

**Original citation:**

Renart, Laura and Banegas, Dario Luis, eds. (2013) Roots & routes in language education : bi-multi-plurilingualism, interculturality and identity. Selected papers from the 38th FAAPI Conference. Buenos Aires: APIBA. ISBN 9789872030704

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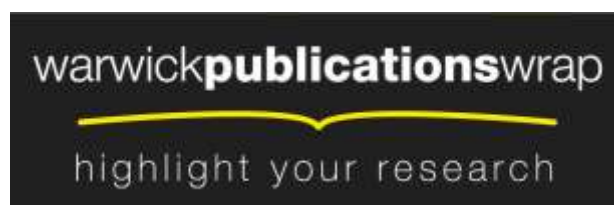
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ROOTS & ROUTES IN LANGUAGE EDUCATION

**Bi/Multi/Plurilingualism, interculturality and identity**

**Selected papers from the 38th FAAPI Conference**

*Edited by*

Laura Renart (*APIBA*) & Darío Luis Banegas (*APIZALS*)

**APIBA**  
Asociación de Profesores de  
Inglés de Buenos Aires



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Roots & routes in language education: Bi-multi-plurilingualism, interculturality and identity. Selected papers from the 38th FAAPI Conference / Laura Renart y Darío Luis Banegas. - 1a ed. - Buenos Aires: Asociación de Profesores de Inglés de Buenos Aires - A.P.I.B.A., 2013.

E-Book.

ISBN 978-987-20307-0-4

1. Capacitación Docente. 2. Enseñanza de Inglés. I. Banegas, Darío Luis II. Título

CDD 420.711

Fecha de catalogación: 10/07/2013

1° Edición: Septiembre de 2013.

Diseño: Sebastián Kladniew

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ISBN 978-987-20307-0-4



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Edited by

**Laura Renart**

Asociación de Profesores de Inglés de Buenos Aires (APIBA),

FAAPI 2013 Organising Association

**Darío Luis Banegas**

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# Acknowledgements

APIBA wishes to thank:

APIZALS for sharing their experience of editing the *37th FAAPI Conference Selected Papers* (2012) to support APIBA in producing the *38th FAAPI Conference Selected Papers* (2013).

The Members of the Academic Committee, all Members of various FAAPI Associations, for their conscientious and invaluable work.

# From the editors

While Laura is working on these selected papers in Buenos Aires, Darío is in Esquel. Laura knows that beyond her door, Spanish, Portuguese, English, Chinese, and many other languages are there, interacting, living, inhabiting different settings and identities which come to shape and be shaped by a constellation of voices. She knows that there are children and teenagers learning some of these languages at school, at home, with the help of their families and the internet. Darío knows that beyond his doors, Spanish, Welsh, Mapudungun, English and others are being used to create and recreate the world. He knows that there are children attending a mapudungun-español school in Lago Rosario, Chubut. All these languages attest to our roots and routes in all directions and reveal who we are.

Bi-multi-plurilingualism, interculturality and identity in language education are growing in different directions (Aronin & Singleton, 2008; Blackledge & Creese, 2010; Hornberger & Link, 2012; Kramsch, 2009; Taylor & Snoddon, 2013) and may be seen, as Weber and Horner (2012) discuss, in terms of languages or in terms of linguistic resources and repertoires (see Greer, 2010). An interest in bi-multi-plurilingualism, interculturality and identity is not new in FAAPI conferences and Argentina. Ferradas (2003, 2006, 2009) discusses the intercultural speaker, the concept of otherness, identity, and self by building bridges with literature. Banfi and Rettaroli (2008) and Renart (2003) have also contributed to this interest by examining bilingualism and bilingual education in Argentina.

The XXXVIII FAAPI Conference focused on such a fascinating topic of language education and the 20 selected papers which constitute the body of this publication evidence



the different branches we may find and explore. We may group the contributions under three main categories: (1) reflective and theoretical discussions (Papers 2, 3, 6, 10, 13, 14, 16, and 19), (2) research-based reports (Papers 1, 4, 7, 11, and 12), and (3) classroom accounts and materials (Papers, 5, 8, 9, 15, 16, 18, 20). It is also remarkable to see how unifying areas of interest emerge from the authors: language teacher education (e.g. Papers 2, 7, 9, 10, 11, 16, 19, and 20), literature (e.g. Papers 3, 15, 15, and 19), and the use of digital resources (e.g. Papers 12, 13, 15, 18, and 20). In terms of languages, it may be interesting to note that two papers (7 and 14) are written in español and the rest in English.

Editing these contributions has been a powerful learning experience and a drive to engage in critical examination of the literature, reflective practices, and research. The presence of concepts such as border pedagogy (Paper 6), digital identity (Paper 13), digital narratology (Paper 15), and aprendizajes intraculturales (Paper 14) has been eye openers to new routes which may motivate us all to develop our curiosity further. Curiosity killed the cat. Yet, curiosity may help teachers live professional lives more fully.

Laura and Darío

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# From FAAPI President

Siempre es motivo de satisfacción para FAAPI no sólo la realización de un nuevo Congreso, sino también la publicación de una Selección de Artículos presentados para cada oportunidad.

Este Congreso organizado por APIBA en Buenos Aires pone en blanco y negro tópicos que están en la agenda de la enseñanza de las lenguas en los últimos años, cuyo abordaje es más que oportuno realizar.

La enseñanza de las lenguas tiene facetas fascinantes. Esta tarea ha sido motivo de interés no sólo de profesores, sino mucho de pedagogos, lingüistas y psicólogos. Este desvelo por la enseñanza de las lenguas permite contar con una larga tradición que se remonta al siglo XVI, desde el método de “gramática-traducción” descrito por primera vez por Valentin Meidinger (1756-1822), creador del método y con el fin de enseñar el francés. A partir de entonces, han sobrevenido nuevos métodos y enfoques, y llegamos a este siglo XXI con la globalización –con sus luces y sus sombras- la internacionalización que deviene de la primera, y la irrupción de la tecnología, los medios sociales, paredes del aula que caen para dar lugar allí aprendizaje ubicuo, donde la sacralización del libro se desdibuja para dar lugar a nuevos modos de comunicación y aprendizaje.

Vivimos rodeados de sofisticados aparatos electrónicos -que habrían hasta intimidado a nuestros ancestros- que facilitan ¿? la comunicación con “los otros” que hasta pueden están lejos. Pero debemos subirnos a la ola, y buscar familiarizarnos con nuevos términos que se van acuñando: lectoespectador, internauta, interactividad, multitareas, multimodalidad,

multimedialidad, hibridización, aprendizaje ubicuo; sin dejar de lado conceptos sociolingüísticos como la otredad y el racismo.

En los años 1970s se empezó a manejar el concepto de competencia comunicativa; en este milenio, ya hablamos del desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa intercultural, ya que el cambio de centuria nos enfrenta cambios socio-históricos, y debemos estar preparados para desaprender lo aprendidos y reaprender un nuevo rol como educadores.

Y esta re-adaptación pone a los profesores en la encrucijada de decidir o seguir las directivas institucionales de que los celulares deben desaparecer del aula, o demostrar que nos sirven para desarrollar las clases, usando *Facebook* o *Twitter* de manera significativa. También irrumpen en el aula las redes sociales y las tablets, de tamaños diversos, con un lector de libros, que puede ilustrar una clase de lengua o literatura.

Es un fenómeno que se da en todas las sociedades, y en términos de Clifford, se trata de definir términos relativo a los viajes, en condiciones globales de cambio: las rutas (routes) que se transitan, y las raíces (roots) que se poseen, que forjan la individualidad y la historia de particulares mapas e historias, con conceptos como grupos minoritarios, inmigrantes o etnicidad ligados a los caminos (roads) que recorren las personas. Es ver a los inmigrantes como personas que luchan para aprender una lengua que les permita participar en la vida social de la nueva comunidad, ya que su sentido de identidad está unido de manera inextricable con la lengua materna.

En Argentina dada la conformación de la población, se dice que “venimos de los barcos”, dicho que deja fuera a los grupos originarios. Entonces cuestiones de identidad, la otredad, las lenguas en contacto, el bilingüismo, el plurilingüismo son una constante. En

una vuelta de tuerca, asistimos a la revalorización de nuestra L1 en el aprendizaje, impensada hace veinte años.

Sudhoff juega con las palabras *wor(l)d*, mundo-palabra, cuando señala que el aprendiente interculturalmente competente es más consciente de las convenciones culturales que subyacen al mundo/a las palabras con que se encuentra y usa, que a la gramática y la forma. Es que justamente el reconocimiento de las similitudes y diferencias culturales promueve claramente el internacionalismo, que es el vínculo entre grupos por encima de las fronteras de los estados y naciones, al decir de Byram.

Es sobre estos temas tan convocantes que distintos colegas han decidido generosamente compartir sus estudios, experticia y conclusiones con otros colegas.

Están invitados a leerlos, y a través de ellos, seguir abriendo puertas que dan al conocimiento, el disfrute intelectual y el aprendizaje continuo. ¡FAAPI se regocija!

Prof. Cristina Emilia Mayol, M.A.

Presidente

# 38th FAAPI Conference



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# **Selected Papers**



# 1 Lessons from research on immersion programmes in Canada

Fred Genesee  
McGill University

## 1. Introduction

Several popular forms of French immersion are available for English-speaking students in Canada; they vary with respect to the grade when French-L2 is first used to teach academic subjects and how much academic content instruction is provided through the L2. Academic content refer here to subjects prescribed in the school curriculum whose primary focus is not language –such as mathematics, science, and history. Immersion in languages other than French exists in Canada; but, the focus in this review will be on French immersion. In *early total immersion*, all school subjects in Kindergarten to Grade 2 are in French. Instruction in English begins in Grade 3 and increases in each subsequent grade until about 50% of instruction is provided in French and 50% in English by the end of elementary school (age 11). In *early partial immersion*, about 50% of instruction in each elementary school grade is provided in each language, beginning in Kindergarten. In *middle immersion*, use of the L2 for content instruction is delayed until grade 3, and in *late*

*immersion* the L2 is not used for content instruction until grade 7 (more detailed descriptions of these programs are provided in Genesee, 2004, and in Paradis, Genesee, & Crago, 2011). Students in middle and late immersion receive traditional French-L2 instruction in the grades preceding use of French for content instruction.

The following general goals are common to these programs:

- age/grade-appropriate levels of competence in speaking, listening, reading and writing in the L1,
- advanced levels of functional proficiency in the L2, and
- grade-appropriate levels of achievement in prescribed academic subjects (e.g., mathematics, science, history).

These general goals have motivated much of the research reviewed in this article. Student learning outcomes have usually been evaluated by comparing the performance of immersion students to that of students in the same grade in monolingual school programs that use the L1 for all instruction or to their performance on standardized tests with norms. In Genesee's research, immersion and non-immersion students were selected to be comparable with respect to socio-economic status and academic ability so that these factors would not influence test performance in favor of one group.

The following review is organized with respect to L1 outcomes, achievement in non-language content subjects, and L2 outcomes. Findings within each of these sections are organized according to important questions which are often asked about each of these topics. Most research has evaluated the learning outcomes of students in general. However, many educators, parents, and policy-makers have questioned the suitability of immersion education for students who might be at risk for academic difficulty in school. This issue is

addressed in a section on the *Suitability of Immersion Education for All Students*. This is followed by a brief section on *Pedagogical Issues*.

## **2. Student outcomes**

### **2.1. First language outcomes**

#### *2.1.1. Do immersion students acquire the same competence in English-L1 as students in monolingual programs?*

Evaluations of immersion students' L1 skills have consistently shown that, in the long run, there is no significant difference between their skills and those of students in monolingual English programs (Genesee, 2004; Lambert & Tucker, 1972; Swain & Lapkin, 1982). In the case of evaluations of early total immersion, it has been found that immersion students often score significantly lower than non-immersion students during the primary grades, when all instruction is in French, on tests of reading and writing in English; they demonstrate no such lags in speaking and listening comprehension. These lags disappear within one year of receiving instruction in English. The rapid catch-up in reading and writing in English that early total immersion students experience is often attributed to the transfer of reading and writing skills in French to English and the fact that they have extensive exposure to English outside school. The same pattern of results has been found in immersion-type programs for majority language students in other countries – for example, in Japanese-English immersion programs in Japan (Bostwick, 2001), Russian-Estonian immersion programs in Estonia (Mehisto & Asser, 2007), and Spanish-English bilingual programs in the U.S. (Lindholm-Leary, 2001).

### *2.1.2. Is more and early instruction in English advantageous?*

Evaluations of alternative forms of immersion have indicated that students acquire the same levels of L1 competence as non-immersion students regardless of when instruction in English begins (early vs. delayed or late) and regardless of how much instruction they receive in English (50% in the beginning or none) (Genesee, 1981). To the contrary, there is evidence that, in some cases, the English language skills of immersion students are superior to those of students in monolingual non-immersion programs despite reduced exposure (Lambert, Genesee, Holobow, & Chartrand, 1993). The home language advantage demonstrated by some immersion students has been attributed to their extended exposure to French in school which, in turn, is thought to have additive effects on their English language development.

### *2.1.3. Does linguistic similarity matter?*

Immersion-type programs have been implemented in a variety of languages in communities around the world, including languages that are typologically different; for example, Mohawk-English (Jacobs & Cross, 2001), Hawaiian-English (Slaughter, 1997), Japanese-English (Bostwick, 2001), Hebrew-French-English (Genesee & Lambert, 1983), Chinese-English (Johnson, 1997), Estonian-Russian (Mehisto & Asser, 2007), and Swedish-Finnish (Björklund, 1998). Some of these language combinations also entail different orthographies (e.g., Japanese-English and Chinese-English). There is no evidence from evaluations of these programs that typological differences, with or without orthographic differences, influence student outcomes significantly.

## **2.2. Academic outcomes**

### *2.2.1. Do immersion students attain the same levels of academic achievement as non-immersion students?*

Evaluations of immersion students' achievement in their non-language school subjects indicate that they achieve the same levels of competence as comparable students in monolingual English language programs -- in mathematics, science, history, and other subjects. Parity with non-immersion students is often exhibited even in early total immersion programs when students receive all academic instruction through their L2, provided the assessment is conducted in the L2 and modifications are made to take into account that full competence in the L2 has not been acquired. Parity with students in monolingual programs has been found even in the case of secondary school students who were studying advanced level mathematics, science, physics, and other school subjects in French (Genesee, 2004).

### *2.2.2. Is the academic achievement of immersion students with low academic ability jeopardized?*

Parents and educators often believe that students with below average academic ability are not good candidates for immersion because they will struggle to acquire new skills and knowledge if they are taught through a non-native language in which they lack proficiency. Genesee (1976) found that below average students in immersion scored at the same level as below average students in monolingual English programs on a variety of academic achievement measures, including standardized achievement tests and examinations mandated by the government, in subjects such as mathematics and science. While the

below average students in both programs scored significantly lower than their average and above average peers in their respective programs, the below average immersion students were not further disadvantaged in academic achievement as a result of participation in immersion.

Students who struggle academically in school are often advised to switch to a monolingual program on the assumption that they will struggle less in a monolingual English program. In fact, academic difficulty is often the main reason for students switching out of French immersion in Canada. Indeed, Bruck (1985a, 1985b) found that students who switched out of early French immersion in Montreal scored significantly lower on a number of achievement measures than students, on average, who remained in immersion. She also found, however, that the academic difficulties of the students who switched were no worse than those of a sub-group of students who remained in immersion despite low academic performance. Of particular interest, the immersion students who switched expressed significantly more negative attitudes toward schooling (and immersion in particular) and exhibited more behavioral problems than students who remained in immersion despite academic difficulties. Bruck suggested that it was not academic difficulty per se that caused the students to switch out of immersion; rather, they switched because they had motivational and behavioral problems coping with poor academic performance.

## **2.3 Second language outcomes**

### *2.3.1. What level of L2 competence do immersion students acquire?*

The French-L2 proficiency of Canadian immersion students has been found to be significantly superior to that of non-immersion students in monolingual English programs with conventional French-L2 instruction which usually consists of instruction for about 45-50 minutes in French per day with a focus on vocabulary and grammar. This has been found to be true for speaking, listening, reading, and writing. In comparison with students who speak French as a native language, immersion students often score at the same level on tests that assess comprehension skills –listening and reading. Their performance on tests of language production - speaking and writing - are generally very impressive. They are able to understand and make themselves understood in all school contexts, and they demonstrate an uninhibited and creative use of French for communication that is seldom achieved by students in conventional French-L2 programs. At the same time, immersion students' use of French is less than native-like: (a) they make numerous grammatical errors; (b) they often have restricted vocabulary and simplified grammar; and (c) their usage is non-idiomatic (see Lyster, 2007). These gaps in L2 competence have led to discussions of how best to integrate language and content instruction to maximize L2 proficiency, a point discussed later in the section on Pedagogical Issues (e.g., Lyster, 2007; Swain, 1998).

Research on immigrant children who spoke neither English nor French as an L1 and who participated in French immersion programs has shown that they performed as well as monolingual children who spoke only English (Swain, Lapkin, & Hart, 1990; Swain & Lapkin, 2005). Of particular note, Swain and her colleagues found that acquisition of literacy skills in the heritage language (L1) had a significant and positive correlation with the

immigrant students' acquisition of French-as-a-third language. These findings underline the importance of promoting literacy in immigrant students' heritage language.

### *2.3.2. Does competence in the L2 depend on students' level of academic ability?*

Studies of elementary and secondary school immersion students have revealed interesting and differential effects of academic ability on L2 achievement. Genesee (1976) found that below average students in both early and late immersion scored lower on tests of French reading and writing than average and above average students in the same programs; similarly, the average students in both program types scored lower than the above average students. In contrast, while average students in late immersion also showed advantages on measures of speaking and listening in comparison to average and below average students, there were no differences among the ability sub-groups in the early immersion program on measures of L2 speaking and listening. Overall, these results suggest that early immersion is more effective for students with different levels of academic ability than immersion programs at the secondary level.

### *2.3.4. Does more L2 exposure result in higher levels of L2 proficiency?*

The relationship between L2 exposure and achievement in immersion programs is complex. On the one hand, students in *total* immersion programs generally acquire higher levels of French proficiency than students in *partial* immersion programs (Genesee, 2004; see also Cenoz, 2008). On the other hand, students in two-year late immersion (grades 7 and 8) have been found sometimes to perform as well as early total immersion students despite the fact that the former have significantly less exposure to French in school (Genesee, 1981).



One explanation for these findings is that older L2 learners need relatively less exposure to the L2 because they are better learners overall than younger learners. As well, older learners who are already able to read and write in the L1 are able to transfer these skills to French, making learning French relatively efficient. Students in late immersion are also self-selecting and, thus, are highly motivated to do well.

Pedagogical factors are also probably important. Evidence for this comes from research that compared two types of late immersion – one that was teacher-centered and one that was student-centered (Stevens, 1983). In the teacher-centered program, native English-speaking students spent 80% of their school day in French, while in the student-centered program students spent 50% of their school day in French. Stevens (1983) found that, despite the time advantage of the students in the teacher-centered program, students in the student-centered program scored as well on a variety of French language measures. She argued that students in the student-centered program achieved such impressive French language skills because their program permitted more active use of French and, as well, learning was more individualization insofar as students were given opportunities to choose what they would study and how they would meet curricular objectives.

### *2.3.5 Is age an important factor in L2 achievement?*

It is widely believed that ‘younger is better’ when it comes to L2 learning. However, evidence in support of this belief most often comes from studies on L2 learning in non-school settings. Evidence from research in schools is more complex. Research in Canada has shown, on the one hand, that students in early total French immersion generally achieve significantly higher levels of French proficiency than students in programs with a delayed

(middle elementary grades) or late (secondary school) starting grade (Genesee, 1981; see also Wesche, Toews-Janzen and MacFarlane, 1996, for a review). On the other hand, Canadian research also shows that students in two-year late immersion can sometimes achieve the same or almost the same levels of proficiency in French as students in early total immersion in some domains of language, even though early immersion students begin studying through French earlier and may have had 2 to 3 times more exposure to French than late immersion students (Genesee, 1981). Similar findings in favor of older learners have also been reported in evaluations of less intensive forms of L2 instruction in other countries (e.g., Burstall, 1974; Krashen, Long & Scarcella, 1979).

### **3. The suitability of immersion for all students**

Educators, parents and policy makers often believe that students who are at risk for academic difficulty should not participate in immersion because such students are likely to struggle in monolingual programs and, therefore, are likely to struggle even more in programs where they are taught through a language they do not know. Research in Canada has examined the suitability of immersion for at-risk students with the following learner and background characteristics which often put them at a disadvantage in school (Genesee, 2007): (a) low academic ability (or intelligence) (Genesee, 1976), (b) low socio-economic status (Bruck, Tucker, & Jakimik, 1975; Genesee, 2004), (c) poor L1 abilities (Bruck, 1978, 1982), and (d) minority ethnic group status (Genesee, 1992; Jacobs & Cross, 2001). It has been found consistently that English-speaking students who are at risk for the above reasons can attain the same levels of competence in English-L1 and in academic domains in immersion as comparable at-risk students in monolingual programs. At the

same time, at-risk students benefit from immersion by acquiring advanced levels of functional proficiency in French.

#### **4. Pedagogical issues**

Notwithstanding the overall effectiveness of various forms of immersion, there is concern over students' competence in French, as noted earlier. There are several possible explanations why students' in immersion struggle with some aspects of French. It may be that the strong focus on content that characterizes immersion teacher instruction focuses learners' attention on content more than on language per se. In other words, as long as students understand what is being said about content and as long as they can communicate about academic content in meaningful ways, the accuracy with which they use language to communicate may go unnoticed, unchecked, and, thus, underdeveloped. Moreover, teachers and students are not held accountable for L2 outcomes to the same extent as they are for achievement in their other school subjects. It may also be that teachers who are teaching content through French-L2 tend to rely on linguistic forms, including vocabulary, grammar, and discourse-related skills, that students have already acquired in order to ensure that input about content is comprehensible and mastered. Thus, the complexity and accuracy of students' competence in French may be limited by the language input they receive from their teachers. In a related vein, errors in language made by students during content classes may receive little or unsystematic attention from teachers for the sake of keeping communication going, but with the unfortunate side effect of stunting students' accurate use of French. In any case, educators and researchers in Canada, and the U.S., have turned their attention on how to

optimize language learning in immersion programs while maintaining high levels of academic achievement.

There is growing recognition that it is critical when teaching through an L2 that teachers systematically and explicitly promote development of students' L2 skills at all times since students have little opportunity to learn the L2 outside school. This means that teachers who are teaching non-language-based content subjects, such as mathematics or science, should be familiar with the academic language skills of their discipline and be able to plan instruction that promotes those language skills at the same time as students are learning discipline-specific skills and knowledge. It is especially important that this be done during the lower grades so that students can comprehend complex academic content taught through the L2 in higher grade. If students do not acquire advanced academic language skills in the L2 early on, they will not have the sophisticated language and literacy skills they need to handle academic instruction taught through the second language in the higher grades. Researchers and educators working in Canada and in the U.S. have proposed strategies for promoting language development in immersion programs (e.g., Echevarría, Vogt & Short, 2008; Genesee, 1991; Hamayan, Genesee, & Cloud, 2013; Lyster, 2007; Snow, Met & Genesee, 1989; Swain, 1998).

## **5. Summary**

Various forms of immersion education have been implemented and evaluated in Canada. In general, these programs have been shown to be very effective. In particular,

- 1) English-speaking students in immersion programs demonstrate competence in their L1 that is comparable to, and in some cases better than, that of similar students in monolingual programs.
- 2) Immersion students attain grade-appropriate levels of achievement in academic domains.
- 3) Immersion students achieve levels of functional proficiency in French-L2 that are significantly superior to that of students who received conventional French-L2 instruction.
- 3) However, the L2 competence of immersion students can be enhanced if teachers are more systematic and explicit in integrating language and content instruction, especially if these efforts are coordinated across grade levels.
- 4) L2 outcomes are also enhanced when students are given plenty of opportunities to use the language actively in interaction with teachers and other students.
- 5) Immersion education has been shown to be effective even with students who might be at risk for difficulty in school due to low academic ability, poor first language skills, and low socio-economic background.
- 6) In general, students who have greater exposure to French-L2 achieve higher levels of proficiency than students who have less exposure.
- 7) In contrast, more exposure and instruction in English-L1 does not necessarily result in greater levels of proficiency in that language.

There are many advantages to bilingualism – the ability to communicate and interact with others, the ability to access information from electronic and other sources in multiple languages, for cognitive enrichment, and for personal, cultural, and educational enrichment.

Second/foreign language immersion programs are an effective way to students to acquire competence in additional languages.

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## 2 The landscape of English language teaching: Roots, routes and ramifications

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### 1. Introduction

This paper will sketch the current landscape of the teaching of the English language in Argentina and, to some extent, Latin America. It will trace the roots that reflect the background of English language teachers and English language professionals. Then it will outline the options or routes followed by teachers as part of their continuing professional development and work life. Finally, the ramifications of these options in relation to our context, with particular emphasis on the past two decades, will be presented and some current trends will be briefly discussed.

## 2. Roots and routes

When we explore the professional roots of English language teachers we first turn towards their educational background. As members of FAAPI associations in Argentina what teachers have in common is a degree of Teacher of English. This may have been obtained at a university or teachers' college; it may be generic, i.e. for all levels or specializing to teach in Primary or Secondary schools; it may even have been designed as a four or two-and-a-half-year degree. However, in spite of this evident diversity, many teachers are not aware that their course of studies can trace its roots to the pioneer plan included in the decree issued by President Julio Argentino Roca and his Education Secretary, Dr. Juan Ramón Fernández on February 10<sup>th</sup>, 1904 as part of the creation of the institution currently known as IES en Lenguas Vivas "Juan Ramón Fernández" (see Banfi & Moyano, 2003). The number in between parenthesis indicates the number of weekly periods taken by students over the course of each year.

<b>1<sup>st</sup> year</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> year</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> year</b>
Foreign Language (12)	Foreign Language(12)	Foreign Language(12)
Geography (3)	History (3)	History (3)
Special Pedagogy(12)	Special Pedagogy(12)	Special Pedagogy(12)
Spanish and its literature (3)	Spanish and its literature (3)	Spanish and its literature (3)
Argentine History(3)	Argentine History(3)	Argentine History(3)
General Psychology(3)	Child Psychology (2)	Moral and Logic(3)

This is my translation of the Spanish terms used in the decree. Note that where the translation says Geography / History, the original plan referred to *Geografía / Historia de ese pueblo* to draw a distinction with Argentine Geography / History. This is owing to the fact that this generic plan was intended for teacher training programmes in English, French,

German and Italian. In those days, the reference to “the people who speak that language” did not require further clarification. Nowadays it could be considered a more ambiguous term and, yet, the content of the courses has not varied significantly. In the first instance only English and French were implemented. This programme was a great innovation for the time in that it provided specific and specialised education for language teachers, something that was viewed as a matter for the State to be involved in directly. This model would be emulated and expanded in subsequent plans in different institutions at various stages.

A trait that appears evident in that plan, and that has continued to be present in the design of these programmes, is its interdisciplinary nature. Contents and approaches are drawn from different disciplines and, with the passing of time, new disciplines that emerged were incorporated, e.g. (Applied) Linguistics, Phonetics, Discourse Analysis, to mention some. One of the current challenges in the curricular design of teacher education programmes is, in fact, finding ‘space’ in any given plan for all the content areas that are deemed ‘necessary’. A related challenge is the nature of teacher educator appointments and the level of (in-) flexibility when it comes to updating content in rigidly assigned slots. This is not a minor issue and is linked to the academic vs. professional nature of the programmes and institutions. Pierce (1991) writes:

Although most studies fail to define the term [discipline] explicitly, they typically assume that boundaries of disciplines closely follow those of academic departments. The use of such boundaries may seem to fix overly concrete limits on a highly abstract phenomenon, excluding too large a number of people with interest in the subject. But its importance in creating and maintaining disciplinary communities makes the academic department the building block from which disciplines are created. (Pierce, 1991, pp. 22-23)

A related aspect of the programmes that has been present from the outset is the devotion of considerable time to the language development of prospective teachers, hence the presence of a significant number of hours allotted to 'Foreign Language.' This overarching objective has on occasion distorted the boundaries between instrumental content/skills development and those areas that are discipline-bound (see Banfi & Iummato, 1998).

At a comparative level, the common ground that Argentine teachers share may lead us to the mistaken belief that this is the way teachers of English have always been educated everywhere. However, models for educating foreign and second language teachers are as varied as the contexts and traditions where they exist. There are various reviews of foreign language teacher education in Europe (Kelly et al, 2002), in various countries from a US perspective (Pufahl, Rhodes & Christian, 2000), in Chile (Vivanco Torres, 2012), in Mexico (Ordoñez, 2009), in Colombia (Moss & Salamanca, 2012). Some elements that can be observed in the programmes in many countries in Latin America are the recent creation or major reform of English language teacher education programmes reflecting the expansion of English language teaching in schools and the active participation of agencies such as the American Embassy and the British Council.

The parameters for differentiation are not only geographical or national but temporal. The late 1990s saw the passing of new educational legislation (*Ley Federal de Educación – LFE – Ley 24.195* and *Ley de Educación Superior – LES – Ley 24.521*) and the birth of *Licenciaturas* for teachers (i.e. two year university conversion courses for holders of tertiary level degrees) and postgraduate courses, particularly Master's programmes. There

was also the formalization of different in-service and continuing education courses and programmes with greater or lesser recognition at an official level. Professional associations have played a part in providing information about these programmes as they appeared and expanded to ensure that teachers had access to the information necessary to make a choice (e.g. Moyano, 1999a & b for the summary produced by APIBA following the 1999 APIBA Seminar). They also participated in the field of courses with accreditation. Crucially, they have acted as networks where teachers could share experiences and information (see APIBA SIGs, Kandel, 2002).

A concomitant effect of the *LES* was the segmentation and differentiation of two sub-sectors within the Higher Education area, i.e. ‘universities’ and ‘non-universities institutions,’ as labelled in the law, a clear distinction in status. A direct effect of the passing of the *LES* and a related law concerning funding of education (*Ley 24.049 – Ley de Transferencia de Servicios Educativos*) was the transfer of non-university higher education institutions to the sphere of the provinces and the City of Buenos Aires. There is insufficient time to analyse this situation in depth here (see Banfi 2013 and forthcoming), but we can say that the effect has not been altogether felicitous in strengthening the teaching profession and raising the status of teachers. Several projects to reform the *LES* have been under study in Congress but have not yet obtained sufficient consensus to redress this situation, as well as other shortcomings of the current law. It would be most important for teacher’s associations, as well as colleges, to play a role in these discussions, although to date they have been underrepresented.

Teachers' multiple and often overlapping jobs have taken them down various roads. Teachers of English in Argentina may work in the state or private sector or both. They may teach at one or more educational levels (i.e. Pre-school, Primary, Secondary, Higher Education). The courses they teach may fall under the label of 'curricular' or 'extra-curricular'. Other possible, and often concurrent, jobs may include: materials writer, examiner for examiner body, consultant or advisor for different institutions, teacher educator, etc. (see APIBA, 2006). Along these paths teachers have often needed to go back to 'school' to update their knowledge-base and acquire new skills in areas as diverse as educational management, age group specialization, school management, online teaching, etc., all in the spirit of the much-discussed continuing professional development (see Craft, 2000 and Banfi, 1997). This often took teachers down the road of degree-plus programmes (NB: *Licenciaturas* are undergraduate degrees according to Argentine law, even if for teachers they are second degrees, see Marquina, 2004 for clarification), and has frequently implied making a choice between specializing, changing track (or even discipline), or taking a broad outlook.

Along the road teachers often realize that there are different benefits and challenges associated with the diverse professional and educational paths they have chosen.

### **3. Ramifications**

Now we turn to some further changes and trends that have characterised the last two decades and that have had considerable impact on the education and professional practice of English language teachers in our country and, to some extent, in our region. One

overarching feature that has characterised this period has been that of almost permanent change. This trait is not exclusive to our area or profession but probably a defining characteristic of the *Zeitgeist*. Let us concentrate on those changes that are most specific to teachers of English.

As we have mentioned, the last two decades have seen the emergence of a range of new degrees and institutions that provide teaching qualifications and degrees-plus qualifications for teachers. During the 1990s we saw a number of instances of what has come to be known as Transnational Education (Banfi, 2002). Whereas before the only possibility to specialise at postgraduate level was to change discipline or go abroad, almost overnight, a number of options became locally available. Also, the passing of the *Ley de Educación Superior* led to the appearance of different *Licenciaturas*, initially the only way, as an intermediate step, to access local postgraduate courses (Álvarez & Dávila, 2005). This would later change with the introduction of *Artículo 39bis* of the law (see Banfi, 2003), but *Licenciaturas*, nevertheless, became part of our landscape to the present as are some MA programmes of interest to teachers. We have yet to see if full-blown four-year *Licenciaturas* and Doctorates in relevant disciplines are to follow.

Another change in educational options for teachers was the emergence of new types of providers of different kinds of certification and accreditation. This is a 21<sup>st</sup> century development that is still very much in its early stages. Various agents are taking part in this growing ‘market’ ranging from university extension departments to publishers and examination groups, sometimes in conjunction, and, in many cases, with profit motivations.

We will probably see considerable growth in this area (for a discussion of the issues, see McGettigan, 2011).

In parallel to these formal developments, and to some extent preceding them, we have seen great expansion in the area of the organisation of conferences, workshops, courses and other events ... of all sorts. Many senior members of our associations remember when the association was the single most important, if not the only, source of such activities (e.g. see testimonies in Day, 2002). This was some time ago, however. Over the last two decades we have experienced what I will label a *Cambalache* situation (for an early discussion of this, see Banfi, 2000). In the very mixed bag of events we often find a wide variation in the quality of speakers, material, content, etc. If we review a list of events presented as 'teacher development' in a given year or even month, we find pseudo-conferences organised by an individual with a profit motive, or sponsored activities with commercial backing; presentations given by researchers or practitioners, others by individuals with vested interests (e.g. author or bestselling book looking for a platform); and even activities almost akin to yoga or Reiki. It is not a question of dismissing any of the above as more or less useful or even attempting to rank them: it is clear that they are essentially different and hardly comparable. Some of these events have helped communicate certain notions, methods and approaches vary widely. Thus, ideas such as multiple intelligences (Gardner 1983, 1993), intercultural approaches (Byram, 1997 Colbert, 2003, MEGCBA 2009), Task-Based Learning (Willis, 1996, Willis & Willis, 2007), CLIL and Content-Based instruction (see Mehisto, Marsh & Frigols 2008, Met 1999), bi-, multi- and plurilingual education (Genesee, 2002, García, 2009, and Hamel, 2008), the benefits of an early start in language learning (Banfi, 2010 and MEGCBA, 2010), and the educational value of teaching



additional languages (MEGCBA, 2001 and Banfi, 2012) are now present in the rationales of teacher's projects as described, for example, in the *III Jornada de Intercambio de Experiencias Pedagógicas de Idioma Extranjero de los DDEE 19 y 21* in July of this year as well as the *Jornadas Buenos Aires y sus Idiomas*, held at the Legislature of the City of Buenos Aires since 2010. Professional associations play a crucial role in the development of critical appreciation necessary to develop awareness among their members of the difference between activities of substance and relevance and those that have other objectives. In other words, there is a place for everything, but different things belong in different places.

The growth of post-degree activities, particularly postgraduate degrees, has led to the incipient emergence of research in the area. Much of the work done as part of these courses is contributing to a better understanding of the issues in the field, but its reach is still limited, often to the institution or even a cohort of students. There is still great need to share and communicate these findings. We should be particularly tentative in this respect because, even though we may have entered an *Age of Research* (Banfi, 2007), there is still a scarcity of research positions or positions that combine research and teaching: individuals have commitment and good will to conduct research, but a proper research structure requires institutionalised support and initiatives. There are some opportunities for research projects such as those promoted by the *INFD Instituto Nacional de Formación Docente*, but there is almost no room for what could be labelled 'curiosity-driven research'. There is much to learn from those who have explored educational research in other contexts (e.g. Genesee, 2006).

The need to form networks among teachers and communicate the results of research has led to the appearance of different publications and forums. The *English Language Journal – ELJ*, edited by Aldo Blanco between 1970 and 1989, was a pioneer publication, possibly too innovative for its time. The newsletter and e-forum *ELT News and Views*, published between 1994 and 2000 by Martin Eayrs were important in disseminating information and getting the ball rolling. Both these publications were the result of the determined effort of individuals and had difficulties to be sustained in the long run. The annual *Revista Lenguas Vivas* published by the IES en Lenguas Vivas “J.R. Fernández” has institutional support and brings the concerns and work of academics and practitioners from the different languages taught at that institution. The launch of the *Argentinian Journal of Applied Linguistics - AJAL* in 2013 is an auspicious event that will hopefully mark the beginning of a new era in academic publications in our midst. Issues such as the Open Access debate are bound to have great impact among us as well (for an introduction to this controversial debate, see Freedman & Anyangwe, 2012). As Milner-Gulland (2013) very aptly puts it (my emphasis):

At the moment most open access is based on an author-pays mode. However this also risks imposing substantial inequalities, and means that many people who are best placed to translate their knowledge into practice – authors outside academia and in poorer countries – are precluded from publishing their work. Put crudely, **we are moving from a position in which the less privileged can write but not read, to one where they can read but not write** – neither is conducive to open dialogue.

