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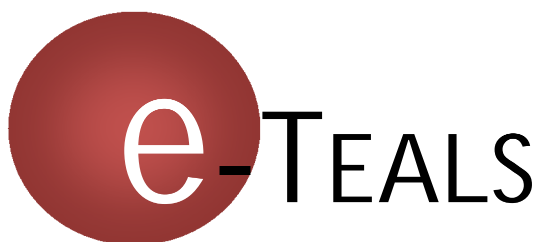

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Literary Literacy: Why Read Literary Texts in the English Language Classes?

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| Algarve University

There are many models of English teacher and there are competing ideas about the aims of English teaching. But I am not going to discuss them or even suggest that one is better over the other, because every teaching context is different, every literary text is different and every theory to interpret the literary text is different. These topics of discussion have been long-standing and continuing but it is not my intention to provide answers for all these issues. Rather it is my intention to debate the importance of reading literary texts in the English language classes and suggest an alternative way to read literary works.

On a recent survey (2006) to nearly 100 students of English and Portuguese Literature, Language and Culture at Universidade Nova de Lisboa [New University of Lisbon], the results have showed that the answer "love of literature" comes in a very low position as far as the choice to do this degree is concerned; in fact, only 18% of these applicants to teacher have declared it. The main reason why these potential teachers of English have chosen to do a degree in English and Portuguese Literature, Language and Culture was the fact they had good results in English as a Second Language while they studied at Secondary School (45%).

Although this was not an extensive survey, in the sense that only students from Universidade Nova were questioned, these results may help explain why some teachers are reluctant to work with literary texts in their English language classes.

But why is it important to read literary texts in the English language classes? It is important, because:

a) it is authentic and culturally valued material (Lazar 14-17; Collie, and Slater 3-4);

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b) it expands students' awareness of the structure of the language both at *usage* level (knowledge of linguistic rules) and *use* level (how to use those rules to communicate efficiently) (Moss 14; McKay 191);
c) it expands their vocabulary (Lazar 17-18; Collie, and Slater 4-5);
d) it is an opportunity for students to become receptive to different cultures (Lazar 16-17);
e) it develops students' interpretative skills (Lazar 19);
f) it helps them to express themselves creatively and imaginatively. As W.T. Littlewood says: "The reader's creative (or rather, 'co-creative') role, and the imaginative involvement engendered by this role, encourage a dynamic interaction between reader, text and external world, in the course of which the reader is constantly seeking to form and retain a coherent picture of the world of the text" (qtd. in Brumfit 14-15);
g) students that read literary texts have access to a vast and diverse range of human experience and reflection and that helps them learn about human relationships and understand more about themselves (Collie, and Slater 5-6);
h) it motivates students to become enthusiastic readers, because, as we all know, a good book has the power of absorbing and fascinating the reader until the end of the plot is revealed and that will surely motivate students to read more. Besides, it is a fact that the more you read, the more you want and love to read and unfortunately statistics reveal that most students do not have reading habits. As a matter of fact, the results of the above mentioned survey have also showed that even among university students of Literature, less than half (42%) read fiction on a regular basis, and about 30% of these students rarely read fiction either national or foreigner.

How to improve students' literary literacy

Despite the many debates on the various methods to teach English language, there is a consensus that the job of the English teacher is to enable each child to become more literate (Davison xxi). Although there is not a unique definition of what constitutes literacy, we know that

in today's fast-changing world literacy means far more than learning to read and write in order to perform specific tasks. Some thinkers advocate literacy as the main propeller for economic growth (H. Graff) and others see it as a guarantee for democracy (Stevens) but, overall, literacy is associated with empowerment of individuals and, ultimately, societies, through the improvement of quality of life and culture at large. And at society level, new kinds of literacy are constantly evolving.

Regarding literary literacy, it can be identified with "critical literacy", and this is the ability to recognise and understand certain conventions of language, the ability to read the words on a literary text, and produce literary meaning (Schleppegrell 2). In other words: "the fundamental ability of a good reader of literature is the ability to generalise from the given text either to other aspects of the literary tradition or to personal or social significances outside literature" (Brumfit 188). According to this definition, the meaning is not inherent in texts and it is the reader who creates it in his interaction with the text.

And English language classes can provide a huge contribute to help students achieve literary literacy by:

- firstly, exposing them to literary texts;
- secondly, developing their understanding of the processes of language whereby meanings are made;
- and thirdly, enabling students to create meaning (West, and Dickey 10, 23).

Specially because in literary texts, "meaning is self-contained in the language but it is not to be discovered by appeal to neat, simple, conventional formulas" that can be taught and learned (Brumfit, and Carter 14). Consequently, it is essential that the students get more often exposed to this kind of reading that will help them "search both backwards and forwards, in and across and outside the text for clues which might help to make sense of it" (Brumfit, and Carter 14).

In addition to this, by reading literary works students will enhance their critical skills at all levels. As Gerald Graff says in his 2003 book *Clueless in Academe*, students tend to always accept everything they read in a text, without much of a critical attitude. Therefore, Graff refers that when, for instance, they find textual contradictions in the text they assume that the problem is theirs and never think that the writer might have probably made a mistake: "I realised that the

students had imbibed the assumption that great writers don't make mistakes (and if a text is assigned in school it must be great), so if textual contradictions appear, they must have been deliberately planted in order to force readers to use their ingenuity to resolve them" (G. Graff 68).

Why do a large number of secondary school students tend to reject or have difficulties reading literary texts?

To start with, if someone experiments difficulties in doing something, the most likely is that he or she may give up doing it. So, perhaps one of the ways to solve this dilemma is to encourage students to read literary works. The continuous reading experience will surely help students become less intimidated and more familiar with literature. Therefore, diminishing the anxieties that may be associated with this type of reading, which sometimes is seen as too hard to read and/or too intellectual for them.

A strategy that may contribute to enhance students' will and ability to read literature: reading literary texts online, in other words, reading hyperfiction

We live in a fast-changing world where technology plays an important role and we teach teenagers – the twenty-first century readers – who are eager for novelty and immediate things whose result can be seen almost on the spot. And all this can work as an advantage in English classes.

If we compare the time and the technology available when most of us were in school, we can see how things have drastically changed. In fact, like John Moss states: "new technologies are having an accelerating impact in the understanding of what it is to be literate and how literacy is achieved" (14). And in this context, literacy cannot be thought as something stable and unchangeable.

What is being suggested here is that the nature of some of the English skills students must develop, namely "reading and writing", are changing because there is a new form of writing (computer writing) which inevitably results in a new form of reading. Writing used to be a much slower and laborious activity than it is now, when a simple click can erase a whole text, can

insert extra text while the computer shifts the other text to fit it in, a spelling check can help avoid many mistakes, another simple click can insert an image and/or a diagram and, finally, a printer can produce an immaculate piece of writing.

The same thing happens to reading. Perhaps not in such obvious way, for we still read books and carry them with us. But there has also been an enormous change as far as reading is concerned. First of all, there are much more books available, and many more ways of getting books. During my school and university years, the quickest student to leave the class would be the one getting the book from the library (usually the only copy available). Nowadays, loans between libraries, reading or ordering books online and supermarkets selling cheaper books have made things much easier.

Apart from all that, the biggest change in reading is in the nature of the text itself which means that it is now possible to read any text – a novel or a short story, for example – on a computer screen. In fact, modern digital technologies have generated a new world for the written word. Besides, new computer technologies are making available pre-twentieth century literary works which were sometimes difficult to find.

Therefore, it is only natural to think that the technological developments propelled a paradigm shift in the reading practices as well as in the nature of literacy. In other words, there has been a change from a paradigm characterised by stable/material presence and linearity – the text – to a paradigm characterised non-physical presence and non-linearity – the hypertext.

The term "hypertext" was coined by Theodore Nelson, in 1965, when he planned the Project *Xanadu*, whose main purpose was to create a hypertext that could store all world literature so that anyone could access it from any computer. And according to most sources, the first hyperfiction – a literary text written to be read in a computer – was created by Michael Joyce, in 1987, and it was entitled *Afternoon: A Story.*

Comparing the hypertext to the linear model of the printed text, the former has no predefined beginning, middle or end, it has a very flexible sequence and it can be described as a "non-sequential writing-text that branches and allows choices to the reader, best read at an interactive screen. As popularly conceived, this is a series of chunks connected by links which

offer the reader different pathways" (Theodore Nelson, qtd. in Vaz 33). About thirty years later, Marie-Laure Ryan, in *Cyberspace Textuality*, defined hypertext as a

> [t]ext broken into fragments ("lexias", "textrons") and stored in a network whose nodes are connected by electronic links. A fragment typically contains a number of different links, offering the reader a choice of directions to follow. By letting readers determine their own paths of navigation through the database, hypertext promotes what is customarily regarded as a non-linear mode of reading. (6-7)

In conclusion, the hyperfiction is:

i) non sequential;
ii) non hierarchical;
iii) multilinear;
iv) heterogeneous;
v) the centre of the narrative is not fixed;
vi) and there are multiple connections (Levy 32).

Like it has happened for all paradigm changes, there has been some resistance and suspicion to reading literary works on a computer screen. But the truth is that the practices of reading have already changed and the hyperfiction reader is already here and we must not stop or avoid his/her inevitable growth and progression. According to Molly A. Travis,

> within the next few decades, cybernetic reading will gradually displace the linear, close(d), solitary reading constructed by print text, and it would indeed seem that the process is already underway. The ideal reader for hypertext has been/is being constructed through sustained exposure to intertextualities and virtualities of mass media and information technologies. This is a reader whose experience includes exposure to . . . ever more extraordinary visual images and effects, information as sound bites, Nintendo and Sega game systems, computer video games and interactive fantasy-adventure games in a computer network. This is also a reader who has

> become immersed in informatics in diverse forms such as banking, education . . . telecommunications and mass media. (116)

Reading a printed text and reading a hyperfiction requires different literacy practices and different uses of the reading literacy for it is not the same thing to read a printed text and to read a hypertext. As mentioned above, in a hypertext, the pathways are not linear as they are in a printed text. That means the reader can choose to move in any direction that the several links suggest. It also means that the reader can become a creator of its own text, more so than when reading a printed text. Hyperfiction offers virtual immediacy, intricate movement, a rich web of text in several media (video, audio) and interactivity for the reader in the form of playing the role of text producer. According to Jay David Bolter, "[p]rinting tended to magnify the distance between the author and the reader, as the author became a monumental figure, the reader only a visitor in the author's cathedral" (3), while hyperfiction stimulates a more active role from the reader.

More recently, another author, Jon Moss, has compared the reading of a hyperfiction to playing three dimensional chess: "one move through a hyperlink can completely redirect our attention, and even if we do choose to return [to previous links] it may be with an entirely new perspective on them. This experience modifies our understanding of what reading is" (15).

