

## Booktubers in the classroom: teaching experiences on the dynamics of online literary criticism

### Booktubers en el aula: experiencias didácticas alrededor de las dinámicas de crítica literaria en red

**M<sup>a</sup> Isabel Morales-Sánchez**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3961-5806>

Universidad de Cádiz (Spain)

**Juan Pedro Martín-Villarreal**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1682-9609>

Universidad de Cádiz (Spain)

**Fátima Coca-Ramírez**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8952-4692>

Universidad de Cádiz (Spain)

**Received:**  
20/06/2020

**Accepted:**  
22/02/2021

**ISSN:** 1885-446 X  
**ISSNe:** 2254-9099

**Keywords:**

Critical reading; literary criticism; reading promotion; reading motivation; Web 2.0 technologies.

**Palabras clave:**

Lectura crítica; crítica literaria; promoción lectora; motivación lectora; tecnologías Web 2.0.

**Contact:**

isabel.msanchez@uca.es

#### Abstract

In this article we show the results of a teaching experience conducted at a university classroom and based on the dynamics of booktubers with the aim of promoting reflection and criticism around literature. The project aims to highlight how YouTube can be an effective tool to encourage critical reading and to reflect about the dynamics and ways of expression of literature, given its success among the youngest. Besides, it invites students to explain complex literary aspects and to discuss their critical, theoretical and historical dimensions in order to discern the role they have nowadays and how they are assumed in the context of new creative and reading habits. The goal was to enable a better understanding of the contents of the subject Literary Theory and to broaden the strategies that would foster the creativity and active participation of students by introducing horizontal learning dynamics. The high number of participants (191) offers a sufficiently large sample to analyze the impact that this experience has had on their training in specific and transversal skills of the subject, and to obtain the students' own evaluation of this.

#### Resumen

En este estudio mostramos los resultados de una experiencia didáctica llevada a cabo en el aula universitaria y basada en la dinámica booktuber, realizada con el objetivo de potenciar la reflexión y la crítica alrededor de la literatura. El proyecto pone de relieve la utilidad de YouTube —al abrigo de su éxito entre los más jóvenes— como herramienta para pensar la literatura, sus dinámicas y sus modos de expresión. También invita al estudiante a explicar aspectos literarios complejos, conversar con la crítica, la teoría o la historia literarias, para vislumbrar qué papel tienen en la actualidad y cómo se asumen en el contexto de los nuevos hábitos creativos y lectores. Con ello facilitamos la comprensión de los contenidos de la asignatura de Teoría de la Literatura, ampliando las estrategias creativas y la participación activa, mediante una dinámica horizontal de aprendizaje. El elevado número de participantes (191) ofrece una muestra muy amplia para analizar el impacto que tiene esta experiencia en la capacitación en competencias específicas y transversales propias de la asignatura, así como para obtener una valoración de la misma desde la perspectiva del estudiante.

This paper presents the results of the teaching innovation project called "YouTube como herramienta de crítica literaria en el aula" ("YouTube as a tool for literary criticism in the classroom"), awarded by the INNOVA programme of the Teaching Innovation Unit of the Universidad de Cádiz (Spain) during the 2019/20 academic year (sol-201900138259-tra).

Morales-Sánchez, M. I., Martín-Villarreal, J. P., & Coca-Ramírez, F. (2021). Booktubers in the classroom: teaching experiences on the dynamics of online literary criticism. *Ocnos*, 20 (2), 68-79.

[https://doi.org/10.18239/ocnos\\_2021.20.2.2426](https://doi.org/10.18239/ocnos_2021.20.2.2426)

## Introduction

The presence of literature on YouTube in various formats has been gradually increasing in Spain, especially since 2010, when Javier Ruescas began to upload videos to promote his novels. Since then, the booktuber movement has generated a series of formats to comment on books, showcase their latest acquisitions, organise games or literary challenges and provide guidance on the latest trends (Rovira-Collado, 2017)<sup>1</sup>. The emergence of literature into the audiovisual medium further tightens the link between the literary universe and the network with new digital dynamics. One way or another, the most recent studies highlight that literary practices in the virtual world have led —around the book “ecosystem”— to transformations in the reading habits of young people (García-Canclini, 2015), regenerating an interest in reading understood in its social and collective dimension. Therefore, although it is not something new, literature regains part of the readers’ attention insofar as its dialogical dimension and the exchange of knowledge is evidenced (Cordón-García & Gómez-Díaz, 2019). In the specific context of literary communication, the changes experienced by the relationship between readers and writers, transferred to social networks, do not go unnoticed either; nor do the marketing strategies of publishers, the new spaces for literary criticism created on the YouTube, Instagram or Twitter platforms or the paradigm shift that has led to the adoption of the network as a tool, support and means of dissemination for reading and writing (Cassany, 2012; Morales-Sánchez, 2018; Gómez-Díaz et al., 2016).