Much has been said about the increasing access to information from all over the world that globalization and information technologies have brought. This access has forever

changed the way language teachers can obtain material for teaching (e.g. authentic audio and video texts, ready-made teaching materials, automated exercises, etc.) as well as academic and professional publications for teachers (for very early examples, see Banfi & Day, 1995). A question that is inescapable if we think about access to information, though, is that of selection. How, assuming it is true that we have access to ‘everything there is’ (and that is a leap in itself), are we supposed to sift through it and get to what really matters to us?

In the professional arena the status of teachers has been much discussed (e.g. Banfi, 1997, 2006). There is a clear tension between two quite distinct outlooks: one that views teachers as professionals vs. another that considers them workers. This tension manifests itself in the organisational structures of professional associations on the one hand and unions on the other, with significant differences in outlook. Related to this is the porous nature of the English language teaching profession. A defining characteristic of associations is the need to possess officially recognised teaching qualifications as the entry requirement to the profession. Yet, as we are well aware, there are numerous cases of individuals who engage in the teaching of English, and even teacher development and coordination, without any such qualifications. Some analyse this as a consequence of the increasing demand for teachers of English that makes it possible for students, and even those who have no specific studies, to get formal and informal jobs as teachers. Others refer to the fact that there are so many job opportunities for teachers of English, many much more ‘glamorous’ than the classroom, that many qualified teachers opt out of the education system. Yet others blame the deceitful and unscrupulous for exploiting the ignorance and misconceptions that the general public have as regards what it takes to be a teacher of English. They are probably

all partly right. Whatever the case, the fact is that we are dealing with an increasingly heterogeneous and diverse sector with multiple needs and interests. This is a challenge to professional associations as they cannot think of an ideal or unique type of member but rather an increasingly diversified reality. The dichotomy between Native and Non-Native Teachers interestingly presented and reconciled by Peter Medgyes seems to be nowadays moving in favour of the Non-Native Teacher (though, see Phillipson, 2009 on the native speaker fallacy). Given the plethora of resources and the ubiquitousness of English (internet, SAP, cable, see Graddol, 1997) we can safely say that the balance is tipped in favour of the professional teacher to the detriment of “the native speaker with a vocation for teaching”.

If we go beyond the individual level or even the sector and we look around us, we will notice that many of the changes we have discussed so far have taken place as a consequence of changes further afield that may involve policy (educational and other), markets, and other collectives. Teachers cannot abstract themselves away from these changes or, if they do, they will have to learn to live with their effects. Crucially, in the period we are discussing, there have been policy changes that have affected the teaching of English specifically. There has been legislation and government regulation at the national and jurisdictional levels on curricular design and teacher education. In these changes, the teaching profession and its representative organisations have had limited representation. This is partly because we simply lack the strength in numbers and dedicated resources that other groups have. On the other hand, we have seen the expansion of the teaching of languages and, in particular, English. This is a worldwide phenomenon but in some countries and regions it has had quite significant impact in terms of the demand of teachers.

The manner in which this demand is met and the long-term projection of this trend vary considerably from country to country as does the role of the State and of other providers in this arena.

Another trend that seems to be acquiring significant momentum is the development of regional links and projects. The ELT N&V e-forum was an early example of these links and there have been some conferences and other events that have brought project leaders to share common concerns (e.g. see the British-Council-organised Policy Dialogues “English for the Future”, Cartagena, October 2012 [www.britishcouncil.org/colombia-policy-dialogues-english-for-the-future.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/colombia-policy-dialogues-english-for-the-future.htm)). Several projects that can be viewed as regional at some level are being launched. The programmes *Ceibal en Inglés* in Uruguay (see Banegas, 2013; Banfi & Rettaroli, forthcoming) and the CiSELT teacher development programme in Chile are hiring teachers and trainers based regionally to work in various capacities, e.g. materials design, teaching using IT, etc. Whether this is outsourcing of some kind or networking and capacity-building at a regional level remains to be seen (for some related issues see Fairclough, 1989; Phillipson, 1992; and Pennycook, 1994).

Opportunities for collaboration and collaborative projects can be found at levels other than the regional and have great potential, for example to bridge the gap between different kinds of language education (see Banfi & Rettaroli, 2008). Or it can serve to bring different types of experiences to bear when analysing complex situations, such as in the project SEEDS (Toledo, 2012).

#### **4. Conclusions**

We touched on the issues of quality when discussing event organisation and we should return to this at this stage. Quality and separating the wheat from the chaff will certainly become a central concern in the years to come. References to instances of pseudoscience (e.g. Emoto's crystals; readers need go no further afield than the Wikipedia entry to check this) or the bastardisation of scientific results (see Dörnyei, 2009's critical review of the misuse of the results of lateralization research) have a short life expectancy in teacher development activities. When assessing faculty for university or teacher educator positions we will have to start making distinctions between different degrees, different kinds of publications and not simply ticking boxes or adding apples and oranges. We should be prepared to raise the bar, make it clear that 'not everything goes,' or that there is a place for everything, but everything should be in its rightful place.

If I need to think of a conducting thread for our reality, it would be the notion of change. We can be sure that change is not innocuous, but remaining unchanged only makes us move backwards. We have to learn to live with the fact that change is and will continue to be a permanent feature of our time and, if we don't adapt, we recede. Also, change is not only some external force we should deal with. We are also capable of generating change. It is up to us to take stock of these developments and direct our destiny, both individual and collective. So, in the spirit of plurilingual education, we can safely say *Plus ça change, ... plus on a besoin de changer*. The more things change, the more we need to change.

#### **Notes**

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Previous versions of this paper have benefitted from corrections and comments from Graciela Moyano and the editors of this volume. Needless to say, any errors or misinterpretations that remain are the author's sole responsibility.

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### 3 Communicating across cultures: encounters in the *contact zone*

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#### 1. Introduction

Our identities are transformed by everything we learn, and this is particularly evident in foreign language learning, which involves *an encounter between self and other*:

Every time language learners speak, they are not only exchanging information with their interlocutors; they are organizing and reorganizing a sense of who they are and how they relate to the social world. They are, in other words, engaged in identity construction and negotiation (Norton, 1997, p. 410).

Rather than encouraging learners to hide behind the mask of an ideal native speaker, thus sacrificing their own multiple and fluid identities, the overall aim of foreign language education, in Michael Byram's words, should be the development of an 'intercultural speaker':

a learner with the ability to see and manage the relationships between themselves and their own cultural beliefs, behaviours and meanings as expressed in a foreign language, and those of their interlocutors, expressed in the same language—or even a combination of languages—which may be the interlocutor's native language or not (Byram 1997, p. 12).

In fact, the development of intercultural awareness is at the core of the national guidelines for foreign languages in Argentina (*Núcleos de Aprendizajes Prioritarios de Lenguas extranjeras*, subsequently referred to as NAPs):

La perspectiva *plurilingüe e intercultural* [...] apunta a tornar visibles las relaciones entre las lenguas y culturas que están o podrían estar en el currículum y a sensibilizar hacia la pluralidad constitutiva de estas lenguas y culturas. Apunta, asimismo, a contribuir a que la enseñanza de lenguas en el contexto escolar reconozca el papel del español en tanto lengua de escolarización y sus distintas variedades y valore el lugar de las otras lenguas y culturas maternas diferentes del español que circulan en Argentina. Desde esta premisa, los NAP de LE [Núcleos de Aprendizajes Prioritarios de Lenguas Extranjeras] privilegian tanto el saber de y sobre las lenguas y el lenguaje, como la formación de ciudadanos/as respetuosos/as de las diferencias lingüísticas y culturales, favoreciendo actitudes que promueven nuevas formas de ser y estar en el mundo y de situarse frente a la diversidad sociocultural y lingüística.

Esta perspectiva de enseñanza de lenguas, entonces, promueve enfoques multidisciplinarios y combina el aprendizaje de lenguas con la capacidad de reflexión y disposición crítica necesaria para convivir en sociedades de gran diversidad cultural; en otras palabras, propicia la participación activa en procesos democráticos y contribuye a la educación para la ciudadanía y la paz. (NAPs 2)

To achieve these aims, which go beyond the acquisition of the language system, the NAPs are structured into six strands (ejes): the four macro-skills, reflection on the language being learnt and intercultural reflection, which links language learning to the acquisition of democratic values and behaviours and the development of citizenship skills.

On the basis of this conception, intercultural awareness is now a transversal objective in foreign language curricula in different regions of Argentina. However, teachers often find it challenging to plan classes with an intercultural focus. Often used to syllabi traditionally designed to develop the four macro skills and only occasionally encourage metacognitive reflection, teachers may find the intercultural focus an overwhelming addition to their very busy agendas. This is related to the fact that intercultural concerns are

often perceived supplementary aspects of English language teaching, rather than integral, transversal ones.

## **2. Materials from the *contact zone***

It is my contention that what McRae (1991, p. 3) calls ‘representational’ materials can help us focus on intercultural issues. These materials include literary works, but also texts produced and distributed unconventionally, as well as any kind of multimodal texts (verbal, auditory and/or visual) which involve the imagination of the receiver: comics and graphic novels, advertisements, graffiti, song lyrics, films, video clips, blogs, v-logs, hyperfiction .... Such texts are rich in cultural content, often metaphorically expressed, and challenge readers’ schemata. English, as an international language, can open doors into a wide range of cultures that express themselves in English. A whole world of multicultural texts is at our disposal (Ferradas, 2010).

In particular, texts in which intercultural encounters are illustrated may help teachers highlight intercultural aspects and encourage students’ personal response and reflection on identity. Such texts can contribute to developing an awareness of difference, overcoming stereotypes and leading to a respectful encounter with otherness. They illustrate what Mary Louise Pratt calls encounters in the *contact zone*: “the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality and intractable conflict” (Pratt, 1993, p. 6).

Dealing with this potential conflict, which Pratt considers unavoidable in colonial situations, is the challenge we need to be aware of and face in our hyperconnected post-

millennial context. The *contact zone* may be our own neighbourhood, our Facebook page, the classroom... Our aim should be to educate citizens who do not just *tolerate* but *respect* and *enjoy* diversity and are ready to consider their own views and customs critically. How can we empower students to express their own meanings, learn about others and negotiate a respectful position in the encounter with difference?

### 3. Travelling and translation revisited

In the constant encounters with otherness we undergo in the post-millennial world, we have become what James Clifford in his book *Routes* calls *travelling cultures*. His use of the adjective “travelling” is not to be taken literally, for it embraces not only “the ways people leave home and return, enacting differently centered worlds, interconnected cosmopolitanisms” (1997, pp. 27-28) but also “sites traversed”, as “the travel, or displacement, can involve forces that pass powerfully *through* –television, radio, tourists, commodities, armies.’ (Clifford, 1997, p. 28).

In Clifford’s use, “travel” is a “translation term”.

By “translation term” I mean a word of apparently general application used for comparison in a strategic and contingent way. “Travel” has an inextinguishable taint of location by class, gender, race, and a certain literariness. It offers a good reminder that all translation terms used in global comparisons —terms like “culture”, “art”, “society”, “peasant”, “mode of production”, “man”, “woman”, “modernity”, “ethnography”— get us some distance *and* fall apart. *Traduttore, traduttore*. In the kind of translation that interests me most, **you learn a lot about peoples, cultures and histories different from your own, enough to begin to know what you are missing.** (Clifford 1997, p. 39, my emphasis)

Clifford's concept of *translation*, understood as movement, both from one language to another and from one cultural locus to another, seems particularly suitable to frame the intercultural awareness we aim at when teaching and learning a foreign language.

#### **4. Exploring routes to express our roots**

When our “translation”, like that of planets around the sun, involves changing places (though tourism, displacement, exile, or simply virtually on the web or social media), we find ourselves facing the challenge of “translation” in the sense of finding the words to express our own meanings —explain our customs, express our values, often to others who see the world from a very different perspective. This is, according to Claire Kramsch, the central problem of foreign language learning: “wanting to express one world view through the language normally used to express another society's world view” (1992, p. 20).

However, in aiming at intercultural awareness, very often the emphasis is laid almost exclusively on otherness, on difference, to such an extent that learners may feel that their cultural identity is at risk, as was the case when the “native speaker model” was prevalent. Instead, when selecting materials and strategies to approach them interculturally, teachers need to make sure learners can profit from the enriching experience of coming into contact with otherness by *reflecting on their own values and identity and on the construction of their self-image*. While teaching the language system, teachers can focus on activities which aim at developing the linguistic repertoire learners need to express their own meanings in English.

We can contribute to intercultural awareness by putting representational texts from different cultures in contact, making sure texts which may be representative of students'

identities are part of the selection. Besides, the varieties of English used in texts from different contexts can encourage reflection on the role of English as an international language and develop awareness of the cultural and linguistic diversity of “world englishes”.

Personal response and reflection based on comparison can be encouraged by means of ‘textual intervention activities’ (Pope, 1998) that invite students to adapt the text, change it and extend it creatively. The silences in the text (information and opinion gaps) are left for readers to fill in with their own reading. Transposing situations in the text to the students’ own cultural context can prove particularly enriching, as they will need to find the words to express their own customs and views and will find opportunities to reflect on their own identities.

## **5. Constructing identity**

By putting the foreign language and culture in contact with the students’ own reality, the comparison invites students to read both cultures from a ‘third place’ which keeps a critical distance from both worlds. At the intersection of multiple native and target cultures, the major task of language learners is to define for themselves what this ‘third place’ that they are engaged in seeking will look like, whether they are conscious of it or not. (Kramsch, 1993, p. 257).

By reflecting on similarities and differences, by discussing how to describe their own context and customs and express their own vision of the world in a foreign language, students may become aware of the values expressed in the text and wonder how representative they are of what they consider their own identity—and how stereotypical.



Texts which exemplify encounters in the contact zone can illustrate potential conflicts in the students' context vicariously. Racial, social and gender issues, cultural misunderstandings, bullying, etc. are themes which such texts deal with, and the teacher can then find appropriate ways of reflecting on the students' own circumstances and teach them the language necessary to describe them and discuss them.

## 6. Suggested resources

Some of my favourite examples of authentic texts (which can be adapted by the teacher) to bring the contact zone into class are:

- [\*Telephone conversation\*](#) by the Nigerian Nobel Prize Wole Soyinka (racial prejudice)
- [\*Kill to Eat\*](#) by the aboriginal writer Oodgeroo Noonuccal (the values and beliefs of Aboriginal Australians as compared to that of “the white man”)
- [\*Robert and the Dog\*](#) by the Nigerian writer Ken Saro Wiwa (different sets of values connected with culture and social class)

Some of the most productive resources for the Argentine context are texts written in English about Argentina, not only travel literature from the nineteenth century but more recently published accounts that illustrate culture clash as well as attempts at mutual understanding. Some highlights are:

- *Tales of the Pampas* by William Bulfin
- *Goodbye Buenos Aires* by Andrew Graham –Yooll
- *The Whispering Land* by Gerald Durrell

- *El Ombú and Other Stories* by William Henry Hudson
- *Sebastian's Pride* by Susan Wilkinson
- 'Faith Hard tried': The Memoir of Jane Robson
- *In Patagonia* by Bruce Chatwin
- *Out of Patagonia* by Janet Dickinson

Apart from providing relevant vocabulary, as well as glossing and paraphrasing strategies to describe the Argentine context and way of life, these texts can become provocative starting points for discussion, critical consideration of stereotypes and defamiliarisation of cultural features which may have been naturalised. An elementary level version of the story of the encounter between the Welsh and the Tehuelche in Chubut, available at [www.claudiaferradas.net](http://www.claudiaferradas.net) under "intercultural activities", intends to prove that even linguistically complex texts can be adapted to suit the level and maturity of different classes. Such texts can provide an opportunity, as early as possible, to reflect on conflict resolution, encourage respect for diversity and develop democratic citizenship skills.

Our selection of texts and strategies to approach them can make a significant contribution towards peaceful global citizenship with a local impact, if we highlight not only our differences but what all human beings have in common.

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# 4 Narrative inquiry within Argentinean EFLTE: Crafting professional identities and knowledge through students' narratives

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## 1. Introduction

This paper summarizes a narrative inquiry developed naturalistically during 2007-2011 with sophomores attending the course Overall Communication (OC), in the English Foreign Language Teacher Education Program (EFLTEP), School of Humanities, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, Argentina. It considers students' identity descriptions as textual interventions and written biographical narratives emerging after exploring a syllabus unit on Irish Studies. Categories of analysis derived from narrative investigation of these texts are interpreted in their local setting. Discussion of results examines how narratives allowed undergraduates to (re)conceptualize their academic identities and trajectories.

## **2. Research rationale and design**

This research stems from narrative investigations on good university teaching practices, as recounted by students, and memorable professors' biographies by the Education and Cultural Studies Research Group, School of Humanities, Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata, Argentina (Álvarez, Porta & Sarasa 2011; Álvarez & Sarasa, 2007; Sarasa, 2008). It aims at describing narratively textual interventions and biographical narratives written by OC students in the EFLTEP, examining undergraduates' productions and their reported observations on these experiences. The study also aims at discussing some implications these pedagogical interventions bear for EFLTE. Its two ancillary goals are to elucidate students' insights into these class activities involving their family and academic existences and to appraise the educational outcomes of student-created stories.

Narrative inquiry in education (Connelly & Clandinin, 1990; Clandinin & Murphy, 2009) involves "a way of thinking about experience." As a methodology, it means adopting "a particular narrative view of experience as phenomena under study" (Connelly & Clandinin, 2006, p. 477). In EFLTE (Johnson & Golombek, 2011), narrative inquiry includes research and development to enhance teachers' personal practical knowledge. In this case, the narrative process adopted in the classes, and the current narrative analysis, are in themselves forms of inquiry in "the phenomenal world in which experience is mediated by story" (Xu & Connelly, 2009, p. 222).

This small scale ethnographic study (Wilson & Chadda, 2010) was undertaken during 2007-2011 with sophomores attending the subject OC, which endeavors to boost awareness of the global status of English (Canagarajah, 2006) through exploring print and media texts,

striving to render contents relevant to EFLTE (Álvarez, Calvete, & Sarasa, 2012). This naturalistic research (Bowen, 2008) involved OC syllabus second unit on Irish Studies (Calvete & Sarasa, 2007). First, from 2007 to 2010, thirty undergraduates (S1—S30, out of four small cohorts totalling fifty six) voluntarily responded in writing to the essay “I Am One of the People” (Patterson, 2006b) composing their parallel textual interventions (Pope, 1995). In this paper, Northern Irish writer Glenn Patterson (2006b) defined his identity embracing his private Belfast domain within the public European realm. Patterson (2006a, 2006c) observed how roots and routes (Clifford, 1997) forged individual and communal trajectories. Second, in 2011, students explored the films *Michael Collins* (Jordan, 1996) and *The Wind that Shakes the Barley* (Loach, 2006). Among other questions, they considered representations of Irish heroes (Ó Giolláin, 1998) shown in these pictures. Afterwards, undergraduates narrated common people’s praiseworthy lives orally. Then, nineteen (SI—SXIX, out of a total a large single cohort of thirty) freely wrote their contribution, providing feedback on this class experience.

This paper addresses categories of analysis derived from a purposive sampling (Teddlie & Yu, 2007) of students’ textual interventions and biographical tales in their context of production and reception (Pavlenko, 2007). Drawing on the theoretical literature (e.g. Clandinin, Steeves & Chung, 2007), the author interpreted the written productions conceptually, uncovering emerging themes in students’ written accounts (Corbin & Strauss, 2007; Polkinghorne, 2007).

### 3. Discussion of results

Volunteered texts problematized undergraduates' identities, exploring the itineraries they wished to follow as students and prospective educators. When composing their writings, students found sustenance along their demanding course of study. Thus, life-writing encouraged life-learning (Pope, 2002). Similarly, undergraduates explored a professional knowledge landscape (Clandinin & Connelly, 1996), reaching into the teaching identity they wished to acquire and the stories they wanted to enact as future educators (Clandinin, Downey, & Huber, 2009).

Textual interventions derived from "I Am One..." (Patterson, 2006b) disclosed rich immigrant origins. As S4 indicated, "I am one of the descendants of the three hundred thousand European immigrants who flocked into Argentina during the late nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth." Next, S19 explained that "I am one of the great great-granddaughters of... an Italian immigrant who arrived in Argentina together with a large number of Italian, German, and Spanish immigrants in the 1880s." S18 displayed a mature awareness of her roots, indicating that

I am one of the many people who find themselves lost in a melting-pot of identities.

I am neither Italian, nor Spanish, nor Uruguayan, nor Native American, nor English, nor Arab, nor Argentinean, but somehow I am a bit of all that...

Concurrently, S3 revealed her all-encompassing background: "I am one of the people who, born in a melting pot and speaking three languages, find myself torn among three cultures: a mother culture which is already a mixture of many others..."

These origins became a source of strength. S25 asserted that “I am one of the people who are extremely proud of her Italian grandfather, who fought in WWI.” Then, S28 stated that

I am one of the million people who live in a country that has officially welcomed other peoples since 1853 and has absorbed these peoples’ culture since then. I am one of the people who live in a country where everybody is proud of their foreign lineage.

Students’ pride in their background was mirrored in their relatives’ biographies, the common—though heroic—lives undergraduates retold after watching the two films. SVI’s and SXVI’s great-grandparents had fought the two World Wars and had immigrated into Argentina to build a family life based on hard work. SXV’s grandfather had “had to settle in a country which was not his homeland and adapt to it,” witnessing how his siblings and wife passed away but being “strong enough to survive and live without them...”. Ancestors’ migrant existences surfaced in written considerations on the class experience, when the group created shared knowledge. SVI remarked that “this gave us a kind of family feeling, our families had all gone more or less through the same things, all—or most—of us are immigrant descendants and our stories melted into one...”

These ancestors’ itineraries were successful because their pains had been rewarded by the family ties they had constructed. Therefore, “all of the stories were teachings of courage, endurance and most important of love” (SVII). SVIII praised these biographies’ value, since students had told true stories of ordinary people—mainly our grandparents—who had suffered because they underwent many hardships, mainly because they had had to



flee from their country, had fought a war, had worked very hard since they were kids, but who had been happy too because they got married and had kids, succeeded in life, (or) accomplished their goals.

Eventually, tales signified pride in a non-essentialist heritage while infusing students with their protagonists' valour. These undergraduates, empowered by their telling, gathered strength to continue an arduous course of study. The textual interventions dwelt on the EFLTEP's challenging nature. S4 stated that "I am one of the few people who, after five years, still struggle in the English Language Teacher Education Program." Similarly, S15 was "one of those English students... able to survive the 'jungle of the state university.' One of those who prefer to remain at university no matter what, rather than choose the easy option of 'fleeing' to 'safer' private institutions." S13 indicated that "I am one of the hundreds of students who complain that the Course is TOO HARD but who keep on trying every day to get their degree," adding that "I am one of the people who after so many years of being in the educational system can compare it to a Trail of Tears." More identities were marked by these difficulties: "I am one of the students who have taken very long to complete their degree, maybe longer than physicians take to qualify. Why then didn't I change to a private institution if it was so difficult for me?" (S19). Finally, S21 linked textual interventions with relatives' biographies by disclosing the perseverance needed and the lessons learned.

I am one of the hundreds of students of English... who really never thought that the course of study was going to take such a long time! But who still believes and

knows that getting a University degree is almost a privilege nowadays and that, therefore, giving up or quitting is not an option.

Likewise, students who told their families' epic narratives found that those spelt hope for their future. Shared accounts of relatives overcoming difficulties became stimulating within their trying EFLTEP context. SIV explained that

We are now convinced that although our course of study gets harder and harder, experiences such as the ones we gained... in (this subject) make students reflect upon their future as teachers. And in spite of all adversities, we can make it happen.

Furthermore, these tales encouraged students to visualize their teaching practices optimistically. SXVII believed that

What mattered was... creating a bond, a human perspective so many times absent at University... which I feel is so much necessary if we are to work "teaching" people... I hope (we) can understand... that every time we step into a class it is not only up to the teacher to make it memorable, it is also up to us.

Inquiring narratively into relatives' biographies empowered students. For SV, "as I finished talking I realized I had felt comfortable... I also realized that many other students' unheroic characters, especially grandparents, had gone through tough situations just as my grandmother had." According to SXVII, "it was marvellous to share these narrations about great people, who were close to us, and who touched our hearts and changed our lives forever." Wisdom was derived from the class, since "all of us were surely left pondering

not just on grammar or on pronunciation but on what is really important in life.” (SVII)

Finally, SVIII explained that

We were given the opportunity to speak about something that we regarded as meaningful and we were eager to share it with the rest of the class... I know that we are studying to be language teachers so we have to pay a lot of attention to how we say something instead of what we say... but this class was different because we were paying attention to what we wanted to say instead of how we said it.

Ultimately, this narrative inquiry evolved from a “pedagogy of life-telling” (Elbaz-Luwisch 2002, p.408) to a pedagogy of life-learning (Goodson, 2012). Students elaborated not just their “roots” but the “*routes* by which they have been arrived at” (Patterson, 2006c, p. 171). They also discovered that their families’ roads were connected.

#### **4. Conclusion**

What are some of the implications of this narrative inquiry into ties between EFLTE and academic identities (Tedder & Biesta, 2007)? Bauman (2009, pp. 157-163) argues within “education in the liquid-modern setting,” students need “counsellors who show them how to walk rather than teachers who make sure that only one road, and that already crowded, is taken.” These counsellors should help students “to dig into the depths of their character and personality, where the rich deposits of precious ore are presumed to lie...” This EFLTE class strived for linguistic and cultural authenticity by working *with* students’ own *expert*

NNSE productions (Canagarajah, 2006; Morris, 2001) unearthing stories as experiential life processes (Bathmaker, 2010; Huber, Caine, Huber, & Steeves, 2013).

Likewise, instructors and students created knowledge from class-generated texts (Trahar, 2009). Consecutively, a narrative pedagogy intervention facilitated the encounters to produce these accounts constructing identities which shape consecutive teaching practices. Understanding derived from life-stories and identity papers constitutes narrative learning proper, suitably meaningful when sustained during scaled-up inquiries (Goodson & Gill, 2011). Undergraduates experienced narrative research while working towards agency development (Bruner, 1996), acting upon the family roots revealed in their texts to envision academic and professional routes. This occurred when students became aware of how their—and their families’—lives’ plots (Biesta & Tedder, 2008) helped them imagine a hopeful future. Thus, students came to own the English language to voice their meaning (Bakhtin & Holquist, 1981; Pope, 2002) translating themselves away from NSE-NNSE dichotomies (Rushdie, 1991). Thus, “appropriating the language by confidently using it to serve one’s own interests according to one’s own values, helps develop fluency in English” (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 592).

This paper highlighted the centrality of attending to lives and experiential knowledge in EFLTEPs. Students bring to class rich linguistic and cultural existences and family stories—which are undergraduates’ tales too. These narratives embody “roots and routes, fixed and entrenched in one sense and on the move in another” (Friedman, 2002, p. 22). Indeed, future EFL teachers can learn the language while learning *from* lives and *for* their professional lives (Biesta & Tedder, 2008) within a reflexive teaching and learning context.

This was an occasion for balancing family identities, understanding origins, projecting expectations, and representing identities to others meaningfully (Mosselson, 2006). These results also suggest the emancipatory significance (Nelson, 2011; Nunan & Choi, 2010; Smolicic, 2011) of sharing biographical knowledge in EFLTEPs to contribute to teachers' development by implementing scaled-up interventions to support narrative inquiry in these fields.

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# 5 Designing intercultural and bilingual e-material for primary and secondary schools

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## 1. Introduction

### 1.2 The challenge of a plurilingual pedagogical perspective in ESOL

The last decade has been witness to deep theoretical changes in ESOL education in the province of Buenos Aires. The changes introduced at regulatory levels since 2006 have brought about the recognition of English as an international language in the context of a provincial system of education which is in turn nurtured by the linguistic and cultural diversity present in its 4.7 million students (Barboni & Porto, 2011). This diversity is the result of sustained migratory processes especially from neighbouring countries, increased interaction with an international community in our present knowledge society reality and policy changes in line with national and regional development policies. The change processes required considering two main principles in the ESOL education provided by the



state which do not constitute the ways in which English was traditionally taught in non-compulsory educational settings in Argentina: social justice and social practice. Social justice refers to intercultural awareness principles guiding teaching while social practice is the principle at the basis of a discourse perspective of language teaching.

On the one hand, the principle of Social Justice stems from a need to recognise the multiple identities that are conveyed in the use of languages and the diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds that students reveal in educational institutions of the province. This diversity is constituted by the diverse trajectories that students bring to the English class in formal schooling under present educational laws. Unlike ten years ago, when secondary education was not compulsory and English was not a compulsory subject in all primary schools, the present legal frame challenges educators and policy makers to develop inclusive educational strategies. These strategies are aimed at embracing an understanding of English as one of the languages present in the province of Buenos Aires among other languages such as Guaraní, Wichi and Mapuche as well as Spanish. While Spanish bears the status of the language of schooling, indigenous languages remain to be the mother tongue for a great part of the children attending schools in the province. English in this context acquires the status of an international language that “allows speakers from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds [...] to have their voices heard and to interact directly without the need of mediators or translators” (Byram, 2009) in an international context. Social justice in the English class is present when the teaching strategy used “enables the creation of a learning context which is not threatening to students’ identities but that builds multiplicities of language uses and linguistic identities, while maintaining academic rigour and upholding high expectations” (García, 2009, p. 318).

On the other hand, the principle of Social Practice “places learning through an additional language as a result of collaborative social practices in which students try out ideas and actions (Lave & Wenger, 1991), and thus socially construct their learning (Vygotsky, 1978). Learning is seen as occurring through doing (Dewey, 1897). Thus, an action-based pedagogy falls within this principle. In the field of language education, this is often referred to as task based pedagogy (Ellis, 2009)” (García, 2009, p. 323). An ESOL pedagogy stemming from this principle embraces a communicative curriculum prescribed as part of the learning experiences that children should undergo during formal schooling with a strong emphasis on a task based pedagogy. This is to be translated in school programmes that present learning English through using it by solving problems (Ellis, 2003, 2010). Emphasis is given to interactive processes to address some of the present day concerns with literacies: knowing languages will multiply improved communication strategies (García, 2009: 5-18) in multiple contexts of use for work, study, entertainment or any other purpose. Languages, whether it be the mother tongue, a second language or a foreign language, are seen as a resource to the development of translanguagings, that is to say, “multiple discursive practices” (Ibid, 2009: 45 - 47) necessary in a world of constant interaction among people. In this respect, Canagarajah (2011) advocates a focus on what he calls performative competence, that is, the type of knowledge conveyed through interactive skills and strategies that people use when they are using and learning to use languages in specific situations (of use).

These ideas relate to some of the main objectives of the ESOL curriculum of Primary education which is to help children find ways of saying and doing things in English in a sheltered environment: one that encourages them to take risks –a necessary condition to

learn languages. On the other hand, they connect with the theoretical foundation of the ESOL curriculum for Secondary education when it says:

English being an effective resource for international communication and the spread of technical-scientific knowledge and literature, it allows access to:

- advances of science and technology for its use and adaptation in the development of self projects;
- other cultures and a reflection about self culture;
- an education in agreement with present day work requirements and with new modes of production;
- updated information in their original language.

All of the above address language as an object of study as well as the construction of knowledge on how to do something, that is to say, knowledge to address communicative situations inside and outside the classroom. (ESOL Secondary Level Curriculum Design, 200, p. 155).

## **2. The setting of the project**

The teacher meetings developed with ESOL teachers across the Province of Buenos Aires as from 2010 reveal a pervasive concern of teachers in the public sector with teaching materials. Through the 134 districts of the province, teachers have acknowledged difficulties to work with the ESOL textbooks in the market, in particular, in contexts of

vulnerability. It is evident that the textbook industry studies the populations that are likely to buy those textbooks and develops a target user as the aim of their publishing projects. In all cases, they are considering those audiences who invest in books for the commercial reasons associated to their activity.

The state system of education of the province receives a 20% intake of students within the social vulnerability index. That intake reaches higher percentages in schools located in certain areas of poverty and deprivation of the "conurbano" in the province of Buenos Aires. Also, these schools receive immigrant populations and certain minority groups established in the territory. The state is responsible for these citizens since children in these contexts need to have their identities and their linguistic diversity recognised.

The collection "Cuadernos para el Aula de Inglés" ("Workbooks for the English class") was in fact developed for these contexts of vulnerability. Though it is not the intention of the Ministry of Education to develop a publishing enterprise as a body of the state, it bears the responsibility to cater for the needs of those who are often neglected and whose vulnerability is sometimes the reason for their exclusion. In this context of inclusion and social justice, the project was released to provide resources to schools where vulnerability rates reach high percentages. Thus, approximately twenty thousand children for each educational level, out of a hundred and eighty thousand, are entitled to their "cuadernos".

### **3. How are these principles realised in the design of ESOL materials for compulsory schooling in the Province?**

When designing “Cuadernos para el Aula de Inglés”, a set of aspects were considered in relation to the principles of social justice and social practices. These aspects were:

- An understanding of English as an international language and of language learning as a process of developing a “translanguaging” understanding of language use.
- A strong local contextual reference as part of a Latin American perspective.
- A task-based pedagogic perspective considering a focus on content, language and thinking skills integration in activities.
- A digital support for the analogic publication in the structure of “the digital corner”

#### **3.1. ESOL learning for translanguaging practices**

It is a well recognised fact that people use today the languages available to them to develop better communication practices. That is part of what researchers are studying in connection to the ways in which linguistic diversity and plurilingualism is improving the way people communicate around the world. These practices, which refer to the ways people use “language” have been called “translanguaging” and can be described as the “multiple discursive practices in which bilinguals engage in order to make sense of their bilingual worlds (García, 2009, p. 319).” This notion was taken up for the construction of interaction in the materials developed. As the example in picture 1 in the appendix shows, the flexible

use of languages before different interlocutors, the use of “non translatable terms” such as *che* or *pichi* - both exponents of indigenous language terms reflect that translanguaging has become natural in our provincial context. The interactions intend to exemplify the systematic, strategic, affiliative and sense-making process that is carried out by bilinguals to include and facilitate communication with others, but also to construct deeper understandings and make sense of their worlds which are lived in different languages.

### **3.2. From the local to the international**

The situations present in the material refer to genuine language uses in the local context to speak about our local reality. By means of geographical references, explicit allusions to our natural world in this part of the world and a clear understanding of the world from the eyes of Latin America, with its ecology problems and its social reality, the teaching of English becomes highly contextualized in our own land to help us talk about us in an international context. There is a strong presence of our local natural world with explicit references to Latin American geographical mobility and sociocultural practices. An example of this can be found in picture 2 of the appendix in which a picture story is presented.

### **3.3. Solving problems to learn language and content.**

The tasks developed in the material include a wide set of information gap, reasoning gap and information gap tasks, involving different levels of work in terms of thinking skills, from lower order to higher order ones aiming at the uttermost objective of critical thinking.

All the tasks amount for the construction of a set of four final projects among which teachers and students can choose depending on their interests and contextual circumstances. These final inclusive projects are third generation tasks with an educational ethical dimension accounting to students' citizenship education. Picture 3 in the Appendix shows examples of these tasks.

### **3. 4. Digital component in the digital corner**

Once the "Cuadernos para el Aula de Inglés" were published, the second stage of the Project was ready to start. This second stage involves the integration of Learning Technologies in the classroom. Technology is already present in many secondary schools in the province of Buenos Aires with the National Programme called "Conectar Igualdad" which started in 2010. Also this year (2013) the primary schools of the province of Buenos Aires are launching a new project called "Aulas Digitales"; thus, primary schools will receive netbooks to be used in primary school classrooms. Thanks to these programmes, students have now the opportunity to enhance their learning with the use of technology in the language classes.

However, computers are not enough to make the big change in the 21st century learners. Even though teachers from the Province of Buenos Aires have been receiving training sessions on Learning Technologies delivered by the programme "Conectar Igualdad" and the programme of Plurilingualism and Intercultural Education of the Province of Buenos Aires, we are aware of the fact that teachers still have difficulties in the use of technologies in their classroom. Teachers need to be confident in order to offer effective

technology integration with appropriate strategies in their real contexts. Therefore, we decided to create a special place for teachers of English who can find motivating e-activities triggered by the content developed in "Cuadernos para el Aula de Inglés" called "Digital Corner" ("Rincón Digital").

The following text is the introduction of the e-book "Digital Corner":

The main focus of the Digital Corner materials is to help and guide English teachers to walk together the **paths** towards Learning Technologies. We all know how technologies have invaded our teaching context and that we cannot resist its integration anymore. We know that each teacher has a personal and unique scenario in his/her own class; therefore, we will suggest different paths to take together with technology, your students and you.

Remember that you together with your students will be leaving your **digital footprints** when you walk through the paths of the web. Hope this e-booklet will help you throughout your digital way.

All the activities suggested in the "Digital Corner" were already tested; all the webtools used are free and all the photos and pictures used are free as well. In this way, we have tried to avoid copyright issues and we teach teachers how to create online material free of legal problems. The webtools recommended are user-friendly and appropriate to the age and level of knowledge of the students and their learning context.

