Master’s Thesis

Classic literature through hip-hop as a means to develop critical thinking and the four skills of language learning: A didactic proposal for EFL lessons in 1\textsuperscript{st} Bachillerato

Master’s Degree in Academic Staff of Secondary Education and High School, Vocational Training and Language Teaching

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Signed:

Aida González Albors
The best teachers are like hip-hop producers: study the classics, select the best parts, then add some new flavour.

Christopher Emdin
ABSTRACT

Within the current pedagogical framework, in which there is still a certain reluctance to include changes towards different and more innovative methodologies, and in which literature, and particularly classic literature, acquire little relevance in the English as a foreign language lessons, this work proposes to include it in such lessons from an approach that listens to the needs of young people, specifically in the first course of Bachillerato. This approach, that combines individual and cooperative work with the aim of contributing to a final project, uses hip-hop as a channel of transmission of the classics of literature and also has a critical and academic character, since it aims to achieve the development of students' critical thinking while this helps to improve the four skills of language learning.

Key words: hip-hop pedagogy, literature, classic literature, young people, critical thinking, skills of language learning
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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Justification and objectives

“There’s an educational disconnect between students’ individual backgrounds and the instruction that they traditionally receive in school (Darling-Hammond 3)” (2013, p. 51), Professor Lauren Leigh Kelly states. Jason Reynolds, author of novels and poetry for a young adult and middle-grade audience, also remarks in an interview the disconnection between teachers and students by saying:

Most adults who get uncomfortable around children do not spend enough time around them. […] You can’t just pop in and pop out. You got to pour into them, and then you got to listen. You got to humble yourself. […] say: I am you, you are me. I’ve been where you are […]. (2018, 3:00)

According to these words and to my direct observation and experience in the classrooms, this work presents a proposal for the perceived need: For the teaching-learning process to be successful, teachers should focus on the essential aspect of including methodologies that take into account the reality and interests of young people and thus better connect with them. Teaching should also include methodologies in which the student becomes a more active agent of his or her own learning. Besides, teaching should encourage the formation of students as cultured adults by developing critical thinking about cross-curricular elements such as values. As pointed by Kelly (2013) teaching needs: “a pedagogy that empowers students intellectually, socially, emotionally, and politically by using cultural referents to impart knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Ladson-Billings 20)” (p. 51).

Generally, the focus in the English as a foreign or second language lessons is mainly on the theoretical explanation of grammar and on the accomplishment of exercises for its practice, and even more in the level in which the present work is centered, bachillerato, since later the students will face the test that allows them to access university. Beth Segal (2014) restates that: “ESL curricula that are set up to teach the English language primarily through the linguistic intelligence are, therefore, a social injustice to those who are stronger in one of the other intelligences that Gardner refers to” (p. 2). In these lessons, literature often acquires little relevance, as Tulika Mishra and Alina Rebecca Chirciu (2012) state:
Literature teaches the nuances of language. It can develop a wider and richer vocabulary and helps oral and written communication to become more refined; but literature, sadly, has been left aside in ELT practice in favor of a skills-based approach to language teaching and learning. (p. 11)

Rahma Al-Mahrooqi (2012) exposes that: “Opinions about teaching English literature in the EFL/ESL contexts have long been contradictory, swinging like a pendulum between opponents and proponents” (p. 5). Opponents, especially regarding classic texts, see literature as complex and at some extent not real and, therefore, inadequate for foreign language learners. However, proponents see its development of pragmatic and communicative competence and defend its inclusion in EFL/ESL lessons as it is:

A reservoir of ideas, thoughts, emotions, and experiences that reflect varied human experience in our complex world. Literature can generate much lively discussion, debate and negotiation of meaning. While it can be taught amorally, it can also be used to foster critical thinking, by comparing and contrasting practices, values, norms and the tradition of different contexts. (Al-Mahrooqi, 2012, pp. 5-6)

With all this, the present work seeks to offer another perspective on how to develop critical thinking in the 1st Bachillerato EFL lessons through literature, specifically classic literature, using the hip-hop music channel. In this way, the classics are studied through the use of hip-hop giving a new air to teaching. Likewise, in this way and through this channel, since it is considered one of the favourites by young people, this proposal seeks a way to connect with them and in turn bring them closer to English and classic literature in a different way. Furthermore, this work pursues the aim that students think critically and improve at the same time the four skills of language learning.

1.2 The state of the topic

There are several people and groups (teachers and non-teachers) worldwide who have set out to approach the culture of young people and bring education closer to them, that is, they are committed to listen to them, to identify their needs and to channel education in values through more creative methodologies which use, for instance, hip-hop. Reynolds also reflects on the disconnection between young people and classic literature. He says:
I think that young people are allergic to boredom and that doesn’t mean that Shakespeare is boring. It just means that oftentimes the teaching of Shakespeare is boring. [...] I believe that we have to start really assessing what the literary canon is. [...] Why not figure out how to expand that canon to be diverse, to be old, to be young... Poetry should be Shakespeare sonnets and it should be Queen Latifah. (2018, 5:12)

