

## **Chilean EFL Preservice Teachers' Post-Reading Designs: Approaches to Language and Literary Learning through Picturebooks**

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### **Abstract**

Teaching English through children's literature is becoming an increasingly valued strategy in primary EFL classrooms worldwide. When carefully selected and used with a clear pedagogical purpose, picturebooks can support young learners' reading skills and contribute to their language development. Although previous studies have examined the literary approaches adopted by in-service EFL teachers (Bloemert et al., 2016; Febriani et al., 2022; Sun, 2023), little is known about how preservice teachers design pedagogical materials that engage children with literary texts. Specifically, there is limited research on how they create post-reading activities that foster multiple ways of engaging with literature.

This study explores the post-reading activities developed by a group of EFL preservice teachers at a university in Santiago, Chile, based on picturebooks for elementary school students. The analysis focuses on the types of reading approaches promoted in these activities and the pedagogical designs that emerged. The findings reveal a range of approaches, with reader-response being the most frequent, followed by activities focused on textual analysis and language development. In addition, the study examined the types of designs used in the activities. The results showed that the preservice teachers designed tasks in the form of written questions, creative writing, artistic drawings, and graphic organizers, among others. While the results showed that the participants designed activities that supported text analysis, reader response, and language development, they also highlight the need to further develop preservice teachers' ability to create tasks that foster multimodal and critical engagement with picturebooks.

**Keywords:** Literature Teaching, picture books, ELT, preservice teacher training.

### **Diseños Post-Lectura de Profesores de Inglés en Servicio en Chile: Aproximaciones al aprendizaje lingüístico y literario a través de libros ilustrados**

### **Resumen**

La enseñanza del inglés a través de la literatura infantil se está convirtiendo en una estrategia cada vez más valorada en las aulas de EFL de primaria de todo el mundo. Cuando se seleccionan cuidadosamente y se utilizan con un claro propósito pedagógico, los álbumes ilustrados pueden apoyar las habilidades lectoras de los jóvenes estudiantes y pueden contribuir a su desarrollo

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lingüístico. Aunque estudios anteriores han examinado los enfoques literarios adoptados por los profesores de EFL en activo (Bloemert et al., 2016; Febriani et al., 2022; Sun, 2023), poco se sabe acerca de cómo los profesores en formación diseñan materiales pedagógicos que involucran a los niños con textos literarios. Específicamente, hay poca investigación sobre cómo crean actividades posteriores a la lectura que fomenten múltiples formas de relacionarse con la literatura.

Este estudio explora las actividades de post-lectura desarrolladas por un grupo de profesores de EFL de una universidad de Santiago de Chile, basadas en libros ilustrados para estudiantes de primaria. El análisis se centra en los tipos de enfoques de lectura promovidos en estas actividades y en los diseños pedagógicos que surgieron. Los hallazgos revelan una gama de enfoques, entre los cuales el de lector-respuesta es el más frecuente, seguido por actividades centradas en el análisis textual y el desarrollo del lenguaje. Además, el estudio examinó los tipos de diseños utilizados en las actividades. Los resultados mostraron que los profesores en formación diseñaron tareas en forma de preguntas escritas, escritura creativa, dibujos artísticos y organizadores gráficos, entre otras. Si bien los resultados mostraron que los participantes diseñaron actividades que apoyaban el análisis del texto, la respuesta del lector y el desarrollo del lenguaje, también ponen de relieve la necesidad de seguir desarrollando la capacidad de los futuros profesores para crear tareas que fomenten el compromiso multimodal y crítico con los álbumes ilustrados.

**Palabras clave:** Enseñanza de la literatura, libros ilustrados, ELT, formación inicial de profesores.

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## **Introduction**

The role of literary texts in EFL teacher education has been widely explored (Arboleda & Castro, 2019; Garzón & Castañeda-Peña, 2015; Masoni, 2018). Research indicates that engaging with literature not only supports language development but also enhances critical thinking (Masoni, 2018). Garzón and Castañeda-Peña (2015) emphasize the motivational benefits of literature for EFL preservice teachers, showing that reader-response approaches and opportunities for personal expression contribute to language learning. Arboleda and Castro (2019) highlight literature's role in fostering cultural awareness.

Despite the widely recognized benefits of literature in language education, research on how to develop the pedagogical skills needed to teach literature in EFL contexts remains limited (Calafato & Simmonds, 2022). In Chile, the integration of literature into public primary school EFL curricula has historically been marginal (Barahona, 2016). EFL preservice teacher programs have largely focused on canonical literary analysis by prioritizing authors such as William Shakespeare, Edgar Allan Poe, and Jane Austen, while overlooking children and teenage literature (Romero-Karlsson, 2016). As a result, preservice teachers have received little preparation in incorporating literature into primary and secondary EFL classrooms (Romero-Karlsson, 2016). However, in recent years, some EFL teacher education programs in Chile have begun to introduce courses on children's literature in the curriculum. For this reason, it is highly relevant to conduct research on how preservice teachers develop skills to both read and teach EFL through Children literature. This type of research can generate scientific knowledge that is valuable to understand the process of preparing EFL preservice teachers on how to mediate literature in the elementary school EFL classroom.

Research on EFL preservice teacher education suggests that teacher candidates require explicit instruction in how to design effective literary activities (Bland, 2015; Sun, 2023; Romero Karlsson & Barahona, 2024). Studies have shown that without adequate training, preservice teachers tend to focus on basic comprehension questions related to plot and character rather than fostering analytical or creative responses (Romero-Karlsson & Barahona, 2024; Sun, 2023). Van (2009) points out that preservice teachers must be equipped with strategies to facilitate engagement with literature beyond basic comprehension. Recent studies also suggest that incorporating multimodal literature, such as picturebooks (henceforth PB), can provide a more inclusive and engaging approach for younger learners (Mourão, 2016; Wang & Lei, 2018; Jin-Fen, 2017). The present research article argues that incorporating PBs into the elementary school EFL classroom can have a significant impact on students' linguistic development, visual literacy, intercultural awareness, and critical thinking. It is, however, important to learn more about the process of how to prepare EFL

preservice teachers to mediate literature to children so that they are well prepared for their future as in-service teachers.

