



**Maria Teresa Verdade
dos Santos Ferreira
Almeida**

**Dramatização e Saber Integrado – A linguagem
adquirida em contexto.**



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dissertação apresentada à Universidade de Aveiro para cumprimento dos requisitos necessários à obtenção do grau de Mestre em Línguas, Literaturas e Culturas, realizada sob a orientação científica da Professora Doutora Susan Howcroft, Professora Auxiliar do Departamento de Línguas e Culturas da Universidade de Aveiro

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dedicatória

I'd like to dedicate this project to some of the teachers that inspired me, and contributed to my decision of embracing the job of teacher.

I also address it to those many special students, who have made teaching - through so much adversity - worthwhile and motivated me to continue the long-term life project - which is to be an inspiration for them too.

palavras chave

Dramatização, linguagem, características de oralidade e estratégias de aprendizagem

resumo

O trabalho de pesquisa investiga e reflete sobre a forma como os alunos adquirem/aprendem Inglês como língua estrangeira, baseando-se nas teorias de aprendizagem que enfatizam o caráter complexo e laborioso da aprendizagem, envolvendo o controle de variáveis linguísticas e extralinguísticas (Stern, 1983; Halliday, 1975; Bakhtin, 1997). Reflete-se ainda, sobre como os métodos tradicionais de ensino-aprendizagem estão a dar lugar a novas formas de aprendizagem – baseada em projetos.

Como professora de Inglês, a pesquisadora sempre se preocupou com a forma como os alunos aprendem a língua estrangeira, bem como quais as estratégias de aprendizagem mais eficazes. Alguns dos esforços encetados nesta procura pelo sucesso educativo, incluem experiências utilizando a aprendizagem baseada em projetos. O tipo de projeto recorrentemente usado, com resultados muito positivos tem sido o ensino da língua, através de dramatizações.

O estudo baseia-se na abordagem qualitativa da língua e materializa-se na análise de características da linguagem oral no texto dramático The History Boys, de Alan Bennett. O texto contém elementos/características da linguagem oral e permite à pesquisadora mostrar os benefícios do ensino da linguagem oral sobre a escrita, no âmbito de um contexto autêntico. Este trabalho argumenta ainda a favor do abandono dos modelos tradicionais de ensino-aprendizagem. A análise dos dados é realizada no âmbito da caracterização de elementos da linguagem oral (Halliday 1989, p. 31) e traços de conversação definidos por Biber (1988, p.430).

A partir da análise e discussão dos dados, é possível perceber que a linguagem oral é mais simples e mais natural, do que a escrita, logo mais fácil de adquirir pelos aprendentes. Quanto à transposição didática dos resultados do estudo, acredita-se que o ensino através do teatro, permite não só acrescentar motivação ao contexto da sala de aula, mas também facilitar a percepção de alguns aspetos específicos da linguagem, que incluem léxico, sintaxe e estrutura - difíceis de entender, quando estudados fora do contexto. Estes e outros aspetos da linguagem e comunicação, tornam-se ainda mais explícitos através de recursos para-linguísticos, tais como entonação, acentuação, gestos, etc. A competência da comunicação é desenvolvida - o que é muito importante quando se aprende LE, tendo em conta a dificuldade em oferecer uma razão plausível para usá-la com um propósito comunicativo.

keywords

Drama, language, spoken features and learning strategies.

abstract

This research reflects on how students acquire and learn English as a foreign language (S/EFL), based on the learning theories, which emphasize that learning is a complex, laborious and heterogeneous task, involving control of several linguistic and extra-linguistic variables (Stern, 1983; Halliday, 1975; Bakhtin, 1997).

It also reflects on how traditional teacher-centred methods are very rapidly giving space to new ways of teaching/learning based on projects.

As a teacher of English, the researcher is concerned about how students learn, and which learning strategies are more effective in the foreign language class. Some of the efforts spent in this quest for success, include experiences using task-based learning, i.e. **Projects**. One type of project often used, with very effective results is teaching EFL through drama.

The study is based on a qualitative approach to language and is anchored on the analysis of features of spoken grammar within the play the History Boys, by Alan Bennett. The text provides elements of natural language and allows the researcher to show the benefits of teaching spoken rather than written language in an authentic context. This work also argues in favour of abandoning traditional models of teaching

The data analysis is performed using Halliday's (1989, p. 31) features of spoken language and Biber's (1988, p. 430) Conversational traits.

From the analysis, and discussion of data, it is possible to perceive that spoken language is simpler and more natural than written language, therefore easier for students to acquire.

As to the didactic transposition of the results of the study, it is believed that teaching through drama does not only provide motivation in the classroom environment but also helps learners to realize some specific aspects of the language, which include lexis, syntax and structure - which is difficult to understand, when studied out of context. These, and other aspects of the language and communication, become even more explicit through paralinguistic features, such as intonation, stress, gesture, etc. The ability to speak language is developed - which is very important when learning EFL with the difficulty of providing an authentic reason to use it for a communicative purpose.

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1. Introduction

Language is one of the forms through which humans communicate. In that sense it offers users a wide range of possibilities and choices. No matter what form we choose, we are influenced in so many ways by different factors, such as the people we are addressing, the communicative intention and the setting. The study of grammatical forms, structures and classes may inform us about the variety of choices at our disposal, but do not show us how these forms are organized in terms of making meaning. Lexis and grammar are valuable "ingredients" that we need to combine into a "dough", i.e., isolated, and out of context, words are merely labels – we have to combine them into units of meaning, to fulfill the communicative act, otherwise their use appears to be very restrictive.

This dissertation will look at language, from a pragmatic point of view, focusing on how language operates socially and communicatively, consequently how situations and contexts shape language and meanings. The research work also reflects how students acquire-learn English as a foreign language (FL), and how this relates to learning (EFL) theories. The idea to carry out the study arises from personal reflections and questioning about the effectiveness of teaching EFL, based on assumptions that social changes (as the most striking reason) have transformed (formerly) successful learning methods, into high failure rates.

School has irrefutably changed, (we doubt, for the best) and although it is not the purpose of this project to discuss, in depth, the causes and circumstances that have made learning less effective, today, it is a matter of fact that many students do not achieve good academic results. It is not very different with language learning, the figures in Portugal demonstrate a high percentage of failure in English as a foreign language (EFL) classes, which is strange because more and more

Portuguese students communicate in English, specially, via the internet. Thus, we might ask: Are the subjects/issues dealt with in classes relevant to the students? Are oral communicative skills developed in FL classes? - or is it mostly about reading and writing - answers to texts that do not always meet students' interests? Teachers need to be aware of the complexity of the learning process, and take the individual characteristics of their students into consideration in the classroom. The winds of change reveal that, though we work in the same schools we work with different students, and what used to work in the past does not seem to work in the present. It's imperative that we are open to new possibilities and welcome our multiple intelligenced students, who expect their teachers, to support and guide them in their learning. Since the situation of the Portuguese School is not that optimistic, this work is an attempt to show that the formulae in EFL classes must change, in order to motivate students to acquire the English language and become relatively fluent in using it. The objective is to provide some evidence of the benefits of teaching spoken rather than written language, and how task-based learning may contribute to more effective language acquisition in L2. Moreover, how learning through Drama can simultaneously add motivation to the language class and reach the objective of improved language outcomes.

Methodology/Procedure

Features of Spoken English will be illustrated and analyzed within the framing of conversational grammar, through the play The History Boys by Alan Bennett, in order to illustrate elements of spoken language and conversational traits. The Methodology will include descriptions of the interrelationships between the social, cultural, structural, pragmatic and communicative aspects of language; Analysis of segments of language – at various levels including sounds, words, sentences and discourse; as

well as a review of the main features of language learning and development.

On the one hand, this work aims to discuss the contributions of spoken grammar and conversation features to teaching EFL. On the other hand, it looks at the benefits of teaching through drama, i.e., on how real texts can highlight the authentic functions of language and the creation of meaning, in turn to be more effective in teaching (English to Speakers of Other Languages) EFL/ESOL.

Due to the importance of English in a globalized world and despite all the controversial socio-educational impacts of such an influence, there has been an increase in the interest in this discipline. Therefore, the relevance of this work lies in the guidelines it may offer to support a more effective, situated and meaningful teaching-learning process in context.

The importance of learning foreign languages, does not cease to grow, and the phenomenon of globalization has reinforced its importance, and made it a top priority for students and parents everywhere, particularly when it is a global language like English. *“Foreign language teaching and learning play a transformative role in society and English is seen as a boundary object, in and by which diversity, pluralism and polyphony can naturally find their way” (STAR and GRIESEMER, 1989).* In other words, the foreign language (in this case English) is regarded as a passport, without which you will not be authorized to enter, or remain if you are a foreigner. In addition, those who do not own it will hardly manage to survive.

1.2 Background data - Learning Theories

The process of learning languages is rather complex and involves not only natural but psychological and social skills. Bakhtin (1997) contributes to the discussion of learning a (FL). He argues that learning a foreign language requires direct and continuous contact with the target language, which is the language of the other. The apprentice learns a language by using it, with practice, i.e., through the interaction between individuals, ideology and power games. According to Bakhtin (1994), learning a language is part of an uninterrupted communicative process, that is, one learns through dialogue. Bakhtin defines language as a socio-historical phenomenon whose basic unit of analysis is the utterance.

For him, individuals do not receive the language ready to be used, it emerges from the interaction of utterances. Consequently, *“the language is perceived as a set of socio-cultural practices, relatively stable which is crossed by an infinite number of voices”* (Bakhtin, 2004 p.132). Although the language is present in the life of an individual from the moment of his/her intra uterine life, this does not mean that learning a language is an easy process.

Other researchers in this field, namely MacWhinney (1999) Larsen-Freeman and Cameron, L. (2008) Matthiessen (2009); Beckner (2009); Blythe e Croft (2009), corroborate the idea of language acquisition relating to many variables, such as: individual differences, cognitive issues, the socio-cultural context; exposure to inputs; methodology; lifelong learning strategies and the teacher's role. Thus it is not easy to define what learning a different language involves precisely. Although the process of learning a foreign language has been the subject of research, for decades, the most systematic and intense research about the topic started in the fifties, and then intensified in the sixties and

seventies. This research still continues today in order to try to find successful strategies that will lead to more efficient language learning by students around the world.

For example, Krashen (1987 p.7) maintains that learning a FL is more successful when learners are exposed to comprehensible inputs and are motivated to capture such input.

"The best methods are therefore those that supply 'comprehensible input' in low anxiety situations, containing messages that students really want to hear. These methods do not force early production in the second language, but allow students to produce when they are 'ready', recognizing that improvement comes from supplying communicative and comprehensible input, and not from forcing and correcting production".

Along the same line, Long (1983; 1996) and (Ellis e Larsen-Freeman 2006, 2009) argue that learning is best promoted when learners participate in negotiating the "input", i.e. when they participate in sequences of interactions that arise as a result of communication difficulties. Moreover, Long and Robinson (1998) argue that task-based learning provides opportunities for learners to pay attention to the way in which communicative situations occur, which according to these authors, are the ideal circumstances for that to happen. In other words, through task-based learning, students develop language and literacy skills by working, mostly autonomously, and often in groups, on a product that will exist beyond the classroom walls.

