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Argentinian Journal of Applied Linguistics

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Editorial introduction

Once upon a time *literature* was an innocent word in an innocent world. But times have changed and the *age of innocence* has given way under the overwhelming impulse of the *age of knowledge*. Under the impact of new technologies the experiences that reading, writing and text signified years ago have been radically changed and the map of literary scholarship is being constantly reconfigured: the canon has been shattered to pieces; hybridisation processes have eroded borders and clear cut distinctions; electronic literature has gained momentum and narratives of new media impact multiply. This complex scenario, which poses challenges for both teachers and scholars, oriented the choice of topic for this first special issue to provide a chance of sharing experience.

A plural spectrum of contributions which display different approaches to literary texts, varied accounts of the incorporation of literature in the EFL classroom, and reviews of recently published books constitute this number. To this AJAL first special issue have contributed teachers, trainers and researchers from different parts of Argentina.

The first contribution is authored by Lucía Quiroga. As the she puts it, "[t]he purpose of this work is to present a set of sample activities as a starting point to develop the literary competence through literature and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class. *Bridging the gap between traditional literature and new digital forms: a practical basis for EFL teachers* is rooted in the author's teaching experience. The three appendices that complete the article provide further activities to be implemented in the classroom with learners of different ages and levels of proficiency.

The second contribution is framed as a classroom account of an experience carried out at a bilingual school in the city of Buenos Aires. In *From Rapunzel to Tangled and beyond: Multimedia practices in the language & literature classroom* Martha De Cunto and María Laura García create a didactic unit around fairy tales and the film *Tangled*. Readers will find that the authors have included useful hyperlinks to different sources and materials.

The third article is another teacher's account: Matías Ansaldo's. *Kamishibai in kindergarten: The magic of ancient Japanese storytelling with young learners*. In this contribution intercultural awareness through storytelling plays a central role. The author presents a didactic sequence through which young learners are taken from a role as

listeners to a role as storytellers by means of different teaching strategies which go beyond the purely linguistic.

Fourth, Enrique Basabe and Miriam Germani share the preliminary findings of a project carried out with future teachers of English from Universidad Nacional de La Pampa. In their conceptualisation and enactment of a less mainstream approach to literature teaching, they resort to critical literacy. Qualitative data were obtained through classroom observations and interviews. Through their project the authors seek "to confidently connect our classrooms not only with literature and teaching but, as our students demand from us, with meaningful learning and, above all, with things that are valuable for life."

In *Popular culture texts: Thinking outside the book and onto the screen* María Florencia Borrello explores "multimedia publishing and the possibilities it has to offer foreign language learners in the consumption and production of popular culture texts" and presents ways through which learners can become writers. To this effect, she suggests the incorporation of a wide range of web 2.0 tools into the classroom to promote multiliteracies. According to Borrello, through the use of these resources, we can help students become engaged in global communication. In this article teachers will also find a whole range of suggestions to explore and incorporate ICT in their literature-based lessons or general practices.

David Leavitt's *The lost language of cranes*, a novel dealing with sexual taboos is analysed in *Queer intersubjective processes in David Leavitt's The lost language of ranes* by José Luis Garletti and Pamela Flores, from Universidad Nacional del Litoral. This contribution is solidly grounded on queer theory and its central concern is to bring "to light the cultural world of homosexuality to communicate an ideological and artistic view of societies in which LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexuals, trans) individuals permanently strive for social recognition."

Last, this special issue includes two book reviews. The first is an extended review of *A companion to digital literary studies* edited by R. Siemens and S. Schreibman, a collection of articles published in 2013. The second book review is located between linguistics and literature as it is about stylistics. *Pedagogical stylistics: Current trends in language, literature, and ELT* was published in 2012 and is edited by M. Burke et al.

The editors would like to thank the reviewers for their thoughtful comments and the contributors for their fruitful cooperation. Readers may wish to know that the AJAL editorial team and reviewers work ad-honorem, that the salary is simply knowing that they are doing something tangible in Argentina. As it is said in Spanish: "No hay que preocuparse, solamente hay que ocuparse".

Darío Luis Banegas and Raquel Lothringer

Bridging the gap between traditional literature and new digital forms: A practical basis for EFL teachers

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Abstract

The purpose of this work is to present a set of sample activities as a starting point to develop the literary competence through literature and Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) class. The theoretical framework proposed is a combination of literary and technology-oriented approaches that offer a wide space for transaction, participation and cultural interaction. The practical proposal stems from the author's teaching experience, and emphasizes the understanding of literary dimensions through personal involvement and the generation of a dynamic space of experimentation. By means of fostering the literary experience in our teaching practices students will be able to form an opinion, judge information, and validate ideas. Literature and ICT constitute an excellent vehicle to achieve that objective.

Keywords: EFL teaching; electronic literature; literary competence; new literacies; personal enrichment.

Resumen

El propósito de este trabajo es presentar un conjunto de actividades de muestra como punto de partida para desarrollar la competencia literaria a través de la literatura y las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación (TIC) en la clase de Inglés como Lengua Extranjera. El marco teórico propuesto resulta de una combinación de enfoques orientados hacia la literatura y TIC ya que ofrecen un amplio espacio para la transacción, la participación y la interacción cultural. La propuesta deriva de la experiencia docente de la autora, y hace hincapié en la comprensión de las dimensiones literarias a través de la implicancia personal y la generación de un espacio dinámico de experimentación. A través del desarrollo de la experiencia literaria en las prácticas docentes nuestros estudiantes podrán formarse para dar su opinión, juzgar información y validar ideas. La literatura y las TIC constituyen un excelente vehículo para alcanzar dicho objetivo.

Palabras clave: enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera; competencia literaria; literatura electrónica; nuevas alfabetizaciones; enriquecimiento personal.

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THE ROLE OF literature in EFL teaching bears a twofold character since it does not only aim at developing the students' linguistic skills, but also at broadening their *literary competence*. The linguistic competence implies the acquisition of the lexical, grammatical and generic knowledge of the foreign language needed to communicate; the literary competence, on the other hand, entails a mayor level of complexity, since it implies the development of associative abilities and evaluative thinking as a result of the articulation between comprehension abilities, literary and intercultural knowledge, and habits and attitudes at cognitive, linguistic and emotional levels (Tabernero & Dueñas, 2003). But in this day and age, the teaching of literature in the EFL curriculum faces one more challenge: the emergence of ICT and its impact on educational practices. Verbal language has stopped being the only means of representation for the construction of meaning long ago; in fact, it coexists with other forms of language, such as the visual and audiovisual. The digital world has already started to gain ground in our society, thus affecting the usual process of reading and embracing the emergence of new literacies. Far from threatening the presence of literature in the curricula, new digital technologies offer a fresh ground for dealing with novel ways of reading and new literary formats. It is of my concern to refer to the ways in which these elements are being combined and deployed in the field of literature and EFL learning.

The purpose of the present work is to contribute to the development of the students' literary competence in the EFL class by suggesting a practical basis to work with literature and ICT. The article also stands as an invitation for students and teachers to experience literature by applying interactive online techniques in order to achieve learning and personal enrichment through the pleasure of reading literature. The present work is the result of the author's own teaching experience in the realm of literature at private and public institutions. It consists of a set of sample activities that deal with three literary texts targeted for readers of different ages and levels. Each of the sequences holds a distinct relationship between literary texts and digital media, which point to enhance student engagement with innovative literary works through multimodal reading and online activities. The activities are meant to stand as pedagogical opportunities that entail the application of free-to-use online resources by blending technology and literature-oriented approaches.

Theoretical Framework

The present proposal is based on the conception of literature as a multifaceted phenomenon of human experience that enables both the expression and the creation of cultures (Carter & Long, 1991; Lazar, 1993). Thus, I consider literariness from a broad and comprehensive perspective: as a set of elements whose *texture* includes the distinctive linguistic aspects of literary art, as well as essential components of literature

such as content, plot, theme, symbol, imagination, context and culture, among others. Accordingly, the emergent digital literary forms[1] here addressed are contained in this conception of literature, since it acknowledges the changing nature of literature in the contemporary digital landscape and its more than effective articulation with other media. Following Aarseth (1997), I will hereby adopt the umbrella term *cybertextuality* to refer to different digital literary texts mechanically organized and digitally mediated (digital publications, hypertexts, digitally generated texts, etc.), which are in turn comprised in the realm of *e-literature*[2].

The effective development of the literary competence through literature and ICT entails a coherent combination of pedagogical approaches that help bridge the gap between literary comprehension and literary competence. The framework here suggested includes approaches that address both the knowledge of the discipline and the knowledge of technology, in order to achieve understanding of the literary dimensions through multimodal reading and online resources. The specific methodological approaches to the teaching of literature that emerge from such a proposal are: the *Literature as Content Approach*, for which literature itself is the nodal constituent, and focuses on literary elements such as context, genre, theme, setting, symbol etc.; the *Literature for Personal Enrichment Approach*, whose fundamental assumption is that literature is a valuable tool for individuals to connect with their own life experiences, feelings and emotions (Carter & Long, 1991, p. 3); the *Intercultural Approach*, which guides students' experiences to the analysis of both the foreign culture as well as their own. This approach allows students to access and confront various cultural universes, and thanks to the experience of otherness, to discover facets of their own cultural and social identity.

The methodological approach to ICT chosen for this work is the *Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge* (TPACK), which brings forward a substantial basis for integrating technologies to education. TPACK offers an interesting interplay between the different types of knowledge teachers should master–the Technological, Pedagogical and Content knowledge–to better integrate technologies to their teaching practices, without neglecting their complex and multifaceted nature. Content knowledge refers to the disciplinary knowledge of the subject that is to be taught, which should be fully mastered and comprehended by the teacher; pedagogical knowledge makes reference to the deep knowledge of approaches and methods which are present in the teaching and learning processes; technological knowledge focuses on the knowledge of traditional and new technologies to be applied in our teaching practices. TPACK does not only consider the above mentioned sources of knowledge, but it also focuses on new forms of knowledge generated by the combination of the former; the constant interplay among these components is not static, it remains in constant tension and displays a varying nature. This variation requires from the teacher a constant reconfiguration of

his/her understanding of the three components (Koehler & Mishra, 2009). The dynamic, transactional relationship between these components of knowledge in context provides an effective, significant teaching experience, since it does not favour any source of knowledge over the other, but it adjusts to the necessities of the context.

Let it be added that the constant interaction among these approaches implies a migration from the concept of literature as an addition of static knowledge to an idea of literature as experience, i.e. as a "dynamic space of experimentation" (Leibrandt, 2007, p. 2).

The connection between the previously mentioned approaches and the sample activities presented will be addressed in the description section of this work.

Description of Sample Activities

The proposal consists of three sets of sample activities that have been arranged into sequences, ranging from levels A2 to B1+ of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). Even though the activities have been tailored for low CEFR levels, the literary texts here addressed have not undergone linguistic adaptation. The criteria selection of the literary texts is based on two aspects: that they are somehow technology-oriented; that they are innovative and tend to trace new paths to dealing with literature. The established relationships among literary texts and digital media are different for each sequence; the categorization followed to describe them is the one proposed by Unswoth (2008) in his classification of books and computer-based literary narratives[3]. The activities in the three sequences aim at providing online contexts for developing understanding about different dimensions of the literary experience, all of which foster the literary competence by including strategies that encourage exploration, enticement to read, appreciation of a particular literary aspect, interpretation, evaluation and creation, among others. All three sequences follow the usual class stages of *before*, *while* and *after* reading sections, which in this case aim at shaping the literary competence through the demarcation of different literary *moments*.

The first sequence (see Appendix A), *A children's poet*, deals with a traditional poem for kids that has been digitalised for distribution and spreading purposes. Some of the main reasons why the poem was chosen lie on its versatility, its musical and lighthearted character and the playfulness of its nature. This first sequence falls into the category of *digitally-augmented* literary text, or perhaps digitally-augmented experience of literary text, since it consists of a text which has been originally published in book format, but has been augmented with online resources that enhance the story-world of the book (Unsworth, 2008). The general focus of this sequence lies on familiarization with the genre, interaction with the author, and enticement of imagination. The sequence is meant to be dealt with kids ranging between 7 to 10 years in a 2-class-period; one for dealing

with the first two stages and the other for working on the after-reading-section. Both the activities suggested for the *first reading moment* clearly aim at generating positive expectations on the poem to be read, since they invite the students to discuss a fantastic character they already know, and later to imagine the features of the creatures to be read about in the poem. In the while-reading-section the teacher entices the students to use their imagination to portray the creatures present in the poem and their main abilities by using free-to-use software. This stage also focuses on the linguistic aspect of the text, since it invites students to explore on the internet the verb actions present in the poem. The following activity focuses on the rhythmic aspect of the genre, placing its emphasis on the musicality of the rhymes and the possibilities of poetry performing. Encouraging students into listening to themselves ultimately leads them into experiencing this type of literary genre in a more dynamic and appealing way. The proposal for the after-reading-stage is to contact the author and to further explore the genre by indulging into the implications of the author's writing process; that the kids are able to debate on the abstraction of this aspect is certainly one of the most valuable elements of the sequence. A final activity that aims at fostering imagination and creation has been left at the end the sequence, by using kid-friendly software to create their own stories. Even though all the approaches mentioned in this work are somehow present in the sequence, the emphasis has clearly been placed on the *Literature as Content Approach* (specific focus on author and genre) and the TPACK Approach (content and technological knowledge have been combined to explore the genre, to gather information, to express themselves and create their own stories by using specific knowledge oriented online resources).

The second sequence (see Appendix B), *A sense of belonging*, is addressed to young adult readers. The literary text employed for this sequence is an adaptation of a picture book by Shaun Tan into a short animated film. This type of literary material was selected on the basis of its thematic originality and emotional content. In this case, audiovisual material has been successfully adapted, in the sense that it faithfully maintains the spirit of the book format. This story belongs to the category of *digitally re-contextualized* literary text, given that it was first published in book form and then re-published online as a digital text. The sequence explores thematic aspects of the text, the author's life and productions, and the dialogic relation between image and text. In certain cases, the role and function of images in the literary text not only facilitates the process of reading but it also takes a step towards greater narrative complexity, as the reader can make associations and inferences between what they read and what they see (Wensell, 2006). Images serve a narrative function when they contribute to the construction of history and meaning in the process of interaction with the verbal text (Cianciolo, 2001). Due to the emphasis the author has placed on certain intrinsic human aspects present in the story, the sequence also deals with feelings and emotions, and draws on creative aspects

based on personal experiences.

This sequence has been created for adolescents between 15 and 17 years old and it is suggested for a 3-class-period. The first reading stage mainly focuses on introducing the students into the world of fantasy and emotions and on generating the adequate atmosphere for the reading. It also draws on students' prior knowledge about some historical material, and later leads them to a full exploration on the author's life and appreciation of his work and productions. The while-reading-stage invites the students to watch a part of the video and to immediately draw on their personal emotions; they are later led to watch the full version of the story and deal with comprehension activities combined with analytical and inferential ingredients. For the following class the students are asked to discuss the complex relationship between text and images–and between the audio and visual elements as well–and rely on both to decode meanings from the story. Let it be added that the ability to read different types of speech and literary language is also an expected ability of the competent reader of literature. The use of online resources is proposed here for students to express, appreciate and share their immediate experiences with the literary text. For a third class, students will be prompted to use more complex software to present either a special creation triggered by the story, or some research on other illustrators.

The theoretical approaches prominent in this sequence are the *Literature for Personal Enrichment Approach*, since the literary piece is used as a resource to draw on the students' personal experiences and emotions; the *Intercultural Approach*, given that the story addresses the existence of two coexisting worlds and leads to the understanding and acceptance of both.

The third sequence ([Appendix C]), *Meeting point*, deals with a hypertext narrative[4] that belongs to the category of *digitally originated* literary texts. Since the experience of reading this type of digital literature is completely different to dealing with traditional texts, the focus of the sequence also varies a little and draws on the process of reading in itself. It also tackles aspects related to authorship, intertextuality and the metacognitive experience of reading hypertext as a genre. This literary text was chosen for the innovative character of its genre, which is exclusively digitally-oriented and entirely experimental.

The sequence is suggested for adults to be dealt with in a 2-class-period. The first reading stage aims at arousing interest through previous reading experiences and at making intertextual connections with the genre. The while-reading-stage is meant to explore the reading paths of the literary text, and to work on comprehension activities in combination with analysis and evaluation of particular excerpts. Students are also supposed to reflect on their own process of reading (metacognition) by capturing this experience into another digital format (visual presenters). A collaborative experience

has been suggested for the after-reading-process, which can be left for subsequent classes or just as a take-home-task.

The approaches emphasised in this sequence are (1) the Literature as Content Approach, since the genre is fully explored as the main element of the sequence; (2) TPACK, as it is required from the teacher to effectively combine content and (3) technological knowledge, to be able to make content transfer and genre adaptation.

