

ORGANIZADORAS

Vera Müller & Vivian Magalhães

Proceedings of the 13th Annual Convention

One English -
many approaches,
needs and realities.



***PROCEEDINGS OF THE 13TH ANNUAL
CONVENTION***

ONE ENGLISH - MANY APPROACHES, NEEDS AND REALITIES



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ONE ENGLISH - MANY APPROACHES, NEEDS AND REALITIES



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PORTO ALEGRE

2008

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Capa: Vinícius de Almeida Xavier

Diagramação: Gabriela Viale Pereira

Dados Internacionais de Catalogação na Publicação (CIP)

A615 Annual Convention (13. : 2007 : Porto Alegre, RS)
Proceedings [recurso eletrônico] : One English - many approaches,
needs and realities / 13. Annual Convention ; org. Vera Müller,
Vivian Magalhães. – Porto Alegre : PUCRS, 2008.
125 p.

Convenção da Associação dos Professores de Inglês/RS (APIRS),
realizada na Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio Grande do Sul.
Sistema requerido: Adobe Acrobat Reader
Modo de Acesso: World Wide Web:
<<http://www.pucrs.br/orgaos/edipucrs/>>
ISBN 978-85-7430-785-5 (on-line)

1. Educação. 2. Inglês - Ensino. 3. Inglês – Aprendizagem. 4.
Professores – Ensino de Língua Inglesa. I. Muller, Vera. II. Magalhães,
Vivian. III. Associação dos Professores de Inglês/RS. IV. Título: One
English: many approaches, needs and realities.

CDD 372.6521

Ficha Catalográfica elaborada pelo
Setor de Tratamento da Informação da BC-PUCRS



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FOREWORD

In July 2007 APIRS held its 13th Convention at PUCRS, Porto Alegre. The event brought together the three associations of teachers of English of the South of Brazil, namely APLIEPAR, APLISC and APIRS, and it was called “*One English: many approaches, needs and realities*”. As with all the Conventions APIRS holds, the 2007 Convention also featured renowned speakers from here, there and everywhere.

It has always been APIRS’ major concern to provide the ELT community with as much shared knowledge as possible. Accordingly, we have decided to start registering the presentations held at our Conventions, which resulted in this first edition of Proceedings. This will enable the teachers who attended to review what was discussed; besides, those who could not make it to the Convention, can learn about what these topics. What is more, the presenters have the opportunity to register their production on a permanent basis.

The 2007 speakers were invited to submit their presentations so that we could publish the proceedings of the convention, and preserve the knowledge they shared with us on that occasion. The low number of articles received may be due to this being a new practice; however, we believe that the 2008 Proceedings will include many more articles. Since APIRS is also engaged in the environmental campaign to save the planet, by avoiding too much use of paper, these proceedings are coming out in electronic format.

We would like to point out that the content of each article is the sole responsibility of their authors.

The Proceedings will be available to APIRS members and the ELT community in general at our website www.apirs.com.br.

Last but not least, APIRS would like to thank PUCRS for the support, both for hosting the Convention and for publishing these Proceedings.

Vera Müller
Vivian Magalhães

Cultural Awareness in the Classroom

***Ana Maria Iribarem Soares
Colégio Militar de Curitiba***

Abstract:

This workshop contains some activities to increase cultural awareness among students within any level of English ability. The aims are different for each activity, and include, for example, the ability to recognize cultural images and symbols; working with cultural products; examining patterns of everyday life and cultural behavior; examining patterns of communication; exploring values and attitudes and cultural experiences.

Key words: EFL; culture; cultural awareness.

1 POEM

Essential Oils—are wrung

Emily Dickinson

Essential oils are wrung,
The Attar from the rose
Be not expressed by Suns alone,
It is a gift of screws.

The general Rose decays,
But this—in Lady's drawer,
Makes summer—when the Lady lies,
In ceaseless Rosemary.

1. Read the poem aloud. Ask the students to write down an adjective that describes the mood of the poem.

2. Read the poem again. The class confirm or modify their opinions, and note down the parts of the poem which they feel justify their choice of adjective.
3. Give out copies of the poem. Divide the class into groups, and ask each group to discuss one line.
4. Each group tells the meaning of one line of the poem.
5. Have a class discussion about the overall meaning of the poem. *What is the poet trying to say?*
6. Finally, ask the students to say in what way the poem reflects the target culture and the poet's attitude.

2 SONG

LYNYRD SKYNYRD "Red White And Blue"

We don't have no plastic L.A.
Frynds,
ain't on the edge of no popular
trend.

Ain't never seen the inside of that
magazine GQ.

We don't care if you 're a lawyer, or
a texas oil man,
or some waitress busting ass in
some liquor stand.

If you got Soul
We hang out with people just like
you

My hair's turning white,
my neck's always been red,
my collar's still blue,

we've always been here
just trying to sing the truth to you.

Yes you could say
we've always been,
Red, White, and Blue

Ride our own bikes To Sturgis
we pay our own dues,
smoking camels, drinking domestic
BREWS

You want to know where I have
been
just look at my hands

Yeah, I've driven by the White
House,
Spent some time in jail.

Momma cried but she still wouldn't
pay my bail.

I ain't been no angel,
But even God, he understands.

My hair's turning white,
my neck's always been red,
my collar's still blue,
we've always been here
just trying to sing the truth to you.
Yes you could say
we've always been,
Red, White, and Blue

Yeah that's right!

My Daddy worked hard, and so
have I,
paid our taxes and gave our lives
to serve this great country
so what are they complaining about

Yeah we love our families, we love
our kids

you know it is love that makes us all
so rich

That's where were at,
If they don't like it they can just
get the HELL out!

Yeah!

My hair's turning white,
my neck's always been red,
my collar's still blue,
we've always been here
just trying to sing the truth to you.
Yes you could say
we've always been,
Red, White, and Blue

oh..oh..Red, White, and Blue....

Red, White, and Blue

oh..oh....Red, White, and Blue

TASK SHEET:

Look at the questions below as you listen to the song. Then discuss your answers with your group.

1. What is the main theme or idea of the song?
2. Which words tell you the main theme or idea?
3. What social or cultural values are reflected in the song?

4. What kinds of people have these values?
5. Which of these values do you agree with?
6. Which of these values do you disagree with?
7. Do you think any of the values in the song are universal, or are they specific to the country or culture represented by the song?

3 OBSERVATION AND JUDGEMENT

The teacher will need a collection of photographs that represent different cultures.

1. Tell the students that they are going to explore observations about the target culture. Ask them to make a list of five to ten things which they have themselves observed.
2. Write up on the board:

Observation	Judgement
American food isn't very spicy	American food is awful.

3. Ask the students to think about whether their statements were observations or judgements
4. Then conduct a whole-class discussion on the following questions:
 - a. What influences the things we observe?
 - b. Why is it important to distinguish between observations and judgements?
 - c. How can we improve our observational skills?
 - d. Why do we think in cultural stereotypes?
5. Now pass round the photographs.
6. Students work individually, studying and writing five sentences about their pictures. When they have finished writing, they pass what they have written, together with the picture, to another student.
7. The other student will mark the sentences *O* (observation) or *J* (judgement), and then returns the sentences to the original writer.
8. In pairs or in groups, students discuss why they described the photographs the way they did.

4 WHAT'S THE MESSAGE?

1. Ask students to work in pairs. Distribute a hand out with different gestures and write the following questions on the board:
 - a) What does each gesture mean?
 - b) Which ones could you use in the UK or the US?
2. Students work together, discussing the gestures on the hand-out and answering the questions.
3. Each pair takes it in turn to report their interpretations to the class.
4. After all the pairs have finished, clarify their meanings. As an extension, ask:
 - a) Which of the gestures are different from the gestures used in your culture?
 - b) In what situations do you use gestures?
 - c) Are there any gestures you should not use with certain people?

5 SAME OR DIFFERENT

1. Play a sequence which illustrates several features of the target culture.
2. Small groups discuss the similarities and differences they have observed.
3. Individual students report to the class.

Same	Different

Another way to increase awareness of observable features of the target culture through video observation is to write questions to guide students towards specific observations. Sample questions:

- a) Do people wait to be introduced to each other, or do they introduce themselves?
- b) What kinds of clothes are people wearing?
- c) How close to each other do the people stand when they are talking?
- d) Do people wait for the host to pour them a drink, or do they help themselves?

e) What things do people talk about?

6 CLOTHES

Warm up: discuss what people are wearing in class.

- Write the following three columns on the board and draw pictures of the items on the right side of the board. Tell the class to match the three parts. Encourage the class to match the pictures to the countries if they are having troubles with the names. Example:

Clothing	Country	Picture
Kimono	Scotland	
Sarong	Malaysia	
Beret	Japan	
Kilt	France	

Follow up: Reading a text about fashion, for example.

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Understanding American Pie – A Different Approach To Teach English

Luciane Maliuk Dias

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Abstract:

Teachers of English are always seeking for authentic materials to enhance their lessons, and songs are definitely a great source for teaching ideas. They can be used to improve students' performances at any skill level. This paper presents a different approach in teaching English through the contextualization of the lyrics of Don McLean's biggest hit "American Pie" into the rock 'n roll scenario of the late 50s, and the 60s in the United States.

Key words: teaching, song, rock.

The lyrics of Don McLean's biggest hit "American Pie" make it possible, through the allusions contained, to identify a number of important songs, characters and events in the rock 'n roll musical context in the United States in the late 50s and the 60s. The song was written in 1972, and it shows, among other things, a poetic representation of the tragic death of Buddy Holly and the incident at the Rolling Stones concert in Altamont Speedway, California, in 1969.

The 1950s in the United States are known to be period of innocence and optimism, and the beginning of the popularization of rock 'n roll. The 1960s were a decade of political and social movements: the Vietnam War, Civil Rights, assassinations of John and Robert Kennedy, Malcom X and Martin Luther King Jr.

Don McLean was born on October 2, 1945 in New Rochelle, New York, USA. He began his recording career performing in New York clubs during the early 60s. In 1971 he wrote "American Pie", and in 1972 it reached the top of the Billboard 100 charts.

The advantage of working with this song in class is that there is no limit to the identification of facts, people or events, since there is not the ultimate interpretation of the song. It opens a wide range of possibilities for discussions, depending on your students' background.

Verse 1 makes allusions to Buddy Holly, an American rock star of the 50s, who died tragically in a plane crash, leaving his pregnant bride. The lines *"But February made me shiver, with every paper I'd deliver, bad news on the doorstep... I couldn't take one more step."* make references to the accident. The tragedy occurred on February 3, 1959. Holly was on a winter road trip with Richie Valens ("La Bamba") and The Big Bopper ("Chantilly Lace"). They had been traveling from city to city by bus, when their bus broke down, and Holly hired a young pilot to fly a small plane with him and the two others on board. The inexperienced pilot crashed the plane in Iowa during a snowstorm. All four men died instantly. The kind of music they played was very popular among teenagers and that day became known as *"the day the music died"*.

In verse 2, McLean refers to the teen idols of the late 50s and early 60s and their hits in the lines *"Did you write the Book of Love? (The Monotones' 'The Book Of Love') ...if the bible tells you so? (Don Cornell's 'The Bible Tells Me So') ... Do you believe in rock 'n roll?'"*(The Lovin' Spoonful's "Do You Believe in Magic").

Verse 3 portrays the decade after the plane crash that killed Buddy Holly, and the ascendance of new singers into the rock 'n roll scenario as it follows: *"And moss grows fat on a rollin' stone"* is an allusion to Bob Dylan's song, "Like a Rolling Stone." It can also be inferred that Dylan is the character in the lines *"When the jester sang for the King and Queen"*.

In a coat he borrowed from James Dean" because on the cover of his album "The Freewheelin'" he is wearing the same kind of coat James Dean wore in the movie "Rebel Without a Cause". *"And a voice that came from you and me"* alludes to Dylan's folk songs roots. This verse also refers to Elvis Presley, the King. In 1958 Elvis joined the army, leaving room to Dylan's emergentness¹, as inferred in the lines *" Oh and while the king was looking down, the jester stole his thorny crown"*.

¹ e-mer-gent-ness, noun Source: <http://dictionary.reference.com/search?q=emergentness&r=66>

In verse 4, Don McLean shows the influence of the British artists in rock 'n roll, and the changes that occurred due to it. "*Helter skelter in a summer swelter. The Byrds flew off with a fallout shelter, Eight miles high and falling fast.*" "Helter Skelter" is a Beatles' heavy metal song, completely different to the kind of danceable rock the American teenagers of the 60s used to enjoy. "Eight Miles High" is a hit from The Byrds, another British band, and it is considered to be the first recognized drug song. "*With the jester on the sidelines in a cast.*" - the jester is Bob Dylan, who suffered a motorcycle accident in 1966, and had to spend nine months recovering at home. The lines "*Now the half-time air was sweet perfume while the sergeants played a marching tune, We all got up to dance but we never got the chance*" refer to the Beatles' 1967 album Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band, which established a 'new' rock 'n' roll, with hidden drug messages, such as in "Lucy in the Sky with Diamonds", in which the first letters of the nouns form LSD, an hallucinogen.

In verse 5 McLean makes allusion to the Rolling Stones' Altamont Speedway concert in 1969, when a man was killed in the audience during the show. "*No angel born in hell could break that Satan's spell*" refers to the Hell's Angels, hired to provide security during the concert. "*And as the flames climbed high into the night to light the sacrificial rite, I saw Satan laughing with delight*". The sacrificial rite is the murder of Meredith Hunter, a young man who was beaten and stabbed to death by the Hell's Angels.

"*I met a girl who sang the blues and I asked her for some happy news, But she just smiled and turned away.*" The beginning of verse 6 refers to Janis Joplin and her early death of an overdose. Then "*And in the streets the children screamed, the lovers cried and the poets dreamed*" McLean refers to the hippie poets' and songwriters' silence due to the horrors of the Vietnam War.

The chorus, repeated seven times in the song, can be understood as Don McLean's resentment for all the things that happened to the American rock 'n roll he knew and loved. "As American as apple pie" is a saying in the United States to say that something is typically American, so "*Bye, bye, Miss American Pie*" is McLean's farewell to the good old rock 'n roll.

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The use of movies to develop foreign language proficiency

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Abstract:

According to SPERBER & WILSON's Relevance Theory people pay attention to what appears to be most relevant to them at a certain moment, which is what makes information worth processing for them. However, when the hearer cannot make inferences, relevance is not achieved. The present study suggests that without the appropriate background knowledge it is impossible to understand the utterances in movies that portray very specific cultural issues. Moreover, these movies are important in the EFL classroom for they help students develop their view of the culture of the target language. To achieve this intent, the movie *Good Night, and Good luck* is then analyzed by means of the Relevance Theory, showing the importance of background knowledge to make the proper inferences. Further studies need to be done in order to learn more about how inferences and implicatures work in pragmatics development.

Key Words: Relevance Theory, Inference, Pragmatics development.

1 INTRODUCTION

The present paper aims to show that movies represent a helpful tool for enhancing nonnative speakers' knowledge about their target language. Studies about pragmatics development are also highlighted here as a way of helping foreign students to better understand the utterances.

According to Relevance Theory, "a context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer's assumptions about the world". (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995: 15). So the context is not only the environment where the utterance takes place, it requires also an understanding of cultural assumptions. When a speaker communicates, the hearers make a process of inferential recognition about what is said. This inferential process is extremely important to understand

the whole utterance because comprehension is achieved by fulfilling the gap between the encoded meaning and this utterance within a context. But sometimes such inferences cannot be realized. It is the case when these inferences are concerned with cultural matters. So it is not enough for a student of a second or foreign language to learn only grammar. In some cases s/he needs to know about cultural aspects of the language to make the appropriate inferences. This fact leads to the importance of teaching pragmatics in the classroom. The question of how pragmatics can be taught, raised by BARDOVI-HARLIG & MAHAN-TAYLOR (2003) comes in this scenario with the objective of helping students of a foreign language to make the inferences that are not realized for nonnative speakers because they are completely unaware of the cultural context. Considering the fact that students usually develop pragmatic competence in a second language by themselves, it would be helpful that they could work with it in classes also. In order to fill this void, the students have movies that appear as an option to help pragmatic development. They are also important because they represent authentic language samples. The movie chosen to illustrate the ideas exposed in this paper is *Good night and good Luck*, written and directed by George Clooney, for its subject matter refers to a very specific cultural and historical context of the United States in the fifties, namely McCarthyism.

2 RELEVANCE THEORY

The Relevance Theory (RT) developed by DAN SPERBER and DEIRDRE WILSON (1986/1995) aims at explaining what happens during the communication process. According to RT people pay attention to what appears to be most relevant to them at a certain moment. Therefore, Relevance is a single property that “makes information worth processing for a human being” (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995:46). The communication process occurs in the interaction between speakers and hearers, but not only by encoding and decoding information. For SPERBER & WILSON, the context is important for the understanding of an utterance:

“A context is a psychological construct, a subset of the hearer’s assumptions about the world. (...) A context in this sense is not limited to information about the immediate physical environment or the immediately preceding utterances: expectations about the future, scientific hypotheses or religious beliefs, anecdotal memories, general cultural assumptions, beliefs about the mental state of the speaker, may all play a role in interpretation.” (SPERBER & WILSON, 1995:15)

An important device to achieve communication is called *mutual knowledge*. When communicating, both speaker and hearer believe that they are sharing the same context. According to SPERBER & WILSON, however, there is no guarantee that by sharing the same knowledge speaker and hearer could have a better understanding of an utterance. So they define what is called *cognitive environment* “as a set of facts that are manifest to him” (SPERBER & WILSON, 1996:39). The main argument of the authors is that when people communicate they aim to alter the cognitive environment of their addressees, and this way human cognition is relevance-oriented. PERNA (2003:49) states that when this is taken for granted, “a speaker who knows a hearer’s cognitive environment can successfully infer which assumptions he is likely to entertain.” YULE (2003:85) says that the interpretations made by a hearer must be based on “pre-existing knowledge structures”. For people that share the same culture, things that are not said can be clearly interpreted. Therefore, members of different cultures must pay attention to the *cultural schema* in order to avoid misunderstandings, because even a subtle difference can cause strangeness.

SPERBER & WILSON (1996:46). say that “an individual’s cognitive environment is a set of assumptions available to him”. An individual can select a right context with the help of encyclopedic entries that contain previous information about the topic being transmitted. Therefore the context used to process a new assumption is composed of “a subset of the individual’s old assumptions, with which the new assumptions combine to yield a variety of contextual effects.” (SPERBER & WILSON, 1996:132). At this point these authors raise an issue that has to do with how the context is determined. They say that the context is not a matter of choice, but it is given at a certain point in a verbal exchange. In fact, the selection of a particular context can be determined by the search for relevance. RT then shows that the individuals aim at the most efficient information processing possible. Hence in order to

maximize relevance and reach positive cognitive effects, the speaker can enrich the hearer's cognitive environment by helping him to make the appropriate inferences.

3 PRAGMATICS DEVELOPMENT IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE AND MOVIES

The study of developmental pragmatics is a discipline that brings a new approach to language teaching. For KASPER (1997) pragmatics is the study of communicative action in its sociocultural context. BARDOVI-HARLIG & MAHAN-TAYLOR (2003) explain that teaching pragmatics is to prepare lessons and activities created by teachers of English as a second and foreign language. Studies about pragmatics development suggest that it is profitable for both production and comprehension. KASPER & ROSE (2002) say that the study of pragmatics in second language learning investigates how L2 learners develop the ability to understand and perform action in a target language. LOCASTRO (2003) reinforces this idea saying that the foreign language environment demands a comprehensive understanding of pragmatics and its importance so as to develop language proficiency. KASPER (1997) comments that most studies in pragmatics development focus on aspects of production and very few examine pragmatic comprehension. The idea discussed in this paper is that movies may help to develop pragmatic competence in the foreign language, especially concerning the inferential process, for they are authentic texts filled up with cultural knowledge.

Movies are a form of entertainment that appeals to almost everyone. OSTERMANN (2006) claims that the popularity reached by the cinema nowadays is undeniable. Movies can be an important tool in language teaching because of two aspects: first the students can learn new words or expressions, especially if the subject refers to an area they do not know, like medicine or law, for example; the second aspect is related to the idea that movies bring the students real samples of the target language. Movies come in the classroom scenario bringing authenticity and culturally based issues. Therefore, the more inferences a student can make, the more pragmatically competent s/he becomes. In accordance with BROWN & YULE (1983:265), "inferences are

connections people make when attempting to reach an interpretation of what they read or hear". Once the right inferences are made, the readers reach the main goal of the text, which is meaning.