For example (Halliday, 1975) rejects the metaphor of "acquisition", in which language is considered a "static product" which the child takes on, when sufficient exposure to natural language enables "parameter setting". By contrast, he claims that the child develops a "meaning potential". Learning language is *Learning how to mean*, which led to his well-known study of a child's language development. Halliday argues for a deep connection between language and social structure, stating that language does not merely reflect social structure. "Grammar is the

structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others use language. It can help foster precision, detect ambiguity, and exploit the richness of expression available in English. And it can help everyone--not only teachers of English, but teachers of anything, for all teaching is ultimately a matter of getting to grips with meaning." (Crystal 2004, p.24)

Halliday (1975) identifies seven functions that language has for children in their early years. For Halliday, children are motivated to develop language because it serves certain purposes, for them. The first four functions help the child to satisfy physical, emotional and social needs. Halliday calls them instrumental, regulatory, interactional, and personal functions. While the following three help the child come to terms with his/her environment. These are heuristic, imaginative, and representational.

Other researchers, including Ellis (2003) suggest that learning by tasks is needed to ensure the development of implicit knowledge. It should be noted that this approach prioritizes fluency rather than grammatical correctness, despite the possibility that learners can attain grammatical competence through communication skills.

Summarizing some contributions of Bahktin, and Revuz, we can conclude that the language is not only a "*medium of communication*", but also an object of knowledge. It is the "*foundational material*" of the *human psyche and the relational life of the individual. The encounter with the foreign language is a complex, enigmatic process and may cause different reactions*". Moreover, the process of learning a language is dynamic and occurs throughout life. One learns a language according to ones desires and needs, but always in social interaction, and without losing the link to the system of language of the mother tongue. Summarising the discussion about acquiring a foreign language, it is important to reiterate that for Ellis (1994, 1997) "*learning a FL is a*

complex phenomenon, with many faces, which may mean different things to different people." The author believes that the learning of a FL is related to the contributions of external and internal factors.

Another valuable contribution is The Communicative Approach, which reasons that the main goal of language is communicative competence. (Richards, 1985). "Communicative competence" here does not only refer to a knowledge of the grammatical rules of a language and how to form grammatical sentences, but also to know when, where and to whom to use these sentences in a speech community. (Richards, 1985 and Hymes, 1971).

Das (1984) describes the "What" and "How" of language teaching and learning in the Communicative Approach- the 'what' meaning the contents and the 'how' referring to the specific techniques and procedures used to unconsciously 'acquire' and consciously 'learn' a language through communication. According to Brumfit (1984), a 'fluent' and an 'accurate' user of the language would be facilitated by the use of the 'communicative' activities.

Among the external aspects that influence the learning process of a FL, are the socio-cultural environment (society) in which learning takes place, the favorable or unfavorable attitudes towards teaching and learning a FL. The success or failure of learning a language often depend (directly or indirectly) on learners' opportunities to listen and speak the target language, as well as the attitudes and feelings that they develop in relation to language. For example, the context of study can favour learning or not. The fact that a student feels well in the environment he/she is learning in, their motivation, the desire to know more about this language can help him/her perform better in the process, in contrast with the student who wants to escape from the learning context. Therefore, the learning context makes the process easier or more difficult. Another external factor that the author considers important is the inputs because they are considered highly

significant for learning. A comprehensible input challenges students to develop their learning process, requires discussions on language, and leads to the enrichment of the learning process. In addition, it is worth highlighting how the inputs are offered and how often, because the more opportunities students have to make contact with comprehensible (authentic and diverse) input, the faster and more effectively he/she will enter into the target language. Freeman-Larsen and Long (1994, p.13) also point out that, to have a better understanding of the learning process of a FL, it is important to bear in mind the importance of the following aspects of the process: the contents of language, who teaches and how he/she teaches, and especially those who learn, how and why they learn. The authors believe that the role of the language teacher must be primarily based on content knowledge, knowledge of students and the learning process. When comparing Larsen and Long-Freeman's words with the purpose of this study, one notices that it relates more directly with the actors of the process, i.e. with learners and their learning process.

All in all, the language learning process involves many variables, which include individual differences, cognitive issues, socio-cultural context, exposure to stimuli, learning methodologies/strategies and the teacher's role. The process is closely connected to the social interaction between the speakers, i.e. multiple intelligences and learning styles aside, learning requires social interaction. Moreover, the main goal of language learning is communicative competence, which may only develop appropriately within social interaction.

1.3 Teaching EFL in Portugal

No matter how the intellectual and cognitive mechanisms operate in interaction with social factors to achieve competence in EFL, language learning in Portugal, has become a matter of concern for all participants in the process. One of the subjects with higher academic failure (along with Portuguese and Maths) seems to be English. It would be beneficial to have a rigorous survey of the academic results of EFL. However according to GEPE (Statistic and Planning Cabinet for Education), there is no existing data, at national level. Therefore to fundament our perception on failure rates in EFL we present some references based on External Evaluation Reports of Schools belonging to DREN (Direção Regional do Norte)

- Agrupamento Vertical de Escolas de Campo, Valongo - "Disciplinas com maior insucesso nos últimos três anos: Matemática, Língua Estrangeira (Inglês) e Português." (ME, 2007a);

- Agrupamento Vertical de Escolas Abel Varzim, Barcelos - "disponibilização dos apoios educativos às disciplinas de Português, Matemática e Inglês" (ME, 2007b)

- Agrupamento Vertical de Escolas de Fajões, Oliveira de Azeméis - "Nos 2º e 3º CEB, as áreas disciplinares com maior insucesso incidem nas disciplinas de Ciências Físico-Químicas, de Matemática e de Inglês..." (ME, 2008b)

- Agrupamento Vertical de Escolas de Vila D'Este, Vila Nova de Gaia, "As áreas disciplinares mais problemáticas são Língua Portuguesa, Matemática e Inglês." (ME, 2008c)

Despite the reduced sample, we can consider that English is among the subjects with higher learning deficit.

Although it is not the purpose of this work to go through all the reasons for such generalized and increasing failure in learning EFL, in my opinion, most of the instructors are still using the type of instruction centered on traditional methods, which include a grammar-based curriculum, along with dialogues and drills to teach English to speakers of other languages (ESOL). As a result of the application of this model, the communicative skills are often relegated to a secondary plane, with primacy given to reading and writing skills.

Consequently, this method has become ineffective, over the past years, and its flaws are visible through the failure rates. Many students seem resistant and show little confidence in their ability to learn English.

The conservative teacher-centred method, mostly based on learning through course books, has put the emphasis on writing skills, which provide language learners with some important background knowledge on vocabulary and language functions, but neglects speaking and communication skills.

Because of this rooted culture of exploring writing skills, students have become much more comfortable with writing activities instead of developing and exploring their speaking skills. As a result, everyone can write relatively well, but not SPEAK. *"writing (...) sets up outside the mind what can only be inside it."* Socrates (*Phaedrus*).

My major concern as an EFL teacher is to meet my students' expectations and real needs. To accomplish this objective, I do constant research on learning strategies, and simultaneously carry out teaching experiments, that may help students improve their learning. The focus is often put on strategies and activities that help students gain confidence in the art of speaking.

1.4 Project-Based Learning (PBL) vs. Traditional Teaching Model

J. Dewey stated that *"the aim of education should be to teach us rather how to think, than what to think"*. It is not only useful but absolutely necessary to teach critical/ creative thinking in the language classroom. If teachers think that their primary roles are to teach and provide answers and information, then the learners are exposed to the culture of "spoon-feeding". Eventually, the learners' ability to look for answers and solutions, to inquire, to decide, to reject and to accept ideas will greatly diminish.

The winds of change, demand that teachers start acting like thinkers who constantly seek ways to encourage creative and critical thinking in their learners, instead of behaving as providers.

Project-based learning is an instructional methodology which focuses on developing self-directed learning skills, i.e. the learners actively construct new knowledge on the basis of current knowledge. And in such a way advanced cognitive abilities such as problem solving, communication skills and critical/creative thinking are developed. Therefore, it is clear that critical/creative thinking is one of the key elements of PBL. So, we need to use this methodology to develop important skills.

"Content learning and skills occur as natural consequences of solving problems, similar to the way people learn on the job. In PBL, students take on the positions of executives, producers, designers, planners, scientists, doctors, historians, and so on. PBL has been extensively used in the field of medicine, but is now being used in many fields and at all ages. Key professional problems serve as the stimulus and focus for student activity." (Boud & Feletti, 1991). Ellis (2005, p. 5) also suggests, *"the need of learning by tasks to ensure the development of implicit knowledge."*

PBL helps students learn skills and strategies in addition to content. For example, students find themselves learning research skills, time management, self-directed learning, transferring knowledge, and other lifelong learning skills while finding information to solve the problems, *cf, Long and Robinson (1998, p. 23) about "task-based learning providing opportunities for learners to pay attention to the way in which communicative situations occur.*

Elsa Auerbach (1997) describes ways to help students develop language skills while conducting a meaningful project. *"I believe that using a project-based approach to language learning gives meaning to the learning that normally goes on in a classroom. I have taught a traditional teacher-centred classroom using a textbook and was always dismayed at how little language was learned. The instruction in project-based learning, at least the way I do it, is less direct than in a traditional class. Students develop language and literacy skills by working on a product that will exist beyond the classroom walls. This creates excitement and motivation that I have not seen in a traditional, text-based only class. In project-based learning, I do a lot less teaching and see a lot more learning in the classroom."* Susan Gaer (Volume 2, Issue D: December 1998).

Among many of the projects that I have implemented to develop students' speaking skills, I find teaching through drama a very good one to achieve this goal. Especially because, the language is natural, it occurs in a meaningful context, and the extra textual elements of spoken language, like gestures, stress and intonation help in making meanings.

1.5 The Use and Benefits of Drama In Education/TESOL

Experts in didactics, educators and researchers in linguistics have argued for the use of Drama in education and in teaching foreign languages (Mordecai 1985, Maley 1982, Almond 2005 et al.).

"(English as second language/English as a foreign language) ESL/EFL professionals need to use this medium more because the artificial world of the classroom can be transformed into a quasi-real language situation and provides an endless amount of opportunities for student's personal growth. We cannot only teach grammar and phonetics with drama but also it has the power to transform the actors as well as the audience. We shouldn't underestimate this powerful teaching tool to reach our students." Chris Boudreault, Internet Journal, 2010.

It is important to make clear that teaching through drama is not the same as teaching drama - teaching through plays, is not about focusing on the technical aspects of the genre, but putting emphasis on the language aspects, which stand as a priority of the literary component. The text is treated as a pedagogy, with the language as the main content, not the other way round. By using drama in the English classroom, the language can be used in context and makes it come to life. Drama has the potential of making the learning experience fun for the students and even memorable because it is interactive and visual. Furthermore, improvisation provides students the opportunity to develop their communicative skills in authentic and dynamic situations.

"What is more important to bear in mind is that, unlike most other methods, using drama in language teaching involves all four skills and provides a solid context for language learning. Plus, it provides a touch of motivation and element of fun to the classroom. It also helps to develop students' creativity and imagination, thus we can talk about "killing many birds with one stone". Boudreault (2010)

Centuries ago, Shakespeare (1599) claimed that:

*"All the world's a stage,
And all the men and women merely players;
They have their exits and their entrances,
And one man in his time plays many parts,
His acts being seven ages."* As You Like It Act 2, scene 7, 139–143

The idea behind the development of creative drama came about when educators realized that the need to play is an important developmental process in a child (Redington, 1984). From this moment, Drama for educational purposes was given, more attention and educationalists started considering it as a serious teaching strategy.

