Reflecting on EFL Secondary Students' Reading Habits and Perceptions of Young Adult Literature to Promote Reading for Pleasure and Global Citizenship Education

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Abstract   One of the challenges faced by language teachers is promoting students' reading for pleasure while also helping them confront world issues. Introducing Young Adult Literature in the EFL classroom can be of great help in this sense. However, it is not easy to select the most appropriate texts and topics, as teenage students' reading preferences are still not well known. Against this background, we administered an online questionnaire to Austrian, Italian, and Hungarian students to explore their reading preferences and habits. In this article, we report the results of this questionnaire and draw some pedagogical implications.

Keywords   EFL. Young Adult Literature. Global issues. Print and digital literacies. Students' reading habits and preferences.

Summary   1 Introduction. – 2 Literature review. – 2.1 Participants. – 2.2 The questionnaire. – 2.3 Procedures of data analysis . – 3 Results. – 4 Discussion. – 5 Conclusion.

1 Introduction

One of the greatest challenges language educators faces today is preparing students "to not only participate in the world but to feel ownership of it" (Witte, Dail, Witte 2018, XV). This means, on the one hand, helping them understand and confront world issues and, on the other, encouraging them to engage in activities that bridge the gap between print and digital literacies.

In this context, the power of Young Adult Literature (YAL) in fostering students' engagement with reading and understanding of a multitude of taboo and controversial topics is well documented (Boyd, Darragh 2019; Montón 2017; Hill 2014). The features of YAL attract students and allow them to relate to both characters and stories, putting them at the centre of the learning experience. Additionally, YAL can also act as a tool to promote global citizenship education by fostering students' awareness of how individual and universal experiences connect (Bland 2015). However, when seeking to attract young people to read in the English language classroom, it is important to examine not only their reading interests but also their reading habits. Students today are said to read in a variety of formats, including YouTube videos, blogs, and social media sites (Dail, Witte, Bickmore 2018), and on a variety of devices (e.g. print, mobile phone, and tablet). Research also shows that reading is very much a social activity for teenagers, which is not limited to face-to-face conversations but extends to other online platforms, such as Goodreads and TikTok (Rebora et al. 2021). For language teachers this implies changing their understanding of reading as well as the literacy skills they promote in their classroom (Blyth 2014).

Against this backdrop, in early 2022, we administered an online questionnaire to Austrian, Hungarian, and Italian secondary students participating in the Erasmus+ project called 'Lit up your phones – DigLit' (2021-23)[1] to enquire about their reading habits and preferences in both their L1 and in English as a FL. In doing so we also asked them to evaluate a YAL collection website designed within the project to aid students' and teachers' selection of authentic literature for extensive reading. In this article, we report and reflect on the results of this questionnaire and discuss possible implications for the EFL classroom.

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[1] The Erasmus+ project aims at supporting English language teachers to promote students' reading for pleasure and understanding of global issues through the combination of YAL and mobile apps. It involves six partners in Austria, Hungary and Italy: University of Graz (Austria), University Ca' Foscari of Venice (Italy), University of Pécs (Hungary), Private Gymnasium und Oberstufenrealgymnasium des Schulvereins der Ursulinen Graz (Austria), IIS TronZanella (Italy), Pécsi Tudományegyetem Gyakorló Általános Iskola, Gimnázium és Óvoda (Hungary). https://diglit.narrativedidactics.org/.

2   Literature review

According to Nilsen and Donelson (2012), YAL refers to texts that are specifically written for people aged twelve to eighteen and are generally characterized by the following aspects:

- They are narrated in the first-person, usually by a teen.
- They have a fast-moving and realistic plot.
- They contain themes that are of interest to adolescents or that they are experiencing, such as loss, the search of identity, bullying, etc.
- They cover a wide variety of genres.

