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**The Souls of Mango Street: A Coeducational Approach to
English Teaching**

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Acknowledgments

*To my parents and sister, for accompanying me along the way,
even when it is not easy.*

To my grandpa, for showing me what courage is.

To Yoli, because her kind heart has brought me so much joy.

And to me, for always trying to find my way. Tired, lost, sad or scared.

ABSTRACT

This essay aims to analyze coeducation's role in teaching English as a foreign language. It integrates this cross-sectional teaching into the Spanish educational system, considering the use of literature as a didactic tool. The project explores theoretically and practically how coeducation and a gender perspective could be integrated into an English classroom through the reading and analysis of the book *The House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros. This novel was selected due to its simple and accessible structure. Moreover, it allows the teacher to bring relevant social issues such as gender roles, immigration, and social inequality to the classroom. After a theoretical study of these issues, the essay proposes a didactic unit of eight sessions, covered by the current law of Spanish secondary education (LOMLOE). This didactic proposal promotes critical thinking and reflection among the students by dealing with harsh and real issues.

Keywords: Coeducation, English teaching, Spanish education, Literature, *The House on Mango Street*

RESUMEN

La finalidad de este Trabajo de Fin de Máster es analizar el papel de la coeducación en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera. El trabajo integra esta enseñanza transversal en el sistema educativo español, poniendo énfasis en el uso de la literatura. A lo largo del trabajo, se analiza práctica y teóricamente cómo se debería integrar la coeducación y la perspectiva de género, a través de la lectura y análisis del libro *The House on Mango Street* de Sandra Cisneros. Esta novela se ha seleccionado debido a su estructura simple y accesible. Además, permite al profesorado llevar al aula ciertas problemáticas reales como los roles de género, la inmigración y las desigualdades sociales. Tras el marco teórico de este trabajo, se desarrolla una propuesta didáctica de ocho sesiones, enmarcada en la actual ley de educación española (LOMLOE). Esta unidad promueve el pensamiento crítico y la reflexión de los y las estudiantes sobre problemáticas violentas y reales.

Palabras clave: Coeducación, Enseñanza de la lengua inglesa, Educación española, Literatura, *The House on Mango Street*

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INTRODUCTION

Women and girls have suffered inequality for centuries. Governments and societies have tried to palliate the violence, discrimination and harsh realities that women have to face daily, through legislation and means of education. The educational system is one of the fundamental spaces for the transmission of values and social norms. However, it has perpetuated gender inequality. This essay deals with the implementation of coeducation in the educational system, as a fundamental teaching to eradicate women's structural discrimination.

Having this concept in mind, this work has developed a didactic proposal, which aims to introduce coeducation as a cross-sectional teaching in English learning, using literature as the main resource. It is thought to be implemented in a Bachillerato classroom, inside the Spanish educational system.

The essay has selected the novel *The House on Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros, to shape the didactic proposal. It is a suitable piece of writing, that allows for the teacher to bring important topics such as gender, inequality, immigration and belonging into the classroom. As is explained in the justification of this project, the book has also been selected for its short length, the easy-to-understand language and the issues that are dealt with throughout the story.

This paper is divided into two big sections: the theoretical framework and the didactic proposal. The theoretical framework displays a thorough analysis of coeducation. After defining this cross-sectional education, the need to change the previous and current educational system is presented, highlighting the issues that continue to be perpetuated through education. Likewise, it is essential to tackle how Spanish legislation mentions gender equality and the necessity to provide quality education to all children, in equal terms, regardless their sex, ethnicity or economic circumstances. Moreover, it is shown how the law presents specific sections regarding coeducation, seeing it as a way of ensuring the eradication of gender inequality inside the school system.

Furthermore, the different goals of coeducation are presented, as well as the most suitable strategies to implement it. It aims to change gender dynamics and stereotypes inside the classroom, according to Subirats (2017). Moreover, in order to change those issues, coeducation must acknowledge the stereotypes and inequalities perpetuated in the

system and, after observing them, develop certain interventions to reduce the problem (Tomé, 2017). Observing, or acquiring what Subirats calls the “violet gaze” is the main strategy that should be followed, along with changing how the spaces in and out the classroom are used, how teachers use inclusive language, and introducing women’s achievements and works inside the textbooks and curriculum. All these changes are able to be fulfilled when teachers are properly taught. The essay draws attention to the lack of gender training that teachers receive and highlights the importance of it.

In addition, as has been stated, the essay presents literature as a tool to create a full didactic proposal, aimed at promoting coeducational values among students. Again, Spanish legislation provides instances of literature and its uses when teaching a foreign language, as well as evaluation criteria for assessing students’ performance when working with this resource. Moreover, this section presents reading models that can be taken into account when approaching literature. In addition, to understand how literature may benefit language teaching, the section displays different methods that can be used in order to develop activities inside the classroom. Again, the importance of teaching educators is highlighted, so that educators are able to implement literature inside the classroom in the most profitable manner. To conclude that section, the essay tackles the beneficial aspects of literature in foreign language learning.

After explaining the methodology of this proposal, which is the task-based approach, the paper develops and describes the didactic unit. Based on the book *The House on Mango Street*, the unit presents a final task, which consists of a podcast episode. This episode will be created after the reading of selected chapters of the book, and a set of coeducational activities. These tasks will help the students develop their critical thinking, teamwork and language skills. Moreover, the main goal of the final task is to allow students to discuss and reflect on women’s suffering and the systematic violence they receive, as well as the stereotypes that are constantly perpetuated in today’s society.

JUSTIFICATION

This master's final paper has been developed to investigate coeducation and its implementation in the Spanish educational system. Gender differences and the systematic violence that women suffer daily are current issues and concerns that cannot be overlooked. As stated in the following sections of this work, society is built around an androcentric perspective, which is evident within the school system.

The main goal of this essay is to underline the importance of coeducation and emphasize the stereotypes and differences perpetuated inside every classroom. It intends to expose the relevance of teacher training and the role of educators in solving these issues. However, it is also important to study the different approaches that can be taken to implement coeducation in a classroom and a Secondary education environment. It should be integrated as cross-sectional teaching, and literature in English teaching is a practical resource and path to achieve this.

This essay underlines and presents the fundamental aspects of this teaching and its implementation through a didactic proposal. Another goal is to create a didactic unit that integrates literature with English teaching in the classroom.

This paper tackles the definition of coeducation, in order to frame the theoretical section and delimit the main focus of the essay. Furthermore, the theoretical framework examines the gender stereotypes perpetuated and ingrained in the educational system, as well as the crucial importance of adopting a coeducational perspective.

To continue, this project highlights the strategies that could and should be followed inside the classroom to ensure that coeducation is implemented. It provides subtle changes that teachers can implement in their classes to avoid gender inequality and stereotypes, taking into account what is known as the "hidden" curriculum. This refers to the language used in the classroom, the patriarchal use of public spaces in the school, the unequal treatment given to girls, and daily-life sexist situations. It also considers the textbooks and general curricula, which promote androcentric values and disregard women's accomplishments and presence in academic fields.

This essay presents literature as a valuable resource in the teaching of English. Several sources and studies support and encourage the use of this resource when teaching

it as a foreign language. Raquel Fernández mentions in her article different approaches that can be taken when reading and how teachers could implement them in the classroom. The primary goal is for learners to develop a passion and interest in literature and utilize authentic materials to teach a foreign language (Fernández Fernández, 2006). Furthermore, the section aims to demonstrate the positive effects of incorporating literature into the classroom when learning a language. It provides strategies and methods, as well as types of activities, which can also be used, underscoring the use of a task-based approach.

The last goal of the project is to combine coeducation with literature. It has implemented a didactic unit that works with the book *The House on Mango Street*. As stated above, this unit aims to present literature as a suitable option for learning a foreign language and as a coeducational resource that helps students acquire an egalitarian point of view. It aims to present harsh and unfair situations faced by different female characters, enabling students to develop their critical thinking and a coeducational perspective.

The work's structure must be presented to conclude this final paper's justification. First, the paper presents an abstract and an introduction, followed by a justification of the goals and purpose of this project. Following these sections, the essay presents a theoretical framework, with articles and studies that support the main ideas of the work. It provides a deep analysis of coeducation, the use of literature in the English classroom, and the teachers' role and implication in changing education.