While some studies have examined the literary approaches used by EFL teachers (Bloemert et al., 2016; Febriani et al., 2022; Sun, 2023), little is known about how preservice teachers develop pedagogical materials that foster young learners' engagement with literary texts. Specifically, there is little research on how preservice teachers design post-reading activities that encourage students to approach children's literature from multiple perspectives. The present study aims to address this gap by investigating how a group of EFL preservice teachers in Chile prepared pedagogical materials based on PBs for primary school students.

## **1. Literature review**

### **1.1. The Role of Picturebooks in EFL Contexts**

The aesthetically playful nature of PBs, with their dual modes of text and image, can significantly stimulate the reading process among young readers by fostering literary competence, dialogue, and cultural awareness (Nikolajeva & Scott, 2001; Pantaleo, 2015). PBs are ideal for the EFL classrooms due to their attractive design and dynamic language, often understandable to children (Bland, 2015). Their engaging pictorial content invites children to reflect on social issues such as racial, ethnic, and social diversity (Jia-Fen, 2017). Some PB also encourage *radiant readings*, prompting students to consider their own responsibilities related to global issues (Wissman, 2019). Considering these benefits, using PBs in EFL classrooms not only helps with language development but also fosters social and cultural awareness. With thoughtful selection and implementation, these texts can create rich learning experiences encouraging students to think critically about the world around them.

### **1.2. Approaches to Literature in EFL classrooms**

One of the most widely recognized frameworks for teaching literature in EFL contexts is Carter and Long's (1991) model, which outlines three primary approaches.

*The cultural model* views literature as a gateway to understanding the target language's culture, history, and traditions. *The language model* emphasizes literature as an authentic resource for language acquisition, focusing on vocabulary, grammar, discourse structures, and syntax. Lastly, the *personal growth model* prioritizes students' emotional and intellectual engagement with texts, encouraging them to draw connections between literary themes and their personal experiences.

In more recent years, Bloemert et al. (2016) analyzed how 106 Dutch EFL teachers approach literature in secondary education. Their study identified four approaches: *the text approach*, which emphasizes close reading of plot, character and setting, etc.; *the context approach*, which focuses on the historical, social, and cultural contexts; *the reader approach*, which prioritizes students' interpretative engagement and personal responses; and the *language approach*, which fosters language development through literature reading. Bloemert et al. (2016) advocate for a *comprehensive approach* where all four methods are combined. Sun (2023) explored the occurrence of Bloemert et al.'s approaches among Chinese secondary-level EFL teachers. The finding showed that *the language approach* was the most used, followed by *the reader approach*. In contrast, *the text approach* and *the context approach* received minimal attention.

Febriani et al. (2022) examined how six Indonesian tertiary-level EFL instructors approached literature teaching. Their study identified three dominant approaches: the *language-based approach*, which integrates literary texts to enhance vocabulary, pronunciation, and reading skills; the *reader-response approach*, which encourages students to engage with texts through personal connections and emotions, fostering motivation and interpretative skills; and the *philosophical approach*, which focuses on extracting and analyzing moral and ethical themes within literature. Their findings revealed varied implementation patterns, with some instructors exclusively using one approach while others combined multiple strategies to achieve more dynamic literary instruction.

In the Chilean EFL context, Romero-Karlsson and Barahona (2024) conducted a case study exploring the types of literary competences promoted by preservice

teachers in their post-reading activities based on PBs. The data was analyzed using content analysis, with inductively generated codes and deductively defined categories. The results demonstrated that *plot and character analysis competence* was the most common followed by *subjective competence*. *Cultural competence* and *esthetic and stylistic competence*, on the other hand, were less common. Their study additionally showed that the preservice teachers predominantly prepared activities in the question-format. Their study concludes that EFL teacher education programs should encourage EFL preservice teachers to prepare both text-oriented and reader-oriented activities.

Serafini and Reid (2024) propose three analytical frameworks - *semiotic*, *literary*, and *artistic* - to address the complex multimodal nature of contemporary PBs. *The semiotic framework* uses social semiotics to explore how words, images, and design work together to create meaning, while also considering the cultural and educational settings in which PBs are read. *The literary framework* sees PBs as complete multimodal stories, where words and images work closely together to shape how readers understand the narrative. *The artistic framework* focuses on visual analysis and treats PBs as works of art, based on ideas and methods from art history and art criticism. Rather than viewing these approaches as competing, the authors advocate for an integrated perspective that brings them into dialogue. In a related study, Serafini (2024) further conceptualizes the word-image relationship in PBs by outlining four key dimensions: *word or image*, *word and image*, *word in image*, and *word as image*. The first two dimensions reflect theoretical perspectives: the first highlights the long-standing distinction between showing and telling, while the second emphasizes a multimodal view in which words and images work together to create meaning. The remaining dimensions focus on the material aspects of PBs, exploring how words are visually embedded within images or acquire visual significance through typographic design. Taken together, these frameworks and dimensions highlight the importance of multimodal and critically aware approaches to studying PBs as complex and culturally grounded texts.

The studies reviewed in this section highlight the importance of employing a multifaceted approach to literature instruction in EFL contexts. Table 1 below summarizes the approaches addressed by the abovementioned studies.