The e-activities suggested by "Digital Corner" involve the "students learn by doing" principle mentioned by Dewey (1897). The four skills are present throughout the e-book: reading, writing, speaking and listening. Once the students finish with their tasks, all the projects can be uploaded to a school/class/student blog , wiki, school webpage, etc. In these virtual environments students have the opportunity to share their work not only with their



classmates but also with other institutions, their parents and, of course, the rest of the world.

Reading and writing activities have always been easy to carry out in our classes whereas listening and speaking tasks have presented more difficulties as regards the use of the different technological gadgets we have used in the last years. Nowadays, the convergence of technologies and the growth of webtools have solved many of our problems. For example, using tools like *Voxopop* students have the possibility to record themselves, to listen to their partners and also to leave a comment on the place. An example of this task is shown on Picture 4 in the appendix.

Also computer skills are part of the practice in the e-book, such as a puzzle game where the students drag and drop the pieces of the puzzle. We have to bear in mind that many students will be touching computers for the first time in their lives. You can see the puzzle on picture 5 in the appendix.

Sharing different stories, legends and rhymes from the cultures that come together in the English classrooms is also present in the “Digital Corner” project. Students play with games like “I spy with my little eye” with the pictures offered by the “Cuaderno de Trabajo del Aula de Inglés”. You can see an example in picture 6 in the appendix. Students do not only play the game but compare the games with the ones they have already learned in their own language and culture. Also students are encouraged to listen and read stories from a diversity of aboriginal cultures that meet in the classroom. An example of the story of can be seen on picture 7 in the appendix.

#### **4. Concluding remarks**

The development of highly contextualized ESOL materials for vulnerable sectors in our society needs to be understood as part of the responsibility of the state to cater for the resources and means to guarantee compulsory education. A local perspective may help ESOL educators approach school intakes that have been traditionally left out of the system and for whom English was for too long a neglected subject in their education. If we wish that that happens, it becomes essential to understand the practical, particular and possible (Kumaravadivelu, 2003; 2006) dimensions of a pedagogic framework that aims at an education for all paradigms.

As regards technology, we would like to conclude saying that we all know we are living in a digital world, but maybe we are not aware of the fact that with the advance of technology we are reaching a stage of normalization in the use of technology in the language classrooms around the world (Bax, 2003). Ten years ago Bax said that pens and textbooks were fully normalized whereas computers had not yet reached the stage of normalization in the classrooms. With the help of the political programmes initiated by the state, we as teachers have in our hands the possibility to enhance learning through technology and to help develop computer skills that will be necessary tools in our 21<sup>st</sup> century students.

Cuadernos de Trabajo para el aula de inglés  
Educación plurilingüe e intercultural  
Webpage:

<http://servicios2.abc.gov.ar/lainstitucion/organismos/lenguasextranjerias/plurilingue/index.html>


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CAPÍTULO  
CUATRO

Cuaderno de Trabajo para el Aula de Inglés de 4º EP

• That's my Pichi



*Mailén: ¡Che, Andy! ¿Qué hacés con mi Pichi?*  
*Andy: ¿Tu qué?*  
*Rebecca: Is this her bird?*  
*Andy: Is this your bird, Mailén?*  
*Mailén: Yes, that's my bird. It's called Pichi.*  
*Rebecca: Pichi? What does it mean?*  
*Mailén: It means "small" in Mapuche. My grandma from Los Toldos gave me the egg of an ostrich. When it hatched, Pichí came out!*  
*Rebecca: But this is not an ostrich, is it?*  
*Mailén: Well... it can run very fast.*

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Picture 1. Translanguaging

• Take action



Picture 2. Ecology in Context

• **Now you**

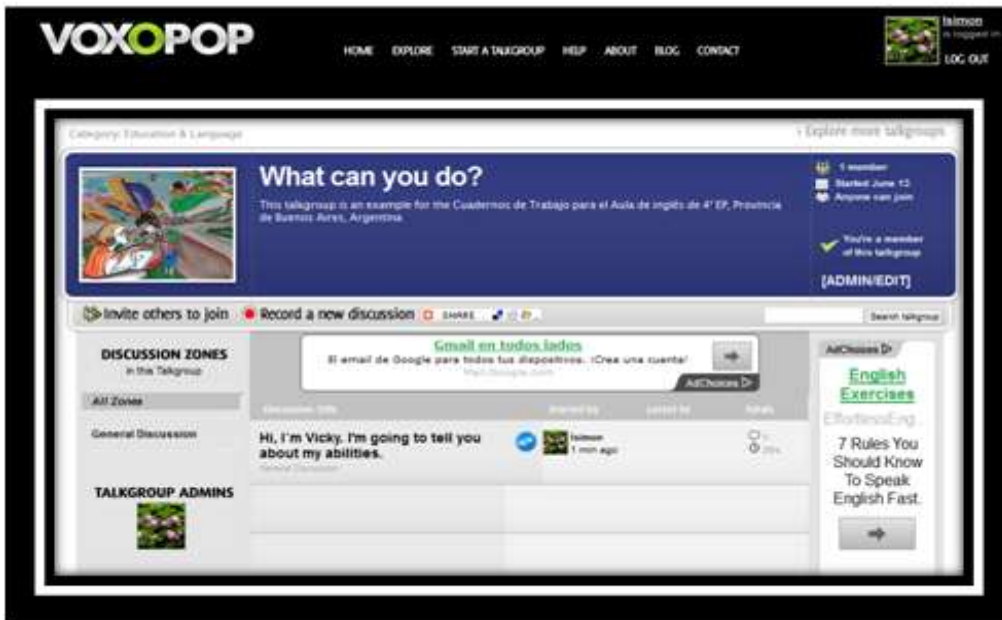
**Listen to the children and match. What can they do?**

- |         |                 |
|---------|-----------------|
| María   | dance ballet    |
| Daniel  | play de trumpet |
| Nahuel  | skate           |
| Mohamed | swim very fast  |
| Nacho   | play rugby      |

**A survey. Ask your friends in the class. Put a tick or a cross.**

Name	Swim	Play football	Play the guitar	Ride a bike	Dance
You					

Picture 3. Task Examples



Picture 4. Voxopop Talkgroup



Picture 5. Online Puzzle



Picture 6. "I see with my little eye" Game



Picture 7. Legends from different cultures



## 6 Border pedagogy: Towards re-routing roots in intercultural education

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### 1. Introduction

The currently developing socio-linguistic reality of English, as both a global and a local language, brings in shifting configurations of power relations, cultural mappings, identity constructions and educational politics. The paradoxical globalisation and transculturation of English has shattered the illusion of linguistic fixity, cultural homogeneity and of a pristine “imagined community” (Anderson, 1991, p. 2). This is redefining the boundaries of linguistic, geo-political and educational policies and paving the way for more critical and integrationist pedagogies that can create and scaffold more “glocal” (Brooks & Normore, 2010) perspectives and literacies. In this light, the terrain of English teaching/learning becomes inextricably linked to the rapidly changing parameters of language, place, identity, history and power.

In a world populated by evolving Englishes, travelling cultures, transnational identities and expanding borderlands, Assimilationist (“English Only”) models, based on the

achievement of native-speaker-like performance, and curricular designs structured upon English language, culture and identity fall apart and no longer hold. Integrationist models, focused on the development of new literacies for intercultural interpretation, foreground the educational value of moving back and forth between cultural systems and of negotiating difference within the contact zone of the classroom.

Within this framework, Border Pedagogy, which conceives of school in general, and the classroom in particular, as a “cultural borderland” (Giroux, 2005, p. 24) proposes working actively with how roots are constantly re-routed in our transculturalised world.

The aim of this paper is to delve into how border pedagogy has crossed the boundaries of educational discourse by means of contesting received notions on language, culture, identity and pedagogy within the arena of ELT. The five sections that follow develop how border pedagogy proposes working with English as a *glocal* language, a travelling culture, a transnational identity, a transdisciplinary subject and a resource material for active work on intercultural interpretation. In doing so, this paper intends to explore to what extent border pedagogy can contribute to scaffolding teachers’ and students’ minds to mediate dialectically between different levels of cultural signification and to transform otherness into difference through intercultural mediations.

## **2. Blurring the boundaries of language**

It is in discourse that power and knowledge are joined together.  
(Foucault, 1980, p. 100)

English, seen as an evolving language, is being instrumentally used within the educational arena, and particularly within the realms of border pedagogy, as a clear example of a how

languages develop as representation systems, as discursive sites for ideological interaction and conflict, and as vehicles for cultural and identity (re)configurations.

For some time after its transplantation by settlement and colonial administration, English was still centred on England, and its collective imaginary still constructed it as the voice of authority, regarding it in Bakhtinian terms, as “monolithic, monological, univocal, single-voiced” (1992, p. 293). English, as the imperial language, continued expanding and spreading worldwide, always patrolling its borders, in pursuit of a ‘perfect copy’, a replica of itself.

However, in the process of becoming a world language, English travelled, hybridised and othered itself. Hence, owing to displacement, formally and functionally, English camouflaged from ‘mother tongue’, to ‘stepmother tongue’ and to ‘the other tongue’. By the end of the nineteenth century, the English of the formerly colonised subjects had started to flourish within their own languages and literatures and acquired an importance which both challenged and dismantled the dominance of the original centre.

Today English is far from being regarded as a European language, and its development is hardly determined by usage or native-speaker models. Control of the language seems to be actively held by the ‘others’, who have aimed to deconstruct Manichean binarity as well as hegemonic discourses of otherness, subalternity and voicelessness, seeking to construct a space of enunciation of their own. This has paved the way for creolisation, interculturality, and border-crossing processes in different cultural configurations. And yet in all cases, English has resulted in hybridity, a key term to refer to the state of transnational identities, and as evidenced in postcolonial, diasporic and border communities.

In Rushdie's terms, those formerly subjected to Empire started to "strike back with a vengeance" (Thieme, 2001, p. 19) by means of conquering English through different modes of appropriation, subversion and resistance. Rather than silenced by acculturation and assimilation, formerly colonised subjects were empowered by transculturation, a process whereby members of subordinated groups appropriated materials transmitted by dominant or metropolitan cultures. This term was coined in 1940 by Cuban Sociologist Fernando Ortíz proposing his notion that "intercultural contact is not unidirectional a process, but a two-way dynamics" (Bass, 1999, p. 372). Mary Louise Pratt (1992, p. 50) adds that the process of borrowing and lending "explodes in all directions within the contact zone", allowing languages to reconfigure not only identities but also cultures.

### **3. Exploring the porosity of cultures**

Culture is by nature heterogeneous and it necessarily works through the realm of borders.  
(Saldívar, 1997, p. 9)

Border pedagogy posits that if English language is always in flux, relational, dialogical and contested, then the cultures that it represents are always 'in the making' and in a constant process of 'becoming' through intercultural mediation. This pedagogy critically explores that throughout the nineteenth century, English 'Culture' and the 'Nation' were conceived of as "patterned, homogeneous shared instances: imagined communities" (Johnson & Michaelsen, 1997, p. 54). That conception of culture, bound to a specific fixed location, with a homogenous population, and an identity of its own, established a straightforward connection between territory, community, culture and identity. Such notion rested on the

premise that there exists cultural homogeneity in a given location, ignoring the fact that what pervades human groups is actually heterogeneity.

As from the twentieth century, the notion of a world divided into cultural islands has been contested by the fact that people, groups and symbols are interconnected both regionally and transnationally. Indeed, border pedagogy explores how boundaries that separate communities are porous and how collectives can no longer be assimilable to a fixed specific space. James Clifford (1999, p. 3) poses that “culture is to be understood as writing/collage, a pastiche composed by heterogeneous elements in which historical and political phenomena interact and overlap endlessly in never-ending processes”. In his book *Routes* (1999), he homonymically plays with “routes”/”roots” to delve into the paradox that culture entails. In his seminal essay, “Travelling Cultures”, Clifford, drawing on from research conducted by Michel de Certeau (1988), Pierre Bourdieu (1986) and Clifford Geertz (1973), refers to the phenomenon of spatial practices resulting from interactions between “dwelling and travelling” experiences within the context of historical processes of dislocation. Culture is the “ever-changing result of the dialogue between what travels [routes] and what dwells [roots], and the ensuing conflicts, as well as resistances, which emerge from that interaction” (Clifford, 1999, p. 3).

Border pedagogy delves into how culture is the vehicle or medium whereby the relationship between groups is transacted within its borders in a complex interplay of identities. The border stands as an interstitial space for identity reconstruction and reconfiguration. In the same way as James Clifford puns with “Routes”/”Roots” to delve into the interstices of “travelling cultures”, Louis Kaplan (1997, p. 10) homonymically plays with “border”/”boarder” to refer to the “bo(a)rder” and to inscribe the oxymoronic

condition of those who are straddling the frontier, of those being within and without, assuming oscillating identities in their differential play.

Border pedagogy underscores that through processes of translocation and transposition, English has remapped itself and ‘gained in translation’. English has developed, not only as it surpassed its own boundaries through (post)colonialism, but also as it let ‘others’ cross its frontiers through migration and diaspora. These “cross-overs” have operated as a rite of passage, not only in terms of its language and culture, but also in terms of the multiple identities conferred by English.

#### **4. Expanding the frontiers of identity**

Border is the space where the nation and identity either  
end or begin.  
(Saldívar, 1997, p. 14)

The representation of these shape-shifting, multiplying, increasingly fragmented subject positions has become a central transdisciplinary object of study and a particular concern of border pedagogy. Indeed, the constitution of transnational identities in Englishes, springing from interconnected “travelling cultures”, characterises the experience of both border and diasporic communities the world over. However, these cultures are endowed with different identity configurations, and are characterised by different material conditions.

On the one hand, border cultures inhabit a defined geopolitical territory, whose boundaries divide two sides at the same time as they create a borderland. It is in this contact zone where border subjects engage in intricate processes of cultural conflict, interaction and crossing-over. Border subjects refuse to fuse into a single conglomerate and struggle for

both the acceptance of difference and the (re)territorialisation of the deterritorialised (Deleuze & Guattari, 1977, p. 155).

On the other hand, diasporic communities result from migration, cultural transplantation and displacement processes (Ashcroft et al., 1995, p. 430). And even though the diasporic experience binds the multiple communities of a disperse population together, there is no specific geo-political boundary framing them. Diasporic cultures mythologise home as a desired place, impossible to return to (Rushdie, 1991). There occurs a split by means of which longing for the imagined home prevails over the actual geographic location which is inhabited. These migrants, as well as their descendants, have a discontinuous relation between their illusory home country and the experience of the physical return to it as visitors (McLeod, 2000, p. 209).

Nonetheless, what brings both diasporic and border communities closer together is their interstitial condition. Interstitial subjects acquire knowledge in the various specific locations in which they inhabit and resist their aggregation to an arbitrary unified whole. Speakers of Englishes the world over enact and recreate their identities in the breaches left open within discursive and social relations (Johnson & Michaelsen, 1997, p. 173), being discontinuously located as insiders/outsideers. The relation they establish with the places they inhabit is that of a dichotomy: fluctuating between being, and not being, either at home or within the border. Border pedagogy posits that it is in this “border zone”, such as the one that English language represents, where cultural symbols, references and meanings can be read transculturally.

## 5. Broadening the borders of pedagogy

Border pedagogy decentres as it remaps.  
(Giroux, 2005, p. 22)

Against the background of such evolving Englishes, cultures and identities, which frame our rapidly shifting global environment, it is necessary to generate and promote evolving pedagogies; that is to say, pedagogical apparatuses that can offer fruitful educational responses to transculturality, hybridity and liminality. Our multiplying identities, cultural configurations and communities (postcolonial, diasporic, border) pave the way for the development of new pedagogies that can create and/or scaffold more *glocal* perspectives and literacies, that is to say “the meaningful integration of the local and the global” (Brooks & Normore, 2010, p. 50). A central vehicle for the development of the *glocalisation* of culture is the deconstruction of literacy within the very educational arena. This implies including previously marginalised reading stratagems, pedagogical apparatuses and curricular designs such as the ones posed by critical pedagogy, intercultural pedagogy and, in particular, border pedagogy.

Critical pedagogy is posited as central to any educational practice that takes up questions of how individuals learn, how knowledge is produced, and how subject positions are constructed. This pedagogy has regained a sense of alternative by means combining strategies for the critique of hegemonic discourses with stratagems to construct new forms of identity and social relations (Giroux, 2005, p. 70).

The tenets of critical pedagogy have been crucial to ELT’s rite of passage, from assimilationist (“English only”) educational policies to integrationist (multicultural/intercultural) ones; from monolingual transmission models, based on native speaker-like



performance, to multilingual transactional models, more sensitive to multiculturalism and built around “expert-speaker” (Jenkins, 2003, p. 81) and/or “intercultural-speaker” (Byram, 1997, p. 21) achievement. These educational responses to the transculturation of English have contributed to the democratisation of knowledge and “cultural capital” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 47). While multicultural policies fostered the coexistence and mutual understanding of cultural and linguistic differences, intercultural policies encouraged the exchange and interaction between them, dwelling on the “in-between spaces” that enable the flux and interplay of identities.

This is when border pedagogy can complement and even supplement other pedagogies. Border pedagogy uses school, the classroom, as a site of active reading, reflection and hands-on work on our evolving languages, cultures and identities. It proposes using our “travelling cultures” to work *glocally* and transdisciplinarily. This presupposes not merely an acknowledgment of the shifting borders that both undermine and reterritorialise different configurations of language, culture, power, and knowledge. It also links the notion of schooling with the broader category of education to a more substantive struggle for a democratic society that acknowledges that culture happens in the interstices, the borderlands, “the spaces between and within” (Clifford, 1999, p. 5). Border pedagogy points to the necessity to create suitable conditions for students to write, read, speak, and listen in a language in which meaning becomes multi-accentual and dispersed, and resists permanent closure (Giroux, 2005, p. 21). This entails a language in which one speaks with, rather than exclusively for or about, others.

Border pedagogy offers the opportunity for students of English to become border crossers by means of delving into the multiple references that constitute different cultural

codes, experiences and languages. In this way, issues on transculturation, hybridity and liminality naturally come to the fore and pave the way for active work on critical cultural awareness and intercultural interpretation.

## **6. Crossing the borders of ELT**

The concept of border crossing has come to represent a project and a commitment to the democratisation of school and society in search for a “notion of commonality without which a re-founding of democratic politics seems impossible, even unimaginable” (Couldry, 2006, p. 4). In this way, both teachers and learners in the ELT classroom can become discursive agents who move across borders transforming otherness into difference.

The point of departure is the premise that our diverse languages, cultures and identities connect us to each other more than they separate us, especially as such borders are continually changing and mutating within the fast forward dialectics between globalisation and transculturation.

Border pedagogy, in this sense, becomes proactive and performative in that it is not merely about “deconstructing discourses, but about creating modes of individual and social agency that enable rather than shut down democratic values” (Giroux, 2005, p. 7). Border pedagogy poses that our main challenge as educators is to “construct a policy of difference” (13) drawing on from the contribution of Postmodernism, Feminism, Marxism, Postcolonialism, not only as theoretical standpoints, but also as enabling tools for teachers to design hands-on pedagogical apparatuses to work towards the active “construction or mobilisation of difference” (Manzanas & Benito, 2003, p. 90).

To such end, border pedagogy suggests the instrumental use of postcolonial theory and border theory with a two-fold purpose. On the one hand, they can be used as dislocating discourses which challenge how imperial centres of power have constructed themselves as ‘selves’ against ‘others’ through totalising discourses. On the other hand, they can be used to raise awareness about the contact zone “as the space where cultures meet, clash and grapple” (Pratt, 1992, p. 25).

Border pedagogy poses that this approach will be of special value to learners if they are offered texts in Englishes (written, visual and electronic), belonging to different disciplines, which both affirm and interrogate the complexity of the students’ own languages, histories, cultures and identities, as well as those of others.

Border pedagogy suggests a set of stratagems to follow so that students can be given the opportunity to deconstruct hegemonic discourses and develop counter-discourses, on the one hand, and to engage in intercultural mediation and border crossing, on the other. This implies reading texts critically and acutely to raise awareness about the origins and mechanisms of intolerance and inequality (Giroux, 2005, p. 21). This also entails making visible the historically and socially constructed places and borders we inherit, and that frame our discourses and social relations, and subsequently signalling forms of transgression in which existing borders forged in dominant epistemes can be challenged and redefined.

Within the project of “voice and difference”, culture is seen as a shifting sphere of multiple and heterogeneous borders where different histories, languages, experiences and discourses (including those “forgotten”, “erased” or missing”) intermingle amid diverse relations of power and privilege; for example, within the “cultural borderland” known as

school (25). This in combination with a “multi-centric perspective” may create the necessary pedagogical conditions for students of Englishes to engage in “cultural remapping as a form of resistance, and to become border crossers in order to understand otherness in its own terms, creating borderlands for the fashioning of new identities within existing configurations of power” (20).

This evolving pedagogy delves into understanding how dynamic identity is as it moves into the borderlands crisscrossed within a variety of evolving languages, cultures, identities and borders. To border pedagogy, there are no unified subjects, only learners, whose multi-layered and often contradictory voices and experiences intermingle to stress the importance of keeping difference within the borderland called school to be able to mediate interculturally.

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# 7 Pensamiento crítico, reflexión, conciencia cultural crítica: características de la interculturalidad en la lectura en lengua extranjera

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UNLP-Conicet

## 1. Introducción

Este trabajo informa sobre un estudio realizado en 2009-10 que utiliza el Modelo de Competencia Intercultural (MCI) de Byram (1997, 2009, 2012) para investigar la dimensión cultural de la lectura en lengua extranjera en un contexto universitario. Este modelo sirve como sustento teórico y también se constituye en una medida de análisis. Los participantes, diez estudiantes del Profesorado y Traductorado de Inglés en la Universidad Nacional de La Plata (UNLP), de entre 18-20 años, leyeron un fragmento de *Desert Wife* (Faunce, 1961) y produjeron una respuesta textual junto con una entrevista individual. De los cinco saberes (*savoirs*) o dimensiones de conocimiento, habilidades y actitudes en los que consiste este modelo, la conciencia cultural crítica (*saber comprometerse*) (*savoir s'engager*) predominó en los resultados. Esto significa que los participantes evidenciaron

un elemento de criticidad y reflexión con respecto al contenido textual, procurando encontrar sentidos ocultos e interpretaciones alternativas, con gran complejidad y profundidad de análisis.

El trabajo está dividido en dos partes. En la primera, describo la investigación llevada a cabo. Esta descripción incluye el MCI de Byram, aspectos metodológicos como la definición de los instrumentos de recolección de datos y el uso del MCI como medida de análisis, y los resultados. En la segunda parte, ilustro los resultados con el caso de Victoria (pseudónimo). También hago hincapié en las implicancias pedagógicas que se desprenden de esta investigación al resaltar que la conciencia cultural crítica o *savoir s'engager* posibilita que la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras sea verdaderamente educativa y se refleje en la actualidad en la noción de educación intercultural para la ciudadanía (Byram, 2012).

## **2. La investigación**

El objetivo general de esta investigación fue describir y comprender cómo la población estudiada en este contexto (estudiantes del Profesorado y Traductorado de Inglés en la UNLP, de entre 18-20 años) entendió el contenido cultural de textos literarios narrativos en la lectura en inglés como lengua extranjera. En este trabajo la atención se centra en un fragmento de *Desert Wife* (Faunce, 1961, p. 173-181) escrito en inglés. Los participantes respondieron al texto produciendo una tarea escrita llamada respuesta textual (entre varias otras tareas) en su lengua nativa, el español, y fueron luego entrevistados para expandir acerca de sus interpretaciones. Ambos instrumentos de investigación fueron analizados

utilizando el Modelo de Competencia Intercultural (MCI) de Byram (1997, 2009, 2012).

Los resultados indican un alto nivel de conciencia cultural crítica, central en el MCI.

Una respuesta textual es un formato de respuesta a la lectura adaptado de Ollman (1996) que permite el surgimiento de respuestas idiosincrásicas a un texto. Requiere del recuerdo de información y del resumen, pero va más allá al incentivar también respuestas imaginativas y personales. Para producir una tarea de respuesta textual, estos participantes tuvieron que dar sentido a las pistas culturales del fragmento y a la información cultural contextualizada del mismo, relacionar esta información con sus parámetros culturales propios, y al hacerlo, traer a la superficie sus experiencias, conocimiento y bagaje relevantes para la interpretación. Como las instrucciones no requirieron que los participantes recordaran cada parte del texto exactamente, tuvieron la libertad de responder a aspectos específicos del fragmento que les llamaron la atención. Las instrucciones que los participantes recibieron fueron las siguientes:

Realice una lectura propia/personal del contenido del texto. Plásmela por escrito utilizando un formato de ensayo/texto que de respuesta a las siguientes preguntas:

¿Cómo describiría Ud. a la cultura reflejada en este texto?

Desde una perspectiva cultural, ¿cuál es el tema del texto?

Esta tarea NO es una síntesis ni un resumen de la historia. No está permitido hacer un simple resumen del tipo *El cuento empieza por ....sigue con .... termina cuando ...* Sí puede ejemplificar su tarea escrita con eventos o situaciones de la historia.

Se administraron entrevistas individuales diferidas que tuvieron lugar aproximadamente una semana después de la lectura del fragmento. Los participantes



tuvieron a disposición no solamente su respuesta textual sino también el fragmento mismo utilizado como disparador para la lectura. Esta decisión metodológica alejó la atención del factor ‘memoria’, cuyo eje es el recuerdo de información textual, y permitió las lecturas críticas que se revelaron como centrales en esta investigación.

### **3. Modelo de Competencia Intercultural**

Este modelo constituye el sustento teórico de esta investigación. Fue propuesto inicialmente por Byram en 1997 y desarrollado más adelante (2009, 2012). Consiste en cinco saberes (llamados *savoirs* por el autor). Estos saberes son *saber ser* (*savoir être*) (que consiste, por ejemplo, en actitudes de interés y curiosidad), *saberes* (*savoirs*) (que se refieren al conocimiento de diferentes aspectos de la vida como el trabajo, la educación, las tradiciones, etc., en una sociedad determinada), *saber comprender* (*savoir comprendre*) (que implica la habilidad para interpretar y relacionar estos saberes), *saber aprender /saber hacer* (*savoir apprendre/savoir faire*) (que implica la capacidad para el descubrimiento y la interacción), y *saber comprometerse* (*savoir s’engager*) (que está implicado en el concepto de conciencia cultural crítica). Este último saber es central para posibilitar que la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras sea verdaderamente *educativa* (a diferencia de mero entrenamiento), es captado por la noción de educación intercultural para la ciudadanía (Byram, 2008; Osler & Starkey, 2005; Starkey, 2007) y explica las dimensiones ideológica y política involucradas necesariamente en la enseñanza de una lengua extranjera (Byram, 2001). Otro elemento importante en este modelo es el aspecto *relacional*, también señalado por Kramsch (1993, 1998), Bennett (1993, 2009) y otros, que ha cobrado vida en la figura del hablante intercultural o mediador intercultural (Byram, 2009).

#### 4. Análisis y resultados

El modelo fue utilizado en esta investigación para analizar los datos recolectados. En particular, se observó la presencia de estos saberes en las respuestas textuales y las entrevistas). Los resultados de este estudio indican un alto nivel de conciencia cultural crítica (*savoir s'engager*). Los participantes manifestaron la capacidad de reconocer y articular las dificultades encontradas en el proceso de percibir una cultura desde adentro (es decir, una perspectiva *insider*), así como la capacidad de aceptar que la perspectiva cultural propia y los valores y expectativas propios influyeron en las visiones que adoptaron. La descentralización en relación a los códigos culturales propios les permitió la toma de conciencia sobre su relatividad cultural. Fueron capaces de explorar las reacciones propias ante los comportamientos propios y ajenos, y pudieron ponerse en el lugar del Otro por medio de la imaginación. En este sentido se evidenció la "tercera perspectiva" de Kramsch (Kramsch 1993, p. 210) que permitió a los lectores adoptar no sólo una visión *insider* sino también *outsider* e híbrida en la comprensión de las culturas presentes en el fragmento dado.

La tarea de respuesta textual trajo a la superficie la conciencia cultural crítica de estos lectores, que las entrevistas sirvieron para respaldar. Esta criticidad fue motivada por temas diferentes y específicos del fragmento de *Desert Wife* y condujo a reflexiones que evidenciaron pensamiento crítico, definido como el pensamiento de nivel más elevado (o el tipo de pensamiento que se regula y controla a sí mismo), que involucra procesos de análisis, síntesis y evaluación (Waters, 2006). Sin embargo, estos lectores fueron más allá del pensamiento crítico en estos términos en pos de una conciencia cultural crítica, o conciencia social crítica, es decir, una criticidad y reflexión conectadas con una dimensión

social, con cuestiones de ciudadanía, y de humanidad y naturaleza humana desde una perspectiva filosófica.

Los temas recurrentes que condujeron a este tipo de respuesta en *Desert Wife* fueron el de la dominación y la autoridad entre distintas poblaciones, las culturas primitivas versus dominantes, los animales también como representantes culturales (no sólo los humanos). En conjunto, esta profundidad de respuesta se evidenció en la respuesta textual (así como en otros instrumentos de investigación no descritos en este trabajo) y fue luego justificada ampliamente en las entrevistas. Todos los participantes ofrecieron análisis de este tipo, en mayor o menor profundidad. Incluyo aquí ejemplos producidos por Victoria (seudónimo).

## **5. Ilustración de resultados: el caso de Victoria**

El fragmento de *Desert Wife* tiene lugar en el contexto de una reserva indígena en los Estados Unidos y describe una celebración navideña en un contexto estadounidense nativo, presentada al lector a través de la mirada de la narradora, Hilda, y su compañero, Ken. Hilda y Ken son estadounidenses que trabajan en el lugar e introducen a los navajos en la idea de una celebración navideña, en la que se entrelazan la cultura estadounidense y la de los nativos. Faltan aquí los elementos típicos de una celebración navideña estadounidense. La narradora se ve confrontada por los códigos culturales de los navajos, que por ser diferentes a los de ella misma motivan su nostalgia y su añoranza de su tierra natal.

El tema de la dominación fue recurrente para la mayoría de los participantes y constituye un buen ejemplo de la criticidad y reflexión de estos lectores (en cursiva en la

respuesta textual de Victoria más abajo). Resalto en negrita las instancias de duda, recursos modalizadores, modalidad, lenguaje tentativo y lenguaje vago y general. Estas instancias son reveladoras de la decisión de Victoria de no tomar completa responsabilidad por sus interpretaciones, es decir, decide presentar sus interpretaciones y luego atenuarlas, o distanciarse de ellas por medio de estos recursos. Victoria explora el tema de la dominación mediante la dicotomía “cultura estándar” versus “grupo minoritario,” recurrente en todo el extracto. También está presente la noción de integración, evidenciada en el contraste *terreno ajeno – propio territorio*. La dominación proviene, en opinión de Victoria, del hecho de que la narradora intenta dominar en un territorio que no es su tierra nativa o, en otras palabras, en la reserva de los navajos. Esta lectora cita el episodio del lavado de los platos (en el cual Hilda, la narradora estadounidense, debe pedirle a las mujeres navajos que laven los platos o no lo hubiesen hecho) como muestra de esta dominación. Subrayo las citas directas del fragmento que utiliza Victoria en su respuesta textual.

Por otro lado, **si mis sospechas son ciertas**, quienes intentan *integrarse* aquí forman parte de lo que **podríamos** considerar “cultura estándar” (*norteamericana*), **al menos** en relación a la *cultura del grupo minoritario de los navajos*. **Quizás** por eso, **incluso** en “*terreno ajeno*”, se generan escenas en que **aparentaría** producirse una *sutil dominación* por parte de quienes sin ser miembros de la tribu ni de la celebración que tiene lugar en ella, representan la *cultura estándar*:

Other women I set to peeling onions and potatoes, and very handy they were at it too.

After the meal was over, the women cleaned the soot from the tubs and boiler with sand, while I scalded the spoons and pans. They were willing enough to do it, though they would have gone away and left everything dirty, if I had not suggested the dishwashing. I thought it best they do some little thing for their meal.

**Es como si, a pesar de** hallarse inmersos temporalmente en otra cultura, *el hecho de pertenecer a la “cultura estándar” concediera ciertos derechos implícitos de dominación, al menos sutil, y obligara implícitamente al grupo minoritario a aceptar el status quo incluso en su propio territorio.*

(Victoria, respuesta textual, *Desert Wife*)

Victoria explica con más detalle la idea de dominación en una parte de la entrevista (en cursiva en el extracto), siguiendo las mismas líneas (la dominación es sutil, hay un privilegio implícito de dominación en lo que ella llama la “cultura estándar”). Evalúa el contenido textual usando adverbios como *paradójicamente* y comenta sobre lo que llamó su atención como punto de partida para su interpretación.

Melina: Hablás de dominación, eso es muy interesante.

Victoria: "Dominación", me refiero a que en un momento dado, por ejemplo hay dos casos puntuales...

M.: Sí, los que citás acá.

V.: Los que cito ahí, en los cuales se genera una *sutil situación de dominación* en la cual *el que pone las reglas, o el que intenta ponerlas al menos, es el foráneo*, es decir, *paradójicamente ellos están en un... insertos en una cultura que no es la suya, y sin embargo están diciéndoles qué hacer.*

M.: Sí.

V.: Es decir, con su cultura, con sus costumbres.

M.: Sí.

V.: *Eso es lo que por ahí me llamó la atención.*

M.: Y ¿por qué los dominados aceptan?

V.: Y claro, o sea, por eso pongo más abajo que habría una suerte de cosa *implícita*, de..de... quizás *contacto implícito*, ¿no?, en el cual la... la cultura mayoritaria o la *cultura estándar*, en este caso, *que podemos llamar cultura estándar, tendría cierto privilegio de dominación.* Quizás por eso tampoco se genera ese recelo ante... Yo creo que el recelo incluso es... Estoy pensando en el término inglés "take over", o sea, *esa cosa de... de que el foráneo o el extranjero pueda asumir el control.*

(Victoria, entrevista, *Desert Wife*)

El análisis de Victoria en el siguiente fragmento de su respuesta textual está relacionado con la idea de tomar más de lo que uno necesita. La participante cita del texto el extracto que retrata a los navajos paseándose con carne cruda bajo sus brazos por miedo a que otros la roben, pone esto en perspectiva y ofrece una opinión crítica sobre Hilda, la narradora (también llamada San Chee). Victoria señala que la narradora no es consciente de que en su cultura la gente también roba. Nótese una vez más la tendencia de Victoria de respaldar sus afirmaciones con citas directas del texto (las marco con subrayado).

**Ciertos factores** contemplados desde el punto de vista de la “*cultura estándar*” (cuya mirada, por otra parte, es la que conduce al lector a introducirse en la cultura de los navajos), focalizan en lo que **podrían** considerarse aspectos negativos de la tribu: “What they did not eat at once they were afraid to put down because some one would steal it, so all the evening they strolled about with great raw beefsteaks in their hands.” (...) “There was a sort of appreciation in the Navajo, but it was the sort that wanted all they could get from any one who wasn't looking.”

*La narradora pasa por alto el hecho de que, al menos en este último caso, tampoco su cultura queda excluida de esta conducta negativa.*

(Victoria, respuesta textual, *Desert Wife*)

Se evidencia aquí una actitud crítica y reflexiva. Victoria va más allá de la descripción, aprecia la diversidad y explora interpretaciones diferentes y alternativas en la representación de otra cultura. En el caso específico de la idea del robo, un elemento particular de la cultura propia se emplea para explicar aspectos de la otra cultura. Victoria observa de manera crítica la cultura y la sociedad propias, evaluándolas desde la perspectiva de la cultura C2 (en este caso, la de la narradora y la de los navajos), lo cual garantiza el distanciamiento crítico y la descentralización de las propias creencias. Estas son características centrales de la comprensión intercultural.

## **6. Implicancias pedagógicas**

Las interpretaciones de Victoria en este contexto revelan el dilema profundo implicado en el hecho de que el reconocimiento del Otro siempre conlleva también el fracaso para conocer a ese Otro (García Canclini, 2003). Dicho en otras palabras, existe un horizonte más allá del cual siempre hay algo que permanece opaco, inasequible y oscuro, tanto en la lectura en lengua extranjera como en la comprensión de otra cultura, o de un miembro de otra cultura. Victoria hace visible esta imposibilidad por medio de su uso recurrente de modalidad y lenguaje tentativo y vago: nada en la comprensión del Otro es certero.

Todas las características de la lectura de Victoria en este contexto demuestran pensamiento crítico y reflexividad, y van más allá del pensamiento crítico *per se* en pos de una conciencia cultural crítica, o conciencia social crítica, es decir, una criticidad y reflexión conectadas con una dimensión social, con cuestiones de ciudadanía, y de humanidad y naturaleza humana desde una perspectiva filosófica. Ejemplos en esta dirección son las disquisiciones acerca de los conceptos de cultura estándar y cultura minoritaria, cultura dominante, grupo minoritario, etc. Estos son elementos centrales en el Modelo de Competencia Intercultural de Byram (*savoir s'engager*) que reflejan la noción actual de educación intercultural para la ciudadanía (Byram, 2012).