To finish, a didactic proposal has been developed, explaining its eight sessions and the legal framework that supports it. It will explore the use of *The House on Mango Street* in a 1st-year Bachillerato Spanish classroom, and the development of coeducational activities. Moreover, the essay closes with a conclusion that covers the project's main ideas, a list of the most important bibliographical works consulted and appendices with some of the resources used.

1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

As stated, this essay will address the implementation of coeducational teaching in the English classroom. To do so, this section will provide a theoretical background that supports and explains the importance of this transversal teaching. It will deal with the definition of coeducation, its objectives, and various teaching techniques to incorporate a coeducational perspective into the classroom. Regarding teachers, this section will examine the importance of providing educators with effective training and support. Furthermore, the theoretical framework will address the advantages of using literature to teach a foreign language and how teachers could implement this resource successfully.

1.1 WHAT IS COEDUCATION?

2.1.1 Definition and origins of coeducation

The educational field is a complex environment that shapes the construction of nations and societies. Students are exposed to several factors that configure their future selves. One of these factors is gender construction and exposure to sexist conventions that persist in society and that are reinforced in the school environment (Aragonés-González et al., 1). This strengthening of gender stereotypes in schools poses a problem and raises questions about the system and its modification to eradicate gender inequality.

Since 1979, with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), several plans have been proposed to address this issue, including adapting teaching methods, modifying textbooks and curricula, or supporting mixed education (Aragonés-González et al., 2020). Coeducational teaching appeared as one of the solutions to alleviate gender inequality in the educational system and to provide a better-quality education to children. According to Feminario de Alicante (2002), coeducation could be defined as "an intentional process of intervention through which the development of boys and girls is promoted based on the reality of two different sexes aimed at a personal development and a common social construction and not in opposition" (as cited in Aragonés-González et al., 2020).

Furthermore, the Spanish sociologist Marina Subirats explores in her book *Coeducación, apuesta por la libertad* (2017) the numerous purposes coeducation should have to be successful. In Chapter 5, she conveys that this educational perspective should

allow the students to socialize, avoiding the negative aspects and the reproduction of gender hierarchies (Subirats, 2017). Moreover, she acknowledges that due to the dominance of certain stereotypes and beliefs, girls could find themselves in situations that force them to quit the educational system too soon.

For Subirats, the school and the public institutions in charge should ensure the integration of these girls and provide them with the means to continue their education, reducing the gender breach and improving learning opportunities for women. However, she states this is no longer a global problem that harshly threatens girls' education. So, according to Subirats, coeducation's main task is to change gender models inside the classroom. As said before, the issue relies on the need to eradicate the transmission of specific stereotypical values in the schoolroom and adapt the curricula and materials provided in the school centers.

The educational environment is a living organism as it shapes society's members' future and personal development, so it needs to reinvent itself. Due to this, education has gone through many stages and modifications. Since the creation of the European educational systems until the twentieth century, women's education had been relegated to household learning (Subirats, 2019). This is the case of the Spanish educational system. From the seventies onwards, mixed schools appeared. The generalization of the mixed schools with the Ley General de Educación, in Spain, initiated a new beginning for women's education in these years (Subirats, 2021). This new concept of education entailed this predominant idea that any form of discrimination should be eradicated from the system (Subirats, 2021).

Even if it appeared as a solution to end with inequality and gender discrimination, mixed schools have proven to be insufficient (Subirats, 2021). It is true that including boys and girls in the same spaces and allowing women to be a part of education was a step forward. However, there are numerous subtle and invisible forms of discrimination now a days that still affect girls (Subirats, 2021). Throughout socialization, with the learning of habits and the shaping of one's own self-esteem, or what is called the "hidden curriculum," the school perpetuates androcentric stereotypes and gender-based models (Subirats, 2021).

The educational system focuses more on the transmission of theoretical productive knowledge, which prepares societies' members to be trained for the working life (Subirats, 2021). In this way, the school forgets or ignores the transmission of social abilities or conduct rules, allowing for different forms of discrimination against women to be perpetuated. Subirats states that the transmission of the androcentric culture makes girls believe themselves to be secondary characters, who are not protagonists in life, and even transmitting a culture of subordination (2021).

Mixed schools were considered a synonym of "coeducation" during the first Republic in Spain (Subirats, 2021). However, as stated, this type of education proved to be insufficient. That is why the concept of coeducation was amplified, considering that it needed to go beyond mixed education. It is true that this type of education allowed for many women to be part of the educational system, reducing illiteracy rates, but it has failed to implement the real cultural change that is needed (Subirats, 2021). That is why coeducation has been mentioned to be the solution, to modify not only education, but the whole of society.

After tackling the definition and the origins of this teaching, the next section covers the appearance of coeducation in Spanish current legislation, and the importance that it is given in it.

2.1.2 Coeducation and Spanish legislation

This essay intends, as stated, to show the importance of coeducation and its implementation through a didactic unit. The insertion of this cross-sectional teaching is endorsed by Spain's educational system and the Spanish legislation. The current Spanish education law is the *Ley Orgánica 3/2020, de 29 de diciembre, por la que se modifica la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación* or LOMLOE. This legislature modifies the previous law, and includes instances and sections that deal with gender inequality and certain rights that education must provide equally to boys and girls.

In Article 1 of the law, the first principle deals with every child's right to education. This principle has a bis, which emphasizes "La calidad de la educación para todo el alumnado, sin que exista discriminación alguna por razón de nacimiento, sexo, origen racial, étnico o geográfico, discapacidad, edad, enfermedad, religión o creencias, orientación sexual o identidad sexual o cualquier otra condición o circunstancia personal

o social” (LOMLOE, 2020). Every student should receive quality education, without regard to their sex, racial origin, age, sexual orientation, etc.

In addition, the law mentions in principles b, c and k, the importance of equity and giving equal opportunities; transmitting values that promote freedom, democracy, solidarity, tolerance and equality, and teaching students to coexist together, avoid conflicts and the use of violence (LOMLOE, 2020).

Nevertheless, the most important principal of **Article 1** is principal L. It deals specifically with coeducation. It cites:

l) El desarrollo de la igualdad de derechos, deberes y oportunidades, el respeto a la diversidad afectivo-sexual y familiar, el fomento de la igualdad efectiva de mujeres y hombres a través de la consideración del régimen de la coeducación de niños y niñas, la educación afectivo-sexual, adaptada al nivel madurativo, y la prevención de la violencia de género, así como el fomento del espíritu crítico y la ciudadanía activa (LOMLOE, 2020)

This section clearly states the current importance of coeducation and that Spanish educational legislation endorses the implementation of this cross-sectional teaching, justifying the creation and development of this essay and its didactic proposal. Furthermore, **Article 2** mentions the main goals of the law. It also draws attention to the full development of students’ personality and abilities, educating to promote equality of rights and opportunities for men and women and, once again, educating students to form them as citizens, learning peace, respect for human rights, solidarity and interculturality (LOMLOE, 2020).

Furthermore, the creation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) needs to be taken into account when speaking about coeducating. The United Nations defines the SDG as:

A call for action by all countries – poor, rich and middle-income – to promote prosperity while protecting the planet. They recognize that ending poverty must go hand-in-hand with strategies that build economic growth and address a range of social needs including education, health, social protection, and job opportunities, while tackling climate change and environmental protection.

There are seventeen SDG. Number 10 deals with reduced inequalities and number 4 about quality education. But the one that concerns coeducation is number 5, which speaks about gender equality. This goal states that “gender equality is not only a fundamental human right, but a necessary foundation for a peaceful, prosperous and sustainable world. There has been progress over the last decades, but the world is not on track to achieve gender equality by 2030” (UN). Moreover, this goal draws attention to the improvements that have been made over the decades considering women’s rights and, most importantly, it set some targets for ameliorating and improving gender equality. The ones that could more specifically concern education are:

5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere

5.5 Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision making in political, economic and public life

5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences

5.A Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws

5.B Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women

5.C Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels (UN)

Having said this and legally framing this work, the next section will cover coeducation’s main goals and the different strategies that can be followed in order to implement this teaching in real schools and with real students.

2.1.3 Goals and strategies to implement coeducation. The hidden curriculum

This master's final paper aims to understand the implications of coeducation and how to build this type of teaching. Therefore, discussing its main goals and the different strategies studied is essential.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) presented a report in 2023 concerning Social Gender Norms. This study showed that 25% of the population “justifies that a man exerts violence against a woman within a romantic relationship” (Otero-Gutiérrez, 2023). Moreover, the study portrayed that “9 out of 10 men and women” still held prejudices against women (Otero-Gutiérrez, 2023). This clearly illustrates the need to create a coeducational system that teaches and educates children to avoid these injustices.