Below is a list of arguments, provided by researchers and educators, favouring the use of drama in education:

Dougill (1987) states *"As an educational tool, the use of drama fosters the social, intellectual and the linguistic development of the child"*. Early and Tarlington (1982) claim that drama centers around language development, personal awareness, group co-operation, sensory awareness, and imaginative growth. It generates the child's awakenings towards aspects of language, life and social interaction. It is inevitable that children start creating critical and creative thinking, when stimulated.

Discussing motivation (Mordecai, 1985; Scharengnival, 1970) wrote that "Drama increases motivation and provides the incentive to work hard." The activities using drama tend to be purposeful. The student sees the need to work, which is to learn the language in order to be able to perform his/her role. Besides the motive having a meaningful context, also works as motivation for students. Not only is it motivational for students, but it also motivates the teacher to meet the students' needs (Mordecai, 1985). Drama activities give him/her opportunities to know and understand the student better. Moreover, the drama activities are pedagogically representative, since the feedback provided by the activities, may help the teacher plan better strategies

for more effective learning and teaching. According to Maley and Duff (1978) "*drama releases imagination and energy and this could be considered as an educational objective*". Fernandez and Coil, (1986, p. 18) say "that *drama encourages students to exercise their sensitivity and imagination and thus makes learning more realistic and meaningful.*" The development of imagination, because of its importance in the growth of the student, and the individual must be stimulated, as much as possible.

"*Drama fosters a sense of responsibility and co-operation among the students.*" (Early and Tarlington, 1983). Since drama activities mean working in a group, students have to adapt to belonging to the group in order to accomplish the task. The students also develop their self-esteem, as they work together.

"*Drama develops moral and social qualities in a student*" cf. (Scharengnivei, 1970). Students learn to look beyond themselves and understand their peer's feelings. Consequently, they develop a sense of empathy and solidarity towards others

Drama can help solve emotional and behavioral problems (Stern, 1980; Scharengnivei, 1970). It can encourage the shy student to participate and represent an effective strategy "to control" troublesome pupils.

Finally, drama can foster students' sensitivity towards an appreciation of drama as an art form (Scharengnivei, 1970).

But the benefits of using Drama are not limited to Education in general, they are extended to the teaching of English as a Second language. Advocators claim its use for a variety of reasons:

Learning a second language can be enjoyable, stimulating and meaningful when combined with drama activities (Mordecai, 1985).

Language is used in meaningful situations (Scharengnivei, 1970; Early and Tarlington, 1982 and Mordecai, 1985). Drama contextualises the language (in real or imagined situations) in and out of the classroom. It is explored, and practiced in meaningful situations. Drama improves

oral communication. As a form of communication, drama provides the opportunity for the student to use language meaningfully and appropriately. (Maley and Duff, 1978, p. 22) state that "*drama puts back, some of the (forgotten) emotion, into language content.*" i.e. language learning had become a concentration of form rather than content and meaning yet drama can help to reverse this learning model, beginning with meaning, then moving towards language structure and form, as an attempt to prepare the student for real-life situations.

Drama activities can be used as a means of reinforcing the language learnt (Mordecai, 1985; Fernandez and Coil, 1986). Repetition helps to retain and reinforce vocabulary and sentence structure.

Drama activities, may decrease the problem of mixed abilities, since students who are more fluent can have the main roles, which require more oral communication, while the weaker students can compensate for their lack of linguistic ability with paralinguistic communication, i.e. they can be given the roles which demand more acting ability, and/or the characters that require different forms of expressivity.

Earl Stevick (1980) suggests that language learning must appeal to the creative intuitive aspect of personality as well as the conscious and rational part. Drama activities involve the student's whole personality and not only his/her mental process. As the student involves him/herself in the tasks and is motivated to use the target language effective learning starts to happen.

The arguments stated above for using drama activities in TESOL relate to the principles of the Communicative Approach, which favour the learner's achievement of communicative competence. Based on the work of researchers like Mordecai 1985, Scharengnivei, 1970, Maley 1978, Early and Tarlington, 1982; Maley and Duff (1978), Earl Stevick (1980) We may conclude that Drama should be used in the language class, for five main reasons: Motivation, Context, Development of communication skills, development of critical and creative thinking and

development of students' moral and social qualities. Drama activities don't only provide the motivation for students to participate/get involved in group projects but they create excellent opportunities for the students to use language meaningfully and appropriately.

Drama also reinforces language acquisitions through repetition (Fernandez and Coil, 1986) because it provides a meaningful context, which many language learning researchers consider fundamental.

The advocates of dramatic techniques believe that the learner will become more imaginative, creative and sensitive, as he/she becomes more self-confident in the process of learning English as a Second Language.

"Tell me and I will forget.

Show me and I will remember.

Involve me and I will understand." Chinese Proverb

As a teacher, I have had the opportunity to witness the veracity of this saying. The student best understands and keeps what he/she **does** and **acts out** rather than what he/she is told or taught. The appropriation of language, and/or other concepts arise natural and meaningfully, as the learner acquires them in context.

At the level of the story of a play, language may assume all the **pragmatic functions** that can be found in real-life conversations, too: e.g. to ensure mutual understanding and to convey information, to persuade or influence someone, to relate one's experiences or signal emotions, etc. In the sense of **rhetorical** and **poetic** characteristics contained in dramatic language, it contributes to drawing the students' attention to the artistic nature of language.

Through the dramatic **main text** (dialogues, monologues and asides) the functions of language, naturally work their way out, since they describe effective acts of communication. For example, when we describe an object, a situation or a mental state, we are evidencing the referential functional of language, but if we use interjections, on adding

emotion to the utterance we are including information about the speaker's intention, which relates to language's emotive Function. If we use the language to describe itself," (*Posner looks up the word in the dictionary*) page 5 (1)

"- *Euphemism...substitution of a mild or vague or roundabout expression for a harsh or direct one.*" suggesting the Metalingual function of language. However, if we use it for the sake of persuasion, for example "- Purely on a temporary basis. It will be the last time, I promise." or in a casual discussion," – Shut up. Just shut up, all of you" pages 16 , 65, the Phatic Function of language, is carried out.

Similarly, through the **secondary text** (stage directions, actor's appearance) the language becomes visual and an objective communication tool – eg. when we read and/or act out (*Hector hold up an admonitory finger*), page 14, through the paralinguistic features we can visualize the characters' gestures and movement on stage, making language come to life.

This often happens throughout the text, cf examples that follow:

"- *No, headmaster.*" (*he covers his ears*) page 16

(*He beckons to signal to someone with your hand, to show that you want them to come towards you or to follow you: Irwin cagily(hide your intentions) into his study, page 10)*

(*This is quite a pausery conversation, with Dakin more master than pupil*), page 88

(*Irwin says nothing*); (*Irwin shrugs*) page 88

These stage directions also highlight the importance of the social distance between actors and how this influences communication. Moreover, the pupils become involved in the cultural differences between their own and the English speaking culture represented in the play.

In agreement with and as stated by Dougill (1987) "*As an educational tool, the use of drama fosters the social, intellectual and the linguistic*

development of the child". Although this methodology has been used since the Middle Ages and appears to have been successful, most educators (and I am not only referring to the Portuguese case) aren't yet open to possibility of introducing this option to improve their language classes. As educators we have to be perspicacious and see the change coming. "If you do not change, you will become extinct." (Johnson, 1998)

As a teacher, I believe there is no point in using obsolete methods, when we know they are not successful, otherwise we will become frustrated with our teaching outcomes and simultaneously make our students miserable. Quoting (Johnson, in *Who Moved My Cheese*) again "Enjoy change! Savor the adventure and enjoy the taste of new cheese!"

1.6 Rationale behind the play

The History Boys, by Alan Bennett.

The History Boys is one of the few school-plays in English drama that is about the process of teaching. If it is true that school is a regular process of opening up young minds, we actually get to see the teacher characters, Hector and Irwin, at work in the classroom. *"School shapes our ends - almost literally, the idea of school as the formative period of your life is one of many notions threading through Alan Bennett's The History Boys"*. John Sutherland, Guardian 2006.

"Bennett shows what teaching at its best is: a process of drawing out rather than putting in. But he does infinitely more than that. He understands that a school is a network of private relationships and a public institution; a place in which a precariously maintained order is constantly on the verge of disintegrating into chaos; and, especially, a battleground for opposing views of life and education. But what he sees more sharply than anyone is that a school is a paradigm of national life." (Sutherland, 2006).

The play delves into the pitfalls and fulfilling aspects of teaching, having England's socio-political changes and the randomness of history as a background setting. Bennett often insists on the belief that life, like history, is a series of chance occurrences which we can't escape.

The play provided me with many things to ponder being both a teacher and a student at the same time, namely, what we intend to convey as role models and if teaching is developing critical thinking rather than transmitting knowledge. It tackled relevant issues that teachers and students need to understand and be aware of, for example, the importance of inspiration and a aesthetic sensitivity, the benefits of memorization, among others, which seem to be timeless, considering the distance of more than two decades away from the play's setting.

Teaching methods/techniques are influential in the learning process of every young student. Approaches used in teaching plays and teaching through plays have an important role in the personal development of a student. We cannot ignore the influence created in children by their teachers, for whom some become role models in their adult lives.

The learning process is a continuous process, thus should reflect a rewarding experience. Moreover, it is about how the student embraces learning with full enthusiasm and the ability to apply the experience to real life.

The Play is also about the hopes and failures – of human beings, rather than teachers and students.

The subject matter dealt with is one that pupils can easily relate to as they are living this experience at the time although in a different cultural setting.

II

According to the Communicative Approach, (cf. Richards, 1985) and my own opinion, the main goal of language learning is the communicative competence.

*The Collins Cobuild English Dictionary, 1987 defines **Communication** as the study of ways in which human beings communicate, including speech, gesture, (...) etc while Wikipedia defines it (from Latin "communis", meaning to share) as the activity of conveying information through the exchange of thoughts, messages, or information, as by speech, visuals, signals, writing, or behavior.*

If **speech** is the way by which humans express thoughts, feelings and ideas, and **language** the expression of human communication through which knowledge, beliefs, and behavior can be experienced, explained, and shared, we can conclude that Speech is the vocalized (opposed to sign language) form of human communication. *Bearing in mind the definitions above, it's seems accurate to say that the two concepts Speech and Language are interconnected.*

In the following section will see how these concepts intersect, taking into consideration the sub-fields of language analysis, differences between spoken and written language and ultimately speech acts and prosody.

Despite the lack of consensus among linguists regarding levels of language analysis, a structure focused study of language should observe the following components: phonology, morphology, syntax, discourse, semantics, pragmatics, phonetics and stylistics.

Such components are briefly described, below.

- Phonology – the study of supra-segmental features of speech give information akin or comparable to that signaled by punctuation in written texts.
- Morphology the study of the morphemes of a language and of the way in which they are joined together to make words (lexis=vocabulary, all the words in a language).
- Syntax – the study of how words are arranged to form sentences or phrases, or the rules of grammar which control this.
- Discourse – the study of language used in recognizable forms, like texts.
- Semantics –The study of the meanings of words and how these combine to form meaningful sentences.
- Pragmatics –the study of how words shape communicative acts, the role of context in making meaning (understanding unwritten or implicit rules of speech interactions)
- Phonetics, the study of the physical properties of speech.
- Stylistics, the study of linguistic factors (rhetoric, diction, stress) of language in context.