Movies can be considered as texts. When watching a movie, viewers must follow the story and make inferences in order to fully understand its content. However, the background knowledge of the viewer may vary, and depending on the subject matter of the movie the process of inference can be damaged. PERSSON (1998) says that an empirical investigation into cinematic comprehension has to be sensitive to the specificity of the text and *background knowledge*. So, *background knowledge*, *pragmatic context* and the *text* itself are called *information sources* which, according to PERSSON (1998) give more strength to the inferential process. This way background knowledge can be seen as an important factor for the understanding of movies, and once it varies from individual to individual, it is necessary to pay attention to the content of the movie chosen. This way, knowing the cultural context would help the viewers to make inferences with as little effort as possible. To carry out this thought, the next chapter contains information about McCarthyism because without knowing about this subject, the inferential process in watching the movie *Good Night, and Good Luck* is not effectively achieved.

4 GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK AND MCCARTHYISM

McCarthyism is a term used to describe a period of intense communist fear and suspicion in the United States that started in the late 1940s and continued to mid 1950s. According to O'CALLAGHAN (1990:109), America was worried by fears of war and their worst fear was the Soviet Union. Most Americans then started to see communist conspiracy everywhere. Taking advantage of this fear, Senator Joseph McCarthy started his "witch hunt", which searched people supposed of being communists. In the mid fifties McCarthy's power started to decrease. One of the responsible people for his fall was newsman Edward R. Murrow.

The movie *Good Night, and Good Luck*, released in 2005, portrays the downfall of McCarthy triggered by journalists Edward R. Murrow and Fred

Friendly. The central character is Edward R. Murrow (starred by David Strathairn), a television journalist. At the end of one broadcast in 1940, Murrow used the phrase “Good night and good luck” for the first time. He continued repeating it, and this is where the name of the movie came from. Co-star George Clooney plays Fred Friendly, Murrow’s producer. Friendly and Murrow share the same opinion about McCarthy and they are aware of the risks they are about to face by attacking the Senator, but together they proceed with their idea. They broadcast the story of Milo Radulovich, an Air Force lieutenant who has been dismissed because his father and his sister are suspected of having communist relations. This program triggers McCarthy’s wrath towards Murrow so he is also investigated and accused of being a communist sympathizer. McCarthy promotes hearings in which he accuses his victims. Then Murrow’s reporters start to attend McCarthy’s hearings, intending to use his image against him. When the journalists decide to go over McCarthy, they face CBS superiors, who fear to lose their sponsors and their peace. Considering the footages used in the movie, McCarthy is another important character, and he is played by himself. Clooney shot the movie in black & white to reinforce this atmosphere and to match McCarthy’s footages.

The information above follows in the analysis of the movie through Relevance Theory, intending to demonstrate the need of the appropriate background knowledge to generate inferences.

5 THE ANALYSIS OF GOOD NIGHT, AND GOOD LUCK

Right at the beginning of the movie, the journalists are working on the show. Edward Murrow tells Fred Friendly the story of Milo Radulovich, a member of the Air force who has been dismissed under suspicion of being a Communist. The following dialogue needs some knowledge about McCarthy’s way of acting during his witch-hunt:

Murrow: _ There’s a story here in the ‘Detroit News’, Dexter, Michigan. A kid named Milo Radulovich.

Friendly: _ Italian?

Murrow: _ Irish. Air Force kicked him out because his dad reads some Serbian newspaper.

Friendly: _ Was he a Communist?

Murrow: - I don't know.

In 1952 an Immigration Act was passed, allowing the government to deport immigrants or naturalized citizens engaged in subversive activities. This way, people who were not American were always seen with suspicion and were investigated in order to protect the United States from the threat of Communist subversion. To better understand this dialogue it is also important to perceive the irony used in the line "Air Force kicked him out because his dad reads some Serbian newspaper". Milo Radulovich is of Serbian descent and that is why Murrow refers to his father.

In the same scene, where the journalists are still talking about Radulovich's case, more evidence of McCarthy's *modus operandi* is shown:

Friendly: _ Is he being brought before the committee?
Murrow: _ No.
Friendly: _ Then it's not McCarthy.
Murrow: _ Isn't it?

Since McCarthy used to bring people accused of being Communists before his committee, Friendly assumes it is not him who charged Milo Radulovich because he has not been called to the committee yet.

Later on, Friendly received a colonel in his office. They discuss Radulovich's case and the colonel says Friendly is attempting to navigate in very dangerous waters. After airing Radulovich's piece, Murrow and Friendly talk about this visit:

Murrow: - What did the General tell you yesterday?
Friendly: - A Colonel. There were two of them.
Murrow: - That makes a General.
Friendly: - They weren't too pleased.
Murrow: - You're gonna get audited this year.
Friendly: - Not me, you. I told them I didn't want to do the story.
Murrow: - You always were yellow.
Friendly: - Better than red.

This dialogue presents two puns, the first one is when Murrow asks about the General, and Friendly says it was a Colonel, in fact two of them. Murrow then says cynically that two Colonels make a General because this one is in higher position than the other in military rank. The second one is related to the colors mentioned. When Murrow says Friendly has always been 'yellow', it is possible to infer that he intends to say he was a coward. However he could

be just referring to the fact that Friendly was a Jew, since yellow is the color that symbolizes Judaism. Friendly's answer 'Better than red' means that it is better be a coward than a Communist, since red is the color of Communism. The journalists air the piece about Milo Radulovich. Then some information about journalist Don Hollenbeck is shown:

Murrow: - I read the O'Brian piece.

Hollenbeck: - Yeah, it's tough. I'm a pinko, I slant the news. I'm just waiting for him to say my wife left me too. (...), Ed I just came by to tell you how great the Lieutenant piece was. (...) How's the fallout?

Murrow: - Mostly good, surprisingly.

Hollenbeck: - Is this the start? Are you taking sides?

Murrow: - It's just a little poke with a stick, see what happens.

Hollenbeck: - Well let me know if I can help.

Murrow: - But you're a pinko, Don.

To better understand this conversation it is necessary to know that journalist Jack O' Brian was a supporter of McCarthy. O' Brian attacked Hollenbeck openly as much as he could, calling him a *pinko*, which is a pejorative term for a person sympathetic to the Communist party, but not necessarily a communist. It was never proved whether Hollenbeck was really involved with communism, but it is possible to infer his tendency towards it when he anxiously asks Murrow "Are you taking sides?" Those days people should stand for one side or the other. If they were not communists they should be against it or vice-versa. When Hollenbeck says "Well, let me know if I can help", the idea that he could be involved with communism, and that he wanted McCarthy to be stopped, is reinforced. Murrow's answer "But you're a pinko, Don", although sarcastic, could reinforce this idea, too.

The last part of the program brings Murrow's incisive closing, which brilliantly starts to build McCarthy's fall:

"(...) Twice he said 'The American Civil Liberties Union was listed as a subversive front.' (...) Earlier, the Senator asked, 'Upon what meat does this our Caesar feed?' Had he looked three lines earlier in Shakespeare's 'Caesar' he would have found this line, which is not altogether inappropriate. 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves.' No one familiar with the history of this country can deny that Congressional committees are useful. It is necessary to investigate before legislating but the line between investigating and persecuting is a very fine one and the junior Senator from Wisconsin has stepped over it repeatedly. We must not

confuse dissent with disloyalty. We must remember always that accusation is not proof and that conviction depends upon evidence and due process of law. We will not walk in fear, one of another. We will not be driven by fear into an age of unreason if we dig deep in our history and doctrine and remember that we are not descended from fearful men nor from men who feared to write, to associate, to speak and to defend the causes that were for the moment unpopular. This is no time for men who oppose Senator McCarthy's methods to keep silent, or for those who approve. We can deny our heritage and our history but we cannot escape responsibility for the results. We proclaim ourselves, indeed as we are the defenders of freedom wherever it continues to exist in the world but we cannot defend freedom abroad by deserting it at home. The actions of the junior Senator from Wisconsin have caused alarm and dismay amongst our allies abroad and given considerable comfort to our enemies. And whose fault is that? Not really his. He didn't create this situation of fear, he merely exploited it, and rather successfully. Cassius was right. 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves.' Good night, and good luck."

The speech attacks McCarthy through his own words and acts. Murrow comments that the hearing demonstrates one of McCarthy's techniques, which is attacking people by saying things he could not prove. Then, following McCarthy, Murrow uses quotations from Shakespeare's *Caesar*: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, but in ourselves", which could mean that the problem was not in the American people or the country, but in the conscience of the people. Murrow moves on saying "we will not walk in fear one of another" because this was a real fact in McCarthyism. People feared everything and everyone, and sometimes they even feared their blood ties. Another interesting quotation is: "we cannot defend freedom abroad by deserting it at home". It refers to the fact that Americans were involved in foreign affairs claiming for liberty, while their own country was imprisoned by fear. At the end of the speech, Murrow highlights the fact that it was not McCarthy who created this fear of communism. It started with the first Red Scare (1917-1920), and then in 1949 the Soviet Union exploded an atomic bomb. McCarthy only used this atmosphere of fear to promote himself by creating a second Red Scare or simply, McCarthyism. Some time after the success of the program, Radulovich is reinstated, which makes the journalists radiant. One month later McCarthy gives his rebuttal to Murrow's program:

Good evening. Mr. Edward R. Murrow, Educational Director of the CBS devoted his program to an attack on the work of the US Senate Investigating Committee and on me personally as its Chairman. Now, over the past 4 years, he has made repeated attacks upon me and those fighting Communists. (...) However, in this case I feel justified in doing so because Murrow is the symbol the leader and the cleverest of the jackal pack which is always found at the throat of anyone who dares to expose individual Communists and traitors. (...) Mr. Murrow said on this program and I quote: "The actions of the junior Senator from Wisconsin have given considerable comfort to the enemy." That is the language of our statute of treason, rather strong language. If I am giving comfort to our enemies, I ought not to be in the Senate. If, on the other hand, Mr. Murrow is giving comfort to our enemies he ought not to be brought into the homes of millions of Americans by the CBS.

McCarthy used in his rebuttal his technique of "character assassination" when he tried to implicate Murrow and CBS in the association with Communism. He called Murrow "the cleverest of the jackal pack" who wished to destroy the ones that exposed communists. Murrow's answer to McCarthy's rebuttal shows once again how incoherent the Senator was, not having any substantial proof for anything. Besides that, he reinforced the idea that any people who opposed him was considered a communist and would have their lives completely investigated:

Murrow - Last week, Senator McCarthy appeared on this program to correct errors he might have thought we made in our report of March the 9th. Since he made no reference to any statements of fact that we made, we must conclude that he found no errors of fact. He proved again that anyone who exposes him, anyone who doesn't share his disregard for decency and human dignity and the rights guaranteed by the Constitution must be either a Communist or a fellow traveler. I fully expected this treatment. The Senator added this reporter's name to a long list of individuals and institutions he has accused of serving the Communist cause. His proposition is very simple: anyone who criticizes or opposes Senator McCarthy's methods must be a Communist. And if that be true, there are an awful lot of Communists in the USA. (...) Having searched my conscience and my files I cannot contend that I have always been right or wise but I have attempted to pursue the truth with diligence and to report it even though, as in this case, I had been warned in advance that I would be subjected to the attentions of Senator McCarthy. We shall hope to deal with matters of more vital interest next week. Good night, and good luck.

After this program the reporters receive the news that McCarthy will be investigated by the senate, which marks their victory and McCarthy's downfall.

6 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to SPERBER & WILSON's Relevance Theory people pay attention to what appears to be most relevant to them at a certain moment, which is what makes information worth processing for them. However, when the hearer cannot make inferences, relevance is not achieved. One important device in the inferential process is background knowledge, which is a pre-existing knowledge structure people develop throughout life. When learning a foreign language people develop background knowledge about this language, but this process is not as fast as it is in their own mother tongue. Teaching pragmatics can be a way of speeding this process. It is helpful then to use movies that present cultural matters in the classroom in order to enhance students' perception about their target language.

Movies like *Good Night, and Good Luck* can be really boring for a viewer that does not have any or little information about the topic of McCarthyism. This impression is due to the fact that the viewer could not make inferences because of the lack of adequate background knowledge. Bringing movies like this to the EFL classroom and showing the students the important elements they need to know can be a pleasant experience for both teachers and students. As BARDOVI-HARLIG & MAHAN-TAYLOR (2003) comment, pragmatics is an area of language instruction in which teachers and students can learn together. Studies in the field of pragmatic development are relatively new, and many of them are related to production, not to comprehension. Therefore, further studies should try to focus on how teachers could help students work with implicatures and inferences.

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Teachers' (dis-)beliefs at the perfect design for English teaching

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Abstract:

Following the works of Borg (1999), Woods (1996), Gil (2005), Barcelos (2001) and Gimenez (2000) on Teachers' Beliefs, this research aimed at (1) listening to teachers' beliefs about the best design for teaching English as a foreign language in Brazil; (2) trying to understand what influences these beliefs; and (3) checking whether different teaching contexts allow teachers to freely design their classes. Results show that the teachers who were interviewed do not believe in one specific design, but have been adapting their knowledge of the many available designs in order to fulfill students' needs.

Key words: Teachers' beliefs, teaching, English as a Foreign Language.

INTRODUCTION

Since the Middle Ages, when the teaching of modern vernacular languages began in England (Howatt, 1985), it seems that teachers, theoreticians and researchers have been pursuing the 'perfect' design² for the teaching of foreign languages. The expansion of air travel, which increased the role of English as a world auxiliary language, resulted in a need for "textbooks that offered a more thorough grounding while at the same time keeping at least half-an-eye on the practical needs of the adult learner. The outcome was a growing market for 'methods': textbooks which established a basic design that was repeated from one language to the next" (Howatt, 1985, p.139)

² For the purpose of this study, I follow Richards and Rogers (1986) distinction between the concepts 'approach', 'design' and 'procedure', where 'design' is understood as the objectives, content selection and organization, roles of learners, teachers and materials, which should be consistent with the 'approach' or theory of language learning, and guide the 'procedures' or classroom behaviour.

However, only recently have studies considered teachers' "voices" (Carazzai & Gil, 2005, p.169) on the matter. Recent research has shown that teachers' classroom practices can be better understood if we look at the beliefs that underlie these practices (Carazzai & Gil, 1995; Borg, 1999; Gimenes, Mateus, E.; Ortenzi, D.; Reis, S., 2000; Woods, D.,1996). Accordingly, the present study follows a broad perspective about teachers' beliefs (Finardi & Gil, 2005), taking into consideration how teachers say they perform in their real teaching contexts and also what they believe to be the best design for English teaching.

TEACHERS' BELIEFS

According to Barcelos (2001), beliefs are the opinions and ideas that teachers have about the processes of teaching and learning, which can influence the way teachers organize and define their chores. Researchers have found that the origin of teachers' beliefs lie on their own school experiences: "teachers tend to recall and build upon their own experiences in classrooms. Teachers have internalized models of teaching by 'apprenticeship of observation', which they activate once they are in a classroom" (Almarza, 1996, p.510; see also Freeman, 2001).

This new understanding of teachers' beliefs as influential to the teaching practice and dependant upon teachers' experiences as students has lead researchers to explore "how teachers learn to teach" (D'Ely & Gil, 2005, p.280). Not only research has looked at the process of acquisition of designs, but also at the experiences teachers bring to their professional development.

Consequently, "discovering a teacher's methodology of instruction requires investigating the belief system that lies beneath the surface of planning and executing classroom activities" Ulichny (1996, p.179).

CONTEXT OF RESEARCH AND DATA COLLECTION

English teachers in Brazil face various teaching realities, such as teaching in public schools, private schools and private language institutes.

While most public schools seem to offer poor working conditions, such as lack of specialized material and big groups, private school teachers usually have access to didactic material, but the size of the groups may vary. Most private language institutes work only with small groups (from private classes to 15 students in a group), but follow a specific design which teachers are expected to stick to.

In order to investigate the beliefs of those teachers who work in these various teaching contexts, interviews were held with one teacher from each context described above. Interviews were exploratory, with open questions and as little interference from the researcher as possible. The three teachers interviewed currently teach in Florianópolis, in the state of Santa Catarina, and their experience ranges from 7 to 10 years of teaching.

ANALYSIS

Analysis of data was based on the ethnographic model (Carazzai & Gil, 2005). The interviews were first transcribed verbatim. Then, from the interviews, moments that reveal beliefs of the teachers were deeply analyzed, in order to answer the following research questions:

1. What do teachers believe to be the best design for teaching English to speakers of other languages?

From the answers of the teachers we can see that teachers do not see designs as 'magic formulas', anymore. Teachers of both private and public schools need to adapt their teaching to the needs of the students. Ana³, the teacher of the private school which was studied, reminds us that students and parents are not worried about learning how to speak a language. For that purpose they would look for a private language institute, which suggests parents' disbelief in the school as a place where their kids can learn a foreign language. What they want from English classes at school is preparation for the university entrance examinations, known as 'vestibular'. Ana then works "mainly with texts, the reading comprehension itself, I don't totally agree with it [not

³ The names of the participants were changed in order to protect their privacy.

working the four skills] because it makes language decontextualized, but the school asks us to prepare students for the ‘vestibular’, which is basically reading comprehension, so for this purpose, focusing only on reading is ok”.

Rosana teaches English in the public school. She says she does not believe in “one specific design, as there are many other factors involved. It is useless to have a wonderful design, based on the communicative approach, for example, if the professional is not prepared for that and works traditionally. Also to be considered are school interests and students, parents, and the society. I’ve also seen teachers do a great job only with chalk and a blackboard.” Her experience as a public school teacher has shown her that students are not interested in learning how to speak a foreign language: “Most of them will never have a chance to use it, only a few will try ‘vestibular’, so what they really want from the English class is to get the grade they need to be approved by the end of the year.”

On the other hand, students who look for a private language institute aim at fluency in the foreign language. Felipe, who has been teaching for five years in the same institute, says: “I think the communicative approach is the best. It is not a magic formula, it is just another teaching design, *which now, for me and my students, I think is the best*⁴. Of course it takes understanding of the design, practice, and the breaking of old habits for a teacher to start using any new design - it is a process that does not happen from one day to the next.”

2. What has influenced these beliefs?

Rosana and Felipe refer to their experience both as students and as teachers, as influences on the beliefs they have about the teaching/learning process which underlie their practices. Felipe has had a traditional experience as a student, “very traditional, with focus on grammar; we had very few chances to speak”, and he was trained as a teacher in an institution that follows the communicative approach. Comparing both experiences he could “see that everything that is learnt is thought first in a context, it is not formal, traditional, we do not go straight into the linguistic content, the students are first exposed to the language, then they practice, and after that they come to conclusions about

⁴ Researcher’s emphasis

how language works. It is more inductive than asking them to first understand and then use it, as in the traditional way.”

Ana believes that the best design depends on the goal of the student, and she concluded that from her experience as a teacher: “My experience as a teacher shows that sometimes the student is not interested in learning how to speak the language; they only need to pass a reading exam, so we teachers need to adapt to the needs of our students”.

3. In their real teaching contexts, do teachers feel able and free to apply what they believe to be the best design?

While Felipe, who works in a language institute, feels free to use any activities and adapt his classes the way he thinks is best for his students, both school teachers point out constraining factors that cannot be controlled by them. Even though Ana agrees that high school should focus on ‘vestibular’, and the school allows her to prepare and lead the classes the way she prefers, there are time constraints. About bringing extra activities to the classroom, she reports that: “whatever the teacher wants to add is ok to add, but then there is no time to do what the material asks, so the teacher is in a hard situation, we either work with what the school focus on, or we leave some items aside so we can work on what we think is necessary at that moment”.

According to Rosana, public schools do not adopt books for the teaching of English, so she can choose what and how to teach. When she began working in public schools, she saw that as a chance to innovate, and decided to teach English based on genres. She was constrained by the poor education students had had so far. “Students didn’t have enough bases for this process, for example, they have very bad reading and comprehension skills even in Portuguese”. The first genre she presented to her students was ‘map’: “they couldn’t accept ‘playing’ with maps in the classroom, for them that was not a class, they asked me when was I going to give them ‘content’. I asked what they understood by content, and they said ‘words to translate’, ‘that verb to be’ [teacher mispronounces ‘to be’ on purpose, imitating her students] ‘something we can memorize for the test’”.

Working with students from 5th to 8th grades, she points out difficulties in spelling that students transfer from their mother tongue, previous English teachers that based their classes on word translation and the school’s

evaluation system as other constraining factors: “the school does evaluation by grades, and students need to show numbers, not development”. All this “has led me to using a more traditional, even mechanical design. What I still try to avoid is translation.”

The book adopted by the school can also be a constraining factor. Ana explained that if she could, she “would not use the material adopted by the school, I would prepare my own classes. I agree with it [that students in high school should focus on ‘vestibular’], but kids in 7th or 8th grades could have lighter classes. They [the students and their parents] want to focus on ‘vestibular’, but if I had the chance I would use a little writing and listening as well. Not speaking; because of the large number of students, it is complicated to work with speaking.”

