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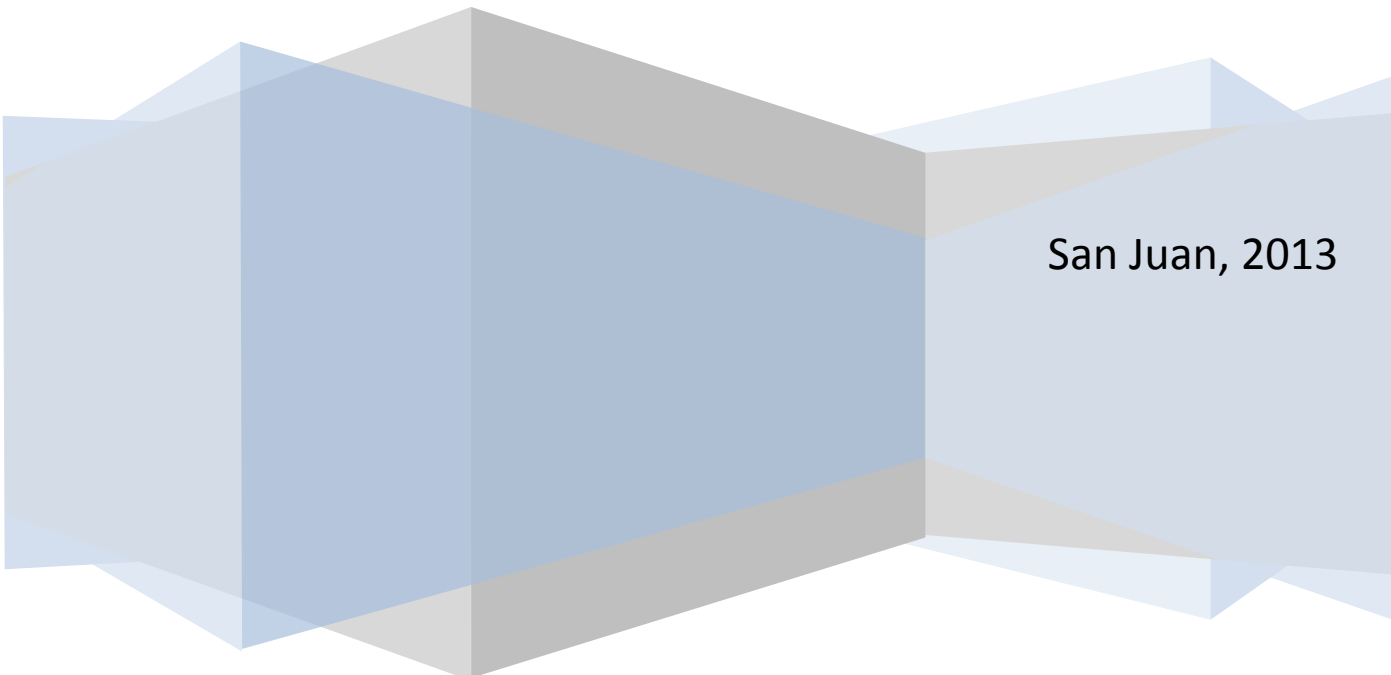
# V JORNADAS DE ACTUALIZACIÓN EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

*Editoras*

**Andrea Leceta y Rosa Inés Cúneo**

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## Palabras de las Editoras

La Universidad Nacional de San Juan nace a la vida institucional el 10 de octubre de 1973. Esta institución se configura como una comunidad de trabajo dedicada a la enseñanza, investigación, creación y difusión del saber en todos sus órdenes, científico, técnico, filosófico y artístico, y a la formación integral de profesionales al servicio del bien común. En el marco de los 40 años de su creación, el Departamento de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa y el Gabinete de Estudios en Lenguas Extranjeras (G.E.L.E.) de la Facultad Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes de la Universidad Nacional de San Juan, con el auspicio y colaboración de la Asociación San Juan de Profesores de Inglés (ASJPI), se propusieron crear un espacio de reflexión y actualización en la enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera, atendiendo a aspectos relacionados con lo pedagógico-didáctico, lo tecnológico y lo literario, y su impacto en nuestro quehacer docente.

Las lenguas son moldeadas y a la vez moldean la identidad de los pueblos. Una lengua conlleva tradiciones, historias, luchas y logros. El conocer las lenguas de otros pueblos implica adentrarse en su pensamiento y sus valores, pero ese aprendizaje sólo puede hacerse desde la revalorización de nuestra propia identidad.

Este año nos honraron con su presencia disertantes nacionales e internacionales de amplia trayectoria en la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera.

Una vez más la respuesta a esta convocatoria ha excedido nuestras expectativas, hecho que refleja la intención de estar mejor equipados para hacer frente a las demandas y requerimientos de las nuevas generaciones.

Prof. Viviana Andrea Leceta

Mgter. Rosa Inés Cúneo

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# PLENARIOS

## Teacher, what page today? A look at materials development

PhD. Darío Luis Banegas  
[D.Banegas@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:D.Banegas@warwick.ac.uk)

Centre for Applied Linguistics, University of Warwick

### Abstract

Learning materials are core components of our practices. Sometimes they become useful tools and some other times they dictate the courses we teach. In this talk I will explore learning materials in different formats and modes but I will particularly focus on coursebooks at primary and secondary school levels. Some of the questions I will raise are: What do coursebooks usually feature? Have they evolved? Are materials challenging enough? Do they offer cognitive-rich opportunities? Are they culturally-responsive? Are there any people against marketed materials? What do more recent materials offer? What's the role of materials today? And more importantly, what's our role in this hard-to-resist marketed world?

### Introduction

In this contribution I have adopted a less formal register and a more conversational tone. My reason (or excuse) behind this decision is that this paper is based on my plenary and at the time of writing these words I feel like I am addressing you in a synchronous matrix of communication and experience.

Let me start my approximation to materials development in English Language Teaching (ELT) by enumerating those materials which I experienced as a learner: a coursebook (student's book and workbook), cassettes owned by my teacher and played when all the planets were aligned, photocopies, readers, videos, songs, newspapers, magazines, pictures, and a game or two.

However, the world is changed and our practices and learning opportunities, whether these are embedded in formal settings or informal environments, are inhabited by an "upgraded" army of materials such as digital applications, YouTube videos, online/offline activities and games, interactive reading devices, blogs, social networks, and resources such as interactive whiteboards (IWB) and netbooks through which autonomy is hoped to be encouraged.

In this contribution I will first conceptualise materials development, and from that point of dynamic departure and I will focus on coursebooks, still unchallenged masters in the realm of marketed materials, and their roles as tools and teachers. From the printed page I will offer

and bird's view of digital materials before examining mainstream materials through the lens of cognitive development and culture.

### Materials development

Brian Tomlinson (2008, 2011, 2012, 2013) is an authoritative source in the field of materials development together with authors such as Harwood (2010), McDonough, Shaw and Masuhara (2013) and McGrath (2002), to name a few.

In a state-of-the art article Tomlinson (2013) asserts that

Materials development refers to all the processes made use of by practitioners who produce and/or use materials for language learning, including materials evaluation, their adaptation, design, production, exploitation and research. Ideally, all of these processes should be given consideration and should interact in the making of language-learning materials.

Tomlinson seems to place the emphasis on practitioners with the aim of conceptualising this field as bottom-up in his quest for bridging the gap between theory and practice. In this regard, Tomlinson (2013) advances that some possible reasons for the gap between applied linguistics theory and materials development practice and implementation may be due to the fact that applied linguistics theories:

- are often written about in language which is not easily accessible to practitioners;
- sometimes seem difficult to apply to materials development;
- do not seem to take into account such realities of classroom practice as large classes, unmotivated learners, lack of adequate time, lack of resources and the need for examination preparation;
- are unappealing to materials developers as their application would require innovations which might prove unacceptable to the users of their materials.

Within the systemic relationships in materials development, materials can be classified in crude terms according to their sources and functions as follows (Fig. 1):

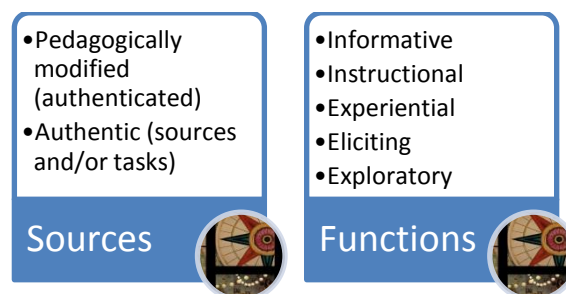


Fig.1. Classification of materials

Readers will notice that in the sources section I have only offered two broad distinctions which may be unclear or easily contested. While functions may coexist depending on our aims as materials users, the issue of authenticity and pedagogical modification are more problematic. When we think of authenticity we tend to associate it with materials which have not been produced for an ELT world or formal education at large. However, we sometimes see textbooks, for example, aimed at teenage L1 English-speakers as authentic. Because of the aims and target groups, both language and content have been modified to scaffold learning. But do these modifications make the language become artificial and contrived? Certainly not.

Having offered this far from accurate classification, let me now focus on coursebooks and their impact on our teaching and learning practices.

### Coursebooks

According to Gray (2010), “teachers are primary consumers of coursebooks and retain considerable power in determining the uses to which they are put in the classroom.” This critical position in relation to the examination of coursebooks as market goods and capitalist objects may be the base to look at coursebooks uses and stances as placed along a continuum (Fig. 2):



Fig. 2. Coursebook use continuum

Under “coursebooks as scripts” I place those practices through which the coursebook and all the materials which come with one become the authority inside the classroom dictating and determining the course syllabus, progress and sequence. Nonetheless, “coursebooks as scripts” should not be seen through negative lens only. More often than not, unqualified teachers’ or novice teachers’ practices (Grossman & Thompson 2024) are improved by adhering closely to one coursebook as opposed to disjointed and unsequenced photocopies. In fact, in this continuum I evaluate this practice as positive as it helps with teachers’ problems with work overload particularly in our educational system and our “profesores taxis.”



The following vignette (Banegas, 2013a) may illustrate this practice of allowing a coursebook to exercise a leading role:

Anahí started both lessons with a routine: checking that each student had done their homework and they had their coursebooks. However, something happened in her first lesson that I did not notice in the other lessons observed at this stage:

1 Anahí: Today we're going to work with festivals.

2 Student: Page?

3 Anahí: Yes? We're not going to work with the book now. Ok, so tell, me, what festivals are popular in your country, here?

(Excerpt 5.19, Lesson 1, 19/04/11)

When the student asked that question (line 2), she made eye contact with me sitting at the back. She later explained that the situation made her realise that the students usually expected her to start her lesson by going immediately to the coursebook. She added that she would usually start her lessons with the coursebook and then she would use other resources and plan activities such as games.

Secondly, “coursebook as tools” is, at this stage, self-explanatory. This is a mid-position which encompasses most teachers and practices since we usually adopt a coursebook as a skeleton or guide around which we engage in context-responsive original and adapted pedagogies and didactic transpositions.

The other end of the continuum, “coursebooks as straightjackets” is a complex territory as the adoption and delivery of a given coursebook may be imposed on teachers and therefore they may feel that such a tool becomes a barrier, a limitation to their creativity, reflection-on-action, and development as autonomous professionals (Akbari, 2008; Duy-Thien, 2008). Tomlinson (“Materials development for language learning and teaching” 158) adds that “opponents of coursebooks argue that they can disempower both teacher and learners, cannot cater for the needs and wants of their actual users, are used mainly to impose control and order.”

As a reaction to coursebook-constrained pedagogies, Dogme ELT appeared in the scene underpinned by three principles: (1) materials-light, (2) conversation-driven, and (3) emergent language (for a discussion see Banegas, 2012). Although the fathers of this movement are particularly against coursebooks, they are part of the publishing industry. Furthermore, followers and champions have mutated and become more flexible with their principles and have now embraced new technologies thus updating their stance as Dogme 2.0.

While these views develop and produce new insights, the publishing industry continues to release new coursebooks. Thus, to the question “What do new coursebooks offer?” Tomlinson and Masuhara (2013) found improvements in the areas of personalisation, discovery, communicative effect, and the use of illustration. Yet,

too much attention given to explicit knowledge of grammar at the expense of affective and cognitive engagement, not enough activities for the experientially and kinaesthetically inclined, not enough use of narrative, not enough extensive reading and listening, not enough challenging content or tasks, and hardly any real tasks that have an intended outcome other than the practice of language. Also, there is very little use made of humour, there is even less use made of literature, and there seems to be an assumption that all the learners are aspirational, urban, middle-class, well-educated, westernized computer users. (247 – 248)

As regards current coursebooks and cognitive development, I have reported elsewhere (Banegas, 2013b) that recent textbooks advertised as CLIL-focused offer practice mostly for lower-thinking skills such as remembering and understanding. Sad as it may seem, higher-order thinking skills are not encouraged. This landscape may make us assess the extent to which the market is promoting challenging materials for teenage learners. In a similar vein but looking at the global coursebook, Freeman (2013) found that each new edition of *Headway Intermediate* is dominated by a growing proportion of lower-order comprehension questions.

While the authors above indicate that cognitive development needs urgent attention, other areas such as culture and intercultural competence are also under scrutiny. For example, Byram and Masuhara (2013) conclude that cultures different from those of the learner are simplified, homogenised, and presented as a single unit of values, beliefs and behaviours interpreted from a western perspective. I shall add that if this is the case across mainstream coursebooks, issues of representation, overgeneralisations, and stereotypes will continue to be featured in the global coursebook.

Within an Argentinian context, intercultural awareness through textbooks has been reported by authors such as López-Barrios (2012) and Moirano (2012). While the former reports that learners play different roles (e.g. informants, consumers, ethnographers) in bringing global and local topics together, the latter highlights that textbooks have been sanitised, that is, there is nothing controversial or critical about their cultural dimension.

However, my own examination of other titles in the market projects signs of hope. For example, series such as *English Unlimited* and *Global* include different varieties of English

without overt implications as regards power and control, and cultures of self and others appear as decentralised and empathetic.

All in all, coursebooks have undergone several transformations as they reflect different needs and market options. It is also important to highlight that coursebook production includes a piloting phase and therefore changes and careful business cases are built and exercises before their release in the market. It is also important to underline that coursebooks respond to a given methodology and users need to be aware of such a methodology to maximise the use of the coursebook.

### **New roles and opportunities**

New (and not so new) trends indicate that coursebooks are now packs which include CD-ROMs and companion websites. These two elements together with online activities realised and channelled through varied formats highlight that multimodality is now an essential component together with opportunities for learner autonomy. Activities now include hints, tips, and answers and therefore learners can manage their own pace and explore different strategies. Teachers, in this scenario, become organisers, leaders, supporters, and clarifiers of whatever learning may take place inside and outside the classroom. That said, ubiquitous learning, with varying degrees of constraints (e.g. access to the internet) is a new dimension promoted by and through materials as, for example, learners no longer their teacher to listen to the audio CD or engage in controlled practice.

Because learning happens everywhere and because new tools allow us to become content creators, both learners and teachers are called to become agents of change by developing their own materials. Learners do not need to be passive recipients of information. The setting up a blog, or a Facebook group will allow learners to engage in knowledge creation, communicate in the target language, and share whatever they find online or produce aided with different software and devices such as mobiles phones.

According to Stanley (2013),

The proliferation of hand-held devices, such as mobile phones, digital cameras, tables, mp3 players and voice recorders, has led to what, for some teachers, is a sometimes bewildering choice of potential activities and resources.

The use of mobile devices is expected to lead to language learning becoming more informal and personal (...). This revolution in mobile learning is happening both inside and outside the classroom.

Teachers, in turn, can also participate in this “authoring revolution” through materials adaptation and development from scratch. The literature now offers practical and critical

advice on how to incorporate ICT in our classrooms (see Dudeney, Hockly, & Pegrum, 2013; Stanley, 2013; Walker & White, 2013) and how education is shaped and shaped by language online (Barton & Lee, 2013) and Web 2.0 tools (Starkey, 2011). Above all, we should remember that ICT per se will not save us. We need to develop a principled-approach to digital language learning.

### **A final word**

In this changing world, materials will continue to be aids, scaffolds for learning, but the development of them may become horizontal in the sense that both producers and users (teachers and students) will create and recreate them. In this way, ownership, autonomy, and contextualisation will be core features of materials and material-rich pedagogies.

In this hard-to-resist marketed world, we need to become critical customers, and co-developers of our own tools. Despite being time consuming, materials development will help us continue with our professional growth as we will discover new roads for exploration and inquiry.

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# TALLERES

## Didactic configurations and substantive knowledge in the English class

**Mgter. Marcela Morchio**  
[sanchez.morchio@interredes.com.ar](mailto:sanchez.morchio@interredes.com.ar)

**Mgter. Patricia Alejandra Muñoz**  
[patriciale2002@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:patriciale2002@yahoo.com.ar)

FFHA-UNSJ

### Abstract

This workshop will provide a space for professional development. It will be based on some of the insights gained through a research project. The focus will be the analysis of the roles assumed by teachers and their substantive knowledge. The methodology is organized around reflection breaks.

### Introduction

As teacher trainers and researchers we have long pointed out that the teacher's performance is rooted in deep unconscious beliefs that guide the selection and implementation of teaching strategies in the classroom. This led us to focus our research<sup>1</sup> on the analysis of teacher performance in the class to try to unravel their conceptions about TEFL. The purpose of this article is to turn the act of teaching into an enlightening experience.

### Didactic configurations and substantive knowledge

In the classroom, the natural setting of pedagogical practices, the EFL teacher displays what Litwin (2011) calls *didactic configurations*, i.e., an idiosyncratic artifact to help students in knowledge construction processes. The didactic configurations deployed in the classroom entail several dimensions, but they primarily articulate the teacher's conception of language and learning and his/her personal history which constitute his/her subject knowledge. Grossman, Wilson and Shulman (2005) distinguish four categories, of which this presentation will address only one: substantive knowledge. This concept refers to the facts of each discipline as well as the paradigms or frameworks that are used both, to guide research in the field and to make sense of the data.

Substantive knowledge of a TEFL teacher is essentially related to the vision of language that he/she has. If the teacher conceives the foreign language as an instrument for

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<sup>1</sup> *La clase de inglés en el nivel secundario: análisis de algunas dimensiones de las configuraciones didácticas de los docente* (Res. 037/11 – CS - UNSJ).

communication, the selection of content is organized around the communicative use of language, but if the teacher's mental representation of the target language is that of a set of structures, grammar will have a prominent role in the classroom without the implementation of opportunities to put that grammar at the service of real life communication. The influence of structuralist and behavioral paradigms have set the agenda for the TEFL field, making language learning predominantly based on structures and repetition and being based on the teacher's instruction rather than on students' construction. Students were guided through sequences of graded material because it was thought that they could only learn when the language was dissected in tiny elements. Very seldom was that dissected language put together again, and thus students were deprived of opportunities to use language to express personal meaning.

Grossman et al. (2005) point out that it cannot be assumed that a teacher's substantive knowledge is acquired only at college. In the case of teachers of English, the development of the linguistic competence begins long before starting teacher training college, either at school or at language schools. The knowledge acquired along these paths has such an impact on the didactic configurations that it is worth analyzing (Litwin, 2008). Ball and Cohen (1999) state that prospective teachers must be given enough opportunities to learn content in ways that reflect the approach they are expected to teach with. However, more often than not, when confronted with new and modern paradigms, these long established patterns are impervious to changes.

Even when the teacher is not aware of his/her own vision of language, this has a direct influence on curriculum decisions (Grossman et al. 2005) and is clearly seen in the didactic configurations deployed in the classroom. In several studies (Morchio and Muñoz 2009 , 2010 ) have shown that in many cases the teachers claim to adhere to certain paradigms but a careful analysis of class transcripts reveal quite different conceptions. It is necessary to turn the teaching practices into an object of analysis to start perceiving the underlying conceptions so as to be able to update them. We could then conceive the didactic configurations implemented in our classes as a mirror of the teacher's substantive knowledge. To achieve that purpose, certain dimensions will be examined.

### **Unraveling substantive knowledge from didactic configurations**

In this section we would like to analyze certain class transcripts to examine didactic configurations so as to explore the teacher's substantive knowledge.

Through our experience as researchers and teacher trainers, we have been able to perceive that even when constructivist approaches of learning a foreign language are favored, conceptions of learning including mere repetition and manipulation of lexical



items or use of grammar structures at sentence level devoid of contextualization are still common practice in classrooms. Likewise, teachers generally have problems in giving tasks and activities a communicative purpose, as illustrated in the two following Transcript Extracts.

T: Today we are going to learn a very interesting topic: simple present.

*Transcript Extract I*

T: Silence, please. .... Ok, let's check exercise 3 on page 7. The one you couldn't finish last class. (Students open their books). Ok, let see... who can read the first question?....

S1: Does she eat cereal for breakfast?

T: Very good! (The student repeats the question) And the answer?

*Transcript Extract II*

T: Number 4, Mathias?

S2: Run

T: Number 4 is run, very good. Do you run in the park?

.....

T: Franco, number 6

S1: Cook.

T: Yes, number 6 is cook. Do you cook?

*Transcript Extract III*

The teacher's introduction in Transcript Extract I reveals a substantive knowledge that envisions grammar as the essence of language. The lack of contextualization on the part of the teacher in Transcript Extract II discloses a vision of language detached of a communicative purpose.

In the third Transcript Extract, the teacher was checking an activity, provided by the textbook, in which students were to match a picture with the corresponding lexical item. Though the task is very simple, the teacher goes beyond the mere matching, she tries to help students express personal meaning. The fact that this teacher attached a personal question to this plain activity shows that her substantive knowledge includes the vision of language as more than a set of linguistic items.

In the same way, although teachers are aware that the role of facilitator is more beneficial to students' learning according to current trends, they have difficulty in performing such a role; with respect to the explanations of the foreign language, up-to-date trends favor assisting students to infer grammar rules allowing them to explore and discover language rules for themselves, helping them to risk hypotheses and reach conclusions about the use of language. At this stage the use of techniques such as the ones suggested by Larsen-Freeman (qtd. in Celce Murcia 2001) are proven to be helpful in following an inductive approach and guided-discovery. Consciousness-raising activities apply to this phase and range from the intensive promotion of conscious awareness to simply exposing learners to specific grammatical phenomena (Andrews 2008). This contrasts with the tendency of many teachers to provide grammar explanations in a teacher-centered fashion, in which students are seen as a container to be filled with knowledge and gives little room for them to risk hypothesis and discover the uses of language.

T: Very good. And complete the sentences in the correct form of the verb. In the negative you have to put don't and in the affirmative you have to write the verb, ok?

*Transcript Extract IV*

In this case, the teacher did neither lead students to explain themselves what the exercise required them to do nor let them refresh the grammatical rule necessary to complete each sentence. Again this relates to teacher's learning matrix; behaviourism and structuralism as well as conceptions of teacher centered classes have dominated the educational scenario for decades.

Up to date practices suggest that students should be seen as "individual or democratic explorers" (Williams and Burden 1997), and should be actively involved in learning, with teachers encouraging and guiding them in the learning process, nevertheless this is not what normally happens. Learner-centered teaching suggests that "the learning is not just directed at the learner, but in some way focused on them, drawing its sense of direction from them, maybe drawing its energy and power from them" (Scrivener 108). This requires not just a methodological change of seating arrangement or student grouping, as it is generally believed; learner-centeredness is about making topics relevant to students, trusting your students' abilities to learn and to make decisions about what and how to learn, empowering them gradually in the path of autonomy.

T: Now tell me ... what do you in your free time?

S1: Watch TV!  
 T: You watch TV in your free time.  
 S2: Play computer games!  
 T: You play computer games..  
 S3: Facebook.  
 T: You use facebook in your free time... and you girls, what do you do in your free time?  
 S4: Play computer games.  
 T: Do you usually text a friend?  
 S5: Yes, yes, always. In facebook.  
 T: Ok you always text your friends. All the time. On facebook? You send messages on Facebook. Great! Why do you use facebook? Why do you prefer facebook?

*Transcript Extract V*

This transcript shows that the teacher does care about students as individuals, and thus when the class is dealing with the topic of free time activities, she appeals to students' massmediatic subjectivities, knowing how much issues related to social media will motivate and lead them to use the target language.

As well as working in a more learner-centered fashion, facilitating learning also entails ensuring that all students understand the task they are supposed to do, and in this sense it is decisive the role the teacher assumes as mediator; according to Vygotsky and Feuerstein, the concept of mediation involves "helping students go to and through the next layer of knowledge or understanding" (Williams and Burden 1997) and this role can be taken by a parent, a teacher or a more able pair. This teacher's role also entails mediating rubrics by means of asking peers to say if or what they had understood about instructions and what it is that they have to do, as well as providing context for the tasks. However, even when teachers know this is good practice, this is not what usually happens in classrooms, where the rubrics for tasks and activities are delivered in the most traditional way, either read by the teacher or by silent reading on the part of the students, with no mediation at all, taking for granted that students had understood them; or even using translation.

T: Ok, now look at the picture in the story on page 107 and circle the correct option.  
 S1: ¿Qué tenemos que hacer??  
 T: Look at the picture here... ok?  
 S1: Ah!

*Transcript Extract VI*

T: ... Now Clarissa ,, can you read exercise one?  
 S1: These are Jane and Rachel. Read about their routine and then answer the questions.  
 T: Thank you, Clarissa. Ok, ¿quién puede explicar a los demás qué hay que hacer? Mmm ... José?  
 S2: Leer y después responder.  
 T. Yes, very good!

*Transcript Extract VII*

In Transcript Extract VI we can see an example of lack of mediation of rubrics in which the teacher monopolizes the delivery of the instruction of the exercise, resulting in a communication breakdown; whereas in Transcript Extract VII the teacher asks a student to read the instruction and another student to explain what he understood, thus, successfully mediating the rubric.

Another aspect to be addressed is the way in which learners are corrected when they make mistakes. From a wide range of strategies available for learner correction, most teachers use gentle correction, mainly recasting, that is to say, rewording the student's utterance and saying it back to the learner in its improved form (Long qtd. in Ellis, et. al. 2006). Some other times peer correction is used and on lesser occasions, the teacher corrects giving an explicit explanation of the grammar rule. It must be noted that it takes a great degree of awareness to choose the appropriate technique for the teaching approach, the learning purpose, the activity, the learner and the context. Similarly, teachers sometimes need to avoid using just one type of correction systematically or overcorrecting, since this could end up discouraging learners to participate in class. Last but not least, paying attention to the quality of mistakes students make over a longer period of time could give valuable information about the learning process, and although these teachers possess received knowledge of this aspect, it is not typically noticed by them.

S1: Yo, yo, yo!!! In photo number four they is drawing different things.  
 S2: Es "they are"  
 T: Ok, very good! They are "what"?  
 S1: Drawing (mispronounced)  
 T: Drawing (the teacher corrects pronunciation) different things. Very good!

*Transcript Extract VIII*

In the previous example there is a combination of peer correction and recast, a student corrects and the teacher provides the right pronunciation when a student is not able to help with the correction. This shows the teacher is able to work in a learner-centered fashion, accepting students contributions, in this view mistakes are seen as a natural part of learning.

### **Focusing on our substantive knowledge**

It has already been pointed out that the focus of this paper is the analysis of some aspects of teachers' didactic configurations to examine the underpinning substantive knowledge. Most of the times, teachers are not aware of the gap between their beliefs about learning and their actual ways in the classroom. Reversing these mental representations is not a simple process. The starting point could be to reflect on the way we mediate rubrics, on how we lead students in the process of knowledge construction. The following questions could be a starting point.

- Think of the activities or tasks that you planned for your last class. Can you identify a communicative purpose for them?
- How much do you feel you help students "build up" knowledge? What strategies do you use to favor this construction?
- In your classes, do you usually take the role of facilitator? When? How?
- Do you ask the help of students to help others? If so, to do what?
- What is your own most used strategy for error correction? Does it work efficiently or do you overuse it? Does it contribute to communication?

We need to question our daily teaching practice in order to be aware of the underlying beliefs we have of the language we teach, and how we make our students learn it. This is of vital importance so that we can adjust them to the requirements of the contemporary contexts we are immersed in.

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## **Storytelling and Web 2.0: transforming a traditional technique in order to achieve 21<sup>st</sup> century learning**

**Mgter. Cecilia Cicolini**

[cecilia.cicolini@gmail.com](mailto:cecilia.cicolini@gmail.com)

**Network Idiomas, APIBA (Asociación de Profesores de Inglés de Buenos Aires)**

### **Abstract**

Storytelling is one of the most traditional techniques in ELT. Good stories provide powerful contexts for language learning and opportunities for authentic communication. By encouraging students to produce their own stories, teachers foster the development of all language skills while promoting student engagement.

If computers are available in class, even when there is no internet access, traditional storytelling can be turned into digital storytelling. This renewed technique, which combines personal narrative with multimedia (text, audio, images and video), promotes learning by doing, creativity, motivation and the acquisition of new literacies.

In this workshop, I will demonstrate how teachers can involve their students in the process of producing digital stories. ICT tools for digital storytelling, including both offline and online resources, will be presented and explained. As a final task, participants will be able to create their own digital stories in small groups.

Participants are invited to bring their portable computers or tablets if possible.

### **Introduction**

*After a digital storytelling is shared, it should be remembered for its soul,  
not for the bells and whistles of technology.*

Bernajean Porter

Storytelling traditions emerged millions of years ago in ancient cultures, with the birth of language. Since then, stories have not only served as entertainment but also as vehicles for learning and cultural preservation. The 21st century has brought about changes in education and in technology. Stories, which were once told while our ancestors gathered around a campfire, are now being narrated with the glow of a computer screen to an extended audience via the World Wide Web. In spite of the new media, storytelling has not changed as a craft and an art. As Jason Ohler (2013) states, humans are “*above all storytelling creatures who use stories to do many essential things, like teach practical skills, build communities, entertain themselves, make peace with the world and cultivate a sense of personal identity. Technology will come and go but stories are forever. And...in many senses, what makes*

*stories effective has also been consistent through the ages...If you don't have a good story to tell, the technology will only make it more obvious."*

In the field of English Language Teaching, storytelling is one of the most traditional techniques in a teacher's toolbox. Good stories provide powerful contexts for language learning. By encouraging learners to produce their own stories or to recreate well-known ones, teachers foster the development of all language skills. In addition to that, telling stories is probably one of the most common communicative acts humans engage in all contexts. Therefore, storytelling provides learners and teachers with genuine opportunities for using the target language. When crafting stories, learners become actively involved in a process of meaning and knowledge construction, thus fostering with this activity constructivist learning and creativity. Stories are effective vehicles for organizing information and they provide good anchors for learning lexis and grammar patterns and for practising pronunciation. Stories are also vehicles for developing intercultural awareness. According to Taylor (2000), cultural elements in particular when using folktales, "*help bridge common ground between cultures and bring out cultural differences.*"

With the advent of new technologies, storytelling in the ELT class can go digital. However, we must always bear in mind that digital storytelling (DST) is first of all storytelling. Secondly, it is digital. The impact of the new media is available only to enhance the narrative craft of the storyteller. The role of the Internet is to provide a global audience for the stories produced. As a result, learners need to engage themselves in the process of constructing stories by working on language and narrative skills before they set off to apply to their stories the technology at their disposal. This technology will allow them to edit and share their stories. In this way, DST encourages the acquisition of traditional and new literacies. The digital story becomes the tip of the iceberg: the final product of a creative process which includes intensive work on language skills, group discussion, writing a script, negotiation, collaborative learning of digital skills and media literacy while encouraging creativity, teamwork, critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

DST, as many class activities involving the use of learning technologies, can provide students with the right dose of motivation which our 21st century learners need. According to Dornyei (2001), teachers can maintain and protect learner motivation by making learning stimulating and enjoyable, by promoting cooperation and by making the learning experience relevant to their learners. If new technologies are used sensibly and with clear learning goals, they may have a role to play in the motivational process as they can help teachers fulfill the conditions above. According to Graham Stanley (2013), there is anecdotal evidence of learners being motivated and engaged when new technologies are used in the foreign



language classroom. Drexler (2010) states that the use of Web 2.0 tools empowers learners to transcend the classroom and makes learners take greater ownership of their learning. The Internet provides an authentic audience, allowing learners to connect with other learners, providing opportunities for interacting in the target language as a vehicle for communication. There are also opportunities to display learners' creation on the World Wide Web, for instance by means of blogs, wikis and online videos, offering an audience beyond the class. When learners are aware of this, they focus much more conscientiously on producing language which is suitable for publication.

New technologies create novel forms of communication and collaboration, which are transforming all aspects of life, giving rise to new literacies: digital literacies (DL). Hockley and Dudeney (2013) define DL as *"the individual and social skills needed to effectively interpret, manage, share and create meaning in the growing range of digital communication channels"*. They observe that at the heart of the drive for "21st Century Skills" (including critical thinking, autonomy, flexibility and lifelong learning) lies the ability to engage with digital tools in order to locate, share and communicate on resources. Students are expected to develop digital literacies so that they are able to succeed in a constantly changing digital world. These literacies can be developed in the ELT class together with language skills when new technologies are incorporated sensibly in the class.

### **The Process of Creating a Digital Story**

#### **1. Crafting a story: from core story to storyboard and script.**

The most important ingredient and the starting point in DST is a good story. Learners can either create their own stories or recreate a well-known story. The elements that make a story compelling are present in the different genres of storytelling: traditional storytelling, DST and all forms of stories: novels, movies, soap operas, jokes, etc. When a story is successful, the audience cannot wait to know what will happen next. When what happens next is unpredictable, listeners are kept engaged. There is tension produced by a conflict to be solved and the resolution of that challenge resolves the tension and closes the story. The main character undergoes a transformation and evolves becoming a "new person". All these elements make up what Ohler calls "the story core" (Ohler, 2013) (see Fig. 1).

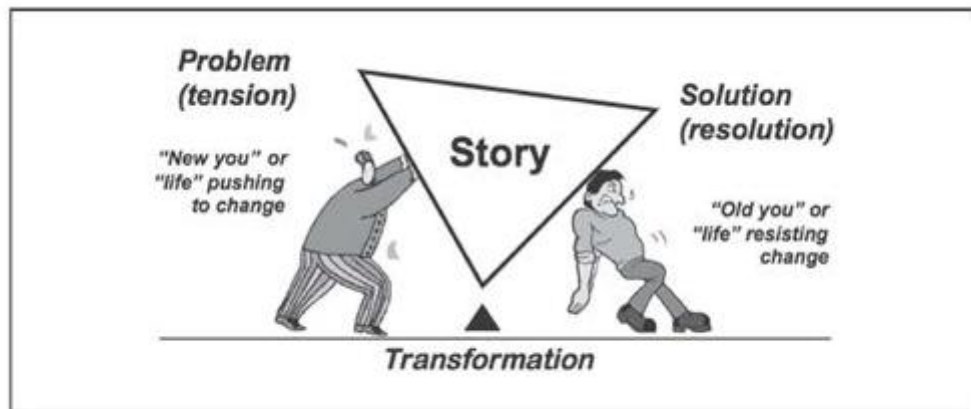


Fig.1: "The Story Core" (Olher 2013)

Once the story core has been designed through brainstorming and discussion, among other possible class activities, the next step is to work on a storyboard. A storyboard is a graphic organizer in the form of illustrations or images displayed in a sequence, with the goal of pre-visualizing a motion picture or animation. The storyboarding process as known today was developed at the Walt Disney Studios in the 1930's and similar processes are still used in other animation studios. While the storyboard develops, the story becomes richer in detail and more effective as a sequence of coherent events is drawn. As part of the design of the storyboard, learners work on the creation of a script, which will later become the spoken audio component of the digital story.

Writing a script provides opportunities for developing writing skills through process writing. While unscripted storytelling can be useful for spontaneous speaking practice at times, there are some advantages in involving learners in script writing. When learners write, reflection is encouraged, what results in a more polished result from the point of view of language and narration. Digital stories can involve either still images with spoken narration and music or they can include recorded video. The first format is simpler in terms of production and the need of technological resources. Creating and editing video, on the other hand, tends to be more complex, time-consuming and costly.

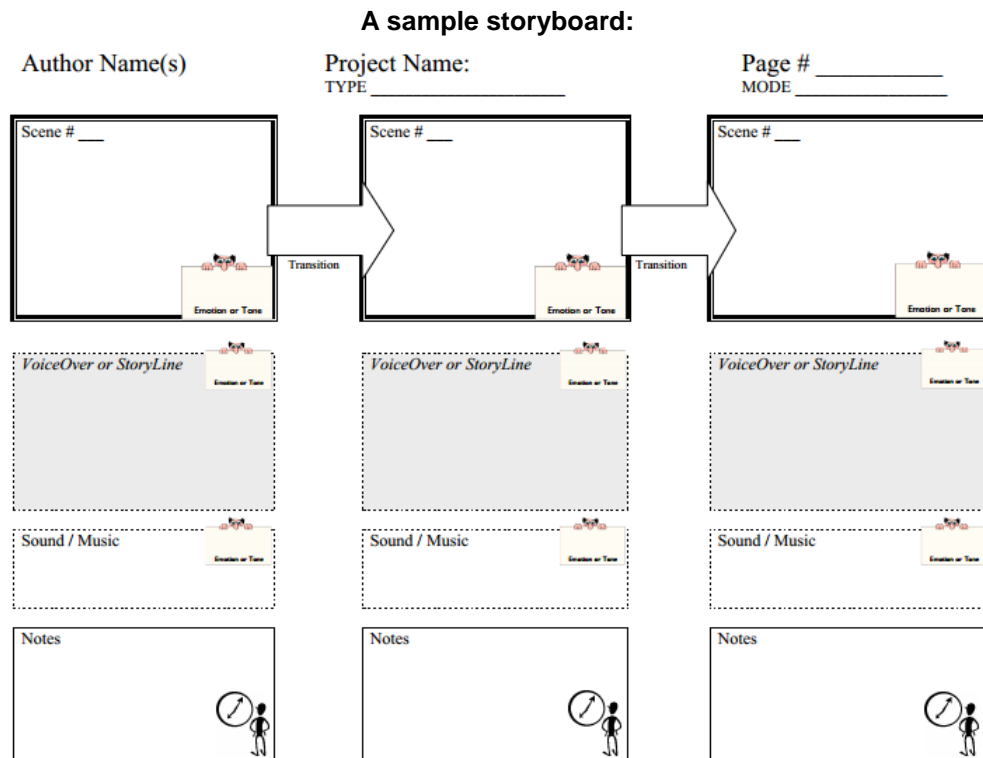


Fig. 2: Storyboarding process (Source: Bernajean Porter, found at <<https://sps-newmedialiteracies.wikispaces.com/file/view/Multi-Media+StoryBoard+Template.pdf>>)

## 2. Assembling the digital story

Before learners start working on the digitalization of their stories, it is recommendable to spend time learning about the digital tools they will be using to achieve that purpose. Teachers may find that there are learners in their classes who are already familiar with some of these tools and who are willing to teach their peers. Alternatively, students can explore tutorials on video available on the Internet, for example on youtube.com. In these processes, learners use the target language as a vehicle of acquisition of a new skill while they are presented with an opportunity for developing new literacies: in this case using the web for the purpose of independent learning. Meaningful learning of both language and content occurs with knowledge construction, learning by doing and collaboration in a constructivist learning environment.

The digital tools described below are only a sample of a repertoire of those currently available. Technology changes quickly and tools soon become obsolete as newer, more powerful ones appear. As lifelong learners, teachers need to keep on exploring technologies and acquiring new skills. As mentioned before, in DST the story element is more important than the digital aspect. Therefore, no matter what technologies are used, people will always find ways to tell stories with them.

a. Hardware

Teachers / learners do not need too many resources to work on digital storytelling. A reasonably fast computer or ipad or tablet every three or four students will suffice. Microphone and headsets for dealing with audio are desirable. For producing photos, a digital camera, a mobile phone or a scanner can be used.

b. Software for producing digital media offline

In order to produce digital stories when no Internet access is available, common software packs are Windows Movie Maker (WMM) and / or Microsoft PowerPoint together with Audacity, which is a free software pack used to record audio.

WMM is a quite well-known, simple product to use, available in all PCs and it can be used offline. WMM can be used to put together pictures, audio, video clips and to add titles, credits and copyright information. Transition effects can be included in the story. When the digital story is created, WMM allows users to export the story in different formats, which can later be shared through a Blog, Facebook, a Wiki, Youtube.com or copied on a DVD or CD-ROM for offline distribution. Learners can digitalize their stories using a set of class computers or tablets, with or without Internet access, working at the school computer lab or outside the school.

For producing digital pictures, Microsoft Paint, present in all computers can be used.

c. Web 2.0 tools

If Internet access is available, there are a number of free tools which can be used to produce digital stories. All these tools run inside web browsers, so there is no software to install, download or upgrade. They are quite straightforward to use if one spends a few minutes experimenting with them. In their basic version, all these tools can be used for free although students will need to register first. The basic idea in all of them, as in WMM, is blending pictures, audio and words to produce stories in different formats. The first three tools are described in more detail and a few more resources are mentioned for teachers to explore on their own.

- **Goanimate:** <http://goanimate.com/> This tool can be used to create animations.

It contains a library of characters, backgrounds and props as well as soundtracks. Students can record their own audio or they can provide digital voices for their characters. Animated videos can be shared privately or through social networks.

- **Creaza:** <http://www.creazaeducation.com/> Creaza is powerful but simple to use. Beautiful cartoon stories can be easily produced. This free webtool, available online both for PCs and tablets, can be used to digitalize stories through the creation of cartoons. Different pre-loaded backgrounds and characters for the stories are provided

and also the possibility of uploading drawings made by students. Effects such as moving objects or characters can be programmed; learners can also upload their images and audio files and share them through social networks. Audio and video editors are also available as well as a mindmapping tool, called Mindomo, which can be used to create the storyboard.

- **Voicethread:** <http://voicethread.com/> This is a much less sophisticated tool, which allows students to produce stories quickly and in a simple way. Users can place a collection of media: photos, videos and documents online and order them to produce an online presentation, which may contain recorded audio.

- Storybird.com <http://storybird.com/>
- Bitstrips for making comics: <http://www.bitstripsforschools.com/>
- Boomwriter: <http://boomwriter.com/>
- 9Slides: <http://9slides.com/>
- Animoto:<http://animoto.com/>
- We Video: <http://www.wevideo.com/>
- Studio Stupeflix <http://studio.stupeflix.com/en/>

d. Images and music. Copyright issues.

While writing the storyboard, learners should also decide how the story will be illustrated: drawings, photos from magazines, from the Internet or taken with their mobile phones or digital cameras can be used. Sites such as [images.google.com](http://images.google.com) and [flickr.com](http://flickr.com) provide a wealth of images available on the Internet.

Teachers and learners should bear in mind issues in connection with copyright. Students must cite all the material taken from the Internet and if necessary, gain permission to use it. Creative Commons can be consulted.

e. Publishing stories on the web.

Once the stories have been produced, they can be easily shared on the Internet. Blogs, wikis, Edmodo.com, Facebook closed groups, youtube.com or vimeo.com among many other sites and resources can be used to showcase students' productions.

