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Fostering First Year English Majors' Reading Proficiency through a Genre-based Teaching of Dahl's Short Fiction

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Abstract

Reading comprehension is an important yet complex skill, the development of which should be assigned central importance in the English as a foreign language (EFL) university curriculum. Engaging with literary texts has been proposed as an effective strategy for developing students' reading proficiency. The present paper seeks to foster EFL first-year students' reading proficiency through a genre-based teaching of the stylistic features of the short fiction of the British author of popular children's literature and short stories Roald Dahl. It is hypothesized that a focus on the recurrent stylistic features in the works of a single author can effectively enhance the target audience's ability to notice and internalize these elements leading to improved reading proficiency. To achieve this aim, the paper proposes a reading comprehension teaching unit designed following the principles of the Sydney school's approach to genre (Systemic Functional Linguistics) as an efficient and effective tool for enhancing the learning of the stylistic features in question.

Keywords: Dahl's short fiction, the genre-based approach, reading proficiency, systemic functional linguistics, unit design.

Introduction

In an EFL context, becoming a fluent reader is a challenging yet rewarding endeavor for every English major. Learning to read competently is key to enhancing students' English language proficiency and academic attainment. To assist Algerian students majoring in English to Achieve this goal, there is a need to adopt a sound methodology that caters adequately for the complex cognitive operations required for processing different types of textual information. The applied linguistics literature has witnessed over many decades the introduction of an ever-growing body of theories, models, syllabi, and prescriptions that purport to accomplish this task. To be able to choose the option that is most amenable to the target population, teachers should be aware of the rationale underpinning the plethora of reading comprehension methods and texts. Reading comprehension models fall under two main categories: the bottom-up and the top-down approaches (Villanueva de Debat 2006, p. 8).

The bottom up approaches underpinned by behaviorist views to learning neglected readers' knowledge and focused instead on enhancing readers' capacity to decode texts through vocabulary and grammar exercises geared towards enabling the learner to construct gradually the capacity to engage with the hierarchy of units forming the texts and starting with the smallest ones like letters, syllables, and words. Top-down approaches, on the other hand, adhered to cognitive theories which depict reading as an active process of interaction between the written text and the reader's background knowledge. Enhancing reading ability, following this view, depends on the rendering textual information relevant to the schematic structure of learners' knowledge. Raising awareness about the way information is staged as well as familiarity with defining features of different text types fosters the reader's capacity to process textual information and enables him/her to locate easily the ideas encoded within a text.

The Genre-based approach is one of the most prominent and robust top-down models to the teaching of whole texts. There are three schools that fall under the umbrella of the genre-based approach: the Sydney School, the English for Specific Purposes (ESP) School, and the Rhetorical Genre Studies School. These schools differ from one another regarding the genre features that should constitute the main

focus of genre teaching/learning. Text types are the focal discourse elements of the Sydney School. The latter seeks to enable learners to acquire an efficient comprehension of texts through highlighting the rhetorical features and structure of different text types. Accordingly, the present paper argues that the genre-based approach following the Sydney School tradition holds a considerable potential in improving English majors capacity in comprehending literary texts.

According to Alderson (2000), texts can be classified as literary or non-literary. These two categories exhibit distinct rhetorical structures, language, and meaning patterns; each designed to fulfill certain specific social purposes or functions. The way texts represent social actions and their generic structure aids readers in understanding not only the thoughts expressed but also the forms of life and social practices of a particular group or genre community (Bazerman, 1997; Hyland, 2004; Hyon, 1996; Iwasaki & Kumagai, 2016).

One of the major flaws in reading pedagogy is its focus on individual texts. Such a focus deprives learners of benefiting from a defining feature of written texts, namely generic intertextuality, the way "...a text draws on similar texts created in a similar situation" (Flowerdew 2013, p. 145). To overcome this problem, the present paper proposes the design of a teaching unit focused on the stylistic features of the short fiction of a single author, the British author of popular children's literature and short stories Roald Dahl. We assume that a focus on the short fiction of this author renders the recurrent features of his style more salient and thus easier to process and learn by Algerian English majors.