The absence of sequentiality as one of the six main features of a hyperfiction, that is, the fragmentation and the absence of a beginning, a middle and an end, is not completely new; we could find it already in oral literature: "In traditional oral literature the singers organize and link story fragments into a permanently movable whole that has neither a beginning nor an ending in the classical sense, and the text itself is subject to perpetual changes" (Mihajlovic n. pag.). However, apart from few examples of non-sequentiality, information has always been organised in a sequential way, even if that sequentiality is occasionally broken by footnotes or bibliographic references (Cuadrado 249). In fact, linearity is a common cultural feature as far as reading is concerned, in other words, the printed texts define the path that the reader should follow. This characteristic of the hyperfiction may be strange to the reader, who might feel

something similar as to walking in a maze. But there is a way out of the maze if the reader lets his or her imagination build the links between the fragments that make up the hyperfiction.

But, after all, what are the benefits of bringing hyperfictions to an English language class? Apart from all those important reasons that were mentioned above concerning the printed literary text, hyperfiction will for sure stimulate even further students' reading habits because they will be reading on a computer – a very familiar and appealing medium to the younger generations who are an increasingly hypermedia-oriented readership.

Besides, reading literature online at home, for example, can free the instructor to spend class time on higher level discussions related to the material.

In addition to that, reading hyperfictions is a way of presenting a new genre to the students. As Brumfit suggests, "if the course is truly concerned with developing reading capacities, it cannot be restricted to short stories and poems which can be studied in class. All . . . types of literature should be available" (190).

Reading hyperfiction will trigger new uses of literacy. As Peter Hanon says, the nature of literacy changes as a result of technological changes: "The history of literacy is also the history of writing technology" (21).

Furthermore, a multimedia application allows students to read at their own pace and if they come across at any time of their reading with an unfamiliar word or topic they can open other sites (dictionaries and/or encyclopaedias online) and get textual explanations of what they did not understand or knew.

Due to the characteristics of hyperfiction – non-sequentiality, no fixed beginning, middle or end of the plot and the existence of multiple connections – reading literature online is an exciting and stimulating interactive format, and it will stimulate students' imagination and ability to make meaning as much or even more as printed literature. Because it is up to the reader to create the story as he moves through the several fragments of text revealed by the links. That is why George Landow calls this reader a *wreader*, because he reads and writes the story at the same time (9, 14). In fact, information technology plays an important role in developing reading skills, because reading online makes students feel as if they are producers of a text and meaning can be viewed as something which is subject to the composer of the text.

So, instead of agreeing with some trends of opinion that do not favour reading online, I believe that reading online will, in some cases, potentially improve proficiency and comprehension.

And I also believe that good literary literacy skills may determine their success at University.

To sum up, we may conclude that all literary reading requires performance and that performance should be varied and fed with different stimulus and no doubt reading literary texts online can be an attractive one for the students, young and not so young.

Some people sometimes suggest that reading will not be so important in the future as a consequence of the impact of information technology. I do not agree with this idea, although I believe different skills will be demanded from students. As Caroline Daly states, "[r]eading as literacy today requires pupils to experience texts that variously represent the world through written, digitised and visual language which the reader can interpret" (110). The point is that the current view on literacy will be, necessarily, shaped by the uses we give to written language. No doubt technology, namely, information technology will shape and request new literacies and those who are teaching the youngest generations must prepare them for literacy in the future.

While this paper has a contemporary perspective, already some twenty years ago Henry Sussman stated: "Virtually every recent approach to literacy acknowledges the impact of the electronic media on the nature and acquisition of language skills and asks if we are not on the verge of a new literacy, conditioned by these very media" (208).

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    dane, *him.*
    Judy Malloy, *LOve One* [*sic*].
    Michael Joyce, *Twelve Blue.*
    Robert Kendall, *The Seasons.*

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Interactive Textbooks and Student's Learning

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In the last decade, crucial advances in computers, in digital memory, in internet resources, in audio and visual transmission, in virtual imaging, and in wireless communication have created new possibilities for the use of technology in the teaching of English. Web publishing, digital archives, digital video, electronic conferencing, blogging, wikis, podcasting, virtual reality worlds are easy-to-explore/accessible-to-all potential new tools for teaching and learning English (Webb). The use of information and communication technologies (ICTs) transformed traditional teaching and learning models and practices in the past decade. This evolution has resulted from the emergence of the information society and has greatly impacted on the global economic and socio-cultural development (Vieira; and Kahiigi et al.).

According to the European Union's aims for 2010 (Treaty of Lisbon):

- We should experience a shift from PC centeredness to ambient intelligence. The ICT environment should become personalised for all users. There should be full multimedia, with an almost 100% online community.
- Innovations in learning should be focused on personalised and adaptive learning, dynamic mentoring systems and integrating experienced based learning into the classroom.
- Learning resources should be digital and adaptable to individual needs and preferences. E-learning platforms should support collaborative learning. There should be a shift from courseware to performanceware focused on professional learning for work.

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- ICTs should be an integrated part of the learning process. Access to mobile learning should be enhanced through mobile interfaces.

The use of these new technologies requires, however, new literacies that enable to exploit their potentials effectively. According to Leu et al., the new literacies of the ICTs include the skills, strategies, and dispositions necessary to successfully use and adapt to rapidly changing information contexts that continuously emerge in our world and influence all areas of our personal and professional lives. In the same way, recent trends in education focus on the need to shift from a teaching paradigm to a learning paradigm (Ponte; and Brown). Such a shift changes the emphasis not only from teaching to learning, but also from teacher-directed to selfdirected learning and from passive to interactive learning. In other words, teachers become instructional designers creating learning experiences and environments, and students work without the teacher being present for every structured learning activity (Kim et al.). According to Brown, contemporary educational paradigms focus not only on the production of knowledge, but are beginning to focus more and more on the effective application/integration/manipulation/etc. of existing information and knowledge.

Therefore, school syllabus are unanimous about the need to design and implement strategies that lead the learner to search, to enquire, to build his knowledge, to develop competences, to use new technologies, and above all to become autonomous. As a result, the use of interactive resources in teaching and learning processes turns out to be essential, so that learners can lead a successful path in this new information society.

Bearing in mind the above assumptions, this research will explore the advantages and disadvantages of electronic interactive textbooks versus traditional textbooks in student's learning.

1. Conceptualizing the learning process

As Kahiigi et al. stated, many approaches to learning over the years tend to agree that learning is a process through which learners achieve their learning goals by carrying out a number of learning activities and participating in interactions to reflect their understanding (Sun et al.).Thus,

learning seems to result from a change in students' perception of reality related to the problem area under study (Rekkedal, and Dye). Learning is then concerned with the way people acquire new knowledge and skills and the way in which existing knowledge and skills are modified to solve problems (Shuell). It consists of the active role played by the learner to process the information for use (Barnard).

Moreover, Chi, Glaser, and Rees argue the amount of knowledge students possess has a substantial impact on their learning processes and learning styles as students learn in different ways. They pay attention to different aspects of their environment, they solve problems in a different manner, they relate to others in distinctive partners and they process information in unique ways. Thus, the manner in which information is presented to them affects their ability to learn (Kahiigi et al.). Consequently, the learning style must be differentiated, although according to Dunn and Griggs, teachers tend to teach in the style in which they prefer to learn or were taught and prefer to work with students who exhibit the same learning style preferences they do.

Sun, Lubega, and Williams identify three learning styles to support students in their learning process:

Visual learners	Students who learn best through images, demonstrations, facial expressions, and body language of the instructor to fully understand the content of the lesson.
Auditory learners	Students who learn best by hearing verbal lectures, discussions, talking things through and listening to what others have to say.
Tactile/Kinaesthetic learners	Students who learn best through experiencing, reflecting, interacting, and doing things. These learners prefer to actively explore the physical world around them and would benefit from manipulating real objects and/or acting on them in a simulated environment.

Table 1 – Three learning styles (adapted from Kahiigi et al.)

According to the same authors, however, students need to make use of the different learning styles interchangeably during the learning process so that they can have an effective learning experience.

1.1 Learning theories

Literature reviews suggest that learning theories can be related to three widespread models: cognitivist, constructivist, and socially situated model of learning.

The **cognitive learning theory** emphasizes the learner's schema as an organized knowledge structure (Bruner; Gagne, Yekovich, and Yekovisch). Unlike behaviorism, cognitivism recognizes that the human mind is not simply a passive recipient of knowledge. Rather, the learner interprets knowledge and gives meaning to it (Hadjerroit). They demonstrate how a student perceives, processes, interprets, stores, and retrieves information and are mainly concerned with the changes in a student's understanding that results from learning. The student is involved in the learning process, so the teachers have to present organized information in a way the student can relate to. Shuell emphasizes that a cognitive approach stresses learning as an active, constructive, and goal oriented process that is dependent upon the mental activities of the learner.

The constructivist learning theory views knowledge as a constructed entity made by each and every learner through a learning process. Constructivism frames learning less as the product of active construction whereby the learners construct their own knowledge based upon prior knowledge (Duffy, Lowyck, and Jonassen; Piaget; Steffe, and Gale). Constructivist learning requires learners to demonstrate their skills by constructing their own knowledge when solving real-world problems. The constructivist model calls for learner-centered instruction, because learners are assumed to learn better when they are forced to explore and discover things. That is, the learner is led to actively construct or build new ideas using previous knowledge and experience attained (Hadjerroit). During the learning process, the teacher takes on a facilitator role focusing on making corrections, fostering new understandings, and creating social disclosure. The learners, in turn, take on the responsibility of learning by actively participating in the learning activities placed at the centre of the learning process.

The socially situated learning theory can be seen as a correction to constructivism, in which learning is disconnected from the social context (Hadjerroit). Whereas in the constructivist paradigm learning is assumed to occur as an individual learner interacts with study

material, this perspective regards learning as socially situated and knowledge as socially distributed (Vygotsky; Wengler). Learning occurs as learners exercise, test, and improve their knowledge through discussion, dialogue, communication, collaboration, information sharing, and interaction with others. Vygotsky argued that the way learners construct knowledge, think and reason is shaped by their relationships with others. He defended that the guidance given by more capable people allows the learner to engage in levels of activity that could not be managed alone.

Thus, learning theories explain the learning process through which learners are able to acquire knowledge, although there is no single learning theory that can fully explain all types of learning. Consequently, several theories coexist and complement each other during a learning process. Along the same line of argument, the attainment of the learning concepts varies from one learner to another and the learning methods dictate the level of knowledge to be attained (Kahiigi et al.). Although the literature on learning theories points to the fundamental philosophical differences between them (Lin, and Hsieh), in practice, a blend of learning theories is being used, as educators tend to believe that what works in a learning situation is a subtle combination of learning theories (Karagiorgi, and Symeou).

As Hadjerroit quoted, Mayes and Fowler proposed a three-stage model or learning cycle, in which they identified three types of learning – conceptualization, construction, and dialogue. According to the authors the essential characteristic of the learning cycle is that it describes a continuous cycle of gradual understanding. Thus, learning develops in three phases, beginning with conceptualization, progressing through construction to dialogue.

Conceptualization is characterized by the process of interaction between the learners' preexisting framework and teacher's knowledge. The construction phase refers to the process of building and combining concepts through their use in the performance of meaningful tasks. The dialogue phase refers to the testing of conceptualizations and the creation of new concepts during conversation with both learners and teachers. It is believed dialogue emerges from collaborative learning.

The three stages of the learning cycle include components which are related to learning theories. In other words, conceptualization is associated with the cognitive learning theory as it

focuses on concepts and their relationships. The construction phase is related to the constructivist learning theory as it aims at the construction of new knowledge and its use in the performance of taskbased activities. The dialogue phase is based on the socially situated learning theory as it is concerned with dialogue, group collaboration, and discussion.

1.2 Learning methods

Learning methods are frequently referred to as ways through which instructors deliver instructions and learners access these instructions. Literature describes several learning methods, such as **traditional learning, e-Learning, blended learning, mobile learning, and personalized learning,** which have been accompanying the advancements in technology and the paradigm shift from traditional learning to personalized learning methods.

Traditional learning refers to face-to-face teacher centered sessions, where the teacher provides the learning information to the students and assessments depend on study notes given to students by the teacher. According to Chickering and Gamson, students must do more than just listen to what is said in class, such as read, write, discuss, or be engaged in solving problems constructively.

E-Learning, in turn, refers to the use of ICTs to transform and support the learning process ubiquitously. Meyen, Tangen and Lian define e-Learning as the acquisition and use of knowledge which is distributed and facilitated by electronic means, such as internet, intranet, extranet, CD-ROM, video tape, DVD, TV, and personal organizers. Thus, it seems e-Learning can be carried out in several ways which include computer based, asynchronous, and synchronous learning (AEN), which facilitates an environment where the students take ownership of their learning.

Blended learning encompasses a combination of various learning methods that include face-to-face classroom activities, live e-Learning, and self-paced learning (Valiathan), in order to maximize the learner's learning potential (Dean et al.; Lubega, and Williams).

Mobile learning comprehends learning or delivery of content that is facilitated by the use of portable technologies such as mobile phone, PDAs, or iPods (Wagner). The global penetration and the use of mobile technologies have created new avenues in teaching

(Armatas, Holt, and Rice). It is believed mobile learning presents vast benefits that facilitate e-Learning. However, mobile learning methods are still in their infancy and have not been fully adopted as a learning method (Kinshuk, Sutinen, and Goh).

Personalized learning is a learning approach that facilitates and supports individualized learning. Each learner has a learning path that caters for learners learning needs and interests in a productive and meaningful way (Graven, and MacKinnon).

2. ICT and foreign language learning

The changing conceptions of learning and the rapid technological advances have been accompanied by changes in language teaching and learning. According to ODLAC surveys (2008), Language classrooms are increasingly turning into blended learning environments that focus on active learning. In other words, teachers tend to use multiple teaching and guiding methods by combining face-to-face sessions with online activities and using a mix of technology-based materials.

The growing use of ICT in language learning environments has changed language teaching and learning in a beneficial way. According to Jonassen, who defines technology-enhanced meaningful learning as active, authentic and cooperative, the main benefits of ICT to language learning are mainly three:

First, **ICT** provide language learners with the opportunity to use the language that they are learning in meaningful ways and in **authentic contexts**. The Internet, in particular, provides an easy and fast access to the use of authentic materials (such as online newspapers, webcasts, podcasts, newsroom video clips or even video sharing websites), which is motivating for the language learner. The author also demonstrates that chat rooms and virtual environments such as Second Life are other sources of learning making use of ICT, where the language learner can practice not only the written use of the language, but also speaking and pronunciation, without the fear of making mistakes.

A second important benefit of ICT use in a language classroom is related to the opportunities it facilitates for **cooperation and collaboration** with one's peers. Language teachers all over the world are introducing ICT-enhanced language learning projects, including

simulations, between their students and groups in other countries, thus widening the language learning perspective into that of learning about the cultural context of the language being used today (ODLAC). For instance, using ICT they can 'skype' or chat online, where learners and teachers can not only write to each other in real-time, but also see each other and speak to each other online. Students are thus able to write, read, speak, listen, and react to a conversation using ICT as part of the language learning process. These beneficial ICT-enhanced language learning activities call for the teacher to organize and monitor them, although in a blended language learning class the overall role of the teacher has changed from the traditional authoritative role to that of a facilitator.

A **third** benefit is the opportunity that ICT-based tools give to language teachers so that they can **tutor their learners** more effectively. With the help of ICT-based tools and the constantly growing number of available educational resources language teachers are able to give individual and personalized guidance to the learners. The use of several media-audio, video, authentic contexts and real-world experiences help language learners with different learning styles to assimilate the content according to their needs.

According to the author, in a blended learning environment that uses ICT tools, it is easier for the language teacher to use different approaches with students and to accommodate different learning styles and the different needs of fast, slow, or handicapped language learners (Jonassen).

2.1. Teachers' perceptions and beliefs about ICT for language learning

Cuban defends that teachers will use technology only if they perceive it to facilitate instruction. Recent Studies have concluded that if teachers perceive technology as adding value to curriculum goals, motivating learners, or augmenting learning they are more willing to teach with technology (Doering, Hughes, and Huffman; Ertmer et al.; Russell et al.).

Likewise, in the ODLAC institutional surveys (2008), it is stated that teachers' attitudes as well as perceptions of the benefits of ICT for language learning, teachers' beliefs about teaching methods, electronic communication with students, perceptions of their role as a

teacher, and their confidence with using technology can influence the ways in which they use technology in their teaching.

2.2. Learners' perceptions of ICT use for language learning

It is believed the use of ICT in language learning not only involves pedagogical changes for teachers but also involves environmental and pedagogical changes for learners who are traditionally used to face-to-face teaching in classrooms.

Although an increasing number of learners have access to online technologies and use ICT for personal interactions, they find it challenging to use ICT in an educational context. In the same way, even though many online language courses include spoken elements and oral interactions with the teacher, learners are often unsure how such elements would work and whether they could actually learn using ICT resources in the physical absence of the teacher. Often students are more willing to listen to audio materials, watch video materials, and take self tests online as a supplement to face-to-face interaction and communication in a language course (ODLAC).

Learners' prior experiences with language learning and with learning making use of ICT, their technical skills, and their personal learning preferences play an important role in their perceptions of teaching and learning in general and with ICT in particular. On the one hand, it is common for learners to feel isolated from their tutor and peers while using ICT, while on the other hand, learners who hesitate to speak in front of peers are more comfortable writing their opinions online (Kumar). In order to help language learners to deal with learning supported by ICT, there should be study tutor systems which include guidance about self-study and rules when using ICT to learn a language from a distance, to access to library resources, and to accomplish activities for collaboration and communication with peers.

Lynch and Roecker identify three delivery trends in formal education and corporate education. The first trend is the freedom to learn at a time that is convenient for the learner and at his own rhythm. The second trend is the emphasis on personal choice. Learners want to make choices as all topics in a course may not be interesting or needed at that particular time in their life. Finally, the third trend focuses on peer support in learning. Most learners seem to

want contact with their peers, which increases the need to provide opportunities for such communicative moments.

Kershaw underlines people who use the new technologies must be provided with training, technology access, and encouragement to use the technology in their day-to-day work. He stresses that "there must be a clear focus on the people who use the technology, not on the technology itself" (Kershaw 14). Moreover, he emphasizes the need of a sustained commitment, as the transformational process can be expected to take between five and ten years, and that it is easy to slip back into old ways if an institution begins to lose its focus on change (48).

3. Textbook and learning

Textbooks in one form or another have been a part of education since the written tradition began, as textbooks are an integral part of most education systems serving as bridges between teachers and students (Bliss 422). Zevin stated that teachers depend on the textbook as their main source of ideas without much enrichment or supplementation from other sources. The author also stated that textbooks are used as part of a nearly closed system of assignments, reading, questions, homework and tests that provide security but little imagination.

3.1. The role of textbooks in language classroom

Textbook plays an important role in English Language Teaching (ELT), particularly in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom where it provides the primary form of linguistic input (Kim, and Hall).

In fact, English language instruction has many important components but the essential constituents of many ESL/EFL classrooms and programs are still the textbooks and instruction materials that are often used by language instructors (Litz). As Hutchinson and Torres suggest:

> The textbook is an almost universal element of [English language] teaching. Millions of copies are sold every year, and numerous aid projects have been set up to produce them in [various] countries . . . No teaching-learning situation, it seems, is complete until it has its relevant textbook. (315)

According to Richards, textbooks are regarded as a key component. In some situations they serve as the basis for much of the language inputs learners receive and the language practice that occurs in the classroom since they may provide the basis for the content of the lessons, the balance of skills taught and the kinds of language practice the students take part in. For learners, in turn, textbook may provide the major source of contact they have with the language apart from the input they have from the teachers.

Other theorists such as Sheldon agree with this observation and suggest that textbooks not only "represent the visible heart of any ELT program" (237) but also offer considerable advantages – for both the student and the teacher – when they are being used in the ESL/EFL classroom (Litz).

Haycroft suggests textbooks are psychologically essential for students since their progress and achievement can be measured concretely when they use them. Second, as Sheldon has pointed out, students often anchor expectations about using a textbook in their particular language classroom and program. Third, textbooks involve low lesson preparation time, whereas teacher-generated materials can be time, cost and quality defective. Thus, textbooks can reduce occupational overload and give teachers the opportunity to spend their time undertaking more worthwhile tasks (O'Neill; Sheldon). Fourth, textbooks serve several additional roles in the ELT curriculum (Cunningsworth). The author argues that they are an effective resource for selfdirected learning, an effective resource for presentation material, a source of ideas and activities, a reference source for students, a syllabus where they reflect pre-determined learning objectives. Furthermore, textbooks give support for less experienced teachers who have yet to gain in confidence. Finally, Hutchinson and Torres argue textbooks play a relevant role in innovation, since textbooks can support teachers through potentially disturbing and threatening change processes, demonstrate new or untried methodologies, introduce change gradually, and create scaffolding upon which teachers can build a more creative methodology of their own.

According to Litz, while many of the aforementioned theorists point out the benefits of using ESL/EFL textbooks, there are many other researchers who maintain some well-founded reservations on the subject. Allwright suggests that textbooks are too inflexible and reflect the

pedagogic, psychological, and linguistic preferences of their authors. Consequently, the educational methodology that a textbook promotes will influence the classroom setting by indirectly imposing external language objectives and learning constituents on students as well as potentially incongruent instructional paradigms on the teachers who use them. Moreover, the pedagogic principles that are often displayed in many textbooks may also be conflicting, contradictory or even out-dated depending on the interests and exploitations of the sponsoring agent.

Litz quotes some recent authors such as:

- Porreca; Florent, and Walter; Clarke, and Clarke; Carrell, and Korwitz; and Renner who have criticized EFL/ESL textbooks for their inherent social and cultural biases.
- Prodromou and Alptekin, who have focused on the need to use the target language culture as a vehicle for teaching the language in textbooks, suggest that it is not really possible to teach a language without embedding it in its cultural base. They argue that such a process inevitably forces learners to express themselves within a culture of which they have scarcely any experience. Frequently, controversial topics are avoided and instead an idealized middle-class view of the target culture is portrayed, which may result in stereotyping, or even reluctance or resistance to learning.

On the contrary there are authors as Gray, who defends textbooks socio-cultural components, arguing that English language textbooks are ambassadorial cultural artifacts and that students should not only critically engage in their textbooks but also view them as more than mere linguistic objects. He suggests, learners will improve their language skills by using their textbooks as useful instruments for provoking discussion, cultural debate, and a two-way flow of information.

Furthermore, some proponents of authentic classroom language models do not criticize the fact that textbooks are culturally or socially biased. They, in turn, have demonstrated that many scripted textbook language models and dialogues are unnatural and inappropriate for communicative or cooperative language teaching because they do not adequately prepare students for the types of pronunciation (Brazil, Coulthard, and, Johns; Levis), language structures, grammar, idioms, vocabulary and conversational rules, routines and strategies that

they will have to use in the real-world (Cathcart; Yule, Matthis, and Hopkins). Consequently, they argue that textbooks are actually too artificial in their presentation of the target language, defending it is crucial to introduce learners to the fundamental characteristics of authentic real-life examples of both spoken and written discourse.

Richards summarises both advantages and disadvantages of the use of textbooks in teaching, depending on how they are used and the contexts of their use:

Textbook advantages	Textbook limitations
1. They provide structure and a syllabus for the program. 2. They help to standardize instruction. 3. They maintain quality. 4. They provide a variety of learning resources. 5. They are efficient. 6. They provide effective language models and input. 7. They are visually appealing.	1. They may contain inauthentic language. 2. They may distort content. 3. They may not reflect students' needs. 4. They are expensive. 5. They may be confining, i.e., they inhibit teachers' creativity.

Table 2 – Textbook advantages and limitations

Collins, in turn, states other limitations to the textbook pedagogy:

First, the standard textbook pedagogy places severe limitations on the classroom instructor, making him or her beholden to a particular approach and interpretation and organization of content. Instructors often find themselves compelled to fit their lecture to the textbook in order to make a clear connection for students between what is being read and what is stated in class. Thus, teacher's role is easily reduced to that of a technician whose main function is to present materials prepared by textbooks authors. When exposed to this methodology, students are forced to learn the same thing in the same way.

Second, the traditional textbook methodology is becoming increasingly superfluous to the courses and to the students using them, as social and technological changes have transformed the way students access and process information.

3.2. Traditional textbook versus electronic textbooks

Collins states textbooks have changed drastically over the years in response to technology and changing needs. The author believes textbooks will continue to change as society uses new technology to better achieve its needs, since the Internet now offers the potential of remaking textbooks completely. First, it will replace the scarcity model on which publishing had been traditionally based with a model in which the value of information increases as it becomes more accessible. Second, technology will result in the creation and validation of multiple forms of discourse that will enrich the educational experience. Third, because of the variety of skills and expertise needed to build interactive textbooks, the notion of authorship will change and more collaborative development models will become the norm.

In fact, the advance in the area of the information technology has opened up new possibilities for the use of the interactive media such as CD-ROM, in the learning and teaching situation. Textbooks are now available via computers (Kim et al.). According to Brusilovsky, Schwarz, and Weber, a very big part of developed "electronic textbooks" are no more than "electronic copies" of printed textbooks: they offer the learner nothing more than access to the textbook content, sometimes with use of simple hypertext technology. Frequently, printed textbooks exist on the market with electronic supplements. However, according to the same authors, a new concept has emerged. Technically, current electronic textbooks (ET) are much better than their grandparents: first ETs used expensive mainframes and represented only text (302). Multimedia technology, however, added the possibility to present sound, video, and animation, and, now, Internet and World Wide Web bring the possibility of distance access (Kim et al.). One of the new features is a multimedia approach, which combines sound, text, stills and video with interactive learning (Plasschaert; Carvalho). These new electronic or multimedia textbooks appear similar to the conventional books, but differ in function. In addition to text and images, they contain the video and audio clips, which allow the learners to interact with the content and to be exposed to the target language and the culture. Learners explore the simulated environment with audio and visual input, which facilitates comprehension in listening and reading (Chun, and Plass; Verdugo, and Belmonte). Teachers, in turn, are able to easily

retrieve the most recent and pertinent information for their students (Moore, Morales, and Carel).

The purposes of developing multimedia textbooks are to enhance student enthusiasm, by using more materials of multimedia and creating opportunities for interactive learning (Davis et al.), thus creating a stimulus-rich environment in which the users can enjoy a variety of interactive experiences that will facilitate the learning process (Calhoun).

Kim et al. quote several studies which compare the effectiveness and efficiency of multimedia textbook (MMTB) and traditional methods. According to the authors even though the multimedia textbook fails to prove its effectiveness in the beginning stage, it became evident that computer-based instruction can be more fruitful as the technology develops. According to a research conducted during 1993, the instructional effectiveness of the multimedia textbook and the lecture are equal. In a 1995 study, the instructional effectiveness of the MMTB is greater than that of the lecture ($P < .05$), and this measurement is the same as that of the printed textbook.

The instructional efficiency of the MMTB is equal to that of the lecture and of the printed textbook. The authors concluded that the MMTBs constitute an educationally alternative instructional method and have a promising future in education. In Lilienfield and Broering's study, the effectiveness of an interactive multimedia computer program in improving the knowledge of users was determined, as the users who had used the computer program achieved a significantly higher grade.

Moreover, multimedia textbooks can be quickly and inexpensively updated and repurposed for the lectures and the handouts, and are available on-line via computer networks for the distance learning. The networked multimedia textbook approach, for the global distribution of multimedia information, brings the benefits of multimedia publishing on the Internet.

According to the subcommittee of the Computer Network Study Project Advisory Committee established under Senate Bill 294, 75th Texas Legislature (1999), there are major differences between a printed textbook and an electronic textbook. Electronic textbooks are made up of the same formatting and design elements as printed textbooks, text formatting,

symbolic text, graphics, and a navigation system. However, these formatting and design elements are enhanced because the information is presented making use of multimedia.

	Printed textbook	**Electronic textbook**
Text	Words and punctuation that make up the document.	Text may be resized, or the font may be changed to meet the reader's needs.
Text formatting	All of the attributes of characters and words, such as bold, italics, underline, coloured lettering, or size. The words are structured into meaningful units, such as sentences, paragraphs, pages, sections, and chapters, as well as tables and lists.	In addition to all of the attributes of printed textbooks, text formatting in electronic textbooks may include hyperlinks which can move the reader to other parts of the page or book (see *Navigation System* below).
Symbolic Text	All subject-specific, semantically rich symbol sets, related text, and positioning which provide information and meaning.	Symbolic text in electronic textbooks may be resized or reformatted to meet the reader's needs. The student may be able to move symbols or edit text to solve problems. The resulting solution could be dynamically graphed or displayed for additional student interaction.
Graphics	Photographs, maps, charts, graphs, illustrations, and diagrams. These may have text associated with them, as with captions, or contain text embedded within the graphic itself.	The electronic versions of graphics may allow the image to be expanded to fill the entire screen, or sections of the image could be expanded to show detail. Graphs and charts may dynamically change to reflect student interaction or manipulation of associated data.
Navigation System	Formatting and design elements include colour sidebars, a table of contents, different levels of headings (chapter, section, subsection), indices, and page numbers. These navigation systems help the student find specific information (text or graphic) in a printed textbook.	Electronic textbooks use techniques for finding specific information within them, such as navigational maps, tables of contents with hyperlinks, heading levels, indices, and page numbers. They may also include hyperlinks, expand and collapse features, search functions, and interactive controls for navigating and controlling the information presentation.

Table 3 – Printed textbooks versus electronic textbooks

According to the aforementioned study, electronic textbooks, however, may also include the following elements, which are not typical of printed textbooks:

- **Hyperlink**. A hyperlink is a segment of text (word or phrase), or an inline image (an image displayed as part of a document) which refers to a location within the current document, or another document (i.e., text, sound, image or movie) elsewhere on the Web. The electronic textbook may also include a "search" feature to find a specific word or phrase anywhere in the book. These navigation systems help the student to find specific information (text, graphic, movie, or activity) in the electronic textbook.
- **Expand and Collapse Features**. Electronic textbooks also have the ability to expand or collapse their structure. For example, it is possible to produce a document which would collapse down to its major titles and subtitles. This makes it much easier to see the overall structure and to navigate to a particular level in the structure. Once that point is reached, it is possible to expand the structure exposing all of the paragraphs at that point.
- **Search Features**. Electronic textbooks generally contain search features that provide users with the ability to search documents and to jump immediately to any occurrence of a particular word or phrase which is used.
- **Sound**. Electronic textbooks often include examples of this auditory information, such as prompts or warning sounds, music, spoken words, and natural sounds.
- **Fixed Sequence Animation and Movies**. Electronic textbooks may contain moving graphics.
- **Interactive Elements**. Electronic textbooks may contain visual graphic animation or symbolic interaction that can be controlled and manipulated by the student.
- **Live Information**. Electronic textbooks may contain hyperlinks to the Web that may provide students access to live information.
- **Collaborative Environments**. An electronic textbook could be designed giving students the ability to collaborate, through the use of chat rooms, wikis, e-mail, discussion forums, videoconferences, among others. Students would be able to study

with peers or a team to write reports, share research data, or share an area of the screen where they can draw, write, calculate, or otherwise work together on the same piece of paper.

• **Three-Dimensional or Immersive Environments**. An electronic textbook may include a three-dimensional environment or experience (virtual reality). These environments can be viewed, heard, felt and/or manipulated using various stereoscopic displays, three dimensional sound systems, interfaces and/or three dimensional controllers. Ideally these environments should simulate real world experiences without real world constraints.

3.3. Interactivity and the emergence of intelligent electronic textbooks

According to Brusilovsky, Schwarz, and Weber, interactivity is the element which turns an electronic textbook from a passive into an active learning medium. In interactive materials it is provided access to a programming environment with a program editor, an interpreter or compiler, and even a graphic program design tool. In such systems, all examples and problems are active teaching operations (303). Thus, the student can not only look at the example but also use the tools to investigate it: to execute it, to change something, to execute it again, and so forth. The same tools replace paper and pencil for developing and testing problem solutions interactively.

The authors quote another example of adding interactivity to textbooks by program testing and grading systems (Benford et al). This kind of programmes not only provides on-line access to the text of lectures and programming problems, but also can process student programmes (i.e., problem solutions) and provide the student with important feedback. It can test the correctness of a student's problem solution, measure its quality with several metrics, and report the results to the student. Such interactive feedback gets the students much more involved in the learning process.

According to Sims, interactivity is intrinsic to successful, effective instructional practice as well as individual discovery. Thus, the author argues the implementation of interactivity can be perceived as an art because it requires a comprehensive range of skills, including an

understanding of the learner, an appreciation of software engineering capabilities, the importance of rigorous instructional design and the application of appropriate graphical interfaces.

Therefore, when developing multimedia applications, significant emphasis must be placed on the ways in which users can access, manipulate and navigate through the content material. Sims identifies a range of interactive concepts based on 11 grades of interactivity which may be used as a guide to different modes of communication between computer and person. By applying these interactive concepts to multimedia courseware design, the various media elements can be integrated based on instructional decisions allowing more effective communication and consequently more educational effectiveness. An important aspect of the following classification of interactive concepts is that they are not mutually exclusive events, but elements which can be integrated to provide comprehensive and engaging instructional transactions.

Interaction grades	Description
Object Interactivity	Refers to an application in which objects (buttons, people, things) are activated by using a mouse or other pointing device.
Linear Interactivity	Refers to applications in which the user is able to move (forwards or backwards) through a predetermined linear sequence of instructional material. Often termed electronic page-turning.
Hierarchical interactivity	The hierarchical (reactive navigation) class of interactivity can provide the learner with a predefined set of options from which a specific course of study may be selected. The most common example of this interaction is the menu, and in its basic format, learners will be directed to a linear interaction after selecting an item and returned to the original menu on completion of the sequence. This interaction is relatively simple in terms of development effort, especially if no conditions are attached to menu selection. However, if prerequisite and mastery conditions are required, the instructional strategies will require more careful specification.
Support Interactivity	Refers to the facility for the user to receive performance support, which may range from simple help messages to complex tutorial systems.

Update Interactivity	It relates to individual application components or events in which a dialogue is initiated between the learner and computer-generated content. The applications present or generate problems to which the learner must respond; the analysis of the response results in computer-generated update or feedback.
Construct Interactivity	Is an extension to update interactivity, and requires the creation of an instructional environment in which the learner is required to manipulate component objects to achieve specific goals.
Reflective Interactivity	Records each response entered by users of the application and allows the current user to compare their response to that of other users as well as recognized "experts". In this way, learners can reflect on their response and make their own judgment as to its accuracy or correctness.
Simulation Interactivity	Extends the role of the learner to that of controller or operator, where individual selections determine the training sequence.
Hyperlinked Interactivity	With hyperlinked interactivity (proactive navigation), the learner has access to a wealth of information, and may "travel" at will through that knowledge base. The provision of linked information can provide a means to present problems which are solved by correctly navigating through the "maze" of information.
Non-Immersive Contextual Interactivity	This concept combines and extends the various interactive levels into a complete virtual training environment (mutual elaboration) in which the trainee is able to work in a meaningful, job-related context. Rather than taking a passive role in which they work through a series of content oriented sequences, they are transported into a micro world which models their existing work environment, and the tasks they undertake reflect those of the work experience.
Immersive Virtual Interactivity	Provides an interactive environment in which the learner is projected into a complete computer-generated world which responds to individual movement and actions.

Table 4 – Range of 11 grades of interactivity (Sims, 1994)

Interactivity as a means to access to significant learning is not only a simple navigation process (Caldas). On the contrary, it involves the drawing of interactive environments. Learning, therefore, depends mainly on the strategies used which should demand an adequate cognitive evolvement by the learner. Moreover, the addition of the cognitive capacities to the ability to master learning is positive as far as the development of learning and of interactivity is

concerned. Therefore, it seems that the development of multimedia environments as a means to learning is an important challenge more in terms of design of environments through which the learner not only processes learning but also improves the development of cognitive strategies which enable to master, identify and select concepts and transfer acquired knowledge to new situations (Sims). In the same way this intelligent, integrated, interactive textbooks allow:

- **Self-paced learning**: Students can learn the material at their own pace. Simulations can be rerun multiple times to help students to internalize the principles being demonstrated. Interactive problems can provide hints if required. And, of course, students can "flip" the pages when they want.
- **Multiple learning styles**: Students learn in various ways. Interactive textbooks show animations of concepts while they are being explained verbally. They also challenge kinaesthetic learners with simulations that require a grasp of the concept as well as hand-eye coordination.
- **Self assessment for the student**: Each textbook provides many ways for a student to self assess. Sample problems show the student step-by-step solutions for a problem. Interactive checkpoint problems follow the same steps as sample problems, but supply hints when requested.

Conclusion

Printed textbooks have a long history in education and still retain several important advantages over electronic texts. However, the computer-based textbook is a new educational tool that promises to play a prominent role in the coming years. Classical instructional technologies, such as video, stills, audio files and computer programmes with a textbook orientation, have been merged into one multimedia computer system and have created additional opportunities for learning. In fact, electronic texts also have their unique strengths in meeting the needs of learners: electronic texts can incorporate simulations and other concrete examples, employ a style well suited to a learner's needs, and work in the opportunity to practice and elaborate upon what students have learned which is very appealing, since interactive media provide teaching tools that appeal do diverse learning styles (Bradshaw).

As Cunningham, Duffy and Knuth state, we believe that the textbook of the future will be a construction of the learner, drawing upon the data base and authoring linking and customizing tools provided. Instructional software will be of a different type: instead of selecting, organizing and presenting content, software will provide tools that enable students to select, construct and organize information from a variety of sources and representational modes, thus reinsuring that the times ahead in education will be exciting and challenging.

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Revival and Renewal in ELT Approaches to Grammar

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Recent years have seen a change in attitudes towards the teaching of grammar. The more dramatic rejection of overt grammar teaching associated with The Bangalore project (Prabhu) has been tempered by an appreciation that grammar may have a role to play in the teaching of English that incorporates the notions of a learner centred approach which is process oriented and skills based and which goes beyond the accepted practice of a more traditionalist approach. The role of grammar in the use of language in the real world outside the L2 classroom should not be underestimated:

> As language users, we may wish to be very clear about what we want to say, or choose to be deliberately ambiguous or non-committal. We may wish to sound polite, distant, direct or even rude. We may wish to convey formality or informality according to the context in which we are operating. To do all these things, speakers use the linguistic resources which the grammar of the language makes available to them. (Cullen 222-223)

Every English language teacher should have her own perspective on what is important (and what is not) in this key element of the teaching/learning process. The importance attributed to this area of ELT practice is founded on the belief (which while not universally accepted) has been stated by various authors like, for example, Penny Ur: "There is no doubt that a knowledge – implicit or explicit – of grammatical rules is essential for a mastery of a language: you cannot use words unless you know how they should be put together" (*Grammar Practice* 4). Regardless of whether a teacher upholds this belief or rejects it, no programme of study can be

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constructed without taking a position on the multiple issues associated with the teaching and learning of grammar.

Bowen and Marks identify three fundamental aspects in their view of grammar which are paraphrased below (76-83):

i) Teaching grammar means teaching the "most common and recurrent aspects of meaning" (e.g. modality, tense, number, gender etc) as well as grammar words (the, a/an, his/her, would/could etc);

ii) Grammar is generalizations about how words and groups of words behave. Grammar teaching and vocabulary teaching are "two sides of the same coin";

iii) Grammar is a system with logic, patterns and restrictions which allows users to substitute new items into its structures and equations to create new utterances.

From the above we can state that grammar teaching should always have as its foremost concern how it encapsulates meaning… what is the difference between "*I have done my homework*" and "*I am doing my homework*"? The IMPORTANT difference is whether the homework is finished or not. We use different verb tenses to communicate different meanings, not because we want to make different tenses: "Learners should not engage in the mechanical input activities of traditional grammar instruction. Remember that input should be attended to for its message so that learners can see how grammar assists in the 'delivery' of that message" (Lee, and Van Patten 155). Grammatical variation as a function of different meanings is shown through the use of different word forms and as such it is artificial to entirely separate the teaching of grammar from the teaching of lexis; for example, when learners are required to get to grips with English irregular verbs in their past simple form, are we asking them to study grammar or lexis? Indeed, it could be argued that lexis is the starting point of language production, the building blocks on which grammar is mapped in order to convey a specific meaning. So, learners might be asked to expand a newspaper headline or create a dialogue based on a shopping list. In this way "learners experience the process of using their grammatical resources to develop the meaning potential contained in lexical items and express a range of meanings which the words alone could not convey" (Cullen 224).

In this light, Nunan provides three extremely useful guidelines as to how teachers can frame their approach to the teaching of grammar (158-160):

1) Focus on the development of procedural rather than declarative knowledge.

Knowing the rules is not enough (declarative knowledge), it is vital that learners are also able to use the knowledge for communication (procedural knowledge). Learning grammar means using it in communicative contexts, this is learning by doing… or "experientialism".

2) Make clear the relationship between grammatical form and communicative function.

Effective courses/books do NOT teach grammar as an abstract system and do NOT present grammar in isolated sentences. Procedures should always include some kind of communicative context.

3) Integrate both inductive and deductive methods into grammar teaching.

With a deductive approach, the teacher gives a grammatical explanation followed by exercises which are designed to clarify and help learners master the grammar point. Inductive procedures are more like guided discovery where from samples of language, the learners work out the grammar for themselves.

What is clear from the first two guidelines is that much more than just "form" and "rules" are important when it comes to the teaching of grammar: "Language learners need to know far more than just how to form sentences. They also need to know the meaning of the forms they use and how to form patterns to encode the meanings they wish to convey" (Watkins 42). Teachers must give consideration to providing opportunities for their learners to make use of the language item in question in meaningful contexts: authentic language use with a communicative purpose. Nunan's third guideline states clearly the need for teachers to vary grammar teaching methodology to the extent of providing opportunities for learners to come to their own conclusions about what the item means and how it works with the emphasis being firmly on creativity and use:

> Grammar is the great systematizing force of language, allowing us to be endlessly creative with a finite set of resources. But we can represent this system more or less broadly, using idealizations which are more or less finely tuned. For learners, idealizations provide a rough-and-ready map which sketches out some of the main routes through the tricky terrain of forms and meanings. (Batstone 24)

It has become something like standard ELT practice for grammar to be **presented** by the teacher prior to the learners being asked to **practice** and then **produce** the grammar in question: an efficient use of this P.P.P. approach has become somewhat synonymous with effective teaching of grammar. Under these circumstances, the main function of the teacher is to be responsible for the quality of the presentation. Ur provides a checklist to try and guide the teacher to evaluate what was (or was not) a successful grammar presentation (*A Course* 82):

- **The structure itself**: Was it presented in both speech and writing? Were both the form and the meaning taught?
- **Provision of examples**: Were enough examples in meaningful contexts provided? Can you be sure the learners understood?
- **Terminology**: Was the structure given a "grammar book" name? Was this helpful? Could any other terminology have been useful?
- **Rules**: Was an explicit rule given? Was this provided by you or elicited from the learners? Was this useful?
- **Explanation**: Was the information given appropriate for the level? How much detail was required? Were contrasts drawn with the L1 grammar? Was this technique effective?
- **Language**: Which language was employed for the explanation? Use L1 or L2? Or a combination? Why?
- **Delivery**: Were you speaking (writing) clearly? At moderated or natural speed?

This checklist assumes a rather traditionalist approach to the teaching of grammar within a largely deductive paradigm. Despite much criticism and the suggestion of alternatives, perhaps most notably Task Based Learning, the P.P.P. approach remains in widespread use, particularly at the level of "novice" or student teachers. There is a strong pragmatic appeal to the division of

grammar into "teachable" sub-units, where a new language item is presented and practiced as a discrete entity, a learnable unit within one class but this allows for little integration of grammar into a vision of language as a broader system (lexical and discourse) and neither is the learner's existing knowledge given any overt value. But "[i]t is very important to remember that learners do not learn from presentation alone, or even presentation followed by practice. . . . You will probably have to focus on the most basic functional-grammar items again from time to time, right through to intermediate level and beyond" (Davies, and Pearse 29). Generally, the language item for presentation/practice is not chosen by the learners so it is difficult to say that there is any notion of learner needs or interests: the whole procedure is very teacher-centred right from the outset. A more process oriented approach would imply that "the learner must have a degree of choice over the grammatical structures they use, and deploy them as effectively as they can to match specific contexts and meet specific communicative goals" (Cullen 223). In addition, very often learners are pressured to "produce" before new grammatical information has been properly processed and/or assimilated. Frequently little or no time is allowed for "introspection". Batsone refers to the negative impact of time pressure on language production described in recent research and concludes that "planning time makes it easier for the learner to activate her existing knowledge, giving her more opportunity to stretch her language resources and hence restructure, and ultimately to proceduralise, a more accurate working system" (81). Few opportunities are generally provided for "receptive processing of input": learners should be allowed to "notice" and experiment their understanding and refine it; a more communicative methodology would involve a different approach: "Instead of starting with a grammar point, a lesson might revolve around students' understanding content or completing a task. When a grammatical problem is encountered, a focus on form takes place immediately by drawing the students' attention to it i.e. promoting noticing" (Larsen-Freeman 39).

Grammar teaching (and learning) needs to be more individualised, personalised to facilitate "internalisation" and to make grammar "personally meaningful". The provision of freer practice is vital so that learners can actively manipulate and explore grammar in use in a "contextually relevant manner": controlled practice where focus is on form may not encourage memorization. "Information gap", "Opinion gap" or "Context gap" type activities should predominate: in these

contexts real communication is prompted by absence of shared knowledge: grammar is used for a purpose. In this respect, Scott Thornbury after describing a jigsaw activity based on teaching the article system reports claims that learners achieve success by learning about language and getting communicative practice at the same time: "they do just as well when tested on the grammar as students taught more traditionally, and they speak just as much as students doing meaning-focussed (i.e. not grammar focussed) information gap activities" (43). From this methodological perspective, the principle role of the teacher has nothing to do with designing grammar presentation phases for a lesson but rather is concerned with the control of pre- and post-task conditions and features while learners focus on "product", where learners focus on specific grammatical forms, and on "process", where learners deploy these forms in real language use rather than the product): teachers should encourage learners' gradual proceduralisation of declarative knowledge.

Batstone makes a strong appeal for an approach to the teaching of grammar which "means guiding the learner's own attention to grammar, and designing tasks which help us to teach learners the skill of using and attending to grammar in language use" (99). Teachers need to be sensitive and flexible in their approach to grammar teaching so that the factors such as learner needs and interests as well as task appropriacy and intensity are constantly being evaluated so as to ensure that their students are efficiently engaged in what might be called "learning". Indeed, pre-service teachers could benefit immensely from a more guided reflection on the teaching of grammar, perhaps through the use of a worksheet (see below).

What makes a GOOD grammar-focussed lesson?

Identify a grammar focussed lesson from your recent learning/teaching experience. Think about the questions below and reflect on what ACTUALLY happened in class.

1) Was it the first time the learners had "seen" this grammar?

____

2) At what stage of the lesson did the grammar "appear"?

____

3) Was the grammar "embedded" in a special context?

____

4) How did the learners "work" with this grammar?

____

5) How did you check the learners' "understanding" of the grammar?

____

6) What kind of "extension activity" did the learners do?

____

7) Was any **overt** pronunciation phase incorporated in the lesson?

____

8) Were the learners required to "recycle" the grammar in a later lesson?

____

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Technology in Language Learning: Wikis and Webquests

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In today's world, computers and the internet play an important role in people's lives, one recent estimate suggesting that in 2007 there were 1.3 billion internet users worldwide (see Internet World Stats). Electronic literacy skills, that is reading, writing, plus the "ability to find, organize and make use of information" using computers (Shetzer, and Warschauer 173) are a part of life for many in the developed world and consequently the use of computers in language learning has "become a fact of life", with the question being asked not "should" but "how can the computer best be used in language teaching?"(Chapelle 1).

Computers were first used in language teaching in the 1960s, and Warschauer and Healey have described 3 phases of computer assisted language learning (CALL). These are behaviouristic, communicative and integrative CALL. The initial behaviouristic stage corresponded to a time when structural linguistics flourished, which emphasised the "system of structures that make up a given language" and the importance of the isolated sentence as the unit of analysis (Kern, and Warschauer 3). Here, informed by the work of behaviourist psychology, learners were provided with practice of repetitive drills. For example, learners could be given a word in the target language and asked to translate it to their mother tongue. In this phase, the principal role of computers was to provide unlimited practice, tutorial explanation and corrective feedback (Kern, and Warschauer 13). However, such activities stirred little excitement among learners and teachers because they merely replicated the types of exercises learners did in the classroom at that time. This, combined with the rejection of purely behaviouristic approaches to language learning both at theoretical and pedagogical levels propelled CALL into a second generation, that of Communicative CALL.

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Communicative CALL emerged in the late 1970s and early 1980s and stressed that computer-based activities should focus more on *using* forms than on the forms themselves, teach grammar implicitly rather than explicitly, allow and encourage students to use the language for realistic communication rather than just manipulate prefabricated language, and use the target language predominantly or even exclusively (Warschauer, and Healey). Cognitive theories of language learning which stressed that learning was a process of discovery, expression and development predominated, and typical activities were text reconstruction programmes, which allowed students working alone or in groups to rearrange words and texts to discover patterns of language and meaning. For many, the focus was more on what students did together while working at the computer rather than what they did with the machine (Warschauer, and Healey). However, although Communicative CALL was seen as an improvement on Behaviouristic CALL, it too was criticised for using computers in an *ad hoc* and disconnected fashion.

Integrative CALL has emerged with the arrival of the internet and multimedia. Computer mediated communication (CMC) can take place between learners through technology such as videoconferencing and discussion boards, and consequently sociocultural theories of language learning have been proposed (Lamy, and Hampel 9). Using the World Wide Web (WWW), learners can search through millions of files of authentic material (texts, audio files, and videos) which correspond to their interests and publish their texts for the general public to read.

All these technologies vary considerably in their capacity and accessibility, and how effective they are also depends on the learners themselves, the task, and the institutional setting (Zhao 8). In this presentation, theories of language learning will be discussed in relation to wikis and webquests, materials will be discussed, as will the advantages and disadvantages of using these technologies in language learning.

Learning theories

Two main theories have developed within the field of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) – the first based on cognitive theories, the second influenced by sociocultural theories. Although these two theories have developed to explain traditional language learning in a classroom setting, they

can also be used to examine learning and teaching using new technologies online. Let us now consider the most important ideas of each theory in turn.

Cognitive theories of learning describe how processes within the learner's mind are involved in language learning (Lamy, and Hampel 19), and consider second language input received by the learner, second language output produced by the learner, and interaction between the learner and some other conversational partner as vital (Lamy, and Hampel 20).The Input hypothesis proposed by Krashen (Mitchell, and Myles 165), claimed that exposure to comprehensible input was the only condition necessary for learning. Krashen proposed that comprehensible input slightly ahead of the current developmental stage of the learner, if provided in sufficient quantity, was enough for the learner to unconsciously acquire the language. However, Krashen's theory was criticised for being difficult to test and lacking evidence (Mitchell, and Myles 165), and Long subsequently proposed the Interaction hypothesis, which suggests that interaction involving negotiation of meaning, that is repetition, confirmation and comprehension checks or clarification requests, helps learners modify their output and focus on form (Chapelle 22). Long has also suggested that negative feedback can help language development (Mitchell, and Myles 174). Swain's Output hypothesis (1995) suggests that producing language may make learners conscious of problems in their interlanguage and analyse them, and in addition give the opportunity to try out new forms (Mitchell, and Myles 174) and Schmidt has stressed the importance of noticing features of the input (Mitchell, and Myles 184).

Since the late 1990s there has been a general development in SLA which Block calls the "social turn" (qtd. in Lamy, and Hampel 23). This broader approach focuses on interaction between learners from a social rather than linguistic point of view, and is influenced by the ideas of Soviet developmental psychologists such as Lev Vygotsky (Lamy, and Hampel 23). According to Vygotskian sociocultural theory, learning originates in social activity and instruction is essentially collaborative, with problem-solving under guidance from more capable peers vital for learning (Gánem Guitérrez 232). He proposed that children or unskilled individuals learn by carrying out tasks under the guidance of other more skilled individuals such as teachers, through collaborative talk. He named this supportive dialogue "scaffolding" (Mitchell, and Myles

195), and the domain where the learner is not yet capable of independent functioning but can achieve the outcome given scaffolded help, the "Zone of Proximal Development" (ZPD). Application of this theory to SLA assumes that new language knowledge is jointly constructed through collaborative activity, which may or may not involve formal instruction. Although these ideas originally described learning in children, Warschauer has applied this model to second language learning with adults (471). Other sociocultural theories include Lave and Wenger's ideas of communities of practice, situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation (Lave, and Wenger qtd. in Zuengler, and Miller 40-41). A community of practice is a group of people who have a common interest and who learn through collaboration over a period of time. Situated learning and legitimate peripheral participation describe the ideas that learning takes place at particular times or in particular places and that participation involves a gradual process of incorporation into a community of practice (Zuengler, and Miller 41). Lastly, Bakhtin's idea of "dialogism" suggests that language is mutually constructed and that we incorporate the language of others into our repertoire, thus making it our own (Zuengler, and Miller 42).

Calls have been made by various researchers to combine both cognitive and socio-cultural approaches in relation to online learning (Felix 85), and Levy suggests that "both theoretical positions have the potential to inform research and practice in educational computing and in CALL" (qtd. in Lamy, and Hampel 19). From a cognitive perspective, the place of CALL and CMC is to provide language input and opportunities to analyse this language; from a sociocultural perspective, their place is to provide contexts for social interaction and to create new discourse communities (Lamy, and Hampel 28).

The Technology – wikis

A wiki is a series of interlinked collaborative web pages which can be edited by all those with a password, or by all those who visit it, and which becomes a "repository of knowledge, with the knowledge base growing over time" (Godwin-Jones 15). The term 'wiki' comes from the Hawaiian phrase 'wiki-wiki' which means quick and the most famous wiki is Wikipedia (Parker, and Chao 57). Wikis are easy to set up and use and as no technical skills are required to use

them, participants can focus on the information exchange and collaborative tasks, rather than on the technology itself. The following is a list of the features of PB wikis (http://pbwiki.com).

- Joint production of texts, as all those with a password can edit the pages;
- Comments can be included on a page;
- Easy access outside class;
- Formatting tools can be used to personalise a page;
- Images, audio files, slide shows and video can be incorporated;
- Chat room can be incorporated;
- Lack of body language;
- Only one computer can edit one page at a time.

The video available at <http://www.teachertrainingvideos.com/wikis/index.html> shows how to set up a pbwiki (which has since been renamed pbworks), and this is an example of a wiki I set up with a group of elementary young learners who were working on past tenses and writing biographies: < http://famousportuguese.pbworks.com >.

Some examples of using wikis in the language learning class

This is an adaptation for wikis of a task published in *New Cutting Edge Intermediate* entitled "Design a tour" (Cunningham, and Moor 32-33).

Class type	**Adults**
Aims	Design a tour of Portugal or a particular region of the country for a particular group of people. Comment on the work of others.

Procedure

Learners are introduced to the task of writing a tour of Portugal or a region of Portugal for a particular group of clients. This stage also focuses on useful words and phrases for the task itself.

Learners work in pairs or groups of 3 and discuss how they could design a tour of Portugal or a particular region/city they know well for one of these groups:

a) A family with young children.
b) A middle aged couple whose children have left home.
c) A group of students on a budget holiday.
d) A retired couple.

They decide on how long the tour will be how many days to spend in each place, the best way to travel and the most interesting things to visit. Internet sites could be consulted at this stage to obtain information on hotels, transport, and museum times, etc.

Learners then go to the computer room where they open their internet browser, go to the wiki already created by the teacher and to which all learners have access. Learners are helped to log on and create pages for their tour information. Learners then write an itinerary for their tour. They could also use the formatting tools to personalise their page and upload photographs to illustrate features of their tour. The teacher would monitor, providing assistance to the learners and noting any good examples of language or any areas in need of input and practice.

Using notes from the previous stage, the teacher would highlight appropriate use of vocabulary and grammar during the activity. An error correction exercise could be used at this stage to focus on form. In addition the teacher could give individual feedback on language via the comments function on the wiki page, thereby individualizing instruction. Practice could be provided of words, phrases and grammar related to the previous stages. Learners would be encouraged to leave comments on classmate's wiki pages on content and language and would be asked to create links between the content on pages, thereby making the project more collaborative. This activity could serve as the beginning of a culturally orientated wiki where learners could add more material over time. Pages about Portuguese (or regional) music, food and drink, customs and traditions could be added and images and audio files uploaded. This could then serve as the basis of a cultural exchange activity in which learners could share their wiki with learners in an English class abroad, thus providing a real audience for their writing. These two groups of learners could collaborate via the chat function to decide what information to include, and how it should be organised, or they could use a wiki page as a discussion

forum. Learners within each country could also use these functions to collaborate during writing, exchanging ideas and creating links between information on different pages. On completion, the wiki pages could be shared and a page for discussion could be started where learners from both groups could leave comments or questions, as on a threaded discussion forum. This interaction could lead to more negotiation of meaning, as learners may be more familiar with the type of errors made by those with the same mother tongue. The teacher would monitor this interaction closely for content, collaboration and language, intervening if necessary to help learners resolve difficulties, and monitoring linguistic problems for remedial work in class.

Additional ideas for using wikis

1. In the task "Talking about someone you admire" (Cunningham, and Moor 42-43) learners could upload a picture and write or record an oral presentation about a person they admired on a wiki page. Their efforts could then be read and listened to by others and a focus on language could proceed as above.

2. In the same way, learners could upload a picture and write or record a presentation about the things they'd hate to be without (Cunningham, and Moor 86-87). This could be done as homework and learners could be shown how to upload pictures of their own personal objects.

3. Students could write a collaborative narrative. In pairs they open a wiki page and write a sentence you have chosen as the first sentence of a story, for example 'It was a dark and stormy night and...'

Students write until you say 'Stop', and then click on another page. Ask learners to read, correct and improve their classmates writing before continuing the story. Continue in this way. Learners can then read all stories online, and vote for the best. Cunningham and Peachey both give ideas for collaborative narrative writing which could be easily adapted to wikis.

4. Learners could be encouraged to contribute to a "virtual vocabulary notebook" as described by Sharma and Barrett (131). Here learners add a new word or expression per week with a

definition, an example sentence and a personal comment. A link to an online dictionary is also provided, and a few learners per week are asked to present their words to the rest of the class. Additional pages could be added where learners asked for help with queries concerning vocabulary or grammar. The teacher or peers could provide answers. A page could be created with links to interesting stories learners had read on the web, or a page with feedback from a face to face lesson where learners together had the opportunity to correct the errors made in class.

Wikis appear to support cognitive theories of language learning. Here, the comprehensible input envisaged as necessary for language learning could be provided via input from peers, the teacher, or learners in other parts of the world. Such input could encourage learners to notice certain features and focus on form. Participants could be encouraged to use wiki functions to negotiate for meaning (Pellettieri 38), or give negative feedback to peers (Notari 132).However, wikis also support socio-cultural theories of language learning. Wikis are essentially tools for collaboration, supporting the idea that learning takes place through social activity. As all members of a wiki can edit or comment on the writing of others, wiki users form a community or practice, and learning can occur in collaboration with more capable peers

Webquests

Dodge defines a Webquest as an "inquiry orientated activity in which some or all of the information that learners interact with comes from resources on the World Wide Web" (n. pag.). Essentially webquests are mini-projects which use World Wide Web sites to help students develop problem-solving and decision making skills. But a webquest requires students to go beyond simple fact-finding to analyse a body of knowledge and create a produce that others can respond to. Some reasons for using webquests in the classroom are that they lend themselves to communication and the sharing of knowledge, they encourage critical thinking skills, and can be motivating as they are often be viewed as being more authentic and therefore for useful to the learner.

Webquests often have four basic stages plus a conclusion/self-evaluation. They are:

Introduction
This sets the scene for the webquest, gives background information and may introduce necessary language.

Task
This details exactly what the learners will have to do. The task should be authentic in nature and may involve a certain amount of role-play.

Process
The Process stage usually includes a set of web sites which learners use to complete the activities and research tasks. The process stage often includes learners in producing an end produce e.g. a presentation or report, which serves as the basis of the evaluation stage.

Evaluation
This stage focuses on a chart which lists goals for the quest and the standards by which performance will be measured.

Conclusion/Self Evaluation

There are plenty of webquest 'repositories' on the internet. A webquest I created for students on a tourism degree course is housed at <http://zunal.com/webquest.php?user=9535>.

Working in pairs or groups, learners work collaboratively and may form a community of practice, supporting sociocultural learning theories. By using multimedia, webquests also address different learning styles and are useful in mixed ability groups. As collaboration could also involve learners working together to resolve a linguistic problem, they also support cognitive theories of learning. They provide an authentic setting in which to practise English itself, and electronic literacy skills in English. Input from websites in English could provide comprehensible input necessary for language learning and by producing language, either in writing or orally, learners may become conscious of problems in their interlanguage and analyse them, or try out new forms.

Constraints of using wikis and webquests in the language learning

A lack of technical know-how or technical support can be a negative factor in the use of technology in language learning. However, both technologies described here are very user friendly, and present few problems, even for the most technologically-shy language teacher. The process of writing or editing a wiki page is identical to working on a word document and logging on is similar to accessing an e-mail account. The only technological know-how necessary to use a webquest is the ability to access websites and writing a webquest can be done on a webquest website, or could simply consist of a word document which could be e-mailed to learners.

Perhaps the greatest disadvantage of using a wiki as a collaborative tool is the fact that only one computer at a time can be involved in page editing. This means that when groups are working together, they must do so on separate pages, which immediately causes a feeling of ownership, making collaboration less likely. Notari reports on how difficult it can be to get learners to comment and communicate when using a wiki (131) and others have reported that learners resent peer editing (Lund 48). Collaboration itself is problematic in nature (Felix 88), as there may be tension between individuals. Cross cultural collaboration was on one occasion reported to have the opposite effect of that intended (Belz 90) serving to "reinforce stereotypes" and leading to an eventual breakdown in communication. The lack of non-verbal clues in CMC could further exacerbate this situation. The role of the teacher in monitoring possible areas of conflict and intervening if necessary is therefore important, and this additional claim on teachers' time could be considered another constraint.

Using a webquest, communication and collaboration takes place via the computer and a written record of this communication exists. This may discourage the use of the mother tongue (L1) in such circumstances. However, using webquests, most collaborative talk takes place between learners face to face, and here there may be more of a tendency to use L1. To discourage this it could be necessary to include evaluation of classroom talk in the final evaluation of learners. The task also needs to be structured in such a way that learners are unable to copy directly from websites, and learners must be warned beforehand that such practices are easy to detect and will lead to the lowest possible marks being awarded.