## **7. Conclusiones**

Este trabajo informa sobre un estudio que utilizó el Modelo de Competencia Intercultural (MCI) de Byram (1997, 2008, 2012) para investigar la dimensión cultural de la lectura en

lengua extranjera en un contexto universitario. Más allá del sustento teórico que ofrece el MCI, en este caso este modelo también se constituyó en una medida de análisis. Partiendo del análisis de dos instrumentos de investigación, una respuesta textual y una entrevista individual, los resultados indican un alto nivel de conciencia cultural crítica. Esta conciencia cultural crítica, o conciencia social crítica, reveló una criticidad y reflexión conectadas con una dimensión social, con cuestiones de ciudadanía, y con aspectos de humanidad y naturaleza humana desde una perspectiva filosófica.

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## 8 Cultural bonding in the 21<sup>st</sup>-century language classroom

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### 1. Introduction

This paper intends to reflect the result of classroom experiences in two completely different learning contexts, one being with young adults at university level and the other, with young learners at a language school. In the light of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL), we will try to show how intercultural awareness can be developed no matter the age or learning objective of the target group.

Our projects are aimed at creating awareness of the importance of cultural bonding among our students. We believe that this aspect of language learning can be exploited independently of the learners' age, the learning aims and the classroom environments.

## **2. Cultural bonding**

We intend to foster cultural bonding by developing intercultural communicative competence, as defined by Byram, Gribkova and Starkey (2010, p.10), the “ability to ensure a shared understanding by people of different social identities, and [the] ability to interact with people as complex human beings with multiple identities and their own individuality.” Creating bonds is a natural characteristic of human beings. When we are born, we depend on our parents; our family represents security and the natural environment where we start socialization. Then, kindergarten is *the* place where, as kids, we start socializing with our peer group; and this continues throughout our whole life.

In order to fully develop our self- esteem we need to belong to a group, we need to promote a sense of belonging. Robert Reasoner’s (1992) programme on building self-esteem in the classroom fosters five basic attitudes which influence the level of self-esteem: the sense of security, the sense of identity, the sense of belonging, the sense of purpose and the sense of competence. He considers adults should encourage the creation of an accepting environment through the implementation of specific tasks aimed at creating bonds and group pride. This will contribute to enhance students’ self-esteem, students’ affective side. In other words, our proposal is taking the individual as the starting point, being cultural bonding with participants of the wider community, the final target.

Providing our learners with competences for their cognitive and affective development is of utmost importance in our teaching practice. Sharing and learning with others need to be fully developed in order to grow as human beings.

Nowadays, interchange is totally favoured by communication and information technologies. The emergence of the internet has contributed to foster cultural bonding.

Bearing in mind that students have opportunities to get in touch with people from around the world and to access information on varied and numerous cultures, it is essential to give them the tools to confront these new challenges. This is one of the reasons why it is so important to introduce learners into cultural similarities and differences from an early stage, but not leaving aside those whose contact with the second language takes place later on in life. It is not only significant to create bonds but also to create cultural bonds *or better* intercultural bonds.

### **3. CLIL and cultural awareness**

CLIL pedagogies place cultural awareness back on the agenda. The 4Cs framework developed by Coyle (2007) does not separate subject matter and language. It focuses on the interrelationship between content (subject matter), communication (language), cognition (learning and thinking) and culture. This framework puts culture at the core. This involves being socially aware of the self and others; “intercultural learning and understanding potentially permeate CLIL learning and teaching, ...” (Coyle, 2007, p.9); “the 4Cs Framework espouses sociocultural theory where social construction of knowledge and culturally embedded learning permeate the whole” (p.11). In the CLIL Compendium, the *culture dimension* is meant to “build intercultural knowledge and understanding, develop intercultural communication skills, learn about specific neighbouring countries/regions and/or minority groups and introduce the wider cultural context”. Having this theoretical background in mind is that we understand that our experiences can be among the research which tries to study the role of *culture* in CLIL. “... rich CLIL environments promote the learners' skills to decentre, take on and mediate between different cultural perspectives ...”

(Sudhoff, 2010, p. 35).

Developing intercultural communicative competence is a challenge in the 21<sup>st</sup> century classroom context. CLIL lessons give us the opportunity to work on a “triple- focussed approach” (Sudhoff, 2010, p. 36), foreign language learners combine learning of the L2, content and interculturality. “The linguistic and cultural competences in respect of each language are modified by knowledge of the other and contribute to intercultural awareness ...” (CEFR, 2001, p.43).

#### **4. Teaching contexts**

##### **4.1 Adults at an ESP university context**

Our research context is an ESP course at university level with future tour guides. To introduce this context, we should trace back the origin of this course of studies in our community. There was a need of tourist guides to respond to the requirements of an international tourist centre. It is important to point out that San Martín de los Andes could be considered a “melting pot” where there are descendants of European immigrants known as “NYC (nacido y criado)”, born and raised; people coming from other parts of the country “VYQ (venido y quedado)”, came and stayed; and Mapuche people. In other words, intercultural communication has always been a distinctive feature of our community.

Within these cultural contexts, English was considered *the* language to be included in the curricula so as to give future professionals the tools to communicate with foreign visitors. Consequently, we considered that the development of local identity was a must in the design of the English syllabus. The projects to be described intend to provide learners with relevant language to share aspects of our culture in order to empower their communication

skills and create bonds with other groups.

Some of our students have had previous experiences with the language. However, they report these instances as being mainly grammar-oriented. Thus, in most cases, it is the first time that learners feel the need to use the foreign language to share aspects of their culture with people from other countries.

Throughout their course of studies, students are confronted to varied situations in which they need to reflect upon their own culture. Teaching practices are intended to connect the foreign language to other areas in the curriculum (Content). Students are asked to retell local legends, describe historical buildings in town, talk about our ancestors and give information about regional hand-made products. Culture and language are permanently and explicitly interacting. "...we attempt to anticipate students' language needs (Language Dimension) i.e. we try to preview possible language problems and provide support strategies for each of the content/ skills, aimed at being developed, once needs are identified. Tasks are carefully planned, scaffolded and presented in a logical way. They are not based on grammatical complexity but on cognitive abilities." (Tavella & Fernández, 2010). The aim is, as Marsh states, to build "knowledge as construction instead of instruction." (as cited in Barbero, Damascelli & Vittoz, 2009, p.104).

"Language support tasks operate at a number of language levels. They normally support the learner at the level of vocabulary, grammar, function and textual organization, and in listening, speaking, reading or writing" (Barbero, Damascelli & Vittoz, 2009, p.105). For instance, when we want our students to be able to retell local legends, we need to give them support tasks at text level. We provide them with sentence starters so that they can structure their oral speeches and express themselves more confidently.

First, students get together in groups organized as they wish and start writing their legends. The teacher corrects the drafts and then, they choose the modality for their presentation. Role- plays, short videos and puppet shows have been some of their choices. Students' reports reveal that they have enjoyed working together with a specific aim, learnt from the others and increased oral practice, as numerous repetitions were needed in order to produce a fluent oral speech. They have gained in language and cultural development. This activity is aimed at further developing language as well as cultural bonding. "...interculturally competent language learners are (more) aware of the cultural conventions underlying the wor(l)ds they encounter and use" (Sudhoff, 2010, 32).

#### **4.2 Young learners at a language school**

As regards our other context, the objectives are to broaden young learners' views of the world around them, to respect otherness and to promote values related to cultural diversity. English Language courses offered at *Huellas Language School* are built around the idea that multiple opportunities should be provided in order to guarantee successful language learning. Not everybody learns in the same way and this should also be reflected in language classes. At *Huellas*, language learning is placed within a wider context. Students are encouraged to develop a myriad of skills through a variety of contents. We will refer to one of the areas particularly relevant to this paper.

Children join different year- round projects connected to varied ethnic and/or minority peoples and countries. The project we will talk about has been designed to encourage intercultural awareness. These classroom actions "enable the individual to develop an enriched, more complex personality and an enhanced capacity for further language learning

and greater openness to new cultural experiences” (CEFR, 2001, p.43).

As opposed to university students who have already been in touch with the content proposed in the L1 through other subjects in the curricula, most of our young learners (8 to 12 years old), coming from state- run schools in the province of Neuquén, have not yet been introduced to these topics in the school curricula. Most of the contents are presented for the first time.

When we talk about English-speaking countries, geographical features, traditions, festivities, typical dishes, clothing, music and society are among the topics that are tackled. Young learners are introduced to these cultures through a variety of activities: cooking, crafts, web searches, role- plays, oral presentations. Depending on the characteristics of the country to be dealt with and the interests of the group of students in particular, we choose among the activities mentioned above. As we want to make sure that all our students join in, we design classroom actions that cater for different learning styles. When students get in touch with other realities, they are generally able to respect cultural differences and value cultural similarities. We believe that cultural awareness is of utmost importance in our community. Then, it should be encouraged from an early age. “Experiencing and understanding a foreign language in a content- based way opens doors to intercultural learning processes.” (Sudhoff, 2010, p.32). It is worth mentioning that in the assessments we carry out at the end of each academic year, culture projects have always been mentioned as young learners’ favourites.

## **5. Role of the teacher in both contexts**

In the section above we have described two very different teaching contexts, age and



learners' aims vary widely. Nevertheless, the teacher's role and the teacher's challenges are the same.

Learners are placed at the centre of the learning process. Respecting learners' differences is one of our most important proposals. Teachers have to take "key decisions about what will be taught, how it will be taught, when it will be taught, and how it will be assessed will be made in reference to the learner." (Nunan, 1999, p. 11).

Teachers are conceived under Underhill's idea (1999) of facilitator. "By Facilitator I mean a teacher in any educational setting who understands the topic, is skilled in the use of current teaching methods and techniques, and who actively studies and pays attention to the psychological learning atmosphere and the inner processes of learning on a moment by moment basis, with the aim of enabling learners to take as much responsibility for their learning as they can" (p.126).

Working with culture is more risk-taking for the teacher, language queries cannot always be predicted and preplanned. This aspect can be very challenging or even, overwhelming for the 21st-century language teacher. At times they feel that they cannot cope with students' demands. Nevertheless, we believe that student-centred approaches which place culture at the core have more benefits than drawbacks.

## **6. Next steps with adults at the university context**

We are now in the process of gathering data to re-evaluate the contents which form part of the English syllabus. Surveys are being carried out so as to know the opinions of students (future professionals) and teachers of other subjects about the relevance of the topics. The idea is to update the syllabus according to the present needs of a community that is in

constant growth and change.

Another aspect to be considered for the reformulation of the syllabus is the cultural background of the students we receive. This is a very important trait if we want to strengthen local identity in a town where there is such a myriad of origins and realities.

### **7. Next steps with young learners at Huellas**

Critical reflection is adopted as a means to help the project grow. Asking ourselves questions about our teaching, about our attitudes, about our students is our constant position. We intend to be self-critical in order to reformulate and adopt changes when needed (Tavella, 2004). This reflection is considered an essential component of all the projects implemented at *Huellas*. Consequently, new ideas and new groups widen the original objective of our culture projects.

We still need to incorporate aspects of our local identity in a community which is an international tourist centre and a very small town where people from different origins and cultures live together. This need has emerged from students' own comments in class.

### **8. Conclusion**

In neither of the above described contexts, we are talking about a language or a culture class, both, language and culture, are interconnected and form part of the same classroom practices. "In foreign language learning contexts, the immanent tie between language and culture bears a significant potential for intercultural learning processes." (Sudhoff, 2010, p.31) Language is noticed, analysed, taught and expanded in terms of the cultural content we want to deal with.

We consider that learning how to respect and value others is very enriching for young learners. When students learn this from an early age, they are ready for cultural bonding. In the case of adult learners, who have in most cases had previous contacts with other cultures, it is relevant to use the L2 as a means to revalue their own culture and be able to share it with others.

By recognising cultural similarities and differences, we clearly promote internationalism, “the bonding of groups across national and state frontiers” (Byram, 2011, p.11). Thus, we educate to know, to do, to live together and to be (UNESCO, 1998).

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## 9 Interweaving critical reading of media texts and culture in a first year teacher training college

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### 1. The genesis of our work

Teacher Training Colleges in Buenos Aires include some form of Cultural Studies in their Curricula. This is done through various subjects namely Literary Studies, History and Language. ISP “Joaquín V. González” includes two further subjects: Geography and Culture of the USA and Geography and Culture of the British Isles. The approach to Cultural Studies provided by these subjects is saturated with media texts but can students actually read these texts critically?

There were three main purposes to our work. On the one hand, the aim was to raise students’ awareness on issues concerning the construction of *the Other* in the written media and how language contributes to this construction. On another level, we wanted to

introduce students to critical reading while furthering the deconstruction of the discursive mediation of the social sphere. A third purpose was to introduce students to research work during their first year course.

For the first stage of the research, a group of students from ISP “Joaquín V. González” was asked to participate in a project which would study the construction of *the Other* in the media. At preliminary stages, students suggested working with a particular case published in several articles from The Guardian, in particular how this newspaper chose to present the riots which involved the Muslim and Sikh communities in 2011. The case was chosen because, at the time, students had been discussing immigration in Britain and had been shocked by the amount of violence and injustice the riots had caused. They carried out thorough investigation of these communities, which required reading about immigration in Britain, trying to understand the difference in the religious approaches of the ethnic groups and the cultural diversity in terms of their respective sets of values and traditions. They presented these findings in September 2012 during a seminar organised by EDAPI (Equipo de Desarrollo Académico, Publicación e Investigación from Instituto de Educación Superior Joaquín V. González). One of the elements which students contributed to the project was how members of the Sikh community are confused with the Middle East Muslim community and how all immigrant groups have to bear the effect of stereotyping, which is the result of constructing an *Other* of special characteristics based on how the cultural features of singular groups are seen by members of the various immigrant communities.

Primarily, we decided to adopt Donald Matheson's concept that "language and human society are inextricable" (Matheson, 2005, p.3). We thus analysed language trying to reach the representations of the world that were reflected in the media texts chosen.

Results, though preliminary, demonstrate how various types of analyses can further students' understanding of media cultures in relation to the construction of *the Other*. Students were made aware of the multicultural feature of British society and in what way racial issues seem to be blurred in the written media, especially in a newspaper like The Guardian, whose foundational purpose was precisely to avoid discrimination.

## **2. Some basic concepts**

For many academics<sup>1</sup>, the role that language plays is that of giving shape to what people think or experience. However, people may also think outside the conventions of language. (Montgomery, 1995 in Matheson, 2005 p.5). This happens when individuals are consciously thinking and can make choices which are different from certain socially accepted linguistic conventions. For example, they may make a conscious effort not to use gendered language. But when they are not consciously thinking, they may resort to current socially determined patterns of language and these patterns are culturally and ideologically loaded. As a result, journalists and media producers hardly ever avoid vocabulary determined by power structures. For authors such as Van Dijk (2000), there is a systematic ideological bias which can be analysed through the language used in the media. Matheson (2005) suggests that a critical analysis of media texts is not only linguistic but it is an analysis of the results of "the dominance of certain social interests" and what these have imprinted in language.

Some consideration on the concepts of power and culture needed to be made clear and were discussed with the students participating in the project. We agreed with Fairclough (1989), Matheson (2005), and Van Dijk (2000) that dominant groups use language to maintain unequal relationships in society. By the same token, culture is thought to be a site of the struggle of many power groups to keep their dominance, their power (Matheson, 2005).

For Gramsci (1932-1933), power is how certain groups manage to persuade others in society that their ideas and interests are right. In other words, those with more power impose their perspectives making these appear as natural truths beyond dispute. Furthermore, the notion of *truth* needs to be revised. The media are not simple channels of communication which open a view to what is assumed to be true. Social sciences and the study of signs (Semiotics) have contributed to question the notion of truth in the media since the 1950's. (Branston.& Stafford, 2010, p. 12). In terms of Foucault (1966), each society creates its own system of *truth*, according to its beliefs, values and idiosyncratic characteristics, that is why, he goes as far as to identify five necessary elements for the construction of truth:

the centering of truth on scientific discourse, accountability of truth to economic and political forces, the diffusion and consumption of truth through what we now know as the media, the control of the distribution of truth by political and economic apparatuses, and the fact that truth is the issue of a whole political debate and social confrontation(Foucault: 1966, p. 131).

The notion of truth was central to our study since it is essential for the media to create the idea that what they publish is true. Moreover, the construction of an *Other* in the media depends on the views of the *Other* which prevail at a certain historical period.



The analysis of views on the *Other* date back to 20<sup>th</sup> Century Cultural Anthropology. Anthropologists consider three moments in history which determine how the hegemonic culture constructed the *Other*. A first stage was early Colonialism, during which Europeans needed to know and interact with the colonised *Other*, but understanding was not expected. This interaction gave rise to later developments of Colonialism and concepts such as *Metropolis* versus *Colony*, where the former meant Europe while the latter obviously meant the colonies. The notions of *Us* and *the Other* clearly reflect this division. When Colonialism was well developed in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, the relationship with the colonies changed and Europeans needed an understanding of *the Other*. As a result, diversity was acknowledged while there was acceptance of the fact that each cultural group satisfies its basic needs in such a way that this is comprehended only by the members of that particular culture. Functional Anthropology explains this process. After decolonisation, *the Other* is seen as a product of inequalities, in other words: the result of unequal distribution of power within society. The *Other* is not a member of the hegemonic culture. (Lévi-Strauss in Llobera, J., 1988).

The problem of racism and the media also needs to be addressed. Van Dijk states that although the media purposely deny racism, they have an important role in its reproduction.

Since public discourse potentially reaches a large audience, it is this latter, social form of denial that is most influential, and, therefore most damaging: it is the social discourse of denial that persuasively helps construct the dominant white consensus. (Van Dijk, T., 2000, p. 543)

### 3. Our work

We asked a group of students taking their first year course at Joaquín V. González if they would like to join a research group that would try to determine how the British and American written media constructed representations of others.

At this point, we must add a caveat. We questioned ourselves from which standpoint we could carry out our work without either taking the rigid stand of the hegemonic culture or the weakened stand of *the Other*, those belonging to different ethnic groups. It was agreed with students that we would always keep in mind the position from which we would question a text i.e. acknowledging the limitations that our own culture imposed on us.

At a first meeting, students stated their interest in a case that had taken place in the UK in the year 2011. In particular they concentrated on the death of three Muslim young men who had been murdered when they were protecting a petrol station from looters. A car charged against the crowd killing two of them while the other man died in hospital. The riots had started a few days before, after the killing of Mark Duggan in an exchange fire which involved a special police group that deals with gun crime in the African and Caribbean communities. This event led to riots all over England and, in Birmingham, it gave rise to the killing of Haroon Jahan and two other men. This was thought to be a racial crime. Both the Sikh and the Muslim communities mourned the three men killed in Birmingham.

The articles the students worked with were published in The Guardian a few days after the incidents mentioned above. The reason why we chose the Guardian was mainly because of its development in terms of principles and beliefs. Since its beginning, this newspaper has claimed an objective approach towards their job, stating ideas such as "comments are

free, but facts are sacred”. It is in this context that we wanted to analyse whether those solid principles were actually carried out in their daily delivery of news. In addition, and for the sake of the investigation, we decided it was necessary, at least at first, to narrow down the number of sources from which we were taking articles, so as to make the analysis more reliable.

Once the choice of newspaper articles was settled, we began our analysis from different perspectives. Fairclough (1995) states that media texts are communicative events in which there are “major temporal and spatial disjunctions”, i.e. they are produced at a different time and place from those of their consumption. As a result, he claims that they are based on a chain of communicative events and involve the public and the private sphere. This is discussed below. It was also established that the articles were news reports because they contained the following features typically present in the genre:

1. Most of them were event-based and communicatively-based.
2. They aimed at objectivity as they presented a diversity of voices, opinions, perspectives of the event being discussed.
3. They were informative not evaluative or persuasive. (However, they were opinion forming).
4. Most of the sources were interviews made to demonstrators.

The following features were considered singular, especially the last, but essential to construct an assumption of truth on the part of the reader.

5. The reports drew from the speech of the father of one of the dead boys. Interestingly enough, one could see how the bereavement of the relatives of the dead men was made public in the photos chosen by the newspaper, in the captions, in some of the quotations. This managed to build sympathy towards the families of the victims.
6. One of the articles was exclusively made up of direct quotations from different participants in the demonstration after the death of the boys, thus giving the impression of a live interview on TV or radio. Only the voices of those involved were present, which personalised the event.

For Fairclough (1995 p. 43), one important concern is whose voices exercise constraints in the structuring of media texts. This will directly affect the “ethos” (the trustworthiness of the newspaper, its credibility) of newspaper articles. The Scott Trust plc is the present owner of The Guardian and The Observer. The aim of the trust is stated in the following words:

To secure the financial and editorial independence of the Guardian in perpetuity; as a quality national newspaper without party affiliation; remaining faithful to its liberal tradition; as a profit-seeking enterprise managed in an efficient and cost-effective manner. (The Guardian News and Media Archive)

One of the topics of discussion was whether in this world ruled by market forces, it is so easy to maintain these aims and how much the printed media have to leave aside to compete with such media outlets as TV, the Web, etc.

#### **4. Applying functional systemic analysis**

To establish the interaction between the concepts mentioned above, namely, power, culture, an assumption of truth and how language is used to create an *Other*, we needed to understand how institutions such as newspapers use language to reflect their own interests and intentions.

Discourse allows us to understand (among other things) the interaction between people, people and the world, institutions and people, the powerful and the weak members of society. So discourse is part of a network of relations where language, power and identity have a role. (Matheson, 2005 p.1).

The linguistic choices made in the articles were analysed on the basis that language users have a limited range of options given by language to choose words and combine them. In the reports analysed several examples of these euphemisms were found. “Acts of retribution” was used instead of “revenge”; “mown down” is a euphemism for “run over”. This metaphor was used to indicate not an accident but a wilful action to destroy, to uproot somehow. This referred to the three Muslim men killed by the hit-and-run driver-who apparently was a new black immigrant - when the former were guarding a petrol station from rioters .These choices show the site or location or position from which the writer chooses to write. (Matheson, 2005 p.20)

Another interesting point is labelling, which constitutes a support for prejudice. Examples from the reports the group worked on led us into thinking that racial tension lies not only in the case of Whites against all others. In this particular case, it is old immigrants against new immigrants though both are not white and both are poor. This conclusion was reached based on the following:

1. The use of metonymical words such as “the worshippers” (the Sikhs and Muslims), which connotes religiosity and thus a high moral standard opposed to “the looters”, which refers mainly to Jamaican and other Black youths who were allegedly looting stores.
2. A very interesting use of the words MAN and MEN. In reference to those hit-and-run individuals. One article states: “two boys and a man were arrested”, which is typical of police reports. The identities are hidden, of course, but there is avoidance of any adjectives regarding race. This indicates the choice of neutrality that the journalist has made in order to appear objective. But, when the words are used to refer to the Sikh and Muslim members, the word man and men are used to refer to culturally shared knowledge. Only men go out to protest, women stay behind. So here, the underlying effect is not to associate the people with crime but with identity.
3. Many times the word “community” is used in reference mainly to the Sikhs and Muslims who live in the area of Birmingham. References to the community are “its fortitude”, “its tolerance”, etc. all of which indicate positive values. While, on the other hand, Winson Green, the geographical name of the area, is associated with crime, looting and men behind masks who are also referred to as “the outsiders”. In turn, members from the community are referred to as “locals”. An area in Birmingham known as Edgbaston is classified as upmarket by one member of the community while another area, Soho, is classified as poor in the claim he makes against the authorities for having changed the constituency boundaries.

4. “Immigrants in the 1960’s” is contrasted directly with “new immigrants”. This binary opposition reflects the internal conflict mentioned above.
5. “Some African-Caribbean and White mourners passed on their condolences...” Here, attention is drawn to the quantifier SOME. This quantifier rules out ALL, MOST, or merely African-Caribbean and Whites. The journalist made some concession to members of the group of new immigrants, who are in another article identified as Jamaicans. The aim here is clearly to appear objective while, at the same time, pinpointing the racial difference and the category of immigrants members of the community are.

As was mentioned above, one of the texts (The Guardian: Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, 2011) was entirely based on quotations from one participant in the riots, a boy of 16. It is an interesting form chosen by the journalist to report the event. The journalist seems to have chosen the voice of this teenager to ridicule the reasons why rioters went out on the streets.

“The first thing that came to my mind? Let’s get wild, let’s do it.”

In addition, we found interesting issues to discuss which contribute to questioning the notion of truth in the statements found in the articles. Following Trew (1979), we analysed one of the articles which presents a statement by the Prime Minister. The journalist states: “David Cameron said on Wednesday that the riots had brought out ‘some of the best of Britain’”. David Cameron seems to reflect the views of the social groups who hold power in Britain and who prefer to hide inequalities and injustices while expressing solidarity with

victims of these injustices. However, a deeper analysis of the statement highlighted the strategies made possible through language choices.

The noun 'riot' effectively conceals the main participant: the agent. A 'riot' is associated with unrestrained behaviour, which we should be able to attribute to human actors. However, 'riot' here effectively masks the doers of the action thus diverting the attention from the real protagonists. As regards the type of process represented by 'bring out', it also successfully disguises the doer as if the action had been performed 'by itself' or had come about spontaneously while at the same time involving an actor. In this case, this actor has an unidentified collective reference, which we take it to be 'the rioters'. Finally, Cameron takes advantage of the event to focus on 'the best of Britain', which is not accidentally in final (thus focal) position. This strategy obliterates the events and the actors and places emphasis on a much more crowd-pleasing ending.

The rest of the article highlights the attitude of the Sikh and Muslim communities, who decided not to demonstrate after the killing of three of their members. This contrasts heavily with other members who expressed a different reaction- mostly young people-and who were "shouted down". The article ends with "A handful of masked youth walked away" and "some younger contingent sniggered as he spoke". They were the same teenagers shaking their heads later, as "the tide of opinion turned against street protest". This obviously associates riots to both young people and masked people, which is the position that the newspaper takes throughout a series of articles on the event.



Therefore, it seems that the newspaper's stand establishes a binary opposition: violent youths against peaceful middle aged men. In the same vein, other articles contrast newly arrived Jamaicans and recent immigrants from Eastern Europe with the "substantial Pakistani community since the 1960s", thus pitching old immigrants against newly arrived immigrants.

The police are also mentioned in some of the articles. In one, young men who were approached by the media outside a mosque stated that the police had failed to protect them. In another article, the police are said to have kept a low profile. The narrative of the events following the death of the three young men expresses the idea that violence is subdued, that members of the community are keeping an attitude of self-control but that wrath runs underneath.

## **5. Our conclusions**

We set out to work on awareness of the construction of others in British society in the written media. By analysing how language is used in a particular newspaper, we began to understand how this paper made linguistic choices to express a certain position, which is sometimes capable of hiding meanings. The study has to be continued to confirm that this also happens in other newspapers in order to reach more solid generalisations, therefore more research and analysis need to be carried out . We also presented students with a different way of reading texts while questioning the concepts of truth and power manifest in them. Students participating in the project felt empowered as they carried out the reading of theoretical material and applied it to the analysis of texts. Although preliminary,

this work has allowed them to distance themselves from any piece of news and take a critical stand on the way information is presented.

We feel that our work has only begun and we think it is by no means a final piece of work. Nonetheless, students learnt to look for more in texts than meets the eye. They became much more interested in immigration in the UK and in understanding a multicultural society a fact that, we feel, may have given them an insight into their own society.

### Notes

1. It is not within the scope of this paper to discuss Linguistic Relativism and its limitations, but the work of Gumperz and Levinson (Gumperz, John J. and Levinson, Stephen C. editors. 1996. *Rethinking Linguistic Relativity*. New York. Cambridge University Press) can be referred to. An interesting paper by Lera Boroditsky, a cognitive psychologist, can be accessed online at <http://www.idealibrary.com>. She states: “Because English speakers often use horizontal metaphors about time, they might grow to think about time horizontally even when not explicitly processing a spatiotemporal metaphor.”

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## List of articles

The Guardian

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/09/riots-spread-birmingham-liverpool-bristol?INTCMP=SRCH>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/10/birmingham-riots-three-killed-crash?INTCMP=SRCH>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/10/birmingham-riots-anger-deaths?INTCMP=SRCH>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2011/aug/10/uk-riots-david-cameron-response?INTCMP=SRCH>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/11/uk-riots-birmingham-muslim-sikhs>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/12/birmingham-riots-tariq-jahan>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/13/uk-riots-death-dudley-road?INTCMP=SRCH>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/18/birmingham-riot-victims-buried?INTCMP=SRCH>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/18/birmingham-riots-funerals-winson-green>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/20/riot-footage-shots-fired-police?INTCMP=SRCH>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/aug/31/birmingham-hit-run-deaths-sixth-man?INTCMP=SRCH>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/oct/10/learning-england-riots-perspective-responsible?INTCMP=SRCH>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/dec/05/morality-of-rioters-summer-riots?INTCMP=SRCH>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/dec/08/rioter-profile-hate-police-victimise?INTCMP=SRCH>

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/2011/dec/09/rioter-profile-law-obeying-us?INTCMP=SRCH>

# 10 *Meet the words: a philological and socio-cultural approach to discourse analysis at teacher training college*

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## 1. Introduction

Decades of structuralist submission were swept away in the seventies when the functionalists came up with the idea that language cannot be understood, and therefore analysed, without considering the context within which words come to life. This situation, both of a linguistic and extra-linguistic nature, unravels a number of factors that will condition the choice of syntax, meaning, register and roles that encode the pre-existing ideas which we intend to communicate. Thus, Pragmatics – understood as the study of language in use, and in vogue in the 70s – gained new significance and became an inherent component of the hitherto omnipotent Linguistics.

The concept of *communicative language ability* coined by Bachman in 1990, however, lacks a fundamental component for effective language development, which has been neglected for years and which presupposes great proficiency: the metaphoric competence

(Littlemore & Low, 2006). Metaphors are closely bound to our reality and, consequently, filter in our everyday reasoning. Their significance has been widely acknowledged insofar as humans think, express and live *by metaphors* (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980).

Contrary to Saussure's notion of arbitrariness, language can only become significant to the learner when it can be attached to a particular reality, and that reality is nothing but a metaphoric representation of the world around us. Research on the origin and etymology of certain expressions – totally artificial at first sight- might expose revelatory data. By encouraging students to hear the *story the word has to tell* we teachers are also encouraging a more empathetic attitude towards both the system and its speakers insofar as the new discoveries contribute to shed light on the apparently obscure bond between form and meaning. Halliday's reference to language texture is nothing but a metaphor, and metaphors are the guiding principles of human thought and behaviour. By exploiting its sensory effect, learners are introduced to a completely new world of meaning. Words gain new significance because their story, the very essence of their existence helps the learner grasp its full signification. It is only through this “non-arbitrary” approach that their hidden voice becomes heard.

The present paper intends to pose a reflection on the way language should be presented to, analysed and experienced by advanced college students in order to enhance successful processing and production. Personal experience at this level reveals a general tendency to failure at comprehension skills, the result of the students' incapacity to see language from “above and beyond” (Halliday, 1989).

## 2. What is meaning?

Hayakawa (1990, p. 34) states that according to common belief

Every word has a correct indisputable meaning and that teachers and books are the supreme authority in matters of meaning and usage. [...] (However) The writing of a dictionary is not a task of setting up authoritative statements about the “true meanings” or words, but a task of *recording*, the best of one’s ability, what various words *have meant* to authors in the distant and immediate past. *The writer of a dictionary is a historian, not a lawgiver.*

The Merriam-Websters Encyclopedia defines *meaning* as “the sense of a linguistic expression, sometimes understood in contrast to its referent.” This sense, however, can be approached through different perspectives to reconstruct a different object of analysis. Definitions, however, are often far from enlightening. Citing Borges (as cited in Foucault, 1966, p. xvi) we come across the following entry:

animals are divided into: (a) belonging to the Emperor, (b) embalmed, (c) tame, (d) sucking pigs, (e) sirens, (f) fabulous, (g) stray dogs, (h) included in the present classification, (i) frenzied, (j) innumerable, (k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush, (l) *et cetera*, (m) having just broken the water pitcher, (n) that from a long way off look like flies.

Following Foucault’s analysis, what is demonstrated through this fabulous taxonomy is the “limitation of our own (thoughts), the stark impossibility of thinking *that* (p. xviii)” taking into consideration that language is often incapable of encompassing the vastness of experience.

Thus, we might have to acknowledge different angles to the process of defining a word: its denotative value (direct specific meaning), its connotative implications (the associated idea), its pragmatic significance (the bond between the word and its context and

users), or its rhetorical power (or effectiveness). Hayakawa (1990) distinguishes between extensional and intensional meaning, the former related to what the utterance points at in the physical world and the latter referring to what is “suggested inside one’s head (p. 37).” In all cases, the link between the expression and its referent might vary considerable. For this reason, it is necessary to re-conceptualise our attempts at defining words, in particular when dealing with advanced EFL courses.

Having clarified this semantic taxonomy it is worth relating the class observation that gave birth to the present discussion.

### **3. Case study**

After years of lecturing and evaluating English Language at teacher training college, I have recurrently noticed that students/teachers-to-be, who are almost on the verge of obtaining their degrees, are still struggling to successfully make sense of written texts, not to mention the added difficulty of encoding their own views in the production of their own material. Serious comprehension mistakes are recurrent, board after board, in spite of the candidates’ use of supporting dictionaries. At first the conflict seemed to stem from the complexity of the input and the time constraints, before which the helping tools proved ineffective. When discussing the same samples in class alongside the students, I gradually realised that the main trouble lay in the ineffective use of the dictionary definitions. Advanced students still seemed to show overreliance on the entries that best fit the use in the given text without ever questioning the true significance of that denotation, or, what is more, its origins.

This comprehension deficiency desperately called for a different approach to the analysis of texts, making the most of the data provided in dictionaries, but encouraging a more inclusive and open-minded decoding of the information.

As a result of this change in perspective, discourse analysis launched in the different direction, oriented towards a true understanding of the words in question by actually “meeting them face-to-face”. This figure of speech meant the critical discussion of the meaning of words by observing their background and their applications in other spheres, thus gaining a clearer –and more visual – interpretation of their use in the given context.

#### **4. A semantic parable**

Bevan (as cited in Hayakawa, 1966, p. 76) introduces the following argument within the field of Politics, a discussion that can perfectly well apply to other spheres in which language is the medium of expression – which after all means every single aspect of human activity.

He (the student of politics) must also be on his guard against the **old words** (added emphasis), for the words persist when the reality that lay behind them has changed. It is inherent in our intellectual activity that we seek to imprison reality in our description of it. Soon, before we realize it, it is we who become the prisoners of the description. From that point on, our ideas degenerate into a kind of folklore which we pass to each other, fondly thinking we are still talking of the reality around us.



This linguistic chaos must inevitably call for some order, within which to understand what is hidden in each word we utter, in an attempt to gain further sensitivity about the meaning of language.

## **5. The order of things**

According to Foucault there is a syntax that binds not only words among themselves but also holds together words and the thing. This binding follows four main processes of resemblance, namely: convenience, emulation, analogy and sympathy. To search for meaning, then, is “to bring to light a resemblance” (Foucault, 1966, p. 33). In other words

To search for the law governing signs is to discover the things that are alike. The grammar of beings is an exegesis of these things. And what the language they speak has to tell us is quite simply what the syntax is that binds them together. The nature of things, their coexistence, the way in which they are linked together and communicate is nothing other than their resemblance. And that resemblance is visible only in the network of signs that crosses the world from one end to the other. ‘Nature’ is trapped in the thin layer that holds semiology and hermeneutics one above the other; it is neither mysterious nor veiled, it offers itself to our cognition, which it sometimes leads astray, only in so far as this superimposition necessarily includes a slight degree of non-coincidence between the resemblances.

Words reveal themselves as enigmas to be solved, truths to be unveiled, in which case language is not absolutely arbitrary but, instead, it conveys a hidden meaning which is waiting to be discovered.

## 6. Natural or conventional signs?

Back to Greek times, Plato introduced the argument of the nature of the link that inter-related the two constituents of the sign. In *Cratylus*, Socrates – Plato’s fictional interlocutor – is thoroughly questioned about whether names are "conventional" or "natural", that is, whether is a system of arbitrary signs or whether words have an intrinsic relation to the things they signify. Lyons (1971) states that it was the philosopher’s task to “discern the ‘reality’ that lay behind the appearance of things. Thus was born the practice of conscious and deliberate etymology.” The term itself betrays its origin (*etymo-* meaning “true” or “real”).

According to Foucault the essence of the sign is inseparable from its analysis; consequently, we can say that the meaning of language is latent in each word, yet recreated through the mediation of cognition.

According to Saussure, the nature of the linguistic sign is arbitrary in that there is no direct connection between the signifier (the shape) and the signified (the concept). Still, there is enough evidence to support the opposite. Simply by resorting to a philological and etymological analysis of certain terms it can easily be observed that, at least in its origins, the link between form and meaning was quite motivated. The two concepts contain in their inner structure the meaning they intend to convey: *philology* derives from the Greek φιλολογία, *philos* (love) and *logos* (reasoned word); *etymology* in turn combines the Greek *etymon* (true sense) and the suffix *-logia* (the study of). From this two-fold perspective, the analysis of language cannot be done exclusively on the grounds of the exclusive denotative value of words, since both its connotation and rhetorical force will

only be grasped insofar as the reader is capable of tracing relevant clues to achieve full understanding of the true meaning conveyed.