Based on the above, the present paper seeks to answer the following major question:

- How to use the recurrent stylistic features of Dahl's short fiction to design a genre-based teaching unit intended for enhancing first-year English majors' reading proficiency?

To address this research question, the paper begins by examining the key theoretical foundations before culminating in the development and presentation of a teaching unit. This order ensures a robust conceptual framework underpinning the practical application, aligning theory with the proposed pedagogical solution.

1. The Case for Using Literary Texts in the Foreign Language Classroom

In foreign language (FL) pedagogy, literature plays an essential role. Through explicit instruction of literary genres, learners

can improve both their reading and writing skills. Exposure to literary texts fosters genre knowledge, which is more than just understanding text organization, grammar, and vocabulary; it goes as far as encompassing ways language is used in specific contexts. By engaging with literature, students can gain insight into both the linguistic features of a text and the cultural and social contexts in which it was created (Hyland, 2004). The advent of the communicative approach in language teaching in the 1970's has sparked a debate regarding the usefulness of teaching literature in the ESL/EFL classroom (McKay, 1982).

To build an argument for using literature in the FL classroom, it is important to highlight that literary texts are far more than mere narratives with plots, themes, and moods; they additionally offer invaluable educational benefits that support language development. Some educators have suggested that literary knowledge may hinder linguistic competence, but this view overlooks the fact that when literary texts are withheld from students, students would lack the necessary skills to engage with these texts when introduced to in tertiary stages of education. Without exposure to literature, students not only miss out on developing critical reading skills but also lose the chance to build background knowledge that aids in comprehension and boosts motivation.

Gilroy-Scott (1983) emphasizes the vast potential of literature for enriching education, arguing that teachers should make use of its capabilities in language teaching. Furthermore, Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) supports the use of authentic texts, whether literary or not, of the target language to help learners navigate socio-cultural complexities and achieve linguistic, cultural, and pragmatic competencies. In line with this, Bobkina and Dominguez (2014) echo Maley's (1987) view that literature is language-in-use, providing a learning experience that 'informational' texts cannot offer, particularly by enhancing skills not typically developed through traditional materials.

Critics such as Edmondson (1997) neglect the potential that literature has in reading proficiency development. What he (1997) fails to see is the fact that language proficiency cannot solely be developed when focus is on language learning only. However, Hall (2007), Paran (2008, 2010), and Stockwell (2007) counter this by suggesting that language proficiency should not be seen as just a utilitarian process where only immediately useful content is taught.

Instead, the holistic benefits of literature such as its cultural and narrative richness and its role in daily life provide crucial insights that help learners connect language to real-world contexts. This perspective ties into Halliday's (1993) theory that language learning involves not just acquiring lexis, grammar, and phonology, but also engaging with content like literature and learning about culture.

Literary texts also play a crucial role in developing sociolinguistic, pragmatic, and discourse knowledge, as Tracey and Morrow (2006) and Bobkina and Dominguez (2014) argue. They suggest that curricula should balance the teaching of language and literature to foster comprehensive language proficiency. While literature classes can be demanding, they are a must in any FL curriculum, as they provide deep engagement with both linguistic forms and cultural understanding. In the same vein, Carter and Simpson (1990) emphasize the importance of language in literature, while other works, such as those of Toolan (2013) and Burke (2014) focus on the intersection of language, literature, and stylistics. Geoff Hall (2007, 2016) builds on these ideas by asserting that literary texts foster cognitive engagement, attention to linguistic forms, and active participation in a language community, all of which contribute to the development of multi-faceted competencies: linguistic, cognitive, literary, cultural, social, and communicative.

In conclusion, the integration of literary texts in the FL classroom offers profound benefits that go beyond mere linguistic competence. They introduce learners to cultural insights, foster cognitive skills, and encourage deeper engagement with language. Literature, far from being an obstacle to language development, is a powerful tool for enhancing the language proficiency development.

2. Approaches to Teaching Literary Texts In the Language Classroom

Six traditional approaches to teaching literary texts can be distinguished in the literature: (1) New Criticism, (2) Structuralism, (3) Stylistics, (4) Reader-Response, (5) Language-based, and (6) Critical Literacy. The Reader-Response Approach (RRA) bears some resemblance to the genre-based approach in that it highlights the crucial interaction between the reader and the text. Hence, it was chosen as the backdrop against which the potential of the genre-based approach in enhancing reading proficiency through literary texts is discussed.