Sage Salvo, the educator and founder of Words Liive, an education technology start-up that brings music-based literacy programs to students and teachers, explains in his TEDx Talk Understanding Literature through Hip Hop that: “When students encounter literature from centuries ago or mathematical that use things that are irrelevant to them in their lives, that context barrier acts like a foreign language and they’re not able to read it” (TEDx Talks, 2012, 1:28). Reynolds also supports bringing the literary canon closer to students by stating that teachers should teach comparative literature to young people for them to see it is a continuum, to build relationships with literature and also with literacy, because then they can work with critical thinking. Crystal Belle (2016), for her part, shows her interest on developing students’ critical and technical literacy skills by describing her conception of a hip-hop–based literacy curriculum in the English lessons. In this line, Catrice Barrett (2013), in her study “(Re)Imagining TESOL through Critical Hip Hop Literacy”, while observing how students respond to a critical language approach through a hip-hop text, aimed to attend the four second language development skills (reading, writing, speaking and listening). Segal (2014) joins the use of hip-hop to improve some skills; she shows an example of the curriculum, Rapping English, which uses this music to teach ELLs vocabulary, grammar, discourse and prosody. Ernest Morrell and Jeffrey M. R. Duncan-Andrade (2002) embrace all of the above: the literary continuum, the critical thinking, and the development of the four skills of language learning through a curriculum that uses hip-hop as the motivator. They defend that using provocative rap texts brings the discussion of topics from a listening/reading of the text “which may lead to more thoughtful analyses, which could translate into expository writing, the production of poetic texts, or a commitment to social action for community empowerment” (p. 89). These authors sought, among others, to develop oral and written debate skills in their students, also group-work skills, to teach students how to argue their opinion about a poem and a song in a critical essay, and to expose them to the literary canon. Likewise, they gave importance to the period and the context in which the poems
were written. They used works from Shakespeare, Whitman, Maya Angelou, Jimmy Santiago Baca, John Donne, among others, and rap texts for instance from Public Enemy or Ice Cube, to be linked and critically interpreted. Results showed that students could establish those connections between both kind of works, the literary and the hip-hop ones, while enjoying and being motivated.

As can be noted, there is interest and research about critical thinking and the development of the four skills of language learning through the treatment of classic literature using hip-hop as a transmission channel in English lessons for young adults. However, research on it decreases in relation to young adult EFL lessons, perhaps because in these lessons literature, and particularly classic literature, is rarely used and even less through music, since they are basically focused on the achievement of the contents through exercises or, at best, through projects. Lindsay Clandfield remarks that idea:

> Its emphasis on functional language to meet the learner’s communicative needs and focus on real-world, useful English meant that there was little room for literary luxuries. Add to this the rise and recognition of English as an international language, and literature has all but been given the boot. (2013, Language learning and literature section, para. 2)

However, there is some light shed on the use of literature, and particularly classic literature, in the EFL lessons as in the use of hip-hop in them and this work aims to join them in a fresh and different way.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Literature, classic literature and young people

It seems that for young people, literature, and particularly classic literature, are synonymous with distant, uninteresting and difficult. Vanisa D. Weist (2004) shows an opinion of a student taking a course on literature in a FL class: “If you’re taking a literature course, it’s not about newspaper articles” (p. 212). She adds that in a literature course, “you’re not talking about just anything that’s written and published… there’s another level, a step up” (p. 213). These ideas derive perhaps from the way that literature has been presented in class, in a disconnected way from the realities of young people. Therefore, teachers need to bring literature, and especially classic literature, closer to their students by carrying out meaningful activities, explaining the context of that literature
and using technologies, among others. This distant presentation of literature in class is affirmed by Professor Patrick Rosenkjar, who advocates for an engaging way of teaching literature making the learners active participants. In his intervention *Using literature in teaching language* he states:

Most Japanese students (and many teachers of English as well) believe that poems, short stories, and plays have little or no place in classrooms oriented to developing communicative competence in English, or that literary texts are only for advanced learners. In fact, Japanese students often say that the study of both English and Japanese literary texts is boring and difficult. This unfortunate situation is probably the result of teaching literature in the wrong way: choosing extremely difficult texts, relying on word-for-word translation, and lecturing to students (often in Japanese) on literary criticism and the meaning of English texts. (2007, Description section, para. 1)

There is possibly a preference of young people for literary genres as young adult novels or graphic novels, however classics as Shakespeare, as it is said by Philip Schwadron (n.d.), connect to teens and young adults due to, among other, the characters of the story. Teachers only need to know “how to work with the works.”

2.1.1 Literature, classic literature and foreign language

Literature and foreign languages have always been connected. Clandfield speaks about the use of literature in learning a language in the past saying that the main reason to learn one was to read the classics of literature in that language. She adds that the expression “read” referred to talk about studying a language; “one ‘read French’, or ‘read Latin’ at university” (2013, Language learning and literature section, para. 1). Despite this connection, literature in English as a second or foreign language classes has experienced an alternating presence as Mohammad Khatib and Mojdeh Mellati (2012) explain: “From 1940s to 1960s, literature disappeared from the language teaching field (Carter 2007), and it was almost ignored in English as a second language and English as a foreign language […] but now it has returned after all” (p. 19). Although this return may have taken place to some extent, it seems that it, and especially in the case of classic literature, often still misses the connection with the students. Janice Bland (2018) agrees with that limited inclusion and connection of literature in language learning lessons: “Yet adolescents’ language learning is still mostly restricted to the scope of traditional
textbooks which ‘feature magazine-style reading passages exclusively, ignoring news reporting, prose fiction, poetry, or anything else (Brown 2009:243)”’ (p. 8).

Ruth Gómez (2017) mentions Fernández, Bobkina y Sarto (2012) when they affirm that in Spain there is great uncertainty about using literature in the EFL lessons by saying “quite a number of teachers still feel reluctant to include literary blocks into the language curriculum” (p. 14). This can happen because perhaps they do not know when and how to include literature in the EFL class, there is only the aim of achieving the teaching of the contents. Nevertheless, she points that nowadays literature is gaining prominence as a teaching tool, because of its effectiveness and functionality as a tool for the acquisition and development of the different language skills, and also because it serves as a mean to broaden cultural and social aspects in the students.

Despite the complexity and foreignness that some associate with literature, especially classic literature, in EFL lessons, Clanfield (2013) points out its assets and provides good reasons for using it in the classroom, for instance:

- Literature is authentic material, so the skills that students acquire in dealing with difficult or unknown language can be used outside the class.
- Literature expands language awareness. By asking learners to examine sophisticated or non-standard examples of language they become aware of the norms of language use (Widdowson, 1975 quoted by Lazar 1993).
- Literature educates the whole person by examining values in literary texts which relate to the world outside the classroom.
- Literature is motivating. Students can feel a sense of achievement at understanding a piece of highly respected literature.