*More information, sample stories, tutorials, relevant links and resources for DST in general at <http://digitalstoriesinelt.blogspot.com.ar/>*

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# PONENCIAS

## La pronunciación del inglés en entornos virtuales

**Prof. Andrea Leceta**  
[andreleceta@hotmail.com](mailto:andreleceta@hotmail.com)

**Mgter. Nancy Leáñez**  
[nancyleanez@hotmail.com](mailto:nancyleanez@hotmail.com)

FFHA-UNSJ

### Resumen

En la actualidad, la tecnología ha adquirido un rol preponderante en nuestras vidas. Como docentes universitarios sentimos la necesidad de adecuarnos a esta realidad, introduciendo cambios en los diseños curriculares para incorporar esas tendencias. Esto se vio reflejado en una propuesta que contempló la organización, transmisión y adquisición del conocimiento situados en ese escenario. Así, nos planteamos como objetivo general la incorporación y aplicación de nuevas tecnologías en nuestro contexto educativo para mejorar el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de la pronunciación del inglés. Esta propuesta se delineó dentro de los parámetros de “*blended learning*” como complemento de la clase presencial. Se han implementado entornos virtuales como instrumentos de mediación pedagógica; en esta oportunidad, haremos referencia a la plataforma educativa *Haiku LMS*, que aporta interactividad, posibilita un proceso de aprendizaje más flexible, fomenta el trabajo colaborativo y conlleva a un aprendizaje más significativo. Esta experiencia se circunscribe al área de Fonética y Fonología Inglesa de esta Facultad.

### Introducción

Esta propuesta pedagógica se realiza dentro del marco del Proyecto: “Enseñar y aprender la pronunciación del inglés con el apoyo de entornos virtuales”. El mismo está en proceso y se desarrolla en el Departamento de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa de la FFHA-UNSJ. Este se plantea como objetivo general incorporar y aplicar nuevas tecnologías en nuestro contexto educativo, con el propósito de mejorar el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje de la pronunciación del inglés, basado en el concepto de *B-learning*, que permite integrar contenidos en líneas a las clases presenciales. Se propone, entonces, una enseñanza más flexible por medio de la aplicación de técnicas y estrategias de innovación pedagógica para optimizar cada oportunidad de educación. Es decir, se intenta enfocar las estrategias de aprendizaje de nuestros estudiantes, nativos digitales, para maximizar el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje del componente fonológico del inglés. Asimismo, se pretende construir un entorno de aprendizaje que estimule diferentes modos de interacción entre los actores del proceso a través de las tecnologías de la información y comunicación (TICs). Estas se conciben como “herramientas que hacen posible una serie de prácticas sociales de comunicación e intercambio de información” (Kriscautzky 2012). La idea de interactividad es central en este concepto dado que los actores tienen la posibilidad de acceder a la



información, procesarla y emitir una respuesta dinámica, lo que conlleva a una actividad recíproca entre los actores.

Para llevar a cabo el objetivo recién mencionado se han introducido una serie de herramientas virtuales en los espacios curriculares pertenecientes al área Fonética y Fonología Inglesa. En esta oportunidad vamos a hacer referencia a una de ellas. *Haiku LMS*, que se ha implementado en la asignatura “Introducción a la Pronunciación”, del primer año de las carreras del Departamento.

## Desarrollo

*Haiku LMS - Learning Management System* -, como su nombre lo indica, es un sistema para la gestión del aprendizaje, también conocido como “sistema de gestión de contenidos” (CMS) (Caccuri 2012) que proporciona un conjunto completo de herramientas para ayudar a los docentes a enseñar, a los estudiantes a aprender, y a todos a conectarse en línea. Es un sistema que permite administrar y publicar contenidos a través de su propia estructura. Esta plataforma les brinda a nuestros alumnos la posibilidad no solo de optimizar el desarrollo de sus habilidades lingüísticas, sino que también les permite tener un seguimiento preciso de su desempeño académico respecto de aspectos tales como: asistencia a clase, cumplimiento de tareas asignadas y resultado de evaluaciones formativas y sumativas.

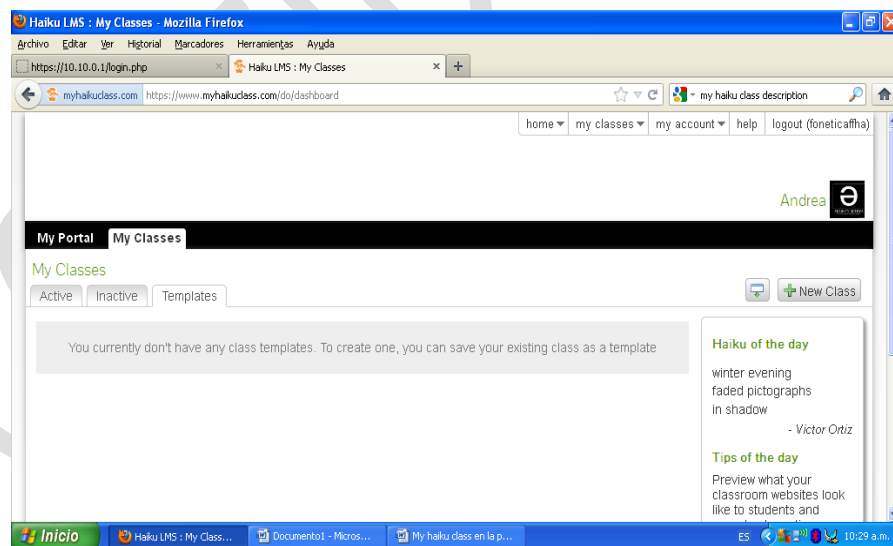


Fig. 1. Portal de acceso a las clases.

En primer término, el docente, en su carácter de administrador, crea una cuenta para la identificación de los usuarios, esto es el registro y la inscripción de los mismos, por ejemplo: <https://www.myhaikuclass.com/u/foneticaffha/portal>, como puede observarse en la Fig. 1.

Una vez creado el sitio se procede a confeccionar la lista de estudiantes inscritos en el curso, accediendo desde la página principal, en la opción *Manage class* -extremo superior derecho. Hacer *click* en *Roster* y seleccionar *Add student*. En esta instancia se elabora la lista incluyendo nombre completo y dirección de correo electrónico de cada uno de los alumnos. Al cargar esta información se debe elegir la opción *Send an invitation*, que incluye un código de acceso personal para que puedan ingresar a la plataforma. Así, volviendo a nuestro ejemplo, los alumnos se registran ingresando al sitio <https://www.myhaikuclass.com/foneticaffha/introduccionalapronunciacion/signup> (Fig. 2):

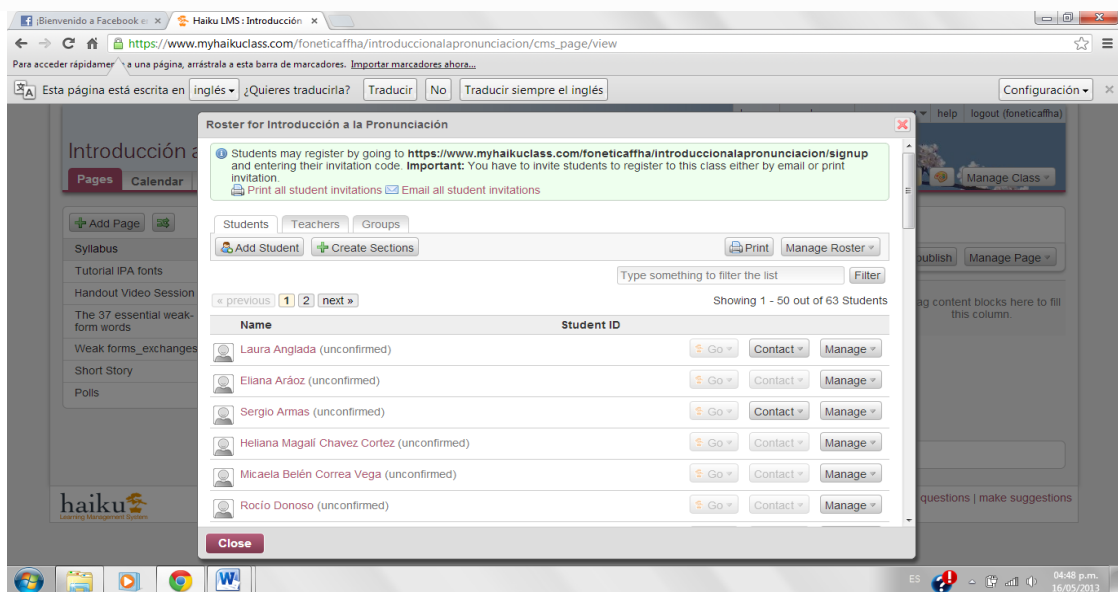


Fig. 2. Lista de asistencia para Introducción a la Pronunciación

Una vez creada la cuenta, se procede a activar la clase para que pueda ser compartida con los usuarios. La Fig. 3 despliega la clase ya activa; en ella puede observarse el Calendario correspondiente al mes en curso, con el recordatorio de los plazos o fechas de las evaluaciones y/o tareas asignadas y la Sección *Announcements*, recurso que permite al docente compartir novedades con el conjunto de los usuarios registrados en la clase. En otras palabras, cuando el usuario accede a esta pantalla, tiene una visión general del desarrollo del curso y sus actualizaciones (Fig. 3. Mis clases).

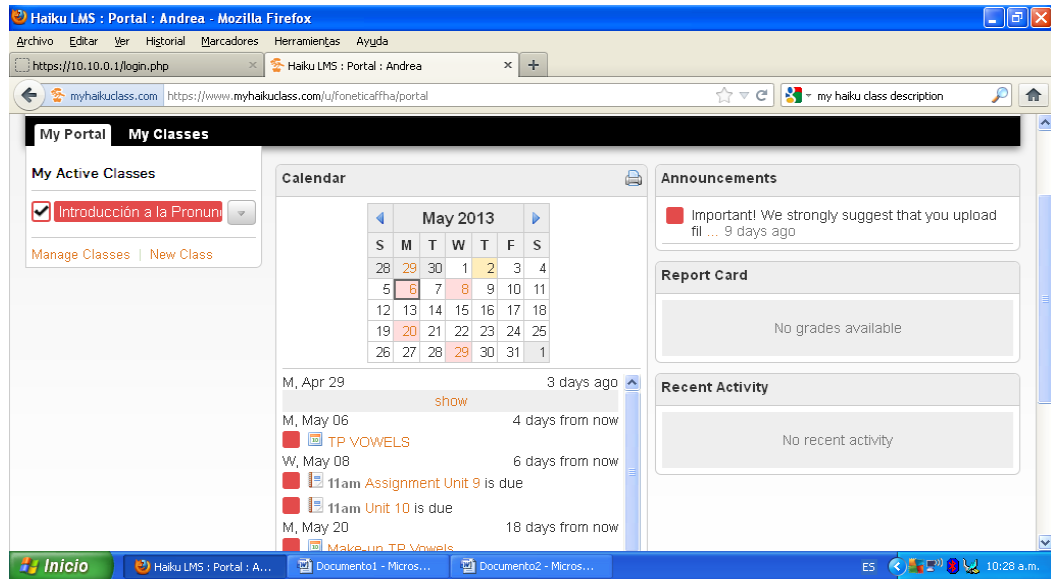


Fig. 3. Mis clases

Respecto de la **organización de este entorno virtual**, describiremos el diseño del curso y los elementos que lo definen de acuerdo a nuestro propósito. En esta fase, los docentes arman la base de datos luego de haber elaborado una selección y organización de la información y recursos a ingresar en el espacio virtual. Estos aparecen en la pantalla inicial, como se muestra en la Fig. 4.

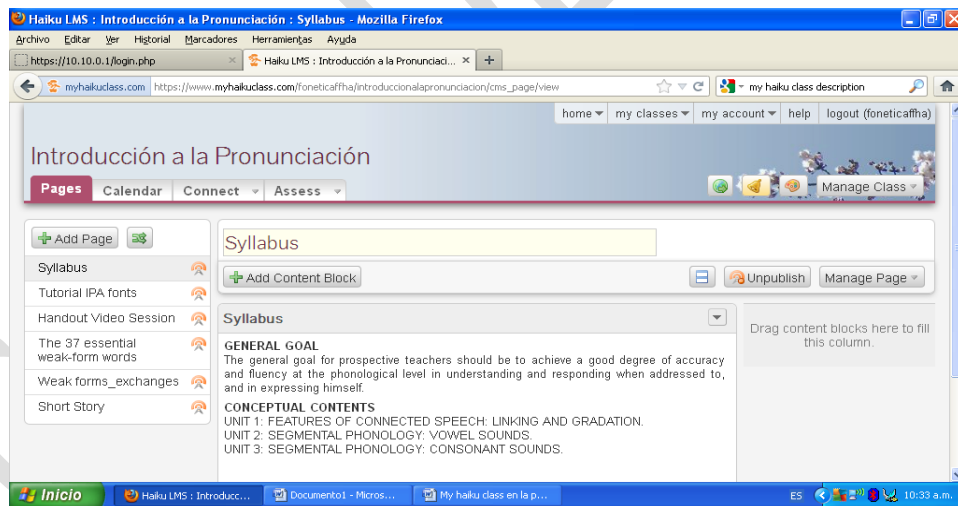


Fig. 4. Página principal del espacio Introducción a la Pronunciación

Esta pantalla inicial despliega cuatro opciones: *Pages*, *Calendar*, *Connect* y *Assess*. *Haiku LMS*, a través de *Pages*, permite a los docentes crear páginas para publicar los contenidos de sus clases, organizados de la manera que consideren más conveniente y en los formatos apropiados en función de los mismos. Por ejemplo, la Figura 4 presenta el diseño de las páginas para nuestro espacio curricular que contemplan distintos recursos: archivos de texto en formato PDF, - para la presentación de programa, guías de estudio, ejercitación extra-

áulica, un tutorial, etc.-, enlaces –para la recuperación de archivos HTML-, archivos *podcasts* (de audio)–para la inclusión de cuentos cortos con el fin de trabajar específicamente la pronunciación- y un video –diseñado por el docente para la presentación del alfabeto fonético desde el sitio web [www.photopeach.com](http://www.photopeach.com). Una ventaja que ofrece esta plataforma es la administración dinámica de sus contenidos, ya que brinda la posibilidad de revisar y editar la información cada vez que se considere necesario. También es interesante destacar que se pueden ir creando páginas y mantenerlas inactivas hasta el momento de su publicación.

El segundo comando de esta pantalla es el calendario *online*, que contiene información más detallada que la desplegada en la pantalla de inicio. El *Haiku Calendar* es muy simple de usar y permite a los participantes tener información sobre la distribución de tareas áulicas, la asignación de tareas extra-áulicas con sus correspondientes días de entrega, fechas de evaluaciones, eventos, etc. (Fig. 5).

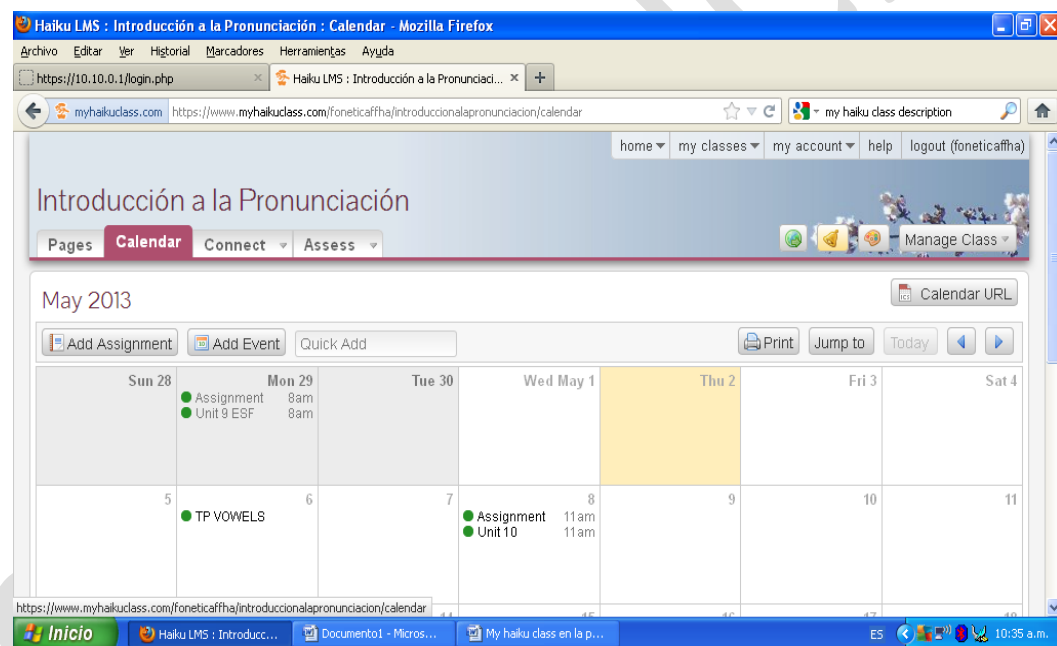


Fig. 5. Calendario de Introducción a la Pronunciación

A través de las opciones *Add assignment* y *Add event* el docente puede detallar el contenido, la modalidad y las fechas de las evaluaciones previstas en el planeamiento, como así también puede especificar datos sobre las tareas realizadas en el aula y aquellas que se asignen para su ejecución extra-áulica. En resumen, el estudiante tiene la posibilidad de llevar un fiel seguimiento del desarrollo del espacio curricular que está cursando, aún cuando no haya podido asistir a clase.

La siguiente opción de esta página, *Connect* (Fig. 6), es la etiqueta de la plataforma que, como su nombre lo indica, establece la comunicación o conexión entre docentes y alumnos.

Esta despliega los ítemes: *Announcements*, *Discussions*, *Dropbox*, *Inbox*, *Polls* y *Wiki Projects*.

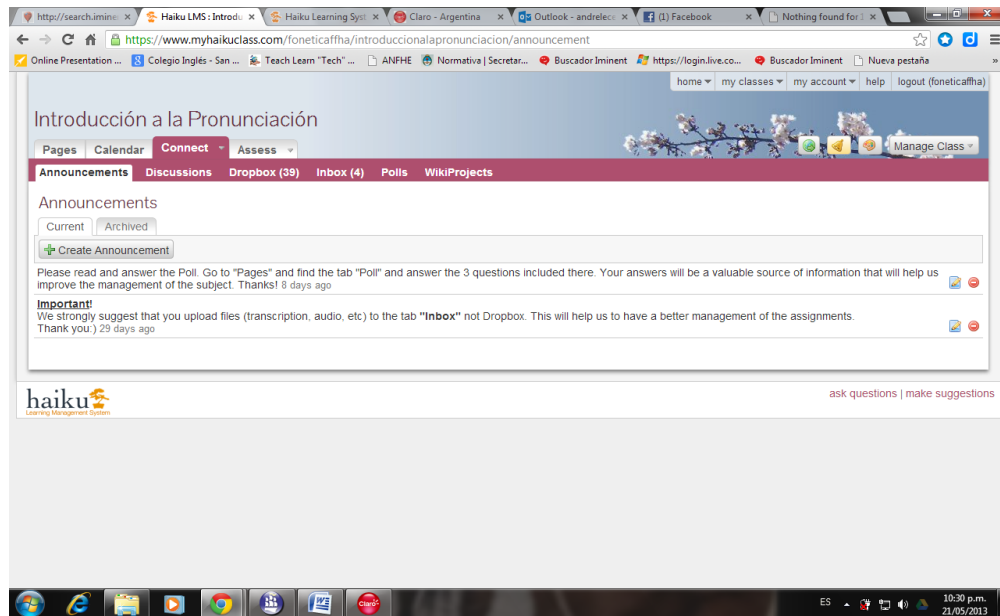


Fig. 6. Connect

En *Announcements* el docente ingresa todo tipo de anuncio que considere importante o relevante para compartir con la clase, contenido que luego aparece en la pantalla de inicio. A través de *Dropbox* el docente puede visualizar información sobre las tareas asignadas, el estado de las mismas, cuántos la realizaron, a cuántos se les envió feedback correctivo y la fecha límite de entrega (Fig. 7).

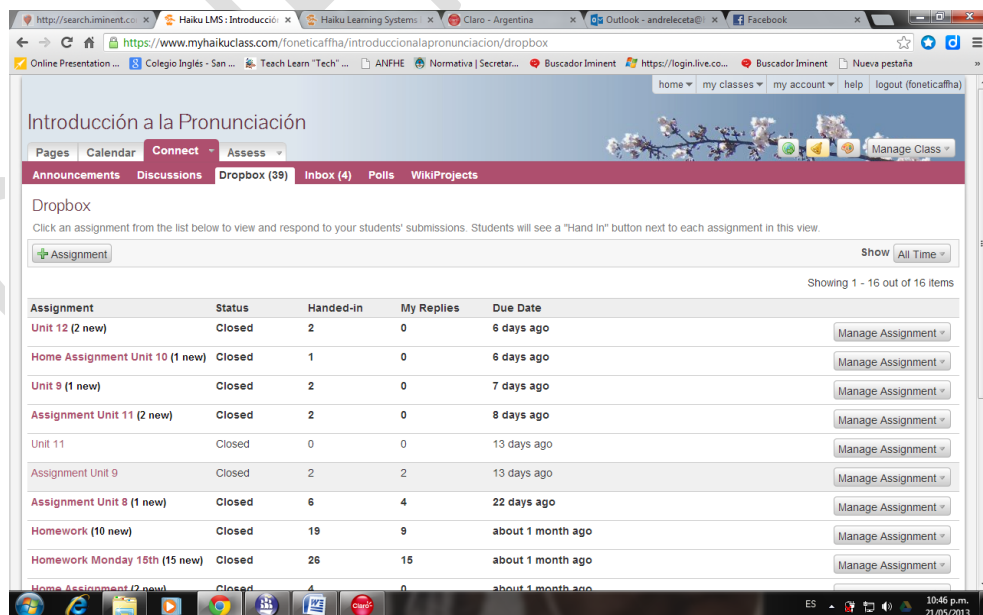


Fig. 7: Dropbox

En esta misma sección, ingresando a *Manage Assignment*, el docente puede editar características de la tarea, escribir mensajes en respuesta a lo enviado por el alumno, descargar todos los archivos enviados para cada actividad y eliminar archivos.

Otra opción de comunicación disponible es *Inbox* que despliega las funciones básicas de la Bandeja de entrada de una cuenta de correo electrónico, es decir, que permite escribir, responder, reenviar y eliminar mensajes, pudiendo adjuntar archivos (Figura 8). La utilización sistemática de este recurso posibilita los procesos de revisión y corrección en forma continua, lo que le permite al docente realizar observaciones en los momentos que considere oportuno, antes de la consolidación del error. El intercambio electrónico es utilizado para proporcionar *feedback* correctivo sobre archivos adjuntados referidos a producciones escritas de los alumnos, como por ejemplo, transcripciones fonológicas de textos y/o archivos de audio de lectura de textos. Asimismo, se recurre a esta opción para realizar consultas referidas a cualquiera de las actividades planteadas en la clase, convirtiéndose en una herramienta de comunicación fluida y permanente entre los usuarios.

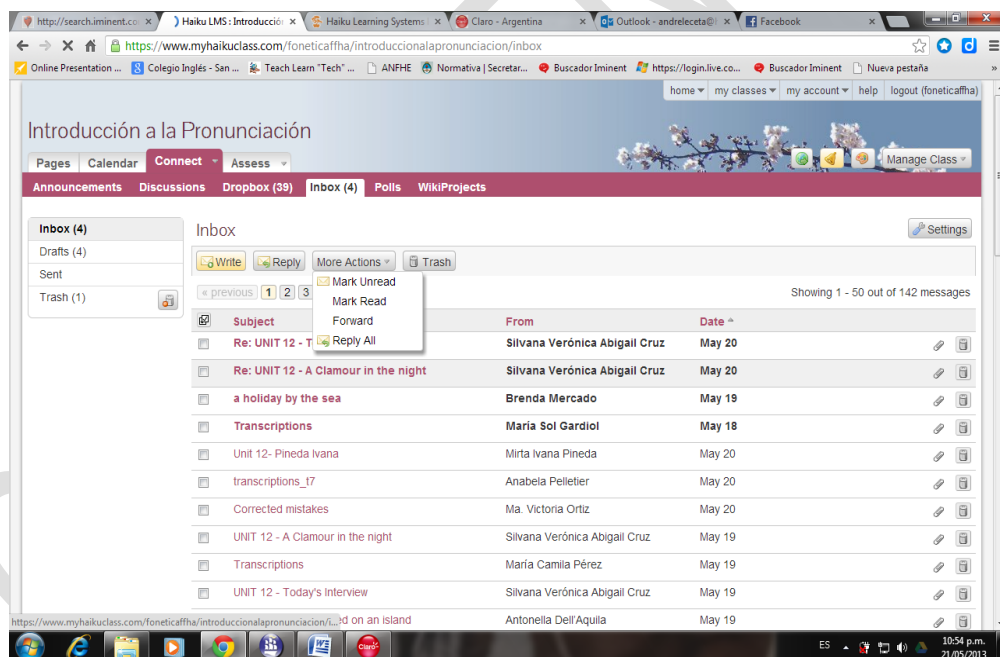


Fig. 8. Inbox

Respecto de los archivos de audio, para compartir este tipo de archivos se propuso la utilización del sitio online [www.voicethread.com](http://www.voicethread.com). Al ser esta una aplicación en la nube no requiere de software específico para su uso y permite a sus usuarios subir y compartir documentos de información, presentaciones, imágenes, archivos de audio y videos. Citando nuestro ejemplo, para el desarrollo de la habilidad de habla, se propuso trabajar un cuento corto. Se creó una cuenta en el sitio mencionado, se subió una diapositiva del texto con su

archivo de audio correspondiente y, posteriormente, se compartió el *link* creado con la clase. Luego, a través de las opciones disponibles en el sitio -grabación de audio o de video-, los alumnos llevaron a cabo la tarea de lectura y/o relato del cuento individualmente y en un contexto extra-áulico. A continuación subieron ese archivo y lo compartieron con el resto de los usuarios. De esta manera, el acceso público de este material permite a los alumnos ver el trabajo de sus pares y los docentes evaluar la actuación de los mismos, pudiendo proveer *feedback* correctivo a cada uno de ellos. En líneas generales, consideramos que el uso de este tipo de recursos digitales promueve el aprendizaje autónomo y mantiene el filtro afectivo bajo, lo que permite que los alumnos más introvertidos se sientan más cómodos y motivados al realizar una actividad de producción oral.

Otro elemento de gran utilidad desplegado en *Connect* es *Polls*. Es en este espacio donde el docente diseña la encuesta que estime necesario implementar. Este recurso le permite obtener *feedback* de sus alumnos relacionado con el desarrollo del curso en todos sus aspectos. La información es procesada automáticamente y se generan los gráficos correspondientes –en diagrama de barras o circulares. La encuesta diseñada se aloja como contenido en *Pages* que es donde el alumno ingresa para responderla.

Respecto de los dos comandos restantes en *Connect*, *Discussions* y *WikiProjects*, estos estimulan el aprendizaje colaborativo y una construcción del conocimiento colectivo, lo que implica una resignificación del trabajo en equipo, donde el aporte individual contribuye a construir un aprendizaje multidireccional. Estas metodologías resultan muy útiles para plantear debates en el desarrollo de contenidos conceptuales. Sin embargo, dadas las características de nuestro espacio curricular que se focaliza en el desarrollo de contenidos procedimentales, se han explotado, en su lugar, las otras áreas contenidas en esta plataforma.

El último elemento que ofrece esta pantalla es *Assess*. Esta opción comprende los módulos: *Assessments*, *Assignments*, *Attendance*, *Grades* y *Reports*. Todos estos elementos le facilitan al docente tener un seguimiento personalizado de la actuación de los estudiantes respecto de sus tareas, quiénes la realizaron y cuántos no la completaron (Fig. 9). Asimismo, los usuarios pueden llevar un registro preciso de la asistencia a clases, dado que el sistema les informa la cantidad de presentes, ausentes y tardanzas.

The screenshot shows the 'Assess' section of the Haiku LMS. The main heading is 'Introducción a la Pronunciación'. Below the navigation menu, there is a section for 'Assignments' with a search bar and a table of items. The table has the following data:

Title	Due	Page	Ungraded	Unsubmitted
Home assignment	2 months ago	n/a		50
Home Assignment	2 months ago	n/a		50
Home Assignment	2 months ago	n/a		50

Fig. 9. Assess

Es necesario mencionar que no hicimos uso de las opciones *Assessments*, *Grades* y *Reports*, dado que estas están configuradas basándose en el sistema de evaluación norteamericano y los criterios utilizados no coinciden con los de nuestro sistema. Se intentó realizar una adaptación para hacer uso de estas, según nuestros parámetros evaluativos, pero sin éxito.

Después de haber descrito todos los elementos de esta plataforma, podríamos manifestar que, en términos generales, la tecnología, lejos de interferir con el trabajo docente, ofrece una amplia gama de herramientas a su disposición para simplificarle la tarea de monitorear el desarrollo académico de los estudiantes y, así, focalizarse en sus fortalezas y debilidades. La computación en la nube se avizora como un nuevo recurso didáctico dentro de un paradigma de conectividad al que se puede acceder desde diferentes soportes.

## Conclusiones

Así concluimos la presentación de nuestra propuesta pedagógica, que, como ya lo expresáramos, intenta optimizar el proceso de adquisición del componente fonológico del inglés, atendiendo a los intereses de los estudiantes en el mundo actual. Hemos asumido el desafío que supone la introducción de las tecnologías de la información y comunicación en el proceso de enseñanza aprendizaje en la universidad. Esta incorporación de nuevas herramientas culturales proporcionadas por la tecnología implica procesos de cambios bastante complejos, en donde las redes sincrónica y asincrónica de comunicación se



entrelazan y conforman un nuevo escenario. En este proceso de cambio la tecnología nos permite diseñar nuestras prácticas de enseñanza de acuerdo con los cambios sociales, históricos y culturales vigentes.

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- Kriscautzky, M. *Las TIC en la escuela, nuevas herramientas para viejos y nuevos problemas*. Barcelona: Editorial Océano. 2012. Impreso.

### **Sitios web consultados:**

<https://support.haikulearning.com/home>

[www.audioboo.com](http://www.audioboo.com)

[www.myhaikuclass.com/foneticaffha/introduccionalapronunciacion/signup](http://www.myhaikuclass.com/foneticaffha/introduccionalapronunciacion/signup)

[www.introduccion-pronunciacion.blogspot.com.ar](http://www.introduccion-pronunciacion.blogspot.com.ar)

[www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

[www.vocaroo.com](http://www.vocaroo.com)

## Un espacio virtual para diferentes voces en la clase de pronunciación del inglés

**Mgter. María Susana Waasaf**  
manawa@infovia.com.ar

**Esp. Patricia Castro**  
pacas2003@yahoo.com.ar

**María Josefina Castillo**  
josefinacastilloc@gmail.com

**FFHA– UNSJ**

### Resumen

El uso de nuevos recursos tecnológicos configura nuevos espacios que permiten desarrollar diferentes maneras de generar y procesar el conocimiento. En este contexto, como profesoras de Fonética y Fonología Inglesa II, intentamos encontrar formas innovadoras para establecer diferentes canales de comunicación con nuestros estudiantes, con el fin de mejorar el proceso de adquisición del componente fonológico del inglés. Esta presentación pretende: a) describir el diseño e implementación de un grupo cerrado en una red social – *Facebook*, y b) compartir los resultados de una encuesta que fue administrada con el propósito de evaluar las opiniones de los estudiantes acerca de la utilidad de este recurso. Al trabajar dentro del marco del modelo *blended-learning*, esta herramienta demostró ser un valioso complemento del trabajo que se realiza regularmente en el aula. Esperamos que este trabajo nos ayude a reflexionar sobre el impacto del uso de tecnología de vanguardia en nuevos espacios socioeducativos

### Introducción

En el marco del Proyecto de Investigación “Enseñar y aprender la pronunciación del inglés con el apoyo de entornos virtuales” que, actualmente, se desarrolla en el Departamento de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa de la Facultad de Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes de la UNSJ, realizamos una mirada crítica y reflexiva a nuestras prácticas docentes en el espacio curricular Fonética y Fonología Inglesa II. En consecuencia, aceptamos el desafío de incorporar algunas herramientas tecnológicas y aplicar diferentes estrategias didácticas en esta asignatura, con el objetivo de optimizar los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje de los rasgos suprasegmentales de la pronunciación del inglés.

El uso de las tecnologías de la información y la comunicación (TICs) configura nuevos espacios socio-educativos en el contexto de la educación superior. La incorporación de estos recursos al interior de las unidades curriculares produce una ruptura con los escenarios tradicionales al generar nuevos entornos de aprendizaje. Estos abren un abanico de posibilidades y facilitan a los estudiantes construir y procesar el conocimiento de diversas

maneras. La configuración de estos nuevos escenarios en la universidad, conduce a una renovación de los diseños curriculares con el propósito de adecuarlos a las habilidades que nuestros estudiantes han venido desarrollando en el mundo de la Web 2.0

En esta presentación describimos, en primer lugar, una situación de enseñanza-aprendizaje en la cual se organizó e implementó un grupo cerrado en la red social *Facebook*. En segundo lugar, compartimos los resultados de una encuesta de opinión que recabó información acerca de la percepción de los estudiantes sobre el impacto del uso de esta herramienta en sus procesos de aprendizaje de la pronunciación del inglés.

### **Marco referencial**

La situación de enseñanza-aprendizaje que presentamos a continuación se encuadra dentro de los parámetros del modelo de *blended-learning (b-learning)*, en el cual la incorporación de dispositivos digitales se complementa con el tipo de interacciones que se dan en las clases presenciales (Sharma & Barret 2007), generando, así, nuevas formas de comunicación entre docentes-estudiantes, entre estudiantes-material y entre estudiantes-estudiantes. Estas formas se pueden dar de dos maneras diferentes: comunicación sincrónica *online* (a través del *chat* o *Facebook*) y comunicación asincrónica *off-line* (correo electrónico, etc.). Ambas modalidades se integran facilitando y reforzando el proceso de adquisición de saberes.

Según Prensky (2011) el contexto educativo actual demanda diferentes maneras de adquirir y procesar el conocimiento. La incorporación de recursos digitales conduce a desarrollar competencias específicas y nuevas formas de pensamiento para poder incorporarse y formar parte de la cultura digital. Según las habilidades y destrezas que posean en la utilización de diferentes dispositivos tecnológicos, Prensky distingue dos tipos de usuarios. Por un lado, denomina “nativos digitales” a aquellos que están acostumbrados a recibir información de forma muy rápida, la pueden procesar de manera paralela o simultánea, a través de tareas múltiples, y, normalmente, aprecian y disfrutan de la gratificación frecuente e instantánea. Por el otro lado, los “inmigrantes digitales”, son aquellos usuarios que deben realizar un esfuerzo para incorporar estas nuevas competencias del mundo digital y sus procesos de adquisición y de búsqueda de nuevas estrategias son más lentos y complejos. En términos generales, la primer categoría está integrada por nuestros alumnos que nacieron y se criaron inmersos en esta cultura, mientras que la mayoría de los docentes pertenecemos a la categoría de “inmigrantes digitales”. Este nuevo espacio socio-educativo provoca un cambio significativo en el campo pedagógico, específicamente en lo que respecta a los roles de docentes y de estudiantes. Así, los docentes deberán asumir otras perspectivas, desarrollar diferentes competencias y aplicar nuevas estrategias para poder

acompañar a los estudiantes en el camino de construcción del aprendizaje de manera tal que este proceso sea más flexible y llegue a ser autónomo.

En el desarrollo de contenidos, en las clases de una segunda lengua, la mayoría de los docentes han aceptado e incorporado el uso de recursos didácticos digitales de la llamada “tecnología de menor nivel” (*low tech tools*), como es el uso de *Word*, *Excel* o *PowerPoint*. Sin embargo, y a pesar de que muchos docentes reconocen y aprecian la importancia del uso de redes sociales, foros, chats, etc., pertenecientes a la denominada “alta tecnología” (*high tech tools*), estos manifiestan cierto escepticismo y resistencia a la aplicación de los mismos. No obstante, desde una perspectiva pedagógica, se ha podido comprobar que la utilización de los dispositivos de la última categoría, contribuye a generar comunidades de aprendizaje colaborativo y a promover el desarrollo de un ambiente educativo más dinámico, conducente a optimizar los procesos de adquisición de una segunda lengua. (Blattner & Fiori 2009).

Una mirada hacia el interior de nuestro particular contexto áulico universitario, nos condujo a reflexionar sobre las posibilidades de implementación y uso de uno de los recursos de alta tecnología que ofrece la Web 2.0: la red social *Facebook* (*FCBK*). Una de las razones que motivó esta decisión es que su utilización tiene un fuerte impacto en el mundo social de nuestros estudiantes al promover nuevas formas de comunicación e interacción y permitir compartir experiencias en el mundo de la cultura digital.

El contexto de surgimiento de *FCBK* se ubica en la Universidad de Harvard en el año 2004. Esta red fue inicialmente creada y diseñada para los estudiantes universitarios y luego, debido a su gran popularidad, extendió su uso hasta conformar una red global de interacción social. *Facebook* es una herramienta sincrónica que se caracteriza por su fácil acceso y porque permite a los usuarios conectarse en forma simultánea *online*, ya sea desde su teléfono celular o desde una computadora personal. Sin embargo, también se la puede considerar como una herramienta asincrónica, pues permite intercambiar mensajes, al igual que el correo electrónico, o enviar documentos de manera *off-line*. Uno de sus rasgos más distintivos es que posibilita la creación de una comunidad virtual integrada por usuarios que tienen intereses comunes. Con el propósito de formar una comunidad de aprendizaje, su implementación requiere seguir ciertos pasos. El primero de ellos es crear un perfil para luego poder utilizar las aplicaciones que la red social ofrece. Una vez creado dicho perfil, los usuarios ya están en condiciones de invitar a otros para comunicarse entre sí y poder realizar intercambios de diferentes tipos (compartir experiencias, mensajes, comentarios, archivos de texto y de audio, fotos, películas, etc.). *FCBK* también posibilita la creación de grupos. Si el grupo es abierto se puede acceder a él libremente, con previa invitación o

aceptación por parte del administrador. Cuando un grupo es cerrado o privado, sólo los miembros de una particular comunidad social pueden ingresar y compartir información. Generalmente, esta última categoría es la más usada en contextos educativos.

### **Metodología**

El presente trabajo describe una experiencia pedagógico-didáctica con alumnos de segundo año, durante el desarrollo del espacio curricular Fonética y Fonología Inglesa II. El objetivo de esta experiencia fue continuar con la integración de herramientas tecnológicas en nuestro escenario educativo, durante el desarrollo de las unidades de acentuación, ritmo y entonación del inglés, con el propósito de optimizar la adquisición del componente fonológico. Este recurso se presentó como un medio de comunicación adicional y complementario al uso del *blog* y del correo electrónico, implementados anteriormente por el equipo docente del Área. Estas herramientas, que se integraron al escenario de las clases presenciales (*face-to-face*), brindaron a los alumnos la posibilidad de elegir el dispositivo digital más acorde con sus intereses, necesidades y preferencias de uso.

La creación, diseño e implementación de un grupo cerrado con la denominación de la asignatura, *English Phonetics and Phonology II*, se organizó considerando dos grandes categorías: 1) organizacional-académica, y 2) socio-afectiva. La primera se relaciona con la organización y distribución de la información entre los actores del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. En esta categoría se focalizan distintos tipos de interacciones: docente-estudiante, estudiante-material y estudiante-estudiante (De Benito & Salinas, 2011) y se percibe cómo estas se van configurando durante el desarrollo de la asignatura, a través del uso de este dispositivo digital. La segunda categoría, socio-afectiva, se relaciona con actitudes, percepciones y emociones y la manera en que estas se manifiestan en las diferentes etapas del proceso interactivo.

En relación con el uso organizacional-académico, se observó que la interacción docente-estudiante se realizó a través de publicaciones en el *muro* del grupo. Por un lado, los docentes publicaron anuncios de horarios, fechas de evaluaciones y de consultas y asignación de tareas extra-áulicas. También contestaron consultas de los alumnos relacionadas con tareas a realizar y postearon comentarios en respuesta a dudas que se plantearon. Por su lado, los estudiantes realizaron preguntas relacionadas con los temas o contenidos de las unidades de aprendizaje y publicaron comentarios con respecto a las publicaciones de los profesores. A manera de ilustración de este tipo de interacción, los docentes enviaron a los estudiantes el procedimiento a seguir para el envío de un archivo de audio utilizando [www.vocaroo.com](http://www.vocaroo.com) o una nota de audio a través del teléfono celular. Posteriormente, los estudiantes enviaron sus archivos de audio a través de un *link* o en

formato mp3, en un mensaje privado al que sólo los administradores pudieron acceder. Los docentes, por su parte, escucharon y analizaron el material recibido y enviaron el *feedback* correctivo de la producción oral, señalando las fortalezas y debilidades. Este procedimiento generó un espacio para que los alumnos pudieran reflexionar sobre sus aciertos y errores y aplicaran diferentes estrategias de reparación durante el proceso de adquisición del componente fonológico del inglés. De este modo, la implementación de la red social *FCBK*, contribuyó a reducir la brecha digital entre docentes y estudiantes. A continuación, en la Fig. 1 se puede visualizar un ejemplo de este proceso:

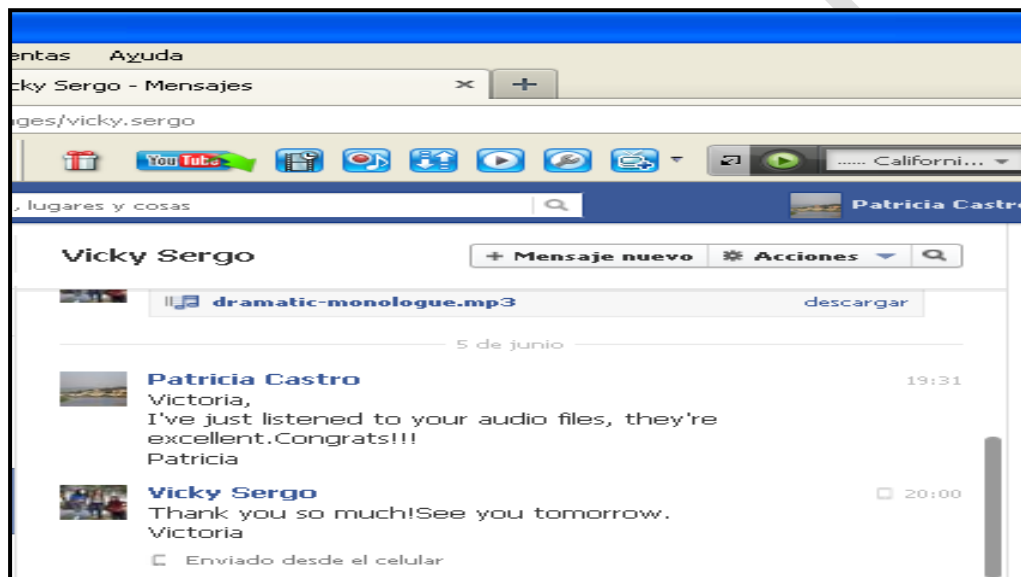


Fig. 1: Archivo de audio en una interacción docente-estudiante

El uso de *FCBK* también favoreció positivamente la interacción estudiante-material. El rápido acceso a las redes sociales y a las aplicaciones que los teléfonos celulares ofrecen, permitió que la mayoría de nuestros alumnos accedieran fácilmente al material publicado, tales como documentos de texto, guías de estudio, sesiones de video, guías de autoevaluación para sistematizar contenidos antes de una evaluación escrita, etc. En la mayoría de las ocasiones, los alumnos pudieron descargar el material a sus teléfonos o computadoras personales de forma inmediata y sólo en muy pocas ocasiones se presentaron dificultades relacionadas con la descarga de archivos. En estos casos, los estudiantes recurrieron a la ayuda y colaboración de sus docentes o pares para sortear el problema. Algunos de ellos lo lograron *online* mientras que otros recurrieron a las profesoras durante la clase presencial o la consulta *off-line*.