2.1. The Reader Response Approach

The 1980s saw a widespread acceptance of the RRA to literature and literary reading. This collective enthusiasm for this approach stems from an appreciation for the fact that students' choices and voices are heard in class, that students read literature rather than learn how to read it, and that literature classes generate a lot of interaction making them authentic and purposeful. In addition to interaction, RR pedagogical implementations have demonstrated an increase in students' desire to respond to what they read, which aids in the development of personal connections with texts, reflections on text content, and critical thinking capacities (Ali, 1994; Spiegel, 1998).

The most significant critique leveled at the RRA stems from one of its founding assumptions. The assumption that pupils should read literature without learning how to read it is incompatible with any endeavor to attain language proficiency. This is because this approach emphasizes extensive, unrestrained reading. We cannot rely on chance or students' unique propensities to learn the language, especially in an EFL situation where content is as important as language (Hall, 2016). Furthermore, lengthy reading appears to be more appropriate for advanced readers who are not the target subjects of the current study. Since the purpose of this research is to examine how students' literary reading proficiency can be improved, and since this research refutes the notion that EFL students are naturally capable of reading in the FL, it appears logical to avoid using it as a framework for this research. The text's significance exists regardless of how it is responded to. Individual reading experiences, on the other hand, should deepen this understanding (Barker, 1989).

2.2. The Genre-based Approach to Literary Reading Instruction

Many educators (Anderson & Styles, 2000; Feez, 1999) acknowledge the importance of teaching through texts because this method "provides teachers with a framework for organizing and sequencing syllabus elements in a coherent and systematic way, and in a way which supports learners as they gradually move to increasingly independent language use" (Feez, 1999, p. 13). Feez (1999) believes that text-based syllabus design is essentially rooted in the genre-based approach. The genre-based approach to teaching language skills has developed significantly in the past decades. Ken Hyland (2004) defines genre as "a term for grouping texts together, representing how writers typically use language to respond to recurring situations" (p. 4). He suggests that explicit exposure to genres aids learners in manipulating them effectively. This approach ensures that a literary

reading course strikes a balance between the traditional aspects of literature study—such as literary periods that contextualize the author—and the context in which the text is being read. It integrates the categorization of text types (genres), their narrative structures, semantic discourse patterns, lexico-grammatical conventions, and reading comprehension skills. This balance is achievable through the genre-based approach, which is inherently textual in nature.

The Reader-Response Approach to reading focuses on the reader's active role in constructing meaning from a text. This perspective values individual interpretation, emphasizing that meaning is shaped by personal experiences, emotions, and cultural background. Literature classes following this approach prioritize discussion, reflection, and subjective engagement, encouraging students to connect the text to their own lives. Since meaning is not fixed, each reader may interpret the same text differently, highlighting the interactive and dynamic nature of reading.

In contrast, the genre-based approach centers on explicit instruction in textual structures and discourse patterns. Rooted in Halliday's (1993) language-based theory of learning, it emphasizes how texts function within their social and cultural contexts. This method helps students identify a genre's structural, textual, and rhetorical features, enabling them to comprehend and analyze texts more systematically. It provides learners with a framework to recognize communicative purposes, structural conventions, and language patterns, ultimately aiding both reading comprehension and writing development.

While the Reader-Response Approach encourages personal engagement and diverse interpretations, the genre-based approach offers structured guidance to decode texts based on established conventions. The former fosters creativity and critical thinking whereas the latter equips students with analytical tools to navigate different text types effectively. Both approaches contribute to reading proficiency, yet they differ in their emphasis—one prioritizing individual meaning-making and the other focusing on textual regularities and discourse structures, which makes it more suitable for novice learners, as it provides clear instructional support and scaffolding to develop their reading skills.

