ECHOES
Reflections on Language and Literature

Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês: Estudos Linguísticos e Literários

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PRESENTATION

Most graduate students start their academic life with the desire to learn as much as they can and to carry out relevant research in their area of interest. However, there is a long path from their entrance to the program to a successful academic career: there are courses to be taken, pre-projects to be written, books to be read, and articles to be published. Publishing articles is a new matter for most students, many of whom are not aware of the importance of knowledge dissemination, or who are not sure if their articles might be good enough and end up not trying to publish at all. What is sometimes forgotten is that the act of publishing an article is the opportunity of making one's work available to other people interested in the same area, and of contributing to the development of that specific field of interest.

It was this idea, and specially the desire for knowledge, that brought together a group of Master and Doctoral candidates and three professors, all from the Programa de Pós--Graduação em Inglês, at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, together in the year of 2013. We wanted to contribute as much as we could to our program, and we decided that the best way of doing that would be to create an e-book and give our field colleagues the opportunity for publishing and having access to great material from other field researchers. After some meetings we came to the conclusion that, as language and literature researchers, we are all walking similar paths, so it was not only a matter of opening space to PPGI students, but to MA and Doctoral students from all universities, in order to share knowledge and debate relevant issues.

We are aware that students still have a long way to go, and that they have lots of research to carry out in the pursuit of academic sophistication, but we are also aware that there must be a space for such beginner researchers to publish their works. For this reason, we are glad to publish *Echoes*, an e-book of language and literatures, which has the aim of publishing

academic papers in English in the areas of Linguistics and Literatures, so as to disseminate studies conducted by both professors and by graduate students as well.

May the echoes of our studies resonate throughout the academic environment!

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Celso Henrique Soufen Tumolo
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INTRODUCTION

Echoes presents articles in the Linguistics and the Literature fields, and the studies published here are from different analytical and/or theoretical perspectives and themes. However, since this e-book is open to studies that deal with the rupture of the boundaries between these two fields of study, we felt that there was no need to separate the articles in categories. It is part of the aim of *Echoes* to reverberate the resonance of one field in the other through the articles published here. Then, this publication is not divided into two sections that would cover each field of study.

Echoes proudly presents nine articles, which comprehend issues related to reading, speaking and teaching English as a second language, plagiarism, gender performativity, postmodernism in films, Chicana literature and African-American literature and history.

In the first article, "Reading Strategies in English Textbooks", Likelli Simão Bender (UNICENTRO) and Luciane Baretta (UNICENTRO) analyze English textbooks adopted in public schools for students from 6th to 9th grades in order to investigate the reading strategies presented in them. Their research has come to the conclusion that, in this material, one can find some indications about the teaching of strategies, but on the other hand the material is insufficient to prepare learners to be autonomous and critical readers.

Continuing the discussion about learning and teaching a second language in its various facets, the article by Raquel Cristina Mendes de Carvalho (UNICENTRO) and Rhuanna Eloise dos Santos Paganotto (UNICENTRO), entitled "Two Sides of English Teaching in Brasil: Teacher's views on the Practice at State Schools and at Private Language School", elucidates the difference between teaching English in Brazilian State schools and in schools specialized in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The study also investigates whether the teachers of those institutions are aware of the different teaching objectives in both contexts. Based on works by Moita Lopes (2003), Perin (2005), Gimenez et al. (2006), and on Halliday's Systemic Functional-Linguistics (2004), the research shows that the investigated teachers are

conscious of the English teaching role in the student's citizenship development in each different environment they study.

The third article, "Autonomy in Distance Language Learning: Tutors Views on Students' Autonomous Actions Regarding the Development of the Four Skills in English", written by Nayara Nunes Salbego (UFSC) and Celso Henrique Soufen Tumolo (UFSC), provides a discussion on autonomous characteristics and actions taken by the students from the distance English teacher education course offered by Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina - UFSC (2009-2013), based on on-site tutors. The investigation involved interviews, carried out through Skype, with two on-site tutors participating in the course during all its eight semesters. The results showed that, according to their perceptions, students had many of the characteristics and actions of autonomous learners, taking responsibility for their learning process, which fostered their language development.

In the article "Can you hear the buzz? – The devoicing of word-final /z/ by Brazilian Portuguese speakers of English and the issue of intelligibility", Leonice Passarella dos Reis (UFSC/EAMSC), Mayara Tsuchida Zanfra (UFSC) and Thaís Suzana Schadech's (UFSC) investigate the devoicing of word-final /z/ by Brazilian speakers of English in comparison to native speakers of English. A questionnaire and an intelligibility assessment test were designed for collecting data from both the speaker and listener groups from the undergraduate and graduate *Letras Inglês* programs, mainly at UFSC, and a native speaker of English. The findings in this article suggest that the devoicing of word-final /z/ caused misunderstandings in the three groups of listeners which seems to hinder communication. Additionally, the results show that the unintelligibility was more frequent for the BP listeners.

The fifth article, entitled "Plagiarism in the Academic Context: an investigation of PPGI Students' Awareness of the Problem", refers to a small-scale research carried with students from Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês (PPGI) at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), in Brazil. The study, written by Bruna Batista Abreu (UFSC) and Malcolm Coulthard (UFSC), aimed at investigating students' knowledge about plagiarism and the existing rules in the Program on this topic. The results derived from the application of the questionnaire point to a lack of precise knowledge from students about the rules and penalties posed in relation to plagiarism, which indicates the need to changing certain cultural practices in Brazilian tertiary education.

In Fábio Santiago Nascimento's (UFSC) article, entitled "Gender Performativity and Melancholia in *Paris is Burning* and *Angels in America,*" gender performativity and melancholia are conceptualized through the analysis of two cinematographic productions: the documentary *Paris is Burning* (1990) and TV miniseries *Angels in America* (2003). The article attempts to problematize the ideals of femininity, masculinity and queerness inserted in the productions. The analysis conducted by Nascimento shows the need of a gaze at the LGBT in the mass media including different axes of difference (gender, sexuality, race, social class, etc.).

Following the vein of Nascimento's discussion, Claudia Santos Mayer's (UFSC) article "Negotiating identity in the abject zone in John Cameron Mitchell's *Hedwig and The Angry Inch*" analyzes the representation of the main character of the film in relation to the negotiation of her sexual and gender identity. Mayer also discusses the concepts of gender performativity, sex/gender distinction, heteronormativity, in dialogue with Nascimento's article.

From a different perspective, although still in the study of films, the article "*Memento* and Postmodernism: An affair to remember", by Lola Aronovich (UFC), describes the film *Memento* as a postmodernist one with nostalgia for modernism and analyzes how the film's protagonist is looking for his lost identity. The theory used by Aronovich is Terry Eagleton's definition of postmodernism as "the negative truth of modernity," and especially the directives pointed out by Frederic Jameson in "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism".

In the sequence, Thayse Madella (UFSC), in the chater "'Woman Hollering Creek' and 'Never marry a Mexican': The role of the *familia*/family in the short stories by Sandra Cisneros" develops the concept of *familia*, which is a recurrent topic among Chicana writers. The background in both stories, she says, is the multicultural space of the Borderlands, bringing the term coined by Gloria Anzaldúa, where contradictions can coexist. The author points out that rather than an easy coexistence, these multiple cultures are in continuous articulation, transition, and negotiation. In the article, Madella affirms that Cisneros writes against the hegemonic discourse and that it is possible to say she resists the dominant ideologies and disrupts such problematic traditions in both short stories.

In the final article "Tony Morrison's *Beloved*, writing oneself into being", Matias Corbett Garcez's (UFSC) discusses in what ways Toni Morrison's *Beloved* can be considered a significant narrative not only within African American and North American literature, but also within African American and North American history. Garcez's article presents important arguments that suggest the significance of *Beloved* not only as a novel, but also as another article within the history of the United States.

Having briefly introduced these original and relevant studies by scholars and graduate students from different universities in Brazil, we proudly introduce *Echoes*, which will surely contribute to the research done in the fields of Linguistics and Literature and also to the intersectionality between them.

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READING STRATEGIES IN ENGLISH TEXTBOOKS

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the English textbooks adopted in public schools in one city of the middle-west of Paraná, by investigating what and how are organized the reading strategies presented in the books designed for students of Middle School (6th to 9th grade). The study is descriptive and the analysis is based on the taxonomy of reading strategies proposed by Davies (1995). Once identified the most used textbooks (2 series with four textbooks each) the reading activities of the first and last units of each textbook were analyzed. Research has shown that there is some concern about the teaching of strategies, but it proves to be insufficient to prepare learners to be autonomous and critical readers. It seems to be the teacher's responsibility to teach other strategies that will guide and improve the reading skill.
Keywords: reading activities; expert readers; foreign language.

Resumo: O presente trabalho teve por objetivo analisar o material didático destinado ao ensino da Língua Inglesa nas escolas da rede estadual de um município da região centro-oeste do Paraná, investigando quais são e de que forma as estratégias de leitura são apresentadas nos livros destinados aos estudantes de nível fundamental II (6º ao 9º ano). A pesquisa é de cunho descritivo e tem como base para análise a taxonomia de estratégias propostas por Davies (1995). Identificados os livros didáticos mais utilizados no município (2 coleções, compostas de quatro livros didáticos), foram analisadas as atividades de leitura propostas na primeira e última unidade de cada livro/ano. A investigação demonstrou que há um cuidado no ensino das estratégias, mas que ainda se mostra insuficiente para levar os educandos à autonomia e criticidade quanto à leitura; cabe ao professor buscar e ensinar outras estratégias que vão conduzir e aprimorar a leitura, não apenas em língua inglesa, mas de toda leitura feita pelo aluno.
Palavras-chave: atividades de leitura; leitor proficiente; língua estrangeira.

1. Introduction

The interest to investigate how the reading skill is taught in English textbooks adopted in public schools is mainly justified by the fact that until the year 2011 no series provided by the Federal Government by the PNLD (national plan for the distribution of textbooks) were available to the foreign language subject (Vial & Silva, 2012). The contribution of the foreign language (FL) textbook regarding the teaching of the reading skill, and more specifically, how one can develop strategies to understand a text in a FL, is the main concern discussed in this paper.

According to Freitag, Costa and Motta (1989), the textbook tends to be used uncritically by many teachers, who end up using it as the only instrument for their classes, considering it as the carrier of an absolute truth that turns out to model the practice of those teachers. This is definitely not positive. The textbooks, according to Franco (1992, apud Azevedo, 2000), besides having an educational role, they also have a marketing purpose. For its pedagogical aspect, the book is often simplified in accordance with the intended audience, so one can say it is not neutral. Regarding the marketing aspect, publishers establish some criteria for the didactic book or series to sell more. It is not uncommon to find textbooks that present texts written for a didactic purpose and no social function.

Therefore, if the textbook is often the teacher's mainly resource to teach, it is expected that it provides the necessary support to form a critical and conscious reader. Braga and Silvestre (2002) postulate that besides the students' lack of interest and intertextuality for what is written on the paper, the most important aspect that tends to be disregarded by the textbook is that students lack the knowledge to "how to" read and write. Although students are frequently evaluated through reading texts and answering comprehension questions, they are not properly taught how to read efficiently. The authors also claim that students should not be considered as recipients of information, but as active and creative individuals, who have the ability to know and control their processes of cognition. The teacher then should be the supervisor of this knowledge construction process. In this sense, the teaching of the reading skill goes much beyond decoding and comprehension of literal information. It is the teacher's responsibility to make appropriate, explicit and continuous interventions on students' learning process, and this should occur before, during, and after reading activities, never expecting that students will be able to complete all these stages by themselves. Learning to read requires effort and must be learned by doing it, that is to say, by reading intensively and extensively.

Based on Freire's famous quote - the reading of the world precedes the reading of the word - Braga and Silvestre (2002) claim that it is important to take into account the prior condition of students: their personal experiences and their knowledge of the world. As the act of reading depends on the interaction between the reader and the text, the teacher should always raise the students' prior knowledge, before going for the text itself, as it is always necessary to relate the textual information with something that one already knows.

According to Geraldi (2006) and Baretta (forthcoming), every teacher is responsible for the teaching of reading, regardless of the subject s/he teaches. Therefore, English teachers are also responsible for teaching the reading skill; this is mainly possible if teachers visualize their classes

as an opportunity for students to gather new knowledge and different cultural perspectives through the reading in a FL. This way, reading becomes an instrument to prepare our students to become better citizens who are capable to analyze, reason and communicate effectively their ideas (OECD, 2009). Having this in mind, teachers must rely on pedagogical tools, like the teaching of reading strategies (RSs) in order to accomplish this final goal (Tomitch, 2009). This article is divided into three parts. In the first part, a review about the teaching of reading through the use of RSs and a taxonomy grouping different RSs is briefly presented to set the stage for the present research concerning the frequency and types of RSs presented in English textbooks. The second part presents the method adopted to conduct data collection, which is followed by the analysis and discussion of the results that compose the third part of the text.

2. Teaching Reading: activities and strategies

According to Braga and Silvestre (2002), Davies (1995), Solé (1998), Tomitch (2009) and others, there are three steps that can be adopted by (reading) teachers to make students experienced readers. The first step, called the pre-reading phase, is the time dedicated to make predictions about what is going to be read. The teacher guides the activities in order to facilitate the anticipation of the text. It is important that at this time all the activities are registered on the board or in the student's notebooks. The next phase, called during reading or reading discovery, is the time students read for comprehension. During this stage, students need to integrate the knowledge and information they already know with the new or unknown information within the text. Throughout the reading discovery stage students have to process and organize the information being read, otherwise comprehension is not achieved. In the final stage of the process, the post reading, students reflect about the received information and build knowledge. In this phase the reader can enlarge, confirm or even transform his/her view of the world.

In order to guide these three moments of reading, there are the reading strategies, which are "a wide range of tactics that readers use to engage and comprehend text" (Paris, Wasik & Turner, 1991, p. 610). Reading strategies can and should be taught to students, so that they can read critically and learn better, given by the fact that, as mentioned above, most of our learning comes from reading materials. This reason is reinforced by Paris et al.'s (1991, p. 609) six reasons to teach RSs in schools:

> First, strategies allow readers to elaborate, organize, and evaluate information derived from text. Second, the acquisition of reading strategies coincides and overlaps with the development during childhood of multiple cognitive strategies to enhance attention, memory, communication and learning. Third, strategies are controllable by the readers; they are personal cognitive tools that can be used selectively and flexibly. Forth, strategic reading reflects metacognition and motivation because readers need to have both the knowledge and disposition to use strategies. Fifth, strategies that foster reading and thinking can be taught directly by the teachers. And sixth, strategic reading can enhance learning throughout the curriculum.

Reading strategies should be taught gradually, until the student reaches certain independence and is able to decide the best strategy to accomplish his/her goals towards the text. Paris and collaborators (1991) mention that "critical strategies are seldom used by beginning readers or unskilled readers, who may be unaware of how to use them or unconvinced of their importance" (p. 614). For this reason, it is necessary that students learn how to use RSs and notice their importance in the reading process. Therefore, it is essential that they read various texts and undertake different tasks that require various RSs to be done, creating autonomy over time.

There are several categorizations of RSs but in the present study we will focus on the categorization proposed by Davies (1995). As stated by the author, this categorization is a broad summary of different studies reported in the literature can serve as a guide to those conducting research in reading strategies. Five broad categories which encompass different RSs are set by Davies; each of the categories contributes to the learning of reading in different ways, as will be briefly described as follows.

The first category, named "control reading process", includes those strategies that the learner engages in an action that is possible to be observed. Examples of these are: regression, pausing, underlining and skimming. The act of regression occurs when the reader notices that s/he has not understood previous information and has to reread the previous lines or paragraph(s). Pausing takes place when the student stops reading, at any given time, to reflect on what has been read. The strategy of underlining is when the reader highlights specific words, sentences, or excerpts during the reading or post reading phases in order to make important information prominent. Finally, skimming refers to the act of reading the passage quickly to get the main idea of the text.

The other four categories of strategies consist of those strategies that are non-observable. The first one of this group, "monitor reading", refers to the strategies that involve the control and evaluation of the reading act as it occurs. Self-questioning is a typical example of this kind of strategy: the reader consciously tries either to find *ways to understand the text or to evaluate his/her attempts. Paris et al. (1991) point out that proficient readers use this strategy as a frequent resource; non proficient readers, however, very rarely question themselves about their reading performance. Reading tasks that help these readers to ask about possible ways to understand a text and evaluate the efficacy of strategies used, are therefore a necessity in reading classes and textbooks.*

"*In*teracting with the text" comprises the strategies which involve the interpretation and the reader's dialogue with the text. The strategies that fit into this category are: questioning the text and expression of feelings. Questioning the text, as the name already says, refers to the strategy of questioning the information presented, the motives and intentions involved in the production of the text. The expression of feelings is when the reader reacts towards the information presented in the text. As Davies (1995) explains, these strategies are used when the reader is constructing one interpretation of the text as a way of responding to the ideas presented in it.

"Textual source of information" are the strategies that refer *to the language elements of the text. The strategies can be divided into: grammar aspects, repetition of words, text structure and cognate words. The language grammar strategies are those that activate the readers' grammatical knowledge to help comprehension, be it in terms of lexicon, phonology, syntax, semantics or others. The repetition of words and the cognate words are two relatively basic strategies that readers use*

to help them to comprehend the general information of a text, even when vocabulary is limited, which is the specific case of a beginners FL reading class. Text structure strategies refer to the reader's identification of different textual types and genres, making specific text structures easier to understand.

The last category of strategies proposed by Davies (1995), are the "external source of information" that involve *non-textual information that is activated during reading. Examples of RSs within this category are: knowledge of content/topic, personal experience and culture.*

Having considered the taxonomy of reading strategies presented by Davies, it is the purpose of this research to investigate how the five category types of strategies are approached in the reading activities of the English textbooks distributed by the Federal Government in the middle-west region of Paraná state. In order to achieve this objective, the method adopted in this study is described next.

3. Method

This research was carried out based on the descriptive analysis methodology. In order to fulfill the main purpose of the study - to investigate which reading strategies are taught to elementary school students in foreign language classes – the two series of textbooks (S1, S2), mostly adopted in public schools in the middle-west of Paraná during the year 2011, were analyzed. Each collection has four textbooks, being one book for each year/grade of school. The first and the last units of each textbook comprise the corpus of the analysis. The activities considered in the analysis are those specifically related to the act of reading, that is to say, in order to answer the activity proposed, the reading of a text was required. Both series present a section designed for this purpose, entitled "Let's read". 84 activities compose the corpus, being 53 activities from S1 and 31 from S2. All activities were analyzed and categorized having in mind their purpose and the strategy(ies) required to answer each one of them, according to an adaptation of the taxonomy presented by Davies (1995). The five categories of strategies: control reading, *monitoring reading, interaction with the text, textual source of information and external source of information are considered for the present analysis. Each category is subdivided into one or more strategies (adapted), as discussed in the previous section (for a better visualization of this categorization, see Tables 1 and 2, below).*

The reading strategies identified in the activities presented in the units selected for analysis were categorized and grouped for comparison. All the analyses were made between grades/years in order to investigate the development of strategies proposed by the textbook collections.

4. Analysis and discussion of results

The analysis of results demonstrate that Series 1 (S1) has more reading activities (63%) than Series 2 (37%) throughout the two units analyzed in each of the textbooks (2 units per textbook X 4 years X 2 series= 16 units analyzed). Besides presenting almost the double of activities, S1 also

brings a thematic unit, in all volumes of the series, designed for the reading of literary texts. These units feature themes, besides the literary spotlight, reading activities that have information about the work, the writer and the socio-cultural context in which it was written, a fact that possibly encourages the student to seek for additional information. Already from these preliminary results, it is possible to infer that S1's authors have a conception of reading that is different from that demonstrated in S2, since they show to the English language student that even in the most basic levels it is possible to read and comprehend literature in the original language.

Regarding the frequency of strategies worked in each series, it was observed that in all 8 textbooks analyzed, there are more reading activities and strategies in the last units of the textbook than in the first units. This seems to be consistent with pedagogical purposes, since the teaching of reading, especially in a FL, should start from the simplest to the most complex activities, so as learning can be effective (Paris and collaborators, 1991).

The RSs presented in the textbooks were mostly related to external sources of information (i.e., knowledge about the topic, personal experience and culture) and to the interaction with the text (i.e., questioning and expression of feeling), as can be visualized in Figure 1 below. Fewer occurrences refer to the control of reading and textual source of information. Quite interestingly, but somehow expected, is the occurrence of monitoring reading strategies that were worked very briefly in S1, only.
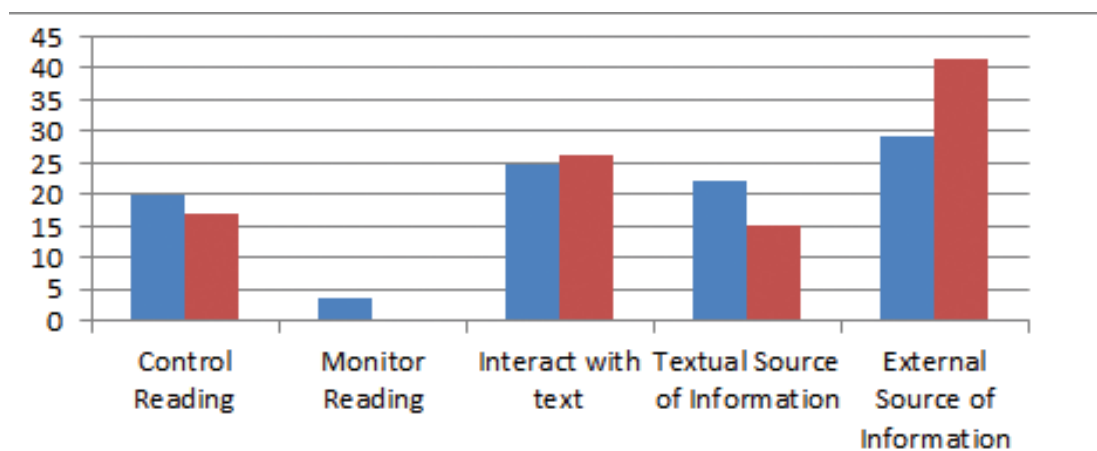
Figure 1. Frequency of reading strategies in the textbooks (%)

Leffa (1996) and Tomich (2009) argue that education is important for reading and that reading ability is enhanced when there is systematic monitoring. Considering the results shown so far, it is believed to be of utmost importance the inclusion of more activities that stimulate the student to realize s/he is using strategies and how the reading process occurs. This way, the student would be entitled to use reading strategies whenever necessary, whether reading in English or in his/her mother tongue. This is the case, for example, of the underlining strategy, required in only one of the 84 reading activities analyzed, despite being widely used by proficient readers (see Tables 1 and 2 below). Monitor reading, another strategy widely used by proficient readers is scarcely worked in the English textbooks: S1 presents 3 instances of use and S2 does not approach the strategy in the 8 units analyzed.