I strongly support the view that the key to effective language analysis lies in “meeting” the words, mingling with their past and present, their evolution and the hallmarks they have left behind. This perspective, however, requires a particular attitude towards language: passion to discover the truth hidden behind words, and in doing so, readiness to fall in love with the art of generating meaning each language possesses.

## **7. Hands-on experience**

What follows is an account of some extracts discussed in class as part of the reading comprehension training. From each passage I have selected the items which I exploited applying the etymological-cultural approach introduced above.

### **SAMPLE 1:**

- a) Discussion of “mind” related words: Collocations and lexical chains.
- b) Video session to illustrate the expression “Dangerous minds”: Child-net international - cyber bullying.
- c) Discussion of the term BULLYING. First a derivational and inflectional analysis was done in order to identify the starting of this concept: bull-y-ing → bully (noun= a blustering browbeating person, one habitually cruel to others who are weaker; verb = to treat abusively, to affect by means of force or coercion) → bull (noun = bovine; verb = to advance forcefully and often violently). Visual implications:



Figure 1. Bullying

Source: [bullfightingmaza.blogspot.com](http://bullfightingmaza.blogspot.com)

SAMPLE 2: short story “Your obituary, well-written” by Conrad Aiken (1927) in parallel discussion with the movie trailer to “The Bucket list” (Reiner, 2007) in order to approach the discussion of death euphemisms. Origin of the expression: KICK THE BUCKET. The bucket is associated with the tool on which the hangman used to stand. If the bucket was kicked, the man would surely die. The analysis of the etymology of the idiom makes the link between the bucket and death less arbitrary.

SAMPLE 3: Reading comprehension “Cars and real men” (Walenn, 1992, p. 111) Extract: “I cannot see how it is possible to confuse driving a car with having sex, and suspect many people boast of their driving **proWESS**.” Discussion of the term PROWESS. Prow-ess (distinguished bravery, extraordinary ability) → Prow (the bow of a ship). In this case the analogy alludes to sailing, an inherent constituent of the British culture. Visual implication:



Figure 2. Prow

Source: <http://thiseclecticlife.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/05/prow-of-ship.jpg>

SAMPLE 4: Reading Comprehension – Equal at work? (O’Connell, 1984, p. 28-29)

Extracts: “**Hedged** about by our own self-images...” and “Women of all types have **blazed** trails in new areas...” In both cases the participle verbs allude to nature. Thus, in order to make sense of the link that binds form and meaning it is fundamental to go back to it. The “hedge” clearly refers to a tangible object (a fence or boundary formed by a dense row of shrubs or low trees). When applied to affect, it connotes a similar enclosure, but of an emotional type. The visual representation speaks for itself:



Figure 3. Hedge

Source: <http://schrocklawnsapes.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/02/hedge.jpg>

In the second case, the reference is to “fire”. The highlighted element denotes “an intensely burning fire” but the metaphoric extension alludes to a definite hallmark. The visual implication evokes a farming context and conveys the idea of ownership and permanence:



Figure 4. Blaze

Source: <http://2.bp.blogspot.com/->

[hj07Tz7vsDA/TxjvES2c8YI/AAAAAAAAAAc/spYjiW4OpGs/s1600/branding.jpg](http://2.bp.blogspot.com/-hj07Tz7vsDA/TxjvES2c8YI/AAAAAAAAAAc/spYjiW4OpGs/s1600/branding.jpg)

SAMPLE 5: Reading Comprehension “How Green were my Fingers” (by Peter Buckham, Punch Magazine). Expression on the spotlight: “London **locusts**”. Beyond understanding the denotation of word “locust” what is necessary here is to grasp the value of such an

insect and its effect on country life. Its allusion evokes a biblical tale thus referring to the damaging effect they might have on people, very much like a plague.

SAMPLE 6: Newspaper article “Relaxing in the part the Iron Lady makes a friend.” (Daily Mail, March 19, 2012) Allusion to the “Tory **wets**”. The act of “belonging to a moderate or liberal wing of the Conservative party” doesn’t actually illustrate the choice of expression. If we add to this the property of “lacking strength of character” we might get a little closer to the nature of this expression. If, on the other hand, we relate this to the verb form and its allusion to “the act of urinating on one’s trousers” we can immediately visualise a child in this situation. Thus, being a “wet” derogatorily refers to being “like a child”.

SAMPLE 7. Cambridge Proficiency Released Use of English paper (2006). Extract: “When television **condones** or **censors**, it is measuring the opinion of at least part of the population; when audiences **boycott** certain shows...” The three choices allude to “control over a situation.” The first term finds its roots in the Latin *condonare* (give up, often applied to Matrimony and giving way to the discussion of “divorce”). The second can also be traced in the Latin language meaning “appraise, value, judge.” The last term results from a proper name and results from the behaviour of the Irish Charles Boycott and his refusal to lower rents for his tenant farmers.

## **8. Final considerations**

This methodology has been welcomed among students, who most of the times had been ignorant to the real interpretations of words, prior to the suggested tips. The general tendency was for students to feel lost before the triggering questions but, once scaffolded throughout the analysis of the chosen words, they managed to see the significance of this

technique and even manifest some wonder at the possible associations that could be established.

In conclusion, and quoting Joseph Conrad in *Lord Jim* we, language teachers, can and should aspire to achieve this: “[...] by the power of the written word, to make (students) hear, to make (them) feel--it is, before all, to make (them) see.”

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# 11 Future teachers: Identities, trajectories and projections

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## 1. Introduction

These are times of change in teacher education since during 2013 and 2014 the curriculum designs for teacher education are to be revised (Res. 167/12 CFE, Res. 2373/12, Ministry of Education) for new curricula to be implemented in 2015 at the latest. These changes respond to other innovations --compulsory inclusive secondary education and the incorporation of information technology to school everyday practices, among others. Future teachers will teach in schools which differ greatly both from those they knew as students and from the perceptions about school that permeate teacher education. In this light, reform can be taken as an opportunity to accommodate our programmes to these new cultural demands.

This process compels us to make informed decisions that need to incorporate our students' voices among other valuable, significant sources. This perception motivated our



research group to inquire into the trajectories, identities and projections of the future teachers of English with the purpose of constructing a knowledge-base which can illuminate reform and change teaching practices.

In this article we intend to briefly present the theoretical categories and the methodological choices in our study and then concentrate on the interpretation of the students' perceptions of the teaching profession and their assessments of their own trajectories in the light of *narrative identities* (Ricoeur, 1991 in Holler & Keppler, 2013) and *the travel chronotope* (Bakhtin, 1981).

## **2. Conceptual framework**

One of our research aims was to identify and analyze the evaluations our students make of their *trajectories* in our institution, how they narrate their *identities* as members of our college community and how they envisage their profession in their *imaginative projections*.

Trajectories are understood as the paths students choose, either purposefully or by default, to complete their course of studies. Even though the curriculum prescribes a duration and a route by establishing course requirements, students' self-constructed trajectories include shortcuts, detours, halts and times different from the prescribed ones (Nicastro & Greco, 2009, p. 23-4). Trajectories can be approached statistically by analysing and correlating quantifiable data and by making generalizations, but this approach fails to capture the uniqueness and individuality of trajectories and the role perceptions and expectations play in the way students navigate through the course. As in discourse the narrative of a trajectory is displayed in time and space, a concept that we have found useful

for our analysis is that of the *chronotope*, i.e. the way in which time and space are represented in narrative (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 84).

Ricoeur defined *narrative identity* as “*the sort of identity to which a human being has access thanks to the mediation of the narrative function*” (1991, in Keppler, 2013). The students’ narrative identities respond to the relationships they establish in their educational community, to what they think, feel and do in that community, and to the way they relate their educational trajectories and their imaginative projections. The latter (Atkins & Mackenzie, 2013) involve the future which is imagined out of the materials provided by the understanding of the norms governing our lives. Coincidentally, the identification and acceptance of norms also contributes to narratives of identity, independently of the efforts one may make towards self-narrative and of the evaluations made of oneself and one’s life (Atkins, 2010, p. 1-2).

### **3. Methodological approach**

Given the complex nature of our object of inquiry, our research group opted for a combined quantitative-qualitative methodology. We designed a number of instruments for data collection, each with multiple purposes: a survey, the analysis of institutional records, workshops and interviews. The on-line survey, which contained closed and open questions and which was answered by 110 students, yielded information about their family, social, educational and cultural backgrounds. Some questions inquired about the reasons for choosing to become teachers of English and their assessment of the course, which rendered information we then used to plan subsequent stages of data collection. The analysis of institutional records allowed us to place second to fourth year students in three groups

according to how their trajectories approximated the one proposed by the curriculum. Out of each group, we selected six students whose characteristics were close to the tendencies which had emerged in the survey with respect to gender, provenance, work status and previous educational histories.

Two workshops were then carried out involving the selected students and three students from the first year, who were randomly chosen. In the first workshop the students were asked to write a very short spontaneous narrative text about the moment they decided to become teachers of English and about what it meant to be a teacher of English today. In the second workshop they had to draw their progress along the course, including the forces that benefitted them and the obstacles they had found. In both workshops students commented on their production and these comments were audio recorded, transcribed and analysed following the proposal made by Critical Discourse Analysis (Fairclough, 2004). The analysis of discourses produced by the students, which employed the categories of chronotope and agency, permitted us to identify some self-narratives and some representations of the teaching profession, the teaching of English, schools, the teacher education institution, studying and learning, and about the participants involved in the different educational processes of which students had been part or of which they planned to be part.

In order to delve into these representations we interviewed three students who had participated in the workshops and who were representative of the three different groups referred to above. The interviews were semi-structured, and organized as a conversation where the interviewers told students what our doubts were regarding what had been said during the workshops, and students clarified that which we said we did not understand. We

centered on what they meant by vocation, what they intended to do when they graduate, how they related to the educational community and how important different subjects were. The analysis of interview and workshop transcripts, written and graphic productions and survey answers allow us to describe trajectories, to approach students' narrative identities and to inquire into their imaginative projections, since CDA provides the tools to access beliefs and ideologies via linguistic analysis.

#### **4. The travel chronotope in students' trajectories**

The chronotope of students' trajectories could be described as a *travel chronotope* (Bakhtin, 1981) because of the presence of progress and halts, of sequences relating adventure, the experience of metamorphosis and the finding of threats and obstacles along the way. Within this chronotope students included a sequence which predated the beginning of their studies at college, and which consists of a series of events and decisions: "being sent" by their parents to a language school is a stage in most of their narratives; all students include a moment when they understand that their studies of the foreign language are not an imposition any longer but a source of joy, and many of them narrate the moment when they realize they want to devote their lives to teaching English with great emotion. This moment is mostly associated to the space of the language school and not to secondary school. What is more, in all narratives the language school is represented as a site of pleasure, fun and friendship, while English lessons at secondary school are not associated to enjoyment to the same degree, but to a more chaotic and dull experience. This preparatory stage seems to be part of most trajectories, since 84 % of the surveyed students attended a language school before entering our institution. Sometimes the decision to be teachers is not made during

secondary school studies, but later in the course of other studies, generally at university -- 36 % of the students started and dropped a different course. After this moment of decision, which students associate to a crisis in their lives, another landmark is the entrance exam, which in our college is necessary because of material conditions. Being part of those who could start the course is evaluated as a huge achievement.

One of the obstacles students mentioned when narrating their experience is the course load, since it makes it difficult for them to study as much as they need to. When asked about what they meant by “studying” and how different it was from “learning,” it was possible to notice that the difference was not easy for them to explain. In the individual interviews one of the students said that they learn throughout the year and only that which is significant to them, and that they study to pass exams, not necessarily to learn. In the interviews we also asked them what an exam meant to them. Nobody said that passing an exam meant that they had learned something important. To them passing an exam means that they have succeeded in “fulfilling the teacher’s expectations” (“conformar al profesor”), that they are responsible but also lucky, and that they have studied with the right method. Not passing an exam means that they have to try again, to study differently, and to conquer their fears. In the language they use, many associate success or failure with chance (“me fue bien, me fue mal”), depriving outcomes of any form of agency.

Students in the senior year acknowledge that the steepest obstacle in their trajectory was the freshman year. A student said that he expected the course to be easier and more like secondary school, but it took him a year and a half to adjust to the demands of higher education. Other obstacles are mentioned, such as that of living far from home, having attended secondary school abroad, having had to interrupt the course due to pregnancy or

disease. Trajectories are sometimes delayed by failed exams, but also by teachers' absences, by the computer –diversions such as games and social networking make it difficult for students to concentrate on assignments-- , and by inadequate study methods. If trajectories are delayed, students need to find a new group of classmates to move on with, and not finding it constitutes yet another obstacle. When speaking about “difficult” courses, they frequently resort to a metaphor: *monster courses* (“materias monstruo”). Quite tellingly, in travel chronotopes it is usual to find monsters along the road, and also to experience *metamorphoses* (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 111). Regarding this, there is a common moment of joy in students' trajectories, when they realize that they were right to choose the teaching course. They describe this moment, which is associated with the teaching workshops and the beginning of their practicum, as filled with emotion and as a turning point in their studies –practically as a metamorphosis.

Along their progress towards their degree, students experience other moments of joy and fulfillment which in the drawings they produced are represented with bridges, and among which they include the teaching workshops and some extracurricular activities – lectures, conferences, dancing lessons, theatre workshops. Other bridges represent the actions of significant people: teachers' advice and encouragement, the support of classmates, parents and friends. Although parents are always presented under a favorable light, students also say that they feel embarrassed when having to disclose to their parents that they have failed an exam. Parents are also presented as demanding figures at the moment of telling them about the decision to drop a university course to take up English teaching, and when consulted about the possibility of not completing the practicum in a

fourth year but in a fifth year of studies, which is regarded as a very tough decision to make.

## **5. Imaginative projections and identity narratives**

We said above that the chronotope of the students' trajectories was traversed by visions of their future as teachers. In one of the writing tasks, one of the students wrote about the teacher as oppressed by the system, and of a duty to be morally committed (“Ser profesor hoy implica mucho compromiso intelectual y moral. ... Pero el cambio depende de nosotros”). In spite of this assertion and of the recurrent relationship established between teaching and words like *sacrifice*, *struggle*, *devotion*, *duty*, we notice that when asked about what is to be a teacher of English today, they do not include the word *school* in their answers. On top of this, when asked in the workshops about how they evaluate state-run secondary schools, the most frequent response is generalized fear. We therefore infer that although they may claim to be committed to social change, they envisage their teaching as taking place at private schools or language institutes, and that they imagine they will deploy their activities *inside a classroom*, not inside *a school* or *a community*. The students we interviewed individually admitted to intending to start working at private institutions or at rural schools, and justified this by saying that they thought they needed to learn a lot more before teaching at urban state-run secondary schools. The data emerging from the survey also suggest the existence of competing projections: even though students showed a slight preference for state schools as workplaces (66 %), working at someone else's language school or starting their own ranked significantly high, 64 % and 41 % respectively (students could mark more than one answer for this question).

Though the students who were interviewed said that they had chosen to be teachers because they were driven by a vocation, they also acknowledged that not all teachers seem to feel the same drive: they have noticed that some go about their work as if it were “just another job”. A teacher, they say, should feel a great wish to teach, a passion they should harbour till the day they retire. They identify themselves with the passionate, driven type of teacher, from which we can infer that their identity is being shaped at this moment of their lives by this attitude towards the profession and by this projection. Their utterances are modalised in terms of obligation and necessity –*deontic modality* (Heyvaert, 2003, p. 84): teachers *need* to teach, they *should* teach. In their identity narratives, they enter college in an attempt to fulfill a strong desire, and they feel an equally strong responsibility towards others --mainly parents and teachers.

The students we worked with see themselves as ethically responsible for their failures, but as sharing the merit of their achievements with parents, teachers and classmates. They are grateful for their support to the point that a student even said that if she is successful at a course, the teacher of that course is successful too, because s/he was able to prepare a student to pass the final examination. Actually, 90 % of the surveyed students admitted to being either satisfied or very satisfied with the programme proposal. They say they are to blame for their bad choices –for attending too many courses at the same time, for not submitting assignments on time, for not adjusting to higher education more quickly. They think of themselves as grown up enough to take responsibility for their mistakes, but as still dependent for the assessment of their self-worth on what parents and teachers think of them. From this we infer that though they engage in self-narrative efforts to present



themselves as adults, needing emotional and economic parental support and teachers' positive feedback fissures their intended adult identities.

## **6. Towards changes in curricular reform and teacher education**

Before we debate a new curriculum and in order to assess our practices, it is necessary to learn about the students who are being educated to teach at inclusive secondary schools. Our study shows that they hold a higher regard for the language school they attended as teenagers than for secondary schools as a site for their future teaching. They have mixed feelings about secondary schools: they say they are committed to social change, but feel fear of state-run secondary schools and express uncertainty about their performance. This representation suggests that colleges need to historicise secondary education and the status of EFL in state-run schools for students to be able to critically examine the purposes and challenges of our discipline.

Out of what we found in our study, we think it would be recommendable to bridge the gap between learning, studying and assessment, so that exams become instances where to account for learning rather than to fulfill teachers' expectations. For students to stop thinking that when assessed they are subjected to chance and to their teachers' whims, it could be interesting to give them a say in the design of their exams --assessment criteria included-- as part of their learning experience. This could cement their intended adult identities and make them feel less dependent on teacher approval for the completion of courses.

In order to make an appropriate content selection, we should be aware that our students re-narrate their identities many times during their education. Some of those narratives are

associated to what they feel incapable of doing, to the point that some courses are perceived by them as *monsters*. It would be ethical to counter this perception by trying to make contents more meaningful to a prospective teacher and breaking down assessment into smaller units for students to be able to learn and cope with academic demands without so much damage to their self-image.

For curricular reform and teacher education practices to continue holding a fruitful dialogue with our present culture, we have inquired into the trajectories, identities and projections of a group of future teachers of English. We hope these findings will be useful for those engaging in changes that will contribute to an improvement in both college and secondary school teaching practices.

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# 12 Cultural awareness and language enhancement through microblogging

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## 1. Introduction

“Teachers need to integrate technology seamlessly into the curriculum instead of viewing it as an add-on, an afterthought, or an event.”  
Heidi- Hayes Jacobs, Educational Consultant

We live in an interconnected information society in which the skills to learn how to decode, code and reproduce information are highly valued. Therefore, it is important to include the teaching of literacy skills in the EFL classroom not only through the conventional teaching approaches but also through the inclusion and exploitation of new information and communication technologies. Technological developments have triggered a change in the traditional concept of literacy which has been enlarged to encompass the news skills that are necessary to interact effectively in new social and learning communities. The use of technological tools in the classroom benefits students greatly. According to Lee (2011) students can become more autonomous learners, become more culturally knowledgeable

while developing language skills such as reading and writing. XXI century students are embedded in a global grid in which messages have a fleeting characteristic: images intrepid with sounds and words moving at incredible rapidness. Therefore, it is a must that students learn to interact with these messages. Within the classrooms, teachers need to work with these multimodal messages (Kress, 2010), i.e. messages pertaining to different modes, so as to train students in digital literacy; in other words help learners to handle different kind of technological software and hardware.

These new technologies help students communicate across a wide range of distant realities. Therefore, it is a must that students learn to participate in a responsible and respectful way in the virtual global environment. Social networks are a good source for collecting information about other people's culture as well as a great media for interaction with members of other communities. This interaction process turns to be really enriching since to be able to share their culture students have to be more aware of their own cultural practices. Learning about other people's cultures helps to gather more understanding about "the other"; therefore, stereotypes will be less likely to wrap up students' judgment, avoiding episodes of xenophobia.

Considering the vast amount of time that our students spend on social networks, we decided to integrate them into our classrooms as a teaching/ learning tool as well as a motivating ally. By teaching /learning tool we mean having students practice their writing skills in an enclosed community where they can get peer feedback as well as teacher feedback, promoting new ways of reading (reading multimodal messages) and contributing in audiovisual and written formats, fostering the understanding of other people's perspectives, applying critical thinking, and enhancing students' cultural awareness. The

*motivating ally* definition we attribute to social networks lies in the sole intention of raising students' motivation through the inclusion of a non- conventional task (use of Twitter) into their school environment.

In this paper we carried out a classroom action research. This work was motivated by our experience of working with teenagers and perceive how difficult is to keep them motivated and engage them in writing activities. In this paper, we want to share the outcome of our research which for us has been a very positive one since we used a social network, Twitter, to enhance language skills as well as raise cultural awareness among our students. By means of the social network, students adopted a much more active role in their learning and participated more in classroom activities more willingly, while teachers acquire the role of facilitator encouraging students' participation, and the use of their problem- solving capacities (Lee, 2011).

## **2. Theoretical framework**

There are different kinds of social networks co- habiting the World Wide Web, such as Facebook, Twitter or Flickr. Our decision to make use of Twitter was based on the already existing knowledge that the students in our context shared about this application. Students have always shown interest in using it and they are willing to try new ways to gain more profit from it. Also, since Twitter helps to create a learning community in which some students feel more self- confident that in regular classroom settings, they tend to participate and interact more in the virtual environment, than they would do in class (Yunus, 2012). This increase in participation goes in line with Krashen's hypothesis (1982) of the low affective filter. The more comfortable and self-confident our students feel, the more

willing to participate they will be. Besides, social networks offer the possibility for students to establish community bonds that will compel them to participate more (Yunus, 2012).

The theoretical foundation of this project lies on both the constructivist and interactional approaches of learning that according to Lee (2011) are the approaches that feed CALL (Computer Assisted Language Learning). We will draw on Lev Vygostky's Social Development Theory. According to Vygostky, learning is the result of social interaction (Vygotsky in Wertsch, J. V, 1985) since students learn by being in contact with more knowledgeable others who will help students gather the knowledge they need to achieve a desired goal. Through different software that favors a constructivist approach and inquiry- based learning, teachers can create a space "for building learner communities, fostering collaboration, engaging learners in multiliteracies, and creating opportunities for global audience interaction and feedback" (Alameen, 2011, p 355). Students will make contributions, agree or disagree with their peer's contributions and propose new sub- topics for interest. Within this frame for interaction students will develop a great deal of learning autonomy by making meaningful contributions, getting feedback and looking for links to share to the class.

Since students interaction took place in the classroom, this is project was a case of synchronous e- learning. One of the advantages of synchronous e- learning is that students tend to feel part of a community rather than isolated (Hrastinski, 2008). Also, students tend to feel more motivated. According to Kock's media naturalness hypothesis (Kock in Hrastinski, 2008), synchronous e-learning shares some elements that characterize "natural" media (e.g.: the possibility to observe our peers' body language) contributing to

psychological arousal. The fact that students can observe their peers' reactions to their contribution makes learners commit to their learning (Hrastinski, 2008).

### **3. Methodology and development**

We outlined the project to be carried out with upper- intermediate students at their 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> year of secondary school (15 and 16 year olds respectively) at a private institution. The number of students in 4<sup>th</sup> year is 27, and the number of students in 5<sup>th</sup> is 23. Each classroom is equipped with a smart board and our students have their own smart phones. The weekly class schedule comprises two classes of 95 minutes each.

The topic unit, “The teenager and their relationship with the technology of XXI century”, was developed in 8 consecutive classes. Four of them, i.e. two weeks, were fully devoted to the use of Twitter in classroom. In those classes, students were requested to participate by “twerking” their contributions. We set 2 as the minimum number of contributions they could make and 4 as the maximum number of contributions. We set this limit to the number of contributions due to the following reasons: if students had been allowed to participate freely, some might have chosen not to participate at all. Then, those students who normally liked expressing themselves without giving too much thought to their contributions would have to think carefully what they were going to write so as to get a good grade based on the relevance of their comments. Besides, if we had not provided a maximum for the number of contributions, there would have been students making more posts than we were capable of keeping track and checking.

Two weeks prior to the first Twitter session, we created a special Twitter account to carry out the activities and asked students to start “following” it. We did not use our

personal accounts, while students did use theirs. (They could opt for creating an alternative account for classroom tasks but they decided against it.) Right before the first class, we “twitted” about the upcoming Twitter sessions to motivate students to participate and get actively involved.

On the very day of the first session, we shared a code of conduct and behavior with the students that stated what was acceptable and what was not during sessions in terms of: behavior, contributions and the sole purpose of the social network in class. The code also outlined the criteria that would be used for evaluation. Those students who failed to follow the code were subjected to school rules for misbehavior.

Sessions were carried out through the main use of videos, students’ oral presentations and readings that served as triggers for debate and discussion through “twits” that appeared on the screen of the interactive whiteboard so as students followed the class interaction. Regarding contributions or “twits”, students were asked to make contributions (two minimum contributions) at different times:

- a- During the first session: a video was shown to engage students in an active Twitter discussion.
- b- On the second and the third sessions: some students had to prepare oral presentations. As a follow up, the remaining students were asked to contribute to these presentations with insightful comments, questions or links about the specific topic. Students were asked to read about the presentation topics before coming to the classroom.
- c- The fourth session consisted of a closure activity in which a survey was carried out to gather insights about the outcome of the activity.



Our teacher roles varied from following Twitter interactions, walking around the room answering students' questions, to posting new questions or comments to instigate further debate to make sure students were fully engaged in the task. Students were graded according to the number and relevance of contributions, the respect and adherence to the code of conduct, the oral presentations performance and the respect to their peers' contributions and perspectives. (Refer to appendix 1 for detailed criteria).

Before embarking on a project involving social networks, teachers have to become acquainted with their school policy about their use. In this specific case, we had to write a letter asking the authorities of the institution for permission to make use of this social network. In that letter, the purpose of the use of the social media was clearly stated as well as the activities that were going to be carried out in the classroom. Permission was granted to make use of Twitter in the classroom setting only. Therefore, tasks outside the classroom were ruled out.

#### **4. Outcome**

In terms of students' overall participation, different tasks were proposed through the use of Twitter, and most of them made more contribution than the minimum required, which it can be taken as an indicator of students' motivation and readiness to participate about the different topics being dealt with. This arousal in motivation is in accordance to Hrastinski's (2008) claims about the effects of synchronous e- learning on students' psychological arousal.

The classes which involve Twitter use were four. Students had to respond to polls, make contributions to other peers' oral presentations, pose questions for further discussion,

present their views on the topic at hand, and finally express their opinion about the use of Twitter in the classroom. At the end of the session, we went through the comments that our students have posted to check the relevance of their messages, the number of tweets, and the language employed by the students. When analyzing the quality of the students' "tweets" we observed that over half of the contributions were relevant to the topic and sparked further debate. Whereas the rest just focus on agreeing or disagreeing with their peers' line of thought. Some contributions, such as "I agree with Pia", were dismissed due to their lack of relevance to the topic. As regards the enhancement of students' language, we could notice that students were more than ready to point and check their peers' mistakes as well as ask for clarification when students' "tweets" were not clear enough. As Dörnyei (2001) stated it is noticeable how students' production increases when they perceive their environment as comfortable and friendly (learning situation level), the task as relevant, and they have clear goals and objectives. Besides, it should be pointed out that at no time did the teachers have to censor a "tweet" because it could have been considered pejorative or insulting against other peers or cultures being studied. Moreover, students displayed a genuine interest to keep on learning about other people's customs and system of beliefs.

From our teaching point of view, we consider that it was a very rich learning and teaching experience. Since we discovered that it is possible to integrate social networks within the classroom to serve a main two-fold purpose: motivating adolescent students to work inside the classroom and keeping up-to-date with current social trends that have an impact on learning. We make our claim based on the number of contributions we got, mainly from those students who tend to participate less in regular classrooms settings due to shyness or lack of confidence. Taking into account our students' comments, we believe

that the use of Twitter help them improve their writing skills since they express that due to the limited number of characters that Twitter allows they have to look for way to condense their message. Thus, using Twitter also promoted drafting, rewriting and the use of online dictionaries and thesaurus.

Since students were working in a well- known virtual environment, they felt at ease and more self- confident; as a consequence, they were more willing to participate (Dörnyei 2001). Students had to write for a specific audience, so they were more committed to their learning and tended to pay careful attention to what they wrote (Hrastinski, 2008). Since all students could read what the others´ had written they tended to ask more questions to check the linguistic accuracy of their contributions; thus, we can say that this task help the master a little more the foreign language.

Besides, the teachers presented material about the content unit (the use of the Internet and social networks) that prove to be positively challenging for the students since students had to investigate about other culture´s usage of technology and social media. Thus, this material prompted research as well as cultural awareness.

## **5. Conclusion**

We acknowledge that fact that this project was carried out in a privileged environment in which students had access to smart phones and teachers had smart boards in their classrooms. We are aware that this is not the normal classroom setting of the majority of Argentinian teachers; however, we still believe that it is imperative to share our experience as an attempt to raise awareness about changes that are taking place in the learning environment and that, little by little, (should) influence our teaching practices.

As educators, it is a must that we keep up-date with the latest social trends that have a bearing on our education setting. Technological developments have brought about new ways to communicate that rely more on a combination of modes than just on the written one (Kress, 2010). This change in the nature of messages caused a broadening in the concept of literacy, so to be literate nowadays we have to be acquainted with the use of technologies, digital literacy. At the same time, technology has made it possible for us to communicate with people in different areas of the globe; therefore, teaching our students to be respectful of their and other's culture is key to a harmonious interaction between peoples.

This new century challenges teachers to embrace technology and use it in meaningful ways. Technological environments are natural for our students who were born in technology embedded houses, thus they perceive the virtual world as a comfortable place (Krashen, 1982) from where they can make valid contributions. However, we should not forget the importance of teaching of values that regulate interaction since they are important in the regular classroom setting as well as in the virtual setting.

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## **Appendix 1**

Criteria for the assessment of students' contributions in Twitter

- a. Contributions should be relevant to the subject matter being discuss
- b. They should clearly state a perspective for analysis
- c. If a contribution counters another, that contribution must also include a reason for the opposition and present a new point of view.
- d. Contributions that include a link should be followed by a comment about its relevance.
- e. Each student must comply with a minimum of 2 (two) and a maximum of 5 (five) contributions.

# 13 Digital identity and teacher's role in the 21st century classroom

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## 1. Introduction

While the digital identity of our students and their technology related behaviour tells as much about themselves and the way they learn, we seem to ignore this valuable information to create good practices. At the same time, we do not use technology in the same way in our everyday life and in our role as teachers. In addition, the netbooks in our classrooms are not generating any real change in teaching or learning, as the Horizon Report 2013 for Latin America indicates (NMC, 2013). But we live in the network society (Castells, 2000) inside and outside the classroom.

Therefore, the network society calls for a new role for EFL teachers – that of designers of ecosystems of learning, where the English class is everywhere and at any time, rather to have technology in the classroom. The design of these ecosystems demands both a teacher with a critical view on technology and knowledge society (UNESCO, 2005), and a learning

design that not only aims at language competence of the items stated in a syllabus, but also competence development for long-life learning that helps learners overcome the cognitive divide poor teaching with technology in education creates.

## **2. Who are our students?**

In the 21st century, as a teacher of English, all my dreams seem to have come true as regards access to technology. But an old saying goes: beware of what you dream, for it may come true. In fact, for many schools and teachers it has become a nightmare, even to the point of forbidding computers, mobile phones at school or blocking Internet access. So what has happened? Even if connectivity and ubiquitous devices are not available everywhere for everyone, it is a fact that society has evolved in such a way that technology influences every aspect of life to a point of no return. Even if somebody has not access to Internet, the format and language of the information they get from traditional media such as TV or radio has been modified, or their attention span, or their ways to get in touch with others.

Students are on the net. This identity makes sense as long as they receive feedback from the community. Identity exists, thus, because they relate to others and are accepted as such by them. For Wenger (2001, p. 187) there is a profound connection between identity and practice. Developing a practice requires the formation of a community whose members can engage each other and thereby recognize each other as participants.

A digital identity is thus the representation through a set of features of the identity of an individual that is used in some processes of interaction with others in distributed networks for recognition of the individual.

According to Windley (2005) identity is defined as collections of data about a subject that represent their traits, preferences and attributes. Thus, it is possible to know who we are or what our credentials (attributes of that identity) are. In this sense, a digital identity is the representation of learning through a set of visible features in an instructional context, the real identity of an individual processes are developed in interaction with others in distributed networks, and is susceptible of being used in the practice of instructional design and educational assessment processes.

Huynh (2012) states that although it has a long way to go, no expert can deny that digital identity is changing the way of building the self-image of young people. It is therefore essential that school offers means to assess through this image under construction, or taking it into account. The distinction between private space and public space, data protection, and e-reputation are factors to consider, deleting certain boundary between the personal and the public. (Zapata-Ros & Lizenberg, 2012).

Our students do not wait until they see their friends to contact them. Their attention span is conditioned by the length of a You Tube video – about 3 minutes on average. Their power of synthesis makes them summarise messages into 140 characters – Twitter maximum. Whenever there is something they need to know they will just google it, or ask



somebody on the net – often somebody they don't know. They express themselves through mash-ups and transmedial messages.

So they are goal oriented, with great power of synthesis, they convey meaning through media convergence, short attention span and divergent thinking. These are the inhabitants of our 21st century classrooms. This is the culture we breathe in our classroom.

### **3. Who are we?**

We, teachers of English, seem to have a split personality in this 21st century world. We share in various degrees several characteristics with our students. Many of us cannot turn our mobiles off – we just silence them because we might be receiving an “important” message or call. We yearn for contact with long lost friends and use digital social networks such as Facebook or Myspace to get in touch and keep relationships, or to know our acquaintances', relatives' and friends' whereabouts. We text how we feel, where we are, what we think, what we do not want to forget. We let off steam in less than 140 characters or through a shareable commented picture. Marc Prensky's deterministic distinction between digital native or digital immigrant according to age (Prensky, 2001) has given way to more accurate labellings according to habits of use, such as David White's continuum between digital visitors and digital residents (White & Le Cornu, 2011), and we seem to find ourselves at different points on this line depending on the aspect of our lives we scrutinise: leisure time, holidays, business, information gathering, contact with people or any other we may think of.

Unfortunately, there is sometimes no consistency between our habits inside and outside the classroom. More often than not, we include technology for the sake of motivation, using digital means for activities which could be equally well done on paper. As teachers, we seem hard to move out of an instrumental rationality that leads us to find the right tool with the right method for our language teaching objective. One reason for this resistance might be, as some authors mention (Buckinham, 2008; Cabello, 2006; Dudeney & Hockly, 2008) that most teachers do not really believe technology is producing a real change or improvement in learning in general. Perhaps, these poor results in learning derive from the fact that we are still using ICT under structural or cognitive frameworks instead of under a sociocognitive one, much more adapted to the networked use of ICT we have today (Warshauer & Kern, 2000).

#### **4. Where is the English classroom?**

Dictionary.com defines *classroom* as “any place where one learns or gains experience.” Then, the classroom can be anywhere in the physical or digital world, as ubiquitous as we choose. Because we do not want our students to learn English only when they are within the walls of the school or at the institute with us, but we would rather have them learn everywhere they are, ending task. Therefore, learning English can take place at school or institute, and also at home, while travelling, while playing at unpredictable places. And at unpredictable times, because the classroom can be set during the school hours, and also whenever the student can and/or want to learn English, for as long as he can or want to stay

in it. The flexible and ubiquitous condition of the 21st century classroom is the main feature of the 21st century learning environment.

However, not any environment becomes a learning one, that is, not any environment becomes a classroom. There should be a learning intention set by the teacher, the student or even better, agreed by both. Technology as a motivational agent only is a short-term investment. We all know by now that netbooks in the classroom –or any technological gadget or program will not create learning intention. In fact, many times ends up being a disruptive element which is resented rather than appreciated.

Do we need technology in the classroom? I would pose that we rather need the classroom *everywhere, all the time* by creating learning environments that take into account digital identities of the actors involved, the interculturality between the physical and the digital world and the teacher who works as a learning designer, and that we can have it thanks to technology. In this way, we can take advantage of the highly valuable face-to-face, synchronous and spatial time together with the students to enhance those aspects of learning that students more and more rarely have the chance to practise when they're not in the physical classroom. We already have actors in the classroom who are immersed in a technological world, so we have technological *mindware* in the classroom, and this is what makes a difference.

## **5. Identity and digital culture in the classroom.**

We can say that we are in a 21st century classroom because both teachers and students are immersed in a world that is affected by technology, and our culture, habits and feelings are changing because of it.

As teachers, we need to deepen our understanding of the role and consequences of digital technologies in contemporary culture, including all areas of activity such as performing arts, telecommunications, information technology, philosophy, law and of course, education. By scrutinizing our habits ten years ago and today, we will be able to spot at least a couple of changes in ourselves. Not only in what we do, certainly in what we are as well. Therefore, our identity is also built by how and when we show ourselves online, what we do, who we connect with, how often and what for. We may consciously do so or not, maybe we are not as careful with this outer image of ourselves as we are when we choose our clothes to go to work. And the same happens with our student's identity.

So we show who we are when standing in front of the class and what can be googled from us on the Internet. And how much do we know about our students? From the institution they attend, the way they look, how they talk, how they behave in class, the information other teachers or the school authorities can give us we outline their identity. However, we usually ignore their digital identity we do not take into account what they prefer to do or have on line. Knowing who your students are, and build together with them a classroom ethos that would let you infuse digital culture in the classroom, including ethical behaviour and awareness of digital identity.