As stated in the previous section, Subirats considered that coeducation's main goal was to change gender dynamics and stereotypes inside the classroom. Its purpose is to ensure that students develop their personality completely without “gender constraints, correcting cultural and ideological sexism and women's social inequality” (Aragón-González et al., 2020).

According to Tomé, the purpose of coeducation is to observe and focus on the use and occupation of spaces, the use of non-inclusive language in the school, the theoretical knowledge transmitted in the curricula, and the social relationships established inside and outside the classroom (2017). The goal of this cross-sectional teaching is to acknowledge the stereotypes and inequalities perpetuated in those fields and, after observing them, providing a set of interventions that should be made to reduce the issues.

Considering this objective, numerous strategies can be used to achieve it. The first concerns teaching boys and girls how to socialize equally (Otero-Gutiérrez, 2023). Girls need to be taken into account, and coeducation should promote that women are not seen as sexual objects, but as subjects of law (Otero-Gutiérrez, 2023). In the following section, Subirats is mentioned, as she considers observation to be one of the basic strategies that need to be implemented (2019). Observing what happens inside and outside the classrooms allows teachers to detect the stereotypes and patriarchal patterns internalized and reproduced by the students.

Amparo Tomé mentions in her article “Estrategias para elaborar proyectos coeducativos en las escuelas” that it is vital to shape a coeducational project effectively. As Otero-Guitierrez and Subirats also mention, teachers should consider the necessary observations, the awareness stage, how the project will be implemented, and which areas of the educational field will be addressed (Tomé, 2017).

Additionally, this author considers that this kind of project should be collective (2017). Teachers should involve the students, the families, the school council, or even town hall representatives. Tomé (2017) considers that four steps should be taken into account:

1. Raise awareness in the whole educational community and shape the project.
2. Programming and analyzing the situation. Provide results and possible solutions.
3. Implementing those solutions and analyzing problems. Modifications should be made, and the entire process and future alternatives should be discussed to improve.

Furthermore, Tomé recommends considering the possible rejections to this kind of project, as many people are unwilling to discuss or consider those changes (2017). Some people may not perceive the problem as such, or that it has been magnified, so it is essential to understand that change requires time and that it is not easy to revise one's beliefs, attitudes, or behaviors (Tomé, 2017). This author recommends that raising awareness takes at least one full year to develop the project optimally (Tomé, 2017).

Different goals need to be considered concerning the spaces that boys and girls occupy, inside and outside the classroom. It is essential that children occupy the same spaces equally, eliminating the hierarchies, and that girls are not left behind or cornered (Tomé, 2017). In addition, the school yard should have differentiated spaces where students can play in different ways: a calm area, where they can talk or play more relaxed games, a movement area, to play different sports, and a nature area, where they can be in contact with it (Tomé, 2017).

Taking into account language, the use of the masculine as generic silences and ignores women. This makes girls feel left behind and affects their interactions in class (Tomé, 2017). The androcentric language and not addressing girls directly leads them not to be asked in class, not being invited to ask questions or to participate in class. According to Tomé, girls ultimately become less talkative in public spaces due to the masculine

generic use of language (2017). To palliate this, it is important to observe how the teacher addresses boys and girls, how often or for what, and try to do it equally and include both genders in the speech (Tomé, 2017).

Analyzing the curricula and textbooks, one may realize that there are fewer, almost nonexistent, female figures. In the social sciences, only 6% of the content and units have female presence; in literature, only 12% (Tomé, 2017). This reveals the importance of evaluating the type of content that students are taught and the importance of what is called the “hidden curriculum.”

The hidden curriculum encompasses the adequate behavior that students must have, the attitudes and principles that should be followed, and the ethical codes and norms of the center and its organization (Tomé, 2017). Tomé also mentions that it covers the schedule and the hierarchical relations established inside the school (2017). Moreover, it also includes the school board's criteria to decide which books, games, editorials, or materials are suitable for the center (Tomé, 2017). This hidden curriculum is as important as the general curriculum. It should be analyzed regarding gender equality, as it may also promote stereotypes and hierarchical interactions in the school, preventing the coeducational project's success.

Finally, this author discusses the importance of intervening in students' socialization. Teachers should intervene to help boys get rid of patriarchal and androcentric ideas. They must learn to play with both boys and girls, as well as to play with all sorts of toys, to include self-care in their lives, and how to be silent or not mad if they are not the protagonists (Tomé, 2017). Moreover, Tomé argues that girls should learn that they do not have to live in fear or passively, can be protagonists of their own lives, and must learn to say no (2017).

After explaining these strategies and connecting with them, the next section will cover the concept of “the violet gaze” and the importance of hidden curricula in implementing coeducation.

2.1.4 The “Violet Gaze” and the curriculum

In order to achieve a coeducational understanding of education, schools should build what Marina Subirats calls “la mirada violeta, “the violet gaze” (2019). For her, it

means being able to "observe what happens in the educational field and understanding why women are invisible in it" (Subirats, 2019). As Tomé also mentions in her article and the previous section, it is important to question who occupies the bigger spaces in the yard, speaks in class, and is relegated and left behind. Subirats points out that culture is highly androcentric and that the issue is evident in the school centers. The issue is that not only do girls need to be included in what used to be masculine exclusive, but that "the conquest of equality is not possible without a rethinking of the roles, qualities, expectations, and values assigned to men. It is necessary to follow a two-way path where men, too, learn and internalize what is traditionally feminine." (Heras-Sevilla et al., 2021). After acquiring this "violet gaze," there can be other steps taken, such as the ones mentioned before regarding textbooks or curricula.

As this project will delve into the use of literature as a valuable resource in English teaching, it is interesting to provide testimonies and information about gender equality in its curriculum. Eulàlia Lledó Cunill, a writer and retired Secondary teacher, displays her experience as a literature educator in an article concerning the relationship between Spanish literature, language teaching, and coeducation. This article is a testimony of how the curricula overlook women's achievements in the literary field and how teachers can contribute to creating a coeducational environment through language teaching.

Eulàlia points out that this article recollects her personal experience and reflections as a teacher. Lledó recalls realizing that women were forgotten in Spanish literature teaching. She lectured about the minstrels, but only masculine figures (2016). In order to acquire a coeducational point of view, she considers it essential to include women minstrels in the curriculum. However, once she started investigating and trying to introduce women's work, she realized that it could not be analyzed or classified as men's production, as it presented different characteristics and themes (Lledó, 2016). After this research, Eulàlia ponders the complications of changing the curricula and including women in them. For her, it is essential to be highly determined to do it, as it overcomes difficulties and considerable obstacles, such as textbooks, canon, prejudices, the curricula themselves, etc. (Lledó, 2016).

This Spanish literature teacher agrees with Subirats when discussing solutions to this issue. Modifying laws, textbooks, and curricula is complex and challenging, but other strategies can be followed to implement the "violet gaze" and start changing education.

Lledó Cunill mentions that the teacher could select readings or pieces of news for specific lessons about women (2016). Moreover, she states that the teacher could comment on women's birth and death commemorations, novel prizes, or awards. Additionally, she considers that the educator should criticize the textbooks or readings in class, avoiding victimhood or excessive critique but presenting a coeducational point of view in the classroom (Lledó, 2016).

As can be seen, the curriculum also perpetuates androcentric ideals. It is a selection of knowledge from the specific social model and the specific type of politically desirable citizen (García Jaramillo, 2019). If the world and societies are androcentric, the curriculum is expected to be too. As Eulàlia indicates, this can be seen in literature. Ana López-Navajas conducted a study analyzing 115 ESO textbooks from the three most used editorials (cited in García Jaramillo, 2019). This study showed that Social Sciences, Spanish language, and Spanish literature had a lower representation of women. Out of 3000 names, barely 300 were women (García Jaramillo, 2019). García Jaramillo mentions another previous study, made by Nieves Blanco. This investigation proved that female presence and representation in textbooks were “insufficient and inadequate” and that only 13% of the literary content referred to women (cited in Garcia Jaramillo, 2019).