As stated by Paris et al. (1991, p. 611), "Strategic readers are not characterized by the volume of tactics they use, but rather by the selection of appropriate strategies that fit the particular text, purpose, and occasion". If expert readers make these strategic choices, it is important that the beginning reader is exposed to various reading strategies, gradually, and learns how to use them more frequently and effectively.

Considering the data collected by grade/year, it can be seen that although the series do not show an increasing number of strategies used according to the grade/year, they show an increase in the reading activities and the types of strategies required to solve those activities, as can be visualized in the tables below (Tables 1 and 2). It was also possible to observe that the activities got more complex and demanded the use of more elaborate strategies. It is interesting to mention the strategy of knowledge of topic/content that was necessary to solve an activity 12 times in S1 and 15 times in S2. One can say that there seems to be a valorization for the reader's background knowledge, an important aspect of reading, especially in a FL.

Table 1: Reading strategies by grade/year – Series 1

Categories	Series 1 – Strategies	6th	7th	8th	9th
Control Reading	Regressing			1	1
	Pausing				
	Underlining				1
	Skimming	3	4	3	4
Monitor Reading	Self questioning		1	2	
Interact with text	Question text	2	4	3	3
	Expressing feelings	1	1	4	3
Textual Source of Information	Grammar of language		2	2	2
	Repetition of words		3	2	2
	Textual structure	4	1		
	Cognate words			1	
External Source of Information	Knowledge of topic/content	5	5	2	
	Personal experience	1	1	1	2
	Culture	2	3	2	1
	Total	**18**	**25**	**23**	**19**

Table 2: Reading strategies by grade/year – Series 2

Categories	Series 2 – Strategies	6th	7th	8th	9th
Control Reading	Regressing		1		1
	Pausing				
	Underlining				
	Skimming	3		3	1
Monitor Reading	Self questioning				
Interact with text	Question text	1		4	2
	Expressing feelings		2		2
Textual Source of Information	Grammar of language	2	1		1
	Repetition of words	1			1
	Textual structure				
	Cognate words	2			
External Source of Information	Knowledge of topic/content	1	10	3	1
	Personal experience			2	1
	Culture		6		1
	Total	**10**	**20**	**12**	**11**

Again, possibly as a consequence of S1 greater frequency of reading activities, it can be seen that this series also works with a greater number and variety of strategies. From the 15 strategies under investigation in the study, S1 does not present examples of only one of the strategies (pausing), while S2 does not illustrate four types (pausing; underlining; self-questioning and textual structure). Nevertheless, even though S1 revealed a greater frequency of activities and strategies, the reading approach presented by this series is not sufficient to form autonomous and competent readers. Moreover, in both series there was only one small section of the unit devoted to the teaching of reading and this part was generally not related to the theme of the unit.

5. Final considerations

It is essential that students learn to read, not only texts presented in textbooks but any text that may appear in their daily lives. It is the English teacher's responsibility not only to teach their students to decode texts or know the grammar of the language but mainly teach them to read critically and autonomously. Knowing how, when, and why to use reading strategies empower students when they need to read and make them more proficient readers.

As mentioned in the beginning of this article, many teachers tend to follow the textbook as the only resource in the classroom, as if it were the only truth and source of texts and activities to be explored. The need for good didactic books that present a variety of authentic texts and

reading activities that stimulate the reader not only to understand, but to use and reflect on written texts (OECD, 2009) is an urgent matter. Although the two series of textbooks analyzed in this research have shown that they present varied reading strategies, they are not sufficient for the 'construction' of proficient and autonomous readers. Teachers have to analyze and evaluate the texts and activities presented by the book and either adapt or substitute them, not using the textbook as the sole source of knowledge in class.

The present research has its limitations. First of all, only two series of textbooks were analyzed; it is suggested that a similar analysis is carried out with High School textbook series, in order to see whether reading strategies are expanded over the grades/years of schooling. Another suggestion is to extend the research with class observation, analyzing how teachers work with the textbooks, how reading strategies are taught and what strategies are emphasized during classes. Finally, a thorough analysis may consider the examination of all units presented by the textbooks under consideration, so that a clear picture of the teaching of reading in a FL can be described.

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TWO SIDES OF ENGLISH TEACHING IN BRAZIL: TEACHERS' VIEWS ON THE PRACTICE AT STATE SCHOOLS AND AT A PRIVATE LANGUAGE SCHOOL

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Abstract: Difference between teaching English in Brazilian State schools and in schools specialized in teaching English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is much discussed nowadays. Official documents that guide English teaching in Brazil, such as DCE (Paraná, 2008) and OCEM (Brasil, 2006) refer to the different objectives for teaching in both contexts, but unfortunately, those differences do not seem always clear for teachers, students and parents (Brasil, 2006). This study investigated whether teachers of EFL in Brazilian State schools and/or private language schools are aware of the different teaching objectives in both contexts, and if they are conscious of the role of this discipline in the student's citizenship development. In order to achieve the main purpose, readings on theoretical aspects of DCE (Paraná, 2008), OCEM (Brasil, 2006), Moita Lopes' (2003), Perin's (2005), Gimenez's et al (2006) studies and Halliday's Systemic Funtional-Linguistics (2004) were carried out. The corpus for the study was collected from a questionnaire answered by experienced teachers of English in Brazilian State schools and private language schools, and the analysis was conducted by means of analyzing their discourse using the SFL through the Transitivity System (Halliday, 2004). Results showed that those teachers are aware of the English teaching role in the student's citizenship development in Brazilian State schools, as well as the purpose of teaching EFL in private language schools.

Keywords: English as a Foreign Language; Brazilian public schools; private language schools; SFL.

Resumo: Muito se fala a respeito das diferenças do ensino de LEM – inglês na Educação Básica e nos institutos de idiomas. Os documentos oficiais, tais como DCE (Paraná, 2008) e OCEM (Brasil, 2006) discutem a respeito das diferenças dos objetivos de ensino nesses dois contextos, mas infelizmente essas diferenças nem sempre parecem claras para os envolvidos nos processos de ensino/aprendizagem de LEM. Este estudo buscou investigar se os professores atuantes nos contextos da Educação Básica e institutos de idiomas têm consciência dessas diferenças e do papel da sua disciplina na formação cidadã de seus alunos através da análise do discurso dos participantes, via LSF (Halliday, 2004). Para tanto, buscou-se o embasamento teórico nos documentos oficiais acima citados e em estudiosos que discutem o assunto, tais como Moita Lopes (2003), Perin (2005) e Gimenez et al (2006), e na Linguística Sistêmico Funcional (Halliday, 2004). Os dados para a pesquisa foram provenientes de questionários abertos respondidos por professores de inglês atuantes nos dois contextos em questão, e a análise se deu a partir do Sistema de Transitividade da LSF (Halliday, 1994). Os resultados revelaram que os professores têm consciência do papel da disciplina de LEM – inglês da Educação Básica na formação cidadã dos alunos, e dos objetivos do ensino da língua estrangeira em questão nos centros de idiomas.

Palavras-Chave: LEM – inglês; educação básica; institutos de idiomas; LSF.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, knowing a foreign language is something unquestionable, and English has been marked among the ones spoken all over the world (Rajagopalan, 2003, as cited in Rocha, 2007). Therefore, language has also been considered as "one of the most reclaimed symbolic goods"[1] (Moita Lopes, 2005, as cited in Rocha, 2007, p.1, our translation) which has been present in Brazilian students' lives every day.

According to Gimenez et al (2006) "in spite of the fact that English has been included in the school curriculum as a foreign language, it is characterized as lingua franca, and its status has been reinforced by means of being used as international communication"[2] (p.253-254, our translation). Nonetheless, the situation Brazilian schools has been facing regarding English teaching is startling due to this school subject has lost face. The loss of face, thus, has driven Brazilian students to search for private language schools, believing those schools are the only places where they could really learn English, in fact, learn how to speak English.

As Barcelos (2006) states, "for most of the students, a private school of foreign languages is the quintessential place for learning English."[3] (p. 158). This belief leads us to a failed position concerning the role English as a Foreign Language (EFL) plays in Brazilian school curricula, as well as the prejudice against the teaching of English in regular schools, which is said it is not learned. However, according to the Orientações Curriculares para o Ensino Médio (Curriculum Guidelines for High School – OCEM), the document which guides EFL teaching in Brazilian schools, "there is lack of clarity about the different objectives of teaching EFL in regular schools and in private courses"[4] (Brasil, 2006, p.90, our translation).

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1. "um dos bens simbólicos mais valorizados na atualidade" (MOITA LOPES, 2005 apud ROCHA, 2007, p. 1)

2. "apesar da língua inglesa ser incluída no currículo escolar como língua estrangeira, esta se caracteriza como língua franca, status esse reforçado pelo seu uso via comunicação internacional" (GIMENEZ et al, 2006, p. 253 – 254)

3. "para a maioria dos alunos, o curso de idiomas é o lugar por excelência onde se aprende inglês." (BARCELOS, 2006, p. 158)

4. "há falta de clareza sobre o fato de que os objetivos do ensino de idiomas em escolas regulares são diferentes dos objetivos dos cursos de idiomas" (BRASIL, 2006, p. 90)

Taking the studies above into consideration, the present investigation aims at verifying whether teachers of English in state schools and/or private language schools are aware of the differences, regarding teaching EFL in Brazil, pointed out in OCEM (Brazil, 2006). This aim is stated based on our belief that the way teachers understand the role and purpose of his/her school subject may influence his/her teaching practice.

When analyzing participants' discourse, by means of their answers to a questionnaire, through the lights of Systemic Functional Linguistics (Halliday, 2004), we intend to understand those teachers/participants' views concerning EFL teaching in both contexts: state schools and private language schools, and besides, our intention is also to contribute to avoid the hoax that learning English is only possible in private language schools.

This article is divided into five sections. After the Introduction, we review the literature concerning EFL teaching, the official documents which guide it in Brazil, and Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as a tool for discourse analysis, more specifically the system of Transitivity. In the third and fourth sections we focus on describing the method through which data was analyzed and discussing the data analysis. Finally we present our considerations and conclusions based on the objectives posed for this study.

2. Review of Literature

2.1 Teaching EFL in Brazil according to the official documents

There are a lot of discussions on the discrediting about teaching English in Brazil, especially in public schools, as well as the reasons why students do not learn a foreign language in this context (Moita Lopes, 2003; Perin, 2005; Coelho, 2006). The great number of students in classrooms, reduced hourly amount of the language classes, lack of technological resources in classes, lack of appropriate resources for English teaching, limited textbooks for students, disinterested students, discouraged teachers, and sometimes teachers who are not well prepared for the job (Moita Lopes, 2003) are among some of the justifications for the previous question. Although we agree that since those referred difficulties have been overcome, the process of teaching/learning EFL may be successful, we do believe those are not specific problems of English classes, but also problems faced by every school curriculum. In this way, so, it becomes really necessary to discuss the purpose of teaching EFL in state schools, which are supposed to be different from private language schools.

Despite the fact that, in Brazil, the school community is free to decide which foreign language is to be taught, "the preference for English is obviously related to the undeniable importance given to it as an international language, which is due to the American and English economic power during the last century"[5] (Moita Lopes, 2003, p.129, our translation)   As a

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5. "a preferência pelo inglês está obviamente relacionada à importância inegável do inglês como uma língua internacional, o que se deve ao poder econômico da Inglaterra e dos Estados Unidos na primeira e na segunda metade deste século" (MOITA LOPES, 2003, p. 129).

consequence of the status the English language has got, it has been considered as the necessary tool for professional success, besides the way through which it is possible to communicate and interact worldwide.

Once the importance of knowing EFL is established, combined with the belief it is not possible to acquire fluency through the classes taught in public schools, several students seek private language schools, because of the belief that only in this context language is really learned (Barcelos, 2006). At this point, comparisons regarding uneven results obtained in EFL teaching in public schools and in private language schools start.

According to the OCEM (Brasil, 2006), the reasons why results of learning EFL from both contexts are totally different are not well known, the fact is that both contexts work with totally different aims at teaching EFL. Diretrizes Curriculares Estaduais (Official Guidelines for The Modern Foreign Languages Teaching Curriculum in Paraná, Brasil – DCE) state that it is necessary

> to overcome the idea that the objective of teaching FL in schools is only linguistic or, that the teaching model in language Institutes can be a parameter for defining the objectives of FL teaching in Basic Education. This relation would be a misunderstanding, considering that the purposes of FL teaching in language Institutes are not the same as in public schools.[6] (Paraná, 2008, p.55, our translation)

Concerning conceptions of teaching EFL in Basic Education, DCE (Paraná, 2008) points out that

> teaching and learning languages is also teaching and learning perceptions of the world, as well as ways of making meaning, it is to construct subjectivities, to allow the recognition of language in use for different communicative purposes, independently of the proficiency level.[7] (p. 55, our translation)

OCEM (Brasil, 2006) also assert that

> the subject FL taught in regular schools aims at both teaching the foreign language and attending other commitments with students, as for instance, contributing for their whole education as individuals.[8] (p. 91, our translation)

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6. "superar a idéia de que o objetivo de ensinar Língua Estrangeira na escola é apenas linguístico ou, ainda, que o modelo de ensino dos Institutos de idiomas seja parâmetro para definir seus objetivos de ensino na Educação Básica. Tal aproximação seria um equívoco, considerando que o ensino de Língua Estrangeira nas escolas de língua não tem, necessariamente, as mesmas preocupações educacionais da escola pública." (PARANÁ, 2008, p. 55)

7. "ensinar e aprender línguas é também ensinar e aprender percepções de mundo e maneiras de atribuir sentidos, é formar subjetividades, é permitir que se reconheça no uso da língua os diferentes propósitos comunicativos, independente do grau de proficiência atingido." (PARANÁ, 2008, p. 55)

8. "a disciplina Línguas Estrangeiras na escola visa a ensinar um idioma estrangeiro e, ao mesmo tempo, cumprir outros compromissos com os educandos, como, por exemplo, contribuir para a formação de indivíduos como parte de suas preocupações educacionais." (BRASIL, 2006, p. 91)

On the other hand, language Institutes, or private courses, "are more concerned with linguistic and communicative proficiency in contextual base, such as, travelling, business or tests"[9] (Paraná, 2008, p.55, our translation). Thus, the majority of private language schools teaches language focusing the fluency competence, but is not headed on, necessarily, the same educational functions headed by the Basic Education.

2.2 Systemic Functional Linguistics

Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the theory in which the data analysis of this study is based on, consists on a linguistic theory developed by Halliday (2004). According to the hallidayan perspective, SFL "corresponds to a general theory of how human language works, conceived from a descriptive approach based on language in use."[10] (Gouveia, 2009, p.14, our translation).

SFL studies the way language works in social contexts, that is, the interaction among human beings, taking into consideration the functional aspect of the language, whose main purpose is to convey information. In this way, the language is not seen as a set of rules, but, "as a tool to make meaning"[11] (Andrade & Taveira, 2009, p.49, our translation).

For Halliday (2004), language is seen as a "system of meaning", and in order to make meaning, there is a system network, which consists of the linguistic system of any language and its context of situation. The system of the language is divided into three subsystems: semantics, lexicogrammar and phonology, while the data system in the context of situation is conveyed by three variables: field, tenor and mode (Halliday, 2004).

The stratum of semantics is used to analyze the data collected for the present study, and besides being a system of meanings, it is also composed by three metafunctions: Textual, Interpersonal and Ideational. The Textual metafunction sees clauses as message, that is language is used to organize the text; in the Interpersonal metafunction, language is organized for enacting social relations, thus clauses are seen as exchange; then the Ideational metafunction clauses have meaning as representation of the world, human ideas and experiences.

2.3 Transitivity System

According to Martin et al (1997, p. 100), "the system of Transitivity belongs to the ideational metafunction and is the overall grammatical resource for construing goings on."   This system is made up of process, participants and circumstances. In a clause, processes are expressed by verbal groups, as 'doing words' or states of being or having; participants are defined by nominal groups; and circumstances are represented by adverbial groups. These components allow us to explore the clauses in terms of "who, what, to whom, in which circumstances"[12] (Taveira, 2009, p. 74, our translation). However, still according to Taveira (2009),

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9. "estão mais direcionados para a proficiência linguístico-comunicativa, em situações de viagens, negócios e preparação para testes" (PARANÁ, 2008, p. 55)
10. "corresponde a uma teoria geral do funcionamento da linguagem humana, concebida a partir de uma abordagem descritiva baseada no uso linguístico" (GOUVEIA, 2009, p. 14)
11. "um recurso para produção de significados" (ANDRADE e TAVEIRA, 2009, p. 49)
12. "quem faz, o quê faz, para quem e sob que circunstâncias". (TAVEIRA, 2009, p. 74).

in the Transitivity system the central element is the process. There is no event, if there is no process expressed by a verbal group. Participants are inherent to the process, while the circumstances may be an optional element.[13] (p.74, our translation)

Halliday and Mathiessen (2004) classify the process into six types: material, mental, behavioral, verbal, relational, and existential.

Material processes represent "actions of external, physical and perceptive changes"[14] (Cunha & Souza, 2007, p.56, our translation), giving the notion that something or somebody does something, hence, for this kind of process we find verbs related to doings or happenings, like, walking, eating, and opening and so on. Mental processes, on the other hand, are related to sensing: perception, cognition and feeling. As examples of mental processes we have: seeing, listening, perceiving (perception); thinking, knowing, understanding (cognition); enjoying, loving, hating (feeling).

Relational processes involve states of being to assign quality to or identify something. These are processes related to being or having. Verbal processes construe the idea of saying, giving a message or information, like speaking, telling and asking.

Behavioral processes concern physiological and psychological behavior, like coughing, breathing, dreaming. Existential processes are processes of existence, expressed by the verbs like exist, and be.

In what follows, we describe the method through which the present study was carried out, then the data is discussed, and finally we present the results and conclusions achieved.

3. Method

The present study was carried out in 2011, aiming at verifying teachers', who teach EFL in public schools and private courses, knowledge about the role and objectives of teaching EFL in those both contexts.

Data were collected based on a questionnaire answered by eleven participants (named P1, P2 and subsequently). Out of those 11 participants, five of them have been working in public schools for more than 10 years. Out of the other six participants who have experience in private language schools, five of them have been teaching EFL for more than five years and one has more than 10 years of experience in that private context.

The questionnaire was composed of 11 open questions about FL teaching, more specifically English in public schools (Elementary and High School) and in private language schools. The questions focused, mainly, aspects concerning EFL teaching in those contexts previously mentioned, like differences and/or similarities about EFL teaching objectives, and also teachers' role in each of those contexts.

We have chosen open questionnaire as the instrument for the corpus of this study, due to the necessity of originality and true views of participants' opinion when answering the questions.

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13. no sistema de transitividade o elemento central é o processo. Não há, portanto, um evento se não houver um processo expresso por um grupo verbal. A ocorrência de participantes é inerente ao processo, ao passo que as circunstâncias são um elemento opcional. (TAVEIRA, 2009, p. 74)
14. "ações de mudanças externas, físicas e perceptíveis" (CUNHA E SOUZA, 2007, p. 56)

These open answers were considered adequate for analyzing teachers' discourses through the lights of SFL (Halliday, 2004). Questions were drawn up based on the researchers' empirical knowledge regarding EFL teaching and on discussions about the documents which guide EFL teaching in Brasil, such as OCEM (Brasil, 2006) and DCE (Paraná, 2008).

Considering data from the answers given to the questionnaire, participants' discourse was analyzed by means of SFL (Halliday, 2004) focusing on the Ideational metafunction and its Transitivity System.

4.Data Analysis

Data analysis was, firstly, conducted by means of identifying the kind of processes used in the participants' discourses when answering the questions. We must observe that there was a prevalence of mental, material and relational processes, while verbal, behavioral, and existential were also used but less frequently. That predominance corroborates Halliday and Matthiessen (2004) who state that those three processes are considered the primary ones, while the verbal, behavioral, and existential are the secondary ones.

Following we evidence the use of those processes by showing some excerpts taken from the answers. The processes are in italics. There are also letters "Q" referring to the question and its number, and "P" to participants, as it has already been explained.

Participants used most frequently relational processes when asserting the importance of EFL teaching in Basic Education, and in order to explain their position they employed several mental processes. The most common argument was that FL allows students to understand the existence of other different cultures from their own.

> *Developing* skills, strategies. *Guiding* students to be aware of other cultures, so that he/she is able to reinforce his/her own identity. Specially, to learn the language. (Q1, P1) (Desenvolver habilidades, estratégias. Levar o aluno ao conhecimento de outras culturas, podendo, desta forma, reafirmar sua própria identidade. Sobretudo, aprender a língua.)
>
> It *is* extremely important, since it *provides* students with a [different] perspective of world and life, as he/she *compromises* with his/her learning. (Q1, P2) (É de suma importância, uma vez que proporciona ao aluno ter uma perspectiva de mundo e de vida desde que realmente se comprometa com seu aprendizado.)
>
> *Understanding* a new culture through several texts. (Q1, P6) (Entender e compreender uma nova cultura com textos variados.)

The above answers corroborate what DCE (2008) emphasize regarding that it is necessary to overcome the idea of teaching only linguistic aspects, and what OCEM (2006) also highlight, that is teaching and learning FL also means identifying different perspectives of the world.

When asked about how they see EFL teaching in Basic Education in Brazil, it was possible to observe that in the teachers' discourse there is an incidence of relational processes, showing they believe failures are characteristics of the educational system, and those failures result of lack

of resources for teaching EFL and of the great number of students in classrooms. Nonetheless, the most referred fact concerns students' lack of interest in studying and learning, and teachers' lack of motivation, corroborating Moita Lopes (2003).

> Lack of interest *is* ostensible by most of the students. (Q2, P2) (é aparente o desinteresse de uma grande parte dos alunos)
>
> They [students] *are* not interested in studying, and they *seem* not *being* aware of the importance of a second language in their lives. (Q2, P4) (Eles [os alunos] não têm interesse em estudar e parecem não estar conscientes da importância de uma segunda língua para a vida deles.)
>
> [Teachers] *get* discouraged after some time when going into a classroom where students do not *have* any interest. (Q2, P4) ([os professores] ficam desmotivados após certo tempo ao entrarem em uma sala de aula onde os alunos não têm o mínimo de interesse.)
>
> Students' teaching[sic]/learning *is* weak, because they are obliged to go to school and *get* uninterested. (Q2, P6) (O ensino/aprendizagem dos alunos é fraco, pois vão para a escola obrigados, desinteressados.)
>
> I can talk about my own experience as a former student, and also by my short experience as a teacher in public schools: I remember teachers who *were* little motivated, and thus resulting unattractive classes, consequently, students with no interest. (Q2, P8) (Posso falar da minha experiência como ex-aluna e também da curta experiência que tive como professora nas escolas regulares: Lembro de professores pouco motivados o que resulta em aulas desinteressantes, e desta forma, em alunos desinteressados.)
>
> The student loses or *has* no interest in the school subject. (Q2, P9) (o aluno perde ou não tem interesse na disciplina. (Q2, P9)
>
> Low motivation from most of the students and teachers, considering some exceptions. (Q2, P11) (Baixa motivação da maioria dos alunos e professores, com algumas exceções. (Q2, P11)

Participants also used several material processes to talk about when parents and students seek private language schools. According to the participants/teachers, this searching occurs when there are the following purposes: improving, starting to learn, and travelling, among others. Participants still use material processes to explain, in their own opinion, why this searching is necessary.