Besides these benefits, literature in the EFL can also lead to interaction due to the themes and interpretations that can be discussed. Mohammad Khatib, Saeed Rezaei and Ali Derakhshan (2011) subscribe to the previous benefits by classifying them into: authenticity, motivation, cultural/intercultural awareness and globalization, intensive/extensive reading practice, sociolinguistic/pragmatic knowledge, grammar and vocabulary knowledge, language skills, emotional intelligence, and critical thinking.
2.1.2 Literature, classic literature and critical thinking

Education aims to instruct civic citizens through all subjects and contents with values and competences and with critical spirit and thinking.

As stated by Zuzana Tabačková (2015), although the term critical comes from the Greek word kritikos, that describes the ability to decide, to discern and to judge, there is more to consider when defining critical thinking. She also explains that “literature and critical thinking are not ‘two islands’ but ‘simply different coastlines of the same one’ (Hakes, 2008, p. xi)” (p. 728). John Butterworth and Geoff Thwaites (2013) specify that the concept of critical thinking: “does not merely mean finding fault or expressing dislike […] It means giving a fair and unbiased opinion of something” (p. 7).

Perceiving, analyzing, predicting, and judging, all four including an evaluative function, are the stages in which Edward D’Angelo (1970) divides the critical thinking process. He states that: “critical thinking is an evaluative form of inquiry. To equate critical thinking with imaginative and creative thinking is inaccurate, since it does not insure the evaluative function will be utilized” (p. 634). By perceiving he understands the alteration of one’s perception of a situation. The analyzing stage involves separating factors and examining them acutely. Predicting means considering alternatives, while judging refers to the development of criteria to evaluate and come to conclusions.

So, as people are different and each person thinks different there can be multiple interpretations of the same information, as Nkosinathi E. Madondo (2012) explains in words of Samuel (1995):

Interpreting literary works does not only lie in words in themselves but also in conceptual understanding. It is therefore acceptable that two people can have two different interpretations of the same text given their background and the knowledge of the world they bring into the text. (p. 32)

Literature deals with a wide range of themes like love, death, revenge, life, betrayal, hope, and many others, so by working with a piece of literature in class it is implicit that the students deal with them resulting in a great opportunity to develop critical thinking. As Clandfield believes:
I think literature can be used as a springboard or a catalyst for work on critical thinking skills. Good literature encourages interaction. […] This is especially true of classic literature. A piece of classic literature remains classic because it resonates with people through time and can be relevant in the present day. This is what Ezra Pound meant, I think, by “news that stays new.” (2013, How to teach using literary texts section, para. 4)

Tabačková (2015) restates the power of literature to develop critical thinking by presenting literature as a reflection of the outside world since the characters of a story, how they speak, and their view of life can compare to real people. She defends that literature contributes to practice critical reasoning and, the most important, to create critical dispositions and moral attitudes that are open to accept alternative points of view without which the present-day world would not survive. Setiyaningsih (n.d.) also stands up for the use of literature as a mean to develop students’ critical thinking due to two main reasons, the meaning beyond the surface and the closeness of literary works to life.

2.2 Hip-hop and young people

The bond between this music genre and young people and its educational potential can be seen in examples such as the connection that Bettina Love, Associate Professor at the University of Georgia and one of the most esteemed educational researchers in the area of hip-hop education, has with her students. She explains in her TEDx Talk Hip hop, grit, and academic success (TEDx Talks, 2014) that this connection is due to the culture of hip-hop. She exposes the situation that is common to find in classrooms: young people banging away on the table or producing sounds, which is usually seen by teachers as a lack of interest or attention, so they scold them, but actually what they are doing is feeling music. Young people are hip-hop and educators need to understand that it is another way of learning, of connecting, a way that brings out social and emotional intelligence, grit, creativity, improvisation, optimism and the development of other multiple skills in young people without meaning they are not academic or any other prejudice it exists towards hip-hop. At school, teachers will meet what she mentions in words of the expert and researcher of African American Life and Culture, Regina Bradley, hip-hop sensibilities, students that identify themselves with hip-hop as a way of being and thinking, a way of understanding the world.
Of importance is when Love mentions that in 2012 the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders hooked up twelve freestyle rappers to spontaneously create rhymes and come up with thoughts in real time and see their brain activity. The result was that these rapper’s frontal cortex (where emotions, motivation and language are developed) moved at an astonishing speed. This shows that hip-hop develops certain important abilities and it may go unnoticed in the education field due to prejudices or disinformation about this music genre. To prove the relevance of the use of hip-hop in education with young people regarding their academic improvement, she presents as an example The Kindezi School, an Atlanta public charter school, which had once the highest academic performing fifth grade class on standardized tests. This school puts students’ culture, their identities and their hip-hop identity in the first place in classes with a reduced number of students ruled by the principles of love, integrity and perseverance. Teachers have the chance to develop all those skills in their students who have the predictors of success, they only need to overtake their prejudices about hip-hop and understand young people’s culture. As Love states: “We are talking about kids whose movements today will become mainstream tomorrow” (TEDx Talks, 2014, 5:45). Teachers should say as Shakespeare wrote in The Tempest: “I’ll teach you how to flow” (1623/2011, 2.1).

2.2.1 Music, hip-hop and foreign languages

It is common among young adults to connect with a song in a foreign language like English through the process of discovering, enjoying, repeating, and understanding it. Recent EFL studies show, as Natalia F. Orlova (2003) explains, that some of the methodological aims with which music is used in class are:

- Practicing the rhythm, the stress and the intonation patterns of English.
- Teaching vocabulary, in particular in the vocabulary reinforcement stage.
- Teaching grammar (verb tenses, grammar rules, etc.).
- Teaching speaking through class discussions.
- Teaching listening comprehension.
- Developing writing skills.
- Developing creativity.
- Developing cultural knowledge.
- Developing critical thinking.
As Segal (2014) states, teachers and students need a curriculum that “provides foundational skills for ELLs that appeals to domains and intelligences that are traditionally neglected in education” (p. 2). Students need methods that involve and engage them, and using music in class provides the perfect opportunity to it. Listening to music is an enjoyable activity for everyone, and education, especially language learning teaching, needs to be an enjoyable activity as well and to provide a pleasant atmosphere for students to feel more confident and with less anxiety and to experience a more efficient learning process. Segal (2014) quotes that idea with the words of Geoffrey Caine and Renate Caine (2011) who explain that “the state of the mind in which learning best occurs is one in which students feel safe when they make mistakes and take risks, but also feel challenged and alert” (p. 4). Hip-hop brings that connection, that engagement, that optimism, that challenge. Professional educator, Rita Pierson, also remarks in her TED Talk *Every kid needs a champion* the importance of human connections and of bringing joy to the teaching and learning process. She points out:

> How powerful would our world be if we had kids who were not afraid to take risks, who were not afraid to think, and who had a champion? Every child deserves a champion, an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection, and insists that they become the best they can possibly be. (TED, 2013, 7:05)

Segal (2014) confirms that rap music provides relevant content to students and that they get immersed since they feel relaxed in the class due to resources that they are familiar with and that they enjoy outside school. She adds that “English language learner’s cultural barriers can unconsciously be lowered as they focus on youthful music that is cross-cultural and is accompanied by the English language” (p. 21).

There are some resources available for teachers to teach English through hip-hop and for students to access them like the website ESL Hip hop developed by Stephen Mayeux. He expresses on it:

> There are a lot of teachers who are reluctant to use this vibrant genre of music, mainly because they believe it might teach their students *bad English*. It’s really unfortunate because hip-hop music is one of the most linguistically-rich sources of content (n.d., About section, para. 2).
2.2.2 Music, hip-hop, literature and classic literature

Music and literature have a reciprocal character; music as a mean to access literature (literature in music) and literature as a mean to access music (music in literature). Both have a connection that can be found throughout history: troubadours with their own poems and melodies in medieval times, the Florentine Camerata leading to the first operas reviving the Greek tragedies, the symphonic poems of the 19th century, or the subject of this proposal, some hip-hop works. In the latter case, hip-hop and literature may not be identified with each other by many students and teachers at first. As Salvo (TEDx Talks, 2012) means, it can be due to the general belief that there is nothing relevant enough in hip-hop to teach through. Love (TEDx Talks, 2014) also confirms that generalized idea of hip-hop not being a synonym for serious or academic when she explains that, for some, her lessons that use hip-hop may give the impression that there is no learning involved. However, she shows that hip-hop and literature coincide in various aspects since her students make powerful narratives using rap and poetry. Salvo (TEDx Talks, 2012), for his part, gives some reasons from the math point of view to justify hip-hop as a literary feat:

- The average hip-hop song is arranged in three verses. The average verse has sixteen bars. The average bar though has about 15 to 20 words, so it means a hip-hop song has got approximately a thousand words and a hip-hop album has about twelve thousand and one enters the realm of a literary composition at that point.
- We have a language economy, we are looking for efficiencies, for methods of communicating much more effectively, just as poets and hip-hop artists do.

There are some companies that are devoted to bring literature and hip-hop together with the aim of improving English proficiency and also to develop critical thinking skills. It is the case of The Hip-hop Shakespeare Company (THSC), a music theatre production company from the UK formed mainly by hip-hop artists, actors and poets that work with the connection between Shakespeare and modern hip-hop artists. Their programmes aim to motivate especially young people from primary up to university levels to work on new skills and to get another perspective of Shakespeare, music, literature, and art in general through interactive sessions that allow them to be creative while thinking critically. The programme Words Liive, for its part, also aims to show that classic literature and hip-hop work perfectly together, for example Martin Luther King through Kayne West. In this
line, the University of Washington offered the course The Text Appeal of Tupac Shakur, in which the class read, among others, Sun Tzu’s *The Art of War*, Machiavelli’s *The Prince* and selected readings from Shakespeare and the Bible to work on the literary influences in the work of Tupac. Developing critical thinking and the four skills of language learning through literature and hip-hop is researched also in works like *Hip-Hop Poetry and the Classics* by Alan Lawrence Sitomer, an inner-city high school English teacher and former professor at Loyola Marymount University, which shows that classic poetry and hip-hop work well to engage students with both, poetry and academics. The latter is reflected in the fact that almost all his students passed the English portion of the California High School Exit Exam (Bridges, 2008).

### 2.2.3 Critical Hip Hop Pedagogy

Hip-hop is a reflection of culture and hip-hop songs reflect it by dealing with topics as sexism, racism, power, society, among many others. Critical thinking, as it has been exposed before, broadly means to judge facts or information after analysing them. Therefore, hip-hop and critical thinking prove to be a well-functioning pairing since through hip-hop teachers can develop their students’ critical thinking about the songs’ topics and references.

Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) mention Powell (1991) who states that “rap artists, they contend, don’t talk that love stuff, but [rather] educate the listeners” (p. 88). This contradicts the belief of a part of the society regarding hip-hop being polemical. Morrell and Duncan-Andrade (2002) also include the opinion of Giroux (1996) about the negative connotations of youth culture promoted in popular media that “propel youth toward mistrust, alienation, misogyny, violence, apathy, and the development of fugitive cultures. […] Critical educators […] must consider elements of popular culture such as hip-hop music as a serious site for social knowledge to be discussed, interrogated, and critiqued” (p. 89).

Professor Christopher Emdin in the video *What If Teachers Used Hip Hop?* speaks about the non-evolutionary character of education since 1950 with the post-Sputnik era and its non-functionality, that is the reason why students and teachers need something different. He explains that in education there have been changes in the curriculums and in the standards, and programs like No Child Left Behind or Race to the Top, all well-intentioned but non-working. It seems that the young people teaching-learning process is
ineffective because, as he says, it is not focused on their culture. He also notes some negative teaching experiences caused “not because of the brilliance of the young people, not because of the intelligence of the young people, but because they were unequipped for understanding how to be an effective educator” (THNKR, 2013, 1:55). He remarks that teachers should not ever take for granted that they understand the culture of a young person since hip-hop, as a cultural movement, transforms and evolves. Antwi A. Akom also reflects in words of Chang (2005) that hip-hop since approximately 1970 has become one of the most influential, artistic, social and cultural movements for youth and young adults all over the world. Akom (2009) also quotes the idea that:

CHHP starts from the premise that hip hop is an important lens for socio-political analysis and representation of marginalized communities, and that youth-driven research on hip hop and popular culture is an instantiation of reading and acting upon the world, that is, critical pedagogy (Fischer, 2002; Freire, 1970; Stovall, 2006; Yang, 2006). (p. 55)

Jasmine Dares (2013) proves that “critical rap pedagogies provide young people with more relevant learning experiences and with greater possibilities to draw connections between their own experiences and the wider community leading to greater opportunities for agency and empowerment” (p. ii). The work The SAGE Guide to Curriculum in Education, that integrates contributions such as “Popular Cultural Milieu Illustrated Through a Hip Hop Cultural Values-Driven Pedagogy”, highlights the idea that the use of a hip-hop culturally responsive values-driven (CVD) curriculum “helps involve and intellectually influence the academic engagement of ‘challenged’ minority learners within a classroom (Emdin, 2010)” (Ali and Barden, 2015, p. 407).

3. DIDACTIC PROPOSAL

3.1 Contextualization

This proposal is intended for a 55-minute class of 24 students in the 1st course of the Bachillerato level in the subject English as a foreign language. Although it is focused on the first course of this level, it could also be applied in the second course since most of the content is shared. It focuses on this level as the English content of the song to develop critical thinking and the four skills of language learning may not be suitable for lower
levels. However, with a proper methodology and at another pace it could be applied in lower levels.

As mentioned before, the teaching of classic literature in EFL lessons does not always connect with young people. This proposal presents a different way of integrating classic literature in the EFL teaching with young adults which seeks to develop critical thinking while improving the four skills of language learning. It could perfectly fit into Unit 9 *Music to our ears* of the book *New Out&About 1* of Cambridge for 1st Bachillerato. Its contents are available on the online platform BlinkLearning and are shown in Figure 1.

**Figure 1**

*Contents Unit 9 New Out&About: Student’s Book 1*

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<th>LISTENING &amp; IDIOMS</th>
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<td>sing along, be into, take up, fit in with, move along, hang out</td>
<td>music</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>TIP: understanding paragraphs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Idioms: to go to pieces, on the spot, to be over the moon, fingers crossed</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GRAMMAR</th>
<th>VOCABULARY 2</th>
<th>PRONUNCIATION</th>
<th>SPEAKING</th>
<th>WRITING</th>
<th>LIFE SKILL</th>
<th>VIDEO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>relative clauses; defining relative clauses; non-defining relative clauses</td>
<td>American English vs. British English</td>
<td>rather a vowel</td>
<td>talking about preferences</td>
<td>a description of a place</td>
<td>giving presentations and nerve control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It could also be suitable for Unit 3 *Entertainment* of the book *Key to Bachillerato 1* of Oxford for 1st Bachillerato. Its contents are available on the Oxford University Press website and are shown in Figure 2.

**Figure 2**

*Contents Unit 3 Key to Bachillerato 1*

3.2 Competences and didactic contents

In Tables 1 to 4 the contents and competences, as they are related, are presented together and specified according to the four blocks defined for the four skills of language learning and taking into account what is established by the Spanish national legislative framework
for secondary and high school education *Real Decreto 1105/2014, de 26 de diciembre, por el que se establece el currículo básico de la Educación Secundaria Obligatoria y del Bachillerato.* This proposal also includes and works with the six cross-curricular elements that this decree states: reading comprehension, oral and written expression, audiovisual communication, Information and Communication Technologies, entrepreneurship, and civic and constitutional education.

**Table 1**

*Contents and competences worked in the Listening of the proposal*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 1: Oral Texts Comprehension (Listening)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contents:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>KNOW:</strong> review of the past units (previous knowledge): first conditional, present and past tenses, modal verbs, etc., and new contents: relative clauses, informal register, non-verbal language, and specific vocabulary and expressions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>KNOW HOW TO:</strong> adopt listening strategies and make hypotheses about the content and build own opinion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>KNOW HOW TO BE:</strong> critic, attentive, open-minded, and respectful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Competences:</strong> linguistic communication, and social and civic competence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2**

*Contents and competences worked in the Speaking of the proposal*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 2: Oral Texts Production: expression and interaction (Speaking)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Contents:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>KNOW:</strong> expressions such as <em>My interpretation is, I think, I would/wouldn’t, In my view</em>, previous knowledge and some of the new contents such as non-verbal language, vocabulary from the texts and videos, and grammar.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>KNOW HOW TO:</strong> apply the contents in debates and interventions, listen, enrich own opinion, reply to questions or statements, express like or dislike and recommendations, and adapt to the context’s register.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>KNOW HOW TO BE:</strong> expressive, critic, clear, pro-active, open-minded, participative, attentive, and respectful.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Competences: linguistic communication, learning to learn, social and civic competence, sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and digital competence in the case they use digital support to research.

Table 3
Contents and competences worked in the Reading of the proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 3: Written Texts Comprehension (Reading)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contents:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>KNOW</strong>: vocabulary from the texts, previous knowledge, the new grammar contents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>KNOW HOW TO</strong>: apply the information given (contexts) to make hypotheses, infer and understand meaning, adapt comprehension to the text type, and get information from different reading techniques.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>KNOW HOW TO BE</strong>: focused and critic.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competences: linguistic communication, and social and civic competence.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4
Contents and competences worked in the Writing of the proposal

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Block 4: Written Texts Production: expression and interaction (Writing)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contents:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>KNOW</strong>: interrogative sentences, vocabulary from the texts, and previous and new knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>KNOW HOW TO</strong>: apply the contents in the writing tasks, come to terms with other opinions, express own ideas, listen, enrich own opinion, and adapt to the context’s register.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- <strong>KNOW HOW TO BE</strong>: expressive, critic, clear, open-minded, and respectful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competences: linguistic communication, digital competence, learning to learn, social and civic competence, and sense of initiative and entrepreneurship.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 Methodology and didactic materials

The methodology combines collaborative learning and project-based learning as the students will need to work in groups to get a result which, in turn, will belong to a class project. The aims are developing critical thinking through introducing classic literature in a hip-hop song while improving the four skills of language learning. This agrees with that mentioned in the work of Belinda Hakes, *When Critical Thinking met English Literature* (2008), to which Tabačková (2015) refers. In this work, Hakes provides many examples of how to apply critical thinking in teaching English literature and explains that there are two ways of introducing literature students to critical thinking: from the literary text (critical reading) to critical thinking or vice versa.