2.2.1. The Three Traditions of the Genre-based Approach

Within genre studies, Hyon (1996) categorizes genre research into three schools: Australian Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), American New Rhetoric (NR), and English for Specific Purposes (ESP). Building on this categorization, John Flowerdew (2002) grouped SFL, NR, and ESP into linguistic and non-linguistic genre studies. NR focuses on the use of the text's lexico-grammatical features and rhetorical structure to understand the situational and cultural context, making it a non-linguistic approach. ESP and SFL, on the other hand, are linguistic in nature starting with the context to understand the authorial choices in language use. These two genre scholarships share a meaning-based, language-centered analysis to examine organizational patterns within a genre (Hyland, 2004).

2.2.2. The Sydney School (SFL)

SFL, in particular, is highly suited for SL or FL learners because it emphasizes genre knowledge within a specific context. SFL's pedagogical framework allows learners to gradually develop autonomy through explicit and repetitive exposure to texts, enabling them to understand both the linguistic forms and the social functions of genres (Christie, 1999; Hyland, 2004; Hyon, 1996; Martin, 1993; Rose, 2005, 2010, 2015; Rose et al., 2003).

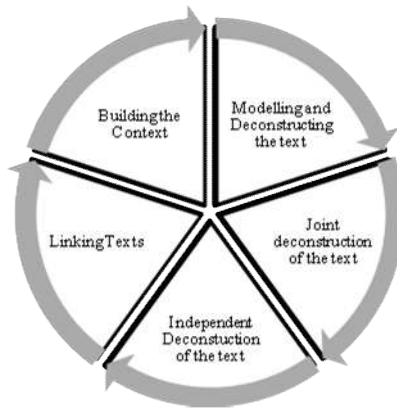
The current study adopts an SFL orientation to genre instruction. This choice is bound by several reasons. Unlike other perspectives, SFL's pedagogical practices are designed to SL and FL learners. It contextualizes language in texts and follows a top-down approach which guides learners to understand the linguistic choices made by the author starting from the context. It also values direct instruction and guides the students gradually with one genre at a time to attain autonomy. Unlike other genre practices, SFL is the most pedagogically experimented with, with several successful literacy initiatives. Most importantly, learners acquire frameworks that guide their readings, and students would gain more proficiency and autonomy when reading literary genres (Berry, 2017; Bateman, 2017; Collin, 2012; Gee, 1999; Halliday & Hasan 1989; Hyland, 2004; Hyon, 1996; Rose, 2005, 2010, 2015, 2019, 2020; Skulstrad, 1999).

2.2.3. The Teaching Learning Cycle

The genre-based approach in education, particularly in language instruction, often follows a teaching-learning cycle which was developed as a basis for genre pedagogy. In this framework, genres are introduced explicitly through modelling and guided practice, which helps learners develop genre knowledge in a

structured way. This process encourages learners to understand both the forms and functions of genres, allowing them to deconstruct texts collectively first then jointly before independently applying their knowledge to new texts. Through scaffolding, students gain proficiency and autonomy, ultimately allowing them to navigate literary genres with greater ease (Feez, 1999; Martin & Rose, 2007). The cycle emphasizes the importance of recognizing a genre's communicative purpose (social function) and how it shapes the text's rhetorical organization and linguistic features. Below is an adapted model showcasing the sequence of the phases of the teaching-learning cycle to the needs of the reading skill as suggested by Feez (1999).

Figure.1.The teaching Learning Cycle



Source: Adapted from Feez, 1999, p. 3

In the first phase, the teacher and the learners explore the cultural and situational aspects of the genre in study. In the modelling phase, the teacher introduces a text, focusing on its genre, structural staging, and linguistic features. The teacher and the learners discuss prior knowledge and shared experiences relevant to the text. In the joint deconstruction phase, they analyze a second text of the same genre, conducting a detailed genre analysis that emphasizes its structure and lexico-grammatical features through communicative tasks. These activities build on students' understanding from the modelling phase, fostering their gradual move toward independent learning. Finally, in the independent deconstruction phase, learners individually analyze a text of the same genre, applying insights from

previous stages and consulting peers and the teacher when needed. This cycle is concluded with linking texts workshop which ultimately enables learners to master the genre, enhancing their language proficiency and benefiting from generic intertextuality.