> When *getting* into the labor market. (Q4, P1) (ao *entrar* no mercado de trabalho.)
>
> Professionals trying to *implement, improve* their practice. (Q4, P1) (Profissionais *tentando implementar*, *melhorar* sua prática.)
>
> For contests, entrance exams for universities, job (profession). Because [he/she] did not *enjoy* the time when he/she was taught, and now he/she needs *to make up* for lost time and *compete* with others. (Q4, P5) (Para concurso, vestibular, emprego (profissão). Porque *não aproveitou* o tempo para estudar quando foi ensinado e agora *precisa correr* atrás do prejuízo, para *competir* com os outros.)

The use of material processes explicit that the purpose of learning an EFL in private language schools is for immediate use of the language. It seems to be specifically related to practical focus of the FL, that is, learn to use, not as in state schools that seem to be learning for knowing.

The following table shows the differences regarding EFL teaching between state schools and private language schools, according to participants' answers. It is possible to observe that participants use several relational and some material processes to represent those differences in both contexts:

Table 1 – Differences about teaching EFL in public schools and in private courses

Private Language Schools	Basic Education
[teachers and students] *have* other objectives; Number of students in each group *is* reduced; [it] *Is* possible to teach English; [teachers] *develop* the four skills; [teachers] *aim* at *teaching* students to *write*, *speak*, and read correctly; Teachers *are* more concerned with students' real learning; [teachers] *have* more pedagogical resources; [students] *have* more time in class;	[students and teachers] *aims* at entrance exams for universities; Groups *are* very big; [teachers] do not *teach* EFL so efficiently; Emphasis *is given* to "reading"; [teachers] *give* an idea about the English language; [teaching] *is* based on genre approach; There *is* no cooperation;

After having been questioned about the teaching differences in both EFL teaching contexts, participants were also asked to point out the objectives of teaching EFL in each of those two different kinds of teaching/learning places. In order to answer those questions, participants used most mental processes when referring to the context of state schools.

> *Contributing* for students' education in a broad way, *showing* them culture and language varieties. (Q8, P1) (*Contribuir* para a formação do aluno de uma forma ampla *mostrando* aos alunos as variedades na cultura e na língua.)
>
> *Promoting* stimulus to EFL [learning] by means of texts and vocabulary. (Q8, P3) (*Promover* o estímulo à língua inglesa através da leitura, vocabulário.)
>
> *Preparing* students for entrance exams in universities. (Q8, P4) (*Preparar* os alunos para o vestibular.)
>
> *Making* students know about the world, and at least, *arouse* the importance of EFL in students' lives, as in the present or the future. (Q8, P10) (*Fazer* com que o aluno tenha conhecimento de mundo e pelo menos *desperte* para a importância da LEM na vida do aluno, tanto no presente quanto no futuro.)

These processes evidence the notion that teaching/learning EFL in state schools involve cognitive activities only. On the other side, when talking about the objectives for EFL teaching in private language schools, participants use most material processes to show their opinions.

> *Teaching* [students] how to use language. (Q8, P1) (*Ensinar* o uso da língua.)
>
> *Integrating* 4 skills in order to *make* students into English speakers. (Q8, P2) (*Integrar* as 4 habilidades a fim de *tornar* o estudante em um falante da língua inglesa.)
>
> Private courses aim at *making* students proficient in EFL, so that they can *reach* their objectives, concerning job or entertainment. (Q8, P3) (Os cursos livres procuram *tornar* o estudante proficiente na língua inglesa, para que possam *alcançar* seus objetivos, sejam eles de trabalho ou lazer.)
>
> *Enabling* student to communicate in English. (Q8, P7) (*Tornar* o aluno capaz de se comunicar em inglês.)
>
> *Preparing* [student] to be fluent. (Q8, P8) (*Preparar* para ter fluência.)

Material processes used by participants/teachers, evidently, construe the idea that private language schools focus teaching on the ability of speaking, mainly, or make students speak the FL.

Participants' lexical choices for representing their opinions regarding objectives of EFL teaching both in state schools as in private language schools show us that, for them, EFL in Basic Education is to evidence for students that there are other languages and other cultures. However, it does not, necessarily, have the aim at providing students with resources for communicating using the target language. Private language schools, on the other hand, seem to have the objective of teaching students how to communicate, use the target language to interact with people of other languages. That is, according to teachers/participants' conceptions, students learn EFL in private language schools in order to be able to externalize and exchange their knowledge.

5. Final Remarks

As we have already mentioned in the Introduction, it is common to hear from teachers, students and parents that it is not possible to learn EFL in schools of Basic Education. Nevertheless, as professionals of education, we also do believe that in Brazil, it is common sense that education has been facing problems in teaching and learning processes, not only in EFL subject, but in subjects at all level. Thus, the feeling of failure and lack of learning is something really present in educational context.

In this study, we could follow teachers' complaints constantly, regarding lack of important resources for EFL teaching. Corroborating Moita Lopes (2003), lack of teaching resources is a fact in Brazilian state schools, and students with no interest in learning, and discouraged teachers contribute to avoid a more effective teaching/learning process.

There are lots of comparisons between EFL teaching in state schools and in private language schools, and we may agree that, in relation to fluency acquisition, private language schools are the places where it is better developed. However, it is worth remembering that EFL teaching

could have better results, in preparing students to speak EFL, in state schools, if this were its objective, according to Félix's (2005) study.

The objective of this present study was to find out if teachers/participants were aware of the reasons why EFL teaching in Basic Education is different from that taught in private language schools. Results of the analysis show that, in spite of the fact teachers in state schools complain about the problems faced in this context, they recognize that the main objective of teaching EFL in each context are really different, corroborating what curriculum guidelines defend. We do believe, it is really important that teachers are aware of these differences, and we hope teachers in Basic Education meet the demands of the main objective of EFL teaching in this context, that is, to make students aware of other languages and cultures different from their own, as well as contribute for their whole citizen education (Paraná, 2008).

Finally, this study did not aim at evaluating EFL teaching in Basic School and private language schools, in order to decide which one is the best. We tried to show that, since they are different kinds of institutions, they do have different objectives in terms of teaching and learning. Therefore, the kind of work developed in each context is not supposed to be compared, without considering each ones' purpose. Evaluation concerning the quality of EFL teaching in similar contexts must be done in order to improve the teaching/learning process, but it has to be taken into account that comparisons can be done only among institutions which have the same objectives, in order to guarantee it is offered quality in teaching. We do hope this study may serve as an instrument for understanding that, when it is said that fluency in EFL is not possible to be learned in Basic schools, but only in private language schools, it can also be said that it happens due to each kind of institution has its own purposes, which differs from each other. Besides, the objective of Basic schools, regardless of the school subject, is concerned to human education as a whole, showing their role as conscious citizens, and their importance in society, not thinking that students are simple empty recipients to be fulfilled with school content (Brasil, 2006).

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AUTONOMY IN DISTANCE LANGUAGE LEARNING: TUTORS VIEWS ON STUDENTS' AUTONOMOUS ACTIONS REGARDING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE FOUR SKILLS IN ENGLISH

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Abstract: This article brings an analysis of tutors' views on students' autonomous actions regarding the development of the four skills in English in the distance English teacher education program offered by Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina – UFSC – (2009-2013). It investigated how tutors perceived autonomy assisting students' learning in the program. Two on-site tutors were interviewed through Skype. Researchers such as Holec (1981), Dickinson (1994), Finch (2002), and Paiva (2005, 2006, 2011), among others who theorized about language learner autonomy, enlightened the discussions and data analysis. Results showed that tutors perceived students' autonomous actions as positive concerning the development of the four skills in the program. According to their perceptions, such characteristics and actions fostered students' language development. Tutors saw students benefiting from their attitude in taking responsibility for their own learning processes.
Keywords: language learner autonomy; tutors' perceptions; distance education.

Resumo: Este artigo traz uma análise da visão de tutores sobre ações autônomas de alunos para o desenvolvimento das quatro habilidades em Inglês num curso de formação de professores à distância oferecido pela Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina – UFSC – (2009-2013). Investigou-se a percepção dos tutores sobre como características de aprendizagem autônoma auxiliaram os alunos no curso. Dois tutores presenciais (do polo) foram entrevistados pelo Skype. Pesquisadores como Holec (1981), Dickinson (1994), Finch (2002), e Paiva (2005, 2006, 2011), dentre outros que teorizam sobre autonomia na

aprendizagem de línguas, deram base para análise de dados e discussão. Os resultados mostraram que os tutores viram como positivas as ações autônomas dos alunos para o desenvolvimento das quatro habilidades. De acordo com suas percepções, tais características e ações auxiliaram no desenvolvimento linguístico dos alunos. Tutores enfatizaram que os alunos se beneficiaram da atitude de serem responsáveis pelo seu próprio aprendizado.

Palavras-chave: autonomia na aprendizagem de línguas; percepção dos tutores; educação à distância.

1. Introduction

Autonomous efforts are essential when it comes to distance language learning. Students need to go beyond any program basic requirements in order to develop the four skills expected for language proficiency: the receptive skills of listening and reading, as well as the productive skills of speaking and writing. Due to physical distance, most of the times, students never meet their teachers; in the distance learning context, the tutors are responsible for guiding learners throughout the program. With the non-stop growing number of distance language learning programs, more attention has been dedicated to investigating this context, in which language development presents many challenges.

Effective language learning, in part, can be accomplished by the development of learning autonomy. As stated by Dickinson (1994), autonomy in language learning is essentially "a matter of attitude towards learning" (p.4); autonomous language learners demonstrate a pro-active behavior in relation to their learning development. In fact, an autonomous learner is one who has actively undertaken the responsibility for his/her own learning. However, guidance is still essential. As Boulton (2006) states, "students do not learn how to *swim* by themselves" (p. 108). Therefore, tutors are the ones able to provide the necessary guidance that leads students towards autonomous learning in distance education (DE) programs.

The Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) offered a distance program, by the *Departmento de Língua e Literatura Estrangeiras* (DLLE). It consisted of an undergraduate program entitled *Curso de Licenciatura em Letras – Inglês na modalidade à distância*. The central objective of the program was to educate teachers of English. To be successful in this program, students were expected to develop themselves as autonomous learners, regarding that autonomy plays a key role in the process of learning at a distance. On-site and distance tutors were essential part of the program and were responsible for giving the necessary support students needed to succeed.

The present article is based on a research carried out to analyze on-site tutors' perceptions[1] in relation to autonomous development of language skills such as reading, writing, speaking and listening, in the distance education program offered by UFSC. The program started in August 2009 and ended in July 2013; it included 30% face-to-face interaction since students had activities developed in the 5 study centers – Araranguá, Chapecó, Concórdia, Itajaí, and São José. The

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1. Perception is a physical and intellectual ability used in mental processes to recognize, interpret, and understand events, an intuitive cognition or judgment. Perception is also a way to express a particular opinion or belief as a result of realizing or noticing things which may not be obvious to others. Perception can be seen as an insight, awareness, discernment, recognition, a set of understandings, interpretations and, finally, a way of knowing (Silva, 2003).

program counted on professors to develop the activities and evaluations proposed throughout the semesters and also on-site and distance tutors to guide and support the development of the courses given. In the investigation, two on-site tutors were interviewed; their answers were analyzed in the light of language learning autonomy literature. This article aims, thus, to enhance the discussions on autonomous actions for developing language skills in a distance learning program. In the next section, language learner autonomy concepts are presented, followed by an analysis and discussion of the tutors' views on students' actions in relation to being autonomous in distance learning.

2. Autonomy in Distance Language Learning

Opportunities for distance learning have been expanding around the world, and are attracting the attention of students. This trend, however, brings new challenges, especially regarding the learning of a second language. Prior experiences with conventional classroom learning do not automatically equip distance learners with the skills and self-knowledge required to tackle the new demands of the distance language learning context. In this sense, this article focuses on understanding the concept of autonomy for language development and the tutors' views on how autonomous actions may support students' learning, especially in the context of distance education.

Autonomy has been the focus in the literature of language teaching and learning for more than 30 years (Hafner & Miller, 2011) and it has been seen as an important educational goal, as pointed out by researchers such as Holec (1981), Dickinson (1992, 1994), Cotterall (1995), Dias (1994), Finch (2002), White (1999, 2003, 2004, 2006), Moreira (1994), and Paiva (2005, 2006, 2011), among others. Besides conceptualizing the term, authors attempted to understand the importance of autonomy in language learning in a way that it could encourage students to participate more fully in their own learning processes.

Holec's theorization can be seen as the basis for any research regarding autonomy in language learning. The author was able to provide a number of features for a term that already existed but had not been conceptualized in the language learning area. Therefore, all the concepts for autonomy presented below address Holec's ideas about what autonomy in language learning consists of.

Researchers point out that autonomy means students taking responsibility for their own learning processes (Holec, 1981; Little, 1991; Dickinson, 1994; Cotterall, 1995; Finch, 2002, Paiva, 2011), which leads them to profit the best from their learning. Based on these researchers' ideas, a group of characteristics and actions are part of the definition of autonomy: recognizing themselves as responsible for their learning, searching for extra materials, monitoring and evaluating progress, establishing orders and progression, and finding practice opportunities.

Paiva (2011), in turn, defines autonomy as a socio-cognitive system in a way that it involves individual's mental states and processes. In her conception, autonomy is a non-linear process that undergoes periods of instability, variability and adaptability. Therefore, it can change for reasons that are, sometimes, entirely internal to oneself, such as willingness to learn in a more independent way, or it can be fostered by external factors, such as instruction. Autonomy does not mean learning in isolation since learners may develop a sense of interdependence and they

may work together with tutors and other learners towards shared goals. An autonomous learner, thus, is the one who acknowledges himself as responsible for his learning, sometimes depending on the social environment and, therefore, also dependent on collective autonomy[2], since its absence would limit individual autonomy (Paiva, 2006).

Although the measurement of autonomy is problematic because autonomy is a multidimensional construct[3] (Little, 1991; Nunan, 1997; Benson, 2001), it is possible to identify and list some initiatives that demonstrate control over learning, based on Holec (1981). Actions such as (a) recognizing themselves as responsible for their own learning processes; (b) determining objectives; (c) defining contents and progressions; (d) selecting materials for studying; (e) testing themselves; (f) monitoring progress; and (g) evaluating progress, are considered initiatives that characterize autonomous learners.

Concluding, autonomy in this article is an essentially self-initiated pursue of actions and initiatives that foster each students' learning process. To all intents, the autonomous learner takes a (pro-)active role in his learning process, creating and making use of learning opportunities, instead of simply reacting to stimuli (Thanasoulas, 2000). Autonomy is not self-study or independent learning but an autonomous learner might profit from such modes of learning in an autonomous way. Interaction with teachers and peers may foster autonomy. Such definitions help to approach tutors' views on students' autonomous actions to learn English in the DE teacher education program offered by UFSC.

3. Method

This article is based on a qualitative investigation that involved on-site tutors' views regarding the development of the four skills in English. They were in charge of carrying out activities proposed by the teachers and administering tests. In addition, the on-site tutors were responsible for the face-to-face meetings specifically organized, two times a week, with 90 minutes of duration each, for the development of language ability, involving the four skills investigated.

Two on-site tutors from two different study centers participated in the research. A structured interview was carried out with them through Skype due to physical distance. The two participant tutors were selected for being part of the program since its beginning. They were interviewed in the last semester of the program (2013.1). This way, they had a deeper involvement with the work carried out in the program and also students' engagement for studying.

The participants are referred to by the use of numbers in order to preserve their identities. They were addressed as 'he', even though they are not necessarily male, regarding that gender was not accounted for in this article. The interview questions are presented along the discussion; they were in Portuguese to avoid language barriers. Tutors' comments and interview questions were translated from Portuguese.

2. Collective autonomy refers to the idea that autonomy is built collectively. Learners do not develop their learning processes entirely by themselves, but also by interacting with peers, teachers and instructors (Paiva, 2006).
3. Autonomy involves constructs related to subjectiveness, metacognition, motivation, social and individual factors.

4. Tutors' Views: Analysis and Discussion

This section presents the analysis and discussion of the on-site tutors views regarding the role of autonomy in the development of the four skills in the students' participation along the DE program. Interview questions were presented, followed by an analysis of the most relevant aspects of their answers regarding the raised topic. Their answers refer to their experience in two from the five study centers, which means that their comments are limited to a certain number of students and not all the students enrolled in the program.

Question 1 aimed to investigate if, in the tutors' opinions, students were able to communicate in English – *Are the students able to use the four skills in English in a satisfactory way regarding communication?*[4]. Both tutors stated that the students developed the four skills in the program, although they had different degrees of proficiency. Tutor 1 revealed that students developed more the reading and writing skills instead of speaking. Tutor 2 mentioned that they developed the four skills, at least the students who participated in all the face-to-face meetings and did all the activities proposed in the program.

Both tutors believed that students profited from their participation in the program. Although 12 students were exempted from some of the language courses[5], which means they already knew some English, tutors stated that all the students had benefits in terms of language development, from participating in the DE program.

For Question 2 – *Is it possible to say that the development of the four skills students present was developed in the DE Language Teacher-Training Program offered by UFSC? Justify.*[6] – Tutor 2 stated:

> Yes, because of the program students were able to improve these skills or consolidate what they brought with themselves to improve these skills, of writing and speaking. (Tutor 1)

In tutor's 2 perception, some students were able to improve their skills in the program, while others reinforced what they already knew. Tutor 1 emphasized that some students who did not have contact with English before the program also improved:

> Yes, it was in the program. It was in the program because few of them had English courses out of the program. Most of them [students] developed their English, there were cases of students who have never had contact with English because, I don't know, in case all their school life they opted for Spanish, and started learning English now at UFSC. (Tutor 1)

Tutors reiterated the idea that learners profited from the DE program, although some of them had some proficiency in the language. Tutor 1 stressed that some students had never had contact with English before, so these students developed their English in the DE program.

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4. "Os alunos conseguem usar as quatro habilidades em Inglês de forma satisfatória para comunicação?"
5. From the 12 students who did not take all the language courses, 3 of them were exempted from the first level; 7 were exempted from levels 1 to 5. One student did not mention the level he was exempted and another decided to do all the disciplines, even though he was exempted from level 1.
6. "Pode-se dizer que o desenvolvimento das habilidades linguísticas em Inglês que os alunos têm foram desenvolvidas no curso de Letras – Inglês EaD oferecido pela UFSC? Justifique".

Question 3 refers to the characteristics of autonomous learners presented in the literature review. It aimed at investigating if students presented autonomous characteristics regarding their language development – *In your perception, do the students study in an autonomous way? For example, do they organize time to study, define orders and progressions, plan practice opportunities, review activities before handing in, and monitor progress?*[7].

Tutor 1 mentioned that some students organized discussion groups and consequently were more autonomous in relation to their learning processes. Similarly, tutor 2 mentioned some students were autonomous since they did activities beyond what was required; they searched for extra resources to improve their skills, such as asking for help from their classmates:

> […] they are very autonomous and sometimes they went far beyond what was required in the activity. They did other readings, asked for help from their classmates, not only from the tutors. (Tutor 2)

Tutors reinforced that students were autonomous and searched for extra resources, doing more than the required in the program. Thanasoulas (2000) states that, to all intents and purposes, the autonomous learner is the one who takes an active role in his own learning process, generating ideas and availing himself of learning opportunities, independently of the various stimuli from the teacher and the program itself.

In the same respect, question 4 asked if students had the initiative of looking for extra materials to support their learning, which is an essential characteristic of language learner autonomy (Littlewood, 1996) – *In your point of view, do the students have the initiative of looking for resources and activities to develop their skills in English?*[8].

Tutor 2 mentioned that students went beyond what the program proposed; tutor 1 also answered the question affirmatively and brought examples of actions taken by the students:

> They searched for texts, discussing and speaking in English, the activities in the program they did not do only them, they discussed in groups and I think this is already a little beyond the activity itself. (Tutor 1)

Similarly to Question 3, tutors' answers for Question 4 emphasized that students presented characteristics of autonomous learners. Selecting extra-materials to foster learning represents a key characteristic of autonomy. As claimed by Holec (1981), autonomous students understand their learning processes and search for extra-materials to improve their language skills.

Question 5 investigated about students' participation in the face-to-face meetings carried out in the study centers. – *Did the students participate in the activities carried out in the study center (mandatory and optional activities), in particular the ones directed to develop the four skills in English?*[9].

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7. "Na sua concepção, os alunos estudam de forma autônoma? Por exemplo, os alunos organizam seu tempo de estudo, definem ordens e progressos, planejam oportunidades de prática, revisam as atividades antes de entregar e monitoram seu progresso?".

8. "No seu ponto de vista, os alunos têm a iniciativa de procurar recursos e atividades extras para desenvolver suas habilidades em Inglês?"

9. "Eles Os alunos participam das atividades realizadas no polo (obrigatórias e não obrigatórias), em particular daquelas direcionadas para o desenvolvimento das 4 habilidades linguísticas em Inglês?".

This question was not directly related to the concepts of autonomy. However, participation in these meetings was interpreted as engagement in the activities proposed in the program as a way of enhancing the four skills in English. This could also be included in the "searching for practice opportunities" characteristic stated by Holec (1981, p.4).

Tutor 1 pointed out that the students who used to go to the face-to-face meetings continued in the program until the end, unlike the ones who did not go and ended up quitting or failing the program. Tutor 2 emphasized that some students who participated in the meetings watched other students' presentations and probably learned from that as well. This action went beyond what the face-to-face meetings requested them to do, which was only presenting the required assignments. Some students did more than that by watching and contributing to their classmates' presentations, for example.

> The meetings were very useful yes, because many times we had these activities and the other classmates participated as supporting actors at the time I believe that these people who were watching the classmates' presentation could learn. They brought different information and searched for more than what was required. (Tutor 2)

Question 5 raised an example of a different action students took when participating in the face-to-face meetings. Tutor 2 stated that students supported their classmates when making presentations. This represents an example of collective autonomy (Paiva, 2006), in which students may learn from their peers. Collective autonomy refers to the idea that learners develop their learning processes by interacting with peers, teachers and instructors (Paiva, 2006).