Con respecto a la interacción estudiante-estudiante, esta se materializó a través de las consultas, inquietudes y dudas que se plantearon los estudiantes entre sí, relacionadas con las tareas que debían realizar o con la resolución de un ejercicio o actividad particular. Al analizar los comentarios y publicaciones de los alumnos en el *muro*, se pudo observar que

los estudiantes enriquecieron y fortalecieron sus procesos de adquisición, a través de la construcción de una verdadera comunidad de aprendizaje colaborativo mediado por el espacio virtual de una red social.

Ahora, al focalizar la dimensión socio-afectiva de *FCBK*, podemos afirmar que la relación docente-estudiante adquiere un carácter más informal, sin perder el nivel de profesionalidad, en un marco de respeto y cordialidad. En relación con la interacción estudiante-material, los estudiantes pudieron acceder al material enviado por los profesores en forma sincrónica (*on line*) o de manera asincrónica (*off line*) para realizar las tareas asignadas. En muchas ocasiones, las interacciones estudiante-estudiante se solaparon con las interacciones docentes-estudiantes, conformando así un escenario socio-educativo particular y característico de las clases presenciales. Es importante destacar que, en el marco de esta dimensión, se observaron algunas situaciones de humor y de solidaridad entre los interactuantes. Algunos alumnos publicaron comentarios o imágenes que provocaron la risa de los docentes y de los compañeros. Asimismo, se puso en evidencia la solidaridad cuando algunos estudiantes respondieron rápidamente al pedido de ayuda de otros alumnos, ya sea salvando una duda o avisando que habían encontrado algunos apuntes dados por perdidos. En otras ocasiones, la manifestación de sentimientos y emociones se realizó a través del uso de emoticones, o, simplemente, de un “me gusta” en las publicaciones realizadas en el muro.

En la Fig. 2 se presenta un ejemplo de una situación de humor entre estudiantes:



Fig. 2. Situación de humor en una interacción estudiante-estudiante en la dimensión socio-afectiva

En la tabla 1 a continuación, se pueden visualizar los usos relacionados con la dimensión organizacional-académica y la socio-afectiva de esta red social:

RED SOCIAL FACEBOOK		
ORGANIZACIONAL-ACADÉMICO	MENSAJES	Consultas por parte de los alumnos a los docentes Archivos de audio enviados a través del sitio web <a href="http://www.vocaroo.com">www.vocaroo.com</a> Notas de voz a través del teléfono celular Archivos de audio en formato mp3 Comunicación en forma privada entre docente-estudiante y entre estudiante-estudiante
	MURO	Asignación de tareas Fechas de prácticos y parciales Fecha y hora de consultas Archivos de texto adjuntos: guías de estudio Links de páginas relacionadas con la cátedra Comunicación entre docente-estudiantes y entre estudiante-estudiante a través de comentarios y publicaciones.
	EVENTOS	Comunicación de jornadas, seminarios, talleres, etc.
SOCIO-AFECTIVO	INTERACCIÓN DOCENTE-ESTUDIANTE / ESTUDIANTE-ESTUDIANTE	Interacciones sincrónicas y asincrónicas Solapamiento de las interacciones entre E-E y D-E configurando un nuevo espacio socio-educativo
	ACTITUDES Y EMOCIONES	Inmediatez en las respuestas por parte de docentes y de alumnos Situaciones de humor y de solidaridad Construcción del sentido de pertenencia y de comunidad de aprendizaje Mayor expresión de las emociones

Tabla 1. Síntesis de uso y aplicación de *Facebook*

Es necesario aclarar que, durante esta primera etapa de prueba del grupo de *Facebook*, se han podido visualizar beneficios y obstáculos. En relación con su impacto positivo, hemos comprobado, en el transcurso de esta breve experiencia, que el uso de esta red social de comunicación virtual favoreció el desarrollo de las estrategias de interrogación por parte de los estudiantes y generó un marco de mayor confianza y menor incertidumbre al recibir la contención por parte del equipo docente en situaciones de duda o de conflicto. También podemos mencionar que su uso ha contribuido a desarrollar en los estudiantes un sentido de pertenencia a una comunidad de aprendizaje en un entorno virtual con un objetivo en común: la optimización del proceso de adquisición de la pronunciación del inglés. Con respecto los obstáculos encontrados, es importante destacar que, aunque esta herramienta ha logrado popularidad y prestigio en algunos ámbitos educativos, en otros, su uso es aún bastante controversial. Algunos docentes y alumnos, como así también algunas instituciones de nivel superior, expresan su resistencia a su uso. A modo de ejemplo, en nuestro contexto educativo particular, la página de *FCBK* no se puede abrir con el servidor que ofrece la universidad y un número reducido de alumnos siguen prefiriendo el correo electrónico.



Antes de iniciar una segunda etapa en el uso de este dispositivo digital, se aplicó un cuestionario semi-estructurado para recabar información acerca de la opinión de los alumnos sobre el uso e impacto de esta herramienta en su proceso de aprendizaje. La encuesta se diseñó a través de la página [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com), y constaba de diez preguntas cerradas y abiertas. Los estudiantes accedieron a la misma a través del *link* <http://es.surveymonkey.com/s/35R6T77>, que se publicó en el *muro* y también se envió por correo electrónico.

En relación con los resultados obtenidos, se pudo concluir que el uso de *FCBK* para comunicarse con los profesores y con los pares, se vio altamente favorecido. La mayoría de los estudiantes admitió haber utilizado esta herramienta más de dos veces por semana. Asimismo, reconocieron que su uso generó un espacio socio-educativo que les permitió desenvolverse con mayor autonomía y optimizar su proceso de aprendizaje de la pronunciación del inglés. En relación con el impacto positivo en el desarrollo de la asignatura, algunos alumnos expresaron: *“...También es muy bueno para aclarar dudas que puedan llegar a tener los alumnos y facilita la comunicación diaria entre docentes y alumnos.”*, *“... la inmediatez de las respuestas ante dudas en horarios fuera de clase. El fácil y seguro acceso a información de la cátedra, tanto de ejercicios de práctica y sus correcciones como cronogramas de actividades para la clase y noticias importantes, consultas extra o cambio de actividades para la clase.”*

Algunos estudiantes agregaron un comentario final en el que reconocen a la red social como un asistente digital que permite *“...el seguimiento del estudio en horarios extra y cualquier medio que sume y facilite el estudio y seguimiento de la cátedra siempre es muy bueno y valorado por los alumnos. Además esto es posible por la buena predisposición del equipo de profesoras y el tiempo que dedican para que estos medios tecnológicos sean realmente productivos.”*, *“...with the teacher, the technology is good for our learning process.”* Es importante rescatar estas últimas reflexiones porque no sólo destacan la importancia de la integración de la tecnología, sino que también le otorgan un rol significativo a la tarea del profesor, como mediador en el proceso de adquisición del componente fonológico del inglés.

### **Conclusión**

La incorporación, como recurso didáctico, de una de las herramientas tecnológicas con mayor potencial y popularidad que ofrece la Web 2.0, nos condujo a reflexionar y aceptar los desafíos que implica el integrar una de las herramientas de “alta tecnología” (*high-tech tools*) en nuestras prácticas de enseñanza.

Pudimos comprobar que el uso de *Facebook* se integra a la vida del aula universitaria generando en los alumnos la búsqueda de nuevos caminos que los ayuden a mejorar su

aprendizaje de la pronunciación del inglés. Se puede concluir que, en términos generales, el uso de esta red social contribuyó a promover un aprendizaje más activo, flexible y dinámico a través de la construcción de procesos más autónomos, solidarios y colaborativos. En esta construcción de conocimientos, se fueron configurando nuevos espacios socio-educativos en los que se entrelaza armónicamente la presencialidad y la tecnología en torno al aprendizaje de una segunda lengua.

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[www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

[www.vocaroo.com](http://www.vocaroo.com)

## Learning intonation through drama

Prof. Leticia Anabel Núñez

[leticianu@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:leticianu@yahoo.com.ar)

IESD y T N° 9-001 "Gral. José de San Martín," Mendoza

### Abstract

In teaching the communicative and attitudinal aspects of intonation, a challenge is faced when trying to have students grasp the meanings conveyed through tones. Either the intended effect on the listener (communicative function) or the speaker's attitude towards the listener or the message itself (attitudinal function) involves handling the dimensions of situations that have a direct impact on the language used, namely, field, tenor and mode, crucial to an intuitive understanding of the language selected to speak to different people in different situations. Exposure to authentic or semi-authentic communicative situations throws light upon these aspects, though several students fail to feel that they *walk in the shoes of another person*, and they are eventually unable to achieve the intended linguistic aim of a suggested oral activity.

Drama may erect itself as a solution to this. A current project in Mendoza is qualitatively testing and proving the positive effects of drama techniques in teacher training courses. After an initial, intuitive, digitally recorded performance, students have been subjected to a qualitative survey among peers and they are now being assessed by objective external professionals so as to draw conclusions on the concrete benefits mentioned hereof.

### Introduction

This work is part of an in-progress research project, *Acting Intonation Out: Teaching Abilities from Drama*, being developed at the teacher training course in Instituto de Enseñanza Superior Docente y Técnica N° 9-001 "General José de San Martín" (IESDyT), in San Martín, Mendoza.

The aim of this work is to determine whether the addition of drama techniques in the teaching of English intonation may endow students with greater sensitivity towards the meanings being conveyed through the system of tone in both the expression of attitude and the realisation of communicative functions.

For the purpose of this paper, a systemic-functional approach to intonation has been followed, as well as an overview of drama as a learning medium capable of endowing students with successful intonation choices.

Intonation operates through a trio of systems (Halliday 1967), namely, tonality, tonicity and tone, each of which corresponds with a set of phonological choices available, which would result in differences in meaning. These three systems interplay in spoken discourse in order to allow for the realisation of different functions, two of which are predominantly performed through tone: the expression of attitude and the realisation of communicative functions.

Faulty choices in the tone system still mean something. These mistaken choices are made as a consequence of a failure to grasp the use of language in different social contexts, the purpose of the speech act, the mood of the speaker and the attitude to the addressee or to the message itself (Tench 1996).

Drama across the curriculum has erected itself as a learning medium, the method of teaching capable of stimulating and achieving powerful learning of the key decision-making skills through role playing, process reflection and simulated social games. The interaction of characters is crucial as it helps to develop a role in a particular situation, which demands the creation of personal meanings that seek to be communicated (Burgess & Gaudry, 1986).

### **Some considerations on the functions of Intonation**

One of the basic functions of intonation is to present the speaker's purpose in saying something (Tench, 1996), that is, the realization of communicative functions. As it was anticipated, this function is mainly performed through the system of tone. The choices among the different tones available in the system elicit the intended effect of the speaker on those who are being addressed. If the choices are subdivided into two major groups of tones, falling and non-falling, the following generalizations can be made:

- Falling tones denote speaker's dominance, so they are used to tell, order, demand, for example.
- Non-falling tones, on the other hand, denote speaker's deference, and so they are used to ask, request, coax, among others.

What emerges as challenging for prospective teachers of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is that even when the wording of a message remains the same, a change in the tone used for uttering it changes the meaning completely, potentially resulting in misunderstandings as to what the purpose of the message is.

Another function of intonation, the one that intonation has been traditionally associated with, is the expression of attitude (Tench 1996). This function allows the speaker express their mood, or their attitude towards the listener or towards the message itself.

Tone is again the system which is primarily involved in the expression of attitude. It is in the extent of the fall or the rise and the variations in pitch in the head and pre-head (structure of the tone group) that the effect of attitude is exerted. The same message can be said in a polite way, or angrily, warmly, and so on (Tench 1996).

Wider falling or rising tones are more intense, more emotional and they add a note of surprise, whereas narrow tones denote mildness and expectancy.

One of the major limitations English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students need to overcome is the inability to apply patterns of English intonation against their own native intonation patterns. Although English spoken with some kind of Spanish intonation would still be intelligible, potential misunderstandings can occur, which might be brought to the EFL classroom and unintentionally taught.

The future teacher of EFL must aim at the highest level of performance, and so the mastery of English intonation.

### **Some considerations on the role of drama across the curriculum**

Drama aids personal development, and so it services learning in many areas of the curriculum. The drama teacher becomes a resource for other teachers in the pursuit of learning in the most varied fields. Drama can also be used to contribute to the social health of the group of students, and to enhance students' communication skills. But the major role of drama is that it may make learning explicit through reflection and discussion.

Drama is a series of imaginary events based on life and acted out by people who tacitly agree to adopt role behaviour appropriate to the created situation. It is in the individual's experience of the real world -combined with a capacity for thoughtful reflection- that results in the creation of personal symbolic meanings (Burgess & Gaudry 1986).

The essence of the life created in drama lies on the development and expression of a role; this role elicits the actor's personal meanings, which seek to be communicated in a simulated situation.

When an actor is playing the role of a character, he is putting himself into action, but also putting himself in other people's shoes. He is fully aware of his own self, and impersonates and projects this self onto the role, incorporating it. This role is performed throughout the dramatic situation respecting the elements of art (focus, rhythm, climax, sound, dynamism, conflict, among others). However, performing a role does not guarantee the actor will express himself and communicate with others. Further technical knowledge and command of body expression must be enhanced and manipulated by the drama teacher and the actor to achieve the educational aim.

Drama in education focuses on the process rather than on a staged production. Students challenge and entertain themselves, and they gain understanding of human condition and the elements of art form. The final aim is that students can free themselves to act out their personal constructs through a role as if they were expressing themselves in real life, assimilating issues from the subject being studied.

### **Sample selection and data collection**

The aim of this research project is to determine whether the addition of cross curricular drama techniques in the teacher training course, especially in the study of English intonation, helps to improve students' intonational performance when conveying communicational and attitudinal meanings.

The sample was taken from learners in the senior years of the teacher training course at the IESD y T N° 9-001 "General José de San Martín." These students have already been or are currently studying the roles of intonation in the expression of meanings, and are visiting primary and secondary schools for their teaching practice. The group is made up of 30 students: 12 are attending the intonation course at present, 15 did so last year, and the remaining 3 students are about to graduate. Mastering the systems of intonation and conveying the desired meanings (without potentially causing misunderstandings) is a must at this stage of their undergraduate education.

Once the sample was selected, the following methodological instruments were used:

1. Digital recording of the reading and acting sessions
2. Qualitative peer survey
3. External evaluation by an expert in the field of drama

During the initial and final drama sessions included in the English Intonation course, students' performance has been digitally recorded (video). Students have been asked to work on movement, gesture, physical distance and proximity, pose, management of space, of their voice, among others.

A qualitative survey has been carried out to find out about students' feelings and impressions regarding the entire experience. Questions regarding the teacher, the material selected to be acted out, the activities proposed, and their own response to the sessions have been included.

Finally, a qualitative evaluation is being carried out of both the digitally recorded material and the surveys by the Drama and the English Intonation teacher. A diary has been kept by the teachers in order to record all the improvements, changes, expected and unexpected events in the development of the course.

### **Procedure**

Drama sessions have become a part of the English Intonation course. Students are invited to join these sessions after they have been assisted in class analysis of intonational

phenomena. The drama teacher has also been attending the English Intonation course. This training period has been taking place for eight weeks, in 80 minute drama sessions, which are offered right after the weekly English Intonation Workshop.

A series of activities have been designed and applied by the drama teacher, who has been fully in charge of the sessions. Further assistance regarding intonation has been provided by the Phonetics and Phonology teacher, who is a non-participant observer in the sessions.

Drama training involved the following techniques:

- Physical exercise (getting relaxed and flexible)
- Establishing the human context (roles and relationships)
- Creating dramatic tension (surprise, mystery, relationships, unexpectedness)
- Establishing the focus
- Expliciting time and place
- Deciding on language and movement
- Creating the mood
- Agreeing on symbols
- Acting out

These activities have been carried out systematically every session and they have been arranged progressively in difficulty. At the end of each session, students have been asked to keep a written record of what has been happening, and of what they have been feeling.

### **Discussion of results and overall impressions**

There has been a dramatic development of physical confidence, which is explicit in the way students react (and how fast they do so) to the teacher's instructions. The clothes they wore at the initial sessions were less comfortable than the ones they have been wearing in the final sessions, even when they claim they do not look as good as they want.

Students stand, walk and even speak differently when they come into the drama class. They speak more loudly and seem to be less embarrassed at their own mistakes or doubts. Their management of space and time is more competent and efficient and they claim they have been able to integrate aspects studied in different subjects.

Regarding the production of intonation patterns, speeches now sound more natural, and at a normal pitch range and loudness. Students intuitively select more suitable intonation patterns for the different acts. Their perception of the meanings being conveyed according to the context of the situation depicted (field, tenor and mode) has changed, being much more accurate at present. Students about to graduate show clearer improvements in performance,

and the ones currently attending the course are still learning to be aware of intonational phenomena.

In the qualitative surveys, the aspect most highly valued is students' own response to the entire experience, special attention being given to the greater ability to express themselves either orally or physically. Students who are about to graduate highlight the importance of the drama techniques for their future professional lives.

In the evaluation by external professionals, students' performance has been considered optimum so far. Not only have they increased awareness of intonational phenomena in the expression of attitude and communicative functions, but they have also gained confidence in group performance and body expression. A permanent workshop is being designed as part of the curriculum so that all students can benefit from this proposal.

### **Conclusions**

The drama course mentioned above has been going on for two months, and even after such limited period of time, it has shown great improvements in the students involved.

Students from the three different groups, namely, the ones attending the English Intonation course, the ones having already attended the course, and the ones about to graduate, all in their teaching training period, have experienced different kinds of improvements. The first, mostly in the management of pitch range and in the expression of attitude through tone and body language, being at present involved in the analysis of such aspects. The second, mainly in movement, body language and management of space and time; and the latter, mainly in the form of art, being able to focus on those aspects that will enable them to set up a play in a secondary school, making their own students aware of the advantages of drama for learning.

Based on the results hereof, the IESD y T N° 9-001 "General José de San Martín" is evaluating the teaching of drama within the English Intonation course. An open drama workshop has already been offered as an optional course for the rest of the students at the EFL teacher training course.

Further research is still to be done in this respect. Drama and intonation must be analysed in greater depth with the aid of other technical devices that may allow further discoveries.

At present, the professionals involved in the workshop are analysing the addition of a final improvisation stage for students who are attending the open drama workshop.



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CONFIDENCIAL

## The implementation of netbooks in the EFL class

Prof. Pamela Alicia Femenía Alcaráz

[pamelasj\\_15@hotmail.com](mailto:pamelasj_15@hotmail.com)

FFHA-UNSJ

### Abstract

This presentation will report some of the findings of the research project “*La implementación de las netbooks en la clase de inglés como herramienta para aprender*” carried out with a grant from CICITCA (Res. 1220-R/12 – UNSJ). The project aims at exploring about the use of netbooks, provided by Conectar Igualdad, in the EFL class in public secondary schools from San Juan and the different activities that teachers propose by means of this technological instrument. In this communication the focus will be placed on some preliminary observations and conclusions drawn from a piloting survey implemented at a public school in the province.

### Introduction

For many years now, societies have been experiencing important changes due to the great developments in technology, and these changes have definitely modified social relations. For this reason, introducing the new information and communication technologies in all social domains seems crucial. In this sense, the main goals in education need to be modified. Schools are expected to guarantee the citizens’ social insertion in this world, but now the particular characteristics of societies require learners to have competences in the use of Information and Communication Technologies (hereafter ICT’s). As a result, governments and educators need to assume responsibility in forming active citizens with a critical aptitude for using technologies.

Today’s students are equipped with tools that allow them to construct knowledge autonomously. Consequently, they have adopted an active role in their own process of learning and they have become the real protagonists in education. In view of this context, teachers are required to assume the role of facilitators that guide and help students through knowledge construction. To be able to do this effectively, they need to become skilful at handling and implementing the use of the new ICT’s in their classes.

### Theoretical framework

The great development and advances in the ICT’s have generated significant changes in our society for many years. In education, the particular characteristics of this digital world have given rise to new roles and offered a wide range of tools with the potential for modifying present teaching and learning practices. The features of this digital society have shaped communication practices that require or produce new literacies as well as different approaches to learning. Undoubtedly, education is immersed in a new social paradigm

mainly with respect to information access, connectivity, the creation of virtual communities and what it means to be literate today. Besides, students are completely different from students a decade ago. These learners, defined as “*digital natives*” by Prensky (2001), have the capacity to perform diverse activities at the same time. Due to their constant use of the new ICT’s, they are characterized by the ‘here and now’, the immediate production and exchange of information, the instant global communication. They feel more at ease in a digital environment than in a world of books, newspapers and other forms of print (Howe & Strauss 2000). As a result, educators continually face the great challenge of transforming their practices in order to meet the needs of the new generation through technology-enhanced learning.

As said before, the new technologies have generated innovative ways of communicating and different learning scenarios. In this context, schools cannot stand aside; on the contrary, they should be familiar with and use the new languages and communication tools that ICT’s bring with them. It seems essential to consider the fact that the simple availability of ICT’s in an institution does not guarantee innovation in its real sense (García and Gonzalez 2006). Innovation should be understood as a change in the teaching beliefs and practices, which should in turn be in accord with the characteristics of a given society. Just doing the same as before, but using different tools, does not represent innovation at all. The new information and communication technologies offer teachers the possibility of reflecting about traditional ways of teaching in order to broaden their perspectives and complement these traditional views with new activities and learning resources. What is more, ICT’s offer educators the opportunity of creating digital communities and of working collaboratively. The impact of ICT’s on the teaching and learning process is not based on their own characteristics, but rather on the different activities that teachers and students carry out, taking advantage of all the possibilities that the ICT’s have to offer in terms of accessibility, connectivity and collaborative exchange, among others.

Our contemporary society is also characterized by a *digital divide* (Warchauer 2007). In fact, there are many forms of social and educational inequality related to technology access and use (Warchauer 2003). According to Warchauer (2007), there is a *generation gap* which examines differences between students and teachers. Of course, students in this millennium have grown up using technology whereas many teachers have to adapt to the characteristics of this new kind of learners and the digital world. There is also a *gender gap*. Today’s girls seem to use computers as much as boys but with different purposes. Girls tend to use technology to communicate with others, but boys frequently just play video games. *School use* constitutes another form of divide which relates to the differential ways in which

computers are used with high and low achievers at school. This means that students with lower literacy and language skills require kinds of instruction different from those with higher skills. It is possible to offer all learners challenging experiences using new technologies, taking into account their particular capacities and needs. *School access* refers to the unequal availability of digital technology between schools with high or low socioeconomic status. At this point, it seems important to mention certain organizations that have been established with the purpose of erasing these digital differences. The Argentine government's *Plan Conectar Igualdad*, for instance, provides every high school student attending a state-run institution with a netbook for free. The intention is to ensure that all learners have equal access to information.

Another objective of this plan is to work towards a society that is equipped with the knowledge and skills related to the use of ICT's. It is important to take into account the fact that the notion of literacy has completely changed in the last few years. In 1996, the New London Group<sup>2</sup> coined the term "*multiliteracies*" which expands the traditional language-based view of literacy. They suggested that all representations of meaning including the linguistic, visual, audio, spatial, and gestural modes subsumed under the category of multimodal should be taught. In 2000, the same group argued that educators need to "extend the idea and scope of literacy pedagogy to account for the context of our culturally and linguistically diverse and increasingly globalised societies". Reflecting on teaching and learning practices has become an essential aspect of education nowadays since the world is constantly changing. Educators need to keep up to date with all these modifications and the requirements of this new society.

### **Objective**

The present project aims at exploring the use of netbooks in the EFL class in public secondary schools in San Juan and examining the different activities devised by EFL instructors in order to foster students' meaningful learning.

### **Methodology**

The data for this piece of research was gathered through surveys conducted among 2<sup>nd</sup> year teachers and students at a public secondary school in San Juan (a total of 80 surveys were collected). It is relevant to mention that this instrument was used in a pilot study in 2012 though the complete survey was conducted this year. At the moment, the analysis of the final

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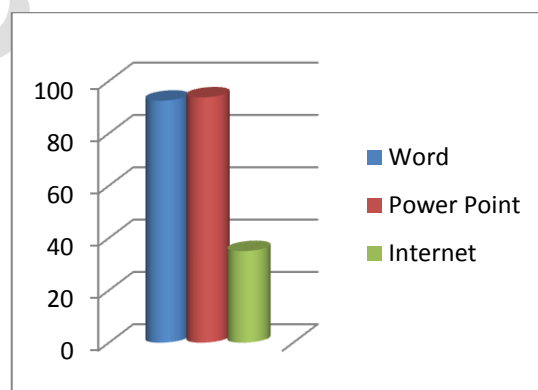
<sup>2</sup> The **New London Group** (1996): a team of ten academics, including James Gee and Allan Luke, who first met in the mid-nineties to consider the state and future of literacy pedagogy.

collected data is being carried out, so the objective of this communication is to present some of the preliminary observations and conclusions drawn from the pilot study.

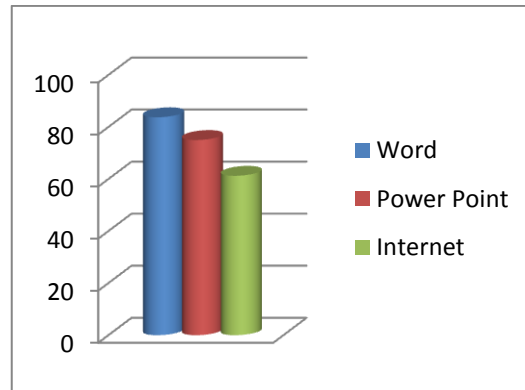
### Data Analysis

One of the most frequently asked questions about *Plan Conectar Igualdad* is whether teachers and students make use of the computers in class or not. The data analysed in the pilot stage of this investigation revealed that about 98% of the students and teachers interviewed admit that they have used the computers in the EFL class at least once since they received them. This result seems to fulfil one of the main objectives of the plan: to reduce the digital divide that characterizes this present society. It is important to consider the fact that the employment of ICT's in the classroom allows all the protagonists in the learning process to develop their creativity and foster their collaboration skills, and it also enhances learning experiences with new competences, new horizons, and creative ways of teaching and construing knowledge.

Another important aspect analysed in this study is related to the different activities and tasks that teachers propose to be carried out by means of the students' netbooks. One of the questions in the survey relates to the educators' choice of computer programs to be used in their classes and which they think will promote students' meaningful learning experiences. In this respect, it was observed that both students and teachers agree on the fact that the use of Word, Power Point and the Internet enhances their learning. 93 % of the participants opted for the programs Word and Power Point whereas the Internet was selected by 35% of the population (see Graphs 1 and 2). This last result may relate to the difficulties regarding the availability of Internet access at schools. Internet connection at schools with a large number of netbooks trying to access it is an issue in most public institutions. It is a problem that demands an urgent solution since teachers and learners would have the opportunity to work in diverse ways, to communicate with other classes, to continue working outside the classroom, and to use a wide range of tools that are now available on the web.



Graph 1: Computer programs selected to be used in class



Graph 2: Computer programs actually used in class.

According to the interviewed participants, they have access to the Internet at their school but, at the same time, 91% of the population certifies that this connection is not a good one and does not allow them to use the Internet in class. Besides, 72% of the interviewees state that Internet access is possible only at specific places in the institution. For example, they usually stay in the entrance hall or near the Computing Lab if they want to work online.

The participants were asked about the activities that could be performed when the Internet connection is not available. The students showed they have explored and are acquainted with the programs set up in their netbooks. This content can be used for different subjects and with diverse purposes. Learners know that through *Escritorio del alumno* they can have access to games, digital books, tutorials, programs to be installed, videos and a wide range of activities and tools that can be implemented in Math, Language and Chemistry classes, among others. Furthermore, students stated that their netbooks allow them to carry out some other tasks: listening to music, watching videos previously downloaded, creating videos and presentations, viewing photos, creating documents (see Table 1). Many of the ideas the learners propose can be included on a regular basis in the EFL class, depending on the importance teachers give to the activities as well as on the different purposes targeted. Only 10% of the students showed pessimism about the unavailability of Internet connection at school.

<i>“Utilizar los programas instalados en las netbooks en escritorio del alumno”</i>	26,25%
<i>“Hacer trabajos en Word o Power Point”</i>	31,25%
<i>“Jugar o entrar a Facebook”</i>	22,5%
<i>“Escuchar música y ver fotos”</i>	3,75%
<i>“Nada, sin internet no tiene sentido”</i>	10%

Table 1: Use of netbooks (without Internet connection).

In view of these circumstances, do teachers make use of the programs available in the netbooks? Do they use this device as an aid in the class curricula? On the one hand, half of the students who participated in this study believe that educators are capable of and prepared to implement ICT's in their classes. They support their opinion by saying that teachers attend courses and take on the challenge of using computers in class. On the other hand, the rest of the participants point out that some teachers do not have the tools or the kind of knowledge and experience that is necessary to make use of this instrument in the classroom.

A very interesting finding in this pilot study shows the great satisfaction students experience when using technology for educational purposes. A total of 95% of learners agree that using these little laptops in class has been a really satisfying activity for different reasons (see Table 2).

<i>“Aprendí más rápido y fácil, le dediqué más tiempo”</i>	30%
<i>“Me da más entusiasmo por aprender porque es más divertido”</i>	23,75%
<i>“Es una manera diferente de estudiar, mejor que el cuaderno”</i>	13,75%
<i>“Aprendí algo nuevo”</i>	11,25%
<i>“Porque siento que soy igual a los demás”</i>	1,25%

Table 2: Learners' opinions about the use of netbooks in class.

The last comment by one student brings out again the main aim of the plan; narrowing the educational and social digital divide in the present world. This also aims at ensuring the insertion of the participants in the global society as well as all people's equal access to the new information and communication technologies.

## Conclusions

The new ICT's have transformed many aspects of the social world, principally education, and continue doing so remarkably. These technologies have modified teaching as well as learning practices. In consequence, teachers and learners' roles are very different now. Educators need to change communication strategies and assume the role of facilitators in the students' learning process. Furthermore, they are expected to respond to new educational goals in order to meet the needs of a new society that requires active citizens with the appropriate competences in the use of ICT's. *Plan Conectar Igualdad* has allowed

for the promotion and enhancement in the implementation of information and communication technologies at schools. Netbooks are now available for most of the teachers and students in public institutions. However, whether these technological instruments are implemented or not in the class entirely depends on the educators' choices and initiative in the use of ICT's. The success of the Plan is linked to the purpose of the pedagogical activities and the involvement of each participant in the different tasks.

In this paper the protagonists' points of view have been analyzed, as well as the actual use of ICT's at schools. The findings of this study show that the majority of educators and students have used the computers at least once and that most of them opt for the use of certain programs like Word and Power Point. The use of the Internet appears in third place due to access problems, more than 90% of the participants claim that connectivity at school is not the best. Apart from the programs mentioned other activities can be performed with the netbooks by using *Escritorio Alumnos*, for instance. Finally, another interesting outcome relates to the great gratification students experience when using their netbooks in class. Although these instruments are used a few times in the EFL class, there is still a long way to go before technology becomes a real part of teaching and learning practices. Many improvements are required as regards connectivity, infrastructure and teachers' professional development. But it is true that using the new technologies in education entails great advantages, particularly for students who are *digital natives* in this constantly changing world.

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## **Integrating culture into the EFL lesson**

**Mgter. Myriam Arrabal de Jamenson**

[mmarrabal@yahoo.com.ar](mailto:mmarrabal@yahoo.com.ar)

**Prof. Alejandra Díaz de Güell**

[adguell@gmail.com](mailto:adguell@gmail.com)

**FFHA-UNSJ**

### **Abstract**

That language and culture are intimately connected is a fact that has been acknowledged by different approaches currently used in our teaching-learning context. Most coursebooks now include a culture section or deal with cross-cultural issues. However, raising cultural awareness and developing intercultural skills pose a number of problems to the teacher who most often surrenders dealing with the cultural component -which s/he regards as an integral part of language learning- in the face of institutional requirements.

The purpose of this paper is to pay a closer look at the problems involved in the integration of culture into English-language teaching and provide some insights as to how to deal with them.

### **Introduction**

The shift of foreign or second language teaching to the communicative paradigm also brought concerns about the cultural values -either implicit or explicit- in social interactions. Nowadays, the intimate relationship between language and the culture where it springs from is acknowledged without being questioned, to the point that most coursebooks include a “culture corner” or “culture spot”. However, culture is still the weakest component of our curricula; cultural teaching remains poor and sporadic in most language classrooms. Basically, the main areas that offer trouble are concerned with what we should teach and how we should teach and assess it.

This paper aims at answering these questions without forgetting that each classroom is a unique domain and that, ultimately, each teacher will have to adopt a critical attitude and do what s/he considers best suited to her/his teaching environment.

### **Integrating culture into the EFL syllabus**

When we plan our syllabus we have to bear in mind three kinds of objectives: conceptual content, procedural content, and attitudinal content. Likewise, when we teach culture we have to organize content according to the three criteria.

### a) Conceptual content

This type of content is concerned with knowing what or getting information. We consider important to make a distinction between “small c” culture and “big C” Culture. The first makes reference to the everyday patterns of living, culture as everything in human life. The second refers to areas of learning associated with cultural development, such as music, literature, art, that is culture as the best in human life. However, there is also another level of understanding of culture: the development of cultural sensitivity and cultural skill. This involves building cultural awareness, what qualities you need to deal successfully with other cultures, and how to operate successfully with people from other cultures. Harry Tomalin (2008) argues that the teaching of culture in ELT should include these things:

- *Cultural knowledge*: the knowledge of the culture’s institutions, the “Big C” (Tomalin and Stempleski 1998).
- *Cultural values*: the ‘psyche’ of the country, what people think; it includes things like family, hospitality, patriotism, fairness.
- *Cultural behaviour*: the knowledge of daily routines and behavior, the “little c” (Tomalin and Stempleski 1998).
- *Cultural skills*: the development of intercultural sensitivity and awareness, using the English language as the medium of interaction.

For practical purposes, choosing the information we want our students to learn has to be weighed carefully in terms of its relevance and meaningfulness to them. Another criterion for selection can be utility for other subjects, e.g. the close relationship between the geography of an English-speaking country and some cultural features of its inhabitants; actually the cultural content learnt in the English lessons about geographical features of English-speaking countries, for instance, may serve as a complement content already learnt in the Geography lessons. Ultimately, this may prove useful to enlarge the students’ knowledge of general culture - now reaching the lowest level in our country’s history, constituting a backslide all teachers usually complain about.

### b) Procedural content

Two aspects can be identified within procedural contents. The first is related to knowing how or developing behaviors: as Nada Salem-Abisamra (2009) points out, teachers are afraid of teaching culture because they fear they do not know enough about it, and think that their role is only to impart facts. Even if teachers’ own knowledge is quite limited, their proper role is not to impart facts, but to help students attain the skills that are necessary to make sense out

of the facts they themselves discover in their study of the target culture. Then, the objectives that are to be achieved in cross-cultural understanding involve processes rather than facts. A "facts only" approach to culture, for which the only goal is to accumulate bits of information, is ineffective. It is procedural knowledge that would enable students to observe and analyse cultural elements and patterns; after all, they should have the ability to react appropriately in any social situation, even those not previously studied.

This area of knowledge involves cognitive operations such as examination, identification, recognition, analysis, comparison and contrast. As far as the development of cultural awareness is concerned, we may ask ourselves a set of guiding questions: "Without abandoning one's culture, what behaviour is regarded as acceptable from the perspective of the other culture? How does our own culture differ from that? What possible misunderstandings may arise?" Let's take greetings and punctuality, for instance. Or even attitude to compliments and gifts.

The second aspect concerns knowing why or discovering explanations: as Alan Maley (in Tomlinson and Stempleski 1998) states, cultural awareness raising is an aspect of values education. As such it offers an opportunity for transcending the often narrow limits of language teaching. In promoting awareness of cultural factors we shall aim to sharpen observation and exploration, and encourage critical thinking about cultural stereotypes. For example, if we are dealing with "Sports" we can explore the values and assumptions underlying this practice. It would be interesting to find an answer as to why sports are so important to the Americans and the British, why Americans have sports rituals, and how this compares to our own culture. Students would then be requested to use their powers of induction, analysis and intuition to infer and generalize, avoiding judgment. Values such as tolerance, empathy and sensitivity should be highlighted at this stage. Ultimately, the students will be learning something other than language and develop a deeper insight of their own culture. This hinges on the third dimension of content.

### **c) Attitudinal content**

This dimension of learning involves knowing oneself or personalizing knowledge, in this case, in relation with others. Students often approach target-culture phenomena assuming that the new patterns of behavior can be understood within the framework of their own native culture. When cultural phenomena differ from what they expect, students often react negatively. Just as teachers need to help students revise their "linguistic patterns," they also need to help them revise their "cultural patterns." Students should be aware that it is important to recognize the pervasive influence of culture on our attitudes, emotions, beliefs

and values, and the dangers of projecting our own frame of reference on that of the culture being studied.

To understand another culture, we must construct a new frame of reference in terms of the people who created it, which is complicated since cultures have both functions (meanings, purposes, needs) and forms (manifestations, realizations, operations) that vary widely, not only across cultures, but also within the subcultures of a society. As students are introduced to the target culture, they need to learn to expect differences and heterogeneity, and eventually to understand and appreciate their logic and meaning.

Integrating the teaching of language and culture in the classroom brings about issues related with learner identity, stereotyping, cultural bias, and prejudice. In a language-and-culture pedagogy, the question of identity is central: the assumption is that the learner's L1 identity is not "colonized", i.e., does not become submerged in the process of learning a foreign/second language, but rather is modified from a monocultural to a multicultural perspective (Porto 2007).

Therefore, the development of cultural awareness necessarily includes the possibility of reflection upon and expression about divergent and convergent aspects of the target culture and that of the learner. However, this should be understood as providing opportunities for learners to go beyond the mere comparison of facts and result not in an unfavourable assessment of the students' own culture and a glorification of the foreign one (Lopez Barrios and Villanueva de Debat 2007) but in a deeper appreciation of their own heritage.

#### **d) Assessment**

As with any other aspect of language learning, the cultural component should be assessed as well. About this, Byram proposes that culture should be assessed in terms of knowledge, attitude and behaviour. The first area is important since some factual knowledge is necessary to communicate interculturally. The second domain is related to the purpose of cultural study, which is to encourage positive attitudes of students towards both language learning and people from other countries and communities. Behaviour includes appropriate behavioural response. It is related to "social interaction", both verbal and non-verbal (qtd. in Swatevacharkul n.d.). The last two aspects are usually assessed under "Attitudinal Contents" in our educational context. It should be borne in mind that decisions on assessment have to be closely related to curriculum objectives and naturally spring from them.

## Conclusion

Now that why we should teach culture in our EFL lesson is widely acknowledged, teachers should decide what and how to teach and assess it so that culture is truly integrated with language teaching and become a strong component of our curricula. The study of culture involves time that many teachers feel they cannot spare in an already overcrowded curriculum; they often content themselves with the thought that students will be exposed to cultural material later, after they have mastered the basic grammar and vocabulary of the language. Teachers should be made aware of the fact that this "later" never seems to come for most students. Therefore, instead of teaching language and culture in a serial fashion, they should teach them in an integrative one with learners themselves as the subject matter in a process of guided exploration and self-discovery, as they examine and analyse their own values and their reactions to those of the culture of the target language.

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**The concept of intercultural competence: its desirability as an objective of all language classes and its realization in the English classes at Universidad Nacional del Sur**

**Prof. Ana María Tombolato**  
[atombolato@uns.edu.ar](mailto:atombolato@uns.edu.ar)

**Mgter. Ana María Martino**  
[amartino@uns.edu.ar](mailto:amartino@uns.edu.ar)

**TPN Ana Carolina Marcos**  
[amarcos@uns.edu.ar](mailto:amarcos@uns.edu.ar)

**Universidad Nacional del Sur**

**Abstract**

This paper will try to show the intimate relationship between the concepts of intercultural, linguistic and communicative competence. The main objective of foreign or second language education in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is precisely intercultural competence, since there is no real communicative competence without it. At the same time, as F. Trujillo Saéz and Cassany et al. (1998) state, you must know a language to be able to approach and understand the culture of the people who speak it.

We will offer a critical analysis of the definitions of *intercultural competence* developed by Meyer (1991); Wessling (1999); Denis and Mata (2002); Celse-Murcia and Olhstain (2000); Byram and Zarate (1997) and also show how the ideas included in this work are reflected in the Council of Europe work, *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, teaching, assessment*, since the Council "is concerned to improve the quality of communication among Europeans of different language and cultural backgrounds." In the last part of our presentation reference will be made to our concrete work at the University, to how interculturality, this need to develop an attitude of acceptance of *the Other* in learners and teachers, is an essential part of our daily job: choosing textbooks; planning objectives for our classes and carrying out the assessment of these objectives; participating in international exchange programs that result in foreign students in our classrooms and, furthermore, preparing our students to travel abroad and take part in foreign university classes or postgraduate programs.

**The concepts of linguistic, communicative, and intercultural competence**

The objective of second or foreign language teaching and learning has changed over the history of language teaching. One could probably argue that the objective of language learning should always be the same: *mastering the language, knowing the language*, but of course, it all depends on the concept of language that underlies the pedagogy endorsed. Or probably we could say the aspect of language considered: 1. Language as a set of symbols, with each particular language having its own grammatical, phonological and semantic elements; 2. Language as a means of communication or 3. Language as the representation of culture and as one of the means, probably the main one, to express different cultures.

Thus, in direct relation to these concepts of language, three different objectives have determined the methodology used in the foreign language classes in the last fifty years or so: 1. Linguistic competence; 2. communicative competence; and 3. intercultural competence.

As we have already stated in the introduction to this paper, there is an intimate relationship between these three competences. Thus, it is necessary to clarify and define these terms to be able to explain that relationship.

The first two, linguistic and communicative competence originated in the basic dichotomy that Noam Chomsky introduced: competence-performance. For Chomsky, “competence” refers to mastery of the principles governing language behaviour. “Performance” refers to the manifestation of these internalised rules in actual language use” (Nunan 1988). The first one is concerned with knowledge of the rules of language, while the second one with the manifestation of those rules in the actual use of language. Linguistic competence encompasses a number of components: morphological component; phonological component; syntactic component; semantic component and lexical component (Belinchón, Igoa y Rivière, 1994). Linguistic competence, then, meant knowing about language, knowing the “rules” and “forms” of a language.