Researchers normally place the birth of YAL in the 1960s with the publication of *The Outsiders* by S.E. Hinton (1967), which was the first novel to be specifically published for teenagers. Since then, the field of YAL has grown and has become more inclusive "especially in terms of points of view and reflecting protagonists from different ethnicities, social classes, and sexualities" (Boyd, Darragh 2019, 3). On the one hand, this has allowed students with diverse backgrounds to identify themselves with the characters in the texts and, on the other, it has encouraged students from dominant groups "to learn about cultures and histories outside their own" (Boyd, Darragh 2019, 3). Also, because YAL normally deals with the emotional and cultural challenges teenagers face every day (Ivey, Johnston 2013) and the developmental changes they go through – such as adapting to physical changes and achieving emotional independence from parents – they can be effective for supporting students' engaged reading (Ivey, Johnston 2013; 2018). In fact, the features of YAL texts "such as multiple narrators, shifting perspectives, and multimodalities" invite students "to construct meanings in the world of the text and to seek potential meanings with others outside of the text" (Ivey, Johnston 2018, 257). For this reason, many researchers and educators find in YAL a solution to turn non-reading teenagers into readers as YA texts tend to "evoke responses and stimulate students to think, feel and talk about their experiences in relation to the texts" (quoted in Too 2017, 42). Despite English language teachers being often concerned that authentic literature might be challenging to use with students who still need to grasp the target language (Strobbe 2013), this challenge seems reduced when allowing students to read YA texts (Duncan, Paran 2018). This is because having a teenage narrator or teenager characters makes reading more accessible for them and thus more appealing (Duncan, Paran 2018, 249; Bland 2018b). For example, Montón (2017) engaged 208 secondary students in the reading of passages from different YA novels – *American Born Chinese* (2009) by Gene Luen Yang, *The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian* (2007) by Sherman Alexie, etc. – and found that not only

students asked to have access to other YA novels in their first language, but they also demonstrated a boost of confidence in reading in English in their free time. Similarly, in another study conducted in Jordan, Yassin and Saed (2021) discovered that YA texts, suggested by their teachers, motivated secondary students to engage with English reading both in and outside the classroom. However, just having a teenage narrator or teenage characters is not enough to grab students' attention. The appropriateness of the language for a young audience, the realness of the plot, the perceived importance of the theme(s) explored, and the genre (Too 2017) need also to be considered when selecting materials for extensive reading. On the other hand, research has also pointed out that YA novels can be used to foster the agenda for global citizenship education (Unesco 2014) as they can help teenagers "think about, and hopefully to transcend, the rigid and dysfunctional structures of popular culture, stereotyping, oppression, and injustice" (quoted in Bland 2015, 131). Additionally, YAL supports students in identifying multiple and alternatives perspectives on a subject developing their critical and intercultural skills which are part of global competence (Divéki, Pereszlényi 2019, 71). However, the success of lessons that use YAL to foster global citizenship education depends on the selection of the right texts and on how students engage with them (Divéki, Pereszlényi 2021). In this context, very few studies have explored EFL students' perceptions of YAL that deals with controversial or taboo topics and further research is needed to guide teachers in introducing them in the classroom (Thompson, McIlnay 2019; Evans 2017).

Also important is the need to understand how teenagers engage with reading outside the classroom. Contrary to the belief that they are totally immersed in technology (Prensky 2001; Selwin 2009), teenage students read both digitally and on paper, but they do so with different purposes (Loh, Sun 2019). While they might use their phone to search for instant information and read materials otherwise not available in print (Zasacka 2017), they still prefer print for lengthier texts and for focused reading (Baron 2017). According to Loh and Sun (2019), students' digital reading habits might also differ based on their attitudes towards reading. That is, students who enjoy reading might use digital devices to also read stories, articles and e-books, whereas those who do not enjoy reading tend to use them only to interact on social media and to play videogames (Loh, Sun 2019). Further understanding students' reading habits both online and on paper and reflecting on how to cater for their specific needs is a necessary step for English language teachers to promote reading for pleasure in the target language.

Given the context described above, in the first phase of the Erasmus+ Project 'Lit up your phones – DigLit', we designed a YAL

collection website[2] aimed at helping English language teachers and students to select appropriate and engaging YA texts for extensive reading and the discussion of global issues. This website allows users to tailor their text search by selecting categories of interest ('tags') such as genre, topic, text format, year of publication, language level, target audience, and length. For each text, there is a short summary and some other useful information (e.g. author, teachers' notes, etc.).