Question 6 asked if students were very dependent on tutors, resorting to them for all the activities, showing no possibility of finding ways to learn and progress in the program more autonomously – *Are the students very dependent on tutors and/or professors, that is, do they look for tutors/professors exaggeratedly in order to ask for help to do the activities?*[10]. Autonomous learners are able to define orders and progressions regarding courses' content, in accordance to the way they learn better. On the other hand, non-autonomous learners would, most of the time, depend on tutors or professors to do the proposed activities.

Tutor 1 believed students depended a great deal on tutors:

> Every day, when I access my e-mails, there are questions. […] There are many questions, as an on-site tutor, right. I do not know if it is the same for the distance tutors. I believe that for some courses yes, for example, the Practicum, and the other language courses as well, right, the oral and written comprehension that they were doing, yes, they looked for the tutors a lot. (Tutor 1)

On the other hand, tutor 2 thought that the students became more independent, considering that they only looked for help in case they really needed.

> Very dependent, no. They were dependent. They did not look for people too much. They searched for help when they could not really do the activity or when they had doubts in doing it. I believe

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10. "Os alunos são muito dependentes dos tutores e/ou professores, ou seja, eles procuram os tutores/professores demasiadamente a fim de pedir auxílio para realização das atividades?".

that students from this study center became much more independent. They would only look for help if they had difficulties, but they were really independent. (Tutor 2)

The tutors presented somewhat divergent views regarding students' independence in the program. However, none of the tutors mentioned if students required help in what concerns their learning process development, such as looking for extra-materials, defining orders, progressions and setting objectives. Tutor 2, for example, emphasized that students from his study center seemed to have become more independent along the program.

Question 7 inquired tutors if the activities proposed by the teachers promoted autonomous learning – *In your opinion, do the activities proposed by the professors promote autonomous learning among students? How?*[11]. Tutor 1 mentioned that the activities that required more research and had a well-explained guide promoted autonomous work.

> I noticed that the activities that required more research and had a research guide, a guide for them (students) to follow, they did on their own, even because everything they had to do was already explained in terms of what was necessary. (Tutor 1)

Tutor 2 believed that the activities proposed by the teachers promoted autonomous learning because they made students look for other complementary resources and strategies to do them. Consequently, they fostered autonomous language learning.

> (…) when doing a writing activity, they had to resort to, for example, dictionaries, Internet, classmates, even the classmates to help them in this field. For example, they scheduled Skype meetings by themselves, they scheduled these meetings and talked and resolved doubts and searched in the book when doing a quiz. (Tutor 2)

As both tutors stated, the activities proposed by the teachers fostered autonomous learning because they guided students through what to do or because they encouraged students to do further research in order to accomplish certain tasks. Students were able to follow the instructions and accomplish the proposed tasks. On the contrary, they resorted to tutors and other classmates.

In sum, both tutors saw as positive autonomous characteristics and actions assisting students' language development. They claimed that students improved their skills by participating in the program and going beyond its requirements. Although many students had some proficiency in English, tutors emphasized that students further developed the four skills due to the DE program. Concluding, they mentioned that students were autonomous in the sense that they tried to find ways of improving their skills, resorting to actions, such as group studying, that fostered learning.

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11. "Na sua opinião, as atividades propostas pelos professores promovem aprendizagem autônoma entre os alunos? De que forma?".

5. Final Remarks and Conclusions

The study reported in this article aimed to investigate tutors' views on autonomy assisting language learning in a distance education program. The tutors' perceptions in relation to the students reinforced the idea that students improved the four skills in English as a result of their participation in the program. The tutors emphasized that even though some students already knew English, they had the opportunity to enhance the four skills in English.

Tutors presented examples of activities that could be related to autonomous behavior, for instance, the discussion groups created by the students themselves and the participation in each other's presentations. Such activities represent the initiative and willingness to foster the learning processes through taking responsibility for their own learning (Holec, 1981; Dickinson, 1992; Cotterall, 1995).

Tutors indicated that students recognized the way they learn in a better way, besides setting goals for their development. Students participated in each other's presentations as a way of supporting both their own and their classmates learning development. In order to accomplish their aims, students resorted to autonomous initiatives, such as looking for extra-materials, searching for practice opportunities, setting goals and objectives, creating study groups, among others. These characteristics of autonomy may have helped the students remain in the course, been successful in their assignments, been able to graduate and become professionals in their area.

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CAN YOU HEAR THE BUZZ? – THE DEVOICING OF WORD-FINAL /z/ BY BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE SPEAKERS OF ENGLISH AND THE ISSUE OF INTELLIGIBILITY

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Abstract: This article reports on a study which investigates whether the devoicing of word-final /z/ by Brazilian speakers of English hinders their intelligibility when heard by other Brazilians, as well as by native speakers of English. In order to investigate this issue, a questionnaire and an intelligibility assessment test were designed for collecting data from both the speaker and listener groups. The group of speakers consisted of 39 Brazilian Portuguese speakers of English as an additional language from the undergraduate and graduate *Letras Inglês* courses, mainly at UFSC, plus a native speaker of English. The listeners, in turn, were split into three groups: a) 26 students and ex-students from the English Graduation Program at UFSC (PPGI); b) 21 students from the English extracurricular course at UFSC, and c) 21 native speakers of English. The results suggest that the devoicing of word-final /z/ caused misunderstandings in the three groups of listeners, hindering communication. This unintelligibility was more frequent for the BP listeners.
Keywords: intelligibility; devoicing; additional language; English; phonology.

Resumo: Este artigo reporta os resultados de um trabalho que investiga se o desvozeamento do /z/ em final de palavra produzido por brasileiros falantes de inglês como língua adicional dificulta a sua inteligibilidade quando ouvidos por outros brasileiros e por falantes nativos de inglês. Para investigar esta questão, um questionário e um teste de avaliação de inteligibilidade foram desenvolvidos para coletar dados tanto dos falantes como dos ouvintes. O grupo dos falantes foi formado por 39 brasileiros falantes de inglês, em sua maioria provenientes dos cursos de graduação e pós-graduação da UFSC, além de um falante nativo de inglês. Os ouvintesforam divididos em três grupos: a) 26 alunos e ex-alunos do Programa de Pós-Graduação do Inglês da UFSC (PPGI); b) 21 alunos do curso extracurricular de inglês da UFSC, e c) 21 falantes nativos de inglês. Os resultados sugerem que o desvozeamento do /z/ em final de palavra dificultou a inteligibilidade nos três grupos de ouvintes, sendo mais predominante nos grupos formados por ouvintes brasileiros.

Palavras-chave: inteligibilidade; desvozeamento; língua adicional; inglês; fonologia.

1. Introduction

The reasons why someone longs to learn English as an additional language (EAL) are manifold. To start with, English is considered an international language, which refers to a language widely used all over the world. In this sense, by learning EAL it is possible to be in contact with people from all over the world, sharing information and having access to global information and technology. Learners aim to use English in different contexts for different purposes, and teachers need to respect the individuality and needs of each learner in order to achieve their goals (McKay, 2003). Based on our personal experience as teachers and as learners, it is noticeable the presence of the desire of reaching native-like pronunciation and fluency in the AL. Three issues come then into discussion: (1) what native is meant to sound like; (2) whether learners can reach that level of proficiency in the AL; and (3) whether this should be the EAL learners' objective.

Even though studies in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) discuss the differences between native and nonnative speakers/listeners, it is hard to find a definition for such groups. Lecumberri, Cooke, & Cutler (2010) call attention to the fact that in some cases the definition of 'native' may not be as obvious as one might think, which is the case of people who learn two languages simultaneously. Therefore, according to these authors, it is easy to state that one is a native speaker only if he/she was "monolingual until adulthood or at least until adolescence" (Lecumberri, Cooke, & Cutler, 2010, p. 868). In this paper, the 'native' is understood as someone who (1) was born in an L1 English speaking country, (2) has English as a first language (L1), and (3) was or has been raised by at least one native English parent who used English to communicate with.

With regard to reaching or not native-like pronunciation and fluency in the AL, it has been believed that as soon as the brain loses its plasticity the learner is no longer able to reach native-like proficiency, which is one of the prerogatives of the Critical Period Hypothesis (Krashen, Long, & Scarcella, 1979). Studies investigating the effects of age of learning and proficiency have demonstrated that other issues rather than a critical period may interfere, and the existence of a critical period itself has been questioned (Flege, 1995; Flege, et al., 1997).

In the light of these discussions, and bearing in mind that English has gained this lingua franca status, being thus largely spoken by people of different L1 backgrounds (Jenkins, 2004),

it has been advocated that, rather than sounding like a native speaker, the EAL speakers' goals should be sounding intelligible (Mckay, 2003).

Due to this claim, there has been a shift on the focus of research in English phonology and pedagogy. Instead of focusing their studies on the description of non-target pronunciations or on how to erase someone's accent traces, researchers are now interested in understanding which non-target pronunciations hinder communication, that is, have an effect on the listener's intelligibility of speakers' accented speech (Becker, 2011; Cruz, 2007; Jenkins, 2004; Pickering, 2000; Varonis & Gass, 1982).

Brazilian Portuguese speakers of English (BPSE) as an AL are not exempted from non-target pronunciations. One case which is usually referred to is the direct transfer of the Brazilian /l/ to English (Baratieri, 2006). In BP, the word-final 'l' is totally vocalized, being transcribed as /w/. If direct transfer occur, , words such as "soul" and "goal" might have their meanings changed, as they would sound as "so" and "go", respectively. As dealing with all the BPSE possible non-target pronunciations due to L1 transfer would be an extensive work, this research focused on the productions of English /s/ and /z/ in word-final position only, that is, on BPSE devoicing of word-final /z/.

The ways in which /s/ and /z/ are produced differ in Portuguese and English. For Brazilian learners, these differences might not be noticeable and the non-target production of those sounds is frequent. This research gives special attention to /z/, as previous research has demonstrated that this sound is frequently totally or partially devoiced in word final position by Brazilian speakers of EAL (Zimmer, 2004). In the following sections, other issues related to the production of /z/ and to intelligibility will be discussed.

1.1 The production of /s/ and /z/

The phonemes /s/ and /z/ are fricative sounds that share many characteristics, such as place of articulation and manner of articulation, but differ in terms of voicing quality. The phoneme /s/ is voiceless, i.e., produced with no vibration of the vocal folds, while the phoneme /z/ is voiced, i.e., produced with vibration of the vocal folds (Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin, 2010). Besides voicing quality, they also differ in terms of muscular strength. Yavas (2011) brings the *lenis* (voiced) and *fortis* (voiceless) definition, where *fortis* consonants are uttered with more muscular effort, more pressure, and more air usage, than their *lenis* counterparts. Together with these definitions, the author also mentions the length of the preceding vowel as being influenced by voicing. He states that vowels, glides, nasals, and liquid sounds have a longer duration before voiced consonants than the voiceless ones. This happens because voiceless consonants are longer, making the articulation of the previous sound to close earlier (Lisker, 1973). Moreover, /s/ and /z/ can be palatalized and produced as [S] and [Z] respectively.

In Brazilian Portuguese, the consonants "s" and "z" in word-final position are produced as voiceless or voiced depending on the voicing feature of the following sound. For example, if these consonants are followed by a vowel or a voiced consonant, it aggregates the voicing quality

of those voiced sounds, being pronounced as [z], (e.g., *asas azuis* [@azaza @zuis][1] 'blue wings'). When they are followed by a pause, or a voiceless consonant, they both are produced as [s], (e.g., *capaz* [@kapas] 'able') (Cristófaro-Silva, 2010; Silveira, 2012). Hence, BP /s/ has four different allophones, viz. [s, ʃ, z, Z], which are influenced by linguistic and non-linguistic environments, depending on the BP dialect (Monaretto; Quednau & Hora, 1996; Cristófaro-Silva, 2010). When /s/, for example, occurs in the end of a word or is followed by a voiceless consonant, it is likely to be produced as the voiceless allophones [s] or [S], depending on the speaker's BP dialect (e.g., *mas* [mas; maS] 'but') (Cagliari, 2007). On the other hand, when the same segment occurs before a vowel or a voiced consonant, it is more likely to be produced as the voiced allophones [z] or [Z], depending on the speaker's BP dialect as well (e.g., *rapaz esperto* [Xa̗ pazis̗ pErtʊ; Xa̗ paZis̗ pErtU] 'smart boy').

In English, the consonants "s" and "z" in word-final position can render either [s] or [z] realizations. In monosyllabic words such as *yes* and *as,* the preceding context does not play a role and thus "s" is always realized as [s] or [S]. However, as stated by Celce-Murcia, Briton, and Goodwin (2010), in final position, when the suffix makes part of plural forms and with verbs in the third person (simple present), the suffix -s has three different realizations, depending on the preceding sound, that is, if it is voiceless, voiced or sibilant, the suffix –s is pronounced as [s], [z] or [Iz], respectively.

There are different views concerning the production of word-final /z/ in English. On the one hand, Flege and Hillenbrand (1986) consider that the /z/ can be totally devoiced (being produced as [s], like BP speakers of English might do). Consequently, Flege and Hillenbrand (1986) claim that the distinction between voiced and voiceless is totally based on the preceding vowel length. Similarly, Smith (1997) states that the total devoicing of final [z] is a feature of American English, since [z] in final position is a complex structure of the language, so speakers tend to simplify it by using the devoicing feature. On the other hand, Giegerich (1992) mentions that native speakers tend to recur only to the partial devoicing of /z/ at word-final position, making it a natural process of the language. Likewise, Yavas (2011) adds that /z/ is only fully voiced when in an intervocalic position, that is, when surrounded by vowels. Similarly, Smith (1997) discovered that participants, who were all NSE, had a different degree of devoicing variation, being it more common before voiceless contexts, and when the speaker did not put much effort in the production. Since there is no consensus regarding the way word-final /z/ is produced, and taking into account that most NSE recordings were partially devoiced, the present study will consider as target pronunciation every time /z/ is produced as [z] or is partially devoiced.

1.2 Language transfer

For the purposes of the present study, language transfer is understood as "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (Odlin, 1989, p. 27). BPSE may transfer

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1. Brazilian Portuguese transcriptions were made based on the vowel and consonant chart proposed by Cristófaro-Silva (2010).

their first language knowledge and devoice the final sibilant /z/ when it is not followed by a voiced sound, as in 'I can hear the buzz.' [aj kQn hiɨ Dʎ b´z][2].

Due to transfer, BPSE may also voice the /s/ when it is followed by a voiced sound, as in 'Yes, I am.' [jEs aj Qm]. In her paper, Silveira (unprepared manuscript) comes to a conclusion that Brazilians do transfer the rules of the use of [s] and [z] from their first language (L1) to the other language (L2). She investigated the effect that words that contained the silent –e (e.g., *nose*) in their structure have on the way they are produced by Brazilians. Her results showed that participants tended to produce [s] as [z] when it was in intervocalic position. Another process noticed was with the word 'us' that was influenced by the next sound, being produced as [√z] when it was followed by a voiced consonant.

Regarding intelligibility and language transfer, Zimmer (2004) discovered that partially devoicing of word-final /z/ does not result in accented speech. Said that, we hypothesize that partial devoicing may not hinder native speakers' intelligibility to a great extent, since it may actually make BPSE speak in a more native fashion.

1.3 Intelligibility

The non-native speech can be assessed in multifarious dimensions – intelligibility, effectiveness, comprehension, comprehensibility, interpretability, understandability, communication, accessibility, acceptability, and communicativity (Cruz, 2007). In this study, only intelligibility will be addressed.

Intelligibility regards "the extent to which a speaker's utterance is actually understood" (Munro et al., 2006, p. 112), that is, the extent to which the listeners understand the intended message, by transcribing the words (Munro et al., 2006). According to Munro et al. (2006), intelligibility is often assessed by listeners, who tell how intelligible a speech is, usually by transcribing what is heard. Therefore, listeners' characteristics have a direct effect on intelligibility. For example, listeners who share the same L1 with the speakers seem to have an advantage over listeners who have a different L1 (Smith and Hayes-Harb, 2011). Thus, "some studies have concluded that native (L1) listeners seem to find native speech more intelligible than non-native speech" (Smith & Hayes-Harb, 2011, p. 115).

Additionally, research in the area has suggested that low proficient L2 listeners have an advantage over (1) high proficient L2 listeners from the same L1 background as well as over (2) NS of the L2 (Bent & Bradlow, 2003; Hayes-Harb et al., 2008; van Wijngaarden et al., 2002).

In order to analyze the impact of L1 background sharing and proficiency level on intelligibility, this study had two groups of Brazilians of different levels of proficiency and a group of NSE.

1.4 Objective and Research Question

Taking all the issues hitherto discussed into account, the objective of this study is to investigate how the devoicing of word-final /z/ by BPSE of EAL affects the intelligibility of their

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2. English transcriptions were made based on the vowel and consonant chart proposed by Celce-Murcia, Brinton & Goodwin (2010).

utterances when they are heard by native speakers of English (NSE) and by other BPSE. This being so, the research question and hypothesis guiding this study are the following:

RQ – Does the devoicing of word-final /z/ by BPSE affect the intelligibility of their utterances when heard by different groups of listeners (BPSE and NSE)?

H1 - BPSE non-target production of word-final /z/ will not affect their intelligibility when heard by NSE listeners to a great extent.

H2 – BPSE non-target production of word-final /z/ will be more intelligible to other BPSE in general (PPGI and EXTRA groups).

H3 – BPSE non-target production of word-final /z/ will be more intelligible for less proficient BPSE (EXTRA group).

1.5 Method

Participants were 40 speakers and 68 listeners. The speakers were 39 BPSE living in Brazil and one American NSE, who is originally from Utah and had been living in Brazil for more than a year at the time of data collection, thus, he/she is acquainted with BP. The BPSE were from (a) the second semester of the *Letras Inglês* undergraduate program at *Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina* - UFSC (17), (b) the third semester of the *Secretariado Executivo* undergraduate program at UFSC (11), (c) different semesters of the distance learning *Letras Inglês* undergraduate program at UFSC (9), (d) the *Letras Inglês* Master's program at UFSC (2), and (e) the *Letras Inglês/Português* undergraduate program at *UNIFRA (1).* They lived in different parts of Brazil: (a) Santa Catarina (27), (b) Rio Grande do Sul (7), (c) Paraná (3), (d) São Paulo (1), and (e) Rio Grande do Norte (1). Regarding their gender, 21 were female and 18 were male. Their age ranged from 18 to 47 years at the time of data collection (M = 27.45).

The speakers answered a questionnaire designed to collect information about their profiles (e.g., age, origin, level of education, knowledge of foreign languages, etc.). Then, they read and recorded the sentences which were later analyzed. The speech files with the target and non-target pronunciations of /z/, as well as some distracter audio files (which included minimal pairs with /ɹ/ and /h/, and /l/ and /w/), were normalized at -6db with an interval of approximately 3 (three) seconds between one another with the use of Sound Forge Pro 10.0. These audio files were made available at a web site specially devised for collecting data (for this and two other subsequent studies) and composed the intelligibility test, which were undertaken by the listeners.

The listeners were 21 native speakers of English (NSE) and 47 BP speakers of English as an AL. The BPSE listeners were 21 students from advanced level groups of *Curso Extracurricular de Idiomas* at UFSC (Extra BPSE) and 26 Master's and Doctoral students from the *Letras Inglês* Graduation program at UFSC (PPGI BPSE). They were also from different areas of Brazil: (a) Santa Catarina (20), (b) Rio Grande do Sul (9), (c) São Paulo (6), (d) Paraná (5), (e) Rio de Janeiro (3), (f) Minas Gerais (1), (g) Pará (1), (h) Paraíba (1), and (i) Piauí (1). The Extra BPSE listener's age ranged from 18 to 50 (M=25.09), and the PPGI BPSE listener's age ranged from 24 to 49 (M=32.92).

The NSE listeners were 14 male and 7 female, from different English speaking countries: (a) the United States of America (12), (b) England (4), (c) the United Kingdom (2), (d) Australia

(2), and (e) New Zealand (1). Their age ranged from 18 to 62 years at the time of data collection (M= 36.28).

The BPSE listeners and NSE listeners answered the same questionnaire. Additionally, the latter answered some questions about familiarity with BP and with BP speakers talking in English. All the 68 listeners were asked to rate the recordings that were previously selected for the intelligibility assessment test (orthographic transcription of the word). This intelligibility assessment test contained the recordings of the following sentences: a) I could hear the *buzz*; b) We couldn't find any *trays*, and c) What is the problem with your *knees*? The test also contained these sentences in written form, but the words *buzz*, *trays,* and *knees* were missing, so that listeners had to listen to the audio file and then complete the sentence with the word they heard. An example can be seen below:

Figure 1: Example of an intelligibility assessment test sentence

The recordings were selected according to the following criteria: it was intended to have (a) 3 recordings made by different speakers who devoiced the final /z/ in the words *buzz*, *trays*, and *knees* (non-target productions), (b) 2 recordings made by different BPSE speakers who partially devoiced the final /z/ (target pronunciation), and (c) one recording made by one NSE who produced the final /z/ accurately. However, since some words were not produced accurately by the BPSE, it was not possible to follow this pattern for all words. In order to test the inter-rater reliability, one recording of the sentences containing the non-target pronunciation of the words *buzz* and *trays* of each sentence was repeated.

2. Data analysis

This section displays the results and attempts to answer the research question which guide this study. In this study, intelligibility refers to whether a listener can accurately understand a spoken word as intended by the speaker. Our research question aims at exploring whether the

devoicing of the word-final /z/ by BPSE affects the intelligibility of their utterances when heard by different groups of listeners.

The 68 listeners heard sentences embedded with occurrences of the non-target pronunciation of three different words (*buzz*, *trays*, and *knees*) and they wrote down each target missing word. All the non-target pronunciation of the words share a specific trait, which is the devoicing of word-final /z/ (resulting in [bʌs], [treis], [ni¢s], respectively), object of the present study. When analyzing the data set, the following codes were used for the different intelligibility status: U (unintelligible), which means that the word transcribed by the listener was a representation of the non-target pronunciation of the word (e.g., [treis] instead of /treiz/); and I (intelligible) which means that the word was a representation of the target (e.g., [treiz] understood as [treiz]).

The data set was submitted to descriptive statistics through SPSS, and the frequencies for each case were calculated. Table 1 displays the results of the intelligibility assessment test. Note that the numbers 1 (one), 2 (two), and 3 (three) added to the words (e.g., buzz1, buzz2, buzz3) refer to the same word being recorded by three different speakers, generating three different audio files. When a word recorded by a specific speaker is repeated in the test, the name is followed by _2 in order to represent its repetition (e.g., buzz1, buzz1_2). Because of space constraints, this article reports and discusses the results for the word *buzz* only.