The large number of students is not seen as a challenge by Felipe. In the language institute, he has an average of 12 students per group, but he has worked with the communicative approach in groups of 20 students, and it was a successful experience. “It is obviously not possible for you to evaluate the speaking skill of 20 students in one activity only, it is impossible; what you can do is have the whole group do the activity and observe some of the people in it, in another activity you observe other people; you have to break it down, it is not possible to observe 20 students in the same activity. So it is possible [to use the communicative approach with large groups] but the more students – and it doesn’t depend on the design – the more difficult, so it depends on the adaptation to reality as, for example, when you focus your observation on one group of students at a time.”

Felipe relates the success of the design application and his freedom in the classroom in relation to institutional responsibilities: “the school trusts the teachers, and trains the teachers very well; we have meetings to discuss theoretical and practical aspects of the approach, and we even try new tasks and activities among the teachers to check if they really work, so I have never had this problem [of not feeling free in the classroom]”. His response shows us that he does have freedom as long as he follows the design adopted by the institution.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Both school teachers interviewed related their practice to the teaching context in which they are inserted, and showed us that for the students the focus of studying a language is not necessarily on learning how to speak that language. Language learning has been segmented into learning skills that are necessary for specific purposes, such as the 'vestibular'. Consequently, these teachers have not been focusing on following any specific design, but on adapting their knowledge of the available designs to fulfill the needs of their students.

Even Felipe, who teaches in a private language institute and strictly follows the design adopted by the school, seems to be aware that the success of the design is dependent on the context, as he relates it to the group and the present moment.

One theme was central in the dialogue with these teachers. They seemed to agree that "progress in the teaching of languages, as in many practical arts, is neither a function solely of the application of a theoretical principle, however persuasive, nor of an unthinking reaction to the demands of the immediate market, but of the alchemy which, whether by accident or design, unites them to a common purpose." (Howatt, 1985, xiii) Designs alone cannot be responsible for the success or failure of the teaching/learning process. These teachers' belief is that attending to students' needs might be more important than following recipes of teaching.

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Summary Practice in EFL Teaching

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Abstract:

Summary practice exercises have been long used in EFL teaching as a way of developing students' reading and writing skills. In this paper, we present an additional reason for summary practice in EFL teaching, based on van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) and Pressley's argument (1998) that comprehension means summarizing. The paper is divided into three parts: a theoretical explanation of the summarizing process; an example of a summarizing activity; and instructional guidelines for developing summary skills in EFL contexts (Hare, 1992).

Key words: summarizing activities; comprehension processes; EFL teaching practices.

SUMMARIZING AS COMPREHENSION/ COMPREHENSION AS SUMMARIZING

Developing reading fluency, improving writing skills and expanding vocabulary knowledge are among the most common reasons that cross one's mind when it comes to teaching summary skills in EFL classes. And there should be little doubt – if any, at all – regarding the adequacy of using summary exercises as a means to achieve such ends. Given that being communicative competent in an L2 also implies, in its broader sense, being a fluent reader and a proficient writer, EFL teachers usually resort to summarizing activities as a way of developing their students' reading and writing skills.

There is, however, a more vital reason for summary practice in EFL teaching, a reason which stems from the fact that the very act of comprehending can be equated with the summarizing process (van Dijk and

Kintsch, 1983; Pressley, 1998). Pressley's description of how we read a paragraph-long text is very helpful to make this point clear:

"What people remember is the gist...For example, suppose you are beginning a paragraph-long text. The first sentence contains a number of ideas, with the reader coding the main idea of the sentence. This idea is held in active memory as the next sentence in the paragraph is read. Attempts are made to link the main idea from the first sentence to the ideas of the second sentence, with another idea emerging from this synthesis, integrating the meanings expressed in the first two sentences with the ideas in the new sentences... In summary, during normal beginning-to-end reading of a text, such as a story, the reader processes the individual ideas but remembers the gist." (Pressley:1998)

Even though Pressley's account of the reading comprehension process seems adequate, it has to be said that it is not new. Previously to him, van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) had already put forward a general theory of how comprehension occurs.⁵ Regarding text comprehension, and more specifically summary production, van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) advocate that summaries are expressions of text macrostructure that are constructed during reading, once the text microstructure has been established. Making a parallel with Pressley's statement, it seems possible to say that the text macrostructure amounts to the gist of the paragraph, whereas the text microstructure amounts to the individual ideas stated in every single sentence that makes up the paragraph.

Van Dijk and Kinstch (1983) argue that in order to understand texts, readers apply three main rules: deletion, generalization and construction. As the name indicates, the first rule states that the propositions from the textbase⁶ that are not macrorelevant – i.e., that are not directly relevant for the macrostructure of the text – are deleted. The second rule states that a general concept is used to substitute for specific ones, while the construction rule substitutes a general event for a sequence of specific ones (Kintsch, 2002). It is important to point out that such rules are applied unconsciously and unintentionally, which is coherent with the authors' point of view that the only way for understanding to take place is by the application of the rules, given our limited memory capacity.

⁵ The theory was proposed in *Strategies of Discourse Comprehension* (1983), and it has been constantly changed and improved, paving the way, for instance, to Kintsch's *Construction-Integration model of text comprehension* (1998).

⁶ The textbase corresponds, in a simplified way, to every sentence that makes up the text.

VARIABLES THAT AFFECT SUMMARY PRODUCTION

At the same time we firmly believe that being aware of the intrinsic connection between summarizing and comprehension is the first step to provide a change in EFL teachers' perspective regarding the purpose for teaching summary skills, we also understand that awareness by itself does not guarantee a successful way of doing it.⁷ In order to obtain better results, EFL teachers should also pay attention to the variables that affect the production of summaries, usually subsumed under (1) person, (2) text and (3) task variables in the literature.

The first type of variables can be considered as the most complex of the three in the sense that teachers have little control upon them, differently from the text and task variables.⁸ Hare (1992) further divides them into three categories: views of the task, skills level and level of content. She notes that students usually understand that a summary is a shorter version of the original material, but they sometimes: (i) resort to a "copy-delete" strategy; (ii) are not certain about the appropriate length; (iii) are not sure of what information to include. Regarding students' skill level, the author says that the most fundamental skill in a summarizing task – i.e., selection of the relevant information – varies from person to person and that the same is true of the ability to have the relevant information succinctly stated, another challenging activity. As for level of content stated in the material to be summarized, Hare calls attention to the influence of the students' prior knowledge in the process, something that can be either positive – serving as a guide to the identification of the main idea(s) – or negative – appearing as an obstacle to it.

There are three main aspects to be considered in the second set of variables: length, genre and complexity of the texts. While summaries of short texts are usually a matter of either identifying the topic sentence or generating a main idea, comprehension demands increase when it comes to summarizing longer texts: more attention must be paid to the rhetorical frames, there are

⁷ Nonetheless, it is important to note that to be able to provide a change in perspective regarding the purpose for teaching is no mean achievement.

⁸ After all, most of the time it is the teacher who proposes the text and the task.

more important ideas to be considered and, therefore, more supporting details to be excluded. Not only the length, but the genre of the text may also represent a source of difficulty for EFL students. Research evidence has shown, for instance, that it is easier to summarize a narrative than an expository text, since while the structures of narratives are more familiar and important and interesting ideas tend to overlap in stories, expository texts bear a less familiar structure and deal with more abstract ideas. Besides length and genre, text complexity – i.e., vocabulary features, structure of sentences, level of abstractness – has also to be cared about, since the more complex the text, the harder to summarize it.

Finally, the third variable tackles with issues of access to the task, purpose to the task and length of the task. As far as access is concerned, Hare (1992) calls attention to the essential difference between summaries produced with access to the material and summaries produced without access to it. As the latter are a summary of a memory representation of the material, and not of the material itself, EFL teachers should be able to evaluate the summaries produced by their students accordingly to the task. Another main interfering aspect is the purpose of the summary. Whenever students produce a summary for an audience, such as an outline of a book to their colleagues, it is likely that the outcome will be different from a summary produced to the summarizers themselves. Summary length is the last aspect to affect the task, according to Hare (1992). Depending on the length imposed, the summary produced will vary from a sort of recall-like outcome – in case of no constraints – to a main idea of the text – in case of a severe constraint. Among these two extremes, the teacher can also opt for a more moderate restriction in terms of the appropriate length of the summary, something like “a sentence to every paragraph”, allowing the selection and condensing processes to take place.

SAMPLE ACTIVITY: A BRAZILIAN BAND REVIEW

In order to illustrate some of the concepts previously mentioned, this section will describe an activity based on a review about the Brazilian band *Cansei de Ser Sexy* (see Appendix 1), written by Peter Culshaw in the online

version of the newspaper *The Daily Telegraph* (available at www.telegraph.co.uk/arts, access on November, 2006). This activity is part of a series of three summary practice exercises used as classroom material in a non-compulsory course called “Writing Production in English”, offered to undergraduate students of Languages (Portuguese-English) in 2006. Before starting the activities, one class was dedicated to presenting to the students guidelines on summarizing.⁹ To make it easier to follow, the activity is in a class plan design.

Before moving into the activity, we would like to call the reader’s attention to two points, both related to the activity aims. Firstly, consonant to what has been put forth so far, the practice of reading and writing skills in the foreign language do not stand as the main aims, but as specific ones, since it is the general development of students’ comprehension skills which is the main goal of the class. Secondly, having a text which discussed an issue directly relevant to the audience – young adults who always have an opinion when it comes to musical styles – helped to develop students’ critical reading skills, an important ability to be fostered in EFL educational settings (Tomitch, 2000). The critical reading was built up gradually, from the very beginning of the lesson, with the question “Have you ever heard of a band called *Cansei de Sexy?*”, to the wrap-up activity, with the question “From your point of view, why some Brazilian bands are so famous abroad and almost unknown in Brazil?”. The rationale underlying such procedure was that, after reading and summing up the text, students would be better equipped to critically respond to it.

ACTIVITY: SUMMARY OF “FROM BRAZIL WITH ATTITUDE”

GENERAL INFORMATION

Aims: to develop students’ comprehension skills; to develop students’ reading critical skills.

⁹ The guidelines were adapted from a text available at www.mantex.com.uk, entitled “How to Summarize”.

Specific aims: to develop students' reading and writing skills; to expand students' vocabulary knowledge.

Level: upper-intermediate/advanced students.

Estimated time: 1 class of 90min.

WARM-UP

Questions about favorite types of music and singers/bands, in order to create a favorable environment to ask: Have you ever heard of a Brazilian band called *Cansei de Ser Sexy*?

DEVELOPMENT

First part: text comprehension

After a brief talk about the band, the teacher tells students that they are going to read, and later summarize, a review written about the band *Cansei de Ser Sexy* during their tour across the UK, whose title is "From Brazil with Attitude". Their initial task is to predict, from the title, whether it would be a very positive, a slightly positive or a negative review of the band.

With the predictions made, students receive a copy of the text, and are asked to read it in order to check their guesses.

The teacher asks students once more about the tone of the review, and elicits from them reasons for their answers, checking their comprehension of the text and vocabulary doubts.

Second part: summary of the text

The teacher asks students to have a look at the 10 reasons stated by the reviewer for classifying the band *Cansei de Ser Sexy* as one of "hottest new

indie bands” and to analyze the ones that could be summarized, according to the guidelines presented to them about the summarizing process.¹⁰

After discussing the reasons for the selection of the items, students work in pairs summarizing the items.

WRAP-UP

When students finish summarizing the text, the teacher asks volunteer students to read their summarized versions of the items to the class. This activity enables discussions on the appropriateness of the summaries produced and also helps students to envisage alternative ways of writing their summaries.

In order to develop students’ critical reading skills, the teacher asks the question: “From your point of view, why some Brazilian bands are so famous abroad and almost unknown in Brazil?”

CONCLUDING REMARKS: INSTRUCTIONAL GUIDELINES FOR TEACHING SUMMARY SKILLS

This paper has presented an argument for summary practice in EFL classes that goes beyond the development of reading, writing and vocabulary skills. Based on van Dijk and Kintsch (1983) and Pressley (1998), it has stated that the focus should be on developing students’ global comprehension abilities, given that summarizing equals understanding. By so doing, the main goal has been to contribute to a change in the way EFL teachers approach summary practice exercises. Even though we are knowledgeable of the fact that a change in perspective hardly ever reflects instantly in teaching practices, it is the first step, and that is why it is so crucial.

According to Hare (1992), EFL teachers should pay attention to the following guidelines when teaching summarizing activities:

¹⁰ See first paragraph of the section for explanation on the guidelines used.

- 1) think about their own definitions of summary: “How one thinks about summarizing has (or ought to have) direct consequences for subsequent instruction.”
- 2) acquaint students with basic summarizing rules: “Specifically, students should be knowledgeable about how to condense lists (generalization rules), seek or invent topic sentences (construction rule), and eliminate unnecessary detail (deletion rule).”
- 3) provide students with a considerable amount of practice with different texts and in different contexts, in order to help them understand the influences of person, text and task variables on summarizing activities.

While materials related to the second and third guidelines are more easily found in the EFL literature, it is our content that the same is not always true for the first one. That is why we hope this paper has successfully achieved its main goal of providing a contribution for EFL teachers’ reflections on their definitions of summaries, as well as on their reasons for practicing them.

APPENDIX 1: REVIEW “FROM BRAZIL WITH ATTITUDE”

From Brazil with attitude

Last Updated: 12:01am GMT 09/11/2006

Unknown a year ago, São Paulo's Cansei de Ser Sexy have become one of the world's hottest new indie bands. Peter Culshaw offers 10 reasons why.

1. The band's name. Cansei de Ser Sexy means "Tired of Being Sexy", and must be one of the best ever.



Kraftwerk meets the Spice Girls: Cansei de Ser Sexy
with singer Lovefoxxx

2. Their charismatic lead singer, christened Luisa Matsuita, glories in the stage name Lovefoxxx (love those three "x"s) and is a half-Japanese 22-year-old from São Paulo who loves to stage-dive into the audience at any opportunity. Despite the outrageous front, there's a slight vulnerability there too – as with all great pop stars.
3. They inhabit a fertile territory somewhere between the DIY subversiveness of punk, the retro-electro of Kraftwerk and the girl-gang mentality of All Saints or the Spice Girls (the band consists of five girls and a male drummer, producer Adriano Cintra).
4. Whereas most indie groups (especially in the world of "emo") and most female singer-songwriters have a tendency to moan endlessly, CSS are a life-affirming, whinge-free zone. When most bands and performers get on stage what they are projecting is: "Please love me – I'm really likeable and cool." But, like all the best artists, CSS give the impression that they don't give a damn what you think.
5. They represent something hopeful for pop music. A few years ago, new young bands from places outside Europe and the US tended to be copyists, doing usually second-rate rock or hip-hop, whereas they way CSS have packaged their influences is a breath of fresh air and genuinely original.
6. One test of a great band (Nirvana, Sex Pistols, the Smiths and Culture Club spring to mind) is that when you first see them you think, "I cannot

believe I've just seen what I've seen." That was the way I felt when I saw them in a small club in São Paulo. Their debut album, while hugely pleasurable, does not quite capture the spontaneous wild rush of their live shows – but they're touring the UK right now.

7. Very few major bands are actually sexy (U2, Coldplay? I think not). CSS, despite the name, are – and with their own unconventional style, rather than the rather desperate, manufactured sexiness of a Christina Aguilera or Britney Spears.
8. The way they mangle the English language with their Brazilian accents is charming. Everyone can sing along: "You're so talented I'm in love / Let's make love and listen to death from above."
9. They are very modern in that, like British bands such as Arctic Monkeys, they built a significant fan base on websites like Tramadigital and MySpace before releasing a record. The group also take on modern celebrity mania in songs such as Meeting Paris Hilton, which, like many of their creations, has a perfectly formed, insidiously catchy chorus worthy of a Tamla Motown single (except, being modern, the lyrics are along the lines of "The bitch said 'Yeah' ").
10. They are clever without being self-consciously experimental, and enjoyably obnoxious with an impeccable pop sensibility. They are, frankly, unstoppable.

CSS (Cansei de Ser Sexy) are currently on tour in the UK. For details see www.myspace.com/canseidesersexy.

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Success for Business English classes in large multilevel groups

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Abstract:

This paper shows it is possible to do a good job even in not-so-perfect teaching situations, as long as difficulties are faced as a challenge. Having students as a focus, a project was devised to get them involved and committed to their own learning process. It describes the students' profile, the project itself, and the reasons why it was successful in business English classes for large multilevel groups in a Management university in the south of Brazil.

Key words: Commitment, large multilevel groups, and project for business English classes.

ORIGINS OF THE PROJECT

For a long time, we have faced the problem of big groups when teaching English as a foreign language. This problem sometimes seems to have no solution at all. Teachers have to deal with several situations to try to manage this kind of group in a successful way.

That is what we proposed to do in Business English classes of 50 students in a university in Caxias do Sul (RS – Brazil). Once we had to face this size groups, we decided to think on how to do our best so as to develop a great teaching method in class.

First of all, we got together to plan the classes for a whole semester. This was a strategy to have a forecast of what we could do. Then classes started and we proposed our goals to the students in the first week. All of them seemed

very excited on the topic, because they felt they could do something really diverse from what they used to.

STUDENTS' PROFILE

It is important, at this time, to mention what the characteristics of our groups in Business English in this university are:

1. As we have already mentioned, all of our groups are very large. We have around 50 students in each group every semester. There is only one exception, which is Friday's group. Since people prefer not to have classes near the weekend because they love traveling and partying to enjoy themselves and rest, usually there are around 30 students in this group, which makes it a little smaller, but not actually small. Also, students on Friday groups have a distinct profile because they are quite committed to their learning.
2. Among 50 people, it is very common to find multilevel students. This is what we found when applying a needs assessment questionnaire on the first class. We find people who studied EJA (adult and young-adult education) and never heard a word of English – especially because there are no English classes in EJA courses, only Spanish. But there are also people who have already lived abroad – three years in Australia, for instance. We noticed this big gap always happens in our groups.
3. This considerable difference in knowledge among students in one single group interferes on their pace of learning. Some of them are really slow to think in English, especially business, and others are even faster than we could imagine from the needs assessment. It generates a group and peer pressure that may lead some students to get stuck in class. They feel they cannot work that fast and that well, so they delegate to the “better” classmates the responsibility to do everything and hand a group copy to the professor.
4. English is a discipline that is part of a “common branch” in four majors of Management College: Marketing, International Business, Human Resources, and Systems Analysis. Students majoring in Human

Resources have only one semester with 70 hours of Business English. The other three majors have twice as many hours. This is an extra limit to our work, because students who have never seen English at all have only one or two semesters to learn or to deal with basic vocabulary of Business English.

5. It must also be considered that there are various age groups in class. We can see some students who are just leaving high school and starting university (sometimes as young as 17 years of age), but others have stopped studying a long time ago. These ones start studying again usually because of professional pressure, trips, and personal needs, or maybe to do something because they have just retired from work. There are people, then, ranging from 17 to 65 years of age. It is logical that their goals in studying a foreign language are very different.
6. Dissonant background is what we face when we have such a range of ages in a single group. It leads to distinctness in cultural, personal, and experience knowledge, as we have already superficially mentioned before. It is important to point out, although it may be obvious, that elderly people have a lot more life experience than teenagers: it makes the old ones more qualified to basic proceedings than theoretical tasks. On the other hand, the young ones are much more efficient in learning new subjects, and deal very well with tasks which pose difficulties to elderly people.
7. We frequently find, unfortunately, some prejudice due to the “colono” accent. In our region (Northeast of Rio Grande do Sul, known by Serra Gaúcha – South of Brazil) it is very common to listen to people speaking the immigration dialect, especially the ones who are not from Caxias do Sul, but rather come from cities close to it, like Bento Gonçalves, Flores da Cunha, Garibaldi, Carlos Barbosa, etc. It interferes in the pronunciation of Portuguese, because they learned how to speak this dialect – derived from Italian – before they learned our standard mother tongue. These people are mocked by the ones who have identified this accent as something dissonant from the accepted pattern for a big city. It is not an exaggeration to say that it is a stigma in our social environment.

8. Also, we could easily identify the “working students” in our groups. They have no time to read, to do research, to go deep into the disciplines, to discuss any topic, to do the assigned tasks, and they are always complaining about having short time to accomplish their duties related to their academic lives. It is very common, as well, to hear complaints on how tired they are, so it is not easy to keep them in class until 10:30 in the evening, and even harder to get them focused on the subject of the class.

Besides all these features, it is relevant to add that the discipline of English Language in Brazil is considered only as a complement for the curriculum. Students do not take it into consideration; they just attend the class, but not actually take part on it.