Speech acts

The philosopher J.L. Austin (1962) claimed that many utterances are equivalent to actions. When someone says: "I name this ship" or "I now pronounce you man and wife", the utterance creates a new social or psychological reality. Such utterances can be categorized in three different Acts: locutionary, illocutionary and perlocutionary acts. The Locutionary acts are simply the speech acts, which have taken place. The Illocutionary acts refer to the real actions, performed by the utterance, where saying equals doing, as in betting, proposing marriage plighting one's troth, welcoming and warning. Finally, the Perlocutionary

acts refer to the effect of the utterance on the listener, who accepts the bet or pledge of marriage. Example:

“I now pronounce you husband and wife!”= locutionary act

Man and women are legally married = illocutionary act

Husband normally kisses the bride = perlocutionary act

- 1) Illocutionary acts can be classified into a several categories or types. David Crystal (1970 p. 582), quoting J.R. Searle, states five: Representatives, Directives, Commissives, Expressives and Declarations (which we will illustrate through practical examples, as we describe some speech acts in the Play).

However, the concept of language is also changeable depending if it is spoken or written. In this next section, we will allude to the differences between written and spoken (English) language and further on illustrate those (theoretic) features with textual evidence in the text The History Boys.

2.2 Spoken Vs Written language

Spoken language is different from written language for many reasons. One of the most important is that it usually has to be understood immediately, whereas written language can be read many times. For that reason, spoken language often has many different repetitive features.

There are key concepts for describing speech, such as intonation, deictics and fillers (pauses, repetitions); affective features – including expression of emotion, doubt, confidence, establishment (or not) of interpersonal relationships; role of intonation in stating, implying,

reinforcing types of utterance (statement, question, command, exclamation).

Since Conversation is a variety of language worth studying in itself, and not only in contrast with written registers, different linguists have described and categorized the features of spoken language. Halliday(1989, p. 31), for example, states that Spoken language has the following characteristics:

- Variation in speed
 - Loudness or quietness
 - Gestures - body language
 - Intonation
 - Stress
 - Rhythm
 - Pitch range
- ✓ Variation in speed relates to the way something's said - Speakers may be prompted to vary the speed of speech within segments, to lengthen pauses and to repeat or add words according to the degree of comprehension, attention/ inattention of listeners (pausing and phrasing).
- ✓ Loudness or quietness; Pitch range; **1)**
- ✓ Gestures - body language; Speech is both oral and corporal: The body is a basic element of communication. There are no universals in body language, and no "timeless gestures" - signs change like any other language (raised handshake). However, its importance is in its reliability: it is more accurate than speech because not consciously controlled.**1)**
- ✓ Intonation - the arrangement of words puts emphasis on intonation - instead of asking - Are you happy? Dakin remarks: "- You happy?", page 88 **1)**

1) *In Conversation, the speaker may make conscious or incidental use of expressive features such as tone of voice, gesture and facial expressions.*

- ✓ Stress - strong contrast is often made in conversation between heavy and weak stresses. Stress generally equals emphasis, The girl is a good actress.
- ✓ Rhythm is, in linguistics, one of the three aspects of prosody, along with stress and intonation. Languages can be categorized according to whether they are syllable-timed or stress-timed. Since English is a stressed-timed language, speakers put roughly equal time lags between stressed syllables, with the timing of the unstressed syllables in between them being adjusted to accommodate the stress timing.

Below, is a list of lexical, grammatical and structural differences in spoken language.

Lexis/Grammar/Syntax	Structure
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more verb based phrases (e.g. having treatment (W), being treated (S), hospital care (W), go to hospital (S)) • more predicative adjectives (misleading statistics (W), statistics are misleading (S)) • more quantifiers and hedges • more pronouns (<i>it, they, you, we</i>) • more lexical repetition • more words that refer to the speaker (like first person reference - <i>I</i>) • more active verbs • more grammatical words than lexical words. • fewer complex words and phrases shorter word length (one or two syllables) • fewer sequences of prepositional phrases • fewer nominalizations • limited vocabulary • less abstractness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • more fragmented, more simple sentences and more use of coordination <i>and, but, so, because;</i> • fewer subordinate clauses (embedding) • fewer "that/to" complement clauses • lexically less dense • longer

Nevertheless, the nature of language, itself, is different too. According to Biber, 1988; Johansson, Leech, Conrad & Finegan, 1999; Chafe, 1982; Cook, 1997; Halliday, 1989, this difference relies on Complexity and Extension, i.e. spoken language is longer, mostly because of repetitions and simpler because the utterances are spontaneous.

According to Ure (1971), the percentage of different words in a text is generally below 40% for spoken texts and above 40% for written texts.

"The act of conversation sets its own challenges which include establishing contact with the intended listener(s) and filling in time while preparing a context for segments of the utterance containing a properly organised message". (Power, 2012 in Written versus spoken English-feature analysis)

2.2.1 Traits of Conversational Grammar

Biber (2002 p. 430), summarizes the discussion about spoken language pointing out six functional traits of Conversational Grammar:

1 - Conversation takes place in a shared context; When the dialogue involves family or close friends (usually "casual style"), little or no information is given which is not known to the participants. When the conversation involves strangers (usually "consultative" style) all necessary background information is supplied and more elaborate politeness procedures are added to the well-known formulae for requests, questions, orders, suggestions and acknowledgements.

"- I was confusing learning" page 9

" - Come the 14 foreskins of Christ and they'll think they've won the pools" page 19 - a specific term used in the cultural context of England.

"- What they want to know, sir, is "Do you have a life? Or are we it? Are we your life?" page 34

In situations where there is a large information gap and a need to be explicit through the language, the language used may be more formal, bridging the gap between Conversation and Spoken Prose. **1)**

2 - Conversation expresses stance; which is a lot what people do in conversations. Expressing opinion is part of the social interaction act.

" - *How do I define history? It's just one fucking thing after another* "page 85

" *I count examinations, even for Oxford and Cambridge, as the enemy of Education.*" Page 48

Utterances create a new social or psychological reality. Speech acts, namely Illocutionary acts refer to the real actions, performed by the utterance, where saying equals doing. (The speech Acts, Austin-1960) For instance, while *Directive acts* are supposed to make the hearer take a particular action, " *Do not use that word.*" (he hits him on the head with an exercise book) page 5 "- *I tell you, be grateful.*" Page 17; *Expressives*, are acts that express the speaker's attitude or emotion towards the proposition "- *I don't know. I don't know at all*" page 19; "- *I didn't say it was wrong. I said it was dull. Interest nil. Singularity nowhere!*" page 18; *Commissives*, commit the listener to a future action, "- *Purely on a temporary basis. It will be the last time. I promise!*" page 16; *Declarations*, change the reality in accord with the proposition of the declaration for example, when Rudge states "- *I got in.*" or the (Headmaster) announces *Splendid news! Posner a scholarship, Dakin an exhibition and places for everyone else.*" page 97, it is as if they are literally already there (Oxford university).

1) The characteristics which differentiate Conversation from Spoken Prose or semi-formal Written English mostly relate to the nature of the interaction, the need to produce and organise spontaneously and the social functions it serves.)

3 - Conversation avoids elaboration or specification of meaning - Because of its spontaneous creation, conversation can be more closely related to the extra-lingual context and the responses of the listeners. Since Conversation isn't scripted in advance, vocabulary is restrictive and the complicated structures, normally associated with written English or more formal language. In conversation, speakers naturally resort to reduced forms, such as elisions and contractions; repetitive repertoire; lexical bundles...

" - *Posner likes singing. "-Hymns?" "-Anything." "-Not...Grace Fields?" "-Possibly." Pages 17, 79; "- Now who goes home? Dakin?" "-Not me sir." "-Akthar?" "- Off for a run, sir." "- Crowther?"; "I don't think...", " - I was going to ... "* pages 64, 73

4 - Conversation is interactive - conversation usually involves more than one party actively taking part and having the possibility to interrupt. It therefore tends to be more intimate and more personally relevant than other spoken forms. There are "mechanisms" that generate/increase interaction, such as,

a. Negatives;

"- *Corpus?*"

"- *No I said I was at Jesus.*"

"- *You said you were at Corpus.*"

"- *No.*"

"- *You did.*" Page 98

"- *You must try and acquire the habit of contradiction. You are much in the acquiescent mode.*"

"- *Yes, sir. No, sir.*" Page 44

b. Eliciting responses: "- *Anybody?*" page 70

c. Attention-signaling forms: "- *Are you following me?*" page 51

d. Vocatives: "- *Ah Posner, no Dakin?*" page 53

e. Discourse markers: "- *I mean,...*" page 16, "- *Well, ...*" page 23

5 - Conversation takes place in real-time:

Dysfluences – it is quite natural that conversation sounds dysfluent. Speakers' speech includes pauses and hesitations, which include repairs (corrections of something that was about to be said at an earlier moment) When such repairs occur at the beginning of utterances they are called *false starts*.

6 - Conversation employs a vernacular (non-standard) range of expressions. At times when we want to relax our minds, or on the occasions when we need more time to organise our thoughts, we tend to *fall back* on "lines" we have used over and over again.

These include the idioms, colloquial clichés and polite formulae which are much in evidence in utterances between friends, example, *the funniest thing I've ever seen, terribly funny (colloquial clichés); mind you; have a good laugh (idioms)*

2.2.2 Conversational Maxims

The success of a conversation depends upon speakers' interaction. People try to make conversations work through a co-operative principle. This can be explained by four underlying rules or maxims. (They are also named Grice's maxims, after the language philosopher, H.P. Grice.) They are the maxims of **quality, quantity, relevance** and **manner**.

- Quality – speakers should tell the truth. They should not say what they think is false, or make statements for which they lack evidence.
- Quantity – a contribution should be as informative as is required for the conversation to proceed. It should be neither too little, nor too much. (It is not clear how one can decide what quantity of information satisfies the maxim in a given case.)
- Relevance – speakers' contributions should relate clearly to the purpose of the exchange.
- Manner – speakers' contributions should be perspicuous: clear, orderly and brief, avoiding obscurity and ambiguity.

2.3 Features of Spoken English: Structural, Linguistic and Socio-dynamic.

According to the Descriptive Grammar (structure of a language as it is actually used by speakers and writers) Features (characteristics) of Spoken English, may be categorized in three groups: **Structural**, **Linguistic** and **Socio-dynamic**, according to specificity:

2.3.1 The **Structural** threefold 1. Rule of three, which refers to the tendency to group episodes, examples, etc. in threes; 2. Anaphoric and Cataphoric, whenever there are references back and forwards in the conversation, and 3. Homeotaxis, when speech is coordinated to relate everything to present praxis.

2.3.2 Linguistic features include all kind of real-language manifestations; they consist in descriptions of speech acts, rather than analysis of standard language. The Linguistic features are:

1. Fillers: are words such as *well, you know, I mean*, which carry no meaning but give the speaker time to think what to say; **1)**
2. Filled pauses: are sounds such as *er, um, erm*, that give the speaker thinking time; **1)**

1) dysfluency – is a break, irregularity, or non-lexical utterance that occurs within the flow of speech. These include words and sentences that are cut off mid-utterances, phrases that are restarted or repeated and repeated syllables, or non-lexical utterances such as "uh", "erm" and "well", and *repaired* utterances, i.e. speakers correcting their own mispronunciations (before anyone else gets a chance to).