In the same phase, we also administered a questionnaire to students in the three partner secondary schools in Austria, Italy, and Hungary with the aim to investigate their reading habits and preferences and perceptions of the YA texts included in the DigLit YAL Collection. By doing so, we wanted to better understand what the teenage students in our sample are interested in reading, how they read (digitally or on print), how often and how they feel about YAL that deals with controversial or taboo topics. In this article, we report on the results of this questionnaire by addressing the following research questions:

1. What are EFL students' reading habits and preferences?
2. What are EFL students' perceptions of YA texts included in the DigLit YAL collection?

2.1   Participants

The participants involved in this study were 115 secondary school students from the three partner schools located in Austria (n= 38), Hungary (n=38), and Italy (n=39), aged between 14 and 19 years old, with a B1 to B2 language level in English. The sample was selected following a convenience sampling strategy (Dörnyei 2007) based on teachers' availability to participate in the Erasmus+ project. Specifically, the sample consisted of both female (n=74) and male students (n=39), while two students preferred not to state their gender [graph 1].

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[2] The DigLit YAL collection is freely accessible at this link: https://yal. narrativedidactics.org/.
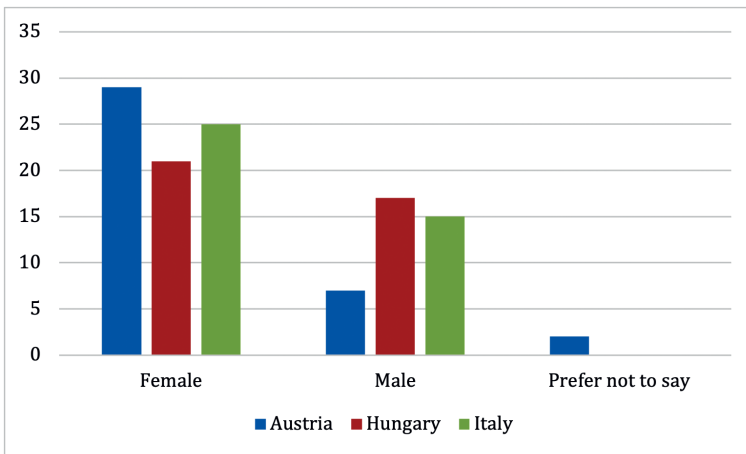
Graph 1 Distribution of students participating to the study by country and gender

2.2   The questionnaire

In order to answer the two research questions, students were first asked to navigate the DigLit YAL collection website and then to fill in an online questionnaire using Google Forms **[Appendix A]**. The questionnaire was in English, but students were free to complete it using either English or the national language (German, Italian, or Hungarian). The questionnaire was designed by the teachers and researchers working in the partner institutions on the basis of previous survey studies (Trigo Ibáñez, Santos Díaz, Rodríguez 2020; Evans 2017) and consisted of 7 closed (i.e. multiple choice items and Likert scales) and 6 open-ended questions, divided into three sections. The first section was meant to collect students' background information, such as country, school, class, age, and gender. The second section of the questionnaire was intended to gather information about students' reading habits and preferences, such as how often they read, what reading device they use, topics they are interested in exploring, and whether they like to share what they read and if so how and with whom. The third section of the questionnaire focused on the Diglit YAL collection: students were asked to choose the YA text(s) they considered most and less interesting to read and motivate their answers. The questionnaire was administered in February 2022 to Austrian and Italian students, and in March 2022 to Hungarian students. Because of the strict deadlines we were under, it was not possible to conduct a proper pilot. This is a limitation which we will refer back to in the conclusion.