**Table 1**  
*Approaches to Literature Instructions in EFL classrooms*

<b>Approach</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Reference</b>
<b>Language Approach</b>	Treats literature as an authentic resource for developing linguistic skills, including vocabulary, grammar, discourse structures, and syntax.	Carter & Long (1991); Febriani et al. (2022); Bloemert et al. (2016);
<b>Text Approach</b>	Focuses on close reading, analyzing literary elements, and understanding literary terminology such as plot, character analysis, and symbolic interpretation.	Bloemert et al. (2016); Romero Karlsson & Barahona (2024)
<b>Context Approach</b>	Examines literature within historical, social, and cultural contexts.	Bloemert et al. (2016); Carter & Long (1991)
<b>Reader-Response Approach</b>	Encourages personal connections with literature, fostering motivation and interpretative engagement.	Febriani et al. (2022); Romero Karlsson & Barahona (2024); Bloemert et al. (2016); Carter & Long (1991).
<b>Philosophical Approach</b>	Focuses on analyzing moral and ethical themes.	Febriani et al. (2022)
<b>Multimodal Approach</b>	Views PBs as compositions where words, images, and design interact to create meaning, requiring visually aware analysis.	Serafini & Reid (2024); Serafini (2024)

This literature review highlights the wide range of approaches to literature presented by previous scholars. When applied successfully, these approaches have the potential to foster strong reading skills among children. However, to effectively activate

these approaches in the EFL classroom, it is essential to understand how to create pedagogical materials that effectively engage students with these approaches. Currently, there is a gap in research regarding how preservice teachers apply these approaches when developing teaching materials for young EFL learners, especially in contexts like Chile, where literary education has historically been underemphasized (Romero-Karlsson, 2016). The aim of the present research article is to diminish this gap.

### 1.3. Teaching Strategies in Literature-Based EFL Instruction

This section presents a review of pedagogical strategies often used when teaching literary texts, particularly PBs, in EFL/FL classrooms. The pedagogical benefits of read-alouds have been recognized worldwide, particularly in relation to PBs (Nilsson, 2023; Stortz et al., 2019). Stortz et al. (2019) examined how L2 preservice teachers designed and carried out read-alouds in a children's literature course. After receiving explicit instruction, the teachers improved their ability to plan and lead sessions that emphasized visual literacy. The study highlights how focusing on visual elements fosters deeper engagement with PBs. The authors call for integrating visually focused read-alouds into teacher education to help future teachers create richer, multimodal reading experiences.

Literary discussions are widely recognized to engage students in literary analysis in EFL contexts. Tutaş (2006), for example, advocates a shift in classroom dynamics from a teacher-led model of analysis to a more dialogic, transactional dialogue where students actively partake in the meaning-making process. Similarly, Nguyen (2016) shows how EFL students in Vietnam, when encouraged to reflect on their learning journey through literature discussions and projects, began to take more active and reflective roles in meaning-making.

Scholars argue that because PBs are inherently multimodal texts, students should be encouraged to respond to them using multiple modes of representation (Sun, 2022; Youngs & Kyser, 2020). In a study conducted at a university in the western USA,



Youngs and Kyser (2020) explored how preservice teachers engaged with PBs through digital tools such as Padlet, iMovie, Prezi, Glogster, and Weebly. Their findings show that participants developed sophisticated analytical skills, including an awareness of visual elements like color, line, typography, framing, and composition. In addition, students were able to reflect on peritextual features as extensions of the visual narrative and analyze how images and words interact. Youngs and Kyser (2020) argue that multimodal composition tasks can strengthen both aesthetic and stylistic literary competences, making them a valuable component of contemporary teacher education programs. Sun (2022) examined multimodal activities in a Chinese EFL secondary classroom. Drawing on interviews, students' published work, and teacher journals, the study shows that learners responded enthusiastically to post-reading tasks that involved a range of media formats, including eulogies, tattoo designs, and social media posts. These findings highlight the potential of multimodal response tasks to enrich literary engagement and deepen students' interpretive work.

In sum, the abovementioned studies demonstrate how the integration of literature discussions, read-alouds, and multimodal response strategies foster literary engagement and interpretive competence in EFL contexts. As the reviewed studies suggest, pedagogical practices that emphasize active, dialogic, and multimodal engagement can enrich the literary experiences of EFL learners and better prepare preservice teachers to mediate dynamic and holistic literature instruction.

## **2. Methodology**

The present qualitative study adapted a case study design since the aim is to explore complex issues within a specific educational context (Yin, 2009). The specific case examined was a group of EFL preservice teachers who designed post-reading activities on PBs aimed for elementary school students. In the present research, the researcher was also the teacher of the Children literature course from where the data was collected, which is common in case study designs (Cohen, 2018). Conducted in the

first half of 2023, the study was part of an EFL teacher education program at a public university in Santiago, Chile. The study was guided by the following research questions:

1. What types of literary approaches do the post-reading activities created by the participants activate?
2. What designs do these post-reading activities take?

### **Participants**

The sample of this study consists of 18 EFL preservice teachers, aged 19 to 21, enrolled in a third-semester elective course on EFL children's literature. Participation in the study was voluntary, 18 out of 22 preservice teachers agreed on signing the consent form. The consent form stated that their post-reading activities would be collected as data for a research article. Of the participants, 15 were female and 3 were male, all Chilean citizens with Spanish as their first language.

### **Reading Course**

The present study collected data from a 16-week reading course within an EFL teacher training program at a university in Santiago, during the first semester of 2023. Notably, this program does not offer mandatory courses on children's or young adult literature. The present study collected data from an optional course on reading and teaching PBs in EFL contexts which was taught for the first time at this university. The course had two main objectives: (1) developing participants' ability to analyze PBs through read-alouds, guided post-reading activities, and literary discussions, and (2) providing opportunities to design post-reading activities for three self-selected PBs suitable for EFL elementary classrooms in Chile.