Having said this, this whole section has addressed the importance of coeducation. As stated, the school is a fertile ground where young people shape their futures and selves. The authors mentioned in these paragraphs agree on the relevance of the curricula and the materials used in class. It is essential to teach women's successes and achievements so that learners acquire a stereotype-free conception of the world. However, it is not enough. Teachers should learn how to tackle and reduce inequality in the classroom and educate with a "violet gaze" (Subirats, 2019). The next section of this essay will further explore the relevance of teacher training in order to prepare educators to face these challenges and educate students in the most effective way possible.

1.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF TEACHER TRAINING

Teachers must make subtle changes, such as considering whether they should address a boy like a girl and vice versa (Subirats, 2019). This need for a new educational model entails changing teachers' education and implementing the new perspective. According to Heras-Sevilla et al. (2021), it is essential to examine the "level or levels of

the so-called equality levels" of the student teachers and the institutions where they train to become future educators. One of the strategies that these authors consider, as indicated above, is changing the curricula. They consider it important to include "voices that have shaped and continue to shape social knowledge" (Heras-Sevilla et al., 2021). It is essential to include more women in the curricula and teach students the important female achievements that have occurred throughout history, and this inclusion should start in teacher training.

In order to prove whether coeducational teacher training could overcome inequality in schools, these authors conducted a study. It is a nonprobabilistic sampling research implemented in three universities in Spain (Heras-Sevilla et al., 2021). These authors used a sample of 452 participants between nineteen and fifty-eight years old. 66.59% were female, 32.96% were male, and 0.44% were intersex. According to their article, the instrument used was a questionnaire with three sections of questions. The first one was about "questions on sociodemographic, cultural, and educational aspects," the second was about the "first level for equality, including two standardized scales on attitudes related to the sustainability of the sex/gender system," and the last section was related to female references in history that they may know (Heras-Sevilla et al., 2021). The data were analyzed with descriptive statistics after the computerized questionnaires were coded.

The participants of this study were trainee teachers with a degree in primary education and a master's degree in secondary education. After analyzing the data, these were the results of the study concerning coeducational and gender-equality training: 56.54% of the participants had received some training related to gender issues at some point. However, only 36.67% of the students had received training concerning coeducation and dealing with gender concerns in the classroom (Heras-Sevilla et al., 2021). Related to the third section of the questionnaire, there was a general "lack of knowledge" of female references (Heras-Sevilla et al., 2021).

The results of this study evidence the lack of preparation that Spanish teachers receive in these concerns. The authors indeed state that, even if the training was insufficient and extremely low, it did not significantly impact the levels of sexism or the trainee teachers' attitudes (Heras-Sevilla et al., 2021). Nonetheless, it is important to

acknowledge the mistake of not preparing teachers for this reality. Gender inequality and injustice are a reality that people face inside and outside the classroom.

It would not be acceptable to expect an unprepared teacher to impart English, Mathematics, or Physics adequately. As previously stated, the schoolroom is a socializing space where children spend most of their day, and it is a small representation of the social organization and structure. In order to transform the stereotypes, the misogyny, and the inequalities, it is necessary to have prepared teachers who will be able to manage those problems in the classroom, and who will be able to show their students more than what the curriculum dictates.

The following section of this paper will explore the presence of literature in English teaching, particularly in the Spanish school system. It will underline the benefits of using literary texts and the approaches teachers could take to use real materials when teaching a foreign language.

1.3 LITERATURE IN ENGLISH TEACHING

After seeing the importance of a coeducational system, it is also significant to learn how to implement this educational process of intervention in the different existing subjects and majors. This essay explores the use of literature to teach English as a foreign language in Spain and implement coeducation as the primary goal.

2.3.1 Literature in English teaching and Spanish legislation

This essay intends to justify using literature as a suitable resource when teaching English as a foreign language. To do so, it is essential to take into account the criteria of the Ley Orgánica 3/2020, de 29 de diciembre (LOMLOE), por la que se modifica la Ley Orgánica 2/2006, de 3 de mayo, de Educación. As mentioned before, it is significant that teachers are adequately trained as literature teachers and readers to guide students in understanding a literary text. It is a matter of combining several methodologies and approaches that allow learners to perceive literature as something more than a grammatical or linguistic tool. It is also a cultural and academic instrument that will ensure the development of their critical thinking and intellectual baggage.

Now that LOMLOE has been mentioned, it has to be said that the use of literature in the classroom is justified according to several sections of the current legislation. For

instances, in the key competences of the DECRETO 39-2022 of secondary education there is a competence of cultural expression and awareness: "En la materia se aborda el reconocimiento, comprensión y aprecio de la diversidad lingüística, cultural y artística propia de países donde se habla la lengua extranjera". As another example, Specific Competence 6 discusses respecting foreign language-speaking countries' linguistic, cultural, literary, and artistic diversity. It also discusses implementing strategies to explain and appreciate this diversity (DECRETO 39-2022). In the case of Bachillerato education, the competencies are very much the same, with both decrees having a content section regarding interculturality. These instances show how Spanish law completely contemplates using literature as a tool in teaching English as a foreign language.

2.3.2 Reading models and literary teaching approaches

Although the implications of literature as a tool for English teaching have not been broadly studied, several authors have investigated why teachers, especially in Spain, fail to use literature effectively. Raquel Fernández conducted a study in 2005 in which she surveyed 49 English teachers from the Community of Madrid, asking them about literature in teaching. 85% of them had never received training about how to use literary texts in the classroom, and 90% wished that they had (cited in Fernández Fernández, 2006). Other authors, such as Christenbury, O'Flahavan, and Wallis, agree that many teachers use literature in the same way their teachers used to, even if they do not particularly enjoy that resource (cited in Fernández Fernández, 2006). This issue relates to the previous idea about the importance of teacher training in ensuring educational quality and evolution, not only in the academic but also in the social field.

Raquel Fernández mentions in her article the two approaches one may take when reading a text, implemented by Louise M. Rosenblatt, to understand how literature may benefit language teaching. There is efferent reading and aesthetic reading. Efferent reading refers to approaching a text, simply to obtain information of it (Fernández Fernández, 2006). It is connected to the objective meanings that the readers can extract from a text. On the contrary, the aesthetic reading is connected with what the text "suggests to each person" and their own experience while reading it, and the efferent approach is related to obtaining information from the text and the objective feelings that every reader may experience (Fernández Fernández, 2006). This author mentions that aesthetic reading is usually not considered in teaching as it is considered to be of "less

intellectual value" (Fernández Fernández, 2006). However, she explains that there is intellectual work to try to understand the message from the text, and that emotions and feelings are connected with intelligence.

In the case of English teaching, the reader needs to connect with their own experience, previous literary knowledge, or knowledge of the language so that this idea of intellectual inferiority is refuted (Fernández Fernández, 2006). This author explains the importance of combining both approaches and, again, the importance of teacher training so that literature can be used in the most profitable way inside the classroom. In this way, students develop an interest in reading for pleasure and understanding literary devices and other formal artefacts.

Future English teachers should receive training regarding the use of literature, as has been stated. They should understand the different approaches in this section and how to bring texts into the schoolroom. Additionally, teachers must know how to be good readers themselves. Fernández Fernández states that the union of the theoretical aspects of teacher training and the reading experiences of each teacher is essential, as well as the implementation of didactic strategies that should be put into practice while teaching (2006).

Different approaches and methods can be used to bring literature into practice. According to Carter and Long (1991), three models can be used: cultural, language, and personal growth models (cited in Medina Calzada, 2025). Lazar (1993) names the three approaches differently: literature as content, language-based method, and literature for personal enrichment. In his book *Literature and Language Teaching: A Guide for Teachers and Trainers*, this author gives different examples of activities teachers could implement regarding the abovementioned approaches. For example, for the language-based approach, Lazar proposes role-playing as a good task for students to represent and read aloud different passages or scenes from any piece of writing (cited in Medina Calzada, 2025). Carter and Long also recommend jigsaw activities or creative writing for this method (1991). For the personal growth/enrichment method mentioned by Carter and Long, discussions are used, and the characters' minds are deepened with different activities during which the students should ponder how they would have acted in the position of the characters.

2.3.3 The importance and benefits of using literature

This final project aims to develop a didactic proposal that combines literature and implements coeducational values inside the classroom. First, it is important to understand the real benefits of using literature when teaching a foreign language, and why it is important to implement this tool.