THE PROJECT IN ACTION

To work with these groups we have to keep in mind the teaching plan approved by the Ministry of Education and Culture (MEC) when the course was allowed to graduate students.

Even though we are aware of the need to know how a language works before learning other specific vocabulary, such as business English, we face a great difficulty on that subject because of MEC. It has imposed to the university to have language plans focusing business situations, since the students are learning Management. In order to have better results in class, we worried in selecting the most “basic” material we could find related to this target.

Our first experience, not very successful, was to use the “Global Links 1” set, for the first and second semesters. It was actually some kind of failure because we did not realize at first that this book is an excellent tool to work with upper intermediate students, but this is not the majority in our groups, as mentioned above¹¹.

¹¹ While selecting material and adapting teaching plans, it is quite indispensable to mention that the university had other teachers working for these groups. We two headed them since July 2003, when we were about to choose the Business Venture material.

After that, another try was the “Business Venture 1 and 2” sets, respectively for the first and second semesters. We could notice it is an excellent material to work with upper basic students, much better than the first option, but there would be too much content to cover with those who had not seen any English before. Due to our experience in class, we decided to work with the first set of Business Venture in both semesters. We divided it into two parts: we planned to work from units 1 to 4 in English 1, and from units 5 to 12 in English 2.

We say we **planned** to work because it all depends on the group and on the schedule. Sometimes we have so many holidays during the semester that we are only able to work up to unit 9, for instance. In other cases, students need reviews so badly that we also have no time available to finish up to unit 12.

After three years, we decided it was time again to change: we, teachers, already knew the dialogues by heart and some students could tell that the information in some lessons was not updated. We were very pleased to find the “Quick Work Elementary” as an easier tool for the students, since it has less content which can also be divided into two parts: units 1 and 2 for English 1; units 3 to 5 for English 2, altogether with the workbook. This last try has not actually happened yet, since we will start this new project this semester (February to June 2007).

Along with the worries about the textbook, we also considered the students’ (inter)action in class. We had to figure out ways to get out students, especially the working ones, to step out of their absent-mindedness in class, and really pull them back to class and get them to work. That was our most successful plan.

THE SUCCESS OF THE PROJECT

We thought of a project because students get more involved, they participate much more in class. It was our first feeling on how to bring tired students to commit themselves to our English lessons. This way, students feel they are creating something, especially once they produce something, starting with the idea and finishing with a whole company of their own. Much more

important is that they bring their job experience to class to share it with other people – classmates and professor.

Another reason for a project is that students get bored when they work only in textbook activities, because they tend to think the book is a world for the professor, not for themselves. We could feel they got really motivated to work on the project when classes started and students wanted to begin with the project right away, instead of what we had previously planned, which was to start our classes with the content itself, and do the company-related activities in the second half of the class. But the fact that they wanted to do at once the tasks related to the project showed us they looked forward to working on it.

This project, then, consists of activities to provoke them to bring ideas in order to create a company and use their English, as well as their experience. That is what theory calls meaningful tasks. Students are constantly thinking of getting better and giving feedback to the professor on what and how things are working out.

Students have 45 minutes per class, during $\frac{3}{4}$ of the semester. It is important to point out that they are evaluated in every activity they have to accomplish. As it is not a formal test, they do not feel under pressure for a grade, and they have a much better performance, since they feel free to look for information and bring things to their group work and to class work.

There are different criteria to evaluate the students' production: responsibility, commitment, respect to deadlines, creativity, English accuracy, group interactivity, honesty, feedback. These topics are methodologically divided to be mentioned here but they are considered as a whole, because they are characteristics of group work that are perceptible right away. As literature mentions, a good teacher must be able to pay attention on this, since he must always be attentive to class movement. That is the role of the teacher as a manager of his class, mainly in a Management course as we are involved in.

The phases of the project are the following:

1. We always start by selecting the activities for the project before the semester actually begins. This is really important, because we get time to consider, to discuss, to analyze, to mature, to foresee the students' improvement. There may be some changes during the semester, if we

- consider the selected tasks will not be successful in a specific group, after observing how students work in class.
2. Our first step when classes begin is to detect the group leader through the needs assessment test. The ones who have more understanding of the English language are the selected ones, in order to help each group, otherwise they could get together in one group only, which would let the others down.
 3. In the second class, the professor points out these leaders and groups are formed with 3 or 4 other students. After that, they decide whether they are going to work with a product or a service, and they think of the name of the company. They are asked to hand in to the professor a sheet containing the names of the group members, company name, focus, and a way to supervise “employees’ presence”.
 4. The last 45 minutes of the third class are designated to set up departments, as well as name tags for every one. The worksheet is again given to the professor, and name tags are expected to be worn every “working day”. It is a good strategy to get to know them better and by their names.
 5. The slogan and logo are made by the end of the fourth class, when students bring to class “kindergarten material”: colored pencils, special paper, paint and brush, crayon... It is also a good time for interaction, sharing, and fun.
 6. After this time they have in mind the mission, vision and goals for the company. These are made by the end of the fifth class. It is a maturation process.
 7. Their next step is to build a price catalog. It is a chance they have to work with numbers and currency of their own product or service. They must calculate cost and profit, so the target client or consumer must be taken into consideration. This is also a preparation for the ninth step.
 8. An advertising campaign could not be missing. It is relevant to think of how to spread out the news of the product or service this brand new company is going to sell.
 9. Students are ready now to show everybody what they have done. A business show is their opportunity to be in front of a big group while

presenting their company as well as a chance to imagine a real sale. This is a climax for the students.

10. A climax for the professor is to receive an academic paper with everything organized and made official for the formal evaluation. It is also a way of the students to systematize their learning during these 10 classes. In the same class they have the opportunity to vote on the best company in class, and this would end the whole project with an evaluation from the groups on what was performed.

This last evaluation students make is a chance for professors to grow and improve classes for next semester. We are now in the third edition of these activities, and some changes were made based on the students' feedback from the initial ideas. For instance, we thought at first that one company for the entire class would be a nice idea for integration and commitment. It was proved wrong, so we promptly changed, following the students' opinions. Now every group has one company to run.

SOME FINAL COMMENTS

The best of all is to notice classes are successful and students are part of it (except for one or two who would never get involved in anything) because it is something decided with the group, and not imposed by the professor. That is the key to success: to share decisions.

To make this key be possible and successful, it is important to listen to what students have to say, because they are the main focus and, as grown-ups, they are aware of their learning process.

This give and take in class leads to a nice environment and a committed relationship among people in this process. Something else for this commitment is the competitiveness among groups in order to be the best one, so they will be voted by their peers.

Professors' competence and commitment are two other tools for this success. There is a great involvement in preparing and planning classes, before and during the semester. It is an in-action process that helps teachers and students to have the most of learning.

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Reading the Words and the World

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Abstract:

This paper presents an overview of some approaches to reading – from decoding to critical literacy – referring to the theoretical basis of such approaches and analysing how these different theories underpin different reading practices and give rise to diverse educational goals.

Key words: reading – literary theory - critical literacy.

‘A man in his middle thirties came stumbling onto the top deck of the bus, talking to everyone he passed as if he knew them. People looked up with dazed glances but as soon as they understood he was a stranger they gathered themselves into their coats and tucked away their eyes.’ (Grut, 2005)

INTRODUCTION

Reading is a complex process where a number of factors must be taken into consideration and where the reader carries out a number of steps which are intended to lead to what is normally called ‘text interpretation’. The objective of this paper is to briefly analyse how this process occurs, looking into the different stages of such process, examining the theoretical principles that give basis to different reading approaches and reflecting on how the adoption of such diverse standpoints influences the way we read and present texts to our students.

When we read the text above there is a number of reading acts that are unconsciously performed by our minds. First and foremost, we can read Vicky Grut’s text because we are able to make sense of its grammar. Our reading depends on our understanding of English grammar rules that are embedded in the text as well the words used. We share with the author the same linguistic

codes and draw on our 'implicit knowledge of English to make sense of it (Montgomery *et al.*, 1992). What is more, we should probably make sense of some clues provided by the text, such 'the top deck of the bus', and also make some inferences and store some information to process later in order to help us to have a big picture of the context. Our previous experience as readers will also possibly help us to identify some literary conventions. For instance, most readers would almost immediately recognize that the text has a narrator who is unlikely to be one of the protagonists of the story, and would also be able to sort out the text under the categories 'fiction/short story'. This same reading background would most likely lead the reader to expect a tale of cultural alienation and/or complex relationships. It is probably at this point that our minds start filling in the gaps left by the scant information given to us in this first short paragraph; consequently, we put in a considerable and deliberate effort of interpretation trying to make sense of what we still do not know.

It is at this stage as well that most of our 'interpretations' will differ, for each reader will bring into their reading specific previous information, cultural and social background, gender and age, beliefs and expectations. The textual material will be somehow mutated into something else, perhaps to the point that different texts are in fact created by different readers and two people commenting on a given text may be left wondering if they have indeed read the same story.

Different readers are also likely to take different routes in their search for meaning. Some will have their attention called by some passages of the text that will go completely unnoticed by others. Some will prefer to explore their personal responses to the text, while others will search for a glimpse of the authorial intention or the views of other readers and critics who, in turn, will give legitimacy to their interpretation. Others will still seek information on the historical period in which the text was produced, trying to find in the material they have in front of them echoes of past voices and related texts from the same period. Above all, we could perhaps say that the way readers choose to deal with the creation of meaning will almost certainly be determined by their social context and experience as readers and as individuals.

THEORETICAL PRINCIPLES

There is a steady flow of books and articles on literary theory which have been published along the years and it is beyond the scope of this paper to look at all the different critical approaches and movements. However, we may profit from a brief review of the main literary theory movements that have informed reading and text analysis in the last two centuries or so. The table below illustrates some of the differences among the main three theoretical approaches to literature: liberal humanism, structuralism and post-structuralism.

Liberal humanism	Structuralism	Post-structuralism/ deconstruction
Literature is timeless – not contextualised	Texts cannot be understood in isolation	Texts have to be read against themselves
Meaning is in the text itself	Meaning is attributed	Meaning is fluid
Language cuts distance between words and things	Reality is constructed through language	Reality itself is textual
Emphasis on moral significance	Emphasis on pattern, symbol, design	Emphasis on gaps, fissures, breaks

According to eter Berry (1995),

‘The term *liberal humanism* became current in the 1970’s as a short hand (and mainly hostile) way of referring to the kind of criticism which held sway before theory. The word *liberal* in this formulation roughly means not politically radical, and hence generally evasive and non-committal on political issues.’

Some of the general values, attitudes and practices that guide a liberal humanist approach to reading are still present in our classrooms nowadays, and particularly in some approaches to texts. Some of the most frequently designed reading comprehension exercises seem to imply that the meaning of a certain text is within the text itself, regardless of the historical period in which it was

written and in which it is being read. The students' task is to unveil this meaning, analyse its language to gain access to the transcendent truth that lies on the page and finally benefit from it for their own moral improvement. We can find examples of this approach to texts in close-end comprehension questions, multiple-choice questions which ask readers to find out the authorial intention and the meaning of certain passages. It is also present in the teachers' negative response to students' questioning of established interpretations and in the idea that by analysing vocabulary and grammar we can ultimately have access to facts and/or intentions behind the text.

Alternatively, structuralism came into play in literary studies in the 1950's in France, opposing the nineteenth-century humanist approach, and proposing an understanding of texts that is contextualised. Texts could not be seen in isolation anymore, but as part of a broader picture that included other cultural and anthropological manifestations and, obviously, other texts. Search for meaning should not be carried out within the text anymore, but *outside* it, in various cultural products and structural networks that permeate society. As structuralism sees it, meaning is never implicit but attributed, and the readers' task is to analyse the structure of the text - its parallels, patterns, echoes, repetitions and contrasts - to reach a well-informed interpretation and have access to reality. This sort of approach to texts is illustrated in tasks that demand students' close attention to the vocabulary used, repetition of words and phrases and the search for a code in the construction of characters, themes and motifs in a text. 'Structuralism derives ultimately from linguistics [and] linguistics is a discipline which has always been inherently confident about the possibility of establishing objective knowledge.' (Berry, 1995)

Poststructuralism, on the other hand, designates a number of critical perspectives that followed structuralism in the 1970's, and which may be considered to have established the foundation of other forms of criticism, such as psychoanalytic criticism, gender studies, new historicism and cultural materialism, and postcolonial criticism. Poststructuralist thinkers undertake to '*decentre, or undermine or subvert* traditional claims for the existence of self-evident foundations that guarantee the validity of knowledge and truth' (Abrams, 1999). Jacques Derrida in *Of Grammatology* says that reading and interpretation are not merely acts of reproducing what the writer expressed in a

text, but an act of producing a text, for 'the writer writes *in* a language and *in* a logic whose proper systems, laws, and life his discourse by definition cannot dominate absolutely' (Derrida, 1976). In clear contrast to a structuralist approach to texts, poststructuralist readers will try to find in the text paradoxes, breaks in tone, viewpoint, and attitude, conflicts, and omissions. Therefore, the readers' task is to read the text against the text with the objective of 'knowing the text as it cannot know itself' (Eagleton, 1996). A poststructuralist/deconstructive reading of a text would pose open-ended questions to our students about the perceptions and assumptions the text makes about the reality and how these perceptions and assumptions would be interpreted in different contexts and by different people. The whole classroom activity would be centred in debate and discussion, with students sharing possible readings and constructing meanings based on language analysis and their perception of this language, instead of speculating about authorial intention or going on a quest for a final meaning for the text.

CRITICAL LITERACY AND LITERARY THEORY

Critical literacy is an educational practice that focuses on the relationship between language and worldviews, social practices, power, identity, citizenship, intercultural relations and global/local issues. Critical literacy has poststructuralism/ deconstruction and post-colonial studies as its main theoretical basis since 'It leads us to question texts - written, visual or oral - to assess the assumptions, values and beliefs that inform textual production. It is an analysis of how discourse is constructed and how it is read.' (Lima, 2007) Critical literacy proposes a new understanding of language which represents a major shift in the way we think of knowledge, literature and texts in general.

The author is not seen as the main authority over a text any longer, as someone who is outside the text and precedes it, but as an individual who, in the act of writing, creates a space where relationships will happen between the text and the reader. 'The author... is a certain fictional principle by which, in our culture, one limits, excludes and chooses' (Foucault, 1969). The text is, therefore, seen as 'a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings,

none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from innumerable centres of culture' and the reader is thus seen as 'the space on which all the quotations that make up a writing are inscribed.' (Barthes, 1977)

Going back to Vick Grut's extract at the beginning of this paper, we should say that our reading could actually develop in three different levels. The reading level, where there is a decodification process, based on our understanding of grammar, lexis and phonologic patterns of English and where, in sharing some knowledge with the author, we recreate a text *within* the text. This is still the practice carried out in a number of reading comprehension activities. Next we could perhaps reach the interpretation level where, in having some information withdrawn from us, we engage in a conscious effort to make sense of what is not actually said; this is where we may look for books written by other readers and critics who have created their own texts *about* the text. This is perhaps the dominant approach to the study of literature and what literary criticism is mostly concerned about.

What Critical Literacy proposes is to take the reading process to a stage further where readers will read the text against itself, looking for paradoxes, contradictions and conflicts in the text and in our reading of it, realising that any reading is actually social, historical and partial. It proposes reading as a social practice, where language 'consists in the inexhaustible possibility of allocating new meanings to same linguistic elements in new social and temporal contexts' (Bakhtin, 1973)

What Critical Literacy suggests is neither to look for what Vick Grut meant when she wrote 'Stranger', nor ask our students of draw exclusively on authoritative readings of it. In contrast, what Critical Literacy proposes is to take both these aspects into consideration and at the same time ask students to create their own reading of the text, analysing its conflicts and accepting that perhaps different people, in different historical moments and in different economic and social contexts may read it in a different way while trying to understand what informs such readings. Critical literacy 'helps us to understand that each reading is partial, because it is the result of each reader's incomplete perception of reality. It should lead us to explore different interpretations and

perspectives - either expressed, implicit or left out- in a given text and in the readings it generates.' (Lima, 2007)

Traditional reading	Critical thinking	Critical literacy
decodification	Interpretation	questioning
language describes reality	Language translates reality	language constructs reality
focus on content	focus on context	focus on assumptions
knowledge is universal	knowledge is singular	knowledge is partial

CRITICAL LITERACY AND THE READING PRACTICE IN THE CLASSROOM

There are a number of implications for the classroom practice when we apply Critical literacy to our teaching; it changes our educational aims, our pedagogical choices, our perceptions of culture and identity and also the relationship between teachers and learners. In terms of reading, the kinds of tasks and the kind of questions teachers propose to their students change considerably, ranging from traditional reading and critical thinking to critical literacy type of questions. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that such choice of questions should not be simply imposed by the teacher, but also negotiated with learners, keeping in mind there will be inevitable conflicts in such negotiation since from the bakhtinian standpoint, the classroom is seen as a social and ideological space where conflicts and changing voices and values come into play. Conflict is likely to arise at the moment of choosing the texts to be read, at the moment of proposing questions and tasks to these texts - towards which learners may display a wide range of level of acceptance - and particularly at the moment of sharing responses to these same texts. It is at the latter that we can perceive what theoretical beliefs inform the teachers' approach, not only to reading but also to teaching and education.

A traditional reading and teaching approach, largely informed by liberal humanist ethos, would insist in choosing canonical texts to expose our learners, as Matthew Arnold said, to 'the best that has been known and thought in the world' and aim at reaching a final, definite interpretation of the text, which

would, coincidentally, be heavily influenced by the teacher's own interpretations as the one occupying the dominant position in the classroom.

On the other hand, a critical reading approach, informed by a structuralist view of texts, would seek to reduce the complexity of both text and interpretation by trying to break the hermeneutic, cultural and symbolic codes and proposing tasks which would lead readers to identify structures in an attempt to reveal the unity of the text. Such supposedly 'scientific', logical and reliable deductions would once more lead to little space for diversity of perceptions and views. The whole structuralist reading process 'prompts us to break free of our habitual modes of perception or categorisation, but it believes that we can thereby attain a more reliable view of things.' (Berry, 1995)

A critical literacy reading practice based on deconstructive/bakhtinian perception of language tries to create spaces in the classroom where readers engage with texts in order to realise that all textual discourse is the result of a multiplicity of voices and influences that come to the text through the writer and the readers' social, historical and ideological realities. It proposes open-ended questions and meaningful debate and it sees the role of the teachers as the ones who encourage learners to choose texts that are relevant in their local/global context. Teachers should be the ones who acknowledge the multiplicity of interpretations as valid in principle and avoid imposing their own superior interpretation. Therefore, the job of the teacher 'is not to produce readings for our students, but to give them the tools to produce their own.' (Scholes, 1985)

The table below shows a representation of the differences between 3 types of reading (the word and the world) in terms of questions prompted:

Traditional reading	Critical reading	Critical literacy
Types of questions: Does the text represent the truth? Is it fact or opinion? Is it biased or neutral?	Types of questions: What is the context? To whom is the text addressed? What is the intention of	Types of questions: How can this statement be interpreted differently in different contexts? What could be the assumptions behind the statements? What

<p>Is it well-written/clear?</p> <p>Who is the author and what level of authority /legitimacy does he/she represent?</p> <p>What does the author say?</p>	<p>the author?</p> <p>What is the position of the author (his/her political agenda)?</p> <p>What is the author trying to say and how is he/she trying to convince /manipulate the reader?</p> <p>What claims are not substantiated?</p> <p>Why has the text been written in this way?</p>	<p>are the implications of these assumptions?</p> <p>What could be shaping the author's understanding of reality?</p> <p>Who decides (what is real, can be known or needs to be done) in this context? In whose name and for whose benefit?</p> <p>What are the limitations and contradictions of this perspective?</p> <p>Whose interests could be represented in this statement?</p>
Strategy: de-codification	Strategy: interpretation	Strategy: critique
Aim: to develop an understanding of the content and/or to establish the truth-value of the text.	Aim: to develop critical reflection (ability to perceive intentions and reasons).	Aim: to develop reflexivity (ability to perceive how assumptions are constructed).
Language: is fixed, transparent and gives us access to reality.	Language: is fixed and translates reality.	Language: is ideological and constructs reality.
Knowledge: universal, cumulative, linear, right vs wrong, fact vs opinion, neutral vs biased.	Knowledge: false versus true interpretation of reality.	Knowledge: always partial, context dependent ,complex and dynamic.

Adapted and expanded from: Gina CERVETTI, Michael J. PARDALES, James S. DAMICO, A Tale of Differences: Comparing the Traditions, Perspectives, and Educational Goals of Critical Reading and Critical Literacy, www.readingonline.com 2001.