Conclusion

What we clearly see emerging in our contemporary digital landscape is a constant development of new literacies and a steady reconceptualization of traditional literature. These developments entail the revision–or integration–of technological knowledge in the field of education, combined with disciplinary and pedagogical knowledge as part of the teacher's background. In this sense, literature has much to gain if it remains open to the new digital developments, since the effective combination of both fields has much to offer to the ongoing development of literary competence. As seen in the activities description, literature in the EFL class can be approached to different extents and through different methods. All the activities were presented in the three conventional reading stages that designate the broad 'moments' of reading, though in all three sequences the before-reading-stage is intended to arouse the students' interest and expectations, and make intertextual connections to the texts. The while-reading-stage points at enticing the students to read, to explore and imagine, appreciating the literary text and to analyse and interpret the literary content; the after-reading-stage aims at recreating the moments of the reading, and encourages personal appreciation and evaluation of the work rather than its mere understanding. The three sequences undoubtedly address different aspects of the development of literary competence, since they move from one stage to the other suggesting activities that move from lower to higher order thinking skills.

Certainly this work has not delved into the role of the teacher as a mediator in the process of reading in English. However, this work leaves some questions regarding the lack of training of teachers of English in the implementation of ICT, since the unfamiliarity of both teachers and students with particular online resources and software might lead to unexpected results that hinder the richness of this type of teaching practice. Narrowing this gap would involve reviewing the curricula of Literature in the English Teaching Program and embracing a plan of change. Since literature has opened up to include other media (visual, auditory, and digital), it is necessary to include models for a critical and innovative approach to teaching. Our role as educators gives us the chance to help bridge the gap between traditional and digital literary forms by engaging students into the pleasure of reading as part of the training of competent readers.

Notes

1. Digitally originated literary forms are often referred to as *cybertexts* or *technotexts* (Aarseth, 1997; Hayles, 2002).
2. Electronic literature is generally considered to exclude print literature that has been digitised, is "digital born" and (usually) meant to be read on a computer (Hayles, 2008).
3. Digitally-*augmented* literary texts; digitally-*recontextualised* literary text; digitally-*originated* literary text or *hypertext narratives*.
4. Hypertext narrative is a genre of electronic literature, characterized by the use of hypertext links which provide a new context for non-linearity in literature and reader interaction (Bishop, 2009).
5. For appendices, follow these links: Appendix A, Appendix B, Appendix C.

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From *Rapunzel* to *Tangled* and beyond: Multimedia practices in the language and literature classroom

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Abstract

This is a classroom account of a project which consisted of a series of multimedia lessons that have been carried out with 11- and 12-year-old Language and Literature students in a bilingual school in the City of Buenos Aires with the aim of working with multimodal texts simultaneously. The lessons pivoted around the main characteristics of fairy tales as a literary genre and the identification of those elements in the film *Tangled* (2010); the relationship between the written version of the fairy tale *Rapunzel* by the Grimm Brothers and the film *Tangled* (2010), including the exploration of the idea of *fracture*; and a very general introduction to the concept of *remediation* defined by Bolter and Grusin (2000, p. 45) as "the representation of one medium in another."

Keywords: fracture; genre analysis of fairy tales; multimedia; remediation.

Resumen

El presente artículo es un informe sobre un proyecto multimedia implementado en 2013 compuesto de una secuencia de actividades destinadas a alumnos entre 11 y 12 años de Lengua y Literatura en inglés de un colegio bilingüe de la Ciudad Autónoma de Buenos Aires cuyo objetivo principal fue trabajar con textos multimodales en simultáneo. Las clases se desarrollaron en torno al análisis de los elementos que componen el género de los cuentos de hadas y la identificación de esos elementos en el film *Tangled* (2010); las relaciones entre la versión escrita del cuento *Rapunzel* de los Hermanos Grimm con el film *Tangled* (2010), una exploración de la idea de *fractura*; y finalmente una introducción muy general al concepto de *remediación* definido por Bolter y Grusin (2000, p.45) como "una representación de un texto de un medio a otro."

Palabras clave: análisis del género de cuentos de hadas; cuento de hadas; fractura; multimedia; remediación.

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THE GENERAL OBJECTIVE of this classroom account is to make connections between multimodal texts (written, video, digital) through the analysis of genre and the concept of remediation.

Teaching Sequence

Context of situation: The following teaching sequence was implemented in 2013 in a bilingual school in the City of Buenos Aires. Students aged 11-12 watched the Walt Disney film *Tangled* at home as pre-activity homework before the lessons.

Introduction

This article describes a series of lessons carried out with 11 and 12-year-old Language and Literature students in a private bilingual school in the City of Buenos Aires. It is a classroom account that employs multimedia. This presentation can be used as a guideline by teachers who are interested in working with multimodal texts simultaneously (written, video and digital) in their classroom practices.

The first part is dedicated to the discussion of the main characteristics of fairy tales as a literary genre and the identification of those elements in the film *Tangled* (2010). The second part compares the written version of the fairy tale *Rapunzel* by the Grimm Brothers and the film *Tangled* (2010) from the point of view of genre and the specificities of the film. It also explores the concept of *fracture*, a term that was originally used in the TV show *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show*, an American animated television series aired in the 60's produced by Jay Ward Productions, in which short cartoons called, *Fractured Fairy Tales* were played for the creation of humour. According to the Paley Center for Media the term is popularly known as a trope that subverts or spoofs classical tales for the purpose of creating humour (http://www.paleycenter.org/education-class-fractured-fairy-tales/).

The last part of this project illustrates the work of remediation in such media as *Tangled* the film, the video game and the book app. The sources discussed include *Grimms' Rapunzel*, *Tangled Disney Comic* (2012), *Rapunzel's Revenge* (2008), *Tangled Video Game* (2010), *Tangled Storybook Deluxe* (2012), *Barbie Rapunzel* (2002) and *Tangled* (2010). The focus of the lessons has been the film *Tangled* (2010) for three reasons: to favour the work on multimedia, to break the traditional chronological line, a break that usually allows students to move more freely from present to past and from past to present; and finally to show students the multiple ways in which these texts are in dialogue or tangled, as the name of the film shows. Although the classroom practice has already taken place, the present account of good practice will be carried out in present tense throughout. The objective is not to give a step-by-step, detailed and comprehensive account of the methodological procedures used in class or to show

how students worked in the course of the lessons, but rather to give an overview of the contents of the different sessions for those teachers who might be interested in working with multimodal texts at the same time.

Part 1

Topic: Elements of Fairy Tales

The first part is an introduction to the genre of fairy tales based on Gates, Steffel and Molson (2003) with an exploration of the main elements of the genre in the film *Tangled* produced by Walt Disney Animation Studios in 2010, a new *fractured* version of *Rapunzel* classical fairy tale by the Grimm Brothers written in the 19th Century. In class, we draw on the knowledge of the oral fairy tales the students have heard in their own language—Spanish—to list the most important elements: the settings such as enchanted castles, forests; cast of characters usually divided into good and evil such as kings, queens, princes, princesses, soldiers, peasants, witches, etc.; the roles of guardians such as mentors, fairy mothers, magical helpers; the role of witches and princes; the use of natural symbols such as day and night, rain and sun; the organisation of the plot in terms of adventure trips; some of the main themes such as mistaken identity, criticism of human weakness (gluttony, pride, curiosity, ambition) and glorification of human strengths (generosity, love); magic objects or persons with magic power such as wands, enchantments, elves, witches, animation, magic words, etc. Each element is presented with a brief oral explanation and some screenshots from the film and video clips which were edited with the software Microsoft Movie Maker and then inserted in separate Microsoft Powerpoint presentations to best illustrate the different discussion points.

Below you will find a few examples to illustrate the mechanics of this part of the lesson. In the first column, you can find references to screenshots and video clips while in the second column, you can read some oral explanations given by the teacher which may serve as suggestions to be taken into consideration when dealing with the elements of fairy tales in *Rapunzel*. The questions that appear in the second column were answered by the students in class but here, for the sake of simplicity and space, the students' authentic voices are not recorded. The answers are given as guidelines to the readers of this article.

Examples shown to students:	Teacher's comments:
Images of the castle, the forest and Rapunzel's tower. Images of Fragonard's paintings.	*Tangled* has some elements that belong to the traditional genre of the fairy tale, which we are going to explore.　 Most fairy tales take place in an 'unreal

place' or no place, also called utopia. This means that the place is not geographically specific. What is the setting in *Tangled*? Do you remember?

Let's consider these images before you answer.

Do you think the settings of the film actually exist or existed somewhere? In which country? Is the name of the place mentioned? Why not? There is a beauty and vividness to the setting that make it unreal. In reality the forest is not like the forest that appears in the film. This is an ideal forest. And the castles are too impeccably presented.

Each place creates a certain atmosphere because of cultural ideas attached to them. For instance, what is the atmosphere created by a castle? There is always something mysterious about a castle, mysteries that have to be revealed. There is also a connection between castles and important people, people with power. And what kind of atmosphere does a forest create? In a forest there is a lot of danger, there are beautiful trees and animals but there are a lot of unknown elements that can harm us. The forest is not actually a place for children alone.

· The Role of Gothel, the Mother

Examples shown to students:	Teacher's comments:
Video clips and screenshots of Gothel Scene: Gothel talking to Rapunzel	In many traditional fairy tales there is a witch whose job is to ruin a girl's life. Who is the witch in *Tangled*? Let's watch her in the house with Rapunzel at the beginning

"The outside world is a dangerous place, filled with horrible, selfish people. You must stay here, where you're safe. Do you understand, flower?"	of the film. She is kind of nice, isn't she? She does not look like a stereotypical witch. How is she presented?

· Rapunzel's Hair, a Magic Element

Examples shown to students:	Teacher's comments:
Images of Rapunzel using her hair. For example: Rapunzel heals Flynn's hand with her hair.	In the traditional fairy tales, there is always magic. In Rapunzel there is magic in her hair. Have a look at these images and list all the uses of the hair. What can she do with her magical hair?

Part 2

Topic: Fairy tales and Fractured Fairy Tales

After discussing the elements of the fairy tales that appear in the film we start working on the comparison between *Rapunzel* and the film *Tangled* (2010). For this task, we use a free audio story downloaded from the website Storynory. The podcast of *Rapunzel* is listened to in class. Students follow the reading with the printed version provided by the teacher. Then they are asked to compare and contrast the fairy tale *Rapunzel* with the fairy tale video *Tangled* (2010) especially from the point of view of characters and plot. This part lends itself to a discussion of the concept of *fracture*. One way in which this fracture works is by changing the personality of characters, that is to say, by ascribing personality traits to the characters that deviate from the personality these characters have in the classical version of the tales. We show the following videos from *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show* for students to become better acquainted with the idea of fracture: *fractured fairy tales 1961 the frog prince* which presents a prince that is a frog and *sleeping beauty fractured fairy tales* in which the prince is an ambitious business crook.

In our lesson, we pay special attention to the unprincely nature of the saviour—a thug called Flynn in *Tangled*—as opposed to the prince in the written story. These are some of the scenes we play for students to discuss the fractures and the humour they produce.

Examples shown to students:	Teacher's comments:
Scenes: Flynn steals a crown, Flynn is captured by Rapunzel.	In several traditional fairy tales, there is a prince whose role is to save a girl. In *Tangled* there is something different. There is no prince, there is a thug!!
	How is he presented? What personality traits does he have? Isn't he a bit of a smarty pants? He thinks he can take advantage of people. He manipulates them kindly but with deceit.
	And at the end, does he become a prince? Which has been his dream? To marry the girl like some princes in fairy tales? Who makes you laugh more? Rapunzel, the mother or Flynn? Probably Flynn because as we watch the movie we compare him with a prince. He is the opposite of a fairy tale prince. He is selfish person who has betrayed his friends. Friends do not have a nobility background either. They are thugs like him.

We also discuss another fracture in the tale: the dismantling of the binary opposition of the role of *saviour*, which is usually given to the prince, and the role of *saved*, usually ascribed to the girl. We show students some scenes such as the one in which Rapunzel uses her powers and saves Flynn in the tunnel.

Apart from discussing the genre of fairy tales, we examine some specificities of the film such as allusions for the creation of humour.

Examples shown to students:	Teacher's comments:
Picture of Thugs wanted by the 'police' "wanted poster"	The story takes place in the past but it is not clear when exactly. Notice that the 'long time ago' implies that we will learn about archaic events. However, is there anything contemporary in the film? Have a look at this picture. Who are they? They

	have been made contemporary for the purpose of creating humor. They are really unexpected in this long-ago context with no technology. Also, they are an allusion to a movie you probably know: *Men in Black*, it is an allusion to make us laugh. The glasses are also anachronistic items. They do not belong to the far-away setting of the film.

The next step is a follow-up of Rapunzel's development. Like many protagonists in fairy tales, Rapunzel goes through an initiation rite, such as the death of an old self in order to be reborn on a higher level of existence. For example, at the beginning she is only concerned with her situation and her wishes but at the end she is worried about Flynn. We can conclude that one of the most important themes in this film is the difficulties of growing up. Growing up means becoming independent and learning about one's capacity to be in the world alone. Like in all fairy tales, the film shows that growing-up is hard, that there are a lot of obstacles that must be overcome. At the end of the struggle there is always success. Below you will find a few examples of her transformation which can also be included in a timeline created on the following website: http://www.classtools.net/education-games-php/timeline.

Examples shown to students:	Teacher's comments:
Scene: Rapunzel singing "When will my life begin?"	First Rapunzel is a maid. What does she do around the house?
Scene: Rapunzel wants to go out the day of the birthday and her mother wants her to stay inside.	Look at Rapunzel in a conversation with her mother. She wants to get out but her mother does not allow her to do so.
Scene: Rapunzel hides Flynn, lies to her mother and decides to leave the tower.	Later when mother comes back she finds that Rapunzel is hiding a man in the house. Watch. This is a new Rapunzel. She does not trust her mother so much. And she lies to her, she uses the same technique her

	mother has used with her: deceit.

Part 3

Topic: Remediation

Finally we work on a very general introduction to the concept of *remediation*, defined by Bolter and Grusin (2000, p.45) as the representation of one medium in another. Although the idea is not new because its origin can be placed at the beginning of art, *remediation* is a defining characteristic of the new digital medium. In this context, Bolter and Grusin suggest that "what is new about new media comes from the particular ways in which they refashion older media and the ways in which older media refashion themselves to answer the challenges of new media" (p.15).

In this part our aim is to show how some elements of the *original* fairy tale are imported into newer media. The use of italics in *original* all along is meant to highlight that artificially we consider the tale by the Grimm Brothers as the original version. However, fairy tales are part of an oral tradition. The written form is an adaptation of one of those oral renderings—with alterations carried out by the writer—whose origin is really unknown.

In this third part of the lesson we go back to students' practising their comparing and contrasting skills. We work with the following sources, which we show students in class: *Grimms' Rapunzel*, *Tangled Disney Comic* (2012), *Rapunzel's Revenge* (2008), *Tangled Video Game* (2010), *Tangled Storybook Deluxe* (2012), *Barbie Rapunzel* (2002) and *Tangled* (2010).

Firstly, we work with *Barbie Rapunzel* (2002) and *Tangled* (2010) and show students various scenes from both films. In doing so, we find out that *Tangled* (2010) repairs technological issues from its predecessor *Rapunzel* (2002). In fact, it remediates the style of the computer graphics used in *Barbie Rapunzel* (2002) and refashions live-action Hollywood films, making the electronic interventions transparent. In other words, one of the goals of *Tangled* (2010) is to make the settings and human characters look as natural as possible and as a result, make the computer disappear. From the point of view of plot and characters, *Barbie Rapunzel* (2002) is more faithful to *Grimms' Rapunzel* than *Tangled* (2010) although it is not really transparent. We show some scenes in which we compare the presentation of Gothel, the witch in the two versions for students to draw their own conclusions about characterisation.
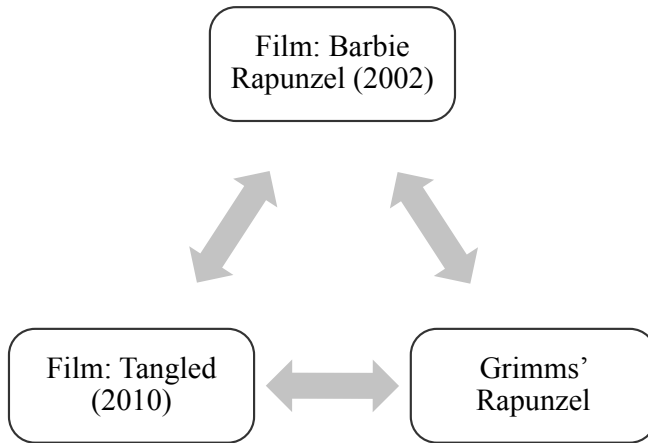
Figure 1. *Grimms' Rapunzel* and the remediated versions of *Tangled* and *Barbie Rapunzel*

Then we compare the written fairy tale with the graphic novel *Rapunzel's Revenge* (2008). This is a novel that sets the *original* tale in the western tradition so it deviates from the generality of the genre of the fairy tales we saw above in that both the setting in time and place are not unspecified, they are anchored in a real time and place. Therefore, the cultural element is very pervasive in the graphic novel and needs to be taken into account for a detailed reading of the text. It would take a long time to dedicate ourselves to a detailed analysis of the graphic novel and besides, this is not our purpose in this part of the class. Therefore, students are presented with four meaningful scenes so that they can do some close reading and become familiar with the pictures, captions and balloons. Then they are expected to compare their analysis with the source text, the tale written by the Grimm Brothers available at Storynory and discussed before in this article.