The Cronbach's Alpha test was run in order to check for inter-rater reliability. The reliability test coefficient obtained was .98 for each group of listeners analyzed separately, and .99 for the 68 listeners considered altogether. Taking into account that all are very high coefficients (> 0.70), it is possible to say that any variability present does not compromise reliability. The following paragraphs discuss the results for the word *buzz*, by comparing the frequencies in each group of listeners, displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Frequencies for the intelligibility test of the word *buzz*.

Words	BPSE listeners – PPGI		BPSE listeners – Extra		NSE listeners	
	U	I	U	I	U	I
Buzz1 [bʌs]1	96.2	3.8	95.3	4.8	100	
Buzz1_2 [bʌs]1_2	92.3	7.7	90.5	9.5	95.2	4.8
Buzz2 [bʌs]2	80.8	19.2	90.5	9.5	47.6	52.4
Buzz3 [bʌs]3	73.1	26.9	76.2	23.8	47.6	52.4
Total	**342.4 (85.6)**	**57.6 (14.4)**	**352.2 (88.12)**	**47.6 (11.9)**	**290.4 (72.6)**	**109.6 (27.4)**

U = unintelligible; I = intelligible

Regarding the PPGI listeners, it is incontestable that the devoicing of /z/ may have affected the intelligibility of the word *buzz* in all of its occurrences, since the difference in the frequencies

for 'unintelligible' and 'intelligible' is large (see Table 1), with a mean frequency of 85.6% of misunderstandings.

The way EXTRA listeners understood the words is close to the way PPGI listeners did. This group also understood most of the occurrences of the word *buzz* as its non-target *buzz* [bʌs] (over 75% of misunderstandings, with a mean frequency of 88.12%).

The way the NSE listeners understood the word *buzz*, on the other hand, differed from the way the two other groups of Brazilians did, to whom it showed to be incontestably unintelligible most of the times. It is interesting to note that as the NSE listeners advance in the intelligibility test, their answers change. This can be seen in Table 1 if the frequencies are considered: *buzz1* – 100% unintelligible; *buzz1_2* – U = 95.2% *vs* I = 4.8%; *buzz2* and *buzz3* – U = 47.6% *vs* I = 52.4%. It is possible to infer that, since *buzz1* was the first occurrence of the word *buzz*, all the NSE listeners understood it as being the non-target *buzz* [bʌz]. Thus, in this case, the devoicing of final /z/ alone may have played a role. As the target *buzz* [bʌz] was also in the test, and bearing in mind that most listeners were familiar with the BP accent in English, they may have relied on something else other than the devoicing of final /z/ to distinguish which member of the pair was being produced, yielding different frequencies for *buzz2* and for *buzz3,* which showed to be more intelligible than unintelligible, to a small extent, though. The level of misunderstandings is more serious, thus, for *buzz1* and *buzz1_2* (over 95%), followed by *buzz2* and *buzz3*, in which over 45% of the NSE listeners transcribed the word *buzz* as *bus*.

According to Hypothesis 1, it was expected that BPSE non-target production of word-final /z/ would not affect their intelligibility when heard by NSE listeners to a great extent. The results discussed here show that the word *buzz* had over 72% of misunderstandings. If only the first occurrence of the word is considered, it was then 100% misunderstood. These results do not confirm our hypothesis and indicates that intelligibility was affected to an extent that is, if not great, enough to hinder/cause discomfort to communication.

In turn, Hypothesis 2 predicted that BPSE speech would be more intelligible to other BPSE, because this group shares the speakers' L1 background. If the mean frequency for the word is considered in each group, results indicate that the devoicing of final /z/ affected the intelligibility of the word *buzz* more often when heard by the BPSE than by the NES, which does not confirm H2. Nevertheless, if only the first occurrence of the word is considered, the opposite is true and thus H2 is likely to be confirmed. However, the frequencies are not strikingly different (PPGI = 96.2%; EXTRA = 95.3%; NSE = 100%) and thus results are non conclusive for this Hypothesis.

Finally, Hypothesis 3 predicted that BPSE non-target production of word-final /z/ would be more intelligible for less proficient BPSE (the EXTRA group). However, results showed that the non-target pronunciation of the word *buzz* was more often unintelligible for the EXTRA listeners (I = 11.9% *vs* U = 88.12%) than it was for the PPGI listeners (I = 14.4% *vs* U = 85.6%) and for the NSE listeners (I = 27.4% *vs* U = 72.6%), which does not confirm H3, even when only the first occurrence of the word is considered.

In short, the word *buzz* yielded two different patterns: the intelligibility of *buzz1* and *buzz1_2* were affected by the devoicing of /z/, whereas *buzz2* and *buzz3* showed to be a little more intelligible, which was truer for the NES. If only the first occurrence of the word is considered,

it is possible to conclude that the devoicing of word final /z/ alone did play a role since it caused over 95% of misunderstandings, thus hindering communication.

A more in-depth look at Table 1 reveals that other intervening factors emerged, what is evinced by a crescendo in the frequency for the intelligibility status in the three groups, stronger for the NSE. The PPGI frequencies range from 3.8 to 26.9, the EXRA frequencies range from 4.8 to 23.8, and the NSE frequencies range from 0.0 to 52.4. This may be explained by the way the intelligibility assessment test was formatted – with the target pronunciation of the word *buzz* being presented in the very beginning of the test. As the listeners carried on the test, they might have been attentive to the possibilities of having two possible targets: *bus* or *buzz*, being more careful and reasoning more about the two choices. NSE listeners probably noticed beforehand that Brazilians tend to devoice the word final /z/ (because of familiarity with Brazilian's L1) and this may have led these listeners to find new strategies in order to guide them when transcribing the words. One of these strategies might have been the reliance on vowel duration, more evident for the NSE who rated intelligibility as null for the first appearance of the word *buzz* and over 50% intelligible for *buzz3* (the last occurrence of the word in the test). In sum, other factors such as (1) task experience, (2) familiarity with BP accent in English, (3) reliance on vowel length when differentiating one word from another, and (4) reliance on pronunciations factors other than the devoicing of /z/ may have played a role, however exploring them goes beyond the purview of this paper and should be addressed in future research.

All in all, it seems that the first occurrence of *buzz* (buzz1) provides real evidence of the effects of devoicing alone on intelligibility, which was totally compromised for the NSE (100% unintelligible) and a little less affected for the BP listeners.

3. Final Remarks

Hypothesis 1 predicted that BPSE non-target production of word-final /z/ would not affect their intelligibility when heard by NSE listeners to a great extent. When analyzing the data for intelligibility, the results indicated that, although other factors may also have interfered, the devoicing of /z/ affected intelligibility very frequently, but in different ways among each group.

Hypothesis 2 predicted that BPSE speech would be more intelligible to other BPSE and the first occurrence of the word *buzz* (buzz1), in which intelligibility was totally compromised for the NSE (100% unintelligible) and a little less affected for the BP listeners, seems to illustrate that.

Hypothesis 3 that predicted BPSE non-target production of word-final /z/ would be more intelligible for less proficient BPSE was not confirmed, since the non-target pronunciation of the word *buzz* was more often unintelligible for the EXTRA listeners (the least proficient).

All in all, intelligibility was affect by the devoicing of the word final /z/ in the three groups of listeners.

Bearing these results in mind, it is expected that studies like this one will trigger the awareness of teachers so that they start focusing on nonnative speech features that really affect intelligibility, as it is the case with the devoicing of /z/ by BPSE.

One of the main limitations of the studies in the area of intelligibility is probably the lack of agreement concerning the most appropriate method to collect and analyze the data. Some of the limitations of this study were: (1) controlled speech, instead of spontaneous speech, which resembles daily talk; (2) repetition of the same sentences, which may have interfered on the results, for that listeners probably became used to the words being produced during the test; (3) lack of a proficiency test for BP listeners; (4) lack of control of the conditions under which the listeners undertook the intelligibility assessment test (e.g., some used headphones, others did not); (5) lack of a pattern in the selection of recordings, since BPSE recorded in this study did not produce all the investigated words accurately, and (6) a low number of listeners, which makes it hard for generalizing the results.

For future investigation, it would be worthwhile investigating the correlation between the reliance on the preceding vowel duration and intelligibility of word-final /z/, with the intent of verifying to what extent the preceding vowel influences the way listeners perceive the words which had the final /z/ devoiced by nonnative speakers of English. Likewise, it is necessary to investigate to what extent the familiarity with an accent plays a role when speakers of English as an L1 evaluate speakers of English as an AL concerning intelligibility and comprehensibility. Taking into account that English is considered to be a lingua franca (Jenkins, 2004), groups of listeners from different L1 backgrounds should also be the target listeners in future studies.

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PLAGIARISM IN THE ACADEMIC CONTEXT: AN INVESTIGATION OF PPGI STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THE PROBLEM

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Abstract: This paper presents a report of a small-scale research carried with students from Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês (PPGI), the graduate Program of English from Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC), in Brazil. The objective is to investigate students' knowledge about plagiarism and the existing rules in the Program on this topic. The study involved the application of a questionnaire to masters and doctoral students who were enrolled in the Program or who had recently left it. In addition, the Program Coordinator was asked about institutional information regarding this issue. Results point to a lack of precise knowledge from students about the rules and penalties posed in relation to plagiarism. It may be caused by the absence of additional and more detailed official information, or by students' insufficient attention to it. Conclusions suggest the need to changing certain cultural practices in Brazilian tertiary education as well as considering this important topic in the university context and implementing certain procedures in order to deal with the problem.
Keywords: plagiarism; academic context; Brazilian education.

Resumo: O presente trabalho trata de uma pesquisa realizada com alunos e ex-alunos do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês (PPGI) da Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC). O objetivo centra-se em investigar o conhecimento de tais alunos acerca do que consiste plágio e sobre as políticas, procedimentos e regras adotadas no Programa em relação a este problema. O estudo envolveu o envio por e-mail de um questionário aos participantes. Além disso, a Coordenadora do Programa também foi ent-

revistada acerca de informações institucionais. Os resultados apontam para a falta de um conhecimento mais preciso dos alunos acerca das regras e sanções estabelecidas pelo Programa no que respeita plágio. Tal desconhecimento pode ser motivado pela ausência da divulgação de maiores informações sobre o tópico ou falta de atenção dos alunos para este tema. As conclusões advindas sugerem a necessidade de se instituir novas práticas culturais e educacionais no contexto brasileiro, que poderão ser vislumbradas a longo prazo. A curto e médio prazo, observa-se que o que pode ser feito pela universidade, pelos professores e alunos inclui o estabelecimento de medidas preventivas e punitivas bem como maior divulgação, diálogo e esclarecimento acerca do tema.

Palavras-chave: plágio; contexto acadêmico; educação.

1. Introduction

Plagiarism is one of the issues involved in the discussion of authorship rights and intellectual property, and it may be detected in several contexts, including the artistic and the scientific ones. It involves the unacknowledged use of external sources, and generally some advantages are illegitimately obtained. These may be: financial, when there is commercialization; or academic, ranging from getting a better grade in a course to gaining a bachelor's, master's or doctoral degree. Considering the importance of this topic to academia, this study leaves on one side any concerns about commercial interests to focus on linguistic plagiarism produced in educational and academic contexts.

The importance of bringing these issues into debate derives from the observed lack of more accurate information about plagiarism in universities. Generally, people do not know what plagiarism really is and how to avoid it, since in most Brazilian primary, secondary and high schools there is no teaching about how to correctly acknowledge external sources. Furthermore, there are teachers who only consider as correct the answers that students have copied from their textbooks. However, despite such impediments imposed by the educational system, it is worrying that there are occurrences of plagiarism involving undergraduate and, more astonishingly, graduate students, since scientific responsibility demands that they know what it is and how to avoid it.

In order to investigate students' awareness on this topic, the present paper reports a small-scale research about how plagiarism has been notified and handled at Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês (PPGI) at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC). The objective is to learn about students' knowledge about plagiarism and about the institutional rules in relation to such practice[1].

The next section presents a brief definition of plagiarism and a panorama about this problem at PPGI, at UFSC, and also in some other institutions. In the third section, which presents methods, aspects related to the small-scale research procedures are described. In the fourth section, the results derived from participants' answering of the questionnaire are pointed out. Finally, drawing both on what has been reviewed about the treatment that plagiarism receives in academia and on participants' responses, there is a general discussion.

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1. The idea for this research paper comes from Coulthard (2007, p. 197)'s suggestion for a research task.

2. Plagiarism in the Academic Context

A definition of plagiarism is provided by Coulthard & Johnson (2007, p. 187), who claim that "at its simplest, plagiarism, or more accurately the type of plagiarism linguists are competent to deal with, is the theft, or unacknowledged use, of text created by another". Then, two important features have to be considered when one defines plagiarism: 1) there is a type of plagiarism linguists can access, which is restricted to language; and 2) plagiarism occurs when the copying is not referenced – otherwise, we could not have copied Coulthard & Jonhson's words and included them in this text!

Plagiarism involves a series of implications. For instance, some university students informally interviewed by one of the researchers did not know that even when copied extracts go through some changes of wording there is still plagiarism. Therefore, due to some complexities, generally ignored, it occurs many times inadvertently. Because of that, it is important that we, as teachers and linguists,

> examine plagiarism as a linguistic phenomenon, rather than as a violation of rules or ethical principles. While it is true that plagiarism is a violation of the rules governing conduct in many circumstances, and of widely held ethical principles, it is also an act of language use. (Pecorari, 2010, p. 1)

As stated by Pecorari (2010), an important scholar in the area, plagiarism is something that occurs throughout language use, and, therefore, it is possible to provide some treatment, especially through the teaching of academic writing skills. In academic practice, it is important to correctly reference the cited words and ideas, and for that purpose we can make use of direct or indirect citations. Both require mentioning the author and the year of publication, and, specifically in the former case, page number(s) and quotation marks – or any other demarcations to make it clear that that piece of text was extracted from somewhere else. There are different norms for appropriately acknowledging external sources. In Brazil, the Associação Brasileira de Normas Técnicas (ABNT) provides procedures shared by academia for text citations and references. There are also some other norms, like the one provided by the American Psychological Association (APA), which is required in the area of language at PPGI, and by the Modern Language Association (MLA), also demanded by PPGI, in the area of literature.

Several universities around the world provide students with information about what plagiarism is and on how to avoid it. Aston University, for instance, distributes guidelines on citation and referencing. From the University of Sydney, where one of the researcher's colleagues had been enrolled, a handout is made available in order to raise students' awareness about this problem and give information about how to appropriately acknowledge citations and make references.

In an article at the Guardian newspaper (Littlemore, 2012), an important point raised is related to the assumption university programs generally have that students already know what plagiarism is. However, it is difficult to prove if the university does not have a document in which students declare their knowledge. Fortunately, such precautions are taken at PPGI. The Coordinator, when asked about how the Program deals with plagiarism, said that when students

enter, they have to sign a declaration, available on the Program website[2], which contains a definition of plagiarism and the consequences of such practice in the institution. Besides that, the Coordinator informed that there is a note in some of the Program's *editais*[3] for the entrance selection process[4], stating that: "PPGI holds an ethical positioning against plagiarism and emphasizes that the candidate whose pre-project is found to contain that will not have their registration homologated"[5]. Therefore, although the PPGI *regimento* does not state the definition of plagiarism considered in the Program neither the sanctions for such practice, these official documents provide some information.

Also the PPGI Coordinator confirmed that the penalties students who plagiarize suffer include exclusion from the Program and loss of their master's or doctoral degree. She referred to the application of these sanctions in two cases: one a student who plagiarized a course final paper and, therefore, was removed from the program; and another one who was later discovered to have plagiarized extracts in his PhD dissertation and, as a result, lost his title.

The undergraduate Program of Journalism at UFSC publishes a newspaper, called *Zero*. In the May 2012 issue, there is a very interesting article presenting information about how some universities deal with plagiarism. The authors state that at UFSC each department takes its own decisions (Mattos & Fragnani, 2012), and that generally things are resolved between student and teacher, without the involvement of legal procedures. Some of the professors who were interviewed for the article said that the problem is mainly pedagogical, and that they sometimes simply give these students a zero grade or, sometimes, even offer a new opportunity to redo the text.

After having presented some institutional aspects about plagiarism and before reporting the research findings related to PPGI students' knowledge on the topic, methods for data collection and analysis are briefly presented in the next section.

3. Methods

As a means of investigating students' knowledge about plagiarism, a small-scale research project was carried out with participants from PPGI. This institution was chosen due to the author's membership in the Program, which provides research feasibility. The next sub-sections present participants, materials, and procedures for data collection and analysis.

3.1 Participants

Masters and doctoral students currently enrolled or who had recently left the Program were sent an online questionnaire. A list of their names and e-mails was kindly provided by the PPGI

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2. http://ppgi.paginas.ufsc.br/files/2010/12/TermoCompromisso.pdf
3. *Edital* is a document that presents rules and conditions about a selection process.
4. Past *editais* as well as the Program *regimento* are available at the Program website, www.cce.ufsc.br/pgi
5. Our translation to the following extract that can be found in some of the Program past *editais*: "O PPGI tem forte posicionamento ético contra plágio e enfatiza que o candidato que comprovadamente perpetrar plágio no pré-projeto não terá sua inscrição homologada".

secretary. It consisted of one hundred students – 37 from the doctoral, 63 from the masters. In addition, the Coordinator of PPGI answered some questions through e-mail in order to give reliable institutional information, as reported in the previous section.

3.2 Materials

With the objective of eliciting PPGI students' knowledge about plagiarism, an open-ended questionnaire was designed. It contains six questions, one of them being sub-divided into a further four. The questions are designed to check what students know about plagiarism and about how PPGI copes with the problem. The complete questionnaire is presented as an Appendix.

3.3 Procedures for data collection and analysis

Participants were sent a questionnaire via e-mail. Rather 21 of the 100 responses were submitted, and they compose the research corpus. All answers were extracted and organized in a single document.

The present research is an interpretive qualitative one. Therefore, categorization and analysis of data was based on participants' answers to the posed questions, as shown in the following section.

4. Results from the Questionnaires

The responses were organized into the following six sub-sections, each comprising an investigated aspect:

1) students' definitions for plagiarism;

2) students' knowledge about PPGI rules and how they were informed;

3) students' knowledge about penalties derived from the infringement of rules;

4) students' knowledge about previous cases involving plagiarism in the Program;

5) the analysis of a case involving two texts, answering whether there is plagiarism or not; and

6) students' opinions and suggestions about how to deal with plagiarism.

4.1 Definition of plagiarism

In their answers to the first question, most participants[6] included not only the appropriation of words, but also of *ideas* – without considering the difficulty or impossibility for the linguist to detect that. Participants also mentioned the aspect of acknowledgement, and another interesting aspect stressed by one of them is that plagiarism comprises *entire or partial* and *non-literal* copy of something:

Participant E: For me, plagiarism consists in the unacknowledged 'borrowing' of someone else's idea.

6. For the protection of their identities, participants were named according to the letters of the alphabet.

Participant O: Plagiarism is when you use ideas (in my point of view not only 'written' ideas) that are not yours as if they were.

Participant F: The use of another people's ideas without the proper references.

Participant P: Plagiarism is to assume the authorship of someone else's ideas without acknowledging the source.

Participant S: I define plagiarism when a person deliberately copies someone else's piece of work. The copy might be a citation or an idea.

Participant J: Any kind of piece of work which is entirely or partially copied (literally or not), and whose origin or author is not mentioned or acknowledged.

Therefore, through their answers, students demonstrated themselves to be aware that plagiarism involves not only the unacknowledged verbatim copying of other people's words, as they consider that many times such copy occurs not literally. However, their understanding of plagiarism has some limitations, as many of them do not mention that the acknowledgement has to be done appropriately, and in the definition presented by Participant S the word *deliberately* is used, which restricts plagiarism to intentionality – which is difficult to identify.

4.2 The PPGI rules

Generally, all participants demonstrated throughout their answers that they consider plagiarism to be something wrong, and, therefore, that PPGI surely does not allow it. However, most of them declared not to know what exactly the PPGI rules are:

Participant M: I have no idea but I imagine that the rules must be strict.

Participant N: I'm not sure about the rules, it is something that I have to check (…)

Participant O: I am not widely sure, but I know that it is not allowed or tolerated.

Participant Q: I don't know exactly, but I guess plagiarism is forbidden and punished.

Participant U: I'm not sure about the details (…)

Some participants mentioned professors and their advisors as the ones who have provided them with some information about the importance of avoiding plagiarism:

Participant B: (Professor X) spoke about it during the first class of Academic Writing.

Participant D: Yes, professor (Y) who taught Academic Writing was the first one to talk about it. My advisor has made it clear that plagiarism is not accepted (…). Other professors also talked about it in their courses.

Participant T: Yes. Informally, in class, by professors.

Only a few of them remembered having signed the declaration when they entered, in which they had attested themselves to be aware about what plagiarism is, that it is prohibited in the Program and that they agreed with the sanctions established for it:

Participant G: I know the program is extremely worried about such problem, and some years ago, (when I entered) I have even signed some form of document saying I'm aware about the consequences in case one of the students commit such crime.

Participant K: Students have to sign a document stating that they will not commit it and they know they can be punished with expulsion.

Therefore, as it can be observed in participants' answers, there may be: the absence of additional detailed information in the Program about plagiarism besides the entrance declaration and professors' awareness-raising about the issue in their classes; and/or lack of attention from students in relation to that – as most of them did not even remember having signed anything about plagiarism.

4.3 The PPGI penalties

As regards the penalties for plagiarism, again students said they were not sure, and most answers present their guesses, as seen through the words *believe*, *would be*, *guess*, *think* and *expect* in the following answers:

Participant D: I believe in the case of plagiarism in thesis and dissertations the penalty would be the loss of the MA or PhD title.

Participant Q: I guess the student is expelled from the course.

Participant O: I think you are invited to quit the course.

Participant G: (…) I expect there would be consequences but I'm not aware of them. (…) I know that if plagiarism is found in a thesis or dissertation, its author should have the correspondent degree invalidated. (That I know because I saw it happen).

Some students presupposed the existence of more serious consequences – including legal prosecution:

Participant H: The only penalty I know is that the person won't have the right to get a MA or PhD title never again. S/he won't be accepted in the University never again.

Participant J: The candidate can be sued, lose his/her title, lose the scholarship (obviously) and even has to refund the money received from the government.

Participant A: Definitely. It is a crime. A student most likely loses his degree and has to legally explain himself to society, in a court for example.

As regards considering different penalties depending on the degree of plagiarism, some participants stated that there is no difference, i.e., all types of plagiarism should be treated in the same way independently of the amount, since "plagiarism is plagiarism", as expressed by Participant G. Some others, on the opposite, consider it fair to have different procedures depending on the case, such as Participant J.