As stated before, there are two approaches that the reader may take towards literature. Regarding academic benefits, literature is considered a “means for fostering critical thinking among language learners” (Brandl, 2022). Moreover, this author mentions in his article that literature helps students “to reflect on their lives and their surrounding world. They learn to ask questions, become skeptical, interpret, explore, ponder solutions, and develop critical thinking skills” (Brandl, 2022).

Considering the aesthetic approach, literature can help the students connect with their feelings and individual experiences, providing a shelter for the reader. As Brandl says, reading literature aesthetically helps teenagers understand human nature (2022). It is also a way of developing critical thinking and obtaining a broader world perspective.

As this essay tackles English teaching as a foreign language, it is fundamental to speak about the linguistic benefits that literature may present. According to Van (2009), “since literature is full of instances of real-life language in various situations, it provides unprecedented opportunities to ameliorate syntactic, pragmatic, cultural, and discursual awareness among learners” (cited in Brandl, 2022). However, it is also significant to acknowledge that some literary texts may pose a problem when learning a foreign language. Some texts may be too complex, syntactically, and lexically (Brandl, 2022). To avoid this complication, it is important that teachers thoroughly select their materials, considering using adaptations of particular texts or just using selected instances/chapters.

There are more reasons for using literature inside a classroom. Taking into account the learners’ perspective, studies such as the ones conducted by Hirvela (2001, 2005) and Yang (2001, 2002), indicate that “learners who have been exposed to positive experiences with literature, and who are given the opportunity to read literature and respond to it, both benefit linguistically and enjoy the experience” (Paran, 2008). In these studies, students comment on arguments in favour of using literature, saying “that it is enjoyable [and] that it deals with substantial and non-trivial topics” (Paran, 2008).

Furthermore, Collie and Slater (cited in Hişmanoğlu, 2005), consider that there are four essential reasons why a teacher should implement literature in his/her classes. They argue that literature is important and a suitable tool because it is a valuable authentic material. Readers may encounter “many authentic samples of language in real-life contexts,” as most literary works are not created for teaching any language (Hişmanoğlu, 2005). In addition, reading literature in class provides cultural and language enrichment. According to these authors, this kind of reading shows the real culture of a country, how people may communicate in a particular place of the world, and the lexical and syntactical structures that are commonly used in written language (Hişmanoğlu, 2005). Moreover, this three reasons are boosted by the last one, which is personal involvement. If students are drawn to the text, they feel part of the reading and their learning, as it has been previously stated. This ends up having beneficial effects in the whole language learning process (Hişmanoğlu, 2005).

Other authors have also spoken about other reasons and key facts of including literature in the foreign language classroom. According to Maley (1989, cited in Hişmanoğlu, 2005), literature is a suitable tool due to its universality, non-triviality, personal relevance, variety, interest and ambiguity. Additionally, literature may provide learners with a wide range of language variations, that is, “sociolects, regional dialects, jargon, idiolects, etc.” and it improves learners’ sociolinguistic competence in the foreign language (Hişmanoğlu, 2005). Therefore, integrating literature in the foreign language classroom presents many benefits and shows its importance. Nevertheless, it is essential to select a suitable methodology in order to correctly implement this resource. The next section of this essay will tackle the use of the task-based approach as a suitable method to implement literature.

2. METHODOLOGY

Literature has been presented as the main resource to implement the didactic unit of this essay, and as a vehicle to introduce coeducation in the classroom. After having explained the legal framework which endorse its use, and explained its importance, it is foremost to tackle the methodology to implement this resource.

In the surveys that Martin & Laurie (1993) conducted, language students expressed their skepticism about the use of literature. This happened due to the

methodology used when teaching literature or including it in the lessons. Students thought that “the obligation to study literature” was what discourage them from reading (Martin & Laurie, 1993, cited in Paran, 2008). These authors learned that students preferred to read for pleasure and personal enrichment. It did not interest them because they felt obliged to speak about it “in a public forum” rather than using it as a tool to master the four necessary skills when learning a foreign language (Martin & Laurie, 1993, cited in Paran, 2008). This shows the importance of selecting a correct methodology, and that it should be one that allows learners to feel part of their own learning process, and that it will prove to be useful to them.

Having said this, this essay will present the task-based approach as the central methodology to develop the didactic proposal. The approach needs to be explained before the proposal is developed.

According to Ellis (2018), Long (2015), Nunan (1989), and Skehan (1996), a task can be considered such if it follows specific criteria (cited in Brandl, 2022): its primary focus should be on meaning and not on form, it should entail a natural use of the language, it should have a defined communicative result, and it should be an activity or set of activities that follow a work plan (Brandl, 2022). Having this in mind, there are several aspects that need to be considered to develop a coherent work plan for implementing this approach to literature in an English classroom.

Planning a task-based proposal should specify the communicative result of the task, which means the end product or “what learners arrive at” once they have completed the task (Brandl, 2022). Furthermore, the task should specify the cognitive actions and the communicative function of language that students engage in (Brandl, 2022). This project will develop the didactic proposal with these concepts and indications in mind, trying to integrate a task-based approach with the novel *The House on Mango Street*.

What about the benefits and implications of this methodology? The task-based approach is supported by cognitive and sociocultural theories of learning (Brandl, 2022). Bryfonski and McKay (2019) conducted a metanalysis of 52 studies, which provides evidence and demonstrates the effectiveness of this approach on improvement of learning (Brandl, 2022). According to Ha et al., this approach has been implemented to increase learners’ skills in communication during the past twenty years (2021). These authors

mentions studies which explain the major principals of the approach that are relevant: the task-based approach “dignifies learner-centered philosophy” (Richards & Rodgers, 2001; Nunan, 2005), it focuses on the goal, procedure and outcome of learning (Murphy; 2003; Johnson, 2003; Nunan, 2005), and it is used in the creation of activities based on content learning, rather than linguistics forms and meanings (Careless, 2001; Crook, 2003; Littlewood, 2004) (cited in Ha et al., 2021).

According to Wills (1996), the task-based approach follows eight principles.

- to give learners chances to practice the target language they know.
- to give learners chances to experience spontaneous interaction during task performance.
- to give learners chances to notice similar meanings from other participants.
- to give learners chances to negotiate turns to speak.
- to give learners chances to use language purposefully and cooperative.
- to give learners chances to participate in solving tasks with others.
- to give learners chances to experience communication strategies.
- to develop learners’ confidence for communicative activities. (cited in Ha et al., 2021).

Having displayed the essential characteristics of a task, how to configure such activities, and explained the benefits and main principles of this methodology, it can be said that it is a suitable method for the purposes of this paper: implementing coeducation through a literary didactic proposal. These principles displayed in this section can be seen in the development of the unit “The Souls of Mango Street.”

3. DIDACTIC UNIT: “THE SOULS OF MANGO STREET”

3.1 JUSTIFICATION

This didactic unit has been designed to combine coeducation and the use of literature in English Foreign Language education. As justification, it is essential to indicate the reasons for choosing the book *The House on Mango Street*, by Sandra Cisneros. This novel is a tale of growth, injustice, suffering, and the experiences of women. The book is divided into short chapters that tell the story of Esperanza, a young Chicana girl growing up in Chicago, and other women in the neighborhood, as well as their struggles. It tackles a young girl's concerns about her future, her desire for freedom and independence, rape, domestic violence, immigration and interculturality. It makes it a suitable option to tackle coeducation in the classroom.

As well as being appropriate for the coeducational purposes of this essay, it is convenient to teach English in a Bachillerato classroom. It is suitable due to its length. Its chapters are short, no more than five pages, allowing the students to read them in class and consider every detail. Furthermore, the language used in it is clear and simple, straight to the point. It fits the language level expected for a Bachillerato classroom. Moreover, the metaphors and symbols of the book are not complicated to understand.

The set of activities designed aims to bring literature closer to teenagers and use it as a tool to learn English with real, functional materials. Furthermore, it seeks to implement coeducation as cross-curricular teaching, trying to break down gender stereotypes and promote critical thinking among students. The structure of this unit allows learners to ponder on women's oppression and gender inequality through the analysis of a set of important chapters of book. The unit includes a learning situation called “The Souls of Mango Street,” where students will learn the selected chapters' meaning and hidden messages and how to create an interactive podcast.

3.2 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The target group selected for this didactic unit is one of the 1st year of Bachillerato, with thirty students. Taking into account this specific group, the didactic unit has followed the principles and criteria of the *Royal Decree 243/2022, of April 5, which establishes the curricula and organization of Bachillerato* and the *Decree 40/2022,*

of September 29, which establishes the curricula and organization of Bachillerato in the Community of Castilla y León.

