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VII JORNADAS DE ACTUALIZACIÓN EN LA ENSEÑANZA DEL INGLÉS

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Palabras de las editoras

"Every education system in the world is being reformed at the moment and it's not enough. Reform is no use anymore, because that's simply improving a broken model. What we need […] - is not evolution, but a revolution in education. This has to be transformed into something else."

Ken Robinson – 2010

En las últimas cuatro décadas nuevas perspectivas, escenarios cada vez más diversos y las nuevas formas de producción y distribución del conocimiento han puesto un creciente énfasis en el uso del Inglés como lengua para la comunicación global. Se da por sentado que el manejo del Inglés es clave para el éxito en los planos laboral, académico o de las finanzas y negocios.

En este escenario, según explica Robinson, el desarrollo sostenido de metodologías revolucionarias de enseñanza es crucial para garantizar el aprendizaje de la lengua-cultura entre los miembros de las nuevas generaciones de usuarios.

Los aprendientes del siglo XXI necesitan comprender en primer lugar el poder del uso de una lengua-cultura extranjera como herramienta para ampliar sus horizontes. La enseñanza del Inglés como Lengua-Cultura Extranjera en nuestro país debe entonces conducir los aprendizajes de los alumnos más allá de las habilidades básicas y los aspectos formales; debe extender sus límites hacia el entendimiento multicultural y la diversidad.

Atentos a estos desafíos, el Departamento de Lengua y Literatura Inglesa y el Gabinete de Estudios en Lenguas Extranjeras (GELE) 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 establecer un espacio de reflexión y actualización en la enseñanza-aprendizaje del inglés como lengua extranjera, con el foco centrado en lo pedagógico-didáctico, lo tecnológico y lo literario, y su impacto en la tarea docente.

Dando continuidad a la ya establecida tradición de búsqueda del perfeccionamiento y de la superación en el accionar docente, y tal como sucedió en las jornadas anteriores, estas *VII Jornadas de Actualización en la Enseñanza del Inglés* contaron con la presencia de disertantes de amplia trayectoria en la especialidad quienes abordaron diversas temáticas relacionadas con la formación de futuros docentes y la actualización de saberes de los profesionales de la enseñanza del inglés como lengua extranjera.

Una vez más la respuesta a esta convocatoria excedió nuestras expectativas, hecho que pone de manifiesto la intención de estar mejor equipados para hacer frente a las demandas y requerimientos de un mundo cada vez más complejo y dinámico.

Rosa Inés Cúneo

Marisel María Bollati

Aída Alejandra Díaz

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NOTE: all the presenters in these Jornadas were invited to submit their papers to be considered for publication. The papers here published are the ones received by June 30th, 2017.

BIODATA

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PLENARIES

"With three wounds she comes": Sara Teasdale's poetry in the centennial of the publication of *Love Songs*.

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Abstract

The current talk intends to enhance Sara Teasdale's poetry, in particular the volume of poems *Love Songs*, in the 100th anniversary of its publication. This book represents a milestone in Teasdale's short career because in 1918 she won the "Columbia University Poetry Society Prize (which became later the Pulitzer Prize for poetry)"[1]. Likewise, the conference attempts to examine the most recurrent themes in her poems and how her poetry relates to, while at the same time stands out from, those authors who preceded her in the Anglo Saxon literature. In addition to that analysis, a connection with music will be established in those poems which have been transformed into choral pieces. This last contribution represents an advance of a current research project called "Crossing Frontiers: dialogues and interchanges in literatures in English and other arts." Prof. Muñoz is part of a multi-disciplinary team which is directed by Dr. Marcela María Raggio at UNCuyo.
Keywords: Poetry – Teasdale – Pulitzer – *Love Songs*

The American letters have given the world countless great talents, and yet if one searches anthologies and collections of poetry, the poetesses included are outnumbered by the male writers. Yet, that does not mean that the talent of those women is less worthy of praise. Therefore, this article tries to bring to light an example of one poetess who has been overlooked in important volumes of twentieth-century poetry, namely Sara Teasdale.

The title chosen for this work echoes a famous poem by the Spanish poet Miguel Hernández, probably known to many people because this poem, along with others, was set into music by Joan Manuel Serrat. The poem contains some of the most poignant lyrics of the Spanish Generation of '27 from which we have taken the mid stanza:

> Con tres heridas viene:
> la de la vida,
> la del amor,
> la de la muerte.

Those three wounds are universal to all of us, and thus they will guide us into the analysis of the poems by the poetess we are celebrating.

Sara Trevor Teasdale was born in Saint Louis, Missouri, in the United States on August 8, 1884. Her parents were at the time already in their forties, and that meant that the birth of their fourth child was an indication that they were still sexually active at an age when they

[1] "Sara Teasdale." Academy of American Poets. https://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poet/sara-teasdale. Accessed April 18, 2017.

were not expected to be having babies anymore. Much to Sara's mother's embarrassment in front of the Victorian middle-class society, the girl was welcomed into a family that treated her as a delicate treasure during all her childhood. This might seem a totally irrelevant fact, but the strict upbringing that Sara received would leave a mark on her character for the rest of her life, the first wound that Hernández presents us with, namely *life*. Whether due to natural temperament or to overprotection, the disabling inhibitions her parents imposed on her would cause Sara to have a very frail health all her life. Her biographer, William Drake, describes her as "shy, excruciatingly sensitive, almost an invalid, she was cast in the same mold as Christina Rossetti, Elizabeth Barrett, and Emily Dickinson, and, like them, was gifted with a force of character and a poetic talent that learned to thrive on pain" (1). Her weak nature would always make her afraid of being ill, and in some occasions would cause her to fall into deep phases of depression, so much so that she was even unable to write.

Yet, despite all her personal insecurities, her ambition to become a well-known writer was always clear for her. In 1917, her fourth book of poetry, *Love Songs*, was published, and a celebration of its centennial anniversary seems relevant given the fact that the following year this volume earned Teasdale the honor of being the first recipient of the Columbia University Poetry Society Prize (which would later become the Pulitzer Prize for Poetry). The book comprises 71 poems, some of them extracted from previous volumes of poetry (*Rivers of the Sea* and *Helen of Troy and Other Poems*), all of them dealing with some facet of love. This topic was central to feminine poetry, and as Lord Byron had said "Love was 'woman's whole existence.' Even the other major themes of religion, death, and beauty were related to that central concern" (Drake 2).

However, Sara was part of a generation which started questioning the Victorian conventions, such as the need for protective love, the impossibility of the actual union of lovers, among other recurrent topics, even though she still shared some characteristics in her poetry with her predecessors. On the one hand, society at large encouraged young women in the creative arts, although it did not easily tolerate that women had any ambition of a career or fame. As Claudia Gómez Cañoles mentions in an article about feminist discourse and literature,

> women's literary strategy consists of assaulting and revising, destroying and reconstructing the images of the woman that we have inherited from masculine literature [...] (Moi 70 qtd. by Gomez Cañoles) in which [women] are represented according to binary logic as the saint and the whore, the angel and the monster, the sweet heroine and rabid madwoman. [my own translation]

In relation to this, Sara felt compelled to please those near her and do what was expected of her; however, she "lived in contradictory worlds of feeling. 'Puritan and Pagan' or 'Spartan and Sybarite,' she called her warring selves that were locked in evenly matched combat. No matter who won, she observed, she herself would be the loser" (Drake 1).

Here we see another cause of anguish, since in her inner self she tried to fulfill those models that had been imposed on her by her family, especially by her mother, but, on the other hand, she was a person with "a personality ready for self-fulfillment, rich in outgoing emotion, sensuous, and keenly sensitive, attuned to aesthetic rather than moral imperatives" (Drake 5). Thus, despite her deep-rooted insecurities, she was capable of writing with sincere passion about her feelings. Unavoidably, her creativity unveiled diverse aspects of a woman's life of the time, and one trait is especially connected with the second wound mentioned in Hernández' poem: love. In the centenary volume we celebrate with this paper, the nuances of love are depicted in every poem, more or less overtly. Idealized, unrequited, passionate, tortured, reflective; directed to a concrete person or a fictional character; to places in nature which echo moments spent with a loved one, all hues are present in *Love Songs*. For instance, there is a poem where she despises her lover's unsympathetic attitude toward her, and warns him not to mourn her once she is dead. "I Shall not Care"[2] reads:

When I am dead and over me bright April
Shakes out her rain-drenched hair,
Tho' you should lean above me broken-hearted,
I shall not care.

I shall have peace, as leafy trees are peaceful
When rain bends down the bough,
And I shall be more silent and cold-hearted
Than you are now. (*Love Songs* 24)

Teasdale draws attention to a far-from-idealized version of a lover, as opposed to the poets who preceded her, who would accept with resignation any situation that would befall them in luck (or in misfortune). The poetic persona in Emily Dickinson's "When I am dead" also tells her lover not to be sad, but the difference in tone is noticeable:

WHEN I am dead, my dearest,
Sing no sad songs for me;
Plant thou no roses at my head,

[2] This poem is wrongly attributed as her suicide note, taking into account that these verses were published in 1917, and her suicide would not occur until 1933.

Nor shady cypress tree:
Be the green grass above me
With showers and dewdrops wet:
And if thou wilt, remember,
And if thou wilt, forget.[3] (*The Answering Voice* 112)

The pervading emotion in Teasdale's poem is anger, while in Dickinson's the attitude is more consolatory. However self-assured she might appear if one considers some of her poems, Sara was, as aforementioned, plagued with insecurities. Her biographer mentions the source of those uncertainties as follows:

> (h)er obsessive fear that she could not attract and retain a man's love very likely sprang from this deep-seated sense of personal worthlessness, centered in her relationship with her mother. Like a helpless child, she felt overwhelmed by the aggressive vitality of her mother, whose tyranny was backed up by all the precepts of church and society that the pliant, good-natured child had been taught to respect. (…) The elements of this family tragedy were further compounded by Sara's vital desire to escape, to live, to write, and to be famous and fulfilled (Drake 71).

In this other poem we see that the poetic speaker feels unable to confess her true feelings to the loved one and pleads for help:

"I AM NOT YOURS"
I AM not yours, not lost in you,
Not lost, although I long to be
Lost as a candle lit at noon,
Lost as a snowflake in the sea.
You love me, and I find you still
A spirit beautiful and bright,
Yet I am I, who long to be
Lost as a light is lost in light.

[3] The poem has been extracted from a volume called *The Answering Voice: One Hundred Love Lyrics by Women* which was published also in 1917. In its "Prefatory Note" Teasdale highlights the fact that "for the first time in the history of English literature, the work of women has compared favorably with that of men; and in no other field have they done such noteworthy work as in poetry" (ix). As her biographer states, "it was a curious act of retracting her steps and defining her own taste and the attitudes that she believed to be distinctively feminine; it was, in short, almost as much an expression of herself as one of her own books, for she limited the verse to love lyrics beginning with the women whom she had liked since girlhood" (Drake 156).

> Oh plunge me deep in love—put out
> My senses, leave me deaf and blind,
> Swept by the tempest of your love,
> A taper in a rushing wind. (*Love Songs* 77)

In spite of her internal torments, Sara had several suitors, including the poet Vachel Lindsay, who sent her letters and poems full of love. Finally, in 1914 Sara decided to marry a businessman, Ernst Filsinger, with whom she moved to New York. She would live there the rest of her life, suffering the constant absences of her husband who was constantly embarking on business trips. She would finally divorce him in 1929, going against the mandates under which she had been brought up, a fact that would badly affect her. She did all in her power to maintain the procedures private from the press and she was afraid of the "additional gossip and notoriety, for she was a public figure and had carefully cultivated a reputation for model respectability. (…) For the popular poetess of love to be divorced was too much in the cynical new mode of the twenties that she despised" (Drake 252).

All her life, Sara Teasdale fought against her feeble health, her depression, and insecurities. The repressed feelings for not being able to choose the life she needed in order to develop her creative talent added to her constant fear of illness, and ultimately of death. And that is the connection to the last of the three wounds initially proposed for the present paper: *death*. In a letter to a friend, Sara wrote:

> I'm afraid that I'm very unbrave about it. (…) Sometimes the thought of having to die becomes literally terrible. There seems to be a means of escape from almost every horrible thing but that… I'm too anxious to live now. Even pain and sorrow are precious—they are living, at any rate. (Drake 51)

In *Flame and Shadow*, her volume of poetry published in 1920, Teasdale wrote a poem called "Alone" which reads,

> I am alone, in spite of love,
> In spite of all I take and give—
> In spite of all your tenderness,
> Sometimes I am not glad to live.
>
> I am alone, as though I stood
> On the highest peak of the tired gray world,
> About me only swirling snow,
> Above me, endless space unfurled;

With earth hidden and heaven hidden,
And only my own spirit's pride
To keep me from the peace of those
Who are not lonely, having died. (139)

The topic of death also recurs in Teasdale's poems as the idea haunted her most of her life. Yet, it is not only present in her poetry, but it is one which appears in other poetesses she admired. While collecting the poems for *The Answering Voice*, she confessed to a friend that she admired Mary Robinson and she felt she "owe more to her than to anybody else except Christina [Rossetti] (…). Sara emulated Mary Robinson's songlike simple stanzas (…), and especially her variations on the constant themes of unsatisfied love and death" (Drake 156). In her "Rispetto: I" "Rispetto II," and "Rispetto: III", all of them included in the compilation of poems aforementioned, Robinson refers to love and death, as if the idea of losing the former would be inseparably connected to death. Thus, in "Rispetto: I" the poetic persona despairs at the idea of being

Dead in the grave! And I can never hear
If you are ill, or if you miss me, dear,
Dead, oh, my God! and you may need me yet,
While I shall sleep, while I—while I—forget! (*The Answering Voice* 75)

In both poetesses, the fear of death is represented, even though in Teasdale love is not enough to prevent her persona from wanting to die, while in Robinson it is the idea of being forever separated from the beloved which seems unbearable. Yet, the topics remain common to the two of them.

Only a few years later, deeply hurt by the loss of her friend Vachel Lindsay—who had committed suicide in 1931—finally Sara found herself unable to cope with life and, anguished by her life-long conflicts, she committed suicide with an overdose of barbiturates on January 29, 1933.

To conclude, and as a way to connect this celebration of the poetry of Sara Teasdale with a research project currently being developed by a multidisciplinary team of professors at UNCuyo, among other institutions, a brief reference will be made to some poems by the American poetess which have been set to music. The project originally connects literature with other fields, and in this particular case, with choral music. The initial contact with Teasdale's poetry turned into music was a poem called "Only in Sleep" from *Flame and Shadow*. The piece was composed by Latvian composer Ēriks Ešenvalds. That was the first step into starting reading more poems and that, in turn, led to the discovery of more songs by

the poetess which have served as the inspiration for other composers to write songs both for choir and solo voices (accompanied or not by a piano).

The following does not intend to be a comprehensive list, since the project is underway and many sources have not been consulted yet. Nevertheless, a chronological list is presented below as an advance of the findings collected so far.

Composer	Year	Name	Publisher
Mabel Wood Hill	ca. 1919	Four Poems by Sara Teasdale	G. Schirmer
Hickman, Marion Rogers	1928 1931	Dusk in June May Night	G. Schirmer
Andris Dzenītis	2007	Let it be forgotten	Musica Baltica
Joseph Phibbs	2011 2011 2013-14	Pierrot From Shore to Shore Moon Songs	Ricordi
Daniel Elder	2015	Fresh and Fearless (May Night)	Walton Music
Ēriks Ešenvalds	2006 2010 2012 2013 2014 2015 2016	Evening Sunset: St. Louis The New Moon I Have Loved Hours at Sea Ebb Tide Let it be forgotten Swans Stars Only in Sleep The Treasure	Musica Baltica Musica Baltica Musica Baltica Musica Baltica Edition Peters Musica Baltica Musica Baltica Musica Baltica Edition Peters Musica Baltica
Robert Anthony LaRose	2016	Alchemy	(not found)

Chart 1: Some poems by the American poetess which have been set to music

As it can be observed from the chart, Sara Teasdale's poems have inspired numerous composers. The project will aim at finding a more complete record of the compositions in order to help Argentinian conductors have a clearer panorama of the pieces available.

To conclude, we hope this paper has contributed to praise the work of poetess Sara Teasdale and to celebrate the centennial anniversary of the publication of a volume of paramount influence in the American letters. We believe *Love Songs* paved the way for other poets to be awarded the most prestigious prize for Poetry in the United States, namely the

Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. The theme of that volume, which can easily be inferred from its title, belongs to the core of the history of universal poetry, but in Teasdale's simple, yet melodious verses, it acquires a renewed perspective, that of a woman's experience. This fresh and a truthful viewpoint for early twentieth-century poetry has doubtlessly earned *Love Songs*, and Teasdale herself, a place in contemporary literature, and, what is more, in the world of choral music. We hope the mark left in her life by the three wounds—life, love, and death—could be redeemed in the beauty of her perennial verses.

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Meaning rules

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Abstract

This paper is derived from a research project on potential pedagogical applications of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) currently under way at the School of Philosophy, Humanities and the Arts at UNSJ. It focuses on the need for EFL teachers to keep meaning at the center of their classroom practices, as proposed by SFL. A context-driven, meaning-centered orientation has steadily been introduced into many teaching materials over more than a decade. In order to accompany this growing methodological trend, it is very important for EFL teachers to make informed use of such resources, preserving their rationale so that their full communicative potential can take center stage in the classroom. In the same spirit, more traditional classroom materials and practices may be adapted so as to infuse them with a similar meaning-based orientation, which is an essential part of any L2 learning process. Some activities are presented to illustrate how these suggestions could be implemented in the class.

Key words: SFL – meaning – pedagogy – materials

1. The Old Form-Meaning Dichotomy

The form-meaning dichotomy has been part of the language teaching/language learning world since time immemorial. Unfortunately, for many years, languages were taught under the assumption that 'form ruled' and that meaning would naturally emerge from the accurate use of the right forms when required in real life /out-of-class situations.

With the advent of communicative approaches, accuracy –which had previously been very highly regarded in language classes – started to become relegated to fluency as the latter was considered to be a more practical and realistic feature of students' interlanguage. This shift of emphasis probably occurred because students often felt frustrated at their inability to use language outside the class in spite of their repeated efforts to learn rules and work with grammar exercises.

Behind the new communicative approaches that came to dominate the language teaching profession in the early 80's were a number of linguistic schools which conceived of language from a social interactive rather than a formalistic perspective. One such school was Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), proposed initially by Michael Halliday in the early 1960's and further developed by its own creator as well as linguists such as Jim Martin, Christian Matthiessen, Geoff Thompson, Susan Hood, Christie, among others. This school views

language as meaning potential, with form at the service of the creation of meanings. It has been steadily gaining ground all over the world and has informed many pedagogical decisions at the level of curricular design and materials design as well as classroom applications.

For the purpose of this paper, we have analyzed various teaching materials used for different levels and purposes in order to determine whether the perspective put forward by SFL, among other functional theories, can be identified as an underlying feature of such materials. In particular, we have explored the contents of the materials in our corpus in terms of the centrality given to variables such as form, meaning, as well as contextual factors.

Our objective through this initiative is to illustrate how the view of language proposed by SFL, with its centrality on meaning, is reflected in many language teaching materials, and to encourage EFL teachers to keep meaning at the center of their classroom practices, as a notion inseparable from form. We suggest that this can be done by teachers bringing a new lens to materials they are using –both modern and traditional- and by adapting materials they feel do not respond to the communicative needs modern-day students have.

2. SFL: A Socio-Semiotic Model of Language in Use

SFL is recognized as proposing a *social semiotic model of language in use*. In order to unpack this definition, a closer look at its main components seems relevant:

- SFL puts forward a **model** of language, which basically means that the description proposed is a way of interpreting the part of our world which involves the use of language. As is the case with all scientific models, SFL's model is **one** way of perceiving and describing phenomena and it involves the use and often the creation of very specific metalanguage.
- The model proposed provides a description of **language in use,** which implies actual instances of language in context, as opposed to so-called 'laboratory language', which works on descriptions of often invented isolated sentences. This 'in-use' element imposes a tremendous challenge on the model, for the object of study becomes boundless and therefore quite slippery. In relation to this, Halliday explains that when the object of scientific study is as complex as human language, it is unrealistic to expect a simple model to be capable of describing it ('it doesn't help anyone if you pretend it's simple") (qtd. in Thompson 152).
- The model proposed is **social-semiotic**, which basically means that the object of study cannot be separated from social contexts, and that these contexts are the main factors behind the lexico-grammatical choices made by speakers.

On these premises, the language description proposed by SFL illustrates how intrinsically fused linguistic form and meaning are, and how each choice made at the level of lexico-grammar is inextricably tied to contexts of use. The theory places special emphasis on the way different contextual variables (such as *who is involved*, *what is being discussed*, *what communication channel is used*) have an impact on each choice made by users of a language in any given situation.

Jones summarizes Halliday's approach to the description of language in the following terms:

> For Halliday, a language is made up of more-or-less closed "systems" of words and grammatical structures, with our vocabulary constituting a relatively open system, and grammar a fixed number of relatively closed ones. From these systems speakers make selections in order to construct, simultaneously, "wordings" and "meanings". The systems of wordings and meanings thus available to a language user reflect the social and cultural context of the language as well as the needs of the immediate situation. So the meanings that a speaker can encode, although they may be in some sense new, are heavily constrained by the recurrent nature of the situations of use (14).

Concurrently, Thompson emphasizes the relationship between form, meaning and context and explains that "any full analysis of [a text] will inevitably need to take account of both the meaning and the form (and the links between them)" (p.2). He insists on the importance of context by claiming that "context and language are interdependent" (p. 9) and metaphorically explains that all instances of actual language use "come trailing clouds of context with it" (p.10), meaning that all our linguistic choices cannot be conceived separately from wider contextual factors affecting such choices.

3. MEANING RULES

In our social interactions, we are always exchanging meanings in various ways. We engage in semiotic processes since we are born. While it is true that meanings can be communicated through a number of ways, not just verbal language, Halliday reminds us that "the **prototypical** form of human semiotic is [verbal] language" (Lewis 93) [*Our emphasis*]. We use language to create, convey and interpret meanings. In the words of Sister Margaret Walshe "The human mind cannot help but make meaning" (qtd. in Lewis iii). This centrality of the semiotic power of language is at the heart of SFL. SFL views language as 'meaning potential' and explores the ways in which different linguistic forms convey different meanings which are always tied to the contexts of which the language is part.

However, foreign language teaching practices were for a long time centered on form, often relegating the communicative power of such forms to second place. Such form-centered practices can still be encountered in many ESL teaching settings. Exercises such as turning an active sentence into the passive, or transforming a first-conditional into a second or third conditional –without emphasis on the communicative value of each choice, continue to be preferred forms of practice for intermediate and advanced levels. These pedagogical decisions are based on a view of language as a static, rigid, set of rules.

Adhering to a hallidayan view of language, we believe that the words and structures of a language need to be always studied in relation to their meaning potential in various contexts. In other words, we contend that meaning and context should be fundamental considerations in EFL teaching settings.

What does a meaning-based view of language mean for a language teacher? For one thing, it invites teachers to challenge traditional pedagogical beliefs such as the importance of accuracy over communicative competence. Discussing methodological principles and beliefs, Lewis goes as far as to call some classroom practices “methodological absurdities” (192) and encourages teachers to “remove [some] learned utterances from their classroom repertoire.” Among these utterances, Lewis includes:

- *Can you say that in a full sentence please?(192)*

Very often, an incomplete sentence, an isolated word, will do wonders getting our meaning across. Lewis points out that “communicative competence is a much wider concept than accuracy” and adds that “accuracy will, whatever methodology is employed, always be the **last** element of competence to be acquired.” (193 –emphasis in original text).

Along similar lines, Nunan questions textbooks’ presentation of grammar out of context and objects to students being expected to learn grammar rules “through exercises involving repetition, manipulation, and grammatical transformation.” He insists that these activities do not promote the learning of language for communication because “learners are denied the opportunity of seeing the systematic relationships that exist between form, meaning, and use” (102). Citing Halliday, he encourages teachers to guide learners to “see that effective communication involves achieving harmony between functional interpretation and formal appropriacy” (102).

4. Bringing a Meaning Focus to the EFL Class

Many teaching materials published over the last 10 – 15 years reflect the shift in emphasis from formal to functional views of language (as proposed by SFL) and contain instances of language which are drawn directly from samples of real language use. It is our contention that in order to exploit such materials to the fullest, teachers using such resources should be familiar with the rationale behind the changes, so that the use of activities proposed does not become a mechanical practice.

To illustrate this, we present some exercises proposed in exam preparation material (KET and TOEFL international examinations), with some suggestions for class implementation and reflections on the principles underlying the transformation of such materials. In the case of TOEFL we include a comparison between older and more recent versions of the test. We also include some suggestions to adapt other course materials to bring a meaning focus to the EFL class

4.1 Exam preparation material

KET-preparation material

International exams have become very popular all over the world, and our local context is no exception to this trend. This popularity has spawned the publication of a great deal of study and exam-preparation materials which have not been strangers to the formal/functional shift.

The teaching of modality, for instance, was for a long time almost exclusively confined to the presentation and exemplification of modal verbs such as *must*, *should*, *may* and the like. However, when we look at real language use, as described by extensive language corpora, we find that modality can be conveyed through a vast array of forms –not just modal verbs-, which vary in response to contextual factors.

The matching activity proposed in the example below, which is part of KET preparation exercises available online (www.cambridgeenglish.org), illustrates the reformulation of teaching materials to include alternative forms to express modal meanings based on actual contexts of use.

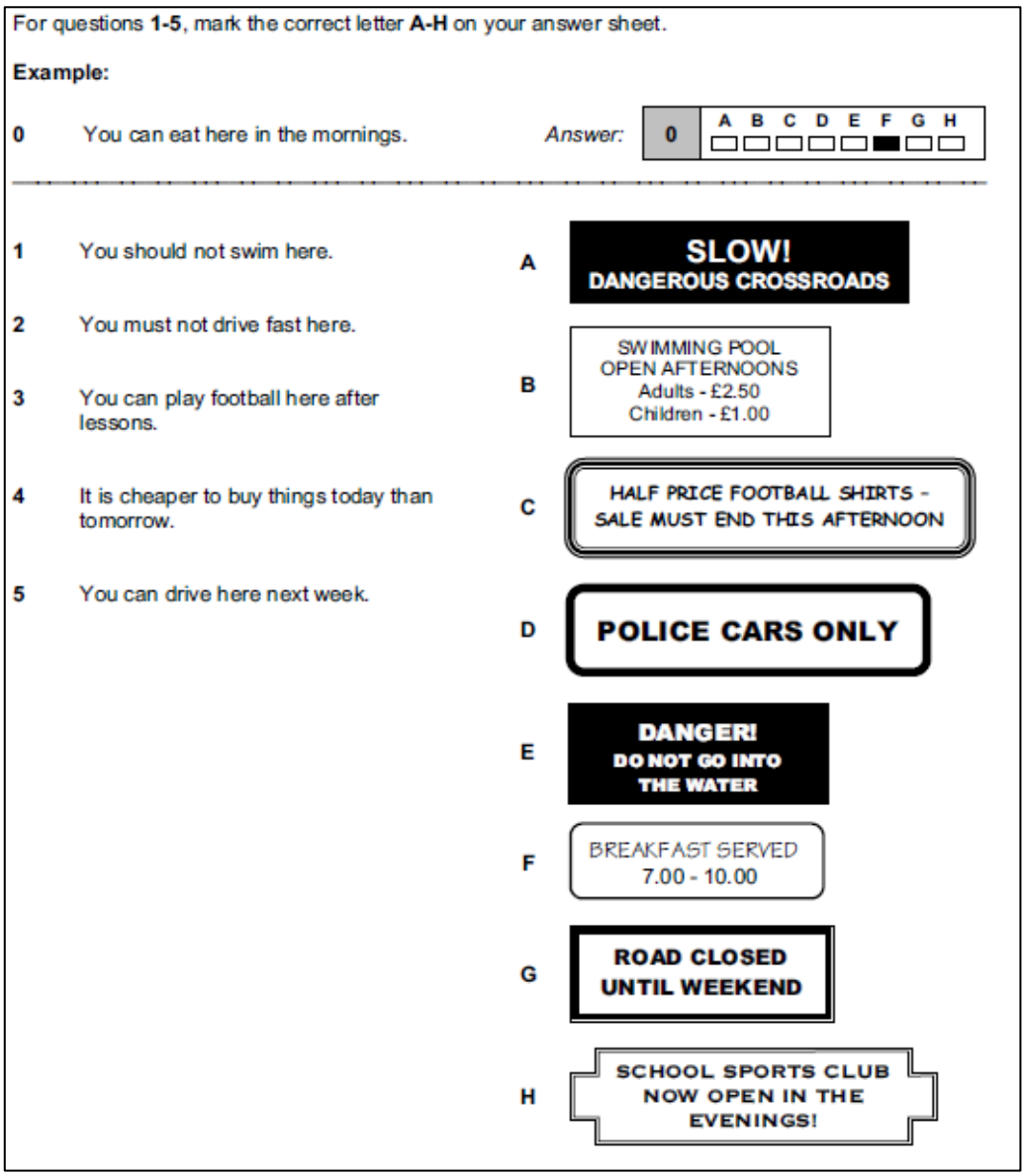


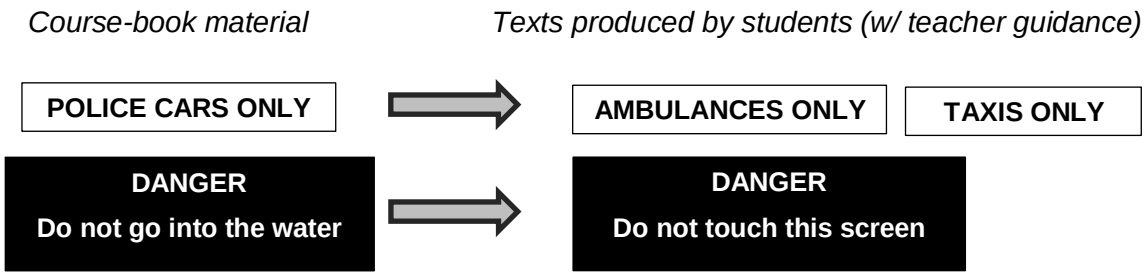
Fig 1. *Ket Handbook 2004* Reading and Writing Sample 1 part 1 page 2 www.cambridgeenglish.org)

Real instances of language use expressing obligation/permission/possibility like the ones presented on the right-side column used to be absent in more traditional form-focused materials. It should also be noted that these forms are framed by multimodal configurations (generally absent in the past as well), which help construe the actual contexts of use more realistically. The fact that these forms, often with their multimodal configurations, have now been made part of teaching materials gives teachers a very good opportunity to create a closer link between language forms and contexts of use.

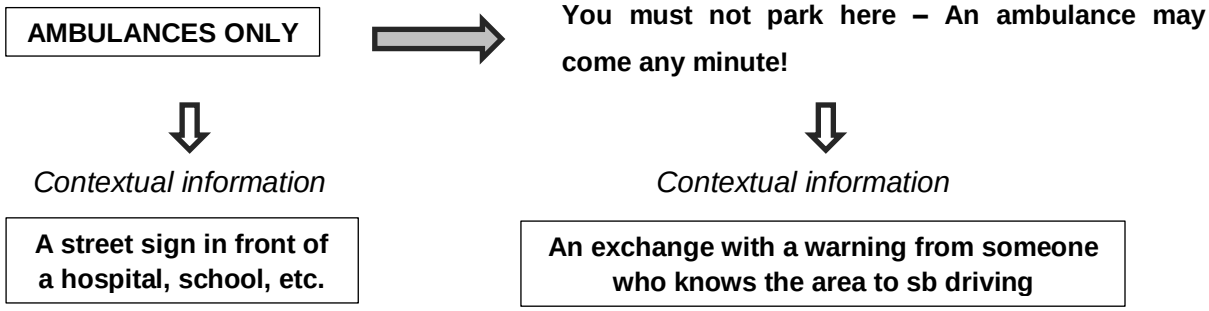
In response to this transformation in teaching materials, this activity may be expanded beyond column-matching and used as an excellent opportunity to discuss contexts of use. In this respect, the teacher's mind-set becomes central to guide pedagogical decisions. Whereas some teachers would probably make the left column the center of attention for this

activity, teachers with a more social-semiotic mind-set would give as much importance to the right column, and invite students to think of similar texts for similar contexts.

For instance, some of the signs presented on the right column above can be used as models for similar signs, accompanied by discussions of situations in which these would be likely to appear:



These forms may also be accompanied by further exemplification of the use of modal verbs and associated contextual information:



This simple activity, derived from the one presented in the coursebook, can help bring the real world into the class while guiding students into developing greater awareness of the form/function/context connection.

TOEFL-preparation material

Another instance of the importance given to meaning and real communication can be observed in the changes that TOEFL preparation materials have undergone in response to changes in the actual exam.

Older versions of the exam (Paper-Based Tests or PBT) consisted of three separate independent sections, corresponding to different language skills. The form-centered design of some exercises made it possible for students to produce/choose the right answer in a rather mechanical way, without any need to pay attention to meaning. In exam preparation training, students were often given sets of rules or tips which ensured success but did not guarantee comprehension of meaning.