2.3 Procedures of data analysis

After data collection, the quantitative results (questions 1-4, 5a-b, and 6a) were transferred to an Excel file to be able to proceed with descriptive type analyses, based on frequency and percentage distribution (Dörnyei 2007). These results were then further enriched through the qualitative results (questions 6a, 7a-b, 8a-b, and 9), analysed following content analysis procedures (Dörnyei 2007). Specifically, the answers to the open-ended questions were first inspected with a view to getting a general sense of the data and were later inserted for coding in the Maxqda Analytics Pro 2020 software. In the first phase, we developed emergent themes of students' perspectives. Thus, we refined the themes and created more abstract categories. In the last phase of analysis, we circled back across all the data to conduct selective coding and reach saturation.

In reporting students' quotes, a code was used in which the first letter signals the country (e.g. 'I' for Italy, 'A' for Austria, and 'H' for Hungary) followed by the grade/class and the number of the student.
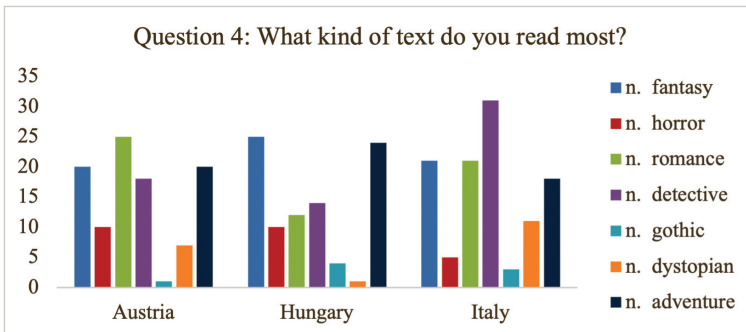
3 Results

In this section we will present the results collected through the questionnaire. In response to Question 1 ("How often do you read in your free time?"), only a minority of students claimed to read 'every day' (20%), while 65% said to read with a certain frequency ('once/twice a month' – 32%; 'once/twice a week' – 33%) and 15% 'hardly ever'. Question 2 was "What kind of texts do you read most? (you can choose more than one option)". Social media and novels constituted the preferred reading for most students, with 73% selecting 'social media' and 53% 'novels'. Newsmedia and newspapers were less popular, with 37% selecting 'newsmedia' and 27% 'newspapers'. As for short stories, comics and magazines they were favoured almost equally with 25% selecting 'short stories' and 'comics' and 23% 'magazines'. On the other hand, 'non-fiction' and 'poetry' were preferred by only 12% of students and 'plays' were the least chosen with 0.4% of preferences.

In Question 3 ("You read mostly"), students were asked to indicate their preferred reading device. Interestingly, despite the high preference given to 'social media' in the previous question, students said to read both on paper (51.3%), especially Italians, and on their phone (38.3%), while only 6% of them selected 'on a pc/tablet' and 4.3% 'on Kindle' **[graph 2]**.
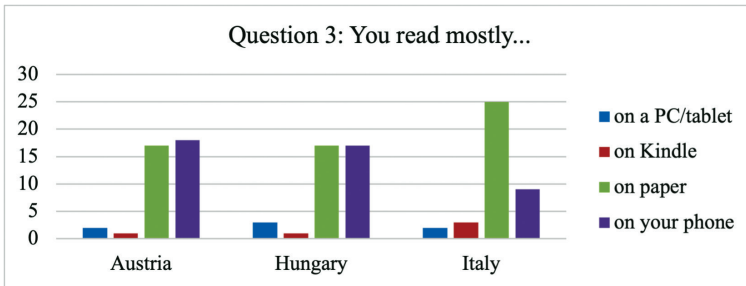
Question 4 was "What kind of text do you read most? (you can choose more than one option)". Among the genres most selected there were 'fantasy' (57.4%), 'detective stories' (54.8%), 'adventure stories' (54%) and 'romance' (50%), while 'horror' (22%), 'dystopian' (16.5%), and 'gothic' (7%) were less preferred [graph 3].

However, despite students' preferences being similar across countries and gender, it must be noted that 'detective stories' was mostly selected by Italian students and that 'romance' was chosen only by girls.