The present proposal for 1st Bachillerato follows the approach of critical reading first, in which students can apply, as Tabačková (2015) quotes from Greenall and Swan (1986) and Scull (1987):

> Various specific techniques and strategies of enhancing critical reading such as extracting the main ideas of the text, reading for specific information, understanding text organization, checking comprehension, inferring, dealing with unfamiliar words, linking ideas, etc. (p. 729)

Then, students will reflect and discuss about what they have read. This part of critical thinking can be carried out in many ways; in this proposal it is done through questions. Tabačková (2015) also agrees, in words of Schmit (2002), that “critical thinking in a literature class can be exercised through questions that the teacher asks as our understanding of the outside world ‘is shaped by the questions we ask’” (p. 729).

With all this, the present proposal’s methodology is explained and structured as follows:

- During the first lesson, students will watch and listen twice to the official video of the hip-hop song *i (love myself)* of Kendrick Lamar for them to get motivated and to try to understand its content.
- Then, they will be provided with two copies: one, *i (love myself)*, including the lyrics of the song, and the other, *Othello*, including the part of the literary text that the song refers to.
"We got a young brother that stands for something! We got a young brother that believes in the all of us! Brother Kendrick Lamar! He’s not a rapper, he’s a writer, he’s an author! And if you read between the lines, we’ll learn how to love one another! But you can’t do that. I said, you can’t do that without loving yourself first."

I’ve been through a whole lot: Trial, tribulation, but I know God. Satan wanna put me in a bow tie Praying that the holy water don’t go dry As I look around me so many motherfuckers wanna down me but an enemigo never drowned me In front of a dirty double-mirror they found me

And I love myself (The world is a ghetto with big guns and picket signs) I love myself (But I can do what I want whenever I want and I don’t mind) I love myself (He said I gotta get up, life is more than suicide) I love myself (One day at a time, sun gone shine)

Everybody looking at you crazy What you gonna do? Lift up your head and keep moving or let the paranoia haunt you? Peace to fashion police, I wear my heart on my sleeve, let the runway start You know the miserable do love company What do you want from me and my scars? Everybody lack confident, everybody lack confident. How many times our potential was anonymous? How many times the city making me promises? So, I promise this (CHORUS)

They wanna say there’s a war outside and a bomb in the street and a gun in the hood and a mob of police and a rock on the corner and a line full of fiends, and a bottle full of lean and a model on a scene These days of frustration, keep y’all on tuck and rotation. I duck these cold faces, post up fee-fi-fo-fum basis Dreams of realities peace Blow steam in the face of the beast The sky can fall down, the wind can cry now The strong in me, I still smile (CHORUS)

Walk my bare feet down, down valley deep My fee-fi-fo-fum. My heart undone (CHORUS)

I went to war last night with an automatic weapon, don’t nobody call a medic. Imma do it ’til I get it right. I went to war last night. I’ve been dealing with depression ever since an adolescent. Duckin’ every other blessin’, I can never see the message. I could never take the lead, I could never bob and weave From a negative and letting ’em annihilate me And its evident I’m moving at a meteor speed Finna run into a building, lay my body in the street Keep my money in the ceiling, let my mama know I’m free Give my story to the children and the lesson they can read and the glory to the feeling of the holy unseen Seen enough, make a motherfucker scream, “I love myself!”

I lost my head I must misread what the good book said Oh woes be me, it’s a jungle inside Give myself again ’til the well runs dry

Vocabulary:

Bare feet: descalzo
Bob and weave: técnica de esquinar en boxeo
Bow tie: pajarita
Duck: esquinar
Fee-fi-fo-fum: parte del cuento Jack y las habichuelas mágicas
Fiend: malvado
Finna: sinónimo de going to – ir a
Haunt: perseguir
Hood: abreviación neighbourhood - barrio
Imma: sinónimo de I’m going to – voy a
Lean: bebida narcótica
Mob: multitud
Picket signs: señales de protesta
Trial: juicio
Tribulation: adversidad
Tuck: posición carpada
Well: pozo
Woes be me: expression “pobre de mí”
ACT I SCENE i: Venice. A street.

Enter RODERIGO and IAGO.

[...]

RODERIGO. By heaven, I rather would have been his hangman.

IAGO. Why, there's no remedy; 'tis the curse of service.

Preferment goes by letter and affection, and not by old gradation, where each second stood heir to the first. Now, sir, be judge yourself, whether I in any just term am affined to love the Moor.

RODERIGO. I would not follow him then.

IAGO. O, sir, content you; I follow him to serve my turn upon him:

We cannot all be masters, nor all masters cannot be truly follow'd. You shall mark many a duteous and knee-crooking knave, that, doting on his own obsequious bondage, wears out his time, much like his master's ass, for nought but provender, and when he's old, cashier'd:

Whip me such honest knaves. Others there are who, trimm'd in forms and visages of duty, keep yet their hearts attending on themselves, and, throwing but shows of service on their lords, do well thrive by them and when they have lined their coats
do themselves homage: these fellows have some soul;

And such a one do I profess myself. For, sir, it is as sure as you are Roderigo, were I the Moor, I would not be Iago:

In following him, I follow but myself;

Heaven is my judge, not I for love and duty, but seeming so, for my peculiar end:

For when my outward action doth demonstrate the native act and figure of my heart in compliment extern, 'tis not long after but I will wear my heart upon my sleeve for daws to peck at: I am not what I am.