Throughout the course, participants studied 14 PBs, including *Where the Wild Things Are* (Sendak, 1963), *The Cat in the Hat* (Dr. Seuss, 1957), *Voices in the Park* (Browne, 1998), *A Sick Day for Amos McGee* (Stead, 2010), *The Paper Bag Princess* (Munsch, 1998), and *We Are Water Protectors* (Lindstrom & Goade, 2020). The participants worked in pairs to create pedagogical proposals consisting of post-reading

activities for three PBs of their choice - either from the course list or approved external selections. Each proposal, approximately 10–15 pages in length, included activities addressing plot and character analysis, aesthetic and stylistic features, thematic and symbolic exploration, and real-world connections.

Participants were instructed to design activities that fostered the types of analysis they considered essential for EFL elementary students, with an emphasis on encouraging multiple interpretative perspectives and fostering joy for reading. Participants had been acquainted with all the approaches presented in table 1 through assigned readings and critical classroom discussions guided by the teacher. The teacher emphasized the importance of a holistic approach which encourages analysis of the different aspects of the PBs. Participants had full autonomy in choosing the format, ensuring activities aligned with their vision of effective instruction in an EFL elementary school setting.

### **Data Collection Methods**

Participants' post-reading activities were collected as data for the present research article. Participants sent these post-reading activities in a Word document by email to the researcher.

### **Data Analysis**

The data were analyzed using content analysis, following an adapted version of Cohen et al.'s (2018) six-step process, which involved systematic coding, categorization, comparison, and interpretation leading to the formulation of conclusions. First, each activity was inductively coded based on the type of reading or response it prompted. Activities that served similar functions were assigned the same code. Next, these codes were grouped into categories representing different approaches to PBs presented in table 1. The categories were then thoroughly reviewed to ensure consistency and coherence. This process involved verifying that each code accurately reflected a relevant aspect of the data and that the categories exhibited internal homogeneity (Patton, 1987) while remaining clearly distinct from one another

(Krippendorff, 1980). Subsequently, the frequency of activities within each code and category was counted. Finally, the findings were synthesized into a report that described the categories and codes using examples from the data and provided theoretical insights based on the analysis.

### **3. Results and Discussion**

The following section presents the findings from the content analysis of the participants' post-reading activities, addressing the research questions of this study. Table 2 and table 3 provide the numerical results of the content analysis carried out in this study. The numerical results are common in qualitative studies to enhance transparency and rigor, allowing readers to see patterns or trends in the qualitative data (Saldaña, 2015).

By showing the frequency of each category, the tables highlight the distribution and prominence of the different approaches to literature identified in participants' post-reading proposals. This numerical data provides a structured overview, identifying key patterns and trends that can then be examined more deeply in the qualitative descriptions. Despite the numerical data, the present study is qualitative in nature since the numerical data serves as a supporting tool rather than a separate methodological feature.

The first column in table 2 lists the literary approaches used to categorize the activities. These approaches were mostly derived deductively, based on those established in the literature review and synthesized in Table 1. The second column outlines the specific activities identified in the post-reading proposals and categorized under each approach. Unlike the approaches, these activities emerged inductively from the data. The third column presents the frequency of activities associated with each literary approach.

#### **Table 2**

*Approaches to literature identified in participants' post-reading proposals.*

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<b>Approach</b>	<b>Activity</b>	<b>Number</b>
<b>Text Approach</b>	Character, Plot, Setting analysis	33
	Symbol and Metaphor analysis	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Reader-Response Approach</b>	Scenario Response	4
	Character Interaction	6
	Creative Illustration	8
	Story Composition	13
	Relating Situation in the Story with Personal Experiences	10
	Appreciation & Emotional Response	5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>46</b>
<b>Language Approach</b>	Vocabulary acquisition	16
	Pronunciation activity	1
	<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Context Approach</b>	Sociopolitical Criticism	9
	Comparative Analysis	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Multimodal Approach</b>	Evaluation of visual elements	2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>

As can be seen in table 2, the most used approach in participants' post-reading proposals was the *reader-response approach* where six different types of activities were identified. The second largest approach was the *text approach* where the most common activities prompted readers to analyze the plot, characters, and/or setting of the PBs. The *language approach* exemplified through vocabulary acquisition activities was frequent whereas the *context approach* was less common.

Alongside identifying the approaches and the activities identified in participants' post-reading proposals, the data analysis of this study also aimed at analyzing the strategies identified in these proposals. The result of this analysis is summarized in table 3 below. Column 1 lists the format used for the activities. Column 2 specifies in detail the format used for the strategies. Column 3 specifies the different focuses these activities had and the final column specifies the quantity of activities for each strategy and format.