Students were also free to add other possible genres and topics which can be seen in the table below [tab. 1]:

Table 1 Results of 'Other' in Question 4

Other	Coverage
Thriller and techno-thriller	3.5%
Historical fiction	2.6%
Novels that tackle current events	1.7%
Youth	0.9%
Sport	0.9%
Fishing/nature	0.9%
Self-help	0.9%
Classics	0.9%

In question 5a, students were asked if they like to share what they read. Overall, participants responded positively across countries, with 68.75% selecting 'sometimes' and 17.41% 'often', and only 13.23% 'no, never' **[graph 4]**. Students who responded 'sometimes' or 'often' were then invited to indicate with whom they normally share what they read.
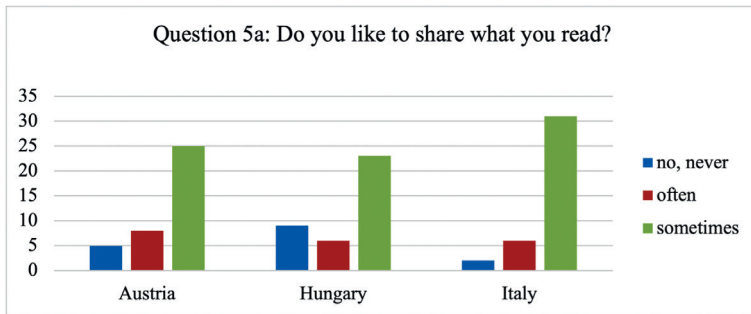
Graph 4 Results of Question 5a

As expected, 'talking with friends' (87.5%) was the most popular choice while 'talking to family' (8.7%), sharing 'through apps' (6.1%), and 'posting on social media' (5.2%) were selected only by a few.

Question 6a was aimed at gathering information about topics that students think would be important to deal with especially when engaging with literature (Question 6a: "What themes do you think literature today should deal with? Rate each theme in terms of importance; 1=not at all important; 4= very important"). Overall, students across the three countries recognised the importance of all the four topics suggested (human relationships, advancement of science, social problems, and climate change). However, while students seemed

to prefer 'social problems' (M=3.33, SD=.08) and 'human relationships' (M=3.13, SD=.09) in comparison to 'climate change' (M=2.91, SD=.87) and 'advancement of science' (M=2.58, SD=.89), the last two themes showed much more variety in terms of students' responses.

In Question 6b, students were free to add other themes they deemed important and motivate their answer. The content analysis showed that students added both themes normally associated with teens, such as 'growing up' and 'conflicts with parents', and themes related to current global issues, such as 'gender equality', 'bullying', 'violence against women', 'racism', 'globalization', and 'mental health'.

Interestingly, when giving reasons on why they selected these topics, students said that literature can play an important role in learning and talking about current issues, even in a foreign language:

> I3SA2: I think that books can be a way to deal with important topics like violence against women or racism.

In this context, several students also highlighted how it would be important to focus on mental health, as this is something that is not talked about enough, despite the huge impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on teenagers' well-being:

> A7E10: mental health...especially after COVID there is an increase of mental health problems [among teenagers].

> A7E6: Mental health because it's still not talked about enough and the society/the oppression you receive from the society and their closed off mind, Trauma and healing.

Since Hungarian students completed the questionnaire after the outbreak of the war in Ukraine, these students also talked about the importance of developing an understanding of the causes and consequences of global conflicts:

> H10AF7: Mistakes in the past, historical facts etc – because we can learn from other's mistakes.

> H9NY9: War-because there's a war in Ukraine next to our country.

Interestingly, students also mentioned the value of reading texts that can help them understand who they are and the role they can play in shaping the world.

> I3SA13: Becoming conscious of who we are and what we can do to make our world better with simple action, because it's something that a lot of people don't do.

Question 7a ("What texts from the Diglit Reading List would you be MORE interested in reading? Name at least three") concentrated on students' perceptions of the DigLit YAL collection by asking them to choose at least three texts they would be interested in reading. The titles selected by the students mostly related to the themes that they themselves suggested in Question 6b. In the table below **[tab. 2]** we report some of the titles most mentioned:

Table 2   YA texts students are most interested in reading.