Do we know which games or type of games do our students play online? Which tool do they use to get in touch with their friends? How often are they online? What topics are they interested in? How aware are they of their choice of privacy levels? What kind of access do they have to technology? How is technology used in their families? All this is invaluable information to build our 21st century classroom.

## **6. Language teachers as designers of ecosystems of learning**

Most activities that include ICT for learning English seem to be, in fact, ways to enhance teaching, but barely enough to enhance learning in such a way that we take advantage of our new competences in the digital world and the possibilities technology opens. As teachers of English, we pave just one part of the road of language learning. This is why developing lifelong learning skills on how to learn a language together with the stated syllabus content of the course become central in our role.

If learning can occur anywhere and at any time, if our classroom can expand as much as we want in time and space, if self-learning competences are to be developed instead of designing lesson plans for individual sequential isolated language items we could think of ecosystems of learning in which those traditional lesson plans are just one more element in a more global and holistic planning.

Why an ecosystem of learning? Because all its elements compose an environment in which learning is sustainable during the current course but its lifespan can be extended

much longer. Its constituents: technology, content, textbooks, students, teacher, school, digital environment interact in complex relationships.

And the role of the teacher as designer is critical in this new model of teaching. We can think of three types of teachers: the technical expert who effectively applies methods and techniques designed by others, the cognitive teacher who analyses the context and the students and take decisions on non-behavioural competences acting in an autonomous and reflexive mode. And there is a third type: the critical teacher. A teacher who takes into account different dimensions to design ecosystems of learning: instrumental, semiological/aesthetic, curricular, pragmatic, psychological, productive, selective/evaluative, critical and organizational curricular, attitudinal and researchable (Cabero, 2007); alive and ever changing environments where learning takes place.

Ecosystems of learning suit work best under pedagogies such as Problem Based Learning (Ng, 2008), Task Based Learning (Willis-elt), or Project Based Learning (Beckett & Chamness Miller, 2006) because they offer multiple opportunities for interaction between their components and help the development of a variety of competences and higher order skills. Flipped classrooms (Peachey, 2012) seem to make the most of face-to-face instances, by allowing teachers to provide on-the-spot feedback when acquired knowledge is put at stake during the activities in the classroom.

An ecosystem, as defined by Encyclopaedia Britannica, is a *complexity of living and non-living organisms, their physical environment, and all their interrelationships in a particular unit of space*. Therefore, a learning ecosystem may include:

- Living elements: learners and teachers, school administrators and/or authorities
- Non-living elements: learning goals, technology, textbook, devices such as netbooks, PCs, mobile phones, tablets.
- Supporting relationships: projects, social networks, activities, curated content
- Unit of space: physical classroom and all the digital environments

Designing an ecosystem of learning needs clear linguistic competence goals, validated ways to evaluate them and deep knowledge of the students. Once these elements are assured, the rest is highly flexible and dependable on context, students' and teachers' preferences, teacher's creativity and technological availability.

So the task of a teacher as a designer would be to create with their students that environment by setting a task, project or problem in the traditional way, provide a bank of resources where students can access to explanations and practice of various types, help the students develop their own personal learning environment, and foster participation in a community learning of practice, leaving the face-to-face classroom time to help them with the core of the problem, task or project.

It is always best to start small – departing from creating a community of learning with the same tools your students use, making them produce similar digital items to the ones they consume – games, pages, audio files, videos, accepting evidence of linguistic competence in different formats to suit different students' intelligences and adapting to

students contexts, curating preferences and habits sites and tools they might be interested in and show you care, and above all, promoting a passion to learn.

## **7. Conclusions**

David Perkins (2012) states that we should educate for the unknown. Understanding our students' relation to technology and our own relationship with it will help us design critical use of technology in ecosystems of learning that will foster language competence development, even after we are no longer with them in the classroom.

We need to help them find how to go on learning the language they need. And let them share their productions. Instead of just testing vocabulary, grammar or structures, let's help them make their knowledge visible. Let's ask ourselves: how do I know they have really learnt? How can they show all the class they've really learnt, taking advantage of the particular traits of each one's identity? And then, let's design the learning environment accordingly.

Our ecosystems of learning will become living and changing environments which will contain a combination of traditional and technological artifacts, and both new and tried-and-tested methodologies, without fixed boundaries and highly personalised, so that language learning competence could go on after our course finishes and becomes part of the students' usual digital environments.



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# 14 ¿Se puede hablar de oportunidades de aprendizajes intraculturales?

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## 1. Introducción

En el caso de la clase de inglés como lengua extranjera—una realidad común a un conjunto social— donde los estudiantes y su docente construyen esa realidad interpretando experiencias y generando comportamientos devenidos de un conocimiento culturalmente adquirido, se nos plantean importantes interrogantes: qué tan compartidos son esos conocimientos entre el grupo y el docente, qué tan aceptados son los comportamientos culturales de los estudiantes por el docente, qué tan tomadas en cuenta son las diferencias que se producen por roles no compartidos en el conjunto social— por la franja etaria de los estudiantes, por los intereses tan distintos del grupo y del docente —; y principalmente, qué tan socialmente elaborada puede ser una realidad traída de una cultura distinta, vehiculizada por la lengua extranjera.

Si las oportunidades de aprendizaje que se van a dar dentro de este contexto socio-cultural se van a dar a partir de las pautas culturales pre-establecidas en los constructos sociales del grupo de pertenencia, se puede inferir –de acuerdo a las interpretaciones realizadas– que existiría una nueva categoría no tenida en cuenta por estudios teóricos previos, si el factor de interculturalidad no está tan presente en los constructos sociales de referencia, sí está lo que se ha interpretado como *intracultural*.

Es el propósito de este artículo definir esta categoría nueva que emerge de un trabajo de investigación (Lizárraga, 2012) que ha buscado dar respuestas a distintas preocupaciones nacidas tras años de práctica de enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera en escuelas públicas de la provincia de Jujuy.

## **2. Lengua y cultura**

El ambiente institucionalizado se ha alejado cada vez más del lenguaje cotidiano, del lenguaje que los alumnos y alumnas traen a las aulas, del lenguaje con el que construyen su realidad, su mundo. Nuestros alumnos y alumnas viven un realidad donde hay nuevos modos de significar; hay una nueva manera de ser y una nueva manera de comprender, puestas de manifiesto a través de un discurso multimodal. Cabe entonces preguntarnos como enseñantes de lenguas extranjeras dónde nos paramos para entender este nuevo discurso, qué oportunidades brindamos a nuestros estudiantes para que puedan aprender la lengua extranjera, qué acciones llevamos a cabo para generar un paradigma educativo distinto que ayude a superar esta brecha abierta entre la nueva manera de ver e interpretar y significar el mundo de nuestros alumnos y la nuestra.

Lo que se ha buscado con el trabajo de investigación mencionado es preguntarnos en qué condiciones sería posible para el docente de inglés como lengua extranjera ) en escuelas públicas de Jujuy posicionarse de otra manera frente a esta nueva realidad, y producir un primer aporte para señalar, en todo caso, un primer paso o necesidad, como lo es producir con los docentes de LE (inglés) una reflexión crítica sobre las pautas culturales de aula/clase y de escuela/institución tal que permita hacer visible lo que hoy se ha naturalizado. Desde este trabajo se sugiere que a partir de esta reflexión crítica sería posible proponer, entre los docentes de LE (inglés) como cuerpo docente organizado, una forma de trabajo que busque modificar la cultura de lo individual instalada hoy para pensar en las pautas que permitirían generar una comunidad de aprendizaje o una cultura del aprendizaje colectivo. Desde este posicionamiento se debe entender en primer lugar que el objeto de estudio que enseña es el más complejo de todos los objetos, que lo que enseña no es únicamente un sistema lingüístico sino un hecho cultural. Interpretamos que no puede separarse la lengua de la cultura que ésta representa, pero entendemos que ante todo se debe capitalizar la cultura del aprendiente—que es nuestra propia cultura— para hacer base en ella, y a partir de ella llevar al aprendiente a construir o resignificar la realidad que le presentamos a través de la lengua objeto, pero vista a través de los códigos culturales de los aprendientes; en otras palabras hacer uso de aprendizajes *intraculturales*, de los conocimientos socialmente elaborados y compartidos juntamente docentes y estudiantes.

### **3. Aprendizaje intracultural**

El análisis de las oportunidades de aprendizaje que vamos a hacer bajo la luz de las pautas culturales, se apoya en el concepto de representación social definido por Denise Jodelet

(1994, p. 36), como “una forma de conocimiento, socialmente elaborado y compartido, que tiene un objetivo práctico y que contribuye a la construcción de una realidad común a un conjunto social”. Este concepto de representación social se encuentra inmerso en el de cultura tal como lo concibe Spradley: “el conocimiento adquirido que la gente usa para interpretar experiencias y generar comportamientos” (1980, p. :6; traducción propia), que según Jodelet son socialmente elaborados y compartidos.

De ahí la categoría del intérprete que el aprendizaje que se está llevando a cabo en el aula de lengua extranjera tiene más el carácter de *intracultural* que de intercultural. La ventaja que debe tomarse desde este posicionamiento es precisamente afianzar el conocimiento de la propia cultura, y en contextos áulicos como los que se dan en la escuela pública de la provincia de Jujuy donde asisten estudiantes de los diversos puntos cardinales de la provincia, o inclusive del otro lado de la frontera, se debe tender a promover el reconocimiento de la diversidad de culturas que se manifiestan dentro de la propia aula.

Existe la interculturalidad vehiculizada por la lengua extranjera que trae inherente su cultura, pero también existe lo *intracultural* si se observa que la red de pautas culturales presente se ha tejido desde la diversidad de culturas que se posicionan en la propia aula, y que si no se recuperan en un tejido social valorado y afianzado como digno de ser tenido en cuenta, son las que contribuyen al individualismo y al aislamiento.

Entonces vemos por qué se haría menester revisar el concepto *intercultural* para dar mayor énfasis a lo *intracultural*—categoría del intérprete—, entendida esta como la red de conocimientos culturales compartidos que los aprendientes traen como aprendizaje desde su cultura, y empezar a construir los aprendizajes significativos desde las pautas culturales establecidas e institucionalizadas, desde una comunidad que ayude a entender la

importancia de la construcción de conocimiento en colaboración, en cooperación, y no en forma tan individualista como se produce esta construcción.

#### **4. ¿Contenido global o local? La cuestión de la identidad en la clase de lengua extranjera**

Analizar qué enseñamos cuando decimos que enseñamos inglés, cómo lo enseñamos, por qué lo enseñamos, son preguntas que generalmente se hace cualquier docente enseñando cualquier disciplina, pero éstas adquieren una doble dimensión en la clase de LE. La clase de LE es un espacio intercultural, como dice Geneviève Zarate (1993), “es en la clase de lengua extranjera donde se establecen los parámetros que articularán las relaciones entre la lengua nativa y la LE.”

Pero ¿por qué los estudiantes de la escuela secundaria pública de la provincia de Jujuy no pueden establecer comunicación en la lengua extranjera después de haber estudiado la misma por seis años? Ese es uno de los principales interrogantes que motivó el estudio. Lo que se analiza desde el aspecto cultural es que generalmente la cultura local no es tomada en cuenta, lo que no se hace es enseñar la lengua localmente, a través de contextos que le sean significativos al aprendiente, a través de sus intereses culturales. Como dijo Henry Widdowson en ocasión de dictar el Seminario *English, whose English? Defining the Subject*, y se cita textualmente: “...redefining the definition of what the English subject means in our local schools, to our local people.”

El hecho de haber analizado sistemáticamente innumerables situaciones de clase en los contextos áulicos mencionados durante casi una década hasta ahora, permite llegar a la conclusión que no importa cuán presente los docentes tengan el concepto de interculturalidad para sus prácticas de enseñanza, su posición nunca es verdaderamente

clara en el aula de lengua extranjera. La cuestión que emerge entonces es qué posición debería tomar el docente en la clase de LE que lo conduzca a cumplir con todos los requerimientos de su rol: mediador entre los aprendientes y su objeto de estudio, mediador entre los aspectos lingüísticos y culturales de su programa de enseñanza, mediador entre la LE y la cultura que ésta trae aparejada; qué posición tomar para poder, y cito textualmente de Hall (1990, p.29): “...to understand not the foreign culture but the local one.”, y actuar en consecuencia, es decir, ayudando a sus estudiantes cuando los mismos se encuentran en el difícil proceso de adquisición de nuevos códigos lingüísticos, brindando esta ayuda desde la comprensión de que el aprendiente difícilmente podrá lidiar con dos aspectos a la misma vez, el código lingüístico y el cultural que trae aparejado esta nueva realidad de aprendizaje; por lo tanto lo importante sería revalorizar la propia cultura del aprendiente si se sabe que todo aprendizaje debe estar anclado en los conocimientos previos, este código cultural propio ayudará al aprendiente a construir significado en la clase de LE sin perder su identidad cultural.

En relación a la enseñanza de inglés como LE, Widdowson (1999) también señala que: “...it is necessary to teach global English through local issues.” Este enunciado puede ser interpretado de esta manera: focalizando en el contexto local se creará la atmósfera apropiada para que los estudiantes no pierdan el sentido de identidad en la clase de LE, necesitamos redefinir el contenido de lo que enseñamos: la LE en términos globales, pero en un contexto particular, local. Esto ayudará también a los estudiantes a ver al docente no como un modelo de cultura de otro grupo de personas que están fuera del aula y de su propia realidad, sino como un mediador entre ellos y su objeto de estudio, especialmente en las primeras etapas de aprendizaje de la LE..



El docente se encuentra en una posición de ventaja al poder seleccionar con qué enseñar lo que eligió priorizar según el grupo de aprendientes con que le toca trabajar. En esta jerarquización de conceptos se privilegia un alto porcentaje de contenido de forma – como surge del análisis de las clases observadas y de otras fuentes– por la situación de poco contacto de los aprendientes con la lengua extranjera. De este modo el aspecto cultural quizás no sea tan relevante en su escala de valores, pero de ninguna manera significa que no esté presente, pues la lengua es inherente a la cultura. Tampoco el docente – como ya se refirió anteriormente– será visto, porque lo elige así, como un modelo de esa cultura, sino únicamente como mediador entre lo que ese aprendiente todavía visualiza como un objeto de estudio más dentro de la variada gama de nuevos aprendizajes que debe realizar en el ámbito escolar. En este nivel – el del aprendiente novato– el concepto de las representaciones sociales que se deben construir no pasan tanto por las de la cultura extranjera, sino por una consolidación de las representaciones sociales locales construidas en conjunto dentro de un ámbito que los aprendientes irán conociendo cada vez mejor en el transcurso del dictado de clases del periodo escolar.

El docente de LE debería diseñar su programa de enseñanza sin perder de vista el hecho de que ambos aspectos, el lingüístico y el cultural, comparten el mismo nivel de importancia; debería tomarse una decisión en la elección de los contenidos de modo tal que éstos puedan ser la base sólida desde dónde se construya el aprecio por la propia cultura antes de esperar que los aprendientes puedan construir conocimiento contrastando o comparando la cultura de la LE con la propia. Priorizar los contenidos que se enseñarán al igual que elegir el enfoque metodológico – técnicas, estrategias, actividades, recursos didácticos, bibliografía– que será puesto en práctica durante los procesos de e-a, requiere

tomar una valiente decisión, muy bien definida, en el contexto institucional donde uno trabaja, y adherir firmemente a ella. Como docentes que pertenecen a una comunidad definida necesitamos identificar los componentes, conceptos básicos de la lengua que incluimos en nuestro programa que son globales, que se enseñan desde principios generales y con características generales donde quiera que ésta se enseña, pero también necesitamos explicarlos desde los principios culturales locales que harán el aprendizaje significativo para esos estudiantes quienes también pertenecen a esa comunidad definida.

Se analiza entonces que hay que redefinir los contenidos de lo que se enseña en términos globales pero en contextos locales, ya que el objetivo de nuestros esfuerzos es lograr la comunicación— el objetivo de nuestro programa—, se debe comprender que todo acto de comunicación está primero ligado a la comunidad de pertenencia de sus actores. Ya que nuestra realidad es siempre local, se debe permitir al estudiante apropiarse de la lengua objeto dentro del marco de su propia identidad cultural.

Estela Klett (1998) dice que la principal preocupación del profesor de LE es que la clase no es motivadora ya que es `un lugar de pura simulación pedagógica, fuera de la realidad: hablamos pero no decimos nada´ (Bourdieu, 1987, citado en Klett). En el aula de LE el discurso no tiene ni las convenciones ni los modos de la interacción comunicativa. Esa es la razón por la que Bourdieu califica la relación con la lengua como `déréaliseé´ (fuera de la realidad). Por eso consideramos que un basamento cultural sólido puede ser el paliativo a la inconsistencia pragmática del discurso del aula.”

##### **5. ¿Se puede hablar de oportunidades de aprendizajes *intraculturales*?**

El conocimiento es un constructo que vive en el lenguaje, tener la oportunidad de acceder al conocimiento de una lengua extranjera es tener la oportunidad de aprender a construir e interpretar la realidad de una manera distinta, desde un lugar donde el aprendiente de esa LE se para como actor de un proceso y en una circunstancia diferente a la de su posición para construcción de conocimiento e interpretación de la realidad que hace desde su lengua nativa. Si lo que ayuda al aprendiente en esa construcción de significado es el contexto – interpretado este como la situación, el conocimiento, el texto, el ambiente–, el aula de lengua extranjera genera situaciones donde se privilegia el aspecto gramatical de la lengua objeto, a través de textos– orales y escritos– diseñados para alcanzar ese objetivo: el conocimiento de la gramática de la lengua, y en un ambiente institucional que no favorece la espontaneidad del pensamiento desestructurado. Por lo tanto, se interpreta que la categoría de interculturalidad pasa a un segundo plano pues la cultura que la lengua objeto trae va a estar presente únicamente en la intertextualidad –en la interacción del aprendiente con el texto escrito y leído fundamentalmente basado en ejercicios gramaticales–; y, como ya hemos analizado, la oralidad está ausente cuando de pensamiento espontáneo se habla. Concluimos entonces que la intertextualidad, desde el concepto de Bloome y Egan-Robertson (1993) , es decir la construcción del conocimiento a través de la interacción del aprendiente con el texto leído y escrito, pero socialmente mediado por la comunidad cultural donde se llevan a cabo los aprendizajes, esta construcción –decíamos– se da con muy pocas oportunidades de aprendizaje por la calidad de los mismos –textos meramente gramaticales, presentados a través de fotocopias, pizarrón, libros, y con poca o nula interacción comunicativa–. Y en la interacción con el texto oral la oportunidad es casi nula, no hay diálogo en la lengua objeto en el aula, la interacción siempre se produce en la lengua

nativa. En consecuencia, el conocimiento cultural se está construyendo desde otro posicionamiento, desde la propia cultura, es decir se están produciendo *aprendizajes intraculturales*.

Los nuevos ambientes institucionalizados deberían convertirse en ambientes de estudio donde el contexto regional logre imbuirse del contexto global que trae aparejado la enseñanza de la lengua extranjera, y se genere conocimiento que no pase únicamente por el hecho lingüístico en sí, sino que se lo funde en el contexto cultural. ¿Cómo hacerlo? ¿Cómo enseñar textos y producir contextos que promuevan estas oportunidades? He aquí el gran desafío que queda plasmado en la siguiente cita de la Prof. Silvia Helman tomada de su ponencia De la lengua a la cultura: la clase de lenguas extranjeras como construcción de un espacio de representaciones contrastivas, en Actas del Congreso de enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras en el nivel superior, UNT (1998).

... la clase de lenguas extranjeras debe convertirse en el espacio ideal en donde los aprendientes accedan a la dimensión cultural de la lengua del otro, sin perder de vista los valores de su propia lengua.... La humanidad debe aprender a convivir y a enriquecerse con lo diferente, lo cual no significa perder su identidad cultural. Decía el gran maestro quichuista Domingo Bravo: los pueblos pueden ser mancillados, pero mientras tengan en alto su cultura difícilmente podrán ser dominados.

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# 15 Reading and interacting with electronic texts: A multimodal process?

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Literature is a combinatorial game  
(Aarseth, 1997)

## 1. Introduction: Let's play!

The developments of ICTs and electronic devices have brought about a fundamental breakthrough in what has been traditionally considered as unquestioned actions: reading a book, writing a text, watching a film will be no longer performed as they have traditionally been. The written text, together with the hegemony of the Book, (Piscitelli, 2011) have lost their exclusive roles as sources of Knowledge. This marks a radical shift in epistemological positions: it conjures up a scenario where different devices, interfaces and types of texts challenge the long withstanding “power of the Book” (op.cit.).

Conversely, contemporary literature will not be a mere witness in these processes of shift in epistemological paradigms: on the contrary, it is the location where many of the

battles for hegemony and power are taking place nowadays. Complemented by technology, literature has become a site for reflection, for experimentation and for (re)creation (Piscitelli, 2011).

Furthermore, contemporary literature has been witness to the impact and influence of different media, namely film industry, television techniques and videogames strategies (Aarseth, 1997; Mora, 2012; Page, 2011). It has become the product of the intersection and combinations of those semiotic systems: it is the result of a technological process of digital convergence and the development of new cultural habits (García Canclini, 2007). New types of texts, hybridized forms, born out of various multimodal elements combined with the characteristics of print tradition, force us to reconsider what literature is today and what it can be done with it. Highly influenced by computing technology and other devices, it is argued that contemporary literature has become “electronic” (Hayles, 2008) and the transposition into new mediums has further turned it into multimedial (Page, 2011).

Moreover, these hybrid electronic texts (half text/half digital artifacts) will make readers question how they are interpolated by them and what role they will assume when experiencing/reading and who they are. Highly characterized by the new media (GarcíaCanclini, 2007; Mora, 2012), readers have become a hybridized combination of “reader and spectator” and their own identity needs (re)considering. Their bodies have also been challenged by the development of electronic devices and the blending processes (Mora, 2012; Page, 2011; Piscitelli, 2011); to such an extent that the boundaries between body and machine, self and other, are becoming blurred.

Specifically, it is the purpose of this paper to explore these concepts from the theoretical perspectives of digital humanities, media studies, electronic literature and digital

narratology. “The Tell-Tale Heart” from Ipoee Vol.1, an electronic adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe’s short story for iPad, will be used as illustrative to exemplify the concepts to be discussed. The *readers* will go beyond the boundaries of their bodies, (re)define their own self-identity and *touch* the text, interacting with it in this electronic adaptation of the short story.

## **2. Hybrid texts: expansions from the print tradition**

Together with the outburst of devices and technology, new types of texts have been produced. Many scholars even urge for the development of a new narrative theory altogether to analyze them and the proposal of a taxonomy of subgenres (Hayles, 2008; Mora, 2012; Page, 2011). Even though consensus has not been reached yet, there is agreement on the concept that mutations in the processes of perception in general have occurred: living in the information era, “thinking has become more ‘image’ than it has always been” (Mora, 2012, p. 39).

Following this, text and image will form a communion in most electronic multimedia texts, giving birth to a hybrid made up of various elements and apart from language. Rather, meaning would be put across through the interaction of language, images, sound, illustrations, typography and the readers’ interaction.

Since many of the electronic multimedia texts are not approached through print, the digital devices themselves become the door into this type of literature. As a result, pages are to be accessed through screens, either mobile devices’ screens (such as the one under scrutiny in this paper- iPods, iPads, iPhones, other tablets, etc.) or computers screens. The hybridization process further extends to the pages -a species of *page/screens* (own



translation and coinage for “pant/página” (Mora, 2012), a unit of perception and interaction from where subjects would experience the texts. Mora (2012) explains that screens have become “the frames and targets for literature”, reproducing in that unit different mechanisms and elements that constitute multimedia electronic literature: words, images, sound, hypertextual links. These *page/screens* bear strong resemblances with the techniques employed in other semiotic systems, such as film or videogames; however, they may expand those by adding an interactive layer. Significantly, these hybrid units enhance the possibilities of literature by (re)mixing intermedial, audiovisual and border-like elements to achieve a mayor expressive potential (Mora, 2012, p.88). Following Hayles (2008, p.13) “the page is transformed into a complex topology that rapidly transforms from a stable surface into a ‘playable’ space in which [subjects are] active participants.”

Multimodality, as defined by Daniel Punday (in Page, 2011, p. 20), “focuses on the way that communicational structures can invoke different senses (hearing, sight and touch) using different semiotic channels (text, image, audio recording, video)”. Adding to this definition, Machin (2007) uses Kress and Van Leeuwen’s expansion on Halliday’s metafunctions of language to address the different functions of ‘visual grammar’. Even though this paper will not address ‘visual grammar’, it is fundamental to state at this point that different modes used in electronic multimedia texts will inevitably carry meaning potential, metaphorical associations and connotation. Challenging even more the traditional hegemony of the written text, multimodality brings to the surface how language is not the only conveyor of communicative functions.

Punday proposes expanding *multimodal* and, instead, he suggests using *multimedia*; however, I consider this to be reductionist, since the two terms aim at different concepts. In

the present discussion, multimediality and multimodality will be subsidiary to each other: multimediality being the combination of different existing media (computers, videogame consoles, mobile phones, mp5 players, tablets) with multiple uses (Punday in Page, 2011) and multimodality focusing on the different modes or semiotic systems that carry meaning potential (Machin, 2007).

A complement to the term *multimedia*, is the concept of *intermediality* proposed by Hayles:

When literature leaps from one medium to another –from orality to writing, from manuscript codex to printed book, from mechanically generated to electronic textuality - it does not leave behind the accumulated knowledge embedded in genres, poetic conventions, narrative structures, figurative tropes, and so forth. Rather, this knowledge is carried forward into the new medium typically by trying to replicate the earlier medium's effects within the new medium's specificities”(Hayles, 2011, p. 58)

By extension, the object of study for this analysis will correspond into an intermediated example of a both multimedia and multimodal text, as it will be described further on.

### **3. New identities: *Read/spectators*. (Re)considering bodies & machines**

Much has been already discussed within literary tradition over the term *reader* and about his/her passivity or activity, agency or reception. (Re) defining the characteristics of the identity of *readers* within media studies and electronic literature is quintessential. García Canclini (2007) explains these characterizations over fields of action and reception, and contrasts them with the definition of *spectator* as being wider in scope and fields of specification (p. 31). Basically, the author clarifies that spectators are shaped by different logics and trigger various dispositions depending on which context they are involved in. GarcíaCanclini also proposes another category to define this subject that does much more

than readers or spectators: internauts. Following the critic, “an internaut is a multimodal agent that reads, sees, listens and combines together diverse materials that come both from the tradition of reading and that of the spectacle context” (op.cit. p. 32).

For this paper, the concept of *internaut* could possibly be adopted to explore the characteristics of this subject. However, Mora’s (2012) term *read/spectator* (own translation and coinage from the Spanish version *lectoespectador*) will be used to define the subjects that experience and interact with electronic multimedia and multimodal literature. Following the author, “readers of the printed tradition differ from *read/spectators* in that the latter have to negotiate much more elements than only meaning potential or intention” (Mora, 2012). So much so that “they have to make a decision as to what he/she considers ‘legible’ or not; each and every one determines the extent of participation with the text and the device chosen for its approach” (Mora, 2012, p. 78). Interestingly, *read/spectators* as a definition of these subjects bring to the surface the spirit of hybridity, combination of activities and expand the concept of *internaut*.

Even though there is still no consensus on how to define these subjects that read, use, play (Hayles, 2008), interact and experience electronic texts, there is general agreement among critics on the transformation bodies have undergone with their contact with technology: a new type of subjectivity and identity is appearing; one that combines the bodies with the machines. Mora (2012) explains that we are all “technological beings” and that there has been a shift in the perception of organic-technological frontiers: the author rightly insists on the change in the perception of the technological context as now being fully integrated into the organic reality. In fact, Mora proposes expanding the concept of the body to incorporate technology in it and thus further hybridize it.

Coincidentally, Hayles (2008, p. 47) agrees on the fact that the humans “have [always] been shaped by their technology”. She extends this by enlarging on the fact that “People and machines are both embodied, and the specificities of their embodiments can best be understood in the recursive dynamics where they coevolve with one another” (op.cit. p.129).

Undoubtedly, the body and the machine or the device can no longer be regarded as separate entities: quite on the contrary, the two concepts have been (re)defining themselves with the increase in electronic multimedia literature and the development of portable technology.

#### **4. To read or to interact? That is the question...**

Reading practices are particularly challenged by the proliferation of new types of texts; traditional linearity has lost its hegemonic position together with the written text, since reading practices have been (re)defined by technological innovations, transforming reading into a non-linear hypertextual process (Piscitelli, 2011).

Marie-Laure Ryan (in Page, 2011, pp. 35, 37 & 59) explains that it is interactivity itself the most significant distinction between old and new media, but it is also the most complicated feature to define. She proposes a classification following the conceptual metaphor [Interaction is an onion] (op. cit., p.35), with 5 levels according to outer, middle and inner layers and interactivity becoming more complex in the inner layers reaching the core. It must be borne in mind that other authors have also proposed to reconsider the relationship between readers and these new texts. Aarseth (1997) has coined the term *ergodism* to explain the processes undergone by readers when they have to make decisions

upon the electronic texts. For the purpose of this paper, I will adopt Ryan's classification, by which,

in the outer layers, interactivity concerns the presentation of the story, and the story exists prior to the running of the software; in the middle layers, interactivity concerns the user's personal involvement in the story, but the plot is still predetermined; in the inner layers, the story is created dynamically through the interaction between the user and the system (Ryan in Page, 2011, p. 37)

Following this classification, the present paper will explore an electronic multimedia text that could be classified among those belonging to the outer layers of interactivity, as it will be shown in the forthcoming section of analysis.

## 5. Electronic multimedia literature in focus. Micro-example: The Tell-tale Heart, or iPod/iPad's intermediation

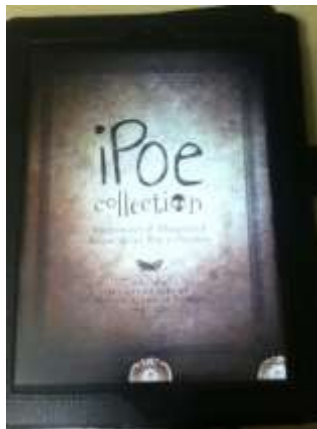


Figure 1



Figure 2

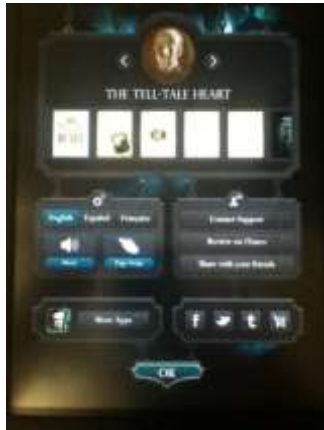


Figure 3

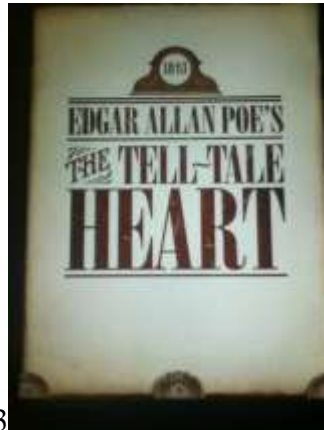


Figure 4

“Ipoecollection” is an application specially designed for iPad and iPod that consists in two volumes with electronic adaptations of some of Edgar Allan Poe’s most famous short-stories and poems, such as “The Oval Portrait”, “Annabel Lee”, “The Masque of the Red Death”, among others. It has been created by the company Play Creatividad and developed with the framework of COCOS 20, a framework for building games, demos, and other graphical/interactive applications.

It can be argued that intermediation is present in this text by the possibility this collection offers to access and interact with the texts with different devices, either iPod or iPad, and allowing for portable ubiquitous interaction to take place. The electronic text *The Tell-tale Heart* is included within Vol. I and the *read/spectator* can start interacting by choosing the language, reviewing the text and connecting to different social networks, assessing the application, as it can be seen in the previous screenshots (c.f. Fig. 1, 2, 3 & 4). Within the text itself, several elements essential for the narrative development and interpretation have been made interactive by tempting *read/spectators* to enter the text and interact by touching them.

The *screen/pages* of the text offer an interesting hybridization between the print tradition and the multimodal/multimedia elements: the layout is clearly the one of an old

book, this can be seen through the choice of colour for the pages, and they also contain interesting elements to interact with the story, as the following shots clearly show where the pictures and the text form an interesting communion (c.f. Fig. 5, 6, 7 & 8). To pass on the *screen/pages*, there is the possibility of touching the arrow on the right hand side towards the bottom of the page in the iPad, or there is the need of literally passing the page by simulating the same movement with print pages.



Figure 5



Figure



6

Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

Multimodality is present here as an interesting layer of meaning potential, clearly manifested in the choice of soundtrack, crescendos and the sounds of the beating heart rising in their intensity and force as the story develops. Typography is another element withing multimodality that cannot be overlooked, incorporating in this case, different lines and words especially made bold for the creation of mood, salience and narrative development. The hues of red, black and sepia colours chosen throughout the text can be associated with the melancholic and troubled mind of the narrator of the story, and this can bear a parallel relationship with the use of sounds along the narrative (c.f. Fig.5, 10, 14, 16, &17).

Multimediality features are present in this text by the intersections of mediums such as film (present in the cut-scenes that are incorporated in the narrative and the use of sound and music), videogame techniques and animation (c.f. Fig. 10 & 11).





Figure 10

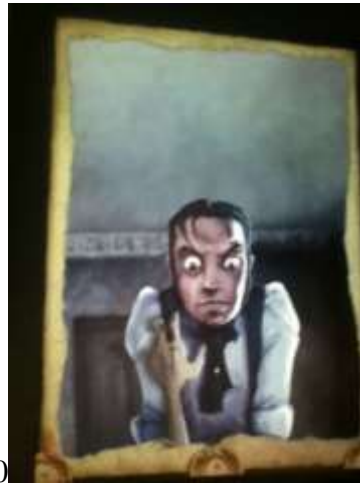


Figure 11

In any choice the *read/spectators* make, they have to transcend their bodies and touch the text and the visual multimodal components that accompany it. In their experiencing the text, they (re)define who they are and what they have to do. Sometimes there are illustrations that change the moment the subjects touch them (c.f. Fig. 6 &9) or at other times, it is the light of a lantern darkening the text or lighting it up(c.f. Fig. 12 & 13), or participating in the dismembering of the body of the old man (c.f. Fig. 14 &15), or rather moving the *screen/page* upwards to discover “the tell-tale heart” (c.f. Fig. 16). Perhaps the most striking feature is seen in the last *screen/page* where the *read/spectators* by touching the screen leave their fingerprint there (c.f. Fig.18), together with the troubled protagonist of the story and thus becoming more involved in the “deed”, a sort of accomplice, challenging their traditional roles and becoming new *selves*. By transcending their bodies, touching and interacting with this text the very identity of the subjects is challenged, and the involvement radically modified.



Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

Indeed, interactivity in this electronic multimedia text , following Hayles' (2008) categorization, will correspond to those within the outer and middle layers of the narrative, where interaction takes place but it is not related to the programming itself or altering the development of the narrative story-line. It must be noted that interactivity in this text is not compulsory: the *read/spectator* can indeed choose if he/she want to trascend their bodies and touch the text or not. However, if he/she does so, there are a number of elements that will be missed.

## **6. New horizons? Drawing some conclusions...**

In this paper I have set out to explore how reading and interacting take place in electronic multimodal/multimedial contemporary literature. In order to achieve this, I have adopted different concepts within media studies, electronic literature and digital narratology, such as *multimodality*, *multimediality*, *hybridity*, *reading* and *interactivity*, and I have set out to challenge the longwithstanding hegemony of the book and written text in the analysis of these concepts.

I have also explored how limited some terms were and I have suggested two new coinages, such as *screen/page* and *read/spectator* together with the expansion of the concept of the body and identity, as a result, and representing the further process of hybridity that even terminology is experiencing and evidencing.

In particular, I have selected one text from Ipoe Collection, *The Tell-Tale Heart* to illustrate the ideas under scrutiny. I have shown how the adaptation of the text presented the hybridity in its design of its *screen/pages*, interpolated the *read/spectators* to interact with it, integrated multimodal and multimedial elements and expanded the limits of devices by being accessible and portable. Also I have shown how boundaries became blurred between the *read/spectators* and the text, by incorporating them within the narrative (c.f. p. 10).

To sum up, new practices of (re)creating and (re)reading contemporary electronic literature are opening up new horizons, forcing us to reconsider our own roles, our identities, and tempting us to cross the frontier that separates our bodies from machines... Maybe, it is an invitation to start playing the game of literature, a *combinatorial game* (Aarseth, 1997).

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# 16 The future teacher of English in Argentina: The roles of the humanities, of research and of collaboration in the new curricula

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## 1. Introduction

We are scholars. For our field to grow we need to encourage  
a true proliferation of ideologies and methodologies,  
rather than to seek uniformity or conformity  
Henry Gates

According to the proposal made by the Consejo Federal de Educación (Res. 167/12) and to the schedule designed by the Ministry of Education (Res. 2373/12), during 2013 and 2014 the curriculum designs for teacher education are to be revised for new curricula to be implemented in 2015 at the latest. This is a turning point in teacher education, since it is inscribed in a major process which includes deep changes in secondary school and in special education and which aims at nationally unifying teacher education respecting local

contexts. At this point, therefore, it becomes most necessary to critically study the texts which guide the way teachers are educated, for the sake of producing new ones which will be attuned to this new inclusive secondary school and which will be oriented to current conceptions of language teaching and of youths.