Participant G: (…) in my opinion, plagiarism is plagiarism whatever the length of it.

Participant P: I guess there are not different degrees of plagiarism.

Participant J: I guess so. I think it can vary from parts of the work to entire chapters, and also if it was a paraphrasing without credits or if it was a literal copy.

One participant mentions the use of *software* to detect that:

Participant B: There is software that helps measure it. I suppose that there's a difference in consequence between a line that could have gone unnoticed by the author and a whole work.

Some participants say that they think each case is evaluated by a group of professors from the Program:

Participant R: I think that a committee analyses the work (that is said to have committed plagiarism).

Although most students do not say that they were formally notified about the penalties for plagiarism by PPGI, they presuppose that they would be sent out of the Program or lose their titles. There appears to exist a commonsensical view: that as plagiarism is a serious crime in academia, the offender will suffer some correspondingly severe consequence.

4.4 Cases in the Program

In relation to knowledge of cases involving plagiarism in the Program, some participants deny knowing of any cases, whereas some provide vague answers, pointing to cases they have informally heard about, probably with some distortions and absent pieces of information:

Participant A: Once I heard the story of a student finishing his Doctors Degree and just in time, it was found out that he had plagiarized someone in his undergraduate final paper. He lost all his degrees. Besides that, I don't know what has happened to the person.

Participant B: I don't know the names, but I heard about several cases in the department. One of them lost both his classification as a doctor and his job.

Participant C: There are rumors that a student from PPGI once committed plagiarism without even knowing and that his master's thesis was cancelled and forbidden to be published.

Participant Q: I heard about a student who lost his title/degree (?) last year (?).

Participant R: I have already heard of cases. (…)

These answers signal that cases of plagiarism appear not to be formally broadcasted in academia, being merely rumors. Humorously speaking, some of the cases reported by students sound like "academic urban legends". In addition, as names are not generally mentioned, there appears to be an avoidance of bringing such shameful events into the public domain. However, maybe it would be important to have these cases formally reported, without mentioning the offenders' names (as such information is not relevant to this matter) in order to provide students with more precise and practical information about how the Program and the university deal with plagiarism.

4.5 "In Case of Fire"

In answering the questionnaire, participants were asked to identify whether there was plagiarism in a case involving two poems, both entitled "In Case of Fire", and justify their conclusions. They were informed that only the first poem had been published[7]. In addition, they could infer additional information from a note written by the end of the first poem, in which the author says[8]: "This poem was inspired by Jenny Lewis, one of my students at Lumb Bank".
Participants strongly diverged in their answers. Some of them even said that the second poem had plagiarized the first one, and that the author of Poem 1 had correctly acknowledged the source:

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7. The complete poems are presented in the last questions of the questionnaire, which is at the Appendix section.
8. Jenny Lewis is the author of the second poem, and Lumb Bank is a creative writing course centre.

Participant L: I think that Jenny Lewis is making plagiarism in the second poem, since she is not the author of the poem, she was just the inspiration to Roger McGough.

Participant M: I believe the second one copied part of the first poem but did not indicate so. I like the idea of the first one saying that was inspired in a student in class. This is a perfect example of someone aware of the responsibility of nominating the real source of a text.

Participant R: I think it is not plagiarism, because Roger McGough explicitly gives credit to his source of inspiration (Jenny Lewis) at the end of the poem. If the author did not reference Jenny Lewis, then it would be a case of plagiarism.

One of the participants considered the possibility that an unpublished text does not exist:

Participant N: (…) if the second one was not publish it's as it does not exist, how can you plagiarism something that does not exist? (…)

Some participants said there was plagiarism in Poem 1, and demonstrated some angriness in relation to that:

Participant B: It seems like the basic idea of the poem was unabashedly used. I'd like to know if Jenny Lewis was in agreement with this use. It actually makes me angry…

Participant A: I believe that Roger could have mentioned that it was <u>adapted</u> from his student's poem. (…)

Participant E: Well, I guess it is, indeed, plagiarism. The idea was hers, the format of the poem was hers… He changed it, he acknowledged (outside the poem) that he was inspired by her poem, but, in the end. He was the one who published!

This was a somehow difficult exercise for students to do, which clearly exemplifies the necessary level of expertise and attention a forensic linguist is supposed to have when analyzing a case involving plagiarism. There are several, sometimes subtle, features to be considered in order to correctly identify plagiarism – and specifically this case goes beyond academic plagiarism to authorship rights issues. In the course "Language and the Law", given during the first semester of 2012 at PPGI by Professors Drs. Figueiredo and Coulthard, a similar case was analyzed, and students were unable to provide a correct answer at that time. Professor Coulthard, an experienced forensic linguist, provided the solution, which is close to the answer given by a literature student who participated on the present research – and who was not enrolled in the mentioned course!

Participant I: I consider poem number 1 to be plagiarism as it did not give proper credit to Lewis. The word "inspired" can be interpreted in different ways, and poem 1, in my opinion, is constructed within the same lexical structure of poem 2, in a clear dialogue with Lewis' work.

The author of Poem 1 did not correctly acknowledge the students' work, as it had not been published. In addition, "inspired by Jenny Lewis" is more likely to mean that it was the person, not her text, who inspired the first poem. A suggestion provided by Professor Coulthard in class would be publishing both poems together, providing the authorship for both writers, who could work together since the two poems seem to dialogue, as observed by Participant I.

4.6 Opinions and suggestions

In relation to their opinions about the appropriateness of the PPGI rules and penalties, some participants confessed that they could not say anything about them for the fact of not knowing them. Some base their opinions on the guesses they had had:

Participant A: As I don't know them exactly, I don't know how right or lenient they are.

Participant K: If I am right about expulsion, they are right.

Few participants considered the expected penalties (exclusion from the course and loss of title) as being heavy:

Participant P: I really think that these penalties are too heavy, and that the student should be given the opportunity to rewrite the text, for example.

Participant U: I guess it is okay. Although the penalties may be heavy, intellectual propriety must be respected.

One of the participants suggested the inclusion of legal procedures for cases involving plagiarism:

Participant G: For starters, it should be treated seriously. There must be consequences – clear and heavy – so that other students won't do the same. Also, since it is a crime, I don't think any Program or University should feel they are able to deal with it by themselves, so I also believe it should also be taken as a legal matter and the responsible law enforcers involved.

Most participants complained about the lack of information regarding this topic, and suggest that the Program should state the rules more clearly, and that students should be given more opportunities to practice their academic skills:

Participant D: I would define it in the program's regimento, and establish degrees and penalties related to it. In terms of dealing with the problem from a pedagogical perspective, perhaps more practice in paraphrasing may be necessary (…)
Participant P: I think that students need to be informed about plagiarism and do exercises to really learn and experience how to adequately acknowledge the sources he/she uses.

Participant Q: I think there should be some kind of workshop of opening class to make this issue clear to students.

One of the participants raised an important point, which provides an interesting suggestion:

Participant J: I just think PGI should be more careful concerning these cases. In the case I pointed out, (I've heard) they just discovered it was plagiarism, because the author saw on Internet. Sometimes I feel they consider some (chosen) students above any suspicion.

It would be important to have *software* for detecting plagiarism at PPGI in order to have a better inspection of academic works – though the acquisition of such tool would demand a high financial investment. Meanwhile, it is important to raise awareness about what plagiarism is, talk more about this topic, and foster students to create their own texts and apply the rules for citations. One of the participants provided a good suggestion for practicing a correct academic procedure:

Participant R: (…) My rule of thumb to avoid plagiarism is always keeping summaries of what I read, using my words, my understanding of the text and always keeping records of direct citations with full reference to the original.

Based on the answers provided by the participants in this section and on the information provided in the second section, a general discussion is presented below.

5. General discussion and Final remarks

The present research had the objective of presenting how PPGI deals with plagiarism and its students' knowledge about the issue. As observed in students' answers, there is some effort from the Program Professors to raise students' awareness about plagiarism and in teaching them how to correctly acknowledge external sources. Although the Program does not provide detailed official information about plagiarism and the penalties for such practice in its *regimento*, when students enroll they need to sign a declaration that contains a definition of plagiarism and the consequence of such practice. However, as we have seen, few students mention such document and could not provide precise information about the Program's rules and penalties for plagiarized works.

Although plagiarism is an ethical issue, which presumably everyone should be aware of, it is necessary to make it explicit the extremely negative nature of such practice and also the complexities and intricacies involving it. Therefore, it appears to be important to consider the possibility of including the rules and penalties involving plagiarism in the Program *regimento* and to develop guidelines to provide students with information regarding the correct academic practice. Besides that, it would be useful to have *software* for detecting plagiarism in order to help controlling. In addition, as at PPGI most students are non-native speakers who have

to produce all their texts in English, which makes the task of writing even more difficult (see Pecorari, 2002), it is necessary to have more emphasis on the teaching of academic writing skills.

According to the interpretation of the data we were able to collect for the present study, there appears to be a crucial cultural aspect in the evident lack of student knowledge about plagiarism and the paucity of information about the issue at PPGI and at UFSC – very different from Aston and Sydney universities. Such conclusions may be biased by one of the researchers' previous experiences when studying in a Brazilian public school, an environment in which plagiarism is not generally mentioned, and students are not taught how to cite external sources correctly. Teaching students about correct referencing and how to produce their own wordings right from the first years of schooling appears to be a necessary task in order to achieve a cultural change in Brazilian educational and academic contexts.

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Appendix – Questionnaire

1 – How would you define plagiarism?

2 – What are the Programa de Pós-Graduação em Inglês (PPGI)' rules about plagiarism?

3 – When you entered PPGI, were you informed about these rules? If so, how, when and by whom?

4 – Does the violation of these rules lead to any penalties?

If so:
4.1. What are the penalties?
4.2. Does the penalty depend on the degree of plagiarism? If so, how is this measured?
4.3. What is your opinion about these penalties? Are they too lenient, too heavy or about right?
4.4. Do you know of any actual cases of students who were punished? Do you have any views on the level of their punishment?

5 – What changes, if any, would you make to the way this problem is currently treated?

6 – As an exercise, identify whether there is plagiarism in either the following texts and explain your conclusion. (A note: only the first poem was published).

Poem 1:
In Case of Fire – Roger McGough
In case of FIRE break glass
In case of GLASS fill with water
In case of WATER wear heavy boots
("In case of…" 12 more times)
In case of FIRE break glass

(At the end of the poem, the author noted:)
"This poem was inspired by Jenny Lewis, one of my students at Lumb Bank" [a creative writing course centre]

Poem 2:
In Case of Fire – Jenny Lewis
In case of fire, break glass
In case of water, lift glass
In case of wine, lift several glasses
("In case of…" 12 more times)
In case of fire, break glass
(This poem was not published before or alongside the first one)

GENDER PERFORMATIVITY AND MELANCHOLIA IN *PARIS IS BURNING* AND *ANGELS IN AMERICA*

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Abstract: In this paper, I explore the concepts of gender performativity and melancholia through the analysis of two North-American cinematographic productions: the acclaimed documentary *Paris is Burning* (1990) and the award-winning TV miniseries *Angels in America* (2003), adapted from the homonymous play by Tony Kushner. Specifically I attempt to interrogate the ideals of femininity, masculinity and queerness portrayed in such productions. Despite the apparent subversive potential of both productions for the denaturalization of heteronormativity, the analysis points out the need of a critical look at the increasingly LGBT visibility in the mass media which should include different axes of difference (gender, sexuality, race, social class, etc.); and a *queer* view on queer studies and the process of knowledge production itself in order to make us able to (re)build our own places in a changing world.
Keywords: performativity; gender melancholia; queer studies; Paris is Burning; Angels in America.

Resumo: Neste trabalho, exploro os conceitos de performatividade e melancolia de gênero por meio da análise de duas produções cinematográficas norte-americanas: o aclamado documentário *Paris is Burning* (1990) e a premiada série de TV *Angels in America* (2003), adaptada da peça homônima de Tony Kushner. Especificamente, busco interrogar os ideais de feminilidade, masculinidade e *queerness* retratados nessas produções. Apesar do aparente potencial subversivo de ambas as produções para a desnaturalização da heteronormatividade, a análise aponta a necessidade de um olhar crítico sobre a crescente visibilidade LGBT na mídia de massa, que inclua diferentes eixos de diferença (gênero, sexualidade, raça, classe social, etc.), e um olhar *estranho* sobre os estudos queer e o próprio processo de produção de conhecimento, de forma que nos tornemos capazes de (re)construir nossos próprios espaços em um mundo em mudança.
Palavras-chave: performatividade; melancolia de gênero; estudos queer; *Paris is Burning*; *Angels in America.*

When you're a man or a woman, you can do anything. You can even have sex on the streets if you want. The most somebody's gonna say is "Hey, get a hump for me", you know. But when you're gay, you monitor everything you do. You monitor how you look, how you dress, your talk, like you act. "Do they see me?", "What do they think of me?" (Pepper LaBeija in Paris is Burning, dir. Jennie Livingston)

In this essay, I would like to explore the concepts of *gender melancholia* (*Bodies that Matter*) and *performativity* (*Gender Trouble, Queer Performativity*) in two cinematic productions, the TV miniseries *Angels in America* (Nichols) adapted from the homonymous play by Tony Kushner and the acclaimed documentary *Paris is Burning* (Livingston). My discussion of the concepts focuses mainly on these two productions; however, I also refer to scenes from other films in order to point out some ideals of femininity, masculinity and queerness present in media discourse, especially those linked with an aesthetics of gender glam (Whitesell) or, rather queer glam. The reason for exploring such concepts or themes is justified by my personal interest on the representation of hegemonic ideals of gender and queerness in media discourse which I see as a source of melancholia, psychological distress, social exclusion and violence; and which also usually produces devastating effects on the shaping of bodies.

Some questions which guide my intellectual journey are: How are specific idealizations of femininity, masculinity and queerness represented in *Paris is Burning* and *Angels in America*? Can we say that the performances of gender and queer portrayed in these productions are subversive or do they only reinforce the compulsory binary order of gender and heteronormativity?

The starting point for a discussion about the melancholic effects produced by the pursuit of gender ideals is Butler's claim that the very idea of gender 'identity' as an "essence", a coherent self is a "regulatory" fiction, an "effect of discourse" (*Gender Trouble*). She exposes that gender acquires its substantial character because of reiteration, the repeated citation of gender norms through *performativity*: "There is no gender identity behind the expressions of gender; that identity is *performatively* constituted by the very "expressions" that are said to be its results" (25). For instance, the initiatory performative act uttered when a child is born "It's a girl!" is the inscription of a being into a symbolic order of gender which is governed by certain social norms (*Bodies that Matter* 232). The compulsory citation of such norms since one is born, according to an ideal of femininity, is the requirement for such a subject who is supposed to desire a male subject. Performing a gender and "assuming" a sex is a matter of *identification* within a bounded and exclusionary heterosexual binary gender matrix (*Bodies that Matter* 3).

A misinterpretation of Butler's performativity of gender runs the risk of suggesting that if gender is a performance, one may choose one's gender according to one's own will. However, Butler makes clear that the assumption that someone *chooses* to perform a gender is itself the performance of a pre-existent subject who does the choosing (*Bodies that Matter* x). Such a performance is prescriptive and regulatory. Gender therefore is a "constitutive constraint" and proscribes the constitution of the *self*.

In relation to the constitution of subjects through gender, she argues that "the matrix of gender relations is prior to the emergence of the "human"" (*Bodies that Matter* 7), but this matrix is not a set of impersonal structural forces such as Culture, Discourse or Power which still maintain a humanist view of construction. For Butler, construction is a "process of reiteration by

which both "subjects" and "acts" come to appear at all" (9). In this process, subjects (or bodies) become "matter" when the repetition of acts over time reaches a point of stabilization which produces an effect of fixity, naturalness.

This effect of naturalness of gender is arguably laid bare in *Paris is Burning*, leading Butler to devote one entire chapter of her book *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* to an analysis of the documentary. *Paris is Burning* portrays poor African-American and Latino queers performing drag acts at balls in Harlem and being judged in contests according to their ability to *really* embody certain ideals of femininity and masculinity (an upper-class woman, a high-profile model, a college student, an executive, etc.).

Figure 1 – Octavia Saint Laurent performs as a *real* woman at a drag ball (Livingston)

At a first glance, the drag pageantry depicted in the film can be read as a social practice which has a strong subversive potential because it demonstrates "how gender and sexuality, and even race and class, are constructed performances rather than innate or essential qualities" (Benshoff & Griffin 239). Nevertheless different readings of the film, including my own, suggest that drag is ambivalent because it "may be well be used in the service of both the denaturalization and reidealization of hyperbolic heterosexual gender norms" (*Bodies that Matter* 125).

Bell Hooks, for instance, in her review of *Paris is Burning,* considers the gay male drag performances misogynist, arguing that they present a degrading appropriation of women who become "object(s) of ridicule, scorn, hatred" (146). Although the film depicts drag performances that emulate ideals of *excessive* white high femininity for the visual pleasure of a male gaze and female bodies as ultimate commodities for achieving economic and social mobility (Coy & Garner 664), some contest's categories of female "realness" can be subversive in some way. The categories "Banjee Girl" (girls from the ghetto, "in the hood") and "Luscious Body" (girls with a curvy, sexy body) can be seen as sites of resignification of gender for the empowerment of non-hegemonic femininities. Banjee girls use the erotic as a source of power (Lorde 57-58) by displaying sexual assertiveness which is possibly a female counter-strategy to male efforts to exert control over women's sexuality. Similarly the celebration of voluptuous, luscious female bodies is in opposition to the skinny body of supermodels (e.g. Kate Moss and Linda Evangelista) who were seen by the media as ideal embodiments of female attractiveness by the end of the eighties.

Hooks is also seriously critical of the camera's gaze in *Paris is Burning*: she points out that Livingston adopts an outsider, imperialistic, objectifying, spectacularizing *white* gaze towards the drag queens of color portrayed in the film (151). Although she is right to claim that the supposed neutral gaze of the documentary is not neutral at all - that it is, rather, a white gaze - she does not consider the possibility of a "lesbian desire" permeating the narrative of the film (*Bodies that Matter* 136). As Livingston has admittedly said in one interview:

> I don't believe you have to be one thing to make a film about it. I'm white, yes, but I'm an openly queer, female director and can't think of anything more out of the mainstream. I'm sorry but I do not think I have the same relationship to the ruling class as a straight man (Green)

Livingston defends herself against accusations of exploiting the queers of color depicted in the film as commodities for the entertainment of a white privileged audience by making explicit her lesbian desire which would supposedly produce queer visibility and recognition. Her discourse is based on a politics of *queer solidarity* which itself is not problematic. Nonetheless by adopting an outsider standpoint and focusing on the drag pageantry as an 'spectacle' in the narrative, she fails to interrogate *whiteness* (and her own power position) and downplays a critical exploration of the social and political aspects which produce oppression and marginalization of queer people.

What Hooks is calling for in her critique is an intersectional reading in the film which scrutinizes not only gender, but also sex and, mainly race and class issues[1]. In the documentary, for instance, Venus Xtravaganza's murder due to his/her mismatch of gender and sex would provide ground for a discussion on the ways heteronormativity forces transgendered individuals to get sex reassignment surgery in the hope of becoming *legible* bodies and therefore less vulnerable to violence and oppression. However, the image that *Paris is Burning* leaves us is that of Brooke Xtravaganza, a post-operated transsexual woman giggling on a beach with a revealing swimsuit, exulting her *independence*.

Another question which I consider critical in *Paris is Burning* is the role played by gay female impersonators in the gay community for the reproduction or subversion of power relationships. An ethnographic study in a drag setting (Schacht) has demonstrated that the primary aim of drag performances is the exercise of masculine power by the conscious use of *glamorous* gendered images which confers to its members "a strong sense of belonging, security and status" (264). Indeed, one performer in *Paris is Burning*, Kim Pendavis, has described his personal philosophy about his experience at the drag balls as involving competition and the pursuit of recognition from the audience. In this sense, the drag performance still upholds the traditional status quo instead of challenging gender/queer inequalities

Despite the different critical readings of drag performance as a social practice or its representation in *Paris Burning*, Butler argues that the subversive power of the film resides in the depiction of the ball as "an occasion for the building of a set of kinship relations that manage and sustain those who belong to the houses in the face of dislocation, poverty, homelessness" (*Bodies that Matter* 137). The use of terms such as "mother", "sister" and "house" in the very context of the film are used to represent those new forms of kinship relations which are not

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1. I am grateful to Prof. Ávila for helping me clarify my understanding of Hook's critique.

identical to those enacted in the traditional nuclear heterosexual family. As a result, there is a new articulation of family as a community which provides queers a social and discursive space where they can belong, be nurtured, sheltered and cared for.

One feature of *Paris is Burning* which calls my attention is that it produces a contrast between the gender "realness" emulated by the balls' contestants and the gender "performances" of *normal* people walking around in Manhattan in some cutscenes. A contrast which produces a "jarring" effect: "the overly muscled calf of a woman or the ostentatious cigar chomping of a young businessman seem just as *queer* as the drag acts celebrated at the balls" (Benshoff & Griffin 239, my emphasis). In other words, drag denaturalizes the hyperbolic nature of gender which aims to "materialize" inapproximable ideals of femininity or masculinity through the repeated citation and reiteration of gender norms. As Butler convincingly argues:

> The critical promise of drag does not have to do with the proliferation of genders, as if a sheer increase in numbers would do the job, but rather with the exposure or the failure of heterosexual regimes ever fully to legislate or contain their own. Hence, it is not that drag *opposes* heterosexuality, or that the proliferation of drag will bring down heterosexuality, on the contrary, *drag tends to be the allegorization of heterosexuality and its constitutive melancholia.* (*Bodies that Matter* 237, my emphasis)

In most part of *Paris is Burning*, we can notice this feeling of *melancholia* which sets the tone in most part of the film, not only because of the oppressing social conditions and sad personal stories of each character, but mainly because of their foregrounding of the never-ready embodiment of hegemonic heterosexual ideals of gender.

This feeling of melancholia is very noticeable in Octavia Saint Laurent who expresses her dream of becoming an actress or a supermodel. Octavia stamps a dozen of pictures of white female models on her bedroom's wall and wishes to be sexy, attractive, glamorous and rich like them. In order to make her dream come true, she poses for a photo session and applies for a female model contest in the hope of achieving international fame. However, she is not successful in her endeavor. At least two reasons prevent her from becoming an international supermodel: she is an African-American transgender girl in a fashion world dominated by white models and, despite her ability "to pass" as a *real* woman, Octavia is still identified as belonging to the male sex "before the law".