Figure 2. Comparison between the written fairy tale and the graphic novel.

In the next section of the lesson we present the students with the video game (2010). We play *Tangled Video Game* (2010) with the students in class and we draw conclusions as to the similarities and differences between the two modes. We play as Rapunzel assisting Flynn in climbing walls and overcoming obstacles with the magic power of her hair. If the school does not allow playing in class, we suggest showing a few YouTube videos in which they can see how to play as in the following link: http://youtu.be/ltDwfeeBu0A. Students are invited to draw their own conclusions about the

characteristics of the video game. We mention the interactive part of the video game, the extension of the adventure part of the plot in the forest and all the challenges the two characters have to confront. We discuss the personality of the main characters in the video games and try to account for the way they are presented. We place emphasis on the *fractured* nature of the story of the video game with the reversal of the traditional gender roles (in the games, Rapunzel is physically more skillful than Flynn, which is clearly seen when she helps him climb and sort out problems with her hair). We conclude that the new medium, i.e. the video game, remediates the animated film *Tangled* (2010) and can be called an *interactive film*. Bolter and Grusni (2000, p.47) refer to the fact that in the video game the players become characters in the narrative who decide where to go and what to do. They have control over the narrative itself and can solve puzzles. This new medium is aesthetically a transparent version of the film but from the point of view of content and form, it absorbs and repurposes the film so that it gets a more sophisticated digital form. We also finish up with the idea that differences between them are related to the specificity of the two kinds of modes, one is a film whose main purpose is to tell a story and the other is a videogame, whose main purpose is to play a game, the story being in the background.

Figure 3. Comparison between the film and the video game.

Then we deal with the book app *Tangled Storybook Deluxe* (2012) in which students can listen to the story or read it at their own pace, experience some extras such as moving animated elements and tilting the Iphone or Ipad and doing three different activities aimed at younger learners like colouring Rapunzel, completing jigsaws and playing the Lantern Game. After exploring the book app and trying some of its features, we conclude that the interactivity it offers improves on the limits of the film. As in the case of the video game, the locus of control is on the user who can decide what to do.

Figure 4. Comparison between the film and the book/app.

Throughout the activities we discuss the particularities of the different modes: animated film, written tale, book app, video game and graphic novel. For instance, when we deal with *Tangled* (2010) we make references to some elements of *mis-en-scène*, or visual style in films which include 'the contents of the frame and the way the frame is organized' (Gibbs, 2002, p. 5) such as various kinds of shots and their effects on readers, gestures and clothing of characters, foregrounding and backgrounding, to mention just a few.

Final considerations

By the end of our lessons in school students were well aware of the connections between the texts in terms of genre, deviation or fractures in the genre mainly for the creation of humour and the concept of remediation. They also learned how to move from one mode to another through the analysis of main elements of each text. As the characters in the film who were tangled by magic and desires, the project has explored ways in which these multimodal texts are tangled too.

In this multimedia classroom account we have tried to show how to connect multimodal texts in a Language and Literature class. We have chosen texts which share the same genre, the fairy tale. We have explored the concepts of *fracture* as a funny deviation from the main elements of fairy tales and the idea of remediation which is a defining characteristic of the electronic medium. We hope teachers can explore the same path we have covered, centering on the film *Tangled* (2010) we moved backwards to the classical fairy tale *Rapunzel* and then forward to the remediated versions of the tale *Tangled Disney Comic* (2012), *Rapunzel's Revenge* (2008), *Tangled Video Game* (2010), *Tangled Storybook Deluxe* (2012) and *Barbie Rapunzel* (2002). In this experience, students were expected to participate actively and develop skills related to making comparisons, applying concepts such as *fracture* and *remediation* and discussing main elements of each of the modes. We believe that this trajectory can be replicated with films such as Andrew Adamson and Vicky Jenson's *Shrek I* (2001) and Cory and Todd Edwards' *Hoodwinked* (2005), both being based on popular fairy tales or parts of fairy tales, which are built on the concept of fracture for the creation of humour and which are the source to several remediated versions of the tales which include apps, video games and websites.

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Kamishibai in kindergarten: The magic of ancient Japanese storytelling with young learners

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Abstract

The art of Kamishibai also known as *paper drama* has been treasured by Japanese storytellers. As part of the annual multicultural school year in Argentina, EFL kinder teachers held a project to provide students with vivid, holistic and enriching experiences related to this ancient tradition. Students, whose native language is Spanish, were immersed in the Far eastern culture and literature in English. Could teachers involve students in the magical world of ancient Japan? How would they do it? Yoga sessions, tea ceremony and stories retold with the art of Kamishibai. After listening to many stories, students were ready to create their own in groups with the help of the teachers. Those stories were carefully prepared, illustrated and then narrated to other students and parents, following the art of the Kamishibai.

Keywords: English; Japanese; Kamishibai; kindergarten; literature.

Resumen

El arte del Kamishibai, conocido también como *teatro de papel*, es uno de los legados de los narradores japoneses. Como parte de la planificación institucional anual vinculada a la multiculturalidad en un colegio en Argentina, docentes de inglés como lengua extranjera llevaron a cabo un proyecto relacionado a esta tradición milenaria. Se introdujo a los alumnos (hablantes nativos de español) de manera vivencial a la literatura y cultura del lejano oriente. ¿Podrían los docentes hacer que sus alumnos se involucren con la magia del ancestral Japón? ¿Cómo lo harían? Clases de Yoga, la ceremonia del té y relato de historias contadas a través del arte del Kamishibai. Después de escuchar varias narraciones, los alumnos estaban listos para inventar sus propios cuentos. Estas historias fueron cuidadosamente elaboradas, ilustradas y luego narradas por los alumnos al resto del grupo y a sus familiares siguiendo las tradiciones del arte del Kamishibai.

Palabras clave: inglés; japonés; jardín de infantes; Kamishibai; literatura.

HOW OFTEN DO EFL teachers provide young students of a foreign language with a vivid experience related to literature? Do they usually truly invite them to feel and be surrounded by the universe of a certain story? At the same time, do teachers provide students with the time and opportunities to let sense re-creation in literature happen?

The following article describes a project that provoked reflection upon these matters. It was held with five-year-old students in a bilingual school in Buenos Aires, Argentina. As part of the institutional annual plan, some years ago, the school academic board decided to work on multiculturalism. EFL teachers working in kindergarten planned a project related to Kamishibai.

The art of Kamishibai, also known as paper drama, has been treasured by Japanese storytellers. It started many centuries ago in the Buddhist temples in Japan. Buddhists wanted people to embrace their values so they used to go to villages telling stories with a strong moral. They went around on their bikes and told short stories accompanied by pictures shown in a wooden stage. This traditional art of storytelling was passed on through generations. Kamishibai storytellers arrived in a town and clapped some wooden sticks to call villagers' attention. People used to sit near the wooden stage and listen to stories, especially children.

Kinder five EFL teachers at the mentioned school participated in an in-service session in which a storyteller introduced them to Kamishibai. After such a sensitive experience and further reading on the topic, the teachers thought of transmitting this ancient tradition to their students. It would be highly interesting, engaging, fruitful, and above all, mind opening.

Aims of the Project

The aim of the project was to expose students to certain elements of traditional Japanese culture and the art of Kamishibai in order to provide them with a meaningful experience.

This goal implied several objectives:

- To introduce students to Japanese culture through traditional costumes and their objects (tea ceremony–Kamishibai storytelling–Japanese music)
- To promote flexible picture-reading and sense-recreation: Multiple interpretations of the same picture and ordering of different sequences of a set of pictures to create a wide variety of stories
- To make student increase the oral understanding and production (fluency) of a wide number of linguistic exponents (grammar and vocabulary) in English: vocabulary (colours, adjectives, actions verbs, places) and grammar (simple past, affirmative)

Which activities should teachers prepare to fulfill these language and literature objectives? But most important, how would they introduce the topic and smoothly go through it without breaking the *holistic literature experience* into a set of activities?

Miss Lee: Introductions of the Character and Japanese Culture

The EFL teachers worked in pairs. This means that each group of students spent a complete shift (afternoon or morning) five days a week with two EFL teachers. This organisation allowed teachers to plan the project in the following way.

One of the teachers would be in charge of the group while the other would get dressed up as a Japanese storyteller. Projects in kindergarten usually work very well when a character, a problem or a story organises the sequence of activities giving them sense and unity.

That is how a certain day, within the daily routine, Miss Lee (one of the teachers dressed as a Japanese lady) entered the classroom. We noted that the students felt the slow pace and calm of the Japanese culture through the movements and tone of voice of this character.

Miss Lee visited students on many occasions: sharing the tea ceremony or doing a Yoga class. Students loved Miss Lee and every day they waited for her visit. After some encounters and carefully prepared meaningful experiences related to the Japanese culture, students were ready to know the art of Kamishibai. For that special day, teachers turned the classroom into a Japanese setting. There were no chairs, no tables; only Japanese music and the wooden stage waiting for students to come and enjoy the magic of this ancient art. Miss Lee was in the classroom when the students arrived from the playground with the other teacher. They were asked to take their shoes off and to enter in complete silence. That was the beginning. At that moment the teachers knew that they were offering their students an *extraordinary* experience (See Appendix A). Every day routine would be temporary interrupted and an event of a different order would be introduced: the opening door to feel the power of a different culture through literature. And that was it. Students were amazed by Miss Lee's first story: her movements, her pauses, her words.

Many other stories were told after that day. Each of them created the same special atmosphere. There was no written word. Literature was in the pictures, in Miss Lee's voice, and in the children's mind. Internet videos showed the way Kamishibai storytellers interact with the audience

A panel related to the project was set on the classroom wall. As the stories were introduced, teachers and students filled the panel with pictures and information related to the stories: key vocabulary, characters etc. (See Appendix A)

Some of the stories teachers based their oral narration on were: *Ming Lo Moves the*

Mountain by Arnold Lobel and *Ruby's Wish* by Shirin Yim Brigdes.

Turning Point in the Project: From Listener to Storyteller

Up to this moment teachers had exposed students to the Japanese culture and had provided them with full immersion in which they were the listeners of the Japanese stories. In this second part of the project, students were expected to become more actively involved.

One day, Miss Lee brought her wooden stage and clapped her sticks to call students attention to tell a story as usual. But that day something *odd* would happen. There were no pictures in the wooden stage, but blank pages. Teachers did not mean to tell any story at all that day. They wanted students to create their own. As soon as Miss Lee opened the wooden stage and children saw no picture, they spontaneously offered themselves to invent a story.

This part of the project was devoted to create a short story and the main activities within were:

1. Dividing students into 3 groups
2. Meeting several times with each group to think about characters, setting and the plot:
   - Students chose the setting of the story from options provided by the teachers
   - Students invented character through guided descriptions or used characters from previously stories told by Miss Lee
   - The students created the beginning, development and ending of a short story. Each part of the story included two or three sentences in English. If the students did not have the language necessary to do so, teachers provided students with different phrases or words. The panel mentioned in the previous section was a helpful source of relevant vocabulary
3. Drawing and colouring the pictures
4. Telling the stories within each group to enrich it linguistically: Students from the same group told the complete story to the teacher using the pictures. As they did, the teacher fostered all members' participation in order to enrich the retelling of the story. If the span of students' grammar structures or vocabulary were not so wide, the teachers provided them with more words and phrases in order to have an understandable version
5. Finding a name for the story: Once all the members of the each group have a similar version of the story, students were invited to think of

possible names for the story. In some cases, remembering the names of the stories told by Miss Lee gave students a clue of interesting names: the name of the main character or the most interesting event or object in the story.

One group named the story *The Problem of the Moving House*. Its name shows the core subject of the plot. An old couple of Japanese villagers meet a wise man several times to find solutions for different problem in their house (for illustrations of the story created by the students see Appendix B).

Japanese Storytellers Themselves

Once the stories were ready, each group had the chance to tell the rest of the class and their parents their own story within the art of Kamishibai. This meant that the classroom was set like a Japanese room. (See Appendix A). The rest of the class took the shoes off, waited in silence while some Japanese music was played. The students as true storytellers followed the Kamishibai traditions (clapping the sticks, opening the wooden stage and showing the pictures, telling the story in a slow pace and with smooth movements). For that moment, the members of each group knew what part of the story he/she had to tell. Shy students, who did not want to speak but were part of the creation process, were assigned a special role: clapping the wooden sticks or opening the Kamishibai stage windows and show the pictures. When students lacked confidence or did not remember what to say, teachers or even other members in the groups provided the storyteller with some key words.

Final Comments

Throughout this project, students were immersed in the Far- eastern culture and literature. Could teachers involve students in the magical world of ancient Japan? The teachers' aim was to provide students with a *holistic and enriching experience*.

During the first part of the project students were invited to participate actively and holistically in meaning cultural experiences, led by the teachers especially through Miss Lee character. In the second part focused on the creation of stories within the Kamishibai art of storytelling. The cognitive and language demands were higher as production was required in order to create a story in group and share it orally with others. All the students increased their vocabulary bank. However, the words acquired by each student varied essentially according to the material used for each group's story. All students learned more than two verbs in Simple Past Tense, being verb *to go* one of the most commons. The chance of a real necessity to practice the story many time in order to tell it to others made most of the students increase their fluency and confidence

in speech production.

Japanese traditions and slow pace in speech and movements in oral literature created a turning point in the class atmosphere. For a month time, the classroom became Japan and pure magic emerged from children and teachers' hearts: Far eastern smells, sounds, images friendly mingled with everyone. The power of cultural clash made us discover ourselves in others.

Note

1.   For appendices, follow these links: Appendix A, Appendix B.

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Reading for life: The Critical Literacy and Literature Project at UNLPam (2013-2016)

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Abstract

During the last year in their ELT programme, students face dilemmas which are more philosophical than linguistic in nature. Literature becomes then a fertile ground for reflective thinking; and critical literacy, a suitable approach to engage in novel ways of reading the world and of appropriating the curriculum. In this classroom account, we offer the preliminary results of a pilot study we carried out in the course on literatures in English we taught at the National University of La Pampa (UNLPam) during the second term of 2013. That action was framed in the research project *Critical literacy and literature in English language teacher education*, which we devised for 2013-2016 and of which we also offer a brief description.

Keywords: critical pedagogy; critical literacy; English language teaching; literatures in English; teacher education.

Resumen

Al finalizar sus estudios universitarios, los futuros profesores de inglés enfrentan dilemas de naturaleza más filosófica que lingüística. La literatura se convierte en terreno fértil para la reflexión y la crítica, y la literacidad crítica un modo de abordaje textual que estimula nuevos modos de leer el mundo y de apropiarse del curriculum. Ofrecemos aquí una somera descripción del proyecto de investigación *Literacidad crítica y la literatura en la formación docente del profesor de inglés*, seguida de una narrativa áulica de las actividades que, en el marco de dicho emprendimiento, desarrollamos en el segundo cuatrimestre de 2013 en nuestro curso sobre literaturas en inglés en la Universidad Nacional de La Pampa (UNLPam).

Palabras clave: enseñanza de inglés como lengua extranjera; literaturas en inglés; formación docente; pedagogía crítica; literacidad crítica.

DURING THE LAST year in their teacher education programme, students face dilemmas which are more philosophical than linguistic in nature, as they are on the verge of becoming teachers. It is a time in their lives when the initial interest in dominating the foreign language and the institutional mandate that language be competently taught are articulated. It is precisely at this moment that we should propose our students engage in critical ways of reading the world and of recreating values and commitment. Literature becomes then a fertile ground for reflective thinking on who they are and where they are going since, as claimed by Carr and Skinner (2009), "those who aspire to a wider (extended) conception of educational professionalism might as well (if not better) read the works of Jane Austen or Henry James as those of Piaget, Maslow or Vygotsky" (p. 151). It is in this crux where literature and critical literacy come together, and where both teacher educators and students can appropriate the curriculum. We believe this is the only way both could finally be empowered "to become critical thinkers, equipped with problem-solving strategies, poised to challenge those forces in society that would keep them passive" (Brown, 1991, p. 248).

Changes in the directions outlined above are framed in the overall transformations being experienced in the last three decades in the areas of reading, literature, and English Language Teaching (ELT). We have witnessed a shift from a *reading* paradigm, by which the process was understood as a mere linguistic phenomenon, to one of *literacy*, inclusive of the discursive and social elements involved in reading. Literacy is thus considered a way of reading and writing ideology, and the term is often accompanied by the adjective *critical* in an attempt to foster readers' examination of "the key moments where social identity and power relations are established and negotiated" (Comber, 2001, p. 271).