This view of the classroom as a dynamic space where reading texts and contexts calls for negotiation of roles and power relations is very likely to bring

conflicts and lead us to pose serious questions on our own beliefs about what constitutes teaching and education. What this paper proposes is certainly not an easy, harmonious and comfortable reading process and we should reckon that sometimes it may even make us feel a bit as the stranger and the passengers on the bus.

‘His jeans and jumper were neat and new, his face was clean-shaven, but the initial impression of coherence disappeared as soon as he started to speak. He slurred his words and waved his arms – there really wasn’t room for that kind of thing on a bus in the middle of winter.’

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Play and games: learning and having fun

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Abstract:

This paper discusses the role of play and games in TEFL to (very) young learners. Firstly, it highlights their importance in children's lives and the reasons for using them in an EFL environment. Secondly, it describes several kinds of play and games as well as how they can be used in the classroom, providing practical examples. Finally, it presents the different steps to be followed when playing.

Key words: games, EFL, young learners.

1 INTRODUCTION

Games... Why are games so popular among EFL teachers? Why are rooms so crowded every time we lead a workshop about games in the EFL classrooms? These questions arose after a very recent event for teachers held in Porto Alegre - RS, as a result of a crowded room filled with teachers eager to learn new games to play with their students. But it was not enough, we felt they wanted more than recipes, they wanted to make an effective and meaningful use of them.

For the reasons given, this article discusses the role of play and games in TEFL to (very) young learners once every single teacher feels the need to ponder on what he/she is choosing to work on within his/her classrooms. Firstly, it highlights their importance in children's lives and the reasons for using them in an EFL environment; if teachers understand why they are so important, it is more likely they will be able to use them successfully. Secondly, it describes

several kinds of play and games as well as how they can be used in the classroom, providing practical examples and helping teachers reach out and touch their students. Finally, it presents the different steps to follow when playing.

2 THE IMPORTANCE OF GAMES IN CHILDREN'S LIVES AND THE REASONS FOR USING THEM IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

Play and Games are physical and mental activities that foster kids' development as they are part of children's lives for kids live in a world of fantasy, enchantment, happiness and dreams, where reality and make-believe mix. Piaget (1971) called play "the work of the children" since they assimilate and change their reality when playing.

Playing games is part of kids' nature: it is their 'here and now'. When they are asked to play, they usually get motivated since it is fun. If they have fun, they will probably get involved and make their best to reach the goals. If they are involved and motivated, it is likely that they will acquire the content they are being exposed to, as it is presented in a meaningful way.

Furthermore, Freinet (1977) estates that children build knowledge based on what they experience. When language is introduced in a pleasant way, children enhance their concentration. They get involved in learning through opportunities teachers create for them to use their imagination and creativity. When playing, they repeat a situation spontaneously. As a result, some language or content may be learned unconsciously. Besides, they develop language skills and vocabulary. The more engaged learners are, the more they absorb new words and structures. In addition, teachers can always check if students are developing properly by observing them playing.

Moreover, young learners are full of energy and like to be active; to keep their attention teachers have to keep them amused. Hence, bodily-kinesthetic activities can help teachers nurture their students as a whole, once games help broaden kids' awareness of themselves and the world.

In addition, games help develop social, cognitive, affective, thinking and communication skills. Kids interact with others and get closer to each other, as

they have to exchange ideas, negotiate and take decisions. They also become aware of rules, and learn how to win and lose. Teachers have a fundamental role in helping them understand values involved in playing. They must learn to be good losers. Therefore, they develop not only their skills but also themselves as human beings.

By the use of games, children will feel more confident to take risks. Consequently, its use can lower students' affective filter and anxiety, and foster children's involvement and participation in the activities, that is why games produce a more relaxed classroom atmosphere.

In an EFL classroom for children, all the reasons mentioned before have to be borne in mind. However, the pedagogical value of games has always to be the most important aspect in English teachers' minds: games must be educational. They must be a central part of children's EFL learning process, but they must be more than a pastime.

Thus, a list of objectives has to be kept in mind when using games in the classroom:

- a) introduce or reinforce contents;
- b) develop concepts;
- c) produce a different environment to the regular classroom activities;
- d) break the ice;
- e) practice oral and listening skills;
- f) improve vocabulary and general comprehension of the target language;
- g) give children the opportunity to learn in a relaxed and fun environment.

Games to be used in the classroom can be categorized according to different kinds of play. The section that follows will try to describe them briefly.

3 KINDS OF PLAY

It is of paramount importance that EFL teachers who teach (very) young learners become more familiar with as many kinds of play as possible in order to make the most of them in their classes. Hence, this section aims at highlighting diverse kinds of play so as to provide teachers with a whole new perspective and a deeper understanding.

3.1 Quiet Play has to do with children spending some time on their own silently, since they need to fully understand any play situation they find around them. This provides children with plenty of opportunities to think, to reason and to focus on their work, as play is considered to be the work of children. It is encouraged by books, puzzles, toys, art supplies and materials, beads, etc.

3.2 Creative Play deals with many different things such as painting, drawing, problem-solving, music, dancing, and the use of imagination. It helps children increase their levels of independence, resourcefulness and competence, and eventually they become better problem-solvers as they set their imagination free. Marylin Lopes (1993) states “Creativity is the ability to see things in a new and unusual light, to see problems that no one else may even realize exist, and then come up with new, unusual, and effective solutions to these problems.”

3.3 Active Play makes children become real active since they move a lot while engaged in this kind of play. It is stimulated by the use of balls, slides, swings, games, blocks and cuisenaire rods, riding tikes, bikes and tricycles, running around, climbing trees, and the use of indoor materials like rhythm band, bean bag toss, toy cars, trucks, busses, trains, etc.

3.4 Cooperative Play promotes the development of negotiation skills, as children have to make lots of different decisions so as to be able to reach their own play objectives. Ball games, tag, see-saws, playing dolls or house, block building, hide and seek are examples of this kind of play.

3.5 Exploratory/Sensorimotor/ Sensory play has to do with all our different senses: sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch as well as having tactile, movement, sound, and visual experiences.

3.6 Practice Play is related to practicing and repeating new skills as they are being learnt. It contributes greatly to the development of coordination, motor skills, and dexterity, which are needed for later game playing. Finger painting, running, jumping, throwing, sliding, twirling are examples of this kind of play.

3.7 Social Play concerns social interaction with peers. It makes children become aware of how to share and take turns, how to communicate, how to behave in groups or in teams, how to interact with others, among other social skills. It can also teach children the meaning of empathy in case one of them gets hurt while playing.

3.8 Constructive Play happens when children use all their imagination and skills to create an outcome, for instance, spaceships, TV sets, houses and apartment buildings. However, children must make all decisions regarding the way it is going to be played or else they will not see it as play and will not find it fun. This kind of play helps them develop problem-solving skills, imagination, fine motor skills, and self-esteem.

3.9 Dramatic/Symbolic/Make-believe Play refers to children trying out several sorts of life roles, occupations, and activities. It involves children in transforming any object they may encounter around them into other objects and using them accordingly. It helps children develop their imagination and social skills.

3.10 Games are associated with peers, competition, and rules. This type of play makes children learn to enjoy competition and challenges, which will be a very important professional skill in the future.

Yet, it is crucial that EFL teachers not only understand these diverse types of play and their characteristics but also are able to make good use of them in their classes in a meaningful way.

The following section will explore how some of these can be applied when it comes to EFL classes and why games are more suitable for these classes.

4 WHY GAMES ARE MORE SUITABLE IN AN EFL CONTEXT?

All the different kinds of play and games described in the previous section can be used in an EFL classroom in a variety of ways. Quiet Play, for instance: children need some time on their own so teachers also have to

include this kind of play in their lesson plans, and to provide students not only with opportunities to play, experience, and to reason but also with as many different materials as possible. It is not important at this context as children will not make use of the target language.

In Constructive Play, children get together in order to create an outcome. In EFL classes, the outcome can be a dialogue, a talent show, a show and tell presentation, and so on. It is clear that students will need to use the target language in order to show their outcome to their classmates, teacher, and parents. However, they may tend to use their mother tongue during the creation process.

Hence, games are the most suitable kind of play as they involve all students at the same time and deal with more aspects of the language. Students develop their listening and speaking skills, they make use of several structures, they practice them over and over again and are able to produce a large amount of language while playing games.

As games are more appropriate for EFL classes, the following section will provide teachers with several different kinds of games.

5 KINDS OF GAMES

There is a great number of games teachers can use in an EFL class to reach their pedagogical objectives. Everybody knows a game and can adapt it to the classroom environment. This section describes some of the games we usually use with young learners in our classrooms. After classifying them according to their type, we will say why we use them in our classrooms and provide practical examples.

5.1 JUMP ROPE RHYMES

Jumping rope is simple, fun, a very healthy exercise, and involves teamwork. However, in an EFL classroom, teachers' main objective must be working on the rhymes. Since they are repetitive and usually short, they are memorable and help learners retain structures and vocabulary. As teachers, it is

important to bear in mind that if students are very young they will not be able to jump rope. So you can adapt it; you can play snake, high water/low water, or over the waves wiggling. Some of the rhymes are given below:

I like coffee

I like tea

I like _____ to play with me!

Blue and green, red and yellow

Will I ever catch a fellow?

Yes, No, Maybe so, Yes, No, Maybe

so...

I was born on a frying pan

Can you guess how old I am?

1, 2, 3, 4, 5,...

Hurry, hurry, don't be late

Meet us at the garden gate.

Jump it high, jump it low

Turn around and out you go!

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn around,

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, touch the ground

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, show your shoe

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, that will do!

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, go upstairs

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say your prayers

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn out the lights

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, say good-night!

(Children act out the actions while they say the rhyme and skip the rope)

5.2 HAND CLAPPING RHYMES

Children enjoy clapping hands, especially when they are 7/8 years old. As they are also repetitive, they help learners absorb new structures and vocabulary. Children usually know a lot of rhymes in their mother tongue, and teachers may create an English version for them or even challenge children to create their own in English. However, clapping is not an easy game for very young learners as it involves rhythm, concentration and lots of actions. You may have to practice a little before introducing the rhyme. Here you have two of them:

5.2.1 A Sailor Went to Sea

*A sailor went to sea, sea, sea
To see what he could see, see, see
But all that he could see, see, see
Was the bottom of the deep blue sea, sea, sea.*

The sequence is this: you first clap your hands together, you then ‘high five’ your right hand palm to your partner’s left hand palm, and then your left hand palm to your partner’s right one. Where words are repeated, you do three ‘high fives’.

5.2.2 Sixty-four

*Concentration
Sixty-four
No repeats
Or hesitation
I go first
You go second
The category is...*

After players define the category, each one must say a noun related to it, but they can not repeat any of them or hesitate when speaking. Teachers can use them after working on groups of words, for instance, numbers, colors, animals, school material, greetings, verbs in the present, and so on. The sequence is this: you first have your left hand palm down and your right hand palm up, as does your partner. You then do the same with the other hand, and finally clap your hands together.

5.3 BALL GAMES

Children love playing games with balls. And, they learn to handle the ball in different ways, develop motor skills, negotiate with their peers, understand rules, win, lose and challenge themselves. In an EFL lesson, this kind of game

enhances teamwork, lowers kids' anxiety and gets children involved. Some games to be played in EFL classes are described below:

5.3.1 Queenie

*Queenie, queenie,
Who's got the ball?
Is she short or tall?
Is she fat or thin?
Or is she like a rolling pin?*

One pupil is picked to be "Queenie," and that kid gets a ball and turns her back to everyone else. The other children sit in a line facing Queenie's back. Then, "Queenie" throws the ball over her shoulder and one of the players sitting in the line catches it. Everyone puts their hands behind their backs so that "Queenie" cannot see who has the ball. Then, they shout out the rhyme. "Queenie" has to guess who has the ball. If she cannot guess, the kid who has the ball becomes the new "Queenie."

5.3.2 Oliver Twist

*Oliver-Oliver-Oliver Twist
Bet you a penny you can't do this:
Number one – touch your tongue
Number two – touch your shoe
Number three – touch your knee
Number four – touch the floor
Number five – stay alive
Number six – wiggle your hips
Number seven – jump to heaven
Number eight – bang the gate
Number nine – walk the line
Number ten – start again.*

This is a bouncing game in which children must bounce the ball and do the actions at the same time. It practices numbers and it introduces some physical action vocabulary. It is important to remember that very young children cannot bounce a ball.

5.4 VOCABULARY GAMES

There are many vocabulary games children are already familiar with in their mother tongue. You can either adapt them or use one that you used to play when you were a child, creating your own version. Vocabulary games are a wonderful tool for introducing or reviewing new vocabulary. For example:

- I Spy with my Little Eye
- Stop
- Image and Action/Pictionary
- Yes/No games
- Hangman
- Make as many words as you can
- Going on a picnic
- Simon Says

5.5 GRAMMAR GAMES

Grammar is one of the language aspects most teachers find it difficult to teach, because students usually dislike 'grammar time', especially when they are young. Why should we overwhelm them with all those boring rules? Games are an energy-saving tool teachers may use to make students understand grammar easily and in a fun way. Read some of the ideas we share with you and be inspired to come up with your own.

5.5.1 Lottery Game

In this game, you have five columns. The second and the third columns are filled in with pairs of sentences. If only the first sentence is correct, children must tick the first column; if only the second sentence is right, they must tick the last column; but if both are correct or incorrect, they must tick the middle one. For instance:

	<i>Do you like cake?</i>		<i>You like cake?</i>	
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In the example above, they should tick the first column.

Teachers can use their students' own mistakes to make a lottery card and the students will profit a lot from trying to find out whether the sentences are correct or not.

5.5.2 Coffeepot/Teapot Game

One student leaves the class and the others choose a verb. The student who is outside returns and has to find out which verb they chose by asking Yes-No questions. They say either "coffeepot" or "teapot" instead of the verb. The 'guesser' asks questions such as "Do you coffeepot/teapot alone?" The aim is to discover the verb.

5.5.3 Tic Tac Toe

Draw a nine square grid on the board and fill each box with one number. After that, the class is divided into two groups: naughts and crosses. Then, one group chooses the number they want to mark their X or O. In order to score, they must answer a question given by the teacher. The team that scores three in a row first, wins!

6 THE DIFFERENT STEPS INVOLVED IN PLAYING GAMES

There are some very important aspects to be taken into consideration when playing a game in class. That means that there are certain steps which have to be followed so that teachers can reach their goals and students can not only have loads of fun but also improve their knowledge of the target language.

Firstly, a nice atmosphere has to be set. There are several techniques teachers may apply in order to call their students' attention and make them be more prepared for the game that is about to start. Teachers may tell their students a story related to the topic of the game itself, create some mystery and curiosity about it, use a bag with objects related to the game so that children can manipulate and experience them before becoming really engaged in it.

Secondly, "It" has to be chosen. There are several pre-game rhymes teachers and students can recite and/or say in order to get to know who is going to be the first one to play or who is going to be "It". One of the rhymes which can be used is "Potato". In this pre-game rhyme, students are supposed to keep their two fists closed in front of them while the teacher touches them, saying the rhyme: **"One potato, two potatoes, three potatoes, four! Five potatoes, six potatoes, seven potatoes, more!"**. Each time the teacher touches one of the students' fists and says **"Four!"** and **"More!"**, that very fist has to be hidden behind the student's back. At the end, the student who has still one fist left is the first to play or is "It". Another rhyme that may be used is "Eeny, meeny, miney, mo". Students make a circle and the teacher pats each student's head while saying **"Eeny, meeny, miney, mo, Catch a tiger by the toe, If he hollers, let him go, Eeny, meeny, miney, mo."** When the teachers says the last word in the rhyme **"Mo"**, the students he/she has touched has to leave the circle. This has to be done until there is only one student left. This student will be "It" or will start playing the game.

Students can also play "Rock, paper, scissors" in order to find out who is going to be the first to play. However, they will not simply say **"Rock, paper, scissors"** and show their partner whether they have chosen rock, paper or scissors. They can sing a rap song: **"Are you ready? Yeah! (2x), Here we go (3x), Rock, paper, scissors (2x), 1, 2,3 (2x), Rock, paper, scissors (2x), 1, 2,3!"**. When students say the last word of the rhyme **"Three!"**, they are supposed

to show their partner they have chosen rock, paper or scissors, using their hands. They must know beforehand and bear in mind that rock smashes scissors, scissors cut the paper, and paper wraps rock in order to know who is the winner and consequently the first to play.

Thirdly, it is time for the teacher and the students to discuss the rules of the game so that everyone knows what they can and cannot do. The rules which are set must be followed and cannot be changed after the game starts. These rules must include a contingency plan so teachers must think about them, foresee possible actions students may take and include in their lesson plan.

Playing and having fun should be the focus of the whole class. While students play, the teacher must keep an eye on them to check whether they are following the rules or not, to clarify doubts and misunderstandings, to help students out, and to guide them throughout the game.

As soon as the game is over, students can register in their own way everything that happened while they were engaged in play. Thus, they will be able to keep record of the vocabulary, the expressions and rhymes used as well as of the different things they did. Teachers and students may use a range of techniques to do so: students can work on handouts with the lyrics of the rhymes and songs they sang and draw pictures related to them, they can cut pictures out of magazines and paste them in sheets of paper in order to be able to remember exactly what was done in the game and to relive it in the future.

7 CONCLUSION

After so many years of practice, we have concluded that EFL learning is much more effective and meaningful when games play a central role in teaching practice. As play and games are challenging, purposeful and involve real language when used with realia, sounds, mime, actions, and so on, children can acquire more vocabulary and language structures, have a better command of the language as a whole, interact more in the target language and be more spontaneous, and take more risks.

Additionally, play and games can be easily and readily adapted to suit any learning area. Thus, they are extremely beneficial in encouraging the growth of

fluency and the building of individual confidence and self-esteem. Our classrooms are learning environments, often highly controlled, but games can bring joy to them and make them a fun and wonderful place for children to be.

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Interviews: a look into native speakers' speech markers, or discourse markers?

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Abstract:

Based on Speech Production and Genre studies, I supply real data and describe informal interviews with native English speakers collected in the *Speak up Magazine*, a publication dedicated to Brazilian English speakers. Speech markers, or also known as discourse markers, which are used to signal different functions in conversation and commonly used by native speakers (NS) comprising the patterning of natural talk were highlighted. I show that in informal interviews in English, NS use, although not always, the discourse markers 'you know' and 'I mean' to give a continuum in the flow of speech and to maintain a connection with the interlocutor. Finally, I present the contributions of this study to the teaching of English as a foreign language, to didactic material production in real contexts, and for social relations.

Key words: interviews – discourse/speech markers – genres.

1 INTRODUCTION

This study is part of a research project focusing on research interviews that can be face-to-face, by telephone, or computer-assisted. Interviews are produced for research questions and surveys or can be found in more informal contexts such the ones described in the present work.

A good perspective of analyses for oral interviews is Systemic Functional Linguistics in the textual metafunction of the language, considering Theme and Rheme (Halliday 1994). In general, oral interviews are characterized by using

¹² The author has been developing studies on survey interviews as a member of GPSEB – Grupo de Pesquisa em Secretariado Executivo Bilíngue. This study is part of an article to be published by *Revista Expectativa* V6, 2007.

topic-comment structure to introduce a new topic, shift the focus, or shade into a new topic. This aspect leads to the use of clause markers for subordinated or embedded clauses (e.g. if, that, because, cause) (Hatch, 1992). For instance, in English oral survey questions, one can mark the theme using a stronger intonation or changing the normal position of the sentence to highlight what he wants to know from the interviewed (Bernardon, 2006). For example, **What medicines**, if any, did you take or use during the past four weeks?

In addition, in a social discourse analysis perspective, Fairclough (2003) considers an interview a conversational social practice, independently if in written or oral mode with specific characterizations. This recursive social practice can be deconstructed according to different approaches. In the theoretical conception of genre, it may be emphasized two main features: a) a typical structure and b) tactics that emphasize individual strategies made by the producer to achieve his/her intentions. Fairclough (2003:104) also differentiates “types of research interviews both in terms of the distribution of speech functions (statements, questions, demands, offers) between interviewer and interviewee and in terms of how interview questions are realized in grammatical mood (declarative, interrogative, imperative).” Taking into consideration these conventions and strategies, this study verifies how Native Speakers (NS) answer interviews questions in an informal context, mainly focusing on the speech or discourse markers, ‘you know’ and ‘I mean’.

Halliday (1994) when analyzing linguistic structures defines ‘you know’ as “explanatory comment coming” and ‘I mean’ as “I will restate it in another way”. Crystal and Dereck (1969) named them “parenthetical type”, which may be embedded in the main clause or may occur in sequence with it.