3. False starts: occur when speakers start in a particular way, then change their mind and begin again; **1)**

4. Contracted forms/Ellision, in addition to verbal contractions, some words are shortened. Ellipsis correspond to the omission of part of the sentence, like verbs, pronouns or relatives... **1)**

5. Non-standard grammar, means that standard (grammar) rules are broken – some words are omitted, others contracted, the sentence order is changed, etc.

6. Hesitations or silent pauses, may happen if the speaker has a speech block, i.e. a temporary inability to think and produce a word/phrase for that particular situation, which may generate prompting from his/her interlocutor. Hesitations also happen as a consequence of embarrassment, for eg. if a speaker is confronted with a difficult question/statement, by his/her interlocutor. **1)**

7. Vague language: include expressions that express uncertainty, like, *sort of, kind of, and so on, I was like, whatever....*

8. Question-tags, are used either to seek for confirmation of something that has been said, or to encourage participation by interlocutors;

9. Repetitions, are the same words or phrases said repeatedly;

9.1 Redundancy, means that surplus or repeated information is provided.

10. In-Group vocabulary, includes a variety of language that is mostly used in informal relations, like dialect, slang, 'private' language of family etc;

11. Less Subordination, in spoken language very few conjunctions are used, the most frequent are *but, and...*;

12. Phrasal verbs, according to the Cobuild Corpus (c. 200m words), the phrasal verb is the single most common form of the verb in spoken English. *One of the things about laid-back English is that it often goes in for phrasal verbs in a big way.* (Power, in Written versus spoken English - feature analysis.)

2.3.3 - The **Socio-Dynamic**, establishes the relationship between individual interactions and group behaviors, thus bringing together the idea that individuals are influenced by one another's behavior. These are concerned with changes over time and emphasize the role of feedbacks.

Some of these features include the following devices:

1. Turn taking: Conversations are based on speakers taking turns to make an utterance. In theory, it means bringing in all members of the group at regular intervals. **Long turns** take place in situations like interviews, or where there are clear differences in status between the speakers. While **Short turns**, on the other hand, are found in social situations between equals, in status. Overlapping turns are characteristic of situations where giving support and finding consensus are important, for example, among women and/or minority groups.

Pupil: *Will you look at my essay, sir? (Adjacency pairs)*

Teacher: *I'm teaching now, but come at lunchtime. (Adjacency pairs)*

Pupil: **Oh, thanks.** (feedback)

2. Paralinguistic Features, include stance, gestures, loudness, etc – here, speech is connected with action and performance.

3. Phatic Utterances, are equivalent to “small talk”, i.e. unimportant phrases to punctuate message, show respect, give thinking time, etc.
4. Prompting, consists in the supply of a word, or a paraphrase to show interest and understanding.
5. Hedging, is a cooperation strategy to modify statements so as to make them less dogmatic.
6. Naming, refers to how people address each other, in spoken mode.
7. Backchannel behavior, affirms that the hearer understands and agrees to let the speaker continue: *uh huh, oh yeah*.
8. Incremental Repetition, implies a gradual increase of the repetition, for emphasis.
9. Genderlects, relates to gender: while Men regard conversations as negotiations, where one part tries to have advantage over the other, Women see conversations as negotiations towards consensus.

III

3. Textual evidence and Analysis of spoken grammar/features.

In this section, we will present and describe examples of **Structural, Linguistic and Socio-dynamic features** in "The History Boys' Play":

Structural:

1. Anaphoric and Cataphoric

When the history teacher, Mrs Lintot says: "More of the same?" *page 8 it suggests* shared context, therefore avoids further explicitness on what "more of the same" is referring to exactly. We can implicitly see reference to previous conversation/past situation. However, there aren't many examples of *anaphoras* or *cataphoric references*, in the Play.

2. Homeotaxis, the sequence uttered by Posner "- I'm Jew. I'm small. I'm homosexual. And I live in Sheffield. I'm fucked" *page 42* is somehow relating all his personal information to the present situation.

Linguistic

The text has few examples of 1. **Fillers**, 2. **Filled** or 3. **False starts**, which in our opinion, relates to the fact of the text being known beforehand. Since the dialogues/conversations are based on a written text, whose lines are previously known, the elements referred to above are not very often these conversations. Once, the speaker(actor) has rehearsed the line, it's not very likely that he/she will start in a particular way, change his/her mind and begin again because he/she knows the text beforehand. *Nevertheless*, we can present some examples: " - *It's flip. It's glib ...*" *page 72* - both the words "flip" and "glib" (with slight changes of meaning) which fit the definition of **fillers**, since they have no literal meaning, besides "*nothing said or meant*

seriously/ and something said without thinking.” Or “This... it’s... it’s such a cliché.” Page 101

In the text, the same words or phrases said repeatedly, like: “- *I know, I know.*” page 6; *Think charm, think, think...*Page 9 are quite recurrent - they emphasize or reinforce some idea/thought.

Through the examples that follow, we can find quite a variety of shortened (or contracted) forms of common or unimportant words, as well as grammatically incomplete sentences, or two sentences collapsed together, in linguistics they are 4. contractions and ellipsis, accordingly:

“- Fuck’em” page 20

“- Cigarette on it?” page 98

“- Why, he doesn’t...” page 29

The following examples of Ellipsis contain omissions of part of the sentence, like “-What’s he want us for?” “...darling, love you as I do, that is...” page 95 or “- You happy?” page 11 which are vulgarly used in oral language, because speakers naturally tend to simplify the utterances – contractions and ellipsis don’t happen just to save time, they are supposed to let the language flow easily, to engage the listener, since a too wordy sentence becomes tedious and boring. When people speak, especially in informal contexts, they want to sound comprehensible and natural, rather than a “*newspaper article*”.

5. Non-standard grammar: “- You don’t not (wank)?” page 45 “Don’t let’s ask...” page 32

6. Hesitations or silent pauses, may represent a speech block, or a normal change in word choice, nonetheless, most of the times they indicate that the speaker regrets having started the utterance because he/she shouldn’t have said it. It can also express embarrassment about using the word/phrase due to formality in relations, or because the word, at issue, is coarse;

" – *It's... interesting miss...If you know what I mean.*" page 33

"- *You...twerp.*" Page 95

"- *But a little... ordinaire.* " page 9 the hesitation functions like a hedge, since it's meant to soften the expression, "*ordinaire*"

7. Vague language, is represented by ambiguous words or phrases, i.e. utterances that can suggest more than one interpretations.

" *The loss of liberty is the price we pay for freedom' type thing.* " page 3

" - (...) the only person I've ever heard address him as such is his somewhat unexpected wife." Page 41

"- *I sort of know*" ; " (...) *supposedly unsuspecting wives (...)*" page 92

"- (...) *or whatever?* " page 100

" – *Somewhere on the outskirts, why?*" " – *Somewhere on the outskirts, ooh. It's not a loft is it?*"

Headmaster: " - *There's a vacancy in History.*"

Irwin (*thoughtfully*): "*That's very true.*"

Headmaster: "In the school."

Irwin: "Ah." page 11, *this last quote* included, since it originated a different interpretation from the intended one.

8. Question tags are used to get confirmation of what's being said, by the interlocutor.

(Mrs Lintott) " - *A sprig of parsley, you mean?*" page 9

" – *Does he like them, do you think?*" page 33

"- *this isn't your gap year, is it?*" page 37

"- *It isn't, is it?*" page 44

" – *You're miked, aren't you?*" page 61

"- *wouldn't it, sir?* page 81

9. Repetition

The examples that follow are used, to show understanding towards the utterance and the speaker, to encourage participation and for reinforcing.

Headmaster: "Yes, yes, I know that..." page 8

"You want it, your parents want it..." page 20

"All right." "- All right what?" "- All right, let's have a drink..." page 100

"- Nothing. No. Nothing" page 43

9.1 Redundancy

"Fuck. Off. Fuck right off" page 105

"He does. Depressingly so." page 22

10. In-Group vocabulary (dialect, slang, 'private' language of family etc.)

Jargon (usually used in work settings but could include the language used in a school which is not commonly used outside)	Private/familiar	Slang/swear words
"Joint Matriculation Board" "Oxbridge" " A-levels" "The supply teacher" "Don"	"- Wasn't he a nancy, sir?"; "twerp" ; "Goody" ; "Foul" ; "Fest" ; "Grubby"; "Trollop"; "Sods" ; "Sulk".	"- what a wanker"; "- Don't take a piss" ; "- he'll kick our arses from bollocks to sundown"; "Cunt-struck" ; "twat"; "suck off"; "shit".

Wide uses of the vernacular expressions are recurrent throughout the text, for different purposes and with different interpretations.

These words/expressions aren't only relevant to feature spoken language, but also to provide information on social interaction, between the interlocutors. Their use contributes to the idea of proximity, not only between students, but also between them and Hector (the unorthodox teacher), Note that most of the examples of this kind of language, for example "Don't take the piss", "our arses"; ... aren't used in a pejorative sense, it's students way of saying "*don't joke/tease*" and "*ourselves*"; The use of slang or swear words is something natural in some speakers/groups, specially youngsters, who tend to banalize these words and use them to express everything – from anger to joy. They don't intend to show disapproval or to insult anyone. In the dialogue between the student Timms and the teacher Hector "- Wasn't he a nancy, sir?" "- *Do not use that word.*" (*He hits him on the head with an exercise book*), " - *You use it, sir.*" "- *I do, sir, I know, but I'm far gone in age and decrepitude*", pages 5, 6, suggests Hector claiming his authority, which he seldom exercises, by preventing the boys to use such language, in class. Obviously, this form of reply is ironic because the boys know Hector better than that. In addition, Hector's reaction to the word "Nancy" expresses prejudice against terms that imply homosexuality, which connect to the his own frailty.

As for the recurrent use of expressions, like "- Fuck." page 16, or "- *Fuck the Renaissance (...) and all the shrunken violets you people line up*", page 53 by Headmaster, suggests the rudeness of the character, that is often ridiculed in the text.

11. Less Subordination, in fact there are few conjunctions, which are not very varied, the most frequent are the coordinating conjunctions, *but, and and*. " - *But the big man is glad.*" "- *And fog would you believe...?*"; "- *And they are bright, brighter than last year. But*

apparently not enough, pages 7, 9, 10; "- I'm conserted by the curriculum but I can find you three lessons..." page 7, 9, 10, 11. In terms of the subordinating conjunctions, the most frequent are concessive and causal conjunctions: *however, though* and *because*: "- I agree. However, Mr. Hector, our long-time..." "- Dakin's a good-looking boy, though somehow sad." ; " - Irwin. Though he hates me." pages 9, 10, 11, 19... ;

According to the Cobuild Corpus (c. 200m words), the 12. Phrasal verb is the single most common form of the verb in spoken English/*One of the things about laid-back English is that it often goes in for phrasal verbs in a big way.*

phrasal verb	page
"going in"	6
"sits up"	7
"lapped up"(=enjoy)	7
"Brought up"	9
"Made up"	10
"Pull up",	11
"care for it"	11
"Turned up"	31
"Pay up"	32
"flows out"	32
"Brims over"	36
"Comes up"	36
"Go for"	42
"Speed on"	70

Idioms are often a problem for ESOL students, they always sound artificial to them, since there are no equivalents in their own language, cf. definition.