But at the beginning of the seventies the paradigm changed, the idea of language as a set of symbols changed. The focus shifted to emphasise the function of language as a “tool” for communication. “Knowing *about* language” was no longer enough; the learner had to be able to use his/her knowledge of rules and forms to use the language to communicate. In 1972, Hymes presented the concept of *communicative competence*, defined as: “Knowledge which allows us to use language as a tool for communication in a particular social context”. It is a dynamic concept based on the negotiation of meaning between the interlocutors, applied to both, written and oral communication, which is realised in a particular context or situation.

As F. Trujillo Sáez (2011) states in “Objetivos en la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras. De la competencia lingüística a la competencia intercultural” that it was Pérez Martín (1976) who explained the distinction between these two competences in this way: “to highlight the difference between knowledge “about” language rules and forms, and the knowledge that enables a person to communicate functionally and interactively.”

However, when analysing the components of communicative competence, Canale and Swain (1980), and in a later work Swain alone (1983), talk about four different sub-competences: grammatical or linguistic; discursive (cohesion and text organization); sociolinguistic (register, linguistic varieties and socio-cultural rules) and strategic competence (compensation strategies, verbal and non-verbal). But van Ek (1984) talks about six

components: linguistic, discursive, sociolinguistic, strategic, social and socio-cultural competence. This socio-cultural sub-competence refers to the native speaker's framework of reference, which is different from the one of the foreign language learner. At the same time, Stern includes *a culture syllabus* within the *contents*, and *transfer* within the *objectives* of his **Multidimensional Curriculum Model**. These two elements are related to culture: the first one corresponds to including contents about life in the target linguistic community and the second has to do with language acquisition strategies, language and culture analysis, and the development of positive attitudes towards language, culture and language learning. Lastly, we can see that in 2001 the Council of Europe explains *communicative competence* in terms of three components: sociolinguistic, linguistic and pragmatic component.

These components are shown graphically with the *sociolinguistic component* placed on the left and linked to the other two with arrows pointing to the right, to make it clear that the Council of Europe deems "sensitivity to social conventions when communicating with representatives of other cultures" of utmost importance.

Taking into consideration all these definitions of *communicative competence*, we can conclude that the socio-linguistic or socio-cultural nature of language was recognised and included in all of them, from the very beginning. Why, then was the need of an intercultural paradigm felt? The answer is simple: in classroom practice, the term received a simplistic interpretation, and the concept was reduced to its linguistic and functional aspects, whilst the socio-linguistic or socio-cultural ones were not given any room, they were forgotten.

As from the 1990s onwards, other disciplines, such as anthropology, psychology and pedagogy have been suggesting and promoting the need for intercultural education in the field of general education. Language teaching theory has recognised this need, accepted the suggestion and started talking about the new paradigm: *intercultural language education*, i.e. it has incorporated the neglected aspect of language and made *intercultural competence* the main objective of foreign language teaching and learning. Of course, this is true as regards "language teaching theory", not always generalised as regards "language teaching practice". Though it is only common sense to see that there is no other place as appropriate as the foreign language classroom to encourage the acquisition and development of this competence.

### **Intercultural competence**

In his work *Mediating Language and Cultures: Towards an Intercultural Theory of Foreign Language Education* (1991) Meyer refers to *intercultural competence* as part of a wider competence of the foreign language speaker and defines it as "the ability of a person to



behave adequately in a flexible manner when confronted with actions, attitudes and expectations of representatives of foreign cultures” (qtd. in Atay et al. 2009).

Similarly, Byram stated the success of interaction implies not only an effective interchange of information, as was the goal of communicative language teaching, but also the “the ability to decentre and take up the other’s perspective on their own culture, anticipating and where possible, resolving dysfunctions in communication and behavior ” (1997). In this line, he presents his model of intercultural communicative competence, which identifies five different factors involved: knowledge, attitudes, skills of interpreting and relating, skills of discovery and interaction and political education including critical cultural awareness.

-Knowledge includes learning about social groups, products, practices and processes of interaction.

- Attitudes involve curiosity and openness towards the other as well as readiness to revise cultural values and beliefs and to interact and engage with otherness.

-Skills of interpreting and relating mean ability to identify and explain cultural perspectives and mediate between and function in new cultural contexts.

-Skills of discovery and interaction are related to the ability to acquire new knowledge of a culture and cultural practices and the ability to operate knowledge attitudes and skills under the constraints of real-time communication.

-Critical cultural awareness is defined as the ability to evaluate critically the perspectives and practices in one's own and other cultures.

Thus, educating students to use a second/foreign language means to accustom them to being intercultural sensitive, by supporting them to build the ability to act as a cultural mediator, to see the world through the other’s eyes, and to consciously use culture learning skills (Sen Gupta 2002). Within this framework, the foreign language learner is viewed as an “intercultural speaker”, someone who “crosses frontiers, and who is to some extent a specialist in the transit of cultural property and symbolic values” (Byram & Zarate 1997). In the document *The Sociocultural and Intercultural Dimension of Language Learning and Teaching* Byram and Zarate state that learners approach the discovery of a foreign culture with attitudes and knowledge which have been built empirically based on their own culture. So, the academic context, they say, is only one of the contexts where attitudes and knowledge should be critically analysed. In general lines, these authors point out that a learner who possesses sociocultural competence “*will be able to interpret and establish relationships between different cultural systems recognise distinctive social marks in a foreign cultural system and deal with conflict which may arise from disorders and resistance typical of intercultural communication.*”

According to Wessling (1999) and Denis and Matas (2002) during the process of teaching-learning intercultural competence, the learner goes through four different stages: sensitisation, awareness, relativisation and organisation and implication.

In the first stage, the learner must *adopt a critical point of view, which will enable him/her to see the elements that condition his/her own perception of reality* and, thus, admit the existence of other realities, as well as other forms of ordering.

In the awareness stage he must acquire strategies in order to inquire and interpret the meanings of linguistic forms, communicative situations, cultural attitudes and manifestations belonging to the foreign language and culture. It is necessary to recognise one's own representations and those of others and to reflect upon their origin.

In the relativisation and organisation stage the student should be able to use dialogue and to contrast points of view in order to establish comparisons and interpret cultural events, taking into consideration the context in which they take place. Thus, communicative competences in intercultural situations and strategies to solve conflicts are developed, and, at the same time, the learner is led to reflect about the system and communication.

In the implication stage, the learner will become aware of the acquisition of a third perspective, developing skills to mediate in intercultural situations which, at the same time, will encourage him towards a meta-cultural reflection, as well as a discovery of new situations beyond the classroom.

As we can see, the main idea underlying all these definitions is that foreign language education should enable learners to become aware of differences, understand and accept them, collaborate in the mediation and communication between different cultures. To put it briefly: it should humanize people, it should make people kinder. However, we feel there is one more element that should be taken into account the idea of identity of the learner. We completely agree with Oliveras (2000) when she underlines "*the conservation of the identity of the learners, softening nationalist feelings, through reflection*" as one of the indispensable conditions in the process of developing intercultural competence.

We have presented the *cultural competence* as the main objective of foreign language teaching and learning nowadays, but, of course, this does not mean that the *linguistic competence* and the *communicative competence* are not present as objectives of language education. In fact, it only means that the cultural competence is the most complete of the three, since the relationship between them is so intimate that one would not exist without the others. Because language is one of the manifestations of culture, it is culture in itself. As Ana

Alonso states in *Competencia intercultural en la enseñanza del inglés dentro del contexto turístico* (2010), the development of linguistic competence is essential for the development of cultural competence, and, both of them are a sine qua non condition for the acquisition of a true communicative competence in a foreign language, so that the learner may feel at ease and comfortable in that new world that is disclosing itself to the student.

A similar idea is expressed by Yule (1998), "*languages reflect cultures*". And, along the same lines, Cassany et al. (1998) define language as "*the key to culture, since it allows us to transmit the outside world and the inside one, and also to organise our thinking*".

Again this intimate relationship is shown by Celse-Murcia and Olhstain in their work *Discourse and Context in Language Teaching. A guide for Language Teachers* (2000) when they highlight the importance of context and socio-cultural aspects in building up communicative competence. They explain that the acquisition of communicative skills in the first language is a process that continues along one's life, in contrast to basic skills which are acquired at a very early age. Learning a second language implies enlargement, modification and readjustment of those innate strategies, since they will be the basis to approach the new language and culture. They emphasise the importance of knowledge of the target language alongside skills and strategies which allow the learner to use the language effectively and appropriately in different social and cultural contexts.

A cognitive principle states that to acquire new knowledge we use pre-existent knowledge, so, when we attempt to learn a second or foreign language, we will do so, using our knowledge of the first language. As we have already shown, language is closely connected to culture; we understand and use language according to our notion of the world, our own cognitive structure, our *schemata*. Consequently, if teachers are not aware of this, and consciously help students to compare and contrast their own notion of the world (their *schemata*) with "the new notion", "the new *schemata*", the new culture, they will never be able to acquire "communicative competence" in the second or foreign language. And there is obviously even less possibility of their becoming "interculturally competent". Dubin et al. (1986) talk about this in relation to the reading process.

We could go on and on, with definitions offered by different authors in recent times, since a lot has been said and written about intercultural competence, but we feel the ones offered in this paper are representative enough. Besides, we are interested in showing some practical applications of intercultural competence in the teaching-learning of English as a foreign language and Spanish as a foreign language at Universidad Nacional del Sur.

In the English Program at UNS, courses of English as a Foreign Language are offered in three different levels: level 1A and B, level 2 A and B and level 3 A and B. These levels have been organised according to the guidelines of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages of the Council of Europe*. It is worth mentioning that the CEFR reflects the ideas discussed in this paper. The document repeatedly refers to “*the intercultural approach*” of teaching, “*the intercultural speaker*”, “*intercultural awareness*”, and “*intercultural competence*”.

In 1.2, *The aims and objectives of Council of Europe language policy*, the document states that the Council adheres to three basic principles:

- that the rich heritage of diverse languages and cultures in Europe is a valuable common resource to be protected and developed, and that a major educational effort is needed to convert that diversity from a barrier to communication into a source of mutual enrichment and understanding;
- that it is only through a better knowledge of European modern languages that it will be possible to facilitate communication and interaction among Europeans of different mother tongues in order to promote European mobility, mutual understanding and co-operation, and overcome prejudice and discrimination; and
- that member states, when adopting or developing national policies in the field of modern language learning and teaching, may achieve greater convergence at the European level by means of appropriate arrangements for ongoing co-operation and co-ordination of policies.

These principles are clear enough as regards the relationship of the framework to the concepts we have dealt with so far. It could also be added that cultural competence and the skills implied in it are included in the different tables to show the abilities described as typical for a definite level. At the same time, it should be borne in mind that although it speaks about “Europe”, globalisation has made it universal.

So, by using it and adhering to its principle, the English Program at UNS is putting into practice “interculturality”, making it happen in our classrooms: the objectives we propose our students to achieve are “intercultural objectives”. These objectives guide our practice. As a result, we have chosen a text that offers intercultural material: not only because of its content, including customs, food, etc.; but also from the point of view of attitude: presenting all varieties and accents of English speaking people (native or foreign) at the same level, not allotting supremacy to any of them, though making the learner aware of the existence of different varieties. The activities selected to practice the linguistic items taught offer the learners many opportunities to develop their intercultural competence, such as role plays, or

researching and discussing lifestyles in other countries. An important feature to enhance intercultural competence in students is the presence of a language assistant from the United States in the Program. Each year a new assistant assigned by the Fulbright Scholarship Program offers activities, in general informal activities, which are a great help in the development of cultural competence: chats, where students participate in conversations freely, twice a week and movie nights, where a film is shown and then commented upon. Moreover, the teachers organise activities to invite the assistant to their classes, where he/she exchanges information about topics dealt with in the book, giving his point of view as a Native American citizen.

Another feature that promotes intercultural competence is the fact that foreign students participate in the courses as they are in Argentina through the exchange programs organised by the university. We host students from France, Peru, Paraguay, Chile, Bolivia, Sweden, Finland, among other countries. Our students also go abroad on exchange scholarships and the UNS has a special course that was designed to help students that are going abroad on scholarships or exchange programs. This course is called: *International Communication Skills (ICS)*

The Spanish as a Foreign Language Course (Español como Lengua Extranjera - ELE) is directed to students of many different nationalities and they exchange information about their cultures at the same time that they learn Spanish.

Another aspect of our practice where intercultural competence is taken into consideration is Assessment. Coherently and consistently with the contents included in the syllabus, the materials used in classes, the extra activities offered, and mainly the objectives set, assessment is planned and carried out including aspects of intercultural competence, i.e., this all-embracing objective is specifically evaluated.

### **Conclusion**

It is clear that all language theories point out that the intercultural competence is the utmost important objective to be achieved by foreign language learners; that it is almost impossible to separate it from the natural way into which languages are acquired. The question is, then, are we teachers aware of the need to include it in our syllabuses? And also, do we always remember how to promote and help our students to become interculturally competent?

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## A picture is worth a thousand words

**Mgter. Marcela Morchio**

[sanchez.morchio@interredes.com.ar](mailto:sanchez.morchio@interredes.com.ar)

**FFHA-UNSJ**

### **Abstract**

The expression *A picture is worth a thousand words* can be traced back to an early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest examples ever found using this phrase is attributed to the newspaper editor, Arthur Brisbane in March 1911 and to Frederick Barnard in *Printer's Ink*, December 1921 in USA. The saying conveyed the message that images were more powerful than words. A century later, the idea is still valid. The objective of this paper is to describe the fundamental role of images and its pedagogical implications when teaching English to digital natives.

### **Global changes and literacy pedagogy**

Global changes have had a strong effect on society. Most of contemporary written daily communication is no longer carried out by analogical means such as books, post but rather by digital devices such as mobile phones, computers. This has had an evident impact on education, for instance, the concept of literacy has evolved into digital literacy to refer to written practices as well as to the process of learning them on a digital environment (Cassany 2002).

Reading on virtual environments (VE) does not only require the processing of words but also of, audio, video and images simultaneously; the individual's capacity to do so is referred to as "multimodal literacy" (Kress & Jewitt 2003; Pahl & Rowsell, 2005; Walsh, 2008 qtd in Walsh 2010).

Tiramonti posits that school in Argentina was built on the assumption that culture resided on the written word but nowadays this construct has been replaced by a culture based on images, hence some of the difficulties the educational system is currently facing.

This is closely connected to the fact that out that students are digital natives (DN) in Prensky's terms and therefore deploy a massmediatic mindset (Corea and Lewkowicz 2007) what makes them learn in very particular ways. One of the characteristics of this type of learners (Morchio, 2010) is the capability to carry out several activities at the same time, without working in a graded, structured and organized manner. They are used to get varied concurrent stimuli and to cope with them efficiently. DN do not need to learn linearly, handling one aspect and successively another, they have the capacity to process varied tasks at the same time.



On account of the aforementioned arguments literacy pedagogy needs to be redefined and teachers need to adapt their teaching strategies to contemporary demands, so as to suit students' needs and learning styles. And this applies also to our teaching context in San Juan as it has been pointed out in recent articles (Morchio and Muñoz, 2009).

### **The image in the EFL classroom**

The expression *A picture is worth a thousand words* can be traced back to an early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The earliest examples ever found using this phrase is attributed to the newspaper editor, Arthur Brisbane in March 1911 and to Frederick Barnard in *Printer's Ink*, December 1921 in USA. The saying conveyed the message that images were more powerful than words. A century later, the idea is still valid.

Images are always present in VE and referring to this fact Kress (qtd. in Cassany 2002) points out that an image is not a mere figure or translation of written information but a different system that conveys meaning on its own. In spite of this, many English lessons are based solely on words.

Most of the students we find in our classes in San Juan are DN, but more often than not, the class design does not suit their subjectivity and thus, for instance, the ELT class is carried out without the support of a single image. Thus, teachers mediate meanings and grammar, scaffold students' interlanguage construction, and so on, working solely on words without using a simple image.

In this paper I would like to focus on the value of working with images in the TEFL class on two particular aspects: one for vocabulary retrieval learning and the other as a visual aid. The first focus is based on my experience as teacher trainer and English coordinator while the second on my in-process doctoral research<sup>3</sup> on vocabulary learning.

### **The image as another aid in the EFL class**

Most schools in Argentina are provided with some type of ICT facilities, partly due to governmental efforts such as *Plan Conectar Igualdad*. Furthermore some educational institutions schools are provided with other type of ICT equipment: IWB, beamers, computer labs. However in many educational institutions more often than not, due to different causes (Morchio, 2013), this technology is not always available at the time of the EFL class. The only resources and aids a teacher can always count on and be sure to have at her/his

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<sup>3</sup> Doctorado en Ciencias de la Educación, Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Mendoza.

disposal for teaching is the classical chalk and blackboard (or its more modern version of whiteboard and marker).

It is in this environment, characterized by the lack of or poverty of didactic resources, where the creativity of the teacher is crucial. In the classroom setting, words can be turned into simple images, as shown in what are nowadays called are *word clouds* (Fig. 1), which are a favourite and are at our disposal in many different labels and formats (Tagxedo, Wordle, Tagul, etc.).

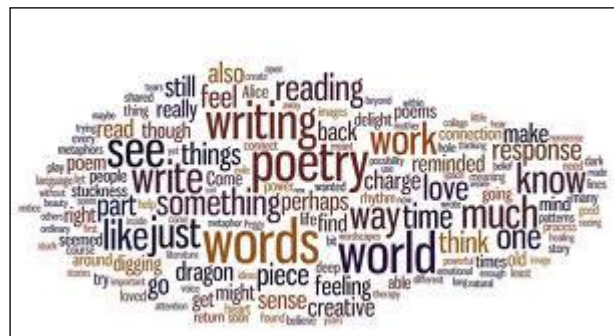


Fig.1: Wordclouds

Whenever we work with a text, it should be remembered that students do not favor a linear processing of information. In fact, a text, as the one depicted in Figure II, might not be easily processed and hence understood by a DN.



Fig. 2: A plain text

However, Figure III might be helpful to explain other possibilities teachers have at hand: the phrase that outstands (*a picture is worth a thousand words*) acts as an image because it

protrudes and this saliency makes it function as an image. Students read this, not as a mere array of words, but as an image and as such, it has a different impact on their learning process.

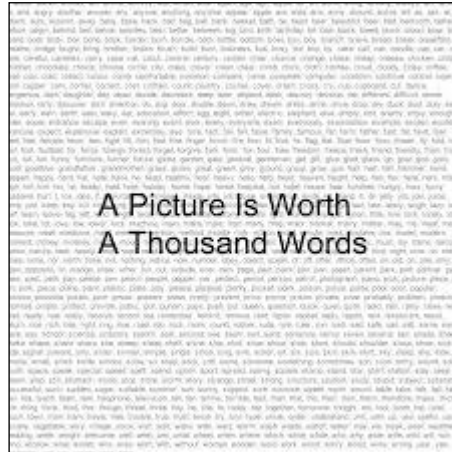


Fig. 3: Phrases as images

This effect can be achieved any time the teacher wants to call students attention, to make explanations or meanings more remarkable, to highlight a mispronounced word during an oral interaction activity, etc. Whenever the situation warrants it, the teacher can write words or phrases on the blackboard in a way that these perform the role of an image (Figure IV).

The teacher only needs to remember that students have developed a massmediatic subjectivity for which a simple drawing, (such as a word within a bubble or a cloud on the blackboard) can perform the function of an image and thus be conducive to more effective learning.



Fig. 4: Words as images

### Images in vocabulary learning

Using the right lexical item at the right time is part of the communicative competence learners should develop in an EFL class. According to Laufer et al (2008), knowing a word entails a continuum of subprocesses: passive recognition, active recognition, passive recall and active recall. This last process, active recall, is the retrieval of the correct lexical item (in terms of form and meaning) from within the mental repertoire.

The use of pictorial material has long been recommended to enhance vocabulary learning as a way to store meaning (Nation 1990) *both linguistically and visually* (Nation, 2006:85). Likewise, pictorial material seems to help speed up vocabulary retrieval.

During an exploratory study about vocabulary retention students were given two exercises of a structured nature in which they were supposed to supply just one item in each sentence. The first exercise (Fig. 5) consisted of sentences only while the second activity was illustrated with some pictures (Fig. 6).

<p>1. Susan Works in an office. She works on the computer and answers the phone. She is a .....</p> <p>2. John works at a hospital. He cures people. He is a .....</p> <p>3. Mr. Smith drives a bus. He is a .....</p>
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Fig. 5: Active recall with words

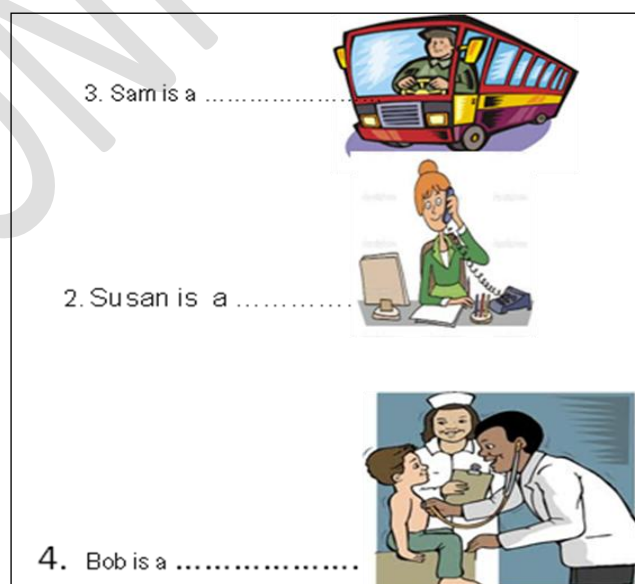


Fig. 6: Active recall with images

This second task proved to be easier because as students were able to retrieve the word at a faster pace and without much difficulty, what seems to strengthen the idea that images play an important role in vocabulary learning. Hence we could posit that the inclusion of images is a valid resource in the EFL classes.

### Images in the EFL class

Throughout this paper it has been pointed out social changes have had an impact on literacy pedagogies, and hence on EFL teaching. It has been outlined that as images appeal to DN subjectivities in a very particular way, teachers should try to include them in our classes. Two possible uses have been suggested: as a simple aid to be used at any point in the language lesson and particularly to favour vocabulary learning. As it has been pointed out the inclusion of images in the EFL classes might be more than helpful in promoting language learning. If a picture is worth a thousand words ... let's use it in the EFL classes!

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## **Desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa en inglés. Experiencia en el nivel universitario**

**Lic. Prof. María Cristina Herrera**  
[mchm@infovia.com.ar](mailto:mchm@infovia.com.ar)

**Lic. Prof. María Beatriz Caterbetti**  
[bettycaterbetti@yahoo.com](mailto:bettycaterbetti@yahoo.com)

**Facultad Regional San Rafael-UTN**

### **Resumen**

Hace varios años, en la Facultad Regional San Rafael de la Universidad Tecnológica Nacional se decidió que los dos niveles de inglés del diseño curricular para las carreras de ingeniería, no eran suficientes para satisfacer los requerimientos del ámbito laboral, ya que sólo se desarrollaban la lecto-comprensión y traducción. Se tuvo en cuenta que las empresas, solicitaban con respecto al idioma inglés, comprender textos, y también cierto nivel de competencia comunicativa, oral y escrita. Esto llevó a la implementación de cinco niveles de enseñanza comunicativa del inglés, todos curriculares, para capacitar a nuestros alumnos de una manera que facilitara, en lo relativo al inglés, su inserción laboral y posterior desempeño profesional. En esta presentación se compartirá la experiencia en nuestra Regional empleando el enfoque comunicativo en la enseñanza del idioma, cómo se concretó este proyecto, sus características, sus modificaciones y los resultados obtenidos hasta la fecha en el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa de los futuros ingenieros.

### **Desarrollo**

En nuestra facultad, la Regional San Rafael de la UTN, la enseñanza del idioma inglés estuvo durante muchos años, al igual que en la mayoría de las facultades del país, dedicada fundamentalmente a la lecto-comprensión y a la traducción de textos técnicos. Pero a partir del año 2000 se puso en marcha un proyecto que contemplaba un cambio radical en el enfoque empleado en la enseñanza del inglés.

Se observó detalladamente el medio en el que los futuros egresados podrían desarrollar su labor, ya como profesionales. Esto evidenció la necesidad de que los alumnos, futuros ingenieros, pudieran expresarse correctamente en inglés, no sólo en forma escrita, sino también, y muy especialmente, de manera oral. Recordemos que según un informe del British Council, para el año 2015 dos mil millones de personas estarían aprendiendo inglés, y dentro de una década el inglés sería hablado por la mitad de la población mundial. Sin duda la globalización en que estamos insertos, llevó a que cada vez más empresas comenzaran a requerir de sus profesionales competencia en el manejo del idioma de la comunicación internacional por excelencia. Por ello se tuvo en cuenta en nuestro proyecto que los egresados no solo necesitaban tener acceso a bibliografía de su especialidad, sino que concurrían a entrevistas de trabajo, que se realizaban en idioma inglés, o debían rendir

exámenes de inglés que también incluían conversación. Por otra parte, se consideró la importancia de un buen manejo de esta lengua extranjera para la participación en congresos internacionales, para aprovechar la amplia oferta educativa en el exterior, programas de intercambio y becas de perfeccionamiento profesional; para participar de programas de pasantías y formación de jóvenes profesionales.

Estos factores, entre muchos otros, nos llevaron a plantearnos la necesidad de un cambio en la enseñanza del idioma inglés, para proporcionar a nuestros alumnos la competencia comunicativa en inglés, una herramienta importante y necesaria para su rápida inserción laboral y su posterior desempeño profesional. De allí que se elaboró un proyecto que trató de dar respuesta a las necesidades detectadas, en cuanto al manejo del idioma inglés, apuntando, por lo tanto, al desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa en los alumnos. Dado que el proyecto está basado en el desarrollo de la competencia comunicativa en idioma inglés, consideramos importante definir qué entendemos por competencia. Cullen (1996), las define como:

“...las complejas capacidades integradas, en diversos grados, que la escuela debe formar en los individuos para que puedan desempeñarse como sujetos responsables en diferentes situaciones y contextos de la vida social y personal, sabiendo ver, hacer, actuar y disfrutar convenientemente....”

De aquí se infiere que la competencia apunta a lo que un sujeto sabe y que le permite hacer en distintas circunstancias. Al respecto, la Dra. Gómez de Erice (2000), expresa:

“...la competencia se entiende como una espiral de complejidad creciente que comprende los mismos procesos, pero cuyo nivel de apropiación varía según la etapa evolutiva en que se encuentran los sujetos y por ello, el grado de complejidad del desarrollo de la competencia.”

En relación a la expresión “competencia comunicativa”, esta no es nueva. Fue acuñada por Dell Hymes, quien en 1972 la definió como *“ese aspecto de nuestra competencia que nos permite expresar e interpretar mensajes y negociar significados en forma interpersonal y en contextos específicos.”*

Lo que habitualmente denominamos “un buen manejo del idioma”, no es poseer solamente “competencia gramatical o lingüística”, es decir conocer y aplicar las reglas gramaticales. Es necesaria además, la “competencia pragmática”, que se entiende como la habilidad necesaria para producir un lenguaje apropiado según los diferentes contextos e interlocutores. Estas dos estrategias se integran en la **competencia comunicativa**.

Michael Canale y Merrill Swain (1980) especifican que hay distintos componentes que subyacen en la competencia comunicativa. De acuerdo a ellos, según el análisis de Pilleaux (2001), ser competente en una lengua implica, además del conocimiento gramatical, se

debe poseer un “componente sociolingüístico”; un “componente discursivo”; y un “componente estratégico.”

Por su parte, Candy y Crebert plantean también la necesidad de tener muy en cuenta en el diseño curricular, las competencias que beneficiarán al futuro egresado:

“En el diseño de los planes de estudio, las universidades deberán prestar mayor atención a la naturaleza de los probables quehaceres del futuro egresado....Algunos interrogantes se refieren a cómo preparar a los egresados para que actúen del modo más competente en el ámbito ocupacional pertinente y si la preparación que reciben los alumnos es adecuada para satisfacer las demandas y realidades del ámbito ocupacional para el cual orienta la preparación recibida.”

Vemos que el rol de las competencias requeridas es fundamental, ya que imprimen una orientación a todo el desarrollo curricular. Al respecto, Matilla (2006) expresa:

“...las competencias desempeñan un importante papel como orientadoras en la definición de los perfiles de ingreso y egreso que exigen los niveles superiores, tanto académicos como laborales.”

A través del tiempo han surgido numerosas propuestas acerca de cómo enseñar este idioma como lengua extranjera. Al respecto, Richards y Rodgers (2001), expresan:

“Los cambios en los métodos de enseñanza de idiomas a través de la historia han reflejado el reconocimiento de cambios en el tipo de destreza o habilidad que los alumnos necesitan, tal como dirigirse hacia la habilidad oral más que hacia la comprensión lectora como objetivo del estudio del idioma.”

Este reconocimiento del cambio de las diferentes destrezas que los alumnos necesitan en la actualidad es lo que motivó la implementación del proyecto de la Facultad Regional San Rafael, donde el enfoque elegido es el comunicativo, que surgió en Gran Bretaña al final de los años setenta. Allí, los lingüistas británicos consideraron necesario centrarse más en la competencia comunicativa que en el simple conocimiento de las estructuras gramaticales, haciendo de la competencia comunicativa la meta final de la enseñanza de lenguas y desarrollando procedimientos para la enseñanza de las cuatro destrezas lingüísticas.

El uso del enfoque comunicativo en la enseñanza de inglés requiere de una enseñanza comunicativa de la lengua que, según Douglas Brown (1994), podría resumirse en las siguientes características:

- Los objetivos áulicos están enfocados en *todos* los componentes de la competencia comunicativa, no solo a la competencia gramatical o lingüística.
- Las técnicas para la enseñanza de la lengua, están diseñadas con el objetivo de que los alumnos la usen de forma pragmática, auténtica y funcional para propósitos significativos.



- La fluidez y la exactitud se consideran principios complementarios que subyacen en las técnicas comunicativas. A veces la fluidez puede considerarse más importante que la precisión.
- En una clase comunicativa, los estudiantes deben mayormente *usar* la lengua de forma productiva y receptiva, en contextos naturales, sin ensayo.

Para resumir lo relativo a este tema, elegimos las palabras de Lomas (1997) que explica la competencia comunicativa en estos términos: "Al aprender a usar una lengua, aprendemos a saber qué decir a quién, cuándo y cómo decirlo, y qué y cuándo callar."

### Características del proyecto

- **Niveles.** Este proyecto incluye cinco niveles, todos curriculares. Se implementó gradualmente a partir del año 2000, empezando con un año solamente, tal como contemplaba el diseño curricular vigente en ese momento, pero comenzando con la enseñanza comunicativa del idioma inglés. Al año siguiente se agregó otro nivel y así sucesivamente hasta completar los cinco años del nuevo proyecto.
- **Horas de clase.** Ha habido algunos cambios. En este momento, todos los niveles tienen entre tres y cuatro horas y media de clase por semana, todo el año.
- **Número de alumnos.** En el 1er nivel los grupos son bastante numerosos, entre 30 y 35 alumnos por comisión, de las cuales hay cuatro. En los demás niveles se trabaja con grupos más reducidos, generalmente no más de veinte.
- **Material.** Desde que se implementó este proyecto, se trabaja con libros de texto de inglés general. Se complementa con material de tipo técnico que consideramos puede ser de utilidad a los alumnos, según su especialidad. Actualmente se usa la serie New English File (OUP), Elementary, Pre-Intermediate e Intermediate. Los alumnos tienen su libro de texto y su Workbook. A esto se agrega otro material orientado hacia la ingeniería, como English for Professional Success, Engineering Workshop, English for Science and Engineering y Technical English, además de artículos de revistas especializadas o de Internet. La serie elegida incluye mucho material de audio, un CD para práctica extra del alumno, y un sitio de Internet al que los estudiantes pueden ingresar y donde encuentran una variada ejercitación interactiva que incluye gramática, pronunciación, vocabulario, etc., que les ayuda a reforzar lo aprendido y practicado en clase.
- **Aspectos de la enseñanza.** Puesto que el objetivo fijado es desarrollar en el alumno la competencia comunicativa, trabajamos en la adquisición de las denominadas cuatro habilidades básicas. El material que se emplea proporciona gran cantidad de ejercitación oral, auditiva, gramatical y de redacción. Con el

material extra, de corte técnico, generalmente se trabajan las habilidades de comprensión de textos y traducción. Por lo tanto, podríamos llamar a nuestro enfoque **integral**, puesto que aúna el desarrollo de las cuatro habilidades comunicativas básicas, sin dejar de lado las otras habilidades que anteriormente se desarrollaban, traducción y comprensión de textos.

- **Evaluación.** Los alumnos deben rendir dos parciales en el año. Si la nota obtenida es 75% o más, promociona la materia; si su nota está entre 65% y 74%, debe rendir un examen final. Si la calificación obtenida es menor a 64%, debe rendir recuperatorio para acceder a un examen final. Todas las evaluaciones, parciales y finales, tienen una parte escrita, que incluye gramática, redacción, comprensión de texto y traducción, un examen oral y otro de comprensión auditiva.
- **Presentación del proyecto final.** Por una resolución del Consejo Superior de nuestra Facultad, los alumnos deben tener aprobado el quinto nivel de inglés para poder presentar el proyecto final de su carrera. Para la aprobación del último nivel de inglés, además de las evaluaciones correspondientes al mismo, deben presentar un abstract (en inglés) del proyecto final y también deben realizar una presentación oral del mismo, también en inglés.

Analizando lo realizado y observando el uso cada vez más amplio del idioma inglés en los más diversos ámbitos, fundamentalmente académico y laboral, tenemos la certeza de que decisión de cambio fue acertada. Después de varios años de experiencia en la enseñanza comunicativa del idioma, podemos afirmar que es posible lograr el objetivo de desarrollar la competencia comunicativa en los alumnos, obviamente en distintos grados, según las características propias de cada estudiante. El presente proyecto es abierto y flexible, lo cual ha permitido introducir modificaciones a lo largo de los años, y permitirá más cambios en el futuro, si esto es necesario.

Si bien analizando lo realizado y observando el uso cada vez más amplio del inglés en los más diversos ámbitos, teníamos la certeza de que la decisión de cambio fue acertada, decidimos realizar una investigación que tuvo como objetivo general relacionar el nivel de logro de competencia comunicativa en idioma inglés de los egresados de la FRSR de la UTN, con los requerimientos de las empresas en las que existe la posibilidad que se desempeñen como ingenieros, para establecer si este proyecto de la FRSR respondía a los requerimientos de las empresas.

Los Objetivos Específicos de nuestra investigación fueron:

- Conocer el nivel de competencia en inglés solicitado por las empresas a sus profesionales.

- Conocer el tipo de evaluación en idioma inglés que emplean las empresas para seleccionar a sus profesionales del campo de la ingeniería.
- Elaborar y administrar a los alumnos de 5to año de la FRSR de la UTN, un test que permita comprobar el nivel de competencia en inglés logrado al momento de finalizar el cursado del último año de estudios.
- Elaborar y administrar a los alumnos de quinto año un test que sintetice los requerimientos de las empresas.
- Comparar el resultado obtenido por los alumnos en este test con el requerimiento de las empresas.
- Detectar fortalezas y debilidades respecto al idioma inglés en las respuestas de los alumnos.

Para concretar la investigación, decidimos realizar entrevistas a egresados, entrevistas a encargados de RRHH de las empresas, y evaluar a alumnos de 5to año de la FRSR. Al finalizar el análisis de los datos recolectados, éste mostró que:

- ✓ El 100% de los egresados considera que el manejo de inglés es una competencia muy importante para su desempeño laboral. Todos coinciden en que en mayor o menor medida lo necesitan o lo van a necesitar en el futuro.
- ✓ Con respecto al uso de las destrezas que forman la competencia comunicativa en inglés (leer, escribir, hablar y comprender), todas son necesarias, siendo la lectura comprensiva la más usada, seguida por la comunicación oral y comprensión auditiva, y la escritura. La mayoría de las empresas requiere que los ingenieros posean competencia en todas las habilidades ya que las empresas tienen contacto frecuente con proveedores y/o clientes extranjeros, o por pertenecer a empresas multinacionales.
- ✓ La mayoría de las empresas requiere inglés como requisito excluyente de ingreso, en algunos casos a todos los profesionales postulantes y en otros según la posición que el profesional va a ocupar en la empresa. En los casos en que esta competencia no es excluyente, las empresas la consideran como muy importante y algunos responsables de RR HH afirman que la persona que tiene conocimientos de inglés tiene más posibilidades de obtener empleo que otra en igual condición y que postula para el mismo cargo.
- ✓ Un alto porcentaje de empresas brinda capacitación a su personal por la gran importancia que tiene para las empresas un buen manejo del idioma inglés por parte de sus profesionales. Algunas de estas empresas ofrecen capacitación en inglés solo a los profesionales que lo necesiten de acuerdo al cargo que desempeñen, especialmente en cargos gerenciales, de liderazgo y para viajes al exterior. Otras empresas no ofrecen capacitación a sus profesionales por política de la empresa o porque el profesional que ingresa a la empresa ya tiene el nivel que requiere para

desenvolverse en su actividad. La totalidad de las empresas entrevistadas que ofrecen capacitación en idioma inglés a su personal, requieren un nivel previo de conocimiento de este idioma para poder iniciar la capacitación. Algunos egresados expresaron que les resultó difícil aprender o perfeccionarse en inglés después de egresar, ya que las empresas ofrecen cursos pero ellos no cuentan con el tiempo necesario para realizarlos.

- ✓ El total de las empresas solicitan un alto nivel de competencia en idioma inglés (Nivel Intermedio Superior o Avanzado), a los profesionales que van a desempeñarse en cargos jerárquicos.
- ✓ El total de los entrevistados que tiene capacitaciones en el exterior, necesita un manejo de inglés de nivel alto para esas capacitaciones, ya que son totalmente en inglés, aun cuando no todas ellas se den en países de habla inglesa.
- ✓ La mayoría de los egresados entrevistados considera necesaria la enseñanza de vocabulario técnico en inglés en la facultad, sobre todo porque luego lo necesitan para la comprensión de textos técnicos, manuales, instrucciones o, en algunos casos, para entrevistas de trabajo en las cuales se toma la parte técnica en inglés. Otros le atribuyen relativa importancia, piensan que la enseñanza de inglés técnico en la facultad no es necesaria, pues consideran que este vocabulario es específico y sumamente amplio, según el trabajo que desempeñan, y afirman que los términos específicos se aprenden en el lugar de trabajo, lo que se facilita si se tiene conocimiento y manejo de inglés general.
- ✓ La mayoría de las empresas evalúa los conocimientos de inglés de sus postulantes, ya sea por medio de entrevistas, exámenes o de ambas maneras. Algunas otras no los evalúan en esta competencia, a pesar de que la consideran necesaria y aun cuando sus profesionales la usan a menudo en la empresa.
- ✓ La gran mayoría de las empresas entrevistadas requiere distintos niveles de competencia en idioma inglés (Elemental, Pre-intermedio, Intermedio) para ingresar a las mismas.
- ✓ El total de los entrevistados que tiene capacitaciones en el exterior, necesita un manejo de inglés de nivel alto para esas capacitaciones, ya que son totalmente en inglés, aun cuando no todas ellas se den en países de habla inglesa. En el ámbito del petróleo, un buen manejo de inglés es absolutamente indispensable ya que la mayoría de las compañías petroleras son multinacionales.
- ✓ El resultado de las evaluaciones de nivel tomadas a los alumnos de quinto año de las distintas especialidades de la FRSR, reflejó que la gran mayoría de los estudiantes adquirió durante el cursado la competencia en idioma inglés correspondiente a un nivel Intermedio, por lo tanto alcanzan el nivel requerido por las empresas. Estos test

se elaboraron teniendo en cuenta el tipo de evaluación en idioma inglés que emplean las mismas para seleccionar a sus profesionales.

- ✓ La gran mayoría de los alumnos mostró fortaleza en Lectura Comprensiva, que es la destreza idiomática que se usa más frecuentemente en el desempeño laboral de los ingenieros. Por otra parte, se detectó que si bien los alumnos pueden expresarse y hacerse entender en forma oral, algunos mostraron dificultades en su fluidez y en el uso de estructuras complejas.

Teniendo en cuenta el objetivo principal de este trabajo, de indagar en qué medida la enseñanza de idioma inglés en la FRSR de la U.T.N, da una respuesta positiva a las necesidades de los egresados con respecto a dicho idioma, al momento de su búsqueda laboral, podemos concluir que el nivel de logro de la competencia comunicativa en idioma inglés obtenida por los egresados, responde al requerimiento de las empresas en las que posiblemente se desempeñen como ingenieros.

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CONFIDENCIAL

## De la práctica a la teoría. Una clase de lectura de inglés con propósitos específicos (ESP) en la universidad

**Mgter. Silvia Castro**  
[secastron@hotmail.com](mailto:secastron@hotmail.com)

**Mgter. Ana Irene Atienza**  
[anaireneatienza@gmail.com](mailto:anaireneatienza@gmail.com)

**FFHA-UNSJ**

### Resumen

Una renovación pedagógica aplicada a las clases de lectura con propósitos específicos que promueve la visión del lenguaje como práctica social y que a su vez contribuye a mejorar la autonomía de los estudiantes en un contexto de formación docente. Intentamos mostrar cómo y por qué abordamos un texto en estas clases para ayudar a la comprensión, un proceso que se logra luego de la interpretación y explicación; y a la reflexión de los alumnos sobre las elecciones lingüísticas y así promover la alfabetización crítica. Esta propuesta se apoya en dos grandes teorías: la Teoría Narrativa, la cual entiende a la narrativa no sólo como una mera característica estructural de los textos, si no como intrínsecamente incorporada al accionar humano; y por otra parte la Lingüística Sistemico Funcional que constituye el sustento fundamental para el análisis crítico de los textos.

Algunos aspectos teóricos que sustentan nuestro proyecto de investigación actual denominado “Nuestra identidad narrativa. Su construcción en material bibliográfico del ámbito universitario” - (Convocatoria 2010, aprobado por Res 037/11 CS) - nos hizo reflexionar sobre el proceso integral que implica una clase de lectura de inglés con propósitos específicos (ESP) en la universidad, en la cual se intenta que el alumno logre convertirse en un lector autónomo: que regule la velocidad y la comprensión de acuerdo a los diferentes tipos de textos y a la finalidad que persiga con su lectura. Entendiendo, como dice Carlino (2005), que la autonomía no es solamente un rasgo de maduración biológica sino una capacidad que se adquiere para cierto ámbito cuando se está familiarizado con las prácticas que allí se llevan a cabo.

Con respecto al material para este tipo de curso, sabemos que es difícil encontrar algo ya publicado, debido a que para su elección se deben contemplar las necesidades, los intereses, el nivel cultural de los alumnos, como así también el conocimiento del idioma y del área de estudio. El enfoque sociológico y holístico innovador de Marjatta (2013), que además contempla el futuro campo laboral de los alumnos, también nos influye al momento de la selección del material de lectura.