Such emphasis on form often led teachers to provide useful shortcuts for students which could be taken without any regard for meaning. For instance, in the following examples, typical recommendations often were to select '*despite of*' (despite never to be followed by 'of') and '*alike'* (never to appear in front position) as the wrong answers even without reading the complete –rather complex- sentences:

Identify the one underlined word or phrase that must be changed in order for the sentence to be correct

Despite of (A) the Taft-Hartley Act which forbids (B) unfair union practices, some unions such as (C) the air traffic controllers have voted to strike (D) even though this action might endanger the national security.

(Sharpe 304)

Alike (A) other forms of energy, natural gas may be used (B) to heat (C) homes, cook food, and even run (D) Automobiles.

(Sharpe 305)

A learner who had studied the prescribed set of rules could actually look at the underlined sections, identify the phrase that matched the teacher's recommendations and not even bother to read the complete sentence.

The modern version of the exam (*iBT -internet Based Test*) reveals a more holistic view of language, in which the skills are no longer tested separately but integrated and interrelated. Now, successful performance of the tasks involved requires students displaying the capacity to establish connections based on the meanings construed in the different sections of the test. The grammar component is tested indirectly in other parts of the test and not as a separate section in which items could be completed mechanically.

This transformation can be appreciated throughout the entire test. For example, the instructions given in the Writing section clearly illustrate the integration of skills since students are required to write an essay based on content derived from both a listening passage and a reading passage on a related topic.

The Integrated Essay. First you will read an academic passage and then you will listen to a lecture on the same topic. You may take notes as you read and listen, but notes are not graded. You may use your notes to write the essay. The reading passage will disappear while you are listening to the lecture, but the passage will return to the screen for reference when you begin to write your essay. You will have 20 minutes to plan, write, and revise your response. Typically, a good essay for the integrated topic will require that you write 150–225 words.

FIG. 2: TOEFL Writing exercise from Sharpe's *Pass Key to the TOEFL IBT* p. 385.

The emphasis of meaning and context is evident in further details contained in the instructions, which ask students to write about the *relationship* between the lecture they heard and the reading passage. Form is not disregarded but is embedded in the task as students are asked to "demonstrate [their] ability to write well [*form*] and to provide complete and accurate content [*meaning*] (Phillips 478).

The new demands of the exam impose fresh demands on exam preparation practices. The tasks now require the deployment of a number of skills in which the interpretation and construal of meaning is paramount. In this context, teachers need to be fully aware of the renewed significance of meaning which underlies these exam preparation materials as to be able to better guide students to accomplish each task.

4.2 Other teaching materials – Suggested practices

Even if other teaching materials (coursebooks, online materials) do not always seem to have a strong meaning-based orientation, the centrality of meaning can be brought to the classroom by adapting exercises and redefining tasks.

For example, a simple question/answer exercise may be reformulated to make room for alternative answers beyond the strictly grammatically dictated response.

What time do you get up?	I get up at 7 o clock. At seven o'clock On weekdays? Oh my God, always too early for my taste. It depends…. Who? Me? When I hear my neighbor's car!
What's your name?	My name is Mary My last name? It's difficult to pronounce…. Why do you want to know? Guess!

Very often adult students will want to know what the most grammatically appropriate answer is. Nunan explains that it is very difficult to answer such questions. He states that

> in many instances, the answer is that it depends on the attitude or orientation that the speaker wants to take towards the events he or she wishes to report. If learners are not given opportunities to explore grammar in context, it will be difficult for them to see how and why alternative forms exist to express different communicative meanings. (102)

The various alternative answers presented in the exercise above can be discussed in class with references to contexts of use in which each alternative would be more adequate depending on the situation.

A similar meaning focus may be introduced when dealing with verb tenses. Beyond any theoretical explanation of the differences between various tenses, teachers may enhance comprehension by associating a given tense with specific contexts of use, highlighting the communicative consequences that each choice will have. In the following example, students may be guided to compare the differences in meaning resulting from the choice of a given verb tense through the inclusion of a simple question and the discussion of the implications in each situation:

Eg. *When I arrived home,*
- the children were making a cake
- the children made a cake
- the children had made a cake

Think and discuss: In which case did you see
- the *whole* process?
- *part* of the process?
- only the *final product* of the process?

The association of linguistic choices with actual situations of use discourages any mechanical-based rule learning and thus promotes more meaningful learning.

5. CLOSING CONSIDERATIONS

It is clear from any literature review that many EFL teaching materials have embraced functional views of language and introduced samples of language which illustrate actual use. It is also true that teaching methodologies have long been promoting communication over accuracy, among other functional notions. Nonetheless, many teaching practices are still centered on a rule-based understanding of language.

We believe that considerations of meaning should rule the pedagogical decisions teachers make in the classroom. This does not mean a disregard for grammatical forms and rules, but rather an emphasis on the inseparable form-meaning bond. Grammatical choices are always made to serve specific functional purposes, and their study should be inseparable from such purposes. We encourage teachers to embrace the transformations that can be observed in new materials and to adapt older or more traditional materials by applying a functional lens to their own practices.

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Teaching EFL to deaf and hard-of-hearing students: strategies and aspects to bear in mind.

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Abstract

This paper presents a section of the thesis: *Teaching English as a foreign language to deaf and hard-of-hearing children included in regular education in the city of San Juan, Argentina*. The objectives of this research are: to describe the current state of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) to deaf and hard-of-hearing students attending regular schools, to determine their levels of achievement and to identify strategies to optimize these students' learning. In this presentation, one of the teachers and the Sign Language Interpreter involved in the investigation will be analyzing the strategies used by students and teachers that are beneficial for learning EFL. The theoretical basis for this study is the Strategic Self-Regulation Model of Language Learning (Oxford, 2011) and the visions of language (Tudor, 2001) and learning (Wiliams and Burden, 1997) that teachers display. This presentation also explores further strategies used with one of these students.

Key words: Deaf - Hard-of-Hearing - EFL strategies

1. Introduction

This paper presents a section of the doctoral thesis "*Teaching English as a foreign language to deaf and hard-of-hearing students included in common education in the city of San Juan, Argentina*" (Muñoz 2017) This is a case study of five deaf and hard-of-hearing students with a loss ranging from moderate to severe. In this presentation, one of the teachers and the Sign Language Interpreter involved in the investigation will be analyzing the strategies used by students and teachers that are beneficial for learning EFL, focusing on the students' written productions. The theoretical framework backing this work is the usage-based theory of language acquisition (Tomasello 69), theoretical assumptions of neurocognitive linguistics (Lamb 170), teachers' beliefs regrading learning and language acquisition (Williams and Burden 60), and learning strategies based on the Strategic Self-Regulation Model of Learning -S2 R Learning (Oxford 11).

2. Theoretical Framework

The basic areas involved in language processing in the brain are: the areas of Broca and Wernicke. However, those are not the only areas devoted to language. According to the

theory of relational networks there is high connectivity of all the subsystems in the brain. This connectivity can be seen in the different fibers and fiber bundles that make up the white matter and that are under the cortex (Lamb 295). The different cognitive subsystems (auditory, visual, tactile, etc.) present many interconnections which show activation paths in various directions: the upward direction through the network is directed towards meaning, and the downward direction, towards expression. Also, the *proximity* principle indicates that connections can recruit upcoming subsystems to integrate a combination of properties of an adjacent subsystem (Lamb 218), which accounts for the high connectivity within the brain.

In this study, we focus on people with a hearing impairment, that is why it is necessary to clarify some characteristics regarding this matter. Following the typology of Fernández Viader (qtd. in Schorn 13), the subjects of this study have a moderate and a deep hearing loss. On the one hand, people with a moderate hearing loss, also called hard-of-hearing, present some difficulty in audition, but with the help of a hearing aid they can function in daily life. This allows them to acquire oral language through the auditory pathway, although there may be some difficulties in articulation, in the lexicon and in the structuring of a sentence. On the other hand, people with a deep auditory loss, also called deaf, cannot function in daily life.

We follow a bio-psycho-social perspective of disability. We understand disability as "a limitation on activity and / or a restriction on the participation of people, due to a problem or negative health status, or a disorder or deficiency" (Pantano 47). This model involves a biological, an individual and social approach. All the abilities and needs of the person are taken into account. People with some type of disability have needs common to all, work, education, entertainment, affection, etc., as all people do, and they also have specific needs related to their limitation, such as a wheelchair, or an artifact like a hearing aids, visual aids, etc.

In the case of the hearing impaired, the prevalent approaches in the development of the language are: Oralism and Bilingualism / biculturalism (Becerra Sepúlveda 112). Currently there are two models of conceptualization of deafness: the medical or clinical model and the socio-anthropological model (Castilla 35). These models have different approaches in the education of the deaf. The first considers the child with hearing disability from their deficit, which affects the socialization and education of these children. This approach favours a hearing aid or cochlear implant in order to achieve oralization. The educational approach derived from this model ensures that the deaf and hard-of-hearing are assimilated to the society of listeners. The second model emphasizes what the deaf person naturally has, it values a natural way of communicating and promotes the incorporation of the hearing-

impaired child into a language environment that uses Sign Language. This language serves to acquire a world of contents and meanings. Sign Language is not universal; each country and region has its own SL.

One of the pillars of this study is the usage-based acquisition model (Lieven and Tomasello 168), which accounts for the emergence of grammar through the analysis of language use. Following the usage-based approach, a person's grammatical development depends on some factors that are critical and come from the environment: frequency, consistency, and complexity. Constructions are ways of saying things, and the frequency with which children listen or say all or part of the constructions leads to the reinforcement (Entrenchment in English) of the same, that is to say to an increase of the intensity in its representation, something that makes them more available for the processing and production of statements. With respect to the other two factors, we can say that consistency favors learning, and complexity prevents it.

The educational process is a complex phenomenon characterized by the intentions and actions of the teacher, the personalities of the students, and the context in which this process takes place. In this presentation, we take into account the psychological-educational beliefs that a teacher can hold regarding the teaching of an LE are: the study of language as a linguistic system, a functionalist approach, a humanist approach, a cultural-ideological vision. Among the decisions that the teacher takes at the time of teaching we can find the following conceptions: behavioral, and cognitive. Within the latter, the teacher can follow different views: constructivist, humanistic, social interactionist. The teacher can conceive the student as: reluctant, receptacle or container, raw material, client, partner or partner, individual explorer and as a democratic explorer. On the part of the student, we analyse their learning strategies. Learning strategies are defined as "... specific actions that the student takes to facilitate learning and make it faster, more effective, enjoyable, self-directed, effective and transferable to new situations" (Oxford 8). Rebecca Oxford proposes a comprehensive framework for the study of language learning strategies, called the Strategic Self-Regulation of Learning Model, in which six dimensions of strategies are presented: cognitive, meta-cognitive, affective, meta-affective, sociocultural-interactive and meta-sociocultural-interactive. There is a dynamic interaction between strategies and meta-strategies for learning a second language (17). Meta-strategies are responsible for the planning, repair, finding and use of resources, organization, management of strategic use, monitoring and evaluation.

3. Methodological Framework

This is a qualitative exploratory-descriptive research, with naturalistic inquiry. It is a case study of five students enrolled in primary and secondary education with moderate to profound hearing loss. Data collection was carried out during 2011. The instruments used were school documents, interviews and class registration through non-participant observation following an ethnographic approach (Rockwell 2009). The nonparticipant observation was carried out during the development of a didactic unit and its evaluation. The instruments used are school documents (students' tests, lesson planning, etc.), records obtained from non-participant observation and interviews. Data were analyzed using ATLAS-ti 6.2 software.

4. Case Studies

Firstly, the English teacher of Case 1 will refer to the strategies that were beneficial to her hard-of-hearing student. Secondly, the Sign Language Interpreter of Cases 2 and 3 will show in what way her intervention was profitable for deaf students. Finally, we will explore further strategies that could be used with these students.

CASE 1

The first case is a hard-of-hearing student who attends 5th Form in a primary school who has two lessons of 80 minutes each per week and has had English with this frequency for five years.

Concerning the teacher´s strategies, one of the most outstanding ones used to work and stimulate her hard-of-hearing student, is to work inductively, mediating rubrics, mainly through questions, especially when dealing with the explanation of grammar structures, and the activation of background knowledge. In this way, she helps her student to establish relationships and relate what she already knows with the new knowledge to acquire. These are strategies that correspond to cognitivist and humanist assumptions of social interactionism. It is evident the teacher also follows a cognitivist approach in the use of strategies of correction of errors, she reformulates what the student has said, provides the missing word, and use recasts.The teacher constantly uses visual support, what is really helpful for all her students, especially her hard-of-hearing one to build knowledge. Another strategy used by the teacher is to approach them to the real use of the language and the constant exposure to it. Students become highly motivated after watching a theatre play in English, for example.

As regards the strategies the hard-of-hearing student uses to acquire the target language, she uses varied techniques. One of the most used is her interest to participate by raising her

hands, approaching her teacher to ask her about an activity she does not fully understand or when she takes part in the mediation of an assignment, either by paying attention or by answering questions. The hard-of-hearing student also shows interest in the subject and the topic developed in the unit when she brings to class a Sunday newspaper article with activities and pictures about ´likes and dislikes´, showing an instance of autonomous learning. The student responds to the visual stimulus her teacher constantly provides and tries to comprehend and process the information in a sequential way. Another useful strategy used was organization, by this we mean giving the student a sense of structure: planning lessons, reviews and evaluation, setting time limits to activities, and showing students the organization prior to each lesson.

As regards the strategies used by this student, we can point out that she is self-directed, she asks the teacher to verify her guesses, she searches for the material she needs and she asks her teacher for constant assistance when she does not understand something. She shows constant interest in participating by raising her hand, approaching the teacher to ask about some part of the task she does not understand, or when she participates in the mediation of rubrics, either by paying attention or by answering questions. This student makes use of several meta-cognitive strategies, such as paying attention, planning her work, obtaining resources, and monitoring; of cognitive strategies: use of her senses, especially the visual channel, to strengthen knowledge, assisted by activation of knowledge, reasoning, supported by a form of inductive and deductive work, inferencing, engaging in tasks of conceptualization. Regarding affective strategies, she does not hesitate to ask the teacher for assistance when she feels frustrated, when she cannot perform a task, sometimes she cannot manage her anxiety, she focuses her attention on some stimulus external to the task of class. In this sense, this student demonstrates a poor management of meta-affective strategies. As far as meta-socio-cultural-interactive strategies is concerned, this student is attentive to the use of the best communication channels in particular with the teacher through the visual channel, so as not to miss gestures or explanations. She interacts with her teacher, asks for individual explanation, clarification and verification, uses compensation strategies in communication, risks to understand the whole and explores the meaning of socio-cultural contexts and identities: this is especially evident when he takes the newspaper's cut with the subject being studied, and with the motivation she showed by the English play that was presented to them.

CASES 2 and 3: SIGN LANGUAGE INTERPRETER'S (SLI) EXPERIENCE

Two of the cases of this study were deaf students, that is to say, that their first language of communication was Sign Language (SL),that is why they needed the assistance of a SLI in

their classes. CASE 2, attended 3rd Year of a secondary school, had two modules of 80 minutes per week and had studied English for three years. CASE 3, attended 4th Form, primary level, with a frequency of two modules of 80 minutes of English per week, and it was the first year he had English as a foreign language as a subject.

C2 is self-directed, she often asks the teacher to verify her guesses, searches for the material she needs and asks her teacher for constant assistance when she does not understand something. She pays attention to all instructions and explanations provided by the teacher and there are no instances in which she is out of task. The presence of a Sign Language Interpreter (SLI), allows her to use strategies that involve her assistance and which play a fundamental role in the inclusion of this student in the classroom and in facilitating their learning. The SLI's task consists mainly in the interpretation of all the rubrics and explanations given by the teacher. The SLI also assists the student pointing out in the texts in which the student works, a strategy student widely uses. Another task of the SLI is to help in the correction and guidance of the tasks that the student performs.

As regards the strategies used by C2, we can say she uses not only cognitive, affective and socio-cultural strategies, but also demonstrates a great capacity for reflection and management of these strategies. The most useful cognitive strategies she uses are the visual strategy -for instance pointing in the notebook or book to follow the reading-, reasoning based on inductive and deductive work, inferring, conceptualizing, analyzing grammar; working with lexis: categorizing, giving examples, among other tasks. Socio-cultural-interactive strategies are also used by this student, for example when she interacts with her SLI and her teacher, asks for clarification and verifies meanings, uses compensation strategies in communication, for example when she tries to understand the whole inferring from parts, or interacts with other students in group work. She displays use of affective strategies when she shows motivation and makes efforts to keep motivated, also when she is always focused on tasks. C2 also uses meta-cognitive strategies to direct their own learning, she organizes and manages it by paying attention, planning her work, trying to get resources, and monitoring her performance. The meta-affective and meta-socio-cultural-interactive strategies she displays reveals she is aware of her state of mind and reflects on her learning ways; also, she interacts with her SLI or with the teacher, as well as with her peers when she does not understand something.

In Case 3, he uses several strategies of a self-directed student: he pays attention to perform tasks, he tries to concentrate on them, copies from the board, and works on the book and workbook. There are other occasions in which, although he tries to pay attention and concentrate, he fails to do it and gets distracted, this happens mainly when the SLI is not

present in the classroom. This student makes use of the manual alphabet when he is asked some questions; since many of the interactions in the classroom require one-word answers, this does not cause a great demand on the student, on the contrary, it is a strategy that helps him to demonstrate comprehension and to express himself in the foreign language. It is worth mentioning the importance of the use of the manual alphabet, as evidenced by the results of the research carried out by Alvarado, Puente, and Herrera (476) emphasizing that knowing the manual alphabet can facilitate reading to deaf children. The SLI assists this student in this sense. C3 manifests himself as an active, sensitive student, with preference for visual stimuli, and for deductive reasoning since he feels at his best working by applying a rule than by inferring it. In addition, his way of processing information favors a sequential procedure following gradual steps. He evidences spatial intelligence (visual), body-kinesthetic – he moves to ask for assistance, or to interact with peers- , and the interpersonal intelligence – he communicates permanently with his SLI, with his teacher and with the rest of his classmates. As regards the Strategic Self-Regulation of Learning Model (Oxford 11) C3 uses cognitive, affective and socio-cultural interactive strategies to be able to learn the foreign language. Among the cognitive ones, we highlight the use of the senses to remember especially vocabulary: categorizing lexical items, and working with drawings associating them with words. He uses affective and meta-affective strategies when he tries to keep his motivation in the task, although sometimes he finds it difficult to keep focused and ends up getting distracted. The socio-cultural-interactive strategies mostly used by C3 are: interaction with his SLI, with his teacher, and with his peers. The meta-cognitive strategies he uses are making efforts to focus and to pay attention, and when he copies from the board. The meta-socio-cultural-interactive strategies mostly used are the need to interact with his SLI, with the teacher as well as with his peers when he does not understand something.

5. Further Strategies Used

Among the various possible further paths of research outlined in the thesis, one was the influence of current trends in the teaching of English as a foreign language to deaf and hard-of-hearing students. In this section we present strategies used to learn the foreign language with the deaf student in Case 3, who was in primary school at the moment of collection of the data; he is now attending secondary school. His teacher has developed a project work in which she makes use of video and the game “Taboo” to express their routine. Students have to define or mime the activity presented in each card and others guess which one it is. In the case of the deaf student, he sends videos of each activity via WhatsApp, making use of SL and signs to show the words he is referring to. He is also asked to correct some signs in a second video, making use of a metacognitive strategy. This activity involves visual as well as kinesthetic intelligences. As regards cognitive strategies, he has to match signs with

meaning. The student feels highly motivated by performing this activity because it requires the use of technology and some preparation – he has to design the signs to show-, thus involving affective and meta-affective strategies. In addition, since all classmates share the videos, and play the game in class, the activity entails some form of interaction. Moreover, the rest of the students in the class also have a go at learning some SL, and assist him when he finds it difficult to remember how to sign a certain action, which also fosters socio-cultural-interactiv

6. Final Considerations

> All students have the ability to display strategic behavior ... the conditions created in the classroom must be the same so that all students can have this behavior ... pedagogic decisions must be thought and planned, from the beginning, thinking about the diversity of interests, abilities, origin or any other personal or social condition of the students, so that their development is accessible and relevant for all of them ... (Echeita and Cuevas 35)

The teaching of English as a foreign language currently demands teaching students to display strategic behavior, that is, to be able to act with the purpose of achieving certain learning objectives taking into account the particularities of each task, the demands of the context and their own personal resources. Therefore, teaching a foreign language involves training the student to behave strategically using their cognitive, affective, and socio-cultural-interactive capacities, and being aware of their particular and different way of learning. The English teacher plays a key role in this task.

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PAPERS

Developing intercultural competence in English lessons: an untrodden path?

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Abstract

Much has been debated about the teaching of cultural content in ELT for the past decades. The trend is far from weakening; rather, it has strengthened to the point that the latest Common Learning Priorities (CLP, or "NAP") make explicit reference to the teaching of languages from an intercultural perspective (Res. CFE N° 181/12). The purpose of this paper is to look into the very concept of intercultural competence (Byram 1997) and suggest possible ways to tread this path in our classrooms.

Key words: ELT – intercultural competence – CLP – classroom implications

Introduction

Defining either Language or Culture is not a simple issue. Most of us (teachers) have always leaned towards the teaching of language, despite an increasing tendency to include culture for the past decades. Gradually, there has been a shift to the point that nowadays most books –if not all- have a "culture corner" or "culture bite", usually accompanied with a very attractive layout. However, in daily conversations with colleagues and at team meetings we have noticed that skipping the Culture-Spot pages or dealing with culture as a reading exercise carried out incidentally are usual practices. This may be due to a number of factors, and probably the areas that offer most trouble are *what* cultural elements to teach, *how to teach* them, *when*, and *how to assess* them. Other aspects to take into account are institutional constraints, lack of time and the material itself, which may not be relevant enough or rather divorced from the students' reality. The purpose of this paper is to explore possible, practical insights into these factors.

Definitions

What do we talk about when we talk about culture? Anthropologist Brian Street (23-29) develops the idea that *culture is a verb*, so instead of asking what culture is, the focus should be placed on what culture **does**, since it entails a process of active construction of meaning making. It is then of paramount importance to enhance in students the ability to observe what people from other cultures **do** in certain situations. For instance, if we observe two English people at the bus stop, most likely they will start talking about the weather, as this is a default topic. Speaking about the weather is an opening of conversation that tells us a lot of what people "do" with their language in that kind of situation. Likewise, this should prompt a reflection on what "we" do. In this sense, our view of the student should shift from a mere learner of linguistic competence to that of an intercultural speaker.

With an eye set on this, the current Curricular Design for Foreign Languages in our country -issued in 2012- explicitly addresses the need to develop intercultural skills, particularly in the 2016 revision for the Oriented Cycle in our province. Regardless the number of itineraries, one of the axes focuses on linguistic and intercultural reflection. Here we need to stop and posit another question: what does "intercultural communicative competence" really mean?

Following Byram (73), intercultural communicative competence is closely woven into the sub-competences of language already put forward by Canale and Swain (1980) and which together build communicative competence: linguistic competence, sociolinguistic competence, discourse competence. These are rooted in the multiple dimensions of knowledge, as the figure shows:

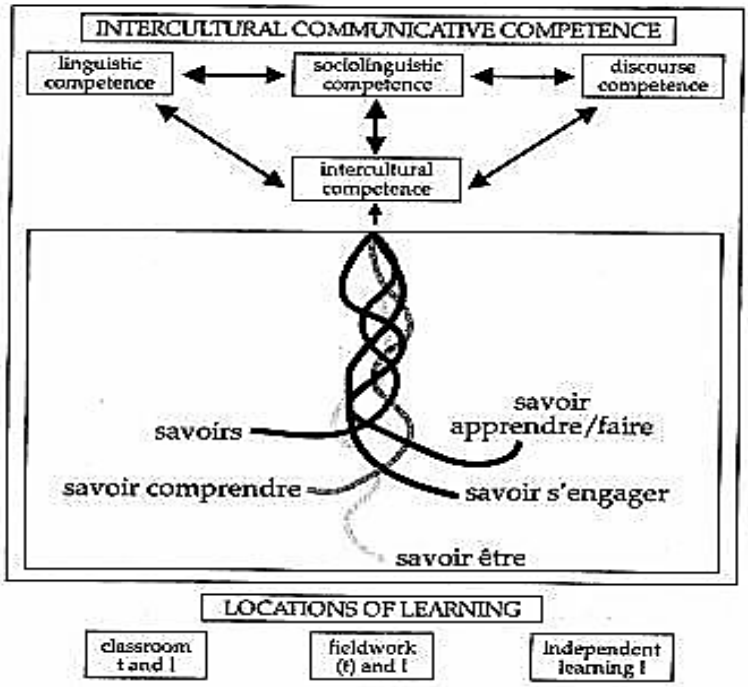

Fig. 1. Model of Intercultural Communicative Competence (Byram 73)

The diagram highlights that intercultural communicative competence comprises the dimensions already explained by Canale and Swain, in such a way that the four competences feed from one another. This "tree" is rooted in intertwined areas of knowledge to which we will focus next, after a brief contextualization of local circumstances.

In our country

At the end of 2012, the National Ministry of Education in Argentina issued the new Core Learning Priorities (CLP, or "Núcleos de Aprendizaje Prioritarios - NAP") for foreign languages at primary and secondary education. The document states in its introduction:

> […] los NAP de LE (Lengua Extranjera) 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/las niños/as y adolescentes, jóvenes y adultos/as de nuestro país (1).

According to the document, this multilingual and intercultural perspective aims to uncover the relations between languages and cultures -placing knowledge about languages in first place-, as well as the development of citizens respectful of linguistic and cultural differences. The ultimate goal is to foster new ways to understand socio-cultural and linguistic diversity and thus build tolerance. The document explicitly states that, for this to happen, attitudes of critical reflection have to be actively promoted in the foreign language classroom.

However, the Core Learning Priorities (CLP) document does not define "intercultural competence". We believe that defining this term should be our starting point in this discussion. Even when the CLP do not explicitly acknowledge so, they have been framed following the European model; therefore, we will take the definitions offered by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF). The CEF defines **intercultural awareness** as the outcome produced by the "knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relation (similarities and distinctive differences) between the world of origin and the world of the target community". To clarify this, Johnson and Rinvolucri (15) offer a simpler, practical, definition: "our ability to understand and function in other cultures". Here it is important to draw a distinction between "awareness" and "competence": the first addresses knowledge; the latter, using knowledge to perform a task efficiently. The CEF identifies two broad areas of competences that the learner needs in the European context: general competences and communicative competences. Given that the CLP for Foreign Languages in Argentina heavily rely on those competences, we will briefly describe them.

General competence is described in terms of four areas of knowledge: declarative knowledge (*savoir*), skills and know-how (*savoir-faire*), ability to learn (*savoir-apprendre*) and existential competence (*savoir-être*). The first, **declarative knowledge** encompasses knowledge of the world, sociocultural knowledge and intercultural awareness; the three are tightly knitted to the extent that each one presupposes the other two. The second and third dimensions of knowledge embedded in the development of communicative competence include **skills and know-how** and **ability to learn**. Both are intimately connected inasmuch as they imply discovery and/or interaction (Byram 34). These processes have an important bearing on the development of practical and intercultural abilities, such as:

- the ability to bring the culture of origin and the foreign culture into relation with each other,

- cultural sensitivity and ability to identify and use a variety of strategies for contact with those from other cultures,
- the capacity to fulfill the role of cultural intermediary between one's own culture and the foreign culture and to deal effectively with intercultural misunderstanding and conflict situations,
- the ability to overcome stereotyped relationships.

These skills stretch beyond the mere knowledge or possession of facts. They require that the learner should move a step further into "an understanding of the way these facts are related i.e. how as a pattern they form the cultural fabric of a society" (Kramsch 6). For this to happen, learners need to construct a new space of encounter. Such a space, instead of aiming to bridge differences and search for the universal, tries to create a context, which facilitates dialogue and serves as a basis to explore the sometimes irreducible differences between people's values and attitudes, preventing stereotyped relationships to happen. We would add that this space is highly personal and its construction, a unique experience; a "road not taken" before, as the American poet Robert Frost expressed in his famous poem.

Values, attitudes and beliefs are part and parcel of the fourth dimension of knowledge: **existential competence** (*savoir-être*). It is in this domain that acceptance of differences, tolerance and respect become crystallised as learners develop awareness of cultural factors. In so doing they have the chance to "value others" (Byram 34), thus abandoning the rigid "me" vs "them" stance and moving towards a perspective that embraces both on a common ground, becoming "us".

In our classes

In order to develop the intercultural dimension in language teaching, Byram et al (10) focus attention on some aims:

- ➔ giving learners intercultural competence as well as linguistic competence;
- ➔ preparing learners for interaction with people of other cultures;
- ➔ enabling them to understand and accept people from other cultures as individuals with other perspectives, values and behaviours;
- ➔ helping them to see that such interaction is an enriching experience to value their OWN culture.

It is important to understand that to be a successful intercultural speaker does not require "complete and perfect competence" (Byram et al, 11). What does this statement mean?

First, there is an obvious issue at stake: no matter how much it is taught, it is inevitably insufficient, not enough. Cultures are constantly changing. Therefore, it is not "natural" to anticipate all the knowledge our students may need on a certain situation. Secondly,

everyone's own social identities and values develop, particularly in the case of teenagers. Our students should learn to be flexible, open and aware of the need to adjust, to accept and understand other people. Bottom line, there is no perfect model to imitate and it is never a completed process, as Byram et al (11) emphasize.

In our teaching community, many teachers have been trained to follow the PPP (Presentation, Practice, Production) model within CLT. Traditionally, this model has been concerned with discrete linguistic items, ranging from a single word (for example, the distinction between *a/an*) to longer and more complex utterances (Woodward 126). Apparently, the model offers little or no room for cultural reflection since it is so strongly focused on language. However, the context used to present language -usually dialogues or texts- is usually loaded with cultural content, for example, a teenage daughter asking her parents for permission to have her birthday party at a disco (Stephenson 26). At this early stage - *Presentation*, it is possible to make room for cultural reflection before focusing on language and controlled practice. At elementary level, the extent to which students can use L2 is limited, so perhaps a brief discussion in L1 about birthday planning in the native culture in comparison or contrast with the foreign culture can be carried out. Nowadays, most textbooks provide excellent examples of culturally bound situations that the teacher can exploit from that perspective, even if the textbook activities do not explicitly encourage such reflection. Likewise, in the case of specific culture sections, the teacher may be willing to focus on language as well. Here the danger lies in paying too much attention to the language -often so tempting!-, hence overlooking tasks concerned with a critical reflection about the foreign and native cultures.

Recently, teacher trainees have been instructed to plan their Practicum lessons following mainly the instructional sequence in Woodward (85 *ff*): *Exposure to language - Noticing - Remembering - Use and Refinement*. The same author states that learners are actually exposed to cultural difference whenever they come into contact with a new sound, a gesture, or a new concept in the target language (102), and that the language analysis itself has to be supplemented with language use "as a medium and experience in cultural and cross-cultural as well as cross-curricular applications" (105). As in the PPP model, it is possible to use the context for language exposure to raise cultural awareness as well. As Woodward points out, learners are able to build up richer language associations when they use language "for their own expressive intentions and for reasons of personal, social and cultural identity" (89). The fourth and last stage, *Use and Refinement*, provide a good opportunity to go deeper into specific cultural aspects of the target language since it involves processes like recalling, generalizing and transfer, as students put language to use in context.

More recently, Task-based learning (TBL) and CLIL have entered the arena of the communicative approaches. In both, the theme of the task is central. According to Legutke and Thomas (13-30), "theme" refers not only to the target language and the teaching/learning process but also to the world of the learner, aspects of the foreign culture, and reactions to any of the ones previously mentioned. It is perfectly possible to plan a TBL lesson, or series of lessons, around a cultural issue without neglecting language work; furthermore, this framework allows for a deeper treatment of such topics since it engages the learner in a more effective way.

Project work also constitutes a rich resource to bear in mind, since it can provide the students with opportunities to research about social practices that are relevant in their native culture. This would give learners a deeper understanding of their own culture at the same time they confront it with the foreign culture. CLIL is another approach that is particularly suited to deal with cross-cultural issues and develop intercultural communicative competence.

An aspect that is especially important for the development of intercultural communicative competence is the emphasis on cognitive operations higher than knowledge, such as application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation. In fact, the "third space" is a new creation that requires learners to examine closely the native and foreign cultures, and on that basis they can develop a new construct. This gives the learner the opportunity to focus on something other than linguistic items that they can find interesting, motivating and personally enriching.

An example

We can illustrate what has been presented in this paper with extracts from a story taken from a textbook for young learners at elementary level. Linguistically, the story deals with description and possession. Therefore, the activities aim at using "have got" and basic vocabulary about appearance: hair color, hair length. In this case, linguistic competence is being stressed. Nevertheless, the story deals with important insights in teens' values and prejudices. Thus, if one looks at the story in more depth, learners can be given the possibility to become interculturally competent with the help of the teacher. A brief account of the story shows a young boy who is concerned with his looks. He boasts about his hair saying, *"I've got lovely long brown hair. I'm so handsome."* while looking at the mirror. One morning he realizes he has run out of a shampoo he uses to make his hair look healthier so he says "*Oh no! I haven't got any 'Shampoo for lovely hair'"*. At this point, we get the first cultural interference. Here, the instructor may resort to questions that make students reflect on the interculturality of the text: *Are boys in our community interested in their hair/looks? Do 12*

year-old boys wash their hair ***every day****?* Through very simple questions, the educator can lead students towards the development of intercultural competence.