The text also offers a few examples of literary language and archaisms, which add value to the language class.

<p><u>Idioms</u> group of words that has a special meaning that is different from the ordinary meaning of each separate word.</p>	<p><u>Literary English</u></p>	<p><u>Old use</u></p>
<p>" <i>Black and blue</i>" page 7 "You don't fit the bill" page 17 be the type of person or thing that you want: "Cop a feel" page 29 (AE) to touch someone sexually, against their will. "- I'm just kicking the tyres (...) page 99 "- push the boat out(...) page 100 =meaning to spend freely on a special occasion</p>	<p>"As per..." /formal / as usual. "Rugger" - Rugby Union "Groan" - moan "Lest" - worried</p>	<p>"Forefend" prohibit "Hath" has "Gobbets" small piece of something</p>

Socio-Dynamic

Among the various examples of socio-dynamic features of spoken language, we highlight as the most recurrent the backchannels "- I do, sir, I know.." page 6, Mrs Lintott: "- Yes, headmaster!" which reinforce the idea of agreeing with the interlocutor's utterance/and obeying the boss.

1. Turn taking: "- It's consolation. All literature is consolation. "

" - No it isn't. What about when it's celebration, joy? Page 46 (Long turns)

"- Yes? " "- Apparently." (Short turns)

Overlapping turns, no examples found.

2. Paralinguistic features in the Drama text the reader becomes aware of these features through the stage directions, which come in parenthesis. There are many examples of body language,... "- *No, headmaster.*" (*he covers his ears*) page 16

(*He beckons = to signal to someone with your hand, Irwin cagily=hiding intentions*) into his study, page 10)

(*This is quite a pausery conversation, with Dakin more master than pupil*), page 88

(*Irwin says nothing*) page 88

3. Phatic utterances (small talk): "*Too right sir!*" page 32

4. Prompting: interventions to supply a word, give a paraphrase to show understanding etc. "I'm beginning to like him."- Who me?" "- Irwin. Though he hates me." page 29

5. Hedging: cooperation strategy to modify statements so as to make them less dogmatic, " - Somebody in your family went to Christ Church?" " - In a manner of speaking." Page 97 " - *I believe you did, yes!*" Page 52 "- *My*

wife Mrs Armstrong, does voluntary work. One afternoon a week at the charity shop. Normally Mondays. Except this week she did Wednesday as well. (...) She reads, but periodically she looks out of the window. Are you following me? The road. The traffic lights. And so on. Boy on pillion. A man ... fiddling. Yesterday she took the number." page 51 This last exemplifies the strategy - to soften the content of the conversation, which is kind of heartbreaking to Hector. The headmaster wants to say is that he knows about the harassment of the boys, but even for him, this is not an easy conversation.

6. **Naming:** We could not refer to language, in the predominant form of conversation in a scholastic (British) context without referring to **Names and Addresses**. In English, we also express status and attitude through titles, first names and last names. Titles are such things as *Professor, Dr (Doctor), Sir, Mr, Mrs, Miss, Sr. (Sister)*. Note that we abbreviate some of these in writing (*Mrs.*), but not in speaking (*missus*).

Very often, in the text, the utterance "Sir?" is used as a polite way of saying "what do you mean?" Pages 6, 10, 25, 30,...

In schools teachers use FN (first name) or FN+LN (last name) when reprimanding or being sarcastic) to pupils and receive T (*Sir*) or TLN (*Miss Smith*) in reply. *Miss* is addressed to women teachers, even when the speaker knows them to be married. For the speaker it expresses a sense of hierarchical rather than marital status, like *Miss Lintott, page 69*.

Note: There are a few references to nicknames, in the text, because there is a consensus among students that teachers should have them.

"- *So have the boys given you a nickname?" (...) A nickname is an achievement"* "- *Hector has no nickname."* Yes he has: *Hector*. But he's called *Hector*. *Hector is his nickname. His name is Douglas."* Page 41

In another passage of the text, there is made a different reference to names, which is historically relevant, because it determines the time when (dead) soldiers started to have a name.

"- Anything about his name?" "- Hodge?" The important thing is that he has a name (...) before this soldiers were all unknown (...) page 55

I found it interesting to notice that there is one single reference to the Headmaster's name. He is always referred to as Headmaster. I believe, this happens because of the "emptiness" of the character. Since the Headmaster is representative he doesn't need a name to individualise him. When the Headmaster states: *Yes, yes I know that, Dorothy. But I'm thinking league tables. Open scholarships. Reports to the Governors... page 8/ Naïve, Dorothy, or human? I'm thinking of the boys..., I promise, ... Please think, Dorothy, ...page 9* - his aim is to be persuasive, to convince his interlocutor to act accordingly. We are in the presence of the Conative Function of language, which aims to engage the Addressee directly and is best illustrated by vocatives and imperatives.

Face and politeness strategies *Face* refers to a speaker's sense of linguistic and social identity. In this sense, any speech act may seem face threatening. Therefore, speakers have strategies for lessening the threat. While positive politeness means being kind and complimentary to the addressee Negative politeness is found in ways of alleviating the imposition. Some of those strategies which have been mentioned already, are: *hedging, impersonalizing, indicating deference, apologizing...* *"- I'm sorry" page 96 " -I beg you pardon?" page 52 or "- Well you were at Cambridge, you know the form." Page 10*

Phatic tokens are another device to express status. The speakers expresses consideration by commenting on something. Considering the reserved nature of the British people, if someone, a stranger produces a phrase/sentence this might be regarded as a sign of respect, the

receptor, for some reason wasn't indifference to the speaker, thus deserved a an utterance. If the comment is to oneself, (self-oriented) to the other, (other-oriented) or to the general or prevailing situation (neutral-oriented), in England this is usually the weather: Cold, isn't it?

"- I gather you knew, too" (Mrs Lintott smiles) *page 95*

7. Backchannel behaviour affirms that the hearer understands and agrees to let the speaker continue: "- Oh, ah... (Headmaster) *page 14*;
" - If I may proceed?" *page 108*

8. Incremental Repetition: "*You won't be. You can't be . How can you be?*", *page 101* "*Are they, are you sure, Nobody has told me.*" *page 16*;
(*doubtfully*) *Yes (with more certainty) Yes. (Others nod.) page 28.* " - *But no. Not today. No. Today I go a different way "* *page 56* - Although there aren't explicit reference of gradual repetition, the examples suggest some increase, mainly in the voice tone of the (repeated) utterances.

9. Genderlects, many passages in the text allude to some opposition between women and men, Mrs Lintott, alone standing for women, and from time to time accusing men, for example, (Headmaster referring to Oxford & Cambridge) "... now we're told women are in droves." *Page 11*; (Mrs Lintott to Hector) " - *The new man seems clever. He does. Depressingly so. - Men are, at History, of course.*" *page 22* (Mrs Lintott to the class)" - *Can you, for a moment, imagine how dispiriting it is to teach five centuries of masculine ineptitude? - Why do you think there are no women historians on TV? I'll tell you why there (...) because they don't get carried away (...) and don't come up with... the bow-wow school of history. History is not a frolic for women as it is for man"* *page 68.*

In accordance to the literature related to the teaching of vocabulary, it appears to be quite evident that the language used in the Play The History Boys, portrays varied and relevant examples of spoken language, which, as argued before, should favour the learning of L2. Moreover, working the linguistic aspect within the framework of the dramatic text, with the performance as the ultimate goal, may add motivation to learning process. On this basis it may be inferred that the text under analysis could serve as an interesting pedagogic tool to teach EFL.

As far as motivation is concerned, I would also like to point out that the topics are of particular interest to the target group. Generally speaking, students tend to sympathize with the topics which are somehow familiar to them. As a matter of fact, the Play deals with the kind of subjects that are real and relatively familiar to them, such as: *School and its purpose, School subjects (History, Language learning, Poetry) Teachers, Love, Sex, Homosexuality, Harassment*, etc. With the exception of the last one, which should not include the themes and routines of a school (despite the interest it may arise among the school community) I figure they are exactly the topics that crowd youngsters imagination. As far as I am concerned, I am inclined to guarantee that the students would go for this Play, with no hesitations.

3.1 The Topics that connect to school and the learning process

It is likely that Bennett is expressing through his characters, his own views and prejudices about the virtues and flaws of School and teaching.

The Purpose of School

"-What are A levels, then?" page 4

"- Boys, boys, boys, A levels are credentials, qualifications the footings of your CV. Your Cheat's Visa. Time now for the bit in between. You will see from the timetable that our esteemed headmaster has given these periods the euphemistic title – of General Studies" page 5

" I count examinations, even for Oxford and Cambridge, as the enemy of Education." Page 48

The extract expresses Hector's scathing criticism on the School board's beliefs towards the process of learning, and particularly with the headmaster's obsession in getting the Boys into Oxford or Cambridge Universities. Besides this, the entire dialogue reinforces skepticism towards Oxford and Cambridge, and again Bennett's showing some kind of disbelief in the power of these institutions. Bennett, who may speak from experience, since he, too, studied History in Oxford University.

Further on, *page 48*, Hector adds *"Which is not to say, that I don't regard education as the enemy of education too."* which also suggests not only his discredit towards (some) school Institutions, but even how they can deform students' character rather than form it.

The dialogue between two of the students: Dakin and Lookwood and the teacher Hector, that follows, confirms the stereotyped notion of Britain possessing only two major academic Institutions, as they ironically call them "the Oxbridge" universities. By using the word lustrous Hector

suggests something that is shallow, since it is reduced to the exterior shine. The students adhere to this environment of deifying "Oxbridge", naturally because they are the first benefitting from it " *You should treat us with more respect. We're scholarship candidates now. We're all going in for Oxford and Cambridge*" page 6

Hector " *I thought that after last year we were setting for the less lustrous institutions...Derby, Leicester, Nottingham...Shiefield. Why do you want to go there?*"

Lockwood " *Old sir, tried and tested*", page 6

Hector " *No, it's because other boys want to go there....So I'll thank you, if nobody mentions Oxford and Cambridge in my classes, there's a world elsewhere*", page 6

This following dialogue is emotionally relevant, and suggested me, how important it is for teachers, to question themselves about what they want to achieve as teachers and educators: - What do we want our students to remember about our classes and our teachings? What kind of human beings are we trying to influence them to be?

" - *I didn't want to turn out boys who in later life had a deep love of literature (...) words said in that reverential way that is somehow Welsh. That's what the tosh is for. It's an antidote*"

" - *Don't teach...*" "- *I wasn't intending to.*" Page 94

The pledge is ironic and suggests some ambiguity, in the sense that Hector is trying to warn Irwin about the flaws of the job (teacher), but he is also suggesting him to *inspire* rather than to *teach*, *advising him to facilitate their construction of knowledge and to provoke their curiosity rather than provide them ready-made findings.*

The randomness of History

The concept of randomness of Historic events is recurrent throughout the Play, and is shared by some of the protagonists. The examples that follow show, with exquisite sense of humour, the truth of such a claim.