One of the particularities of this booktuber community, who share their reading interests and opinions on authors or works in video format, is the use of an informal tone —typical of the mass audience they are addressing—which normally is mostly young (Perkins, 2017), just like them. This practice of literary criticism is outside the professional sphere, in the hands of readers who are not required to have any previous literary knowledge beyond that provided by their own reading experience. But

it has proven to be relevant in shaping public tastes and in the promotion of publishing novelties due to its enormous popularity (Márquez & Ardévol, 2012). Extensive use of the medium undoubtedly shows new ways of understanding the social and cultural values of reading (Rovira-Collado, 2016). A parallel space is thus created in its own right, in line with the convergent transformation of the media already foreseen by Jenkins (2008). It is a horizontal and participatory platform in which the exercise of literary criticism takes place among peers. While hybridisation of the roles of writer-reader/producer-consumer is neither new nor exclusive to digital cultural products, the main change is the suppression of any hierarchy in the exercises of literary criticism, until recently controlled by institutions (universities, publishing groups and traditional media). In this sense, readers become effective and persuasive agents who share opinions and reviews in their own social networks, in specialised web spaces such as Goodreads, in blogs or in the online sales channels themselves (De la Torre-Espinosa, 2020).

The didactic potential of this phenomenon should not go unnoticed, as its creativity and dynamism, its potential to encourage reading and to influence readers’ tastes are demonstrated. Therefore, a new way of promoting reading is created with its own rules, more oriented towards motivation than reflection (Paladines-Paredes & Margallo, 2020). In line with this synergy, introducing this type of practice in the classroom, not only around the reading of works, but also around the understanding of literature as a cultural phenomenon, it allows other conceptual aspects to be covered that result in a better critical training of a pupil who, in turn, can be initiated into these practices.

## Methodology and objectives

Finding out to what extent students’ consumption and participation in booktuber practices has a positive effect on their ability to discuss literature is our starting point. Therefore, we created an activity to encourage the explanation of literary concepts in

an informal learning context, such as YouTube, so that students become actively familiar with these concepts in practice. The qualitative analysis of the videos made by the students, together with the quantitative study of their knowledge of the environment, their assessment and participation, as well as their own vision of the activity in a final survey, makes it possible to assess the relevance of this experience as a valid strategy to favour the acquisition of competences.

This activity is linked to the subject called Theory of Literature, a compulsory first-year subject in Hispanic Philology, English Studies, Classical Philology, French Studies, Arabic and Islamic Studies and Linguistics and Applied Languages. This initiative responds to two essential objectives: to encourage other ways of working on critical and theoretical reflection on concepts of literary analysis and to put into practice a participative dynamics that would increase the involvement of students to implement the programme thereof. In addition to these objectives, there are other more specific ones, aligned with the basic competences of the subject, such as explaining literary concepts in a structured and systematic way, working on planning and time management, creative and effective expressive skills both orally and in writing, according to the required register, and the development of autonomous learning strategies using ICTs as a tool for learning, research and dissemination.

The learning of basic concepts of the subject is assessed with the production of a recorded video, following the booktuber's own dynamics. This makes it possible to bring academic knowledge closer to the students' everyday spaces (González et al., 2005) from a pedagogical approach based on a communicative and project-based approach. This enables the extension of online university education offered through the virtual classroom (Czerkawski, 2016; Moghavvemi et al., 2018), and addresses the acquisition of digital skills at the same time. Most students, who are considered digital natives, regularly use platforms such as YouTube, with their own oral communication

strategies. However, in many cases, despite its use, the learner is unaware of the nature of the medium and its communicative strategies. Hence the need to reinforce digital skills and strategies of communicative adaptation to the media context, i.e., it is not just about being a booktuber but about trying to be a good and effective one instead (Suárez & González-Argüello, 2020).

During the four months of the project, the teachers monitored the different teaching sequences, ensuring that the objectives set were met in all phases, as shown in table 1. The activity also included a survey aimed at testing the effectiveness and appreciation of the project and to find out the students' degree of familiarity with digital media products under the label of booktubers, as well as their appreciation and consumption.

The dynamics of the activity made it necessary to establish a series of reflections on the space that literary criticism occupies today on the web and the habits and influences of the readers themselves. In addition, students had to make a prior effort to identify the characteristics of the booktubers' discourse. In the last phase, each group shared their video with the class, so that everyone could interact, in a feedback process that allowed them to clarify doubts, review content and give their opinions on the effectiveness of the videos.

## Results

The results of this optional teaching innovation activity show an improvement in student involvement (table 2). The latter valued the experience very positively, as it facilitated the understanding of theoretical contents, while at the same time allowing for a novel activity to be carried out.