**Table 3**

***Strategies used in the Post-Reading Activities***

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Number</b>		
<b>Questions</b>	Open-Ended	Story-oriented	22		
	Questions	Context-oriented	3		
		Reader-Oriented	8		
	Multiple Choice Questions	Story-Oriented	1		
	True or False	Story-Oriented	5		
<b>Picture Description</b>	Describing Events	Story-Oriented	3		
<b>Writing activity</b>	Analytical Response	Story-Oriented	1		
	Personal Reflection	Reader-Oriented	1		
	Sentence Writing	Language-Oriented	2		
<b>Matching Activities</b>	Text + Illustration	Story-Oriented	2		
	Word + Definition	Story-Oriented	2		
<b>Artistic Compositions</b>	Creative Illustration	Draw a Character	5		
		Draw a setting	3		
		Draw a symbol	1		
	Creative Writing	Additional Scene	Story-Oriented	4	
		Fictional Diary	Reader-Oriented	1	
		Prequel/sequel	Story-Oriented	6	
		Dialogue Composition	Story-Oriented	5	
		Reader Scenario	Reader-Oriented	2	
		Response Contract	Reader-Oriented	1	
		Letter to a character	Reader-Oriented	7	
		<b>Poster Activity</b>	Social Issues	Context-Oriented	3
		<b>Graphic Organizers</b>	Timeline	Story-Oriented	2
Character Profile	Story-Oriented		5		
Personal Reflection	Reader-Oriented		2		
Symbol Interpretation	Story-Oriented		1		
Story Comparison	Context-Oriented		1		
<b>Vocabulary Activities</b>	Word Search	Language-Oriented	4		
	Crossword Puzzle	Language-Oriented	4		
	Cloze Activities	Language-Oriented	4		

	Pronunciation Practice	Language-Oriented	1
	Memory game	Language-Oriented	1

As shown in Table 3, the most frequently used format in the activities outlined in participants' pedagogical proposals was the question format. Open-ended related to plot and character analysis were the most common ones. Reader-oriented questions that prompted students to express their impressions or opinions of the stories were also common. Many of the activities prepared by the participants used the strategy of artistic composition. Here two sub-categories were identified in the data: Creative drawing and creative writing. The results showed a large variety of different types of reading and drawing activities including drawing characters, composing additional scenes, and writing a letter to one of the characters in the story. Graphic organizers were also a common format used among the activities, these included readers filling in character profiles and timelines. This suggests that the participants considered this format effective for helping young learners engage with essential aspects of character and plot analysis in a visually pedagogical and child-friendly manner.

Some of the activities focused on vocabulary learning. These activities appeared in many creative formats such as crossword puzzles, word search, and cloze activities. As table 2 and 3 demonstrate, participants' post-reading proposals embraced several types of reading approaches that took on a large array of formats.

The following sections present in detail the results for each of the approaches identified in participants' pedagogical proposals with illustrative examples from the data. Several activities prepared by the participants included illustrations directly from the PBs. However, due to copyright restrictions, those activities cannot be displayed in this research article.

### 3.1. Text Approach

The activities categorized as *text approach* prompted readers to pay close attention to both the text and illustrations to analyze the foundational elements of the

story such as the sequence of events, character development, and setting. In the present study, this was the second most prominent approach (see Table 2), which concurs with the findings of Romero-Karlsson & Barahona (2024) and contrasts with Bloemert et al. (2016) and Sun (2023), where this approach was less common. This suggests that, in the Chilean context, there may be a stronger emphasis on formal literary analysis, particularly plot and character analysis in teacher education programs. The prioritization of these elements may reflect curricular traditions that privilege structural readings of narrative over thematic or aesthetic approaches.

Several groups prepared activities in the form of character profiles where students were instructed to fill in a chart with information about the characters. Group 5 and group 6, for example, prepared character profiles for *Voices in the Park* where students had to fill in information related to both personality traits and physical descriptions. In this way, students were prompted to review the text carefully to gain a fundamental understanding of the characters. In some cases, such as group 6's activity on *Voices in the Park*, students were also invited to identify the main differences between each character in terms of economic situation, personality, and perspective of the world. In addition to the character profile, group 6 prepared discussion questions which prompted reflection on the story's main theme:

1. Do you think that people with more money are happier than those without much? Why or why not?
2. Would you rather spend time with Smudge and her father or Charles and his mother? Explain why.
3. Do you think that the mother treats Smudge, her father, and Albert differently because of their economic situation?

This activity began by encouraging students to make fundamental observations about the characters and then gradually guided them toward more inferential thematic readings of the text. As shown in Table 3, participants frequently emphasized discussion questions in their post-reading activities. This supports the arguments made by Tutaş (2006) and Nguyen (2016) that literary discussions are an effective strategy



in EFL classrooms for encouraging active participation and deeper engagement with literary texts.

In addition to character profiles and open-ended questions, matching activities were quite common. In several of these activities, students were instructed to match statements about the plot, characters, and setting of the story with the corresponding illustrations. For example, in Group 3's proposal on *The Cat in the Hat*, students were given these statements:

1. The sun did not shine. It was too wet to play.
2. He fell into a pot!
3. I call this game FUN-IN-A-BOX.

They were then asked to choose from three illustrations for each description. Although these activities are multimodal in nature, they do not go beyond the elementary matching process and do not prompt more complex analysis of how the images and words interact, as was observed in Youngs and Kyser (2020). There were no matching activities that encouraged readers to reflect on how the illustrations support, contradict, or expand the meaning of the text, nor were there activities that addressed inter-pictoriality, text within images, typography, or *mise en abyme* (Serafini, 2024). This limitation suggests that participants had not yet developed a deeper understanding of visual literacy or had limited exposure to teaching multimodal analysis.

Another common activity type among the groups' post-reading proposals was *True and False* statements. These required students to evaluate short claims about characters, settings, or events. Group 6's work on *Voices in the Park* provides one such example. These activities, while simple, help consolidate literal understanding and reinforce attention to detail. However, they do not promote analytical thinking unless followed by a space for discussion or justification. The frequent use of these activities in participants' proposals may indicate a tendency to favor measurable comprehension activities over more open-ended tasks.