Next, the boy rushes to a hairdresser´s to buy shampoo. There, he is attracted to a pretty hairdresser and takes a wrong shampoo bottle, *"Big Hair".* That evening the boys uses the product on his hair, thinking about the pretty lady at the beauty shop, in the assumption that the lady finds him good-looking, too. At this point, the teacher's questions may focus on the boy's attitude and prompt reflection, e.g. *"What is the boy's attitude?" "Is this attitude common among the boys you know?" "What about the girl?" "Do you think she likes the boy?"*

The following pictures in the textbook show the boy as he wakes up the following morning. His hair has grown enormously, to the point that he cannot move. He feels he looks like a monster and, terrified, runs to the beauty shop. People on the street stare at him. At the beauty shop, a male hairdresser cuts his hair and the boy is very rude to him -he gives direct commands-, in spite of the hairdresser's kindness. However, he sounds soft as he speaks to the girl -who is watching the scene- and invites her to go to a café. The girl is angry and she refuses to go out with him, saying, "You look lovely but you are too vain and rude". The teacher may exploit the girl's attitude, for example, by asking, *"Why is the girl angry?" "What is more important to her: good looks or good manners?" "What is more important for the girls you know?"*

Conclusion

Throughout this work, we have attempted to offer a reflection about the intercultural dimension of language teaching. We have tried to do so by revisiting the rationale behind this concept and by offering a simple and practical instance of one possible way to help our learners develop intercultural awareness. We believe that each teacher, building on a solid theoretical framework and following his/her own insight -fed by knowledge about the students, the school community, and the local circumstances-, faces an "untrodden path" open ahead.

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Revisiting the importance of collaborative work at the heart of FAAPI 2016

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Abstract

The 2016 FAAPI Conference, organised by San Juan's English Teachers' Association- brought together ELT professionals from Argentina and other countries to discuss and reflect upon the multidisciplinarity of our field and the value of collaboration. Presenters looked at their practices discovering collaborative efforts they are already part of -involving collaboration between theories, between participants in the teaching learning process, or at an institutional level- and exploring ways in which such efforts could be enhanced. This conference was also marked by two important events: the 400th Anniversary of Shakespeare's Death and the 200th Anniversary of Argentina's Independence as a nation. The presence of so many world-known and highly prestigious EFL figures taking part in a conference in San Juan has left a message that we want to treasure by showing special segments of the main lectures to illustrate points in common to remind us the importance of working through collaboration.

1. Introduction

The mission of FAAPI, the Argentine Federation of English Teachers' Associations, is to connect and support English Language Teaching professionals in Argentina and to foster continuing development and growth in the field of EFL teaching. FAAPI's Annual Conference, organised every year by one of its over 20 Teachers' Associations, is a key academic event which seeks to accomplish that mission. The XLI Annual FAAPI Conference, organized by San Juan's local association (ASJPI), took place in the city of San Juan between September 15th and 17th, 2016. The Conference's motto -ELT as a Multidisciplinary Endeavour: Growing through Collaboration- was conceived around the notions of multidisciplinarity and collaboration. Along with these main subjects, a number of central ideas were identified as guiding topics, among which the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's Death and the Bicentenary of Argentina's Independence stood out as particularly significant.

The spirit of collaboration permeated the entire event from its early organizational stages to the last minutes of the Conference. FAAPI speakers, its academic committee and its selected paper editors were among the main collaborators. The Conference topics were brought to life by distinguished national and international speakers in the many presentations made. Furthermore, a federal academic committee with representation from several provinces in Argentina generously contributed their time to evaluate proposals and select

some of the papers for publication. The challenge of compiling and editing the selected papers was taken up by Dr. Darío Luis Banegas, Dr. Mario López-Barrios, Dr. Melina Porto and Dr. María Alejandra Soto.

The sense of collaboration started to be felt several months before the seminar when official institutions agreed to allow the use of their facilities for the events. Several modern and traditional venues were generously made available to ASJPI by the Government of San Juan and the National University of San Juan: the Sarmiento Theatre, the Barrena Guzmán Convention Centre, the Amadeo Conte Grand Cultural Centre, the Franklin Rawson Auditorium of the Museum of Fine Arts, the Eloy Camus Auditorium within San Juan's Civic Centre, the Auditorium of the Electrical Engineering Institute and several classrooms of the School of Engineering (UNSJ).

ASJPI also received the collaborative support of the regular FAAPI sponsors who once again offered their commercial expertise and academic resources to make the Conference possible. These sponsor companies were in charge of an exhibition of special ELT materials (for all levels and age groups) at the Amadeo Conte Grand Cultural Centre during the three days of the Conference. One of these companies – The Performers- presented a play at the Sarmiento Theatre open to all participants and to the community of San Juan, which was a very welcome initiative.

Another clear example of collaboration was observed in the warm welcome given by the citizens of San Juan to all FAAPI participants, who totalled over 1.000 people, including attendees, speakers and sponsor companies' representatives.
It is important to highlight that the Conference received the endorsement of the National Ministry of Education and Sports (Resolution -2016-209-E-APN-SECIYCE#ME) and the provincial Ministry of Education (Resolution N° 6701-ME-2016) which gave the event an official framework in line with the magnitude of the event.

2. Purpose of this paper

This paper aims to treasure the special message this Conference has left by presenting special segments of some of the main lectures to illustrate points in common that remind us of the importance of growing through collaboration in the context of ELT.

3. Collaboration in the context of ELT

Collaboration has a significant role in language teaching and it is generally viewed very positively as illustrated by several ELT researchers. Regarding the relevance of growing through collaboration, Darling-Hammond (19-22) and other authors such as Cochran-Smith

and Zeichner suggest that in order to work collaboratively in an effective way, teachers need to put in practice shared decision making as well as communication, and planning. Robinson and Schaible (57) state the importance of collaborative teaching by defining it as "any academic experience in which two professors work together in designing and teaching a course that itself uses group learning techniques." Villa, Thousand, and Nevin (3) describe co-teaching as "two or more people sharing responsibility for educating some or all of the students in a classroom."

In this paper we extend the notion of collaboration beyond the classroom itself to collaboration among various institutions (educational and governmental entities) and individuals (teachers, students and researchers) working together to bring to life a Conference for the professional development of teachers.

4. Conference Highlights

It would be impossible to include within the scope of this paper all the powerful ideas that were presented during the Conference. We have made a selection of some highlights which are just a sample of the many messages that reinforced the notion of collaboration. In particular, we have selected words from Claudia Ferradas, Malena Solda, Susan Hillyard, Luke Prodromou, Susana Liruso and Aziz Abu Sarah which are transcribed below from the recordings made available by the ASJPI.

4.1 Claudia Ferradas and Malena Solda's plenary: *All the world's a stage: celebrating Shakespeare in the ELT class.*

In line with the 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's Death as a central topic in the Conference, Dr. Claudia Ferradas and actress Malena Solda's plenary "All the world's a stage: celebrating Shakespeare in the ELT class" proposed ways in which teachers can get students interested in Shakespeare's work and approach essential aspects of English culture through collaboration with acting.

> Ferradas: So, our conference is ELT as a multidisciplinary endeavour. And I couldn't resist the temptation, when I saw this title, of thinking of Malena and thinking of the art of the actor and what they can teach us. Not only about Shakespeare, but about drama in the classroom as text. Malena could you help us? Could you let us know what's in Shakespeare for you?
>
> Solda: Sure. Well, you started by asking why Shakespeare. Let me tell you what we actors ask ourselves that might be useful to you teachers. Why is Shakespeare so attractive? What is […] so important? Is it the plot? Is it the interaction between the characters? Is it the structure of the text, that is to say, its musical energy? Is it the energy of every word and how it leads to an emotional crescendo? Maybe all of this

> together. Let's start with punctuation and sounds; that is breath. My breath will float differently whether I'm eager to see someone… a man, for instance, for a friendly talk or if I want him, physically. For example Juliet, take Juliet. She's eager to see Romeo, right? She has just met him and she wants to see him again. But what for? Aiming for a conversation? Well. Let's listen to what Shakespeare did with punctuation in the text. The commas and the stops tell us where to breathe.

These two speakers show how drama can aid language teachers and how acting, with its emphasis on resembling real life, gives great importance to aspects of language that may be downplayed in a language class, such as punctuation.

4.2 Luke Prodromou's semi-plenary*: Celebrating Shakespeare's… Unruly Women: Language, Voice, Identity.*

Luke Prodromow, a highly recognized author of numerous ELT coursebooks, presents his semi-plenary with the collaboration of Professors Claudia Ferradas and Susan Hillyard. The three experts demonstrate how Shakespeare's ideas about 'what makes good theatre' can be applied to the classroom. Two ideas are emphasized: The first is inspiration, the muse, the fire; the second is imagination. During Prodromou`s semi plenary "Celebrating Shakespeare's… Unruly Women: Language, Voice, Identity" he explores Shakespeare´s two ways to make good theatre, two things that may collaborate to teaching.

> Good theatre, like good teaching, is a marriage of two minds, but it is a passionate marriage. Agreed? The passion is important, a muse of fire. When Shakespeare wrote those words, […] the first language textbooks began to appear and the first English lessons; English as a foreign language began to appear. What were they like? They were one to one, private classes […] But what were they like? Those first English lessons way back in the 16th century? Well, one commentator and educator, he says, well he complains about the way English teachers, that is us, conducted their private classes. 'I like not their manner of teaching' he says. Why did he not like their manner of teaching? He explains 'they would take money beforehand and when they are paid, they care little for their scholars, their students' […]. What was the method that these teachers adopted? The educator explains exactly their method of teaching. He says they would read about half a page and translate it. And how long did this exciting lesson last? […] About half an hour. Good work! If you can get it!
>
> But in those days not all of the textbooks were based on translation, surprisingly. […] And dialogues were actually very realistic dialogues […] based on everyday situations. And some of them had a lot of inspiration, passion and even humor, as in the example we are going to see in a minute. […] which is designed to teach idioms.

> Idioms in the 16th century, ahead of his time this writer. As you watch the dialogue and hear it from the textbook, I want you to identify the idioms, see if you can spot them. What is the situation? The situation is two friends […] the communicative function is they are gossiping about a topic, the neighbor. The neighbor is a passionate old man.

After this introduction, Ferradas and Hillyard act out the situation described:

> F: What's become of your neighbour?
>
> H: He is as old as you see him. But he has recently wed a wench of 15 years old!
>
> F: Really? Then he and she will make the whole bible together. You know the new and the Old Testament.
>
> H: An old cat doing young mouse!
>
> F: Old flesh makes good brawn.
>
> […]

Following Ferradas and Hillyard's performance, Luke Prodromou revisits Shakespeare's *Henry V* and states:

> I wonder whether William had actually seen this dialogue when he wrote his own private lesson in Henry V. He presents us with a scene which shows us the first private English lesson in history. Who is the teacher? King Henry V. He is getting old, he has just conquered France […] and now he has decided to conquer the princess of France, the beautiful young princess […] Catherine. They have agreed to swap private lessons. Henry is going to teach her English as a foreign language and Catherine is going to teach him French as a loving language.

Next, Prodromou and Hillyard act out the language lesson depicted in *Henry V* to illustrate how passion and imagination play a paramount role in the teaching- learning process:

> P: Fair Catherine, most fair Kate, would you teach me words of love that would enter your gentle heart?
>
> H: Your Majesty shall not get me. I can not speak your England.
>
> P: Fair Catherine, if you would love me fluently with your French heart, I would be glad to hear you confess it brokenly with your English tone. Do you like me, Kate?
>
> H: […] What means like me?
>
> P: Let me teach you, Kate. An angel is like you and you are like an angel.
>
> H: [*answers in French]*
>
> P: Correct! Excellent! Well Done!
>
> H: [*answers in French]*

P: What says? That the tongues of men are full of deceit?

H: the man is full of deceit!!!

P: I am glad you speak no better English but if you did, you would know how plain I am. I do not know a way to make my words of love but directly to say I love you, Kate. What says thou to my love?

H: Me no understand.

P: Let me explain. If you do love someone who looks like me, let thy imagination be the cook.

H: imagination? Cook?

P: Let me give you an example. Good teachers give examples. For example, imagination is when you peace out my imperfections with your thoughts. A cook… look, a black bear would turn white, a curly head would go bald, a fair face would wither. But a good heart is the sun and the moon, or rather the sun and not the moon, for the sun shines right and never changes. What says thou into my love?

H: Is it possible that I should love the enemy of France?

P: But Kate! If you loved me, you would love the friend of France. I love France so well that I would not part with a village of it. I will have it all mine. When France is mine, and I am yours, then yours is France and you are mine.

H: What means that?

P: I will tell you in French. Though my French would hand out my tongue like a newly married wife for end her husband's neck. [*He speaks in French].*

H: [speaks in French]

P: My French is not better than your English. But doth thou understand English, Kate? I love you Kate, Can you love me?

H: I can not tell!

[…]

P: Ok forget my false French and let me tell you in true, plain English. I love thee.

H: Is it possible?

P: Can you love me? Can you love me in spite of this face? You know Kate, the older I get, the better I shall appear. My comfort is that old age, that great destroyer of beauty can do no more to spoil my face. I am at my worse now. If you have me Kate, you will have me better and better. Will you have me Kate? Tell me your answer in your broken music for your voice is music and your English broken. Tell me Kate, will you have me? Tell me your mind in your gentle broken English. Will you have me Kate?

H: That will content me.

P: Ok. That is the correct answer. Well done! And now let me kiss your hand and call you my queen.

H: [*Speaks in French and runs away]*

P: Forget it! Another time!

To show how 16th Century great literary works can be a useful guide for modern teaching practices, Prodromou also adapts Hamlet's well known monologue to represent the 21st century teaching experience. This adaptation reflects upon issues of modern times such as gender equality:

H: Every classroom is a stage and all schoolmasters

P: and mistresses

H: and all schoolmasters and mistresses merely players. They have their exits and their entrances. And teachers in their time play many parts in lessons of many stages.

P: at first the ice breaker. Breaking down barriers between teacher and learner.

H: and then presenter of target language with clarity and care to capture the attention of students who creep unwillingly.

P: and then the friend, smiling and supportive, with gentle words making learners' grammar grow.

H: then, the tester. Full of forms and index numbers, armed with marks, grading, ranking, quick in discrimination, seeking the carrot, motivation, bursting the bubble, learner's transformation.

This creative adaptation even includes the evaluation stage, contemplating the arduous task that teachers have correcting student's work at home:

P: And then, the judge. Sitting at home with piles of paper with eye severed and endless cups of coffee. Full of corrections in red and underlinings, and so they play their part.

H: The sixth stage shifts into the classroom manager. Master and mistress of time and space, facilitator of classroom interaction and monitor of learners' progress. And model of language and correctness.

P: Using her voice

H: or his voice

P: Using her or his voice to keep up the pace and keep down the noise. Last role of all, that ends a good teacher's history. The magic of transformation. Teaching with artistry, with music!

H: with drama!

F: and with poetry!
P: If we, actors, have offended
F: think only this and all is mended
H: imagine you've been sleeping here
P: while these visions did appear
F: and everything that you have seen
H: has been nothing but a dream
D: that's old one. Our play is done
F: and will strive to please you everyday
H: Good night ladies, good night sweet ladies
P: good night to you gentle all

4.3 Claudia Ferradas' Plenary: *The Marriage of true minds: When Art, Literature and ELT converge*

In her plenary, Dr. Claudia Ferradas reflects on didactic strategies to develop students' collaboration, critical thinking and intercultural awareness in a globalised class. As a result, she focuses on the idea of making feelings and emotions part of the learning process to make knowledge memorable.

> If you are emotionally involved, the experience is memorable. And to be aware of the power of the imagination to create empathy, which is what we want as educators,[...] no matter what we teach, we are teaching values and we are teaching, you know, how the muscle of imagination allows us to be [...] to feel that we are in somebody else's shoes.

Ferradas proposes the creation of empathy as the main objective of the language lesson to educate citizens capable of respecting differences and able to express their own identities in a globalised environment.

4.4 Susana Liruso's semi-plenary*: EFL practices to enhance young learners' learning*

In the semi plenary "EFL practices to enhance young learners' learning", Susana Liruso highlightes the importance of learning English to promote global skills; working through communication and collaboration, and enriching the learning through shared experience.

> Each child is an individual with individual learning needs but most learning takes place in the social context. Right. Brunner said "making sense is a social process". Being part of the society is working in collaboration.
> How do we make sense? We make sense through exploration and communication.
> How do we communicate? We communicate through language.

> That is important for us because we are language teachers but we also communicate through languages, that is to say, through other modes. Luke (Prodromou) has just said it before, through gestures, music, images… So, why collaboration is important? Collaborative work provides opportunities to learn from each other; to engage in cooperative talking, that is so important when we are learning a foreign language; to share and broaden understanding; to learn to take turns, that's so important in primary school. I usually tell my teachers to take advantage of the fact that they are teaching a foreign language. Teaching a foreign language always gives us the opportunity to sort of start again because we have to start giving information about ourselves. Something that you don't do in other subjects. In other subjects you tell the teachers your name, but you don't tell your age. So all this pragmatic side of English can be worked beautifully in primary school, telling children not to shout that much, to take turns, right? And that is easier than in other subjects because we can say: in English we communicate like this.

However, Prof. Liruso points out that working collaboratively is not limited to just 'pair work' or 'group work' but requires careful planning.

> Now, for collaborative work to be successful it has to be planned, monitored and supported. It's not just Ok! We get in pairs and we work, right? It's just much more than that. It requires lots of planning.

According to Professor Liruso, in order to trigger collaborative learning among students, activities should be carefully planned, monitored and supported. Teachers should take advantage of teaching a foreign language to share information about them with students and then encourage students to share their own information and points of view, take turns, listen to and respect each other, which will in turn lead to learning from each other.

4.5 Aziz Abu Sarah's plenary*: Revolutionizing Education: Building Peace in a Divided World*

In his plenary, the National Geographic Explorer and Cultural educator Aziz Abu Sarah emphasizes the idea of helping teaching through experience and collaboration. Sarah introduces his plenary with his personal experience of National Geographic choosing him as an explorer to work for them. He reviews the possibility of calling an educator: "an explorer".

> Sarah: People when they think about explorers, they don't think about educators, what do they think about? scientists, astronauts, [...]archeologists, all these kinds of cool things.
>
> Audience: BIOLOGISTS!!
>
> Sarah: Biologists, yeah, I'm sorry about that. Also biologists. We have an explorer [*pointing to the audience*] and we think of a person with this hat [*showing a photo in*

> *the screen*] we have the same hat in here, and he is trying to steal my thunder [*pointing the audience again and laughing*]

After telling the audience about his brother's death due to the war between Pakistan and Israel, and the way they lived and experienced everything at that time, Sarah explains to the audience that he refused to speak in Hebrew because he felt it as a sign of resignation to its culture. But the need to study and have a job, in addition to the work of a teacher and the class in general made him change his mind.

> The reason I wanted to study Hebrew was I wanted a job [*laughing*]...and, I wanted actually, I wanted to go to college. this point of my life was a point of transformations at all points […] I'm in a classroom where that's not the case, everyone was a civilian, everyone dressed like me, looked like me and it was confusing because I thought we were enemies, and I had a plan: I'm gonna learn Hebrew, and not talk to anybody through this all time.

To sum up, he gives teachers some interesting clues to keep in mind in order to make our classrooms multicultural and to help everyone feel a sense of belonging.

> This is eventually what makes a big great difference. We don't think about learning about each other, breaking stereotypes, working together with each other and having an experiential education. And I hope this can help you, in your classroom.

He reminds teachers of the intrinsically human aspect of the classroom, where teachers and students come to share time of their lives. In this context, "learning about each other" sounds like a very appealing invitation.

5. Conclusions

The XLI Annual FAAPI Conference gave all participants a chance to renew their commitment to the teaching profession and to the betterment of education. ASJPI took this challenge and became the proud host of the event. Thanks to the support and collaboration of a large number of participants, colleagues and institutions, the local Association of Teachers of English was able to rise to the occasion honouring its commitments to teaching development.

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Learning strategies and pronunciation teaching and learning: pedagogical implications and benefits of incorporating learning strategies in the language classroom

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Abstract
This presentation will illustrate the use and benefits of learning strategies as addressed from cognitive psychology to enhance students´ pronunciation skills in the language classroom. In particular, three vowel sounds (/æ, ʌ, ɑ:/) will be focalized. The proposal follows Anderson´s Information Processing model (1983, 1985), which is based on cognitive approaches, in the belief that it can provide useful insights for teachers to help students become better (language) learners since it helps educators understand more clearly how students process and store new information. In addition, the proposal also uses some of the principles present in the CALLA model for pronunciation teaching.

1. Introduction

This paper presents some of the findings from a research carried out in order to pursuit a research-oriented degree (Licenciatura en Inglés). The research was conducted at Facultad de Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes (UNSJ). The main objective of the research is to find out whether students' acquisition of some features of the English phonological system could be enhanced with the aid of learning strategies.

Different authors indicate that learning a second or foreign language is no mean feat for most students, especially if the language being learned differs considerably from the learners' L1. Many students struggle trying to acquire a new lexical, grammatical and/or phonological system because such acquisition poses a real challenge on their cognitive abilities. Some students can deal with the challenge of learning a second language (SL) more successfully than others, but if they fail to overcome the initial difficulties involved in the complex process of SL learning, some of them get frustrated and do not enjoy the process of language learning. This situation could be avoided if weaker students are equipped with some pedagogical tools which can help them become better language learners and, thus, be ready to face any language-related challenge that comes in their way.

In this research project, I tried to find ways to help unsuccessful learners become better ones because I noticed that many of them were having many difficulties in incorporating, in this particular case, the English phonological system, which differs substantially from the Spanish one (Spanish is the students' L1). Obviously, every single phonological feature of the English language could not be addressed, so I only focused on three problematic vowel sounds (/æ, □□,□□/) for Spanish speakers. In order to equip learners with cognitive tools that could help

them acquire these sounds with greater ease, I followed O'Malley & Chamot's (1990) and Oxford´s (2013) directions to enhance students learning abilities through the aid of learning strategies.

2. Theoretical framework

In order to account for one of the possible ways in which learning could take place, I followed Anderson´s 1983 and 1985 Information Processing model with the aim of gaining a better understanding of such a process. The model is framed within cognitivism since it pays special attention to the role of the mind in the learning process. According to this model, human memory plays a crucial role in the process of storing and learning new information and also it emphasises the fact that regular practice leads to automatisation (23). Besides, this model helps us explain the complex process of second language learning. It states that humans possess two types of memories: short-term (working) memory and long-term memory. This last memory is, in turn, further sub-divided into two other kinds of memories which Anderson calls declarative (knowledge about things) and procedural (knowledge about how to do things). In general terms, Anderson's model indicates that the incoming information (input) is processed in the working memory (23). However, in order to be able to process, organise and store the new information, it has to be associated with the information that learners already have in their long-term memory so as to build meaningful *bridges* between the old and the new information. Once this complex cognitive process is completed, the new information is ready to be stored permanently in the long-term memory. According to Anderson, this way of storing information is really demanding for learners, but it has the advantage of keeping information stored in a systemic and organised way (24).

The long-term memory stores two different types of knowledge: declarative and procedural. The first type (declarative) refers to information that we know about something and it is considered static knowledge. The information stored in this memory can be verbalised (declared), but images and temporal sequences can also be kept in this memory. According to Anderson, the information kept in this memory is organised like a hierarchical network made up of cognitive units (nodes) and links among the nodes (24). Johnson states that declarative knowledge is stored in memory as a data base organised in semantic schemes and he also recognises advantages and disadvantages to this type of memory. He says that since the knowledge stored in the long-term memory is kept in an organised fashion, it is relatively simple for learners to have access to a particular piece of information (24). However, gaining access to this information requires conscious attention on the part of the learners, which makes it harder for them if they try to do more than one cognitive-demanding task. As regard the second type of knowledge – procedural – Anderson claims that it is

knowledge about how to do things. He states that sometimes information that used to be kept as declarative can be proceduralised (26). This means that learners need not pay conscious attention to what they are doing because the knowledge has been automatised. Johnson also finds advantages and disadvantages to this kind of knowledge. One of the advantages is that once certain knowledge has been automatised, learners can *use* it without even realizing they are doing so, which means that they can pay conscious attention to other cognitive tasks. However, Johnson explains, if some knowledge is proceduralised in an erroneous way, it is difficult for learners to access it, make it conscious again, fix what was wrongly learnt and automatise it again (26). Summarising, declarative knowledge can be internalised relatively easy, but procedural knowledge is automatised after students have had many instances to practise it and so being able to take it to a subconscious level of usage.

According to Anderson's model, the acquisition of skills or any other cognitive faculty takes place following three stages in which declarative knowledge becomes procedural: (1) Cognitive stage: the learning process of new abilities begins in this stage which involves conscious attention on the part of the learners. (2) Associative stage: in this stage, the new (sometimes erroneous) knowledge is associated with already existing information and meaningful links are developed. (3) Autonomous stage: in this stage, the abilities being learnt become more automatised and the mistakes that hinder their correct usage begin to disappear. This automatisation is only possible through constant and varied practice. The benefit of reaching this stage is that no conscious attention is required to perform a task and almost no demand is set on the working memory (33).

Having discussed the model used to account for the learning process of complex cognitive skills, I will now focus on the way in which pronunciation teaching could be addressed in order to maximise students' opportunities to learn it successfully. Celce-Murcia, Brinton and Goodwin indicate that pronunciation teaching, along the years, has moved from being considered a top priority to a skill that could be learnt by the learner on his/her own without any explicit reference to it on the part of the teacher (2). Some of the methods used to teach pronunciation are the following:

(1) The Direct Method: it gained popularity in the late 1800s and early 1900s. In this method, pronunciation is taught through imitation and intuition; students imitate a model – the teacher or a recording – and do their best to approximate the model through imitation and repetition (Celce-Murcia et. al., 3)

(2) The Reform Movement: the first linguistic or analytic contribution to the teaching of pronunciation emerged in the 1890s as part of the Reform Movement in language teaching.

This movement was influenced by phoneticians such as Henry Sweet and Paul Passy, among others, who formed the International Phonetic Association and developed the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA) (Celce-Murcia et. al., 3).

(3) The 1940s and 1950s: it is believed that the Reform Movement played a role in the development of Audiolingualism in the USA and the Oral Approach in Britain during the 1940s and 1950s. In both methods, pronunciation is very important and it is taught explicitly from the start (Celce-Murcia et. al., 3).

(4) The 1960s: in the 60s, the Cognitive Approach and cognitive psychology viewed language as a rule-governed behaviour rather than habit formation. It deemphasised pronunciation in favour of grammar and vocabulary (Celce-Murcia et. al., 4).

(5) The 1970s: the methods that came to attention during de 70s, such as the Silent Way and Community Language Learning (CLL), continued to exhibit interesting differences in the way they dealt with pronunciation. The Silent Way can be characterised by the attention paid to accuracy of pronunciation of both the sounds and structures of the target language from the initial stage of instruction. Secondly, the CLL class also pays close attention to pronunciation from the very beginning, but the techniques used to teach it are different from the ones used in the Silent Way (Celce-Murcia et. al., 5, 6).

(6) The Communicative Approach: this approach, also called Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), took hold in the 1980s and is currently dominant in language teaching. It states that the primary purpose of language is communication, thus, using language to communicate should be central in all classroom language instruction. Even when native-like pronunciation is not the main aim in this approach, careful attention to pronunciation teaching is paid in every class through a wide variety of tasks. I would like to conclude this section by making clear that this last approach is the one followed in this research because I believe it helps teachers account more thoroughly for the complex issue of language teaching (Celce-Murcia et. al., 7).

In connection with the use of learning strategies to assist the learner in the execution of cognitive tasks, the taxonomy proposed by O'Malley and Chamot (1999) was adopted because of its simplicity and coherence. However, I also took into account the proposed modifications that Oxford (2013) makes to the taxonomy. These authors take into consideration Anderson's 1985 model and emphasise the role of the student as central in the process of regulating his/her own learning process. O'Malley et. al. define learning strategies as "special ways of processing information that enhance comprehension, learning, or retention of information" (1) and they organise them in three macro groups: **metacognitive**,

cognitive and **socio-affective**. Metacognitive strategies are higher order executive skills that regulate the learning process, that is to say, they allow learners to plan, direct and evaluate that process. In general terms, these strategies are independent from the specific learning tasks. Cognitive strategies, strongly linked to the learning tasks, operate directly on incoming information, manipulating it physically or mentally with the aim of aiding the learning process. They have an operative function and enable the analysis, organization, elaboration and transformation of information. Socio-affective strategies include a broad group of strategies that involve either interaction with another person or ideational control over affect. Generally, they are considered applicable to a wide variety of tasks. These strategies also have a significant influence in the learning process (O'Malley et. al., 44, 45).

3. Methodology

This is a mix-methods study which uses mostly quantitative tools, but also qualitative ones, to gather information. As regards the tools used to collect data for quantitative analysis, recorded interviews, evaluation charts, and students' logs were used. On the other hand, a personal report was provided by the study participants where they supplied a qualitative assessment of the whole experience. The research is a descriptive one and was conducted at Facultad de Filosofía, Humanidades y Artes and at a private English institute. The study participants were a group of students with a B1 (CEFR) level of English who were chosen and assigned randomly to specific groups.

Now, a brief comment on the steps followed to teach pronunciation and to train students in the informed use of learning strategies will be made. Then, I will refer to some of the findings in this research.

Goodwin proposes a series of pedagogical steps that could help educators teach pronunciation in an informed and optimal way (qtd. in Celce-Murcia et. al., 291). In this respect, Kelly also suggests using these steps when teaching pronunciation. These proposed steps are framed within a communicative framework for teaching pronunciation and are sequenced as follows:

(1) Description and analysis: in this stage, I presented the phonological feature (/æ, □□,□□/) we were going to study by showing when and how it occurs. I made use of vowel charts and presented some general rules for occurrence deductively.

(2) Listening discrimination: in this section, listening activities that included contextualised minimal pair discrimination exercises were proposed. The students' task was clearly defined and focused on only one or two features at a time.

(3) Controlled Practice: at the beginning, in more controlled activities, the learners' attention was focused almost completely on form. I made use of poems, rhymes, short dialogues and dramatic monologues to practise the phonological features under study.

(4) Guided Practice: in guided activities, the students' attention was no longer entirely on form. The learners began to focus on meaning, grammar and communicative intent as well as pronunciation. For example, in this study, I used a number contextualised exchanges in which students had to focus on the message as well as on pronunciation.

(5) Communicative Practice: in this stage, activities stroke a balance between form and meaning. In this research, debates, interviews, simulations and drama scenes were used. As the activities became gradually more communicative, the learners' attention was still focused on one or two features at a time since it is usually overwhelming for some students to suddenly monitor many pronunciation features at once.

(6) (Self) evaluation: in this final stage, an evaluation on the part of the students and from the teacher was carried out. The purpose of the evaluation was to measure how much progress the students had made. It consisted on a conversation amongst three students, a peer feedback and a self-reflection on their performance (11-28).

Having described the steps followed to teach pronunciation, I will now describe the stages proposed by O'Malley et. al. (1999) and revised by Oxford (2013) to instruct students on the optimal and informed use of learning strategies. It was decided to use these stages because I found them easy to teach and follow and because they propose a clearly defined way to carry out the instruction. The stages are the following ones:

(1) Preparation: this activity took place on the first class (session) and its main objective was to raise awareness on the learners about the existence of learning strategies and relate it to their prior knowledge about strategies. Students were asked to gather in small groups and reflect about the techniques they used to make their learning process more effective.

(2) Presentation: this phase was linked to the previous one and it was done in the same class. Once the students gave their opinions about the techniques they used to study, I made students notice how important some of these habits were in the process of learning a language. Then, the concept of learning strategies was formally introduced and the benefits and advantages of using such strategies were also highlighted.

(3) Practice: this stage took place for about 14 weeks. During this period, the training was carried out. The strategies that were selected and used were the ones that had already proved useful for aiding the acquisition of English phonological features in other studies

(Waasaf, Leánez and Nafá; 2001 and Leánez, Waasaf, Castro and Leceta, 2012). The selected strategies were the following: Metacognitive: selective attention, functional planning and monitoring; Cognitive: organization, note taking, repetition; Socio-affective: cooperation, self-talk and interrogation.

(4) Evaluation: the efficiency of the training was evaluated regularly and problems were solved when necessary. The students, for their part, evaluated their own use of strategies by using a strategy log.

(5) Expansion and reflection: this stage took place by the end of the training, when the students began to automatise the most useful strategies for each of them. That is, the strategies started to become proceduralised. At the same time, the learners had the chance to start applying the strategies in other contexts, for instance, at school, and also reflect upon the benefits of using learning strategies on a daily basis to enhance their learning practices (201-203).

4. Results and discussion

In this section, some of the most relevant findings of this study will be presented. In order to gather the data, several instruments were used: interviews, strategy logs, questionnaires and personal reports of the experience. The findings answered directly to the objectives of the study. In the first place, I will show which strategies received the higher percentages of usage. Then, I will show which vowel phoneme was the most problematic for the students and how the strategies helped them articulate the vowel sounds with greater mastery. Finally, a brief account of the qualitative finding will be given.

In general terms, it was possible to observe that, out of the three macro groups of strategies (metacognitive, cognitive and socio-affective) included in the study, the cognitive strategies were the ones that students favoured the most. One possible explanation for this result is that students found the strategies included in this category the most useful ones given the nature of the tasks they were asked to perform. Figure 1 shows the percentages of strategy use by the experimental group (EG) for both tests.