Similarly, the success rate demonstrates the interest and effort in preparing for the activity (table 3). On evaluation of the activity, which scored 15% of the total for the subject, oral and digital communication strategies, the ability to adapt to the

**Table 1**  
*Phases of the teaching experience*

Phases	Topic	Teaching activity
1. Explanation and discussion of theoretical and literary concepts (in class) and explanation of the concept and dynamics of literary criticism of booktubers.	Selection of 24 concepts from the syllabus and compulsory theoretical readings.	Familiarisation with the concepts of literary criticism.  Relationship with the subject syllabus.
	Explanation of the booktuber phenomenon. Viewing and analysis of examples.	Analysis of networked oral production strategies.  Familiarisation with several booktubers and analysis of their strategies (oral, presentation, production, etc.).  Creation of working groups (3-5 students) and selection of the concept to work on.
2. Drafting and correction of the dissemination plan (independent work).	Development of outreach and dissemination strategies.	Reflection, research and bibliographic documentation on the chosen concept.
	Reflection on oral communication strategies in digital contexts.	Development of a plan to disseminate the concept: selection of explanation and communication strategies, search for examples.
3. Video production (independent work).	Digital skills training.	Scriptwriting.
	Production of an oral informative speech.	Selection of youtuber video format.  Video recording and editing.
		Publication of the video in the virtual forum of the classroom.
4. Peer feedback, teacher correction and evaluation of the activity by means of a survey (virtual classroom).	Evaluation of the videos by students and teachers; use as teaching support material.	Video viewing and reviewing.  Carrying out the survey on the perception of booktubers and assessment of the activity.
	Evaluation of the activity.	

**Table 2**  
*Students participating in the booktuber activity*

<b>Number of students enrolled</b>	<b>241</b>
Participating in the activity	191 (79%)
Not participating in the activity	50 (21%)
<b>Number of videos</b>	<b>51</b>
Average length	04:03

proposed media context and the degree of assimilation of theoretical and literary concepts, as well as the ability to exemplify them, were assessed.

In general, assimilation of concepts has been satisfactory: the videos presented show how the students overcame the first difficulties in working

**Table 3**  
*Success rate of students participating in the booktuber activity*

Success rate of students participating in the activity	
Grade	Students
<b>Fail</b>	0 (0%)
<b>Pass (5-6)</b>	14 (7.3%)
<b>Good (7-7.9)</b>	41 (21.5 %)
<b>Very good (8-8.9)</b>	40 (20.9 %)
<b>Outstanding (9-10)</b>	96 (50.3 %)

with theoretical concepts, despite being totally unfamiliar with them. Additionally, in cases where errors in understanding the exercises were found, feedback mechanisms made it possible to correct

the exercises in the second phase of the project, thanks to autonomous documentation work, complementary to the classroom explanation.

Table 4 exemplifies several of the 24 concepts worked on in this activity. The sample clearly shows the heterogeneity of these concepts, from classical and general concepts such as mimesis, catharsis, masterpiece or canon; to others belonging to contemporary literary theories such as intertextuality, open work or horizon of expectations,

without forgetting the most recent ones, such as transmediality<sup>2</sup>.

On the other hand, the literary examples in this same table show that, although some students prefer to use canonical literary texts to explain theoretical concepts, others (groups 10, 11, 13) direct the discussion towards other areas of consumption, such as cinema, comics, music or bestsellers. These examples also show how the choice of works and fields becomes a relevant strategy to make the term easier to understand, beyond its definition.

**Table 4**  
*Selection of participants' videos*

Group	Concept	Theoretical-literary text	Link
5	Mimesis	Aristotle, Poetics Plato, Republic	<a href="https://youtu.be/Y8__W5UL9NU">https://youtu.be/Y8__W5UL9NU</a>
9	Deautomation	V. Shklovski (1978). "Art as a device", s Russian Formalist Theory, Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI, pp. 55-71.	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOcR6UPamRs&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOcR6UPamRs&amp;feature=youtu.be</a>
10	Transmediality	A. De Toro, "Dispositivos transmediales, representación y anti-representación. Frida Kahlo: Transpictoriality-Transmediality". <i>Comunicación</i> , 5, 23-65. 2007 V.V. A. A., Slenderman J. K. Rowling, Harry Potter George Martin, A Song of Ice and Fire	<a href="https://youtu.be/CgDhep7B1yg">https://youtu.be/CgDhep7B1yg</a>
11	Ars/ingenium	Aristotle, Poetics Plato, Republic Horace, Epistle to the Pisos Homer, Iliad Camila Cabello, Romance	<a href="https://youtu.be/-pl0lEH_dfQ">https://youtu.be/-pl0lEH_dfQ</a>
12	Gynocriticism	Elaine Showalter, "Towards a Feminist Poetics" Siri Husvedt, The Blazing World Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, We should all be feminists Virginia Woolf, A room of one's own	<a href="https://youtu.be/dxcDs9_wPG4">https://youtu.be/dxcDs9_wPG4</a>
13	Open work	Umberto Eco, The open work Rian Johnson, Knives out Darren Aronofsky, Black swan Antoine Saint-Exupéry, The little prince	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEAwlXEFypM&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LEAwlXEFypM&amp;feature=youtu.be</a>
15	Literary canon	Harold Bloom, The western canon The Bible Homer, Iliad	<a href="https://youtu.be/gNnlHabiHBg">https://youtu.be/gNnlHabiHBg</a>
20	Expectation horizon	Hans Robert Jauss, "The reader as an instance of a new history of literature". Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary Ernest Feydeau, Fanny	<a href="https://youtu.be/ZTm0vMzCFOQ">https://youtu.be/ZTm0vMzCFOQ</a>
22	Intertextuality	J. Kristeva. Bakhtin, Word, Dialogue and Novel (1966) R. Barthes. "Texte (théorie du), Encyclopaedia Universalis Ovid, Metamorphoses Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet	<a href="https://youtu.be/_IWblMtfAs8">https://youtu.be/_IWblMtfAs8</a>