Speech or discourse markers, ‘you know’ and ‘I mean’, in a psycholinguistic view, also receive labels such as: lexical filled pauses or voiced pauses, and polywords. Chafe (1980, as cited in Towell, R. Hawkins, and Bazergui, 1996) points out that pauses have to do with decisions related to what to talk about next, or to difficulties the speaker is having in deciding not *what* to verbalize, but *how* to verbalize something he already has in mind.

In Speech Production studies, three main phases of disfluency are highlighted: (a) original utterance, (b) the editing phase (e.g. ‘I mean’), and (c) the continuation (it includes repair and repetition). Spontaneous speech may contain

many disfluency markers, as the speaker hesitates in midutterances to alter something in the preceding speech, to repeat, or just to consider how to continue (Lickley and Bard, 1996). Some evidence is that in speech data of NS a great deal of hesitation and repair does in fact occur as it could be observed in the interviews described in this paper.

Apart from the many problems still to be solved in this area, it seems that proposals of definitions of speech markers and of units of speech production and the clustering of units studies lead to clarification and advances in consensus concerning the analysis of units of spoken discourse. Some results from L2 Speech Production Theoretical and Instructional studies in recent years show that L2 speech production has been measured by means of temporal variables and hesitation phenomena, both categories being composed by several sub-measures, many times interrelated and referred to by different labels (e.g. disfluency markers, speech markers, fluency markers, repair phenomena) (Fortkamp, 2000).

Because of the variability feature of oral discourse analysis, investigators first created unit definitions based on traditional grammatical approaches. Particularly, oral data from both native speakers (NS) and non-native speakers (NNS), which have a fragmentary nature, raise discordance in definition of units of analysis and, consequently, application (Foster et. al, 2000). These studies were not sufficient to validate criteria of analysis and so theorists started to consider other features of discourse analysis, such as the interactional (turns), functional (moves), and intonational (tone and utterance) (Crookes,1990).

Although Genre perspective is not commonly connected with studies of speech markers, as the latter concerns oral production and hesitation phenomena, while the former with how people interact socially through the language, the scrutiny of a genre may help to check what tactics native speakers use in a specified genre and in the raise consciousness of how the target language is used in that context. Besides, we could conclude that speech markers, against expectations, are frequently used by high-fluency speakers and this aspect may help NNS in their socio-interactions as lexical fillers may be used to give pace to their answers and to reorganize their thoughts when using a second language.

2 METHOD

The data consist of interviews from a Brazilian magazine for English speakers. Each interview is related to different topics and released by five different subjects. The discourse markers “You know” and “I mean” were highlighted each time they appeared in the interviewers’ speech.

The transcriptions were typed the way they were collected from the magazines in order to maintain the characteristics of the source. Although a transcription based on conversational analysis or phonological and phonetics should also have been relevant, this small-scale study focused only on the texts’ genre. Characterized in this way, further research could be done taking into account phonological aspects.

Some constraints of data collection were found. One is that features such as, eyes gaze, hand movements and others related to non-verbal features were not considered, since the interviews are not face-to face.. The second is the small amount of data and subjects.

Conventions related to overlaps (...) and pauses (,) were used in the transcriptions. But different length of pauses, repetitions and other hesitation features do not appear in the magazine transcriptions.

2.1 ORAL INTERVIEWS DATA DESCRIPTION

The lexical fillers ‘you know’ and ‘I mean’ appear in the middle of the speech to pace the dialogue; a re-starting of a sentence or clause, to conform more to what someone wanted to say. The lexical filler ‘And’ is another marker to indicate a transition-relevant place, although it is not analyzed in this paper. The clause markers ‘ I mean’ and ‘ you know’ are highlighted in the three next stretches of data collection:

- a) SU: Is it the “Dead White Male’s syndrome that you were talking about before?

Marian Keyes: Certainly, it was. Absolutely, **I mean, you know**, they do these posters of Irish writers for the tourists and they are all men and they are all, well mostly, dead. But not anymore, there’s been a huge

rejuvenation and, **you know**, it has to do, I think, with the fact that we've come of age as a nation. **You know**, we're confident young country now, whereas we weren't before. (see Appendix)

- b) Tristan Ashnman asks some London teenagers whether they are worried - or surprised - about many successful pop groups don't actually play their own music.

First girl: It surprises me that groups like (the) Spice Girls were manufactured because, in many things, like their movie, they... it was put across that they weren't. It doesn't really worry me because, **I mean**, if they do good music and if they kind of put it out on the audience, that's fine with me. (see Appendix)

- c) SU: Is there such a thing as a home advantage in sailing?

Matt Hayes: No, not really. **I mean**, the thing is that the...people that you're sailing against, the competitors, **I mean**, these sailors are so good that they'll work out the harbour. And the other thing is, **you know**, at least you know it's safe to drink the water! (see Appendix)

The speech marker 'you know' was more frequently used. In the data analyzed, 17 (seventeen) 'you know' markers and 7 (seven) 'I mean' markers were counted. In example (a) the interviewed used two lexical filler one after another, pacing even more her speech. They were present in most of the speeches described in the interviews confirming the findings in the literature research that they are frequently used by high-fluency speakers. This aspect suggests that lexical fillers are a characteristic of NS's informal conversational interaction in a fluent level.

Subjects were chosen from different cultural backgrounds and with different accents of English to confirm the frequency of the same type of discourse markers or filled pauses. As previously stated, since the accurate representation of sounds is not the focus of this analysis, phonological and phonetic transcription of data were not included. I could observe that some subjects' stretches were characterized by the use of discourse markers while others were not. The transcriptions were only of those stretches where discourse markers, 'you know' and 'I mean', were present. It is important to emphasize that results are limited to the particular speech genre of informal interviews and to the small amount of data.

3 CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, in informal interviews in English, native people use in general, although not always, the discourse markers 'you know' and 'I mean' to give a continuum in the flow of speech and to maintain a connection with the interlocutor.

Much work remains to be done in relation to how and when native speakers use markers. It is premature to teach the set of markers as lexical formulae and pedagogical orientations about teaching ready-made formulae or pattern language are controversial. However, the spoken genre perspective can help to answer some of these questions, since the natural and pattern language used in the conversational situation would seem to be the most useful and least artificial kind to teach foreign students (Hatch, 1992).

Moreover, the selection of spoken genres for instructional purpose may enhance speech activities as they can be presented and discussed according to their cultural and social purposes. For particular speech functions, for example, this perspective can draw learners' attention to how people interact and negotiate their positions in informal interviews. This culture aspect and its interference in the EFL instructional context is another important aspect to be explored, leading future studies in this area.

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How is writing like swimming?

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Abstract:

Writing can be uniquely useful in EFL when duly regarded. Unfortunately, students are normally expected to produce texts as if understanding a language could alone cater for excellent writing performances. However, writing is a learned behavior which demands tutoring and practice. Hence, approaching writing as a process becomes essential to raise students' awareness of their own production, thus improving their skills and results. Appropriate feedback followed by re-writing practices are then invaluable tools in strengthening the purpose of writing activities.

Key words: re-writing, feedback, process writing.

Writing, as most readers will probably agree, is usually hated by students and its correction considered ineffective, let alone time-consuming, by EFL teachers. Unfortunately, we must admit they are right most of the time. Writing is a challenge even in one's mother tongue and, despite all the teachers' efforts to correct students' work; they seem to make the same mistakes repeatedly over time.

Nevertheless, writing can be a valuable and effective tool in the learning process and also a means of enhancing students' self-esteem. A simple riddle once proposed by Eric Lennenberg (1967) may shed light on the subject: *How is writing like swimming?*

When referring to specific characteristics of different species, Lennenberg noted that walking and talking were universally learned by human beings, unlike writing and swimming, which were culturally specific, learned behaviors and

demanded certain conditions and tutoring to be acquired. In order for one to learn to swim, he/she needs a body of water and somebody to teach him/her how to do it. Likewise, to learn how to write, there is a need for a literate society and somebody to teach how this should be done. However, teachers do not always consider the second element of the equation and, in doing so, deprive their students of proper instruction about how to put their ideas down in written form. Thus, they take the ability to write for granted, and grade their students' written work as final products, as if written by accomplished writers. But how can a student be graded for something that he/she has never had the opportunity to actually learn how to do? It is probably this view of writing as something already learned that makes it so painful and frustrating for both teachers and students.

By simply grading students' production as final, teachers never really give them the opportunity to see writing as a process and then profit from it. It is then easy to understand why teachers and students feel so disappointed about their writing experience. If we resort to Lennenberg's riddle once again, it would be like expecting an apprentice swimmer to win the Olympic Games without any significant practice. It seems necessary to rethink our goals in assigning written tasks in order to make them more fruitful and less of a waste of time. Do we want just another grade to evaluate students or do we really want them to learn something?

Although we may see writing as a very simple thing like "grab your pen and paper and do it!" there are two different ways to approach it. One way is what the majority of teachers have been doing over the last few decades and is most probably a reproduction of how they were taught English or learned their mother tongue – Product Writing. To put it simply, we could think of almost anything that is taught in schools, for instance, arithmetic. Suppose you are a Math teacher who has been working on addition and subtraction over a period of time, but has not yet worked on multiplication or division, what would you expect from your students? To know how much $3+3+3$ is, or 3×3 ? I bet you answered $3+3+3$ for, despite being reasonably hard for a child who has just been introduced to arithmetic to add 3 numbers, and as 3×3 such is an easy example of multiplication, you would not normally expect your students to know how to do something they do not have a clue about, even though it equals 9 in both cases. The Product Approach does it the other way around, and expects a student to

figure a 9 out of both calculations without ever explaining to him/her how to do it in either way. But, contrary to arithmetic, the way you go through the process in writing does affect the final results, and that is where the Process Approach kicks in. Working with writing as a process means to teach your students how to write *before* you actually ask them for a product; furthermore, it means offering students the possibility to rethink their texts so as to improve them and learn from their own mistakes. In a product approach, grades are the main motivator for students' production, which is generally poor and does not show improvement over time, whereas in a process approach, the main motivator is to convey a written message in the best possible way; in this case grades become a mere consequence of a well written composition.

Whenever we grade our students without giving them a chance to rewrite or revise, we convey to them that they are supposed to know how to do it. Therefore, their written work becomes mechanical, and yield no more than grades. On the other hand, if we offer them the opportunity to take a second look at their work, we show them that writing is a process and they need to go over it in order to learn how to do it. Unlike speaking, writing gives us the chance to revise our words and think about them. According to Brown (1994), the process approach is an attempt to take advantage of this and give students a chance to think as they write. Ultimately, this kind of writing practice will help students have a better outlook on the mechanics of the language as well as a more independent and appropriate use of its lexis and grammar, hence achieving clearer and more accurate communication, which is bound to be carried over to their speaking practice and lead them to the proficiency levels they are expecting (or expected) to reach.

Unfortunately though, re-writing is still seen as a punishment by most students and as a second chance by teachers. However, Chavarria (2004) believes that re-writing is the main exercise for the acquisition of writing skills and a major activity if we consider writing as a process. Re-writing is crucial to the students' learning process, since, as noted by Chenoweth (qtd. in CHAVARRIA, 2004, p.26), only through this will they have the opportunity to explore their own ideas and develop them in a more successful way, which is otherwise impossible if new topics are immediately assigned. Taylor (qtd. in BRUCE; CHADWICK, 1989, p.1) also supports the idea that showing students where their own

arguments are weak or where their logic breaks down is a more effective approach than showing them standard patterns or discussing with them how to support an argument.

The activity of re-writing gives students a sense of purpose when having a second look at their compositions, which can be very profitable in the learning process. Chavarria (2004) conducted a survey with 52 students divided into two groups and found that 68% of the writers in a process group (who were used to rewriting) always read their compositions after the teacher's comments. Meanwhile, only 21% of the writers in a product group always read their compositions after the teacher's comments, while 13% of the group never read them. It seems to serve no purpose whatsoever giving feedback and not asking students to rewrite based on the teacher's comments.

Not only does re-writing play an important role in the students' learning process, but also the feedback they receive. Feedback on writing is a valuable tool in helping students go over this process and benefit from it both in meaning and form, as long as students assume a more active role in it. As regards error correction, Kavaliauskiene (2003) noted that the majority of EFL teachers assume an active role in this, while learners take a passive role. In his opinion, in the long run this approach is inefficient in treating so-called fossilized errors. On this point, Lalande (qtd. in Omaggio, 2001, p.319) believes that it is not the re-writing activity in itself which helps the students improve their writing skills, but the problem-solving activity promoted by the use of a correction code, or the simple thinking about a structure/excerpt that has been highlighted by the teacher and is apparently correct for the student. That means the student is put into the role of rethinking what he/she previously thought was flawless, consequently correcting wrong hypotheses he might have created about the structure or its uses.

In order for students to be more active in the writing process as well as in their own correction, teachers must prevent from trying to dominate students by neurotically correcting all of their mistakes at the drop of a hat. Instead, teachers should comment on students' work to promote their involvement with the correction and clarity of their own work, which will lead to a more effective text.

Sommers and Hedge (qtd. in CHAVARRIA, 2004, p.27) divide re-writing into two stages: re-drafting and editing. According to them, re-drafting is the process that good writers go through as they evaluate, rethink, and rewrite parts

of the text. Editing has to do with checking for accuracy and making final revisions. This division suggests how feedback could be given to students. Some researchers assert that teachers should first of all worry about meaning when commenting on their students' production, thus leading to a re-drafting practice, wherein the student would analyze his/her own work so as to make it clearer and closer to his/her original objectives. Secondly, after the draft has been prepared, it can be checked for accuracy so that the student can proceed with the editing. The draft is then corrected, leading the student to produce a final version of his/her piece of work, just as professional writers do.

Furthermore, Raimes (qtd. in CHAVARRIA, 2004, p.26) maintains that written comments are more effective if they are questions, specific suggestions and praise than if they are comments such as "good" or "not bad". Research led by Chavarria (2004) showed that when students were not told what to revise, revisions were not even attempted. He believes it may be the process approach to writing, and supportive feedback in particular, that motivate students most.

Another option to make students more active towards their written work is to give them the chance to provide feedback on their peers' work. A study by Figueiredo (2006) with students from a Brazilian university showed that most of the ten students involved in the research enhanced their self-esteem in relation to their written production after their engagement in peer correction activities. The subjects also showed a positive view of correction by the end of the research. The good aspects of their texts pointed out by their peers, as well as the respect for the original meanings of the texts, were some of the aspects the researcher believes contributed to students' self-esteem. In addition, peer correction activities promote problem-solving, interaction and negotiation of meaning and can, consequently, save teacher's time.

Although research is not conclusive about the effectiveness of the teacher's feedback, or of rewriting, on students' improvement, it seems clear that not asking them to rewrite is certainly ineffective. Therefore, it is urgent that we at least make the writing experience a little less painful for both students and teachers, and more of a good opportunity for more meaningful interaction.

In fact, it is a matter of taking into consideration the characteristics of writing as an ability to be learned and as a type of text that improves over time. Concerning these features, re-writing and constructive feedback are more

adequate and fairer practices to adopt in the classroom. The dissatisfaction shown by teachers and students seems to come from their distorted view of the writing ability. Nobody is a born writer and only by recognizing this can we try to do a better job. This will bring more motivation and better communicative results for students, help them with other skills, and eventually, save teachers a lot of time in correction. It will also yield good grades, based on meaningful and rich texts composed by students who certainly have something to say and write, but just have not learned how to do it properly yet.

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Grice's theory of implicatures: an enriching subside for EFL teaching

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PUCRS/2008

Abstract:

The Gricean concept of 'conversational implicature' asserts that listeners infer far more additional meanings than the conventional conveyed ones from speakers' utterances. The present study attempts to suggest the applicability of Grice's theory among EFL students by means of the pragmatic analysis of a movie scene from *East Side, West Side*¹³. Findings seem to corroborate his theory and indicate it as an insightful resource for application within the scope of an EFL classroom. Implications of the findings are proposed.

Key words: Grice, conversational implicature, pragmatics.

The current study¹⁴, applicable to language teaching, aims at emphasizing the relevance of utterers' meaning beyond the conventional logical sense of what is being uttered. For doing so, the exploration of Gricean concepts comprising the cooperative principle, conversation maxims, and conversational implicatures are taken into consideration for an in-depth interpretation of a movie scene (*East Side, West Side*), attempting at reaching a better understanding of how it is possible for listeners to infer far more than what is actually said by the characters.

Such an analysis may cast a broader light on the benefit of delving into pragmatic content for enriching EFL teaching material, so that students may bear in mind that non-conventional utterances employed in the target language can in

¹³ *East Side, West Side*. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy, MGM. USA, 1949.

¹⁴ The present study was carried out in 2005, under the guidance of Dr. Cristina Lopes Perna / PUCRS.

fact convey far more meanings than the original set of utterances apparently seems to propitiate, and feel more at ease when exposed to such sort of language variety.

PRAGMATIC CONCEPTS REVIEW

Pragmatics, in accordance with Yule (1996), is the study of speaker's meaning inside of a given context invariably leading to more being communicated than actually said.

For many linguists, Grice's notion of 'implicature' is one of the essential concepts in pragmatics. In "Logic and Conversation" in *Syntax and Semantics* (1975), Grice gives shape to his notion of implicature; a fundamental concept to his philosophical general theory that proposes to account for the linguistic phenomenon that enables listeners to decode the additional meaning conveyed by speakers, at the same time it tries to distinguish when to make use of strictly logical procedures for language analysis. In "Studies in the Way of Words" (1991, p. 34), he asserts that "what words mean is a matter of what people mean by them". Such a statement helps one to set the course for the deriving conceptual idea of implicature. But before decoding the meaning of this crucial concept, one ought to look more thoroughly at Grice's notion of cooperation principle and the maxims of conversation.

Taking into account that data exchange is the ultimate purpose of conversation, Grice (1975) proposes a theoretical rational scheme that accounts for cooperative ends in conversation. Such a theoretical model is something that people do not bear in mind whenever attempting at producing meaningful bits of information. He states that in conversation, people do not merely utter sentences in a haphazard way; rather, they abide by certain conventional as well as conversational principles. These principles seem to be subconsciously accepted and followed by speakers. The definition of Grice's cooperative principle may be stated as follows: contribute what is required by the accepted purpose of the verbal exchange.

Levinson (1983) revisits Grice's theory and says that in communicating, people use a set of assumptions originated from basic rational considerations that

guide the conduct of conversation. This set of rational assumptions, or conversation maxims, are actually sub-principles of the cooperative principle, which serve as general guidelines for an effective use of language in conversation to improve cooperative exchanges. Grice (1991) states that this cooperative use of language is orientated by maxims of conversation, which altogether delineate the cooperative principle by setting rational means for conducting cooperative interactions. These conversational maxims are the maxims of quality (make your contribution true; do not convey what you believe false or unjustified), quantity (be as informative as required), relevance (be relevant) and manner (be clear; so avoid obscurity and ambiguity, and strive for succinctness).

So, in simpler words, the cooperation principle stands for the set of specific logical assumptions about the cooperative nature of ordinary verbal interaction. Such a cooperative nature intrinsically implies that speakers should use language sincerely (maxim of quality), relevantly (maxim of relevance) and perspicuously (maxim of manner), while providing sufficient information (maxim of quantity) in order to converse in an efficient, rational, cooperative way.

People may follow the cooperation principle in at least two different ways, depending on how speakers relate themselves to the conversational maxims: (1) Speakers may rely on the addressee to amplify what they say by means of unequivocal inferences denominated 'generalized conversational implicatures' or just 'standard implicatures', which are not necessarily dependent on the conversational context, and are thought to take into account the logical conventional meaning presented by speakers' utterances. (2) If speakers deliberately and ostensibly exploit or flout some of the maxims in order to explore them for communicative purposes, they make use of inductive inferences within the context, which are entitled 'particularized conversational implicatures' or simply 'implicatures'. Grice (1991, p.30) predicates "when people flout the maxims, we have implicatures". Such floutings or exploitations of the maxims generate many figures of speech such as irony and metaphor that may lead listeners on to a broader range of distinct inferences.

According to Yule (1996, p.40), "it is speakers who communicate meaning via implicatures and it is listeners who recognize those communicated meanings via inference".

According to Levinson (1983), there are several kinds of pragmatic inferences outside the organization of language which may impact greatly the structure of language, and thus provide some straightforward account of how it is possible to mean more than what is directly expressed by the conventional sense of the linguistic expressions uttered.

In *Studies of the Way of Words* (1991), Grice also argues that for figuring out the additional conveyed meaning of a given implicature, the listener will rely on the following data: (1) the conventional meaning of the words uttered; (2) the cooperative principle and the maxims; (3) the linguistic context of the utterance; (4) one's background knowledge (culturally determined pre-existing knowledge structures that are used to interpret new experiences); and (5) the fact that all these previous relevant items are part of both speaker's and addressee's mutual knowledge.