YA texts selected	Coverage
The Hunger Games (2008) by S. Collins	29%
We Were Liars (2014) by E. Lockart	16.5%
To Kill a Mockingbird (1960) by H. Lee	14%
The Howl's Moving Castle (1986) by D.W. Jones	13%
The House on Mango Street (1983) by S. Cisneros	8%

In Question 7b ("For each text, please say why"), students said that they were interested in reading texts such as the *Hunger games* and *We were liars* because they have a plot that is fast-pacing, adventurous or that has a sense of mystery:

> I3SA4: In *We Were Liars* there is a lot of mystery and I love this type of books.

In other instances, students mentioned that they wanted to read texts that have characters they can relate to (either because of age or because of what they are going through) or that deal with themes they deem important, such as racism and mental health. For example, H9NY4 said:

> A7E9: [I want to read] *Don't Call Me Crazy* because I personally think that the topic mental health is a very present and important topic in our society especially for teenagers right now. A lot of my friends struggle with their mental health therefore it would be necessary to know a few things about it.

However, some of the students also selected 'lighter' texts, such as *The Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* (2001) by Anna Brashares, saying that sometimes it feels nice to read something just for fun. Finally, students also chose books because they are classics (i.e. *To Kill a Mockingbird* by H. Lee) or because they had already heard of them from friends, teachers, and social media (i.e. TikTok, Goodreads, etc.) or had already watched the film:

> I3IC12: [I would like to read *Red, White and Royal Blue*] because I keep seeing it on social media platforms (everyone says that it's a really good read) [and *The Howl's Moving Castle*] because I really enjoyed the animated film (one of my favourites), so I would like to read the novel too and [*To Kill a Mockingbird*] because It talks about very important topics

> I3IC8: *Howl's Moving Castle* because we saw the animated film

Students were also asked to select texts in the DigLit YAL Collection that they thought were not interesting to read (Question 8a: "What texts from the Diglit Reading List would you be LESS interested in reading?"). In Table 3, we report some of the titles mostly mentioned [tab. 3]:

Table 3 YA texts students are less interested in reading.

YA texts selected	Coverage
Frankly in Love (2019) by D. Yoon	10%
Stay Gold (2020) by T. McSmith	7%
Birthday (1986) by M. Russo	7%
My Brother's Name Is Jessica (2019) by J. Boyne	4.3%
Eleanor & Parks (2015) by R. Rowell	3.5%

In Question 8b ("For each text, please say why"), students reported a mix of reasons for not wanting to read a specific book. For example, those who mentioned *Frankly in Love* said that they generally do not love romance as a genre, but also that they perceived the plot as 'boring' and 'cliché':

> I3SA18: [I'm not interested in reading] *Frankly in Love*, because the plot of the book is very repetitive and not innovative.

> H9NY18: [I'm not interested in reading] *Frankly in Love*. According to the summary it seems like a typical romance book. I may be wrong about the story, but I am really not interested in these kind of cheesy love stories.

Similar comments were used for *Stay Gold* and *Birthday*. As regards *Stay Gold*, students also claimed they would not read it because they were tired of talking about LGBTQ+ issues. The same was said about *My Brother's Name Is Jessica*. Some students went as far as to say that they do not support the LGBTQ+ cause, while others simply felt there were too many books about the LGBTQ+ community in the DigLit YAL collection:

H9B4: I don't support LGBTQ

I3IC6: I don't like their attitude to force their ideas into everyone so mine is a form of protest

A7E11: In my opinion, there are too many books about LGBTQ+ which is a topic that must be talked about but there many other social issues like feminism and black lives matter that should be talked about

However, not all students were unanimous. For example, I3SA16 mentioned that by reading *My Brother's Name Is Jessica* she thought she could better understand the experience of transgender people:

I3SA16: I would like to read this book because it talks about Jessica's transition and also I would like to understand the feelings and the emotions felt by her brother.

In Question 9 (*It's your turn to contribute to the Diglit Reading List! Write down the title and author of a text that you think should be added to the list and that responds to the themes of the project and to young people's interests*), students were asked to add a text of their choice to the collection and they selected various titles, such as J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* saga, Angie Thomas' *The Hate U Give*, Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime*, John Green's *The Fault in Our Stars*, and Karen McManus' *One of Us Is Lying,* showing students' preference for books with a fast-pacing and mysterious plot that also tackle important teenage related or social issues.