23	Gynocriticism	Elaine Showalter, <i>Towards a Feminist Poetics</i> , 1979. Federico García Lorca, <i>Poet in New York</i> , Carlos Ruiz Zafón, <i>The Angel's Game</i> Jane Austen, <i>Pride and prejudice</i> Manuel Chaves Nogales, <i>A sangre y fuego</i> . Virginia Woolf y <i>las Sinsombrero</i> . Poetic works of Luis Cernuda	<a href="https://youtu.be/QG2UOE8Xtkk">https://youtu.be/QG2UOE8Xtkk</a>
28	Open work	Umberto Eco, <i>The open work</i> J. Cortázar, <i>Rayuela</i> Juan Ruiz, <i>Libro de buen Amor</i>	<a href="https://youtu.be/FMyl2JfL0jE">https://youtu.be/FMyl2JfL0jE</a>
31	Implicit reader	W. Iser, <i>The reading process: a phenomenological approach</i> , in <i>Aesthetics of Reception</i> . V. Nobokov, <i>Lolita</i> James Joyce, <i>Ulises</i> .	<a href="https://youtu.be/NtzRSq83TUM">https://youtu.be/NtzRSq83TUM</a>
32	Genius	Krestschmer, <i>Diderot, Men of genius</i> . Homer.	<a href="https://youtu.be/UNWPxGI5emo">https://youtu.be/UNWPxGI5emo</a>
38	Expectation horizon	Gadamer, <i>Truth and Method</i> . Hans Robert Jauss, "The reader as an instance of a new history of literature (1975). Antonio Buero Vallejo, <i>Story of a staircase</i> . Federico García Lorca, <i>The House of Bernarda Alba</i> .	<a href="https://youtu.be/gmaGD3rU8t8">https://youtu.be/gmaGD3rU8t8</a>
40	Masterpiece	Jean Galard in AAVV. (2000) <i>What is a masterpiece?</i> Cervantes, <i>Don Quixote</i> .	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtwUCerJ3Go">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dtwUCerJ3Go</a>
43	Catharsis	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i> Sophocles, <i>Oedipus Rex</i> .	<a href="https://youtu.be/eEaQYj2ANnA">https://youtu.be/eEaQYj2ANnA</a>
49		M. Bakhtin, <i>Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics</i> Alberto Méndez, <i>The Blind Sunflowers</i> .	<a href="https://youtu.be/JrKQFBCLNNo">https://youtu.be/JrKQFBCLNNo</a>

By being actively involved in the activity, students reversed the educational roles. From passive knowledge recipients, they became active learning producers. Students have been responsible for developing an explanation to help their peers understand the concepts of the programme. They have thus become aware of the difficulty of constructing a persuasive and effective discourse. The activity has somehow minimised the usual animosity that students have towards theoretical texts, which is generally based on their poor reading habits. The strengthening of academic literacy skills (Carlino, 2008) contributes to this improvement. As a consequence, the work of analysis and understanding leads to a better assimilation of the theoretical ideas that are the cornerstone of this subject.

Three booktubers' dynamics used in the corpus stand out essentially. The first (68.5%) one is more faithful to the aesthetics of the video blog

and resorts to a close-up of the student-booktuber, direct with the viewer. Their presentation depends exclusively on their ability as speakers, on their way of showing themselves to others, on a staging with persuasive resources, based above all on verbalisation, even if music or images are used as support (groups 5, 12, 13, 15). The second option (23.5%) takes advantage of specific software such as Animaker, Screencastomatic or Moovly, in order to achieve a greater distance and even to hide the booktuber self with an avatar. Similarly, the Draw my life format allows the discourse to be constructed by means of animations or drawings (groups 11, 22, 32, 40).

In such cases, the learner records his or her voice-over to explain the predetermined concepts. For example, group 22 uses graphs and explanatory diagrams, as well as pictures of authors or pictures together with textual quotations to accompany

the verbal explanation of the theoretical concept. Sequential drawings are introduced to illustrate and compare the myth of Pyramus and Thisbe in the two literary works, so that the use of writing accompanied by images predominates. This last resource brings greater dynamism to the video as opposed to the stagnation of the incorporated quotations.