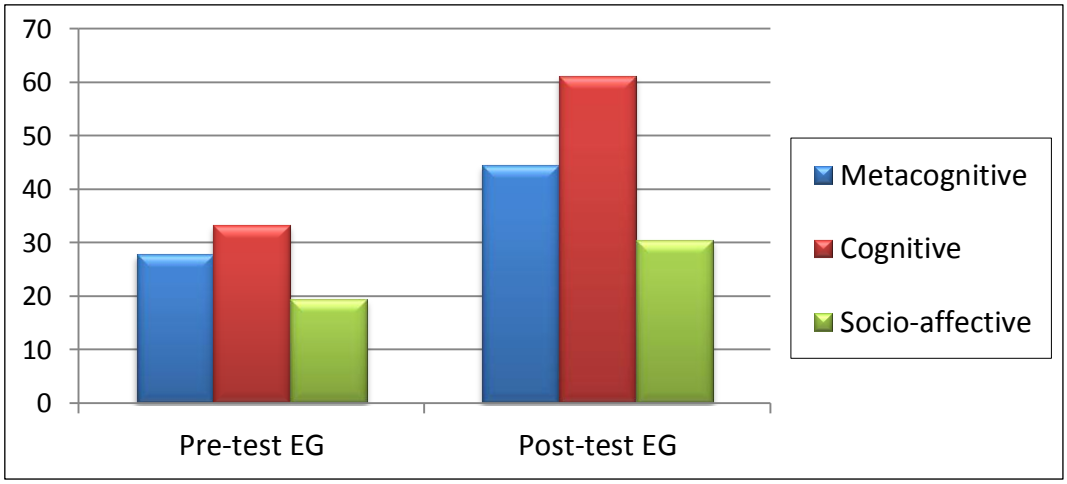

Fig.1. Use of learning strategies in pre and post-test by the EG.

It is possible to see from the graph that the students in this group did not use learning strategies regularly before they received the training on their correct and informed use. However, in the post-test, the percentages go up substantially probably due to the positive effect of the training. The other group (CG) showed similar values in the pre-test, but in the post-test, the percentages did not move up as in the EG. In fact, the percentage decreased a bit in the post-test. However, the cognitive strategies still surpassed the other two macro groups. The following graph shows these results:

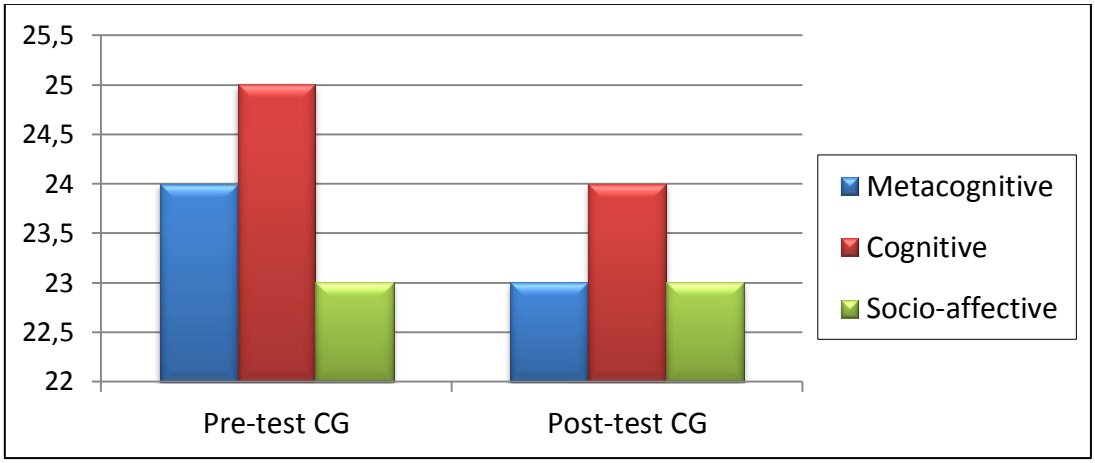

Fig. 2. Use of learning strategies in pre and post-test by the CG.

Figure 2 shows that the students in the CG did not increase their percentages of strategy use in the second test. This group was not expected to present the same values as the EG because they did not receive the formal training in strategy use; nevertheless, it was surprising that the percentages of use moved down in the post-test. One possible explanation for this unexpected behaviour could be that the participants were more conscious about the seriousness of the study and they provided more honest answers.

Generally speaking, in the cognitive category of strategies, the strategy of repetition was the one that students chose (85%) the most, followed by organization and note-taking. As it was said before, the participants might have chosen the strategy of repetition because it was the most appropriate one to accomplish the aim of articulating certain sounds adequately.

With reference to the second macro group of strategies (metacognitive), the strategy of monitoring was the one that students found the second most useful (80%), followed by selective attention and functional planning. The learners claimed that while they were monitoring their performance, they were able to spot mistakes in it and were able to fix them in time.

The socio-affective strategies were the ones that obtained the lowest percentage of use on the part of the students. The strategy of cooperation was the third most used strategy (65%), followed by self-talk and interrogation. The students indicated that the help they sometimes got from their peers was of great use to carry out some of the tasks they were asked to do.

Out of the three vowel sounds studied in this research (/æ, ɑː, ʌ/), the one that students found most difficult to articulate was vowel n° 5 (/ɑː/), then vowel n° 4 (/æ/) and finally the sound they found less problematic to produce was vowel n° 10 (/ʌ/) since it is the one whose place of articulation is more similar to Spanish /a/. As it was mentioned before, the students were assigned to two groups. The students in the EG received explicit training on the use of learning strategies, while the ones in the CG did not. This difference was crucial and affected the students' phonological performance, favouring the students in the EG. At the beginning of the research, both groups showed similar levels of competence in their pronunciation. However, after having received the training on learning strategies, the students of the EG began to surpass their peers in the CG and presented better results in the final evaluation as regards their pronunciation skills. The following tables show these results more clearly.

Group	**Experimental Group**					
Tests	***Pre-test***			***Post-test***		
Vowel phonemes	**Reading**	**Speaking**	**Difference in %**	**Reading**	**Speaking**	**Difference in %**
/æl	0,45%	0,22%	0,23%	0,77%	0,72%	0,05%
/ʌl	0,53%	0,25%	0,28%	0,89%	0,78%	0,11%
/ɑːl	0,36%	0,33%	0,03%	0,74%	0,71%	0,03%

Table 1. Percentages of correct articulation of phonemes in both tests by EG.

It can be observed from the table that, in the pre-test, the percentages of correct articulations were rather low, but after the instruction in pronunciation and the training in strategy use the percentages moved up, especially in the reading part. It is believed that this increase was the result of the training that only this group received.

The following table (Table 2) is included in order to compare the results of the CG with the ones from the EG.

Group	**Control Group**					
Tests	***Pre-test***			***Post-test***		
Vowel phonemes	**Reading**	**Speaking**	**Difference in %**	**Reading**	**Speaking**	**Difference in %**
/æ/	0,40%	0,29%	0,11%	0,61%	0,54%	0,07%
/ʌ/	0,54%	0,27%	0,27%	0,75%	0,68%	0,07%
/ɑ:/	0,35%	0,15%	0,20%	0,57%	0,35%	0,22%

Table 2. Percentages of correct articulation of phonemes in both tests by CG.

From this table, it can be seen that, initially, the percentages of both groups were quite similar, but after the training that only the EG received, the values of accuracy in the post-test were substantially higher in the EG when compared to the ones in the CG. This difference may mean that the participants from the EG were able to performed better than their peers in the CG because of the benefits of the use of strategies. It was possible to arrive at this conclusion because before receiving any kind of training, both groups showed similar degrees of phonological performance. During the research, both groups were exposed to the same pronunciation instruction, but only the EG received strategy training. So, when the results of the post-test were compared, it was noticeable that the EG had performed better that the group (CG) which did not go under the strategy training.

In connection with the qualitative results, I would like to clarify that they were only used to try to find out what the study participants thought about the whole experience. They were asked to provide a personal report where they commented briefly on the experience. About 80% of the students claimed that they benefited from the experience. 90% of the learners said they could transfer the use of strategies to other areas of learning. About 75% of the participants indicated that they were able to see how their learning process was optimised by the informed use of learning strategies. 95% of the students stated that they would have wanted

to continue learning about pronunciation and about strategy use for the rest of the semester. To sum up, most of the participants were able to notice a positive change in the way they approached and conducted their learning process.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, some of the main the results of a research being conducted in pursuit of a research-oriented degree at FFHA were presented. The main objective of the research is to find out whether students could become better ones if they are equipped with some learning strategies which could help them become better and more independent learners.

It was possible to prove that once the students have automatised the use of strategies, they can use them effectively to optimise their learning, while the students who did not receive any training on strategies performed less successfully than their better equipped peers.

I have tried to share this experience in connection with the beneficial use of strategies to enhance students' learning process. I would like to end this discussion by stating that teachers and students alike can benefit from the use of strategies because their correct use may help them make the most of the learning experience.

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Writing Medical Abstracts in English using Genre- based Pedagogy

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to describe a pedagogic proposal for writing medical abstracts in English using Genre- based Pedagogy (Christie & Martin, 1997; Dreyfus et al., 2016; Martin & Rose, 2008; Rothery, 1996) with third year students of the Medicine career at Universidad Católica de Cuyo. Such pedagogy adopts an explicit approach to literacy with the aim of providing equal opportunities to students to read and write the genres that will allow them to participate actively in science, technology and other social institutions. It focuses on the role of genre in the social construction of experience. Here we propose that through exposure and explicit teaching of the generic structure and prototypical lexico- grammatical realizations of medical abstracts Medicine students are able to produce abstracts in English that will allow them to participate in the medical scientific community in the future.
Key words: Medical abstracts- written production in English- Genre- SFL

1. Introduction

This paper presents a pedagogic proposal for writing medical abstracts in English using Genre- based Pedagogy (Christie and Martin, 1997; Dreyfus et al., 2016; Martin and Rose, 2008; Rothery, 1996) with third year students of the Medicine career at Universidad Católica de Cuyo. Students need to participate in contexts where they are allowed to contribute to the evolution of knowledge by transforming what they have learned or challenging current practices and developing new ways of using language in specialized contexts (Schleppegrell and Colombi, 2008). To be prepared for this, advanced literacy skills are required.

Literacy should be considered a process of construction of meanings that evolve continuously in a society and in the individual. It is a means of social action where both language and context co-participate in construing meanings. This concept has implications for pedagogical practices since, through control of advanced literacy skills, students may become involved in areas of their interest by supporting or resisting the current social order (Schleppegrell and Colombi, 2). Also a pedagogical focus that develops advanced literacy makes explicit what needs to be taught and learned because it emphasizes the importance of explicit instruction of academic practices valued by discourse communities in culturally appropriate contexts for teacher- student interaction.

Here we propose that, through exposure and explicit teaching of the generic structure and prototypical lexico- grammatical realizations of medical abstracts, Medicine students are able

to produce abstracts in English that will allow them to participate in the medical scientific community in the future. The Scaffolding Literacy in Academic and tertiary Environments (SLATE) project (Dreyfus, Humphrey, Mahboob & Martin, 2016) and the Generic Structural Potential of the Geography Abstract proposed by Soliveres (2010) provided the background and tools to implement our proposal in the context of the Medicine career at university.

2. Theoretical framework

Advanced literacy points out the group of notions and strategies required to participate in the discursive culture of the disciplines, as well as the activities of reading and writing necessary to learn at university (Carlino, 3). The ways of reading and writing differ according to the field of study and they can only be learned within the framework of each discipline because the disciplines are conceptual, rhetorical and discursive fields in themselves. The type of texts, the topics, the purposes, the recipients and the contexts vary in each discipline and students need to learn about them. Taking this into account, we consider that Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) is the most adequate linguistic framework to analyze language in context because it conceives language as functional with respect to its meaning potential and the interpretations of the texts, system and elements of the linguistic structures (Halliday & Matthiessen, 22). Within a functional view, a language is interpreted as a system of meanings accompanied by the ways through which these meanings can be realized. SFL proposes a way to identify the grammatical features that make a particular text the type it is, i.e. the relation of the linguistic options and the situational contexts in which they are used can be explained in functional terms. It provides the tools to analyze the ways in which language builds social and cultural contexts showing how a text means through the grammatical and lexical choices that realize them.

SFL interprets the context of culture through the notion of *genre*. Genres are staged activities with a purpose which are functional to reach cultural purposes (Martin & Rose, 16). Each culture has genres which are realized through the variables of *register*, recognized as significant and appropriate to reach social purposes. The explicit teaching of the features of higher education genres can give students control over the most relevant discourses of science and society, and this can be achievable through Genre- based pedagogy.

Genre- based pedagogy (Christie & Martin, 1997; Dreyfus et al., 2016; Martin & Rose, 2008; Rothery, 1996) adopts an explicit approach to literacy with the purpose of providing equal opportunities to all students to read and write the genres that allow them to participate actively in science, technology and other social institutions. To achieve such goal it is vital to be explicit in the ways a language works to make meaning, engaging students and teachers

in their roles, putting emphasis on the content, structure and sequence of the students' stages to become literate in an educational or professional context. This pedagogy focuses on the role of genre in the social construction of experience, which suggests that the educational processes are essential for the construction of relevant social positioning in technical and professional contexts. Some of the benefits of genre pedagogy are that it is explicit, systematic, needs-based, supportive, empowering, critical and consciousness-raising (Hyland, 2004).

The SLATE project (Dreyfus et al., 1), which provided tools for our proposal, provided online genre-based embedded language and literacy support for students at a Hong Kong university to help them develop their proficiency in academic English. As described by the project designers, the Teaching Learning Cycle (TLC) (Rothery, 9) was adopted. It consists of three steps, namely the *deconstruction* of a sample text of the genre at issue, the *joint construction* of a new text and the *independent construction* of an instance of the target text. The first step, *deconstruction,* involves questioning the students about their prior knowledge of the genre at issue so as to take into account their starting point in relation to the genre and the disciplinary knowledge. It also implies analyzing the structure and linguistic features of the target genre. At this stage, building field knowledge, i.e. knowledge about the theme students will write about, is vital. This is achieved by providing students with a range of authentic texts to read and by resorting to the knowledge built in other subjects of the career. The second step, *joint construction*, consists of generating a new text in collaboration with an expert writer, in this case the teacher, who provides step-by-step guidance on the three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal and textual). Finally, the *negotiated independent construction* step involves students producing a novel text considering the features of the target genre already analyzed, and the teachers providing iterative cycles of asynchronous feedback to help students improve their texts. Such top- down methodology allows for reflection upon generic features through slow scaffolding into the target texts.

With this purpose in mind, we find the 3x3 toolbox (Humphrey, Martin, Dreyfus & Mahboob, 109) used by the SLATE project designers very useful. This toolkit is called 3x3 because it forms a nine-square matrix: Features at three different levels of language (genre and register –whole text-, discourse semantic –phase/paragraph-, and lexicogrammar –clause, group and word-) intersect with features of language from each of the three metafunctions (ideational, interpersonal and textual).This tool makes visible the metafunctional organization of language but simplifies SFL's model of stratification and rank as three levels of text.

The type of feedback provided during the *independent construction* of the text and reconstruction was adapted from Dreyfus et al. (2016) who describe three stages of

feedback: *feedback preview* (greeting the student, making a positive comment and outlining the focus of the feedback provided), *feedback* (identifying specific issues) and *feedback review* (providing a brief recap of the support given and encouraging comments). For the *feedback* stage, an adaptation of Ellis (2009) corrective feedback strategies was adopted. The strategies that were favored were metalinguistic corrective feedback and direct corrective feedback. The first consists of giving the students metalinguistic clues by using error codes or by providing brief grammatical descriptions to help them understand the nature of the problem. The second strategy involves the teacher giving the correct form.

3. The Medical Abstracts

According to Martin and Rose's taxonomy (198), the Research Article is a retrospective procedural recount. It is concerned with applied scientific knowledge, adding to or modifying the field's existing knowledge. It is divided into stages: Abstract, Introduction, Methodology, Results and Discussion.

The abstract is an autonomous text that satisfies the needs of the specialist reader in the sense that it summarizes the research purpose, methodology, results and implications of the article, and generates interest in the topic and introduces the specialized terminology and concepts of the article (Salager-Meyer, 135). Abstracts are published in journals, which are considered highly specialized publications addressed to specialists. They are characterized by complex lexis and syntactic constructions, making them more difficult to understand for non- specialists.

Medical abstracts can be classified according to the type of research they report (Salager-Meyer, 99):

- *Research "Original" Articles*: *Clinical, Basic, Operational, Epidemiological*. They inform about novel findings concerning diseases, drug trials, experiments in animals or in vitro. *Primary Research.*
- *Case Reports*: They inform about clinical observations of one or few cases, with an educational value. *Primary Research.*
- *Reviews*: *Clinical, Basic, Epidemiological.* They summarize knowledge of a specific area of study, they present the state of the art and analyze concepts and experiences critically. *Secondary Research.*

For the purpose of our pedagogic genre- based proposal, we find Soliveres' model of the Generic Structural Potential of Abstracts (58) adequate to describe the generic structure of medical abstracts in English. We consider it highly applicable to many disciplines. It specifies

the rhetorical function of each constituent into sub- constituents, making it more accessible to students as a tool for analysis.

The following chart shows the Generic Structural Potential of Abstracts in English, displaying the total structural variation available in the genre (Soliveres, M. A., 62).

Constituent 1	**Previous Information**
Sub-constituent 1	Generalization about phenomenon or disciplinary area
and/or	
Sub-constituent 2	Indication of the validity of a phenomenon or disciplinary area
and/or	
Sub-constituent 3	Indication of a gap with respect to previous studies
and/or	
Sub-constituent 4	Indication of a cause and/or effect of the phenomenon under study
Constituent 2	**Research Announcement**
Sub-constituent 1	Description of the main activity and or purpose
or	
Sub-constituent 2	Presentation of the structure of the article
or	
Sub-constituent 2	Description of analysis procedure
Constituent 3	**Methodology**
Sub-constituent 1	Information about methodological tools (and purpose of their application)
Constituent 4	**Results and Discussion**
Sub-constituent 1	Presentation of the discovery based on data, changes in time, comparisons or relation among variables
and/or	
Sub-constituent 2	Explanation of the discovery
and/or	
Sub-constituent 3	Comparison of the discovery with the literature
and/or	
Sub-constituent 4	Evaluation of the discovery based on hypotheses
and/or	
Sub-constituent 5	Present or future implications of the discovery
Constituent 5	**Conclusions**

Fig.1. Generic Structural Potential of Abstracts in English (Soliveres 58)

4. The pedagogic proposal

Medicine students' curriculum at Universidad Católica de Cuyo include English I, II and III as annual subjects in the first three years of the career, with an 80 (eighty)-minute class per week each. The first two subjects are devoted to the comprehension of specialized texts in English, including research articles and abstracts. English III is devoted to writing medical abstracts in English.

Third year students are familiarized with the generic structure and prototypical lexico-grammatical realizations of medical abstracts. The goal of English III is to help them produce acceptable medical abstracts in English. In order to do this, we follow the Teaching Learning Cycle (TLC) stages. In the *deconstruction stage* different abstracts are analyzed and students produce charts with prototypical lexico- grammatical realizations for each constituent in class. Below (Figure 2) we display an example of a chart produced in class after analyzing the linguistic realizations of 15 abstracts read in the course:

Constituent	**Verb Tenses/ Voice**	**Typical Phrases**	**Logical Connectors**
1. Previous Information	Simple Pesent Past in the Present/ Active and passive voice	*Previous studies…* *The literature…. The prevalence of …. in …. has increased over the last decades…* *…. was detected* *the main cause of hospitalization….* *….was the need for….* *….compared to ……..* *….had an identifiable condition….* *…….is/are the most frequent……* *….is required to….* *Given an observed……* *Lexical items*	*But* *However (gap)*
2. Research Announcement	Simple Present/ Active and passive voice	*This paper/ Here…* *In this article…* *This research… In the present article we describe…* *We report the case of…* *We conducted a …. study….* *We investigated…* *In this investigation we propose…* *The aim/ purpose/ objective of….is to… The objective of the present study/report/project /investigation/research is/was:* *to compare/to test/to study/to demonstrate/to show/to probe/to expose/ to develop a method …/* *to describe/ to document, etc.* *…. cases of …. are described here.* *this study was designed to….* *The mechanisms of …. are discussed here.*	*Besides* *Also (addition)*

3. Methodology	Simple Past Simple Present/ Active and passive voice	*By…ing* *We determined that… We conducted a … study – We studied…. We analyzed…* *We took a sample of … people.* *We considered as independent/dependent variables…* *We performed…* *We resected…* *We found…. – We found that….* *We checked…* *We tested…* *The patient underwent…..* *He received…* *He developed was/were taken/ studied/isolated/treated/measured/analized/as sessed/evaluated/seen/followed up/hospitalized for/admitted for/selected/divided/resected/ operated, etc.* *This study was conducted with a sample of…* *After pathological confirmation…review was undertaken of the …. patients…* *Registry and practitioner database at …. for patients with…. detected by….* *Statistical analysis was performed using…….* *The analysis included (children) between …. and … years old.* *Lexical items (sample, tools, groups, placebo, trial, etc.)*	*In addition (addition)* *First, then, next, finally (sequence)*
4. Results and Discussion	Simple Past Simple Present Modalizing structures/ Active and passive voice	*Findings…* *Our results…* *The clinical findings were…* *Statistical significant differences were found.* *Statistically important abnormalities are summarized…* *Lexical items*	*As a result, consequently, for this reason, thus*
5. Conclusion	Simple Present Modalizing Structures/ Active and passive voice	*As a conclusion…* *In summary…* *In conclusion* *In summary* *As a result of our investigation…* *The main findings of this study are…* *This investigation highlights…* *Further research is needed…* *A more comprehensive investigation is needed in order to….* *We conclude that…- To conclude….* *We are thus able to confirm that….* *This study supports….* *Our findings support/suggest/highlight, etc.*	

Fig.2. Linguistic realizations of 15 abstracts read in the course.

In addition, teachers provide students with the Generic Structural Potential of abstracts displayed in Figure 1 and the 3x3 toolkit adapted for medical abstracts, as shown below (Figure 3):

Metafunction	Whole texts- Social activity:	Phase- Discourse semantics	Clause/ sentence- grammar and expressions
Field	Do the constituents build knowledge relevant to the research process?	Is information developed across phases (e.g. general/specific, point/elaboration, evidence/interpretation, claim/evaluation)?	Do noun groups effectively describe and classify specialized terms?
Tenor	Does the text amplify, justify, reinforce, acknowledge experts in the field, previous research, etc.?	Does the writer develop points and guide the reader towards a preferred position?	Are phrases like "it is clear that" or "there is a need for" rather than "I think" or "you should" used to negotiate opinions and recommendations?
Mode	Is the research process explained across the constituents of the abstract?	Does the information flow from topic sentences to expanded concrete terms in subsequent sentences?	Is nominalization used to express processes and nouns rather than verbs?

Fig. 3. Adapted from table 8.4, Dreyfus et al., 2016, p. 219

In the *joint construction stage*, students are given a primary or secondary research article to read, analyze and, then, write an acceptable abstract for such paper in groups using the tools provided. Finally, in the *independent construction stage,* they have to produce an abstract individually for a given paper. This process is carried out both face-to-face in class and with online asynchronous support.

Once the abstract has been produced, feedback is given in three stages: *feedback preview* (making a positive comment of the production and outlining the focus of the feedback provided), *feedback* (identifying specific issues that need improvement) and *feedback review* (providing a brief recap of the support given and encouraging comments). For the *feedback* stage, metalinguistic corrective feedback and direct corrective feedback is used, depending on the needs of each production.

This process is carried out throughout the whole subject. In the first part of the subject, from March to May, students are asked to produce *structured abstracts* for original abstracts (primary research). Next, from June to July, they produce *descriptive abstracts* for case

reports (primary research). Finally, from August to October they write *informative abstracts* for reviews (secondary research). In this way, Medicine students are exposed to the main research article types available in Medical Journals and they are familiar with the generic features of the main medical abstract types.

5. Final Comments

Based on the analysis of the productions of the three types of medical abstracts revised in the English III subject at university, we can conclude that Genre-based literacy pedagogy helped students become aware and gradually gain control over the production of abstracts in English they need to participate in their discourse community. Using a top- down approach to teaching and feedback, as suggested by the SLATE project methodology, proved to be efficient and encouraging to students since they were able to improve their texts at clause/ sentence level considering their effect at phase and whole text levels. The Generic Structural Potential model for abstracts used to analyze and produce medical abstracts provided students with an effective tool to produce their abstracts following the research stages adequately.

Using the tools and methodology proposed by the SLATE project designers to teach medicine students write medical abstracts was effective, as it allowed us to work with students with limited English language proficiency through slow scaffolding into a more Medicine- specific understanding of English: they had the chance to read, analyze and write research articles and abstracts and familiarize with the linguistic resources used in such genres.

The revisions made by students after feedback showed that they had a clear idea of what was expected, even though they didn´t result in error free language. However, students' final versions of their abstracts evidenced a clear organization of texts, which resulted in acceptable samples of their discipline genre.

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University Classroom Interaction and Power Management through Intonational Choices

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Abstract

This research project seeks to analyse and describe how discourse power is transmitted through intonation in EFL classrooms, at university level. A corpus-based two-tiered acoustic-discourse analysis is conducted in order to determine how power is transmitted, preserved and negotiated in EFL classroom settings, considering three perspectives: (1) Teacher talk, (2) Student talk, and (3) Teacher-Student interaction. In traditional university lectures, teachers tend to bear a dominant role which is not only expressed in the intensity and duration of their speaking turns, but also in the intonational curves, or tones, and pitch height with which they choose to convey their messages (Brazil, [1985]/1997). In turn, students tend to hold a non-dominant role which is evident in their relatively short contributions, as well as in tone and pitch height selection. More dynamic classroom models allow for richer interaction among EFL classroom participants, which, in turn may contribute to more fruitful interpersonal relationships and significant knowledge construction at university levels.
Key words: Classroom Interaction - Intonation - Power Management- Teacher and Student Talk

1. Introduction

Power is a very broad concept and one may think it refers basically to physical force or political power, but in actual fact all human interaction is based on power relationships. From parents to children, from bosses to employees, from doctors to patients and from teachers to students, power is always there to be established, negotiated, ascribed and removed (Foucault, 1972; Fairclough, 2003; van Dijk, 1993). And power permeates communication in many ways. Not only in body language, but also in the words we choose to use, and the way we utter them (i.e. *what* we say, *how* we say it and how we *move* it). This presentation is precisely about the way in which intonation (acoustically conceived as an intimate interrelationship of F0, Intensity and duration) is used to transmit power in EFL university classroom communication.

In classroom context, there are clearly two groups of participants: the students, on the one hand and the teachers, on the other. Traditionally, and for the sake of institutional organisation and established socio-cultural rules, teachers have adopted a dominant role in the classroom to not only organize the overall speech event, but also to show their authority granted by the subject-matter knowledge and their socio-institutional status. In turn, students are traditionally expected to assume a non-dominant role subordinated to that of the teachers, and derived mainly from institutionalised participants´ roles and the conception of students as “tabula rasa” with no significant voice to be raised, and no relevant knowledge to be shared or shown.

Even if constructivist and cognitive theories show that in fact (1) it is students who hold the most relevant power in class as without them a class would not exist (Lakoff 292), and that students do bring a wide array of prior academic and personal knowledge and experience to our classrooms, the traditional communication model still pervades EFL university classrooms in my country. Instruction, in this context, is based on a Sender a Message and an Addressee, following the traditional monologic model of communication. In this scenario, the teacher holds the knowledge to be communicated in a one-direction message to students, who are conceived as mere passive addressees. There are exceptions, of course, to this generality, whereby more dialogic forms of communication take place, hence increasing interaction and collaborative knowledge construction between students or students and teachers.

One of the main reasons to explain why this traditional model of communication prevails may be attributed to the fact that Power, in class, is shared and agreed upon in the institutional environment where each participant is socially and culturally expected to act in a certain manner, not for the sake of domination in itself, but in order to get things done. As Torreblanca also puts it

> Es un poder que está en relación con el concepto de autoridad o poder legítimo. Esta autoridad, que en el aula poseen los profesores, emana de un mayor conocimiento de la materia y del cumplimiento de una serie de reglas de juego (sociales, culturales e institucionales) que, a la postre, favorecerán al conjunto de los alumnos (y al proceso de aprendizaje) (Torreblanca 60) (parenthetical explanations are mine).

Although this research Project advocates for a more dialogic communication based on less dominance on teachers and more solidarity between teachers and students at university levels, in order to strengthen their interpersonal relationships as fundamental conditions to significant knowledge construction, it cannot be denied that teachers still need to assume the "contextually dominant" role of lesson organisers, guides and facilitators in a constructivist environment and this means still adopting certain intonational features that signal this dominance at prosodic level.

2. Teacher Talk, Student Talk & Classroom Interation

Much has been said about the fact that *Teacher Talk* serves at least three functions in class. It is the subject the students are learning, it is the language used in classroom to communicate and it is a model for students to imitate (Torreblanca 55). It is also a modified discourse similar to mother talk or caretaker speech, because teachers simplify their speech to make it more comprehensible to their students and to facilitate acquisition.

Krashen describes Teacher Talk within the *Input Hypothesis*. In this respect, Xiao-yan explains that

> Input plays a critical role in language learning. There is no learning without input. The language used by the teacher affects the language produced by the learners, the interaction generated, and hence the kind of learning that takes place. The problem is what type and how much of input is appropriate and useful for language learners in classrooms. In Krashen's view, learning only takes place by means of a learner's access to comprehensible input, that´s why teacher need to adapt their classroom talk. Humans acquire language in only one way — by understanding messages or by receiving comprehensible input (24).

Teacher Talk, then, undergoes various modifications at lexical, syntactical, morphological and phonological levels to facilitate processing and comprehension by students. Regarding phonological changes, the following are the most typically mentioned in the literature:

- Longer speaking turns by teachers
- Vowel lengthening for the sake of emphasis or contrast
- Lower speech rate or tempo
- Higher Intensity (intensity in acoustic terms)
- Exaggerated pronunciation and articulation
- Longer and more frequent pauses
- Use of "dominant tones" (pitch movement) in tandem with high pitch height (High Key)
- Reduced use of weak forms in structural words /him/ instead of /Im/
- More empty pauses located at syntactical boundaries or before and after lexical elements the teacher wishes to highlight
- Excessive use of prominent words resulting both from emphasis and from the presence of more pauses

Regarding *Student Talk*, references in the literature are not as well described as those for Teacher Talk. However, as both Teacher and Student Talk are the building blocks of Classroom Interaction among participants that have institutionally and culturally established roles, a series of prosodic characteristics in Student Talk can be inferred from this discourse setting. In general, Student Talk in EFL classrooms is characterised by:

- Shorter speaking turns (resulting form the IRE traditional exchange category)
- Vowel lengthening as a result of hesitations
- Little use of weak forms in structural words because of reduced foreign language fluency
- Lower speech rate or tempo because of hesitations

- Lower Intensity (intensity in acoustic terms) resulting from non-dominant role
- Longer and more frequent filled pauses that coincide with vowel lengthening
- Use of “non-dominant tones” (pitch movement) in tandem with low pitch height (Low Key)
- Excessive use of prominent words resulting both from hesitations and from the presence of more pauses

Student Talk is described in terms of the *Output Hypothesis* by Swain, and in relation to this, Swain explains that “they (students) are not pushed to their output” (249), meaning that students are not generally given adequate opportunities to use the foreign language in class.

Classroom interaction is the result of Teacher Talk and Student Talk, which -in classroom settings- is basically organised following the IRF structure, or triadic exchage (“Initiation” by teacher, “Response” by students-“Feedback”, by teacher), as described in Sinclair and Coulthard (33). This means that L2 acquisition relies both on input and output. According to Keith Johnson the Interaction Hypothesis is based on the premise that acquisition occurs when learners acquire the language by talking to other speakers (95).

Classroom discourse is unique in its discourse characteristics, due to the unequal power relationships between teachers and students. Teachers tend to control the lesson, dominate in interactions allocate speaking tursn and initiate and finish triadic exchanges, among others.

3. Methodology and Results

In order to analyse how intonational choices signal power allocation and distribution in classroom interation, a corpus-based analysis was conducted to analyse 5 authentic EFL university level lessons (B2 level) recorded on an anonymous basis in institutional university contexts in Argentina during the months of September and October 2015. The material, which contained both Teacher Talk and Student Talk, and interaction among them, was orthographically transcribed, acoustically anaysed with Speechanalyzer 3.1, and then annotated with prosodic features following Brazil´s 1997 discourse intonation annotation system, as required by discourse analysis of intonation.