We propose a critical reading of the document by which this reform is to be guided in the field of ELT (*Proyecto de Mejora para la formación inicial de profesores para el nivel secundario*, 2011), and of seven circulating curriculum designs. Some of these designs are being implemented at universities and some at *Institutos de Formación Docente* (Cfr. Res. 30/07) from different regions of the country, some are more than ten years old and various others are the result of recent reform. We review the relevance that different designs give to three key issues -the humanities, research and collaboration- to start to approach the way in which teacher education, the teaching profession and the role of teachers of English within the Argentinean educational system are being envisaged in the present, establishing a comparison between the attendance load devoted to some humanities –to Literary and Social Studies—, to research and to collaboration –especially under the form of ICT-- in designs which are yet to be reformed, and one which has recently been modified. This latter one states that authors have taken into account Res. 24/07, and does not mention the recommendations made in PM.

We inquire into the role given to the humanities because teachers should become active citizens if they are to educate future generation in democratic values (Nussbaum, 2010, p. 2; cfr. Johnson, 2006; Gates, 1993). Hopefully, curriculum change will allow us to veer –or stay-- away from an education centered on technical skills and primarily aimed at contributing to economic growth. We take an interest in the place given to research because

knowledge about education is not only constructed out of experience, but also out of formal projects and subsequent communication of findings. If future teachers are not encouraged to inquire into the way their students learn, into what they need to learn and into how education could be changed for the better, education in our country will heavily rely on theories and didactic proposals made in other contexts (cfr. Tello, 2006). Finally, the relevance of collaboration is addressed since we understand teaching as the making of a number of decisions which are never made in isolation but as part of school communities (Reagan & Osborn, 2002). As foreign language teachers we need to be taught how to become active members of these communities if we want to make a significant contribution to Argentinean education. All these issues have been explored in a key document which we address in the following section.

## **2. Federal proposal about the humanities, research and ICT in FL teacher education**

“Proyecto de mejora para la formación inicial de profesores para el nivel secundario” (henceforth PM) is a user-friendly non-binding document produced by a team of highly qualified specialists who advocate for a plurilingual approach to FLT, which provides direction and focus for the task of curriculum design. According to this proposal, the education imparted at teacher education colleges is highly valuable, since what teachers know about teaching is usually constructed out of their classroom experience as students. Besides, teacher education is envisaged as an opening stage paving the way for lifelong professional development.

The text is highly critical of the knowledge transmission model and hinges on four learning foci which place the humanities in a conspicuous position: *learning*, *citizenship*,



*interculturality, discursive practices*. It does not prescribe course names or course load. Instead, it enumerates the experiences students should undergo and the key types of knowledge and conceptual frameworks they should construct to perform successfully as FL teachers. The text proposes a set of objectives to be achieved and of activities to be experienced by the learners to attain those aims, highlighting the role to be played by ICT and collaborative work. No doubt the PM opens a vast territory that challenges teacher educators to make informed didactic decisions at the moment of producing new designs. It also imposes a series of responsibilities on administrators concerning educational policies during the course and also after graduation to accompany newly graduates as they start to interact with their different work environments.

The text elaborates on what future teachers need to understand and what experiences they need to undergo (cfr. Perkins, 1993, 1995) during their education and also during the first years of their teaching profession. One of the issues of central concern in this text is the importance to be given to the construction of citizenship, considering that English is both an imperial language and the language of global communication, and that it has become part of many different social processes –colonization, migrations, multilingualism. Future teachers need to understand the ideological component to their teaching and the cultural processes they enter when using one or another language. To promote the understanding of these issues, the humanities within the curriculum become central, since they could provide the tools to reflect and analyze situations and visions regarding these social processes. The humanities consist of all studies which centre on human experience, ways of thinking and of feeling, and they include languages, art, literature and philosophy, as well as studies which are also known as social sciences, such as history and psychology.

The humanities are concerned with *possible* ways of feeling and thinking, with provisional, speculative and imaginative ways of understanding which differ greatly from the methods of empirical sciences, which positivist thinkers propose as the only valid form of knowledge (Wierzbicka, 2011). Though practically all fields within the EFL teacher education curriculum are based on the study of the human being – Modern Languages and Education being part of the humanities – we study the role given to Literary and Social Studies in the current curricula, considering that the study of literary texts and of history and culture have a direct impact on the understanding of the social processes which result in the construction of citizenship and of human intercultural experience.

Another element to be formally included in new EFL teacher education curricula is that of interculturality, the understanding of which is also dependent on the way the humanities need to be taught. As shown by J. A. Belz (2003), intercultural contact does not necessarily result in cultural understanding. This implies that future teachers will not only need to interact with texts in English, but also to adopt a dialogic attitude that will enable them to understand and communicate with people whose culture differs from theirs, be they foreigners or nationals. Awareness of alterity, mediation, cultural diversity, dialogue and difference could be attained by means of the study of various disciplines –EFL, Phonetics, Linguistics, Pedagogy— but again here Literary and Social Studies are most fertile, since they aim precisely at studying the historical, cultural and artistic processes which take place in foreign communities, which in new designs can be made to compare to related ones which take place in our country.

Regarding Learning, PM proposes the following:

la interlengua (...) emite señales sobre el estadio del aprendizaje en que se encuentran los aprendientes y es por este motivo que la interacción debería ser tema de constante reflexión e investigación para todo alumno-futuro profesor y para todo docente en ejercicio. (p. 154)

This assertion suggests that research into the way languages are learned and taught, and into education in general, should be given a relevant role in the new curricula. What is more, when considerations are made as to what genres could be taught, the research article is mentioned. That is the reason why we inquire into the role given to research in the current curricula: if the design, management, execution and communication of collaborative research projects, both disciplinary and educational, are part of teacher development, they are also included among the responsibilities of teacher education institutions. In the inquiry into curricular designs that we present in this paper, we assume that the teaching of research methodologies is informed by the teaching of academic writing, and as a consequence we consider that both contribute to an education in research. We have estimated the course load devoted to the teaching of both, though there is a chance that research and academic writing should be addressed in courses other than those especially designed to that purpose.

Related to the issue of research is that of collaboration, since no researcher will attain significant achievements if working in isolation. An interesting innovation of PM is the inclusion of considerations regarding what teachers learn in the first years of their professional careers. At this stage of learning and also throughout the initial, undergraduate stages, collaboration becomes central. If learning is envisaged as a social activity that takes place in communities of practice, understanding will only happen if students are made to experience genuine collaboration, both within and outside the classroom and in real and

virtual environments. ICT becomes relevant as a means of communication but also as a way of encouraging collaboration, since educational technologies are specifically designed to allow people to communicate and to work together beyond geographical constraints. ICT is likely to make it possible for graduates to continue working with their educators and former classmates once they start to work as teachers, to access the foreign cultures they teach about, and to include collaborative work in their secondary school teaching.

### **3. Current designs, old and new**

In order to evaluate the nature and scope of the changes that are to be introduced in curriculum designs if they are to comply with the general guidelines provided by PM, we have read a small sample of seven documents produced between 2001 and 2012 in a heterogeneous set of academic institutions operating under various educational jurisdictions (national and provincial universities, teacher training colleges) and located in different parts of our country. Six designs were written before or coincidentally with the publication of the PM, and one was completed shortly after. Though there is no mention of PM in the latter, we expected to find a greater course load devoted to the humanities, research and ICT considering the key role those fields have acquired in recent years, but as can be seen in Table 1 below, that was not the case.

<b>Institution</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Total attendance load</b>	<b>Literary and Social Studies</b>	<b>Research and Academic Writing</b>	<b>Collaboration and ICT</b>
Nº 1	IFD *	2001	4320	544 (12,6%)	64 (1,48%)	0
Nº 2	IFD	2004	4698	1024 (21,79 %)	96 (2,04 %)	64 (1,36%)
Nº 3	National University *	2005	3150	330 (10,47)	110 (3,49%)	0
Nº 4	IFD *	2009	2384	480 (20,13%)	224 (9,39)	80 (3,35 %)
Nº 5	IFD *	2011	4064	544 (13,38%)	0	0
Nº 6	Provincial University	2011	3408	384 (11,26%)	96 (2,81 %)	96 (2,81)
Nº 7	IFD *	2013	5040	736 (14,60%)	96 (1,90 %)	112 (2,22%)

\* In these designs the content of some courses is selected by each college

Table 1. Course load in seven teacher education institutions

It should be noted that our scrutiny was of a quantitative nature and aimed at inquiring into the importance ascribed to ITC, to academic writing/research and to the subjects included in the cultural field *in terms of the number of 40-minute attendance periods devoted to them by the jurisdiction*. It should also be noted that some jurisdictions included courses where institutions could make a curricular proposal that responded to their contexts and educational policies (marked with an asterisk in Table 1). There is a possibility that ICT, research and cultural related matters should be included in these courses, but still that was not a jurisdictional decision.

From the data collected (see Table 1 above) it is clear that, regardless of significant variations in the total load proposed in the designs, the number of hours devoted to Literary and Social Studies ranges from a relatively low percentage (10,47%) to a non-negligible one (20,13%). But if we turn our attention to ICT and to Research and Academic Writing we can observe either a dramatic absence or a very low incidence of these subjects. Besides, we cannot overlook the fact that a reading of the contents of three occurrences of workshops or seminars hinging on ICT aim exclusively at the development of technical competences, while only one centres on ICT and education. As regards Academic Writing and Research, there is a tendency to include them in the *Formación para la práctica profesional* field and/or in that of *Formación General*, which means that the language used is not always English but also Spanish. In our opinion this is a serious shortcoming. To begin with, teachers need to communicate in both languages as part of their professional development; also, as John Flowerdew (2007) points out,

With the pressures of globalization and the marketization of the academy (Aronowitz 2000; Giroux and Myrsiades 2001), more and more scholars need to write for international journals, which are invariably in English [...]. The challenge for most EAL writers to write at an appropriate level for publication in international journals is considerable. (p. 14)

Besides, teachers are also likely to teach academic writing in their professional practice, which calls for the learning of academic writing in the FL during their education.

The results provide evidence that the goals proposed by PM will not be reached unless significant changes are made to the older designs and sustained action is carried out in the areas of comparative neglect detected. A comparison between pre-PM designs and the post-PM design yields that though the three contents we have explored are sometimes included

by the jurisdictions, the attendance load proposed by the newer design does not differ greatly from that of some older ones. This signals a need to draw the attention of jurisdictional teams and of the teacher educators who will be invited to participate in the process of reform to the recommendations made by PM, because those recommendations, while responding to current perspectives in teacher education, seek to attain some national coherence at the level of curricular planning.

#### **4. Concluding remarks**

In keeping with the epigraph we chose for the Introduction to this paper, we are far from advocating that uniformity and conformity are desirable in teacher education or in any other field. However, if teaching degrees are to be valid all over the country, educational reform has to be carried out on the basis of federal agreement, and though PM does not force change but recommends courses of action, it expresses views which are shared by representatives of prestigious institutions from all over the country. Each jurisdiction may adapt the proposal made in PM to the region, and each institution, in turn, to their students, but PM recommendations cannot be disregarded.

Once the curricular reform is completed, teacher educators will have to adapt to the demands of the new designs for curricular reform to grow into real change. Even today, before the reform is completed, some changes can start to be introduced to attune our teaching to PM recommendations. For instance, probably it will soon be no longer enough to teach about the cultural and historical processes of English speaking countries --a relationship will have to be established with ours in order to promote intercultural competence. Also, it may not be necessary to wait for the creation of a course exclusively

devoted to research, since scientific enquiry can be tackled from the very first years of teacher education by initiating students in academic writing, in the epistemological foundation of the disciplines taught and in the research methodologies those disciplines favour. The same holds true of/for the teaching of ICT: if a course were introduced in the curriculum but it were aimed exclusively at the development of technical abilities, it is likely to do very little for the teaching of collaboration. If, on the contrary, ICT is incorporated to teacher education to promote learning processes --for example, as a means to favour group processes, a better disciplinary understanding and linguistic and intersubjective abilities--, it is likely to bear an impact not only on course outcomes, but also and especially on the quality of future secondary school teaching, as our students will most probably incorporate their learning experience to their professional practice.

We do not believe that we need to wait for big reforms to reflect about what our students need if they are to become good secondary school teachers. Once reforms are made teacher educators will have to be ready to abandon their comfort zones and implement them, which calls for changes that could very well start much earlier than the reforms themselves. After all, as Henry Thoreau said in *Walden*, “Things do not change; we change.” If we do not, teacher education will not either.

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# 17 Using Spanish in academic English language learning

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## 1. Introduction

In this paper I explore teachers' and learners' beliefs and attitudes towards the use of Spanish within the context of my adult academic EFL classes. To do this, first I review some literature on this issue and on learning at large; then I reflect upon my work environment and the instances when it would be convenient to resort to L1 analyzing the particular reasons for tipping the scales in favor of translation to foster language learning.

## 2. Background

Most teachers my generation in Argentina have been led to believe that a successful English lesson should rule Spanish out. In methodology classes we were given tools to discourage students from using L1 and encourage them to always speak English. This might be why, although we know in the light of current research that there is no reason why

we should not use translation when we deem it more effective than the English explanation, we cannot help but feel that we are committing some kind of methodology crime if we translate.

On the other hand, students more often than not resort to Spanish to make sense of the teaching contents we present, and it is only natural that they do so, Spanish being the linguistic background they possess. If we asked our adult students about this question, we would see that they do not share our beliefs and attitudes to translation.

### **3. Literature review**

From the beginnings of the 1970s, with the advent of communicative teaching and the Direct Method practitioners to the English teaching world, translation has been generally out of fashion. This has been so, probably, due to the negative attitude towards the Grammar Translation Method against which these practices were reacting. Although GTM is unsatisfactory in many aspects, the use of translation does not make us advocates of this method and, what is more, there is no reason why the use of students' first language (L1) should not be considered in the context of a communicative approach. As a matter of fact, from the 1980s there has been a number of authors in the field of second language acquisition who claimed that the use of L1 in the L2 classroom is necessary and, at times, essential to facilitate second and foreign language learning.

Among the large amount of literature, I selected some to analyze this issue from different perspectives.

### **3.1. A sociolinguistic perspective**

I found the sociolinguists' views particularly interesting because they refer to the social and individual conflicts entailed by the L2 language learning process. In chapter 7, *Second language learning as participation and re-construction of selves* (Lantolf, 2002), Aneta Pavlenko and James Lantolf (2002) view language learning “not as the acquisition of a new set of grammatical, lexical and phonological forms but as a struggle of concrete socially constituted and always situated beings to participate in the symbolically mediated lifeworld of another culture.” They see second language learning as the struggle for participation in the second language community. In fact, they note that the metaphor “participation” has emerged to complement the metaphor of “acquisition” in language learning. The individuals undergoing this process are marginalized and feel threatened in their individuality because all their cultural/cognitive background which constitutes their selves is challenged when confronted to this new cultural/cognitive knowledge expressed in and through the new language. It is interesting to read the immigrant stories quoted in this book, to get an overall idea of the deep personal impact suffered by these people struggling to acquire a language to participate in the new community's social life.

Earlier but still frequently quoted literature addresses the same issue from the same perspective. In a provocative article, Elsa Auerbach (1993) gives a sociopolitical rationale for the use of the L1 in ESL classrooms. She primarily addresses the situation of immigrant ESL learners studying in the United States. Her conclusions, however, are applicable to any second language learners in any context. In this article, she states that “everyday classroom practices, far from being neutral and natural, have ideological origins and consequences for

relations of power both inside and outside the classroom.” Auerbach (1993) summarized her conclusion as to using L1 in the classroom in the following way: “Starting with the L1 provides a sense of security and validates the learners’ lived experiences, allowing them to express themselves. The learner is then willing to experiment and take risks with English.”

Liliana Piasecka seconds Auerbach’s position when she states, “One’s sense of identity as an individual is inextricably bound up within one’s native language.... If the learner of a second language is encouraged to ignore his/her native language, he/she might well feel his/her identity threatened” (Piasecka, 2012).

Although our EFL students’ backgrounds are not the same as the immigrants’ backgrounds described in Pavlenko’s and Lantolf’s chapter, I think that they also experience the same emotional turmoil while acquiring the L2. After all, our students are also trying to be part of a new language community and until they have acquired the necessary linguistic competences to work effectively in this new environment, they are bound to feel somehow marginal and threatened.

### **3.2. Applied linguistics**

The Applied Linguists’ perspective is no less interesting. In chapter 6 of their book: *Between Worlds: Access to Second Language Acquisition*, David E. Freeman & Yvonne S. Freeman (2006) analyze why and how teachers should try to make the best of their students by respecting their learning styles and by celebrating their first language and culture. Since cooperative learning is proposed by these authors as one of the most appropriate situations for L2 acquisition, an amount of L1 interaction should both be expected and welcome. Peer

teaching is prompted as a resourceful mechanism for making students interact and acquire the language, no matter if this peer coaching is conducted in the L1 or the L2.

Seeking to prove how being aware of the importance of the first language helps both teachers and learners, they provide concrete examples on how to make the best use of the L1, such as their preview, view and review technique. Basically, they suggest using the L1 for preview so that everyone knows what is going to happen in class, using the L2 for the activities and closing again with the L1 to summarize the key ideas and raise questions on the lesson.

One of the first and main advocates of mother tongue use in the communicative classroom has been David Atkinson (1993). Atkinson points out the methodological gap present at that time in the literature, concerning the use of the mother tongue, and argues a case in favor of its restricted and principled use mainly in accuracy-oriented tasks. He lists the following appropriate uses for the L1 in the L2 classroom.

Suggested Uses for the L1 in the EFL Classroom		
1. <b>Eliciting language</b>	"How do you say 'X' in English?"	
2. <b>Checking comprehension</b>	"How do you say 'I've been waiting for ten minutes' in Spanish?" (Also used for comprehension of a reading or listening text.)	
3. <b>Giving complex instructions to basic levels</b>		
4. <b>Co-operating in groups</b>	Learners compare and correct answers to exercises or tasks in the L1. Students at times can explain new points better than the teacher.	
5. <b>Explaining classroom methodology at basic levels</b>		
6. <b>Using translation to highlight a recently taught language item</b>		
7. <b>Checking for sense</b>	If students write or say something in the L2 that does not make sense, have them try to translate it into the L1 to realize their error.	
8. <b>Testing</b>	Translation items can be useful in testing mastery of forms and meanings.	
9. <b>Developing circumlocution strategies</b>	When students do not know how to say something in the L2, have them think of different ways to say the same thing in the L1, which may be easier to translate.	
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Spanish</b>	<b>English</b>
negative antonym	<i>vivo</i>	not dead
simplification/ approximate synonym	<i>fue vergonzoso</i>	it was terrible
circumlocution	<i>se mostró reacio</i>	he didn't want to do it
simplification	<i>el precio del viaje se compensa por lo lo barata que es la vida</i>	the ticket's expensive but life's cheap there
explanation	<i>pulpo</i>	it lives in the sea, it's got eight legs
ADAPTED FROM "THE MOTHER TONGUE IN THE CLASSROOM" BY DAVID ATKINSON.		

Figure 1. Atkinson's (1993) list of appropriate uses for the L1 in the L2 classroom.

Tomlinson's concept of "inner voice" is, in my view, crucial to understand the process of L2 acquisition and to reassess the impact of L1 in this context. A rough definition of "inner voice" is "speech in the mind"; it is the internal voice we use when talking to ourselves or when repeating what we have heard or read. Although the inner voice is different from the public voice, it does use a variety of the same language. Examples of inner speech

utterances are: "Not again!", "Poor guy", "Allright, nothing very unusual.", "Why so much work?", "Why did I do that?", "What to do now?", "Weird. Doesn't make sense." (Tomlinson, 2001).

Tomlinson argues that: "It is very difficult to use an inner voice when learning an L2 from formal instruction. When we learned our L1 we did so in what was primarily a private and personal way. We talked to ourselves before we talked to others and even when we talked out loud we were often using a private voice which was self-directed. However, when we learn an L2 in the classroom we are usually required to use a public voice from the very beginning. We are not normally given time to talk to ourselves but are required to participate in public interaction. Our L1 inner voice is inhibited by the need to produce L2 utterances which will be subject to public scrutiny. So, instead of developing thoughts and ideas in our heads before speaking them aloud, we put all our mental energy into finding the right L2 words in the right form and the right order. We use the L1 inner voice for translating from L1 to L2 and for monitoring the correctness of our utterances in the L2. And in most cases we do not develop an L2 inner voice for a very long time, mainly because most of the activities we participate in as beginners demand instant responses and ask us to report our experience rather than to process it. Other reasons are that we are afraid to be "ungrammatical" in our heads in case this interferes with what we say aloud and because the de-contextualized triviality and blandness of much of the language we are required to process and produce does not encourage thought." (Tomlinson, 2001).

Considering these professional opinions can shed some light on our discussion because, if our thoughts and ideas are shaped in our L1 and this becomes evident when



trying to acquire an L2 or L3, shouldn't we as language teachers prioritize clear understanding of ideas before we demand correct encoding of these ideas in the foreign language?

### **3.3. The neurosciences**

These relatively new sciences have offered fascinating insights into the human brain which have helped understand human cognition and emotion. For the purpose of this analysis, I will just consider some aspects of Cognitive Learning which also apply to language learning.

Cognitive Neuroscience distinguishes two types of learning: Emotional and Cognitive. Emotional Learning is characterized by being quick, unconscious and effortless. On the other hand, Cognitive Learning is described as being slow and difficult, requiring a conscious effort and consuming a lot of energy. It may also even be deemed dangerous if new knowledge contradicts existing knowledge which the brain considers essential for surviving.

Our bulk of existing knowledge consolidated in hebbian networks or neural networks is called Security Zone or Comfort Zone. Learning implies widening this Comfort Zone, a process which entails defeating initial fear, confusion, and rejection. Additionally, Cognitive Learning has two mortal enemies: boredom, caused by low dopamine levels, and anxiety, caused by high dopamine levels. To overcome all these strong emotions and succeed through all the stages of learning, we need to come to terms with the new

knowledge, that is to say we need to *understand*, because when we understand we make the necessary neural connections which can, in their turn, allow us to go beyond our Comfort Zone.

Thus, being learning such a complex process and understanding such a key factor for it to take place, we might consider using L1 to facilitate the necessary understanding prior to language learning.

#### **4. My personal teaching experience**

It has always been my feeling that adult learners in particular, being cognitively oriented, value translation and benefit from it. To estimate the extent of this assumption, I designed a short questionnaire which addressed students' feelings and attitudes towards the use of Spanish. Surveyed student population consisted of young adults distributed in six courses ranging from beginner to high-intermediate level. I should point out that, besides collecting data, giving out the quiz resulted in a lively class discussion about learning strategies in general and about the use of Spanish to make sense of English, in particular.

This was the questionnaire given:

#### **USE OF TRANSLATION IN THE EFL CLASS**

##### ***Students' Questionnaire***

- 1- *How do you feel when you translate a new word / new words into Spanish?*
  - a- *Relieved, because you get the meaning clear.*
  - b- *Guilty, because you should understand without having to translate.*
  - c- *Don't have any special feeling, because it's all part of learning.*

- 2- *How necessary is it for you to find the Spanish equivalent for a new word / words?*  
*a- Very necessary, I cannot do without it.*  
*b- Not so necessary, I feel I can manage without it.*  
*c- It depends, at times I need it badly but some other times I just don't*
- 3- *Do you want to add any ideas on this issue?*

And these were the overall results:

Question 1: a = 22%                                  b = 0%                                  c = 78%

Question 2: a = 39.3%                              b = 28.2%                              c = 62.5%

It is interesting to note that beginners felt more inclined to choose “a” answers whereas intermediate and high-intermediate students preferred “c” answers.

For the last question, some interesting issues concerning learners’ strategies popped up, among which I transcribe the following:

“In Physics, it is good to realize that a new word like “chiral” doesn’t have a clear meaning neither in Spanish nor in English, so sometimes there is only one barrier to overcome: Physics”.

“Para entender, necesito establecer una relación entre el significado de la frase en inglés con el sentido de la frase en español.”

“I think it’s better to try to understand the complete sentence and, only when it’s necessary, to translate a specific word”

## 5. My reasons for translating

- 1- It's clear and it saves time: Consider, for example, teaching the word "coil" in an engineering students' class. Would you have them check it up in an English-English dictionary or would you simply say it means: "bobina"?
  
- 2- It lowers anxiety. In a particular class, I explained the meaning of "wrap" by saying: "When you buy a birthday present, the shop assistant wraps it up in a nice color paper, maybe ties a ribbon around it and they might also stick a card for you to write". While I was miming the actions, I noticed a student's lost blank look and I asked him: How would you say "wrap" in Spanish? He said "envolver", still blank-faced. Then he said: "But I thought it meant "atrapar" because I saw the word in a NatGeo documentary program being used in connection to how an octopus catches its preys... ah...ok, I get it, it's the way it catches the prey" In this way, the initial anxiety caused by the apparent ambiguity was solved.

Lowering anxiety becomes relevant to favor intellectual cognitive learning which, according to the neurosciences, is difficult, slow and consumes a lot of energy.

- 3- It tackles prior knowledge: We know that activation of prior knowledge is always useful to integrate new input in existing cognitive schemata. Besides, from a sociolinguistics perspective, addressing students previous knowledge empowers their identity, that is, who they are and what they know become relevant.

## **6. Conclusion**

Foreign language teaching-learning is such a varied and dynamic field that I believe that the mother tongue should be incorporated naturally as another useful instrument in the communicative foreign language classroom. This does not mean denying the fact that our students need as much exposure as possible to L2 during class time which, in many cases, will be the only time when they encounter the language. Besides, it is also true that when students try to communicate in English, they activate necessary cognitive strategies to acquire the linguistic ability which they would not activate otherwise, like negotiating meaning, for example.

However, whenever we are confronted with something new, it is a natural instinct to look for similarities with things that are familiar, to try and draw some comparison with what we already know. Consciously or unconsciously, we bring what we know to what we do not, making it impossible to learn anything entirely from scratch. Thus, it is not possible to learn a foreign language without relying to some extent on your mother tongue, and the impulse to look for similarities and to draw conclusions based on them is as strong here as in any other learning context.

Even in the classroom using the most direct language-teaching methods, the learner will still, out of necessity, conduct an internal dialogue or rationalization in his native tongue. This impulse will be stronger with the greater the incidence of apparent similarities. We, as teachers, might do well in warning our students against these dangers of overgeneralization. In this respect, the overuse of the L1 in the L2 classroom may be

prejudicial. All in all, it is always for us teachers to decide when and how we are going to resort to L1 to enhance learning of L2.

Decision making is a fascinating component of our classes because it is based on our theoretical and experiential knowledge but it is also exciting free play. When it comes to deciding whether to translate or not, I believe teachers should trust the criteria that mind dictates but also the intuition and creative spark present in our hearts and guts.

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# 18 The use of multimodal resources to explore a text's voices

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## 1. Introduction

our speech ... is filled with others' words,  
varying degrees of otherness and varying degrees of 'our-own-ness'  
Bakhtin, 1968

The idea that a text is filled with the voices of others, apart from the writer's, has been present in the field of discourse studies for several decades now. Experienced writers bring voices to the text to achieve various effects and experienced readers can spot those voices and explore their significance in the overall meaning of a text. In the world of EFL, in which most readers are still in the process of developing the strategies that will make them more proficient language users, identifying such voices can be a challenge.

This paper is part of the pedagogical component of a research project carried out at the Facultad de Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes, Universidad Nacional de San Juan. It presents some visual and digital tools for the identification and exploration of the multiple voices

which are present in a written text. We believe that going beyond the verbal or linguistic component of a text and using multimodal resources as an aid in reading comprehension can help students discover a text's voices: a task which is often back-grounded in the EFL reading class. Our general research perspective is informed by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004), and our approach to the identification of 'voices' or sources is based on research by Murcia Bielsa and O'Donnell (2011). We further support our proposal by drawing on Multimodal studies (Jewitt, 2008; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001) as we believe that the EFL classroom can be enriched by teachers and students working with a multiplicity of modes, rather than focusing on the linguistic mode exclusively.

We firmly believe that if students are guided in an adequate learning environment, they can become aware of the presence of various voices in a text and of the impact those choices have in the construction of meaning.

## **2. Attribution to sources: the voices brought to a text**

A text's words or ideas can be presented as the writer's, or attributed explicitly or implicitly to external sources. In the field of EFL, the study or analysis of sources in a text has been traditionally associated with reported speech structures; however, language offers other ways of attributing information. Moving away from form-dominated perspectives, we endorse a meaning-centered approach to the exploration of sources, which includes other linguistic resources apart from the conventional subordination or coordination patterns covered in reported speech lessons. Within the SFL framework, Martin and Rose (2007, p. 52) claim that the words and thoughts of others can be introduced into a text by means of



several linguistic resources. These resources are presented below, with examples drawn from our research corpus:

- *projecting clauses*, i.e. subordinated or coordinated clauses traditionally associated with reported speech. (“*This young generation has known so much sadness and anguish,*” he said in an interview that year.)
- *projecting within clauses*, i.e. with no subordination structure. This is realized by verbs embodying verbal and mental processes known as projecting verbs in the SFL framework. (*But Mr. Sabato was criticized for initially appearing to support the military dictatorship.* The New York Times, May 2, 2011)
- *naming speech acts*; i.e. using words -often nominalizations- which imply one or more voices, such as ‘*discussion*’, ‘*debate*’, ‘*protest*’, etc. (...he helped draft a statement of protest concerning writers who had disappeared. The New York Times, May 2, 2011)
- *using “scare quotes”*, i.e. the writer’s use of punctuation to separate him/herself from the words used. (*After nine and a half months of investigation, the commission produced “NuncaMás,” which compiled evidence of about 9,000 “disappeared” persons.* The New York Times, May 2, 2011).

To this list, in line with Murcia Bielsa and O’Donnell’s proposal, we add the introduction of voices by means of circumstantial elements:

- *adverbial elements* used to attribute ideas or information, such as ‘according to’, ‘in the words of’.(*In a rare 2008 interview with the newspaper Pagina12, Ms. Walsh...*The Washington Post, January 12, 2011)

Focusing on the effect that attributing information may have, Murcia Bielsa and O’Donnell (2011) have explored sourcing as part of a study of the presence of power and ideology in discourse. Drawing on research by White on the Appraisal Framework (Available at [http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/AppraisalGuide/UnFramed/Stage4-](http://www.grammatics.com/appraisal/AppraisalGuide/UnFramed/Stage4-Intertextuality.htm)

Intertextuality.htm), these authors explain the various purposes of bringing -or choosing not to bring- voices to a text, and present a classification of sources along the following lines:

a) who is presented as holding *responsibility* for the information; b) the writer’s *endorsement or disendorsement* of the information; c) the *placement* of the information in the text; and d) *descriptive features* of the source (including its independence and status) which help construe the source’s *credibility*. The authors explain that a ‘fact’ or piece of information can be:

- **unsourced**
- **sourced**

If sourced, the information can be:

1. endorsed or unendorsed, depending on whether the responsibility for what is said is shared by the writer or not;
2. introduced by direct or indirect quotation;
3. introduced by a personal/ impersonal; singular / plural; or named/unnamed / anonymous source;

6. introduced by a source enjoying high, middle or low independence (depending on the interests at stake in relation to what is being said);

7. introduced by a source enjoying high or low status in society.

In general terms, when no sources are cited, the information is presented as true facts. On the other hand, when writers attribute information to a source, they often do it as a way of “*shaping opinions, favoring information which fits their position, and disfavoring information which goes against their position*” (Murcia Bielsa & O’Donnell, 2011). Needless to say, these effects are extremely relevant in any critical approach to the study of texts, and are often discussed as instances of intertextuality, which Fairclough defines as:

... basically the property texts have of being full of snatches of other texts, which may be explicitly demarcated or merged in, and which the text may assimilate, contradict, ironically echo, and so forth. (Fairclough, 1992, p. 84).

External voices which are - in Fairclough’s words - “explicitly demarcated” would represent, for a traditional form-based linguistic framework, a case of direct speech, and those voices that are “merged in” the discourse would fall into the category of indirect or reported speech.

These considerations, which may be familiar to discourse analysts, can be kept away from the EFL classroom on the assumption that this type of analysis should be reserved for native speakers or very advanced classes. We claim that through the use of some pedagogical tools, in particular through the use of multimodal resources, teachers can help students from various levels to reflect critically on the presence and effect of the sources brought to a text.

### 3. Multimodality as a resource

As educators have become well aware of, today's children and adolescents are a new kind of students. They are "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001) who were born and are being raised surrounded by visual, electronic and digital texts which Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001), among other researchers, call "multimodal texts". According to Anstey and Bull (2010), a multimodal text is one that combines two or more of the five recognized semiotic systems: linguistic, visual, audio, gestural and spatial.

In a 2007 study involving a group of British students from three to sixteen, Eve Bearne and her research team (in Walsh, 2004) explored the skills and strategies used by the students for reading screen-based texts. The researchers could not assert if the learners' manipulation of multimodal texts was actually affecting their learning process or if they were developing cognitive abilities different from those necessary for reading traditional print-based texts, a dilemma that is likely to remain unanswered for some time. However, what became evident in Bearne's study was that for the younger generations reading is not just reading in the traditional sense of the term; rather, it is 'reading and viewing'. The way these learners "make" meaning has definitely changed.

Multimodality in the world of education implies, as Kress (2005, p. 5) explains, moving away "*from representation primarily through writing to representation primarily through image*". How can we bring a multimodal approach to the reading of a mostly monomodal text in an EFL class? We argue for the integration of print and visual modes, and agree with Walsh (2008, p. 1) when she claims that multimodal texts and print-based texts are different but "not mutually exclusive". We believe we can bring in the

multimodal resources of image and screen to highlight various aspects of a text and guide students to identify text elements -in this case, a text's voices- which may be otherwise passed up.

Researchers and practitioners in the field of EFL need to respond to the demands brought about by the new generations of learners and devise pedagogical tools to cater for the particular characteristics of these young learners.

#### 4. Tools proposed

We present a few ideas for the use of multimodal resources to identify and explore voices in a text. The list is by no means exhaustive. Resourceful teachers will certainly find ways of expanding it based on their students' needs and interests.

##### a. Speech bubbles

The first and most basic suggestion is the drawing of simple 'speech bubbles' next to what a writer presents as somebody else's words or ideas. This does not require any sophisticated technology and can be done quite easily in any classroom context. For example, the voices in the following made-up text can be highlighted graphically as follows:

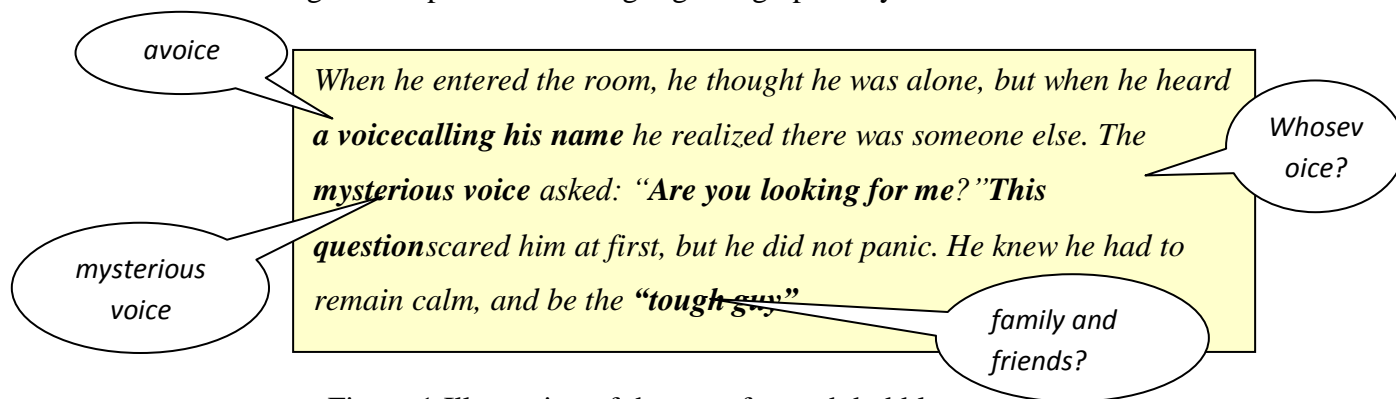


Figure 1. Illustration of the use of speech bubbles

This tool can be used in different ways, from a simple exercise in which students are asked to draw a bubble next to a sourced reference, to a more complex task in which, apart from drawing, students are asked to colour code the graphic forms following specific criteria, for example using Murcia Bielsa and O'Donnell's classification presented above. Moving away from the traditional approach to Reported Speech, we could also ask students to identify names of speech acts (such as *the question* in the previous example) and make them reflect on how these are used to represent external voices.