Finally, the third dynamics (7.8%) reproduces other models which, in principle, belong to the booktuber medium, such as the master class, telephone chats between classmates and even theatrical staging (groups 2, 23 and 43). In two cases (groups 23 and 43), these traditional formats, combined with the comparison of works of various kinds, allow for comments and personal reflection, achieving a more than satisfactory result in explaining and disseminating the concept. More specifically, the concepts of gynecriticism and catharsis are thus conveyed by presenting themselves connected to experiences close to the booktubers, far from academicism, seeking the comedy and dynamism typical of these videos.

However, practice has not come without complications, especially in terms of implementing oral and digital communication strategies or adapting discourse to the media context of YouTube. The students' weaknesses in the management of strategies, both general and specific to booktubers, show once again that consumption habits are not directly related to the understanding of the channel, its characteristics and how it works. Being a consumer only does not allow developing the competences to be a producer. The survey of students confirms their familiarity with this type of video: 73.2% (102 out of 142) say they are familiar with it. In terms of actual consumption, 69.1% state that they are regular or occasional consumers of this type of video, although only 8.5% (12 of them) do so on a routine basis.

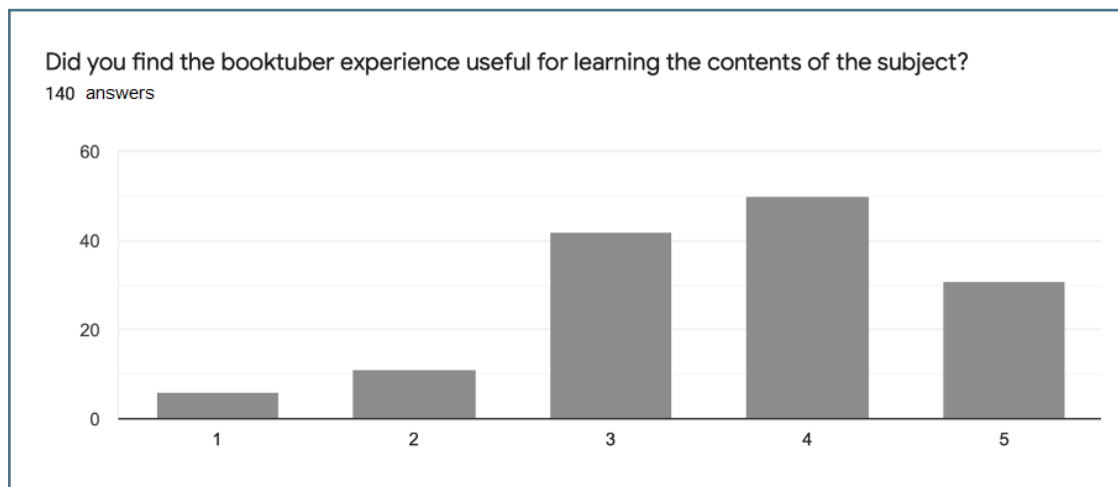
It is therefore imperative that attention be paid to the development of other media-related competences in addition to those linked to communication

skills. In particular, we found it difficult to construct dynamic and simple discourses on complex topics. We also found that students are prone to read pre-written texts and to neglect the preparation of oral discourse in view of its very nature (groups 20 and 27). It is also common to link spontaneity or naturalness in the speaker's attitude to a lack of rigour, without distinguishing that written and oral discourse are not equivalent, as they respond to different communicative strategies and contexts. The same applies to formal-informal registers: YouTube is an informal context that is not incompatible with the dissemination or diffusion of solid, contrasted and theoretical ideas.