3. The Use of the Short Story Genre to Foster Literary Reading Proficiency

When students are exposed to a genre's structure and language features repeatedly, they develop what is referred to as *genre knowledge*. In addition to the structural and linguistic aspects, genre knowledge also includes an understanding of the cultural context of the text. Hyland (2004) identifies four key components of genre knowledge:

- Knowledge of the communicative purpose(s) (social function) that the genre typically serves
- Knowledge of the appropriate forms (rhetorical organization and linguistic features) that are needed to construct and interpret texts,
- Knowledge of content and register (situation: field, tenor, mode),
- Knowledge of the cultural context (author's beliefs, background, and understandings) embedded in the text. (p. 56)

By becoming familiar with these components, students not only learn the structural features of a genre but also develop a deeper understanding of how language functions within a social context leading to enhanced reading proficiency. This knowledge is essential for engaging with literary texts of the same genre, as it allows learners to move beyond a surface reading and consider the broader social and cultural implications, leading to a more profound comprehension.

3.1. Stylistic Features in Roald Dahl's Short Fiction

Wilhelm et al. (2010) assert that "there is no better place to begin a study of literature than with the short story" (p. 1). Four short stories (Lamb to the Slaughter (1953), The Landlady (1959), The Umbrella Man (1980), and The Way up to Heaven (1954)) will be used to achieve the aim of this research and to put to test the suggested solution. These short stories are authored by the renowned British writer Roald Dahl (1916–1990), celebrated for his contributions as a short story writer, novelist, poet, and screenwriter. Dahl's works are particularly fitting due to his skillful portrayal of humanity's darker aspects, which has made his writing widely popular (Howard, 2017).

Stylistics, which examines the formal elements of language in a literary text, offers important insights into the relationship between text, language, and reader. Meaning is not static but shaped by both the linguistic structures of a text and the processes of interpretation undertaken by the reader. In this sense, stylistics bridges the gap between textual analysis and reader interpretation, making the act of reading an interactive, communicative event (Clark, 2007). This aligns with the genre-based approach, as it recognizes that understanding a text goes beyond identifying its linguistic features—it involves constructing meaning through interaction between the text and the reader.

The short story genre is characterized by several key stylistic features that distinguish it from other forms of literature. A compelling story is driven by a central conflict that creates drama and suspense, engaging the reader and fulfilling the story's communicative purpose which is negotiating an immersive reading position. This purpose, conveyed through various thematic, structural, and linguistic choices, reflects social conventions and the context of the short story (Knapp & Watkins, 2005).

The short story genre follows a specific sequence of events that can be analyzed using various models, such as Labov's (1972), Macken-Horarik's (1996), and Rose's (2005).

1. Abstract: What the story is about, presenting context
2. Orientation: Setting Description: Who, when, where, what? (evoking the context), Event: expectant sequence, Problem: counter-expectant creating tension, Reaction: behavioral/ attitudinal outcome, Solution: counter-expectant releasing tension
3. Complicating action: Then what happened?, Problem/Challenge: creating tension, Reaction: behavioral/ attitudinal outcome
4. Result or resolution: What finally happened?, Setting: presenting the context, Problem: creating tension, Solution: releasing tension, Twist: unexpected turn of events
5. Coda: That's it, I've finished, Comment: narrator's voice (qtd in. Figueiredo, 2009; Macken-Horarik, 1996; Rose, 2005, 2007, 2016).

Understanding these elements allows learners to recognize the boundaries of the short story genre and to manipulate these structures

in reading (Figueiredo, 2009; Macken-Horarik, 1996; Rose, 2005, 2016).

Teaching the short story genre entails also discussing its field and its components (characters, setting, events, themes, narrative point of view, and linguistic features) as well as isolating particular discourse meaning patterns (cause/effect relations and comparison) and lexico- (lexical items, lexical meanings -denotation and connotation-) grammatical items (clause structure, and the different functions of the clause groups) (Cummings & Simmons, 1983; Short and Leech, 2007).