### **Figure 1**

*Sample of a True and False Activity*

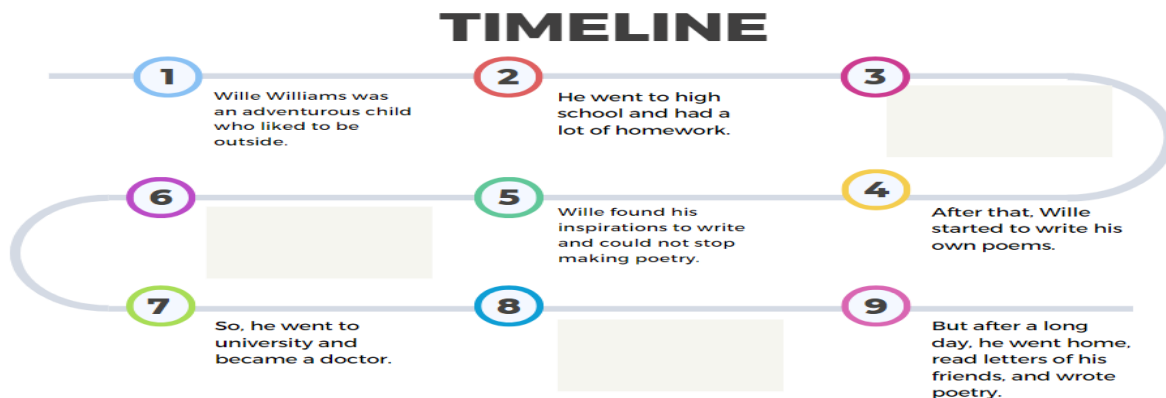
<b>Statement</b>	<b>True</b>	<b>False</b>
• Smudge's father was unemployed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Charles did not want to go to the park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Charles is the happiest kid in the world living with his mom and his dog, Victoria.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Smudge's father hated dogs.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Smudge was not creative at all, she even looked sad.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Despite not having energy, the father accompanied Smudge to the park.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• Charles's mom was overprotective with him.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• When Smudge and Charles met they played and it made Charles feel free.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

1.T 4.T 7.F  
 2.F 5.F 8.T  
 3.F 6.T

A few groups also prepared timeline activities where students were asked to fill in missing information related to the story's progression. One example of this was seen in Group 8's proposal on *A River of Words*. The timeline format supports students' understanding of plot sequence and the cause-and-effect relationship between events. However, none of the participants used the timeline to explore more complex literary elements such as tension, pacing, or narrative perspective.

**Figure 2**

*Sample of a Time Line Activity*



In conclusion, the text approach is a valuable tool for teaching literature to young EFL learners as it helps them improve their understanding of narrative structure and story elements (Bloemert et al., 2016). Through activities like character profiles, matching exercises, timelines, and true/false statements, students are encouraged to read closely and think carefully about what happens in the story and why. However, most of the activities fostered literal comprehension over interpretive or critical engagement. The prominence of this category suggests that participants prioritize fundamental plot and character comprehension when designing activities for young children which coincides with the findings of Romero-Karlsson and Barahona (2024).

### 3.2. Reader-Response Approach

The reader-response approach was the most prominent category among the participants' post-reading proposals, contrasting with the findings of Bloemert et al. (2016) and Sun (2023), where this approach was less emphasized. However, it aligns with the results of Romero-Karlsson and Barahona (2024), whose study also conducted in the Chilean EFL context at the tertiary level.

In the present study, the activities identified for this approach can be divided into two sub-groups: *Creative responses* (Bloemert et al., 2016; Sun, 2023) and *personal reflections* (Bloemert et al., 2016; Carter & Long, 1991; Febriani et al., 2022; Romero-Karlsson & Barahona, 2024;). Creative response activities invite students to engage artistically with the stories through writing, drawing, role-play, or other expressive forms. Personal reflection tasks, on the other hand, encouraged learners to share their opinions, experiences, and interpretations. A common form of creative response was *story composition*, where students were asked to write a new scene or alternative ending to a story. For instance, in Group 2's activity on Dr Seuss' *Gerald McBoing Boing*, students were instructed to write their own stories incorporating onomatopoeic language, mirroring a key feature of the original. Similarly, Group 3's activity on Dr Seuss' *The Cat in the Hat* involved students preparing and performing skits based on selected illustrations, encouraging both interpretation and performance. These tasks

promote not only narrative understanding but also language production in meaningful contexts.

Another creative activity involved adding speech bubbles to wordless scenes, as seen in Group 4's *Where the Wild Things Are* proposal. This encouraged students to infer emotions and motivations of the characters.

In *creative illustration* activities, students drew responses to the story to interpret, expand, and express their understanding. A common example, found in several *Where the Wild Things Are* proposals, was asking students to draw their own monster and describe its features in a short text.

**Figure 3**

*Sample of a Creative Illustration Activity*

**MY CREATURE'S PROFILE**

CREATURE'S FINGER/PAW PRINT:

FULL NAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 NICKNAME: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DATE OF BIRTH: \_\_\_\_\_  
 HABITAT: \_\_\_\_\_  
 HEIGHT: \_\_\_\_\_ WEIGHT: \_\_\_\_\_  
 EYE COLOR: \_\_\_\_\_ SKIN COLOR: \_\_\_\_\_

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

EMOTIONAL DESCRIPTION: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

SPECIAL TALENTS: \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

FAVOURITES:

FOOD: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DRINK: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DESSERT: \_\_\_\_\_  
 COLOR: \_\_\_\_\_  
 SEASON OF THE YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PERSON: \_\_\_\_\_  
 OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

DISLIKES:

FOOD: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DRINK: \_\_\_\_\_  
 DESSERT: \_\_\_\_\_  
 COLOR: \_\_\_\_\_  
 SEASON OF THE YEAR: \_\_\_\_\_  
 PERSON: \_\_\_\_\_  
 OTHER: \_\_\_\_\_

*Character interaction* activities, where students wrote letters to or about characters, encouraged deeper engagement with character perspectives. For example, Group 5's proposal on Browne's *Voices in the Park* asked students to write a letter to the character they found least like themselves, offering advice on how to improve their

situation. This task not only deepened character comprehension but also fostered empathetic and ethical dimensions.

