Can a robot write a symphony? Can a robot turn a painting into a beautiful masterpiece? –
- Can you? -

November 2005: THE WATCHERS

***Martian Chronicles* by Ray Bradbury**

They all came out and looked at the sky that night. They watched the green star of Earth there. It was a move without conscious effort; they all did it, to help them understand the news they had heard on the radio a moment before. There was an Earth and there the coming war. They stood on the entrances and tried to believe in the existence of Earth (much as they had tried to believe in the existence of Mars long time ago) it was a problem reversed.

Earth now was dead; they had been away from Earth for three or four years. Space was indifferent; seventy million miles of space makes you indifferent, put memory to sleep, erased the past, and allowed these people here to continue with their work. But now, tonight, the dead were there, Earth was destroyed, and their memory awoke, a million names were remembered: "What is going on tonight on Earth? What about my brother and your family?" The people on the entrances glanced sidewise at each other's faces.

At nine o'clock Earth seemed to explode, catch fire, and burn. They waited. By midnight, the fire was extinguished. Earth was still there, but nobody moved until two o'clock. The radio message flashed from Earth. They could read the great Morse-code flashes:

*“AUSTRALIAN CONTINENT ATOMIZED IN PREMATURE EXPLOSION OF
ATOMIC DESTRUCTION. LOS ANGELES, LONDON BOMBED. WAR. COME
HOME. COME HOME. COME HOME.”*

***The Time Machine* By H. G. Wells *(CONTENT EDITED)**

“The Time Traveller smiled at us. Then, still smiling, and with his hands in his pockets, he walked slowly out of the room, and I heard his shoes walking by the long passage to his laboratory...”

It is impossible not to wonder. Will he ever return? It could be that he is trapped into the past, and fell among hairy savages of the Age of the Stone; or among the grotesque dinosaurs, the huge reptilian brutes of the Jurassic times. Or, did he go to the future? Where men are still men, but with the questions of our own time answered, and our problems solved.

When I think about it, everything was like dream, I Remember those days of weak experiments, incomplete theory, and mutual disagreement with the other scientists. Nothing it is relevant now, the Time Machine was a reality now, for the Advancement of Mankind. But, is that true? Will it bring happiness and progress to us? Or will it bring an era of chaos and destruction I have never seen before? Are I the greatest minds, the saviors of our history? Or just a group of foolish men playing to be gods? One thing is for sure, if the end of our civilization is near, I will know it soon. But to me, the future is still dark and empty, I live in ignorance. And I have by me, for my comfort, two strange white flowers, as a prove that even when the mind and strength had gone, gratitude and a mutual humanity still lived on in the heart of man.

Ray Bradbury “Kaleidoscope”

(Originally, this excerpt was selected for the fifth session, but due to time limitations it could not be used)

“The first explosion cut the rocket up the side with a giant can opener. The men were thrown into space like a dozen silver fish. They were dispersed into a dark sea; and the ship, in a million pieces, went on, a meteor cloud seeking a lost sun.

"Barkley, Barkley, where are you?"

The sound of voices calling like lost children on a cold night.

"Woode, Woode!"

"Captain!"

"Hollis, Hollis, this is Stone."

"Stone, this is Hollis. Where are you?"

"I don't know. How can I? Which way is up? I'm falling. Good God, I'm falling."

They fell. They fell as stones fall down wells. And now instead of men there were only voices-all kinds of voices, incorporeal and impassioned, in varying degrees of terror and resignation.

"We're going away from each other."



UNIVERSIDAD METROPOLITANA DE CIENCIAS DE LA EDUCACIÓN
MIGUEL CISNEROS BELMAR
02/05/2017

ENCUESTA DE RETROALIMENTACIÓN Y RECOLECCIÓN DE DATOS

La siguiente encuesta tiene fines académicos y será realizada de manera voluntaria y anónima, con el propósito de reunir información con respecto a los objetivos, metodologías y temáticas que se llevaron a cabo en la sala de clases. De antemano, muchas gracias por su colaboración.

1.- A lo largo de estas sesiones ¿Tienes la impresión de haber entendido con mayor profundidad lo que es la Ciencia Ficción y sus temáticas? ¿De qué forma?

2.- ¿Te interesa más la Ciencia Ficción ahora que terminaron las sesiones? ¿Notas algún cambio o contraste en cuanto a tu percepción de la Ciencia Ficción?

3.- ¿Fue para ti la Ciencia Ficción un género de interés? ¿Crees que es un género adecuado para trabajar en clases con jóvenes de tu edad? ¿Cómo fue tu experiencia a lo largo de las sesiones?

4.- ¿Cuál es tu impresión con respecto a las herramientas audiovisuales utilizadas a lo largo de las sesiones? (Videos, música, imágenes, presentaciones, etc.) ¿Fueron llamativas o de tu agrado?

5.- ¿Hubieses incorporado alguna otra herramienta? ¿Hubieses quitado alguna?

6.- En cuanto a la lectura ¿Sientes algún cambio, mayor confianza o interés al momento de tener que enfrentarte a la lectura de un texto en Inglés?

7.- ¿Los textos seleccionados durante las sesiones fueron de tu agrado o interés?

8.- ¿Cómo fue tu experiencia al momento de trabajar con las lecturas en la clase?
¿Cómo calificarías su dificultad?

9.- ¿Sientes que te es más fácil, o que tienes más herramientas para obtener información en un texto Inglés, entender su significado y reconocer su vocabulario?

10.- ¿Te gustó la experiencia de trabajo a lo largo de las sesiones? ¿Te gustaría repetir la experiencia con alguna temática diferente?

11.- ¿Tienes algún comentario que te gustaría hacer, alguna crítica, sugerencia, u opinión que quisieras expresar?

FIN DE LA ENCUESTA, MUCHAS GRACIAS POR SU PARTICIPACIÓN Y COLABORACIÓN.

“The three Laws of Robotics”

Laws of Robotics are a set of laws, rules, or principles, which are intended as a fundamental framework to underpin the behavior of robots designed to have a degree of autonomy. Robots of this degree of complexity do not yet exist, but they have been widely anticipated in science fiction, films and are a topic of active research and development in the fields of robotics and artificial intelligence.

The best known set of laws are those written by Isaac Asimov in the 1940s, or based upon them, but other sets of laws have been proposed by researchers in the decades since then. These were introduced in his 1942 short story "Runaround", although they were foreshadowed in a few earlier stories. The Three Laws are:

- A robot may not injure a human being or, through inaction, allow a human being to come to harm.
- A robot must obey the orders given it by human beings except where such orders would conflict with the First Law.
- A robot must protect its own existence as long as such protection does not conflict with the First or Second Laws.