Consideramos la selección del texto fundamental, ya que desde la teoría narrativa también sabemos que “enseñar consiste en ayudar a descubrir e identificar la ‘perla escondida’ de la

propia humanidad... Alcanzar de manera plena un conocimiento y una comprensión basados en el reconocimiento, es decir, en la afirmación explícita del derecho a la alteridad y a la diferencia” (Duch 1998). Inspiradas en esta reflexión, el texto elegido es *A very short story*, de Ernest Hemingway:

One hot evening in Padua they carried him up onto the roof and he could look out over the top of the town. There were chimney swifts in the sky. After a while it got dark and the searchlights came out. The others went down and took the bottles with them. He and Luz could hear them below on the balcony. Luz sat on the bed. She was cool and fresh in the hot night.

Luz stayed on night duty for three months. They were glad to let her. When they operated on him she prepared him for the operating table; and they had a joke about friend or enema. He went under the anaesthetic holding tight on to himself so he would not blab about anything during the silly, talky time. After he got on crutches he used to take the temperatures so Luz would not have to get up from the bed. There were only a few patients, and they all knew about it. They all liked Luz. As he walked back along the halls he thought of Luz in his bed.

Before he went back to the front they went into the Duomo and prayed. It was dim and quiet, and there were other people praying. They wanted to get married, but there was not enough time for the banns, and neither of them had birth certificates. They felt as though they were married, but they wanted everyone to know about it, and to make it so they could not lose it.

Luz wrote him many letters that he never got until after the armistice. Fifteen came in a bunch to the front and he sorted them by the dates and read them all straight through. They were all about the hospital, and how much she loved him and how it was impossible to get along without him and how terrible it was missing him at night.

After the armistice they agreed he should go home to get a job so they might be married. Luz would not come home until he had a good job and could come to New York to meet her. It was understood he would not drink, and he did not want to see his friends or anyone in the States. Only to get a job and be married. On the train from Padua to Milan they quarrelled about her not being willing to come home at once. When they had to say good-bye, in the station at Milan, they kissed good-bye, but were not finished with the quarrel. He felt sick about saying good-bye like that.

He went to America on a boat from Genoa. Luz went back to Pordonone to open a hospital. It was lonely and rainy there, and there was a battalion of arditi quartered in the town. Living in the muddy, rainy town in the winter, the major of the battalion made love to Luz, and she had never known Italians before, and finally wrote to the States that theirs had only been a boy and girl affair. She was sorry, and she knew he would probably not be able to understand, but might some day forgive her, and be grateful to her, and she expected, absolutely unexpectedly, to be married in the spring. She loved him as always, but she realized now it was only a boy and girl love. She hoped he would have a great career, and believed in him absolutely. She knew it was for the best.



The major did not marry her in the spring, or any other time. Luz never got an answer to the letter to Chicago about it. A short time after, he contracted gonorrhoea from a sales girl in a loop department store while riding in a taxicab through Lincoln Park.

Entendida la narrativa como herramienta fundamental para la autorreflexión, pensamos que este texto cuyo tema es el amor en tiempos de guerra, nos permite explorar su poder para comunicar sentido cultural y para alcanzar una autocomprensión. Sobra decir, que la narrativa sirve como una lente interpretativa para reflejar y comprender la naturaleza y la complejidad moral de la vida humana. Esto le permite al estudiante ampliar su horizonte interpretativo iluminando su pensamiento y sentimiento al tender puentes entre diferentes lugares, épocas, culturas y creencias.

En la clase, el proceso de lectura consta de tres momentos: prelectura, lectura y poslectura. Durante la prelectura abordamos el texto para activar y/o ampliar los conocimientos previos de los alumnos, en primer lugar, en cuanto al género. El análisis del discurso tiene muchas variaciones teóricas y prácticas, y sus diferentes escuelas han influido notablemente en el área de las lenguas con propósitos específicos (LPS), a tal punto que el tipo textual o el género es en la actualidad un rasgo que permea las especificaciones de todo programa y todo material de trabajo áulico. Pero un análisis de textos completo, inevitablemente involucra no simplemente al texto como un artefacto aislado sino como inserto en una gran variedad de contextos situacional, social, cultural, profesional, personal, entre otros.

En esta instancia, planteamos una serie de preguntas tales como: ¿Qué información le proporciona el título? ¿Cuáles son las partes de este tipo textual? ¿Qué sabe del autor del cuento? ¿Conoce los contextos social y cultural de este cuento? Luego de esta etapa, la próxima consigna sería darle un vistazo al texto para tratar de dilucidar el tema del texto.

Al iniciar la lectura propiamente dicha comienza el proceso de comprensión en el que, según Liu (2010), el profesor ayuda a los alumnos con palabras, frases u oraciones difíciles y sobre temas de gramática durante el despliegue de esta actividad.

Por ejemplo, trabajamos los referentes del primer párrafo mediante inferencias, con preguntas como:

¿a quién o a qué hacen referencia *they* y *them*? ¿sabemos a quién se refiere *him* o *he*?  
¿con respecto a *she*, encuentra su referente en este párrafo?

One hot evening in Padua **they** carried **him** up onto the roof and **he** could look out over the top of the town. There were chimney swifts in the sky. After a while it got dark and the searchlights came out.

The others went down and took the bottles with them. He and Luz could hear them below on the balcony. Luz sat on the bed. She was cool and fresh in the hot night.

En el segundo párrafo, por ejemplo, apuntamos a inferir, ayudados por el contexto, el significado de nuevo vocabulario o frases que pueden presentar dificultad para la comprensión.

Luz stayed on night duty for three months. They were glad to let her. When they operated on him she prepared him for the operating table; and they had a joke about friend or enema. He went under the anaesthetic holding tight on to himself so he would not blab about anything during the silly, talky time. After he got on crutches he used to take the temperatures so Luz would not have to get up from the bed. There were only a few patients, and they all knew about it. They all liked Luz. As he walked back along the halls he thought of Luz in his bed.

En este otro párrafo analizamos el uso de verbos modales y la forma “ing” y su traducción.

After the armistice they agreed he should go home to get a job so they might be married. Luz would not come home until he had a good job and could come to New York to meet her. It was understood he would not drink, and he did not want to see his friends or anyone in the States. Only to get a job and be married. On the train from Padua to Milan they quarrelled about her not being willing to come home at once. When they had to say good-bye, in the station at Milan, they kissed good-bye, but were not finished with the quarrel. He felt sick about saying good-bye like that.

A continuación podemos utilizar el siguiente párrafo para revisar sufijos y prefijos en adjetivos, verbos y adverbios y verbos regulares e irregulares.

He went to America on a boat from Genoa. Luz went back to Pordonone to open a hospital. It was lonely and rainy there, and there was a battalion of arditi quartered in the town. Living in the muddy, rainy town in the winter, the major of the battalion made love to Luz, and she had never known Italians before, and finally wrote to the States that theirs had only been a boy and girl affair. She was sorry, and she knew he would probably not be able to understand, but might some day forgive her, and be grateful to her, and she expected, absolutely unexpectedly, to be married in the spring. She loved him as always, but she realized now it was only a boy and girl love. She hoped he would have a great career, and believed in him absolutely. She knew it was for the best.

En el proceso de explicación del texto, el profesor toma el control del proceso preguntando y explicando a los alumnos sobre el significado de oraciones y sobre el significado literal del texto. Tomando oraciones como las que se ven a continuación, el alumno distinguirá entre una relación de causa-efecto, enumeración o contraste, etc.; y cuáles son las ideas relacionadas.

After he got on crutches he used to take the temperatures so Luz would not have to get up from the bed.

They wanted to get married, **but** there was not enough time for the banns, and neither of them had birth certificates.

They (the letters) were all about the hospital, **and how** much she loved him **and how** it was impossible to get along without him **and how** terrible it was missing him at night.

En esta misma etapa, de explicación, los alumnos pueden encontrar en estos tres párrafos cómo el autor se expresa literalmente sobre la relación amorosa, el comienzo de la ruptura y el final de esa relación.

Before he went back to the front they went into the Duomo and prayed. It was dim and quiet, and there were other people praying. **They wanted to get married, but there was not enough time for the banns, and neither of them had birth certificates. They felt as though they were married, but they wanted everyone to know about it,** and to make it so they could not lose it.

After the armistice they agreed he should go home to get a job so they might be married. Luz would not come home until he had a good job and could come to New York to meet her. It was understood he would not drink, and he did not want to see his friends or anyone in the States. Only to get a job and be married. **On the train from Padua to Milan they quarrelled about her not being willing to come home at once. When they had to say good-bye, in the station at Milan, they kissed good-bye, but were not finished with the quarrel. He felt sick about saying good-bye like that.** The major did not marry her in the spring, or any other time. **Luz never got an answer to the letter to Chicago about it.** A short time after, he contracted gonorrhoea from a sales girl in a loop department store while riding in a taxicab through Lincoln Park.

En la etapa final de lectura crítica, utilizamos el marco Hallidayano, de Wallace (2003) quien lo diseña para guiar el análisis de textos en cursos de lectura crítica. El mismo presenta en forma gradual, exponentes léxico-gramaticales de los significados ideacional, interpersonal y textual.

El campo del discurso (significados ideacionales), refiere a la forma en que el autor describe lo que está sucediendo, es decir de qué trata el texto. Los alumnos pueden contestar el siguiente tipo de preguntas para obtener información sobre los participantes, los procesos, las circunstancias y la causalidad: ¿qué o quiénes son los principales participantes? ¿qué adjetivos aparecen junto a ellos? ¿qué verbos acompañan a los participantes? ¿realizan procesos mentales, materiales, de relación, etc.? ¿cuán específicamente se describen las circunstancias? ¿se usan adverbios, frases preposicionales? ¿cómo se atribuye la causalidad? ¿el agente está siempre evidente? ¿los actores están en posición de sujeto? ¿quién le hizo qué a quién?

El tenor del discurso (significados interpersonales), está relacionado con la forma en que el autor indica su relación con el lector y la actitud con respecto al tema del texto. Para reflexionar al respecto, el alumno puede contestar preguntas como: ¿cómo se refiere el autor así mismo, a los temas y al lector? ¿cuál es el modo más usado: declarativo,

imperativo o interrogativo? ¿cuál es el rol de la modalidad: qué grado de certeza o autoridad expresa? ¿aparecen adverbios, sustantivos o adjetivos que indiquen la actitud del autor hacia el tema del texto?

Una respuesta probable sería: el autor, en general utiliza el modo declarativo y no emite opinión respecto de los hechos u opiniones de los participantes, salvo en la ocasión, por ejemplo, cuando dice: “absolutely unexpectedly”.

El modo del discurso (significados textuales) se refiere a la forma en que el autor organiza el contenido del texto y para esta instancia los alumnos pueden responder las siguientes preguntas sobre su estructura semántica: ¿el texto es narrativo, expositivo o descriptivo? ¿está escrito en presente o pasado?; sobre su organización general: ¿cómo se presenta la información?; y sobre su cohesión: ¿de qué manera el texto se presenta como una unidad? ¿qué tipo de conectores se han utilizado (con respecto a la estructura semántica del texto)?

En este caso una respuesta podría ser: Es un texto narrativo escrito en pasado y su unidad está dada por medio de conectores de tiempo.

Creemos que este análisis crítico se complementa con los aportes de la Teoría de la Valoración de White (2005). Esta teoría se ocupa de los recursos lingüísticos por medio de los cuales los textos/hablantes llegan a expresar, negociar y naturalizar determinadas posiciones intersubjetivas y en última instancia, ideológicas. Se dividen en tres grandes dominios semánticos: actitud, compromiso y gradación.

- La **actitud** incluye respuestas emocionales o sistemas de valores culturalmente determinados con respecto a los participantes y a los procesos y se divide a su vez, en tres sub- sistemas:

El *afecto*, que tiene que ver con la respuesta emocional y con la disposición, y que se realiza de manera típica a través de procesos mentales de reacción; mediante atributivos relacionales de afecto. Estas evaluaciones ponen en juego la solidaridad entre el hablante y su audiencia. Al apreciar los eventos en términos afectivos, el hablante/escritor invita a su audiencia a compartir esa respuesta emocional, o por lo menos a considerar esa respuesta como adecuada y bien motivada, o comprensible. Cuando se acepta esa invitación, entonces, la solidaridad o la simpatía entre hablante y oyente se aumenta. Ejemplos:

They were glad to let her  
 They all liked Luz.  
 He felt sick about saying good-bye like that  
 She was sorry,...

El *juicio* que comprende significados que sirven para evaluar positiva o negativamente el comportamiento humano, en relación con un conjunto de normas institucionalizadas. Así, el juicio está involucrado cuando el hablante evalúa a un participante humano en relación con sus actos o disposiciones. Las normas sociales que se ponen en juego en estas evaluaciones de juicio adoptan la forma de reglas o expectativas sociales. Ejemplo:

She was cool and fresh in the hot night.

La *apreciación* que es el sistema por el cual se hacen evaluaciones de productos y procesos e incluye valores estéticos y sociales. Ejemplo:

One hot evening in Padua

- El **compromiso** incluye el conjunto de recursos que posicionan al hablante/escritor, es decir, lo que está en juego en la relación interpersonal, con sus emisiones tanto individuales como en lo que se va acumulando a medida que el texto se va desplegando. Refiere a los recursos para posicionar la voz del hablante/escritor en relación con las diversas proposiciones y propuestas de un texto; los significados por medio de los cuales los hablantes reconocen o ignoran la diversidad de puntos de vista que sus emisiones ponen en juego y por medio de las cuales negocian un espacio interpersonal para sus propias posiciones dentro de esa diversidad. Ejemplo:

... and she knew he would probably not be able to understand, but might some day forgive her, and be grateful to her, and she expected, absolutely unexpectedly, to be married in the spring.

- La **gradación** incluye los valores que proporcionan escalas de grado, ya sea en términos de fuerza interpersonal que el hablante adjudica a una emisión, como en términos de la precisión con que un elemento pone en foco una relación de valor. Ejemplo:

... and believed in him absolutely.

En la última etapa del proceso, en la poslectura, luego de haber respondido las preguntas del marco Hallidayano el alumno puede reflexionar sobre los efectos que le producen las elecciones del autor, relacionados con los diferentes aspectos del campo, tenor y modo del texto; en particular con el aspecto interpersonal del mismo, luego de haber realizado el análisis lingüístico utilizando la teoría de la valoración.

Estamos convencidas que en el proceso de lectura los alumnos descubren, construyen e imaginan sus mundos y también logran imaginarse a sí mismos, suavizan los juicios acerca de otros individuos; fomentando la empatía con los extraños, sobre todo con quienes sufren. Con clases de este tipo pretendemos formar profesionales que se caractericen por la solidez de su formación y por su compromiso con la sociedad de la que forman parte.

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## **Do Students Use More Connectors When They Write Longer Texts? A Study on the Use of Connectors in Paragraphs and Essays Written by EFL College Majors**

**Prof. Carlos Machado**  
[carlosamach@gmail.com](mailto:carlosamach@gmail.com)

**Dra. Susana Tuero**  
[sbtuero@mdp.edu.ar](mailto:sbtuero@mdp.edu.ar)

**Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata**

### **Abstract**

Even though texts written by EFL students do not present any grammar mistakes, or problems with vocabulary use, they often often sound stilted and unnatural. Often, this can cause by the overuse and misuse of cohesive devices. The present study was designed to investigate the use of connectors in paragraphs and essays written by EFL college majors and to determine the extent to which text type and length affect the use of such devices.

### **Introduction**

EFL teachers whose job is to help their students develop and improve their writing skills are fully aware of the recurrent difficulties language learners have in developing appropriate written prose. In the past decades, much research in the field of ESL/EFL- English as a second or foreign language- composition has focused on the study and analysis of different aspects of the writing process. Such research has sought to identify sources of problems and attempted to provide solutions. As early as the 1980s, composition specialists and researchers began to question basic assumptions about writing. At the same time, a few EFL teachers of writing began to realize that their attitudes and beliefs as well as their subjective assessment of what good writing is did not provide students with clear guidelines on how to go about writing. Today, most teachers and writing instructors know that there is much more to writing good, effective texts than just using correct grammar structures, appropriate vocabulary, and acceptable punctuation. Even though there are some so-called writing courses whose only focus is on the study and practice of grammar, well-prepared teachers of writing know that there is much more to writing than such surface-level aspects. Good writing results from good thinking, analytical reasoning, and logical reflection. Effective prose, thus, is the outcome of complex cognitive processes which help writers produce coherent and well-articulated texts. An effective prose presents a structure in which ideas are unified and flow smoothly.

Over the last decades a number of studies have analyzed the use of cohesive devices in ESL/EFL writing; much of that research is based on the seminal work *Cohesion in English*, written by Halliday and Hasan in the year 1976. In their publication, they identified five

cohesive elements: reference, ellipsis, substitution, conjunction, and lexical elements; all of which create “texture”– the property of being a text. Much research has been done to study the use of connectors, and their role in ESL/EFL academic writing. Some of such research studies (Milton and Tsang, 1993; Silva, 1993, Granger and Tyson, 1996; Zhang, 2000) have examined the use and overuse of connectors in second or foreign language writing. The purpose was to analyze how these cohesive elements affect the overall effectiveness of student writers’ texts.

Along similar lines, Mohamed and Omer (2000) and Buitkienė (2005) studied the use and transfer of connectors across registers from students’ first language into their second or foreign language writing. Some other researchers carried out a contrastive analysis to study the use, misuse and overuse of connectors in second or foreign language academic writing. Within the framework of contrastive rhetoric, an interesting research study was conducted in the year 2008 by Agnieszka Leńko-Szymańska in the University of Łódź, Poland. She analyzed the use of connectors in texts written by three groups of participants: native speakers who were expert writers, students who were also native speakers of English but non-expert writers, and advanced learners of English who were native speakers of different languages. Results from this study indicate that EFL students and native English speakers, who are non-expert writers, use more connectors than expert native writers do; findings also show that EFL students use connectors more frequently than non-expert native students do.

Despite the conclusive findings coming from research in the field of ESL/EFL writing, within many writing classrooms, many EFL teachers and writing instructors still cling to the idea that using connectors helps students achieve text coherence. At this point it is important to state, however, that the use of such devices is the result, rather than the cause of coherence. Ideas within a coherent and unified text relate logically to each other and to the topic at hand. If such logical ties do not exist, instructors have to help their students solve a more complex problem which relates to students’ logical thinking; to the way they generate and organize their ideas before writing. As early as 1990, in his work *The Illogic of Logical Connectives* W. Crewe pointed out:

*“...used judiciously by a good writer cohesive ties (like connectors) can aid the communicability of the text; used badly they simply confused; in the latter case, poor writing can be instantly improved by their elimination [...] Logical connectives should be seen as higher-level discourse units which organize chunks of text in relation to the direction of the argument ” (33)*

As stated by Crewe, connectives should not be seen as mere stylistic enhancers; when ideas are logically connected to one another there is no need to use connectors. In this way, based on results from previous experimental research and our own professional experience, the present research study was designed to analyze the use and overuse of connectors in



paragraph and essays written by EFL college majors, and to determine if the use of such cohesive devices varies according to text type and length.

### Purpose

- To determine whether EFL college majors overuse cohesive devices in their written texts.
- To determine the extent to which text type and length affect the use of connectors.

### Hypothesis

- I. Students overuse cohesive devices in their writings.
- II. Students use fewer cohesive devices when they write shorter texts like paragraphs than when they write essays.

### Methodology and Materials

For this research paper, 43 effect paragraphs and 43 effect essays written by EFL majors at UNMdP were analyzed. The paragraphs belonged to the term exam # 2 from the first-year course *Process writing I*, and the essays were part of the first term exam of the course *Process writing II* which belongs to second year. Freshmen wrote about an everyday life topic: discussing the effects of working on the computer for long hours, and in the case of the essays, students had to discuss how lack of participation in class affects students' performance in college.

### Procedure

Both paragraphs and essays were analyzed to quantify all the linking adverbials following Biber *et al.*'s taxonomy (1999). He divides linking adverbials into seven categories: enumeration, addition, summation, apposition, result/inference, contrast/concession and transition (Table 1). From his taxonomy, the category "transitions" was excluded because these connectives are mainly used in oral discourse and should not be needed in academic writing.

Category	Linking adverbials
Enumeration	first, second, third, fourth, firstly, secondly, thirdly, fourthly, in the first/second/third/fourth place, first of all, for one thing, for another thing, to begin with, to start with, next, lastly
Addition	in addition, further, similarly, also, by the same token, furthermore, likewise, moreover, at the same time, what is more, as well, too

Summation	in sum, to conclude, all in all, in conclusion, overall, to summarize, in a nutshell
Apposition	which is to say, in other words, that is, i.e., namely, specifically for instance, for example, e.g.
Result	therefore, thus, consequently, as a result, hence, in consequence, so
Contrast / concession	on the one hand, on the other hand, in contrast, alternatively, conversely, instead, contrary, in contrast, by comparison though, anyway, however, yet, anyhow, besides, nevertheless, still, in any case, at any rate, in spite of that, after all
Transition	by the way, incidentally, by the way

Table 1. Biber's et al.'s taxonomy (1999)

## Results

Forty-three paragraphs and 43 essays written by EFL majors at UNMdP were analyzed quantitatively and qualitatively. In the 43 paragraphs written by freshmen taking process writing I, 158 connectors were found. Table 2 presents the mean, the average number of connectors used per paragraph, was 3, 67%.

Number of paragraphs	Number of connectors	Mean
43	158	3,67%

Table 2. Mean for connectors used in paragraphs

Following Biber's taxonomy, the total number of cohesive devices identified in the paragraphs was later sorted into the different categories. Table 3 shows that 60 connectors belonged to the category enumeration, with a mean of 1.39% . 35 were part of the category result, and the average number was 0.81% . 33 connectives were used for summation with a mean of 0.76% , and 15 belonged to the category apposition, with a mean of 0.34%. 9 connectors were used to show addition with a mean of 0.20%, whereas 6 were used to show contrast and that represented an average of 0.13%

Total number of Connectors in the paragraphs	Category	Raw Number	Mean
158	Enumeration	60	1,39%
	Result	35	0,81%
	Summation	33	0,76%
	Apposition	15	0,34%
	Addition	9	0,20%
	Contrast	6	0,13%

Table 3. Mean for each category of connectors used in paragraphs

After quantifying the number of connectors in the paragraphs, 43 essays were analyzed.

Table 4 shows that in the case of essays, 134 connectors were found with a mean of 3, 11%.

Number of essays	Total number of connectors	Mean
43	134	3,11%

Table 4. Mean for connectors used in essays

As it was done with students' paragraphs, table 5 shows the number of connectors found in each category following Biber et all's taxonomy.

Total number of Connectors in the essays	Category	Raw Number	Mean
134	Result	46	1.07%
	Contrast/Concession	31	0.72%
	Enumeration	29	0.67%
	Addition	15	0.34%
	Apposition	9	0.20%
	summation	4	0.09%

Table 5. Mean for each category of connectors used in essays

The following chart compares the number of connectors used in paragraphs and essays.

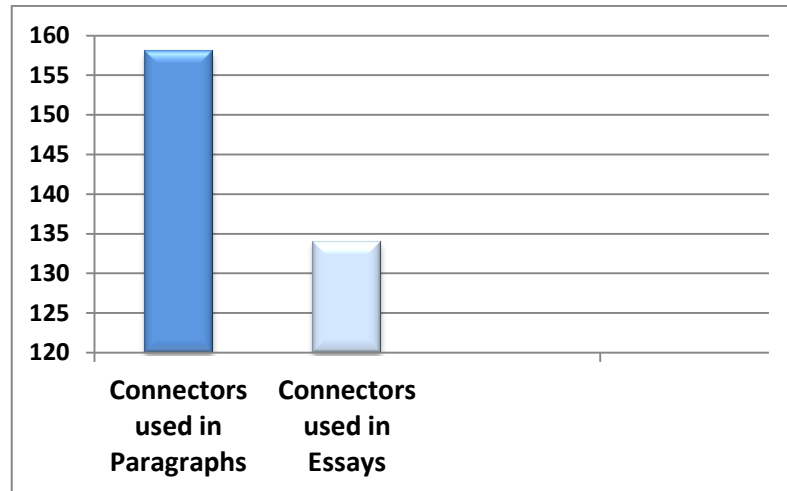


Chart 1. Number of connectors used in paragraphs and essays

## Conclusions

This research aimed to determine whether EFL college majors overuse cohesive devices in their written texts. One of the hypotheses was:

- I. Students overuse connectors in their writings.

Considering the findings, the hypothesis is partially confirmed. The results yielded by the analysis of 43 paragraphs show that freshmen tend to overuse cohesive devices when they write, in this case, cause-effect paragraphs. Out of the 43 paragraphs analyzed, 158 connectors were found, with a mean of 3, 67%. As the numbers show, many freshmen used almost four connectors in each of their ten to twelve-line paragraphs. Clearly, considering text type and length the average number of connectors used represents an overuse of such devices.

Results from this study are consistent with findings from previous research in the area. In his work *Illogic of Logical Connectives* (1990), Crewe concluded that many college students use a lot of connectors when they write and such an overuse “*at best clutters the text unnecessarily and at worst causes the thread of the argument to zigzag about, as each connector points it in a different direction*”. In a similar fashion, Leńko-Szymańska in her work *Non- native or non-expert? The Use of Connectors in Native and Foreign Language Learners’ Texts* concluded that the tendency to overuse linking expressions is a characteristic of novice writing in English. Certainly, foreign language learners are likely to run the risk of misusing those connectors if they prefer quantity over quality.

However, as previously stated, the first hypothesis in the present study was not totally confirmed. If the results from the analysis of students’ essays are observed, it can be noticed

that out of 43 essays, 134 devices were found and that represents a mean of 3, 11% connectors per essay. In this case, considering text type and length, it cannot be claimed that sophomore students overused connectors in their four-paragraphed essays. Three connectors in a four- paragraphed essay do not show overuse.

Along similar lines, the second hypothesis in this study which stated that *Students use fewer cohesive devices when they write shorter texts* cannot be confirmed either. A quick look at the results shows quite the opposite. Freshmen used more connectors when they wrote paragraphs. They used almost 4 connectors per text, as opposed to sophomore students who used an average of three connectors per essay.

Considering that those paragraphs were written by first- year students who had not taken any writing course as part of the English teaching Training program at UNMdP, their tendency to overuse cohesive devices may stem from their previous experience. The emphasis on the use of connectors in EFL writing may be encouraged by classroom activities, and even induced by “textbook advice”. The use of connectors is frequently considered one of the most effective means of achieving coherence and cohesion in written discourse. Most teachers of English, writing instructors and even textbooks insist that student writers should use such devices in order to help ideas flow naturally. However, such an emphasis on the use of connectors has turned into an indiscriminate use of those linkers. One of the problems with many EFL student writers’ texts can result from the overuse of cohesive devices. The outcome of any small-scale study like this, then, bears important pedagogical implications for the teaching of writing in English as a foreign language. The focus should not be on the amount of connectors to include in a piece of text. Instructors should not encourage the use of connectors as the best way to link one claim to the next, even if books on how to go about writing include exercises and taxonomies of linking adverbials. Writing instructors and teachers should resort to other activities and strategies instead. Classroom practice should not focus primarily on the meaning of each device and on decontextualized exercises to link isolated sentences. On the contrary, it should aim at the development of students’ logical thinking so that they can improve the way in which they generate, organize and present their ideas following the logical method of development in English.

As Crewe points out, a case should be made against the practice of using logical connectives as mere ‘stylistic enhancers’, words or expressions that may be sprinkled over a text in order to give it an ‘educated’ or ‘academic’ look. Rather, logical connectives should be seen as higher-level discourse units which organize chunks of text in relation to the direction of the argument. If the links are misused, the argument as a whole, not merely the sentence containing the connective, becomes difficult to process and may even appear illogical.

Leńko-Szymańska, in turn, states that other means of building coherence should be highlighted in the teaching process- constructing a logical argument in which semantic relationships between ideas are self-evident and where the reader requires few overt markers to follow it.

As stated at the beginning, good writing is the result of good thinking, analytical reasoning and logical reflection. Writing as a skill may be difficult to teach but if teachers focus on other aspects of their students writing process other than the use of connectors, any text written by EFL students may not only be more native-like, but also more expert-like. After all, it is in that direction that teachers and writing instructors should move.

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CONFIDENTIAL

## Teacher feedback to student writing

María Lourdes Montes Bustos

[mlourdesmontes@gmail.com](mailto:mlourdesmontes@gmail.com)

FFHA-UNSJ

### Abstract

This article presents a study carried out to explore the feedback techniques used by English teachers at secondary schools in our province. In order to obtain the data, a survey was employed to assess students' perception towards: the frequency with which different techniques are used by their teachers and the utility value they assign to each of them. The results show an overall correspondence between these two indexes. However, two techniques exhibited a remarkable mismatch between frequency of use and utility value assigned by students. Students reported to value peer correction and self-assessment as useful tools to improve their composing skills but figures show a dramatic disparity with regard to the regularity with which they are implemented in their English class.

### Introduction

Feedback is one of the most valuable resources a teacher has in order to adapt instruction to the particular needs of students. It is also the means through which students can assess which aspects of their work are adequate and which ones need improvement. It should be noted, nonetheless, that providing feedback is not always easy for teachers and decoding teachers' feedback can also turn into a nightmare for many students.

Research on ESL writing instruction has provided teachers with a varied range of principles and strategies to apply when responding to a student's piece of writing. Regardless of researchers' disagreement about their effectiveness, these strategies are used by teachers and demanded by learners to tackle problems related to the complex task of composing.

This paper intends to describe: a) *which of these strategies EFL teachers in San Juan are implementing and* b) *which techniques EFL learners in San Juan find more useful.*

### Theoretical framework

Inheritors of the behaviorist tradition, early educational theorists like Thorndike, considered that positive feedback would naturally stimulate the student to repeat the same kind of conduct, whereas negative feedback would inhibit inappropriate student behavior (Brookhart 3). This paradigm had an important repercussion and shaped the kind of instruction imparted by most teachers in the twentieth century.

As happens with most paradigms in the social field, new perspectives arise and challenge the validity of the preceding ones. During the 1980's and 1990's, descriptive analyses of what teachers did when responding to students' writing led to the conclusion that feedback could be misleading or too authoritative.



Despite the fact that some authors such as Cook, Selinker and Truscott went as far as suggesting that error correction is unnecessary, ineffective and even counterproductive (Ferris, D. qtd. in Hyland & Hyland 81), evidence of the effectiveness of error correction in ESL writing tasks is abundant in empirical studies conducted in recent years (Ashwell, 2000; Brookhart, 2008; Chandler, 2003; Ferris, 1997; Ferris & Roberts, 2001).

After a shift towards embracing a constructivist approach, new studies have come to take into account students' inner faculties as an important part of the process of editing. Teacher-student conferences, where a teacher and a student debate on the ways in which a particular piece can be improved, have thus become increasingly popular tools in writing instruction in L2 settings (Saito 48). Peer and self correction have also proved to work well with upper intermediate and advanced ESL students, as shown by Rothschild and Klingenberg in a study conducted in 1990 (Saito 48).

## **Methodology**

### **Participants**

In order to reflect the preferences exhibited by students in San Juan regarding feedback techniques used by teachers in writing assignments, two schools located in the Capital City were chosen: one of them of private administration, the other one financed by the State. The majority of students who attend these two educational establishments come from middle-class households. As in most secondary schools in San Juan, English is taught as a *foreign language* in the two institutions analyzed in this report, the average amount of English instruction being of 120-160 minutes a week. Because writing skills require a certain level of mastery of the resources of the language, I selected students from the upper courses in the two secondary schools surveyed.

### **instruments and procedures**

The following survey (Fig. 1) was used to collect data which answered the initial questions. It was designed to illustrate which strategies students claim their teachers implement when providing them with feedback on writing assignments. The survey also aimed at obtaining information about students' preferences with respect to the strategies used by their teachers. It was written in the students' mother tongue to ensure their proper understanding of what each strategy consisted of.

**Acerca de las estrategias empleadas en sus clases de Inglés para mejorar sus producciones escritas indique:**

- **Frecuencia:** 0 (Nunca) – 1 (Pocas veces) – 2 (Casi siempre) – 3 (Siempre)
- **Grado de utilidad:** 0 (Contraproducente) – 1 (Poco útil) – 2 (Útil) – 3 (Muy útil)

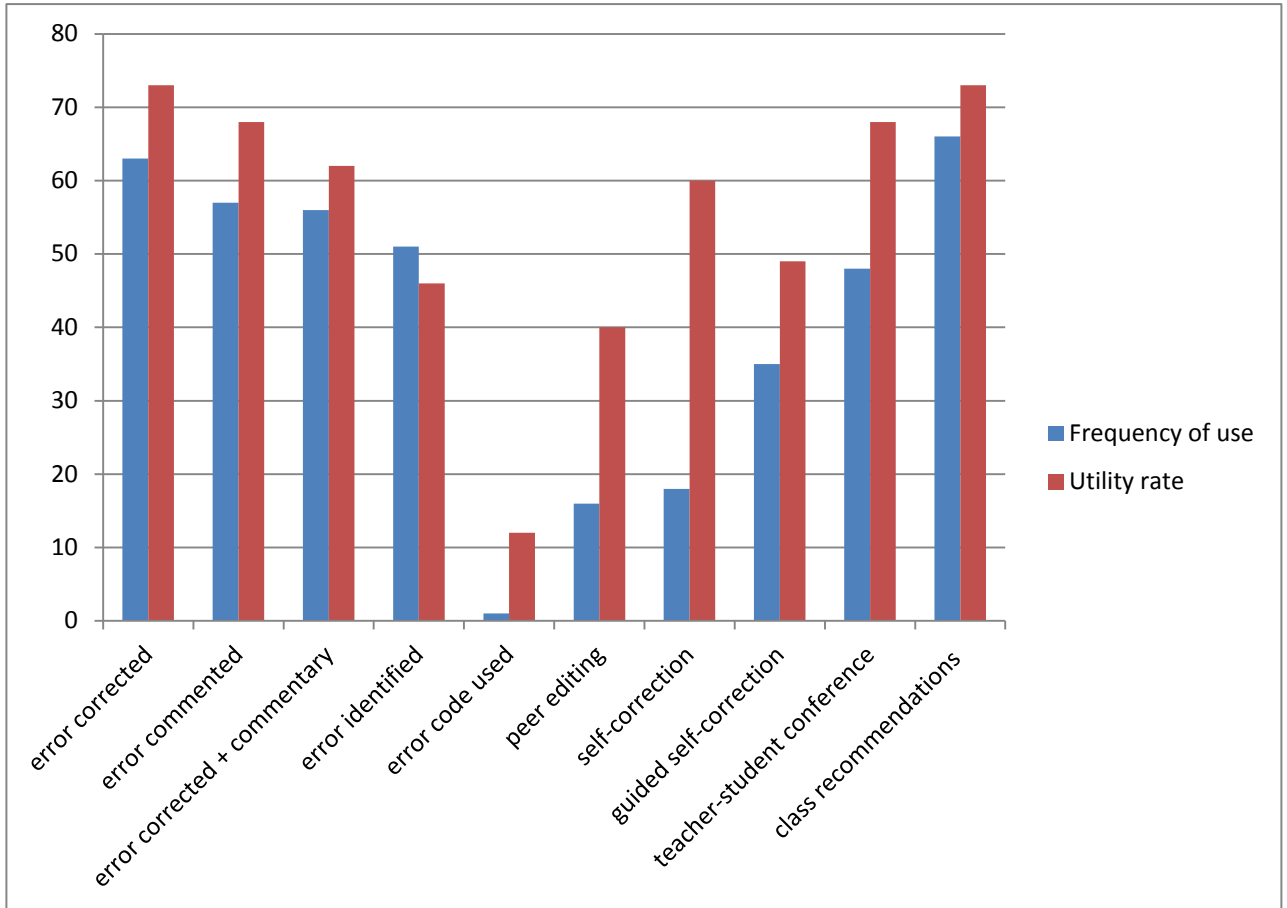
Estrategia utilizada	Frecuencia				Utilidad			
	0	1	2	3	0	1	2	3
1. Su profesor/a corrige sus errores proporcionando la forma correcta.								
2. Su profesor/a realiza comentarios sobre sus errores para que Ud. los corrija.								
3. Su profesor/a corrige sus errores y agrega comentarios acerca de los mismos.								
4. Su profesor/a sólo identifica sus errores subrayando o redondeándolos.								
5. Su profesor/a utiliza un código para etiquetar errores de diferente tipo. (ej: WW, WO, P, Sp)								
6. Sus compañeros leen sus trabajos escritos y sugieren correcciones para mejorarlos.								
7. Ud. realiza una auto-corrección usando una guía orientadora provista por el/la docente.								
8. Ud. realiza una auto-corrección sin ningún tipo de guía o asistencia.								
9. Su profesor/a y Ud. debaten acerca de sus errores y dificultades particulares e intentan resolverlos.								
10. En clase su profesor/a hace recomendaciones generales para mejorar los trabajos escritos.								

**Si lo desea puede agregar comentarios sobre alguna o todas las estrategias mencionadas.**

Fig. 1: Survey on instructors' feedback answered by students

### Data analysis

42 (forty two) surveys were collected of which only 30 (thirty) underwent analysis. The selection of the surveys was carried out arbitrarily, and its aim was to ensure that the two schools were equally represented. Thus, the final sample was constituted by 15 (fifteen) surveys answered anonymously by the same number of students from each of the two schools. The following bar graph shows the results concerning **frequency of use** of the different strategies and the **utility value** students assigned to each of them.



Graph 1. Overall correspondence between most helpful strategies, according to students, and frequency of implementation by instructors.

The greatest gap in the graph is exhibited by the *self-correction* bars. Most students assigned the highest mark (3) for the utility value of this strategy, yet they reported doing it with little frequency.

It should be noticed that there was a discrepancy between the values displayed by two of the techniques. Despite the importance students attribute to *peer editing* and the use of an *error code*, the analysis reports a lack of implementation in their English classes.

The *teacher-student conference* is another strategy reported to be seldom put into practice by teachers but highly valued by students.

## Discussion

It is possible to say that for the most part, students' preferences with respect to the way in which their teachers respond to their writing assignments coincide with the frequency with which those techniques are used in their English classes. Notwithstanding, it is important to point out that teachers in our province apparently neglect two strategies which are important to help students become autonomous learners: *peer editing* and the use of an *error code*.

Students' answers show that they are not used to letting their classmates read their written works and asking them for suggestions. Teachers should start considering *peer editing* as a valuable source of feedback which offers students the possibility of learning from the mistakes or from the comments of their own classmates. This technique demands some kind of instruction from teachers in order to be carried out effectively by learners. There is plenty of material on-line which teachers might find useful when incorporating this strategy in their classes.

The lack of implementation of an *error code* to address student's mistakes also deserves some attention. Using labels is a powerful tool to make students aware of the types of error they make and it helps them to correct mistakes more easily. Moreover, this strategy is time-saving for teachers who many times feel to be "drowning" in paperwork. Putting this technique in practice will require that part of a class be devoted to explaining what each label means. In order for students to become familiar with how the technique works, group activities can be carried out in which they have to correct a piece of writing using the *error code*. It would thus become possible for teachers to combine this strategy with *peer editing*. In connection to the development of a spirit of autonomy among students, we should draw attention to the huge gap exhibited by the *self-correction* bars. It is alarming that even though students seem to recognize the value of self-assessing what they have written, they admit to lacking the habit of doing it every time they write. The word *self* might lead teachers into thinking that this strategy does not involve them directly; however, they should reflect that it is in their hands to encourage students to go through the fundamental process of revision. The use of self-assessment guides at early stages may help students be more involved in the process of writing.

### **Conclusion**

This paper intended to explore the way in which teachers in San Juan deal with the task of providing EFL learners with feedback on their writing assignments. It also had as an objective to survey students' preferences with respect to teachers' response to their writing. The results of this study could be expanded by further research. Empirical studies should be carried out to prove the effectiveness or inefficacy of the strategies employed to respond to students' writing in EFL contexts. Despite the limitations of this investigation I think that its results reveal which aspects of our duty as teachers match the demands of our students, and which ones need to be worked upon. The fact that peer editing and the use of an error code were reported to be the least useful strategies, cannot be disregarded because it indicates that students are not familiar with them. Students cannot value something they do not know.

It should therefore be the job of their teachers to give those strategies a try and see how they work with different groups and students.

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**Effects generated by Cognitive Load Theory:  
*Does Language Proficiency Reduce the Redundancy Effect?***

**Prof. Carlos Machado**  
[carlosamach@gmail.com](mailto:carlosamach@gmail.com)

**Mgter. Pedro Luchini**

**Universidad Nacional de Mar del Plata**

**Abstract**

Based on cognitive load theory, this paper sets out to explore the extent to which language proficiency may reduce or compensate for the redundancy effect in L2 reading comprehension. Two groups of young learners preparing to sit for the FCE, Cambridge First Certificate Exam, participated in this study. They were divided into two groups. One group was exposed to a single mode of instruction: reading alone, while the other was presented with a dual format which integrated reading and listening. In the light of the findings obtained, some pedagogical implications for the teaching of reading comprehension skills will be discussed.

**Introduction**

Comprehension is not a simple process of accessing word meanings and then combining them. It involves the construction of a mental representation of a text as a result of intricate cognitive processes (e.g., Kintsch, 1998; Zwaan and Radvansky, 1998). Given this complexity, reading comprehension becomes a very important predictor for successful language learning because it subsumes the mental processes of learning, memory and problem solving.

The cognitive load theory is concerned with the relationships between working and long-term memory and the effects of those relationships on learning. This theory has been used to generate many instructional procedures (Sweller, 2003, 2004) one of which is the *redundancy effect* (henceforth, RE) This effect happens when the same information is presented to learners simultaneously through different modes of instruction (e.g. spoken and written). Sweller stated that learning is inhibited when a written and spoken text containing the same information is presented simultaneously rather than in written or spoken form alone. When learners are presented with the same information in a dual mode, they are required to mentally bring together the multiple forms. This manifold operation generates an extraneous cognitive load that obstructs learning (Chandler & Sweller, 1991; Sweller, 2005; Sweller & Chandler, 1994).

When learning to read in a foreign language, it is a common practice among EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers and instructors to use an explicit dual mode to present a text. Indeed, many textbooks include the phrase “listen and read” every time there is a text. In many cases, it seems to be “textbook advice” to expose students to the same information in a dual format. However, as stated before, the effects of this manifold operation do not seem to be conducive to learning. Many studies based on cognitive load theory suggest that multiple forms of presenting information turn out to be counterproductive for comprehension purposes. In fact, it has been demonstrated that simultaneous reading and listening is less effective than reading alone.

In a previous study carried out with a group of 24 students preparing for the Cambridge *PET* (Preliminary English Test) at a private school in Mar del Plata, There were significant differences in gain scores across the two presentation modes. Examination of text comprehension scores indicated that those learners who were exposed to the modality mode (reading alone) obtained better results than those in Group B, exposed to the redundant mode of instruction(read and listen). That is, the group of students who only read the text was able to retrieve more main ideas than Group B on the whole.