*Scenario response* tasks invited students to imagine themselves within the story world or take on the perspective of a character in a new situation. In Group 5's activity on *Gerald McBoing Boing*, students responded to a bullying incident in the story, reflecting on how they might react if they were part of that scene. This kind of activity opens space for emotional engagement and moral reasoning, promoting personal connection to the text.

*Personal reflection* activities focused on students' thoughts, opinions, and connections to the themes in the stories. For example, Group 9's activity for *Voices in the Park* asked students to answer open-ended questions such as:

1. What is the moral message of the text?
2. How is the situation in the picture book related to everyday life situations?
3. Who was your favorite character? Why?
4. Mention a moment in your life where you experienced a situation like the one in *Voices in the Park* where there were many perspectives on one situation.

These questions invite students to consider not only the text's content but its relevance to their own lives and experiences. The final question pushes students to reflect on perspective-taking. As noted by Febriani et al. (2020), such reflective practices can support moral reasoning and critical thinking.

In conclusion, the reader-response approach appears to hold a particularly strong position within the Chilean EFL context at tertiary level, as evidenced by its high frequency and variety in this study (see table 2). Activities such as story compositions, role-play, illustration, and reflective questioning not only deepen students' understanding of literary texts but also create opportunities for meaningful language use, emotional expression, and ethical reflection. These findings highlight the potential of reader-response to foster richer, more personal engagements with literature in EFL classrooms.

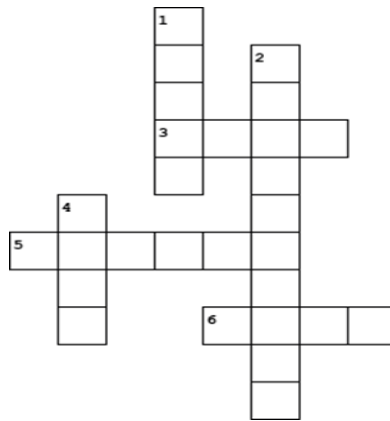
### 3.3. Language Approach

The *language approach* invites students to work on their language skills by focusing on the text in the story. This approach was the third most common (see table 2), unlike previous studies (Bloemert et al., 2016; Sun, 2023) where it was the most common.

A common design for the language activities was the crossword puzzle and the word search game. An example of the crossword puzzle was found in group 3's proposal on *Where the Wild Things Are*.

**Figure 4**

*Sample of a Language Activity*



**Down**

1. The wild critters had these pointy things on their fingertips.
2. The way Max's mom called him due to his mischievous acts.
3. The vehicle Max used to travel to where the wild creatures were.

**Across**

1. The name of the animal of Max's costume.
2. In his room a \_\_\_\_\_ grew.
3. The creatures turned Max into the \_\_\_\_\_ of the wild things.

Another common language activity was cloze activities to complement passages from the story with the key vocabulary as seen in group 9's proposal on *Where the Wild Things Are*.

**Figure 5**

*Sample of a Cloze Activity*

<b>Wild</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Supper</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Mischief</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Roar</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Roll Eyes</b>
<b>Frightened</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>King</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Rumpus</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Gnash</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>Claws</b>

- “The night Max wore his wolf suit and made \_\_\_\_\_ of one kind, and another...”
- “His mother called him “\_\_\_\_\_” THING!”
- “”And now,” cried Max, “let the wild \_\_\_\_\_ start!”
- “Now stop!” Max said and sent the wild things off to bed without their \_\_\_\_\_.
- “And when he came to the place where the wild things are, they roared their terrible \_\_\_\_\_s and \_\_\_\_\_ their terrible teeth”.

In conclusion, the language approach holds strong pedagogical potential for teaching literature to young learners with limited English proficiency. By drawing attention to the linguistic features of the text, it supports vocabulary development, comprehension, and overall language awareness. When designed thoughtfully, activities such as crossword puzzles, cloze exercises, and word searches can help learners engage with literature in enjoyable and accessible ways. However, to maximize its impact, this approach should also include more productive and communicative tasks - such as pronunciation practice, guided dialogue, or creative language use - that allow students to actively apply what they learn.

#### 3.4. Context approach

This approach invite students to connect the story to either its sociopolitical context (Bloemert et al., 2016; Carter & Long, 1991; Romero-Karlsson & Barahona, 2024) or to other literary and cultural productions (Romero-Karlsson & Barahona, 2024). Consistent with previous studies (Bloemert et al., 2016; Romero-Karlsson & Barahona, 2024;), this approach was the least frequent among participants’ proposals (see Table 2). However, unlike those earlier studies, this study observed a stronger emphasis on activities that relate the story to sociopolitical themes, rather than on comparative literary analysis.

Activities coded as *Sociopolitical Criticism* encouraged students to draw parallels between the issues presented in the story to their own context. An example of this could be found in Group 1’s activity on *We Are Water Protectors*, where students were instructed to create a poster to raise awareness about environmental issues, specifically water pollution which aligns with the central theme of the story.

## Figure 6

### *Sample of a Poster Activity*

Create a poster that encourages people to be more environmentally conscious. It must be colorful and captivating. Here you have an example of a poster for you to have an idea of how to create yours.



The poster activity reflects the creativity seen in many participants' post-reading designs, echoing the variety of formats noted in Sun (2022) and Youngs and Kyser (2020). In addition, this activity effectively fosters socio-critical readings of PBs aligning with Jia-Fen (2017) and Wissman (2019).