"- History is a commentary on the various and continuing incapacities of men (...) History is women following behind with the bucket"

"- Can I speak freely, miss? How do I define history? It's just one fucking thing after another "page 85

"- The smallest of incidents, the junction of a dizzying range of alternatives any one of which could have had a different outcome. If I was bold, if I was you... I could spend a lesson dissecting what the Headmaster insists on calling "this unfortunate incident" and it would teach the boys more about history and the utter randomness of things than...well, than I ever managed to do so far". page 92

"- When Chamberlain resigned as Prime Minister in 1940 Churchill wasn't the first thought; Halifax was more acceptable. But on the afternoon the decision was taken Halifax chose to go to the dentist. If Halifax had had better teeth we might have lost the war." Page 90

Once again, Bennett feels like a fish in the water, talking about what he knows well, since he graduated in and taught History.

Language, figures of speech

There are frequent and explicit allusions to language itself, not only, in terms of the literal meanings of words, but its often metaphorical use, showing how powerful words and language can be, thus the importance of dominating them, as much as possible.

(Posner looks up the word in the dictionary) page 5 1)

"- Euphemism...substitution of a mild or vague or roundabout expression for a harsh or direct one." page 5

1) ref. to metalanguage, the language examining and describing itself.

Hector "A literal fig-leaf. The mild or vague expression being General Studies. The harsh one, Useless Knowledge. The otiose – the trash, the department of why bother?" page 5

Posner: "- Otiose = serving no practical purpose, without function." page 5 **1)**

Dakin "- The subjunctive is the mood you use when something might or might not have happened, when it's imagined." page 90

"- The Subjunctive" – the mood of possibility, page 64

" – It's a gerund. He likes gerunds", page 100

There are several references to compound adjectives "uncoffined, unkissed..." page 55 as well as clichés, " and you abhor clichés, don't you? And you tell us to avoid them...." Page 101 the subjunctive, or the gerund – alluding to word classes, figures of speech and verb tenses.

Language is often used metaphorically, i.e. when a word or a phrase is not used literally but in a figurative sense. "- Whether because of diffidence or shyness but a holding back. Not a swim." page 56

Another passage in page 88 "Dakin: "- How does stuff happen, do you think?"

(...)

Irwin: "-To some extent" page 88

In this extract Dakin is not talking about "Hitler making a move on Poland" page 87 but about what his relation with the professor (Irwin) could have turned out, had one of them made a move.

There is a subtle reference to pronunciation, or the need to pronounce words correctly, "- I think it's pronounced Nietche" page 47 (despite not being English) it suggests the need to pronounce words correctly, preventing the speakers from sounding as ignorant users of the language.

Poetry and Theatre – aesthetic effect:

One of the best allusions to poetry - and the emotion it arises, comes in the scene where the Drummer Hodge poem is studied. It demonstrates the unfashionable virtue of memorization. It shows Hector finding an echo of his own sad life, not only in the drummer thrown into some common grave but in Hardy's own unpleasant existence. It reinforces a profound general truth: that "the best moments in reading are when you come across something - a thought, a feeling, a way of looking at things - which you had thought special and particular to you.

"- Sir, I don't always understand poetry." "- You don't always understand it, Timms? - I never understand it. But learn it now and you'll understand it whenever." Page 30

There is an allusion to the uselessness of theatre, which I think is ironic. Since Bennett is a playwright he is, in my opinion, suggesting the opposite of what his character says " - *Dons...most dons anyway...think the theatre is a waste of time... any graduate keen on acting forfeits all hope of a good degree. It's no fun teaching the stage-struck.*" (Hector) *And isn't being stage-struck part of their education?" page 82* I consider this passage of particular relevance to what I'm trying to argue, which is: Drama represents real life, and can, therefore, attract students to the process of learning, because it appears to them as something natural "All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players; They have their exits and their entrances, *And one man in his time plays many parts,...*"

3.2 The Teacher characters

The teacher characters are described either directly through the main and secondary text, either indirectly, i.e., through what they feel and think, which we realize through their lines.

Hector, is a controversial character, he represents the non-conformists teachers, which often criticize the board's management. Despite his sexual deviation, the boys enjoy his classes and learn. As mentioned before, he is the school's anti-orthodox teachers, and perhaps for this reason he inspires his students.

Apart from the fact that Hector likes to take the boys on a ride, which the boys, have become used to, and hasn't caused them any trauma, he is seen as their intellectual mentor. Although they have some trouble, in deciding what is exactly that he teaches, they recite by heart many poems because of his influence.

The Headmaster, also recognizes Hector's positive influence on the boys, although he disapproves of his methods. "*Mr. Hector, our long-time master (...)There's passion there. Or, as I prefer to call it, commitment. But not curriculum-directed. Not curriculum-directed at all.*" pages 11, 12

Timms corroborates "The hitting never hurt. It was a joke. We lapped it up" and Rudge, ironically "He hits you if he likes you, he never touches me" Dakin: "- You're hitting us again, sir"

Hector: "- I'm your teacher. Whatever I do in this room is a token (=sign) of my trust.", page 6

The environment in Hector's classes is laid-back and amusing. In this passage, he is being sarcastic about his authority. He doesn't act superiorly with the boys.

In addition, when the new teacher, Irwin, questions the boys " - Does he have a programme? Or is it just at random? The Boys answer: " - Ask him sir, we don't know!"

"It's just knowledge...the pursuit of it for it's own sake..."

"Not useful, sir. Not like your lessons."

It's higher than your stuff, sir. Nobler.

Only not focused, sir. Mr Hector is not focused." page 36

Dakin: "Do you like Auden, sir?" (...) I think he was more like Mr. Hector, sir. A bit of a shambles. page 38

Timms: " - Mr Hector's stuff is not meant for the exam, sir. It's to make us more rounded human beings" page 38, this is a complement on Hector's teaching style (having a wide range of qualities that make someone or something pleasant, balanced, and complete)

Although the students' intention, at this point is to try and flatter the new teacher, they can't hide how much Hector's teaching really involves and influences them. However, the extract also suggests a certain confusion concerning how they feel about this professor and his lessons. *" Noble but not focused" "it's just knowledge".*

Irwin is a whole character that represents the young good-looking teachers, for whom students normally have crushes.

(Headmaster) "- You are very young. Grow a moustache. I'm thinking classroom control", page 12

Akthar: "- You're very young, sir. Is this your gap year?, page 20

The question is somehow offensive, since gap years usually happen before going to university, but the teacher responds with charm with "I wish it was". Irwin is intelligent and politically correct, in all occasions except for the one during the following dialogue. Here, *Irwin* loses decorum, by accepting to have a drink with him and almost admitting to be homosexual.

Dakin: "- Is it because you're a teacher and I'm ... a boy?(...) Irwin: "- Obviously that..." Irwin: " - You've already had to cope with one master who touches you up..." Dakin: Is that what it is? (...) So give yourself a

break. Be like everybody else for a change(...) All right (...) let's have a drink. pages 100, 101

Mrs Linttot, the history teacher is a very critical, intelligent and open-minded woman who also opposes the Headmaster's obsession of getting the boys to "Oxbridge". "- You give them education. I give them the wherewithal to resist it. We are the entity beloved of our Headmaster, a "team". "- These days, teachers just remember the books they discovered and loved as students and shove them on the syllabus. Then they wonder why their students aren't as keen as they are." Remarkable comment, this last one, which reinforces what I have said about "winds of change" and how, many teachers, haven't done any effort to keep up with modernity.

Headmaster is a whole character, since he is a representation of a stereotypical headmaster – the kind that is characterized by his rudeness and ignorance and for being despotic. He flirts with the students.

He acts authoritatively and often swears " - *I don't like the sound of that, Irwin. I don't want you to fuck up.*" page 49 "- *Mr. Irwin. Fuck the Historian*" *Didn't I suggest you grew a moustache?"* page 78

3.3 Language variation

Language changes' include style and register: considering Style as the typical way of speaking of a particular character, and Register the specific language (words and grammar) used by that character, in particular situations - which this text portrays significantly. Irony and sense of humour are recurrent throughout the text. Bennett, is an expert in the art of playing with words in order to make people laugh. Consequently, the general tone of the utterances is humorous.

Below we include examples of the Style and Register, by the most relevant characters of the play.

	Style	Register	examples
Hector	Outspoken, truthful	Casual	" <i>Hit the boy, hit him</i> "; " <i>You should just say what you enjoy</i> " pages 83,
Headmaster	Rude, authoritative	Casual	" <i>- Fuck</i> " ; " <i>- Fuck the Historian</i> " page 78
Irwin	Polite, formal, cautious	Consultative	" <i>on the few occasions he went anywhere, yes, I believe he did!</i> " page 84
Lintott	Direct, sarcastic, with humour	Casual	" <i>- they had it in first hand.</i> " ; <i>You twerp.</i> " Page 88
Dakin	Outspoken, audacious, ironic	Casual/Intimate	" <i>you can suck me off, next week?</i> " " <i>No tits?</i> " pages 84,101.

IV Discussion of the findings

The findings of the research work, suggest a close link between learning abilities – natural language - and social interaction. On the one hand, there is language - considered a social phenomenon, which evolves through interaction Maturana (2004), on the other, there is evidence on the advantage of learning by tasks, which may take the form of teaching through drama, over traditional teaching models.

Learning EFL is more successful, if the following aspects are taken into account: looking at learning EFL, primarily, for communicative competence; methodologies should focus on the spoken aspects of language, and activities emphasize speaking rather than writing; language should be “served” as part of a whole text, rather than separate texts that only relate thematically to each other. Drama and plays are ideal for achieving such goals, as they provide the text and the context containing the language to be studied, and simultaneously, a purposeful reason to learn, which is the final outcome - the performance of the play.

This is in accordance with language learning theories, mentioned above, that argue for, the importance of teaching EFL within a meaningful context, i.e. exposing learners to significant input, which means relevant language, from learners’ perspective.

Drama activities have been adopted successfully by many educators, and have contributed directly to increase motivation and improve language learning output. Since plays represent the language of speech, they are perfect for helping students to engage with and learn about speaking English in a fairly 'natural' way.

Obviously, this aspect is not dissociated from my claim for project-based teaching rather than traditional curriculum based teaching.

Spoken language is beneficial to the process of language learning, since the main goal of language learning is communicative competence.

Additionally, the contribution of project-based learning, in particular through Drama activities, is significant and further research in this field should continue with the aim of introducing changes, that would, first accept the use of Drama activities in teaching EFL; second allow the teachers to use other materials, namely books and plays instead of traditional course books.

According to the varied examples, of spoken language features presented in the previous section, it is legitimate to affirm that Drama texts do provide a meaningful context for learning EFL.

Moreover, the nature of the examples, namely repetitions, elisions, hedging, back-channeling, prompting and question-tags provide evidence of how the spoken language fulfills communication acts and make these clear to the learner.

In the case of question-tags, it becomes clear how they help conversation along, since they always elicit some response from the interlocutor.

The varied examples of dysfluencies, represented for example, by hesitations, fillers and contractions, suggest features of real language, which cannot easily be highlighted with other types of text.

This applies to vague language, which I believe is much more likely to occur in spoken form. It is not so common to have expressions, like *sort of, kind of, whatever...* in written texts.

The use of non-standard grammar suggests that language is not an unbreakable, fixed set of rules, but something dynamic, for human beings' to manipulate for the communication purpose.

The strong presence of in-group vocabulary suggests how natural it is for native speakers, youngsters in particular, to use vernacular language – without the connotation of being impolite.

Phrasal verbs are not that simple to teach, since they do not have exact equivalents in Portuguese, however, the context certainly contributes to learners' understanding of the actual meanings and usages.