4. SFL-based Literary Reading of Short Stories: The Outline of the Teaching Unit

Building on Yang's (2002) and Kim's (2004) experimental studies, which employed awareness-raising stylistic activities in teaching literary texts, as well as Boukezzoula's (2016) work, which utilized a genre-based approach in designing a teaching unit, this research adopts a teaching approach tailored to the unique demands of literary texts and the reading skill. This approach integrates reading comprehension with an understanding of how linguistic elements operate within specific social and cultural contexts to support the study's objectives.

4.1. Unit Objectives

To overcome the challenge raised above and to patch the gap between reading; literature, and the genre-based approach, the SFL-based literary reading unit proposed as a solution seeks to achieve the following objectives:

- Describing and explaining the social, historical, and cultural context of the literary texts, their genre, narrative structure, and stylistic features in relation to their own contexts, to understand the relationship between individuals and society, the diversity of human experience, and the value of the text.
- Identifying and illustrating the relationship between texts, their communicative purpose, and their genre.
- Investigating and analyzing a wide range of texts written by Roald Dahl to develop flexible and critical approaches to interpretation.
- Examining and analyzing the texts' narrative structures and stylistic aspects to discern their effects on meaning

patterns, audiences, and contexts, and justify their interpretations.

- Exploring and assessing how different text structures and stylistic choices represent different communicative functions.
- Evaluating and interpreting how literary texts construct meanings and communicate social and cultural values.
- Synthesizing and creating intertextual connections by analyzing and evaluating the structure and stylistic features of the literary texts, making thematic and linguistic links across multiple texts to develop an appreciation of new texts based on prior knowledge.
- Developing and expressing deeper textual understanding that enhances their enjoyment in composing and responding to complex texts, including those by Roald Dahl.

4.2. Implementation of the Teaching Unit

The SFL-based teaching unit will adapt the general framework developed by Susan Feez (1999) and the teaching/learning models implemented in the Reading to Learn (R2L) initiative of modelling and deconstruction of the text (prepare: where the teacher presents the context –social, cultural, and historical- first and then the text -in terms of its communicative purpose, the genre, the narrative staging, the field/plot, the audience, the discourse meaning relations, and the lexico-grammatical devices; and how to exploit these aspects to achieve both the linguistic and literary knowledge and competence of the short story genre), joint deconstruction (task), independent deconstruction of texts (elaborate), and lastly linking related texts to highlight the intertextual thread that binds texts together. Each phase represents a separate lesson addressing a different recurrent stylistic element that stands out in Dahl's short fiction. By focusing on one recurrent stylistic element per lesson, students progressively build their analytical skills rather than being overwhelmed by multiple stylistic features at once. Furthermore, each phase of the teaching learning cycle emphasizes a specific learning outcome. By rotating through different stylistic elements in each phase, students develop a well-rounded analytical skillset that allows them to independently deconstruct a text in its entirety by the end of the unit. Lastly, each stylistic element requires students to engage with texts at different cognitive levels, ensuring higher-order thinking development. Each

stylistic element (e.g., narrative structure, point of view, discourse-meaning patterns) plays a different role in shaping meaning and engaging the reader. By examining them separately but sequentially, students gain a holistic understanding of how texts function at various levels—structural, rhetorical, and linguistic. This method allows them to see the interplay between different elements when analyzing texts as a whole in the final Linking Texts Workshop.

4.3. Subjects and Duration

The designed unit will be implemented with Algerian first-year EFL students. These students have not been introduced to literary studies in middle or high schooling which makes them the ideal subjects for a study that seeks to introduce and scaffold literary reading proficiency. The experiment will be conducted over the course of five weeks scheduled as follows:

- Week One: Pre-test (2 hours),
- Week Two: Building the Context and the Modelling Phase (4.5 hours),
- Week Three: Joint Deconstruction of the Text (3h),
- Week Four: Independent Deconstruction of the Text (2 hours) and Linking Texts Workshop (1.5 hour),
- Week Five: Post-test (2 hours).

4.4. Teaching Unit Lessons

This table provides a detailed outline of the SFL-based teaching unit, including its objectives, language skills and competencies, the selected reading material, and the relevant stylistic features.