In contrast, comparative analysis—which invites students to examine similarities and differences between literary texts—was far less common. One example was found in Group 7's proposal on *Outside In*, where students were asked to compare it with *We Are Water Protectors* using questions such as:

Think about the texts *We are Water Protectors* and *Outside In*. Which similarities and differences can you identify between the two texts? What do these books say about nature, is it important? Which one is your favorite, and why?

By comparing one story to another, students improve their understanding and critical thinking by analyzing and interpreting various elements of each narrative. In the case above, students were invited to compare how the central theme of nature was depicted in each story while also expressing their personal preferences and reasons for liking one story over the other.



In conclusion, by encouraging students to connect the themes of a story with real-world sociopolitical issues or with other literary texts, this approach supports the development of critical thinking and cultural awareness. Activities such as poster creation, as seen in the proposal for *We Are Water Protectors*, empower students to respond creatively and socially to important contemporary topics such as environmental protection. Similarly, comparative tasks promote deeper literary understanding by prompting students to reflect on shared themes such as the relationship with nature and to articulate their preferences and interpretations.

### 3.5. Multimodal Approach

The multimodal approach views PBs as layered compositions where words, images, and design interact to create meaning, requiring visually aware analysis. In this approach, students also focus on the aesthetic features of both the illustrations and the typography convey meaning in the story. While activities in other categories, such as text approach, also encourage students to draw conclusions based on illustrations, this category specifically emphasizes the significance of aesthetic elements such as color, shape, line, light, and objects. Students are instructed to explain how these features contribute to the meaning of the story. In the present study, activities of this kind were few and focused exclusively on colors and tone seen in the illustrations as can be seen in group 6's proposal on *Voices in the Park*:

1. Why does the tree change in color and shape when she notices her son is not there? (Voice 1)
2. Why does his background look so dark and cold in comparison to other characters? (Voice 2)
3. Why do their backgrounds look so different if they are in the same place? (Voice 3)
4. Why is Smudge's background full of fruits and vivid colors? (Voice 4)

By focusing on specific questions about the illustrations, students are guided to explore how these visual aspects reflect and enhance the characters' emotions and the overall atmosphere of the story. This approach not only deepens students'

understanding of the text but also develops their ability to interpret and articulate the significance of visual storytelling techniques.

The participants in this study did not design post-reading activities that reflect the multimodal analysis proposed by Serafini (2024) and Serafini and Reid (2024). Their activities did not prompt students to examine how illustrations, text, and design interact to construct meaning in PBs. This result contrasts with the findings of Stortz et al. (2019), who observed that L2 preservice teachers designed read-alouds with a strong emphasis on visual literacy, and with Youngs and Kyser (2020), who found that the preservice teachers in their study paid close attention to visual elements such as color, line, typography, framing, and composition. This suggests that the participants in the present study needed more systematic training to be better able to prepare activities that promoted the development of multimodal and visual literacies. Although these types of readings had been encouraged throughout the reading course, these instructions proved to have had a limited influence.

#### **4. Limitations and Reflections**

This study offers insight into how Chilean EFL preservice teachers design post-reading activities for PBs. However, some limitations can be acknowledged. First, the data is based on written proposals prepared by EFL preservice teachers rather than classroom implementation with children, which limits understanding of how these activities work in elementary school contexts. Future research could benefit from observing how such tasks are adapted and received by children in the elementary school EFL classroom. Second, the small sample size and single institutional setting limit the generalizability of the findings. The proposals were produced within a specific course and guided by one instructor, which may have influenced both the focus and format of the activities.

Despite these limitations, the study offers a useful insight into the possibilities and challenges of integrating PBs into EFL teacher education and points to areas where further support and reflection may be needed.

## 5. Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight the diverse range of post-reading strategies employed by EFL preservice teachers when designing post-reading activities on PBs for young learners in the Chilean context. *The reader-response approach* was the most common which aligns with recent research conducted in the Chilean tertiary EFL context (Romero-Karlsson & Barahona, 2024). *The text approach* was the second most frequently used, with activities that emphasized close reading of both the verbal and visual modes to analyze plot and character development, and setting. These activities were designed in the form of character profiles, timelines, and true/false statements and matching activities. Notably, these tasks often progressed from fundamental plot analysis to thematic analysis. *The language approach*, though less frequent, offered opportunities for students to develop vocabulary and practice language structures through formats such as word games and cloze exercises. While these activities reinforce language skills, their contribution to deeper literary engagement and development of critical thinking is limited. However, in the Chilean EFL context, these activities play an important role in that they actively contribute to young readers' language development which they need to conduct more complex and inferential readings.

The form of the post-reading activities displayed greater variety compared to those reported by Romero-Karlsson and Barahona (2024), where preservice teachers mainly relied on the question format. Participants in the present study received more explicit instruction from their teacher to focus on the design and form of their activities - guidance that was less emphasized in the earlier study. This suggests that teacher instruction plays a significant role in shaping how preservice teachers approach the design of post-reading tasks. Thus, the present article stresses the importance that EFL teacher education programs in Chile prepare preservice teachers to design post-reading activities that encourage all the approaches displayed in table 1 through dynamic and varied formats as shown by the participants in the present study. It is essential that course instructors explicitly train preservice teachers in the reading

approaches outlined in Table 1 and demonstrate how these can be effectively incorporated into post-reading proposals through the pedagogical design of varied and engaging activity formats.

However, the results of this study also indicate that the participants hesitated to design activities related to more sophisticated multimodal analysis, socio-critical and intertextual analysis, and language activities related to phonemic awareness and pronunciation. For this reason, the study calls for future research on strengthening EFL preservice teachers' ability to design post-reading activities using these specific approaches.

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