Vocabulary:

By heaven: Juro por el cielo/Dios
Hangman: verdugo
Curse: inconveniente
Preferment: ascenso
Heir: heredero
Affined: obligado
Content: estar tranquilo
Serve: turn; vengarse
Master: amo
Duteous: obediente
Knee-crooking: de rodillas flexibles
Knave: bribón/granuja
Doting: adorando
Bondage: esclavitud
Wears out: agota
Ass: burro
Nought but: nada más que
Provender: forraje
Cashier’d: destituido
Whip: azotar
Trimm’d: ajustado
Visage: rostro
Thrive: beneficiarse
Homage: homenaje
Doth: does
Compliment: elogio
Daw: grajilla (ave)
- They will only need, through the scanning reading technique, to identify the line of the song that is the same as the one in the literary text as shown in Figure 3.

**Figure 3**

*Example of the reference identification*

![Example of reference identification](image)

- Once, the line has been found, the explanatory didactic video shown in Figure 4 that illustrates the origins of that literary reference will be displayed and the teacher will elaborate on it in order to clarify the content.

**Figure 4**

*Screenshot BBC Channel YouTube video Wear my hear upon my sleeve*

![Screenshot](image)

- Afterwards, students will be handed out two worksheets: one with information about the literary author and the context of the literary piece in question, and the other with information about the hip-hop artist and the context of the song used. Each worksheet also contains questions about its corresponding story’s critical judgement. Students will answer them individually at home based on their own interpretation of both stories after reading the texts on the copies handed at the beginning of the lesson through the active and detailed reading techniques. For this, they will need to apply these strategies of critical reading because, as Tabačková (2015) defends, following Schmit (2002), that “the discussion should move to the analytical phase when specific elements of the text are closely studied so as to ‘identify meaningful components of the text’” (p. 729).
W. Shakespeare was born in Stratford-upon-Avon in 1564. Around 1592, he began his career as a playwright and actor. He developed his literary career in London. His beginnings were dedicated to poetry. However, what really made the British writer famous were his plays. He wrote comedies, tragedies and historical dramas, among others. He also wrote about deeper themes such as love, betrayal, revenge, death, loyalty, appearance, ambition, etc. to enter the minds of the characters as in Romeo and Juliet, Hamlet...

Some doubted about the excellence of his literary work due to his education. However, Shakespeare is one of the most important playwrights and poets of English and World Literature leaving for posterity hundreds of words and expressions.

The Tragedy of Othello, the Moor of Venice is a tragedy from approx. 1603. The main characters are: Othello, a Moorish general in the Venetian army, and his trusted but disloyal servant Iago.

Othello marries Desdemona, with who Roderigo, friend of Othello, is also in love. Iago wants to destroy Othello and counts on Roderigo’s help. Using a planned strategy, they make Othello believe she is unfaithful, and Othello kills her. Iago’s wife reveals the truth and she gets killed by her husband. Othello, after knowing the truth, kills Iago and commits suicide next to his dead wife.

What’s your interpretation of the extract of the piece?

What’s your interpretation of I will wear my heart upon my sleeve?

What topics do you think he writes about in Othello?

Does his message of: I will wear my heart upon my sleeve still happen nowadays?

Do you like the story? Would you recommend it? To whom and why?
I (LOVE MYSELF)
BY KENDRICK LAMAR

Kendrick Lamar was born in California in 1987. He is an American rapper, songwriter, and record producer. He started as a child releasing mixtapes. Lamar grew up around precarious street activity which influenced him. Dr. Dre became his mentor and he has worked with multiple artists. In his songs we can find themes such as: the complexity of modern African-American life, trauma, police harassment, racism, social injustice, insecurity, fear, etc. Lately he’s been incorporating elements of funk, soul, jazz, and spoken word. He leaves the audience to interpret his music. Billboard magazine described his lyricism as Shakespearean.

WHAT'S YOUR INTERPRETATION OF THE SONG?

WHY DO YOU THINK HE SAID I WEAR MY HEART ON MY SLEEVE?

WHAT TOPICS DO YOU THINK K.LAMAR WRITES ABOUT IN THIS SONG?

DOES HIS MESSAGE OF: I WILL WEAR MY HEART UPON MY SLEEVE STILL HAPPEN NOWADAYS?

DO YOU LIKE THE STORY? WOULD YOU RECOMMEND IT? TO WHOM AND WHY?
- In the second lesson, the teacher will go into detail about the context of the literary piece and its author and the class will proceed to debate its questions on the corresponding worksheet under the teacher’s guidance.

- Next lesson will follow the same plan as the previous but this time working with the hip-hop song. The debates will help them compare and respect ideas, and critically analyse and judge them, while developing their speaking skills.

- At the end of the third lesson, the official video of the hip-hop song will be displayed again for them to recognise and identify better the words and sentences and to develop listening skills.

- In the last lesson, carried out in the IT Classroom, the teacher will assist them in forming groups of four and will explain their contribution to the final project. In order to collaborate, develop writing skills, and to form part of the class project Classics like Shakespeare never die website, available in https://africaaida20.wixsite.com/misitio and shown in Figure 5, each group will write in the Blog of that website 5 questions and the reasons why they ask them, that is, they will write what they would ask to K. Lamar and W. Shakespeare and why if they had the chance with regard to the topics and the pieces discussed in the previous lessons. The motivation for making questions is because this proposal defends that giving answers and solutions is important but learning to ask is more relevant, so it agrees with Professor Randy Pausch (2008) in his work The Last Lecture when he states: “the questions are more important than the answers” (p. 211). They will insert them as comments in the post dedicated to K. Lamar and W. Shakespeare – “Wear my heart upon my sleeve” shown in Figure 6. Then, in following lessons, other debates and posts will be dedicated to songs of other artists that include a Shakespearean reference and that were taken from the YouTube video Shakespeare References in Rap Lyrics: An Animated History: Friends by Salt-N-Pepa (“the green eyed-monster” – Othello), I Still Luv You by T.I (“what’s done is done” – Macbeth), and Thieves! by Run The Jewels (“a pound of flesh” – The Merchant of Venice). The videos of these songs and the BBC Shakespeare Speaks explanatory videos for the Shakespeare literary reference in the songs are available in the Artists page of the website as shown in Figure 7.
Figure 5
Home page of the created website