Therefore, anchored in this cognitive theory and based on results from previous experimental research and our own professional experience, the present research study was designed to analyze the effect of simultaneous presentations (read and listen) and single presentations (read alone) on reading comprehension with different groups of learners preparing to sit for the FCE, Cambridge First Certificate Exam.

### **Purpose**

- To determine whether dual modes of presenting the same information generate a redundancy effect when reading in English.
- To determine the extent to which language proficiency can reduce or compensate for the possible redundancy effect.

### **Hypothesis**

- In the case of reading comprehension in English as a foreign language, language proficiency does not reduce the extraneous cognitive load if the redundancy effect is generated by dual modes of presentation.

## **Methodology and Materials**

### **Participants**

Participants were two groups of students preparing to sit for the Cambridge *FCE* exam. The total number of students from both groups was 30. To carry out this experiment, the two groups of students were arranged in two equal sub-groups: Group A & B. The selection of students was randomly made. Each group completed a task separately. Group A was exposed to a single mode of instruction (reading alone). Group B was asked to read and listen to the same scripted text simultaneously.

### **Procedure**

Data were gathered employing a full text of about 500 words. This text was drawn from a students' course book *PET Result* (Baker 2010). This passage was deliberately selected from this source to guarantee that its linguistic complexity and its length would not become an internal factor that would eventually put into jeopardy the validity of our study (See Appendix 1).

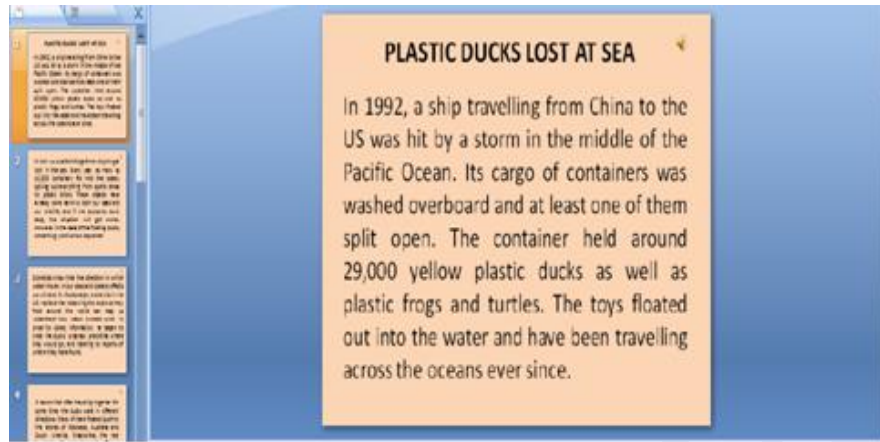
Three evaluators segmented the text into main and secondary ideas. Initially, two evaluators worked together to spot the main ideas. Then, a third intervened to cross-check their findings. In cases whereby there were discrepancies between the raters, the three evaluators working jointly discussed them until they reached common consensus. A total of nine main ideas were identified (see Appendix 1).

The text was fragmented into five different paragraphs, each similar in length (approximately 100 words). These paragraphs were shown to the learners on five successive power point slides. Each slide was held on display for about 30 seconds. Learners were not allowed to control the pacing of the slides. The time allotted for learners to read each slide was calculated taking into account a pilot experience carried out by their teacher, prior to data collection, through which it was possible to measure the average time it took these learners to read and understand excerpts of a similar linguistic complexity and length.

As was said earlier, Group A was asked to read the narration on slides, while group B was presented with the audio narration along with a synchronized redundant on-screen text. The slide presentation was shown to both groups individually on two consecutive turns. Right after they completed their reading/listening tasks, the learners were asked to write a summary of what they had read, containing as much information as they could retrieve. They were allowed to write their summaries in L1 or L2 according to their preference to facilitate



the expression of their ideas. Graph 1 below illustrates the first slide shown to the learners in which the opening fragment is shown.



Graph 1. The first slide shown to both groups

## Results

The ideas students included in both groups (A: read; B: read and listen) were then analyzed following the group of 9 main ideas previously selected. These ideas were used as "master rating" to analyze students' summaries and evaluate their productions. Table 1 presents the number of main ideas that each student in each group could gather and the total number of main ideas identified in each group.

<b>Group A:</b>		<b>Group B: Read &amp; Listen</b>	
<b>Read alone</b>	<b>Main</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>Main</b>
<b>Participants</b>	<b>ideas</b>	<b>Participants</b>	<b>ideas</b>
Student 1	6	Student 1	3
Student 2	4	Student 2	5
Student 3	4	Student 3	2
Student 4	7	Student 4	2
Student 5	5	Student 5	3
Student 6	4	Student 6	4
Student 7	5	Student 7	4
Student 8	3	Student 8	4
Student 9	6	Student 9	4
Student 10	6	Student 10	3
Student 11	6	Student 11	4
Student 12	5	Student 12	3

Students 13	4	Student 13	4
Student 14	6	Student 14	5
Student 15	7	Student 15	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>54</b>

Table 1. Number of main ideas identified in each group

Those students exposed to the reading alone treatment identified 78 main ideas, whereas the learners presented with the dual mode of instruction spotted a total number of 54 main ideas.

Examination of text comprehension scores indicated that those learners who were exposed to the modality mode (reading alone) obtained better results than those in Group B, exposed to the redundant mode of instruction. On applying the ratio suggested (9 ideas, 15 students per group = 135 main ideas in each group), the analysis of means indicates that Group A scored 57, 7%, while Group B achieved 40%. In average, the difference between the means reached 17, 7 %. This difference suggests that Group A was able to retrieve more main ideas than Group B on the whole. Table 2 below presents the means score for each group and the difference between the means in percentages:

<b>Group A (read)</b>	57.7%	<b>17.7%</b>
<b>Group B (read and listen)</b>	40 %	

Table 2: Difference between the means

## Conclusions

As stated, those learners who were exposed to the modality mode (reading alone) obtained better results than those in Group B who read and listen to the same text. A single mode of instruction decreased the redundancy effect and seemed to facilitate reading comprehension skills.

As regards students' proficiency in relation to the redundancy effect, our initial hypothesis is confirmed. In the case of reading comprehension in English as a foreign language, language proficiency does not reduce the extraneous cognitive load generated by dual modes of presentation. Even if all students who were part of this study read a text which was "easy" for them as it was below their proficiency level, students from group A, read only, outperformed students from group B, read and listen. That is because an instructional design that integrates a dual mode imposes an extraneous cognitive load that manifestly obstructs reading comprehension, regardless of students' proficiency level.

This claim contradicts some SLA theories which foster the use of multiple presentations. When the same text is presented using two different modes, however, learners are pushed to activate two different channels simultaneously to process the same information and to build up referential networks connections.

Decoding an L2 text using one sole mode of instruction already implies a demanding cognitive load over working memory. Along these lines, it is very unlikely that L2 learners will have sufficient working memory capacity to be able to handle a dual mode of instruction that involves reading and listening simultaneously as this implies a competition of resources in working memory.

Although small-scale, the present study bears some practical pedagogical implications. This study suggests that teachers and material designers should appraise their work in ways that reduce learners' extraneous or unnecessary cognitive load, so as to facilitate comprehension. Along these lines, a set of numerous steps could be taken in the foreign language reading comprehension class to foster learning. First, teachers should reconsider the impact of the Redundancy Effect on the reading aloud of instructions. A popular common belief among language teachers' points out that by reading instructions aloud along with their students reading comprehension will be facilitated. Another common practice that reinforces the redundancy effect consists in teachers reading out loud a passage along with their students who are later required to explain in their own words what they have understood. In some other cases, teachers often appoint one student to read aloud a text while the rest of the class does it silently. Once the reading stage is over, one of them is asked to reconstruct what he has understood. Certainly such practice is not conducive to learning.

As shown in this and previous studies, the redundancy effect affects Efl learners no matter what their command of the language is. It is not a question of how each individual student tackles the reading task at hand, but rather of the way a dual mode of instruction thwarts the comprehension process imposing a heavy cognitive load on students.

## Appendix 1 (Text used)

### PLASTIC DUCKS LOST AT SEA

In 1992, a ship travelling from China to the US was hit by a storm in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. Its cargo of containers was washed overboard and at least one of them split open. The container held around 29,000 yellow plastic ducks as well as plastic frogs and turtles. The toys floated out into the water and have been travelling across the oceans ever since. It isn't unusual for things from ships to get lost in the sea. Every year, as many as 10,000 containers fall into the ocean, spilling out everything from sports shoes to plastic bricks. These objects have already done harm to both our seas and our wildlife, and if the accidents don't stop, the situation will get worse. However, in the case of the floating ducks, something positive has happened. Scientists know that the direction in which water moves in our seas and oceans affects our climate. Dr. Ebbesmeyer, a scientist in the US, realized that observing the ducks as they float around the world can help us understand how ocean currents work. In order to collect information, he began to track the ducks' progress; predicting where they would go, and listening to reports of where they were found. It seems that after travelling together for some time, the ducks went in different directions. Many of them floated south to the shores of Indonesia, Australia and South America. Meanwhile, the rest headed north into the Arctic Ocean, becoming trapped in ice until the winds and the movement of the water sent them over 3,000 kms to the North Pole. Today, although many ducks have been found washed up on different shores around the world, thousands of the ducks are still floating. So, if you see a plastic toy, bleached and worn after so much travelling, with the words "First Years" printed on it, and you report your find, you will help towards our understanding of the world's climate.

#### Main ideas

1. A ship travelling was hit by a storm
2. One of the containers was split open
3. The container had plastic ducks, frogs and turtles
4. The toys have been floating/traveling across the oceans ever since
5. Many objects lost in the sea have done harm to the seas and wildlife
6. However, the floating ducks didn't cause any harm
7. Floating ducks have been used to understand how ocean currents work and their effect on the climate
8. Many ducks are still floating
9. If you find one you'll help towards the understanding of the world's climate.

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CONFIDENCIAL

## New tasks for old texts

**Marisel Bollati**

[mmbollati@gmail.com](mailto:mmbollati@gmail.com)

**Rosa Inés Cúneo**

[rosacuneo@gmail.com](mailto:rosacuneo@gmail.com)

**Ana MaríaLaciar**

[ani.laciar@speedy.com.ar](mailto:ani.laciar@speedy.com.ar)

**FFHA-UNSJ**

### Abstract

The value of reading in an EFL class is beyond dispute. However, once a text has been read in class and the accompanying exercises have been completed, it often goes into oblivion until evaluation day, when texts are at best quickly reread. Our aim in this presentation is to highlight the potential of getting students to interact and engage with texts which have already been covered in class. Revisiting a text necessarily implies repurposing the reading activity so that students approach the task with a new challenge. As we come back to 'old' texts with new tasks, we can draw on a wide range of resources ranging from traditional to multimodal tools (including the use of visual and digital resources). In turn, our 'new' tasks may be focused on a variety of new purposes, from strengthening the students' reading skills (including critical reading) to promoting the development of other language skills such as speaking, listening or writing. Our belief is that by generating new, repurposed 'encounters' with old texts, we can help students focus on and notice various aspects of language and culture, and build bridges between the old and the new.

### 1. Introduction

Within the EFL community, the value of reading is beyond dispute. Reading serves a multiplicity of purposes in a language class, from offering meaningful content to providing illustration of linguistic forms. However, once a text has been read in class and the accompanying exercises have been completed, it often goes into oblivion until evaluation day, when texts are, at best, quickly reread. We believe that a text has a great potential as a learning tool, and that going back to a text that has already been seen as part of a lesson or unit can be a worthwhile activity as long as it is conducted in such a way that it does not become a repetitive or tedious task for learners. From the teachers' perspective, revisiting a text implies bringing new life to an old text and making it meaningful again for students.

In this paper, we present a number of activities that can be carried out to revisit a text. No claim is made to originality, as most of the ideas presented are likely to be familiar to EFL teachers. Rather, our efforts are focused on bringing together a variety of text-related tasks and on offering practitioners a bank of activities that may be useful at the time of deciding what can be done to make the most of texts.

## 2. From Reading to Re-reading: Revisiting a text

### *From Reading ....*

Volumes have been written on the reading skill, which should come as no surprise given the role reading plays in the development of literacy. From the perspective of this paper, perhaps the most important development in reading research has been the shift from this activity involving a passive skill to it being recognized as an active, challenging and thoroughly engaging activity, which brings together the learner's knowledge of the language and knowledge of the world.

Reading comprehension is "a meaning-construction process, involving integral interaction between text and reader" (Koda 254). Knowledge of the lexico-morpho-syntactic structure of the target language is not enough to face a reading comprehension task successfully. Readers need to deploy their reading strategies and text processing skills together with some reflection on the contexts of production and interpretation of a foreign language text.

In view of the complexity of the processes involved, becoming a good reader involves a long process of exposure, meaningful practice and personal growth. Carrell and Eisterhold (86) argue that since our knowledge is in a constant process of expansion and refinement along our lives, comprehension increases and we become better readers in the course of time.

We believe that students can be better equipped to successfully deal with reading comprehension tasks if they are taught how to explore the various ways in which the linguistic and extralinguistic components of language operate together to construe particular meanings. We claim that this exploration can be aided by means of text-revisiting activities.

### *....to Rereading*

What does 'revisiting a text' imply? Basically, it means to come back to a text with a fresh purpose. Swaffar (n.pag.) explains:

*Rereading consists of on-going and repeated encounters with a text, guided by a particular task so that segments of the text get revisited and rethought.*

Several authors have explored the value of coming back to a text (Barnett and Seefeldt, 1989), and they confirm the validity of the activity, which Swaffar (n.pag.) summarizes as follows:



*Rereading is the most effective type of reading, especially of foreign language texts, because it offers learners the opportunity to re-think messages and see features they have not noticed in initial reading.*

When students revisit a text, they bring to it the cognitive load of the ‘first encounter’, i.e. the previous knowledge they have built of the text in question. Such familiarity can give students a sense of confidence, which is always favorable for learning. The new encounter thus becomes an opportunity to go deeper into the text and explore those aspects which may have gone unnoticed the first time, such as details about a story’s characters or places, point of view, cultural references, among others.

However, when rereading is proposed as a classroom activity, special care should be taken by teachers to define a renewed purpose for the task so that students have the motivation to discover, explore or engage in an aspect of that text which they had not dealt with before. The objective of the activity should be clearly identifiable, ranging from developing a deeper understanding of the whole or part of the text, gaining a new perspective, having an opportunity to internalize some linguistic forms, establishing relationships with other texts or aspects of the students’ context, to name a few.

### **3. Drawing on Theoretical Developments to support Text Revisiting**

A number of theoretical developments carried out over the last two decades, such as the Multimodality Framework (Kress and van Leeuwen, 1996, 2006; Unsworth, 2008; Cope and Kalantzis, 2009) and Genre Theory (Martin and Rose, 2003) as well as educational approaches focused on the learners’ cognitive processing and critical thinking can be drawn upon to provide guiding principles to this text re-visiting proposal.

- **Multimodality**

According to Jewitt, multimodality is an inter-disciplinary approach which posits that language is only one of the meaning making resources that a society uses to communicate. She explains that “*representation and communication always draw on a multiplicity of modes, all of which contribute to meaning.*” Such modes include “*visual, aural, embodied, and spatial aspects of interaction and environments, and the relationships between these*” (n.pag.). Among them, the visual mode has been given special prominence in educational settings.

A great deal of research has gone into the transformation of the old language-based educational paradigm into the multimodal paradigm of today’s world. Focusing on visual elements, Kress and van Leeuwen systematized the analysis of images in their pioneering 1996 work “Reading Images: a Grammar of Visual Design”. Largely driven by this initiative,

multimodal tools started to make their way -little by little- into the field of education and specifically into language teaching.

Cortazzi et al (n.pag.) endorse the complementarity of visual and verbal elements and claim that visualization can definitely aid comprehension. In line with their promotion of visualization, they illustrate the verbal/visual relation in the following way:

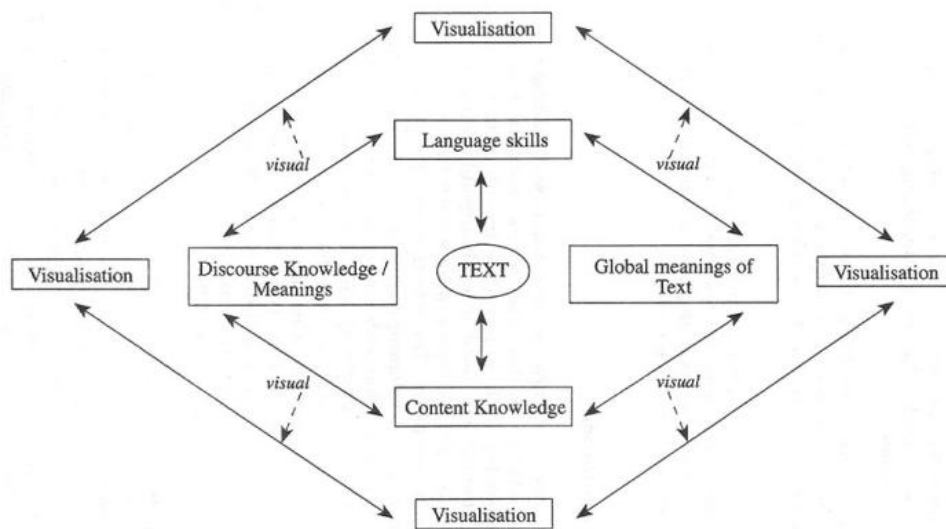


Figure 1: Cortazzi et al representation of visual / verbal complementarity

Cortazzi et al stress the importance of framing a text “*through a variety of visual means in order to successively emphasise language, global meaning, content knowledge and discourse meanings while simultaneously developing skills of visualisation*” (n.pag.).

Multimodal studies, especially the use of visual elements, are particularly relevant to our purposes and are often at the basis of decisions made in designing and carrying out re-reading activities.

- **Genre Theory**

The concept of genre, which was originally associated with literature and literary studies, has relatively recently been extended -in particular within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics- to make reference to any “*socially significant activity*” (Jewitt n.pag.). According to Martin and Rose, genre is ‘*a staged, goal-oriented social process*’ (7). Based on this perspective, all human activity falls within a genre; therefore, all the language used in each interaction constitutes a particular genre.

This social approach to genre has had a tremendous impact on educational theories and methods, with language teaching being no exception. Genre theory provides a framework to bring new meaning to a text re-visiting initiative.

- **Cognitive Processing and Critical Thinking Approaches**

Language instruction has often been thought of as the teaching of linguistic forms. However, the separation of form and content has been severely questioned by advocates of socio-semiotic approaches to language like Kress, van Leeuwen and Jewitt among others. Shifting away from the form-content dichotomy implies a renewed attention on meaning by both, teachers and students. From a cognitive perspective, a focus on meaning implies the development of a variety of processing skills on the part of students (Lynch and Wolcott, 2001; Cottrell, 2005).

Along with the academic and educational interest in cognitive processing came the need for promoting critical attitudes in learners, so that the processing of content would not be equated with blindly accepting any material as being universally valid. Pineda Baez explains that critical thinking involves more than “*just acquiring and retaining information*”. She adds that critical thinking implies “*identifying questions worth answering, directing one’s search in responding to those queries, developing a sense that knowledge is contestable and presenting evidence to support one’s arguments*” (49).

These principles are also relevant to our purpose when we think of goals and ways of revisiting texts, and they lie at the basis of the decisions made in text-revisiting activity design and selection.

Below is a description of a number of activities that can be done to revisit a text, which are to a large extent derived -directly and indirectly- from the above referenced developments. The list includes suggestions that range from very frequently used reading exercises to other, less frequent activities. In all cases, the goal is to maximize meaningful exposure to a text while engaging students in varied and challenging tasks.

#### **4. A range of reading activities**

The activities which are typically provided in course books to accompany a text are focused either on a text’s ideas or on the text’s formal aspects. The former, usually called content-based activities, are geared towards enhancing comprehension, while the latter -form-based activities- are focused on aspects related to the language system, such as grammar and/or vocabulary. Below is a list of some of the most commonly used activities:

- Some typical Content based activities (with a comprehension focus)
  - General comprehension questions
  - Questions with multiple choice answers
  - True/False exercises

- Information matching exercises
- Summary writing
- Some typical Language-based activities (with a vocabulary and/or grammar focus)
  - Matching word with definition
  - Finding synonyms/ opposites
  - Word formation exercises
  - Transformation and paraphrasing exercises

In an attempt to categorize reading activities, Lunzer and Gardner (n.pag.) proposed the use of DARTs -Directed Activities Related to Texts- which basically involve two types of processing<sup>4</sup>:

- a. Reconstruction activities, such as text completion (filling in words/sentences), sequencing (arranging jumbled chunks in a logical sequence), grouping, table completion, etc.
- b. Analysis activities, such as finding and categorizing information by marking or labeling a text or diagram.

Any teacher will immediately recognize all of the above as typical reading comprehension / text related exercises. However, given the usual time constraints of the classroom, most of the time only one or two of the above activities will be carried out in class, with the possibility of an additional activity assigned as homework. In principle, all the activities which are not done originally with a text can be carried out during a second or third encounter with the same text. Students' familiarity with the material should make it possible to do this in relatively short time segments.

We believe that, for the purpose of revisiting a text, these exercises can be supplemented by other less frequently used activities which can bring renewed meaning to a rereading task. Such additional activities may involve:

1. Associating text and images
2. Drawing and/or completing graphic organizers
3. Reflecting on genre features
4. Reformulating texts as alternative genres
5. Establishing intra-textual, inter-textual as well as personal and cultural connections

### Use of images and graphic organizers (1 & 2)

The use of resources other than language can actually complement language-based reading activities and help students acquire and consolidate knowledge. The Multimodal revolution has irrefutably shown that students learn more if the learning involves visual elements.

From the use of a simple image related to a text to the use of graphic organizers, or the creation of a video based on a text, a whole range of activities may be proposed. A few suggestions are given below:

- Students are asked to search for web images that they associate with a text read and then explain what association they have found.
- The teacher provides a number of images (using web resources, magazines, newspapers, etc.) and invites students to associate the images with various texts already read in the course.
- Students are required to provide a graphic representation of a text read, using simple formats such as tables or charts, or to select a suitable graphic organizer from choices made available and complete it based on the ideas in the text.<sup>4</sup>

In all cases, teachers would have to prepare and adapt the activities suggested considering the characteristics of each group of students. Nonetheless, regardless of possible variations, we believe that such activities can engage students in an associative mental exercise which provides fertile ground for discovering shades of meaning and connotations.

### Genre reflection and reformulation (3 & 4)

Revisiting a text affords a good opportunity to engage students in genre-based reflection. Any activity involving genre reflection will necessarily lead students to thinking of the social purpose of a text, allowing them to establish a stronger link between class material and the real world.

A good way of creating genre awareness is to engage students in thinking of an alternative social purpose for some texts. By way of illustration, an informative text about the dangers of smoking can be transformed into:

- an informal conversation between smokers and non-smokers
- a lecture on the dangers of smoking

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<sup>4</sup> Countless educational websites offer free, easy-to-use templates for this purpose [http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/http://www.edhelper.com/teachers/General\\_graphic\\_organizers.htm](http://www.eduplace.com/graphicorganizer/http://www.edhelper.com/teachers/General_graphic_organizers.htm)

- a TV campaign warning about the health hazards of smoking
- a protest poster against smoking in public places.
- etc.

In each case, the features of the new genre would have to be introduced to the class. This can be a good opportunity to promote class discussion of these otherwise complex generic elements.

To further engage students in genre reflection, a 'Genre Matrix' may be introduced at the beginning of the school year, with the names of the genres expected to be covered in the course. After several texts have been read, students may be asked to fill those slots in the matrix which correspond to the texts they have already seen, based on each text's social purpose.

Menu (Text:_____)	Advertisement (Text:_____)	Personal e-mail (Text:_____)
Newspaper article (Text:_____)	Blog entry (Text:_____)	Party invitation (Text:_____)
SMS (Text:_____)	Doctor-patient conversation (Text:_____)	Instructions (Text:_____)
Phone conversation (Text:_____)	Job interview (Text:_____)	Letter of complaint (Text:_____)

Figure 2: Genre matrix

The use of this matrix helps bring home the social nature of all instances of language use. We believe that the promotion of this kind of awareness definitely has a place in the language class.

#### Establishing connections (5)

In order to kindle students' interest in coming back to a text, learners may be asked to find various types of connections. A recent publication by the New South Wales Department of Education and Training (2010) suggests engaging students in making the following connections:

- between the text and something in the students' life (text to self)
- between the text and other texts (text to text)
- between the text and something happening in the world (text to world)

Building on these suggestions, we propose some multimodal tools to facilitate the task, as illustrated below.

*Text to self*

As a way of relating a text to something in their own lives, students may be asked to single out aspects of the text that they feel identified with. This can be expanded to a spectrum of personal ‘proximity’ or ‘closeness’ along which students identify aspects which are closer to or further from their own reality:

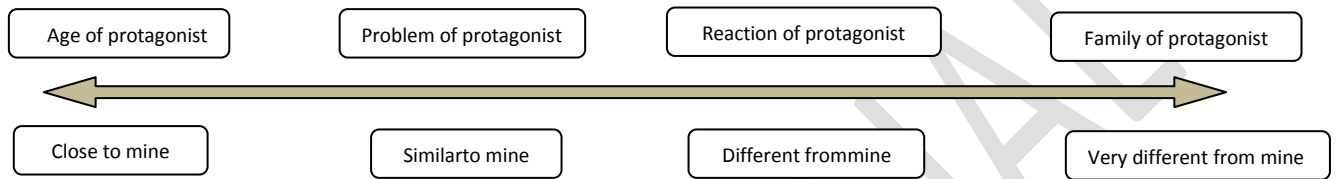


Figure 3: Personalization (text-to-self) spectrum

The value of personalizing a text as an element of reflection lies in its motivational power and its potential for making reading meaningful to students on a personal, individual level.

*Text to text:*

Students may also be asked to find connections or relationships between various texts read, and to show those relationships in various forms, such as the use of tables: <sup>5</sup>

Aspect to relate/compare	Text A	Text B	Text C
<b>People</b>			
Individuals			
Institutions			
Age			
Sex			
(Other aspects)			
<b>Places</b>			

<sup>5</sup> An interesting alternative format is presented in the form of a T at: [http://www.smekenseducation.com/6582aa2628\\_sites/www.smekenseducation.com/files/T-Chart\\_Template.pdf](http://www.smekenseducation.com/6582aa2628_sites/www.smekenseducation.com/files/T-Chart_Template.pdf)

<b>Time</b>			
References to the present			
References to the future			
References to the past			
<b>Conflict /problem</b>			
Causes			
Consequences			
<b>Opinions</b>			
Writer's			
Protagonists' /experts'			
Your own			

Figure 4: Text-to-text connection table

This type of tool can be very useful to get students to explore texts paying special attention to details which were probably left aside in initial readings. It can also prove useful to get students to refer to a text using their own words.

*Text to world:*

The classroom is often said to be an artificial communication environment, especially in EFL settings in which both, teacher and students, share a native language. One way of reversing that artificiality is by engaging students in the exploration of connections between a text read and something happening in various parts of the world. Again a spectrum can be used to indicate this proximity:

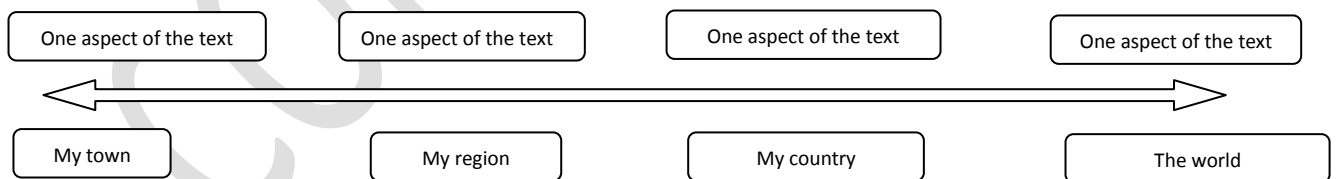


Figure 5: Text-to-world connection spectrum

This type of reflection can be very enriching in terms of national identity and citizenship awareness. It can also be a very good entry point to the promotion of values such as acceptance of diversity and difference.



## 5. Closing remarks

Our claim is that time spent on the above activities is well spent and that all these activities have a role to play in the language class, with varying degrees of relevance depending on the characteristics of the course being taught.

Our beliefs may be summarized by saying that the re-reading of a text is a tool for personal, interpersonal and cultural exploration. In a metaphoric way, and very much in line with our own perspective, Christie and Macken-Horarik (n.pag.) claim that a text has the potential of acting as:

- a springboard (for personal growth)
- a window (for relating to others)
- a prism (for reframing experiences and thoughts)
- a kaleidoscope (for exploring cultural diversity and multiple meanings)

To close on this metaphoric tone, we claim that texts can be thought of as 'slices of life' and as all forms of life, they can interact with us and help us gain new meanings with each encounter.

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CONFIDENCIAL

## Keeping track of participants in texts: a tool to develop students' reading skills

**Prof. María Eugenia Bessega Cuadros**  
[euvi03@hotmail.com](mailto:euvi03@hotmail.com)

**Prof. Rosina Antonella Desimone**  
[antu\\_d387@hotmail.com](mailto:antu_d387@hotmail.com)

**Prof. Ana Paula Ortega Bernal**  
[anapoli29@gmail.com](mailto:anapoli29@gmail.com)

FFHA-UNSJ

### Abstract:

With the purpose of building a bridge between linguistic research and classroom applications, we present some practical tools devised as part of the pedagogical component of a research project called *“The representation of Argentina and its people in the discourse of English-speaking media”* currently being conducted at the National University of San Juan’s School of Philosophy, Humanities and the Arts. Drawing on general principles of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and on some of the tenets of Multimodal studies (Kress, 2003; Jewitt, 2008), we propose the use of some pedagogical tools for the identification, classification, tracking and graphic representation of participants –social actors- in EFL texts. For the *identification* and *classification* of social actors, we suggest the use of some analytical linguistic categories derived from van Leeuwen’s (1996-2009) Social Actor theory, which offers a *“sociosemantic’ inventory of the ways in which social actors can be represented”* in discourse (1996; 32). Regarding the *tracking* and *graphic representation* of social actors, we propose the use of multimodal resources such as images and other visual tools to represent both, the actors identified in a text and the cohesive ties created through repeated references to the same participants. The use of the proposed categories and tools is discussed and illustrated.

### 1. Introduction

Drawing on some theoretical and methodological instruments afforded by Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) and on some of the tenets of Multimodal studies (Kress, 2003; Jewitt, 2008), this paper presents a set of pedagogical tools for the tracking, identification, classification and graphic representation of participants –social actors- in ESL texts.

The tools proposed were devised as part of our exploration of ideational meanings, more specifically, of human participants or ‘social actors’ within a research project called *“The representation of Argentina and its people in the discourse of English-speaking media”* currently being conducted at the National University of San Juan’s School of Philosophy, Humanities and the Arts.

## 2. Social Actors Theory and Multimodality

In previous publications (Bessega, Desimone & Ortega, 2012; Bollati, 2012), we highlighted the importance of the identification of social actors and presented a selection of the social actor categories proposed by van Leeuwen (1996) to be used for our research purposes. We also stated our goal of building a bridge between linguistic research and classroom applications and expressed our belief that this goal can be partly achieved by introducing a set of adapted and somewhat simplified social actor categories for the exploration of written texts. In this paper, we build on our previous work and propose the use of some pedagogical tools to make the identification, classification, and tracking of social actors more accessible to students.

For our *social actor identification and classification* purposes in this paper, we rely on our previously defined selection of the categories proposed by Social Actors Theory. van Leeuwen's Social Actor theory offers a "*sociosemantic' inventory of the ways in which social actors can be represented*" in discourse ("The Representation of Social Actors" 32). By defining his categories as *socio-semantic*, the author proposes a view of meaning which is intrinsically tied to culture rather than to language itself, and claims that there is no "*bi-uniqueness*" ("The Representation of Social Actors" 32) in language, i.e., no direct correspondence between form and meaning.

van Leeuwen's original classification -which includes over twenty categories- is presented in the form of a system network, with the inclusion/exclusion categories as the main entry points. Although all the classification criteria are relevant and worth studying, only a limited number of categories have been included in our research, with some adaptations for classroom applications.

Regarding our *social actor tracking* and *graphic representation* purposes, we propose the use of multimodal resources such as images and other visual tools to represent both, the actors identified in a text and the cohesive ties created through repeated references to the same participants. The value of images and graphic representations in education is clearly expressed by Jewitt (241) when she says:

*how knowledge is represented, as well as the mode and media chosen, is a crucial aspect of knowledge construction, making the form of representation integral to meaning and learning more generally.*

In turn, Jones et. al. (21) explain that the use of graphic forms when reading can help students "*select important ideas and details as well as detect missing information and unexplained relations.*" Reinforcing the value of a multimodal approach, Kress and van Leeuwen posit that "*visual structures realize meanings as linguistic structures do also, and*

*thereby point to different interpretations of experience and different forms of social interaction* (qtd. in Heberle 102). For these reasons, we believe that using images and graphic forms to track social actors is a valid form of meaning exploration.

### 3. Working with Social Actors


To work with human participants –social actors- in the classroom, we propose a series of simple image-based activities which can help students approach texts differently and achieve a better understanding of them. The images used should have a meaningful connection to the text in question; for example, if a text includes a reference to a child, the image used should unequivocally refer to someone in that age group; if a rock star is mentioned, the human image might include a guitar.<sup>6</sup> The images may be selected from image banks available on the internet, or they may be drawn by students with an artistic flair. If computer technology were not available in the class, some simple symbols may be used to stand for different social actors (a ball may be drawn to represent a soccer player; a red cross, to symbolize a doctor; a lollypop to represent a child, etc). In these cases, the image used to stand for the actor may be proposed by or agreed with the students based on text content. By way of example, when working with a given text, students may be asked to spot all the references to a given participant, count all the instances in which he/she is mentioned in the text, and then work graphically as indicated in the activity below, which relies on some simple computer generated images.

Tracking Participants: Find and underline in the text all the instances in which “XX” (*name of the participant*) is mentioned; then, complete the diagram. How many times is “XX” mentioned? Do you think he/she is an important participant/person in this text?

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<sup>6</sup> The images used in this paper have been chosen only for illustration purposes. The choice of suitable images will depend on the teacher’s criteria.

Name of the text: \_\_\_\_\_



  
Social Actor "XX"


**Paragraph 1**

**Paragraph 2**

Two or more participants may be tracked using different colors, graphics and/or shapes for each one.

Name of the text: \_\_\_\_\_


  
Social Actor "XX"


  
Social actor "XY"

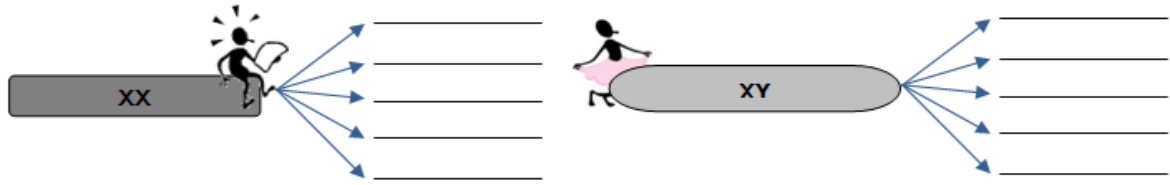
**Paragraph 1**

**Paragraph 2**

Once students have tracked the participants, they can be guided to *identify* some special features or notice the different ways in which they are actually mentioned.

Identifying Participants: Look at the *Tracking* diagram and write down the different ways in which people are mentioned. Are they referred to by their first name, their

surname or a nickname? Is their occupation used to refer to them? Are people presented in a positive or a negative way? Can we identify the people by their relationship to others?



After identifying the participants in the text and bearing the previous questions in mind, students can move on to a *classification* of social actors. In this case, various types of tables and/or charts may be useful to illustrate the different ways of representing participants.

One of the categories selected in our research is **nomination**, usually realized by proper nouns which can be *formal*, *semi-formal*, *informal* and *honorific*. Proper nouns starting with Mr, Mrs or Ms plus the surname, or the surname alone, are considered *formal* realizations; given names plus surname *semi-formal*; given names, *informal* and standard titles and ranks, *honorific* (van Leeuwen, “The Representation of Social Actors” 53 ). To work with this category in the classroom, nomination may be introduced with a simple question such as: *What are people “called” in the text?* Then students can be asked to write the different ways of referring to people on a chart (see Table 1). This organizing principle can be used for other categories as well.

Classifying Participants: Look at the graph with the different ways of mentioning people and place the participants in the corresponding table.

Participant/Person	What are people “called” in the text?			
	Formal Mr/Mrs/Ms	Semiformal Name+ Surname Surname alone	Informal Given name	Honorific Title /rank
Mrs Robinson	✓			
Jimmy			✓	

Table 1: Nomination

A similar approach may be used to deal with the **functionalisation** category, in which social actors “are referred to in terms of an activity, in terms of something they do, for instance an *occupation or role*” (van Leeuwen, “The Representation of Social Actors” 54). This category can be introduced by asking: *What do people do? What activities do they perform?* Students may then be asked to fill in a table as shown in Table 2.

<i>Participant denomination (function or activity)</i>	<i>Who is the "function" referring to?</i>	<i>Activity performed</i>
<b>student</b>	XX	study
<b>soccer player</b>	YY	play soccer
<b>boss</b>	PP	manage & organize

Table 2: Functionalisation

**Appraisalment** is a category related to the way we *evaluate* people. In van Leeuwen's words, '*social actors are appraised when they are referred to in terms which evaluate them as good or bad, loved or hated, admired or pitied*' (van Leeuwen, "The Representation of Social Actors" 58). When dealing with this category, students may be asked to look for evaluative elements or attributes such as adjectives and nouns used to represent the participants, and they can be guided to enter that information into a table with some graphic elements to illustrate the type of evaluation (See Table 3).



Participant/Person	<i>Are people presented in a positive, negative or more neutral way?</i>				
	(+)		(-)		+/-
<i>the <b>genious</b></i>		✓			
<i>an <b>indifferent</b> guy</i>			✓		

Table 3: Appraisalment

The last category selected for this paper is **relational identification**, which is defined as the representation of social actors "*in terms of their personal, kinship or work relation to each other*" (van Leeuwen, "Critical Discourse Analysis" 84). This category can be dealt with by asking the following question: *Is the participant referred to by his relationship to somebody? What kind of relationship is it?* Then a chart may be used to record the results of the exploration as shown in Table 4.

Participant/Person	<i>Can we identify the people by their relationship to others?</i>			
	Family	Friend	Boyfriend /girlfriend	Workmate/ Classmate
<i>Mrs Robinson's husband</i>	✓			
<i>His dear buddy</i>		✓		

Table 4: Relational Identification

These tables can be easily adapted to different classroom contexts and teachers can adjust the level of difficulty by combining categories, or using different guiding questions.



#### 4. Conclusion/ Classroom application

We consider that by helping students track, identify and classify participants in a certain text, teachers can enhance the learners' comprehension process. We also believe that if multimodal resources are made part of the activities, with teachers and students working collaboratively in the graphic representation of participants, many of the meanings construed in the text can be brought to the forefront and revealed. The use of images has the added advantage of catering for the needs of visual learners, whose learning style is often left aside by many language activities, especially those involving reading skills.

Although this type of reading comprehension activity is not normally found in ESL textbooks, we believe it can bring to light relevant aspect of the representation of people in discourse. We also believe that guiding students to reflect on aspects such as a text participants' positive or negative representation can help promote the learners' critical thinking skills.

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## Anglicisms and attitudes: direct and indirect methods

**Dra. Rosa María Sanou**

[delosriossanou@uolsinectis.com.ar](mailto:delosriossanou@uolsinectis.com.ar)

**Mgter. Graciela Viviana Albiñana**

[graciela\\_Albi@hotmail.com](mailto:graciela_Albi@hotmail.com)

**Prof. Claudia Gabriela Castañeda**

[claudiagab\\_cast@hotmail.com](mailto:claudiagab_cast@hotmail.com)

**FFHA-UNSJ**

### Abstract

This paper presents some of the results of the research project “*Anglicismos en San Juan: uso y actitudes*” (CICITCA-UNSJ, 2011-2013) which explores the use of English loans in messages in Spanish, as well as the attitudes which the speakers of our speech community have towards these forms.

The main theoretical framework we draw upon in this work is the one provided by Sociolinguistics, particularly the Variation model, which has two fundamental focuses of interest: on the one hand, the correlation between the linguistic variation in speech and certain social factors; on the other hand, the subjective attitudes that the different alternative forms arouse in the members of a community. These attitudes can be either positive or negative, depending on whether they accept or reject a particular linguistic use and can be studied by means of different techniques, which can be direct or indirect. As regards the indirect ones, several linguists have shown that speakers have the tendency to evaluate not only the actual linguistic forms in use but also the personality of their interlocutors, according to their linguistic behaviour.

This paper presents some of the results of the research project “*Anglicisms in San Juan: Use and Attitudes*” (CICITCA-UNSJ, 2011-2013). In this opportunity we explore, by means of direct and indirect methods, the subjective attitudes that the speakers of this community have towards anglicisms.

The **theoretical framework** underlying this work is the Sociolinguistic Variation model, (Labov 1972), which is based on two central ideas. On the one hand, language in use is not homogeneous; on the contrary, it is highly heterogeneous, but its heterogeneity is structurally ordered. On the other hand, the subjects’ linguistic behaviour has an emblematic value in relation to their social identity, so much so that people use the way their interlocutors speak as a symptom or sign of social information about them (López Morales 1993). Therefore, the Variation model can provide interesting input concerning the image that the speakers try to project, as well as their subjective attitudes towards different linguistic forms (Silva-Corvalán 2001).

As regards the subjective attitudes, different studies about the speakers’ evaluation of certain speech features are based on the basic assumption that individuals have a certain degree of linguistic conscience, which allows them to evaluate the diaphasic, diastratic and diatopic

differences in the speech of their community. Thus, linguistic usages become the object of positive or negative attitudes, i.e. attitudes of acceptance or rejection.

In relation to the study of attitudes, the specialized bibliography offers two approaches: a) the behaviourist one, according to which attitudes are a form of behaviour and can be analyzed by means of direct observation of objective conduct, and b) the mentalist approach, which considers them as an inner mental state not directly observable and, therefore, infers them from data provided by the subject, by means of both direct and indirect methods. The first ones consist of direct questions about people's attitudes to particular languages or linguistic features, while the second ones apply "*an indirect measure which elicits the respondents' attitudes without making them feel self-conscious or embarrassed*" (Holmes, 2008:419)

Despite these differences, authors agree that attitudes present the following features: "*... son adquiridas, permanecen implícitas, son relativamente estables, tienen un referente específico, varían en dirección y grado, y proporcionan una base para la obtención de índices cuantitativos*" (Shaw y Wright en López Morales, 1993:234). Also, according to Moreno Fernández (2005), linguistic attitudes have three components: cognoscitive (knowledge or belief), affective (feelings and emotions) and conative (tendency to act and react towards the object). These attitudes apply not only to particular traits of linguistic behaviour but also to languages as a whole, no matter whether they are the L1 or an L2 that coexist in the same community. Moreover, there is research that has shown that subjects can even evaluate the speakers' personality from their linguistic conduct (Lambert, Labov, Shuy y Fasold, in Silva-Corvalán, 2001).