The increased use of pronouns to refer to people and things in the vicinity, perceptible in the wider context of the conversation is also easily observable. In this context, learners will appreciate how simplification comes about and develop sufficient sensitivity to overcome the obstacles which prevent them from acquiring the FL.

As far as the functions of language are concerned, their use is quite explicit and easily recognizable through many of the utterances in the text.

The context also contributes to the understanding of figurative language, since language is often used metaphorically.

The sense of humor provided through stylistic devices, such as irony and word-play make the text more appealing to the reader.

Generally speaking, the conversations between the characters respect the rules of co-operative principles (Grice) and the language is familiar to the readers. Unlike many other Plays, which use formal and artificial language or phrases, I consider Bennett's choices quite appropriate, considering the age of most of the protagonists.

The language used in *The History Boys* is easy and accessible to the common speaker (maxim of manner). Speakers are clear and brief. Although sometimes the utterances might lead to some ambiguity, there are no obscure dialogues. The characters intervene in turns, with relatively short lines, not providing too much information at each time. (maxims of Quality and Relevance). Finally, there is no evidence of the speakers saying what they think is false (Maxim of quality).

While examining the examples of illocutionary acts, I realized how simple it would be to explain how the utterances are equivalent to actions, by using a single dialogue of the play, " - *I hadn't realized how easy it is to make things happen, you know?*" "- *No.*" " - *I shouldn't have said everybody's happy, as just saying the words meant (...) that things began to unravel pretty quickly.*" page 103.

The examples presented are not a complete list, i.e. many others could be included. However, it was not our purpose to list every single example that could add value to the teaching of EFL. But instead present a selection of those we considered most relevant to what we want to show, which is how the play reflects spoken language and how that language can be understood through a natural context, and certainly how native speakers use it as opposed to invented examples often found in textbooks. In addition, as I have mentioned before, The History Boys, which deals with so many different topics, in particular, with those related to school and the process of learning, exposes the main protagonists of the learning process (teachers and students), in terms of their hopes, fears and frailties, which contributes to the purpose of making the text appealing to the learners .

Bennett expresses, as I have mentioned, through his characters, his own views and prejudices about the virtues and flaws of School and teaching, which can be used with students to discuss their own views on school and learning.

Ultimately, the text shows how less conventional teaching styles are more inspiring, therefore, generally, more effective for learning. Moreover, the idea that lessons and enjoyment do go together is transverse throughout the text. "- Is that what you think these lessons are? Fun? " But fun is good, sir." *page 65.*

Given the ideological and linguistic material provided by the Play, there is enough evidence to suggest, that the Drama text, in general (and this Play, in particular) constitute a powerful teaching tool, in language learning, which is, also a (subsidiary) finding of this research work.

Learning a second language can be enjoyable, stimulating and meaningful when combined with drama activities. Finally there's the argument of meeting multiple intelligences and dealing with mixed abilities. Drama activities can meet different learning styles, for example, give the *kinesthetic* students opportunities to express

themselves through body language; let the *interpersonal* fulfill their need to interact with the group, and allow the *linguistic* learners to carry out their passion for reading, studying (while appreciating the intricacies of the language). At the same time, these learners will have the opportunity to exercise their memory skills, as they learn, by heart their roles in the Plays. If we think about the *musical* learners as those skilled for performance, composition, and appreciation of musical patterns, we can immediately associate this learning style to drama activities, and know they will be a success when applied to these students. As far as the *logical-mathematical* learner is concerned, they might try to argue that they lack artistic skills, though they can easily be persuaded when given a problem that need a logical resolution, or any issue that needs investigating. The changes of space or classroom layout will certainly captivate the *spatial* learner. Even the *intrapersonal* learners can loosen up, according to researchers in of this area. Everyone can actively participate. Concerning the classes' mixed abilities, drama activities could help to dilute the asymmetries, as the "stronger" students can take the main roles, which require more fluency, while the weaker students compensate through a paralinguistic communication.

These are just some of the benefits of using drama in TESOL. The list is not exhaustive. Generally it can be said that the use of drama and drama activities in TESOL do adhere to the principles of the Communicative Approach, which is for the learner to achieve communicative competence. It is the hope of the advocates of dramatic techniques, that the learners will become more imaginative, creative and sensitive as they become more self-confident in the process of learning English as a Second Language. Perhaps the value of drama can be summed up by Susan Stern (1980) who looked into drama in second language learning from a psycholinguistic point of view. She stated that "*drama heightened self-esteem, motivation,*

spontaneity, increased capacity for empathy, and lowered sensitivity to rejection. All these facilitate communication and provide an appropriate psycholinguistic climate for language learning.”

V Conclusion

We can conclude that through the implementation of dialogic, pluralistic and intercultural teaching (Maher, 2007), with the objective of developing multiple intelligences, critical thinking, and cultural awareness it is likely that the creation of third spaces (Kostogriz, 2005; Kumaravadivelu, 2009; Stevensen, 2005) can happen. Moreover, this third space, is very likely to become visible, if teachers admit the need to create a different learning environment. As an advocator, and a relatively experienced teacher using drama activities in my language classes, I know it is not all plain sailing. In the beginning I made lots of mistakes (I still do) but despite all I recommend people giving it a try. Since, there aren't many opportunities to have training in this area, I would like to leave my contribution to those who would like to plunge into the adventure of teaching language through a wider text, than those in course books:

-To those teachers, willing to step outside their comfort zone and try something new to make the learning of EFL more effective and more enjoyable, not only for learners but for themselves too. I'd like to leave some guidelines in the appendices to help you get started.

The purpose of this work has been to reason about the benefits of teaching through drama. On the one hand, because the language used in this genre appears to be much more natural to the speaker, and on the other hand because the Play itself, may work as project work. Instead of segmented items of language learning, the students are provided with a context, supplied by the whole text, which is the play. The project evolves with the aim of the presentation. The language is acquired within the frame of the story, there is a conducting thread, which leads to a final product, the performance.

It would seem legitimate for language teachers to question their assumption about traditional methods of teaching EFL.

We need to be more aware of the positive influence of teaching through projects.

In increasing such awareness, we can add, not only motivation, but also relaxation to the language class, and in streamlining the environment of the classes, students may feel more "liberated" and improve their speaking skills.

Although many investigators, up to now, have put great effort to the important cause of the language teaching and learning process, society evolves and the role of educators is to keep up with these changes, in order to facilitate and support students' learning.

From my experience, there is great promise in applying drama to new methods of language teaching. So, as a result of this assumption, I suggest that in the future researchers in this field, as well as educators in a joint effort, consider the possibility of introducing curricula changes, in order to meet students' interests and raise motivation for learning EFL. Since there is irrefutable proof of the benefits of using drama in teaching EFL, why not consider the replacement of course books by selected Drama texts, with necessary adaptations to meet both students' expectations and the demands of the syllabus. Drama texts (plays) are a perfect vehicle for presenting speech to learners, since they provide them with plenty and varied examples of real language, and language usage. The nature of speech meets most of language' spoken features, and therefore fulfils the objective of communicative competence. Besides, the stage directions help to show other features of speech, namely paralinguistic features, like gestures, facial expressions, variation in speed, tone of voice, as well as stress, which help conveying the speakers' communicative intention, be it surprise, irony or to pose a question – these aspects of the language and language learning are offered to the students "wrapped up" in the text of the play, which they are invited to practice in a natural setting. With the performance as the aim, there is a motive for practice and for the

development of memorization skills, which will also contribute to consolidate the language acquisition. In addition, to the linguistic gains there is motivation, which is fundamental in learning, no matter what it is that is being learnt. Generally speaking classes are regarded by many students as boring routine. On the contrary, the environment of a rehearsal appears to be more attractive and enthusiastic, despite its embedded learning objective. Although it develops in a rather laid-back environment, students face it as a serious classroom activity, worth being carried out with the responsibility and commitment it requires. For all the reasons stated, I consider the use of plays pedagogically relevant and an authentic vehicle for students to communicate in the FL class.

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Appendices

A. Glossary

1. General Glossary of The History Boys

Cock-eyed – unlikely to succeed

Forefend /old use/ prohibit

Hath /old use/ has

Gobbets /old use/small piece of something

Pep talk – encouragement speech

Twat – very offensive word for a stupid or unpleasant person, female sex organ;

Shambles /*inf*/ very disorganized

Sod - rude to say something is unimportant

Twerp /*inf*/ person you think is stupid

Tosh /*inf*/ nonsense

Totty – vulgar word to refer to sexually attractive women

Wuss /spoken/ someone you think is weak or lacks courage

2. Glossary of terms expressing upper class English

Groan /literary/ moan

Lest - worried, concerned

3. Glossary of terms related to Academic context

Don - a university teacher, especially one who teaches at the universities of Oxford or Cambridge.

B. Essential features of speech - There is no common agreed technical lexicon of terms to describe features of conversation – some of the terms are more or less synonymous (such as *overlap* and *simultaneous speech*).

- Address
- Affective features
- Agenda
- Adjacency pairs (presupposition of turn-taking)
- Adverbials
- Back-channelling/Backchannels(acknowledgment of understanding)
- Backtracking
- Closing conversation
- Co-operative signals
- Cut Off
- Deictics
- Disagreement
- Facilitating mechanisms
- Feedback
- Fillers
- Foregrounding
- High considerateness/high involvement speakers
- Humour
- Implicatures (implication)
- Introducing new topics
- Metamessages
- Monitoring talk
- Opening conversation: request, question, offer
- Overlap (co-operative)/overlapping sequence
- Pauses
- Rapport talk/report talk
- Relevance
- Repetition
- Simultaneous speech
- Smooth shift – listener waits for speaker to finish and vice-versa
- Tag questions
- Turn-taking
- Types of conversation: child/adult, gender related, power related (e.g. doctor-patient)
- Uncompleted sentences
- Unsmooth shifts - listener doesn't wait for speaker to finish and vice-versa
- Utterance types: statement (declarative); question (interrogative); command (imperative); explanative.

C. Work less and teach more!

- Before you start teaching your students using a specific drama, you need to do preliminary work, like reading and understanding the play first. In other words, it would be good to “dissect” the text into parts and plan the language focus on each part.
- For each part, you can include related activities or games (i.e. miming or facial expression exercises)
- As you move from part to part, emphasise on the sub-themes of each part, highlighting the language aspects.
- If your students can't memorise all the lines, allow them to use scripts. Don't be scared to improvise the drama or scripts. Don't be too rigid in following the drama word by word. Since one of the aims is to develop students' imagination, allow some room for creativity.
- Involve everyone. You know your students well, so try to meet the multiple intelligences and the different learning styles you have in front of you.
- For the weaker students, give them short sentences to begin. Once they are more and more confident, give them more.
- Classroom drama is part of your class, and management is just as important as your other lessons. Let your students know the procedures for work.
- Using drama to teach grammar is probably a very good idea, as it fits the notion of “teaching grammar in context”.
- You can assess your students through drama classes, as long as you are accurate and descriptive about the rubric you build.
- Create an enjoyable environment. Do not go into the classroom and start lecturing about the drama. Make it a light moment that allows your students to learning English the fun way.
- Perhaps the value of drama can be summed up by Susan Stern (1980) who looked into drama in second language learning from a

psycholinguistic point of view. She stated that drama heightened self-esteem, motivation, spontaneity, increased capacity for empathy, and lowered sensitivity to rejection. All these facilitate communication and provide an appropriate psycholinguistic climate for language learning.