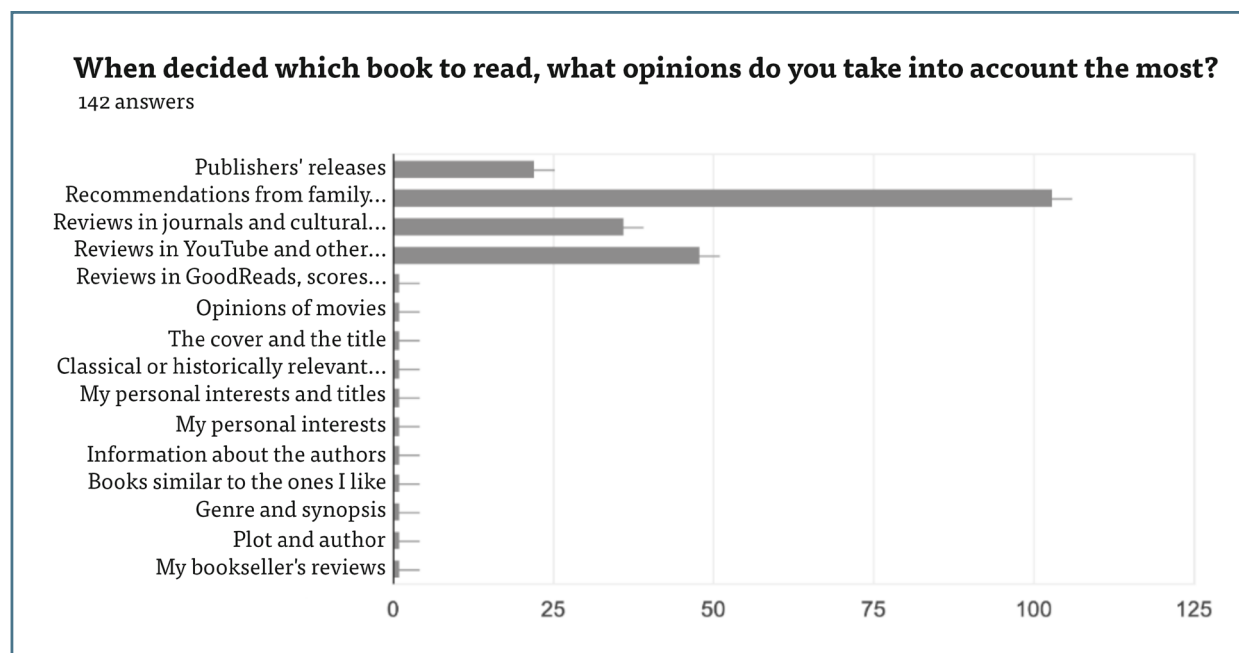
To conclude the evaluation of the results, in all cases we confirm the high level of satisfaction of the students with the activity: 87.8% of those surveyed consider the booktuber experience as a useful or very useful formula to consolidate the contents of the subject, as shown in figure 1. Some of their comments highlight the opportunity to review content in preparation for the evaluation, its playful nature or its benefit for deepening knowledge of a specific theoretical notion. However, some students pointed out the need for specific training in the use of video production and editing equipment, as well as other IT tools necessary to carry out the activity. It is interesting to note the mostly positive opinion on the dynamics of the booktubers, who are influential for 79.5% when it comes to reading or finding out about literature. Whether the user takes into account the booktuber's training or, on the contrary, gives him or her the role of an amateur critic, which he or she assumes to be valid, underlies this question.

In the same vein, it is noteworthy that most respondents select their readings guided by the recommendations of their family circle and by the reviews and criticisms they consult on YouTube and other social networks, i.e., by non-specialist opinions, as shown in Figure 2. When choosing a book, 72.5% (103) say they take into account the opinion of family or friends, while reviews on YouTube and other social networks account for

**Figure 1**  
*Results of the students' level of satisfaction with the activity*



**Figure 2**  
*Results of the question "When deciding which book to read, which opinions do you take into account the most?"*



33.8% (48). It is also clear that traditional channels for literary criticism are of little interest, as only 15.5% (22) are guided by new publications and their dissemination channels, and 25.4% (36) by critical consultations in newspapers and cultural supplements. The comparison of these results gives

us another paradoxical result: despite considering conventional literary criticism media as more reliable, their low degree of exposure to cultural supplements in magazines and to conventional literary criticism means booktubers have greater influence on students.



In contrast, only 25% plans producing videos for this purpose. Taking into account the education students intend to acquire throughout their university education as literature specialists and the growing interest in academic outreach work, among which the booktuber phenomenon could be included, the use of this type of resource is highly advisable as it clearly opens the way to professional training that is currently poorly attended to.

## Discussion

Thanks to this experience, we have fundamentally undertaken to open up the classroom to the digital spaces that young people tend to consume, with the aim of finding out how useful they are as teaching tools. Based on the interest in promoting reading and critical skills, it is essential to generate synergies that allow us to read about literature, to understand what literature is and to give an opinion on it following solid criteria (Cassany, 2018). Therefore, it is more than likely that YouTube can become an effective tool for delving into literary history, criticism and theory, given the increasing interest in this audiovisual form and its ways of approaching literature (Bergé, 2018). This digital repository also allows us to address the challenges of training in reading and writing—not only of traditional works, but also of digital works—in higher education, with projects that, from a transversal and innovative perspective, bring us closer to these new spaces for debate (Morales-Sánchez, 2016).

This didactic experience also measures the reaction of the students of Literary Theory to the challenge of becoming booktubers; they are invited to construct their opinion on the basis of a text or a concept and to participate in a practice of online literary criticism, while exercising subject-specific skills and strengthening the links between this familiar context and academic language. In this sense, the practice shown is in line with other teaching experiences that address the promotion of reading through new digital media and, in particular, based on the booktuber phenomenon (Rovira-Collado, 2016, 2017; Suárez & González-de-Arguello, 2020).

In all cases, the main objective is to articulate didactic practices aimed at making the most of this phenomenon in order to foster the acquisition of critical-literary analysis and oral communication skills and to encourage students to take on these forms of socialisation around literary reading as their own. In our case, in addition to reinforcing understanding and work on a particular subject, we propose to renew the language in which the teacher explains literature and its principles to the students, in order to connect the academic and personal spheres. At the same time, it is also worth noting that many students were wary of this type of exercise, which could be understood as a sign of the technophobic tensions that the social immersion of cyberculture provokes in students, who must resolve their lack of digital competences with an additional effort, as this takes the place of other more traditional teaching methods (De la Torre-Espinosa, 2020).