Similarly, literature has experienced an unprecedented expansion both in its object, which adopted new and innovative forms, and in the means that are used for its production, dissemination, and consumption (Eagleton, 1983/1996; Robin, 1993). This new perception of literature, not as an exclusive product of a target culture but as a global phenomenon, opens up a plethora of opportunities for its study, especially those based on reception theory (Iser, 1972; Jauss, 1982). Scholars in favour of that model believe that it is only in the dialectic convergence between text and reader that the literary work truly exists. In ELT, McRae (1991) proposed what he labelled "literature with a small 'l'", an approach to literature closer to life, even as a specialised subject in higher education (pp. 120-125). Recently, this field has undergone "a radical reorientation along new paradigms […] in understanding motivation and acquisition in terms of social participation and identity construction" (Canagarajah, 2006, p. 9). This displacement has taken at least two different directions: (a) a rearrangement of the psycholinguistic model of TESOL into a wider one, inclusive of the social aspects of

education (Holliday, 1994, 2005), and (b) the growth of a critical pedagogy movement within the field of applied linguistics (Pavlenko, 2004; Pennycook, 1994, 2001) based on Phillipson's (1992) claim of linguistic imperialism. It is in this continuous change and transformation of paradigms and in the constant flux of our teaching practice that the critical literacy and literature project at the National University of La Pampa (UNLPam) came into existence.

The Project and Its Context

The changing contexts described above allowed us to propose a reorientation in our approach to teaching literature. In our English Language Teacher Education programme (2009) at the Department of Foreign Languages at UNLPam, the literature curriculum was reduced to only three courses from the five we used to have, and the description of literature itself was freed from its monolithic national boundaries (e. g., 19th century English Literature, 20th century American Literature). The new Literature in English II, which we are currently teaching, belongs in the second term of the fourth year of the course of studies. Even though we had made some sporadic attempts at using critical literacy, it was only by the beginning of 2013 that we decided we were ready to devise a clear plan to teach literature following its tenets.

We wrote a research project, *Critical literacy and literature in English language teacher education*, which we framed around three research questions:

1. To what extent are our students provided with the cultural and linguistic resources necessary for them to engage with texts critically?
2. How can critical literacy be applied to literature classes?
3. In what ways can a critical approach to literary texts and an emerging teacher identity be articulated? (Basabe & Germani, 2013a)

We focused on the design of a series of experiences which, without disregarding the more usual approaches to the teaching of literature (Carter & Long, 1991; McRae, 1991), would integrate those derived from a linguistic reading of the literary texts (Birch, 1989; Durant & Fabb, 1990; Toolan, 1998) with those advocating for critical reading (Shor, 1999; Wallace, 2001, 2005) and for the creation of open spaces of debate and enquiry (Andreotti, Barker, & Newell-Jones, 2006). Despite the fact that the first stage of the implementation of the project had elements of action research (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988), at the moment of putting the suggested activities into practice, our approach to the methods of data collection was definitely qualitative. They included ethnographic observation, interviews, focus groups, and document analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003; Denzin & Lincoln, 2003; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) in order to achieve

greater triangulation and to secure validity and reliability.

In this classroom account, we offer only the preliminary results of a pilot study we carried out in the second semester of 2013. That was the first time in which Literature in English II was taught since our ELT programme was modified in 2009. Due to that change, only three students, Dana, Juan, and Malvina, could take the subject[1]. They had taken two previous courses in literature in their teacher education programme, but they reported to have no clear engagement with literary experiences before university, either in English or Spanish. The professor in charge of the subject had been tenured for ten years and specialised in education and had a longer relationship with the students than the rest of the chair, having already been their tutor for two other subjects. The other teacher educator, specialised in Phonology and Literature, had arrived after a long leave of absence and had taught literature as an assistant for about ten years. The teacher assistant had been in the chair for two years. As there were only six people on the course, an intimate and productive working relation was fostered between us.

Results

We firstly focused on a careful selection of the literary texts to be used, their arrangement around thematic areas, and a suitable design of tasks involving critical literacy. We tried to choose literary works which, due to their provocative nature, would lead to self-interrogation and self-growth. As for the activities, based on our reading of Frost's (1920) *The road not taken*, for example, we had a fruitful discussion with our students about the choices and dilemmas they faced on the eve of their becoming teachers. Also, suggested to us by their informal conversations around the issues, we devised a writing task in which students were put in the position to judge Smith's action at the end of Sillitoe's (1959) *The loneliness of the long-distance runner* in comparison with that of George Milton in Steinbeck's (1937) *Of mice and men*. Finally, we proposed a form of assessment in which they were in charge of selecting and performing their favourite scene in the plays they were assigned. As an additional task, we asked them to write the script of a critical encounter between two characters from different plays.

As regards data collection, we made between 10 and 15 class observations and we gathered class documents. In addition, we had an individual interview with each of our students halfway through the course and a focus group when the course was over. We read and coded the data on the basis of our knowledge of qualitative methodologies (Denzin, 1989; Gibbs, 2007; Rapley, 2007). We presented a preliminary version of our results at a national convention (Basabe & Germani, 2013b). Here we offer a glimpse of those findings using the headings that naturalistically emerged from our coding.

Roles and Relationships

Some years ago, in an informal conversation with our students, one of them posited that he expected literature to teach them "things that were valuable for life." Gradually, we decided to shift from a cultural/historical approach to one fostering personal growth (Carter & Long, 1999). Thus, we arranged the texts selected for the course on the basis of the human relationships they portrayed. Our classes turned then into discussions not only about literature but also about the human issues that are its matter: selfhood, gender, parenting, teaching and learning, among others. As a group, our students drew sociograms based on the personal relationships among characters in the plays we read, in which they tagged feelings and power relations. This led them not only to analyze the bonds and conflicts present in the texts but also to create and recreate the social and personal ties among them through patient teamwork and careful reflection.

At first, the students felt surprised and even slightly uncomfortable at the critical tasks we proposed to them, and they found it difficult to express their viewpoints freely and engage in debate when they disagreed with each other. As Juan stated in an interview, "one offers an interpretation and nobody dares to expand on it or answer back to it". In fact, there developed a teacher-student interaction paradigm for most of the classes because the students were often reluctant to play a more active role or because the teachers fell back into traditional teaching models. But, as the group grew into "a critical community" with a common and explicit objective: "the critical assessment of a text" (Wallace, 2005, pp. 92-94), they managed to stay focused, think hard, and work as a team, reaching fruitful instances of debate and enquiry. In an interview, Juan reported that he found the approach "more practical, [since] one comes closer to interpretation and realizes one can read on their own," and Dana stated that she had enjoyed the possibility of "having choices and going beyond literature." As teachers, we were able to gradually lose our fears and to become co-participants in the construction of knowledge.

Identity and Personhood

At the beginning of the course, Dana and Malvina tended to frame their readings of literature exclusively in a religious context, and Juan mostly in academic contexts. When we asked them to list five books they considered valuable for their lives, for instance, the two girls mentioned *The Bible*, and Juan hesitantly referred to Poe. In the creative writing activities in which they were requested to make value judgements on certain characters, they would tend to identify with those that fell within their comfort zone, and they would usually think it inappropriate to support life choices that might not necessarily conform to their views on society. As the course advanced, only Malvina tried more personally "involved" readings and dared consider more challenging possibilities. "Literature has the capacity to reflect my feelings, to tell stories which

are similar to mine," she enthusiastically stated in an interview, "to make me think about and understand others." From our observations and document analysis, we deduced that, while Malvina ventured into more personal readings, Juan became good at identifying conflicts and sometimes at working out the linguistic subtleties of a literary text. Throughout the course, though, Dana tended to continue condemning characters on moral grounds and to very often find refuge in a predictable analysis that seldom dared to plunge into the critical.

Even though they were able to identify the literary traits of a text, the students often had difficulties in sharing their findings in ways other than description and exposition. When carrying out tasks that positioned them in a teaching role, for example, they showed a strong tendency towards lecturing rather than eliciting responses or discussing ideas. In our focus group, they expressed their concern with the complexities of teaching literature and language in general, an issue we also shared. In the observations of our own classes, we also noticed our inclination to present and lecture and the anxiety we experienced when leaving our controlling position. We believe these feelings result not only from the intricacies of our role but also from the instability stemming from a critical approach.

Critical Attitudes

We expected our students to already possess the linguistic and cultural resources necessary to fully apprehend a literary text. However, they tended to disregard the representational nature of literary experience and to avoid conscientious text work, due, in Malvina's words, to their "lack of tools." Yet, they did use a series of specialized analytical categories, such as gender, race, and class, in order to read literature. Malvina once acknowledged, "I read literature as if it were theory." We inferred that this could be the result of a habit of interpreting texts from a theoretical perspective rather than from a more linguistic/aesthetic or personal stance, an issue that—we strongly believe—we should be critically addressing in English language teacher education.

In order to foster a more personal and critical engagement with literature, we tried to frame tasks in view of the students' interests, to promote diverse and alternative readings, and to encourage them to create their own questions and put forward their own dilemmas. They responded by engaging critically with the instances of creative writing we suggested to them and integrating literature with other forms of expression and sources of information (e. g., their own drawings and posters, videos and pictures from the Internet, etc.) that they individually related to the texts. The students realised that, if they were allowed to make their own choices and support them critically, they felt empowered and able to enjoy literature at a more personal level. Thus there is only one person and one situation in which literature comes to be true: the reader and the

processes of literacy.

Further Suggestions for Critical Practice

Our experience of critical literacy left us with a feeling of satisfaction due to the fruitful, though limited, results we had. Here we offer a list of suggestions that we judge worth applying if we want to foster critical thinking and practice:

- Make the methodology and the reasons for its use explicit from the start. This will lead students to understand what is expected from them and to prevent their getting lost in the process.
- Create safe classroom contexts in which everybody's knowledge and viewpoint is respected and in which everybody has the right to express their opinion.
- Combine thought-provoking literary texts dealing with a similar topic but representing diverse perspectives.
- Give students the chance to share with the class the literature they read and to select texts and approaches as a way to cater for different styles and interests.
- Offer opportunities for creative writing, such as retelling narratives from the point of view of another character or taking a moral stand on the events of stories. Chances should also be given to transform literary texts into other visual, linguistic, or performed artefacts, such as posters, paintings, video clips, sketches, or poems.
- Connect literature with the students' lives, honouring their personal experiences and their social context through activities that generate significant interest.
- Foster teamwork and peer evaluation. Encouraging students to share their views promotes solidarity and collaborative learning.
- Redefine assessment. A critical approach should be accompanied by an evaluation that coherently reflects the practices carried out during the course, that requires them to take a position, and that, if possible, sparks action.

We should acknowledge that many of these suggestions were already outlined in the basic literature we introduced at the beginning of this account. We thought it worth reconsidering them now that we are speaking from our own experience of critical literacy.

The greatest effects of the adoption of a critical literacy approach to teaching literature

lie in the redefinition of our and our students' roles and relationships. Critical literacy puts a strain on teaching. Through its use in the classroom, we learn to be critical, but we also learn about the pain of the criticism that is directed at us and to the apparent stability and correctness of our teaching practices. Critical literacy also allows the personal into the classroom. As co-participants in the building of knowledge we have to accept we have not got all the answers. We may not even have the right answers—if indeed there are any. Therefore, critical literacy is problem posing but never problem solving. If, as we did, we give it an opportunity and we practise it conscientiously, it will fit the curriculum, and theory will come its way. In our case, we have chosen a version of critical literacy that, not so much in the direction of its social effects (Comber & Kamler, 1997), focuses on the personal and on the ways we become who we are. We are still wondering about the political dimension of our enterprise, though, and on whether it will have a strong impact on a population that may not feel themselves marginalised. Yet, by the end of our project we hope to find answers to those queries. We expect our version of critical literacy to confidently connect our classrooms not only with literature and teaching but, as our students demand from us, with meaningful learning and, above all, with things that are valuable for life.

Note

1. Pseudonyms were used so as to ensure anonymity. Consent forms are available upon request. In November 2013, participants were presented with a preliminary version of the results, with which they mostly agree.

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Popular culture texts: Thinking outside the book and onto the screen

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Abstract

As current generations of students are entering the classroom having had years of "screen time," it is imperative to rethink and remake traditional teaching practices. The present paper thus aims to explore multimedia publishing and the possibilities it has to offer foreign language learners in the consumption and production of popular culture texts. As multimodal types of literary texts, podcasting, video publishing and live streaming prove pivotal in enabling students become engaged in *global* communication.

Keywords: multimedia publishing; podcasting; video publishing; live streaming; multimodal/multimedial skills.

Resumen

Debido a que las generaciones actuales de estudiantes llegan a la clase habiendo tenido años de "tiempo frente a la pantalla", es imprescindible repensar y reconfigurar las prácticas de enseñanza tradicionales. El siguiente trabajo tiene como objetivo explorar los sistemas de edición multimedia y las posibilidades que la misma tiene para ofrecer a los estudiantes de idioma extranjero en el consumo y producción de textos de cultura popular. Considerados como tipos multimodales de textos literarios, los fenómenos del "podcasting", de la edición de vídeo y del "streaming" en vivo demuestran jugar un rol primordial en tanto permiten a los estudiantes formar parte de la comunicación global.

Palabras clave: edición multimedia; podcasting; edición de video; streaming en vivo; habilidades multimodales/multimediales.

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DEFINED AS *DIGITAL NATIVES* by author Marc Prensky (2001), the current generation of students has been born into a highly technological world where they are all "native speakers" of the language of computers, video games, digital devices and Web platforms. These new media have indeed come to offer students endless possibilities to engage in interaction with others beyond the physical boundaries of the classroom. Indeed, the Internet is not only a place to access information, but also a place that challenges us with a myriad of platforms for social interaction and collaboration (Johnson, 2005). With the proliferation of mobile devices such as smartphones, MP3 players and tablets, popular culture nowadays is rich with engagement in online social media, especially among teenagers and young adults. As a result, production of popular culture texts has grown so rapidly in recent years up to the point of becoming almost ubiquitous in everyday life. Popular culture texts constructed, linked and disseminated through online, digital technologies within informal contexts play a powerful role in *what* students choose to read and write, but most importantly, in *how* they read and write.

In light of the aforesaid, we are in the midst of an inevitable shift in both teaching and learning practices, which indeed creates a strong argument for acknowledging this new digital/media literacy skill within the formal setting of the classroom. Put more bluntly, twenty-first century learning needs new spaces—both physical and virtual—that actually connect the school, college or university with the global community of the Web. This, in turn, not only requires students to interact with multimodal texts, thereby developing multimedia and multiliteracy skills; but it also demands educators to acknowledge their pivotal role in empowering learners to analyse and reflect upon the impact of images, sound and text.

Having said this, the present work thus sets out to explore multimedia publishing and the potentials it has to offer foreign language learners in the consumption and production of popular culture texts. As the ability to download, create and share multimodal literary texts continues to expand, podcasting, video publishing and live streaming can be great motivators for students to engage in meaningful, global communication. Yet, before proceeding any further, it is first imperative to define these three technological tools in detail.

Reinventing the Textbook: Podcasting, Video Publishing and Live Streaming

The *New Oxford American Dictionary* defines the term podcast as "a digital recording of a radio broadcast or similar program, made available on the Internet for downloading to a personal audio player." Born in late 2004, the term podcast resulted from the combination of iPod and broadcast, and can refer to both the content and the method of delivery (Islam, 2007, p. 5). Podcasting is, therefore, a way of creating and distributing audio content in the form of Web radio. Podcasts are typically saved in MP3 format,

so they can be downloaded to any MP3 audio system, such as iPods, MP3 players, smartphones or computers, and then played and replayed on demand.

As Richardson explains in his book (2010),

> Many podcasts are presented by normal, everyday people just talking about things that interest them–with a bit of music mixed in. Others are more serious and focused in content, offering up the latest interesting news on a particular topic, interviews with interesting people, or recording of interesting keynotes and presentations (p. 112)

All that is required to start listening to podcasts is to download iTunes form the Apple site to your computer or the iPP Podcast Player App to your smartphone. Both types of software are available for free and will run on any computer and a diversity of mobile devices. Moreover, podcasting allows listeners to subscribe to those programs that they find most interesting, and automatically receive the latest episodes. Following Islam (2007), "[w]ith podcasts, the listener is in control… If people subscribe to a particular training podcast series and then decide that they no longer want to take classes on that subject, they can unsubscribe and the program will stop coming" (p. 6).

At present, there is a plethora of podcasts to choose from. Museums make podcasts to be used as audio guides to exhibitions. Radio shows are available as podcasts. Universities offer podcasts on academic topics and teachers or conference presenters create podcasts for those who are unable to attend a class, workshop or lecture. Within the field of foreign language learning, podcasts can be used to listen to real texts by native speakers or to have students create their own radio shows. The motivating factor, above all, is that the content of podcasts is not limited to a school or community audience. On the contrary, podcasts are meant to be broadcast online, thereby reaching wider audiences and engaging individuals in authentic global communication. One good example of podcasting for foreign language teaching would be the *English Teacher John Show* where John Koons, an American English teacher form Philadelphia, broadcasts stories and language lessons from Matsumoto, Japan. Transcripts for his podcasts are also available on his blog, as well as videos, pictures and other media resources.