4 Discussion

Our first research question was "What are EFL students' reading habits and preferences?". The results of the questionnaire showed that the adolescents in our sample are not avid readers, like reading a wide variety of text genres, with a preference for social media and fiction (e.g. fantasy, detective and adventurous stories) rather than poetry and plays, and have a tendency to read both on paper and on their phone. These findings confirm previous studies (Trigo Ibáñez, Santos Díaz, Rodríguez 2020; Evans 2017) and reveal that print and digital literacies are deeply intertwined in young people's life irrespective of nationality. For educators this means finding the way to engage students with different texts across different devices. As Lo and Sun (2019, 670) claim, "print and e-reading materials can complement each other within an ecology that supports reading". However, buying both physical and e-copies is not always financially pos-

sible and teachers often struggle in catering for students' different needs and interests. An option could be to use multimodal contents (such as BookTok videos, films; Jerasa, Boffone 2021) to enrich print reading and combine e-book reading with more physical activities, but other solutions should be investigated to develop best practices in the promotion of EFL reading in today's scenarios.

Our study also confirms previous research on the social and collaborative nature of reading for teenagers (Evans 2017; Loh, Sun 2019). Students in our sample claimed to like sharing what they read by talking to friends and to get information about books from social media platforms such as Goodreads and TikTok. According to Rebora et al. (2021) and Jerasa and Boffone (2021), these platforms are not only having an impact on teenagers' reading choices, but also on their out-of-school literacy practices. In this context, educators should design social reading activities that engage students in critical discussions around books in physical as well as online spaces (Lütge 2018; Delanoy 2018). Examples of digital activities are writing recommendations on Goodreads, participating in online literature circles (Larson 2009; Smith 2019) and in digital social reading experiences (Pianzola 2021; Blyth 2014) through annotation platforms such as Hylighter (Thoms, Poole 2018) and Glose for Education (Kajder 2018). However, the use of these platforms in the language classroom is still under researched, and future studies should address their affordances especially within the perspective of a seamless physical and online ecology of reading (Loh, Sun 2019).

As regards the second research question ("What are EFL students' perceptions of YA texts included in the DigLit YAL collection?"), students showed appreciation towards texts that tackle issues that they felt directly or indirectly affected them (Boyd, Darragh 2019), such as the war in Ukraine and mental health. Specifically, students claimed that talking about mental health is necessary given the increase of depressive symptoms and anxiety in adolescents post-pandemic (Manutscheri 2021). In a follow-up discussion conducted with the Italian students, we learnt that many of them either felt under stress or knew someone who did and wanted to understand how to support them. A similar interest was shown towards racism as a result of current events related to police brutality in the US and towards the economical and historical reasons behind global conflicts. On the contrary, texts related to LGBTQ+ issues received mostly negative comments. At first, this came as a surprise to us teachers and researchers. However, when further discussing the results of the questionnaire with the students, we realised that the problem was not so much the topic but the way it was dealt with in the texts we had included in the DigLit YAL Collection. In particular, students claimed to not feel attracted to texts that talk about queer issues in a stereotypical or explicit manner, preferring more implicit readings (Divéki 2020). This

leads us to underline the importance of choosing texts and approaches that address controversial issues in the EFL classroom in a multi-dimensional and critical manner (Delanoy 2018; Gray 2021) without perpetrating biased views or force-feeding opinions (Divéki 2020, 30). The same could be said for texts that deal with mental health issues. While opening up a dialogue about mental wellbeing and challenges is indispensable, teachers need to carefully consider how to introduce such a sensible topic in the EFL classroom. Indeed, according to Manutscheri (2021), when talking about mental health, language teachers should pass on reliable information to students, discuss appropriate language to use, and select texts that depict mental challenges in a realistic manner (Manutscheri 2021).