Below is a list of intonational variables analysed and results obtained not only in Teacher Talk but also in Student Talk, and their Interaction, especially in IRE/IRF sequences. Intra-individual acoustic analysis was also conducted to verify prosodic variations between classroom talk and colloquial speech, outside classroom settings. Results and discussion are presented in the following sections:

1. **Turn duration, Speed/Tempo and Segmental Duration:** Time as a variable can be measured in various ways in classroom interaction. It can first be analysed in terms of (1) turn duration by teachers and students, as a floor-keeping device of dominance or a floor-yielding cue of non-dominance (2) by the number of syllables uttered per minute, also known as *tempo* or speaking speed in perceptive terms which in general is low in the case of teachers for the sake of intelligibility and also low in the case of students but because of doubt or hesitation, and (3) considering segmental duration of vowels to trace how vowel lengthening is linked to emphasis and clarity in the case of teachers, or to hesitation in the case of students. Because speed is reduced both in teachers´ and students´ talk due to pedagogical and contextual constraints, there are regular instances of vowel lengthening (acoustic increase in duration) in the sample, for the sake of emphasis (in the case of teachers) and hesitation (in the case of students). In turn, at macro-analysis level, it is clear to observe longer speaking turns by teachers, meaning relatively shorter speaking turns for students, with dominance variable being clearly in favour of the teacher in this discourse-prosodic parameter. Teacher talk generally represents 60-70% of all the language spoken in class (Torreblanca 73), with its direct positive and negative implications, and these reference values are also confirmed in the corpus-based study here. On the one hand, longer teacher turns mean longer exposure to the model to be imitated (Input Hypothesis), but on the other hand, it means students significantly shorter speaking turns (30-40%), which results in less practice opportunities for students, as observed in the sample. Outside classroom setting, data shows that turn duration acquires different characteristics among teachers, and among students. Out-of-classroom interaction is more democratic, in a way and dominant-non-dominant roles become blurred as speakers statuses are similar.
2. **Intensity:** Teacher Talk, as analysed in the classroom sample, is relatively louder than the Intensity they would normally use in daily talk and with respect to those of students. The acoustic analysis shows that a rise in decibels also tends to be associated with an F0 rise, which, in terms of Brazil would be equivalent to High Key [HK] (40). Microintonational correlates of F0, intensity and duration are interrelated to obtain a certain discourse meaning. In classroom interaction, as the teacher normally bears a dominant role, even in more dialogic lessons, they tend to use a level of intensity which is higher than their average, as observed in the intra-participant acoustic analysis of intensity. Here again, dominance and non-politeness (in terms of Lakoff, seems to prevail in Teacher Talk, in clear contrast with that of students, who generally use lower intensities, and Mid or Low Key as clear discourse signals of non-dominance (.

3. **F0 Height and Movement (Key and Tone Selection):** Here again, as acoustic results show, the organizational structure of the lesson (Sinclair and Coulthard 12-14) is in hands of the teachers (both in traditional and in more interactive dialogic classroom models), and following their dominant role and institutional authority they decide when and how to pass from one transaction to another, following their lesson organisation. Note that this organisational function is held by teachers both in traditionally dominant roles and in facilitator/guidance roles, because the classroom dynamics is still in their hands, in order to achieve pedagogic objectives. In the acoustic-discourse analysis attention was paid to (1) the prosodic cues used by teachers to signal transaction transition, such as high key [HK] and pause at the beginning and low termination [LT] at the end of transactions (as described for example in Mc Carthy, (112-113). Regarding tone selection, IRF exchanges were analysed in order to pay attention to (2) the alleged use of final rising intonation in Teacher talk that resembles a comprehension check (Chaudron 71) and is in line with what Brazil describes as the typical intonation used in Making-Sure questions (as opposed to Finding-Out questions with falling intonation), as well as (3) hesitant intonation in the case of students´ response moves signalled by level tones and rising tones which seem to show insecurity and ask for confirmation. Finally, (4) attention was paid to tone selection in the Evaluation or Feedback move which, according to the literature is associated with high fall tone choices, and the same trend was observed in this sample of Teacher Talk.
4. **Pauses:** Literature indicates that in classroom communication there are considerably much more pauses than in colloquial conversation both in the case of teachers and in the case of students, which reduces overall speaking speed as indicated above. This is probably associated with pedagogical needs, such as emphasis, or interest in increasing intelligibility on the part of the Teacher and aiding learners' comprehension and processing of specific words. Pauses, in Teacher Talk, as observed in the sample, are normally placed at syntactic boundaries, or before and after significant language elements, to emphasize and highlight them. In the case of Student Talk, pauses are generally associated with other discourse requirements, mainly hesitations and doubts. In the latter, unlike the former, pauses are observed to be filled and accompanied with vowel lengthening.
5. **Prominences:** Teachers, in their dominant role, tend to allocate more prominences in their utterances if compared with their colloquial speech. This is unnatural when compared to real communication intonation (Jones, 2009: 4) and leads to more tone units per time unit and more tones and pitch height selections. Acoustically, prominences entail an increase in F0, duration and intensity, for the sake of highlighting new

information, or indicating contrast or emphasis. Since Classroom Communication seems to be filled with pauses and slowed-down interventions both by teachers (for the sake of repetition, clarity and emphasis) and by students (because of hesitations and uncertainty), the resulting relatively shorter tone units (in comparison with longer tone units in ordinary speech) have only one or two words on which to ascribe prominences, and this is the case even of structural words (both in teacher and student talk), which, in normal speech are non-prominent because of vowel reduction (gradation or use of weak forms), are strongly articulated in classroom interaction, as observed in the sample. For this reason, on many instances, Classroom Talk has been described as having a "funny" intonation (*cantinela*, in Spanish) which is probably first caused by the unusually high number of prominent syllables in small segments, which brings about more tone units, more tones and more pitch height selections. This may account for the "staccato rhythm" of chorus replies by students or teachers when they explain some concepts repeatedly.

4. Conclusions

The preceding findings provide acoustic verification for most of the descriptive assumptions found in the literature, regarding the prosodic choices and adjustments found in Teacher Talk, Student Talk and Classroom Interaction. Not many references have been found regarding Student Talk prosody, but the analysis here, explains how dominant-non dominant roles interact in classroom communication, especially in traditional settings where the IRF exchange model prevails.

In those lessons where more feedback or follow-up is provided by teachers in the third part of the triadic exchanges, the students have more speaking time available and this entitles them with more speaking opportunities which becomes evident in the prosodic choices they make. They seem to overcome the fear of making mistakes and being admonished, and their intonational choices are not as hesitant as in traditional IRE settings.

The findings are taken from a relatively small corpus, hence, it is not possible, at this stage, to draw general conclusions from them, but they serve to confirm observations made in the literature. Various prosodic features interact simultaneously in spoken language, and classroom interaction is no exception. Turn duration, speed/tempo, segmental duration, intensity variations, F0 height and movements, pauses and prominences all interact in Teacher´s and Student´s Talk to build a delicate balance of power and solidarity in classroom interaction.

Prosodic selections in classroom interaction do not only depend on our anatomic characteristics, but they are especially regulated by institutional roles and subject matter knowledge. It would appear that most teachers do not really make conscious choices in this

respect, and that the mostly repeat patterns learned in their own experiences as students. This is the reason why the traditional model of classroom interaction still appears to pervade most of university EFL lessons in Argentina.

By virtue of this traditional model, teachers tend to dwell in the dominant area of interaction as explained in Wubbels et al. (67-69) and sometimes fail to combine this pedagogically necessary dominance with solidarity and proximity variables, to build more democratic classroom interaction at university levels.

If teachers continue to stick to the IRE (where the final move is just unidirectional Evaluation) model and do not move to a more dynamic IRF exchanges (where Feedback means more dialogue with students) that promotes follow-up and longer and more meaningful speaking turns by students, then the development of English spoken skills in our classrooms will still be a challenging issue. Hesitant, or worse quiet students do not learn to speak if they do not get the chance to do so, and neither do they learn only by listening to their teachers, no matter how ideal the model is.

In this respect, following the traditional notion that acquisition of a skill results from productive practice of it, it follows that learners will develop the speaking skill by producing the target language more frequently, and more correctly (Chaudron 91). As Swain put it,

> One function of output is that it provides the opportunity for meaningful use of one´s linguistic resources […]. Similarly, it can be argued that one learns to speak by speaking (248).

For this reason, although for organizational and pedagogical purposes, teachers will always need to exert leadership and dominance in classroom settings (also, and of particular interest here, in their prosodic choices), I advocate for a more democratic and dialogic nature of EFL university lessons, in order to combine these necessary guidance and facilitating duties with more proximity and solidarity elements that help build more meaningful interaction between teachers and students and students among themselves.

This research project seeks to promote more meaningful interpersonal relationships in class, by using appropriate prosodic features. Many times, it is not what we say but how we say it, and this can contribute to *meaningful learning* or not. Learning practices need to be designed in order to promote students´ speaking skills at university EFL classrooms. But in order for students to overcome the fear of making mistakes when speaking in class or with other students, we, as teachers, should create appropriate learning environments to accompany and guide students in the process of knowledge construction. Prosody and intonation play a major role in affirming dominance and non-dominance in classroom settings. For this reason,

teachers need to be aware of the choices they make at this level, as they may, eventually, facilitate or hinder learning and development altogether.

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Transmedia literacy skills in students at secondary schools in San Juan

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Abstract
The technological advances produced in the last decades have changed individuals' roles as they interact with new social media, their ways of knowing, learning, and even their type of literacy. In order to approach these topics, first and fourth-year students at a secondary school in San Juan were surveyed and, after the data analysis, two students were called for an in-depth interview. The data obtained have enabled researchers to identify what students really do with technology, the ways in which they interact with it as well as significant differences according to age. Such results are an aid in posing possible innovative ways of transferring students' real-life activities to the classroom, and in making learning more authentic and significant to them.
Key words: Transmedia- Literacy- ICT- Media

1. Introduction

One of the main objectives of formal education is to create the necessary conditions to help students in the complex process of socialization become part of the society in which they live. To achieve this aim, it is imperative that school changes as society does.

Considering the impact of technology in the last decades, schools have started incorporating the use of Information and Communication Technologies (hereafter ICTs). However, the use of technologies frequently fostered at schools does not encourage students to take an active role. I think this can be attributed to the fact that we have not asked ourselves what students are really doing outside schools or whether they are acquiring new skills different from the ones promoted at schools. This paper seeks to pose such questions.

2. Theoretical Framework

2.1 The impact of technology

The technological advances produced in the last decades have firmly established digital artifacts as part of people's daily lives. Nowadays, the use of tablets, smartphones, or laptops has changed the way transactions are made, work is done, and information is made available. More significantly, there have even been transformations at social and mental levels since technologies have affected the way people communicate, interact, understand, learn, and see the world (Comba and Toledo par.2).

In addition to this, Internet users' role in the mass media has gone from being purely passive to increasingly active. As an example, it is worth highlighting the fact that in the past, people used to read newspapers online, look for information on the web, or listen to music. Today's society does not only do these activities, but they also post their comments on newspaper

articles or videos, share their posts on social networks, create and share videos, mix songs, or express their opinions and likes in many ways across Web 2.0. Considering this, it is valid to say that the impact of technology has partially removed the barriers existing between those who create content and audiences (Comba, Toledo, Carreras and Duyos sec. 1).

Taking into account different ways of knowing, Toledo et al. (3-18) state that technological advances have produced two really important changes. One of them is "the double decentralization of knowledge and the increasing use of ICTs." Knowledge has not only been decentralized from those educational institutions (schools, universities) to which it was associated, but also from the idea that books were the only reliable instrument from which people could access accurate information and learn. Such changes can be put down to the fact that new generation of teenagers have grown up surrounded by computers, videogames, cellphones, and the Internet, which have led young people to learn, know, and socialize differently from previous generations. Prensky (1) refers to these teenagers as Digital Natives and explains that they think and process information differently and have acquired new skills. Among them are the ability to multitask, manage small quantities of information efficiently and remember information visually.

2.2 New social media: Mass-media and self-media convergence

The other change Toledo et al. (3-18) talk about discusses the fact that nowadays' teenagers are users of the new social media. The term new media or new social media makes reference to a media ecology distinguished by the convergence of traditional media, such as books or the TV, and new virtual environments that promote communication, like social networks or forums. Not only this, this term refers to the publication of content created by common users as well as to different digital artifacts that are part of teenagers' daily lives (Comba et al. 2-3). Moreover, this new media is characterized by the convergence of mass-media and self-media, i.e., the meeting of information that has been produced by qualified people, like journalists and editors, and works created by others with no professional training, especially the young. Teenagers publish their Whatsapp or Snapchat conversations, their thoughts, and even photos or videos of what they do. In this way, they participate actively in Web 2.0 assuming the role of **prosumers**: both consumers and producers of content (Comba et al. 4-5). This new media is, in short, characterized by its users' interaction, participation, and production. In order to illustrate such a role, Ritzer (qtd. in Comba et al. 4) brings up the fact that whenever there is a conference, a Twitter channel is opened and the audience does not only listen or take notes, but they leave messages simultaneously.

2.3 Transmedia Literacy Skills

Considering this change in roles, several authors talk about a new form of literacy teenagers are acquiring: Transmedia literacy (Ciastellardi and Di Rosario 9). It demands new skills and competencies from digital natives, such as the ability to understand, interact, and produce throughout multiple modalities. Transmedia literacy is a model of cultural convergence in which content is part of the audience's daily lives and favours the use of different platforms where many channels offer the same content in a unique and particular way (Ciastellardi and Di Rosario 9).

As mentioned above, acquiring this form of literacy implies the development of new skills and competences, most of which are picked up by prosumers as they participate actively in Web 2.0. However, learning these skills does not result from the aims of this transmedia environment. On the contrary, their development is a side-effect of prosumers' daily activities (Scolari).Teenagers are nowadays acquiring necessary skills for life informally, outside their lessons at school. Among them, Pérez-Latorre (2) mentions: cognitive and emotional abilities, social skills, and transmedia skills.

The former are mainly developed by videogames. They have to do with solving problems, being able to adapt to new situations, making informed decisions, and planning. As for social skills, they are related to prosumers' interaction on social networks, their participation in an online community, and the virtual exchange of information. Finally, transmedia skills refer to media content management, i.e., the creation and distribution of content across digital environments.

2. 3 Prosumers on New Social Media vs. Prosumers at School

Going back to what was mentioned in 2.3, prosumers are acquiring all these abilities as they perform different activities and interact on new social media. But, what is it that they really do?

A very common activity in which they engage is called transmedia storytelling (Hernández-García 15). This consists of multiple narratives being produced around one single comment, article, videogame, story, film, etc. Thomas (42) exemplifies this by referring to **www.pottermore.com**, a website where Harry Potter fans created parallel stories, or changed the end of the original story. As a result, prosumers take already existing content and create something new out of it.

Another way in which prosumers participate on the web is by joining an online community. Frequently, groups of users sharing interests work together for a common goal, which may

involve creating content, or create a forum in order to exchange information, ask questions, give instructions on how to do something, or where to find what they need. In this way, online communities encourage the development of collective intelligence and promote participatory cultures (Hernández-García 15). Jenkins (qtd. in Ciastellardi and Di Rosario 7) defines participatory culture as "a culture with relatively low barriers to artistic creation and civic engagement, strong support for creating and sharing actions, and some type of informal mentorship whereby informed participants pass along knowledge to novices." Moreover, Jenkins adds that in a participatory culture members are socially connected with one another and care about what their partners have created. As a result, everyone feels their contributions matter (qtd. in Ciastellardi and Di Rosario 7).

At school, however, the activities prosumers are asked to do are generally unrelated to what the ones they perform and practise outside the educational institution. Students do not tend to be encouraged to put what they have learned on their own into practice or to use the skills they have acquired. More often than not, our education system sets students' interests aside and settles for students' using ICTs to only create a power point presentation instead of drawing upon their already existing knowledge and abilities. As a result, Cenejac (Sec. 1) emphasizes the need for an educational upgrading so that students find a purpose for learning what they are being taught at school.

3. Methodology

The aims of this study were to explore and describe the roles teenagers have adopted in their interaction with new social media so as to provide a broad overview of the skills and competencies they are acquiring informally.

In order to achieve these objectives, a non-experimental and sequential design was adopted. First, a survey was designed and conducted with 36 (thirty-six) students of a private secondary school in San Juan. In this educational institution, 24 (twenty-four) participants were 1st year students and 12 (twelve) of them were 4th year students.

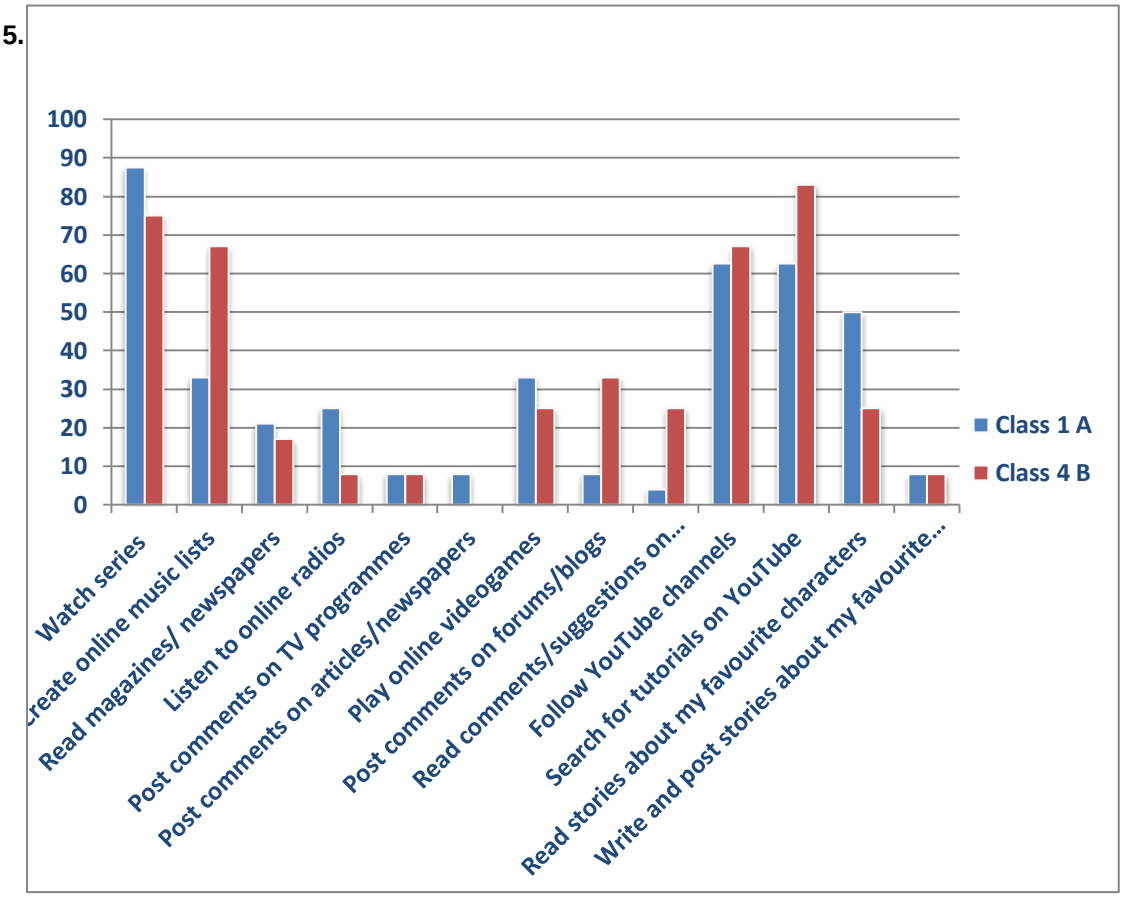
This survey consisted of 11 closed questions and 3 open ones. The former focused on the activities teenagers do on the Internet and attempted to identify whether they had a passive (consumer) or active (prosumer) role. As for the open questions, these mainly encouraged students to give their opinion about the usefulness of new social media on their performance at school.

After the survey implementation, the data obtained were organized and analysed, with the ensuing selection of two students, one from each class, to participate in an in-depth

interview. Such students were carefully chosen considering their higher participation in the creation of virtual contents.

4. Data Analysis

Graph 1 below shows that the activities carried out on the Internet by the students vary considerably according to their age. Almost 90% of first year students chose the "watch series online" option. In second place (62,5%) we can find two activities related to the use of YouTube: searching for tutorials and following YouTube channels. This way, it is possible to see that watching videos, either tutorials, series, or those published on the channels they follow, constitute the three main activities that more than 60 % of 12/13 years old participants perform.



Graph 1: Students' participation on the Internet

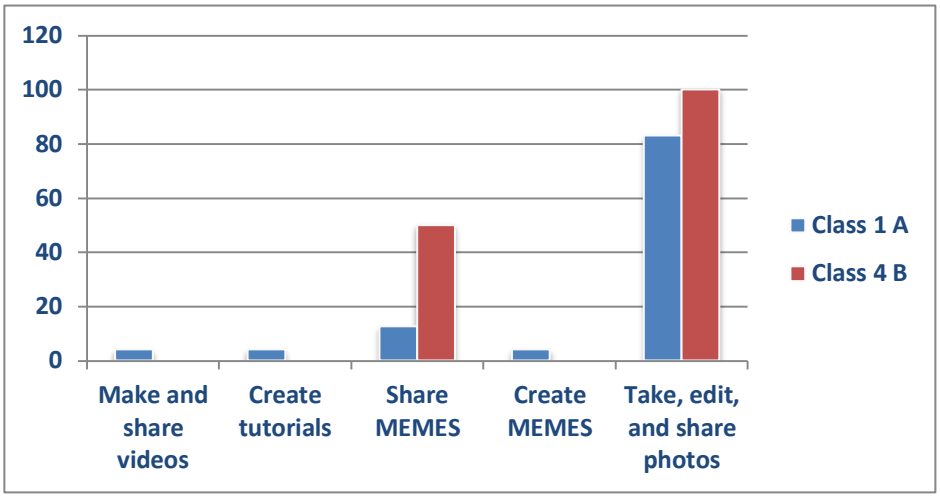
Fifty percent of First Year students read stories created by other users about fictional characters or famous people they like. The student who participated in the interview said that she usually read or publish her own stories on Wattpad and that she is a fan of different writers that publish those stories there.

As for the other options (leaving comments on websites/articles or participating in forums), they were almost not chosen by the participants, obtaining less than 10% of the votes. This is possibly due to the fact that, whenever they need to do something, they resort to YouTube tutorials.

Regarding Fourth Year students, the activity that more than 80% of students carry out regularly is searching for tutorials on YouTube. The other three commonly chosen activities are watching series on the Internet, creating their own online music playlists and following YouTube channels. In this way they are similar to the lower age participants in that the activities they both do more frequently involve the use of videos, more specifically videos from YouTube. These activities are followed by others that were significantly less chosen, like engaging in blogs leaving comments or visiting forums to read comments and suggestions. Finally, none of them comment articles published on the Internet.

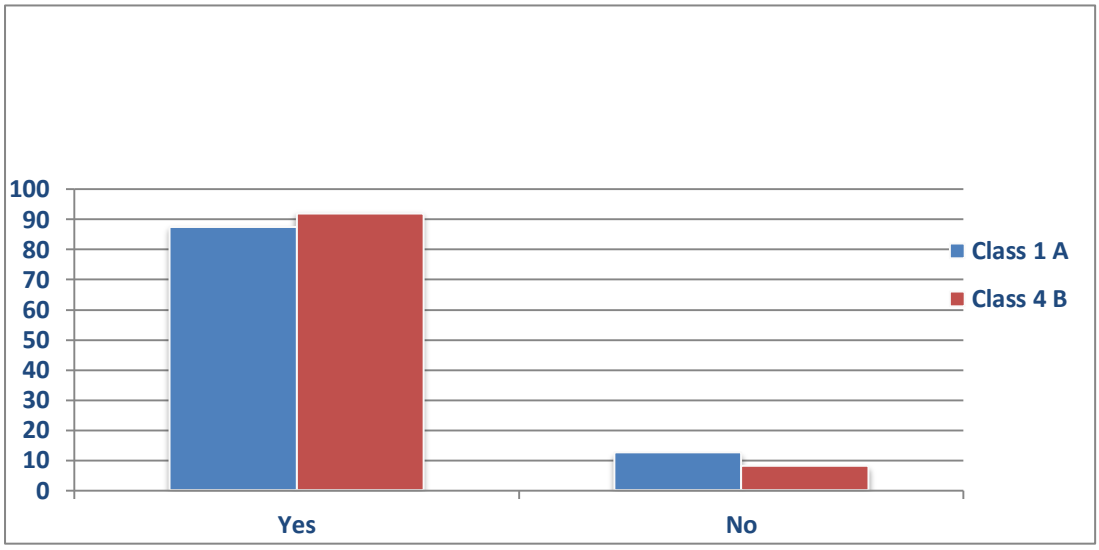
As a result, it is possible to infer that most teenagers in San Juan do not have a very active role on the Internet but, instead, tend to resort to it for help or fun as consumers. As we can see, the options with higher percentages refer to activities involving a passive role: listening to music, watching series, among others. However, those requiring greater participation or creation of contents are among the lowest percentages.

Graph 2 portrays the activities performed by the youths related to the creation and distribution of digital contents on the Internet. It is noteworthy that the *take, edit and share photos* option was both groups' most chosen alternative. The second most elected alternative by both groups is sharing MEMES. However, in this case the percentage difference between each group is higher, reaching almost 40% given 50% of Fourth Year students and a little more than 10% of First Year students chose this option.
Another interesting result portrayed by the chart is that Fourth Year students didn't choose any other activities than the first two, while First Year students covered all the options. This leads us to think that the younger adolescents are, the more variety of contents they create. That is to say the younger generations are adopting a much more active role and they are becoming prosumers of the Internet.



Graph. 2. Content production and distribution

Graph 3 shows the contrasts between the number of participants that confirmed they learnt through the use of social networks, videogames, and the Internet with those that did not. The result is highly remarkable since the contrast established between the two options is significantly large, with differences going beyond 50%. Approximately 90% of First year students and more than 90% of Fourth year participants confirmed they learnt, whereas a little bit less than 10% of younger students and 8% of those belonging to the oriented cycle answered they did not.



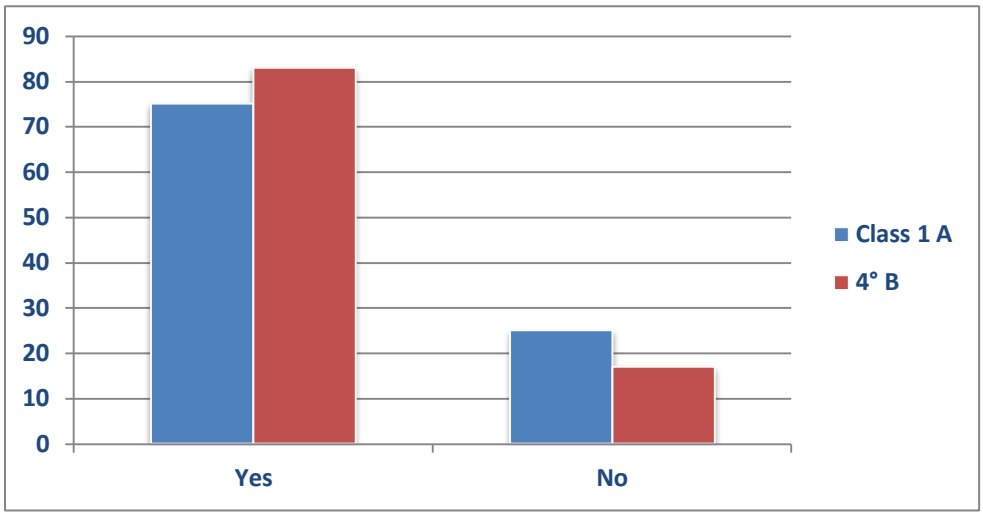
Graph 3. Do you think you learn from videogames, social networks, and the Internet?

For those who answered positively, the survey encouraged them to explain what they had learnt. The answers were varied: Thirty three percent of First Year students said they had learnt to inform themselves correctly though the Internet as they referred to newspapers or magazines they visit to read about breaking news or topics they like. 24% expressed the

Internet had helped them restrict the search when they needed to obtain specific information about a topic, so their efficiency is higher when it comes to, for example, solving school assignments or looking up information about movie characters. Also, 19% of students mentioned the importance that tutorials hold as they teach them to solve real-life, everyday problems, and explained they watch them every time they don't know how to use their computers, the Internet, videogames or a social network. One student that highlighted the usefulness of the Internet by saying it helped him know *"how to build things"* could be included among this percentage as well. Other participants indicated that the Internet had been useful to them to solve mainly school problems: Learning about some history and biology topics, or carrying out practical class works for different subjects. The social aspect was also taken into account in their answers. Some students argued that thanks to the Internet they had learnt to relate themselves to people from both the real and the virtual world, and 5% explained they had raised awareness of the perils involved when speaking to or meeting someone unknown. Finally, one First Year student gave quite an original answer as he explained what he had learnt through different videogames: *"In random games: to do my best to win". In racing games: how to modify and drive cars."* etcetera.

Similarly, the Fourth Year students' answers also made reference to school, social and practical dimensions. 36% explained that, through tutorials and informative videos, they had learnt how to inform themselves and get rid of doubts about different topics covered at school. Another 36% claimed that the Internet had enabled them to understand how to restrict online searches and thereby efficiently select the information they needed for school. Some students also said they had learnt to write summaries. However, 9% of them explained that reading books or watching films for school is not necessary. According to them finding and reading a summary from the Internet is enough. This leads us to reconsider the value of the activities we offer to our students as well as to rethink the ways in which we incorporate ICTs inside and outside the classroom. As regards the social aspect, 18% of students indicated that the Internet had encouraged them to relate to other people. Finally, only 9% mentioned they had learnt to carry out practical things through the global net.

The results obtained through these questions show that the use that younger students make of the Internet is much wider than the use made by Fourth Year students, which is basically social and school driven. The data derived from Graph 3 are similar to those in Graph 2 in that they report a larger Internet activity on the part of First year students.



Graph 4. Has everything you have learnt been useful to you for school?

Chart 4 is derived from the question *"Has everything you learnt (through videogames, the Internet, and social network) been useful to you for school?"* Just like in chart 3, the quantity of affirmative answers outnumbers the negative ones in both groups. However, it is important to highlight that, in this case, the percentage of Fourth year students (83%) who confirmed what they learnt has been useful to them for school was higher than the one representing First year teenagers (75%).

Those who chose the first option (***yes***), also had to answer how everything they had learnt outside school had been useful to them. Most First Year students claimed with what they had learnt, they had been able to solve problems or to carry out practical class works. Another 38% mentioned that the Internet was useful to clarify doubts, understand topics that were unclear, or study. That is to say less than 40% of students use the Internet to study without being asked by the teacher. Finally, only 6% claimed it had been useful to perform manual activities, such as musical instruments fabrication.

As regards the answers provided by the Fourth Year participants, 70% highlighted its usefulness when it comes to searching for information that allows them to carry out practical class works. Only 10% find it useful for studying purposes since watching tutorials helps them understand several topics.

Out of these results we can infer First Year students mainly resort to the Internet to carry out school activities or to study on their own. Although in both cases the higher percentages of students use the Internet to search for information and thereby get work done, 38% of First Year students do these without being asked by the teacher, and only 10% of Fourth Year participants use it with such purpose.

6. Conclusions

The results of this study show a tendency among teenagers in San Juan to be consumers in Web 2.0 since most of the activities they do at home involve the assumption of a fairly passive role. As a result, it is possible to deduce that students are not fully developing the abilities necessary to acquire transmedia literacy.

Perhaps one of the reasons to account for such results is that, at schools, most of them are only asked to look for information on the Web, but they are not being encouraged to perform more challenging real-life tasks.

However, the data obtained also indicate that younger generations of students are the ones who create more content and publish/share it on the Internet. This way, it is valid to infer that adolescents in San Juan are in process of becoming prosumers and, as teachers, we must help them in that process.

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Anglicisms in *Rumbos* Magazine: Density of Use and Thematic Areas

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Abstract

This paper presents some results of the research project *Anglicismos en medios de comunicación masiva en San Juan* (CICITCA-UNSJ, 2016-2017), which studies –from a sociolinguistic perspective– the use of anglicisms in magazines and TV programmes read/watched in San Juan.
On this occasion, we will focus on the anglicisms –necessary and unnecessary- used in 32 issues of *Rumbos* magazine published in 2015. More specifically, we will refer to their frequency of use in each one of the following thematic areas: Gastronomy, Technology, Sports, Tourism, Fashion and Beauty; Films, Music and Television; and Others. In addition, the percentage of English loans used in each area was calculated. Finally, we calculated what we call the *density index of anglicisms,* which reflects the amount of English words in the issues mentioned, taking into account only the content words. Then, this index was contrasted with the one found in our previous research on Facebook anglicisms.

1. Introduction

On this occasion, we report some results of the research project *Anglicismos en medios de comunicación masiva en San Juan* (CICITCA-UNSJ, 2016-2017), where we study the use of anglicisms in the mass media available to the community of San Juan, in particular magazines and television programmes.

For this research, we adopted the sociolinguistic approach, which studies speech in correlation with its sociocultural context, within each linguistic community. According to Lastra, "Lengua, cultura y sociedad son algunos de los temas que dan origen a la trama de la sociolingüística moderna" (19). Sociolinguistics has three main lines of work: variationism, sociology of language and ethnography of communication (Silva Corvalán 4). This investigation, which focuses on the use of English loans adopted by Spanish, shares interests with the first two lines: on the one hand, it analyzes variation in the use of these loans in the printed press and TV programmes; on the other, it studies them as a result of the lexical influence which results from languages in contact. However, it is important to note that, in our country, the contact between English and Spanish is virtual or deferred (López Morales 163), since these languages do not coexist in Argentina.