To sum up, simply by recording digital audio with a computer, MP3 player or smartphone and then publishing the recording online, teachers can have students share what they create with others on the World Wide Web. This can easily be done by using an open-source program like Audacity, which is a free audio-editing program to record, edit and, if necessary, translate recordings into MP3 files. In this way, students can publish interviews, create audio shows on a given theme or even recite poetry and upload their work to the Web server at their school. Yet, if the school has no server

of its own, a good alternative would be to upload the recording to archive.org, which provides free storage for videos, audio files, photos and text, and then link the URL that is assigned to the file to a blog, website or wikispace.

Apart from all this, and in case some teachers may be rather hesitant about having students create audio recordings or about using the new technology themselves to record and upload audio files to the Web, already made podcasts can be used for developing students' listening and critical thinking skills, while exposing them to authentic texts other than those pedagogically controlled texts they encounter in textbooks. Indeed, podcasting allows students to access an array of podcasts on a great many different topics and even comment on them. Hence, the possibilities podcasting has to offer foreign language learners at all levels are only limited by one's own imagination.

In a similar vein, video publishing, also known as movie making, is "digital storytelling in its most complex form" (Richardson, 2010, p. 121). Students can create their own multimodal texts by making use of images and sound. All that is required to create a video is a digital camera, smartphone or laptop, and a video-editing program like Windows MovieMaker or iMovie for Apple computers. Both programs come with useful tutorials and there are always loads of YouTube videos online based on the subject. As a matter of fact, YouTube itself offers the possibility to record video from one's own computer onto their server and, moving a step further, YouTube's offspring, TeacherTube.com, is exclusively dedicated to student/teacher-produced videos.

The potential of video publishing is therefore limitless. From a foreign language teaching standpoint, teachers could have students read and perform stories or poetry they write or further ask them to create digital stories by simply using pictures and then recording audio voiceovers onto the images. One example of the latter is a digital story I created myself, which I have entitled *Embodiment*. Yet, if appropriateness may be an issue for some teachers who are doubtful about having students create image videos, a good alternative would be to have them produce text videos based on a given story or passage, such as the *V for Vendetta* video on kinetic typography in which V introduces himself to Eevy, in a long rambling string of alliteration.

Finally, the third technological tool to be explored in this work is that of live-streaming video to the Web. By means of this technology, school plays, end-of-year concerts or senior student presentations can be broadcast to relatives far and wide. Moreover, teacher professional development seminars, conference workshops and presentations can be made available to everyone for free and without the hassle of having to travel long distances. All that is required to put this into practice is a stable Internet connection, a computer with a microphone, a video camera and a free account at an online video-streaming site like Ustream.tv. This site does not only allow users to stream video easily, but also provides the possibility to archive shows for later viewing,

and even offers a chat room for viewers to interact while watching. <u>One example of a past lecture</u> that has been archived is that of an educator talking about how he launched at College a real life version of the game Quidditch from the Harry Potter books. As Richardson (2010) explains, "[a] lot of presenters (myself included) stream many of their presentations and take advantage of the chat feature that Ustream provides. The 'backchannel' conversation can be a great way of interacting with the online audience and broadening the scope of the dialogue" (p. 128).

From an educational perspective, creating and sharing multimodal texts implies that "[t]he potentials are huge, and the pitfalls challenging. But publishing to an audience can be a great motivator for students. Podcasting, videocasting, screencasting, and now live-streaming TV are all great ways to get student content online" (Richardson, 2010, p. 129). Creativity with digital media provides opportunities for self-expression and the making of new content to be shared with authentic, wider audiences. As Kadjer (2010) states, Web 2.0, also referred to as the Read/Write Web, offers learning environments and practices that

> *do* make possible opportunities for creating; for communicating in multiple modalities; for sharing and publishing our work for an engaged, invested audience; and for interacting and collaborating, even globally. The new literacy practices open up some new territory in the English classroom, while amplifying things that we'd previously known and embraced (p. 35).

In addition, given that the almost ubiquitous presence of smartphones and free online interactive networks have begun to blur many of the cultural definitions of communication that we have lived under for generations (Kadjer, 2010, p. 112), the overall meaning of literacy is unavoidably becoming resignified as a result. Nowadays, in a media-saturated world, it is no longer enough for students to simply learn how to read and write. Current generations of students need to develop the ability to sort through, analyze, decode, create and communicate information through different media. We, as educators, are thus responsible for teaching media literacy skills to our students. In Baker's words (2012), "[m]edia literacy is not a separate course; instead, it is a lens through which we see and understand our media-saturated world. It is also a teaching strategy that should be incorporated into every course" (p. 6). Moreover, "[m]edia literacy encourages us to consider the world of our students–their media, their popular culture–as the hook to get their attention and get them engaged, while also meeting essential teaching standards" (Baker, 2012, p. 4).

Crossing the Digital Divide, Pushing Educational Boundaries

Most educators would agree that effective pedagogy must involve the use of authentic material for learning. Surprisingly enough, today's students are more active consumers and producers of this type of material than we can possibly and actually imagine. According to Baker (2012),

> Among young people ages 8-18, the average amount time spent with all media (TV, music, computers, videogames, print, and movies) is 7 hours and 38 minutes per day; however, "today's youth pack a total of 10 hours and 45 minutes worth of media content into those daily 7 ½ hours" (Rideout, Foehr, & Roberts, 2010, p.2). This figure actually shocked researchers for the Kaiser Family Foundation when they announced the latest data in January 2012. They had expected time spent viewing TV, for example, to be displaced by new media. It was not. (p. 27)

This quotation has two-fold implications: students are not only enthralled by media, but they are also multitasking with all its technological and digital forms. Students nowadays come to the classroom being multiply literate already. Indeed, it can further be claimed that current generation of students are creating a variety of genres in their everyday life, ranging from pages on social networking sites to videos and audio files. Thus, as educators, we should take advantage of this fact by tapping into this new digital media: "[w]hen we recognize the media and popular culture of our students and incorporate it into instruction, we demonstrate that we value their media and its connections with learning. One of the things all educators need to acknowledge is that media are also texts" (Baker, 2012, p. 27). Once this is acknowledged, we will then be ready to move out of the book and onto the screen.

Nevertheless, as Kadjer (2003) explains,

> Integrating technology into the classroom absolutely requires change in the role of the English teacher. Not only do we need to work to facilitate student learning, but we need to work to develop both our digital literacies and those of our students…
>
> Becoming tech-savvy does not require knowing the logistics behind establishing a network or how to repair hardware… becoming a tech-savvy teacher doesn't mean you have to become a "techie." You don't have to abandon your beloved, tattered copy of Webster's dictionary for the newest online edition available through a handheld PC. Becoming tech-savvy simply means that you will lead students to become digitally literate within

the context of your curriculum. (p. 10-11)

As teachers, we make choices. We choose the texts we want our students to explore. We choose the exercises we want them to work on or produce. We choose what we believe are the most efficient materials and learning tools for our students. Podcasting, video publishing and live streaming are simply some of the countless teaching tools available, to be chosen only when thought appropriate, motivating and enriching. Unfortunately, some educators perpetuate traditional teaching practices and modes of literacy, thereby creating a divide between students' meaningful, real-life learning and that which is delivered in the classroom. Twenty-first century learning requires new spaces—both physical and virtual—that indeed connect the school, college or university with the global community, and support creative and productive learning beyond the classroom. Evolving pedagogies demand evolving curriculum design that integrates technology and the teaching of twenty-first century skills into our everyday educational practice.

Conclusion

We live in a digital age in which the learning tools and the literacies that these require are constantly and continuously changing. As Mahiri (2006) argues in his article, "[t]raditional conceptions of print-based literacy do not apprehend the richness and complexity of actual literacy practices in people's lives enabled by new technologies that both magnify and simplify access to and creation of multimodal texts" (p. 61). Both digital and media literacies as a whole prove better at describing the skills and practices our students now require to be successful readers and writers outside the classroom. In other words, for today's students to be fully literate, they need to be able to make meaning out of different texts, text forms and communication modes, as well as to be able to communicate through those modes (Kajder, 2010, p. 9). The increasing participatory culture we are nowadays immersed in demands teachers to teach these new literacies and to create classroom spaces that will go beyond the boundaries of the walls and embrace multiple modes and media.

In McLuhan's words (1960), "[w]ithout an understanding of media grammars, we cannot hope to achieve a contemporary awareness of the world in which we live" (p. xii). Digital and media technologies shape the ways we think, the ways we interact and the ways we understand. Yet, the mere integration of these technologies into the learning environment is not enough. Digital and media—or information and communication—technologies can only enhance teaching and learning if based upon suitable pedagogical approaches that incorporate multimodal texts in ways that are creative, dynamic and meaningful to further extend literacy.

On a concluding note, as Wesch (2008) once said, "[t]here is literally something

in the air, and it is nothing less than the digital artifacts of over one billion people and computers networked together collectively producing over 2,000 gigabytes of new information per second." In this light, the discussion so far has actually been meant as a starter, prompting educators to carry ideas forward, examine their teaching practice, and think critically about the pedagogical implications of implementing new tools and digital/media skills into the classroom to create popular culture texts to be shared with the global community of the Web. Within the framework of multimedia/multiliteracy pedagogy, educators can help broaden students' opportunities to express themselves, as well as their linguistic and creative talents. It is thus crucial that the concept of literacy be expanded to include visual, audio, interactive and digital media for, as Richardson (2010) states, these skills

> support the important, overarching goal of developing students who can flourish in the networked personal spaces they will inhabit the rest of their lives. If we fail to graduate students who are not able to create, sustain, and participate in these networks in safe, ethical, and effective ways, we've done them a disservice. (p. 149)

The ultimate aim of the ideas captured here is, therefore, two-fold: to highlight the importance of continually asking ourselves, as educators, what it actually means to be truly literate and educated in the twenty-first century; and to raise awareness of how enlightening–however challenging–change can be in both your students' and your own learning life.

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Queer intersubjective processes in David Leavitt's *The Lost Language of Cranes*

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Abstract

Written in the 1980's in the USA and dealing with sexual taboos, the novel chosen has received unanimous international praise. The present research work analyzes the construction of identity and recognition as a process that goes on only when in relationship with others and the impact of the queer political agenda in the 80's on the intersubjective processes constructed between LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexuals, trans) characters in David Leavitt's *The Lost Language of Cranes*. Besides, we shall concentrate on how his novel brings to light the cultural world of homosexuality to communicate an ideological and artistic view of societies in which LGBT individuals permanently strive for social recognition.

Keywords: sexuality; gender; coming out; identity; intersubjective processes.

Resumen

Escrita en Estados Unidos durante la década de los ochenta y a pesar de centrarse en temas sexuales tabú para la época, la novela seleccionada fue acogida a nivel mundial de manera unánime. El presente trabajo aborda además de la construcción de la identidad y el reconocimiento de las personas mediante un proceso que tiene sólo lugar en relación con otros, el impacto que tuvo la política homosexual de los ochenta en los procesos interrelacionales que tienen lugar en la población LGBT (lesbianas, gays, bisexuales y travestis) de la novela *El lenguaje perdido de las grúas* del escritor estadounidense David Leavitt. Por otro lado, nos concentraremos en los modos en que dicha novela da a conocer el mundo cultural de la homosexualidad para comunicar una visión ideológica y artística de las sociedades en las que los individuos LGBT se encuentran en permanente lucha para ser reconocidos socialmente como tales.

Palabras clave: sexualidad; género; salir del armario; identidad; procesos interrelacionales.

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ACCORDING TO STEPHEN Whittle (2000, p. 117), Queer Theory is about the deconstruction and the refusal of labels of personal sexual activity and gendered behavior. It concerns *gender fuck*, which is a full-frontal theoretical and practical attack on the diphormism of gender–and sex–roles. In this way, Whittle has offered an oppositional standpoint to the assumed "naturalism" of sexual diphormism. To him, the transgendered community is now facing up a "new category crisis" which, to a certain extent, has not yet been addressed in issues of race, sex and class but in terms of gender in its most complete and fullest sense.

To discuss *the queer* in the context the novel was written means to discuss the queer in two divergent ways. On the one hand, the word queer, as it appears in the dictionary, has a primary meaning of *peculiar*, *odd*, *strange*, *out of the ordinary*. By extension, we can assert that Queer Theory concerns itself with any and all forms of sexuality that are considered queer. As theory, on the other hand, it critically challenges and deconstructs normality in terms of identity as well as analyzes social dynamics and power structures regarding sexual identity and social power.

Though research on queer studies was tackled later in time, the rise of LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans) liberation movement dates back to the 1970's as the result of multiple riots in Stonewall Club in New York. The Stonewall riots were a series of spontaneous, violent demonstrations by members of the gay community against a police raid that took place in the early morning hours of June 28 1969, at a gay bar, the Stonewall Inn, in Greenwich Village. Several hundred incensed patrons, tired of harassment, resisted by throwing bottles, cans, stones and other objects at the police. In the aftermath of this historical resistance of queer people, the Gay Liberation Front (GLF) was formed in New York and similar groups sprang up across the United States and the world. The modern LGBT movement was born. Instead of pleas for tolerance, the demand of queer people was unconditional acceptance. Under the slogan *Gay is good*, thousands of queer citizens came out.

The Stonewall era is often recalled as a critical turning point because it marked the qualitative development of a mass movement in that country. With the rise of the LGBT liberation movement in the post-Stonewall era, overtly gay and lesbian perspectives, after a long period of silence, began to be put forward in politics, in philosophy, in art. This particular period represents the moving out of a closeted time of homosexuality into a time of expression, identity, and representation–a cultural explosion of sorts.

Literature written by and about LGBT people has been highly visible and has attracted considerable critical attention since the 1970's. As we shall see later in the present research work, whether through fiction, drama, poetry or autobiography, homosexual literature typically explores issues of gender and identity as well as the influences of ethnicity and social class on the individual (Crompton, 2006).

Within the realm of literary criticism, for a long time, same-sex relationship issues were considered taboo by many scholars and, consequently, not much research was carried out until the 1990's, when intense research work around gender and sexuality was produced. Given the origins of gender studies in social and political realms and the continued inequalities in society and culture based on gender, questions and issues about sex and gender are likely to remain at the center of debates in each particular field (literature, sociology, philosophy, anthropology, and the like). The scholar who is usually identified as first using the term *queer* is Teresa De Lauretis (1991) in her Feminist Studies book entitled *Queer Theory: Lesbian and Gay Sexualities*. Besides Teresa de Lauretis, other scholars such as Judith Butler, Laurent Berlant, Judith Halberstam and David Holperin were also interested in queer studies (Hubbard, 2007). However, the texts that are considered most responsible for influencing and developing the principles of queer studies are Michel Foucault's *The History of Sexuality* (1978) and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick's *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (1985). Thus, to develop the concepts of the main categories involved in the analysis of the novel chosen, we shall tackle the theoretical background delineated by Foucault and Sedgwick.

Same-sex relationships result from homosexuality, the sexual attraction or behavior between people of the same gender or sex. The most common terms for homosexual people are *lesbian* for females and *gay* for males, though *gay* is also used to refer generally to both homosexual males and females (Leap, 1995). Same gender-loving refers to those sexual engagements between individuals, regardless of their perceived sexual orientation, marked by same-sex desire and physical sexual acts accompanied by sexual fidelity, commitment, and/or romantic love (Melancon, 2008, p. 64).

David Leavitt's *The Lost Language of Cranes* (1986) deals with the way in which people come to grips with their sexuality in a society which only lately came to understand that not being heterosexual is not a disease but a sexual choice to be respected and integrated to the fabric of culture through which the construction of identity and recognition can be appreciated. Set in Manhattan in the 80's, the novel deals with the pain and agony of two protagonists (Philip and his father, Owen), who are stoned simply because their familial and social contexts do not accept they are queer and behave and think in a different way. Apart from that, Leavitt's novel allows us to appreciate the mystical side of life as it pictures the pursuit of communion as well as the identity or awareness of an ultimate reality through direct experience or instinct.

The aim of the present work is to analyze the construction of identity and recognition as a process that goes on only when in relationship with others and the impact of the queer political agenda in the 80's on the intersubjective processes constructed between LGBT characters in *The Lost Language of the Cranes*. Besides, we shall concentrate on

how the novel brings to light that cultural world of homosexuality to communicate an ideological and artistic view of societies in which LGBT individuals permanently strive for social recognition.

Approaches to Queer Studies: A Literature Review

As an academic movement, Queer Theory is typically associated with the 1990's but its earliest articulations can be traced to the 1970's in the first works of the French philosopher Michel Foucault as an investigator on sexuality (1978). As a forerunner of Queer Theory, he interrogated the way in which Western social orders deploy rigid standards of gender and sexual intelligibility as a method of social regulation. In his book *Politics, Philosophy and Culture: Interviews and other writings 1977-1984*, Michel Foucault (1988, p. 85) states that in fact, from the 1970's onwards, a new political, economic and technical incitement to talk about sex in the form of analysis, contextualization, specification, classification became visible and based on this theoretical approach to queer issues, a diversity of discourses on sexuality in the fields of medicine, psychiatry, pedagogy, philosophy, sociology, and social work emerged (Foucault, 1988, p. 89).

After the episodes of Stonewall in the United States, community organizers and writers in different fields have won major legislative and cultural victories for gays and lesbians, moving them from the margins to the mainstream, forcing recognition of the problems they usually face and bringing to the fore their need for equal rights and protection for all sexual orientations. Today, gay and lesbian communities are a visible, vibrant part of the political and cultural landscape. Since the 1970's onwards, some groups formed networks for support and socialization, including student groups at universities, the Gay Community Center, and the like. Some organizations used public forums to express LGBT issues and engage audiences creatively and intellectually, such as the Gay Community News (Duberman, 1997, p. 174).

The queer movement grew throughout a historical period in the last half of the twentieth century known as neoliberalism. In the USA the last twenty years have seen important social, economic and political shifts in society. Consumerism was expanded, multiple international markets arose, and therefore a new capitalist world developed. In this restructuralization at social levels, LGBT organizations shaped by neoliberal citizenship practices began to claim for equality rights for LGBT people through the mechanisms of public policy and legal change.

Major Categories

Sexuality and Gender

Sexuality is a complex term and spans human experiences including family relationships, sexual behavior, physical development, sensuality and so on. Broadly speaking, it is

an area of study related to an individual's sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation and the impact of prejudice and discrimination on those who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual or trans (Schoene, 2006).

Gender describes the characteristics that a society or culture delineates as masculine, feminine or LGBT, whereas a male or female sex is a biological fact. Traditionally speaking, what it means to be a "real man" in any culture requires male sex plus what our various cultures define as masculine characteristics and behaviors. Likewise, a "real woman" needs female sex and feminine characteristics. Consequently, the traditional standard view is one in which heterosexuality, bifurcated between male and female, is the only acceptable type of sexuality at all; thus, anyone outside this form is marginalized into silence (Butler 1991, p. 13).

In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault (1978, p. 75) describes the emergences of new political technology, one marked by power's investment in life, in the control and management of human beings as productive entities. Discourses on sexuality are coterminous for him with the displacement of centralized power by diffuse forms of discipline and control that saturated all dimensions of the life-world. Foucault describes the new ideologies as entailing "power over life". He states that power over life may take different forms and that its primary focus is on the values imparted within the familial realm in European modernity. His studies on sexuality have laid the grounds for a renewed theory of the importance of ritual in the constitution of sexual and gendered difference.

Sedgwick (1990, p. 81) claims that the categories through which identity is understood are all socially constructed rather than given to us by nature and opens up a number of analytical possibilities. Also examined are medical categories which are themselves socially constructed such as AIDS, the relationship between homosexuality and drug consumption, and the like. She also examines how language and especially divisions between what is said and what is not said, corresponding to the dichotomy between "closeted" and "out", especially in regards to the modern division of heterosexual/ homosexual, structure much of modern thought. That is, she argues that when looking at dichotomies such as natural/artificial, or masculine/feminine, we find in the background an implicit reliance upon a very recent and arbitrary understanding of the sexual world as split into two species. The fluidity of categories created through Queer Theory even opens the possibility of new sorts of histories that examine previously silent types of affections and relationships.

Since most anti-gay and lesbian arguments rely upon the alleged naturalness of heterosexuality, another critical perspective opened up by queer theorists attempts to show how these categories are themselves deeply social constructs. Since "heterosexuality" is the "natural" condition, it is a place that is spoken from but not inquired into. In

contrast, homosexuality is the "aberration" and hence it needs to be studied but it is not an authoritative place from which one can speak (Greenberg, 1998, p. 119).

Though Foucault and Sedgwick gave rise to subsequent theoretical investigations on queer studies, the area of investigation seems still unexplored because Queer Theory and the story of LGBT people with their drawbacks, contexts, sufferings, social intersubjective processes, familial relationships, coming out and open recognition and acceptance by society have been and still are a taboo that many scholars do not dare to tackle.

These two outstanding researchers in the field of Queer Studies provide deep insights into questions of gender, identity, miscommunication, coming out, social intersubjective processes, and language issues. Their proposals allow us to approach how identity is constructed and recognized as a process that is only possible in relation to others, starting from the very moment of these LGBT people's coming out and going on with their lives, in their relationships, in their social contexts, in their own families. Queer Theory will help us explore and problematize the sexual identity of the main characters in the novel (Philip and his father Owen), highlighting the intersections of sexuality with social construction, familial relationships, culture, and power.

Coming Out

Coming out is a personal journey. It is a gradual process of recognizing, accepting and sharing our sexual identity with others. The phrase *coming out* derives from the general expression *coming out of the closet*. *Coming out of the closet* marks the rite of passage to a lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender identity. When an LGBT person admits, acknowledges, or reveals they are homosexual, then they have "come out of the closet". In other words, they are no longer trying to hide the fact that they are queer.

In a queer culture, often referred to as LGBT culture, when people identify themselves as *homosexual*, they start to cope with a sequence of conflicts taking place in their surrounding context. One of the first contexts to face is their own family. In traditional families, homosexuality is considered harmful, pernicious, bad and strange. Consequently, homosexual youngsters suffer outright rejection from their families and are often literally thrown away as dishonored human beings (Brownmiller, 1993, p. 84).

The coming out process is a complex one and not everyone will understand or accept it. Finally, friends or coworkers may be shocked, confused, or even hostile; some relationships might permanently change; an individual may experience harassment or discrimination; LGBT people may be fired from their jobs, denied housing or denied insurance; people under 18 years of age may be thrown out of their homes or lose financial support from their parents. Many factors affect the coming out process; for example, gender, age, self-recognition as *different*, feelings, moods. As people's

perception of themselves alters, they are likely to feel confused about their identity.

Sedgwick (1990) indicates that the epistemology of the closet has given a solid consistency to gay culture and identity throughout this century since the episodes of Stonewall in June 1969. From then on more and more LGBT people started to find consequential changes around and outside the closet. Sedgwick (1990) says that the closet is the defining structure for gay oppression in this century. The closet door has never seemed secure for LGBT people's protection. Everyone must come out individually for their own sake.

As far as coming out is concerned, Michel Foucault (1978) asserts that even if the categories of heterosexual and homosexual are entirely socially constructed, that does not mean they are not real categories of thought that shape the way we live our lives (Foucault, 1978, p. 97). In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault examines the complicated space represented by *the closet* and the multiple effects *coming out* has on the larger social structure. He says that our social structure is based on insides and outsides; that is "any identity is always connected with an exterior or outside that defines the subject's own interior boundaries and corporeal surfaces" (Foucault, 1978, p. 100).

The secretive space that *the closet* provides problematized the binary structure (interior/exterior; homosexuality/heterosexuality). The closet, Foucault claims, is a site where it is possible to be homosexual inside and heterosexual outside all the time. The possibility that anyone can spring out of the closet at any time and declare his/her sexual condition destabilizes the boundary between inside and outside.

On the other hand, it is also possible to interpret the closet as a reinforcer of inside/outside categories. Foucault remarks that the closet is a space of secrecy (Foucault, 1978, p. 103). If someone is in the closet, he/she is pretending to be something he/she is not. The closet also reinforces the places designated for these two identities. The real identity which is kept in the closet is *private*, whereas the presumed identity that one displays out of the closet is *public*. Besides, both binaries represent two opposing hierarchies. The hidden identity implies shamefulness and inferiority to the opposing, public identity.

In Leavitt's novel, the characters who decide to come out are grownups. In *Epistemology of the Closet*, Sedgwick (1990, p. 90) claims that adulthood is the stage when we begin to learn more about our sexuality and identity. The novelist clearly depicts how coming to terms with sexual feelings can take a long time, and that many people do not come out until later in life, as we can see in Philip's father. We think that the concept of *coming out of the closet* is essential to our analysis because in the novel the process of coming out structures the narrative and provides the context for the development of language and for the enactment of communicative situations.

Identity and Gender

Identity is related to one's nature and self and may be presented in two linked senses, which may be termed "social" and "personal". In the former sense, an "identity" refers to the characteristics of a set of people that label and distinguish them from others. In the second sense, an "identity" is a set of some distinguishing characteristic(s) that a person takes a special pride in or views as socially constructed and which that person thinks defines him/her as part of a group and as different from others.

In the present work, we shall use "identity" to refer to personal characteristics or attributes people associate with their selves in dialogue with the social groups of which they are part, and which emerge in discursive practices. What Foucault claims in reference to identity and gender is that the conception of identity is not a question concerned with the subject proper but rather a theory of discursive practice (1978). Identity emerges in an examination of how discursive practices can create differing notions of the subject and subjectivity. Foucault suggests that if subjects, and therefore identities, are created through discourse, then they must be produced through historically constituted acts of performance, through conditions, and this makes identity a historically constituted creation, which is actually different across both time and space. Though the concept of identity is still under process, it is rather far from that of the essentialists (Plato, for example). For essentialists, there exists some detectible and objective core quality of particular groups of people that is inherent, eternal, and unalterable; according to their perspective, groupings can be categorized bearing in mind these qualities of essence, which are based on such problematic criteria as gender, race, ethnicity, national origin, sexual orientation, and class (Calhoun, 1994).

For Foucault, power is the ultimate goal for any social and political movement and the idea of transcendent principles to guide political action is a residue of essentialist politics that will ultimately serve only to hinder the possibility of successful social transformation (Foucault, 1978, p. 122). Besides, for Foucault and anti-essentialists, the task of progressive social change is to reconstruct society and to overturn existing forms of oppression. Hence, as Foucault says, power is the key. Once individuals exercise it, society can be transformed and reconstructed.

In *The Lost Language of Cranes*, identities are constructed and involve the commitments and identifications of the characters in relation to others. Personal identity in Leavitt's novel can be consequently glossed as the aspects or attributes of a certain character in the novel that form the basis for his or her dignity or self-respect. In this sense, a character's identity can be closely associated with their gaining of dignity, honour, and pride once they come to accept and share their sexual preferences.

Gender and Literature

We recognize with Lizbeth Goodman (1996) that if we, the readers, open our minds to the texts of those who have been raised or behave quite differently from ourselves, if we take interest in a wide range of multicultural, sexually distinctive voices as they "fight against social contexts to have a place and the right to be heard", we more fully enjoy the "richness and depth in the great world of literature" (Goodman, 1996, p. 7) through the use of words.

In the United States, the gaining of visibility of the LGBT community in the 90's also brought to light their literature, from poems and novels to fantastic journalism. On the whole, LGBT literature deals with the pain, the social oppression people have to go through when coming out, the taboo of living and having sexual relationships with someone of your same sex. Moreover, LGBT literature also deals with issues other than romantic or sexual relationships, such as drug consumption as well as the use of pornography. Among the LGBT novelists that deal with such topics in their novels are Michael Cunningham (*The Hours* 1998, *By Nightfall* 2010), Steve Berman (*So Fey: Queer Fairy Fiction* 2009, *Boys of Summer* 2012), Sarah Waters (*Affinity* 2002), Shamim Sarif (*I Can't Think Straight* 2008), Andrew Holleran (*Nights in Aruba* 1983, *The Beauty of Men* 1997), to cite some.

In *The Lost Language of Cranes*, David Leavitt communicates his ethical and aesthetic view of those aspects of society directly concerned with LGBT individuals, and which have been previously considered taboo in literature: sexual intercourse with partners of the same sex, frequent visits to bars and cinemas for queer people, references to pornographic movies and magazines, drug consumption, specific vocabulary related to pornography and sexual intercourse.

Lizbeth Goodman (1996, p. 21) asserts that when we refer to the study of literature and gender, we do not just mean literary analysis of texts with regard to the sex (male or female) or sexuality of authors, but the wider study of literary texts as they are written, read, and interpreted within cultures, by women and men. In the four decades since New York City's Stonewall rebellion, gay literature has exploded as a distinctive form of cultural expression. In a variety of styles and genres, LGBT individuals have increasingly begun to articulate their sexual identities. At the same time, LGBT writers and scholars have begun in earnest the writing of a literary history long denied by the refusal to recognize homosexual love as an integral part of Western literature culture.

Communication and Intersubjective Processes

Language is important within a novel because it is responsible for the construction of the plot and the way characters express their thoughts and communicate among themselves. It also creates a character, describes a setting, and helps us to see life through different

eyes.

Furthermore, it plays an important role in intersubjective processes. Even though miscommunication is a problem for all people, it tends to be a major problem for most LGBT. The core of this lack of communication between family and queer individuals is related to the fact that most parents do not accept their children's sexual choice, setting up a barrier in between.

Much of the intricacies of language in social constructions of sexuality can be defined in terms of the theories that Michel Foucault espoused. In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault regards sex as something purely biological, and defines *sexuality* as a discursive construct (Foucault, 1978, p. 68-69). Foucauldian discourse tends to privilege the discourse of homosexuality over the physical sexual acts of LGBT people. Consequently, he urges modern societies to speak about it openly (Foucault, 1978, p. 35).

Foucault focuses on the discursive production of sexuality within regimes of power and knowledge–what is said about it, what relations it generates, how it is experienced, what functions it has historically played. In brief, he points out that "sexuality is a historical construct, a network in which the stimulation of bodies, the intensification of pleasures, the incitement to discourse, the formation of special knowledges, the strengthening of controls and resistances are linked to one another according to a few major strategies of knowledge and power" (Foucault, 1978, p. 105-106). In *History of Sexuality, Vol. 2*, Foucault (1990, p. 49) introduces another important concept: "the use of pleasure", where he begins to discuss how subjects practice on themselves and upon others a kind of self-desire. Following ancient Greek principles, Foucault asserts that there are three factors that affect the proper use of pleasures: need, timeliness, and social status. The first factor *needs* is related to the right amount of food, drink, and sex a human being needs to have provided that they are properly used. *Timeliness*, the second factor of the proper use of pleasure, is connected to the idea that there is always a time for everything and certain pleasures should be experienced only at certain instances. Finally, he states that the proper use of pleasure lies on one's *social status*, the role a person plays in society (a man, a woman, a child, a slave). And one's subjectivity is judged based on how one uses those pleasures. Those who use pleasure properly are better people and often hold positions of power over those who are ethically weak. To describe pleasure, Foucault (1990, p. 52) discusses the term *aphrodisia* (Roman version = venereal), which roughly translates as "things performed naturally" or "pleasures of love", "sexual relations", "carnal acts" or "sensual pleasures".

The prism of Queer Theory and the employment of categories such as sexuality, gender, identity and coming out will allow us to see how a homosexual imagination can foreground LGBT experiences, among them those related to the intersubjective relationships among the characters.

Some Interesting Facts about the Author

Born in Pittsburg (Pennsylvania, USA) in 1961, David Leavitt is a graduate of Yale University. After graduating, he started his career as a writer, analyzing the world of homosexuality in his novels. At present, he is a well-known writer of LGBT novels as well as a professor at the University of Florida, where he addresses different workshops on LGBT literature.

Apart from the repercussions of gay identity for family and society, Leavitt also brings to the fore the most prominent stereotypes of LGBT individuals, depicting them as a group which is socially and emotionally isolated, unhappy, and with low social self-acceptance. His stereotypes further portray LGBT people as being oversexed, but their sex lives are unsatisfactory; and, as they are unable to form lasting relationships, most of their encounters with others are transient. In *The Lost Language of Cranes*, the writer presents a sort of relationship between Philip and his lover Eliot embedded with such characteristics as the ones cited previously. Eliot is a young person who started to make out with boys at the age of twelve. At the age of seventeen he had his first lover, with whom he spent a semester living in Florence, Italy. After that, he met and fell in love with Philip Benjamin, a relationship that would not last quite long. Finally, he travelled to Paris, where he fell in love with Thierry, a young Frenchman student.

The Plot of the Novel: A General Overview

The novel is a multilayered work of sensibility and semiotics, quite delicate on the surface, making the reader discover that the title refers not to long-legged birds but to machines employed in lifting materials.

Hence, the name of the novel might bring to the fore two different interpretations. On the one hand, the topics that keep Jerene (Philip and Eliot's friend) tied to investigation for seven years: *The Phenomenon of Invented Languages*. Her first dissertation would be on a couple of young little female twins, who have never been taught an established language, and hence, create one of their own. Her other dissertation would lie upon a neglected child whose only company is the view it has of a building site with several large cranes from the window. The child begins to imitate the movements and noises given off by these machines in an attempt to communicate with them. We can assert that the interpretation of the name of the novel would rest upon Owen and Philip Benjamin. Owen has lived on a lie his whole life. He has kept his own homosexuality in silence throughout his marriage. He always wanted to repent but he never could. Philip, his son, is also a homosexual and, in a way, he also looks like the child-crane by following Owen's tracks and repeating what his father has silenced all through his life.

The Lost Language of Cranes deals with a New York family in crisis, the Benjamins. Owen is a well-known grown man with a Ph.D. in comparative literature, who has

prepared and addressed interesting dissertations. Unhappy with his job as a researcher and a lecturer, he becomes the director of admissions at Harte School, a school only attended by male children belonging to wealthy families. When he starts working at Harte's, the Benjamins' son Philip is twelve years old. When Philip is allowed to enter Harte school, he immediately becomes attracted to boys.