The abjection of Octavia's body, narratively suggested in *Paris is Burning*, reflects a naturalization of sex instead of a critical view on the effect of power upon sexed bodies. The film does not problematize the assumption of sex as a process which is conditioned, regulated or rather restricted by cultural and social values which precede the construction of sex itself (*Bodies that Matter* 5). In what ways and through what means does power produce sex differentiation? How did the queer bodies of the film become objects of hatred? Certainly addressing these questions in the film could be a step further towards the destabilization of heteronormativity and the enactment of social justice in transgender people's lives.

Melancholic performances of gender/queerness are also portrayed in *Angels in America*. In the following pages, I explore the embodiment of these performances in two characters of this

TV miniseries.

In the monologue, the protagonist, Prior Walter (Justin Kirk), a young gay man suffering from AIDS and abandoned by his partner, meets his alter-ego who is a drag-queen. The first line of the monologue shows that the drag-queen is attempting to impersonate Norma Desmond (Gloria Swanson) by repeating her line "All right, I'm ready for my close-up, Mr. De Mille" from the final scene of *Sunset Boulevard* (Wilder). In the final scene, Norma Desmond gracefully walks down the staircase of her house, performing for her new imaginary picture in front of several cameras before being arrested for the murder of a young screenwriter she has fallen in love with. Even when she meets her final destiny, Norma exhibits a glamorous image or emotional attitude which makes her unforgettable, a legend, a true Hollywood star. She has a grasp of what Whitesell calls *gender magic* (270): a combination of beauty with a minimalistic performance which makes her extraordinary, elevated, etherealized, fabulous, fantastic.

In order to emulate this glamorous ideal of femininity typical of the fifties, the drag-queen in *Angels in America* adheres to specific gender norms which are externalized in attributes such as "grace" and "elegance". Also, she uses the metaphorical image of the blossom of a flower to illustrate the gendering process of transformation, of *acting out* those typical female attributes. At the same time, her comparison of the process with the images of a "rare bloom" or a "zebra orchid" could also mean her attempt to stand out, to become someone special, glorified. However, at some moment, she realizes that she has failed to achieve that ideal of femininity and takes off her wig, comparing herself with a "corpse", a *lifeless* body. She becomes a melancholic drag-queen who is unable to fully identify with that specific glamorous model of femininity or to embody and materialize that identification.

The drag performance in *Angels in America* therefore exposes two aspects of gender melancholia: (1) gendering is a process of heightened identification with the psychic figure of an

other, for the identification is never complete but always deferred or requiring further reiteration and; (2) heterosexuality is a sexual regime that requires "the renunciation of the *possibility* of homosexuality" as a way of defining what is "sexually unperformable" (*Bodies that Matter* 234-236). In Butler words: "The straight man *becomes* (mimes, cites, appropriates, assumes the status of) the man he "never" loved and "never" grieved; the straight woman *becomes* the woman she "never" loved and "never" grieved" (ibid).

This is the sense in which Kimmell argues that homophobia is the men's fear of other men (39). Men may develop defensive efforts to overcome fears of being perceived, especially by other men, as emasculated or not powerful, producing the violence and oppression of all those who are not fully manly (women, gay men, non-native-born men, men of color). Homophobia therefore is a consequence of gender melancholia. It is the failure to *act out* the type of masculinity which a man has internalized and which he seeks to be prized for.

For instance, in *Angels in America*, Joe (Patrick Wilson), a young ambitious lawyer, attempts to embody a combination of white-collar and *butch* masculinity which is hegemonic[2] (Connell 1995). Throughout the film, he is in constant self-denial, fighting against his latent homosexuality. In Joe's world, homosexuality is something which does not exist, *unsaid*, a threat both to his career aspirations and his broken marriage. Even when he tries to "come out" to his mother, he finds just her silence and dismissal. In the second half of the film, Joe externalizes an ideal of masculinity which is quite similar to that performed by Stanley (Marlon Brando) in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Kazan). In fact, he projects his failure of normative gender performance towards his object of affection (Louis), presenting an extremely violent attitude.

Considering all the above, both *Angels in America* and *Paris is Burning* are rich cultural artifacts for the exploration of gender, sexuality, race, class or rather - queer issues. This fact highlights the importance of careful examination of mainstream queer media discourses as a political strategy to deconstruct homogeneous representations of queerness as a "grouping of non heteronormative sexualities and genders" (Cover 30) which is in opposition to compulsory heterosexuality and serves to stabilize the constructed dichotomy between heterosexuality and homosexuality as two well-defined polar *identities*.

Even though discourses of "queer" visibility and resistance have reached the mainstream media in some way[3], we should be critical about them. On the behalf of whom are those discourses? Who is excluded from them? To be "critically queer" is not just to unveil the power mechanisms which support heteronormativity, but it is also to challenge an insistent false idea of freedom promoted in late modernity. As Sedgwick rightly puts it: "we persuade ourselves that deciding what we like or don't like about what's happening is the same thing as actually intervening in its production" (15). If *queer* has become a model and a parody of the white, middle-class identity, perhaps it is time to forge new ways of achieving a true coalitional politics.

2. The concept *hegemonic masculinity* has been the focus of much debate in the area of men's studies. Nevertheless I use the term here in a narrow sense to refer to a form of *socially dominant masculinity*. In other words, although we must acknowledge the current emergence of global local masculinities, there are still "certain masculinities [that] are more socially central, *or more associated with authority and social power* than others" (Connell & Messerschmidt 846, my emphasis).

3. See for instance *The Queer Eye for The Straight Guy*, a reality show aired from 2003 to 2007 on Bravo channel which portrays stereotypes of middle-class, asexual gay men using their 'gay expertise' to perform a makeover ("make-better") usually on straight men.

Specifically in relation to the Brazilian academic context, I strongly believe there is an urgent need to develop a materialist queer theory (Cover 1999) or rather an intersectional approach towards the area of queer studies. How does social class affect the experiences of queer subjectivities in Brazil? How does consumer capitalism influence the formation of queer movements? Despite some initial movements towards the investigation of those questions (Marsiaj), social class is still a concern almost absent in the queer studies research agenda in Brazil.

Developing a queer approach to queer studies is certainly not an easy task and it requires constant critical evaluation of the formation of human subjectivities and the enactment of social relationships through different "axes of difference", for "people are different from each other" (*Epistemology of the Closet* 22). Indeed, we need not only to trouble gender, sexual or racial *identities*, but queer the construction of knowledge and its modes of production (Moore 614). In other words, we must whittle away some persistent binaries that limit the ways we conceive the world in order to discover new possibilities in our own scholarships. In times of increasingly uncertainty, undeterminacy and fluidity, such movement would bring a relief from our deepest anxieties and consequently allow us to make sense of - and build our own places in – a world that has become *queer* to us.

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NEGOTIATING IDENTITY IN THE ABJECT ZONE IN

JOHN CAMERON MITCHELL'S *HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH*

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Abstract: This work analyzes the representation of the main character in the film *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001) focusing on the problematic that emerges from the negotiation of her sexual and gender identity and the set of behaviors and conventions that regulate such identities. The basis of such discussions are the concepts of gender performativity, sex/gender distinction, heteronormativity, and the abject zone according to the work of Judith Butler *Bodies That Matter* (1993), among others. In the end, the conclusion is that the representation of the character analyzed concentrates on the articulations between the character's performance and the heterosexual norms in order to open up the way for new possibilities of coming into being on what concerns sex and gender.
Keywords: cinema; gender; identity; queer studies.

Resumo: Este trabalho analisa a representação da personagem principal do filme *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (2001) enfocando a problemática que emerge da negociação de sua identidade sexual e de gênero e do conjunto de comportamentos e convenções que regulam tais identidades. Para isso, me baseio em discussões sobre performatividade de gênero, distinção sexo/gênero, heteronormatividade e a zona abjeta de acordo com o trabalho de Judith Butler *Bodies That Matter* (1993), entre outros. Ao final, se conclui que a representação da personagem analisada se concentra nas articulações entre a performance da personagem e as normas heterossexuais de maneira a abrir caminho para novas possibilidades de vir a ser no que concernem identidades de sexo e gênero.
Palavras-chave: cinema; gênero; identidade; estudos queer.

This paper is based on discussions our group had in a course concerning Judith Butler's theorization on how one becomes men or women, or neither of them. First of all, I would like to consider two questions I ask myself when trying to talk about the subject and which I do not feel ready to solve—if they are going to be solved at all. The first question concerns the use of

the verb "to become" in this context. I wrote that one "becomes" a man or a woman, but actually what Butler (*Bodies That Matter* 1993) argues is that we never fully become a man or a woman. In fact, one assumes the role of man or woman, and spends the rest of hir life trying to perform that role based on an ideal that is, by definition, unattainable. So one never becomes a man or a woman, but becomes someone who performs the effect of man and woman, by reiterating the norms that govern the sex/gender positions, regardless of the possibility of getting those idealized positions. Butler writes "[t]hat [the reiteration of the sex/gender norms is necessary is a sign that materialization is never quite complete, that bodies never quite comply with the norms by which their materialization is impelled (*Bodies That Matter* 2). So, one has to measure his or her actions, make his or her choices, live his or her live always taking into consideration— even if unconsciously—the performative character of sex and gender.

The second question I ask myself is: does one assume a sex, or is one assigned a role without his or her full consent; that is, is it his or her very own choice? Is not the assignment imposed upon individuals, sometimes even before birth in the ultra-sound room? As Butler writes, when the doctor affirms that the baby is a boy or a girl, those affirmations "[shift] an infant from an 'it' to a 'she' or a 'he' […] But [the] 'girling' of [a] girl does not end there; on the contrary, the founding interpellation is reiterated by various authorities and throughout various intervals of time to reinforce or contest this naturalized effect" (*Bodies That Matter* 7-8). So, it seems that the responsibility comes from external authorities, such as language, gender roles, and also the biological reading of the configuration of the baby's genitals. However, as we discussed in class, biology can be read a last resource to achieve the naturalized justification for the heterosexist binary man/woman. If the reading we make of biologic schemes is a cultural construction, and, as such, depends on the possibilities of our language, it hides the heterosexual imperative of the pronouns he or she, for instance. Butler writes that there is no subject before sex and gender; rather, but the subject only exists through the process of assuming a sex. In her words, "[s]ubjected to gender, but subjectivated by gender, the 'I' neither precedes nor follows the process of this gendering, but emerges only within and as the matrix of gender relations themselves" (*Bodies That Matter* 7). So, as soon as babies are born (or before they are born, thanks to technology), they are classified according to the gender relations available; they are born into gender relations at the same time that they are born through gender relations.

However, some bodies are going to develop into men and women, but not all of them, even if there are no pronouns to designate them. These unnamed bodies that do not fit the man/woman places are relegates to an abject zone, as Butler names it (*Bodies That Matter* 3), where there are no well-defined places because the articulation of that place's existence occurs in a different way. This abject area does not exist because the individuals who inhabit it are repudiated from the places of subjects; it is, actually, the opposite: the places of the subjects can only come into existence when in contrast to that abject zone:

> [t]his zone of uninhabitability will constitute the defining limit of the subject's domain; it will constitute that site of dreaded identification against which—and by virtue of which—the domain of the subject will circumscribe its own claim to autonomy and to life. In this sense, then, the subject is constituted through the force of exclusion and abjection, one which produces

a constitutive outside to the subject, an abjected outside, which is, after all, 'inside' the subject as its own founding repudiation. (*Bodies That Matter* 3)

In the end, one negotiates sex/gender identity throughout life thanks to the ones who produce the "normal" by contrast in order to keep "normality" on track.

My objective in this paper is to observe and discuss the representation of the main character of the film *Hedwig and the Angry Inch* (directed and starred by John Cameron Mitchell). Hedwig is certainly one of the inhabitants of the abject zone. Is he gay? Is she transsexual? Is Hedwig a he or a she? How does the film portray the negotiation (and subsequent deferral) of her gender identity, the assumption of her or his sex, and the set of conventionalized behaviors required by that assumption? To begin my discussion, I would like to bring forward some attempts at defining Hedwig's sex/gender I found in some works that discuss issues related to the film. Holly M. Sypniewski (2009) initially defines Hedwig as a "partially transgendered rock star" (558) who is "[l]eft physically indefinable according to binary gender categories" (559) after a sex-reassignment surgery gone wrong. Sharon Cowan (2009) writes that, "[a]lthough Hedwig describes 'herself' as a 'girly boy from East Berlin', and s/he is also called a faggot by an audience member, throughout the film it is not clear whether we, the viewers, are supposed to think of Hedwig as a man or a woman" (110). For Christian Blood (2009), "Hedwig fits into no handy gay categories: not a man, not a woman, not a drag queen, not intersex. […] Hedwig is not a drag queen, per se, insofar as she is not a man who performs as a woman" (207). Steve Feffer (2007), whose article focuses on the film's queering of rock and roll's heteronormative standards, writes that Hedwig "is an embodied challenge to rock's construction as male and heteronormative" (240).

What I want to point out in these excerpts is that it is always difficult to define Hedwig. The experience is similar to my earlier questioning of language. There is a void that is difficult to fill up; there is no adequate pronoun to define Hedwig, probably because of the heterosexual imperative manifested through a language that lets only the heterosexual possibilities come into existence. But how does Hedwig negotiate the impossibility of naming herself as a man or woman—or as a possible subject—, at the same time that s/he struggles to build up a name for herself as a rock star? How does Hedwig perform her queerness; can she find a queer place to occupy despite the heterosexual imperative?

Hedwig begins her life as Hansel, the son of a German woman (played by Alberta Watson) and an American soldier (played by Gene Pyrz), born the same year the Berlin Wall was built up. As a child, Hansel receives the status of a boy for his body configuration. But, as Hedwig herself defines later on, that boy is a girly boy. Delicate, caught between two worlds—the tedious, dull colored East Berlin and the fertile America that comes into his house through radio and TV. In one conversation with Hansel when he was six years old, his mother tells him that "[a]bsolute power corrupts" (00:19:55), and it is better not to have power at all. This conversation seems to be a warning for Hansel, who will have to deal with the power of sexuality since childhood, as his father abuses him at a young age. Later on in life, when he is around thirty, Hansel rationalizes the power of his sexuality and tries to use if for his own benefit when he meets Luther Robinson (played by Maurice Dean Wint), the American soldier who is going to lead him to the sex-reassignment surgery and further

escape to the United States. They meet in one afternoon when Hansel sunbathes near the Berlin Wall. Hansel is naked, lying face down on bomb debris when Luther, who takes him for a girl, finds him. When Hansel tells Luther he is a boy, Luther seems to become even more interested, and offers Hansel a pack of the Gummy Bear candy he likes. Hansel tastes the candy and realizes he knows that taste: "It's the taste of power" (00:25:52). However, that power scares Hansel, who realizes there is a world full of diversity, colors, and multiple tastes that he can achieve by using his sexual power.

Hansel runs away, but gets back to their meeting place on the next day. Hansel follows a path of candy bars leading to Luther, who is lying naked on the door Hansel used earlier to sunbathe. This sequence can easily be related to the tale of Hansel and Gretel, two brothers who are trapped in a house made of candy by an evil witch. Hansel and Gretel, in Grimm's tale, outwit the witch and run away, but the film's Hansel falls into Luther's trap. Luther is the authority to whom Hansel must submit in order to run away to the U.S. Hansel's queer sexual power can be seen in his clothes, which mix the sex appeal of red vinyl—the material and color often associated with aggressive sexuality—and common boy's clothing, shorts and shirt. Luther, on the other hand, does not need any apparatus to reinforce the status of his sexuality, which is well-defined in his strong male body. The candy covering Luther's genitals make reference to what kind of "favor" Hansel will have to perform in order to open the door Luther controls, and also the childish "prize" he is going to win. No love, no guarantees, only the ephemeral pleasure of sweets.

Image 1

Hansel is different, queer, "fine", as Luther puts it, but neither a boy nor a girl. He is something else, which is not named but very sexually seductive. But Hansel cannot continue enjoying this power he has; he has to assume a sex in order to be legitimate. He could offer Luther sexual pleasure, but as he wants to leave to America, he has to leave something behind, as his mother tells him when introducing the idea of the sex-reassignment surgery. What Hansel has to leave behind is his queerness, the ambiguity of his sexuality in favor of one of the well-defined identities of the heterosexual law. So, Luther and his mother impose the sex-

reassignment surgery upon him, through which he would "become" female and enter the realm of the possible subjects. However, as I wrote before, he has to follow the logic of heterosexual desire and become a woman. After the surgery, even knowing that it went wrong, Hansel takes the name of his mother, Hedwig, and goes to America with Luther. From that moment on, Hedwig assumes the female role, performing as a housewife, wearing women's clothes, wigs, make up. The disfigured penis does not seem to be a problem, because it is a secret protected by the privacy that circumvents the heterosexual husband and wife relationship. That works fine until Luther leaves Hedwig for another young boy. Hedwig's ambiguous gender identity is deferred: Luther desires young males, not what Hedwig has become—neither a woman nor a male anymore.

Left behind with no regular job nor any other source of income, Hedwig starts working as a baby sitter and a prostitute. There is no sequence telling about Hedwig's period of prostitution directly despite of a mention to it in a dialogue in which Hedwig is telling some of her fans about her past. Even so, Hedwig uses metaphors for that, such as: "After my divorce, I scraped by with baby-sitting gigs and odd jobs—mostly the jobs we call blow" (00:45:16-00:45:25). Although the lyrics of Hedwig's songs talk about her life and genital configuration openly, the film does not offer the viewer images of her time as a prostitute in the past. It seems that the film selects the less marginal images of her to show the viewers, and does not go into the lowest moments of her life. The film trivializes Hedwig's suffering and reduces her experiences to curious or comic remarks. We will only get to see Hedwig as a prostitute later on, but she will soon be rescued by Tommy's (played by Michael Pitt) limo and go back to a certain kind of "decency". Such decency seems only to be achieved when Hedwig is under the protection of an authorized (and authorizing) male body. This way, the viewer does not get to see how Hedwig performs or how she negotiates her subjectivity in the most marginal position—in the point of view of the control over what become images available to the spectator of the film, at least.

Hedwig meets Tommy Speck, later known as Tommy Gnosis when he becomes a rock star, while working as a baby-sitter in the house of his parents. In the house, we see Hedwig performing as a woman, wearing women's clothes and practicing the traditionally female activity of taking care of children. Their first meeting happens when Tommy is masturbating in the bathtub while watching Hedwig with the baby. She comes into the bathroom and masturbates him, leaving him a business card of her band. Hedwig seems to be, once again, trading her sexual power for an open door. By getting involved with Tommy, she finds a lover, a partner in music, and, eventually, a name as a rock star. The period she spends teaching Tommy about music and love seems to be the happiest period of her life. Tommy and Hedwig's relationship is also protected by the privacy of the heterosexual household, similarly to what happens to Hedwig's marriage to Luther. Image 2 shows Tommy and Hedwig kissing at Hedwig's house. Women's clothes hanging from lines inside the house form veils that hide the truth about Hedwig's body in an aura of reinforced femininity combined with the supposed heterosexuality of Hedwig and Tommy's relationship. Noticeably, the feminine aura that protects Hedwig does not exist outside the door of her house.

Image 2

The couple's happiness is interrupted when she confronts him with her body. Hedwig asks Tommy to acknowledge the configuration of her genitals—the existence of a mutilated penis that reveals the ambiguity of her body. Tommy denies it to her and flees. The way her genitals are must be kept secret, one must not talk about the subject or her "disguise" as a woman would fall apart. After Tommy leaves her, her ambiguous identity is deferred again, in terms of the potential acknowledgment she could achieve through a relationship of mutual sexual attraction, and she goes back to a marginal position. At the same time, Hedwig affirms her ambiguous gender identity as she refuses to accept the separation between the normative male and female gender assignments by hiding the ambiguous configuration of her body. Tommy steals her songs, so she is not recognized as an artist; she becomes a shadow behind Tommy's steps, trying to force a situation that will reveal that she is, in fact, the music genius behind Tommy's success. The lowest moment of her pursuit of Tommy's acknowledgment happens after the Angry Inch breaks up with Hedwig and she has to go back to prostitution. Image 3 shows the prostitute across the street from where Hedwig stands, in front of a sign that reads "Do not place garbage

Image 3

against this wall at any time". The sign is certainly ironic, as street prostitutes are often treated as "garbage" and are not supposed to be there. However, the "garbage" is there, no matter how many signs the heteronormative rule places around the system. The prostitute Hedwig occupies the alley, although society prefers to pretend she not there. There are no garbage bags on the floor, only prostitutes, which makes the sign appear to be, in fact, directed at them.

Hedwig will only have recognition after another violence against her (and Tommy's) body. They suffer a car accident, and Tommy cannot deny her presence in his life anymore. So the press finds out about their relationship and Hedwig finally becomes the famous rock star as she had dreamed of. But later she finds out that is not the recognition she was looking for. She realizes that it is not fame she wants, nor it is the recognition of the authorship of her songs, but the possibility of defining herself independently of the configuration of her body and the need to make it fit in one of the hetero categories available. Hedwig is after completeness within herself, and the possibility of being what she has become after the abuses and violence she suffered without having to put on a mask to hide it—a mask, or wigs, make up and women clothes: that is, without assuming a sex/gender position. On stage, while performing with her band, Hedwig takes her wig off and tears her clothes apart, leaving the stage after breaking the instruments apart. She enters Tommy's show, which is happening in a building close by. Image 4 shows Hedwig wearing only black shorts hiding her genitals. Now, Hedwig is not a he nor a she anymore, because she/he realizes that it is not necessary for her/him to try to fit into any category, hide her body, nor perform any role, but be what Hedwig has become in her trajectory.

Image 4

The last song Hedwig performs is *Midnight Radio*. Hedwig wears the same black shorts of the scene before, and now her makeup is marked by the silver cross Hedwig once painted on Tommy's forehead, meaning knowledge. In the lyrics of this song, Hedwig highlights that, despite the suffering people go through, it ends, and they can find the knowledge within themselves that tells them they are whole, like she has just discovered she is. Hedwig then leaves the stage and the last image we get is Hedwig walking naked through a dark alley. In this take, Hedwig is only a shadow walking away.

It seems that Hedwig has indeed found a queer place to occupy, one which does not depend on the fixed categories of sex and gender imposed by the heterosexual organization of society. However, as Jordy Jones (2003) points out, at the end of the story, "the return of Hedwig as an artist coincides with the return and redemption of Hansel as a man" (463). The author understands *Hedwig* as a rite of passage of the homosexual male, who has to deal with the feminine within himself—his own Hedwig—in order to come to terms with his sexuality. I would agree with Jones' argument when he talks about the fact that Hansel, as a man, never desired to become a woman and, therefore, Hedwig cannot be seen rigorously as a transsexual or transgender. But I see the film as aiming more at working the pressure put over an individual to assume a certain position under the heterosexist rules, on the performances required in order to guarantee a safe place within the sex/gender categories, and on the idea that it is possible to negotiate a different way of articulating sex and gender despite that pressure.