The stage objectives that this unit deals with are a, b, c, d, f, g, and l. These contents are:

- a) Ejercer la ciudadanía democrática, desde una perspectiva global, y adquirir una conciencia cívica responsable, inspirada por los valores de la Constitución Española, así como por los derechos humanos, que fomente la corresponsabilidad en la construcción de una sociedad justa y equitativa.
- b) Consolidar una madurez personal, afectivo-sexual y social que les permita actuar de forma respetuosa, responsable y autónoma y desarrollar su espíritu crítico. Prever, detectar y resolver pacíficamente los conflictos personales, familiares y sociales, así como las posibles situaciones de violencia.
- c) Fomentar la igualdad efectiva de derechos y oportunidades de mujeres y hombres, analizar y valorar críticamente las desigualdades existentes, así como el reconocimiento y enseñanza del papel de las mujeres en la historia e impulsar la igualdad real y la no discriminación por razón de nacimiento, sexo, origen racial o étnico, discapacidad, edad, enfermedad, religión o creencias, orientación sexual o identidad de género o cualquier otra condición o circunstancia personal o social.
- d) Afianzar los hábitos de lectura, estudio y disciplina, como condiciones necesarias para el eficaz aprovechamiento del aprendizaje, y como medio de desarrollo personal.
- f) Expresarse con fluidez y corrección en una o más lenguas extranjeras.
- g) Utilizar con solvencia y responsabilidad las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación.
- l) Desarrollar la sensibilidad artística y literaria, así como el criterio estético, como fuentes de formación y enriquecimiento cultural.

This unit works with a, b, d, e, f, g, and h concerning the key competencies. Those are Linguistic Communication Competence, Plurilingual Competence, Digital Competence, Personal, Social, and Learning to Learn Competence, Citizen Competence, and Entrepreneurial Competence. This unit tackles all of the specific competencies of Decree 40/2022. Those are:

1. Comprender e interpretar las ideas principales y las líneas argumentales básicas de textos expresados en la lengua estándar, buscando fuentes fiables y haciendo uso

de estrategias de inferencia y comprobación de significados, para responder a las necesidades comunicativas planteadas, **2.** Producir textos originales, de creciente extensión, claros, bien organizados y detallados, usando estrategias tales como la planificación, la síntesis, la compensación o la autorreparación, para expresar ideas y argumentos de forma creativa, adecuada y coherente, de acuerdo con propósitos comunicativos concretos, **3.** Interactuar activamente con otras personas, con suficiente fluidez y precisión y con espontaneidad, usando estrategias de cooperación y empleando recursos analógicos y digitales, para responder a propósitos comunicativos en intercambios respetuosos con las normas de cortesía, **4.** Mediar entre distintas lenguas o variedades, o entre las modalidades o registros de una misma lengua, usando estrategias y conocimientos eficaces orientados a explicar conceptos y opiniones o simplificar mensajes, para transmitir información de manera eficaz, clara y responsable, y crear una atmósfera positiva que facilite la comunicación, **5.** Ampliar y usar los repertorios lingüísticos personales entre distintas lenguas y variedades, reflexionando de forma crítica sobre su funcionamiento, y haciendo explícitos y compartiendo las estrategias y los conocimientos propios, respetando la diversidad cognitiva, social y cultural, para mejorar la respuesta a sus necesidades comunicativas, **6.** Valorar críticamente y adecuarse a la diversidad lingüística, cultural y artística a partir de la lengua extranjera, reflexionando y compartiendo las semejanzas y las diferencias entre lenguas y culturas, para actuar de forma empática, respetuosa y eficaz, y fomentar la comprensión mutua en situaciones interculturales.

Regarding achievement indicators, each session will cover a set of indicators in connection with the key competencies and evaluation criteria that will be tackled in each of them.

It is worth noting that each session tackles a distinct set of specific competences and a different evaluation criterion. However, all of them appear together in the final task of the unit. Finally, the unit deals with the three competencies in the Decree: Communication, Multilingualism, and Interculturality. The specific use of content will be further analyzed with a summary of each session and activity.

3.3 CONTEXTUALIZATION

Regarding the temporality, this unit consists of eight sessions of 50 minutes each. Moreover, the students could develop their final task at home. The students will have a week to finish the final product at home and present it between the sixth and seventh sessions, leaving the last two for the oral presentation of the final task.

In terms of methodology, this unit is sustained by a task-based approach. The sessions are thought to be sequenced and interconnected, to achieve the main goal: that the students create a short podcast episode in which they ponder and discuss gender inequality and violence against women. The students learn by inferring the grammatical structures or the main topics. To do this, each session presents a set of small group tasks that the learners do inside the classroom that will lead them to know the most important parts of a podcast episode, how to create a script, and, most importantly, how literature can reflect social issues and injustices. Nevertheless, there are some instances where the teacher will take a direct approach to ensure that the group understands certain things during the unit, such as the use of conditional sentences or the structure of a podcast. This is done to avoid mistakes in the final task.

As has been indicated in the methodology section of the whole work, the task approach will help students practice the target language, have spontaneous interaction, negotiate turns to speak, use language purposefully and cooperative, participate in solving tasks with others and boost learners' confidence in communicative activities (cited in Ha et al., 2021).

Concerning the evaluation, the teacher will assess the learners' progress with the small tasks done in class and the final product. There are several activities, such as the "peer interview," in which the adolescents ask each other conditional questions about the chapter they have read together in groups. They must note their classmates' answers in a chart, and the teachers will collect these sheets. It would be assessed as class work to ensure the pupils progress and understand what is done in class. Moreover, the teacher will develop a rubric to evaluate the final task and a peer-evaluation one. During the presentation of the projects in class, each group will have a rubric to evaluate their classmates' work. Hence, students receive feedback not only from their teachers but also from their peers. Additionally, this helps with classroom management, forcing the students to pay attention to their classmates' presentations.

Having explained the curricular and methodological characteristics of the unit, it is essential to mention the didactic implications of this sequence of activities. The main principle of the proposal is creating a democratic environment where learners are comfortable enough to make mistakes. The teacher's goal is to guide students in learning, allowing them to be the protagonists. The task-based approach permits adolescents to

develop their critical thinking skills. This is achieved through the cooperative work in groups and the sharing of ideas. Moreover, the students need to ponder and give their own perspective and impressions of the selected chapters, hence, boosting their independence and their ability to think for themselves. The instructor helps them on the journey, as seen in specific sessions. However, some of the knowledge will be directly given by him/her, only after the students have tried to infer it themselves.

Moreover, errors will be seen as learning opportunities rather than faults, fomenting participation, and creativity. The learners are encouraged to be open-minded and reflective, pondering social concerns. It is a didactic unit that values the students' personal and intellectual development more than their linguistic skills. Nevertheless, some activities require grammatical work, but not as the unit's core.

Regarding diversity, one student with ADHD is in this class. For him/her, all the instructions for the day must be written on the blackboard beforehand, and the materials must be visual and synthesized. Moreover, this student will be placed in a group with students who can better help him/her do their tasks.

Furthermore, to consider all economic and personal circumstances, the teacher will provide time in class to record and develop the podcasts for those students who do not own any technological device, as well as arrange the groups reasonably so that the classmates can help each other.

3.4 THE FINAL TASK

The final task needs to be explained. It will entail creating a short podcast episode about the book *The House on Mango Street*. The students are divided into groups of three. As seen in the theoretical framework, coeducation must be implemented as cross-sectional. This means that it should be transmitted, not only in the curriculum, but through the hidden one. In order to transmit coeducational values in the class, as well as developing these activities, the teacher must take into account how groups are equally created, how language is used, and that the making of this unit does not promote any form of discrimination or inequality. That is why the groups would be made to ensure that boys and girls participate in the same way. As the groups are odd numbers, some groups will have two girls and one boy, and others two boys and one girl.

Each group is given a selected chapter from the book that they have previously read in class. The selected chapters will be: “Boys & Girls,” “My Name,” “Marin,” “The First Job” “Sire,” “Sally,” “Minerva Writes Poems,” “What Sally Said,” “Red Clowns” and, finally, “A House of My Own.” These extracts are selected due to their length and the language used in them. It is easy to understand and quick to read. Furthermore, these chapters deal with harsh realities and violent episodes that will allow the students to deepen in stereotypes and real gender issues.