Figure 6
Blog post on the created website
3.4 Catering for diversity

We all are different, so we all learn different. Therefore, catering for diversity means responding to all students taking into account their differences. In class teachers will need to attend different students with Additional Educational Support Needs (AESN), such as Special Educational Needs (SEN): Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Gifted and Talented Students (GAT) and specific learning difficulties (SpLDs): dyslexia, etc., and needs that result from a late entry into the educational system, among others. Due to the importance of making education accessible to everyone, this didactic proposal enables this educational inclusion in the following way:

- ADHD students can benefit from this proposal since music strengthens attention and social skills. Anni Layne Rodgers states that music is rhythm, rhythm is structure, and structure is soothing to an ADHD brain struggling to regulate itself to stay on a linear path. She agrees with the words of Kirsten Hutchison, a music therapist at Music Works Northwest, that “structure helps a child with ADHD
plan, anticipate, and react” (2020, Therapy That Plays Well section, para. 2). In order to help improve their attention, the activities need to be related to the music and the teacher has to guide and control them.

- Participation in debates and in small groups will help ASD students, as well as the other students, to develop their social and conversational skills. Paula Kluth gives in her adaptation of her work “You’re Going to Love This Kid!”: Teaching Students with Autism in the Inclusive Classroom ten ideas for inclusive classrooms that will support students with autism. One of them is “Get Them Talking” and confirms those skills’ development as follows:

In some classrooms, a handful of students dominate small-group conversations and whole-class discussions. While it is important for these verbal and outgoing students to have a voice in the classroom, it is equally important for other students—including shy and quiet students, students using English as a second language, and students with disabilities—to have opportunities to share and challenge ideas, ask and answer questions, and exchange thoughts. To ensure that all students have opportunities to communicate, teachers need to put structures and activities in place that allow for interaction. (n.d., Get Them Talking section, para. 1)

- This proposal clearly leads to an increase in the GAT students’ motivation since they can go beyond the classroom activities by adding extra voluntary work for the website that involves reflection and further research. It is also positive for them as it allows them to work in small groups and to consider different opinions. Besides, they will likely contribute to the debate with additional information.

- Students with SpLDs such as dyslexia will feel more comfortable in the writing skill as one of the writing tasks is done at home where they can make use of helpful resources, and the other is done in groups in class and they use digital devices. All this will reduce their concern about making written errors. In this regard, Kluth states:

In order to support a student struggling with writing, a teacher may try to give the child gentle encouragement as he or she attempts to do some writing— a word, a sentence, or a few lines. Teachers might also allow the
student to use a computer, word processor, or even an old typewriter for some or for all lessons. For some learners, being able to use a word processor when writing helps them focus on the task at hand (content) instead of on their motor skills (process). (n.d., Consider Handwriting Alternatives section, para. 1)

- Late entry students will be able to follow the lessons. The video’s subtitles, the vocabulary aid in the texts, the use of helpful and digital resources, the preparation at home, and working in groups will help them in the case they experience language difficulties. In case of major language difficulties, the teacher can make adaptations, for instance in the length and complexity of the texts, in the approach of the activities, among others. If they do not feel integrated yet, the group work and the debates will help them to integrate and get to know the group better.

4. CONCLUSIONS, EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS, AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE EDUCATIONAL ACTION

In conclusion it can be said that teachers can connect with their students’ interests by introducing innovative and different methodologies; and this proposal attempts to serve as an example of it. Focused on the teaching of classic literature while covering the didactic contents in the EFL classroom for young adults through the use of hip-hop applying a project-based methodology that combines individual and collaborative work, it seeks to develop in them critical thinking as well as the four skills of language learning. It intends that young adult students do not fall into the unawareness of the classic literature, that the methodology connects with them through the hip-hop music genre that is usually popular among them, to relate both so that there is a bond on which to work on critical thinking while developing the four skills of language learning. All this seeks to be transferred in a meaningful and affable way, so that it has importance in the lives of the adolescents, that it connects with them, that it involves them while they enjoy it, and not that they see it only as an input that they will forget in a while.

Certainly, the implementation of this type of methodology, which engages, connects, educates and raises culture, and which has a development and a final result in which students have an active role, requires a different and creative involvement from teachers. It implies willingness, change and a considerable dedication of time in selecting and
creating materials. This connects with the limitations of this proposal since it is focused on songs of one single style of music that contain literary references, and therefore the range of materials to work on is reduced and involves a time-consuming search. For this reason, one of the suggestions for future educational action is to extend the range to other styles of music that also include literary references. The other limitation of this proposal is the level of English that it requires, hence it has been proposed for the 1st course of Bachillerato. Therefore, another suggestion for future educational action is to apply the proposed methodology in lower stages and courses with adaptations or different materials, which leads back to the use of other styles of music with a lower pace and less linguistic density. Other possible future educational actions related to literature and hip-hop or any other style of music could consider other types of literature. Besides, these educational actions could use different sources than the one selected for this proposal, which is the idiom of a literary work, such as literary concepts like the educational program Words Liive does, literary stories, or literary verses like members of The Hip Hop Shakespeare Company do, among others. This proposal also gives rise to other areas of interest like the influence of hip-hop on student motivation, as well as on the inclusion of students at risk of social exclusion, and even the use of this music genre to teach content of other subjects like the program Science Genius does and as the rapper and educator Nathan Brault defends in his TEDx Talk *Hip-Hop's Place in Education* (TEDx Talks, 2015).

In sum, teachers organize their lessons applying methodologies that take shape through activities. To do this, they have multiple options and resources at their disposal, and one of them is to listen to the students in order to discover their interests and, thus, define a methodology that captivates and intrigues them; and this proposal is intended to serve as an inspiring example of that implicated educational action. This involvement, as studies indicate, allows students to get motivated and engaged, and to enjoy an enriching meaningful learning. This proposal adds to it the development of values through critical thinking as well as the improvement of the four skills of language learning, which implies careful critical listening, understanding and responding, in short, turning the student into an active and involved agent able to apply the acquired knowledge to different situations.
5. BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES


