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FAAPI

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Contents

Argentinian Journal of Applied Linguistics
Vol. 6, No. 2, November 2018, 4-5

FAAPI

Editorial introduction

Every issue is an opportunity to spread the knowledge generated in different settings and through different research purposes, tools, and avenues.

In this volume we are happy to include more contributions from Argentinian authors. This may indicate that what we started back in 2013 is reaching out within Argentina and more colleagues are considering the possibility of publishing with us.

The first article is set in Córdoba, Argentina. Gava and Dalla Costa examine the effects of online forums on 32 higher education students' writing practices. Through a quasi-experiment framework which combined quantitative and qualitative instruments, it was found that ICT contributed to the enhancement of English language writing practices and the enactment of collaborative work. This study is a valuable example of teacher research since the authors carried out this study with their own students enrolled at different university courses. In their conclusion, educators are encouraged to explore the affordances that ICT offers in the social construction of knowledge and language practices.

The second article is a reflective contribution which seeks to summarise how three approaches, innatism, sociolinguistics and neurolinguistics, have shaped the field of applied linguistics and language learning. Beltramino, the author of this reflective piece, puts forward a set of teaching strategies that materialise each of the approaches discussed and concludes that teachers should choose those

methods that better suit our learners' interests and learning style, our work context and our teaching style, and to devote time to the study of those methods so as to make informed and thoughtful teaching decisions which should be implemented, assessed, adapted, reimplemented and re-assed continuously.

In the third article, Roberts and Banegas reflect on general notions around authenticity, motivation, and English language proficiency and summarise three projects carried out in the south of Argentina with students and teachers across the educational system. It should be highlighted that the projects, or proposals as the authors call them, are the result of processes generated by educational authorities in Chubut, a teacher association (APIZALS), and a group of teacher-educators who carried out a bottom-up teacher research project with the aim of promoting writing for publication.

Our fourth article comes from Ecuador. Rodas and Santillán provide a succinct account around the development of terms such as multilingualism and interculturalism. They start their reflective piece by drawing the reader's attention to the historical background underpinning such concepts. They move on to see such terms from their Ecuadorian perspective and establish links between the academic literature and official documents that regulate language policy and education in Ecuador.

Due to further reflections from its authors, in this volume we have included an updated version of the interview between Ortega and Piccardo we published in May 2018.

Last, we have commissioned two book reviews. In the first review, María Celeste Luna from Universidad Nacional de Cuyo has commented on *¡A lingüistiquearla!,* an edited book by Mare and Casares from Universidad Nacional del Comahue. Written in Spanish, the volume can be downloaded from here since it is a free publication aiming at sharing the outcomes of a research programme led by Mare. In the second review, Verónica Ferrari has produced a conscientious analysis of *LGBTQ Voices in Education: Changing the Culture of Schooling* edited by Bloomfield and Fisher.

We truly hope that this second issue attracts readers to become potential authors in the near future.

Darío Luis Banegas and María Susana Ibáñez

Argentinian Journal of Applied Linguistics
Vol. 6, No. 2, November 2018, 6-25

FAAPI

A socio-cognitive approach to the development of EFL writing skills through a collaborative online discussion forum in a university course

Ileana Yamina Gava*
Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina
Natalia Verónica Dalla Costa
Universidad Nacional de Córdoba, Argentina

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ABSTRACT

WBLL (web-based language learning) projects are increasing steadily in blended and distance learning environments. Although experts believe that digital technologies can assist student writing, systematic evidence for this claim in university contexts is still scarce. This paper reports on a two-stage research project carried out by Dalla Costa and Gava (2016, 2017) aimed at analysing the impact of an online discussion forum (ODF) as a pre-writing activity on the students' productions and perceptions. The study was carried out in the virtual classroom using the Moodle learning platform of an English Language II course at Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (UNC), in which ICTs (information and communication technologies) are employed to promote a sociocognitive approach to the development of writing skills. The findings show that the cognitive and social opportunities afforded by ICTs seem to favour the collaborative construction of knowledge through online dialogue and the application of higher order thinking skills, which became evident in the students' contributions to the ODF, their opinions about the online activity, and their productions in the writing task. Further investigations of blended learning projects and different modes of asynchronous computer-mediated communication could help corroborate these findings and enrich our perspective of the use of online tools to promote the practice of EFL writing skills at college level in this increasingly digital age.

Keywords: online discussion forum; asynchronous computer-mediated communication; EFL writing skills; dialogue; cognitive skills; collaborative construction of knowledge

* Corresponding author, e-mail: yamigava@gmail.com

RESUMEN

Los proyectos para el aprendizaje de la lengua en entornos híbridos y a distancia están aumentando continuamente. Aunque los expertos creen que el uso de las tecnologías digitales puede ayudar en el aprendizaje de la escritura, en contextos universitarios la evidencia es escasa aún. Este artículo reporta los resultados de un proyecto de investigación en dos etapas llevado a cabo por Dalla Costa y Gava (2016, 2017) cuyo objetivo fue analizar el impacto de un foro de discusión en línea (ODF, por su sigla en inglés) como actividad de pre-escritura en las producciones y percepciones de los alumnos. El estudio se llevó a cabo en el aula virtual a través la plataforma Moodle de un curso de Lengua Inglesa II en la Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (UNC), en el que las TIC se emplearon para promover un enfoque sociocognitivo para el desarrollo de las habilidades escriturarias. Los resultados demuestran que el uso de las TIC brinda posibilidades de desarrollo sociocognitivo para la construcción colaborativa del conocimiento a través del dialogo en línea y la aplicación de habilidades de pensamiento de orden superior. Esto se evidencia en las contribuciones de los estudiantes en los foros de discusión, sus opiniones sobre esta actividad de pre-escritura y sus producciones en tareas de escritura. Investigaciones futuras sobre el uso de distintos modos de comunicación asincrónica mediada por computadoras en entornos híbridos podrían contribuir a corroborar estos hallazgos y enriquecer nuestra perspectiva sobre el uso de herramientas en línea que promuevan la práctica de las habilidades escriturarias en ILE en el nivel universitario en esta era digital.

Palabras claves: foro de discusión en línea; comunicación asincrónica mediada por computadora; habilidades escriturarias en ILE; diálogo; habilidades cognitivas; construcción colaborativa del conocimiento

CURRENT PEDAGOGICAL PRACTICES can neither ignore the application of information and communication technologies (ICTs) nor fail to incorporate issues related to online learning in a world where digital technologies have become an integral part of everyday life and professional development (Dussel & Quevedo, 2010; Lion, 2015). Despite the advances in the field of Educational Technology, in-depth, systematic studies of web-based language learning (WBLL) in higher education contexts are still scarce (Ngo, 2016; Tri & Nguyen, 2014). As to the use of digital technologies for the development of writing skills in EFL, there has been an increase of studies revealing the complexity of the factors involved in online writing in a variety of settings and most studies show that further research should explore the need for substantial changes in writing instruction (Akmal, 2017; Davis, Fernández & Mailhes, 2013; Nielsen, 2013). For instance, Cho (2017) analyses the interplay of task representation, students' perceptions of their roles and the roles of others, and peer feedback in synchronous web-based collaborative writing. Zheng, Warschauer and Farkas (2013) re-

port on the significant gains of well-planned use of digital media on the literacy processes and outcomes of learners from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds. Also, another recent study carried out by Li and Zhu (2017) demonstrates that the features of wiki interactions and scaffolding strategies contribute to improve the qualities of writing and students' learning gains. Moreover, Eloia and Oskoz's (2017) conceptual article clearly shows that tools and genres are evolving and, therefore, literacy, writing genres, L2 teaching practice and research should be redefined from a broader perspective. Since online communication relies heavily on the written mode, it becomes evident that traditional language teaching methods should be revisited to keep pace with the digital environments in which most college students are immersed. In this broader scenario, the present study focuses on specific ways in which online tools can be incorporated by means of asynchronous computer-mediated communication in a university EFL course, where WBLL is being incorporated through the Moodle platform, so as to contribute to this necessary shift in pedagogical practices in this digital age. It is important to highlight at this point that that, according to the course requirements, online activities are carried out mainly through Moodle. Thus, the purpose of this paper is to report the results of a two-stage research project carried out by Dalla Costa and Gava (2016, 2017) aimed at analysing the impact of an online discussion forum (ODF) as a pre-writing activity on the students' productions and perceptions. The study was carried out in an English Language II course at Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad Nacional de Córdoba (UNC), in which ICTs are employed to promote a sociocognitive approach to the development of writing skills. We believe that, by exploring the relationship between the pre-writing collaborative activity, the individual productions in the writing task and the students' opinions, this study may provide insights into the levels of interaction in which collaborative learning and the application of higher order thinking can be instantiated through asynchronous computer-mediated communication.

In the following sections, we first describe the context of the study and review prior research on ICTs and language teaching focusing on the use of digital technologies for the development of EFL writing skills. Next, we develop a theoretical framework about WBLL, the cognitive and social opportunities ICTs offer for the collaborative construction of knowledge, the implications for EFL teaching, and the usefulness of forum debates. We also present the analytical categories of this study based on Bloom's (1971) taxonomy of cognitive skills for the construction of knowledge and Salmon's (2008) classification of online collaboration. We then summarise the purposes of each stage of the project, its methodology and findings. This is followed by a discussion of the results and limitations. The paper concludes with pedagogical applications and some suggestions for future lines of research.

Literature Review

Educational technology is an evolving field. Several works referring to the state of the art have been published and advances have been made in a multiplicity of areas (Drent &

Meelissen in Area, 2010; European Commission, 2006; Lion 2015). Nonetheless, in the field of WBLL, there is still a need for more in-depth studies into technology-enhanced instruction for the development of writing skills since this is a requisite in a world highly dependent on digital technologies (Cantor Barragán, 2009; Özdemir & Ayden, 2015; Yunus, Salehi & Chenzi, 2012; Zheng et al., 2013).

As regards the use of the online forum, recent studies report on the outcomes of the use of this tool in a variety of EFL contexts and suggest its effectiveness to enhance students' collaboration, critical thinking, and writing skills. Based on an extensive review of the literature in the field, Kaur (2011) looks at the benefits and main characteristics of online forums for language learning. Her work reviews the interactional features of forums, their potential for improving written communication, autonomy and reflective thinking, as well as the key role of teachers in motivating students' participation. At international level, Nielsen's (2013) research explores the learning outcomes of ODF in a blended EFL course in a Japanese university. The results throw light into students' perceptions of the online activity and levels of participation, writing accuracy, cultural issues, and teachers' role in guiding and monitoring the activity. On the other hand, Sánchez-Upegui (2009) carried out a study of the use of the virtual forum at Universidad Católica del Norte in Colombia. The results indicate that interaction was oriented to monologic styles without a conversational structure, and messages centered on personal response. However, one of the conclusions of this study is that the forum constitutes a valuable tool since it eliminates time and space barriers and, if used effectively, it fosters the collaborative construction of knowledge. In a similar line of research, Cantor Barragán (2009) reports the findings of an exploratory study at Universidad Nacional de Colombia on the use of ODF during the transition to virtual education. The results show that the forum serves mainly for interaction, discussion and revision, and that the students have positive perceptions of this tool. The study suggests that online forums could contribute to learner autonomy, time management and students' better control over their own learning. Furthermore, Akmal (2017) reports on a recent study carried out at an Indonesian university focusing on the use of ODF for writing practice. The outcomes are indicative of the students' writing performance improvements, their application of critical thinking skills and a positive attitude towards the ODF. The author suggests that, although there are advantages to the use of this tool, research data about its pedagogical effectiveness in relation to the writing skill are still unsatisfactory.

At national level, Davis, Fernández and Mailhes (2013) investigated the construction of knowledge by means of virtual forums in EFL teaching at UNLaM. The results revealed a positive attitude towards the forum as it enabled students to exchange messages in a collaborative way. Such communication led to the development of writing skills. Gava (2012) also studied the collaborative construction of knowledge by means of forums in a language course at Facultad de Lenguas, UNC. The results led to a taxonomy of collaboration in ODF. The author concludes that the ODF fosters collaboration and the

application of higher order skills relevant to EFL learning. In addition, she suggests that further studies are necessary to determine other uses of forums in virtual learning environments (VLE) focusing on the development of specific skills.

Theoretical Framework

As ICTs continue to improve global communications, information access and knowledge production, new cognitive and social opportunities for the construction of knowledge and collaborative learning emerge. As a consequence, new literacy teaching models are required. In fact, as Area and Pessoa (2012) suggest, the "appropriation of meaning and multimedia expression are the new terms for the old concepts of reading and writing" (p. 17). In this context, literacy in general and writing in EFL, in particular, imply developing not only instrumental skills to use digital technologies, but also cognitive and social skills to interact with information and transform it into knowledge in a collaborative manner. Even though online learning has increased in popularity, meaningful applications of WBLL have not yet been matched by research in the context of higher education (Dalla Costa & Gava, 2009, 2016, 2017; García, González & Ramos, 2010; Gava & Anglada, 2015; Sun & Chang, 2012). Digital technologies play an important educational role as they provide cognitive and social affordances for the construction of knowledge and collaborative learning, which are two competences included in digital literacy, also called *multiliteracy* and *new literacy,* since literacy requires more complex processes than just the instrumental use of technology (Area & Pessoa, 2012).

The cognitive affordance of ICTs, the construction of knowledge, is not a new concept. Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) already referred to the difference between *knowledge telling and knowledge construction*, that is, transforming information critically. However, this difference is especially relevant in today's society. At present, it becomes even more necessary to distinguish between information and knowledge as the possibility to access large amounts of data through the use of ICTs alone does not reflect the capacity to use them meaningfully (Area and Pessoa, 2012). From this point of view, literacy represents the appropriation of cognitive abilities to interact with information and transform it into knowledge in a critical way.

The social affordance of ICTs, collaborative learning, is not a new concept either although research in this area is still scarce (Egbert & Petrie, 2005; Gava, 2012; Gava & Anglada, 2015; Zheng et al., 2013). The idea of educational environments that foster cooperation was already present in Dewey's (1938) experiential theory of learning and Vygotsky's (1978) socio-constructivism. These theorists put emphasis on transforming information into knowledge by means of experiential and relational processes. Therefore, knowledge is not transmitted from the expert to the novice but constructed in interaction with others through meaningful learning experiences. Socio-constructivism and experiential learning respond to deficiencies in directed instruction and challenge traditional goals of

education proposing innovative approaches in which learners construct knowledge by participating in meaningful experiences. Learning happens when students construct their own version of knowledge as a result of social interaction. Vygotsky's concept of *scaffolding* also suggests new roles for the teacher and students. The teacher provides support to students in acquiring new knowledge through collaboration and participation in activities they find meaningful in the context of their own experiences. This allows students to merge their personal mental model with the conceptions of peers and experts.

The new cognitive and social opportunities for the collaborative construction of knowledge generated by ICTs have powerful implications for the teaching of EFL. First, it is necessary to analyse the changes that digital technologies are producing in education and rethink the new competences required. This implies a critical pedagogic approach to ICTs and an awareness of their potential and limitations (Levy, 2007). Second, to foster responsible participation in virtual learning environments, it is essential to develop *digital citizenship* (Jenkins in Meneses Rocha, 2013), which entails the critical and reliable use of technology. In this sense, Area and Pessoa (2012, p. 17) refer to "the formation of the citizen for the digital society" who acts with ethical principles to exercise their freedom of expression. Third, it is crucial to rethink a new pedagogy for the teaching of EFL (Warschauer, 2004). As students will need to communicate in English using the Internet in their professional lives, they should be equipped with online writing skills to interact effectively in these new communicative scenarios. Therefore, the incorporation of VLEs in formal education is no longer an option but a necessity.

Moodle is a VLE featuring interactional tools, such as online forums and tasks, which have great potential for teaching and learning practices. The use of the ODF is central to this project since it reflects sociocognitive concepts enabling students "to use technologies for experiential learning tasks, carry out tasks in collaboration with others, reflect on the process (...), and increase control over their own learning." (Bikowski & Kessler, 2002, p. 28). These factors help increase students' motivation and engagement. Moreover, the ODF constitutes one of the most collaborative virtual learning environments to develop critical thinking and language skills and have a potential that should be exploited (Akmal, 2017; Bikowski & Kesler, 2002; Cantor Barragán, 2009; Gava, 2012; Kaur, 2011; Nielsen, 2013; Sánchez-Upegui, 2009; among others).

Context

The two-stage study reported in this paper was carried out at Facultad de Lenguas, UNC during the first semester of the 2016 academic year. This institution offers five-year Teacher Training, Licentiate and Translation Studies programmes in EFL. Each academic year of these degree programmes includes an English Language course which students are required to complete independently of the programme in which they are enrolled. In this five-level course, the four skills, namely, reading, writing, speaking and listening, are developed in the

context of Content-Based Instruction. Students are expected to make progress from an intermediate to an advanced level of English. The subjects in this study were students attending English Language II, the upper-intermediate level at which essay writing is taught.

A total of 32 student subjects participated in this study. The sample for this investigation did not consist of students taken at random but belonging to two intact classes selected on the basis of *convenience sampling* (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991, p. 42), that is to say, the selection of individuals who happen to be available for the study. In terms of their linguistic background, all the subjects were Spanish-speaking learners of EFL enrolled in the second year of the five-year Teacher Training, Licentiate and Translation Studies programmes. They were at an upper-intermediate level of English language proficiency equivalent to level B2 of the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* published by the Council of Europe (Shaw & Weir, 2008).

Two EFL teachers in charge of the course in which the study was carried out also participated in the study. These teachers were selected on the basis of their experience in teaching EFL at university, since they had been teaching and researching for more than ten years in this course. The level of researcher participation and involvement is a key issue in qualitative studies, and recommendations about it vary in the literature. In the present study, although the role of teacher-researchers might have compromised the validity of the study, inter-rater reliability checks were conducted to avoid biased interpretation of the data. In addition, before this study was conducted, the instructors attended training sessions on the use of digital technologies for the teaching of writing in EFL.

Research Methods

This two-stage project constitutes a quasi-experimental study based on quantitative and qualitative methods. For data collection, questions for the ODF, a student survey and an essay writing assignment through the virtual classroom were designed. To begin the debate, which was open for three weeks, the teachers published the guidelines for the pre-writing activity. The topic for discussion was related to one of the syllabus units dealt with in the face-to-face classes at the same time as the ODF was being developed. The teachers encouraged meaningful interaction and provided the following instructions regarding the content and length of the contributions.

Guidelines for the online pre-writing activity

Welcome to this debate! In this forum we will share ideas that will then be useful to write an essay on the topic of leisure. To begin this activity, we invite you to consider the following:

In the article "The Use of Free Time", Adler poses the question: *Is it good for a society to have much free time?* In his view, the answer is that it depends on how people actually use their free time. Thus, there are many people who think that their leisure time is the perfect time for relaxation and refreshment, while others are not satisfied with undemanding activities and look for ways to exercise their skills or strengthen their minds in their spare moments.

In order to discuss this topic, you should contribute with ideas related to the variety of leisure time activities and different kinds of holidays dealt with in this course. To support your views, please refer to at least one of the articles or videos in the course materials and in the virtual classroom. You may also consider the use of leisure time as depicted in the short story *Roman Fever* by Edith Wharton. Your contribution should be brief (not more than 80 words) and to the point so that it is easier for everybody to follow the discussion and you should also build on the ideas being discussed by making reference to someone else's opinion. Please, remember to use relevant and specific vocabulary as well as appropriate grammar structures. Let's begin

As the students participated in the ODF, the teachers' role was to scaffold the collaborative construction of knowledge by moderating the debate, posing guiding questions, encouraging participation whenever necessary, and summarising main points.

Once the pre-writing activity had finished, the analysis of students' contributions to the ODF was carried out to determine the levels of collaboration and cognitive abilities used. Then, the following topic for an expository essay writing task was uploaded to the virtual classroom.

Guidelines for the essay writing task

You are a member of a debate group at the local college. The course instructor has asked you to write a short report on the following topic and submit it in the form of an academic essay:

One of the main characters in the short story *Roman Fever* says, "the new system has certainly given us a good deal of time to kill; and sometimes I get tired (...) The luncheon hour was long past, and the two had their end of the vast terrace to them-

selves. At its opposite extremity a few groups, detained by a lingering look at the outspread city, were gathering up guidebooks and fumbling for tips." (pp. 20 & 21). As this scene in the story shows, the amount of free time most people have has been increasing over the years. Although some people enjoy having free time in their hands, many others prefer to engage in some form of creative activity or active entertainment, which may bring some sort of satisfaction or benefits to the individual.

Based on the above statement, write an essay of around 300-350 words about the physical, intellectual and spiritual advantages of leisure time activities. You should include some reference to the materials and short stories dealt with in this course. Please, note that your file should be named as follows: SURNAME_Name_Group_Assignment1_Expository essay. Make sure you comply with the guidelines for submitting compositions. Otherwise, you will not receive feedback on your essay. SUBMISSION DEADLINE: Tuesday, May 9, at 14:30.

This assignment provided the students with a learning experience in which they could use the knowledge collaboratively constructed in the pre-writing activity through the ODF. The students submitted their essays using the interactional tool offered by Moodle. Finally, a post-study survey consisting of closed- and open-ended questions was administered to obtain the students' perceptions of this activity (see Appendix).

Analysis Procedures

The categories of analysis applied in this two-stage study are based on Bloom's (1971) taxonomy of cognitive skills and Salmon's (2008) classification of online collaboration for the construction of knowledge. As regards cognitive skills, Bloom identifies six levels: *knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis* and *evaluation*. Each of these levels is based on the previous ones and represents a higher order thinking skill. Assuming that the development of critical thinking can be facilitated by the collaborative construction of knowledge by means of the ODF, we use this taxonomy to describe the levels of cognitive abilities evidenced in students' contributions to the debate.

To examine the effects of the online pre-writing activity through ODF on students' essay writing task, the references made in the essays to information previously discussed in the forum were classified by the researchers taking into account the categories described above and another researcher acted as second-rater when reliability checks were conducted. This process yielded an interrater reliability percentage of 80%. This indicated that the researchers and the second rater agreed on their rating 80% of the time and disagreed 20%, which showed a good level of agreement between them.

A table was designed to tabulate data related to the type of information included (i.e., reference to short stories, background readings and audiovisual materials), the section of the

essay in which the information was presented (e.g. introduction, body, conclusion) and the levels of higher order skills evidenced, namely, *knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis* and *evaluation* (Bloom, 1971). Later, these results were compared to the results of the survey carried out to obtain the students' perceptions of the online activity and to determine whether the collaborative construction of knowledge evidenced during the first stage of this project was also reflected in the analysis of their productions in this second stage.

Salmons (2008) proposes a taxonomy of five types of online collaboration that provides a framework to understand different levels of collaboration in VLE. These include: *dialogue* (participants exchange points of view), *peer feedback* (students exchange comments to create a task), *parallel collaboration* (each participant completes a component of a task that is combined in a collective product), *sequential collaboration* (participants work over prior contributions and these are combined), and *synergic collaboration* (a final product is created mixing individual contributions). Thus, even if students complete a writing task independently, if there is integration of other students' opinions and ideas (from the pre-writing stage) into their essay, we can describe their work as collaborative, which offers opportunities to construct knowledge.

First Stage of the Project: Students' Types of Collaboration, Cognitive Skills and Perceptions of the ODF Activity

The purpose of the first stage of the project was to analyse the impact of the blended learning project carried out in the virtual classroom of an English Language II course at Facultad de Lenguas, UNC for the collaborative construction of knowledge in a VLE. The specific objectives were: (a) To carry out a forum debate in the virtual classroom as a pre-writing activity, (b) to analyse the types of collaboration and the cognitive skills employed by the students, and (c) to conduct surveys to obtain the students' perceptions of this online activity. In the following sections, we describe the findings of this first stage of the study.

Findings

The analysis of the data showed that the students' contributions to the debate were indicative of collaboration by means of online *dialogue* among the participants —the first level of collaboration identified by Salmons (2008). The students constructed knowledge collaboratively as they exchanged ideas and summarised key points. Besides, the six levels of higher order thinking skills identified in Bloom's (1971) taxonomy were applied. The following exchange illustrates three of the six levels: *knowledge* and *comprehension* of the topic and *application* of background knowledge and personal experiences to make contributions to the ODF.

> Student A: One of my favourite things to do in my free time is reading and, although I do it for pleasure, I know it also contributes to my learning process as a language student (knowledge, comprehension and application). I also think choosing how to spend our free time has a lot to do with our background and everything we were exposed to during our childhood (knowledge and comprehension). For example, going back to my personal experience, I think, probably, I like reading because I grew up in a home where everyone read a lot during their free time (application).
>
> Student B: I also agree with the point of view regarding the role of parents (comprehension). Free time is the moment when we can do activities we enjoy (knowledge). Personally, I enjoy reading and travelling. I read throughout the year whereas I only travel on holidays. I consider both of them enrich the mind, and also widen one's horizons (application).

In addition, the students' contributions show instances of *synthesis, analysis and evaluation* —the other three levels of higher order skills. As the following exchange shows, the students analysed specific examples by making meaningful connections among reading materials and summarising main points. The level of evaluation becomes evident as they assessed the value of leisure time activities that contribute to intellectual and spiritual growth.

> Student A: Hello everyone, yes, participating in our communities is very important. "El Sistema" is a kind of social project aimed at young people from poor socioeconomic and cultural backgrounds in order to change their lives. Similarly, the Wallace Foundation also seeks to improve the relationship youngsters have with the arts (synthesis and analysis). Both of these educational projects work towards humanitarianism (synthesis and evaluation).
>
> Student B: I agree. It seems to me that leisure time activities are indispensable. They help us improve and foster our spiritual and moral growth (evaluation). In my case, I enjoy spending my leisure time listening to music, and contributing to Bell Ville's charitable association. From my point of view, a day off work not always makes us lazy (analysis and evaluation). As we learned in this unit, leisure is the time for doing something useful and depends on which kind of activities we do (synthesis). To summarise, it is very interesting to see the activities that can be developed for the growth of the soul and the spirit (synthesis and evaluation).

As these contributions show, students constructed knowledge collaboratively by selecting and sharing information related to the topic. Thus, the content of the forum evidenced the participants' knowledge, their ability to comprehend the topic, apply it to a new situation, analyse, synthesise and evaluate others' contributions.

The analysis of the students' answers to the survey shows that 59% of the participants

were familiar with the use of online forums although 94% had not used them as a pre-writing activity. Many students referred to the advantages of the ODF. For instance, most of them said that it was very useful to learn from their classmates' contributions and improve their writing skills. They also maintained that this debate was beneficial since there were no time or space constrains. Some students expressed that they could learn more about digital technology and believed that forums might be helpful for future translators. They also mentioned that this online dialogue was useful to learn new vocabulary. Some pointed out that this online environment was suitable for those who are introverted and tend not to participate in face-to-face classes. Interestingly, 72% of the participants admitted that the ODF was conducive to the development of the skills of analysis and synthesis. In general, students stressed the benefits of using the virtual classroom, of the guiding role of the teachers, and of developing group work skills. These are some of their opinions as regards the usefulness of the forum to carry out the pre-writing activity:

- The forum was very useful to get new ideas and different opinions and use them in my writing. There were different ways of relating the material I hadn't thought of before.
- The forum helped me include new ideas in my essay and also new words, so I could improve my vocabulary.
- It is good to exchange ideas over the Internet through a forum. It doesn't take much time to participate and we do not have to be at a certain place to do this.
- I could not participate in the forum, but I got some ideas. I would like to participate in the next one.
- We can analyse the topic because there are many opinions and the teachers also participate, so the ideas are more precise and the content is better organised.
- We share detailed information and then teachers help to synthesise ideas.
- The forum was good for collaborative learning because we had to read previous posts before we wrote our contributions. I think it was a good strategy to work in teams.

The analysis of the students' contributions and opinions shows that this online task appears to have been conducive to the collaborative construction of knowledge by means of the application of higher order skills and the meaningful negotiation of ideas through dialogue, key elements in collaborative higher education settings (Bruffee, 1999).

Second stage of the project: Effects of the pre-writing activity through ODF on students' essay writing task

The purpose of this second stage of the project was to find out the effect of the pre-writing activity through ODF on the writing task carried out in the virtual classroom of the English Language II course at Facultad de Lenguas, UNC. This helped us determine whether the

collaborative construction of knowledge evidenced in students' contributions to the forum during the first stage of this project was also reflected in their productions. The specific objectives were: a) to analyse the effects of the online pre-writing activity through ODF on students' essay writing task, and b) to compare them to the results of the survey carried out to obtain the students' perceptions of the online activity.

Findings

The students' collaborative construction of knowledge by means of online dialogue—the first level of collaboration identified by Salmons (2008)—in the first stage of the project seems to have helped students in the subsequent essay writing task. Moreover, the application of the six levels of cognitive skills in Bloom's (1971) taxonomy found in the first stage of the project were also reflected in the information included in the different sections of the essay.

Ninety per cent of the essays written by students who had participated in the forum included information previously discussed in the forum, which shows that the online dialogue generated was helpful to carry out the essay writing task. As regards the types of information included in the essays as a result of the online debate, most students included information from audiovisual materials. For example, they made reference to *El Sistema*, a social programme to help poor children in Venezuela:

> A great example of this is the amazing children's orchestra in Venezuela called El Sistema where a group of people keep kids away from the streets and vices teaching them how to play instruments and also values. (Supporting detail in a body paragraph)

Some students also related this programme to the short story "The Legacy" by Virginia Wolf:

> Like Angela, in the short story "The Legacy", you can participate in institutions that help people in need such as El Sistema in Venezuela, an organization that educates people through music. (Supporting detail in a body paragraph)

Most students referred to the short story "Roman Fever" as this example shows:

> Although everybody is free to choose what to do, I think that just sitting without doing anything productive, as the two main characters of Roman Fever do at the beginning of the story, is not the best thing to do when one has some time to kill. (Introductory paragraph)

Many students also mentioned background reading materials such as "The Use of Free Time":

> In conclusion, these different leisure activities let us produce the goods of the soul, spirit and intellect, which makes a life worth living, as Mortimer Adler holds in

> "The Use of Free Time". (Concluding paragraph)

In relation to the section of the essay in which information from the forum debate was included, most essays presented such information in the supporting details of body paragraphs where the students included examples from audiovisual materials such as *El Sistema* or short stories as shown above, and also in the introductory paragraph where they mainly made reference to the short story "Roman Fever" and the article "The Use of Free Time":

> According to Aristotle, there are two kinds of serious activities in which a person can engage. Over the years, most people have dedicated themselves to that kind of work that only provides money, in other words, the one from which you make a living. However, there is another type of work which produces not the goods of the body but the goods of the spirit, and is called leisure work. There are three productive and creative leisure activities by which people can grow morally, intellectually or spiritually. (Introduction)

With regard to the levels of higher order skills evidenced in the ODF and also reflected in the essays, the six levels of cognitive abilities in Bloom's (1971) taxonomy were achieved. *Knowledge* and *comprehension* of the topic and *application* of background knowledge to develop main ideas are evidenced in this excerpt, which shows how a student developed the idea of helping others dealt with in the materials by applying it to her knowledge:

> Moreover, helping others is another popular leisure activity and it is considered one of the most rewarding ones. Although it generally involves long hours, research has shown that those who are involved in different projects to help people in need tend to be the happiest. A good example of this could be the people who take part in volunteering programs abroad during their holidays.

In addition, students' contributions show instances of *synthesis, analysis and evaluation*— the other three higher order skills. As the following excerpt shows, students analysed specific examples by making connections between reading and audiovisual materials and synthesising them. The level of evaluation becomes evident as students assessed the value of leisure activities that contribute to intellectual and spiritual growth.

> One of the leisure activities which fill people's soul is being engaged in cultural pursuits, as they provide artistic and collective feelings. (...) In addition to art and entertainment, participating in social programmes such as El Sistema and political affairs is important to reflect upon the society we want to live in and the kind of person we want to be.

As it can be seen, the effects of the pre-writing activity through collaborative ODF on the

students' writing task are evident in the types of information included in the different sections of the essays, which showed the application of different levels of cognitive skills. The analysis of students' essays shows that this online task appears to have been conducive to the collaborative construction of knowledge by means of the meaningful negotiation of ideas through dialogue in the forum and the application of higher order skills to the subsequent essay writing task.

The comparison of the students' perceptions of this online activity in the post-study survey with the effects of the online pre-writing activity through ODF on students' writing task enables us to confirm that the usefulness of the forum for the collaborative construction of knowledge evidenced in the survey during the first stage of this project is also reflected in their productions in this second stage.

Discussion

The results of this two-stage research project enable us to state that the cognitive and social opportunities offered by ICTs seem to favour the collaborative construction of knowledge for the development of EFL writing skills in the context of this study. In fact, the analysis of students' contributions to the ODF, their opinions about the online activity and their productions in the essay writing task shows that this online project led to the collaborative construction of knowledge by means of the application of the higher order skills proposed by Bloom (1971) and the first level of collaboration proposed by Salmons (2008), dialogue.

There are two main limitations of this study. First, it focused on a relatively small population of EFL Argentinean university students belonging to two intact classes selected on the basis of *convenience sampling* (Hatch & Lazaraton, 1991, p. 42). Although the selection of individuals who happen to be available for the study was appropriate in this investigation, this design precludes generalisation of the findings. Therefore, it would be interesting to conduct replication studies with larger groups of learners and students with different language proficiency levels. Second, the twofold role of the teachers as researchers and participants may influence the interpretation of results owing to subjective perceptions of students' performance. In order to have an additional instrument to analyse the data and triangulate results, the student survey was carried out, which enabled us to corroborate the information obtained from the analysis of the ODF contributions and the essays.

Despite these limitations, this study provides evidence that the cognitive and social affordances of the ODF have positive effects on students' writing since the collaborative construction of knowledge evidenced in the ODF and their perceptions about the pre-writing activity was also reflected in their productions. In addition, this online learning experience revealed a change in roles since the teachers' scaffolding in the ODF encouraged students to play an active role transforming information critically into knowledge. Therefore, the teachers were no longer the experts but the guides of the learning process.

Conclusion

As to the pedagogical implications of this study, it is necessary to continue analysing the impact of ICTs on language education and rethink the new competences required. This calls for teacher training that includes not only an instrumental but also a critical approach to ICTs. Moreover, as these EFL students will communicate using the Internet in their profession, it is vital for them to develop the necessary online writing skills. Further investigations of blended learning projects could help corroborate these findings and enrich our perspective of the use of digital technologies in EFL writing. Future research could also seek to determine whether the collaborative construction of knowledge for the development of writing skills is possible in other courses offered at Facultad de Lenguas, UNC and similar contexts, and whether the application of higher order abilities increases with students' proficiency. It would also be interesting to examine the impact of a wider variety of online tools and modes of communication on the development of EFL students' socio-cognitive writing skills.

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Appendix

Post-study survey

This survey was administered in Spanish, the students' mother tongue, to facilitate students' answers of open-ended questions.

Por favor, marque con una cruz o conteste las siguientes preguntas:

1. ¿Conocía o estaba familiarizado con la dinámica de los debates en foro?
Sí No

2. Si contestó "No", especifique qué aprendió en este debate sobre el uso de un foro electrónico.

3. ¿Alguna vez había utilizado el foro de debate como actividad de apoyo a la escritura?
Sí No
4. ¿Considera que fue útil el uso del foro de debate como actividad de apoyo a la escritura?
Sí No

5. Explique por qué.

6. ¿Si contestó afirmativamente a la pregunta anterior, para qué parte de su ensayo le resultó particularmente útil el debate en foro? Ejemplifique brevemente. (Puede marcar más de una opción.)
Thesis
Topic sentences
Supporting sentences
Supporting details
Conclusion

7. ¿Considera que el foro permitió la construcción colaborativa del conocimiento? ¿Por qué?
Sí No
Justificación:

8. ¿Considera que el foro permitió el análisis y la síntesis de los temas tratados? ¿Por qué?
Sí No
Justificación:

9. ¿Considera que realizar más debates en foro sobre los temas asignados para tareas de escritura académica sería beneficioso? Por favor, explique por qué.

Sí No

Justificación:

10. ¿Tuvo alguna dificultad en esta actividad o percibió alguna desventaja?

11. ¿Tiene algún comentario o sugerencia? Por favor, escríbalo a continuación.

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Three theoretical approaches to L2/FL teaching put into practice

Florencia Beltramino*
Universidad Católica Argentina, Argentina

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ABSTRACT

Applied Linguistics -AL- has been gathering momentum since its origins in the 1950's and ever since has been contributing with practical solutions to second language -L2- and foreign language -FL- teaching and learning with such a prolific body of knowledge that is an intellectual feat to keep up to date with it. From AL corpus three theoretical models were selected: Innatist, Sociolinguistic and Neurolinguistic as a proposal for addressing language teaching based on AL theoretical underpinnings. Departing from the chosen methods, simple and easy-to-apply classroom practices are suggested and explained. They are meant for classroom settings conformed by adolescents and young adults whose L2/FL language is beginners or false beginners and whose objective is that of learning English for general purposes.
Keywords: innatist; sociolinguistic; neurolinguistics; teaching practice; theoretical underpinnings

RESUMEN

La Lingüística Aplicada -LA- ha venido creciendo desde la década del 1950 y desde ese momento ha contribuido con soluciones prácticas para la enseñanza y aprendizaje de segundas lenguas -L2- o lenguas extranjeras -LE- con un cuerpo de conocimiento tal que es un desafío intelectual mantenerse a la vanguardia. Del corpus de la LA se seleccionaron tres enfoques metodológicos: Innatista, Sociolingüístico y Neurolingüístico como propuesta para abordar la enseñanza de las L2/LE basada en sustentos teóricos. Partiendo de los enfoques elegidos, se sugieren y explican prácticas docente simples y fáciles de implementar, pensadas para contextos áulicos conformados por adolescentes y adultos jóvenes con un nivel L2/LE principiante cuyo objetivo es aprender inglés para fines generales.
Palabras clave: innatista; sociolingüístico; neurolingüístico; prácticas docente; sustentos teóricos

* Corresponding author, e-mail: florenciabeltraminoprof@hotmail.com

APPLIED LINGUISTICS, the science that provides second language - L2- and foreign language -FL- teachers with practical solutions is a new discipline, yet it is also, and furthermore, an extremely prolific one. Since the 1950's its scope has covered the topics of L2/ FL acquisition and instruction from the precursor Behaviourist approach to the most recent Neurolinguistic perspective. Making an oversimplification, those methods have either built on previous scholarly works and contributed with further developments or, opposingly, have undermined other theories by claiming that only theirs is the appropriate path to language acquisition. As L2/FL teachers we should consciously select from the available approaches a mix of practices that are suitable for our learners and that are in accordance with our work style and context. This article will dwell on simple teaching practice suggestions based on three different theoretical models: Innatist, Sociolinguistic and Neurolinguistic, and will explain the rationale for such choices and a way of implementing them in the context of classroom settings meant for beginners and false beginners between the ages of 14 and 25. While the approach is that of communicative English for general purposes, it can also be applied to other L2/FL languages as well.

The ultimate intention is to offer a proposal to address L2/FL teaching from a professional strand which is based on theoretical underpinnings contributed by AL.

The Innatist Approach

Firstly, innatist models coincide with the assumption that human beings are endowed with a specific module to acquire language, namely the Language Acquisition Device. Krashen (1981), who draws on Noam Chomsky's seminal work, states that language acquisition occurs effortlessly when people are exposed to abundant, appealing and comprehensible input which is a little bit above their current language level. Following this approach students have to be offered varied input other than textbooks such as songs, information about famous people, TV/Netflix series, reading books, to mention a few, according to their interests and language level. To exemplify, for A1 students a full series episode may be hard to follow and, consequently, generate frustration. However, using the names of popular TV/Netflix series can function as a great authentic input provider for vocabulary and good pronunciation models; after all, even beginner students are acquainted with the intermediate level phrase to *break bad* because of the series *Breaking bad*. Similarly, they are likely to do well in not pronouncing the silent /l/ in *walking* because of *The walking dead* series, making it a great opportunity to introduce similar cases of silent /l/ occurrence such as *talk*.

As frequently as possible realia should be used in relaxed interactions since being able to understand non-adapted material in a friendly atmosphere not only enhances students' self-confidence and motivation but also reduces anxiety which cooperates with low levels of the affective filter. The affective filter is Krashen's explanation for the way anxiety, motivation, self-confidence and attitude affect students' variability regarding L2/FL performance. It is acknowledged that the lower the affective filter, the higher level of intake. One form of

creating a friendly class setting is to offer learners possibilities for peer-assessment and by explaining to them that making mistakes is part of the learning process. This feat is better achieved if corrective feedback is given face to face. A written comment, useful as it may be, will unlikely replace reassuring and encouraging words uttered by the teacher.

Despite many undissolved disputes amongst innatist, psychological and sociological L2/FL learning models, all of them coincide with the belief that there is a predictable route of language acquisition which is hardly ever altered. Keeping on a par with the idea that language learning follows predictable steps of complexity, presenting too demanding language would be a methodological mistake. A proper diagnostic test which includes all four skills reading, writing, speaking and listening is a must in every course of study. Without consuming much preparation time, an online diagnostic test may be emailed to the learners who, after resolving it, can send a picture with its result to the teacher. A variant would be taking learners to the computer lab, in case there is one, and have them take the test there. After collecting all these data, the language instructor will have a clearer comprehension of his/her students' interlanguage level which will allow for a well-founded curriculum planning.

While Krashen contends that no grammar instruction is necessary, many theorists have challenged his position. Being EFL teachers, we can argue that some students do seem to need it. The other side of the coin is many others find grammar activities extremely tedious. As practitioners we should cater for all learning styles alike, thus a possible resolution of the dilemma is offering an optional extra grammar aid which could be prepared either in the form of the traditional grammar booster booklet, or in the form of grammar explanation videos on YouTube, which may be uploaded into a social media or e-learning platform, together with self-correction online exercises to practise after viewing. The web is packed with helpful videos produced by English native teachers which provide the double benefit of being ready to use and presenting a reliable language model.

The Sociolinguistic Approach

Secondly, sociolinguistic models (Ellis, 1997; Gass, 2005; Swain, 2000; Tarone, 2000) advance that context is a crucial factor that influences language acquisition. Within this approach the Interaction Hypothesis developed by Long (1998) maintains that three steps account for language learning: positive evidence (or input), negative evidence (or feedback) and output. The importance of this contribution mainly resides in recognising feedback and students' output as aspects that the teaching practice should and must incorporate. It must be pointed that for innatists output is a factor of minor significance whose main purpose is that of being a channel to obtain more input; and feedback, in the sense of the linguistic advice teachers give to students, is out of their scope.

Depending on the case, either implicit or explicit correction techniques are advisable to ensure a good language model is acquired. However, feedback should not finish after the correction but must ensure students' production of the correct version of the chunk that con-

fused them, i.e. feedback must also encourage further output. In this sense, feedback converts into a two-way road travelled by the teacher and the student as well.

Students output must always be taken into consideration both for planning and deciding if remedial teaching is necessary. What is more Swain (2000) posits that output is not only a way to practise but a mandatory path to language learning. This means that without output there is no meaningful learning. Students' interlanguage externalisation can be encouraged and exercised variedly, yet the challenge may reside in coping with all the data teachers obtain. Recording a class, or part of it, at regular time intervals, for example every 2 months or by the end of a term, may provide additional information to the one obtained through exams. The data collected can be systematised into categories such as pronunciation, amount of time learners use the L2/FL (instead of the L1), range of vocabulary, etc. These categories can be used as indicators to periodically asses. In addition to allowing practitioners to thoughtfully plan their next pedagogical moves, having accurate data can also result in a powerful incentive for students. By midterm learners can be shown, in the form of a graph or chart, how much they have progressed and how much more they are expected to advance.

Meaning negotiation is one other aspect of practical significance from a sociolinguistic perspective, so role-playing exercises, discussions and problem-solving activities are recommended ways to foster it (Ellis, 1997). What can be challenging, however, is to devote the necessary time to hearing those exchanges, giving feedback and encouraging learners to expand their output afterwards. Technology is, once again, a great ally to overcome class time constraints. Stronger students may be paired up with weaker ones to roleplay, for example, a conversation in a clothes shop whose audio will be recorded using students' mobile devices. The stronger participants will be asked to expand the assigned model for the interchange and try to elicit further output from their partners so that meaning negotiation can effectively take place. Once rehearsed, the dialogue should be recorded and sent to the teacher for being added up to his/her output data register.

In line with sociolinguistic accounts, a revealing insight was contributed by The Variationist approach in the view of Tarone (2000) who expands other L2/FL acquisition theories by considering social setting and the impacts it may have. For this model, learners will apprehend (or not) corrective feedback based on whether they recognise the interlocutor as someone to be trusted or someone to feel identified with. Thus, besides teachers, students who are recognised as *linguistically reliable* by their peers can effectively function as feedback givers.

Communicative pressure, i.e. the burning need humans have to communicate with others, is thought by Long (1998) to significantly foster L2/FL language development. In the case of L2 learners the communicative pressure is imminent since it is the surrounding context which exerts it. FL learners, however, under very few circumstances experience real communicative pressure. Such is the case, for example, of South American learning scenarios where learners are far from English speaking countries. Interchange programmes

have gained popularity in the last years, taking people from all over the world for a sojourn in another spot in the globe. Taking advantage of this practice, language teachers can contact interchange programmes organisers to invite FL native speakers to actively take part during class time. Ideally, FL learners should be told the guest hardly speaks their L1 in order to maximise the communicative pressure. Not surprisingly, when these experiences are carried out, FL learners find them both motivating and fruitful. They gain confidence from being able to understand and communicate with a native speaker. At the same time, students make the most of the colloquial vocabulary and expressions that non-native teachers are often unacquainted with.

The Neurolinguistic Approach

Thirdly, in the last two decades Paradis' (1994, 2004, 2009) disruptive experiments seem to have demonstrated that explicit knowledge (vocabulary, verb forms, grammar rules, i.e. the arena of declarative memory), does not transform into implicit competence (the ability to communicate spontaneously, i.e. the scope of procedural memory) by means of practice, and argues that both mechanisms should be worked simultaneously. This finding is in direct opposition to *traditional teaching approaches* which claim that, to automatise an L2/FL structure, first language forms need to be rehearsed in the declarative memory and only then used in communicative activities. In Netten and Germain (2012, p. 88) words:

> According to this [traditional] paradigm, explicit knowledge about the language, through use in exercises, becomes so well-established in the mind that it can eventually be used automatically, or non-consciously, to communicate spontaneously: that is, knowledge, through practice, is transformed into an ability, or a habit.

Traditional teaching methods spend a huge amount of time dealing almost exclusively with language forms obtaining poor communicative results, as reported by Hart and Scane (2004); and Netten and Germain (2007). The pertinent question to ask is: How can explicit and implicit knowledge be worked at the same time? Neurolinguistic approaches -NLA- recommend (Netten & Germain, 2012):

- Start with the oral use of a structure since oral acquisition precedes explicit learning.
- Use and reuse the same structure many times, since new neural pathways need to be built to generate automaticity.
- Language structures must be learnt in context since the brain retrieves information from the setting in which it occurs.

In accordance with this model, a substantial portion of the class has to be dedicated to the development of implicit competence by means of numerous oral interactions both with class peers or the teacher, and grammatical or vocabulary boosting activities may be assigned as

homework. According to Ellis (2011), extensive oral practice should be performed using first a limited number of newly introduced items until spontaneous production occurs and allows for increasing complexity. Due to the fact that class time is always scarce, the possibility of expanding an oral interchange can also be part of a home activity. For example, the dialogue at the clothes shop proposed before can be expanded with new structures and vocabulary to be presented the next class. Furthermore, for the sake of this new presentation students can be randomly paired up with a different partner from the one they initially worked with thus fostering a fully communicative situation to take place.

Since in the view of Netten and Germain (2012) cognitive neuroscience "has indicated that the use of authentic language in real communication is essential to acquire the internal grammar necessary for spontaneous communication", most classroom practices need to be led to meaningful experiences. This can be achieved by making every class interaction personal, even textbook suggested exercises can be transformed into a realistic situation. If the clothes shopping dialogue is carried out choosing as an imaginary setting one of the shops where learners usually attend, vocabulary relates to clothes they often buy, and prices expressed are the real ones in the market, all the interaction becomes a shopping experience rather than a class activity. Similarly, the broadening of vocabulary items can be turned into an oral contest between teams which compete for memorising and saying aloud with correct pronunciation the greatest number of clothing items. As a preparation for the competition a list of wearing apparel should be built up by learners according to clothes they often wear or like. It is advisable to have students start from scratch telling the list either when they forget a word or mispronounce. Thorough this activity real, authentic and experiential communication is happening in context, i.e. the neurolinguistic approach is being applied.

Concluding Remarks

As accredited by most teachers, no L2/FL theory by itself is the unique path to successful teaching. That is the reason why they adopt and implement an eclectic work style. Applied Linguistics -AL- is the field of study which assists language teaching with practical applications of linguistic theories, however, it provides such an enormous body of knowledge that is almost impossible to stay abreast of it and, additionally, quite often newest models pretend to rebut older ones. This is the case when language practitioners may find themselves at loss.

This article has offered simple-to-implement teaching practices based on three theoretical positions, namely Innatist, Sociolinguistic and Neurolinguistic not with the purpose of asserting that the selected models are the most advantageous, but with the intention of sharing a possible approach to the application of Linguistics to classroom settings, also meaning that teaching practices must be deep-rooted in theoretical background. The recommendation is to select from AL rich corpus those methods that better suit our learners' interests and learning style, our work context and our teaching style, and to devote time to the study of

those methods so as to make informed and thoughtful teaching decisions which should be implemented, assessed, adapted, reimplemented and re-assed continuously.

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Writing beyond the classroom: Insights on authenticity and motivation

Grisel Roberts*
ISFD N° 809, Esquel, Argentina
Darío Luis Banegas
Ministerio de Educación del Chubut, Argentina

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ABSTRACT

The current article aims at arguing that engaging learners with writing tasks whose products are later socialised with a wider community may promote higher motivation and English language proficiency among learners. In this contribution, we discuss recent notions on motivation and authenticity in language learning and analyse writing tasks. Finally, we put forward initiatives and pedagogical implications for transforming writing development into an authentic experience for learners and teachers regardless of their English language proficiency. Although our reflections and examples come from our experience as EFL teachers in Argentina, we believe that our insights and discussions may resonate with other contexts.

Keywords: authenticity; writing; motivation; proficiency; publicación

RESUMEN

El presente artículo tiene por objetivo argumentar que el involucrar a los estudiantes en tareas de escritura cuyos productos son socializados con una comunidad amplia pueden aumentar la motivación y la proficiencia en inglés de los estudiantes. En esta contribución se discuten nociones recientes sobre motivación y autenticidad en el aprendizaje de lenguas y se analizan tareas de escritura. Finalmente, se proponen iniciativas e implicancias pedagógicas para la transformación del desarrollo de la escritura para convertirla en una experiencia auténtica para estudiantes y docentes independientemente de la proficiencia en inglés que posean. Si bien las reflexiones y ejemplos provienen de la experiencia de los autores, las reflexiones y miradas pueden resonar con otros contextos.

Palabras clave: autenticidad; escritura; motivación; proficiencia; publicación

* Corresponding author, e-mail: griselroberts@yahoo.com.ar

CURRENT APPROACHES TO teaching writing in EFL and ESL contexts underline a need to engage learners in tasks which are relevant and have a clear communicative intent. In a recent review of language skills, Burns and Siegel (2018) note that driven by such a communicative approach writing research and practices are giving attention to feedback from teachers, peers, and through self-evaluation in teaching processes cemented on genre awareness, sociocultural theory and collaborative practices.

While such considerations on approaching writing are endorsed by English language teachers and usually developed at great length in TESOL methodology books within a communicative and sociocultural approach (for example Scrivener, 2011), situated professional practices may challenge such views and raise different concerns regarding the extent to which writing tasks and the context in which they occur are truly relevant and meaningful in learners' trajectories.

In this contribution, we briefly discuss current notions on motivation and authenticity in language learning and analyse writing tasks. Drawing on recent experiences in southern Argentina, we put forward initiatives and pedagogical implications for transforming writing development into an authentic experience for learners and teachers regardless of their English language proficiency. Although our reflections and examples come from our experience as EFL teachers in Argentina, we believe that our insights and discussions may resonate with other contexts giving a shared interest in stimulating learning that becomes relevant, engaging, and memorable.

Conceptual Framework

In our experience as EFL teachers and teacher educators, when practitioners engage in teaching writing, they often focus their learners' attention on the potential reader of their piece as a motivation strategy. This approach is what Hyland (2016) terms the reader-oriented approach. With an emphasis on context, goals and uses of a text, writing is conceived as an interactive, and therefore social, and (meta)cognitive activity (for example, Lee & Mak, 2018) where writers think of an audience, whether abstract or specifically intended, to develop their texts. Due to the interest in the term *audience*, Hyland remarks that teachers have included further instances of peer feedback not only to exercise collaboration but also to raise awareness on intertextuality across their written productions.

Through a growing focus on a genre approach to writing and with readers in mind, teachers should create learning experiences which are motivating and authentic. In this section, we briefly discuss both terms.

Motivation

The extant literature on language learning motivation research indicates that motivation should be considered a fluctuating and unstable construct which considers a person's drive to engage in the activity of learning met by their identities in context (Dörnyei, Ibrahim, &

Muir, 2014). In other words, a person's interest in, for example, learning English, is part of a complex relationship with context and the beliefs and possibilities of being and becoming speakers of English (Norton, 2016). Such a web of experiences and beliefs may be more effectively examined through a micro-lens which promotes teacher research on motivation (Ushioda, 2016). From a teaching perspective, teachers need to find writing tasks which stimulate learners to complete them and engage in social and cognitive learning processes. In this regard, motivation should be embraced through a relational view that considers tasks with goals and products which are aligned with learners' interests and needs, and present as well as imaginary future selves.

That an emphasis on motivation which considers learners in their context has revealed to benefit language learners (Ushioda, 2013) indicates that the implementation of writing tasks in the EFL lesson, the issue of this contribution, needs to be embedded in teaching practices which cater for relevance and meaningfulness. In a critical review of motivation in language learning, Lamb (2017) encourages researchers and practitioners to move away from understanding learner motivation and explore ways in which learners can be truly motivated to learn in the classroom. In this regard, Pinner (2016) suggests that the use of authenticity in various aspects of language teaching and learning can act as a motivating factor.

Authenticity

In the same manner in which it is challenging to circumscribe motivation to one single definition, the term authenticity is far from being a stable or simple concept to define. Pinner (2016) takes classical definitions of authenticity (for example, Breen, 1985), such as the use in TESOL of materials not primarily intended for pedagogical purposes or ESL/EFL learning, but extends the argument further, discussing authenticity through a continuum. From the author's view, authenticity may be better understood as a complex and interactive continuum which takes into account the social dimension of authenticity: "at one end the learner or individual and their needs, linguistic ability and personal motivation to learn, at the other the target language use community" (Pinner, 2016, p. 101). The authenticity continuum also represents the relevant contexts of learning: the classroom and the use domain beyond the classroom. Pinner (2016) stresses that in this view not only materials should be authentic; tasks, purposes, and audience should also be authentic so that learners want to do what is proposed in the lesson. Drawing on connections between identity and motivation, Pinner (2016) suggests that language teaching should give learners the opportunity to express their authentic self, i.e. themselves, in an authentic way. The author highlights that while motivation and authenticity are usually intertwined in research and practice, there is a paucity of studies which investigate the interplay between them.

From a pedagogical stance, recent experiences authored by teachers in Argentina attest to the need of developing authentic activities to enhance learner motivation. For example,

Dalla Costa, Spataro, and Cad (2017) examine their own activities designed for a pre-service TESOL programme in Argentina. The authors emphasise the importance of incorporating authentic texts and tasks for language skills integration and experiencing different teaching approaches. Similarly, García, Ledesma, and Saumell (2017) approach the creation of authentic texts and tasks through the use of technology to make the learning experience closer to what learners' technology-mediated social practices outside school. While such proposals are commendable because they respond to a variety of settings, writing seems to be ignored, and audience is restricted only to peers and teachers. Perhaps, this lacuna mirrors everyday practices and marketed coursebooks in EFL settings. In the section below, we briefly analyse writing tasks found in coursebooks used in our setting.

Writing Activities in Practice

In our experience as EFL teachers in Argentina, writing tasks for all levels may include different visions of authenticity in relation to texts, purposes, and audience. In this section we reflect on writing tasks we have found and implemented in EFL lessons. First, we refer to writing tasks with teenage learners, and secondly we draw our attention to undergraduates.

Writing Tasks for Teenagers

Writing skills development is ubiquitous in general English courses for teenagers regardless of whether learners attend private or state secondary education or private language schools.

A cursory view of coursebooks for teenagers in Argentina reveal that writing is a skill that can be embedded within every (other) unit or placed at the end of a coursebook as a separate and self-contained section. For example, in a general English coursebook (Styring & Tims, 2018) for teenage learners with an A1 level (CEFR), a section for writing skills development is placed at the end of the coursebook. While the activities are sequenced in growing level of complexity and offer learners models and as well guidance (for example a chart to brainstorm and organise ideas) for their own writing productions, the final writing tasks may lack an authentic purpose or clear audience. Table 1 illustrates our crude analysis:

Table 1. Sample writing tasks for A1 teenage learners.

Unit	Topic	Final writing task
2	A description of a family	Write descriptions of two people in your family, or other people.
4	A report about a survey	Look at the survey chart (a class sports survey) below and write a report.
8	A biography	In your notebook, write a biography of your favourite person.

We note two issues with the writing tasks listed above. The task in Unit 4 lacks a purpose beyond the pedagogical aim of helping learners transform graphical information into a descriptive text. Learners will write a report based on the same artificial information about sports from an imaginary situation. Although learners can engage in peer feedback, such collaboration may be reduced to checking for linguistic accuracy since there is no need to exchange or corroborate information. To summarise, the activity is devoid of an authentic communicative goal, and the audience is simply the learners themselves and possibly their teacher for marking. In contrast, the Unit 2 and 8 tasks provide room for personalisation as learners need to write about their family and favourite person. We believe there is a genuine goal, communicating learners' personal history and self. Nevertheless, there are no indications of what happens with the texts once they are completed. Who is the intended audience? To some extent, the original goal becomes diluted as there is no authentic audience or social engagement with the text. We presume that, again, the main reader of the texts will be the teacher.

We are aware that teachers may reproduce such writing tasks when they design their own. For instance, learners with different English proficiency levels may write a letter to an imaginary friend or reply to an email. In such cases, the goal seems to be further opportunities for practice of form at the levels of textual organisation and clause. However, there is no focus on the meaning or relevance of what is being written since there is no genuine audience who will engage with the content of the text and respond to it.

Writing Tasks for Undergraduates

With undergraduate learners, the situation may be similar. For example, Banegas taught a module on academic reading and writing in the first year of an initial English language teacher education (IELTE) programme and used a specific handbook on academic writing (Bailey, 2006). Table 2 illustrates the writing tasks included in the handbook.

Table 2. Sample writing tasks for undergraduate learners.

Unit	Topic	Final writing task
4	Formal letters	Study the following newspaper advert. You have decided to apply for this job. Make notes for your letter of application, then write the letter, paying attention to layout as well as content.
4	CVs	Prepare a CV for yourself. First make notes of all important information (with dates), using similar headings to those un the example above. Then organise it as clearly as possible.

		Finally, type it on a computer and store it so it can be updated in the future.
4	Comparison Essay	Study the information in the table comparing two cities, which both have good universities. Use it to write a report on which would be the most suitable location for an overseas student planning a one-year course. (About 200 words.)

When compared to the tasks included in Table 1, there is little difference between the tasks for teenage learners and undergraduates. The newspaper advert and the table comparing two imaginary cities lack authenticity, and therefore the aim of both writing tasks is to practise writing with a specific genre in mind. While the purpose is pedagogically valid, both activities fail to offer learners authentic opportunities, for example, to reply to a real advert or compare two cities and engage the learners in a follow-up discussion after sharing their essays. In contrast, the CV task may be assessed as authentic since the undergraduate learners will prepare one about themselves. The activity, in our understanding, does include an authenticity of purpose and audience as it is expected that the CV may be useful in the future possibly for potential job opportunities in the learners' context or elsewhere.

One important necessity, then, is to imbue writing development among EFL learners with opportunities for authenticity of purpose and audience to enhance motivation and English proficiency. By promoting writing tasks which are context-responsive and have a relevant and real audience and purpose, teachers have the opportunity to develop learners' awareness on the three basic elements of the rhetorical situation: context, audience, and purpose.

In the section below, we suggest three pedagogical proposals which could be collaboratively implemented in different contexts with the aim of promoting authenticity of purpose, audience, motivation, and English proficiency. We have selected such proposals because they have been implemented even when there are limitations such as teachers' lack of time, scanty resources, or class size. However, the proposals are active and developing at the time of writing thanks to learners', teachers' and school authorities' enthusiasm.

Pedagogical Proposals

The three proposals outlined in this section are contextualised in Argentina and involve different actors. Through such proposals, it is expected that genre-based writing development among EFL learners and IELTE student-teachers becomes meaningful and relevant, and contributes to motivation enhancement.

A Proposal with Young Learners

We believe that young learners can become engaged in writing tasks and their texts be shared with a wider community. Often, learners may produce posters, flyers, or comic strips which are shared on the school walls or magazines for internal distribution as the final task of a larger project. In addition, young learners may write emails, letters, postcards, descriptive texts, short opinion pieces, or stories as part of their usual EFL learning experiences at school; yet these are usually read by their teachers only. However, teachers and educational authorities could encourage learners to reach out a wider audience.

In April 2018, the ELT Coordination from the Ministry of Education of Chubut, a province in southern Argentina, released a project called *Chubut escribe en inglés* (Chubut writes in English). The project consists of two phases. The first phase consisted of a call to all secondary school learners in Chubut to submit a short story, comic, poem, comic or argumentative essay in English which has been the product of their learning experience. Teachers are encouraged to include this call in their practices as a project which may motivate learners to write in English. They are provided with guidelines on how to approach writing in their lessons having this call as the final stage in the process. Guidelines have been elaborated through detailed and reader-friendly instructions and language since many of the teachers in Chubut may lack formal ELT training.

The second phase includes the collection, editing, and publication of learners' submissions into a free e-book which can be later used at schools as reading material. At the time of writing this piece, the ELT Coordination has received several submissions from learners which include flyers promoting a specific city or region the province of Chubut, comic strips, poems, and brief descriptions of schools or classes.

A Proposal with Student-Teachers

In a similar vein, the second proposal is aimed at IELTE student-teachers and is led by APIZALS (Asociación de Profesores de Inglés de Zona Andina y Línea Sur), a teacher association in southern Argentina. In May 2018, they launched an open call under the title of *Future teachers write!* through which they invite student-teachers from IELTE programmes in southern Argentina to submit pieces of creative and argumentative writing which have been the product of coursework in their programmes. The aim of this call is to promote, socialise, and encourage writing in IELTE programmes and generate texts which have been developed for a specific audience, context, and purpose.

According to the organisers, the manuscripts will be selected, organised, and edited in a free e-book to be freely distributed through the association website. Based on personal communications, the manuscripts collected so far include essays, short stories, and poems.

A Proposal to Encourage Publication

The third proposal is part of an inter-institutional project we are co-developing with three

IELTE programmes in Argentina. In the last year of such programmes, student-teachers are expected to focus on genre analysis and genre-based writing pedagogy together with developing their academic writing skills. It has been agreed that through intra- and inter-institutional groups, the student-teachers would engage in academic reading and writing through genre awareness and write book reviews for potential publication in professional journals in order to enrich the writing task with an authentic audience. Furthermore, student-teachers would experience the process of writing for publication, which, in the case of book reviews, usually includes peer review from book review editors or other professionals in the field.

Based on personal communications, the teacher educators leading the project have encountered challenges such as student-teachers' English language proficiency, lessons cancelled due to teacher strikes, and workload. Notwithstanding, the project is still active as the student-teachers involved are attracted to the possibility of publishing a book review for the first time in their lives.

Conclusion

The above proposals, based on actual practices in Argentina, suggest tangible ways through which writing tasks in TESOL can become a source of motivation when authenticity of purpose and authenticity of audience are ingrained (Pinner, 2016). Through the proposals summarised above, learners' texts can transcend schools and school-based pedagogical aims and become part of the social construction of practices. In so doing, learners' identities as L2 learners (Norton, 2016) and motivation (Lamb, 2017; Ushioda, 2016) can be invigorated and transformed (Dörnyei et al., 2014) as they can see themselves as writers in a language other than their L1. It is believed that by providing learners with authenticity of purpose and audience, their L2 proficiency may also increase as they will become aware of the genuine reach of their texts.

The current article has considered how writing instruction in EFL contexts can be strengthened if writing tasks also include authenticity of purpose and authenticity of audience. Following the features of genre writing, peer feedback and collaboration are at the heart of the proposals described above. However, collaboration is not limited to teachers and learners. The three proposals rest on the collaboration and support from other institutions such as ministries of education, teacher associations, and educational institutions working in tandem to guarantee socialisation and dissemination of learners' productions.

While we acknowledge the benefits of writing tasks whose sole reader may be the teacher or whose main aim is practising within certain pedagogical constraints, we invite teachers to incorporate instances and experiences that allow learners to share their texts with a wider and genuine audience. Finally, we hope L2 writing research may examine the extent to which initiatives like the ones included in this contribution have an impact on learners' motivation and L2 proficiency.

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Understanding multilingualism and interculturalism from an Ecuadorian perspective

Fabián Darío Rodas*
Universidad de Cuenca, Ecuador
Juan José Santillán
Universidad de Cuenca, Ecuador

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ABSTRACT

The phenomenon of globalization has brought the world closer and has changed the way we live and communicate. Therefore, without the physical barriers that separate countries, people have found new ways to be in touch with the different inhabitants of the world village. In this context, people have seen the need to learn new languages, which takes one to the fascinating field of multilingualism. However, being able to communicate in many languages is not an isolated process, since it is closely related to culture; this fact leads us to the area of interculturalism, that is, being aware of the other – of the different one – being able to understand and feel how the other feels. This paper explores the concepts of multilingualism and interculturalism, along with some considerations of the Ecuadorian context.
Keywords: multilingualism; interculturalism; culture; language

RESUMEN

El fenómeno de la globalización ha dado lugar a que el mundo se acerque cada vez más, cambiando la forma en que vivimos y nos comunicamos. Por lo tanto, sin las barreras físicas que separan a los países, las personas han encontrado nuevas formas de estar en contacto con los diferentes habitantes de esta aldea global. En este contexto, las personas se han visto en la necesidad de aprender nuevos idiomas, lo que lleva al fascinante campo del multilingüismo. Sin embargo, el ser capaz de comunicarse en varios idiomas no es un proceso aislado, pues está relacionado con la cultura, lo que deriva en la interculturalidad, es decir, el ser consciente del otro – del diferente – comprender y sentir lo que el otro siente. Este artículo explora los conceptos de multilingüismo e interculturalidad, así como algunas consideraciones en el contexto ecuatoriano.
Palabras clave: multilingüismo; interculturalidad; cultura; lenguaje

* Corresponding author, e-mail: fabian.rodas@ucuenca.edu.ec

HORNBERGER (2008) CLAIMS THAT "although multilingualism and multilingual education have existed for centuries, our 21st-century entrance into the new millennium has brought renewed interest and contestation around this educational alternative" (p. 198). Despite this assertion, the question concerning the definition and characteristics of multilingualism remains. With regard to interculturalism, some authors maintain that this term has arisen in response to the criticism of existing policies of multiculturalism. Raltansi (2011) states that interculturalism offers a more fruitful way than conventional multiculturalism for different ethnic groups to co-exist in an atmosphere that encourages better inter-ethnic understanding and civility.

The aim of this paper is to provide relevant information about the concepts of multilingualism and interculturalism. The paragraphs to follow explore these two concepts, starting with a brief historical account, and elucidating them under the light of the relationship between culture and language, and an analysis of the different notions of competence. Finally, some considerations as to how multilingualism and interculturalism are viewed in the Ecuadorian context are provided as well.

Historical Background

Aronin and Hufeisen (2009) explain that early researchers of multilingualism and multiple language acquisition, such as Braun in 1937 and Vildomec in 1963, did not study the phenomenon systematically, but rather identified it as a field of study in its own right. Moreover, Braun and Vildomec were reportedly the only researchers of the time who did not concentrate exclusively on the negative side of the existence of multiple languages in the learners' repertories, but emphasized the positive effects of being multilingual, such as enjoying a broader knowledge about culture.

The field of intercultural communication, on the other hand, like any other academic discipline, has been influenced by a series of discourses that change very often and are challenged and resisted most of the time. Intercultural communication as an academic field is relatively new, and one can say that, in Europe, the term sociocultural communication was widely used instead. In addition, it is appropriate to mention that, according to Houghton (2010), Michael Byram and Geneviève Zarate were commissioned in the early 1990's by the Council of Europe to provide input to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CERFL), which would allow the assessment of sociocultural competence. Houghton (2010) goes on to state that Byram and Zarate developed together a model that conceptualized intercultural competence – changing the expression to be more precise in meaning – in terms of having the declarative knowledge of a culture, the ability to learn cultures, the ability to apply intercultural skills, and a general disposition of respect and tolerance towards cultural differences. Byram and Zarate's model had a significant impact on the development of the CEFRL and became widely accepted and valued among language teachers, educators, and researchers.

As for the introduction and use of the term intercultural communication in the United States, Kumaravadivelu (2008) mentions that one can trace its origins back to the Allied victory in World War Two. As a result of this event, many American diplomats and army officials were sent overseas, specifically to Europe. As a response to their lack of knowledge of the foreign cultures they were in contact with and the difficulties they faced when communicating, Congress passed the Foreign Service Act in 1946. The creation of the Foreign Service Institute followed and helped solve many of these inconveniences.

Language and Culture

A first aspect worthy of mention when discussing multilingualism and interculturalism is the intimate relationship between language and culture. A good point to start is by analyzing the definition of the two concepts, keeping in mind, nevertheless, the multitude of outlooks on the issue. In attempting to define language, it seems to be a must to consider Saussure's characterization. Saussure (1974) conceives language as a system of signs which consists of a signifier (the sound-image or the written word) and a signified (a concept), in the way that they both are inseparably linked to each other. The sound-image connection cannot be separated from the concept. Hence, language, as a human faculty, can be understood as system of symbols and abstractions, and their essential rules, that individuals employ to communicate. In line with this idea, Samovar, Porter and McDaniel (2013) assert that "[a]t the most basic level, language is a set of shared symbols or signs that a cooperative group of people has mutually agreed to use to help them create meaning" (p. 247). The authors emphasize the arbitrariness of the establishment of the sign-meaning relationship.

Concerning culture, the definition of the concept becomes somewhat more complex. The reason is that there coexist several perspectives and notions about culture that range from social sophistication to mental programming (Samovar et al., 2013). It is proper, nevertheless, to indicate that culture could be viewed as the total number of the human-made, innate, inherited and/or learned ideas, attitudes, beliefs, values, and knowledge forming the shared foundation of social action. One can also add that culture is the total range of activities and ideas of a specific group of people with common and shared traditions, or a connection of ideas and feelings accepted by the majority of people in a society. Moreover, Spencer-Oatey (2012) remarks that culture manifests itself in three fundamental layers: observable artifacts, values, and basic underlying assumptions. The first layer refers to the visible and audible behavioral patterns, that is, the first differences an individual notices when entering in a foreign culture. For their part, values refer to socially set standards of desirability, which influence and even determine how people experience social coexistence. Finally, underlying basic assumptions encompass "learned responses that originated as espoused values" (Spencer-Oatey, 2012, p. 3). As individual experience demonstrates that these responses provide solutions for specific problems, they become

ultimate, non-debatable, and taken for granted. Therefore, they influence and determine the two other layers.

In addition, it is necessary to consider other notions of culture, those that represent modernist views of the term. Kramsch (1993) states that culture can be defined as membership in a community with a common history, a common standard language, and common imaginings. However, the same author has also developed newer concepts. For Kramsh (1998), culture has to do with the construction of meaning and imagined communities. The author claims that the speech community has become the discourse community, whose discursive practices both enable and limit the range of possible meanings constructed by the individual. In addition, Kramsch (1998) considers that, created and shaped by language and other symbolic systems, culture is a site of struggle for the recognition and legitimation of meaning.

Finally, the relationship between language and culture has been much debated since the 19th century. Byram (2008), for instance, mentions that Risager's comprehensive and authoritative analysis starting from Agar's notion of languaculture has shown that a language spoken by a specific group of people – be they native speakers or not – is not necessarily tied to a specific set of beliefs, values and behaviors, i.e., a specific culture. Contrastively, the renowned, though misnamed, Sapir and Worf hypothesis maintains that the language either influences (weak version) or determines (strong version) an individual's worldview, and therefore, his or her behavior in a culturally set group. Furthermore, Samovar et al. (2013) remark that "[w]hether they are English, Swahili, Chinese, or French, most words, how they are used, the meanings assigned, the grammar employed, and the syntax bear the identification marks of a specific culture" (p. 42). Besides, one has to consider that language is but a mirror of culture, and, at the same time, culture is transmitted through language.

Understanding Competence

In order to have a clearer idea about interculturalism and multilingualism, it is important to elucidate the different outlooks of the term competence.

In the 1960s, Noam Chomsky developed his seminal work about linguistic competence. According to him, linguistic competence relates to the *ideal* language system that makes it possible for speakers to produce and understand an infinite number of sentences in their language and to distinguish grammatical sentences from ungrammatical constructions. Chomsky (1965) argues that this is unaffected by grammatically irrelevant conditions such as speech errors. Another definition of linguistic competence suggests that it is a system of linguistic knowledge possessed by native speakers of a language, which is used in contrast to the concept of linguistic performance. The latter refers to the way the language system is used in actual communication (Chomsky, 1965).

Although this concept was coined by Chomsky in the 60s, it has been further developed by many contemporary scholars and authors. The term has been used with

different meanings and in different contexts. It is convenient to start by mentioning that most people use it as a casual everyday synonym for ability. Another definition equates competence to the capacity of successfully responding to different types of situations that encompass tasks, difficulties, and/or challenges. In other contexts, competence can be defined as the ability to act between languages and cultures, but also as a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding and skills applied through action in any relevant situation. Fleming (2009) remarks that the word competence has had a checkered history; nevertheless, it is clear that it makes reference to observable behaviors, as well as to the implicit understandings within them.

With respect to communicative competence, one can argue that it is a term which refers to a language user's knowledge of the major subfields of linguistics – phonetics, phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics – as well as social knowledge about how and when to use utterances appropriately. On the other hand, it is important to mention that this term was coined by Dell Hymes in 1966, as a reaction against Noam Chomsky's 1965 distinction between competence and performance. The approach pioneered by Hymes is now known as the ethnography of communication. According to Hymes, communicative competence entails both knowledge and ability regarding formality, feasibility, contextual appropriateness, and consequential performance (Richards & Rogers, 2001). Moreover, in the 1980s, Carel and Swain introduced a further development of the notion of communicative competence. Richards and Rogers (2001) explain Carel and Swain's conceptualization of communicative competence as one that encompasses four dimensions:

1. Grammatical competence, understood as Chomsky's linguistic competence.
2. Sociolinguistic competence, i.e., understanding of the social context of a particular communication act.
3. Discourse competence, that is, the ability to appropriately produce and understand interwoven texts.
4. Strategic competence, which comprises making use of various tactics and techniques to initiate, continue, repair, and end a communication exchange.

All in all, as noted by UNESCO (2012), communicative competence implies both understanding and producing appropriate words and other communication forms in ways that will make sense not only to the speaker/actor but also to others.

For its part, intercultural competence can be defined as a combination of attitudes, knowledge, understanding, and skills which are applied by means of action and allow people to understand and respect others who have different cultural backgrounds. Moreover, intercultural competence could be explained as the ability to respond appropriately, effectively, and respectfully when multicultural interaction and communication takes place (Samovar et al., 2013). The ultimate aim of attaining this type of competence is establishing positive relationships with different people and constructing a better world for everyone.

Nevertheless, Byram et al. (2014) remark that intercultural competence does not involve abandoning one's own cultural identifications or affiliations, nor does it require individuals to adopt the cultural practices, beliefs, discourses or values of other cultures. Instead, for these authors, intercultural competence involves being open to, curious about, and interested in people who have other cultural affiliations; this involves the ability to understand and interpret their practices, beliefs, discourses, and values. With regard to this topic, the Council of Europe (2008) reports that an individual's intercultural competence is never complete but can always be further enriched from continuing experience of different kinds of intercultural encounters.

Deardorff (2006) provides another interesting typification of intercultural competence. For this author, the concept refers to observable behaviors that, springing from definite knowledge, attitudes, and skills, are at the same time successful and adequate for establishing and maintaining intercultural exchanges. Each element of Deardorff's (2006) further contains specific constituents. Thus, knowledge encompasses self-awareness, culture-specific knowledge, socio-linguistic awareness, and an understanding of global topics and issues; intercultural skills include listening, observing, assessing, and empathy; and intercultural attitudes cover openness, curiosity, respect, and tolerance.

Multilingualism and Interculturalism

Multilingualism has been defined as the ability to use three or more languages, either separately or in various degrees of code-mixing. McArthur (1992) argues that "different languages are used for different purposes, competence in each varying according to [factors such] as register, occupation and education" (p. 673). Another definition of multilingualism characterizes it as the product of the fundamental human ability to communicate in a number of languages (Franceschini, 2008). Additionally, it is important to consider that, when individuals speak several languages, they are sometimes called polyglots. However, the fact that some people can use many languages does not necessarily mean they have equal proficiency in or over all the languages they employ. Méndez (2013) mentions that accessing other languages prompts awareness of an individual's worldview and the relativity of their way of thinking; in other words, the study of languages can disclose and prompt an appreciation of the different ways in which diverse communities view and interpret each other.

As to multilingual education, it can be said that it is in fact multilingual if it uses and values more than one language in teaching and learning. One can also assert that multilingual education takes place when communication occurs in two or more languages in or around writing. Hornberger (2002) believes that multilingual education is a wide and welcoming doorway towards peaceful coexistence of peoples and especially restoration and empowerment of those who have been historically oppressed.

Furthermore, Byram (2008a) – who is considered by many the father of interculturalism studies in Europe – explains the intimate relationship between bilingualism and interculturalism. He defines bilingualism as the minimum ability to say something in two or more languages. He also mentions that it is the ability to be accepted, or pass, as a native speaker in two or more languages. Byram (2008b) claims that *passing* as a native speaker linguistically implies also to be seen or identified as someone who *fits in* a group of native speakers in terms of behavior, appearance, opinions, and beliefs – in short, of culture.

Complementarily, Byram (1997) characterizes interculturalism as an ideology or belief system. He explains that interculturalism and multiculturalism are not the same, at least in the European context; for Byram (1997), multiculturalism comprises encouraging different social groups with different languages and cultures to live side by side in a spirit of mutual acceptance, each remaining within their own language and culture, that is, essentially monolingual. The author adds that groups living side by side cannot simply ignore each other. Moreover, for Peñas and López (2006), interculturalism involves moving beyond mere passive acceptance of a multicultural fact of multiple cultures effectively existing in a society; instead, it promotes a dialogue between cultures. Besides, one can mention that interculturalism has to do with the need to enable each culture to survive and flourish, but, at the same time, underlines the right of all cultures to contribute to the society they belong to; this means that cultures can survive only if they are in contact with other cultures, not in isolation. Within this context, the development of cultural sensitivity and the encouragement of intercultural interaction and mixing are seen as the responsibility of all members of society.

Accordingly, the Council of Europe's White Paper on Intercultural Dialogue states that intercultural dialogue allows individuals to prevent ethnic, religious, linguistic, and cultural divides. It enables people to move forward together, to deal with their different identities constructively and democratically on the basis of shared universal values (Council of Europe, 2008). Hence, education is intercultural when it recognizes and values understanding and dialogue across different lived experiences and cultural world views.

Multilingualism and Interculturalism in the Ecuadorian Context

So far, this paper has examined multilingualism and interculturalism from a Western – European – perspective. However, it is necessary to highlight some important facts about Ecuador. In 2008, a new Constitution –Constitution number 20 – was ratified by popular vote. This Constitution takes into account the concepts of multilingualism and interculturalism. These words are also included in the Ley Orgánica de Educación Intercultural (LOEI) – Law of Intercultural Education – and the Ley Orgánica de Educación Superior (LOES) – Law of Higher Education. Of course, this is due to the fact that Ecuador, as well as most South American countries, has roots of different ethnic groups, mainly

indigenous ones. Therefore, the relationship among these diverse cultures and the way they communicate are deemed, at least in paper, as very important.

The official language of Ecuador is Spanish, but 14 other ancestral languages are spoken too, especially by those peoples which inhabited this land before the coming of the *white man*, the Spaniards, in the late 1400s. Furthermore, in regard to the country's education system, in the national curriculum, most contents are taught in Spanish; however, the Constitution mandates that one ancestral language must/should be included in the curriculum.

In order to better support the arguments of this paper, it is adequate to make reference to some articles from the documents mentioned above.

The Ecuadorian Constitution, in its article 346, explicitly declares that the government is to guarantee intercultural education in the native language of the indigenous people that are involved in the process, Spanish becoming a means of intercultural relationship. For its part, article 2 of Ecuador's Law of Intercultural Education states that elementary and secondary education in the country is to guarantee the recognition, respect, and value of the different nationalities, cultures, and peoples that inhabit the country. Moreover, the article also remarks that Ecuadorian education ought to acknowledge the right to plurilingualism, that is, the right individuals, communities, and peoples have to be educated in their official ancestral languages, as well as in those that enable relationship with the international community. Finally, the Ecuadorian Law of Higher Education, in its article 8, letter g, proclaims that higher education in Ecuador should aim at developing and strengthening a constitutional nation that ought to be sovereign, independent, unitary, *intercultural*, *plurinational*, and lay.

As seen above, multilingualism and interculturalism are considered in Ecuador as well. Nevertheless, the way they are used and applied in the country's context is completely different from first-world contexts. In Ecuador, these two terms almost exclusively refer to the relationship among ancestral, indigenous, communities and the respect that *mestizos*, and the few white people living in Ecuador ought to have for the former's languages and cultures. Nonetheless, as discussed in the previous sections of this paper, multilingualism and interculturalism are more than that. The relationship between the two concepts comprises respect, tolerance, empathy, and open mindedness, as well as linguistic and cultural knowledge and competence, not only in local contexts – as the Ecuadorian law emphasizes – but also in international ones.

It is interesting to note that, even though the Ecuadorian legislation has traditionally protected ancestral cultures and languages, it was only after 2016 that a National EFL (English as a foreign language) curriculum was implemented. This fact could be interpreted as a contemporary acknowledgement of the importance of this lingua franca. Nevertheless, this recognition is untimely, and it can be seen as one cause – among many others –of the low English proficiency level of the country. This fact can be revealed by the English

Proficiency Index (EPI) Report published by Education First (EF) in 2017, in which Ecuador ranks 55 among 80 evaluated countries.

Conclusions

The fall of the Berlin Wall, the dissolution of the Soviet Union, and the improvement in technology have marked the beginning of a new era: globalization. However, the effects of globalization have conditioned the context in which individuals operate, and have profoundly altered people´s experience of both formal and informal education. On the other hand, globalization has brought forth the appearance of new terms such as multilingualism and interculturalism, which have also affected the way people deal with the other, with the *foreigner*.

The relationship between multilingualism and interculturalism is a complex one. The interdependence between the two concepts is apparent and almost unbreakable, and it is progressively built on the development of a series of *competences* that enable individuals to become participants of a globalized society. This relationship, furthermore, rests on the connection between a language and its culture; therefore, the more access one has to different languages, the more complex the amalgamation of these languages, their cultures, and one's own experience becomes. Under this perspective, a nationalistic approach to multilingualism and interculturalism, although fostering appreciation for minority groups, can hinder an individual's knowledge and involvement in a globalized society.

In this discussion, we should bear in mind that English has become the indisputable dominant language of the world. It becomes apparent that, due to the importance of English nowadays, third-world governments should concentrate their efforts on improving the conditions for the teaching and learning of this language. Doing so ultimately brings forth both cultural and economic development (Alfarhan, 2016). Hence, to become an active part of this globalized planet, and thus be global citizens, the use of English is a priority. In addition, because of its status as an international language, English can be seen as the most suitable vehicle for knowing about other cultures and becoming an intercultural citizen.

One should be aware that the use of ancestral languages in native communities is important, and that they must be preserved for future generations. Nevertheless, it is imperative to stress that, in order to become globalized and ultimately improve a country's economy and living conditions, citizens should struggle to understand the *foreigner*, that is, cultures and languages outside the local context. This understanding is not only necessary for a harmonious coexistence, but it also nurtures the development of communicative and intercultural skills that enhance social and even economic progress.

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Plurilingualism in the new era: A conversation with Enrica Piccardo

Yecid Ortega*, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education – OISE
University of Toronto

Enrica Piccardo, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education – OISE
University of Toronto

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ABSTRACT

The use of many languages has existed for many years; indigenous communities have used languages, dialects and variations of their languages to make meaning and to share culture. Plurilingualism as a theory and educational approach looks at people's language(s) repertoires and how they use them at any given moment to communicate. In this interview with Dr. Enrica Piccardo, we discussed the concepts of plurilingualism and multilingualism as well as the importance for education and the advancement of a more ecological and synergic paradigm shift in English teaching worldwide, and specifically in the Latin American context.

Keywords: Plurilingualism; pluriculturalism; multilingual education; Latinamerica; TESOL

RESUMEN

El uso de muchos lenguajes ha estado en nuestros contextos por muchos años; las comunidades indígenas han usado sus dialectos y variaciones de sus lenguajes para hacerse entender y compartir su cultura. Plurilingüismo como teoría y enfoque educativo se orienta en el repertorio lingüístico que tienen las personas y como lo usan en un momento determinado para comunicarse. En esta entrevista con Enrica Piccardo, abordamos el tema del plurilingüismo y su diferencia con el multilingüismo, así como su importancia en la educación y el avance sinérgico y ecológico para un cambio en el paradigma de la enseñanza del inglés a nivel mundial, pero específicamente en américa latina.

Palabras clave: Plurilingualismo; pluriculturalismo; educación multilingüe; Latinoamérica; TESOL

* Corresponding author, e-mail: yecid.ortega@mail.utoronto.ca

IN THIS INTERVIEW, Dr. Enrica Piccardo discusses the conceptualizations of plurilingualism and her work in the language research field. This interview was carried out during Spring 2017 by Ph.D. candidate Yecid Ortega. Dr. Piccardo describes what translanguaging and multilingualism are and what it means to be a plurilingual person, as well as the role of parents and teachers in teaching languages.

Professor Piccardo is a leading authority on multilingualism and plurilingualism and she has a vast experience in the field of language teaching education and research. Her main work is in Canada and France, the wider European context (through her collaboration with the Council of Europe), and the USA. She is currently leading two international projects on a quality approach to CEFR implementation and the internationally successful project LINCDIRE (LINguistic and Cultural DIversity Reinvented). Her most recent publication, with Brian North, is *Developing illustrative descriptors of aspects of mediation for the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR): A Council of Europe project* which reports on the 4-year Council of Europe project that produced the newly released CEFR Companion Volume (CEFR/CV) of which she is a co-author. The CEFR/CV includes new scales of descriptors for mediation and for plurilingual and pluricultural competence, among others, and presents a considerable innovation potential for language teaching and assessment.

The idea of a plurilingual individual is not new: certain indigenous communities in the Americas, Australia, Central Asia and Africa have always used different languages to communicate for the purposes of trade, self-determination, and cultural identity affirmation (see Hornberger, 2009; Henderson & Nash, 1997; Skutnabb-kangas, 2012; United Nations, 2012/2016; Walsh & Yallop, 1993). The term *plurilingualism* has to do with the individuals' flexible and composite linguistic repertoire and the use of languages, or even varieties of the same languages (Council of Europe, 2001). This concept is based on the assumption that languages are not separate entities that are compartmentalized in the brain, but rather form a dynamic multi-system (Wandruszka, 1979, as cited in Piccardo, 2013). For education, plurilingualism concerns valuing and acknowledging students' cultural and linguistic backgrounds and goes in tandem with translanguaging as an approach that allows students to use their home language (or first language) to make meaning in a pedagogical task. These concepts cannot be separated, but are linguistic practices founded on social interaction and cooperation. In this interview, Dr. Piccardo expands on these ideas and I will provide some implications for English teaching in Latin America.

Yecid Ortega: What is the difference between multilingualism and plurilingualism?

Enrica Piccardo: The first thing I can say is that it may sound like it is just a terminological difference. Why should we pick yet another term; plurilingualism instead of multilingualism? At the end of the day, the English word was multilingualism, and plurilingualism is something that has been introduced from outside, from French or Latin

traditions. Also, one may think that multi- and pluri-, as prefixes, mean pretty much the same. But the reason why there is this distinction is precisely to stress a fundamental difference between a static view and a vision of language diversity.

Multilingualism, a term that has been around for a long time, just refers to multiple languages, like with the way people have always thought about bilingualism, but with more than two languages. There is no particular stress on or attention given to the relationship between these languages. Thus, we must ask ourselves several questions, such as: Are these different languages in some relation? Are they interconnected? Are they interdependent? Is there a possibility that one acts upon the other, that one reinforces the other, that one hinders the development of the other? And what is this dynamic view of different languages?

Plurilingualism answers some of these questions as it portrays the idea that we can hardly consider language diversity and different languages as a series of pieces that are separate from each other, or as a series of elements that are independent from each other and that grow or fade in an independent way.

If we want to use a metaphor to describe plurilingualism, we can compare it to environments where you have many elements side by side. Take the forest, for example. You may think that every tree is independent, but the trees are in very strict connection to each other, and they grow together, and they are dependent on each other. And now we know that trees even communicate with each other. So, plurilingualism stresses this idea of not keeping languages separate. To continue the metaphor of the trees, they may be big powerful trees, or just little new ones, but they live together and are in some form of relationship, so we need to consider them together as a network. In the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR: Council of Europe, 2001, 2018), which is the document where the term plurilingualism was used for the first time in 1996 in the first provisional version, there was already the distinction made between multilingualism at a social level and plurilingualism at the individual level, stressing even then that within an individual it is almost impossible for languages to stay separated.

But it is not the end of the story because we must also add the lens through which we see the world. As Ingrid Gogolin (1997) reminded us, there is “the monolingual habitus”, which implies a monolingual lens that prevents us from seeing the rainbow - we just kind of see black and white - because we have grown up with this idea that languages are better separated in order to not contaminate each other. So if we continue with this static idea, people cannot be plurilingual; in the best case they can be multilingual. But if we use the term plurilingual, some positive things can happen. Not only, fortunately, can we acknowledge that people have more than one language, and really see the entire picture as an integrated linguistic repertoire, but also they can feel allowed, even encouraged to draw on them, to build upon all the wealth that they have, something that they usually don’t do because they are not able to see those languages as interconnected or have been taught that such connections are not possible or are not good.

I would like to add one more thing that I have noticed; I have taught my course in multilingualism and plurilingualism twice now and on both occasions I have seen the same phenomenon: some students were with me on this idea already by day two - not day one, as this was a new concept for them – and saw themselves as plurilingual. For other students, it took a longer time, but by the end of the course, I can say that none of them saw themselves as monolingual anymore. And that has been a big satisfaction for me. Even those who thought they only knew English, for example. Well, they started to understand that, first of all, that is probably not true; they know some words of different languages, they know they have learned a language at school, maybe very badly, or they do not remember anything they have learned, but it is there and you can possibly reactivate it. But they also started to understand that there is not one English, but there are many *Englishes*. Because languages, all languages, and in particular international languages, have many varieties. But even other languages that are less international have many varieties. I am Italian and even Italian is very different if it is spoken in the north or in the south of the country, for instance. All over the world, the different socio-economic landscape makes for different language; people's age; the context, if you are in an academic or in a non-academic context; all those factors give rise to different varieties, sociolects and idiolects, different languages. Yes, you can call them in different ways, but basically, if we want to boil it down to something, they are, in a sense, part of this plurilingual landscape.

YO: I like the idea of your metaphor of the forest and the trees, because the way I see it, multilingualism looks at the trees as separate entities, or separate individuals, whereas plurilingualism is looking at the same trees, but also looking at what connects them; there are animals interacting, there are people, there is the wind and the changing of the seasons, leaves fall, sometimes flowers grow, all those things that interconnect; and the entire forest depends on the weather, the rain, the wind, the light and shade... . That is the beauty of plurilingualism as a concept: it acknowledges the interconnectedness of the languages, as opposed to multilingualism. Now, the next question is related because it seems we need to understand what the difference between plurilingualism and translanguaging is.

EP: I would like to follow up the idea of the forest. It also depends on the position of each tree. If it is peripheral it will grow in a certain way, if it grows in the centre it will be more connected and supported by the others. If the forest is cut down in one part, some of the trees that were in the centre may become peripheral. What is their reaction? Will they suffer? Will they grow more because they have more light? Who knows?

Now, to go back to this difference, only a few years ago there would not have been a need for this question because plurilingualism was basically starting to appear in the second half of the 90s. The first draft was in 1996, and during those years there were complimentary studies to the CEFR, and the second 1996 draft – as well as the 1998 version, which went

out online – already had the same definition as the one that was published in 2001 in the final version of the CEFR.

At that time, the use of *translanguaging* was only linked to experimentation in Wales around revitalizing the Welsh language. And that is the root of translanguaging: something that was done on purpose to allow the use of both languages to acknowledge and reinforce the one that was, in a sense, more at risk. That was basically like the foundation.

But since then and until very recently, those articles of scholars that worked a lot on translanguaging acknowledge this idea that plurilingualism is more of an umbrella term, more of a philosophical view, and that translanguaging is one of the most powerful tools to work towards that philosophy. It has only been in the last couple of years that the word translanguaging has been extended to cover everything that is connected to a plurilingual vision.

However, I just do not see the way translanguaging is used as having the same depth that I see in plurilingualism. There is not this idea of the philosophy of language interconnectedness that goes beyond the use of both languages, the alternating languages, code-switching and meshing, purposeful use of another language, or recognizing what is done in society by people who have more than one language.

With translanguaging, we do not see a stress on several languages in my opinion, although there can be. But above all, what I see in the studies is more about recognizing and valuing the language of students who come to an English-speaking area and are usually forced not to use their own mother tongue, be it Spanish or an Indian or Chinese or other language. So what I see more is the idea that students should be not only allowed but even encouraged to use translanguaging in their path in order for them to use the tools that they have available, and so be more effective.

Now, this is certainly a very good thing, and I am certainly very supportive of that. What I am not supportive of is to stretch this view - which is a way of doing things, a teaching practice, a strategy for learners, a strategy for teaching, the recognition of a social phenomenon - into a broader view that recognizes, as we said before, this general, broad, interconnected view of language-knowing, language-learning, language-proficiency, in whatever constellation you may have in your life, be it your mother tongue plus a second language, plus another foreign language, plus an interest that you have, including modern languages and classical languages (for example, Latin and Ancient Greek or Sanskrit). I had one student in the group who was very interested in the Sumerian alphabet, for example. Well, that is all part of a plurilingual vision, it is not part of translanguaging. If you adopt a plurilingual perspective, you can easily find a place for all these phenomena that are very important, because any language, even if it is considered a 'dead' language, can be foundational for other languages, or for your process of cognitive development.

YO: Yes, so if, on top of your language - or languages - you have a knowledge of Latin or

Greek, or a couple of indigenous languages, for example, or if you are interested in Sumerian writing and try and learn it, all of those languages become a repertoire that you possess, that you have, independently of whether you translanguage or not, or of how often you translanguage. Plurilingualism helps in recognizing this repertoire, and eventually strengthening it, whilst translanguaging is more focused on classroom pedagogy.

EP: Yeah, translanguaging is more applied. As I said, there is nothing wrong with the concept of translanguaging, quite the contrary. I am very happy that it is out there. What I would like to see is to not extend this concept beyond its possible limits, but to try to deepen it, in a sense, to strengthen it within its function – instead of fighting a territorial battle by putting one concept against the other, why not try to see the interconnectedness of these two, and how they could reinforce each other?

YO: Now**,** I am going to read a quote from one of your articles in *TESOL Quarterly* and then after that, I will ask you a question about it. So, in that article you say "plurilingualism promotes awareness of language diversity, functional uses of a variety of linguistic means, recognition of similarities and differences among languages, and the link between language and culture(s) and eventually also of the specific features of each language, including the mother tongue" (Piccardo, 2013, p. 609). When we think about the link between plurilingualism, which is the theory, or a philosophical mindset, and plurilingual education in formal settings, how would you define and describe what we may call a pedagogy of plurilingualism?

EP: That is a very important point. One of the doubts people have is that they say: '*Okay, I am fine with the philosophy and the theory behind everything, but how can we make that possible in everyday practice? How can we implement this idea?'* Well, let's consider some keywords in this quote: one is *awareness*; another is this idea of *functional uses* and *variety* of means; then *similarities and differences*; and the final one is *mother tongue*. So, let's go through them one by one.

Awareness is really the keyword. *Plurilingualism* is not the same as *polyglottism*. I mean plurilingualism does not mean that you are phenomenal in several languages, it means that you have this awareness, this capacity to draw on different resources, and also freedom to do that, not just the ability, but this confidence and risk-taking attitude of using whatever elements you have, without being confined by being restricted to purity. It is a two-way phenomenon, because in a sense you are aware of language diversity, so you say '*Okay, I can use another word, I can draw on that, this word is better at expressing this concept, or this grammatical form in that language is much clearer to me, it gives me a better idea of what it is intending to codify and express than the corresponding in another language*.'

But it also works the other way round. By exploring ways of conceptualizing through

different languages you become more aware of the phenomena involved, the linguistic phenomena, and also the cultural – that is a bit of a different story - but culture in the sense how the language conveys the culture. That is why I wrote *including the mother tongue* because, in a sense, you do not look at your own mother tongue in the same way as before; once you enter this plurilingual vision, you start seeing your mother tongue in a different way. Marcel Proust used to say that the end of a long journey is not seeing new places, but seeing the same places with new eyes. And that applies perfectly to plurilingualism. It is like after you have gone on a journey through different languages and cultures, you may know more about different languages and cultures. But one thing is for sure; you will never see your own language and culture in the same way as before. You will have acquired an awareness, and a capacity to compare your culture(s) to other cultures and to appreciate your mother tongue more than you did before, because it is no longer just something you learned automatically when you were a child.

And the other two words are linked to this, you see; similarities and differences among languages. The moment you know you are aware is when you say: '*Oh yes, in English you say this but in Spanish it is different and in Italian it is different*' and you ask, why are they different? What is the culture behind this? Why are they expressed in different ways, and is this linked to the way we organize time, the way we organize relationships or food, the literature and poetry in the language? Every possible element. And I referred to the functional use too; using words the way you need them and being free to use them.

Now, to go back to the beginning of your question, how can we do that in class? Well, precisely by stimulating and creating this curiosity among the kids (and when I say, kids, I mean from little kids to students all the way up to university). Young learners, teenagers, adults, everybody has this natural curiosity for the linguistic phenomenon. Teachers are able to open their eyes and to stimulate them – teachers, other adults or other friends, but the teacher is the one who creates the right atmosphere in the classroom for students to learn from each other, because they do not just learn from the teacher, or maybe they even learn more from their peers than from their teacher. But the teacher is necessary to create this space where they can first of all visit curiosity and this fear of taking risks, saying: '*Okay, you do not know the word in this language, try another one, try and invent, try and think of what it could be in that language, considering the different elements that you have and that you know, it may be wrong, but it is a risk, it is a hypothesis, but you go for that*.'

And lastly, this idea of the roots of a language: etymology. It is a word that sounds very academic, and teachers may say: '*Oh, but I am dealing with eight-year-old kids, how can I possibly work with that?*' Well, you can, of course, you may need to simplify the name, but still, it is extremely interesting for kids. And some teachers may say: '*Okay, but I am teaching English and most of my kids are Chinese, so, where is the link?*' Well, in that case, maybe you have to compare rather than to find similarities, you may work a lot on syntax and on the construction of the sentence, its grammatical elements, the sounds, more than on

the vocabulary because the vocabulary is very, very different. In any case we will end up thinking that languages are less different than what we think they are. Another element that plurilingualism stresses is the use of international words that are very similar, although they are sometimes spelt in a different way in different languages.

When I was teaching in France, I had a student from Poland doing her Masters in France, and she was doing very interesting work on showing how much French was in the Polish language. One would never think that French was so pervasive in Polish. Yes, historically there was contact, and although it may be pronounced in a different way, and the sound is different when the teacher takes you through that, you see a lot of similarities beyond differences, something that I would have never ever imagined existed.

Another possibility is – even though this may sound odd – to extend to other similar languages. You were mentioning indigenous languages before. Although they are very different from each other, they have situated themselves along continua, so it is very interesting for the teachers to show that this is an indigenous language and that the next one on that continuum would have that way of saying this, which is slightly different.

But other languages situate themselves along continua too, or families of languages, so, you can work a lot on that, so you see you can work on etymologies, on structure, on many different elements... .

I have said in the past that you can make a monolingual class become very plurilingual. Well, you can teach English in a very plurilingual way, for instance, the moment you show the differences in vocabulary between British English, American English, Australian English, and South African English. For Spanish it is the same, you can say different words from different Spanish-speaking countries; in Spain, they say this, in Argentina they say that, and so on.

YO: Yes, that is true. While teaching the fruits in English to children, teachers can say that Argentinians say “frutilla” for strawberry and Colombians say “fresa”.

EP: Yes, and that stimulates curiosity. Because one point is to try and take kids away from this idea that there is a right or wrong way to say things. It is the idea that we have that English has to be the “Oxbridge”, in Europe at least this is still the ideal. And for French, it’s the same story: there is still this ideal, the purest French is considered to be spoken in Loire valley, and then if you have a teacher who is from Congo, or Quebec their French is not considered sufficiently standard, and there are some “*Oh no*” reactions.

Another interesting episode happened when I was teaching in France. I had a student who did her Master’s thesis on experimental education with kids learning Spanish, and she was working on the cultural aspect. Incidentally, for those kids, the only Spanish-speaking country that existed was Mexico, for some reason. Perhaps it had something to do with football teams. But this is not the point, the point is that when she presented some recording

of Spanish-speaking kids to her students, and they had to try and figure out what they were saying, one kid said '*pourquoi ne peuvent-ils pas parler comme nous?*', ('*Why cannot they speak normally like us*?') referring to French. Her students were in fact very monolingually oriented, something that prevented them from embracing difference. So, this idea of plurilingualism is meant to really take people away from the idea that there is one language, one variety, and one possibility.

YO: What do you think would be the role of parents in this plurilingual pedagogy?

EP: Oh, it is enormous. It is really, really big. I actually think that parents can play a huge positive role or a huge negative role. And that is crucial. Because if they themselves are not buying into this, they continue to pass the message onto the kids that you should not mix languages, you should have the best French, the best English or Spanish.... Here, for example, parents say '*But what kind of French are you teaching? The good one? From France? Not the one from Quebec?*' Although we are in Canada, and it would be so important for the kids to have both types of French. So, yes, parents can play a huge role the moment they themselves are liberated from this monolingual *habitus*.

YO: What you have explained today works very well in multilingual areas and contexts such as in North America or Europe. But in Latin America, specifically in Argentina, people may believe these contexts are monolingual and that we are, linguistically, less diverse. So, how can we have plurilingual education in such contexts where we believe that we are not necessarily as diverse linguistically?

EP: I think that you have given the answer there; 'we believe that we are not…'. I think that is the point. How much is reality and how much is belief? In a sense, I've never seen such a monolingual reality as Canada and North America and at the same time, apart from maybe in Europe, in big cities in Europe, I have never seen such a multilingual reality as Toronto before coming. But, do they believe they are plurilingual? Let me give you a practical example: here, it is really a multilingual city and at school, everybody has at least two languages. Most of the kids have at least a third language at home, if not two more, so it is very common for kids here to have four languages. But those kids, because the province considers itself monolingual, they kind of hide or talk down their roots in their other languages. They think they cannot speak French, they see themselves as English speakers only. So, the point of plurilingualism is really to make this diversity visible.

Now, unfortunately, I have never been to Argentina, I wish that one day I could go, but I know, for example, again, being Italian, that there are a lot of families with Italian origin in Argentina. So, how visible is this heritage? And Argentina is close to Brazil, another big language. To what extent do people realize that Spanish and Portuguese are very close and

that you can easily introduce some elements of Portuguese. I am sure that everybody's studying English because it is the language that is most widespread. So, you see, you may easily have kids that, due to their family ties, have one heritage language, even if they do not speak it anymore because it was the language of their grandparents, but it is the kind of leverage for curiosity for another language. They have Spanish, and as we said they have one variety of Spanish, but the teacher can easily bring words in from other Spanish-speaking countries or varieties. And they have another big language as a neighbouring language; Brazilian Portuguese. So, plurilingualism is already there, it is just that it may be below the ground. It is a question of nurturing it and making it grow, and germinate, and making it visible.

YO: We have never realized that, like you say in your paper we mentioned today, that we are all plurilingual because we have not understood that languages are variations of the languages that we speak. If you live in one specific area in Buenos Aires or if you live in Córdoba or if you live in another region you may have different variations of the same Spanish and you can bring that it into the English class.

EP: And I forgot about the indigenous languages. Argentina has a lot of indigenous communities, so again, they might learn just a couple of words, but that is one of the languages of the country too. Nowadays, where we are at last trying to get out of this colonial mentality that was neglecting and suffocating the very existence of other languages, especially indigenous ones, now is the moment for true plurilingualists to raise that curiosity. You may have kids who have indigenous languages, again in their family roots and not confined to certain reserves. Because the problem of indigenous languages even here is that there are reserves or areas where they are spoken - and spoken just there - and that, again, is a multilingual vision, you know, which is terrible at the end of the day. Because it is as if each one had its own corner. '*Provided you don't disturb me, I won't disturb you. I am not interested in what you do. I do not want to mingle. I stay here, you stay there, you have your separate language, and I respect you.*' Now, that is not good. We know that that will not get us anywhere. We have seen already that it is more negative than positive.

YO: Do you think that in Europe, North America and Latin America, teacher education programmes are prepared for plurilingual education?

EP: Unfortunately, the only country I have been to in South America was one short visit to Brazil. The furthest down I have seen so far is Mexico, which is not yet South America even or the Caribbean, where there are other varieties of Spanish like in Cuba and in the Dominican Republic. But, I have never been to the South American context. So, I cannot comment on the teacher education there specifically. But I have been around a lot in Canada,

a little bit in the States, and a lot in different countries in Europe: France, England, Switzerland, Italy, Germany, Austria, Spain, so really quite a lot. And I have seen how they organize their teacher education and how it is organized here. And, well, it is still a struggle for most. Things are moving; in certain areas, things are moving, and that is very good. But the curricula themselves are still not oriented towards plurilingualism. They are still keeping languages separate because there are different instructors for the different languages and these instructors themselves very often have not been trained towards plurilingualism, so they are not passing it on to their students. The curricula are still created in a separate way from one language to the other. Languages are kept separate in the curriculum because there is summative assessment at the end, and assessment is almost always monolingual. But as I said, things are moving, and I have seen some good signs. I have in mind two examples of high-stakes plurilingual exams: one in Austria, which is the *Matura* at the end of secondary school - and it has started to become plurilingual in the sense that you have to draw upon one language and express yourself in another, you have documents in different languages including your own mother tongue on which you can build to express yourself. Then in Greece, there is another high-stakes exam with the same idea, you are given different documents in one language and you have to recreate the meaning in the target language. It's a small step. You could say we're still in a multilingual paradigm and not in a plurilingual one, and that's probably true, but if I go backwards from there – if I put myself in those teachers' or professors' shoes, how can you possibly train these students for such an exam without having them perceive the differences and similarities between the different languages and being more at ease with teaching from one language to another? So it could have a kind of positive backwash effect.

Other things that seem to be going in the same direction are reflective tools for teachers to understand their own linguistic repertoire, as you said before, like, there is the *Autobiography of Intercultural Encounters*. Okay, this is more the cultural part, but, there are portfolios for teachers to make them more aware of their linguistic repertoires and to build on that, and to push the teachers towards new languages. There are tools that have been developed to help the teachers put together work with different languages. For example, projects like *Miriadi*, a project that tries to help teachers work with Romance languages, neo-Latin languages, where they use plurilingual books. It's true that they have not always been trained for that, but sometimes they are.

In the new *Companion Volume to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages*, there are new scales for plurilingual and pluricultural dimension education. As the CEFR has pushed, has fostered renewal in different aspects of language education including teacher education, we can expect that these new scales will also have an impact on that, where they are used. Again, in Europe, there is a project now that is trying to study the feasibility and the need for a framework for teacher education (temporarily called the CEFR for teachers), where it's a kind of a list, a catalogue and also a framework for what language

teachers should be able to do, what kind of dimensions they should care about, etc. And one aspect is plurilingualism.

So, there are a lot of good signs that things are moving in that direction. It's true that a lot still needs to be done, but we can be optimistic that one day we will get there.

YO: Good to know.
We are aware that you have been working on the CEFR for a number of years. This framework has also been adopted in language policies outside the European Union. In Latin America, the CEFR has been adopted for a while now, so in an era of culture and context responses to pedagogy, do you believe that such frameworks are still valid in educational contexts in Latin America?

EP: Well, first of all, just a small correction, it's not the tool of the European Union, it's from the Council of Europe – they're very, very different. The Council of Europe is a much broader institution and it's not political in terms of its governing body, as it deals with human rights and the rule of law and one of the mandates is to deal with intercultural matters.

Brian North was one of the authors of the first version of the CEFR and also the coordinator of the 4-year Council of Europe project to produce the new extended set of descriptors, and I am in the core group of authors. The CEFR Companion Volume which contains these new descriptors will be another big leap forward.

So, yes, of course, the CEFR has been adopted in very different places including Japan; countries that are very, very different. So, that's not a problem because it's the nature of the CEFR to be sufficiently neutral to be adapted, to be useful in different contexts. This *E* from the Commonly *European* Framework of Reference is there because it's a product of the Council of Europe, it was created in that context, that's all. Besides, their motto 'united in diversity' carries a strong idea of intercultural education too.

The CEFR is not a sacred book that you have to hammer down to a class, it's adaptable, it is something that you take and you read, you understand its philosophy, and you use it purposefully for your context. There are adaptations for significantly different contexts, such as the Japanese context, which is very, very different, much more than the difference between South America and Europe. South America has much more in common with Europe than Japan, so I do not think it will need as many adaptations as with the Japanese context. The Japanese have developed a lot of descriptors for the lower levels because they needed to chunk down their students' progress, so they developed what they call the CEFR-J, and it is a good document.

YO: Okay, so my final question is…We have been talking about the inclusion and valuing of indigenous and modern languages in the English-language classrooms in Latin America,

specifically in Argentina, to challenge the hegemonic practices of English-only policies. In North America they have the idea of 'English only', and sometimes the children's home languages are not recognized. What is your opinion on this? What should things look like in Latin America where Spanish is the main language of the classroom? Should the teacher avoid English only and allow the students to use Spanish to convey meaning?

EP: English-only policies, as you can imagine, are something that I am really scared about, being a scholar who is interested in plurilingualism. I think it will cause a lot of damage, not only for indigenous languages, of course for indigenous languages more than anything else because they are only spoken there, but also for any other languages. So, I really think that plurilingualism should be the key to first of all help indigenous languages to be recognized more, to be known, and be valued. A way to challenge English-only ideologies is to recognize other languages, heritage languages, international languages, any other additional language. Recently I have heard somebody use the word *world* languages because they do not want to call them *international* or *additional*, but just more generally world languages, which I like. And so, I think, I hope, that plurilingualism will help challenge this aspect. Together with my team we have this project, *LICDIRE* (LINguistic & Cultural DIversity REinvented) where we precisely try to bring together Western and indigenous languages to benefit both, and one aspect that we have not mentioned so far is the pedagogical part, where we try to bring together this idea of a plurilingual view with a CEFR-based Action-oriented Approach.

So, I think that with Spanish, it is in a sense a bit the same thing, Spanish being a strong, international language spoken in many countries; Spanish is definitely a more invasive language, let's say, not giving so much space to others. But at the same time, if we look at history, I am pretty optimistic. The thing with North America and South America, I am generalizing a bit here, is that there are still huge differences in the recognition and space that have been given to indigenous cultures and languages. I mean the situation in South America seems to me not as bad as in North America in terms of the indigenous languages. There are countries that have even started to officially recognize indigenous languages, and the communities are still stronger. Culturally, there has been much more cross-fertilization than in North America, you see that there has been a big influence of indigenous cultures on mainstream cultures. There has not been that big influence of indigenous culture on Anglo-Saxon culture in North America – it is something very recent.

So one can imagine that there may be some good developments. This is somewhat my dream, my utopia, but I hope, and I do not think it is just a dream, that it could be a leading model. We could hope for this integration of indigenous languages to be even stronger in Central and South America than in the northern part of the continent. We can see the way things have changed in countries like New Zealand, where Maori culture is becoming stronger and one can hope that that will be the case elsewhere. So, I do not know if it is a

dream here, but I do not see the same problem. I see a similar problem but not as serious as with English. English has a more pervasive nature not only with indigenous languages but also with any other language in the world. And I do not see that happening in Spanish, at least not yet. So, we might have a good development there, possibly.

YO: Alright, I think that these were all the topics that we wanted to address today.
Thank you very much for accepting this interview. Do you have anything to conclude?

EP: Yes, we talked a little bit about standardized testing. Standardized testing the way it is increasingly widespread today, is at odds with plurilingualism. Standardized tests are generally gatekeepers, and they still convey a model of the native speaker: strong, monolingual. So, they are something that we should deconstruct, we should change. More than anything else, I strongly believe, and not just for plurilingualism, that any innovation in language education has to start with assessment and testing, and then proceed backwards. Plurilingualism is not an exception in that respect. If we do not start to infuse a plurilingual element in these standardized tests, or in any tests, in high-stakes tests, then it is a kind of lost battle. We should not forget that.

YO: Could you comment a little bit on portfolio assessment approaches?

EP: Yes, for example, there is at least the possibility of accompanying a standardized test with a portfolio evaluation. Even if it was only 70% and 30%, that would make a huge difference. There are ways of going around it, we only need to be creative.

YO: I would like to thank Dr. Piccardo for her insights on this fascinating topic, above all as you enlightened us on the idea that we all are plurilingual. With this in mind, I would like to draw some implications and provide some thoughts on how Dr. Piccardo's idea could be home-engineered for the Latin-American context.

First of all, policymakers, administrators, curriculum designers, teachers, students and the communities need to raise this linguistic and cultural awareness that Professor Piccardo mentions. The first aspect I would like to mention here is how much power has been given to the English language, a climate of fostering an understanding that there are other world languages that are equally valid is important. This climate can be created by instilling a curiosity for languages while children are in the early years of education. A while ago, Mehisto, Marsh, and Frigols (2008) proposed a Language Showers approach to expose children up to 60 minutes per day to different languages. These Language Showers are not intended for children to learn the foreign language fully but rather to prepare students for a plurilingual and pluricultural society. Similarly, children in daycare or preschool can be exposed to Language Sprinkles (Ortega, 2017), a form of early language immersion for 10

minutes sometime during the school day. These language showers and sprinkles help children to be curious and to get acquainted with languages and cultures and to have a more positive attitude and familiarity with sounds and structures of languages.

Furthermore, there is a need to create an awareness that there are other variations of the Spanish language in Latin America and also within each country. Teachers could potentially compare and contrast these variations when teaching English. A good example of this is that in Colombia the word for a plastic or paper bag is called "talego", "chuspa" or "bolsa" depending on the region. There are other Spanish words that come from indigenous languages and can easily be brought to the English language classroom. For example, the word "cuate" (friend) in Mexican Spanish comes from Náhuatl indigenous language "cuatl" that means "twin" and can mean in English "buddy".

The second aspect I would like to bring is that unless policymakers welcome the teaching and learning of languages and the promotion of indigenous languages in language policies, there is little teachers can do to promote a plurilingual approach to English teaching. The CEFR is a reality for many countries in Latin America, but policymakers, academics, researchers and teachers need to go beyond considering only the levels, they need to start seeing the philosophy behind, the pedagogical dimension. Also, they need to feel free to adapt what is necessary so it is more cultural and linguistically relevant to their communities. What is important here is to remove language policies that are geared to "English-only policies" and instead "plurilingual policies for the teaching of languages" should be explored and promoted.

Finally, I would like to mention the teacher education aspect. Teacher education programs in Latin America can focus on language teaching with an emphasis on local/global cultures and languages. Courses on plurilingual and indigenous education may be beneficial for the pre-service teacher holistic training. Translanguaging approaches can be taught to teacher candidates in the language teaching methodology class. In other words, students in the English language classroom can use their linguistic repertoire (Spanish, variations of Spanish or indigenous languages) to make meaning during an English activity. Translanguaging (García & Wei, 2014) may include translation and code-switching practices in which students make sense by performing bilingually while carrying out a variety of reading, writing and speaking tasks. Action research initiatives can be also explored in which the teacher educators put emphasis on pedagogical strategies that are more in tune with their local realities and how these relate to global concerns. Curriculum and material designers can work together with teachers from other subject matters to create project-based and action-oriented activities (Piccardo, 2010) using portfolio assessments that challenge the current competitive and neoliberal goal-minded teaching and research perspectives. I believe that with this "new" plurilingual vision or worldview, researchers and educators can foster a more socially just world in which we all learn from each other, respect other cultures and languages and cohabit in a more liveable planet.

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Book review

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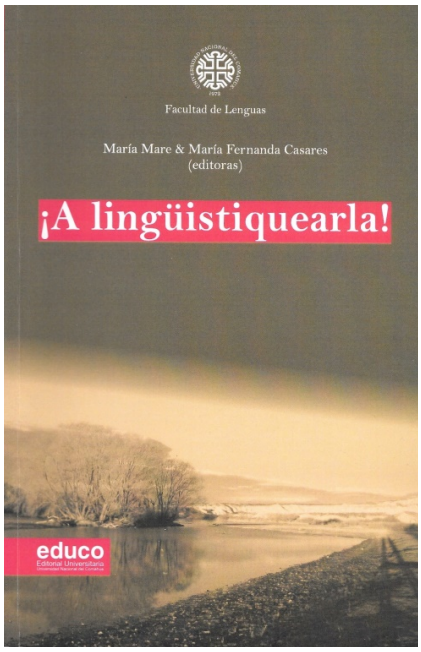

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Research at colleges and universities in Argentina is a growing activity nowadays. Teacher-researchers and students, who are summoned by their "mentors", get together in teams to investigate about different topics in different areas. Linguistics is one of the areas that are becoming more attractive to researchers and "researchers to be", i.e. students, in Argentina. Nevertheless, these activities are rarely spread in the community and are usually seen as merely academic doing. Researchers are then "in a cave" (Mare & Casares, 2018, p. 11), working in their offices and labs without much promotion of their work outside the academic community itself. Mare and Casare's book *¡A Lingüistiquearla!* is an impeccable attempt to take research done at university to the community. In their book, they present the activities carried out as part of a research programme called *Las categorías funcionales: un abordaje en términos de adquisición y variación* carried out at Facultad de Lenguas, Universidad del Comahue, between the years 2014 and 2017. The editors, Mare and Casares, put together an array of articles written by the investigators themselves in an effortful collection, which is worth reading by anyone interested in linguistics. As the authors express in the introduction, the book has been written in a simple style. Their objective is that the articles in it can be read not only by specialists in the field, but also by anyone interested in the acquisition of languages studied from a formal perspective, especially students.

The book is divided into three sections. Section one deals with the study of languages. This section is divided into four chapters as well, which deal with topics such as the study of languages itself from a formal perspective, the acquisition of the mother tongue, the

acquisition of an L2 and finally, linguistic change. These phenomena have been explained from a generative grammar point of view, which is the theoretical framework for the whole book. The final chapter about linguistic change, written by Mare herself, explores the controversial topic of gender-inclusive language. The author concludes, after an extremely enriching discussion about the topic, that language belongs to the people who speak it and therefore, whatever linguistic change going on in any language is valid. This chapter should be considered reference material for anyone dealing with the topic of language change and inclusive language.

The second section of the book talks about the pedagogical and social aspects the authors took into account during their investigations. This section tells of experiences that the researchers involved in the project had when carrying out workshops for teachers of languages, talks and debates and a radio programme. What is important to highlight here is the objective the researchers had to reach to the community, which is, as they insist, one of the most compelling responsibilities university has with society.

Finally, section three is about research in linguistics. This section is divided into three chapters. The authors explain notions about grammar as a science. They also share their experiences with students, who had to do a research project and write a squib or research paper. They explain in detail the process the students went through to get to the final paper and how enriching this experience was for both, students and teachers alike. At the end of the chapter, the authors talk about the initiation of students in research. They insist on immersing students into research and investigation and accompanying them in this process, which can be fascinating, but difficult at the same time.

This volume is highly recommendable for teacher trainers, researchers, students and all the EFL community interested in knowing how research is carried out at universities and how much of this work can be taken out of the academic environment to society as a whole. The academic community should also celebrate the work this group of researchers has done into bringing linguistics to the people.

María Celeste Luna
Facultad de Filosofía y Letras,
Universidad Nacional de Cuyo, Argentina
celeste.luna@gmail.com

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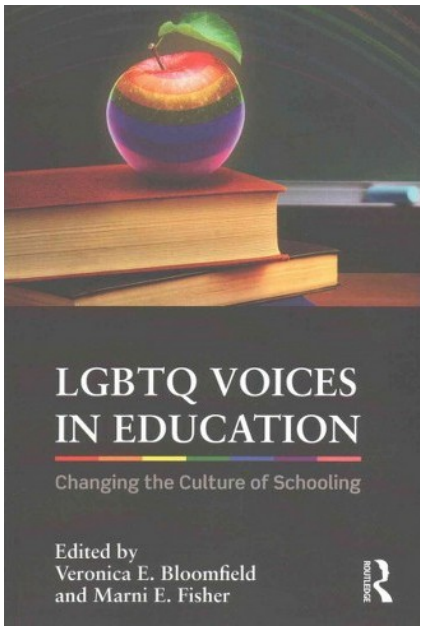
Book review

LGBTQ Voices in Education: Changing the Culture of Schooling



Edited by Veronica E. Bloomfield and Marni E. Fisher, Routledge Taylor and Francis Group New York and London, 2016. ISBN: 978-1-138-18708-5 (hbk); ISBN: 978-1-138-18709-2 (pbk); ISBN: 978-1-315-64340-3

LGBTQ Voices in Education: Changing the Culture of Schooling by Veronica E. Bloomfield and Marni E. Fisher is a Routledge edited collection divided into three sections, offering in total 12 chapters, a Foreword, a Preface, two Interludes and a Dénouement. The book draws the reader's attention to gender, sexuality and identity issues, particularly in educational environments.

The foreword, by Kris De Pedro, provides an insightful and personal view regarding LGBTQ issues and policies within and outside the school. De Pedro, a school practitioner, also connects his personal experiences with LGBTQ culture, media and school. In the Preface, Bloomfield and Fisher offer a brief historical background on LGBTQ issues along with key concepts such as transgender, transsexual, intersex, questioning, among others.

Section I, "Raising Awareness: Troubling the Waters" comprises four chapters and Interlude I. Each chapter addresses LGBTQ issues as seen from different perspectives, but, at the same time, as having the same concern: LGBTQ students' needs, emphasizing one major theme across the section *dialogue*. In chapter 1, Michael Sadowski presents data from the GLSEN (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network) survey about anti-LGBTQ language at schools. Moreover, the writer points to the GLSEN findings which correspond to students' perception of school climate concerning LGBTQ issues. In chapter 2, Lynda Wiest engages in a dialogue about LGBTQ issues at school with a group of female graduate students, mainly teachers. The discussion intends to facilitate ways of addressing LGBTQ topics in pre-service and in-service education. Chapter 3, by Veronica Bloomfield, provides the readers with the writer's own experience concerning questions, queries and situations related not only to her sexuality but also that of those around her. Furthermore, the writer discusses several issues such as diversity, gender roles, sexuality and how they are dealt with

in the classroom. Chapter 4, by Marni E. Fisher and Kevin Stockbridge, discusses the importance of teachers creating safe spaces for those outside the heteronormative norms. Interlude I, by Stacy E. Schupmann, offers an inspiring collection of texts about the writer's personal life and experiences as a lesbian, including a poem, reflections about religion, politics and the story of her own coming out.

Session II, "Climate and Culture: Fostering Positive Identities" consists of four chapters and Interlude II. Each chapter contains four research reports which deal with the integration of LGBTQ topics in schools and the impact this integration may have. The major theme of this section is *school climate.* In Chapter 5*,* Melisa J. Smith and Elizabethe Payne present address anti-bullying discourses regarding LGBTQ students and the impact these discourses have on schools. The writers also discuss the normalization of homophobic language on the part of students as well as teachers and school authorities. In Chapter 6, Elise Paradis attempts to shed some light on the *Cyberqueer* phenomenon and on how North American LGBTQ youth make use of the internet and concludes that, as schools are not providing safe spaces for LGBTQ students, it is natural that they turn to other places where they could find a sense of community. In Chapter 7, Markus Bidell reports on an investigation based on the importance of schools having *Gay-Straight alliances* (GSAs). Throughout his report, Bidell pinpoints the positive impact of schools with an LGBTQ-inclusive curriculum on LGBTQ students. In Chapter 8, Danné E. Davis states that youngsters are aware of sexual diversity and, therefore, it is important to include queer children's literature in the curriculum. According to Davis, children are coming out at younger ages and working with such narratives can help them challenge the heteronormativity existing in the classroom. Interlude II, "Do you Need my Queerness to Define your Straightness? The Pedagogy of Queering-Deviance in the Academy" by Anna Wilson. Based on the format of the Babylonian Talmud method of study, in which a central theme is at the centre of the page and surrounded by the teaching of rabbis, the writer presents intertwined topics such as religion, sexuality, race and ethnicity

The last section, "Transformative Practices", comprises the remaining four chapters. The section deals with teachers' experiences and, at the same time, offers more optimistic expectations as regards teaching practices. Chapter 9, by Julia Heffernan and Tina Gutierez-Schmich, recounts the implementation of anti-oppressive pedagogies and students' reflection, to further analyse a college course on diversity and multiculturalism. In Chapter 10, Sean Robinson examines how the use of media literacy in the classroom may encourage teachers as well as students to reflect and criticise schools, communities and society. Chapter 11, by J. Spencer Clark and James S. Brown, argue in favour of the importance of developing students' skills to discuss delicate issues. Furthermore, the writers discuss the relevance of promoting dialogue among students, particularly among those of different cultures. In Chapter 12, by drawing her attention to binaries such us rural/urban, human/non-human, Marna Hauk reflects on the benefits of *ecopedagogies,* which seek to re-educate

planetary citizens; in this case, applying these pedagogies to gender stereotypes.

Finally, in the Dénouement, "Speaking Up", hoping that the book encourages readers to become actively involved with the LGBTQ community, Marni E, Fisher and Veronica E. Bloomfield engage in a dialogue summarising the topics covered in the book and leaving a door open to actively continuing the discussion of the issues presented in the book.

In conclusion, *LGBTQ Voices in Education: Changing the Culture of Schooling* offers an insightful, motivating collection of experiences which invite the reader to reflect upon delicate LGBTQ issues such bullying, acceptance, coming out, tolerance and so forth. The contributors stress the pedagogical implication each chapter has and invite us to review our practices. As a teacher, I highly recommend this book because it provides teacher educators with tools, ideas and examples that may help them create a safer and more inclusive school climate for LGBTQ students.

Verónica E. Ferrari
Universidad Tecnológica Nacional, Facultad Regional Avellaneda, Argentina
veronicaeferrari@gmail.com

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  ISBN 978-0-521-11298-7 (hbk): £54.50; US$ 71.20
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Lantolf, J. (Ed.). (2000). *Sociocultural theory and second language learning*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Little, D. (1991). *Learner autonomy 1: Definitions, issues and problems*. Dublin: Authentik.
Meza Rueda, J.L. (2008). *Historia de maestros para maestros. Pedagogía narrativa expresada en relatos de vida*. Bogotá: Universidad de La Salle.
Pérez-Cañado, M.L. (2012). CLIL research in Europe: Past, present, and future. *International Journal of Bilingual Education and Bilingualism, 15*(3), 315-341.
Prince, P. (2011). What's the story? Motivating e-learners with fiction. In D. Gardner (Ed.), *Fostering autonomy in language learning* (pp. 225-233). Gaziantep: Zirve University.
Richards, K. (2006). "Being the teacher": Identity and classroom conversation. *Applied Linguistics*, *27*(1), 51-77.
Smith, R. (2003). Teacher education for teacher-learner autonomy. In J. Gollin, G. Ferguson & H. Trappes-Lomax (Eds.), *Symposium for language teacher educators: Papers from Three IALS Symposia.* Edinburgh: IALS, University of Edinburgh. Retrieved May 2, 2012, from http://homepages.warwick.ac.uk/~elsdr/Teacher_autonomy.pdf
Smith, R., & Erdogan, S. (2008). Teacher-learner autonomy: Programme goals and student-teacher constructs. In T. Lamb & H. Reindeers (Eds.), *Learner and teacher autonomy: Concepts, realities and responses* (pp. 83-102). Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
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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