As the novel develops, Owen's growing sexual appetite starts to threaten his marriage. He has maintained twenty-seven years of marriage, being routinely unfaithful to his wife. His secret sexual appetite makes Owen walk in the dark for long hours at night, go into gay bars, drink heavily, browse pornographic magazines at stores, and become addicted to casual sexual intercourse with same-sex citizens he falls in love with in his outings. The same routine has been repeated so frequently that Rose starts to suspect something is wrong between them.

As well as his father, Philip also leads an LGBT life. He lives with his lover Eliot, he frequently goes to gay bars and he usually makes love with his flatmate and lover. But, determined to reveal himself openly as a homosexual, he takes courage and one night he comes to dinner to his parents' home where he definitely comes out to his parents. They are taken aback by the news. Philips' mother is a little puzzled for a while as she does reject same-sex relationships. However, this revelation has a greater impact on Owen, who seems to accept his son's open confession, as he is also a secretly gay man that has kept his secret for his nearly twenty-seven years of marriage. Philip's coming out will help his father reveal his sexual orientation as well.

Analysis and Discussion of the Categories

Identity and Gender

In *The Lost Language of Cranes*, David Leavitt deconstructs the idealized structure of the family and reveals the instabilities involved in it as the result of the creation of identities through the control of sexuality. It is true that Owen kept an unrevealed secret to his wife Rose, but also his wife to him. She never told him she had had sex with the husband of a friend of hers when the Benjamins were invited to spend a weekend at their friends' villa. To make matters worse, she had also been silent about a secret love affair she had with Nick, one of her co-workers.

Faded and gray like their surroundings in Manhattan, the Benjamins look empty, passionless, devoid of emotion, painfully repressed. Though Rose and Owen have been in the same house for several years, they seem to have led separate lives, barely talking to each other, even to their son. Owen maintains emotional distance with Philip, afraid to get close in case homosexuality somehow rubs off, that his love would be interpreted as something sick and perverse.

The way in which the different gay characters are made to discover their homosexuality

varies, which speaks about the immense richness of experience surrounding the discourses of sexuality. The catalyst between Philip's coming out and his family is his lover Eliot, a young boy who has been raised and brought up in an LGBT family because his parents had died in a car accident and he was completely alone. Abbie Goldberg (2013) states that children raised by LGBT parents are more likely to depart from traditional gender roles and enter in a same-sex relationship themselves. Children born to and raised by homosexuals tend to play, dress, and behave differently than children raised in heterosexual households. In the novel, Eliot, a boy brought up by a homosexual couple (Derek-Geoffrey), soon begins to explore his body and to feel sexual appetite for men.

As for Philip, the exploration of his sexuality and personal identity started much earlier than his sex relationships with Eliot. Though individuals may become aware at different points in their lives of their sexual identity, in the novel it is in his childhood when Philip came across with homosexual comics, which he secretly collected and kept in his bedroom.

> When Philip remembered the adolescence, he remembered the hidden parts. Hiding had been so important, so essential a part in his life, that even now–grown up, more or less, and living on his own–he kept every book with the word "homosexual" in the title hidden, even in his own apartment. (Chapter 1, p. 71)

In his adolescence, Philip meets Eliot Abrahams at a party and falls in love with him at first sight and from that moment, he starts to visit him. For a long time, they keep their queer relationship hidden. Philip feels an inner struggle for the sexual orientation he has opted for and does not dare to come out to his parents later in his teens. Miscommunication at home probably seems a hurdle for him to come out openly at first and he thinks Eliot might be not only his lover but also a support for his terrible sorrow and loneliness. Philip is convinced that his same-sex attraction feelings are inborn and accepts his gay identity, whose internal battle is finally exteriorized through his coming out at the age of twenty-five.

While Owen Benjamin's secret guilt portrays the conflicts of an older generation, Philip's relationships with various same-sex lovers look relatively free of guilt and focused on feelings bound to arise in any close relationship. Leavitt's novel is subtly biased in favor of Philip's outlook. Philip is determined to live life in his own terms as an out gay man and his struggle is to live openly and honestly while finding happiness.

Philip and Owen's Coming Out

In *The Lost Language of Cranes*, David Leavitt deals with the relationship between adults and their social context and describes how they become totally rejected after coming out. It was a gradual process for Philip to recognize and accept himself as a homosexual, a process that began in his childhood by browsing homosexual comics at home, followed by a sexual attraction to men at Harte's. When at Harte's he is discovered to be a homosexual, he experiences harsh discrimination and harassment by his teachers and classmates, which force him to change school at once. Afterwards he meets Eliot at a party and from that very moment, Philip falls in love with him and moves to live in his apartment.

In his twenties, Philip comes home to come out to his parents, which marks indeed his passage to an LGBT public identity:

> "All right," he said. "Here goes." He looked away from them. "I've been meaning to tell you for a long time," he said, "and I haven't gotten around to it, because I guess I've been afraid–
> (…) He closed his eyes. "I'm gay," he said. Then again, as if they hadn't heard. "I'm gay." He opened his eyes, looked at them, but their faces were blank. (Chapter 2, p. 164)

After putting an end to his internal struggle, now he must face another conflict, his familial context. His mother considers homosexuality as something harmful as she correlates it with diseases like AIDS or drug consumption, something very pernicious for a twenty-five-year-old young man at those times.

As well as Philip, his father also has kept his homosexuality in silence for almost twenty-seven years of marriage. He always wanted to feel sorry but he never could. According to Sedgwick (1990), being in the closet like Owen for a long time is the defining structure for LGBT oppression. The closet door has never seemed secure for Owen's protection. Maybe the closet door, which according to Foucault (1978), is a shield that allows the individual to be a heterosexual outside and a homosexual inside, also creates certain internal complicated boundaries between the individual and his context. It would have been better then for Owen to come out individually for his own sake and not wait till his son's decision to reveal his homosexuality to the family, though springing out of the closet earlier would probably have destabilized that problematic boundary between inside and outside, mainly in his family where the relationships and communication did not appear to be good and fluent. It was clear that Owen's secret sexual orientation was that internal struggle that problematized his communication and paternal role within the familial context.

The vision the novel affords regarding intersubjective processes is based on the idea that social networks are essential for gay people to find their place in their contexts. Such networks may be made up of same-sex people or LGBT institutions and their main role is to provide support to both children and parents who permanently struggle to come to terms with their own homosexuality. In the novel, it is the Gay and Lesbian Campus of Coalition as well as the Gay Hotline (a radio programme) where Philip's father, for example, not only meets several helpful and kind LGBT friends but also finds the necessary help and advice he needs after coming out of the closet and consequently, being kicked out from home.

Communication and Intersubjective Processes

David Leavitt's *The Lost Language Of Cranes*, impacts on queer literature not only by problematizing what is normal and acceptable between LGBT individuals, but also by introducing specific vocabulary related to the homosexual realm. Community members can establish their affiliation with the group through shared ways of speaking, acting and thinking. The terminology used by these LGBT communities revolves heavily around sexual matters including terms for sexual organs, preferences and activities. The term used by linguists and coined by William Leap (1995) to describe the study of language as it is used by LGBT speakers is called *lavender linguistics*. Lavender Linguistics refers to any aspect of spoken or written linguistic practices, which include speech patterns, vocabulary, and the like, used within LGBT communities.

In the 80's conversations around these terms in particular became dominant in the discourse choices made by LGBT individuals (Cameron, 1997, p. 47). To talk about same-sex relationships and bring queer vocabulary to conversations was no longer taboo in those circles LGBT started to frequent. Leavitt resorts to this vocabulary to clearly depict pornography at home, in the streets or in the cinema and in human body contact with their same-sex lovers. The following scene shows Philip and Rob's first encounter at Upper West Side gay bar. They met by chance there and after introducing each other and chatting for a while, Rob invited Philip to his home:

> They sat for a few moments drinking tea, and then Philip moved closer to Rob, put an arm around him, put a hand on his knee. Rob was shaking violently….
>
> "I think I probably just had a little too much to drink," Rob said. "You know, when it's cold, alcohol thins the blood."
>
> (…)"Lie down on your stomach and I'll give you a backrub," Philip said. Rob obliged. Philip rubbed his shoulders, pounded his back….. and reached under to touch warm skin. Rob's shaking subsided. He turned over and

Philip kissed him…

(…)Rob just lay there. When Philip's penis approached his mouth, he took it in, no questions asked. When Philip lifted Rob's hand and placed it where he wanted to caress, it caressed in a nervous circle, but never of its own volition.

(…)Rob was enormously excited, much more excited than Philip himself. Philip thought this to be impolite on his part. In his opinion, when one made love to someone for the first time, one was obliged to exhibit a healthy erection and at least feign great enthusiasm. But he had masturbated twice today and could probably do neither. When Rob came, it was with incredible force. A drop landed on his chin; the rest pooled on his chest. Philip brought himself, by furious and concentrated masturbation, to a climax of sorts about ten minutes later. (Chapter 4, p. 196-7)

The Lost Language of Cranes presents queer characters as natural and authentic, while heterosexual characters are shown to be bigots, secretive and perverse in their relationship with others. In the novel, being gay and lesbian is good and natural whereas heterosexuals are all "bad people." Philip is right to love whoever he wants as people should express that love in any way they feel like. There is nothing wrong with gay people, in his view. The fallacy usually lies with the heterosexual observers, whose attitudes and thought processes have been skewed by misinformation and prejudice in a period when LGBT issues were attempted to be introduced in society and literature.

By reading a novel whose plot centers not only on the relationship between a gay son, a closeted homosexual husband and their own family but also on the simplicity of the characters' life, (jobs, education, place of work, pastimes, and the like), the straight reader may come to understand that queer people are not bad, corrupt or perverse and that not being a heterosexual is not a disease but a sexual identity to be respected and integrated to the fabric of culture.

Conclusions

The main interest that led us to write this research work about the representation of queer intersubjective processes in Leavitt's *The Lost Language of Cranes* is to evaluate the role the novel assigns to interpersonal communication and relations in the search for alternative gender identities within the LGBT culture of the 80's. We intended to explore the way in which this novel throws light and evaluates the world of homosexuality within the political agenda of the 80's.

Foucault defies the essentialist view which suggests that sexuality and gender are inborn. Our analysis has shown that David Leavitt embraces the idea that sexuality and

gender are culturally and discursively constructed, and instead of a single sexuality, he points at the existence of a diversity of sexualities.

In *The Lost Language of Cranes*, Leavitt goes beyond essentialist binary organizations in order to artistically question the ideological categorizations of sexuality and gender. In the novel, Philip repudiates the dictates of the heterosexual community concerning sexuality, gender and intersubjectivity and ventures to discover his true self free from his parents and the community's restrictions.

Lack of communication between Philip and his family is for him a major problem. The fictional situations refract a very sad and harsh reality: some families may feel certain rejection towards their gay or lesbian children and want them to leave their homes.

In Leavitt's novel, being a homosexual is not evaluated as wicked or sinful but as an election; therefore, characters struggle for their own rights to be recognized and considered as any human being should be. Leavitt considers homosexuality an issue that still represents a taboo for a society that rarely accepts people's queer conditions. This treatment of homosexuality suggests a rather over-determined view of human behaviour in psychological terms. In a certain way, homosexuals (Philip and his gay/lesbian peers) are regarded as the voiceless, the minorities, the socially-deprived, the excluded. The novel advances the idea that attitudes towards same-sex love depend on culture, age and upbringing. The way in which Philip experiences his feelings differs greatly from the way his parents evaluate homosexuality, even in the case of Owen, a homosexual himself. This comments on the context of culture, since in the 80's and even now coming to terms with sexual elections can take a long time, and many people do not come out until later in life.

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Book reviews

A companion to digital literary studies

A companion to digital literary studies, a volume in the *Blackwell companions to literature and culture series*, collects the voices of conspicuous scholars in a brand new field of research, voices which address technical, methodological and epistemological concerns related to the creation, publication, circulation, preservation, accessibility and interpretation of digital literary texts. This international collection of articles, edited by Ray Siemens and Susan Schreibman, includes an editorial introduction, thirty-one articles and an overview of electronic resources.

In their introduction Ray Siemens and Susan Schreibman remark that the phrase *digital literary studies* is insufficient to describe "a meeting of interests that represent the most important change occurring in the field of literary studies today" (p. xviii). When presenting the collection of essays, Alan Liu proposes to read them as depicting "a scene of new media encounter" (p.3) between the digital and the literary. This scene cannot be described as a border, he maintains, because the separation that formerly existed between codex-based literature and new media has long been breached to the extent that boundaries have turned into a zone of encounter. But this is not a new encounter, but one which has been taking place for a long time, as he shows in his account of the different moments in history when the literary witnessed and participated in the advent of new media. It is precisely in the writing of a history of new media where media theory metadiscourse is created—the discourse by means of which media ecologies adapt to the environments is they cross over new borders.

Shaping any history of new media encounter, says Liu, there are certain underlying propositions—an "overall narrative genome" (p.6). First, the new media are generally approached in terms of otherness, as a stranger to the land. The identity of new media is narrated as a life cycle which encompasses a moment of colonization or enchantment,

then a moment of disenchantment, and finally a moment of surmise—the moment when the new technology becomes part of the social landscape. As all other histories concerning the human, the story of new media has historical, socio-political and subjective dimensions. Also, histories of new media are unpredictable and reversible, since they are "messy" (p.9) modernisation narratives which try to account for long processes filled with arbitrariness and contingency. There is something in new media which is old, and something in old media which appears to be new when seen from new scenarios—thus, histories are both instances of *déja-vu* and of *avant la lettre*. Likewise, new media may both be libertarian and democratic on the one hand, and subjected to neo-authoritarian practices which call for specific programming models on the other. Finally, Liu explains that the study of new media requires to analyse not only the way in which (re)presentation is made possible through them, but also how notation is constructed and carried out so that (re)presentation becomes feasible. As he is in favour of seeing these narratives as traversed by imagination, Liu considers that a general goal of the *Companion* is "to tell a good story of new media encounter that has the maturity of a good world of messy, reversible, and imaginative possibilities" (p.16) Specifically, the *Companion* will attempt to answer some difficult questions, among them the extent to which literature, which is concerned with the less tangible aspects of the human, can be—or how it will continue to be—part of a territory like the digital, so much related to databases, statistics and complex programming.

The reader of the *Companion* will be introduced to the benefits of digital technologies regarding the study of all literary texts, even of Greek and Latin classics. In *ePhilology: When the books talk to their readers*, Gregory Crane, David Bamman and Alison Jones list among them the fact that this technology reaches all sites in the world, it is hypertextual, dynamic and self-regulating, it learns from readers and adapts to their needs. Never before did readers have such a wide access not only to literary texts, but also to critical discussions, to analyses of all kinds and to scholarly polemics as they have now. In *Knowledge will be multiplied: Digital literary studies and early modern literature*, Matthew Steggle, for instance, illustrates the power of digital media in their encounter with literary studies by alluding to readers' novel access to scholarly debates surrounding Shakespeare apocrypha, specifically the case of *The funeral elegy*.

Many of the essays produce historical narratives of the development of different forms of technology applied to the production and the reading of texts, and methodological proposals regarding the way in which digital tools contribute to literary studies: machine translation, different forms of analysis, complex statistical studies; the reproduction and dissemination of old or rare texts, the building of ever more comprehensive dictionaries, the compilation of growing databases of literary texts and criticism, the supplementation of rare texts with images, critical apparatuses and extra

primary material, the possibility of searching for leitmotifs within the texts which allow for different narrative sequences. It also provides for the presentation of a text and its translations or of different manuscript versions of the same text, so it could be said with Dirk Van Hulle that "digital literary studies seem to intensify the relationship between a published work and its textual memory" (p. 157).

One of the drawbacks of digital projects which were intended to make literary texts widely available is pointed out in *Disciplinary impact and technological obsolescence in digital medieval studies* by Daniel Paul O'Donnell, who reports on projects which, thought ambitious and expensive when they were carried out, because of the technological obsolescence of the media chosen soon dated to the point of making unavailable the texts they intended to divulge. Another problem which is addressed in the *Companion* is related to an emphasis on quantity over quality. Peter Damian-Grint surveys bibliographies and related resources in *Eighteenth-century literature in English and other languages: Image, text and hypertext*, and concludes that the number of literary texts produced in this century and made digitally available is still small, especially in the case of those written in languages other than English. What makes prospects more somber still is that the projects which address high-school or college students, he states, are low quality and scarce. His opinion as to eighteenth-century digital collections is that they will certainly be of use to scholars, but will soon be technologically dated as well.

Nineteenth-century literature is attractive for the World Wide Web because it is unencumbered by copyright restrictions, and therefore many projects have been undertaken which favour teaching and scholarly work. These projects are surveyed by John A. Walsh in *Multimedia and multitasking: A survey of digital resources for nineteenth-century literary studies*. The author draws a parallel between the present age and the Industrial Revolution in terms of growing literacies and fast technological changes. In *Hypertext and avant-texte in twentieth-century and contemporary literature*, Van Hulle maintains that the metafictionality of twentieth-century literature is reinforced by digital media—the fragmentariness of modernist texts, for example, is enhanced by the possibilities afforded by hypertexts, while present-day hyper-poets and writers are trying to incorporate and parody digital elements and procedures to printed texts, playing with time and space in innovative ways and effecting what could be considered a paradigm shift.