MOVIE SCENE ANALYSIS

East Side, West Side (1949) is a classical film noir, very representative of the golden years of Hollywood film studios. Such a melodrama/murder mystery is set in New York City in the late 1940s. The movie presents memorable performances of bygone Hollywood icons such as Barbara Stanwyck (Jessie Bourne), James Mason (Brandon Bourne), and Ava Gardner (Isabel Larson), who respectively portray the roles of the betrayed wife, the cheating husband and the lustful lover.

The choice of the scene (wife and mistress meeting for the first time at Larson's apartment) lies on the fact that, independently of following the story line of this feature, one may automatically infer the given context of such a rendezvous. The tone of the conversation as well as the women's tense behavior, leads one to induce they are no friends at all; that Brand (Mason) is the main issue of their conversation, and their categorical roles (wife and lover) in regard to him. Basically speaking, the scene leads viewers to infer a restrained verbal fight between a devoted, passionate wife (Stanwyck) and a wicked, heart of stone lover (Gardner) who will stop at nothing to get her man.

Grice's theory of conversational implicatures remains a key concept for analyzing the characters' utterances, helping EFL students to achieve a deeper understanding of how it is possible for a listener to infer far more than the intended conveyed meaning of what is being said.

The current analysis of the movie scene is found at chapter 14 of its DVD format. The movie script contained in it comprises several particularized conversational implicatures that will guide EFL students to infer a subsequent set of possible meanings. Irony is also present in the course of the scene, helping to establish the feeling of contempt that those women have towards one another. In addition to that, there are some utterances that require special background knowledge from the listeners to work out the intended meaning of what is uttered by the characters.

Considerations about both the conventional and additional meanings conveyed throughout the scene are presented below by means of implicatures.

SCENE: RENDEZVOUS AT LARSON'S PLACE

(I – Isabel Larson & J – Jessie Bourne)

I - Oh, I thought you'd change your mind!

J - Did you?

Implicature: Do you really think you know me so well to the point of predicting the way my mind works?

I - If I were in your place, I think I'd be a little curious too.

Implicature: If I were you, I would also be curious to know the woman who is stealing away your husband.

I - Wanna a drink? I have your husband's favorite brand!

Implicature: Such an ironic remark is intended to threaten the wife by stating that her husband is a frequent guest at her place.

J - No, thank you.

I - All right! You're late and I'm going to a cocktail party so I'll wind this up fast.

I – I'm back and I'm going to stay back!

Implicature: Prepare yourself to lose your man because I want him badly and you will not stand in my way.

J – That is no longer a matter of concern to my husband or myself.

Implicature: I don't give a damn because I know my husband wants to stay with me.

I – Did you stand outside the door rehearsing that?

Implicature: I don't buy that.

J – No, it came easily because it's true!

I – I'm not especially interested in marrying Brand anymore!

Implicature: If Brand feels too insecure about leaving you, I won't mind being 'the other'.

J – Oh, you have other means of support?

Implicature: Ironic remark that leads listeners to infer the wife is asking her if she has found any other stupid man to give her money in exchange for sex.

I – Better means.

I – Would just be simpler if you let him go but if you don't, I wanna tell you what to expect.

Implicature: If you don't leave your husband, I'll make your life hell.

I – This time it's going to be different; this time he's not going to sneak a few minutes me when he can get away from you; this time you'll see him only when I don't want him, is that clear?

Implicature: By emphasizing the deictic item "this time" several times, listeners may infer that Isabel and Brand were lovers in the past, characterizing a conventional implicature (based on the specific meaning of the linguistic expression "this time").

J – You're not difficult to follow!

Implicature: Ironic comment that leads listeners to infer that Jessie is actually stating that Isabel lacks the sophistication to imply things in a refined manner.

I - Sorry I'm not more subtle, but you must remember I haven't had your advantages.

I – When your mother was busy being the great lady of the theater, mine was on a burlesque show on 14th Street.

Implicature: Special background knowledge is required to interpret the additional conveyed meaning: (1) the wife's mother was a talented, successful actress performing on Broadway theaters, in the heart of Midtown, New York, therefore being able to provide her daughter with many advantages. (2) The lover's mother was possibly an untalented artist, perhaps a chorus girl or stripper performing on

the skid row (here represented by 14th Street – a boundary line between Midtown and Downtown that specially until the 1970s was typically consisting of humble immigrant commercial establishments and cheap saloons frequented by vagrants and alcoholics). One automatically infers that Miss Larson's mother could not provide her daughter with many advantages.

I – And when your mother sent you to Miss Cavanaugh's school for nice young ladies, I was slaying in the hash.

Implicature: Listeners may infer the notion of a script that has to do with the sort of aptitudes that were taught to girls in the 1920s and 30s in America, the notion of an educational system that prepared girls to make a good marriage and be efficient housewives. When Isabel utters "I was slaying in the hash", one may understand that the idiom used conveys the additional meaning that she was striving to make a living, with neither outside help nor positive outcomes.

I – Oh, you learned how to pour tea properly and how to cross your legs at the ankles only, then playing pumps makes you a lady, but putting bowls on makes you something else.

Implicature: The first part of the utterance has to do with the ordinary kind of activities that were likely to be taught at Miss Cavanaugh's school for turning girls into respectful ladies. By stating "then playing pumps makes you a lady", one may infer that in those times a real lady should learn how to dance elegantly in society balls (pumps stands for dancing shoes), and by saying "but putting bowls on makes you something else", Isabel is implying that she had to work as waitress to make a living (putting bowls on stands for setting tables for a meal).

I – You learned how to make a good marriage, but like all your kind, you think that by marrying a man you've done enough.

Implicature: You haven't learned how to turn a man on, how to keep him lusting for you. The use of the linguistic expression "like all your kind" (scalar implicature) is derogatory in accordance to the context of the movie. One might infer it categorizes Jessie into a group of women who are completely unaware of their own sexuality, considering sex as merely a part of their conjugal obligations.

I – Well, there's one thing Miss Cavanaugh forgot to teach you; something I learned: how to keep a man; how to keep him wanting you.

J – My husband doesn't want you, he's finished with you, he told me so last night.

I – I'll call him and he'll come running.

Implicature: I will just snap my fingers and your husband will come just like a dog running after a juicy bone.

J – Do you know how he thinks of you?

I – Roughly!

Implicature: He thinks of me in a very instinctual, crude manner. I excite him.

J – As a sickness

Implicature: Jessie thinks her husband was addicted to Isabel just like a smoker to nicotine. In other words, listeners may infer that Jessie is implying that Isabel represents the sweet but deceitful taste of vice.

I – And what you stand for? Health? Sacred and profane love, hm?

Implicature: While I represent vice (the bad girl who excites men) you represent virtue (the devoted righteous woman, the future mother of his children) to him.

J – If Brand wants you, why doesn't he leave me? I'd let him go, he knows that! But he begs me to stay with him, why?

I – He told me why, over and over again, for the same reason he married you.

J – Because he loves me.

I - Because he wants a checkrein, a control, a straightjacket, and that's what you are to him, because he's a little afraid to be himself.

Implicature: Brandon is afraid of following his instincts, and so he needs someone who can control him and not let him stray from the right path to lead a respectful and successful life.

J – You're a little afraid too, aren't you?

Implicature: You are afraid of losing him, you are afraid of being no match for someone like me.

I – Of what? Of you?

Implicature: These echo questions imply "Do you really think I would be afraid of someone as insignificant as you are?"

J – Why else did you call me? Because you're not sure of yourself, you know you've lost Brand, this is one last desperate try, isn't it?

J – You're afraid and unhappy and perhaps that's only fair.

Implicature: You deserve to suffer as much as you made me suffer.

J – You caused me a great deal of unhappiness in the past, but if I were in your place, I would remember something Miss Cavanaugh didn't forget to teach me: how to lose gracefully!

Implicature: The conventional meaning leads one to infer once more that Brandon and Isabel were lovers in the past, and that she is hopelessly trying to have him back. The second part of the utterance (conditional sentence) imparts the idea that Jessie was victorious in that argument by implying that Isabel should stop acting in a cheap way and admit to herself she had lost Brandon for good. The particularized conversational implicature one might infer is: You are a pathetic loser that should at least know how to keep your composure in an adverse situation.

4 CONCLUSION

The previous movie scene analysis apparently seems to corroborate the fact that Grice's theory of 'conversational implicatures' can indeed account for the linguistic phenomenon that far more inferred meanings may actually be carried out than the original conventional ones uttered by speakers.

By exploiting the maxims of conversation, speakers are purposefully enabling listeners to infer additional meanings, even though the somewhat illogical, unconventional senses implied by speakers' utterances seem to fail to do so in a purely semantical, syntactical point of view.

The present study may be of great relevance for the teaching of English in an EFL classroom, since the logical assumptions that permeate the cooperative principle, and the generative concept of conversational implicatures seem to be part of the inextricable maze of acquired knowledge that empowers one's mind with the possibility of inferring far more meaningful information than a given set of original utterances is apparently proposing to do. Hence, as straightforward implications of exploring additional conveyed meaning within the classroom, EFL instructors could be helping students to expand their linguistic repertoires, and making them better equipped to deal with the intricacies that make up the target language. As a matter of fact, by suitably training EFL students to infer apparent hidden meanings of linguistic expressions, instructors may be fostering among students a feeling of well – being in coping with linguistic situations, and thus promoting a broader understanding of the proposed language.

A further implication would be that if the characters had uttered the proposed additional meaning, instead of the subtly implied linguistic forms, East Side, West Side would have probably been censored for going against the strict moral standards of the time the movie was released, thus being likely to be classified as unsuitable for public view. Hence, one may realize the relevance of making use of conversational implicatures for the purpose of turning a somewhat rough dialogue into something more implicit, and yet far more refined and socially acceptable.

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Discussing the use of literature in the foreign language class

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Abstract:

Literary texts can be very useful in language classes, but their potential has not been fully explored. This article aims to discuss the use of literature in the English class in order to teach language and culture and also develop reading skills. It intends to provide teachers with tools to decide on which kind, how much, and how to use literary texts with all level students.

Key words: Teaching, Literature, Reading.

Books are the quietest and most constant of friends; they are the most accessible and wisest of counselors, and the most patient of teachers.

Charles W. Eliot

The use of literature in the foreign language class has not been sufficiently discussed and deserves more attention. Having this in mind, research was done on the topic with the objective of discussing the use of literature in the foreign language class in order to teach English, teach culture, and develop reading skills, considering the pedagogical practices involved in teaching literature as a resource in the foreign language class. The following questions were addressed: Why should literary works be used in the foreign language class? What kind of literature should be taught? How should literature be taught? How much literature should be taught? The results of the research and suggestions to teachers interested in using literary texts in their classes are presented here.

Many teachers refute the idea of using literary texts in their classes, either for feeling unable to use them or for feeling unprepared. Many questions can be present in teachers' minds, such as, "How can I work with literary texts?" and

“How can I evaluate activities based on literary works?”. The issue of literariness, that is, what makes a text literary, cannot be overlooked. It is always advisable to teach literary texts as literary texts; however, that does not mean to say that language teachers cannot teach literary works. It just means they have to learn how to profit from the use of literature in their language classes without the need of the literary metalanguage and knowledge literature specialists make use of.

Teachers who feel like this are not alone. SHOWALTER (2003) points out that teaching literary works is never an easy task, for there is always a certain degree of anxiety related to the teaching of literature. She attributes this anxiety to the nature of literature itself and the lack of training for literary teaching. For her, “we are not confident of our authority” (2003, p. 3). That happens because literature, unlike other subjects, is subjective and demands involvement, but this is exactly what provides us with the opportunity to make our students open up to different issues.

If it seems hard to teach literary works, SCHOLES helps us. For the author, “we must stop trying to teach *literature* and begin to study texts, and maybe then we will teach literature” (SCHOLES, 1986, p. 15). This coincides with the opinion that “Teaching literature is about reading” (BAKER & WESTRUP, 2000, p. 67). Thus, one needs to know about the kind of teaching one will use and its objectives. The way a literary text is used in a language class is not necessarily the same it is used in a literature class. Perceiving this might lower teachers’ anxiety levels.

If planned, the use of literature in the language class has several advantages. The most apparent ones are: providing a source for observation of language in use; offering the possibility of identification and discussion of cultural aspects; improving the ability of reading different kinds of texts; encouraging creative and critical thoughts; developing the reading habit and providing enjoyment, providing the acquisition of reading skills; improving analysis and interpretation competences; promoting the taste for reading, etc.

Literary works are a good alternative in English language teaching because they can show different kinds of texts to students, providing them with plenty of opportunity to have contact with different writing styles, beliefs, and points of view. Considering that, the main objective of this article is to provoke on teachers the wish to teach meaningfully through literary texts. With this, it is also intended to

instigate students to desire and to taste the reading of literary texts and to make teachers able to encourage students to discover a new world of possibilities, thoughts, cultures, and meanings through this rich tool that is literature, bringing new alternatives to the foreign language class.

MCKEACHIE (*Apud* SHOWALTER, 2006, p. 24) states that, “the objective of a course is not to cover a certain set of topics, but rather to facilitate student learning and thinking”. According to MCKEACHIE’s affirmation, what is really important in a class is the promotion of the students’ language improvement, making them able to communicate in the foreign language. It is important to remember that another vital skill that is improved through the use of literature is reading. Also, it is usually agreed that the act of reading a text also promotes the improvement of writing skills. With the habit of reading, students acquire vocabulary, higher linguistic knowledge, and also increase their deducing capability. As SLATER (1991, p. 5) supports,

Reading a substantial and contextualised body of text, students gain familiarity with many features of the written language – the formation and function of sentences, the variety of possible structures, the different ways of connecting ideas – which broaden and enrich their own writing skills. The extensive reading required in tackling a novel or long play develops the students’ ability to make inferences from linguistic clues, and to deduce meaning from context, both useful tools in reading other sorts of material as well.

Besides the linguistic advantages that literature can offer in class, we also can understand literature as lenses through which we can refine our vision in a general way, turning people more critical and creative.

According to NUTTALL (2005, p. 128), “the best way to improve your knowledge of a foreign language is to go and live among its speakers. The next best way is to read extensively in it” Then, the best way teachers can provide to their class this contact with the language is through texts and among these texts we are encouraging the use of literary texts along other types of texts.

In a text, it is possible to get to know more about other cultures, different thoughts and ways of life, specific linguistic uses and expression styles, such as irony and others. SLATER (1991, p. 4) sustains that,

In reading literary texts, students have also to cope with language intended for native speakers and thus they gain additional

familiarity with many linguistic uses, forms and conventions of the written mode: with irony, exposition, argument, narration, and so on.

It is important to make sure that the learner knows that one can understand a text without understanding every word in it. The learner needs to learn how to read a text without looking every word up in the dictionary. It is fundamental that teachers demonstrate their own taste for the reading activity, giving value to the reading and considering it as an indispensable habit, because “readers are made by readers”, as NUTTALL (2005, p. 229) affirms. In order to understand a text, the reader must be able to distinguish between important and unimportant points, and supporting details; establish differences between what is fact and what is opinion; between relevance and irrelevance, and valid or invalid conclusions; to differ from general (all) and restricted (some) information; and he or she must know how to distinguish certainty, probability, possibility, necessity and their absence.

However, it is often affirmed that students reject dealing with literary works. We believe it is not literary texts they reject, but the way these texts are used. In most elementary and high schools in Brazil, literature is taught based on its historiographic approach, emphasizing dates, names, and periods. When students hear about literature, this is what they think about. Nevertheless, they spend hours on the Internet reading and writing fan fiction and e-mails. This suggests it is not literature or reading they reject, but rather the way the texts are used.

It is common sense that nowadays people, mainly teenagers, have a short attention span. This requires that teachers use quick and varied activities. Also, that when literary texts are used, there are activities for before the reading, during the reading, and after the reading. This demands a lot from the teacher, but it makes lessons much more interesting and rewarding. It is certain that the greatest work of the teacher is not in the classroom, during the class. It is before the class, preparing and anticipating the class.

It is the time when interested teachers might ask: what kind of literature should be offered to students? When one thinks of literature, one often thinks only of the great classics, but it is important to remember that movies and movie scripts, lyrics, fairy tales, poems, travel books, autobiographies, chronicles, essays, comic books, and many other items can also be considered types of

literature and used in class. The classics are harder to teach because of the difficult and unusual vocabulary. In addition, the period when the texts were written and the context are usually too distant from the learners' life and, for this reason, classics should not be used when one is starting to use literary texts in the class unless one has a very good reason or activity at hand.

Teachers must be careful when selecting texts, respecting the level of vocabulary and language knowledge of the class as a whole, and increasing the difficulty of the texts gradually. For this reason, working with contemporary texts is advisable, as they have contemporary language and are closest to the students' reality. This kind of texts can raise discussions, comparisons with other texts, maybe from other periods with the same theme or subject, and other possible activities.

Using poetry is a very good alternative. SHOWALTER (2006, p.62) defends that "teaching poetry offers the literature instructor some of the most fundamental, unmediated, active, even physical ways to engage students in learning. Poetry adapts very well to group work as it can be taught by reading it aloud and it is best consumed in public than a short story is, for example. In poetry, two equally or more plausible interpretations can exist together. And this provides students with plenty of material for discussion. Short stories vary in length, extending from one to many pages, which makes them versatile. Contemporary short stories, for example, offer an excellent opportunity to introduce students to issues of region, race, gender, class, and their linguistic implications.

To sum up, what kind of Literature should be taught? It depends on the students' age, previous knowledge, and preferences. And for this reason, the teacher should do some research about what the students like to do and, why not, what they like to read. However, this is a strategy to help manage the class, and the professor should use different literary genres and kinds of texts in order to expose the students to different vocabulary, structure, and other literary aspects. Although it is important to consider the level of the class, as SLATER (1991, p. 6) warns, "in the absence of curriculum or exam constraints, it is much better to choose a work that is not too much above the students' normal reading proficiency." It is also important to propose texts from beginning to advanced levels, gradually, so that learners get used to the reading act and the language.

Regarding the amount of literature to be used, the most important aspect to be considered is the pleasure in the reading act, and this will naturally lead to the development of the reading skills. First and foremost, the learning process of a new language becomes easier to the student with enjoyment included in this process. The teacher can use as many literary texts as the teacher and the students feel comfortable about.

As SHOWALTER (2006, p. 113) mentions “learning is most effective when it is active and interactive”. Then, the key of the learning process is the interest in the subject that is being taught. To provoke this interest must be the concern of English teachers. However, a big question probably remains in teachers’ minds: “How should one use literary texts in a foreign language class aiming to provoke and to keep the students’ interest?”. It is important to emphasize that this is not a magical alternative; there is no guarantee of success for the class, and this will depend on the interest and enjoyment of the teacher in proposing the activity. If a teacher is not into the habit of reading and does not feel confident, it is no use forcing this teacher to do that.

However, it must be acknowledged that English teaching through literary texts is an alternative to entertain the students and vary the classes. But this tool has to be used with criteria in order to avoid repetitive and boring classes. Everything has to be used in a balanced way in order to aim at more effective and interesting classes. To use this tool in class, the teacher has to take into account the group, having their interests as their main objective, because each class is a different class and what can work well in a class can be a very disappointing lesson in another situation and with other students.

Some useful advice to create or stimulate interest for reading is to encourage the students to read the texts aloud; to help the class to speculate about what happens next in the book; to show the class new books and talk a little about each one starting from titles or/and pictures of the book cover; to play parts of recordings in class; to promote discussion of the practical or ethical problems faced by characters in the books, and other strategies. Despite these techniques, the interest and the encouragement of the teacher are the most important incentives to the readers. It is important to relate the literary text to the students’ daily life to promote the understanding of and the interest in the class and in the reading act.

However, to plan a course it is necessary to keep in mind three main criteria that should influence the choice of texts. They are suitability of content, exploitability, and readability. Just to remember, the teacher needs to readapt the course prepared, more specifically the activities based on literary texts, if the materials chosen are not accepted by the group. As NUTTALL (2005, p. 170) supports, “enjoyable texts also make the classwork more effective”. Thus, it is extremely important the use of texts that will interest most of the students and will not bore the others.

There are many different ways to work with a literary text. There are various possibilities of adaptation, according to the text and the teacher’s flexibility and creativity, but there are some suggestions that apply to most texts and groups. In order to make the reading easier to students, it is advisable to supply supporting material such as useful vocabulary for discussion or question lists. It is also advisable to plan several short activities and distribute them along the reading, so that some are for before the reading, some for during the reading, and some for after the reading. This way, students do not feel so tired and have a feeling of accomplishment every time a task is finished.