In the context of our project the results of the questionnaire and the implications we derived from them were invaluable not only in informing the design of the extensive reading project but also in promoting students' agency. Indeed, students expressed great enthusiasm about being asked to evaluate the DigLit YAL collection and took pride in giving suggestions on how to improve it by also adding texts of their choices.

5   Conclusion

Though YAL can be a valid tool to motivate teenage students to read in the target language, despite possible linguistic and cultural challenges (Bland 2013, 213), more research is needed on both which texts to select and how to approach them in the classroom to promote students' active engagement with global perspectives (Lütge 2018). Dealing with topics that are either controversial or taboo is not an easy task, especially given the fact that not all students might respond favourably to their introduction (Paiz 2019). Actively engaging students in the selection and discussion of reading materials is necessary if we really want to turn the language classroom into a truly critical and inclusive space (Paiz 2019; Manutscheri 2021).

Our study has limitations both in terms of the sample size and the lack of a pilot to ensure the validity of the questionnaire, and our results cannot be generalised to the wider population.

However, we hope to have provided readers with some interesting reflections in relation to the need to both integrate print and digital reading and to take into consideration the issues that might arise when tackling taboo/controversial topics in the EFL classroom. In our project, the questionnaire and the reflections that originated from it were an important step in opening a dialogue with the students and continued to inform both the design and implementation of the subsequent extensive reading programme. The results of this experimentation will be discussed in future publications.

Appendix A: Students' questionnaire

Dear Student,
This questionnaire is part of an Erasmus+ (KA2) project which aims to promote students' reading for pleasure and discussion around global issues (es. gender equality, disability, climate change, etc.) in English as a FL. In this context, we need your feedback to improve the list of texts we have put together for the project in order to better relate it to your interests and reading preferences. The questionnaire consists of three parts in which you will be asked to (I) give some general information about yourself (i.e. country, class, school, age, and gender), (II) describe your reading preferences, and (III) comment on the reading list your teachers presented in class. The questionnaire is anonymous, and it will take you about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. There are no right or wrong answers. Simply say what you think! Your opinion is very valuable for the success of the project. If you have any queries, please refer them to your teacher.
Thank you,
The DigLit Team

PART 1 – General Information

Country:*
- Austria
- Hungary
- Italy

School:*
- Priv. Gymnasium und Oberstufenrealgymnasium des Schulvereins der Ursulinen Graz
- IIS Tron Zanella
- Pécsi Tudományegyetem Gyakorló Általános Iskola, Gimnázium és Óvoda

Class:*

Age:*

Gender:*

- Female
- Male
- Prefer not to say

PART 2 – Reading Preferences

1) How often do you read in your free time?*

- hardly ever
- once/twice a month
- once/twice a week
- everyday

2) What kind of texts do you read most?*
(you can choose more than one option)

- newspapers
- newsmedia
- social media
- novels
- short stories
- non-fiction
- poetry
- comics
- magazines
- plays
- other:

3) You read mostly:*

- on your phone
- on a PC/tablet
- on Kindle
- on paper

4) What kind of stories attract you most?*
(you can select more than one option)

- fantasy
- horror
- romance
- detective
- gothic
- dystopian
- adventure
- other:

5a) Do you like to share what you read?*

- no, never
- sometimes
- often

5b) If you answered 'sometimes' or 'often' to question 5a, how do you normally like to share what you read?*
(you can choose more than one option)
- talking to friends
- posting on social media
- through apps
- other:

6a) What themes do you think literature today should deal with? Rate each theme in terms of importance*
(1=not at all important; 4=very important)
- human relationships
- the advancement of science
- climate change
- social problems

6b) Add other themes to the list if need be and give a reason why you think they should be added:*

PART 3 – Diglit Book List

Choose three texts you would like to read most from the ones explored during the classroom activity

7a) What texts from the Diglit Reading List would you be MORE interested in reading? Name at least three*

7b) For each text, please say why*

8a) What texts from the Diglit Reading List would you be LESS interested in reading?*

8b) For each text, please say why*

9) It's your turn to contribute to the Diglit Reading List!
Write down the title and author of a text that you think should be added to the list and that responds to the themes of the project and to young people's interests*

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