The podcast episode they must record should be 5 to 10 minutes long. It should include a short interview with a character in their chapter, as it is represented at that moment in the book or as its future self. For example, they could interview Sally after her marriage or Sally while she is still a young girl.

Moreover, it should include a brief discussion or reflection between the group members about the chapter they have worked on. It would be a guided discussion, as the teacher will previously provide a set of questions to help the students develop their scripts: “What is the main topic of the chapter?” “What would you have done if you were X character?” “How does this chapter make you feel? What emotions does it transmit?”

Throughout the development of the previous unit sessions, the students will know how to develop a podcast episode and read and analyze the story in class. Moreover, the teacher will dedicate one session to show them recording platforms and devices in the computer room, to allow them to practice. They could advance some of their work in class and finish it at home. To conclude, the last two sessions will be dedicated to orally presenting the podcast and evaluating them as stated above, with a rubric for the teacher and another for the students.

3.5 LEADING ACTIVITIES FOR THE FINAL TASK

Session 1

In this first session of the didactic unit, the students will be presented with the book and its historical context. Through some interactive activities, they will have to hypothesize about the plot and the topics the book will address.

This session will cover the following specific competencies and criteria from the LOMLOE:

- Specific competence 1
- Specific competence 5
- Specific competence 6

Regarding content, this session works with communication, as it requires the students to use oral and visual comprehension strategies and describe, compare, and discuss. Moreover, multilingualism is also present, as learners need to activate previous knowledge and use strategies to infer the meaning of the pictures that the teacher will screen. Additionally, interculturality exists, as the Chicana culture and a representative literary work are presented in the session.

Achievement indicators:

- The students are able to infer the plot of the novel through the interpretation of a set of images screened by the teacher.
- The students recognize Chicano cultural elements and ponder about their implications in the novel.

Session 2.

In session 2, the students will start approaching the book with a gender perspective. The pupils would be told that in the final discussion and reflection of the podcast, they must express hypothesis about their character's future. Hence, conditionals will be used.

To avoid explaining grammar as such in a “master class” approach, the teacher will select a video and will ask the students to infer the grammatical structure. To underline and focus on gender and inequality, the teenagers will have to practice speaking in groups, with conditional sentences, discussing what they must do in their podcast. They will start working with the selected chapters, just making hypothesis that they may use in their final-task discussion. They will have to imagine a different life for that woman, with a coeducational perspective. For example: “If Sally had not married at thirteen, she would have gone to university and become a painter.” To use this information in their final task, they will have to note down their answers.

Moreover, each person in the group is handed a paper sheet with questions to make a survey to their group partners. In the sheet, they will have the names of the classmates, and they have to speak and ask each other questions about the chapter, to see what would they do themselves, if they were in their character's place. They will have to note down their answers in proper English and discuss them orally with the whole class after they have finished.

This session is essential. It allows the students to ponder about unfair and unequal realities, and the different outcomes that may arrive from different circumstances. The main goal of the session is not to teach grammar, although it is included, but to boost their empathy and help them develop their gender perspective.

This session will cover the following specific competencies and criteria from the LOMLOE:

- Specific competence 2
- Specific competence 3
- Specific competence 4

Respecting content, this session works with communication when using conditionals, oral production, and the written production of those conditional sentences. Furthermore, multilingualism is present when students inevitably compare the English conditionals with the Spanish ones and try to infer the conditionals' structure. Finally, learners work with interculturality because the conditional sentences will be related to the book's content.

Achievement indicators:

- The students use the conditional structure correctly and are capable of creating hypothesis.
- They identify and describe gender stereotypes from the characters' personalities and experiences.
- The students are able to communicate among themselves in proper English and obtaining clear and coherent answers from their classmates.

Session 3

For this class, the teacher will select a video podcast about an interview to show the students the kind of structure that these episodes follow. They will listen to the video, and the teacher will hang them a few questions on a piece of paper so that they can reflect with their initial groups about the organization of the podcast. For example: “how does the podcast start?” “which words does the host use to present the guest?” “write down courtesy expressions that the speakers use.” One or two questions about women’s representation will be in that podcast episode. The students will need to ponder about the type of questions that women are asked about, if the host addresses them in the same way as to a man, or if they have the same speaking time as men.

Moreover, they will have to ponder about how they want to represent women on their podcast episode, and fight against gender stereotypes. They will have to use the previous questions as a guide to write down their representation. For example: “we would like to ask out female character questions about education, not children or marriage” “we would like to give equal time to speak to each interlocutor.”

Finally, after sharing their answers very quickly aloud, the teacher explains the complete structure they must follow in order to develop their final task correctly.

This session is again essential to help the students understand how women are addressed to and represented. It is important so that they reflect on how they want to portray women in their final task, allowing them to, perhaps, extrapolate that to their daily lives.

This session will cover the following specific competencies and criteria from the LOMLOE:

- Specific competence 1
- Specific competence 4
- Specific competence 6

With reference to content, there is oral comprehension (Communication), identifying particular English oral strategies (Multilingualism), and exposure to diverse cultural issues (Interculturality).

Achievement indicators:

- They actively participate in gender discussions and are able to extract the main ideas and issues that the characters experience.
- They properly express in English and are capable of correctly writing the answers to the teacher's questions.

Session 4

After having some introductory sessions and ensuring that the students are prepared to develop the final task in terms of format, it is essential to create another coeducational session.

In session 4, the students must read a few short chapters aloud with their teacher. For example, the chapters "Boys & Girls," "My Name" or "Sally" show plenty instances of the structural differences established between men and women. Moreover, they are short and easy to read, so that makes them suitable for this session.

The teacher will ask the students to discuss in their groups a set of questions that make them ponder the unfair and harsh situations that the girls in the book suffer:

- What is happening to this character?
- Is she free?
- Does anyone control her decisions?
- Discuss the role of fear and desire.
- What differences between boys and girls is the chapter showing?

Additionally, they will have to rewrite the story of one of the characters from those chapters, avoiding stereotypes and trying to provide a more gender-egalitarian point of view. They will have to brainstorm their ideas and develop a mind map, for the teacher to collect, as well as choosing what type of text they want to write: journal entry, letter, a monologue or dialogue... The teacher will give them some questions to each of the groups to guide their writing:

- What could Sally do if her father had not beaten her?
- What if she did not marry so young?
- What if Esperanza could change her name?

To conclude, the students will read their answers and discuss them for a few minutes. They will have to consider if these new versions of the story feel fairer or more hopeful for the character, if this woman/girl could still face certain challenges in life, just for the sake of being a girl, or if they still perceive any stereotypes in the others' writings.

This session allows students to work on their reading, speaking and critical thinking abilities, as well as teamwork. They are able to learn new words and expressions that may appear in the chapters, practice using English in a real context, using authentic materials, and boosting their ability to ponder about complicated issues and problems.

This session will cover the following specific competencies and criteria from the LOMLOE:

- Specific competence 1
- Specific competence 2
- Specific competence 3
- Specific competence 5
- Specific competence 6

Achievement indicators:

- The students create coherent and creative texts that reflect their understanding of the novel and the characters' issues.
- They are capable of using proper vocabulary and the accurate writing structure.

Session 5

In this session, the students must work with the chapters they read in the first class. They have to develop their podcast script and assign roles to each group member, trying to take into account what they learned in the previous session, and have that coeducational approach in their writing.

This session will cover the following specific competencies and criteria from the LOMLOE:

- Specific competence 2
- Specific competence 3

- Specific competence 5

Concerning content, this session works with Communication due to the planning and development of the scripts. In addition, the learners work with multilingualism when searching for idiomatic expressions or specific vocabulary to add to their dialogues. Regarding interculturality, the groups will have to discuss the lives of Mexican-American characters and their cultures, so they must avoid stereotypes and prioritize respect.

Achievement indicators:

- The students collaborate in groups to plan a structured and coherent script.
- They use the proper linguistic resources to transmit the message, covering all the points that the task has.
- They develop a complete and organized discussion about gender issues in their script.
- The students are aware of English courtesy norms and politeness, as well as following the podcast's correct structure when writing their script.

Session 6

The students go to the computer room and will work with Audacity and other platforms to practice for the podcast.