The concern for improving the reading competence of students at basic levels has given rise to multiple projects, whose action outside and inside the classroom seeks to converge the momenta accepted by the youngest students with academic interests (Vizcaíno-Verdú et al., 2019). At the university level too, there is an increasing number of initiatives to reformulate how this training should be carried out and how to strengthen it at a stage where it seems to have been neglected in favour of specialisation. This interest is not only justified by the fact that reading is essential in the development of critical thinking (Morales-Sánchez, 2020), but also by the need to revitalise its interest and to incorporate it as an essential habit for future professionals, and as a communication tool for the younger generations. In the context of reading promotion, the connection with the new communication channels and dynamics derived from the network should serve to regenerate new strategies and alternative teaching resources. In this sense, if reading is an object of reflection among the youngest (in networks and digital media), it is worth asking how the understanding of the theoretical and critical discourse on literature and the reading of literary texts itself is

such a major challenge for those starting university studies. In the same way that some proposals point to reading clubs as spaces for researching reading habits (Dantas et al., 2017), the incorporation of desacralised spaces such as YouTube, TikTok or Instagram should also serve as a stimulus to address these new habits and communicative dynamics, typical of the digital medium.

## Conclusions

The results obtained confirm that comprehension of theoretical content is increased by including activities that encourage booktuber practices and strengthen informative, digital and writing and reading skills, placing them in an informal context familiar to students and updates the scope of application of the content. The Literary Theory subject is presented as a tough subject, due to its theoretical and reflective nature, in which the student feels lost as he or she is not very familiar with its concepts, terminology and little-known and specialised bibliography.

It is important for teachers to make an effort to overcome this barrier and, above all, to neutralise the prejudices with which students approach the class. Teachers must strive not only for the understanding of the subject but also for the perception of its usefulness for the students' professional training. The use of digital dynamics to promote critical reading allows students to approach academic texts from a more familiar medium, which is commonly used in their daily and leisure activities. Familiarisation with the academic environment facilitates the acquisition of knowledge in a participatory and collaborative way, fostering a horizontal learning dynamic, based on specific projects, which helps to assimilate reading and writing skills. The construction of a persuasive and theoretical discourse, addressed to their peers, is very beneficial: on the one hand, it forces the search for strategies to explain clearly the relevant concepts and, on the other hand, it reinforces the students' confidence in their abilities to face this challenge.

Similarly, the booktuber phenomenon, usually focused on literary commentary, is equally useful for explaining theoretical concepts, although in many cases students include some literary works to contribute opinions among the different participating groups. Based on this idea, and given that literary criticism is also part of the subject, we do not rule out extending the activity in the next academic year to include the commentary of literary texts. This will allow the development of other subject competences such as creative, analytical and reading skills through the critical reading of specific works (including those selected by the students themselves), focusing on the typology of genres particularly.

Despite having achieved the main objectives, we have found the need to improve some aspects related to the diagnosis of students' weaknesses, both in literacy and digital skills, without forgetting the impact that both have on the optimisation of communication and persuasion strategies. Nevertheless, the positive aspects detected support the continuity of the project and the development of new lines of teaching innovation. Basic knowledge of the main assumptions of literary theory and criticism are essential for understanding the literary phenomenon and its different manifestations throughout history. This knowledge makes comprehension easier and allows for a greater degree of depth in reading levels. Therefore, in this proposal, the interest in making literary and academic texts more comprehensive converges with that of incorporating the new languages and spaces for reflection of younger students. Given that the results have also shown the imbalance between the consumption rate and the content production rate, this experience has led to the implementation of other innovation projects. As a continuation of this one, these projects will focus their attention on promoting the creation of digital content, aimed at explaining and understanding the literary universe from different theoretical, creative and reading perspectives.

## Notes

1. The generally accepted idea of digital natives (Prensky, 2001) sometimes obscures the fact that learners do not always have the necessary digital skills to carry out such activities, as access to digital media should not be confused with the ability to use them. Therefore, implementation of activities educating in digital skills training remains a need in the higher education space (Kirschner & Bruyckere, 2017).

2. References to specific examples of the different groups participating in the activity are made taking into account the numbering given in the table, which includes a selection thereof according to their heterogeneity.