Table.1. The SFL-based Teaching Unit Lessons

I. Th e Unit Lessons	II. Langu age Skill (s) and Competencies	III. The Objectives	IV. Strate gy	V. Redu ndant Stylistic Features
VI. Le sson One:Unde rstanding the Context of Culture &	VII. Ski ll/Compete ncy: Reading comprehen sion skills: Understan	VIII. By the end of the lesson, the students will be able to analyze the author of <i>Lamb to the Slaughter's (1953)</i> social and	IX. T he Teaching Learning Cycle: Modellin g and	X. -The context of culture: The social and cultural context of the

Context of Situation: Narrative Structure (Field)	ding how the text relates to the broader social and cultural contexts	cultural background and its influence on the dark humor genre. They will also be able toextract the key phases of the plot (orientation, complication, resolution) and explaining how these phases reflect the dark humor genre.	Deconstr uction of the Text (Teacher led presentat ion and discussio n)	author XI. -The context of situation: XII. 1- The field: The narrative structure which follows a phase relational order made up of: XIII. - The orientation: setting- problem/event- t-reaction XIV. - Complication : problem (s)/event (s)- reaction - Resolution:
XVI. Lesson Two:Tenor: Narrative Point of View & Author's	XVII. Skill/Competency: Analytical skills: Deconstr ucting textual and	XVIII. By the end of the lesson, my students will be able to evaluate the impact of the Roald Dahl's choice of narrative point of view in The	XIX. The Teaching Learning Cycle: Joint Deconstr uction of	XX. 2- The tenor: the social relations existing between the reader and the author

Intended Effect	structural elements	<i>Landlady (1959)</i> by comparing different perspectives and justifying how these choices influence the reader’s interpretation.	a Text: pair-guided practice. Teacher and students collaborate to analyze the text.	and actualized through narrative point of view and the author’s intended effect on the reader.
XXI. Lesson Three: Mode: Discourse, Grammar, and Lexis Meaning Patterns	XXII. Skill/Competency: Lexicogrammatical patterns and Critical thinking and interpretative skills: Understanding context-specific patterns and Analyzing the text at different levels following a top-down progression	XXIII. By the end of the lesson, my student will be able to extract and analyze meaning relations in the text by identifying cause-and-effect connections, examining clause structures and their functions, and interpreting lexical choices in terms of denotation and connotation to determine their impact on meaning and coherence in the same author’s short story <i>The Umbrella Man (1980)</i> .	XXIV. The Teaching Learning Cycle: Independent Deconstruction of a Text: Independent practice with minimal teacher support. Students apply learned skills to analyze the text.	XXV. 3- The mode: XXVI. - Discourse-meaning patterns: meaning relations (mainly cause/effect relations) XXVII.- Grammar-meaning patterns: clause structure, and the different functions of the clause groups XXVIII. Lexis-meaning

				patterns: lexical items, lexical meanings (denotation and connotation)
XXIX. Group Workshop : Linking Texts Together: <i>Lamb to the Slaughter</i> (1953), <i>The Landlady</i> (1959), <i>The Umbrella Man</i> (1980)	XXX. Autonomous Learning Skill (the teaching cycle's progression from modelling to joint and independent deconstruction builds learners' ability to analyze texts independently. This scaffolding approach helps students become more confident and skilled in interpreting the text's	XXXI. By the end of the workshop, students will be able to synthesize their understanding of the stylistic features and language skills by comparing and linking the three texts analyzed throughout the unit, evaluating their thematic and structural similarities and differences, and constructing a critical response that integrates discourse-meaning patterns, grammar-meaning patterns, and lexicogrammatical analysis.	XXXII.Scaffolded integration as learners rely on previous analyses leading to a structured comparative framework allowing the students to revisit and extend their understanding of the stylistic features explored in each lesson promoting collaborative understanding and synthesis moving beyond mere analysis of individual elements to evaluate how recurring stylistic choices contribute to meaning across different texts.	

	structural and linguistic patterns)		
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Conclusion

The present paper proposed a genre-based reading unit aimed at developing first year English majors’ proficiency in reading comprehension through a focus on the recurrent stylistic features of the short stories of a single author, Roald Dahl. It was assumed that a focus on the stylistic features of a single author would render them more salient and thus easier to process. However, the robustness of this claim can only be determined in empirical conditions where the unit in question will be implemented in a real classroom environment.

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