Conclusion

With the rise of computer-mediated communication and the Internet, the computer has been transformed into a tool for communication with the rest of the world and as a way of accessing huge amounts of authentic target-language information. In addition it gives the learner a way to publish and distribute their own information to an international audience. Because of these new opportunities, many language teachers see great potential in computer technology in teaching. However the answer to the question "Does the use of network-based language teaching lead to better language learning?" (Kern, and Warschauer 2), is not an easy question to answer because the technology itself is not ultimately responsible for the improvements in learning, it is the how the technology is used which is important. If the learner is to benefit from the technologies discussed here, the role of the teacher in monitoring group dynamics, coordinating activities and encouraging critical reflection on language and content is of the utmost importance.

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Modes of Reading Literary Texts in a Foreign Language in Intercultural Perspective

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> . . . it is up to the reader to see to it that literature exerts its critical force, and that this can occur independently of the author's intentions. (Calvino 26)

In this paper I consider an assumption that reading literary texts in a foreign language-and-culture classroom implies, in a first instance, the individual interaction developed between reader and text. In a second instance, reading is located in the classroom as personal readings are shared, discussed and modified. Therefore, our point of departure must be reading (allowing some time to *convalesce* as an important factor to consider) and the subsequent approach should take place on the basis of the *response* to literature that follows or, in other words, on the outcome of reading.

Brumfit and Carter point out that literature is not self-explanatory by nature and discuss the need of supplying the foreign learner-reader with background information[1] in order to enhance a fuller cultural understanding of the literary text. Contrasting with this position, it is pertinent to see how Soter balances the question of the importance of 'backgroung knowledge' in the perspective of reader-response theories. Very significantly the author establishes a parallel between a reader and a traveller:[2]

> . . . we could consider the literary journey as comparable to the physical one we take when venturing to another country and culture. No matter how much we may prepare ourselves, arm ourselves with information about the unfamiliar culture, we can be sure of encountering the unpredictable; we can be sure of our own surprise expressed perhaps in terms of "But it

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> wasn't in the guidebook!" We can also be overprepared. Armed with too much preliminary information, we may seek to find what will confirm our "prior knowledge" (albeit limited). Such information may function as a frame or a lens through which the actual is then perceived. We may, therefore, be so preoccupied with confirming what "the guidebook" said that we miss the opportunity for the experience to speak directly to us . . . . (Soter 226)

Although I agree with the need of supplying additional texts in specific cases (Delanoy; Kuna), it is important to clarify two points. Firstly, what is the concept of 'culture' that is at stake? From the examples that Brumfit and Carter give we believe that they implicitly mean products and behaviours, not necessarily comprehending intrinsic values and attitudes.[3] Furthermore, this approach to reading may actually prove itself inadequate in terms of an intercultural perspective sustained by reader-response theories. The authors seem to not differentiate between concepts of "reading" and reading in a foreign language is necessarily different from reading in the mother tongue or in the first language (assuming equal 'fluency' in the corresponding foreign 'culture' or 'cultures' in the plural): we read differently in a foreign language and we read differently from our students. If one of the premises proposed by these authors is that reading must take place in the first instance, then I would agree with Dasenbrock that "to annotate the unannotated text would be to prevent the students from experiencing the meaning of the work" (44). As Sell puts it: "Styles of reading involving some kind of historical or cultural purism – the assumption that a text's significance is never more than its significance in its original context – are unconducive to the dialogicality of genuine communication" (21). Dasenbrock, for instance, adds an argument for the value of reading a literary text from a foreign perspective:

> The informed position is not always the position of the richest or most powerful experience of a work of art. And this becomes even more true when crossing cultural barriers: the unknown can be powerful precisely because it is unknown. But this is not to defend ignorance, to defend remaining unknowledgeable. For one can see something for the first time only once; after that, the choice is to become more knowledgeable, more expert, more informed, or to stay uninformed without the intense pleasure of initial acquaintance. (Dasenbrock 39)

The author is justifying the uses of the study of literary texts against the arguments used by some which are directed against it, as Broich put it: "This means that in a course on literature it will not do to begin with a brief introduction to the 'background' and then, with a sigh of relief, forget about it and devote oneself entirely to a close reading of 'the' texts" (27).

Pertinently, Kramsch locates one of the difficulties noted in reading literature in a foreign language in the chosen reading mode: "Indeed, the frequent disappointment of intermediate language learners may stem from the fact that they are asked to read efferently as stories texts that yield their best when read aesthetically as discourses" (*Context and Culture* 124). The fact that the students are concentrated on the information provided by the text, makes them feel 'incompetent' readers as they feel their knowledge of the foreign culture is insufficient. As Kramsch notes well, and unlike what Brumfit and Carter seemed to be saying, what they are overlooking is not additional information "but an awareness of their own frame of reference and of their dialogue with the text during the reading process" (*Context and Culture* 124). Usually missing in the foreign language classes is the cultural context of interaction of the reader with the literary text and the awareness that the reader's experience as 'non-native' reader is useful in experiencing the text. As Dasenbrook suggested above, the 'foreignness' of the texts, in the perspective of the students, may reveal different capacities and perspectives in understanding those texts. A pedagogical (intercultural) advantage may ensue: "Rather than be the object of correction or even ridicule, these [cultural discrepancies] should be exploited as a unique mirror to the particular reader's perspective and contrasted with the response of other readers at other times under other circumstances" (Kramsch, *Context and Culture* 128).

Therefore the question arises as to the kind of reading that learners are expected to perform and this may be located in two different poles: either 'efferent' or 'aesthetic'.[4] According to Rosenblatt, 'efferent' reading situates the text in a web of concepts supplied by teachers, critics and the norms of the reader's culture (445). 'Aesthetic' reading involves a lived relationship with the text itself. Put thus, the dichotomy is simplistic; nonetheless, the teacher has to determine what type of reading should be stressed. The purposes of the reading should be evident in the activities that follow it. Purves identifies a number of purposes for reading

(ludic, efferent, aesthetic, proactive, spiritual, hermeneutic, ritual)[5] and notes that during the act of reading purposes may change and may be multiple and simultaneous (351).

I advocate that the teacher should work within a reader-response framework that privileges an aesthetic reading of literary texts and, along the continuum of these different modes of reading, plays down the efferent purpose. As Bredella has noted (in "Literary Texts"), the aesthetic reading experience is pedagogically significant for it allows us to explore how the reader is affected by the text, and what the 'response' might be. Here there is an opportunity to direct the reader's attention to his/her images of the other and of oneself and to explore the dual process of involvement and detachment. This happens as the reader participates in this imagined world while at the same time observes his/her own involvement. This reflective element connecting reader and text encourages the adoption of different points of view and broadens the readers' horizons.

Very roughly we would say that 'response' here refers to the interaction that develops between reader and text and between different readers of a common text. From this it does not follow that a response is necessarily individual and contestable, becoming solipsistic as the learners use the text to confirm their own reality which they are unable to see beyond. As Bredella notes, "[the] aesthetic experience does not begin until our projections and experiences undergo a change" ("The anthropological" 4), and as a dialogue with the text starts it will open up new possibilities, questions, creative doubts: "Being intercultural needs this dialectic which is part of the aesthetic experience" (Bredella, "Afterword" 230). In this disquieting place meaning emerges dynamically and it implies a re-evaluation of otherness and relocation in our individual mappings.

Kramsch refers to "faultlines"; "conflict"; "rupture points" (in *Context and Culture*) and, more recently (in "From Practice to Theory"), employs the phrase "telling moments". These are meant to reveal differences in perception in the dialogues that learners establish with texts, provoking new insights born from the confrontation. In our terms, Kramsch is stimulating the emergence of a 'compound voice'[6] thus making students realise areas that are unclear, ambiguous, and making them note how meaning is changed and conveyed by the choice and use of words in a particular context.

In addition to this, I propose that this 'compound voice' may be found *inside* literary texts and offer a pretext for reflection on the intercultural (dis)encounters portrayed and the struggle that they prefigure. The process of acting, or not, interculturally may be mirrored in literature and a compound voice makes it more visible.

It is in this context that we will suggest a selection of texts that may signal a tension, points of rupture that may be identified by the presence of a 'compound voice'.

Briefly then, a compound voice can play a role in reading literary texts in two different dimensions: the narrative world of the characters and the readers' response to this world. Regardless of being labelled post-colonial or travel literature, and although I agree with some authors who argue convincingly in favour of using these texts to promote intercultural understanding (cf., for instance, Bredella, "Literary Texts"), I also believe that literary texts of different genres present the opportunity to interpret such passages critically. The ultimate goal of intercultural communication being understanding, this is the potential of the literary text.

However, as teachers and educators, we cannot assume that literature alone will bring forth these enlightened, redemptive properties in our students. As educators engaged in what could be called intercultural literacy, we promote literary competence by helping develop interpretive and analytical skills that may assist the learner read and understand otherness beyond the literary text as he/she comes in contact with different forms of representing the world, be it through language or otherwise.[7]

To conclude I would like to offer an example of a compound voice speaking from a poem:

Another Language
Writing was to build on paper;
To speak was to make things out of air,
To see was to take light, and shape it
Into something that was never there.

Patrick McGuiness.

Notes

[1] I find it pertinent at this point to contrast the notion of 'background knowledge' with that of 'context'. According to Kuna, "[c]ontext is . . . not what you can put into 'introductions' or footnotes, i.e. mere 'background', an amorphous, *ad hoc* arrangement of so-called extra-literary facts" (269).

[2] The element of 'unpreparedness' characteristic of intercultural learning is also described in terms of comparing learners to travellers in Kramsch's words: "As intercultural speakers, learners are likely to engage their teachers in a voyage of discovery that they had not always anticipated and for which they don't always feel prepared" (30).

[3] Phipps and Gonzalez' observation is timely: "Culture in modern languages has long been understood as literature with some elements of background" (42).

[4] Iser also establishes a distinction between two contrasting modes of reading. He first identifies a referential approach in the 19th century which, according to the author, is explained by the functional importance that literature (and the literary critic) fulfilled then, associated with the acquisition of knowledge. This type of reading produces referential meaning, implying a clear division between subject and object. The second approach implies a substantially different relationship between text and reader, and therefore leads to a different quality of meaning taken no longer as "an object to be defined, but is an effect to be experienced" (10).

[5] Attridge, for instance, advocates what could be called 'responsible reading' "an alertness to its singular otherness, an attentiveness to the way it operates through mobile forms as well as by thematic representation and conceptual argument, will result in a fuller, more responsible response and in an enhanced possibility of change in the future" (34).

[6] The term is borrowed from Sauerberg.

[7] As Lehtonen notes, literacy is a social activity by character and, therefore, acquiring literacy means to transfer from one world to another and in more ways than one (53).

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