It is a fact that English has become a true international language. English loans have been incorporated into our language since the XVIII century, a phenomenon precipitated by the

appearance of the printed press, which contributed to the expansion of these words in an easier and faster way. Nevertheless, most authors claim that the true invasion of the English language started in the XX century, after World War II, when the USA became a global power (Rodriguez González 160)

Besides historical, political and economic causes for the English expansion around the world, other authors –like Haensch (2005)– claim that the main reasons are linguistic, such as the linguistic economy of this language (among other features, it has a high proportion of monosyllabic words), the use of English words as euphemisms and the speakers' triviality: they adopt English words because they consider them linguistically more attractive.

2. The Mass Media

The Mass Media –whether written, broadcast or spoken– have made a profound impact on societies and their culture. They erase the boundaries between different societies, among the individuals, and create globalization. Therefore, they are a significant force which gave origin to the so-called *mass culture,* where the media reflect and create culture.

The function of the mass media –radio, printed press and television, together with the Internet– is not only to reach out the masses and equip them with information, but to mold audiences' beliefs and generate new social tendencies, including fashions, consumption necessities and the linguistic habits of a community. Accordingly, Alfaro (qtd. in García Morales 21) claims that the social means of communication are one of the most relevant causes of the expansion of English loans.

The Printed Press

The printed press comprises the mass media whose means of expression is the printed word –as well as pictures– and whose physical support is paper. There are two main groups: newspapers and magazines. The former are daily broadcast and aimed at a general audience; usually, they focus on providing general information. The latter are periodical publications –published weekly, fortnightly, monthly–, which tend to be more specialized and offer a significant number of graphics. They do not contain daily news because they address topics which have been addressed by other means, but do so in a more detailed way. Magazines can be classified as: news, information, entertainment, science & technology, special interest and others.

Television

The word *television* is a hybrid from the Greek *tele* ('distance') and the Latin *visio* ('vision'). It is an audiovisual means because it can combine image, sound and movement. It originated

in the forties and in the following decade it became THE massive means of communication in the USA, entertaining and informing the viewer with a great variety of programmes. At present, television is the most widespread and influential means of communication worldwide, even though the Internet has been a tough competitor: both compete with a high percentage of audience. Two crucial characteristics have contributed to television success: its sophistication in addressing messages and its low cost for the addressee. There are several types of television: chain or net television, independent stations, cable television and a relatively new one, satellite television with direct broadcasting.

The radio

The radio is a type of technology which allows transmission of signals through the modulation of electromagnetic waves, which outreaches some faraway places. It uses sound as a form of communication: words, music and sound effects make up the radiophonic language. According to the extent of the waves and their fidelity, we can distinguish two types of radio stations: AM stations (amplitude modulation), with the greatest scope but least quality sound, and FM stations (frequency modulation), with a reduced scope but greater quality and stereo broadcast.

The Internet

It is the global system of interconnected computer networks which guarantees that heterogeneous physical networks work as a unique (logical) net. It appeared for the first time in 1969 and has dramatically revolutionized communications since then. It is an interactive and selective audiovisual means which, depending on the type of product and the addressed audience, can reach a good part of potential users.

3. Analysis of anglicisms in *Rumbos* magazine

In particular, here we refer to the use of English loans in 32 issues of *Rumbos* magazine published in 2015. This is a free news magazine that readers get together with their Sunday newspaper; it is addressed to a very general public. We analyzed 356 foreign words which offered 1214 instances or occurrences. It was our decision to consider only the anglicisms adopted in the last years by the Spanish language. In our corpus, they are the ones still not included in the 21st edition of the *Diccionario de la Real Academia Española (1992), i. e.* those that were incorporated in later editions of the dictionary or have not yet been included at all.

We calculated their frequency of use in each one of the six thematic areas, we classified them into necessary and unnecessary, and we determined the *density index of anglicisms,* which reflects the proportion of English words in the above said issues.

3.1 Thematic areas

An interest raised to study these English loans taking into account the field in which they were used and we grouped them into different thematic areas, i.e. the domains linked to a certain theme, matter or subject, in relation to which a number of anglicisms tend to be used. After a detailed analysis of the different sections of the *Rumbos* issues, seven main thematic areas were determined: Films, Music and Television; Technology; Fashion and Beauty; Sports; Tourism; Gastronomy; and Others.

The area that presents the highest percentage of the lexical loans in our corpus is **Fashion and Beauty,** with a very significant 20% (Figure 1). It includes words related not only to shoe wear and fashionable clothes, but also to make-up, beauty products and treatments for both men and women. Some of these anglicisms are: *antiage, eyeliner, fashion, frizz, jeans, outfit, spa, t-shirt, tunearse, wearables.* For example:

*… el novedoso efecto **lifting.*** (#623 p.2).

*Los precios correctos de Muaa en la Moda **Teen** son: **Jean** con apliques $1070; calza negra con **print***
$760. (#608 p.4)

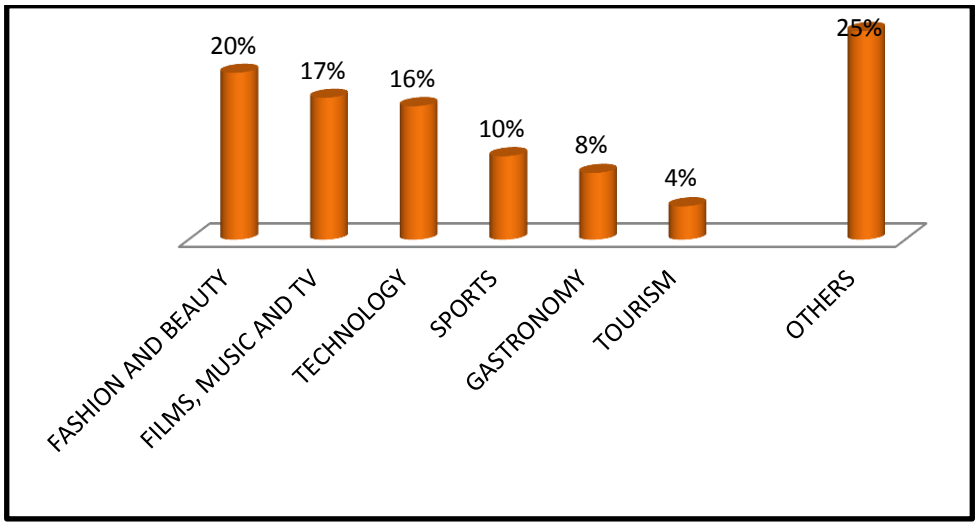

Fig. 1. Anglicisms according to Thematic Area

Similarly, the semantic area **Films, Music and Television** also reaches a high proportion of the loans used: 17**%**. This area includes anglicisms that are generally used in the domain of movies, music reviews, concerts, TV programmes, as well as actors and artists. For instance, *backstage, casting, celebrity, fan, groupies, hit, jazz, play back, rock, show* belong to this area. The following quotations illustrate their use:

Cuatro días de fiesta delante de una cámara: el ***backstage****, los artistas, (…) los mejores* ***sets****.* (#605 p.25).

"Aquí estoy hablando del vago que está en el escenario cantando y editando discos" –afirma esta ***celebrity*** *del interior, nacido en Rancho Ñato, remoto paraje del Chaco salteño."* (#594 p.18)

Technology is almost tied with the previous area, with a considerable 16%. It comprises English words linked to appliances and its components, different types of devices; also software, applications and other aspects related to computing and the Internet, such as *apps, blog, chat, gamers, GIF, hackeada, HD, online, PC, wi-fi*. These quotes from our corpus exemplify their use:

Tweets *de autor: ¿Serías capaz de contar el argumento de tu novela o cuento en 140 caracteres o menos? Con el* ***hashtag*** #ResumeUnLibro, usuarios de todo el mundo lo hacen. (#623 p.8)

…como las cosas que nunca debes hacer, los tipos de ***gamers*** *o los pormenores de las relaciones a distancia.* (#605 p.30).

The following thematic area is **Sports**, which has to do with words associated to sportsmen, sporting disciplines and the articles needed to practise them. It represents the 10% of the English loans used in these magazine issues. Some common words in this area are: *canopy, coach, fitness, fixture, gym, surf*, *referí, ring, surf, training.*

Se trata del ***powerwalking****, una alternativa a salir a correr.* (#614 p.11)

Free running*: correr y volar. Es uno de los deportes urbanos por excelencia y no se necesita ningún tipo de equipo.* (#593 p.18)

Gastronomy, with an 8%, is the area that comes next in our ranking. It includes words connected with food, recipes, kitchen utensils, and activities related to cooking and cooking events, like *blend, cupcakes, delivery, fast food, grill, muffins, scones, snacks, tupper, veggies.* In our corpus we found the following examples:

Lavar bien las verduras, cortar por la mitad las zanahorias ***baby*** *peladas, el hinojo.* (#626 p.26)

…saludables y nutritivas para llevar en las ***luncheras****.* (#605 p.19)

The area that shows the lowest proportion of English words in *Rumbos* magazine is **Tourism** with a scarce 4%. It includes anglicisms linked to trips, tours, different kinds of lodging and the amenities they offer, passengers transfers and a variety of activities for their

entertainment. For instance: *apart, city tour, check out, family plan, hostels, parking, transfer,* among others.

Amerian Hotel. Minivacaciones 3x4. Incluye media pensión, ***city tour*** *(…).* (#600 p.49)

Family plan *incluye pensión completa (desayuno buffet americano), cena* ***show****, almuerzo de tres tiempos en restaurante o piscina.* ***Transfers in/out*** *aeropuertos.* (#623 p.14).

Finally, we grouped under **Others**, on the one hand, all those loans which appear with very low frequency and belong to a variety of other thematic areas, for example: *alien, baby, book, carpet, college, establishment, freak, hall, happening, jobs,* etc. On the other hand, it also includes those anglicisms that are not restricted to only one but several thematic areas (such as ***top****: **top** model, **top** courses, **top** restaurant and even **top** cemetery),* reason why these lexical items reach a high percentage: 25% of the total English words. Among others, we found: *a full, big, boom, cool, new, performance, pack, premium, ranking, style, tips, VIP.* Some examples from our corpus are:

…desisten de ir a lugares que estén muy llenos de gente, como el ***shopping.*** (#605 p.13)

La promoción es hasta agotar ***stock*** *de los ejemplares.* (#596 p.22)

In short, the thematic areas that show the most relevant number of English loans are those related to esthetics and products which are fashionable, to the cutting edge technology and to the glamorous world of TV, movies and music.

3.2 *Necessary* and *unnecessary* anglicisms

Authors propose several classifications of anglicisms; one of them distinguishes between necessary and unnecessary loans (Barcia 20). The first ones are those English words for which there is no equivalent in our language. On the other hand, unnecessary loans (also called *de lujo* in Spanish) are those that have a valid and current Spanish expression to refer to the same entity;

Regarding this classification, we observed that out of the total number of English words found in the *Rumbos* issues, 60% are unnecessary, i.e. more than a half of them are preferred over their Spanish counterpart.

Our next step in the analysis was to calculate the percentage of use of these loans for each of the thematic areas. Thus, we observed that the unnecessary anglicisms attain higher percentages of use in most of them: Gastronomy (78%), Others (78%), Fashion and Beauty (71%), and Tourism (71%). In the case of Sports, it equals the use of both necessary and unnecessary English words: 50% (Figure 2).

As far as Gastronomy is concerned, it is quite noticeable that, in the last years, the use of anglicisms has also started in this field. Even though in this magazine there are few pages for cooking and recipes, and therefore, not many English words, these show a high proportion of unnecessary ones. Concerning the other areas, the significant percentages of these loans show that writers have a marked tendency to use them not only to refer to trendy clothing and leading-edge beauty products, but to describe hotel facilities and tourist attractions, as well as sports and the equipment used to practise them.

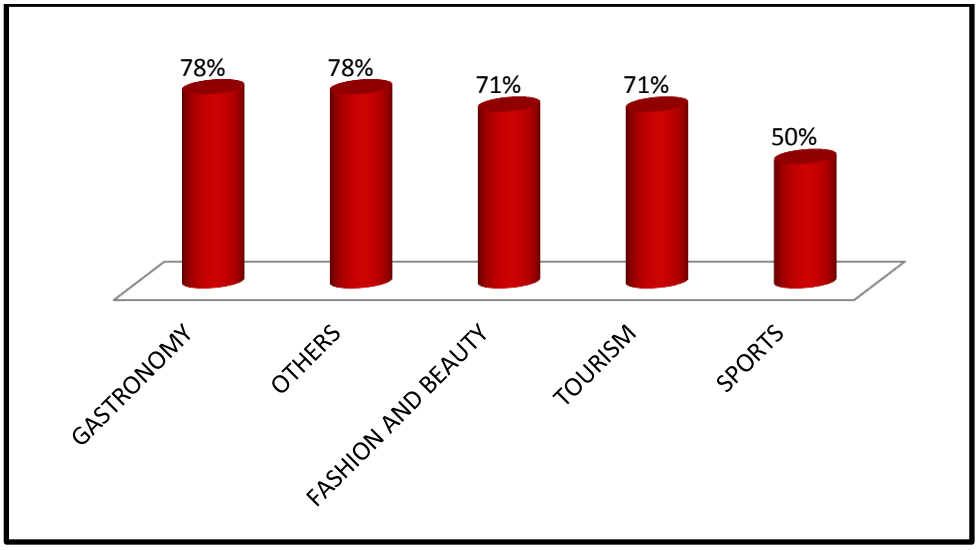

Fig. 2. Unnecessary Anglicisms according to Thematic Area

As regards the necessary anglicisms, they only prevail in the areas of Technology (69%), and Films, Music and Television (59%) (Figure 3). We expected these results, since the loans included in these two areas are associated either to electronic devices and computing technologies, or to styles and techniques in the production of films, TV programs and musical shows, which were created or invented in English-speaking countries, and then adopted by Spanish users together with the English word for them.

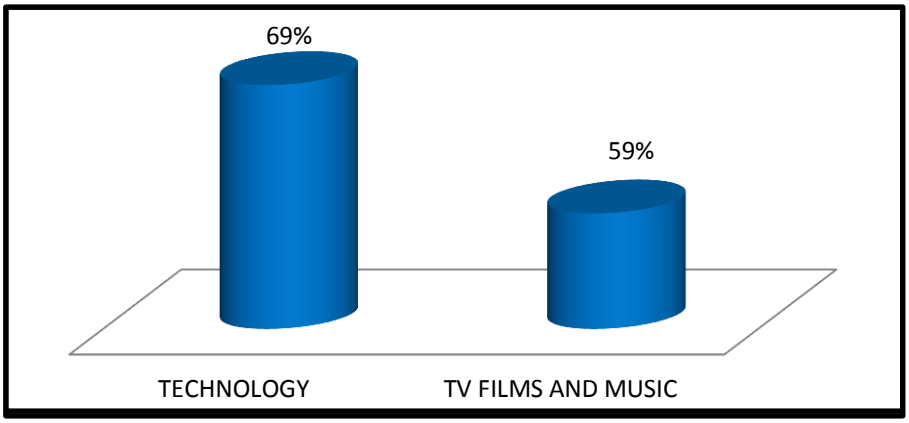

Fig. 3. Necessary Anglicisms according to Thematic Area

Concerning the use of necessary and unnecessary loans, one of our objectives was to compare the results obtained in our research on Facebook and those found in *Rumbos* magazine. In both corpora, the unnecessary ones outnumbered the necessary ones. However, it is worth pointing out that in the print media the loans with an equivalent in Spanish exhibit 60%, while in the messages on Facebook they reach a high 77%. This provides evidence that the social net users really tend to use these anglicisms much more frequently: these loans give their messages a more casual, juvenile and colloquial touch.

3.3 Density Index

Finally, we explored what we call the *density index of anglicisms,* which reflects the proportion of English words over the Spanish ones. In order to calculate this index, we counted the total number of content words used in one *Rumbos* magazine; i.e. we only considered those lexical items that have a lexical meaning (as opposed to grammatical meaning): nouns, adjectives, adverbs and verbs, since these correspond to the word class of all the anglicisms registered in our corpus (except for *ok*). The resulting index is 0.96 (Figure 4).

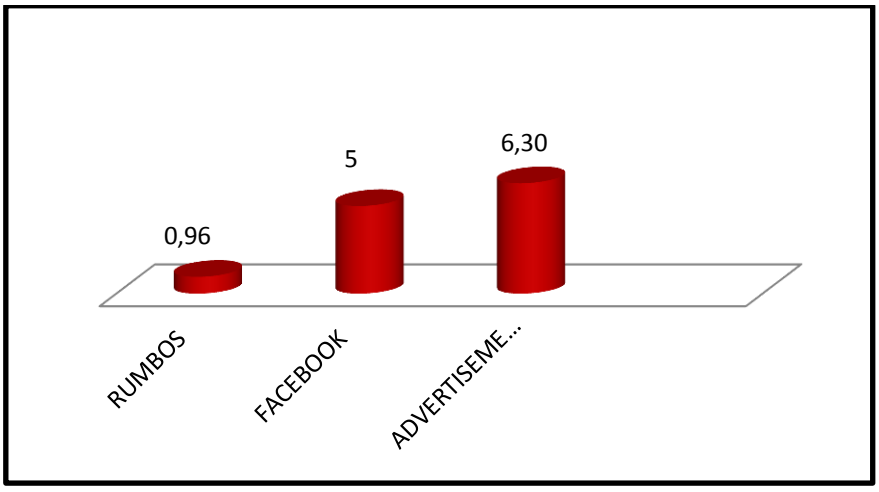

Fig. 4. Density index of Anglicisms in *Rumbos*, Advertisements, and on Facebook

At this point, we thought it would be interesting to contrast these results with the ones we got in our previous research on Facebook. So, we calculated the index in the way described above, taking into account only the number of content words. As a result, it was quite noticeable the high increase of the index in these messages, in comparison with the number of Spanish words: the resultant index climbs abruptly to 5, which is five times higher than the *Rumbos* one. The users of this social net exhibit a quite stronger tendency to choose English loans over their Spanish equivalent, because they try to write and share more informal, spontaneous and juvenile messages. Also, due to the fact that speed is relevant in digital communication, these loans offer the advantage of being shorter than most Spanish words.

Finally, taking into account the typology of texts, it was quite noticeable that, in advertisements, English loans were used in a higher frequency than in the other types of texts of our corpus. We calculated their density index and it was quite revealing that it climbs sharply to 6.30. This means that the index is six times higher in advertisements than in the rest of the articles. Usually advertisements exhibit more pictures and include only few words, but a good proportion of them happen to be anglicisms. Apparently, Spanish writers tend to use a higher number of them when they advertise a particular product, since the use of English loans is strongly associated with the notion of something trendy, cool, glamorous, high quality and/or technologically updated. These quotes from *Rumbos* #600 exemplify their use:

Espíritu ***college.*** *Falda* ***skater*** *$520. (p.38)*

Cool! *Portalápices magnético $235. (p40)*

*Bolígrafo Tecno. Apto para Ipad****, tablets*** *y* ***smartphones*** *$48,30. (p.40)*

L*a línea Sedal* Crema *Balance creó el* ***look*** *de China Suárez para esta temporada. (p.41)*

4. Conclusions

To sum up, in the *Rumbos* magazine corpus, as well as in the other two research projects we have carried out, the same idea prevails: in the social imaginary of our speech community, anglicisms seem to be related to global communication, cutting edge technology, the international scene, the field of music, films and TV with its productions and celebrities, the latest trends in fashion and other areas in everyday life, and the chance to project the image of someone young, worldly, who has good social skills.

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When study time means game time: video game-based learning as a means to support long-term memory development

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Abstract

In the 21st century we are witnessing an accelerated development of mass media communication and information technologies. Computers, tablets and smartphones have absorbed most of teenagers and children's lifestyles and school routines, through instant message services, social networking sites, multimedia platforms and video games. We, as teachers, should not remain oblivious to these phenomena. For that matter, we have observed, in recent years, that the latest pedagogical frameworks for language teaching have focused primarily on developing theories that foster foreign language learning via social networks and video platforms use. From our perspective, we consider video games to be powerful and valuable resources to explore and learn English as a foreign language in an authentic way. This paper will attempt to demonstrate how video game-based learning contributes to support the long-term memory system while catering for multiple intelligences in EFL learning environments.

Key words: English as a foreign language – video-game based learning – the memory system – use of video-games in foreign language education

1. Introduction

Children and teenagers nowadays live in a hyper-connected world, where ICTs and mass media communications are developing constantly. Computers, tablets and smartphones have absorbed most of their lifestyles and school routines, through instant message services, social networking sites, multimedia platforms and video games. As a consequence, teachers cannot ignore how this phenomenon is already making an impact on their classroom practices.

Experts in the fields of EFL Teaching and Psycholinguistics are continuously building up on *new theoretical points of view that propose novel ways to introduce ICTs in the classroom via* social networks and video platforms use. Specifically, we deem video games as valuable and motivating tools to include in our EFL classes in an authentic way. They can help learners to store new concepts, discourse and linguistic items in the Long Term Memory if included in a wide array of tasks, focusing on problem-solving and concept retrieval (Baddeley ch.1). In addition, they can enhance learners' language performance if they accompany activities that accommodate to different multiple intelligences, such as verbal- linguistic, visual-spatial, interpersonal, and so on. Therefore, this paper will attempt to demonstrate how video game-based learning contributes to support the long-term memory system while catering for such intelligences in EFL learning environments.

2. Theoretical Approach

1. Video Game-Based Learning in the EFL Class

Many, if not the majority of, teachers involved in foreign language teaching insist that the English presented in the classroom should be authentic, not produced for instructional purposes. Generally, what this means is materials which involve language naturally occurring as communication in native-speaker contexts of use, or rather those selected contexts where standard English is the norm (Kilickaya 1-2). The usage of these authentic materials is usually advocated as a means of helping students reach native-like fluency in a language. Authentic materials in the EFL classroom can have a positive effect on learning. Authentic language learning materials can increase learner on-task behavior; additionally, overall class motivation to learn class content may increase when using authentic materials. This may be one of the reasons that foreign language movies, songs and culture classes that use authentic media are fast becoming a standard in foreign language departments world-wide.

Video games are a form of interactive and engaging authentic materials currently receiving much attention from educators. They offer potentials in improving EFL language skills (McFarlane and Kirriemuir 4-5). Research has shown games integrated into mainstream classrooms support higher-level learning and thinking skills, and can be especially helpful in developing future professionals. Though research in the area is young, recent investigations probed educators opening up classrooms to video games for language learning, and the changing role of the language teacher in game-based learning environments. Research has shown that with proper teacher guidance, video games, through the power of simulation, not only promote higher-level thinking skills, but also provide opportunities to delve into the language and knowledge of professionals from other semiotic domains (8).

The words video games and education may automatically trigger in the minds of some a strong discrepancy between two realms of society that do not appear to be fully compatible, namely, popular culture and academia. In fact, significant critiques related to how computer technology, television, and the Internet have invaded individuals' lives seem to be growing (Bauerlein in Galvis Guerrero 55). While these critiques have a sound degree of validity, other have opted to shift from this approach to the technologists' approach (Chapelle qtd. in Galvis Guerrero 55) in which the potential of technology is explored and tested to meet the needs of learners for the 21st century.

With this in mind, Squire has put in a nutshell a current technology advance not commonly used in education nor foreign language instruction. That is video games. Squire understands video games as serving entertainment purposes in the computer industry and that such

forms of entertainment have been designed with profit and marketing interests rather than academic ones. Similarly, the author acknowledges the ambivalence of the research methods used in video games in education and the need to filter ideologies and particular interests, especially in video games. Gaming could be defined as a "social practice, meaning that it occurs at the intersection of people's goals, technological affordances, and social and cultural contexts." (4). Similarly, McFarlane and Kirriemuir define video games as a type of digitally designed and pre-programmed visual platforms available for one or more players that allow for user input and the flow of digital information (5).

In addition, Squire warns about the importance of fully understanding the impact of utilizing video games in education, especially when measuring results. That is, one cannot measure results used from video gaming practices in education against traditional measurement practices because one may be assessing different skills and needs. This discussion inevitably leads the author to forewarn about crucial changes that can be brought about by the use of digital cultures, one of these changes being the shift of favoring print culture vs. visual culture (9-11).

Because of the innovative nature of video games and computer technology, Squire argues that one of the potential obstacles gaming practices will run into in the future is enrooted traditional structure in schools (14-17). By the same token, McFarlane and Kirriemuir assert that the heart of the issue of not including video games also resides in the lack of appropriateness of video games' content vs. curriculum content, lack of time affecting both teachers' familiarization with current video games and implementation of these video games in the classroom, and the presence of irrelevant content in video games (3-4). McFarlane and Kirriemuir state that the aforementioned factors have negatively impacted the inclusion of mainstream video games in schools. But as obscure, distant, and ignored the inclusion of video games currently is, Squire vigorously states that students themselves will easily acquire and access the technology due to its pervasiveness. The author also notes that this creates not only a need for schools to stop ignoring technology itself, but also to cater to new literacy needs students of the 21st century have, and that teachers oftentimes are not aware of.

The current, entertainment concept of video games is generic and oversees substantial developments during the last two decades in both education and entertainment. McFarlane and Kirriemuir have distinguished between what they refer to as mainstream digital games and learning-oriented games (*edutainment*) (3-4). The former is the entertainment and profit-oriented type of gaming which is produced by major entertainment companies. These types

of video games usually run under specific and well-known gaming devices such as Nintendo™, PlayStation™, X-box™, or PCs. The objectives of mainstream games are marketing-driven and not designed for education, whereas learning-oriented games have adapted the original idea of video games in order to present content in an enjoyable manner. With this difference in mind, McFarlane and Kirriemuir have reported that despite efforts made by developers of edutainment software, traditional video games prevail in individual's preferences due to their superiority in visual content and plot content, as well as the ability to recreate fantasy, challenge players, and foster curiosity (4). What is more, edutainment has been criticized because of its predictability, predisposition to learning (because learners know playing is leading to learning), and monotony in presenting content. Another weakness has to do with the simplistic platforms used to develop edutainment when compared with those used to develop mainstream video games.

In the midst of the debate as to which type of gaming is better for education, strong reasons why mainstream video gaming may represent a better choice have been provided . This has to do with the notion of "flow". According to McFarlane and Kirremuir , the notion of flow has found agreement academically in that flow is the level of engagement that an individual reaches while doing an activity in such a way that other things are dismissed. While flow appears to be an innovative affordance provided by video games, it needs to occur under specific conditions (21-22). According to Malone conditions inducing flow should be as follows:

- Activities that adjust the level of difficulty desired by the player,
- Perceptual saliency in order to avoid interference with other external stimuli,
- Game performance assessment (how well a player is doing),
- Feedback on player performance,
- Varied assortment of challenges

A last type of video games is reviewed by Thorne, Black, and Sykes (Galvis Guerrero 58). These video games are referred to as Massively Multiplayer Online Games (MMO). According to Thorne, Black, and Sykes, these video games are commercially designed and allow for large numbers of people to play online simultaneously, while interacting and reaching game specific objectives. It has been documented that individuals spend significant amounts of time playing this type of video game because of MMO's complex and challenging nature.

In line with developments in learning theory, research that has examined children's computer games play sees their learning as a process of participation in practice rather than a process of acquisition of facts or disconnected 'pieces' of information, i.e. 'doing' rather than 'knowing'. Since games are often characterized by a trial-and-error approach to overcoming challenges or obstacles, these games can support the development of logical thinking, problem solving skills and concept retrieval.

2. The memory system

What is memory? Why is it so important in the learning process? How does memory contribute to second language acquisition? These are questions that most EFL teachers often ask whenever they are introduced to the Memory System and its primary role in the learning process of a foreign language.

Firstly, we can say that memory is "not an organ like the heart or liver but an alliance of systems that work together" and it allows us to learn and store new knowledge and facts in various contexts (1).

Secondly, memory plays a crucial role in helping us to perform successfully in any daily activity of our lives. We need memory to gain new knowledge at school or college as much as we need it to remember where our workplace is or the supermarket list. Several studies in the field have shown that some forms of brain damage, which consequently can affect the memory system, hence altering the course of our everyday activities.

Thirdly, the memory system has been approached from various disciplines, including Neurology, Philosophy and Psychology. Each of them has contributed to the study of how it is made up and how it works. Particularly, we consider that Alan Baddeley's neurocognitive approach to the study of the memory system suits the purposes of English language learning in our context best.

Since the 1960s, scientists have taken interest in studying how our memory system works and what it is made of. Particularly, the model proposed by Atkinson and Schriffin in 1968 represented human memory as a two-way system: a short- term memory (STM), which briefly retained material (environmental input processed by the visual, auditory and haptic registers), and a long-term memory (LTM), which stored the processed information permanently; each system was considered to function separately. (Atkinson and Schriffin qtd. In Baddeley 2). However, this model was greatly criticized as new evidence suggested that

"merely holding an item in the STM did not guarantee learning" and that STM is not as crucial for learning in the aforementioned model.

Alternatively, Baddeley proposed a model that considers the memory as a unified system in which the the concept of the STM is replaced by the Working Memory (WM); it is defined as "a multicomponent system that utilizes storage as part of its function of facilitating complex cognitive activities such as learning, comprehending, and reasoning". This multicomponent system is comprised of three subsystems, that process input differently: the phonological loop, which stores "acoustic and verbal information"; the visuo-spatial sketchpad, which processes and stores visual and spatial input for a limited range of time; and the central executive, which controls the information centrally (3-4). The input perceived by the senses is processed chunked by the episodic buffer, which also works along the prior knowledge that learners bring into the process to "enhance storage and retrieval" (4-5). In addition, the Working Memory transfers the processed information to the LTM, a complex structure that can be divided into two components: the explicit (or declarative) memory and the implicit (or non-declarative) memory. At the same time, the explicit memory comprises two components: the episodic memory, which

> refers to our capacity to recollect specific incidents from the past, remembering incidental detail that allows us in a sense to relive the event; we seem to be able to identify an individual event, presumably by using the context provided by the time and place it occurred. This means that we can recollect and respond appropriately to a piece of information, even if it is quite novel and reflects an event that is inconsistent with many years of prior expectation"; and the semantic memory, which is related to what we know about the world and the society we are living in and how we manipulate tools, etc. It is important to clarify that both the WM and LTM systems do not work separately but interact with one another so as to perceive, encode, store and retrieve new knowledge effectively (5-6).

3. Practical Implications

Considering the theoretical concepts presented before, we propose a series of classroom activities using mainstream computer video-games to show how linguistic items can be, not only processed but also retrieved from the memory system. In addition, these activities are designed to motivate students taking into account their multiple intelligences. In this respect, we cater for at least four of Gardner's learning styles. Firstly, the visual-spatial intelligence, which is associated to the awareness of the immediate environment and space. Secondly, the interpersonal intelligence that has to do with the way in which students interact and/or

empathize with others. Thirdly, the logical-mathematical intelligence, that involves learners being capable of solving problems and thinking conceptually and abstractly. Lastly, the linguistic intelligence, which relates to the ability to produce language either oral or written.

In order to fulfil our initial proposal, we take into consideration the linguistic competence and comprehension level of the learners. For that reason, we have classified our choice of non-educational video-games into Beginner and Advanced.

- Beginner level: Students arranged in groups will build a fantasy house with the video game The Sims 2, and they will describe their own house. After that, they will compare their own house with the house of another group's.

  The main task is to decide how many rooms the house will have, which objects they will include in each room, and what household chore the character of the game will do.
- Advanced level: In pairs, the students will be shown a trailer of videogame The Walking Dead – Season One: A Telltale Game Series in order to guess its plot. Next, they will proceed to play the game. While they are on it, they will encounter different situations in which they will have to choose from a set of programmed sentences, which will the character say, for which they will have to take into account the context and the possible consequences of their choice. Finally, they will have to retell the principal events of the story.

Both activities are targeted towards developing problem-solving skills and linguistic-item retrieval in the learners. This kind of tasks characterize the working of the LTM and, in turn, help to activate the episodic and semantic memory subsystems, as they make students recall prior knowledge and strategies for the identification of various events. Also, both games offer different contextual possibilities which will allow learners to store and process new knowledge better and provide visual and verbal input that stimulates the phonological loop and the visuo-spatial sketchpad in the STM.

4. Conclusions

Computer games provide language-laden, rich and entertaining vistas onto immersive simulated worlds (Anderson et.al, 5). We believe that properly designed classroom or homework activities for simulated worlds in the classroom is a promising direction for learning, which can result in dramatic improvements to a traditional classroom. This proposal shows that it is possible to support language learning with non-educational-adapted digital video games. In addition, as games are sources of both linguistic and visual input they prove to be great tools to develop and stimulate both the working and the long-term memory

systems. Finally, they constitute valuable sources of educational entertainment for they both motivate and cater for students' multiple intelligences or learning styles and needs.

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PAPERS BY STUDENTS

Dealing with the Omission of the Subject Due to Spanish Interference through an SFL Approach

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Abstract

In an EFL class of novice students whose native language is Spanish, it is common to find the recurrent error of the omission of the subject in students' written assignments. This is often attributed to interference from the students´ native language. The most common technique used by teachers to help students correct this problem is feedback but it is often unproductive. Guided by an SFL approach to language, teachers may resort to the use of noticing strategies to help students become more aware of the way the grammar of English represents experience and how it is based principally on a simple structure (mainly the SVO pattern in traditional grammar) made up by participants and processes.

1. Introduction

English is regarded as the most important Second Language in the world by most experts. Any English speaker would expect to communicate with others by using it in any part of the world. This has led to an increasing interest in the learning of English (Saville-Troike 9). Considering this tendency, Latin America, and Argentina in particular, is no exception. The language can be learned in public or private institutions, schools, institutes or universities, and also in more informal ways by students' using the language through the internet or participating in exchange programs. Therefore, the teaching/learning of English and the problems the process may involve is a central concern in the area of second language teaching.