#### **b. Digital conceptual mapping**

A slightly more sophisticated resource is the digital tool called 'IHMC Cmap' (<http://cmap.ihmc.us/download/>), which can be used for a multiplicity of purposes and can easily be adapted to visually represent voices in a text. For example, a Cmap can be used to help students discover and illustrate the argumentative pattern in a text. This may be regarded as a complex reading comprehension activity. Yet, we believe that this digital tool can help to make the challenge more accessible to modern day visual learners.

The example below illustrates the use of a C-map to identify the positions construed through the various voices present in the selected text, which is part of the corpus of our research project. For this task, we rely on the three argumentation categories proposed by Martin and Rose (2008) within the SFL framework. These authors claim that, depending on the positions deployed in a text, argumentation can take one of the following forms: *exposition*, with a single-position defended, mostly through the writer's own voice; *challenge*, with two competing positions put forward and only one presented as valid; and *discussion*, with various positions presented and one generally favoured above the others.

In general terms, expositions are more likely to be single-voiced, and challenges and discussions tend to contain a multiplicity of voices.

Through the use of visual representations afforded by C map, students can be guided to first identify the voices and corresponding positions in a given text (Figure 2) and then to discover the argumentative pattern (Figure 3). This can become an effective way of dealing with the seeming complexity of such tasks.

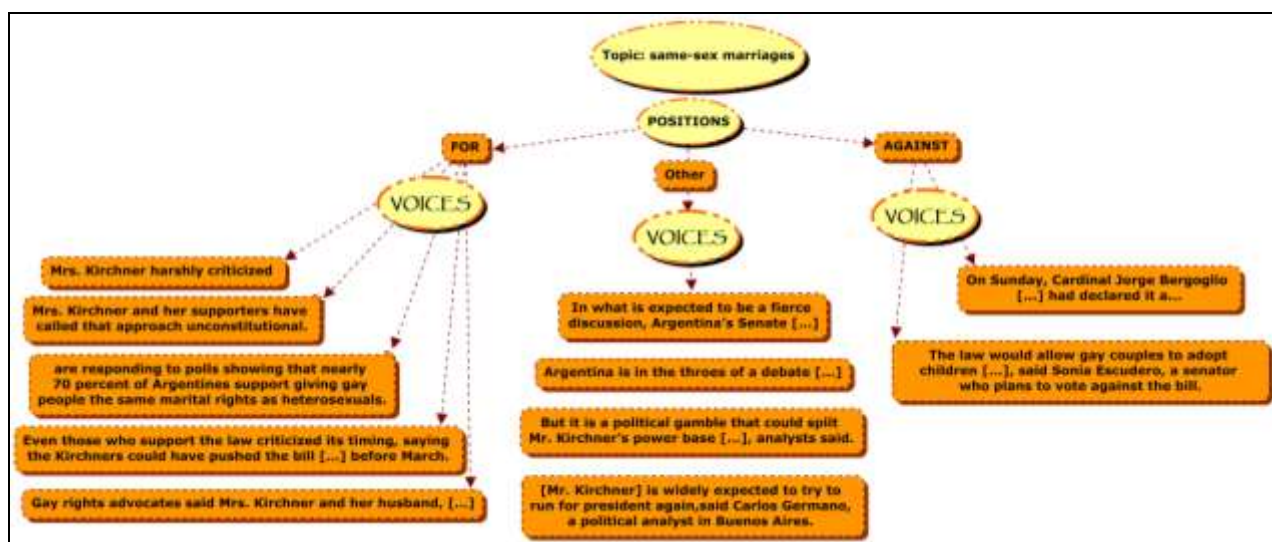


Figure 2. Identifying voices and positions in “Argentina Senate to Vote on Gay Marriage”, The New York Times, July 14, 2010

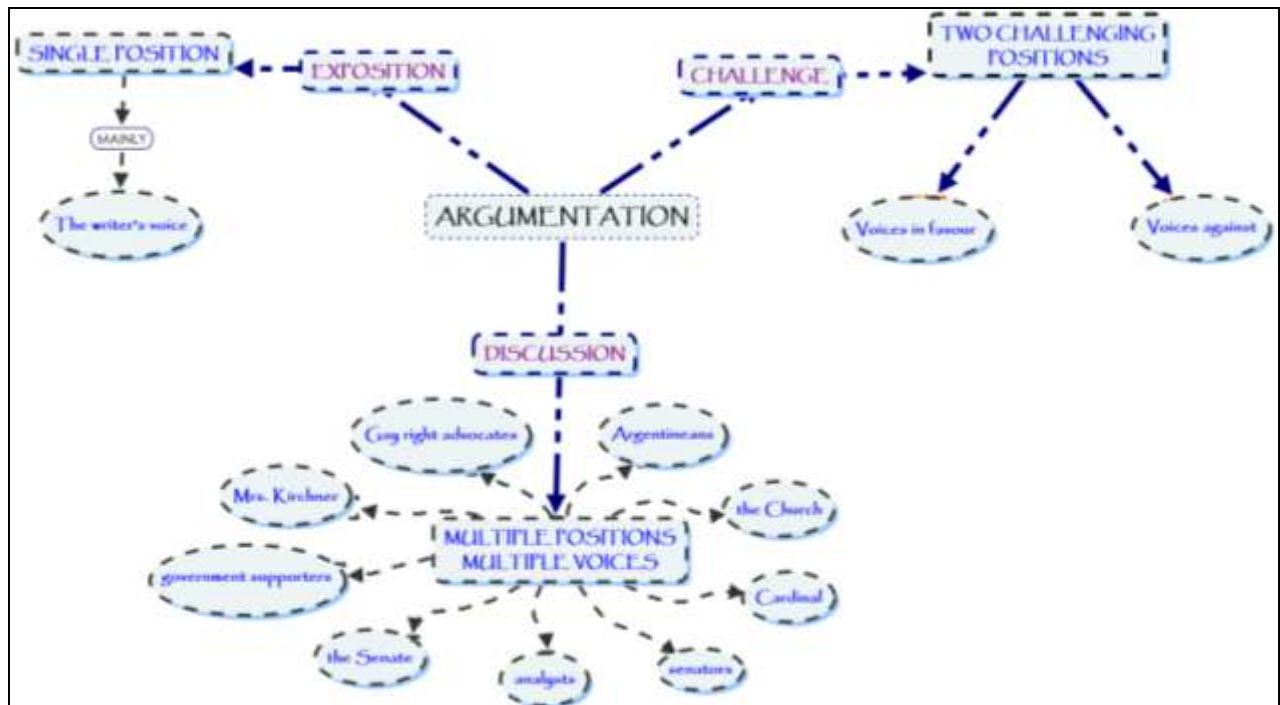


Figure 3. Identifying a text's argumentation pattern in "Argentina Senate to Vote on Gay Marriage", The New York Times, July 14, 2010

Figure 2 above clearly shows that the text under analysis presents a multiplicity of perspectives but favours only one of the positions. Figure 3, in turn, guides students to help them define the argumentative pattern, in this case, a discussion.

It is through the visual representation that the task can become accessible to students and the reading comprehension process can be enhanced. Such combination of linguistic, visual and digital modes can be used to improve reading comprehension skills in a way which is more appealing to current day learners and more compatible with their surrounding environment.



### c. On-line cartoon strip maker

Taking the visual component one step further, the use of a tool such as ToonDoo (<http://www.toondoo.com/>) to create on-line cartoon strips may allow students to represent the voices in a text, bringing in images and photographs to accompany the words. This resource can be used for a variety of tasks, ranging in complexity depending on the students' level.

Figure 4 shows a traditional reported speech exercise, in which students have to provide the actual words of a reported version contained in a given text. This transformation exercise, which is likely to appear in most language courses, becomes a more appealing activity when it is channelled through visual and digital modes as in the example provided.



Figure 4. Photographs representing voices in “Maradona: ‘All you could hear was Messi crying’”. Marca.com, February 13, 2013

Using ToonDoo, students can create their own characters, either based on photographs or on image banks, i.e. life-like or picture-based representations. In the illustration above, which relates to a text about well-known figures, web-images can be used in the

representation. In the case of texts such as short stories or other texts which contain fictional characters, students may be asked to imagine what such voices might look like, using descriptive features in the text or other contextual or cultural information, such as the social roles played by the participants. They can then decide what resources to use in their graphic creation.

The type of speculation involved in guessing what a source might look like can become an interesting topic for discussion, as many times decisions made by students will be based on stereotypes or preconceptions. Teachers might use such opportunities to challenge any negative or prejudiced view.

The three tools illustrated above show that visual and digital resources can be adapted to suit the needs and interests of students with varying degrees of linguistic sophistication, with tasks adjusted accordingly. Once a teacher becomes familiar with these tools, a world of unlimited possibilities opens up, which is likely to enrich the students' learning experience.

## **5. Closing remarks**

We believe that the tools presented constitute simple resources to help students discover aspects of a text which may go unnoticed in an EFL class. Through initial guidance and explicit instruction, students may start to recognize the identities construed in a text instead of viewing it as a single-voiced, indisputable cultural product. This is clearly a worthwhile educational objective.

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# 19 Reflecting on identity and intercultural issues through literature

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## 1. Literature, culture and empty mirrors

Analysing the different reasons why literature can be used in the language classroom, Lazar (1993) refers to some features generally associated to the literary text: its potential to engage the reader and arise motivation, its authenticity and educational value, the fact that it exposes language creatively and so students may gain language awareness and develop interpretative abilities and, last but not least, the possibility that literature gives to students to discuss cultural elements and establish connections between the culture presented in the literary text and the reader's own culture. In this regard, the author states that "literature can provide students with access to the culture of the people whose language they are studying" (Lazar, 1993, p.16). Nonetheless, the relationships between literature and culture can be of a complicated nature. The author claims that this is so due to different factors: a) the complex relationship between culture and literature; b) the fact that literature reflects only

some aspects of the culture it derives from, which implies that it cannot be thought of as a full and factual reliable cultural description; c) how culture is defined will inevitably alter the way in which literature is understood; and finally, d) the fact that literature written in English nowadays is representative of so many divergent cultures, it may be interesting to identify the “imposition of particular imperialistic values” (Lazar, 1993, p.16). In view of this and in reference to how literature can be read cross-culturally, it may be argued that one factor that can counteract the complexity existing between culture and literature is the fact that many themes are recurrent in different cultures. Thus, it might be very useful to establish relationships between the literary text and the culture studied in the classroom in order to bridge the gap that may exist between the student and the culture represented in the text.

Delving into the meanings of culture, it might be appropriate at this stage to identify some of its features in order to be able, eventually, to search for agreement on what is it to be taught in a language classroom where the use of literature is associated to the analysis of cultures. The Collins English dictionary refers to culture as the “total of the inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge, which constitute the shared bases of social action [...] activities and ideas of a group of people with shared traditions, which are transmitted and reinforced by members of the group.” If literature can help students discover new forms of life and different ways of seeing the world, this inevitably constitutes a further step in the development of their own identity. Being able to experience a different culture through the use of literature implies that the individual has the possibility to examine his or her own culture, too. This introspection allows for new thoughts and new comprehensions. Identity, then, is to be regarded as “the state of having unique identifying characteristics held by no

other person or thing [...] the individual characteristics by which a person or thing is recognized [...] that relation that holds only between any entity and itself.” (Collins dictionary). In an attempt to establish a clear relationship between culture and identity, it becomes evident that there is a close link between the two of them. The individual characteristics that make one person have a specific identity –by extension, a social group sharing identity features- contribute to the configuration of the cultural patterns to which that person or social group adheres and, at the same time, they are the basis for their individual and collective action. In this way, it may be argued that identity and culture can be regarded as complementary: one allowing for the existence of the other.

In this context, after acknowledging the value of literature in the language classroom and its potential for the analysis of culture and the development of identity, there only remains one term to bring to the equation, that is the concept of interculturalism. Meer and Modood (2012) write extensively on the differences between interculturalism and multiculturalism and state that the first one is connected with

something greater than co-existence [...] interculturalism is allegedly more geared toward interaction and dialogue than multiculturalism [...] interculturalism is conceived as something less ‘groupist’ or more yielding of synthesis than multiculturalism [...] interculturalism is something more committed to a stronger sense of the whole (Meer & Modood, 2012, p. 177).

Though the differences between interculturalism and multiculturalism can shed some light on how to work better inside the classroom, some questions still linger on: Are we as teachers prepared to work with these concepts in mind? Do we simply observe multiculturalism in our classrooms or we go further to think in terms of interculturalism and integration? What is interculturalism in our contexts, how is it to be understood in the

field of teaching foreign languages? And, what consequences does it bring to the daily work in the classroom? What fictional settings do we encounter in the literature we teach that might explore the concepts of culture, identity and interculturalism? More importantly, what is our standpoint as educators in regard to these terms and what are the implications?

In an article summarizing the basis for a doctoral study conducted by Tammy Schwartz, the author recalls the words by poet Adrienne Rich and uses them to introduce the subject of the latent relationship between schooling and identity development. Rich illustrates what often becomes a sad reality: “When someone with the authority of a teacher, say, describes the world and you are not in it, there is a moment of psychic disequilibrium, as if you looked into a mirror and saw nothing.” (Schwartz, 2004, p.16). The article by Schwartz is concerned with the problems that exist in a community of Appalachian descent in the United States, where a group of young female students are sent in a mission to recover part of their collective identity through the analysis of written texts. Their discovery helps both the students and the author to come to terms with some images generally associated to the neighbourhood they live in and the concluded work reflects how their own culture is clearly different from the hegemonic one. In the final lines of her work Schwartz raises another question that could be added to the ones above: “Can teachers, principals, and the districts in which they work create learning spaces so that diversity is privileged over uniformity?” (Schwartz, 2004, p. 21). Hopefully, professionals who are aware of the intercultural nature of their classrooms and who have an interest in working for the plural and the diverse will not surrender to the image of the empty mirrors reflecting no one in particular and will work towards filling those mirrors with images of multiple voices.

## **2. Discussing two examples**

One way to work with literature in the name of diversity can be through the selection of texts whose characters and themes embody the difficulties of being different in hostile environments. This paper explores the construction of identity and issues regarding interculturalism in two literary texts written by female authors. The first one is the famous and Pulitzer winner novel by Toni Morrison *Beloved*, which explores the lives of a former slave woman and her family around the times of the Reconstruction in the United States. The novel exposes the reader to one of the crudest possible realities of a woman who commits infanticide in order to prevent her children from becoming slaves. Morrison artfully constructs a narrative loaded with memorable scenes, most of them with a high degree of explicit brutality that illustrate the hardships of black female identity construction in the context of abolition. The second text is a short story published in 1994 in a volume called “Did my mama like to dance?: and other stories about mothers and daughters” written by the Cuban-American author Cecilia Rodríguez Milanés. The short story is titled “Abuela Marielita,” and tells us about a woman who has come to live in the United States with her daughter’s family after migrating from Cuba in the 1980’s. The story is full of domestic details that describe a compassionate character who has begun to feel forgotten even in the house she inhabits and surrounded by her own daughter’s family. In spite of the obvious differences these two texts have in connection to length, setting, plot and author’s background, it is possible to think of them as interesting examples to bring about class discussion of issues related to discrimination, gender violence, cultural respect and treatment of the other in upper-intermediate and advanced groups. By focusing on different moments of the texts it will be shown that they both share a profound concern with identity,



especially as it is built by female characters in unfavourable contexts where marginalization is a threatening factor and the protagonists are considered either outsiders or members of unprivileged groups.

## **2.1. Beloved**

*Beloved* tells the story of a woman, Sethe, who escaped slavery in the last days of her fourth pregnancy. She carries the burden of thousands of memories that take her from the present back to the painful days when she was enslaved. From the opening of the novel, the author creates a rhetoric web that continually balances between the present and the past, insisting on the latter with the intention of setting the mood and establishing one of the main themes in the narrative, which is the recovery of memory. One of the first examples in the text that leads to the question of identity construction is connected with the events around the engraving of Beloved's tomb. The narrator explains how Sethe and her fourth child, Denver, decided to come to terms with the ghost of Sethe's third baby, also a girl, who carries the name that gives title to the novel. In a domestic spiritual ceremony, they called the ghost to come and stop what made the house so "...spiteful. Full of baby's venom." (Morrison, 2005, p. 3). When the ghost did not give any sign of understanding the message, mother and daughter began the following conversation that eventually led to a crude recollection:

"'For a baby she throws a powerful spell,' said Denver.

‘No more powerful than the way I loved her’, Sethe answered and there it was again. The welcoming cool of unchiseled headstones, the one she selected to lean against on tiptoe, her knees wide open as any grave. [...] Ten minutes, he said. You got ten minutes I’ll do it for free. [...] Not only did she have to live out her years in a house palsied at the baby’s fury at having its throat cut, but those ten minutes she spent [...] were longer than life, more alive, more pulsating than the baby’s blood that soaked her fingers like oil.” (Morrison, 2005, p.3).

Identity in the case of Sethe is mostly associated with brutality and sexual violence. As a former slave, she grew up being treated as chattel, she formed her personality and learned social roles in a dehumanising context that could only repeat itself. She was an orphan daughter who hardly heard of her own mother and how she threw away her other babies keeping Sethe, the only one not born out of rape. She was a wife who consummated her marriage outside in the cornfield not far from the sight of other people and was never allowed to fully legitimise the sacrament. Finally, she was a mother who traded the engraving of her daughter’s tomb for ten minutes of sex, making this a traumatic moment that would linger in her mind and heart forever. She lost her two elder boys and cut her baby’s throat in an act of horror and desperation.

Regarding Beloved, the mysterious character who first seems to come to occupy the place of the dead baby, the readership does never get to know who she really is. In a brief analysis of Beloved’s identity, Anatol (2010) provides different interpretations that range between the worlds of the possible and that of the supernatural. She argues that Beloved may have been an enslaved girl who escaped sexual exploitation and found Sethe’s home

when running away. In line with the supernatural interpretations that coincide with the ghost story genre –a classification most critics adhere to-, *Beloved* may be read as either the personification of Sethe's baby girl or as "a compilation of all the enslaved peoples who died" (Anatol, 2010) in the Middle Passage and to whom Morrison dedicates the novel. Despite the interpretation that each reader wants to adopt, it is evident the author intended not to provide a definite answer in this regard. The character's identity remains elusive, which implies the author is concerned with problematising the issue of identity construction. The social group originated with the arrival to the United States of the black community for indentured labor creates a culture delineated by slavery, a feature that is evident not only from the thematic aspects of the novel but also from the structural one. The text is built in a circular, almost elliptical way, taking the reader from one point to the centre and then to the outside again, resembling memory and its tricks. This resource is used by Morrison with the clear intention of showing another identity pattern which is the rich oral tradition of African American culture.

## **2.2. Abuela Marielita**

This short story presents a different setting, Miami in the 1980's, a city that was rapidly transforming due to complex social and demographic changes. One of the innovations was connected with the mass emigration of Cubans who departed from the Mariel harbour in their native country and became political refugees in the United States. But this new wave of Cuban migrants was different from that of previous decades. In the 1950's most of the Cubans who arrived in the United States belonged to the upper classes that had the means

to escape of Fidel Castro's administration. In the 1960's the Cuban migrants that finally made their way into the United States belonged mainly to the middle classes. Whereas the *marielitos*, name given to the Cubans who came via the Mariel boatlifts between April and October 1980, were said to belong to a lower social stratum : some of them were ex-convicts and mental patients that Castro had released on purpose to ship them out of the island. In addition to the social differences, the *marielitos* had already experienced the communist system imposed on Cuba, so their needs and ways of thinking were somewhat different from those of their countrymen who were already settled in the country from previous years. The arrival of the *marielitos* generated resentment in various sectors: among non-Hispanic whites who felt that another group of foreigners was again taking advantage of their lands and jobs; among the black community who saw with envy how these new Cuban exiles were receiving preferential treatment while they were still discriminated against and relegated within the labour force; and among other Cubans who already held positions in various spaces of society but understood their reputation was threatened by the arrival of these individuals who were considered the scoria of society, to use a term that was employed both by Fidel Castro and the North American media.

*Abuela Marielita* is an excellent portrait of the tensions existing regarding the arrival of these people. The first lines of the text read as follows: "My daughter doesn't want people to know that I came through the port of Mariel, so she tells them that I came by way of Spain in January 1980, four months before I actually arrived en los cayos." (Kothari, 1994, p. 93). The technique of stream of consciousness is used by the author to take the reader through different moments of the main character's life: her last days in Cuba, the people she met during the crossing, what happened to the rest of the members of her family and the

difficulties encountered during her early days in the United States. Throughout the narrative, the author proposes an intense dynamics of descriptions made from the point of view of Soledad, the grandmother of the family who is a former *marielita*. Through exquisitely detailed accounts the family is introduced: Michael, Soledad's son-in-law, whose business allows the whole family to have a good economic position and buy as many air-conditioning systems as are needed to fight the heat –instead of Soledad's insistence in using a fan and enjoying the weather outside; Gertrude, Soledad's daughter, with whom the protagonist seems to have a more distant relationship than she would prefer; and the two children, Marcos and Graciélita, who are spoilt and naughty. Once the relationship between Soledad and the family members has been well described, there comes the introduction of two important characters, Yamile, the humble single mother who moves to the little room the family rents at the back of their house, and her baby Luz. At the time these two characters are presented, the narrator makes it clear that it was about them she was meant to talk about, so all the successive lines lead the reader to the climax of the story while the domestic portrayal continues to marvellously describe a fascinating household as it is observed by its eldest member. Soledad becomes an example of how the *marielitos* were treated both in the community at large and within the Cuban immigrants, but she also epitomises old age and how senior citizens are disrespected or looked down on because they may not be interesting regardless the life experiences they have to tell.

### **3. Conclusion and further suggestions**

The two stories presented above are only examples in which literature relies heavily upon cultural elements to attract the reader's attention and generate genuine bonds. An interesting activity to carry out inside the language classroom, both to enhance speaking skills and critical thinking, would be to study how these stories are read, understood and ascribed with meaning, both in the culture that has produced them and in the student's own culture. In order to raise intercultural awareness, these two texts could be used to reflect upon the tensions that exist between groups with different identity patterns, different needs and cultural heritage who come to live within societies that do not seem ready to accept variety. Is it possible to fill in the empty mirrors and create learning spaces for the rich and the diverse? This question will ultimately be answered in as many ways as literature classrooms may there be. What is important to remember is that the link between culture and literature is very close indeed. Consequently, teachers and researchers may want to explore this richness in order to allow learners and readers in general to become aware of the deep meanings hidden in narratives so strongly based on cultural elements. In this 21st-century world, so globalised, with communication and technology in the palm of our hands, one of the ways in which real understanding can be fostered is through the teaching of new values oriented to plurality and difference. Professionals working in the field of English and education cannot turn their backs on the fact that reality nowadays demands a more complex analysis of texts including more comprehensive approaches to the reading of materials so as to facilitate reflection both on the foreign culture and the culture each person identifies with.

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## 20 Computer and Internet mediated narrative construction in EFL

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### 1. Introduction

The purpose of this contribution is to share our experience in the educational use of Information Technology and Communication (ICT) in higher education from a practical standpoint, and to show some of the applications we developed in 2011: the materials design project "Múltiples Narrativas y Enseñanzas de la Lengua. Las TIC's como Medio para la Creatividad" was organized by the department of Distance Education at Facultad de Lenguas, within the framework of *Proyecto Aulas en Red*, 2011, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba. This was an interdisciplinary work in which language teachers, pedagogues, computer technicians and graphic designers contributed to the development of specific materials. This paper aims at showing how we used Moodle 2.3 to create and design an interactive narrative specially written for our students taking the course *English Language I*



at School of Languages, UNC, so as to help them integrate the different contents of the units of the course in an interactive and engaging way. This descriptive presentation shows how to use technology mediated resources and implement Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and blended learning, following a narrative thread (Litwin, 2010) in order to create an innovative resource and to lower the number of drop outs in the first year of the course of studies.

## **2. Theoretical framework**

### **2.1. CALL materials**

In the 1980s, while CLT was becoming part of mainstream language teaching, different educational technologies started to be applied in the field of language teaching. This led to the development of Computer Assisted Language Learning (CALL), a term coined by the interested participants in the 1983 TESOL convention in Toronto. Beatty (2003), one of the authorities in the field, defines CALL as ‘any process in which a learner uses a computer and, as a result, improves his or her languages’ (p.7) whereas Chapelle (2005), another leading authority on computer-assisted language instruction, defines CALL as ‘the broad range of activities associated with technology and language learning’ (in Brown, 2007, p.200).

CALL is employed in and out of the classroom. Beatty (2003) states that materials for CALL can include those which are purpose-made for language learning and those which adapt existing computer-based materials, video and other materials. In either case, the introduction of CALL materials in the language class has aided learning in multiple ways.

Research has showed that computers are needed in the language classroom and that CALL “can substantially improve achievement as compared with traditional instruction” (Meich, Nave & Mosteller, 1996 in Beatty 2003).

At the moment, much research is studying the advantages and disadvantages of computers in providing communicative tasks which foster learning (Burbules & Callister, 2001; Chapelle, 2001; De Alba, 2000; Dedé, 2000; Litwin, 2000; Singh, 2003), yet little is known about the use of narrative as the unifying or integrative resource to develop and practice the foreign language. In fact, different technological devices such as video, television, audio CDs, the Internet and computer software can aid language teachers pursue communicative goals in the classroom, as the medium. Now, as to the content, little is found in the bibliography. Brown (2007) points out that CALL materials are particularly useful for non-native-speaking teachers since a wide array of authentic written and oral texts are available at the touch of a key. Moreover, CALL materials have moved from a behaviourist instructional design to a constructivist design since they “have gone from an emphasis on basic textual gap-filling tasks and simple programming exercises to interactive multimedia presentations with sound, animation and motion video” (Beatty, 2003, p.11). These advances in Information Technology have led to the introduction of typical communicative activities such as online quizzes, puzzles and games. Another breakthrough related to CLT and CALL has been the introduction of Computer Mediated Communication (CMC). CMC refers to “communication by email, bulletin boards, chatlines within MOO (Multi-user domains, Object Oriented) environments” (Beatty, 2003, p.62). CMC offers learners different opportunities to interact with others and engage in negotiations of meaning using the second language. CMC together with different CALL resources

available in our teaching environments can be used as the means to engage our students in tasks which are meaningful and highly motivating.

## **2.2. A case for Case Development**

Teaching through case study and analysis offers a novel and interesting strategy for the treatment of issues and problems of the curriculum. If the cases are well selected, they favour understanding of the topic under study. Selected cases allow us to address issues whose complexity we may not dare to tackle. In addition, personal interests may arouse teachers' and students' motivation, and they can be invitations to keep thinking, to promote meaningful experience. Two are the job prospects for planning cases: the first is to select real cases, and the second, to build cases for teaching. In both situations the strategy through case work can be a way to address an issue or overcoming the particular strategy chosen from the proposed methodology for the treatment of a subject. Cases are an invitation to think, understanding that thought and reflection are processes inherent to the human condition. To think is to believe, assume, guess, look for reasons, devise, invent. The qualities of good cases are to stimulate thought, finding reasons and enjoyment or pleasure in that activity (Litwin, 2004).

The case is a tool or instrument for teaching a subject. The form of the case is a narrative, that is, a story which tells a story, describes how an event happened. Good cases contain dilemmas, situations of difficult or complex problem resolution, which is bound to stimulate thought and reflection.

Cases must bridge the relevant topics in the curriculum. They must relate to the topic to be taught. It is likely that given the complexity of the facts, the case can be related to several topics, but the biggest concern is that the topic should be related or relevant to substantive matter of the syllabus. A good case provokes discussion, encourages participants to take sides, to recognize disputes and find good reasons to continue analysing. It should also awaken the interest of students and challenge them to think.

### **2.3. A case for blended learning**

The term blended learning is applied to a variety of teaching and learning situations. Generally it is applied to a course where learners and teachers meet in a face to face class and in which the course contains a parallel self-study component such as web based materials. A blended learning course can be much more profitable than each of its parts and positive outcomes can be easily appreciated when both, teachers and technology are assigned clear roles. In such a course teachers add value to the teaching itself and technology comes in support of a course where learners have access to technology outside the class.

According to Barrett and Sharma (2007),

blended learning, done well, can exploit the best of both worlds (the online and the in class components). Carefully chosen online materials can enhance the classroom component of the course. The outside world can be brought into the classroom, improving motivation and generating interest.

Singh (2003) sees blended learning rather as “a combination of multiple delivery media designed to complement each other and promote meaningful learning”. This is often a mix

of traditional instructor-led training; synchronous online conferencing or training, asynchronous self-paced study, and structured on-the-job training from an experienced worker or mentor (Singh, 2003, p.3).

### **3. The Experience**

In the first stage of the materials design project, the ICT department accompanied and guided all the Language I teachers in the teaching approach to be used: building up narrative using different technological resources. It is worth mentioning that several languages are taught at the School of Languages (English, French, Italian, German and Portuguese) and in this particular case all the languages were involved.

This was an interdisciplinary enterprise since a pedagogical assistant guided the members of the chair who participated and also instructed them as follows:

- a) Keep in mind that the cases are narratives, stories, and as such we should have some interest in narrative and its qualities which are attractive to our readers / students, beyond the didactic intentions such cases could offer.
- b) Cases must be complex enough so that we can profit from them. A complex case will be rich in learning opportunities and will also be of interest to our students.
- c) Cases are a starting point, a roadmap. From them will emerge what will allow us to submit or implement the selected content. Think of the cases, then, in terms of a hypertext.
- d) When it comes to resources, think for example of:

- e) Written texts: newspaper articles, fragments of stories, novels, poems, letters, emails, flyers, advertisements, chat dialogues, tweets, postings.
- f) Visual texts: movies, series, drama, animation, music videos, interviews, documentaries.
- g) Audio texts: songs, radio programmes, telephone conversations, interviews.
- h) Texts, iconic paintings, images of sculptures, photographs, symbols, among others, in order to give life to your case.
- i) The task of drafting the case will not be detached from the task of selecting the resources. If you think of a great event, a wonderful story, but you cannot create or find resources that can recreate the case, efforts will have been wasted. This is particularly crucial in case design for foreign language teaching.
- j) It is important to keep track of resource availability at the time of writing your cases.
- k) The decision to work with a film, series, play, short story or novel, for example, may seem, at first glance, unoriginal. However, you can always work with new voices. You can tell a part of the story in the voice of a minor character or a new character, a character witness who may give a new twist to the story. You can focus less on what the resource says and more on what it does not say, on what is not, on what we do not know for sure.

#### 4. Case design

Following the instructions compiled, translated and listed above, we worked on the design of a case which had several links to be visited, such as maps, images and background information. We produced a map content of notions and visual hypertexts; each notion that we named and articulated on the map had brief explanations, examples and recommendations for exploration or testing.

##### 4.1. The case

Case	Images, resources	Activities designed using Moodle (Platform)
<p>- 1 -</p> <p>And finally the day came! After so many chat conversations on Facebook, emails and text messages I was going to meet Jake, my keypal. My grandma would panic even though she had met my grandpa on a blind date in El Durazno, back in the sixties. And to think that in those days in the USA, pioneers such as Licklider o Kleinrock were already creating a worldwide web!</p>	<p>Facebook, emails, text messages</p> <p>Visual: an old envelope</p>	<p>Exercise on phrasal verbs based on the letter and set expressions (Moodle: cloze)</p> <p>Reading comprehension: True or False</p>
<p>-2-</p> <p>And there I was, on the verge of doing what in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is a common thing to do: going on a date with a person whom I “accidentally” met online. In fact, I am not quite sure if I can say that we met “by chance”, unless a purposeless click can be regarded as an “accident”. Respond to</p>	<p>Visual: computer and webcam</p>	<p>Chat</p>

<p>Jake's friend request, I read, Confirm?...and, accidentally or not, I clicked. And, to tell you the truth, I had no idea how this story would end up. Late at night, while I was picking up my emails or doing some homework, a small chat window popped up "Hi!" and I would go "How r u?" and endless online (or real?) conversations would follow. Once or twice we used the webcam on Skype but then I got tired of having to dress up to meet him "face to face", and after making up some excuses, we resumed our traditional and safe letter typing chat.</p>		
<p>- 3 -          Adding a friend of a friend of mine on Facebook just because I liked his profile pic and because, according to his wall, we had the same book and music interests, turned out quite interesting. To be honest, more than once the frightening question "How do I know if...?" crossed my mind. My fears were quite real. Cases of inappropriate or even dangerous online dates were on the news every day. Even while I was chatting, I came across terrifying cases on YouTube which sometimes put me off this relationship.</p>	<p>Headlines on abuse</p>	<p>Forum to express opinion</p>



<p>- 4 -</p> <p>To cut a long story short, by a twist of fate, I ended up taking a course in London. I let him know about it, of course. When he suggested meeting up at the Mc Donald's on Leicester Square, I didn't have the slightest idea of how to get there. Fortunately, I remembered the day I got lost in the middle of Rome and I used Google Earth to find the hotel. So, I turned to Google Earth and with the touch of a key I found the Mc Donald's I was looking for, right in the heart of London! I was so worried about my date that I lost all track of time. I was running late and I didn't have enough time to get ready. Anyway, I was determined to face the challenge. "In any case", I thought, "it's a public place... what can go wrong?" I grabbed my Harrods' bag with the new top I had bought and rushed to the tube station. It was the peak hour and cars were crawling nose to tail, as it is always the case in hectic cities. I wasn't used to the hustle and bustle of the city after having lived so many years in the tranquillity of my hometown, El Durazno.</p>	<p>Oyster card</p>	<p>Listening + fill in the gaps</p>
<p>- 5 -</p> <p>When I arrived at McDonald's, it dawned on me that I might be looking quite shabby and my hair untidy. I decided to go to the</p>	<p>Screen</p>	<p>Synonyms &amp; antonyms. Word formation</p>

<p>ladies' to tidy myself up and look a bit more respectable. Toilets in this chain of restaurants are supposed to be spotless. The whole place smelt of a blend of disinfectant and recently baked apple pie with cinnamon aromas. I washed my hands and face, brushed my teeth, used some deodorant, changed my top, did my hair, touched up my make-up and put some gloss on my lips again. I wanted to impress him! I looked at myself once again. Yes, now I could go and meet my friend! I walked out of the ladies' and tried to spot him.</p>		
<p>- 6 - I did remember his well-defined features from the picture he had sent me. Could he be that one standing below Ray Kroc's portrait? No, too old. What about that tall one in a striped sweater? Not him. He was next to a girl and they seemed to be madly in love with each other. Mmm... Yes! Definitely! My heart was telling me my friend was that blond guy fidgeting with his keys, standing right by the entrance and looking at a screen right in front of him. But... what was he staring at? The news? An important match? Wimbledon? Derby? A few meters further back, a security guard was also watching what was being shown on that screen. I tried to ask the guard if something serious had</p>	<p>Useful sights</p>	<p>Project work</p> <p>Who was Ray Kroc? What is Wimbledon? What is Derby? (Moodle: multiple choice exercise)</p>

<p>happened, but he actually ignored me. Perhaps Jake was looking so restless because he had lied to me. What if he was going out with another girl and she happened to be in there? And if he didn't dare...? What if...? Enough! I decided to stop making things up and comparing my reality with those incredible stories in the news, warning people against the dangers of Internet dating. With my head up high and a dazzling smile, I walked towards Jake, determined to win his heart. When I was just a few feet from him, I couldn't help catching a quick glimpse of the screen. Oh, no, I couldn't believe my eyes! Flabbergasted, I found out that the 42 inches of the LCD screen displayed every single scene of what was going on in the ladies' lounge I had just left. No doubt, Jake had seen it all. "And now what?" "What should I do?" I wondered. I had to face up to the situation. Surely he had recognized me on the screen. I also knew that he would notice my accent the moment I uttered a word. And I was not wrong at all. I took a deep breath and talked to him with a clear, sonorous "Jake"?</p>	<p>Visual: a picture of McDonald's (Leicester Square) showing CCTV cameras</p>	<p>Vocabulary work</p>
<p>- 7 - Today we are living happily together in a typical English cottage in Burford in the</p>	<p>A cottage house</p>	<p>Write a paragraph comparing El Durazno with Burford</p>

Cotswolds. I enjoy the peace and quiet of this off the beaten track place. And to think that it all happened thanks to the laptop I bought to carry out a teaching project at university!		
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## 5. Final comments

The old and the new were brought together in our educational setting, to carry out a collaborative blended learning project which would integrate narrative (case development, Litwin et al., 2004) and technology. It is widely known that narrative is one of the oldest genres, and it is present in every aspect of human activity. According to Coles (1989) stories can transform thought and action. Litwin et al. (2004) explained the importance of the use of narrative in education:

La didáctica recupera hoy el valor de las narraciones como forma de conocer y también de comunicar la experiencia, ofreciendo nuevos marcos interpretativos para la inclusión de diferentes estrategias en las propuestas educativas.

Blended learning combines multiple delivery media that are designed to complement each other and promote learning and application-learned behaviour (Singh, 2003). The pedagogical experience, we believe, fulfils the requirements enumerated by Singh, (2003, p.9):

The Pedagogical dimension is concerned with the combination of content that has to be delivered (content analysis), the learner needs (audience analysis), and learning objectives (goal analysis). The pedagogical dimension also encompasses the design and strategy aspect of e-learning.

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ISBN 978-987-20307-0-4



9 789872 030704



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