This session will cover the following specific competencies and criteria from the LOMLOE:

- Specific competence 2
- Specific competence 3
- Specific competence 4
- Specific competence 5

Communication content is constantly present in this session, as the groups will practice the oral production of their podcast episodes. They must take pronunciation, pace, and volume into account. Moreover, the use of digital sources tackles multilingual content. Regarding interculturality, this session works like the previous one, as it is an oral reproduction of the students' scripts.

Achievement indicators:

- The students are capable of using technology and recording systems properly and responsibly to create their podcast episodes.
- They record the episode taking into account phonetics, pace, and correct pronunciation.

Session 7 and 8

Each group presents its podcast. The rest of the classmates have to do a peer-evaluation rubric to assess their mates' work. In this rubric, they must assess the structural aspects of their peers' episodes and the coeducational ones. The students must evaluate whether their classmates promote equality and have correctly analyzed the gender issues presented in their book chapter. As there are numerous groups, these will take two sessions. Moreover, the teacher will ask the groups to assess themselves. She/he will give them a piece of paper with questions like: "Is our interview free of stereotypes?" "Do we give the female character voice and autonomy?" "Do we include a polite discussion, with inclusive, non-sexist language?"

This session will cover the following specific competencies and criteria from the LOMLOE:

- Specific competence 2
- Specific competence 3
- Specific competence 5
- Specific competence 6

Communication is key for the unit's final session, due to the oral presentation of the podcasts in class. Also, multilingualism is present, as students must fill out a peer-evaluation rubric. In regard to interculturality, the same as the previous sessions, it is always present.

Achievement indicators:

- The groups present their episodes with clear ideas and a profound analysis of the selected chapters.
- They are able to orally present a project in proper and adequate English, avoiding communication mistakes.

- They evaluate their classmates critically but respectfully, completing cooperatively with their group a co-evaluation rubric.
- The groups are capable of reflecting on their own work and learning process, identifying possible improvements in their communicative and intercultural performance.

Final Task: The Mango Street Podcast could cover all the specific competencies and evaluation criteria: 1.1, 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 3.1, 3.2, 4.2, 5.3, 6.1, 6.2.

CONCLUSION

Education is one of the most powerful tools to change society and its members. The school system and every classroom represent the bigger ecosystem that society is, and it is why inequality, discrimination and violence are perpetuated through it. This paper has shown the urgent need for and importance of implementing coeducation as a means to palliate this structural problem which is gender inequality. This cross-sectional teaching should ensure the active rupture and eradication of patriarchal dynamics, prejudice and stereotypes that are present in the educational field.

The use of literature and of *The House on Mango Street* have been proven to be a valuable resource to integrate this gender perspective and education in the English as foreign language classroom. Through the reading of this novel, the students can see and discuss about sexual violence, underage marriage, structural inequality, gender roles and the search for freedom and identity that women have to go through. The implementation of the didactic proposal not only allows them to develop their linguistic skills, while participating in discussions and group tasks, but also to boost their critical thinking, empathy and to teach them how to question the world that surrounds them. Based on the task-based approach, it promotes collaborative and significant learning, as well as reinforcing the students' communicative skills and creating a safe space where they can express their own ideas and collaboratively discuss real life issues.

The didactic unit is a mere example of how coeducation can be slowly introduced in the classroom, no matter what subject the teacher may give. However, as stated in the theoretical framework, coeducation needs of many strategies to be successful. Creating activities is essential to take into account the “hidden” curriculum, as education is more than the teaching of theoretical knowledge. But there is much more to do. Teachers must not be alone on this journey. As Tomé argued, implementing such a project in a school requires for all the educational community to be involved: parents, teachers, students, town halls, inspection, all the public administration. Society in general needs to acknowledge the need for this teaching to be implemented and schools need every possible resource and support to do so.

Educating in equality should not be an option. It is an essential need. Women must be heard, seen and taught. Teaching breaks down barriers and is the tool to achieve freedom. The only means to achieve a fairest and more equal school, as well as a real democratic society, is through coeducation. Teach girls to stand up. To rise their voices and ask for their rights. To vote and fight for their freedom. And, maybe someday, this will be just a story.

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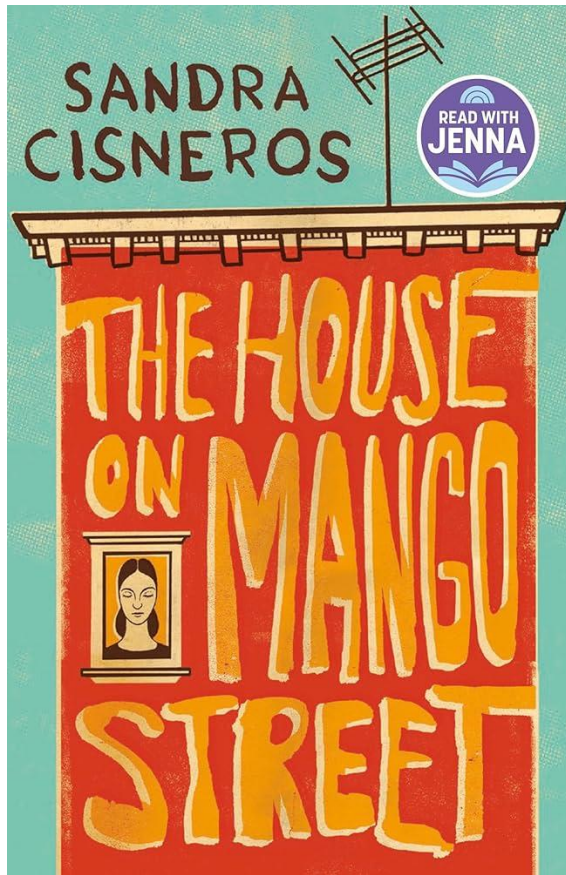
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APPENDICIES

The House on Mango Street



Session 1. Example of picture to infer the plot and issues of the book:



Sanchez Family, 1921. Courtesy of Anna Rios Bermudez. National Museum of The American Latino.

Teacher's evaluation rubric for the final task:

	Excellent (10)	Very good (7.5)	Average (5)	Low (2.5-0)
Content and coeducational aspects	Deeply integrates gender discussions, sheds light on stereotypes and proposes practical solutions.	Presents a clear gender perspective and criticizes stereotypes.	Shows some awareness of Coeducation, although not thoroughly developed.	Does not include a coeducational perspective or superficially address it.
Reading comprehension and analysis	Well-justified and critical analysis of topics and characters. Understands the coeducational implications and hidden messages of the story.	Good analysis with accurate literary references.	General understanding of the texts, without deep analysis.	Limited or erroneous comprehension of the text.
Communicative competence in English	Fluent, well-pronounced, and clear speaking, a wide range of vocabulary, and adequate structures.	Comprehensible speech with some minor mistakes.	Fluidity and pronunciation problems in the speech.	Severe difficulties in oral comprehension and expression.
Creativity and cultural expression	Creative podcast, emotionally shocking, and culturally sensitive.	Good level of sensitivity and originality.	Some ideas are creative, but not fully developed.	Lack of originality.
Teamwork	Equal participation and cooperation can be perceived.	Good collaboration, with minor disparities.	Partial or unequal partnership.	Evident disorganization and deficient participation

Students' co-evaluation rubric for the final task:

	Excellent (10)	Very good (7.5)	Average (5)	Low (2.5-0)
Clarity and coherence in the message	The content is clearly understood and well-structured.	Generally clear and coherent.	Some confusing ideas or poorly organized.	Difficult to follow or incoherent.
Deepening of the topic	It demonstrates a deep understanding and critical analysis of the topic.	Good analysis with clear arguments.	General knowledge of the texts, without deep analysis.	Limited or erroneous comprehension of the text.
Communicative competence in English	Fluent, well-pronounced, and clear speaking, a wide range of vocabulary, and adequate structures.	Comprehensible speech with some minor mistakes.	Fluidity and pronunciation problems in the speech.	Severe difficulties in oral comprehension and expression.
Creativity and interest	A creative podcast that catches the audience's attention.	Good level of originality.	Some ideas are creative, but a bit predictable.	Lack of originality, monotonous.
Content and coeducational aspects	Deeply integrates gender discussions, sheds light on stereotypes and proposes practical solutions.	Presents a clear gender perspective and criticizes stereotypes.	Shows some awareness of Coeducation, although not thoroughly developed.	Does not include a coeducational perspective or superficially address it.