The learning of English as a foreign or second language does not happen automatically. Rather, it involves an intricate process. Traditionally, in the field of Second Language Acquisition (hereafter SLA), language learning implies the development of four skills: speaking, listening, reading and writing. Writing represents a thorny topic since there is not even agreement with respect to what goes on in the process. Therefore, the teaching of writing poses a real challenge

In this paper, we focus on some problems regarding writing in English. We will focus on novice students of English as a Foreign Language (hereafter EFL) and the problems caused by the interference of their mother tongue (hereafter L1) that they may experience when writing. More specifically, we pay close attention to the syntactic level, taking into account some grammatical miscues that stem from the influence of the students's L1 on the long term memory (hereafter LTM) and that make students fail in their attempt to communicate through English. We analyze mainly one recurrent error in the written productions of

students, the omission of the subject in English sentences. Drawing on a Systemic Functional Linguistics (hereafter SFL) approach, we put forward some suggestions to help students overcome such a problem, by focusing on the noticing stage of the teaching/learning process through different strategies.

2. Theoretical Notions Relevant to this Study

2.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics

SFL is a theory developed by Michael Halliday since the early 60s which focuses on the social component of language; in other words, the theory gives importance to the creation and exchange of meanings in social context. In SFL, meaning is a multidimensional notion which involves ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings; each of them operating at the same time and being construed by different lexico-grammatical choices (Bollati and Marcovechio 2).

This way of describing language, in which the starting point is meaning, makes it important to reflect upon two different aspects. On the one hand, languages refer to reality in different ways and the elements they use to do so differ from one language to another making up different and sometimes unique sets of resources to be used in each language. This idea leads to the assumption that each language should have a different and unique grammar to describe its structures (Mertz 12). On the other hand, Mwinlaaru and Xuan claim that languages "tend to be more similar in terms of the range of meanings they construe than in the structural realisations of these meanings". This SFL view of the grammar of each language makes the theory relevant when analysing the problems that may arise in contexts involving the coexistence of two languages, as is the case of a second language teaching course in which students may have to deal with interference problems (3).

2.2 Contrastive Analysis

Within the field of linguistics, whenever we think of the term "interference", we immediately think of Contrastive Analysis (CA). This was the first pedagogical approach that researched into the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA). It was based on Structuralism and Behaviorism; it had a purely pedagogical purpose and was mainly developed by Robert Lado. It has made important contributions to the field of language teaching, such as the concept of transfer, but it has also been heavily criticised since the rise of Generativism for its alleged ambiguity at the moment of classifying errors. So, any consideration developed from this approach may require to be backed up by further research.

2.3 Interference

As mentioned above, one important concept developed within this framework is “transfer”, which has to do with the “transfer of elements acquired (or habituated) in L1 to the target L2 [second language]” (Saville-Troike 35). This process can be positive or negative. On the one hand, positive transfer occurs when the elements that come from the L1 are adequately used in the L2. On the other hand, negative transfer, also known as interference, occurs when the L1 elements are used inadequately or incorrectly in the target language. We must also bear in mind that, as Saville-Troike explains, the elements that will mainly cause interference are those “where there is partial overlap but not equivalence in form, meaning and/or distribution” (35) – one example of such overlapping is the S-V-O pattern discussed below.

2.4 Syntax of English vs Spanish

Following Manzanares, who carried out some research in the field of Contrastive Linguistics, English and Spanish have differences in all the levels of a language. At the syntactic level, which is most relevant to this paper, three main points stand out. First, the absence/presence of the subject; second, the variability with respect to the subject-verb order; third, the rate of use of certain constructions like the passive.

As regards the absence/presence of the subject, we can differentiate pro-drop from non pro-drop languages. Pro-drop languages are those in which the subject can be easily omitted, as is the case of Spanish, since the morphology of Spanish verbs carries enough information to infer the subject. Non pro-drop languages are those in which the subject cannot generally be omitted because it cannot be inferred due to little morphological information present in the verb (Manzanares 13). In other words, since English verbs have fewer inflections than Spanish verbs, the subject is often explicit in sentences. This difference between languages leads Spanish speakers into omitting the subject in English sentences.

2.5 Long Term Memory and the Writing Skill

Having referred to interference, we may wonder how it applies to the writing process. However, we first need to identify what goes on in the writing process and the role that the L1 plays in it, and especially in the Long Term Memory (hereafter LTM).

In order to describe this phenomenon, we consider it appropriate to follow Bereiter and Scardamalia who described what they called a "knowledge telling" model of writing. In such model, beginner students seek to keep writing as a straightforward activity in which they just retell what they know or what they have experienced (Grabe and Kaplan 119). In other words, they do not see writing as a problem-solving task in which they must find the solution to a problem as advanced students would do.

One of the major problems that writers face in this model has to do with the retrieval of information about the topic they will be writing. The easiest way to perform such process, and one of the most widely used techniques, is to use the language in which they experienced or learned the events or data needed. This allows students to get information from their Long Term Memory (LTM) in a larger amount than if they had tried to recall the information needed in any other language.

The importance of the LTM was also shown in a different model like the one described by Flower and Hayes. In the process of composing, three main components are recognized: "the composing processor, the task environment, and the writer´s long-term memory" (Grabe and Kaplan 91). In this case, the LTM is mainly useful as a source of information about the topic to be developed. Any strategy regarding the retrieval of information for writing is applied to the data available in the LTM so that it becomes suitable for the written text.

The L1 in the LTM

Following Friedlander, who carried out research in the field of psycholinguistics, the L1 and the LTM are strongly related. In 1987, he analyzed the written productions of 28 Chinese-speaking students who were asked to plan their texts either matching or mismatching the language of the topic knowledge. He confirmed his hypotheses that "ESL writers would be able to plan more effectively and write better texts when they planned (…) in the language-match conditions" (118).

Friedlander explains the results from this study through what he called "experiential storage pools" (121). These pools, present in students´ memory, are set in one or the other language, and it is easier for students to access the pool if they match the language they are using at the moment of retrieving information with the language they used when they went through the experience itself. This view can be highly supported if we take into account that our novice students´ knowledge of the second language is by far smaller than their knowledge of the world, since most of the learning they have experienced in their lives has been through their L1. Therefore, an experiential storage pool operating in the L1 would end up being next to inaccessible if students use a second language and their knowledge of it is too limited.

Following Boroditsky, who currently works in the field of psycholinguistics, the setting of the long-term memory in one or other language influences our retrieval of information with respect to how the information is structured, thus making it easier or harder to remember certain data. Her hypothesis that "language shapes thought" (63) has been supported by some research carried out by Boroditsky herself. In her studies, Spanish and Japanese were compared with English. The first two languages are alike since the agent is generally omitted

by native speakers when they are referring to an accidental event but, in the case of English, the agent is always mentioned without distinction to whether the event is accidental or intentional. What is more, the non-mentioning of the agent in any kind of event described would sound awkward to native speakers of English. This way of structuring information influences the LTM. According to what Boroditsky found, it was easier for English speakers to remember the "doer" of accidental actions, generally characterized by the subject in sentences, than it was for Spanish and Japanese speakers, who struggled to recall that information (64).

It may assumed that the way in which the LTM works and the importance of the L1 in the process in it leads students to translate when writing. They retrieve the information in their mother tongue and then translate it so as to use it in their production. They find various kinds of difficulties in this process since the information is structured in different ways according to the language used.

3. The Impact of Errors on Language Use and Ways of Addresing them

It seems natural that errors –in this case, errors resulting from interference- should have an impact on language use. It is also to be expected that all teachers will tend to do something to deal with such errors.

A study carried out at the Universidad de Loja in Ecuador has dealt with this theoretical problem in an actual teaching practice scenario. This research focused on the topics of interference and the development of writing skills of 24 senior students. It was found that, with respect to the strategies used by students, 78% of the subjects translated information, i.e. they constructed a message in Spanish, and then they put those ideas into English. Such a high percentage indicates that interference may be relevant but, in what particular areas of writing? "High frequency interference errors included misuse of verbs (20%), omission of personal and object pronouns (16%), misuse of prepositions (11%), overuse of articles (9%), incorrect word order (9%), and misuse of articles (5%)" (Cabrera et. al. 43). As the authors themselves conclude, the omission of the personal pronoun (generally, functioning as subject) is due to the influence of the mother tongue, Spanish, in which it is possible to use a tacit subject (Cabrera et. al. 45).

Is the omission of the subject an important error to be considered when teaching English as a second language? To answer this question we must clarify first that an "error" occurs systematically due to lack of knowledge about the L2, in contrast to "mistakes" which may occur due to lapses in memory, for example (Saville-Troike 38). Considering this, we will

analyse the errors from the point of view of two relevant theories in the field of linguistics: Generativism and Functionalism.

Generativism sees language as a set of rules which guide the speaker into combining different elements of it. Henceforth, the mastery of a language implies the correct use of its elements according to the rules. In this process, learners build their mental grammar (a state of the mind which is also known as Interlanguage), and they develop this system making it similar to the one of the language being learned.

Bearing this in mind, we can analyse two examples provided by Cabrera et. al.:
“I like my childhood because was unusual and very amazing”.
“I remember that played with the doll that my father bought me” (45).

In the previous examples, the personal pronouns “it” and “I” are omitted, rendering incorrect sentences. Since English syntax requires all sentences to take a subject unless the imperative mood is used, in this theory, the omission of the two subjects violates the rules of a rule-based system producing ungrammatical sentences. Such errors are also important because their appearance generally indicates that they are part of the interlanguage system of the students, i. e. the structure has been erroneously internalized and its correction is not easy.

Functionalism sees language as a way of making meaning. Language is used to serve the function of communicating ideas to others. So, within this theory, language must be analysed in context. Hence, we have chosen to analyse an example that we encountered in our teaching experience:
“On Sunday, my friends and I went to the shopping mall and bought a watch”.

The error in this example can only be noticed if we take into account where the sentence comes from and what really happened that Sunday. This statement is a direct translation of what our student thought in Spanish: “El domingo, mis amigos y yo fuimos al centro comercial y compré un reloj”. In the English version of the sentence, we assume that all the people who went to the shopping mal- that is the writer and her friends- bought a watch. In the Spanish version, we realise that only the author bought the watch. There is a mismatch between the message that the student wants to convey and the message that she actually conveys. In other words, the language used does not accurately fulfill its main purpose, to convey meaning. In this case, correct spelling problem and because English needs an explicit subject reference as it does not use inflectional morphemes in verbs the way Spanish does. This is just one example of how languages construe reality in different ways.

This misinterpretation should be taken into account because the content that is put forward in both sentences (the Spanish version in the students' mind and the actual sentence produced) is different. In addition, this kind of error is hardly noticeable for the instructor, who is supposed to give the student some feedback.

To deal with this type of issues, some teachers will resort to what we call 'conventional' ways of doing that, and some other may venture into less conventionals ways, as discussed below.

3.1 Some conventional ways of addressing errors

In the above mentioned study by Cabrera, teachers were asked about their strategies to deal with interference. The answers were rather varied:

> 23% of the teachers encouraged their students to read frequently; 22% of teachers used kinesthetic activities; 17% used bilingual dictionaries; 15% used English exclusively in the classroom; and 11% used translation exercises (43).

Looking at the figures above, we can draw two conclusions. Apparently, the technique that is mostly focused on interference (that is, translation exercises) is the least used. Also, we can say that, in general terms, there is no clear strategy with respect to how to avoid Spanish interference.

3.1.1 Feedback

Apart from the strategies mentioned above, in Argentina, feedback is a common technique used by teachers. Feedback implies the correction of errors by the teacher or instructor. So far, we have mentioned that feedback may sometimes be useless since some semantic errors cannot be spotted because the grammatical structure/s may be apparently correct. Therefore, neither the teacher/instructor nor the student can tell whether there is an error or not in some written productions.

If we look at Gass´s model of learning, we can also rule out feedback as an effective strategy for the teaching of grammar. In Gass´s model of learning, we can distinguish six different steps: input, noticed input, comprehended input, intake, developing and output. If our pedagogical intervention takes place after the output (in such case the pedagogical intervention becomes feedback), then we are dealing with what is already a part of the interlanguage system, which makes such errors harder to correct. So, the author´s proposal is for the pedagogical intervention to take place in the noticed input stage, i. e. before the structure becomes part of the interlanguage system (Muñoz 32, 33).

3.1.2 The coursebook

Many teachers in Argentina are guided by a coursebook. Nowadays, the bibliography used in educational institutions is generally designed by publishing companies to be universal,

instead of language-specific. Hence, these books do not address the problem of interference directly (or indirectly) and, generally do not take into account sentence structure apart from certain specific patterns that have to do with the use of some verbs (verb patterns). That is to say, books are supposed to work well for all countries and students, irrespective of their own language. In the ´70s, Contrastive Analysis was heavily criticised and did not become successful partly because this approach implied the design of language-specific material. On a similar line of thought, SFL proposes that each language should be treated in a unique way, since each language has its own ways of making meaning.

3.2 Some alternative ways of dealing with interference errors

We believe that the type of problems we have mentioned can be addreessed in some alternative ways, resorting to some strategies based on SFL principles, such as the identification and the tracking of participants**.**

3.2.1 Identifying Participants in the Text

As we have already mentioned, the noticing stage in the learning process should be focused on so as to avoid potential errors such as the omission of the subject in English sentences produced by novice writers. For the noticing stage then, our proposal is to make students aware of the participants that are present in the text, the processes they are involved in, and the circumstances under which the process happens.

Participants are “a person, a place or an object” (Butt *et al* 52); processes are “expressions of happening, doing, being and saying” (Butt *et al* 46); and circumstances are in the text to “illuminate the Process in some way” (Butt *et al* 56). When refering to these elements, we are focusing on the ideational meaning of a text, that is to say what the text is about.

In the case of the participant element, it is realised by noun phrases, and generally the participant that comes in first position in a sentence is the subject. The presence of it in English texts is fundamental when making meaning. This participant cannot be omitted if we want to know who or what is involved in the process.This aspect of the language should be emphasized during a noticing activity so that students can understand the importance of the subject in English and can bear this in mind at the moment of writing.

3.2.2 Noticing through the tracking of participants

Another way of making students aware of the participants and the importance of their explicit referente in the text is by tracking participants. To do so, we should, as a first step, find the reference to a participant in a text (mainly one functioning as Subject, for our present purpose) and all the following references to it (Bollati and Marcovechio 4). This tracking can

be done by using different graphic elements like the use of colours and shapes or the underlining or highlighting of words.

The tracking activity may be carried out by guiding students to find 'identity' and 'similarity' chains. The items of an identity chain are in a relation of co-reference, that is to say, "every member of the chain refers to the same thing, event, or whatever…" (Hasan in Torrecilla 45). On the other hand the items of a similarity chain are in a relation of co-classification or co-extension, that is to say, "items that refer to non-identical members" (Hasan in Torrecilla 45). By giving importance to the referent during the noticing stage, students may learn to avoid certain problems in which the referent of a pronoun functioning as subject is not clear or in which the subject must be present to clarify the referent even when the use of ellipsis is grammatically correct (such as in the already analysed example, "On Sunday, my friends and I went to the shopping mall and bought a watch.").

3.2.3 Teaching sentence structure

Finally, we think that sentence structure can and should be taught explicitly to students. Specifically, we believe that the SVO pattern deserves special attention, in particular when dealing with novice writers and interference errors.

Why SVO? In this case, the SVO pattern is crucial since it is shared by most languages in the world, including English and Spanish. It is also a central and frequent pattern in both languages. Furthermore, it is the pattern that students acquire first in the L1 and in the L2, making it very important to focus on at the moment of teaching (Pinuer and Oteíza 89).

This pattern, hence, should be paid attention to when dealing with problems at the syntactic level, like the omission of the subject. One way of guiding students to produce correct sentences is by teaching them to follow a pattern such as the one already mentioned. Through this simple strategy, we are teaching them some kind of pattern or "formula" that would give them guidance at the moment of writing and at the moment of self-correction. They will eventually internalise the essentials of English sentences such as the presence of a subject or the ordering of elements (another common problem due to interference).

Is this strategy difficult to apply in the classroom? It does not have to be, as long as we, teachers, keep it simple. Steve Peha has developed a simple way of introducing sentence structure into the classroom. In his program, he divides sentences into different parts that he calls main parts (main clauses), lead-in parts and in-between parts (mainly adverbials) and add-on parts (such as appositive constructions) and then he instructs students into six different ways in which they can combine these parts. Although Peha's strategy focuses on more complex sentences than the ones our novice writers would produce, it can be adapted

and applied only to the parts that make up the main clause. We do not need to teach our students the concepts of Subject, Verb and Object but we can teach them that most sentences -at this early stage- take two participants and one process (SVO). One way of keeping it simple is by teaching students how to identify the participants and the processes involved. The first participant in the sentence would be expressed by means of a noun phrase (that would function as the Subject) while the processes would be expressed by means of a verb (V). The main point we seek to convey is that we can bring syntactic structures into the classroom with a simple down-to-earth strategy which can help our students.

A classroom focus on sentence structure may not only improve the written production of our students, but also their reading abilities since they will know the basic structure of most sentences and they will also find it easier to communicate with others. Peha himself comments on how productive this practice turned out in his context “I'm amazed at how well kids communicate by mastering six simple two- and three-part patterns like these”.

The simple SVO pattern can help students to express themselves in a better way as it teaches them the logical way in which information should be structured, i. e. students will get used to structuring sentences going from shared information to new information. They will make the text easier for the receptor to process the information. They will algo learn that, in English, it is important to mention known information (generally represented by the first participant of the sentence), while in Spanish, such information would be considered redundant in most cases. The links used in English to create cohesion are different from those used in Spanish, especifically in the case of subject references. The cohesive resources exist in both languages but they are of a different nature and students need to be guided to recognize them from an early stage to avoid problems like the one shown previously.

4. Conclusion

We have analysed a common error in Spanish-speaking students: the omission of the subject in English sentences. This error has been looked at considering different fields within linguistics, mainly Systemic Functional Linguistics, Contrastive Linguistics and Psycholinguistics, and the conclusion has been the same; this error occurs due to interference. The possibility of dropping the subject in Spanish seems to be directly related to the setting of the LTM and leads students to omit the subject when writing in English. It is not easy to deal with this type of errors, since the coursebook is not prepared to cope with interference problems, and feedback is not always a suitable option since some errors cannot be spotted or are very hard to deal with. In view of this, we believe that more

emphasis should be placed on the noticed input stage by tracking and identifying participants in English texts. We also believe that the basic SVO sentence structure should be explicitly taught to novice students as a way of helping them develop more confidence in the use of a system that is different from their L1.

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The Write Stuff: How Writing Journals Affect Writing Apprehension and Writing Quality in an Upper-Intermediate English Course

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Abstract

Writing has long been the most dreaded activity carried out in the EFL classroom. Just the thought of staring at a blank page and having to fill it with 180 words can cause panic in even the best of students. Writing apprehension is widely prevalent in the foreign language classroom. But, why is there so much anxiety and dread connected to writing? By implementing writing journals and allowing and encouraging students to creatively play with the language and topics, and not follow textbook strict-to-the-form essays and letters, are we helping or hindering our students in the acquisition of their second language? This paper will explain possible causes for writing apprehension, the need for creativity and emotion in writing, and the effects that the implantation of writing journals had on an Upper-Intermediate level EFL class in San Juan, Argentina with respect to writing apprehension and writing quality.
Key words: *writing apprehension, writing journal, creativity, writing quality*

1. Introduction

Today we are going to do a writing. These are probably the eight most dreaded words in any EFL classroom. Just the word 'writing' can cause any student to break out in a cold sweat and question why they even decided to study English in the first place, or curse their parents for making them go to class. The mention of 180 words is worthy of rashes and Benadryl shots. 'Where do I start?' 'What if I make a mistake?' 'I just can't do it'. These are all phrases you will likely overhear more than once when dealing with students.

Why is there so much anxiety connected to writing? Is this anxiety connected to all types of writing or only to the typical 'teaching to the test' form writing? Is there anything we can do as teachers to ease this pressure and anxiety? These are all questions that need to be answered in order to better the quality of our teaching and our students' learning.

While watching the acclaimed film 'Freedom Writers,' directed by Richard LaGravenese and released in 2007, I was able to see the effect that the implementation of writing journals had on an English Language classroom. Students who previously had little to no interest in writing developed a love of writing because they were able to tell their own stories. These students went from testing well beneath their grade level to excelling in their language class. These effects were all on an English classroom with native speakers, but I began to question if this project wouldn't have the same effect on an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. So, digging into the old bag of teacher tricks, I decided to implement a writing journal in my Senior VI classes with the firm belief that the use of these journals would not

only lower my students' writing apprehension, but also improve their writing quality by allowing the students to explore their creativity by writing on subject matters of their choice and also by allowing them to explore and play with the language without fear of making mistakes and being evaluated. By lowering this anxiety, students would be able to enjoy writing instead of fearing it and improve their writing quality.

The purpose of this paper is to prove that the implementation of writing journals in an EFL classroom will lower writing apprehension and will improve the writing quality of students.

2. Review of the Literature

The term writing apprehension was coined by Daly and Miller in 1975 to refer to 'a general avoidance of writing and of situations perceived by the individuals to potentially require some amount of writing accompanied by the potential for evaluation of that writing (qtd. in Hassan 4).' A foreign language classroom can be a place where this anxiety-provoking situation occurs the most, especially in a context where writing in the mother tongue (from now on referred to as L1) is not fully developed and explored. It is common knowledge that this is one of the weaknesses of the Argentine education system, and this lack of writing knowledge in the L1 then carries over and translates into dread in the foreign language studied (from now on referred to as L2).

Taking into account the level of apprehension of each writer, we are able to distinguish two main groups: high apprehensives and low apprehensives (Bishop 32). High apprehensives are characterized by having less control over language usage and general writing conventions than low apprehensives. These high apprehensive students will, in general, write shorter, less syntactically complex texts and typically find writing unrewarding, paralyzing, and indeed torturous, thus making them dread and avoid situations where writing is required at all costs. These people will then in turn procrastinate excessively or neglect to hand in their work (Bishop 32-33; Hassan 5; Winer 60-61).

Low apprehensives, on the other hand, do not avoid situations where writing is necessary and are even quite confident in their skills as writers. They are, according to Daly, more likely to play with the artistry of a language, thus taking risks in exploring lexis and syntactic structures resulting in, as Book says, more complex and oftentimes longer written texts (qtd. in Bishop 35).

This writing anxiety may stem from one or more causes. The student's lack of confidence in their writing ability, the degree of preparation needed to complete the task, topics which are boring or intimidating, and the fear of being judged and evaluated by the teacher on the basis of the writing tasks are but some of the main reasons presented (Hande and Sevdeger 220; Winer 57). Many students feel insecure about their own writing skills because they focus on

the surface level errors of spelling and grammar, while others have found that many times the knowledge of writing that they have in their L1 may not carry over into their L2 (Winer 62). In English language classes, students frequently find the topics that the teacher has chosen for them to write about boring and/or intimidating. They cannot relate to the topics and they feel that there are such strictly enforced limits in both form and content that they are not able to experiment outside of what is expected (Winer 64). Other students fear the teacher's red ink and are paralyzed by the thought of being judged or evaluated on the basis of their writing ability and proficiency.

One of the methods proposed to overcome these dilemmas, and the basis of this paper, is the implementation of writing journals in the EFL classroom. Spaventa defines writing journals as "notebooks in which writers keep a record of ideas, opinions, and descriptions of daily life" (qtd. in Tuan 82). Wilcox goes further saying that

> a journal is a place where our thinking can become visible, we toss around ideas and consider what others think; we make connections between new and prior information, examine our own thinking strategies, and judge our own learning (qtd. in Castellanos 113).

By using these journals, students are able to examine their exterior world and then express what they feel internally about their world, life, feelings, and learning.

One of the main requirements is that writing journals not be evaluated on their content nor their form. The main focus should be the process and not the product. Students should be able to get their thoughts onto paper quickly without worrying about the correctness of what has been said. Students need to be able to express their ideas and thoughts freely without fear of making mistakes and being evaluated on the technical aspects of language. Instead evaluation should be purely based on participation. When students feel that they are able to share their voices freely without judgment, they are then more likely to take risks by playing with the language (Castellanos 114; Bagheri and Pourgharib 3520; Tuan 82; Patterson 85).

Educators tend to stigmatize mistakes. As Dr. Robinson explains in his TED talk posted on ted.com, children take chances because they are not yet afraid of making mistakes. By the time these children have become adults, and after passing through the education system, they are terrified of making mistakes. Thus, according to Dr. Robinson, we are "educating people out of their creative capacities (Robinson)." Formal education is regularly seen to inhibit the transformation of any early signs of creativity in children (Albert 44). By encouraging students to play with the language and to take risks without fear, we as teachers are also encouraging them to explore their creativity. Creative use of the language may help in certain aspects of language acquisition, particularly in grammar and vocabulary. In the

EFL classroom, a vast majority of the reading input is through creative works, albeit novels, readers (usually fiction), or poetry. Yet, when students need to put their language to use in writing, teachers normally ask for well-organized facts in descriptions, essays, and reports. Rarely do educators give their students the chance to produce any expressive or creative output. While textbooks abound teaching foreign language students how to produce a well-organized and strict-to-the-form essay, books instructing students how to write stories or poetry in their L2 are virtually non-existent (Smith 12). Creativity is not only important in language acquisition, but also in our students' everyday lives. Creative behaviors are the very core of human adaptation and development. Creativity has permitted the human race to solve problems and gaps, create and invent products and tools, and contribute novel ideas in individual, social, and global situations (Beghetto 255). Critical thinking skills are also developed through creative writing by making the students reflect on their own knowledge and information in order to reach an educated opinion and write about it (Bekurs and Santoli 2). Tin states,

> Creative writing activities can change students' perceptions not merely on writing but also on themselves and the world they live in, lower their anxiety, and develop their writing proficiency, accuracy and personalities (qtd. in Tuan 83).

By creatively writing about a topic that they are emotionally involved in, students will actively explore descriptive vocabulary and structures and reflect on their own writing.

By being able to choose the topics to write about, students feel empowered and active in their learning. Too often our students become invisible and the only voice that can be heard in the classroom is that of the teacher's. A writing journal is a place where our students can become visible. These journals can be a tool of inclusion and validation of all the writers (Castellanos 120).

Emotions play an important role in cognition and learning, in particular attention, memory, reasoning, and decision-making. People do not remember the boring, mundane events of their lives, but they do remember the events that evoke emotions of joy, happiness, and content (Dolan 1191). It has been proven that students learn and perform more successfully when they feel secure, happy, and enjoy the subject matter (Darling-Hammond et al 90). The emotional center in the brain processes all sensory input before being processed by the rational mind. This emotional center is what activates attention, which then activates a set of problem-solving and response systems (O'Regan 80). The emotional center is the filter for all cognition. By lowering this filter and creating a non-threatening, non-judgmental, and safe environment for our students, and allowing them to write about topics of their choice, we as educators are creating situations of optimal learning.

3. Previous studies

Reviewing previous investigations, we are able to see that writing journals improved both writing anxiety and writing quality in students studying English as a Foreign Language. Tuan found in his study, conducted at the Faculty of English Linguistics and Literature of the University of Social Sciences and Humanities in Ho Chi Minh City, that after thirteen weeks of using the writing journals the number of words per essay grew from an average of 196.71 words to 215.55 words, meaning an increase of 9.58%. Not only did the number of words per entry increase, but the amount of mistakes made per entry lowered by over 64%. Three-quarters of the students also answered that they felt that journal writing had been useful to them (Tuan 88).

Hwang, in an eight-week study in 2010 study in Thailand, found that guided freewriting aided students in improving their fluency. This study also showed that Hwang's students liked the writing journal activity and they felt that these writing journals helped them increase their English writing fluency (qtd. Patterson 88).

A similar study conducted in Japan by Fellner and Apple in 2004, but on computers, revealed that students who participated in this study increased their output by 350%, going from a mean of 31.5 words on day 1 to a mean of 121.9 words on day 7. They also noted an increase in the level of vocabulary complexity, with students using in larger quantities words from the 2000-word level (qtd. Patterson 88).

Patterson in his own study, though not offering exact numbers, observes that the use of writing journals in his own classrooms has influenced in the improvement of his students' writing fluency during the semester. He states that his students have expressed their enjoyment in the activity and they find it 'interesting and meaningful' (Patterson 88).

4. Research Methodology

Participants

This study was carried out in the city of Rivadavia in the province of San Juan, Argentina during the first and second trimesters of the 2015 school year. The students chosen for the study attended the Senior VI class (an Upper-Intermediate B2 level) at a private language school. Between the two Senior VI classes, there was a total of 25 (twenty-five) students, 16 (sixteen) females and 9 (nine) males, all belonging to middle to upper-middle class families. After administering a diagnostic test, consisting of a personal description and an essay, at the beginning of the year, I observed that there was a wide spectrum of writing proficiency, varying from poor to excellent, with the majority of the students scoring average. All students have between 5.5 and 6.5 clock hours of weekly English instruction. The average age of the

students was 16.52 years, ranging from 15 to 20 years old. The reason for the selection of these students was their L2 level and their experience with writing in the L2.

Instrumentation and Procedure

A diagnostic writing test was administered in March 2015 (at the beginning of the school year) and consisted of a personal description and a for-and-against essay, in order to measure students' writing proficiency. The compositions were graded on a four-way scale (Poor, Average, Good, and Excellent) taking into account accuracy, organization, and content.

Students were then asked to complete a survey, based on Liao and Wong's survey, in order to gauge their level of writing apprehension (Liao and Wong 165). (See Appendix I) Each answer was given a point value based on a five-point scale, the highest possible score being 50 and the lowest possible score being 10. Based on the final scores, students were classified as being either high apprehensives (score of between 30 and 50) or low apprehensives (score of between 10 and 29).

Each student was then required to have an extra notebook which would be used as a writing journal. They were required to write an entry of at least a paragraph twice a week outside of class, but were encouraged to write more often. Students were allowed to freely choose the topic about which to write and the format in which they wrote. The teacher encouraged them to explore creative genres such as stories and poems.

The students were also informed that the only score they would receive on their writing journals would be strictly based on participation. Mistakes in grammar, structures, vocabulary, etc. would not be penalized and they should write as freely as possible without worry. The teacher then assured the students that the entries would only be read by her so as not to feel restricted on the content. The teacher gathered their journals twice each term, at mid-term and at the end of the term, and then read and commented on the entries offering suggestions and encouragement.

At the end of the second term, the students were once again asked to complete the survey in order to assess writing apprehension and then compare the scores to the first test and see if apprehension had increased, decreased, or not changed at all. Students were also asked to answer eight open-ended questions based on their opinions of the use of the writing journals. (See appendix II)

In order to assess change in writing quality, the number of words, complex structures, and mistakes of the first and last entry of each student was taken into account and compared.

5. Findings

When asked, only seven students, all female, responded positively to having kept a journal or diary before this experience, and always in Spanish. This meant that writing journals would be a completely novel experience to an overwhelming majority of the students.

After administering a ten-question survey at the beginning of the school year in order to calculate writing apprehension, I found that there was a significantly high majority of my students that were considered to be high apprehensives. Of the twenty-five students surveyed, nineteen (76%) registered as high apprenhensives. After participating in writing journals for two trimesters, we can see that the tendency has completely changed. As we can observe in Table 1, the percentage of high apprehensives dropped from 76% to a mere 20%, while low apprehensives grew from only 24% to a significant 80%. What we can conclude is that the use of writing journals in the EFL classroom is directly related to the lowering of writing anxiety among our students.

	High Apprehensive		**Low Apprehensive**	
	# of students	**% of students**	**# of students**	**% of students**
Pre writing journals	19	76%	6	24%
Post writing journals	5	20%	20	80%

Table 1. Results of the Writing Apprehension survey.

Not only can we see that the students writing anxiety has lowered, but when asked, 76% of the students also feel that their anxiety has decreased thanks to the writing journals. The remaining students that responded negatively clarified that they believed that they didn't suffer from writing anxiety in the first place, which we can see corresponds to the same percentage of students who tested low on the apprehension scale.

In order to calculate writing quality, I compared the number of words, the number of complex structures, and the number of mistakes of the first and last entries. On average, the first entry contained 87.12 words. The last entry, after completing two trimesters, had an average of 179.04 words, translating in an increase of 105.51%. We can also see a similar tendency in the number of complex structures per entry. In the first entry, we can observe a mean of 2.12 complex structures, but in the last entry that mean increases to 5.72 complex structures (+169.8%). To fully round out my analysis of writing quality, I also took into consideration the amount of mistakes. We are able to observe that the amount of mistakes grew from an average of 3.8 mistakes to an average of 4.04 mistakes per entry. Although, as shown in Table 2, if we also take into consideration that the amount of words written per entry also

increased, we can see that in the first entry there was an average of one mistake every 22.93 words, while in the last entry there was an average of one mistake every 44.32 words.

	Pre Writing Journals	Post Writing Journals	Changes	
			Value	Percentage
Average number of words	87.12	179.04	91.92	105.51%
Average number of complex structures	2.12	5.72	3.6	169.8%
Average number of mistakes	e/ 22.93 words	e/ 44.32 words	21.39	-93.28%

Table 2. Analysis of writing quality.