## References

- Bergé, G. (2018). *¿Qué leen los jóvenes? Los booktubers como prescriptores de literatura juvenil* [End-of-Master Project]. Universitat Oberta de Catalunya. <http://hdl.handle.net/10609/83108>.
- Carlino, P. (2008). Leer y escribir en la universidad, una nueva cultura. ¿Por qué es necesaria la alfabetización académica? In E. Narváez Cardona, & S. Cadena Castillo (Eds.), *Los desafíos de la lectura y la escritura en la educación superior: caminos posibles* (pp.155 - 190). Universidad Autónoma de Occidente.
- Cassany, D. (2012). *En línea. Leer y escribir en la red*. Anagrama.
- Cassany, D. (2018). *Laboratorio lector: para entender la lectura*. Anagrama.
- Cordón-García, J. A. & Gómez-Díaz, R. (2019). *Lectura, sociedad y redes. Colaboración, visibilidad y recomendación en el ecosistema del libro*. Marcial Pons. <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv10rr9fm>.
- Czerkawski, B. C. (2016). Blending formal and informal learning networks for online learning. *International Review of Research in Open and Distributed Learning*, 17(3), 138-156. <https://doi.org/10.19173/irrodl.v17i3.2344>
- Dantas, T., Cordón-García, J. A., & Gómez-Díaz, R. (2017). Lectura literaria juvenil: los clubes de lectura como entornos de investigación. *Ocnos*, 16(2), 60-74. [https://doi.org/10.18239/ocnos\\_2017.16.2.1281](https://doi.org/10.18239/ocnos_2017.16.2.1281).
- De la Torre-Espinosa, M. (2020). El fenómeno Booktube, entre el fandom y la crítica literaria, *Álabe*, 21, 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.15645/Alabe2020.21.6>.
- García-Canclini, N. (2015). Leer en papel y en pantallas: el giro antropológico. In N. García-Canclini, *Hacia una antropología de los lectores* (pp. 1-35). Ariel.
- Gómez-Díaz, R., García-Rodríguez, A., Cordón-García, J. A., & Alonso-Arévalo, J. (2016). *Leyendo entre pantallas*. Trea.
- González, N., Moll, L., & Amanti, C. (2005). *Funds of Knowledge. Theorizing Practices in Households, Communities, and Classrooms*. Taylor & Francis.
- Jenkins, H. (2008). *Convergence Culture. La cultura de la convergencia de los medios de comunicación*. Paidós.
- Kirschner, P., & Bruyckere, P. (2017). The myths of the digital native and the multitasker. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 67, 135-142. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2017.06.001>.
- Márquez, I., & Ardévol, E. (2018). Hegemonía y contrahegemonía en el fenómeno youtuber. *Desacatos*, 56, 34-49. <https://doi.org/10.29340/56.1876>.
- Moghavvemi, S., Sulaiman, A., Jaafar, N. I., & Kasem, N. (2018). Social media as a complementary learning tool for teaching and learning: The case of YouTube. *The International Journal of Management Education*, 16(1), 37-42. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijme.2017.12.001>.
- Morales-Sánchez, M. I. (2016). Estrategias de formación lectora en la universidad: la literatura como ámbito transversal para un aprendizaje integrado de la cultura. *Álabe*, 13, 35-57. <https://doi.org/10.15645/Alabe2016.13.2>.
- Morales-Sánchez, M. I. (2018). Leer literatura en la era digital. *Palabra Clave*, 7(2), e049. <https://doi.org/10.24215/18539912e049>.
- Morales-Sánchez, M. I. (2020). Los estudios sobre lectura y escritura en el contexto universitario. Una forma de abordar la realidad de la competencia lectora. *Álabe*, 21, 1-5. <https://doi.org/10.15645/Alabe2020.21.14>.
- Paladines-Paredes, L. V., & Margallo, A. M. (2020). Los canales booktuber como espacio de socialización de prácticas lectoras juveniles. *Ocnos*, 19(1), 55-67. [https://doi.org/10.18239/ocnos\\_2020.19.1.1975](https://doi.org/10.18239/ocnos_2020.19.1.1975).
- Perkins, K. (2017). The Boundaries of BookTube. *The Serials Librarian*, 73 (3-4), 352-356. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0361526X.2017.1364317>.
- Prensky, M. (2001). Digital natives, digital immigrants. *On the horizon*, 9(5), 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10748120110424816>.

- Rovira-Collado, J. (2016). Del blog de LIJ 2.0 al *booktuber* en la promoción del hábito lector. *RESED. Revista de estudios socioeducativos*, 4, 37-51. [https://doi.org/10.25267/Rev\\_estud\\_socioeducativos.2016.i4.05](https://doi.org/10.25267/Rev_estud_socioeducativos.2016.i4.05).
- Rovira-Collado, J. (2017). Booktrailer y *Booktuber* como herramientas LIJ 2.0 para el desarrollo del hábito lector. *Investigaciones Sobre Lectura*, 7, 55-72. <https://doi.org/10.37132/isl.v0i7.180>.
- Suárez, M. M., & González-Argüello, M. V. (2020). Becoming a Good *BookTuber*. *RELC Journal*, 51(1), 158-167. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0033688220906905>.
- Vizcaíno-Verdú, A., Contreras-Pulido, P., & Guzmán-Franco, M. D. (2019). Lectura y aprendizaje informal en YouTube: El *booktuber*. *Comunicar*, 59(27), 95-104. <https://doi.org/10.3916/C59-2019-09>.