The thirteen articles in Part III, entitled *Textualities*, introduce the reader to new practices and genres ushered in by the new scenario of digital literature. The section starts with articles which centre on the literary text and on reading. In *Reading digital literature: Surface, data, interaction, and expressive processing*, Noah Wardrip-Fruin defines *digital literature*, dates its origin in the 1950s and introduces pioneer critical

studies on the topic. The author remarks that critical works on digital literature should operate with some type of model, proceeds to explore *Tale spin* (1976), a story generation programme and, finding current models insufficient, presents a new one.

The use of questions in the title and in different sections of *Is there a text on the screen? Reading in an era of hypertextuality* and an allusion to Stanley Fish's famous essay on reading are Bertrand Gervais' discourse strategies to address the status of texts in today's era of hypertext and linked computers and their impact on reading, writing and the production of knowledge. The author identifies three gestures involved in every act of reading (manipulating, understanding and interpreting) and analyses the factors that explain our reading difficulties in an era of hypertextuality. Cross-reference in this article leads to *Reading on screen: The new media sphere*, where Christian Vandendorpe traces the history of reading in the western world, which he considers associated to that of the book (from scroll, through codex to E-book). He comments on *Grazing, browsing and hunting*, the three modes of reading proposed by M. Heyer (1986), considers different metaphors used for text representation and, in the last sections, deals with the challenges posed by the advent of hypertext, announcing a future when "the printed book will have more and more difficulty meeting the expectations of most readers" (p. 213). Johanna Drucker's *The virtual codex from Page space to e-space* focuses on substitutes for traditional books and shifts from descriptions of familiar forms to those of "their reinvented shape in an electronic context" (p. 217). The author dismantles a series of preconceptions associated with both the bound codex and the electronic book. She presents electronic environments for reading and authoring as indebted to print culture and promotes "extending the ways a book *works*" rather than "simulating the way a book *looks*" as we shift into digital instruments (p.217).

The next essays deal with the more playful aspects of digital literature. *Handholding, remixing, and the instant replay: New narratives in a postnarrative world*, by Carolyn Guertin, provides a description of digital narrative as a battleground where the drive for fragmentation proper to the digital and the linear trajectory of narrative are at war, and indicates that in these scenarios reading has become a visual task of browsing while the concept of story has been substantially altered. The author characterises "what passes for narrative in digital storytelling forms" (p.233) as hyperactive, post-modern, post dramatic, self-reflexive and repetitive, and highlights digital narrative indebtedness to instant replay, remixing in disco music. Marie-Laure Ryan's *Fictional worlds in the digital age* clarifies concepts which are crucial to understand "fictional practices that take advantages […] of the most distinctive properties of digital media: interactivity, multimedia capabilities, volatility of inscription, and above all networking" (p 251). It explores the implications of those properties for fictional works existing both in the traditional and in the digital media, and after considering public online worlds where users

meet under the disguise of avatars, proceeds to praise videogames for the interactivity they allow for and for resolving the long-standing conflict between "ruled" and "make believe" games. References to the basic components of online games and to the implied player complete the article. In *Riddle machines: The history and nature of interactive fiction*, Nick Montfort characterises interactive fiction (IF) as potential narrative based on textual input and textual output, and describes constituents of the form such as player character, non-player character, parser, world model and conventions. When tracing the history of IF, the author also refers to developers and companies, to IF communities, and to the rise of IF in languages other than English. The first part of the title acquires meaning when IF is compared to its literary relatives: the novel and the riddle. The article is enriched by a transcript of a piece of IF and by a list of recommended IF pieces available for free download.

Technical aspects acquire more relevance in the next essays within this section. In the opening part of *Too dimensional: literary and technical images of potentiality in the history of hypertext*, Belinda Barnett and Darren Tofts explore three "early hypertext designs" (Vannevar Bush's Memex, Ted Nelson's Xanadu, and Douglas Engelbart's On-Line System) and some associated issues: accessibility, selection, categorising, storing, retrieval of information. According to the authors, the "founding fathers" were visionaries who gave prominence to the images of potentiality displayed by hypertext. In the last two sections the authors deal with early hypertext fiction and alternative poetics characterised by a sense of unending. Assuming that installed digital literature is a genre set in the context of other disciplines and art forms, Mark Leahy, in *Private public reading: Readers in digital literature installation*, deals with a series of aspects that distinguish installed digital literature from other digital literature, namely its location, third dimension, materiality, embodied reading and public reading. Reference to current literature on the topic and descriptions of instances of the genre help appreciate the singular mode in which the installation of digital literature "addresses its readers" and the type of reading practice "it elicits from those readers" (p. 315).

Digital poetry, performance, gaming and blogging are the topics of the next four essays. In *Digital poetry: A look at generative, visual and interconnected possibilities in its first four decades*, Christopher Funkhouser considers digital poetry a conglomeration of forms which constitute a new genre of literary, visual and sonic art and deals with a few of those forms (computer poems, graphical poems, hypertextual and hypermedial poetry). Derridean and Lyotardian concepts help Funkhouser characaterise digital poetry as "typical of the postmodern condition" (p 330). Though digital poetry is considered a by-product of the digital revolution and a genre which has received quantitative impetus from the WWW, the author identifies a long list of predecessors and highlights elements of this type of poetry already present in age old literary works and genres.

Two apparently distant relatives, computer technology and the performance arts, are brought together under David Saltz's lenses in *Digital literary studies: Performance and interaction*. The author considers different uses performance scholars and practitioners have put computers to serve; he presents applications used in pedagogical and/or research projects (performance readers, static space and live performance simulations), considers their shortcomings and alerts on the dangers involved in their acritical use. The impact of recently developed applications on the way the performing arts are being practised and the role acquired by computers in the performance itself are also analysed. Saltz concludes that the use of computers does not add "a new tool to an old discipline" but challenges "basic assumptions about performance" (p. 346).

Andrew Mactavish's approach to digital games uncovers an "important object of study for scholars" (p. 348), yet one with no firm ground underfoot as a discipline. *Licensed to play: Digital games, player modifications, and authorized production* introduces digital games as an emergent form of youth culture, considers the status of game players as co-creators and stresses the creative potentials of digital games. The author advocates for the study of digital gameplay in their enabling context and his analysis centres on "the production of player created derivative content" (p. 352) or modding, an issue that necessarily leads to discussion of corporate interests, copyright laws, knowledge sharing ethos, post fordist commodities and end-user license agreements. Closing this section, *Blogs and blogging: Text and practice*, by Aimée Morrison, provides an overview of the blogsphere, makes considerations about the term *weblog*, refers to the essential and optional characteristics of the genre that distinguish it from its kin, examines the cultural and technological factors that turned blogs mainstream and presents blog taxonomies which pave the way for considerations about such controversial issues as blogging in the academy, codes of ethics for bloggers and an evaluation of the future of the blogsphere.

Part IV- *Methodologies* includes eleven articles which impinge on different issues related to the contribution that computing can make to the field of the humanities, especially considering the changes it can introduce to representation. The first essay in this section, *Knowing…: Modeling in literary studies*, starts asserting that what we do shapes who we are, and that computers are making us complete new tasks daily, which in the long run will change our identities. Willard McCarty summarises the developments made in natural sciences regarding the concept of modelling and simulation to discuss the epistemological implications of computing for the humanities. Can computational modelling be of any help to the humanities, as it is to experimental sciences? He concludes that it might, as long as we use modelling as a tool to study that which cannot be modelled.

John Lavagnino's *Digital and analog texts* brings to the fore the discussion about the way in which modes of representation impact our experiences and on the way we

read and interpret texts. Lavagnino appeals to the history of the use of the categories in twentieth century engineering, cybernetics and cognitive science, and maintains that the distinction between the analog and the digital acquires meaning when contextualized, and that it is valuable insofar as it "can help us describe some practices in the use of texts more precisely (p. 402). In *Cybertextuality and philology* Ian Lancashire also explores the digital text, but this time through the concept of cybertext, and centring on the processes of authoring and reading, of analysing literary texts and also of contributing to linguistic analyses, to memory tests and to author self-monitoring. Computers can now quantify and analyse authors' actions in an unprecedented way, promising to throw light on the creative process by making it possible to study "authoring sessions" which writers could start to donate to research.

The digital is addressed from the perspective of publication and circulation in the next two essays. Welcome by some humanists and feared by others, the "move to digital production and dissemination" (p. 434) of scholarly publication in the humanities is Kenneth M. Price's centre of attention in *Electronic scholarly editions*. A series of open-ended questions posed by the author attest to his awareness of the amount of work to be done; of the high demand of social capital and of economic support required by scholarly editions which necessarily exact collaboration among librarians, archivists, academic administrators and funding agencies; and of the need that electronic scholarly editions adhere to international standards. Terminological distinctions, considerations about preservation, digital libraries, archives, databases and narrative are the central issues discussed and reference to outstanding digital editions help illustrate key points. In order to make digital texts available to the widest audience possible, the Text Encoding Initiative (TEI) develops sets of recommendations regarding the encoding of digital texts. These guidelines make a contribution to the humanities by establishing standard formats for data which make it possible to share texts and to analyze them no matter the technology available. This is the topic addressed in *The text encoding initiative and the study of literature* by James Cummings, who claims for more funding for the study of digital literature, now that efforts like that of the TEI are paving the way for the creating of digital editions.

In *Algorithmic criticism* Stephen Ramsey resumes the topic of the use of computers to study literature through "text analysis" via algorithms, a form of research which is conservative in spirit, in key with scientific methods and far from hermeneutic, argumentative standpoints. This may be welcome by those critics who distrust the methods associated with the humanities and embrace the possibilities offered by the revolution to be wrought by algorithmic criticism. Also of interest to critics is whether writing machines generate art, which is the question underpinning William Winder's *Writing Machines*. Acknowledging the invaluable support provided by formatters,

checkers, thesauri and printers, and acknowledging the functions of automatic templates, Winder is also aware of their shortcomings. He revises three paradigms-accelerated writing, artificial intelligence approach and automatic generation of of art—to focus on the latter. The use of an ancient epitaph to illustrate the scope of *transmutation* and *transliteration*, reflections on the meaning of art, descriptions of syntactic, semantic and narrative templates, and considerations about topographies and mapping complete the article. The words "Can computers really write? Only if they can fly" (p. 513) provide a clear answer concerning author's stance. Literary scholars will also be interested in the possibilities afforded by computing to quantitative analysis. Building on overviews that discuss early advances in the field, in *Quantitative analysis and literary studies* David Hoover advocates for quantitative approaches as "innovative ways of "reading" amounts of text" (p 517). His assessments of quantification methods, statistical programs and artificial intelligence related techniques are complemented with exemplification. Two applications deserve fuller treatment and are analysed in forensic and literary contexts: authorship attribution and statistical stylistics.

Some of the issues discussed by G. Syaeed Choudbury and David Seaman in *The virtual library* are out-of-copyright texts, permission problems, funding sources, software tools that lead beyond mere searching and browsing, repositories and preservation, and librarians, digital specialists, cataloguers and programmers as "allies in exploring new forms of publication, production and dissemination" (p. 541). Though aware of the overwhelming mass of data of interest for the humanities which remain unexplored "because infrastructure and services to use them effectively in digital form remain in nascent form" (p. 542), the authors still consider that "digital libraries based on repositories will continue to ensure that the library remains a hub of scholarly activity" (p. 545). Also related to the creation of libraries is the format texts need to take in order to be studied. *Practice and preservation-format issues* by Marc Bragdon, Alan Burk, Lisa Charlong, and Jason Nugent centres on digital formats currently used in a series of research activities in the field of the humanities. Format propriety to a given task and "to each format its purpose" (p 547) are guiding principles that, in the authors' opinion should rule format selection. XML, PDF, TIFF, JPEG and JPEG 2000, five formats ubiquitous in web environment and frequently used by humanist researchers are discussed "in light of their facility in promoting associated discipline goals" (p.547) and their potentialities and drawbacks are considered. In *Character Encoding*, Christian Wittern remarks that "every digital text has to use a character encoding in its internal representation" and that people working with digital texts need "a basic understanding of what character encoding is and what the basic issues are" (p. 565). After elucidating the meaning and scope of terms such as text encoding, character encoding and mark up, the author explores the relationship of character encoding and writing systems to

concentrate on Unicode, "the most important coded character in use" (p. 565). These last three essays testify to the importance of technical issues to text creation, circulation, preservation and accessibility.

The closing section, *Annotated overview of selected electronic resources*, by Tanya Clement and Gretchen Gueguen, reviews a sampling of freely available online resource in English. The materials selected cover a wide range of genres, methods, perspectives and traditions and are organized into three sections: digital transcriptions and images, born-digital texts and new media objects, and criticism, reviews, and tools.

The variety of topics and issues discussed, the academic rigour and the broad-minded and varied views displayed in the articles contribute to a plural text which, due to its cohesion, moves beyond the mere *compilation* towards a real *collection*, a complex textual system of interconnected, indispensable parts. *A companion to digital literary studies* may be considered seminal to literary studies, since it is published at a moment when the field is already consolidated but still young. Though it offers undergraduates tools to explore an astonishingly quick-changing and ever-expanding field, the book will probably find its largest audience among graduates and scholars, to whom it is highly recommended.

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Book reviews

Pedagogical stylistics: Current trends in language, literature, and ELT

Edited by M. Burke, S. Csábi, L. Week, & J. Zerkowitz, London/New York, Continuum, 2012, Pp. xii + 241, £ 21.53 , ISBN 978-1-4411-4010-4 (pbk); £ 20.59, ISBN 978-1-44112312-1 (Kindle Edition)

Reviewing a book about pedagogical stylistics in this special issue aims at promoting the integration of discourse studies and literature framed in educational contexts such as language (teacher) education. When I first read this book I thought of future teachers of English, teacher educators, and learners who wish to inspect the texture of literary texts and experience the identities of readers and analysts by building interpretation based on textual description.

The volume edited by Burke et al. contains 12 chapters divided into three parts: (1) Analysis, reading and reception in pedagogical stylistics, (2) Emerging trends and methods in pedagogical stylistics, and (3) EFL and pedagogical stylistics. Of the three, the second part is the most developed in terms of contributions and methods. While teachers may initially judge that only the last part will be of direct relevance to them, every chapter purports to provide professionals with tools to make stylistics pedagogical, approachable, and attractive.

Part 1 offers examples of text analysis which take learners from textual analysis to interpretation. The authors in this part provide examples of pedagogical approximation to paraphrase, deixis, semantic fields and their influence on the reader's schemata, literary awareness and a more theoretical discussion framed as the reader's paradox of the dissimilar universes inhabited by the reader and the analyst. The classroom examples and studies are indicative of practitioner research because the authors are those who explored pedagogical stylistics with their own learners.

The four chapters in this part successfully illustrate how stylistics can enrich the literature classroom by advancing a text-oriented approach. I must clarify that the authors do not aim at eliminating interpretation based on different traditions and programmes and literary theory. On the contrary, they put forward an experience which goes from the

text and the linguistics behind the text and from there engagement with interpretation.

Part 2 also offers more examples of learner engagement with stylistics at different levels of formal education. In this part the authors evidence the presence of varied approaches towards pedagogical stylistics and research. For example, the first chapter in this section reveals mix methods and shows how we can help learners reflect on their own learning. This approach responds to the need for literary awareness addressed in Part 1. Pedagogical stylistics is also encouraged through a stylistics-based approach to creative writing. This exploration is an attempt to integrate critical and creative practice by constructing an interdisciplinary matrix through which linguistics and literature meet.

In the process of researching stylistics applied, Part 2 shows how learners can explore deviation aided by corpus linguistics. In addition, it informs readers of ways of bringing pragmatics to literary analysis and extending pedagogical stylistics to the field of hypertext fiction and digital literacy. Overall, this part seems to indicate that trends in pedagogical stylistics include interdisciplinarity, an amalgamation of fields and research methods, and the prevalence of teacher research over other forms of enquiry.

Part 3 is the shortest and as a teacher of English in a foreign language context I would have liked to have encountered more chapters. Nonetheless, many of the ideas posited in Parts 1 and 2 could be very well adapted and applied to teacher education. The authors in this part reflect on the benefits of stylistics in foreign language learning: do learners need to understand metaphors before other features of a foreign language? Do they need to learn all metaphorical expressions? How? To what end? As an answer to these questions and the debate between linguistics and linguistics applied, readers will find one more classroom-based example of how two English translations of a short story trigger different interpretations based on stylistics-driven description.

Overall, the book succeeds in providing readers with examples of classroom explorations, samples of analyses, and even lesson plans and research tools. Readers should bear in mind that they will not find advances in stylistics per se. All the contributions stress the pedagogical intent they carry. I recommend this book particularly for teacher educators who teach courses on language development, discourse analysis, and literature.

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Cambridge
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Pp. v + 173
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Lantolf, J. (Ed.). (2000). *Sociocultural theory and second language learning.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

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Ushioda, E. (2011). Motivating learners to speak as themselves. In G. Murray, G. Xuesong & T. Lamb (Eds.), *Identity, motivation and autonomy in language learning* (pp.11-24). Bristol: Multilingual Matters.

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