Not only are we able to observe the increase in writing quality of these students, but when asked the students also recognized their improvement, with only two students responding negatively. A student who recognized his improvement stated that by writing more texts, he was able to learn new words and practice his grammar. This thought was shared by many students who said that by writing in the writing journals, they were able to explore new vocabulary. Another student said, 'I think that when you practice something constantly you become good in what you practice.'

What is most important is that all twenty-five students felt that they were able to freely express their ideas and opinions in their writing. A student expressed that she felt complete freedom in her writing, which she also felt helped her develop her capacities as a writer. Yet another student stated that she felt that she could express herself without fear of being judged. Many of the surveyed also believed that by writing about what they wanted, it incentivized them to look for the words and the forms to say exactly what they wanted to say. The vast majority (88%) also believed that they were able to be creative in their writing by experimenting with vocabulary and different genres. The students who responded negatively explained that they didn't feel that they were creative people. While reading the different entries, it was evident that the students played with different descriptive language with the use of adjectives and adverbs and synonyms to common words. Many students also explored different genres by writing short stories and even poetry.

The teacher's comments ultimately influence the feeling of freedom and self-confidence of the students and their writing. Of the twenty-five participating students, twenty-four responded that they felt positively towards the teacher's comments in their writing journal.

The one remaining student stated that she felt that comments from teachers had no effect on her, whether positive or negative. Many students voiced that the teacher's comments motivated them to write more and more difficult texts and that the comments made them feel better about themselves and their writing. Others were appreciative that the teacher did not use red ink and that all her comments were made in a kind, encouraging, constructive, and supportive manner. The students also believed that the comments helped them overcome mistakes and they also liked the fact that the teacher used humor in her comments. Furthermore, the students expressed their gratefulness that the teacher took her time to read and comment on every single entry from each student believing that this way they learned more and that the information 'stuck' better.

When asked how they would describe their experience with the writing journals, an overwhelming majority of the students (88%) characterized their experience in a positive light, while the remaining 12% said that the experience became tedious, boring, and stressful. Those who answered positively said that they believed that the journals helped them grow as writers. Many expressed their enjoyment of the activity characterizing it as fun and a great and dynamic way to learn. One student even said that he believed that it would be great to look at the journal when he was older to see what he was feeling at this point of his life. The students believed their experience to be so positive that they hope this project continues in the future so that other students can have the same experience (see Table 3).

No.	Questions	Answers	Number of students	Percentage
1	Had you ever kept a journal/diary before this experience?	Yes	7	28%
		No	18	72%
2	Do you believe that by using the writing journals, you were able to overcome any writing anxiety?	Yes	19	76%
		No	6	24%
3	Do you believe that by using the writing journals, your writing quality has improved?	Yes	23	92%
		No	2	8%
4	How did you feel when you read your teacher's comments?	Positive	24	96%
		Negative	1	4%

5	Do you feel you were able to freely express your ideas and opinions?	Yes	25	100%
		No	0	0%
6	Do you feel that you were able to be creative in your writing?	Yes	22	88%
		No	3	12%
7	How would you describe your writing journal experience?	Positive	22	88%
		Negative	3	12%

Table 3. Descriptive statistics of the questionnaire survey.

6. Pedagogical Implications

The use of writing journals in an EFL classroom is a great way for teachers to get to know their students and also to create a bond of trust between teacher and student. When students see that they are able to express themselves without being judged and they feel safe, their filters are lowered significantly and an optimal learning environment is created. Teachers need to be very careful in their comments, limiting them to encouraging and motivating phrases, even with humor, and gentle correction. Also, as we can see from the evidence, the use of writing journals has a great influence on the writing apprehension and writing quality of the students. It is my opinion that this project could be carried out in all levels of learning, modified for each level. An elementary level student could benefit as much as an upper-intermediate level student from the journals and develop a love of the written word by being able to write on topics that interest them and being able to explore different creative genres. All students must be made to see that writing is an important skill that they will need in their future.

7. Conclusions

This study shows that the students studying English at this private English Language School were overwhelmingly apprehensive towards writing at the beginning of the school year. But, after two trimesters of participating in writing journals, the tables were completely turned. As shown in previous studies, the use of writing journals in EFL classrooms positively influenced not only in writing apprehension, but also in writing quality by increasing the number of words and complex structures per entry, and lowering the amount of mistakes committed per word

in each entry. This result was achieved creating a safe, trustworthy learning environment and by allowing students to write on topics that interested them.

A concern that I have is that some students found this activity to be tedious and stressful because they didn't know what to write about. Although I gave them some topics to write about, it was not permanent. I propose that if this activity is carried out again, students should be constantly given topics or ideas for writing and it would be their choice to write about those topics or a topic of their choice.

I believe that this project would be beneficial to students of all levels, obviously modified to suit each one. My concern is that teachers will see the implementation of writing journals in their classrooms as too much extra work for them and reject them before weighing the proven benefits.

A large part of the writing journals was the encouragement to explore different creative genres such as stories and poetry. I believe that additional research is needed to discover the effects of teaching creative writing on the foreign language learner and the language learning process.

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Appendix I – Writing Apprehension Survey

Please circle the answer that is true for you.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
1 – I avoid writing in English.	5	4	3	2	1
2 – I hate having my writing in English evaluated.	5	4	3	2	1
3 – My mind seems to go blank when I start to work on a composition in English.	5	4	3	2	1
4 – I don't think that I can express my ideas clearly in English when writing.	5	4	3	2	1
5 – I don't like having others read my writing in English.	5	4	3	2	1
6 – I am nervous about writing in English.	5	4	3	2	1
7 – I think writing in English boring.	5	4	3	2	1
8 – When I hand in an English composition, I think I'm going to do poorly.	5	4	3	2	1
9 – I am not good at writing in English.	5	4	3	2	1
10 – I don't think I write as well in English as others.	5	4	3	2	1

Appendix II - Questionnaire

Please answer the questions truthfully for you.

1 – Had you ever kept a journal/diary before this experience?

2 – Do you believe that by using the writing journals, you were able to overcome any writing anxiety?

3 – Do you believe that by using the writing journals, your writing quality has improved?

4 – How did you feel when you read your teacher's comments?

5 – Do you feel you were able to freely express your ideas and opinions?

6 – Do you feel that you were able to be creative in your writing?

7 – How would you describe your writing journal experience?

8 – Any additional comments/thoughts?

The Five Why's of E-feedback: Benefits and suggestions.

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Abstract

Mainly in the last decade, teachers and educational researchers have been interested in the social and collaborative aspect of language teaching provided by the use of interactive technologies in the classroom. Thus, they have set out to find effective ways of using these technological tools for language teaching purposes. Composition instructors are not the exception and have increasingly turned to digital means of responding to student writing in the hopes of fostering the improvement of students' higher education writing skills. It is in this scenario that technology and response to academic writing converge in the concept of electronic feedback (e-feedback). The presentation, based on my Language IV course final paper, will aim to help teachers get acquainted with the benefits of e-feedback and, through some suggestions and considerations, will hope to prompt its inclusion in their future teaching practices.
Key words: technology – teaching – writing - e-feedback.

1. **Introduction:** Welcome to the jungle

"If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of tomorrow."

John Dewey

The rapid growth of the Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) enables the integration of technology with daily activities and education is not an exception. Mainly in the last decade, teachers and educational researchers have been interested in the social and collaborative aspect of language teaching provided by the use of interactive technologies in the classroom. Thus, they have set out to find effective ways of using these technological tools for language teaching purposes.

Taking into account that most of today's students are "digital natives" (Prensky 1), and considering the fact that a great part of the teacher's job is providing feedback, it is no wonder that composition instructors have increasingly turned to digital means of responding to student writing in the hopes of fostering the improvement of students' higher education writing skills. It is in this scenario that technology and response to academic writing converge in the concept of electronic feedback (henceforth e-feedback).

More specifically, the increasing impact of technology in the English as a Second or Foreign Language (ESL/EFL) writing classroom is inevitable. Therefore, teachers should understand what opportunities e-feedback provides for writing instruction and how to implement it to help students successfully traverse the academic writing process. However, due to the small amount of research material on the relation between e-feedback and the improvement of

ESL/EFL students' writing performance, the paper will focus on higher education writing instruction from a general perspective, encompassing both L1 and L2/EFL writing teaching and learning. Thus, this paper aims to help teachers get acquainted with the benefits of e-feedback and, through some suggestions and considerations, hopes to prompt its inclusion in their future teaching practices.

2. **What?** Behind the scenes: theoretical framework & literature review

"At the heart of effective technology integration, technology offers opportunities to be more actively involved in the learning experience."

Vanessa Vega

The concept of e-feedback, coined by Frank Tuzi (217), essentially makes reference to the feedback offered in a virtual learning environment (VLE), such as Google Docs®, blogs, wikis, etc.; where the instructor signs in to an online platform and comments on files previously uploaded by students. However, e-feedback is an umbrella term that covers a range of different approaches to the teaching and learning of writing. In this case, as we see writing as a social practice, we define it not only as a response given to an activity but also as "a joint activity involving interaction between learners and instructors or among students themselves, focusing on the whole process and including both how feedback is received and how it is utilized" (Dysthe et al. qtd. in Guasch et al. 51). This means that the process of e-feedback is considered a cycle which consists of teachers and/or peers offering feedback, learners receiving it and discussing it with the teacher and/or peers and, then, implementing it in the written assignment in progress.

Since e-feedback is a relatively new form of feedback, the literature on it is substantially less than on other more traditional options (oral and written feedback). However, some prior research highlight its contribution to creating a greater awareness of audience and communicative purpose (Ware qtd. in Ware and Warschauer 110), its empowering quality and ability to make writing classes more collaborative (Hyland and Hyland 93), its provision of a non-threatening environment for students to practice their literacy skills and receive peer feedback on their work (Colomb and Simutis qtd. in Hyland and Hyland 93), among other findings. As regards writing instruction, teachers have also began to see that computer-mediated communication (i.e. e-feedback) brings significant changes to the social dimension of learning, so it has also become an area of interest in the context of academic writing courses.

3. **Why?** All good things: benefits of e-feedback

"We need technology in every classroom and in every student and teacher's hand, because it is the pen and paper of our time, and it is the lens through which we experience much of our world."

David Warlick

Why should I include it in my teaching practices? Is the effort worthwhile? Will it help my students improve their writing performance? Some of these inquiries and others of the sort are bound to appear when teachers are presented with this alternative. So, in order to quell some doubts, we have made an attempt to list e-feedback's main advantages.

3.1. The faster, the better: immediate e-feedback

Researchers such as Hyland and Hyland (84-87) and Gibbs and Simpson (18-19), focused on the importance of the temporal dimension of feedback. The condition that feedback should be given immediately in order for it to contribute to learning was considered a necessity. Moreover, Gibbs and Simpson pointed out that it is essential for "feedback to be timely, in that it is received by students while it still matters to them and in time for them to pay attention to further learning or receive further assistance" (18). This immediacy of return is one of e-feedback's major appeals since, by offering it within a short period of time after the task has been handed, students are given the chance to modify, correct and, consequently, improve their work at a time when they are still mindful of the learning target intended by the writing task or assignment. Besides, by offering timely feedback, teachers can benefit from the chance to adjust content or teaching strategies based on actual learning needs.

3.2. Dimes and time well spent: low-cost e-feedback

Student writers can save time and costs by not having to physically submit their work since it can be uploaded at the time and place of their preference. In turn, instructors can do so by reading and sending comments to each student from any location without consuming class time and not having to carry and return the revised submitted papers in hand. For this reason, feedback is expected to be returned more quickly online than in hard copy. Another potential positive can be the improved legibility of feedback, in the event of unclear reviewer's handwriting.

3.3. No more "the dog ate my homework": recoverable e-feedback

An additional advantage of e-feedback is the reduction of potentially lost or forgotten papers (Sullivan, Brown and Nielson qtd. in Tuzi 220). Everything can be done online: students can submit and retrieve their work while reviewers can offer them feedback. Thus, the chance of

students losing or forgetting their work is greatly diminished and teachers are exempt of carrying around, or possibly losing, valuable pieces of writing. At the same time, this "recoverability" provides instructors with the possibility of using the transcripts of student writing stored online for in-class discussion and analysis. They can retrieve these transcripts and use them as a support to build students' metacognitive awareness of particular linguistic, interactional, organizational and rhetorical features (Sengupta qtd. in Ware and Warschauer 111).

3.4. Under the watchful eye: monitored peer e-feedback

Another advantage of e-feedback is that it provides a better means of monitoring conversations and students' work, thus, keeping the students on task (DiGiovanni and Nagaswami 268). Given that peer e-feedback is visible to instructors, they are able to monitor the conversations and provide guidance to writers in need of assistance. At the same time, the fact of knowing that teachers can supervise their conversations encourages students to keep their focus on the written assignment.

3.5. You are not alone: transparent and accessible peer e-feedback

According to Dysthe et. al (252-253), by means of acting as an interaction tool, technology for writing (i.e. e-feedback) can play an important role in the peer review process. It contributes both to making the interaction process "transparent" (252) as well as to understanding how students use the feedback (i.e. how students integrate the feedback into their products). Students are given access to other students' drafts, hence, they can learn from the various ways to solve an assignment and even gain a clearer picture of their own writing weaknesses. A further positive effect of this "transparency" is that it fosters a sense of community, learners' feel they are not alone as a result of seeing that peers also struggle and, thus, their writing apprehension is reduced when facing the challenge of writing (252-253).

3.6. Revision makes perfect: L2 e-feedback

Tuzi (230-231) examined the impact of e-feedback on the revisions L2 writers made to their academic compositions and reported that e-feedback influenced many L2 writers' writing process. Students considered that receiving e-feedback from various people invoked a greater awareness of audience and helped them focus on the strengths and weaknesses of their own writing. Hence, receiving multiple responses encouraged them to re-think their papers and revise more, especially in the cases where they detected that their intended message was not being received. They also indicated that being able to retrieve and review the received comments at a later time meant they were able to make more revisions than they would normally have made using traditional oral or written feedback.

4. Who? The grass is greener on both sides: Teacher vs. peer e-feedback

"Collaboration allows us to know more than we are capable of knowing by ourselves".

Paul Solarz

The most common e-feedback is the kind provided by a teacher. Thus, the majority of research has focused on analyzing and defining teacher e-feedback as opposed to peer e-feedback (Cho and McArthur qtd. in Guasch et al. 326). Gielen et al. (305) stated that learners interpreted teacher feedback as both more complex and preferable over peer feedback in terms of reliability and value. This can be explained by the "expert" or "knowledge authority" status that students attribute to their instructors. In other words, students consider teachers as the only ones equipped with the necessary expertise to be critical towards their work.

Researchers have also focused on the feedback given by peers in online environments. King (qtd. in Guasch et al. 327) affirmed that, as it is based on social interaction, peer e-feedback is crucial in improving learning in collaborative writing situations. In addition, Hyland and Hyland (93) mentioned that peer feedback encourages student participation in classroom activities and, hence, makes them more autonomous in their learning process. However, there have been instances where students have reported feeling insecure when evaluated only by a peer due to not receiving the expert knowledge attributed to the instructor (Ertmer et al. quoted in Guasch et al. 327). All the same, whenever students have been made aware of the advantages of being criticized by their peers, they have considered it a beneficial experience (Dysthe et al. quoted in Guasch et al).

5. When? It is not the destination but the journey: summative vs. formative feedback

"When the cook tastes the soup, that's formative.
When the guests taste the soup, that's summative."

Robert Stake

Although summative assessment is considered feedback to some extent, due to the fact that it gives information about the "gap" between the current and the desired student performance, it has proven inadequate for student improvement (Dysthe et al. 243). For this reason, Sadler (121) argues that teachers should favor formative assessment since it involves the monitoring of students' strengths and weaknesses by means of the recognition and reinforcement of the aspects associated with success or high quality and the modification or improvement of the unsatisfactory aspects of their performances. Thus, by using the term "formative feedback" (as a synonym for e-feedback), it is implied that students

should have the opportunity to improve through revisions, i.e. be able to make as many guided modifications throughout the development of their writing process as needed.

6. How? One man's research is another man's treasure: considerations and suggestions

"Feedback is the communication of praise, criticism and advice."

John Hattie

In spite of the small amount of research available on the connection between e-feedback and ESL/EFL writing teaching and learning, we can mention some general considerations to bear in mind along with a few suggestions to make the inclusion of e-feedback as seamless as possible.

6.1. Cater for everyone: acknowledge differences

From a social cognitive perspective, we should bear in mind that learners differ from each other in learning styles, personality, goals and prior knowledge. Therefore, students are bound to react to and interpret instructor and peer feedback according to those individual differences. For this reason, teachers should try to figure out which technological tool to respond to student writing fits their teaching and learning purposes best and is the most appropriate for their specific context.

6.2. Not "out of the blue": provide training

Teaching and learning in online environments requires specific communication competences related to the particularities of interacting online (Guasch et al. 196). Therefore, students and teachers alike can think of themselves as technologically-challenged and harbour some apprehension toward any sort of educational technology. This reluctance can be seen as a significant barrier to implement e-feedback in the classroom. However, if teachers and students are trained on how to appropriately use e-feedback software tools and actually experience engaging with the technology, it is likely that they will overcome any initial reservations they may have. Thus, it is advisable for institutions to make the effort of providing training, resources and support to instructors who wish to explore e-feedback in their teaching practices.

As regards the relevance of training students to give e-feedback, Stanley (qtd. in Hyland 91) found that those who receive guidance analyze their peers' writings in greater depth and develop better quality responses instead of simply offering vague comments and empty praise. Thus, trained students are able to provide their classmates with more specific suggestions for revision aimed at improving their essays. A suggestion for practice could be to offer students guidance on how to give e-feedback to their peers by presenting examples of the type of feedback they should provide; for instance, a comment composed of praise

along with constructive criticism on some aspect of the writing assignment that stands for revision and correction (e.g. transitions between topics).

6.3. The more, the merrier: consider the alternative

Normally, e-feedback is not enough to address all students' learning needs as writers have different preferences in terms of receiving assistance and providing judgement. Therefore, it must be considered as a supplement to, rather than a substitute for, more traditional forms of feedback such as face-to-face oral feedback. It should be seen as an available avenue for response and an opportunity to further support students' learning during the construction of their knowledge.

7. **Coming full circle:** Brief review and conclusions

"When schools tell students to put technology away, it's like asking a doctor to save a life with one hand tied behind his back."

Matt Miller

As regards the reasons why e-feedback is recommendable we can state that, although it requires additional training, it saves both students and teachers time and money, reduces paperwork issues, increases the amount of student participation, enhances instructors' ability to monitor conversations, diminishes students' writing apprehension, promotes students' self-regulation of their writing process and, in the case of l2 writers, prompts extra revisions of their drafts.

In relation to who should provide the e-feedback, we can mention that, although students consider teacher e-feedback more reliable and valuable, peer feedback is equally or even more important. The latter is favoured by the use of e-feedback since, due to the higher quantity of peer comments, students are able to make more revisions to their own work. Hence, peer e-feedback is deemed a must in collaborative writing situations.

With respect to the moment in the learning process where e-feedback should be introduced, formative feedback is seen as the best option. Formative feedback allows students to improve through revisions since it focuses on the learner's writing process.

Finally, we believe that some useful suggestions in connection to responding to student writing by using e-feedback are: acknowledging students' differences, providing training in both software tools and effective peer e-feedback, considering students' impressions, instructional goals and according methodologies when choosing the appropriate digital tool, and regarding e-feedback as a supplement to traditional forms of providing writing feedback to students.

However small the glimpse provided into the subject of e-feedback, we wish it will expand teachers' beliefs on how technology can support the feedback process. Ultimately, we hope to encourage teachers to seek and find a compatible tool for their teaching practices and, thus, take advantage of the opportunities at hand, in order to positively impact their students' writing performance.

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How Can the Use of Multimodal Resources of Modern Technology Enhance EFL Writing?

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Abstract

Based on an understanding of language as proposed by Systemic Functional Linguistics, this presentation[1] seeks to illustrate the important role that a multimodal perspective can have in the EFL writing class. The field of Multimodality, with its emphasis on the multiplicity of meaning-making modes, has been gaining ground in language teaching, partly as a result of the technological revolution of the last few decades. Modern technological devices (computers, tablets, smartphones) offer a variety of modes for the creation of meaning, which may allow teachers and students to "move ahead of a language-centred view of human communication" (Nelson 71). These resources can be brought to the EFL writing class to aid students in their own "authorial" process of creating meaning, combining verbal language with other resources.

Key words: Multimodality – Writing – SFL - Authorship

1. Introduction

Since the beginning of the development of the first electronic computer, language teaching has gone through many changes to keep up with the technological transformation that the computer brought with it. The advent of this new technology lead to language teachers exploring new ways of accessing and interacting with all types of cultural data, often presented in different material forms rather than only through verbal language. The ability to understand and interpret material beyond the linguistic domain has become fundamental because computers mingle information that belongs to a variety of domains; for instance, the linguistic, visual, auditory, kinetic and, programming domains. As a consequence, all active users of this type of technology, and mainly those who aim to use it as a tool for teaching, need to know that the computer is a processor of languages.

In saying that the computer is a processor of languages we are referring to semiotic systems other than the traditional ones based on conceptions of written and spoken language interactions. What we see displayed on our screens is the result of layering an array of semiotic systems that encode linguistic, visual, auditory and kinetic forms in an integrated manner. This new logic results in the emergence of new ways of producing meaning, and, as a consequence, new views in fields such as education, language literacy and language learning are very likely to be adopted.

This paper has been developed within the framework of the Research Project entitled "Systemic Functional Linguistics: Potential Pedagogical Applications" (F1021), being carried out at Facultad de Filosofia, Humanidades y Artes, directed by M.A. Marisel Bollati and co-directed by M.A. Rosa Cúneo.

The field that has studied such new ways of creating and interpreting these meanings is known as Multimodality, a notion that has been explored in depth by Gunther Kress. This scholar, among others, developed this concept from a social semiotic perspective. A multimodal social semiotic approach deals with practices for meaning-making drawing from several semiotic systems which "allow us to move ahead of a language-centred view of human communication" (Nelson 71).

In the last few years, education researchers have been trying to show how an influential area of social research such as foreign-language teaching can be benefited by the multi-layered notion of meaning-making proposed by Multimodality. It seems reasonable to expect that this notion could be productively applied in the field of language instruction in order to develop the four traditionally defined language skills: listening, reading, speaking and writing.

The aim of this paper is to analyse the nature of multimodal resources of modern technology and their application to L2 writing. Taking as a point of departure the assumption that the computer, together with other electronic devices such as smartphones and tablets, have become more accessible and affordable to a significant number of students- thus representing a potential learning tool-, teachers of English as a foreign language (EFL henceforth) can -or perhaps should- exploit such technological tools for the improvement of instruction of L2 writing.

2. From Systemic Functional Linguistics to Multimodal Studies

2.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL)

According to SFL, people use language as a tool to communicate different types of meaning, and "like any other tool, it is shaped by its purposes" (Halliday and Hasan 44). The meaning of a message is construed through three layers of meaning, which are referred to in SFL as metafunctions, with each metafunction representing "that part of the system of a language that has evolved to perform the function in question" (Halliday and Hasan 44). These three metafunctions are called ideational, interpersonal and textual. Each metafunction represents the part of the grammar that we use to talk about and understand processes, events, participants and things (ideational), to interact with others (interpersonal), and to create coherence between the different parts of our message (textual). From an SFL perspective, any message is the result of weaving the three metafunctions together (Halliday and Hasan 44).

In this paper, we will follow Gunther Kress, who applied notions of SFL to describe other semiotic modes through his social semiotic approach to multimodality.

2.2 Multimodality

Multimodality is an approach that sees human communication as a social phenomenon that involves more than language. In any interaction, speakers rely on a number of semiotic modes and cultural knowledge in order to create their messages. Speakers also create new meanings by combining modes. According to Bezemer et al, semiotic modes coexist within societies because they fulfil certain needs, and so they naturally change through time as such needs themselves change (4). A multimodal approach provides teachers with concepts about the different aspects of an interaction, which are relevant in any teaching context.

2.3 Semiotic mode

As a starting point, a multimodal semiotic approach allows teachers to make students aware of a multiplicity of modes, which they may already master to a certain degree. *Semiotics modes* (linguistic, visual, auditory and kinetic, among others) are systems for meaning-making, and each of them has its own organizing rationale and functions for the creation of meaning. Following Eggins, we can understand modes as *semiotic* because using them requires "a process of making meaning by choosing" (Eggins 3). Students grow conscious of the implications their choices may have as soon as they start interacting with each one of them and with the responses they receive from their audience or readers.

The students' audience is part of their own community, which has a common cultural impression of a determined grouping of symbols and how they should be arranged to create meaning (Bezemer et al. 11). Students become aware of these conventions and, by learning about all the possibilities available, they eventually become able to accomplish a further meaning function through the selection of modes that could be combined.

Modes interact with each other in our daily social exchanges and work together to drive the "psychological machinery" of *synaesthesia* (Nelson 56), the production of new ways of making meaning by "shifting ideas across semiotic modes" (Nelson 56). Nelson accounts for two processes: *transformation*, which he defines as the "purposive reshaping of semiotic resources *within* modes", and *transduction*, which he explains as a similar process to that of transformation but occurring "*across"* modes (Nelson 56). These two processes integrate the mechanism of synaesthesia and allow to combine modes to obtain new forms of meaning. The speaker's possibilities to create new meanings thus depend on the modal affordance of the semiotic mode.

2.4 Modal Affordance

Another concept that is prevalent within a multimodal semiotic approach is that of *modal affordance*, "the material stuff of a mode" (Kress 80) i.e., images, sounds, light, etc., and the

cultural aspect of a mode, i.e., the social constructions built with that material over the time. Modes vary from culture to culture in the meaning functions they offer, and this is due to the demands and specifications each society has, the nature of its members and the successive constructions of ways of producing meaning. These constructed affordances offer different uses for each mode; at the same time, the functions of each mode are consistently modified by the members of the community with each use in order to obtain the meaning necessary for the practices of that society at the time (Kress, 81). The possibility to create new meanings through the combination of modes could become a focus of interest for EFL teachers because the synaesthetic functions may nurse students' authorship.

2.5 Authorship

We understand *authorship* as the possibility to express the writer's "authorial voice" (Nelson 57), using resources that modes offer by being combined to create meaning. By understanding multimodality, teachers can prepare students to recognize that each mode can be used to do a specific thing; thus, the interpretation of signs depends greatly on the ability to understand what semiotic work each mode is performing. Having interpreted the reasons for and the meanings of the layering of modes, students will be able to adjust their writing in response to such interpretations and to capitalize on what they have seen modes do. In order to promote students' authorship, it is necessary that students learn about the properties of the environment in which they participate and of the technology that enables them to do so.

3. Discussion

Focus and Applications of Multimodality

A multimodal teaching approach requires a learning theory that focuses on the semiotic and social aspects of multimodality. According to Bezemer *et al,* the semiotic hand accounts for the signs of each mode, how those signs are organized to shape genres, how those genres are used and how modes are combined and used as a whole. The social hand deals with situational environments in which modes are generated as ways of producing meaning. Everyday situations yield occasions where people engage in the use of *ensembles*, which -according to Bezemer *et al*- are combinations of meanings "drawing on and consisting of different modes" (3). The way in which ensembles are realized and their possible uses are defined by their context, i.e., the community and the specific situation; for instance, an English class in San Juan.

As an example of an activity involving this approach, consider Figure 1.

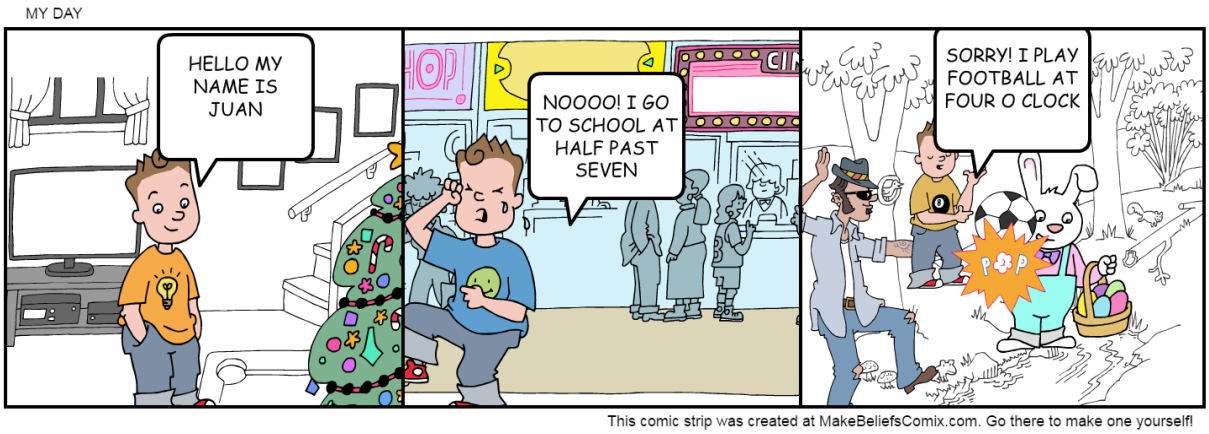

Fig. 1: Computer-generated comic by an 8-year-old EFL student from San Juan

The multimodal text in Figure 1 above was created in an EFL class in San Juan. Students carried out the task of creating a comic about their day using an online comic generator. The website offered the possibility of combining layouts, pictures of different characters -each with a set of moods-, backgrounds, panel prompts, talk and thought balloons, colours and language, which students had to select and drag onto an empty template.

The author of the comic was an 8-year-old student, who represented his daily routine by combining a variety of symbols from different modes. He decided that the layout would consist of three frames, each of them serving as introduction, development and resolution, respectively. When asked about his decision, he said that many of the comics he had read consisted of that number of frames and that it helped him express the most important things in his day.

The site presented a wide range of characters, and the student chose one which he considered resembled him physically. Additionally, his choice of mood for the character changed according to the activity and place he represented in each frame of the comic: when the place is “home”, the cartoon’s gestures and mood are relaxed; when he is going to school in the morning, the character’s “tantrum” shows discomfort; and when the place is a football club, the cartoon’s body language expresses comfort and interest. Other characters were not considered relevant in the first frame, but they were present in the second and third frame. Their position in the frame gives clear evidence of the student’s familiarity with means of drawing special attention to a given aspect, or on the contrary, defining what is secondary in importance. All of these authorial decisions reveal a great deal of knowledge on the part of the student.

Other meaningful choices include the selection of backgrounds. In the first frame, the background represents home, more specifically a living room. In this place, the student starts his narration. In the second frame, the city represents his daily journey to school. In the third

frame, plants and trees convey the idea of being outdoors (in this case, at a football club). This selection of backgrounds is meaningful because it has been chosen among a number of other possible settings for this narration. Eggins explains that semiotic systems have a "distinctive feature" (3): users of those systems make choices which acquire their meaning after being compared against the other possible choices that had been available to them. In Figure 1 we can think of a list of contrasts for the choices the student made: starting the narration in the living room vs the kitchen; a journey to school with the city as background vs the country; practicing football outdoors vs indoors. All these choices embody "a view of the world that is historically, socially and culturally shaped" (Bezemer et al. 6). The student's previous experiences with modes enabled him to make a selection of all the symbols, and the proper relations with each other, in order to communicate his own vision of things.

In the student's creation, material features such as layouts, characters and backgrounds have as important a role in the communication process as verbal language, which is perhaps the most conventional mode used in the EFL class to instruct and evaluate narrations. A multimodal lens has allowed us to go beyond a conventional approach and enabled us to analyse the meanings that this student created by resorting to other means different from written language, a mode he has not mastered yet, either in his L1 or in the L2 (English). The multimodal semiotic approach applies notions of SFL and describes a number of semiotic modes. Modes that represent visually organizing aspects, such as choosing the number of frames or the position of characters, are closely related to the textual metafunction. Additionally, the modes that enabled the student to select the events representing his routine and the character resembling him the most, are related to the ideational metafunction (*processes* and *participants* in SFL metalanguage). Lastly, the modes that allowed the student to express his feelings, and relations with other characters are related to the interpersonal metafunction (*interaction* in SFL terms).

4. Pedagogical Implications

A multimodal approach can have important implications for EFL teaching. The instruction of multimodal resources for L2 writing, made available by the use of computers or other technological devices, can help students "communicate and negotiate meanings by means of media that are not the L2" (Nelson 71). The multimodal texts created by students can then be used in class as authentic material to assist students in their process of learning about semiotic resources, organizing principles, and cultural references. Furthermore, when encouraged to report about the reasons for their choices, students are guided to verbalize the meanings they assign to elements, symbols and their relations, and this may facilitate the acquisition of the linguistic tools required for that purpose.

5. Conclusion

Discussing the use of a multiplicity of modes as normal in human communication, Kress says that

> The affordances of the new technologies of representation and communication enable those who have access to them to be 'authors,' even if authors of a new kind – that is to produce texts, to alter texts, to write and to 'write back' (173).

Nowadays, we can more easily have access to computers and make use of the multimedia resources they offer for L2 writing. The potential of a multimodal approach is that of facilitating the process of creation of texts, especially for students who do not yet master the L2. Having grown up in the 21st Century, students will most certainly bring to the classroom their previous experiences with multimodal texts but need to be instructed in the implications the combination of modes can have. This is not an easy task for educators, but communication is changing due to the advance of technology and, as a consequence, students' skills and expectations are changing, and teachers need to meet that demand.

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