A quantitative variacionist **methodology** was used to analyze the dependent variable of this study -the speakers' ATTITUDES towards English loans-, which presents, in our corpus, three variants: positive, negative and neutral (which also includes those cases where the informants did not know what to answer). As regards the independent variables, three social ones were included in the study: age, gender and socioeducational level.

To collect the corpus 126 subjects from San Juan, male and female, were interviewed. All of them belong to three socioeducational levels: low, low middle and high middle, and three age groups: young, adults and elders. A questionnaire was used to get information about the subjects' sociodemographic data, their use of anglicisms and their attitudes towards them.

Data about the informants' attitudes were collected by means of a survey which included two techniques:

1º) a direct one: several questions which elicited the individuals' opinion as regards the use of these forms in everyday conversations, in Spanish messages.

2º) an indirect one: reading two texts written in Spanish -one with 12 anglicisms and the other with their equivalent word in Spanish-, followed by questions which elicited the subjects' opinion about the personality of the writer of each text. It is important to point out that both texts were the same length, had been written in the same style and presented very similar situations: a wife describing -in the first person- a trip she had done with her husband. The only difference between both texts was the vocabulary: one included a few English loans and the other did not.

The **analysis** of linguistic data with respect to the **USE** of anglicisms showed that in the total sample, the informants choose the English word with a considerable 56% of the answers, which represents more than half the instances in the questionnaire (Fig. 1).

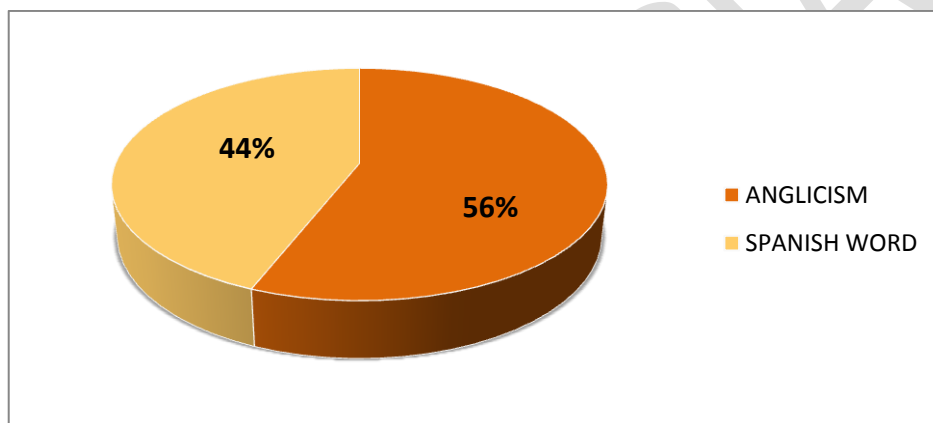


Fig.1. Use of anglicisms

This clear tendency to prefer the Anglo-Saxon terms is the result of the strong pressure nowadays exerted on our language to incorporate anglicisms constantly. This phenomenon which has become worldwide, particularly after World War II, is the result of different factors, such as the emergence of the USA as a major global political and economic power, together with the globalization phenomenon and the progress in communications.

This virtual contact between English and Spanish in Argentina leads to the borrowing of anglicisms, not only when these are the only alternative -since there is no equivalent in Spanish- (necessary anglicisms), but also when the language offers a valid and current synonym (unnecessary anglicisms, such as *ok, a full, sorry, delivery, free, top, fashion*). Time will demonstrate which forms analyzed in the research will be definitely incorporated to Spanish vocabulary, as it happened in the past with many other English words, such as: *club, bar, batería, bife, bermudas, cheque, clon, cóctel, suéter, ticket*, among others (Lorenzo 1996).

Concerning **attitudes**, in this opportunity, the results obtained with direct and indirect procedures will be contrasted. The survey explored whether the interviewees consider that people who use anglicisms give the impression of being: 1. modern; 2. 'cool' and 3. worldly. When **directly asked** whether those who use English loans appear to be **modern**, 52% of the subjects answer affirmatively, while 41% do it negatively and the rest do not express their opinion on the matter (Fig. 2). That is to say, less than half the respondents do not relate the usage of these loans with being an updated kind of person.

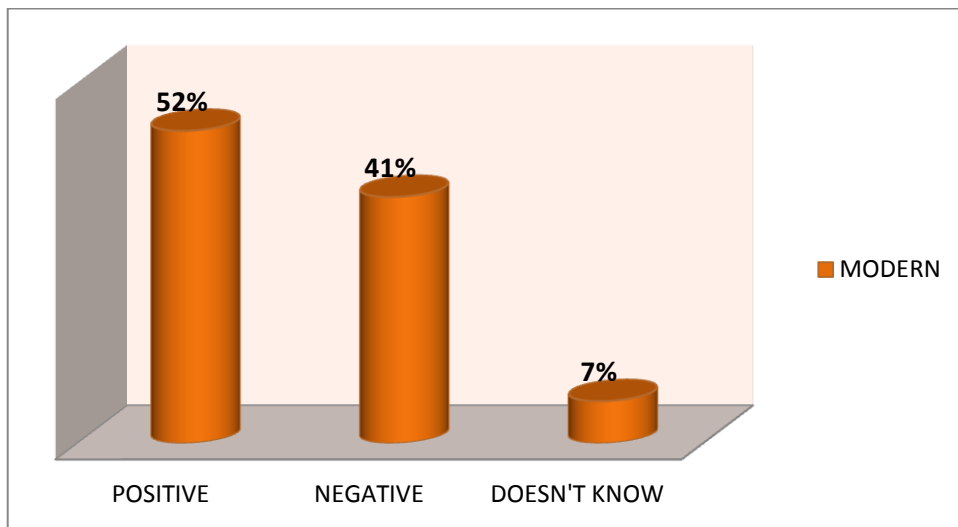


Fig. 2. Attitude towards 'modern' (direct technique)

Secondly, they were asked whether they thought people who use anglicisms give the impression of a 'cool' type of person (*canchero*). In Spanish, this word designates a person who is "*ducho y experto en determinada actividad*" (*Diccionario de la lengua española*, 2005), that is to say, someone experienced on a certain field. In Argentina it also depicts a person who 'has things clear and under control'; someone who -although sometimes considered a little bit arrogant- appears to be self-confident and acts with ease.

Data analysis showed that half the informants agree with this (50%), while 42% don't and the rest do not have a definite opinion (Fig. 3). In short, the respondents' opinions are divided: some consider that the use of English loans is related with being 'cool' and some others do not.

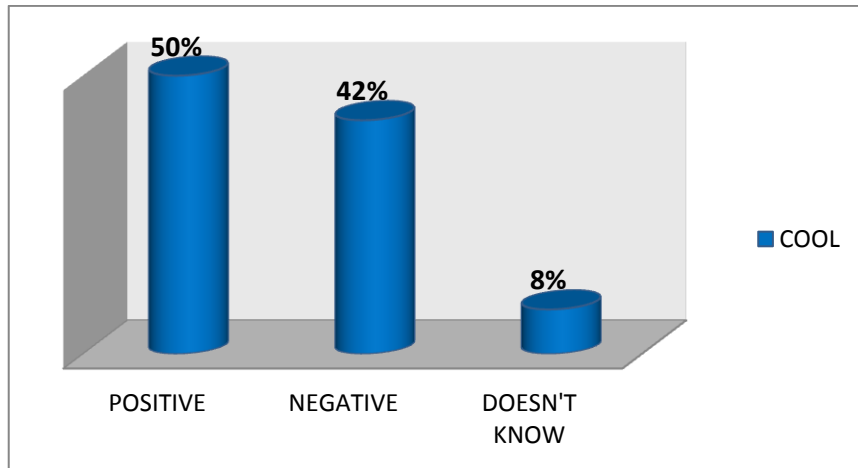


Fig. 3. Attitude towards 'cool' (direct technique)

Thirdly, the possibility that the use of borrowings reflect the image of a worldly or international kind of person was explored. 'Worldly' and 'international' are used in the sense of having experience with travelling and a better knowledge of other countries and their cultures -either through the Internet or readings-, so much so that they have an extensive view of international reality. The percentages obtained indicate that 43% of the interviewees agree with this, but a slightly greater proportion (48%) think the opposite and the rest are neutral; i.e. The results do not show a clear-cut tendency among the respondents (Figure 4).

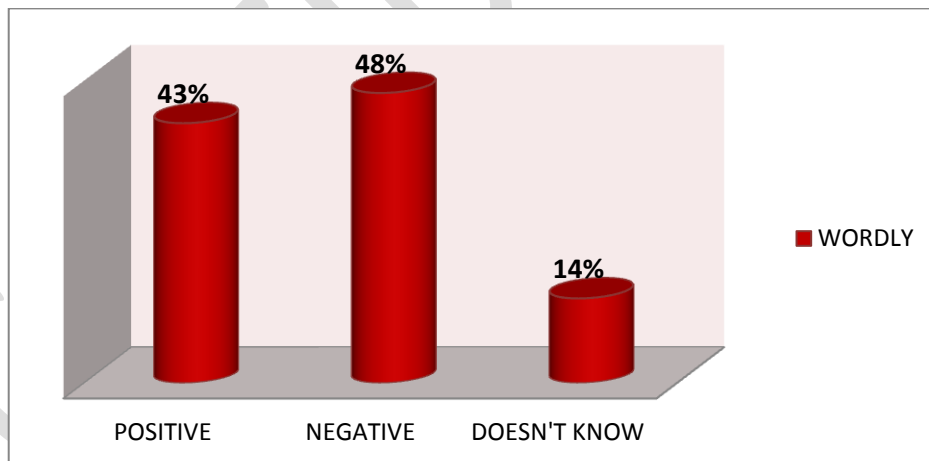


Fig. 4. Attitude towards 'wordly' (direct technique)

Finally, a broader question was asked: whether they **liked it or not** that people use English words when producing their messages in Spanish. Almost half the informants (49%) give a negative answer, a third part do not have any preference (35%) and only a very low proportion (16%) give a positive answer (Fig. 5). In other words, a very strong negative attitude prevails, followed by another of indifference for anglicisms, while only a minority openly favours the use of English loanwords.

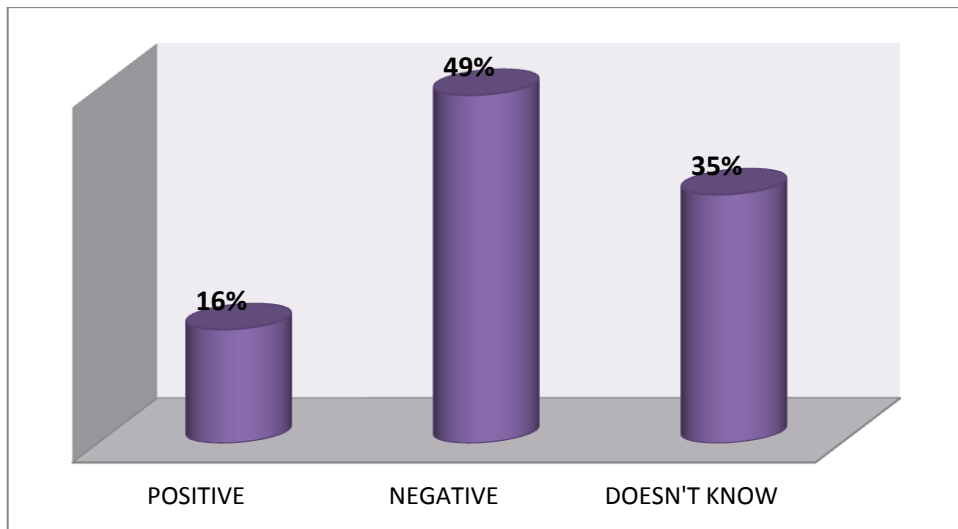


Fig. 5. Attitude towards usage of anglicisms

Some of the arguments with which the informants justify their negative attitude are: the animosity towards the United States and their culture, the feeling that people who use anglicisms are *“huecos”* or shallow, and the rejection of mixing different languages, which sometimes prevents from understanding certain words: For example: *“No me gusta para nada porque no me gusta que tengamos la cultura de los ingleses y menos de los yanquis”, “No tengo por qué estar venerando palabras de ellos”; “ ‘Ay, sorry, darling!’, eso me parece hueco”; “‘Fashion’ y ‘top’ son palabras que asocio con un modo de vivir a la ligera, con un exceso de superficialidad”; “No soporto el inglés; si mezclan, me quedo pagando”.*

Regarding **indirect techniques**, interviewees were also asked if they thought that the author of the text with anglicisms (Text A) and the author of the other one (Text E) seem to be **modern**. The data reveal an enormous gap of 62% between the 91% of the subjects who believe that the writer of Text A gives the impression of a modern person, and the 29% who express the same about the other writer (Figure 6). Thus, this analysis confirms that the attractiveness of using anglicisms is linked with the image of an updated type of person, a person who generally follows modern trends, not only as regards fashion but also as regards the use of technology and leisure activities, among others.

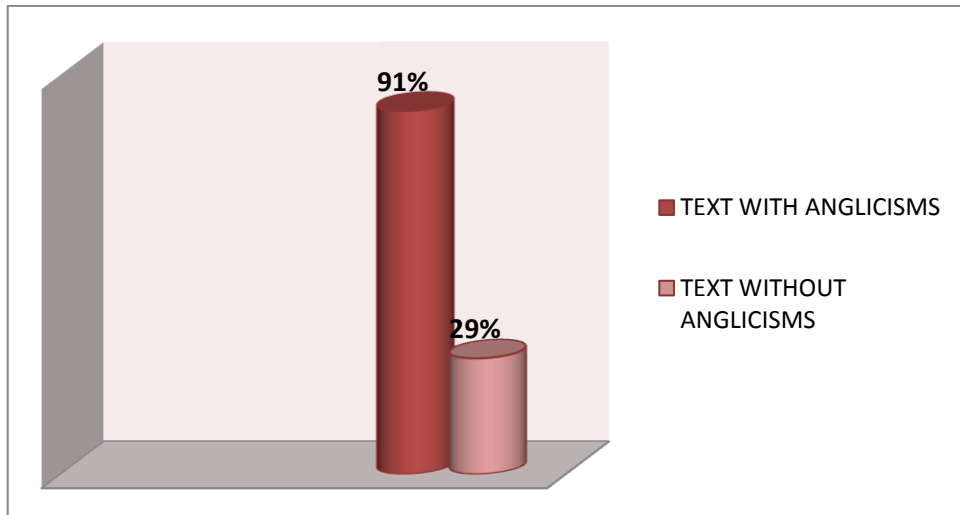


Fig. 6. Positive Attitude: 'modern' (indirect technique)

With respect to whether the authors of the texts appear to be **'cool'**, the results show a major difference of 70%, between the 87% of the informants who answer affirmatively on Text A and a significant low 17% of those who attribute this trait to the person who wrote Text E (Fig. 7). Clearly, the adoption of English loans contributes to project the image of an easy going, confident person, sometimes considered a little bit arrogant, though.

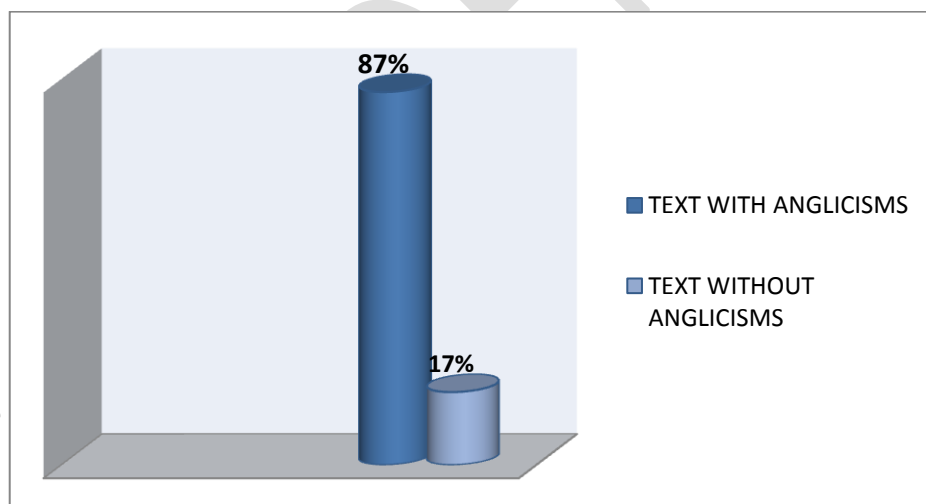


Fig. 7. Positive Attitude: 'cool' (indirect technique)

In relation to having the image of a **worldly** or **international** person, the author of Text A reached 75% of affirmative answers, which constitutes an extremely higher percentage than that of the other author (Fig. 8). This considerable gap of 45% definitely confirms that the presence of English borrowings helps to portray a person who has a more international view of reality, having travelled extensively and learnt much about foreign countries and cultures, by means of readings or the Internet.



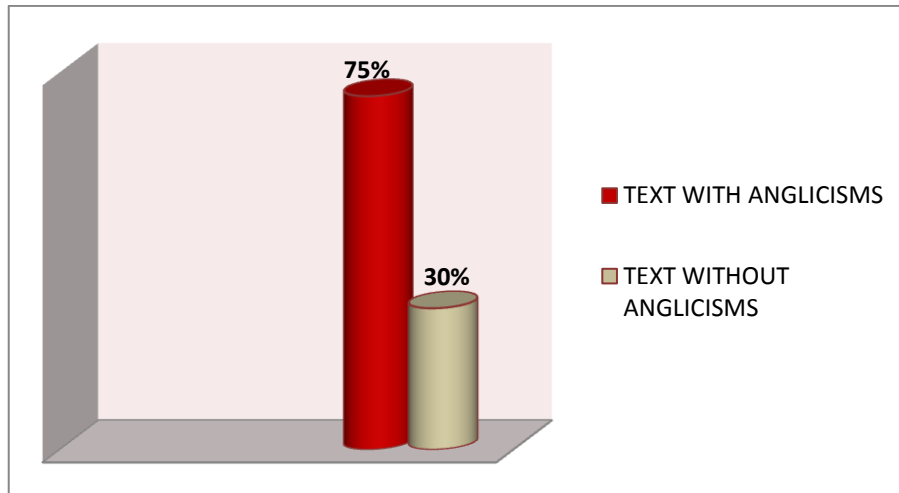


Fig. 8: Positive attitude: 'wordly' (indirect technique)

Being the presence or absence of anglicisms the only noticeable difference between both texts, it is inferred that such trait was the one which made the respondents positively evaluate the author of Text A, by attributing him the three qualities referred to above, which are very much appreciated in contemporary society. In order to have a global figure of the positive attitude, the average of the percentages of those who think that the writer of Text A appears to be modern, 'cool' and worldly was calculated. Thus, it became evident that 84% of the subjects have a highly positive attitude (Fig. 9) towards these forms, while only 16% do not.

These figures are indeed decisive and confirm that -with an indirect procedure- the informants answer spontaneously, without being influenced by factors such as their passionate defense of our language or culture, by their negative opinion about the USA or the United Kingdom -especially about their foreign policy- or by their rejection of the idea of mixing different languages in speech.

Aside from the personality traits presented above, subjects were asked -applying the same indirect technique- about two other possible characteristics of the writers of the texts: high level of education or instruction, and success in their occupation. The proportion of individuals that answer affirmatively for both authors is very similar. In respect of being **well educated**, the one that doesn't choose any English loan reaches 77% of the respondents and the other one, 71%; and as regards being **successful**, the writer of Text E achieves 65% of the informants, while the one responsible for Text A, 71%. These figures prove there is virtually no contrast between both writers; i.e. the use of anglicisms is not at all associated with these two personality traits. It is specifically linked with the ones already discussed.

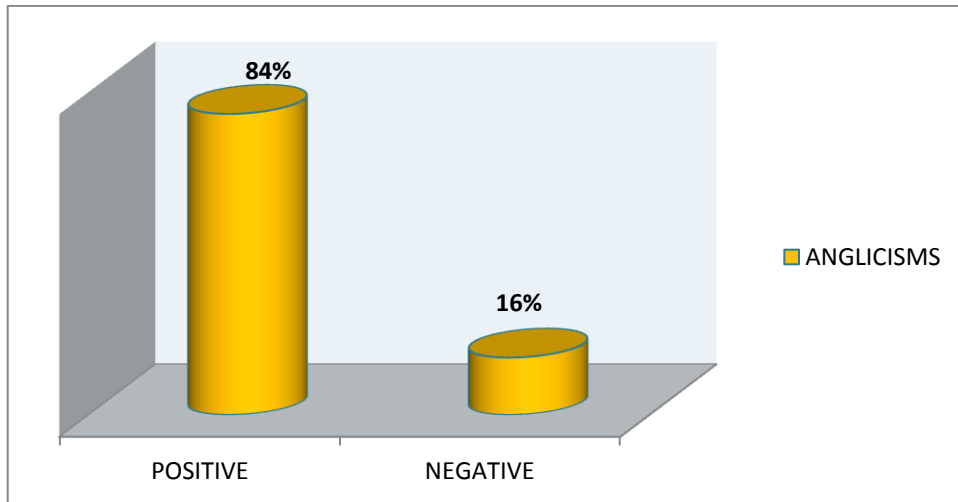


Fig. 9: Attitude towards anglicisms (indirect technique)

**To conclude**, there is an apparent contradiction between the extensive use of anglicisms (56% of the instances proposed in the survey), the very small proportion of subjects (16%) who -asked directly about their likes- admit openly that they like these English loans and the significant 84% of the interviewees who judge positively the writer who uses them (Figure 10). This is related with what scholars call *linguistic covert prestige*.

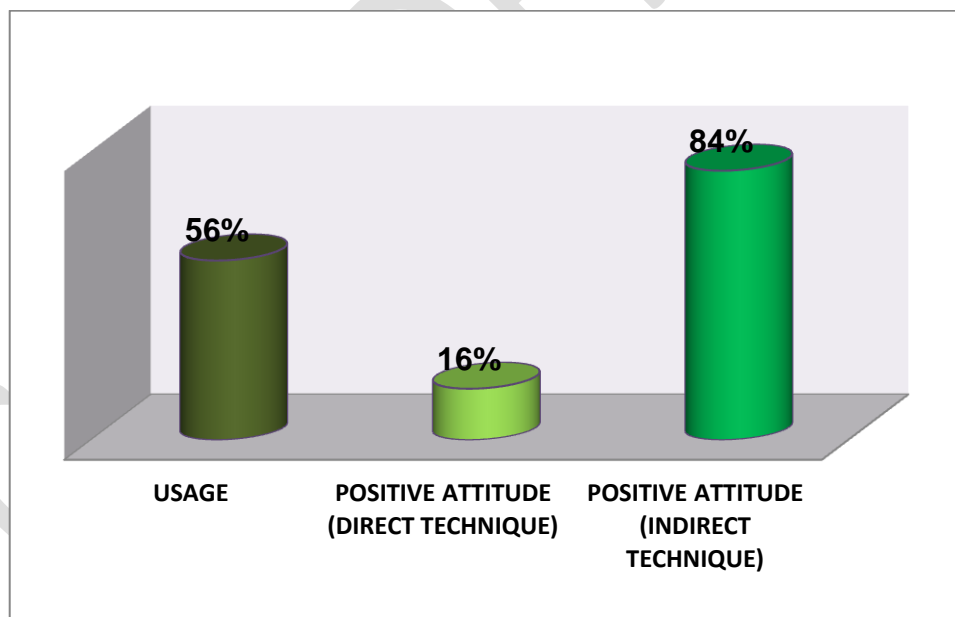


Fig.10: Use and attitudes towards anglicisms

The fact that English is nowadays the international language of science, economy, technology, tourism, communication -among many others fields- contributes largely to its linguistic prestige. Moreno Fernández (1998) defines *linguistic prestige* as “*un proceso de concesión de estima y respeto hacia individuos o grupos que reúnen ciertas características, y que lleva a la imitación de sus conductas y creencias*” (1998: 189). In other words, the

prestige some communities enjoy extends over the language they use, which, in turn, becomes a speech model that is attractive for other groups or individuals to imitate.

According to Huguet y González (2004), there are two types of linguistic prestige. On the one hand, they distinguish *overt prestige*, i.e. the one related with correct or standard linguistic usages, and the *covert prestige*, which the authors define as: ““*un conjunto de valores ocultos que se asocian a usos lingüísticos que no se ajustan a la norma*” (Trudgill qtd.in Moreno Fernández 1990). Therefore, they are not openly recognized as being attractive or esteemed. Nevertheless, they are, as a matter of fact, socially valued for reasons such as innovation, creativity, communicative potentiality or prestige of the speakers who choose them.

Thus, when asked directly about these foreign forms, most of the informants express rejection but, deep down, they feel attracted by them, since in the social or collective construct the use of anglicisms is associated with qualities highly appreciated nowadays, such as worldliness, modernity, ‘coolness’ and youthfulness.

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## LA VARIABLE DO EN INTERROGACIONES EN INGLÉS AMERICANO

**María Cecilia Atencio**

[mceciat@gmail.com](mailto:mceciat@gmail.com)

**María Julieta Tello Peralta**

[julitello11@hotmail.com](mailto:julitello11@hotmail.com)

**María de Fátima Torres Brizuela**

[fatitorres@live.com](mailto:fatitorres@live.com)

**FFHA – UNSJ**

### **I. Introducción**

Como futuras profesoras de inglés, interesadas en general por problemáticas lingüísticas, y para cumplir con el requisito final de la asignatura “Sociolingüística” nos resultó atractiva la idea de analizar un fenómeno que presenta variación en el inglés americano actual. A tal fin, adoptamos la perspectiva sociolingüística variacionista, cuyo interés central es estudiar la relación entre el comportamiento lingüístico de los hablantes y ciertos factores sociales y estilísticos.

En esta oportunidad, exponemos los resultados de nuestro trabajo sobre la variación sociolingüística que se da en el uso del auxiliar “do”, en oraciones de tipo interrogativo, en el inglés americano actual. Esta alternancia consiste en la presencia/ausencia del auxiliar “do” y fue analizada a partir de los guiones de los programas televisivos de EEUU.

### **II. Marco teórico**

Como se dijo, nuestro estudio se ubica en el campo de la sociolingüística, la cual estudia la lengua en uso considerando el contexto sociocultural en donde se producen los mensajes. Es decir, tiene en cuenta no ya la lengua como un sistema abstracto como la estudia la lingüística de la oración, sino el uso de las unidades que la componen y forman un sistema organizado: *“lengua, cultura y sociedad son algunos de los temas que dan origen a la trama de la sociolingüística moderna. (Lastra, 1992:17).*

Una de las líneas de trabajo sociolingüístico, el *variacionismo*, tiene tres intereses fundamentales: correlacionar aspectos del comportamiento lingüístico con factores sociales,

estudiar las actitudes subjetivas de los hablantes frente a diferentes fenómenos lingüísticos del habla y analizar con los cambios lingüísticos en proceso.

La sociolingüística variacionista considera que “*la inmensa mayoría de las comunidades de habla —si no todas— son de algún modo heterogéneas lingüística y socialmente y que la variación lingüística está socialmente condicionada*” (Trudgill, en Hernández Campoy, 2005:17). Es en el comportamiento lingüístico de los hablantes donde observamos el valor emblemático del lenguaje: nuestra manera de hablar se ve condicionada por nuestra realidad social, ya que diversos factores sociales (como edad, género, etnia, religión, nivel socioeducativo) inciden en nuestro comportamiento lingüístico. Paralelamente, también tiene una fuerte influencia la mayor o menor formalidad de la situación comunicativa: cuanto más formal sea, mayor será la presión psicológica sobre el hablante, y más formal y cuidado será su estilo de habla.

### III. Metodología de trabajo

En lo que concierne a la metodología de trabajo, se adoptó la variacionista cuantitativa; en particular, se tomó el modelo cuantitativo-correlacional de William Labov. Como ya se dijo, la variable lingüística dependiente estudiada es el auxiliar “DO” que presenta las variantes: (do) y ( $\emptyset$ ), o sea presencia o forma no marcada, estándar, canónica vs. ausencia de la forma verbal o forma marcada, no estándar y no canónica. Nos centramos en las instancias utilizadas en oraciones interrogativas, en tiempo presente y pasado, tanto en preguntas de tipo total (*yes-no questions*) como parcial (*wh-questions*). Las muestras de habla se tomaron de los intercambios verbales que se establecen entre los personajes de las series de programas televisivos de EEUU, es decir que los diálogos son realizados por los hablantes nativos del inglés.

Como ejemplo, la variante ( $\emptyset$ ) o sea la ausencia del auxiliar que se observa en nuestro corpus están:

*You think it could be a smear job?* (Gillian, personaje de “Lie to me”, episodio 1, temporada 1, año 2009)

*You ordered “Magic Mike” 5 times?* (Max, personaje de “2 Broke girls”, episodio 9, temporada 1, año 2011)

Por otra parte, como ejemplos de falta de auxiliar “do” en preguntas de tipo parciales, nuestro corpus incluye casos como:

*Which you like better, good cop or bad cop?* (Reese, personaje de “Person of interest”, episodio 18, temporada 1, año 2011)

*Why you fired Paulina?* (Max, personaje de “2 Broke Girls”, episodio piloto, temporada 1, año 2011)

En cuanto a factores o variables independientes que pueden influir en las realizaciones del auxiliar DO, se tomaron en cuenta: 2 factores lingüísticos, el estilo y 3 factores sociales.

Los factores lingüísticos que se tomaron en cuenta fueron: el tiempo verbal y el tipo de pregunta.

- 1) el uso del auxiliar “do” tanto en tiempo presente como pasado
- 2) el tipo de pregunta total (yes no questions) o parcial (wh question)

De modo que se discriminaron los datos del corpus por una parte, según fueran empleados en tiempo presente o pasado y, por otra parte, según se tratara de preguntas totales o parciales.

En relación con el estilo, se trabajó con dos: formal e informal. Para distinguirlos se tuvo en cuenta la tensión comunicativa observada sobre el hablante en los intercambios verbales. Se decidió tomar dos de los programas televisivos de comedia como representativos del estilo informal, “*New Girl*” y “*Two Broke Girls*”, y uno representativo del estilo formal, “*The Good Wife*”. Tomando 3 horas de grabación de cada estilo, comparamos las realizaciones de habla y de esa manera se pudo dar cuenta de cómo el estilo condiciona la manera de hablar.

Las variables sociales que se consideraron fueron la clase social, el género y la edad.

Para ubicar a nuestros informantes en un determinado estrato social, al ser personajes de ficción no se les pudo aplicar un índice de educación y ocupación, sino que inferimos su clase social basándonos en aspectos como sus estudios, su ocupación, la vestimenta, la decoración de su casa, el lugar de trabajo, el grupo de pares, etc. Se decidió trabajar con dos clases sociales: clase media alta (MA) y clase media baja (MB).

Se incluyeron varones y mujeres, y respecto a la edad, distinguimos 2 grupos etarios: jóvenes (de 20 a 35 años) y adultos, de 35 años en adelante.

En cuanto al corpus, quedó constituido por la transcripción de 45 horas de transmisión de las series televisivas que se listan más adelante. Así se obtuvieron 649 instancias de la variable “DO”. Se trabajó con una muestra predeterminada conformada por 40 personajes de los programas televisivos distribuidos en partes iguales: 20 hombres y 20 mujeres, 20 jóvenes y 20 adultos, y 20 de MB y 20 de MA.

Fueron 14 las series elegidas:

1. "New Girl" (2009)
2. "Glee" (2009)
3. "2 Broke girls" (2011)
4. "Grey's Anatomy" (2010)
5. "Gossip Girl" (2007)
6. "The Good Wife" (2009)
7. "Person of interest" (2011)
8. "Bones" (2005)
9. "Modern Family" (2009)
10. "30 Rock" (2006)
11. "Lie to me" (2009)
12. "Cougar Town" (2009)
13. "The Walking Dead" (2010)
14. "Revenge" (2011)

#### **IV. Análisis de los datos**

##### 1. Uso de DO en muestra total

Una vez procesados los datos lingüísticos se observó que de un total de 649 ocurrencias de la variable "DO" un 60% le corresponde a la variante estándar o nuclear (do) mientras que el 40% a la no estándar o periférica ( $\emptyset$ ) (Gráfico 1). El alto porcentaje de la variante periférica fue sorprendente para nosotros, ya que la ausencia del auxiliar representa una violación de una regla gramatical del inglés. Como estudiantes del Profesorado de Inglés, nos sorprende este uso tan extendido y contrario a la normativa inglesa que se propone en el estudio formal y sistemático de esta lengua.

De ahora en más, presentaremos solamente los porcentajes del uso de la variante no estándar, a fin de no recargar el análisis con cifras innecesarias: al haber sólo 2 variantes, es obvio que los porcentajes restantes hasta sumar 100% le corresponden a la otra variante (do).

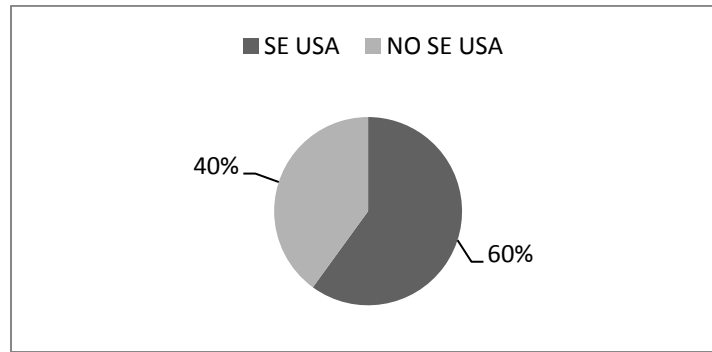


Gráfico 1. Uso de DO en muestra total

## 2. Uso de (Ø) según el factor estilístico

La variación estilística depende de la presión psicológica sobre el hablante o la tensión comunicativa en el momento de la enunciación. Cuando el estilo es formal, los sujetos tienden a ser más cuidadosos con su manera de hablar, mientras que en el estilo informal, la forma de hablar es coloquial y espontánea.

En el estudio que nos ocupa, el estilo resultó el factor que más fuertemente incidió en el uso de la variable en estudio. Si tomamos los datos de la ausencia de la variable "DO", los números muestran una diferencia del 15% entre el estilo formal (45%) y el informal (60%). Esto es así porque en una interacción verbal donde hay más tensión comunicativa –es decir, mayor grado de formalidad- es común que los sujetos se preocupen por utilizar las formas más correctas o prestigiosas, como se observa en la serie "The Good Wife" donde hay muchos diálogos entre abogados, en los juicios o en las oficinas del juez, etc.

Paralelamente, el porcentaje de realizaciones de la forma marcada es más elevado en el estilo informal porque hay menos presión psicológica en los sujetos que forman parte del intercambio verbal. De ahí que la ausencia del auxiliar ascienda al 60% en "New Girl" y "Two Broke Girls". En conclusión, llama la atención que aún en las situaciones más formales no se emplee el auxiliar "do" en casi la mitad de los casos relevados.

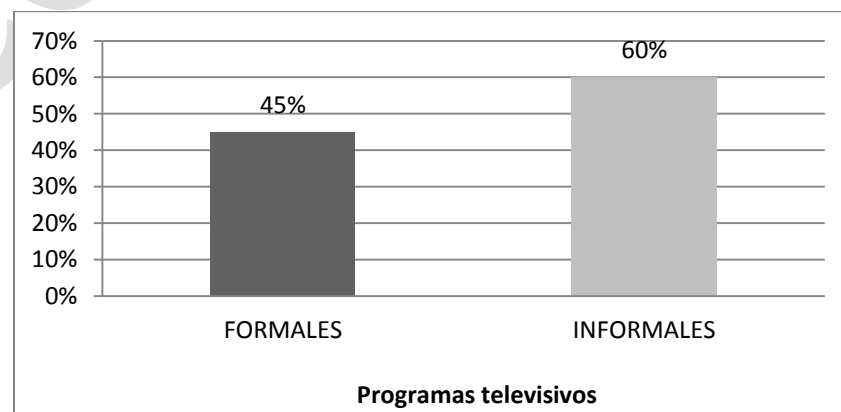


Gráfico 2. Uso de "Ø" según estilo en programas televisivos



### 3. Uso de (Ø) según nivel sociocultural.

Cuando hablamos de **clase social** no nos referimos a compartimentos estancos, sino a subgrupos sociales que comparten similitudes en cuanto a nivel educativo, ocupación, salario, prácticas sociales. Es más apropiado hacer uso de términos como “nivel socioeducativo” o “nivel sociocultural” según en qué se hace énfasis. La mayoría de las sociedades suele presentar una estratificación en tres clases: media alta, media baja y baja. Las investigaciones coinciden en señalar la existencia de un sociolecto prestigiado, que es utilizado por la clase media alta e imitado por las demás.

El nivel sociocultural fue un factor que influyó en las realizaciones de la variable DO. Tomando la variante no prestigiada, podemos ver que el porcentaje más alto de su uso lo presenta la MB con un 45%, siendo 34% para MA, es decir, que a más baja posición en la escala social, mayor ausencia del auxiliar “do”.

La clase MA, se explica porque son profesionales, con estudios universitarios y por lo general, resultan ser más conscientes de las formas gramaticales correctas de su idioma, por lo que actualizan la variante no estándar en menor proporción que la MB.



Gráfico 3. Uso de "Ø" según nivel sociocultural

### 4. Uso de (Ø) según género

Existe la tendencia a realizar las variantes prestigiadas, correctas o socialmente aceptadas en mayor proporción por parte de la mujer. Esto se debe a que socialmente la mujer es evaluada por su apariencia y por su forma de hablar, mientras que el hombre es evaluado socialmente por su éxito en el ámbito laboral (Trudgill, en Sanou y Nicolás, 2000: 13). En comunidades donde hay más igualdad en el rol social de mujeres y hombres, hay menos diferencias en su forma de hablar.

En lo que respecta al género, no fue un factor que realmente incidiera en las elecciones de los hablantes, en cuanto al uso de la variante no canónica. Sin embargo, resulta interesante destacar que, aunque entre el empleo de los hombres y las mujeres se da margen mínimo de diferencia del 4% – 42% y 38%, respectivamente- ese porcentaje menor detectado en las informantes femeninas confirma la tendencia de la mujer a usar las formas que gozan de mayor valoración social, ya que tiene mayor conciencia lingüística de las mismas. Quizás estas cifras tan similares entre los géneros respondan a que en la sociedad norteamericana actual, en general, hay más igualdad entre los roles sociales que cumple cada género: cada vez más las mujeres acceden a ocupaciones de mayor responsabilidad y remuneración.

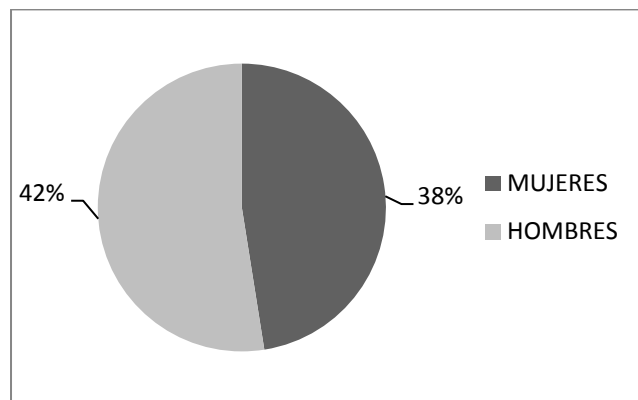


Gráfico 4. Uso de "Ø" según género

#### 5. Uso de (Ø) según edad

En lo que respecta a la **edad**, "ciertas variables lingüísticas pueden llegar a funcionar como indicadores de los diferentes grupos etarios" (Sanou y Nicolás, 2000: 13). Un estudio que tenga informantes de distintas edades permite detectar ciertas situaciones. En ocasiones la comparación entre el uso de una forma lingüística de los jóvenes y los mayores permite detectar un cambio lingüístico en marcha.

En este corpus, la edad apenas influye en el uso de la variable en estudio. Los jóvenes realizan la variante periférica en un 44% mientras que los adultos en un 38%. Se evidencia un pequeño margen de diferencia del 6% a favor de los jóvenes, quienes utilizan con más frecuencia la forma no estándar. Si bien el contraste es pequeño, corrobora la tendencia de la generación más joven, que suele ser más informal en su manera de hablar, como suele serlo en todos los demás órdenes de la vida. Esto parece indicar que esta alternancia está instalada en el habla desde hace bastante tiempo y no se percibe como una forma nueva que está entrando.

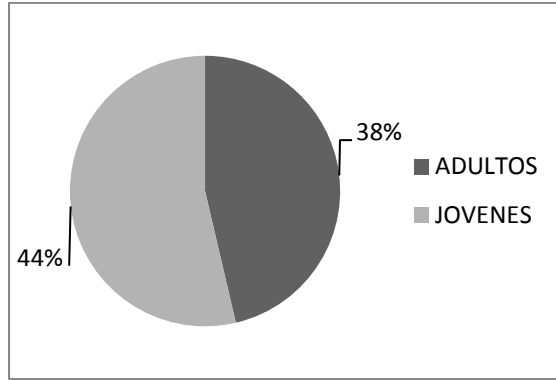


Gráfico 5. Uso de "Ø" según edad

6. Uso de (Ø) según el tiempo verbal.

Los datos revelan que la ausencia de “do” ofrece un 49% de uso en el tiempo presente y un 31% en el tiempo pasado. La notable diferencia del 18% evidencia que este factor lingüístico tiene una fuerte influencia en el empleo de DO.

El mayor empleo en presente se debe no sólo a que la elisión del auxiliar “do” se inició históricamente en el tiempo presente, sino que también en el momento de la enunciación disponemos de mayor número de elementos contextuales que permiten prescindir más del auxiliar que es marcador del tiempo presente. Resulta sorprendente el porcentaje de uso de la forma no estándar en el pasado, porque en las preguntas la marca del pasado es el auxiliar “did”, que va acompañado por la forma de infinitivo (*to infinitive*). En otros casos, se omite el auxiliar y se emplea directamente la forma verbal del pasado simple. Esto constituye una violación gramatical más grave aún, dado que elimina el auxiliar y cambia la forma misma del verbo. Por ejemplo:

*You came up with one?* (Max, personaje de “2 Broke Girls”, episodio piloto, temporada 1, año 2011)

Why you fired Paulina? (Max)

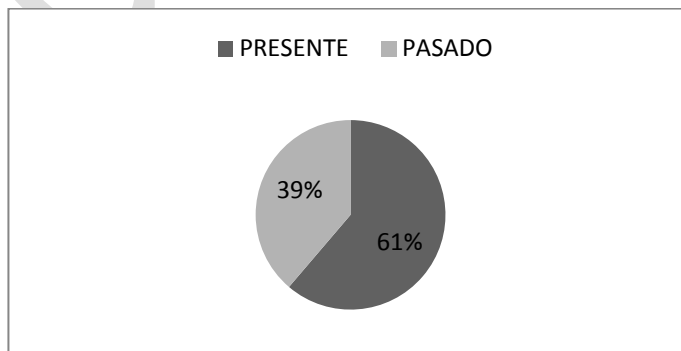


Gráfico 6. Uso de "Ø" según factor lingüístico tiempo presente/pasado

### 7. Uso de ( $\emptyset$ ) según el tipo de pregunta.

En lo que respecta al tipo de pregunta total y parcial, la variante marcada se realizó en un 30% en las interrogaciones parciales vs. un 48% en las totales, es decir, hubo un contraste del 19% a favor de las preguntas totales. Los resultados fueron contrarios a lo esperado. Se suponía que el auxiliar se eliminaría más frecuentemente en las preguntas de tipo parciales, ya que el pronombre interrogativo (“*wh word*”) en sí mismo ya es una marca de interrogación.