Good pre-reading activities or warm-ups are those activities that stimulate the interest in the text or promote engagement with the activity. Pre-reading activities can also make the reading of the text easier as they activate and build on previous knowledge. They also provide an assessment of the students’ background and, if necessary, provide them with some background to facilitate their reading of the text.

Before reading a text, it is important to have the establishment of clear aims for the reading. The students have to know why they are reading a text and how they have to read it. They have to be aware that different texts are read differently and that they have to find the best way to read a certain text. In general terms, good suggestions of pre-reading activities involve prediction of the text content based on a cover, a title, first lines, or pictures. Also, students can be asked to compare texts, identify specific structures and/or vocabulary, find the main idea or some specific information, and identify key words. Another good alternative is to have activities that use the physicality of the text, such as cutting the text into pieces and asking the students to put the text in order or even erasing words from

the text so that students can guess the missing word. These activities can be used to encourage the students to read the text.

The most common kind of while-reading activities are activities or exercises used to check comprehension or interpretation. Students can be given “True or False”, “Agree or Disagree”, or “Match the columns” exercises or even Questionnaires to answer as they read the text. They can also be asked to construct semantic webs, draw pictures or family trees based on a text, or even write paraphrases. They can also be given just half of a text and then be asked to make predictions about the text sequence.

After reading activities usually involve the possibility of going deeper into a text and also going beyond it. In the case of short stories and novels, even easy or abridged readers, discussions can involve: the title of the story, the characters (their appearance, personality, way of speaking), the setting (time and space where the story takes place), the plot (what happened, who did what and why), and the end of the story. More advanced students can discuss aspects related to the identification of a turning point in the narrative, any underlying themes, the narrator and its point of view (who tells the story and why), different types of language (literal or figurative), and perhaps symbols and imagery. In the case of song lyrics or poems, students should also be encouraged to pay attention to the form of the text and its sounds (rhymes and rhythm).

Debates are productive if they leave the text and come to the students' reality. If the teacher feels comfortable, points of view in a text can be compared to real life, such as in questions like: “What would you do if this happened to you?” and “Have you ever been in a similar situation?”.

Writing activities are a good follow-up, mainly if the texts produced are shared with the whole group. Students can retell the story from a different perspective or using different vocabulary; they can write a different end to the story, write a diary of one of the characters, write similar poems or stories. They can also make newspapers, magazines, scripts, plays, Websites, reviews, etc.

There are many literary texts available in libraries and on the Internet, but in order to illustrate some aspects that can be worked with in some texts, a few suggestions are given. The poem “My grandmother”, by Karl Shapiro, is a very useful text. It can be used in activities that connect the grandmother of the poem with the grandmothers of the students, mainly because in Brazil it is common to

find grandmothers that are able to speak more than one language similarly to the grandmother in the poem. It is also possible to work with William Blake's poems, such as "A poison tree", "The Tyger", and "The Sick Rose", focusing on the metaphors present in the poems. Concise short stories such as "The Elevator" by Bernard Malamud, "Thank you, M'am", by Langston Hughes, and "Cat in the Rain" and "Hills like White Elephants" by Ernest Hemingway are full of metaphors and symbols that can be discussed. A subject in vogue nowadays is plastic surgery and it can be discussed with the aid of the short story *The Birthmark* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Equally important are the novels that can be present in a foreign language class. Even classics such as Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn*, and Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* work well if used in segments. Also, it is important to point out that many of the classics can be worked together with a movie version of the same literary work.

Literary texts can be used as often as the teacher and the students feel pleased about. It is possible to design and use a lot of different materials to help the students. Everything that can contribute to a different and interesting lesson should be considered and, perhaps, used in foreign language classes. The use of literary texts in language classes is not mandatory, but an alternative to language classes and teachers in search of new possibilities.

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Unveiling the Present Perfect

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Abstract:

This paper aims at discussing often overlooked intricacies of the English Present Perfect Tense from a verbal aspect perspective. In particular, we look at the extent to which both grammatical and lexical aspect features of verb forms may contribute to the overall meaning of sentences with the purpose of helping language teachers consider such subtleties of the English tense and aspect system when explaining the Present Perfect to Brazilian learners.

Key words: Verbal aspect, Present Perfect Tense, L1 transfer.

1 INTRODUCTION

Teaching a foreign language is, needless to say, a unique experience which involves a lot of dedication, patience, creativity and adaptability to cope with the ever growing and sometimes unexpected difficulties from the many learners who cross our paths on the road of learning. But, are these difficulties so *unexpected*? Well, zooming in on the teaching of English as a foreign language in Brazil specifically, which is itself an even more unique experience, seasoned teachers like those browsing through these pages and we, the writers, must most certainly have noticed they are not of an arbitrary nature. These very same teachers can probably think of some rather over recurring *mistakes* our students do not seem able to help making. It would be quite silly to say these repeated and frequent mistakes made by our most varied sets of students are simply coincidences. However sad it may be to admit that even after thorough instruction and practice over the confused topics our students at many times keep making

the same errors over and over again, one must try and see the enormous effort and higher intellect used in the compensation of the aforementioned difficulties. One of these difficulties and the compensation strategies employed to make up for it are of great appreciation and value for us, and more importantly, are the trigger to this article's key topic. This one thing, as the readers are likely to know by now, is the one grammar point that would not be passed over on any teacher's top ten toughest-to-teach list whatsoever: the Present Perfect Tense in English.

The Present Perfect, as we see it, presents two very peculiar problems to any Brazilian Portuguese native speaker learning English as a foreign language. The first of them is an arguable and considerably sad lack of input our students possibly have on the said tense from their own teachers who, having learned English under the same or, at least similar, conditions of their students, are most of the times unversed on its uses and tend to take the issue as of no relevance, thus unintentionally misguiding their students to believe the Present Perfect to be of an arbitrary nature that should not at all be worrying since there should be other simpler ways to express the same ideas. This approach to the importance of Present Perfect often comes out in sentences like "Don't worry! The Present Perfect is not that important." or "The Present Perfect is only used in England, so you don't need to learn how to use it if you're learning American English." and it ultimately makes its teaching very mechanical and good-for-nothing but to make students test-takers, who can easily fill out blanks with the correct *have/has + past participle* structure, but will not come up with the simplest sentence using it in a natural context. Despite being a very controversial and thought-provoking assumption we are making, we do not intend to delve into its discussion any further now, as we would rather look at other issues, which are more linguistically relevant at the moment, and leave the unfinished discussion as food for thought for the years to come.

The second problem students' face is what deserves extra care from us and is the main focus of our attention in this paper. It is the absence of any corresponding tense in their mother tongue, fact which can be undoubtedly evidenced in simple translations of Present Perfect, which turn out to be sentences involving the Portuguese *Presente Simples*, *Pretérito Perfeito Simples* or *Pretérito Perfeito Composto*, as the examples in Table 1 below demonstrate.

Table 1: Comparison between English and Portuguese: Present Perfect Simple

ENGLISH PRESENT PERFECT SIMPLE	PORTUGUESE
Cintia has worked at the bank for 7 years. Carol has been a teacher for 20 years.	➤ <i>Presente Simples</i> Cintia trabalha no banco há 7 anos. Carol é professora há 20 anos.
I have finished the exercise. He has never broken a leg.	➤ <i>Pretérito Perfeito Simples</i> Eu terminei o exercício. Ele nunca quebrou a perna.
I have not seen Susan lately. I have visited Mark every day.	➤ <i>Pretérito Perfeito Composto</i> Não tenho visto a Susan ultimamente. Eu tenho visitado Mark todos os dias.

Such a simple fact is apparently overlooked by teachers and, subsequently, by learners who end up creating hypothesis about the language that are obviously based on pure transfer of aspectual values from their L1 to the L2. Transfer is a very common phenomenon which has overall positive results since a great many verbal characteristics are rather similar in a myriad of languages. However, for specific structures, wherein aspectual values are not exactly the same, transfer can lead to wrong conclusions and excessive overuse of L1-like structures instead of more adequate L2 structures. This issue will be further discussed in the sections that follow.

2 TENSE AND ASPECT

The verb tenses in a language result from a combination of tense and aspect features. **Tense** is the grammatical category that relates the time of an event with some other time, usually the time of speech. That means to say that an event can be located at a time prior, during or after the moment a speaker is describing it (present, past or future). It is important to note, however, that tense is not necessarily straightforwardly related to the **time** at which the event represented by the verb takes place. For instance, the English Simple Present tense can be used to refer to various times, since it can describe habits and routines, timeless truths, future events, among others. The English verbs are

inflected for two tenses: present and past (YULE, 1998), which are indicated by the *zero/-s* and *-ed* morphological markings, respectively.

Aspect, on the other hand, refers to the internal constituency of an event, reporting whether the speaker is referring to its beginning, middle or end, and whether or not the situation the sentence describes has finished or is complete. For example, the distinction between sentences (1a) and (1b) is that of tense, whereas (2a) and (2b) show a difference in aspect.

- (1) a. Peter is cooking dinner for us.
- b. Peter was cooking dinner for us when I arrived home.
- (2) a. Carol nadou no clube.
- b. Carol nadava no clube.

In the first pair of sentences, 'is' and 'was' are used to distinguish the two events in relation to the utterance time: (1a) present and (1b) past. By contrast, the difference between the sentences in (2) does not refer to the way the events described are located in a time line in relation to the time of speech, since they are both described as past events. The main difference has to do with the way the speaker chooses to describe the situations: in (2a) she/he views the event as complete, finished, whereas in (2b) the speaker emphasizes the event as being consisted of internal phases, not considering the issue of whether it has ended or not as of any relevance.

Aspect is further divided into **grammatical aspect** and **lexical aspect**. Lexical aspect refers to the inherent aspectual properties of verb stems employed by the speakers to describe a given situation, whereas grammatical aspect involves semantic distinctions which are encoded through the use of explicit linguistic devices, such as verbal auxiliaries and inflectional morphemes. There are two grammatically marked aspects in English: progressive (*be+ing*) and perfective (*have+past participle*). The most important features of the perfective, the one that characterizes the Present Perfect Tense, will be presented below, in section 2.1. The taxonomy of lexical aspect will be discussed in section 2.2.

2.1 THE PERFECTIVE ASPECT IN ENGLISH

The perfective aspect always relates two times and evokes the idea of one event being prior to the other. Differently from simple tenses, in which the time of an action is presented as a single whole, the relation between events, in perfective utterances, is vital to their meaning, especially because there is no need for a precise time definition. Thus, in the English Present Perfect (3), the sentence expresses a relationship between two times – present and past (or some time before now) –. When using the Past Perfect (4), the speaker is referring to an event that took place before another time in the past, much as the Future Perfect (5) relates either a future event with respect to now, time of speech, or expresses a future situation that will take place before another future event.

(3) I have seen that movie.

(4) When I arrived at the airport, the plane had left.

(5) Patrick will have finished his dinner before we get there.

This definition contrasts with the way the perfective determines meaning in the *Pretérito Perfeito* in Portuguese and may confuse us for as far as we all know the *Pretérito Perfeito* denotes the idea of a completed action and, opposite to it, the Present Perfect does not necessarily do so. Such discrepancies leave us wondering on how to understand the apparently illogical English verbal system, just to surprise us with its richness when we look into one of the missing pieces of the puzzle: the lexical aspect.

2.2 LEXICAL ASPECT

In addition to the grammatical marking of aspect, verbs or verb phrases (VPs) in a language can also convey aspectual meanings, being thus classified according to the type of events they describe. For instance, some verbs are inherently durative and dynamic, such as *sleep* and *run*, which describe processes that involve some kind of mental or physical energy, whereas others are intrinsically punctual, such as *win* and *break*, which describe instantaneous, momentary events. There are also the so-called state verbs, which describe

homogeneous events that do not have internal dynamics and possess indefinite duration, such as *understand* and *need*. Finally, there are those employed in describing situations that have both intrinsic duration and a culmination point, such as *drink a glass of wine* and *read a book*. This property of verbs (or VPs) is known as **lexical aspect**. The most known taxonomy is the one proposed by Vendler (1957), who classifies verbs into 4 categories: States, Activities, Accomplishments and Achievements. In the table below, examples of these four kinds of verbs (or VPs) are presented:

Table 2: Categories of lexical aspect

STATES	ACTIVITIES	ACCOMPLISHMENTS	ACHIEVEMENTS
<i>understand</i>	<i>walk</i>	<i>walk to school</i>	<i>start</i>
<i>believe</i>	<i>work</i>	<i>work on a project</i>	<i>lose</i>
<i>know</i>	<i>read</i>	<i>read a book</i>	<i>stop</i>
<i>want</i>	<i>run</i>	<i>run a marathon</i>	<i>break</i>
<i>own</i>	<i>eat</i>	<i>eat an apple</i>	<i>fall</i>
<i>desire</i>	<i>study</i>	<i>draw a picture</i>	<i>jump</i>

State verbs are used to refer to situations that do not have internal dynamics, have indefinite duration and no clear endpoint, that is, situations that hold effortlessly, in the sense that no energy input needs to be applied for it to hold¹⁵. Therefore, when we say that *Fred owned a Mercedes for 5 years*, we are implying that the state of *owning a Mercedes* was of the same nature for all the

¹⁵ States are said not to normally occur in association with progressive tenses in English, as can be seen in (6a) below. This is a controversial statement, however, as (6b) and (6c) show. Some authors argue that the italicized verbs in such sentences have lost their stative properties and have become activities, since the progressive aspect used in association with a stative verb often conveys the meaning of a temporary state. The reader is referred to Leech (1987), Smith (1983, 1997).

(6) a. * *Bill is knowing* about the test.
 b. *Mary is being* ironic.
 c. Today *I'm understanding* everything the teacher is saying.

period of 5 years, that is, Fred did not own a Mercedes more in the mornings than in the afternoons!

Activities, on the other hand, describe processes that occur over indefinite periods of time, i.e., they have no notion of completion, but an arbitrary final point, as shown in examples (7a) and (7b) below:

- (7) a. Daniel swims at the club with his daughters.
- b. Mary works at the bank.

Accomplishments are those verbs (or VPs) used to describe events that have intrinsic duration and a culmination point, which represents the completion of the process and result in a change of state, a new state, as in (8). Finally, **achievements** denote instantaneous, punctual events, which depict their beginning or climax instead of presenting the whole situation, as shown in example (9).

- (8) Mary drank a glass of wine last night. (after the action, the glass has become empty)
- (9) Harry *won* the race last year. (refers to the culmination point of the racing event)

Understanding that verbs have inherent characteristics which differ them from one another is just a glimpse at how rich and logically organized verb systems are, diverging from the common belief that their use solely relies on tenses – and driving students insane with untold exceptions which must apply all the time. As we will show in the next section, The English verb system presents impressive clockwork systematicity as we look deeply at these elements, tense and aspect, as the cogs of a big verbal clock and at how beautifully and precisely they mesh.

3 ENGLISH VERB TENSES: A COMBINATION OF TENSE AND ASPECT

English has been said to have 12 verb tenses. However, a careful look at the chart below (from CELCIE-MURCIA; LARSEN-FREEMAN, 1999, p.110) reveals that grasping the whole English tense-aspect system is much easier if it is seen as the result of 12 distinct combinations of tense and aspect features. The tenses (*present*, *past* and *future*) are given along the vertical axis and the four

kinds of grammatical aspect – *simple* (or *neutral*), *perfect* (or *perfective*), *progressive* and *perfect progressive* (a combination of the last two) – appear horizontally. By looking at the table below, we can see that all the 12 English verb tenses are in fact named after a combination of a tense with one or two different aspects.

Table 3: English verb tenses: a combination of tense and aspect

	SIMPLE	PERFECT	PROGRESSIVE	PERFECT PROGRESSIVE
	∅	have + -en	be + -ing	have + -en be + -ing
Present	<i>write/writes</i> <i>walk/walks</i>	<i>has/have written</i> <i>has/have walked</i>	<i>am/is/are writing</i> <i>am/is/are walking</i>	<i>has/have been writing</i> <i>has/have been walking</i>
Past	<i>wrote</i> <i>walked</i>	<i>had written</i> <i>had walked</i>	<i>was/were writing</i> <i>was/were walking</i>	<i>had been writing</i> <i>had been walking</i>
Future	<i>will write</i> <i>will walk</i>	<i>will have written</i> <i>will have walked</i>	<i>will be writing</i> <i>will be walking</i>	<i>will have been writing</i> <i>will have been walking</i>

Therefore, as we can see, the Present Perfect Tense, our focus of analysis here, results from a combination of Present Tense features interacting with the perfective aspect. By looking at it this simply, most of the unnecessary traumatizing fright frequently grown around the topic is lessened since its non-arbitrariness becomes evident. Then again it is good to remember that this understanding is subconscious to native speakers and that having a conscious look at it can not be but valuable for any non-native speakers who intends to make up for these slight and seemingly unteachable nuances of language by at least tracing contrastive parallels to help them monitor their own use of the structure. Anyhow, the meaning/use distinction is difficult to discern, so by understanding the semantic core of each component of the system, learners will have an advantage in knowing where the semantic domain of one tense ends and the other begins.

However revealing or interesting it might seem, knowing this alone does not suffice for clearing out all the troubles learners have. To better understand the unique uses of the Present Perfect we must look again at the English verbal

engine and see how the parts interact to result in clearly and logically organized systematicity – intuitively understood by natives and a few very proficient speakers thus far, but that will hopefully be made simpler and more tangible to anyone, as explained in the next section.

4 THE INTERACTION BETWEEN GRAMMATICAL AND LEXICAL ASPECT IN THE PRESENT PERFECT

Another important issue related to the Present Perfect is that lexical aspect also interacts with grammatical aspect to affect meaning. That means to say that the meanings conveyed by the inherent properties of verbs contribute to – and, to some extent, may determine – the overall interpretation of the sentences constructed with the Present Perfect. In order to make this point a little clearer, let us examine the following examples:

- (10)a. Jonas has believed in Allah all his life.
- b. We have known Peter for quite some time.
- c. My mother has been ill.

In the sentences shown in (10), the perfective aspect is used with stative verbs, conveying the meaning of pre-existing states that may or may not continue at the time of speech. In all the cases, the core meaning of the perfective is affected by the stative characteristics of the verbs with which it is associated, originating the continuing interpretation of the three states mentioned: *to believe in Allah*, *to know Peter* and *to be ill*.

In a similar fashion, when the perfect aspect is used with activity verbs it describes a prior experience or activity, as the examples in (11) demonstrate. In the three examples given in (11), the most natural interpretation is the one in which the actions reported have started in the past and still have a connection with the present moment. In other words, it is still true that Gary works at the bank and that Peter lives in Canada, and Paul's previous experience with running in competitions also becomes clear.

- (11)a. Gary has worked at the bank for five years.
- b. Peter has lived in Canada all his life.
- c. Paul has run in competitions before.

By contrast, the perfective aspect used with dynamic verbs – accomplishments (12) and achievements (13) – normally denote events that have finished.

(12)a. I have written 35 email messages today.

b. Mary has read this book twice.

(13)a. I have found my keys.

b. Marta has broken the window.

In all the examples above, the situations reported are closed, in the sense that they signal prior events that have been completed: both initial and endpoints of the situation are clearly presented and the whole event is seen a whole.

From what has been briefly described, we can undoubtedly see that a verb tense as rich as the Present Perfect can not be defined by categorical and encyclopedic definitions which invariably prove themselves frail with the page-long list of exceptions that must follow their learning and consequently mar the its otherwise smooth acquisition. Rather, we argue, more attention should be given to how tense and aspect interact, for only by doing so we can utterly comprise the hard-to-teach meaning/use equation involved in grammar structures, hence helping learners cope with the difficulty of learning and using this important and overly underestimated tense.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

When students are exposed to English in naturalistic contexts, they are offered plenty of opportunities to interact and end up mastering the intricacies of the Present Perfect. When they learn the language in a foreign context, we believe in the need for the teaching of grammar, in particular, the teaching of the English verbal system with the help of metalinguistic reflection. By using instruction of this sort we can finally deliver to learners the structure's rationale they many times believe impossible to grasp, fact which they attribute to sheer arbitrariness in the choice of verbal tenses by native speakers. This choice sure is a matter of emphasis, but we can not at all say it is deliberately shunned when there are necessary meaning inferences to be made that can only be transmitted accurately through its usage. Then, once more, we are able to see how rewarding

this understanding may be to students since it enables them, through its comprehension, to choose when and how to use it correctly in order to highlight the information they want to emphasize, ultimately bringing them closer to a very desirable goal: high proficiency in the target language. Thus, knowledge of verbal aspect may be of value, and carefully planned focus on form activities may help learners improve their understanding of its intricacies. As Celcie-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman (1999, p.111) claim, “by viewing the tenses and aspects as a system, the learning burden is lessened”.

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