Se podría aventurar una posible explicación: que tal vez, el porcentaje fue más elevado en las preguntas totales, porque en estas muestras de habla analizadas, muchas de ellas funcionan como muletillas y por eso se realizan con una frecuencia muy alta lo cual puede promover una mayor pérdida del auxiliar; por ejemplo en: “*You need?*”, “*You know?*”.

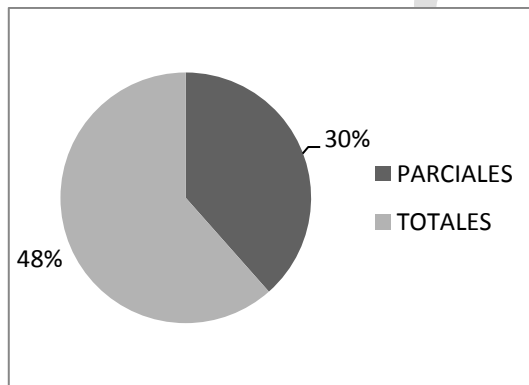


Gráfico 7. Uso de " $\emptyset$ " según factor lingüístico tipo de pregunta parcial/total

## V- Conclusiones

Se resaltan los siguientes resultados:

1. El uso de la variante no estándar presenta un alto porcentaje de uso en la muestra total (40%) lo cual indica que la elisión del auxiliar está muy extendida en el inglés americano actual.
2. El factor estilo es que el más influyó en este estudio, con 45% y 60% de omisión del auxiliar en el formal e informal, respectivamente. Claramente, la pérdida de “do” se percibe más como una variante más informal, que viola la normativa inglesa.
3. El nivel sociocultural influyó bastante en las realizaciones de la variante no canónica con 34% en la MA y 45% en MB, resultados que están, sin duda, ligados al mayor nivel educativo de los sujetos del estrato más alto, que los hace valorar más el empleo de las formas gramaticalmente más apropiadas.
4. Tanto el género como la edad prácticamente no influyeron en las realizaciones de la forma marcada.

5. En cuanto al factor lingüístico de tiempo verbal, influyó notablemente en este corpus: la omisión del auxiliar está mucho más ligada a los verbos en tiempo presente (49%) que en pasado (31%).
6. Finalmente, el porcentaje de pérdida del “do” asciende a un elevado 48% en las preguntas totales y disminuye al 30% en las parciales. Probablemente, en las preguntas totales se prescindía más del auxiliar, debido a que en este corpus, muchas instancias corresponden a muletillas de alta frecuencia de uso.

Esta elisión del auxiliar concuerda con la característica norteamericana de sintetizar o acortar muchas expresiones aplicando un criterio de lograr una mayor economía de tiempo al hablar. Por ejemplo, se utilizan:

a. Contracciones verbales

- i. is not → isn't → ain't
- ii. going to → gonna
- iii. want to → wanna

b. Abreviaciones de sustantivos comunes y propios

- iv. brother → bro
- v. sister → sis
- vi. victim → vic
- vii. Jennifer → Jenny → Jen → J
- viii. Robert → Rob → R
- ix. Alexander → Alex → Al

c. Acrónimos comunes en habla

- x. As soon as possible → ASAP
- xi. Oh my God → OMG
- xii. I love you → ILY
- xiii. Lots of laugh → LOL

## VI- Referencias

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CONFIDENCIAL

**Dispositivos grupales:****Una propuesta innovadora en la formación docente****Mgter. Norma Aubone**[norma.aubone@speedy.com.ar](mailto:norma.aubone@speedy.com.ar)**Lic. Esp. Miriam Youngerman**[miriamyoungerman52@hotmail.com](mailto:miriamyoungerman52@hotmail.com)**Alumnos:**

**María Victoria Sergo  
Paula del Valle Rodríguez Calvo  
Salomé González  
Mariana Manrique  
María Julieta Tello  
Heidi Anne Mathews  
María Josefina Castillo  
Marcos Jaliff**

**FFHA-UNSJ**

En nuestra trayectoria de varios años de ejercicio como docentes de la FFHA - UNSJ, y frente a la experiencia del malestar creciente en la tarea docente por el desencuentro cada vez más radical entre las expectativas prescriptas en relación al aprendizaje universitario y las posibilidades y modos subjetivos de afrontar la novedad académica de los estudiantes de hoy, nos planteamos la necesidad de la problematización como vía posible de tramitar dicha tensión e insatisfacción.

Frente al creciente desgranamiento de la matrícula, los abandonos tempranos y el clima de insatisfacción y apatía tanto en estudiantes como en los docentes, el número ingreso reducido generalizado en todas las carreras, acompañado de una reducción en los egresos y la notoria falla en la cobertura de cargos por docentes con título superior en la provincia, nos preguntamos:

¿Cuáles son los “síntomas contemporáneos” tanto en los sujetos del aprendizaje como en las prácticas docentes e institucionales que requieren una interpretación y reformulación de nuestras prácticas de formación?

¿Cuáles son las demandas y requerimientos de la orientación en educación superior?

¿Es posible pensar en diseños alternativos de formación que produzcan otros efectos subjetivos e institucionales?

En este espacio queremos en este espacio compartir algunos resultados de nuestras reflexiones y, por sobre todas las cosas, nuestras observaciones sobre los efectos de un dispositivo implementado como práctica innovadora que nos ha posibilitado vivir una experiencia nueva. Esta experiencia es la del asombro, la de gozar de la novedad del encuentro -todos los años diferente-, posibilitador no sólo de la recreación de nuestra tarea, con nosotros mismos y nuestros estudiantes como actores co-partícipes de la construcción de nuevos escenarios educativos.

El espacio universitario provee la riqueza de la heterogeneidad de subjetividades emergentes tanto de distintas generaciones como de diferentes imaginarios sociales en función de contextos familiares y culturales y de variadas trayectorias educativas. Esa heterogeneidad nos permite también identificar los “núcleos duros”, las significaciones más cristalizadas y resistentes a las transformaciones histórico-sociales en las representaciones construidas sobre lo educativo, y los efectos en la producción subjetiva que la eficacia del dispositivo pedagógico trajo aparejados.

Las tensiones entre el dispositivo pedagógico tradicional de la “Academia” contrapuesto a las nuevas prácticas de disciplinamiento y de producción subjetiva por parte del discurso mediático sostenido por el mercado, y por ende, por los grupos hegemónicos de poder económico, se expresan en los nuevos “síntomas contemporáneos”: anorexia intelectual, abulia, malestar docente, insatisfacción generalizada, embotamiento del deseo por el conocimiento, fracaso pedagógico, deserción, fragmentación y desgranamiento. (Cordie 2000)

El individualismo y la consecuente pobreza creciente de lazos sociales, la fluidez en el pensamiento, el des-compromiso con el otro, la ausencia de una significatividad social del conocimiento, la fragmentación mediática, el desfondamiento de las instituciones educativas y la destitución de la subjetividad pedagógica, son algunos de dichos efectos que sufrimos como malestar en nuestra labor académica.

Los efectos que la “forma escolar”, o los núcleos duros de la formación educativa en su transmisión generacional de más de dos siglos, sigue dejando sus inscripciones subjetivas y sociales que perduran en un magma de significaciones contradictorias con los nuevos imperativos que devienen del disciplinamiento del mercado y los medios de comunicación

La subjetividad pedagógica ya no se construye en los trayectos educativos, entendiendo el sujeto pedagógico como una subjetividad constituida a partir del “deseo de aprender”, el



reconocimiento de las propias carencias, la búsqueda del conocimiento como vía posible de construcción de una realidad más amplia y compleja y por sobre todo, como herramienta fundamental para la construcción de un proyecto personal.

Los sujetos “consumidores” y/o sujetos de “opinión” producidos por el discurso mediático, presentan obstáculos severos en la construcción del pensamiento lógico, en los procesos secundarios que requieren la reflexión crítica, lo que condice con los déficits de comprensión textual y de escritura. (Corea y Lewkowicz 2004)

Décadas atrás, si bien la subjetividad pedagógica estaba sujeta al aplastamiento o alienación por sojuzgamiento a prácticas autoritarias, en condiciones de información lo que atenta contra la subjetividad es la sensación de vacío y dispersión

La “subjetividad mediática” opera con la inmediatez, la sobre-estimulación, los lazos fluidos, la respuesta sin resonancia subjetiva y los individuos son movidos a la acción o a la opinión como descarga, sin tomar en cuenta los efectos del propio decir.

El trayecto universitario no ha variado hasta el momento sus estrategias de abordaje frente al cambio de contexto y cambio de los sujetos aprendientes, y son cada vez más visibles las dificultades de apropiación de estas herramientas, las limitaciones de los alumnos de los últimos años a la hora de llevar adelante sus propias prácticas, y los procesos de escritura, en tanto que implican necesariamente una elaboración de segundo nivel tanto en los procesos de subjetivación como de articulación teórica de sus propios procesos de aprendizaje-enseñanza.

Lo que fue eficaz en otro momento en cuanto a las estrategias didácticas ya no alcanza. Como docentes responsables de la formación docente tenemos que agudizar la invención de otros espacios que hagan posible nuevos estilos de construcción de saberes, superando el pragmatismo vaciado de sentidos, el efficientismo técnico que deja fuera la condición singular de cada uno en su propio proceso de construcción identitaria, el individualismo enajenante y las propuestas tecnocráticas que impiden la problematización continua de las prácticas en un espacio social de intercambio.

Todo esto es producto de las marcas que los discursos y prácticas de los 90 han inscripto en los docentes -actuales formadores-, sin descontar que en los mismos también operan las lógicas mediáticas y de mercado, cuando no opera el pensamiento reflexivo y crítico.

Desde el año 2006 diseñamos para los alumnos ingresantes y de primer año de las carreras de Profesorado y Licenciatura en Ciencias de la Educación, un dispositivo grupal que

denominamos *Acompañamiento Pedagógico*. Esta denominación tuvo la intención de diferenciarlo de las tutorías que se implementan en otras carreras (no se trata solamente de una diferencia semántica, sino epistémica, teórica y metodológica). Más que pretender que cumpla una función tutorial (de sostén, guía, orientador), pensamos al acompañante desde un lugar de par, en un proceso de aprendizaje de tipo grupal, como un coordinador de grupo que trabaje con los diversos emergentes de esta tarea particular: el aprendizaje universitario. Haciendo uso de dichos emergentes, el acompañante debería mediar en la construcción del pensamiento reflexivo, crítico y argumentativo a partir de los intercambios. Se trata, entonces, de una estrategia que propende a la resignificación de los lazos sociales, el conocimiento como construcción en sociedad y para la sociedad (superando el individualismo y mercantilización del conocimiento que tanto vaciamiento simbólico ha provocado)

Dado que en Profesorado de Inglés, nuestra cátedra *-Psicología del Adolescente y el Joven-* se dicta en el primer semestre de primer año, convinimos en lo oportuno de implementar este mismo dispositivo desde la cátedra, y como la vía posible de articular los contenidos con la problemática educativa actual a partir de la resignificación de las propias trayectorias educativas de los alumnos y de la identificación de sus propios vacíos y carencias como motorizadores del *deseo de saber y de hacer un lazo educativo*, con el conocimiento y con los otros, para posicionarse en las coordenadas de la formación docente del Inglés como disciplina elegida.

Se convocó a algunos alumnos de años superiores que mostraron condiciones destacadas en el grado de apropiación de los contenidos y procedimientos para conformar “grupos de aprendizaje” con los alumnos de la cátedra, como estrategia de mediación pedagógica (Souto 1996).

La propuesta consiste en la conformación de dos dispositivos grupales:

- ✓ Grupo de Aprendizaje (Acompañamiento Pedagógico) con los estudiantes de primer año
- ✓ Grupo de Formación de los Acompañantes Pedagógicos, en el cual, a partir del análisis y problematización de sus las situaciones planteadas en los grupos de aprendizaje y de los emergentes grupales, construyen un *saber hacer* en una experiencia grupal y en una práctica reflexiva y subjetivante.

Esto implica trabajar paralelamente con dos niveles de formación a partir de la posibilidad de implementar prácticas constructivistas que quedan limitadas en el espacio áulico por el acotamiento de la carga horaria y de las exigencias curriculares, que no responden a tiempos lógicos de construcción del pensamiento, sino a tiempos cronológicos y pragmáticos.

Por otro lado, este dispositivo constituye un espacio posible de formación en la dinámica grupal, estrategia cada vez más necesaria de implementar en la formación de los agentes educativos debido a los efectos devastadores de la fluidez de los lazos sociales en la contemporaneidad, y que van de la mano de los procesos de desimbolización. Estas prácticas producen un plus de sentido en la construcción de lazos en el mismo trayecto de formación. Las herramientas teóricas que se capitalizan en la formación toman una dimensión significativa y operativa, en la medida en que se adopta una posición activa en la elucidación de los obstáculos frente al aprendizaje y, fundamentalmente, al lazo con el otro, y que en la superación de los mismos, se interioriza y fortalece un modelo de problematización de las propias estrategias subjetivas y cognitivas tanto en las prácticas grupales o sociales como en los procesos de aprendizaje.

En otros momentos de consistencia institucional, era posible producir un sentido general que articulaba simbólicamente muchas situaciones diversas. En los tiempos actuales de “dispersión”, el estatuto de la subjetividad ha pasado del Estado al mercado, de la totalidad al fragmento. Hoy podemos hablar de una simbolización situacional; y por ello es posible que en cada situación se elaboren las reglas de coherencia, y es al interior de cada situación que se analizan las contradicciones.

Para la construcción de un proyecto personal como educadores, se requiere asumir la temporalidad que se elabora a través de los procesos superiores, la lectura e interpretación de la realidad como construcción discursiva y compleja, la identificación de la propia singularidad tanto en la sensibilidad como en las competencias y estilos personales, diferenciándose de los “modelos estándar” hegemónicos, la propia legitimación de las prácticas a partir del poder del conocimiento y manejo de las herramientas disciplinarias que nos permiten argumentar y fundamentar “qué”, “para qué”, “con qué”, “con quién”, “cuándo”, y “cómo” de nuestro quehacer como educadores.

El objetivo de compartir esta experiencia radica en que hoy más que nunca sabemos que no hay recetas, que no hay relato único, que frente a la incertidumbre nos cabe hacernos cargo de asumir la misma como un desafío de invención con la cual construimos como sujetos y como sociedad. Pero esa labor no debe realizarse en soledad. Esa es la “novedad”; transformar el malestar en una maravillosa experiencia de escucha de estas nuevas juventudes y de descubrimiento del potencial que representa la diversidad para el aprendizaje, asombrándonos con cada grupo por el entusiasmo, la participación, el cuestionamiento, las posibilidades de un pensamiento tantas veces amordazado por nuestras prácticas rutinarias, reproductivistas y atomizadas. Es nuestro deseo poner en circulación esta experiencia porque creemos que puede ser recreada por otros y para otros.

Y, porque este recorrido es construido con los acompañantes, el relato de sus experiencias es lo que para nosotras representa el mejor aporte a ser compartido como estrategia innovadora en la práctica pedagógico-didáctica universitaria.

**Relato de experiencia:**

*Los tres años de experiencia como acompañante pedagógico me llevan a repensar la complejidad que implica el acto educativo, la relación con el grupo de pares, la inserción en un nuevo nivel del sistema educativo y por sobre todo, la complejidad de las relaciones humanas. Hay una pregunta que se repitió en mis tres grupos de "acompañados" y fue: "Por qué haces esto? Te pagan?" Era sorprendente la dificultad que tenían los chicos en entender que es posible ofrecer a otros la propia experiencia, conocimiento y tiempo sin otra intención más que compartir "sin fines de lucro".*

*Es en el intento de compartir que intenté construir soluciones junto con los chicos que pasaron por diferentes etapas hasta llegar al objetivo "promocionar".*

*Otra palabra que me resulta importante resaltar es la "resignificación" que involucra este proceso, resignificación de mis propias prácticas docentes, la construcción conjunta con mis pares y mi propia subjetividad ante los conflictos que fuimos resolviendo con el grupo.*

Julieta Tello.

*Lo que me llevó a participar en esta propuesta fue que el año pasado (2012), mi primer año en la universidad, yo fui "acompañada", y creo que gracias a esto fue la primera vez que pude trabajar en grupo. Sin embargo, este no fue el único beneficio que tuve. El hecho de estar en contacto con una persona que ya había pasado por todo lo que nos esperaba ese año, y que nos alentaba a seguir a pesar de las dificultades, me ayudó mucho a sentirme segura a la hora de, por ejemplo, rendir un parcial. El Acompañamiento también me sirvió para aprender todo lo que no nos enseñan sobre la facultad: hablábamos de las materias, los profesores, la experiencia de rendir un parcial o un examen, qué es regularizar, qué es promocionar, entre otras cosas. Es decir, esta es una experiencia que sirve, no sólo para Psicología, sino para toda la carrera.*

*Al principio el grupo estaba centrado en la teoría y no le daba mucha importancia al debate ya que no tenía tiempo para que se produjera. Una tarde durante el acompañamiento, el grupo no sabía qué escribir cuando la profesora les preguntaba qué se imaginaban que podían hacer ellas como docentes ante una situación de marginación. Por esta razón, con mi compañero sugerimos que cada uno, incluyéndonos nosotros, contara qué haría y que uno fuera anotando todas las ideas en un papel. Las chicas nos contaron que a partir de este momento se dieron cuenta de "la importancia del diálogo".*

*Afortunadamente, las chicas nos integraron a mi compañero y a mí rápidamente: confiaban en nosotros, nos consultaban sus dudas y nos contaban los problemas que surgían dentro del grupo. Muchas veces nos agradecieron por lo que hacíamos y nos dijeron que les había servido mucho. Debido a esto, fue una experiencia muy enriquecedora y gratificante.*

*Considero que ser acompañante también me sirvió para visualizarme como futura docente, ya que fue mi primera vez frente a un grupo que esperaba algo de mí, y para ver distintos problemas a los que me voy a tener que enfrentar.*

*Sumado a esto, el hecho de ser acompañante con un compañero también fue muy enriquecedor porque nos "obligó" a tomar decisiones juntos y porque pudimos aprender mucho el uno del otro: conocimos otros puntos de vista, otros modos de lidiar con los conflictos, entre otras cosas.*

María Victoria Sergo

*Me sentí motivada a participar en esta propuesta por distintas razones. En primer lugar, porque me sirvió muchísimo cuando cursé primer año porque me ayudó entre otras cosas, a insertarme en el ámbito universitario. Pensé que yo podría ayudar a otros chicos de la misma forma en que mi acompañante me ayudó a mí. Esta propuesta da la oportunidad para aprender mucho de y con los chicos que a cada uno le toca acompañar, para trabajar con grupo y ayudarlo a enfrentar distintas dificultades propias del aprendizaje grupal*

*Este año me tocó trabajar con un grupo de chicas que no se conocían al momento de conformar el grupo, tuvieron ciertas dificultades para trabajar en grupo, y también al momento de enfrentarse con el sistema universitario, les ayudé a diferenciar entre grupo de amigos y grupo de aprendizaje, a entender la importancia del grupo de trabajo, respondí a distintos interrogantes que tenían sobre el funcionamiento de las materias, de la carrera y del sistema universitario en general*

*Durante esta experiencia aprendí que no es fácil participar en un grupo desde una posición distinta a la de 'pares' e intentar ayudarlos. Sin embargo, es una experiencia totalmente enriquecedora que permite conocer otros puntos de vista, otras realidades, otras formas de afrontar las dificultades que se presentan en el paso por la universidad, además de ser muy útil para comenzar a posicionarme en un lugar diferente, que, sin ser docente, se trata de una cierta asimetría respecto de los alumnos.*

Paula Rodríguez

*Estoy en este momento cursando 2º año y el año pasado cuando cursé Psicología viví la experiencia de ser acompañada Me ayudó a insertarme en la vida universitaria ya que mi acompañante me ayudó sacar dudas de todos los trámites universitarios. Me sirvió para relacionarme con alguien de otro año que ya había pasado por eso. Por esta razón quería*

*participar en la propuesta para poder también ayudar a alguien y servir de contacto dentro de la facultad.*

*Sin embargo, desde el principio mi grupo tuvo problemas. En la primera reunión vinieron los cinco integrantes, pero después de cinco minutos dos ya se habían ido. La misma situación se repetía todas las semanas. Solo había una chica que venía a todas las reuniones. Intenté mediar entre todos, pero había mucha falta de compromiso de los demás integrantes, yo siempre estaba para ayudarlos en lo que necesitaban. A veces tenían consultas sobre la materia y otras veces querían hablar sobre la facultad y otras materias*

*En esta experiencia aprendí que se necesita la cooperación de ambos lados para avanzar. Por más que yo insisto y los busque, no puedo obligarlos a ser responsables, por más frustrante que sea. Sin embargo, creo que la fortaleza de esta propuesta es la posibilidad de crear un espíritu de trabajo en equipo y aprender que para avanzar tenemos que trabajar juntos y todos aportar al grupo, a los alumnos de primer año ayudarlos a insertarse en la universidad por parte de alguien que ha pasado por el mismo trayecto.*

*La experiencia del Grupo de Formación me sirvió para poder consultar sobre dificultades o incertidumbres que tuve. Pude consultar no solo a las profesoras pero también a los otros acompañantes y pudimos expresarnos libremente y ayudarnos mutuamente.*

*Esta experiencia y el Grupo de Formación sirven para seguir trabajando en equipo. Más adelante, cuando seamos docentes, ya vamos a tener esta experiencia para poder aplicarlo con los otros docentes y entonces trabajar en equipo y colaborar.*

Heidi Mathews

*Durante la primera parte del presente año, participé en la propuesta de Acompañamiento Pedagógico presentada por la cátedra de Psicología del Adolescente y del Joven. Desde mi lugar como estudiante de las carreras de Profesorado y Licenciatura en Inglés y con el compromiso social de convertirme en docente de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa, decidí ser parte de esta experiencia con el propósito de aprender más sobre las prácticas que nos constituyen como docentes transformadores y constructores de subjetividades. Así mismo, la idea de aportar propias experiencias a un grupo de trabajo de primer año de nuestra carrera y colaborar en el alcance de los objetivos que se propusieron dentro de este equipo, fue uno de mis propósitos.*

*En mi experiencia con el grupo de primer año que acompañé, colaboré en la búsqueda de soluciones a las inquietudes planteadas por el grupo. Además, desempeñé un rol mediador entre los intereses de cada estudiante en diferentes oportunidades. Por ejemplo, en una ocasión se decidió sobre la temática a investigar para el trabajo final integrativo que los alumnos debían realizar a fin de promocionar la materia de Psicología del Adolescente y del Joven. Mi grupo había decidido basar su investigación sobre el tema "Sexualidad". Sin*

*embargo, a pesar de que todos estuvieron de acuerdo en un principio, algunos de ellos estuvieron en desacuerdo posteriormente, debido a que querían elegir otras temáticas como violencia, acoso, homosexualidad y discriminación. Junto a mi compañera de trabajo, Salomé González, aconsejamos a nuestro grupo y les propusimos que cada uno de los integrantes buscara una temática de su interés y la relacionara con el tema "Sexualidad".*

*Durante esta experiencia aprendí a buscar diferentes maneras de motivar al grupo para que pudieran seguir trabajando en equipo. Tuve también la posibilidad de escuchar diferentes propuestas sobre manejos de grupo y al mismo tiempo pude resignificar algunos conocimientos. Además, gracias a esta propuesta, pude tener una aproximación a los problemas que la realidad educativa presenta y comprendí que la construcción de un lazo social y el compromiso con el otro son valores un docente debe llevar por siempre a lo largo de su carrera.*

*Personalmente creo que este dispositivo ofrece experiencia y oportunidades para repensar saberes construidos, brindando la posibilidad de acercarnos hacia nuestro futuro como docentes transformadores de la realidad. Es necesario reconocer que esta propuesta facilita y ayuda a que los alumnos puedan alcanzar sus objetivos, proponiendo un modelo pedagógico basado en la escucha activa y la motivación. Así mismo, posibilita la construcción de una política educativa más justa, necesaria y democrática.*

Marcos Andrés Jaliff

*Es difícil romper las ataduras de lo establecido, lo incómodamente "natural". No tener tiempo, no querer más problemas, no tener esto, y no poder aquello, son excusas vacías frente a la falta de compromiso y solidaridad.*

*Sin embargo, varios rechazan ese no. Y hay tiempo, y hay maneras.*

*La experiencia del acompañamiento pedagógico me permitió, entre otras cosas, experimentar la solidaridad con los compañeros que estaban pasando situaciones similares a las que viví. Me permitió comunicar mis vivencias como alumna de primer año y construir junto a mis acompañadas una experiencia común, la de acompañantes-acompañado. Cabe recalcar que esto no lo he vivido en otra materia, y no sé si habrá otra posibilidad en el futuro.*

*Juntas charlamos sobre la organización de la materia, algún concepto que queríamos interiorizar, cómo ellas pensaban realizar el trabajo de coloquio integrando una experiencia de vida de un amigo de ellas con los contenidos vistos en clase y el eje que eligieron como base, que fue en este caso la marginación. Pudimos enlazar temas, descubrir conexiones y cultivar la mirada crítica de la realidad que nos atraviesa. A pesar de que en el camino una compañera no nos pudo acompañar hasta el final y de los encuentros que no pudimos realizar, pudimos conciliar posiciones, contrastar puntos de vista y complementar ideas.*

*Personalmente, aprendí a comunicar mis experiencias junto a un grupo, a un equipo formado por alteridades únicas y distintas. Pienso volver a intentarlo en años próximos. Creo que una de las razones por las cuales los alumnos, los compañeros, se niegan a esta experiencia es la imposibilidad de volver atrás cuando se descubre al Otro.*

Mariana Manrique

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## **Giro en las políticas lingüísticas curriculares. Modificaciones en el tratamiento de las lenguas extranjeras**

**Mgter. Blanca R. Benítez**

[bbenitez@uolsinectis.com.ar](mailto:bbenitez@uolsinectis.com.ar)

**FFHA-UNSJ**

### **Resumen**

Esta presentación tiene por objeto mostrar las modificaciones que se han producido en las últimas décadas, en el tratamiento de las lenguas extranjeras en el país, en el marco de las políticas lingüísticas curriculares.

Para hacer un análisis comparativo se constituyen en referente de análisis por un lado, la Resolución CFCyE: 72/98, que se conoció como “Acuerdo Marco para la Enseñanza de Lenguas”. Esto sucede en el contexto de implementación de la Ley Federal de Educación. Del acuerdo de referencia se abordan algunos términos relativos a la enseñanza de lenguas en el país y se focaliza en el lugar que se le asigna al inglés como lengua extranjera.

Por otro, en el contexto actual, se constituye en referente de análisis la Resolución CFE 181/12: “Núcleos de Aprendizajes Prioritarios de Lenguas Extranjeras (NAP), Educación Primaria y Secundaria”, en el marco de la implementación de la Ley de Educación Nacional. Acá se revisa el tratamiento que se hace de las cinco lenguas extranjeras presentes en el sistema de educación formal: alemán, francés, inglés, italiano y portugués.

Desde un enfoque interpretativo y crítico en investigación educativa se apela a herramientas del análisis del discurso para hacer un análisis comparativo.

### **Palabras claves:**

Políticas curriculares - lenguas extranjeras – núcleos de aprendizajes prioritarios

### **El Acuerdo Marco para la Enseñanza de Lenguas en el contexto de la implementación de la Ley Federal de Educación**

El Acuerdo Marco para la Enseñanza de Lenguas que correspondió a la Resolución CFCyE 72/98- se firmó en el seno del Consejo Federal de Cultura y Educación en Mayo de 1998. En el mismo se expresan fundamentos federales e internacionales<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>7</sup> La Declaración de Derechos Humanos de 1948, el Pacto Internacional de Derechos Económicos, Sociales y Culturales de 1948, la Resolución 47/135 de la Asamblea Gral. de la ONU acerca de los derechos de las personas pertenecientes a minorías nacionales o étnicas, religiosas o lingüísticas, la Declaración de la Cumbre del Consejo de Europa (1993) sobre las minorías nacionales, la Declaración Final de la Asamblea Gral de la Federación Internacional de Profesores de Lenguas Vivas (1991) que recomienda que los derechos lingüísticos sean considerados como derechos fundamentales de las personas, las recomendaciones de la Comisión Técnica Lingüística del Mercosur Educativo (1997).

Respecto de los objetivos, el acuerdo promueve el cumplimiento de artículos e incisos de la LFE: Art. 15, inc a8. Art. 5, inc. q

*“El establecimiento de las condiciones que posibiliten el aprendizaje de conductas de convivencia social, pluralista y participativa”.*

*“Concebir una organización de la diversidad lingüística y cultural que permita la participación efectiva de las comunidades lingüísticas a través de los aprendizajes formales en la escuela”.*

*“Favorecer la pluralidad lingüística y cultural, respetando el rol social de cada lengua a través de procesos de enza y aprendizajes y adquisición efectivos”.*

*“Facilitar la enseñanza del español como segunda lengua a lo largo de los niveles del SEA en los casos de comunidades que no tengan al español como lengua materna”.*

*“Recuperar, conservar y difundir el patrimonio lingüístico y cultural de las comunidades aborígenes [...]”*

*“Favorecer la interculturalidad facilitando la comunicación e intercomprensión con los habitantes de las distintas comunidades de origen extranjero del país”.*

*“Establecer criterios generales para la enseñanza de tres niveles de LE a lo largo de todo el SEA (Ed. Inicial, EGB, Ed. Polimodal) en una primera etapa de transición a partir del 7º año y progresivamente a partir del 2º ciclo.*

El acuerdo refiere al multilingüismo, el español, las lenguas aborígenes, y las lenguas extranjeras. El documento “recomienda una oferta plurilingüe y multicultural, cuando ello sea posible” y del análisis que haga cada jurisdicción dependerán las decisiones sobre la lengua o las LE que se adopten. El documento define a las LE como “aquellas que carecen de comunidades naturales para su adquisición y uso”.

La enseñanza de LE es acordada en términos de niveles, entendiendo por tales, unidades de aprendizaje/adquisición que implican el desarrollo progresivo de las competencias lingüística y comunicativa.

La noción de nivel respeta el desarrollo cognitivo, afectivo y social de los alumnos y las alumnas en cada ciclo a través de la selección de contenidos y expectativas de logros. Cada nivel implica el inmediato inferior tanto en cuanto al desarrollo lingüístico comunicativo como acerca de la reflexión sobre el lenguaje. Integra y profundiza aspectos de la lengua como conocimiento y uso.

En este marco, el inglés tiene un lugar destacado. Basamos esa apreciación en que no sólo es la única LE que se nombra, sino también por como se la conceptualiza y califica y las opciones que se pronuncian para su inclusión en los diseños curriculares.

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Se la define como lengua de comunicación internacional y se la considera pertinente para que hablantes de diferentes lenguas puedan comunicarse social, científica o técnicamente. Se considera también que el inglés adopta rasgos de inteligibilidad general porque, según el documento, no está asociado con ninguna variedad o cultura de origen particular, lo que facilita la entrada a muchas culturas.

Que el inglés haya adquirido preponderancia en el mundo, no es un hecho casual, es una construcción histórico-social. Como tampoco es casual que se lo prefiera para la comunicación social, científica y técnica. Es sesgado el documento oficial al considerar que el inglés adopta rasgos de inteligibilidad general porque no está asociado con ninguna variedad o cultura de origen particular. El inglés está asociado a países de poderío económico, político, científico, técnico, cultural, etc.

Un documento oficial puede y debe tomar las decisiones que estime conveniente, de política curricular, de política lingüística, etc. El problema es no asumirlas como tales y mostrarlas como asépticas y neutras. Una prescripción curricular es una propuesta de política educativa. Y las lenguas son fenómenos complejos y deben ser analizados también en términos sociopolíticos.

La otra idea que desarrollamos para seguir mostrando la preponderancia de la lengua inglesa en el acuerdo del CFCyE es la relativa a los niveles de inclusión y las opciones que ofrece opciones al respecto:

Al menos un nivel de inglés como lengua de comunicación internacional y 2 niveles de otra LE seleccionada. Al menos 2 niveles de inglés y un nivel de otra LE seleccionada, al menos tres niveles de inglés. Es decir que el común denominador es el inglés, quien está siempre presente es el inglés, o quien no puede estar ausente es el inglés.

En Mayo de 1998, cuando se firma el acuerdo de referencia, nos encontrábamos en pleno proceso de aplicación de la Ley Federal de Educación. Dicho acuerdo responde a ese proceso. En el campo educativo se emprendieron una serie de reformas, presentadas como de "carácter técnico", como si fueran "apolíticas". Cuando se sancionó la Ley Federal de Educación 24.195/03, el por entonces Ministro Rodríguez enunció como pilares fundamentales de la misma, la calidad educativa y la igualdad de oportunidades. Para ello se definieron una serie de líneas de acción: transformación de la estructura y niveles, en la organización y la gestión, en los contenidos, en la capacitación y la formación de los docentes y en la infraestructura y el equipamiento. Es en la línea de los contenidos que se formula el citado acuerdo.

A la vez que se globaliza la economía, se fortalecen, redefinen y surgen nuevos bloques regionales. En 1991, mediante la suscripción Tratado de Asunción, surge el Mercosur, Mercado Común del Sur, creado como la unión aduanera entre la República Argentina, la República Federativa de Brasil, la República del Paraguay y la República Oriental del Uruguay. Los países firmantes advirtieron que dicho tratado no podía circunscribirse a meros acuerdos económicos y que “la educación debía jugar un rol principal”. En 1992 comenzó a funcionar orgánicamente el Sector Educativo del Mercosur.

Relativos a las relaciones bilaterales con Brasil, en materia educativa, probablemente la suscripción Convenio sobre Cooperación Educativa en 1999, por Ley 25.181, fue el hecho mas importante.

Argentina y Brasil, según el Convenio de referencia, son concientes de que los sistemas educativos deben dar respuesta a los desafíos de la democracia en un contexto de integración de los países de la región, de transformaciones productivas y avances científicos y tecnológicos, y el acuerdo bilateral en materia educativa se inspira en acciones de cooperación. Dicho Convenio es de 1999, es decir posterior al Acuerdo Marco de Enseñanza de Lenguas de 1998.

En el Plan del Sector Educativo del Mercosur, la educación sigue siendo considerada no sólo como una condición para fortalecer el proceso integrador y para asegurar su irreversibilidad, sino también porque cumple un papel central en los procesos de desarrollo con justicia e inclusión social. Se considera que el mayor desafío es una educación de calidad y pertinencia a la realidad en la que viven. Y que aun representa un objetivo lejano para los países de la región, brindar educación para todos a lo largo de toda la vida. La educación, según dicho plan, tiene que estar vinculada al mundo productivo, a la formación profesional.

### **Las Lenguas Extranjeras y las políticas curriculares en el contexto actual**

En la Ley de Educación Nacional 26.206/06, la referencia a las lenguas extranjeras se hace presente cuando se enuncian los fines y objetivos de la política educativa nacional. Concretamente, el Art.27 alude a la finalidad de la educación primaria, y entre sus objetivos, el inciso c: Brindar oportunidades equitativas a todos/as los/las niños/as para aprendizajes de saberes significativos en los diversos campos de conocimiento [...] las lenguas extranjeras [...].

El Art. 30 hace lo propio respecto de la educación secundaria, en todas sus modalidades y orientaciones tiene la finalidad de habilitar a los /las adolescentes y jóvenes para el ejercicio pleno de la ciudadanía, para el trabajo y para la continuación de estudios. Y entre sus

objetivos, el inciso d alude a desarrollar competencias lingüísticas, orales y escritas de la lengua española y comprender y expresarse en una lengua extranjera.

También, en las Disposiciones específicas, el Art. 87: La enseñanza de al menos un idioma extranjero será obligatoria en todas las escuelas de nivel primario y secundario del país.

Cabe destacar también el Art. 92, relativo a los contenidos curriculares comunes a todas las jurisdicciones: a) El fortalecimiento de la perspectiva regional latinoamericana, particularmente la región del MERCOSUR, en el marco de la construcción de una identidad nacional abierta, respetuosa de la diversidad.

Dentro de las modalidades previstas en la ley está la Educación Intercultural Bilingüe (art. 52-54) que garantiza el derecho constitucional de los pueblos indígenas a recibir una educación que contribuya a preservar y fortalecer sus pautas culturales, su lengua, su cosmovisión e identidad étnica.

La LEN busca garantizar una educación integral que desarrolle distintas dimensiones de la persona y habilite tanto para el desempeño social y laboral, como para el acceso a estudios superiores. Un modo de garantizar oportunidades equitativas es el aprendizaje de saberes significativos en los diversos campos de conocimiento, entre ellos, las lenguas extranjeras. También se alude a desarrollar competencias lingüísticas, orales y escritas de la lengua española y comprender y expresarse en una lengua extranjera. En las disposiciones específicas se hace expresa referencia al fortalecimiento de la perspectiva regional latinoamericana, particularmente la región del Mercosur, en el marco de la construcción de una identidad nacional abierta, respetuosa de la diversidad.

En ese contexto y bajo esas especificaciones se puede comprender que en diciembre del 2008 se sancionara la Ley 26.468 en la que se especifica que todas las escuelas secundarias en sus distintas modalidades incluirán, de modo obligatorio, una propuesta curricular para la enseñanza del idioma portugués como lengua extranjera. Y en las escuelas fronterizas con la República Federativa de Brasil su inclusión será desde el nivel primario. La citada ley señala también que el cursado de dicha propuesta será optativo para los alumnos. Según este instrumento legal, hay intencionalidad política en el país de promover la enseñanza el portugués en el marco del Mercosur.

Desde hace un tiempo se advierte que las conceptualizaciones respecto de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras cambiaron. En los NAP de LE, concretamente en la Resolución del CFE 181/12, aprobada por el Consejo Federal de Educación, se objetivan ciertos cambios. Se alude a las LE presentes en el sistema formal de educación obligatoria y formación docente

del país y se las nombra en orden alfabético: alemán, francés, inglés, italiano y portugués, “sin desconsiderar, a futuro, la posibilidad de inclusión de otras lenguas”, señala el documento de referencia.

En la introducción de los NAP del área de LE se señala que “han sido elaborados considerando, en forma conjunta, los principios fundamentales que deben sustentar la enseñanza del alemán, francés, inglés, italiano y portugués en el contexto escolar, es decir, la enseñanza de estas lenguas - de una o más de una, de acuerdo a la oferta jurisdiccional - integrada al conjunto de saberes que se enseñan en la escuela”.

Se señala también que “los NAP de LE contemplan la especificidad de los elementos propios de cada una de las lenguas incluidas, enfatizando desde una perspectiva intercultural y plurilingüe, la dimensión formativa de la enseñanza de LE, es decir, su papel en la educación lingüística, el desarrollo cognitivo y los procesos de construcción de la identidad sociocultural de los niños/as, adolescentes, jóvenes, adultos/as de nuestro país”.

Según los propios NAP, la perspectiva plurilingüe e intercultural que se asume, más que buscar una “oferta acumulativa” en término de cantidad de lenguas, busca “tornar visibles las relaciones entre las lenguas y culturas que están o podrían estar en el curriculum y a sensibilizar hacia la pluralidad constitutiva de estas lenguas y culturas”.

Como una característica del sistema de educación formal del país, los NAP de LE señalan la heterogeneidad de situaciones que se presentan relativas al momento de escolaridad en que se incluye una LE, la carga horaria asignada, las lenguas que se ofrecen, elementos estos dispares según las jurisdicciones.

Se propone una organización que contempla diferentes recorridos de aprendizaje de acuerdo con el momento de escolaridad que se tome como punto de partida para la enseñanza. Una organización flexible, en tanto permita la enseñanza consecutiva o simultánea de más de una LE. En el caso de un recorrido de un solo nivel que se inicie en el Ciclo Orientado de Secundaria, se verá potenciado por el conocimiento y la reflexión sobre la propia lengua. Para el caso de la enseñanza de una LE en un solo ciclo, se propone como estrategia dos opciones: el trabajo con la oralidad – comprensión y producción oral – o bien con la lectura y la escritura.

Los NAP para LE proponen seis ejes: en relación con la Comprensión Oral, con la Producción Oral, con la Lectura, con la Escritura, con la Reflexión sobre la Lengua que se aprende y con la Reflexión Intercultural.

Los NAP han privilegiado la presentación de cada eje por separado, sin desconocer la posibilidad de funcionamiento simultáneo de algunas prácticas, de acuerdo con la edad de los/las estudiantes y de la tarea a realizar. El orden de los ejes no responde a ninguna secuenciación. Se espera que la organización por ejes propicie el diálogo y la articulación con la enseñanza del español como lengua de escolarización.

En este momento son cinco las lenguas extranjeras incluidas en las prescripciones curriculares, lo que no obsta, según el documento, que podrían incluirse otras. Las LE son presentadas en orden alfabético y no aparecen, como sucedía en el Acuerdo Marco de 1998, referencias particulares a ninguna LE, ni el predominio de una sobre otras.

En las convocatorias efectuadas desde el Ministerio de Educación, la Secretaría de Políticas Universitarias y el Instituto Nacional de Formación Docente, las distintas LE fueron convocadas en igualdad de condiciones.

#### **A modo de síntesis**

Actualmente se lleva a cabo en el campo de las lenguas una revisión respecto de la categorización de extranjeras, segundas, maternas, primeras, regionales, de vecindad, originarias, de herencia o de origen, entre otras, según se expresa en los propios NAP.

Una prescripción curricular es una propuesta de política educativa y toma las decisiones que considere conveniente, cabe reconocer que las lenguas son fenómenos complejos y deben ser analizadas también en términos socio-políticos.

En la práctica el inglés como lengua extranjera tiene una fuerte presencia en el sistema de educación obligatoria, tal como se advierte en el Informe Enseñanza de Lenguas Extranjeras del Área de Programación Educativa de Junio del 2010. En el mismo se explicita el estado de la enseñanza de las LE en el país y se señala que el 36% de los chicos de primaria y el 64% de los chicos de secundaria pueden acceder a una LE en su educación obligatoria. De los que acceden, en el caso de la primaria, el 95,4% lo hace al inglés y en el caso de la secundaria, el 92,23% lo hace a esa LE.

Sin embargo, desde el discurso oficial, se advierte que cierta intencionalidad de que la perspectiva intercultural y plurilingüe que se promueve, adquiera notas más propias de esta perspectiva, modificando el enfoque precedente, que también se declaraba intercultural y plurilingüe y estaba centrado en y promovía el predominio de una lengua sobre otras.

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