In the end, the resolution of Hedwig's trajectory does not seem to come from being able to occupy a place defined by the two restrictive categories of heteronormativity, but from acknowledging a whole area of possibilities that encompasses different manifestations of the self, and not only what is required by the role of man and woman. In this area, the queer body would be able to define itself in a different paradigm, one that does not depend on the definition of what is the sex of the object of desire or the configuration of the body, but from the lived experience of body and desire.

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MEMENTO AND POSTMODERNISM: AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER

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Abstract: The 2000 film *Memento*, directed by Christopher Nolan, deals with a protagonist who suffers short-term memory loss, and who often does not know where he is or what he is doing. Several traits of postmodernism are present in this which can be described as a postmodernist film with nostalgia for modernism. By following Terry Eagleton's definition of postmodernism as "the negative truth of modernity," and especially the directives pointed out by Fredric Jameson in "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," this paper analyzes how the film's protagonist too is looking for his lost identity.
Keywords: postmodernism; *Memento*; identity; memory.

Resumo: *Amnésia*, filme de 2000 dirigido por Christopher Nolan, lida com um protagonista que sofre de perda de memória de curto prazo, e que geralmente não sabe onde está nem o que está fazendo. Várias características do pós-modernismo estão presentes neste que pode ser descrito como um filme pós-moderno com nostalgia pelo modernismo. Seguindo a definição de Terry Eagleton de pós-modernismo como "a verdade negativa da modernidade", e principalmente as diretrizes apontadas por Fredric Jameson em "Pós-Modernismo, ou a Lógica Cultural do Capitalismo Tardio", este trabalho analisa como o protagonista do filme também está à procura de sua identidade perdida.
Palavras-chave: pós-modernismo; *Amnésia*; identidade; memória.

In 2000, long before achieving international fame with *The Dark Knight*, Christopher Nolan directed *Memento*, an existential thriller that became a cult favorite in no time and was nominated for two Academy Awards, Best Editing and Screenplay. This independent film tells the story of Leonard, a man who is constantly looking for his wife's rapist and murderer. He suffers from a rare type of amnesia that incapacitates him from forming new memories. In other words, he cannot remember anything since his wife's death, so he fills his body with tattoos and carries photographs to remind him of what it is he is pursuing. In the process, he also narrates another story, that of Sammy Jankins, a middle-aged accountant who supposedly had the same

memory loss problem as Leonard. Sammy's wife, a diabetic, does not believe his condition and tests him by demanding that he give her several shots of insulin in a short period of time. He ends up killing her, but, since he has no memory, is not haunted by guilt. To complicate matters, the main narrative (Leonard's daily routine to catch the killer) is told backwards, while Sammy's story remains fragmented but linear. Overall, this is a brilliant movie in which basically every single character cheats or lies to the protagonist, including himself. It is also, as I plan to show in this paper, a postmodernist film with nostalgia for modernism. This may sound odd but isn't, especially if we take into account Terry Eagleton's definition of postmodernism as "the negative truth of modernity" (29).

Eagleton, of course, holds a very negative view of postmodernism and analyzes it through a socialist perspective. For him postmodernism is like presenting all the symptoms of rabies without ever having been near a mad dog (20). Thus it is more appropriate to talk about *Memento* bearing in mind Alan Wilde's vision of postmodernism: "a world in need of mending superseded by one beyond repair" (qtd. in Steven Connor 122). Leonard's world is indeed one beyond repair, for his only memory relies on the emptiness provoked by having lost his wife. In his words: "I have to believe that when my eyes are closed, the world's still there." Moreover, I want to use Fredric Jameson's notorious essay, "Postmodernism, or The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," which seems to have been written to describe *Memento*. Why not, after all, take an early dialogue in the film and see it as a demise of modernism? In this dialogue Teddy, a corrupt cop, a snitch, or just a friend, depending on the version, tells Leonard:

"You don't know who you are."

"I'm Leonard Shelby. I'm from San Francisco."

"That's who you *were*. That's not what you've become."

Perhaps postmodernism too, like Leonard, is what has become of modernism, without really knowing it.

In his essay Jameson claims that one of the traits of postmodernism involves the disappearance of the individual subject (64). We can look at Leonard as not being an individual subject, since he has no short-term memory, and his identity is based on photos and information from others. Teddy keeps reinventing himself, depending on the circumstances, and so does Leonard. If, according to Jameson, "personal identity is itself the effect of a certain temporal unification of past and future with the present" (72), then Leonard is a non-subject who lacks an identity. He has a past prior to his wife's rape, although he never talks about this past, and when he does, as in his narration of the Sammy Jankins's case, it might be a lie. However, he has no recent past, no present, or a very fragmented present, to say the least, and certainly no future. He will never again make new friendships or fall in love or find a job, for he will have no memory of any new occurrences in his life.

On the other hand, style can be seen as a modernist trait (Jameson 65), and Leonard does possess some style. After all, he wears designer clothes and drives a Jaguar, both stolen from the drug dealer he kills. Fighting the powerful evidence that he is a non-subject, he keeps repeating that, unlike Sammy, he knows who he is, because he uses reason (tattoos, Polaroids) and has a drive (revenging his wife).

In fact, when Leonard admits "I don't even know how long [my wife]'s been gone," he might be echoing our doubts about modernism and about how long it ceased to exist, or even if it's

been gone at all. Leonard, for one, particularly because he is no longer an individual, is nostalgic for authorship and purity, characteristics deeply linked to modernism. We get to see a picture of him smiling and pointing a finger at himself. This resembles nostalgia for authorship, for a time when he could point at himself and indicate he's done it, he's killed his wife's murderer. And it is precisely this authorship that becomes his quest in life. Furthermore, he judges whether a document is authentic or not by evaluating its handwriting. If it's his handwriting, if it has his authorship, then, and only then, he can trust it. In a desperate moment, he looks for a pen to write down a few observations about Natalie, the drug dealer's girlfriend, a waitress who abuses him before deciding to help. Few movies have given written documentation as much importance as *Memento*. In a way this represents the sacredness of authorship. But, at the same time, there is a scene in which Leonard burns a book that belonged to his wife. Is it a canonical work? We don't know, for the book's cover is gone, a clear copyright violation. This may be seen as the death of the (modernist) author.

Leonard's very search for truth already indicates that he is a modernist at heart. For starters, he is a true believer in facts, as his lines demonstrate: "Memories are an interpretation, they're not a record. And they're irrelevant if you have the facts." So he looks for "facts" to erase any trace of the memory that he killed his wife—if we are to believe Teddy. A recurrent image in the film is the Polaroid of Teddy with the inscription "Don't believe his lies." But whose lies shouldn't we believe, Teddy's or Leonard's? Is the inscription just a reminder for Leonard, or are *we* supposed not to believe Teddy either? Leonard affirms that there are some memories which are absolute certainties, like picking up an object. Only that this comes immediately after Sammy picks electrified objects again and again in his conditioning test. And Leonard's affirmation becomes even more absurd after we hear Teddy's version that Sammy never did that, since he was simply a con-man.

Leonard also pursues meaning, a concept linked to truth and purity: "Just because I don't remember it, doesn't make my actions meaningless." But Teddy claims, "You don't want the truth. You make up your own truth." One of the last shots in the movie suggests that Teddy may be telling (a version of) the truth after all. Leonard imagines himself hugging his wife. She looks at his chest, where the tagline that appears throughout the film, "John G. raped and killed my wife," is written. But another message that was never there also appears: "I've done it." We know this was not part of his vast collection of tattoos because Natalie had previously asked him why the space next to his heart was blank, and he answered that maybe he was saving it for when he found the murderer. Now, after Teddy's revelation that Sammy's story is actually what happened to Leonard and his wife, it may be that he's found the killer: it's himself.

According to Jameson, in postmodernism anxiety and alienation cease to exist because "the alienation of the subject is displaced by the fragmentation of the subject" (63). He goes on to claim that "the liberation, in contemporary society, from the older anomie of the centred subject may also mean, not merely a liberation from anxiety, but a liberation from every other kind of feeling as well, since there is no longer a self present to do the feeling" (64). This "Waning of Affect" described by Jameson is present throughout *Memento*, not only because we have no selves left to do the feeling, but also because the characters, who only exist in their relationship with the protagonist, do not seem to feel. Leonard, no longer a centered subject, can't feel anything

but emptiness. The character in the film who feels the most, who even cries, arguably the only one who feels at all, is Sammy's wife. But we are later told she might never have existed—maybe Sammy didn't have a wife. If this is the case, we're left with a movie without any affect.

Another important trait of postmodernism that appears in *Memento* has to do with the notion of space, rather than time, dominating the world. Just as Leonard doesn't know how long it has been since his wife was killed, we don't know how many days go by. He always wakes up asking, "Where am I?", and the last sentence in the film is a very ironic "Now where was I?", after he has just reinvented himself once more. Leonard takes pictures of space (the hotel where he's staying, his car), and the only instance he seems concerned with time is when he realizes he's late for a meeting with Natalie. Moreover, the two only images of time in the movie belong to dead wives. First we see Sammy's wife resetting her wristwatch to show her husband it's time for her shot. This already strikes us as pretty peculiar, since Sammy appears oblivious to any notion of time, and he doesn't bother to look at her watch. But this moment gains significance when the second image of time comes along, and it's that of Leonard burning his wife's clock. If Teddy's story that Leonard just invented Sammy to cope with the guilt of killing his wife is true, then it is possible that his wife did precisely what Sammy's wife does: adjust the time and say "It's time for my shot." This would make more sense with a clock than with a wristwatch, so maybe this is yet another clue that Teddy might not be lying after all.

The question that Leonard asks himself, "How am I supposed to heal if I can't feel time?", can also be applied to postmodernism. Not that postmodernism would be interested in healing anything or itself, but Leonard is, since he still believes in purity. Leonard can't heal because he would need memory to do that, and he can't feel, not necessarily because of his lack of notion of time, but because he no longer exists. What Jameson says about the 1980s noir classic *Body Heat* perfectly fits *Memento*: "Everything in the film […] conspires to blur its official contemporaneity and to make it possible for you to receive the narrative as though it were set in some eternal Thirties, beyond real historical time" (68).

Memento has several film noir characteristics, except a femme fatale (after all, Natalie doesn't do anything to add to the hero's perdition: he's lost long before he meets her). Leonard, an insurance investigator when he used to work, sounds like a character straight out of Billy Wilder's *Double Indemnity*. Perhaps the thirties is not the look *Memento* conveys, but it's certainly a period "beyond real historical time." Let's consider the black-and-white setting in the flashbacks concerning Sammy's story. We don't see a lot of setting, since in most of these scenes huge close ups of Sammy, his wife and Leonard fill the frame. But there's something in those faces and in their clothes that spells out indefinite past. Like *Body Heat*, the space in *Memento* is also "elaborately edited out" (68). The setting we are allowed to see is not contemporary at all. There are no computers in Leonard's office, and the TV set shown in Sammy's house is old. In the color scenes related to the present, what we see are cheap hotel rooms, a bar, an abandoned warehouse, a tiny tattoo parlor, a small street. In other words, nothing that reminds us of progress or technology. All of this creates a sense of displacement, for we have no idea what period of history we are witnessing. Then, when Leonard claims that "the present is trivia," we are immediately reminded of the "essential triviality" mentioned by Jameson.

Memento's architecture, with its decadent hotel rooms, is one of displacement. For Jameson, architecture is postmodernism's "privileged aesthetic language" (79), and its intention is for us to feel lost in this hyperspace (83). Jameson describes the Bonaventura building, whose walls are glass-like mirrors, so when we look at the building we can only see "the distorted images of everything that surrounds it" (82). In one scene in *Memento*, Natalie takes Leonard to a mirror, and they both look at his tattoos. We look too, and wonder why only one sentence in his body ("John G. raped and killed my wife") is spelled backwards. Is it so he can read it straight when he faces a mirror, or is it to distort all the other tattoos that surround it? In the end Leonard will acquiesce that "We all need mirrors to remind ourselves of who we are. I'm no different." The mirrors he needs must be distorted, for he wants to forget that he killed his wife.

One point that needs to be addressed is whether *Memento*'s most humorous scenes relate to parody or pastiche. For Jameson, pastiche is postmodern; parody is modernist. Pastiche is parody without the fun, without satire or laughter (65). However, for Linda Hutcheon, parody and pastiche are not all that different:

> Parody—often called ironic quotation, pastiche, appropriation, or intertextuality—is usually considered central to postmodernism, both by its detractors and its defenders. For artists, the postmodern is said to involve a rummaging through the image reserves of the past in such a way as to show the history of the representations their parody calls to our attention. [. . .] But this parodic reprise of the past of art is not nostalgic; it is always critical. (93)

Hence, when Leonard realizes he is in the middle of a chase, without knowing who's chasing whom, or when he knocks down the wrong door (and guy) and apologizes, it does look more like parody than pastiche, because it has humor. It is a parody of many chase scenes we are tired of watching in Hollywood cop shows. But Hutcheon points out that parody "both legitimizes and subverts that which it parodies" (101). In its noir and police film moments, then, *Memento* is also celebrating the very films it is parodying. And yet, it seems that *Memento* is parodying postmodernism itself when it depicts Leonard "waking up" and asking, "Ok, so what am I doing? Well, I'm chasing this guy. No, he's chasing me." Doesn't postmodernism also look like this mess at times?

There are several other common traits that can be found both in postmodernism and in *Memento*, such as depthlessness and schizophrenia (Jameson 58) and "the need for maps" (89). Leonard has a need for maps, but not really to locate himself. In the map he hangs on the wall we can observe pictures of people, cars, and hotels, and several arrows, but they don't lead him (or us) anywhere, nor do they provide any answers. He also carries a kind of mapping in his own body, because he needs maps that represent a superficial drive in his nostalgic pursuit for truth.

Still on the subject of truth, Jameson asks, "Can we in fact identify some 'moment of truth' within the more evident 'moments of falsehood' of postmodern culture?" (86). That's the same question we may ask about *Memento*: is there *any* truth in the film? Leonard's motivation in life seems to be creating a puzzle he can never solve. Teddy says Leonard eliminated twelve pages from the police file so he would have an incomplete picture of the rape and murder scene. After Leonard kills Teddy he will look for the next guilty party to punish, everyone but himself. And the falsehood in the movie can go even deeper than that. If Leonard doesn't remember anything

since he hit his head, he shouldn't be able to remember his condition. That is, he shouldn't even be aware of his amnesia. If we are to believe this, it negates the whole film. His entire story would be a lie and, in that sense, we would be left with chaos. But casting this doubt is a plus for the film, since it gives us a taste of anarchy—a very postmodernist trait indeed. Who needs to know the truth after all?

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"WOMAN HOLLERING CREEK" AND "NEVER MARRY A MEXICAN": THE ROLE OF THE *FAMILIA*/FAMILY IN THE SHORT STORIES BY SANDRA CISNEROS

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Abstract: The concept of *família* is one of the most discussed topics among Chicana writers. As a Chicana writer, Sandra Cisneros also foregrounds the familial relations that oppress women within the patriarchal society. Therefore, this work is going to focus in two short stories from the book *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*: the homonym "Woman Hollering Creek" and "Never Marry a Mexican". The background in both stories is the multicultural space of the Borderlands, a term coined by Gloria Anzaldúa to define a location not only physical and geographical but also psychological. In the Borderlands, contradictions can coexist, and rather than an easy coexistence, these multiple cultures are in continuous articulation, transition, and negotiation. In the short story "Woman Hollering Creek", Cleófilas, the protagonist, discovers she can take control of her own life and have voice only if she runs away from her husband, who represents the oppressive institution of the *familia*. Nevertheless, being married is the experience that imprisoned her but it is also the experience that gave her the possibility of becoming conscious and broadening the borders of her *conocimiento*. Crossing borders – geographically and psychologically – then, creates the possibility for her to become the protofeminist daughter who will question the traditions and try alternative family compositions, as Debra Castillo defends. On the other hand, the protagonist of "Never Marry a Mexican" is already conscious of the gender roles in both, the traditional Mexican *familia* and the American family. Hence, even though she criticizes the Mexican *familia*, she knows the American family structure is not an example, even less a solution, to escape the gender roles that oppress women. Because Cisneros writes against the hegemonic discourse, it is possible to say she is resisting, through her writing, the dominant ideologies and disrupting such problematic traditions. In both short stories, the end does not bring a solution, once, as Anzaldúa says, living in the Borderlands is living constantly juggling with cultures and traditions.
Keywords: chicana; Sandra Cisneros; family; gender roles; borderlands.

Resumo: O conceito de *família* é um dos mais discutidos entre as escritoras Chicanas. Como uma dessas escritoras, Sandra Cisneros também destaca as relações familiares inseridas na sociedade patriarcal que oprime as mulheres. Por isso, este trabalho analisa dois contos do livro *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories:* o homônimo "Woman Hollering Creek" e "Never Marry a Mexican". O plano de fundo em ambos os contos é o espaço multicultural das fronteiras – *Borderlands*, termo discutido por Gloria Anzaldúa para definir um local não somente físico e geográfico, mas também psicológico. Nas fronteiras – *Borderlands*, contradições podem coexistir. Para além de uma coexistência pacífica, múltiplas culturas estão continuamente em transição, negociação e articulação. No conto "Woman Hollering Creek", Cleófilas, a protagonista, descobre que ela pode ter controle de sua própria vida e ter voz, mas somente se ela se afastar de seu marido, que representa a instituição opressiva de *família*. Apesar disso, casar-se foi não somente a experiência que a aprisionou, mas também a que possibilitou que ela se tornasse consciente de sua posição e ampliasse as fronteiras de seu *conocimiento*. Cruzar essas fronteiras – geográficas e psicológicas –a possibilitou se tornar a filha protofeminista que irá questionar as tradições e tentar diferentes composições familiares, como defende Debra Castillo. Por outro lado, a protagonista de "Never Marry a Mexican" já é consciente dos papéis de gênero tanto na *família* tradicional mexicana quanto na família americana. Por isso, apesar de também criticar a família mexicana, ela sabe que a estrutura familiar americana não pode ser usada como exemplo, muito menos como solução, para escapar tais papéis de gênero que oprimem as mulheres. Por escrever contra o discurso hegemônico, é possível afirmar que Cisneros está resistindo, através de seu trabalho como escritora, às ideologias dominantes e corrompendo certas tradições problemáticas. Em ambos os contos, o final não busca uma solução, uma vez que, como argumenta Anzaldúa, viver nas fronteiras – *Borderlands* é viver em constante malabarismo com suas próprias culturas e tradições.
Palavras-chave: chicana; Sandra Cisneros; família; papéis de gênero; borderlands.

The concept of *família* is one of the most discussed topics among Chicana writers. According to Philippa Kafka, "the family setup [. . .] is the single most critiqued institution in the works of Latina Writers. But the family is not the cause of women's problems – inequitable gendered power relations are" (4). As a Chicana writer, Sandra Cisneros also foregrounds the familial relations that oppress women within the patriarchal society. The topic appears in a range of short stories written by this writer. Therefore, this work is going to focus in two of them from the book of short stories *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*: the homonym "Woman Hollering Creek" and "Never Marry a Mexican". In the former, the main character is depicted as a woman becoming conscious of being inferiorized by her husband and discovering that she can have a voice and be independent, but, for that, she must give up her idealized view of romance. In the second, a woman already conscious of the role of wives criticizes such role in both cultures, the American and the Mexican. The background in both stories is the multicultural space of the Borderlands, a term coined by Gloria Anzaldúa to define a location not only physical and geographical but also psychological. In the Borderlands, contradictions can coexist, and rather than an easy coexistence, these multiple cultures are in continuous articulation, transition, and negotiation: "Cradled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their value systems, *la mestiza* undergoes a struggle of flesh, a struggle of borders, an inner war" (100). It is in this scenario that the construction and disruption of *familia*/family takes place in the short stories written by Cisneros.

For Debra Castillo, the institution of the *familia* is one of the main institutions working in keeping the gender roles as they are. The *familia* altogether with other formal institutions, like the academy and the church for instance, try to reinforce such positions in order to maintain the hegemonic patriarchal discourse. According to Phillipa Kafka, "[a]ll other institutions out-

side the home practice and maintain male domination, and in all those institutions 'women's conceptual location' is situated basically within the structure of 'family life'" (Kafka 5). In this sense, even though the other institutions also "practice and maintain" male dominance, the realm of home, the family, is the most discussed by Chicanas for this is, usually, the space allowed for women. Castillo constructs a composition of *familia* according to the Chicana/o traditions; however, she also describes a point of awareness where discourse can be disrupted and where women can have other roles instead of the one available for them in this patriarchal traditional composition:

> The *familia* structures itself around a self-sacrificing mother, whose power resides in her absolute control over her children as well as in moral authority that derives from her unending suffering. The good father is neither faithful to his wife nor particularly available to his children, but he does support his family economically [. . .] the father is a background influence in the family, while day-to-day household decisions are made by the mother. [. . .] The Chicano son is privileged and petted, a spoiled being that will grow up into a man neither to be trusted nor depended upon . He will, however, revere his mother, though he is unlikely to show respect for any other woman. The protofeminist daughter, compelled throughout childhood to serve the men in her *familia*, begins to question the traditional order and asserts her right to explore alternative family dynamics and sexual partnerships with women as well as with men. (Castillo 19-20)

The rebel daughter is the point of awareness, the person who, by seeing the role of her mother, the *machismo* of her father, and the path of her brother in the direction of occupying the position of the father in their family, is going to question this tradition and look for different family compositions, or for alternatives that include not having a family at all, focusing on an independent life in which she has agency and voice. The two characters who I shall discuss in this work can be considered the protofeminist daughter in this Chicana family composition described by Castillo: one in the process of becoming the protofeminist daughter and the other already conscious of it and criticizing both, the American and the Chicana family institutions.

The Chicanos, in the borderland, the macho, is frequently violent, do not allow their women to be independent in any instance, either economically nor emotionally. This violence, whatsoever, is not an essentialist necessity; rather it is a social construction. Once the Chicanos have lost their capacity of protecting and nurturing their families (because they have low-jobs, suffer psychological violence, cannot express themselves linguistically very well, and so many other reasons), the way they find to show their power is by turning their anger and humiliation against someone over with they have control, in this case, their wives: "In the gringo world the Chicano suffers from excessive humility and self-effacement, shame of self and self-deprecation [. . .] The loss of a sense of dignity and respect in the macho breed a false machismo which leads him to put down women and even to brutalize them" (Anzaldúa 105). Even though this is not an excuse to accept such violence against women, or any minority, the Anglo society, which also accuses the Chicanos of *machismo,* is also responsible for part of the social construction that puts this group in a situation of poverty and humiliation.

Hence, women under those circumstances, under oppressive cultures, oppressive traditions, can become aware about their situation from such experiences. That is what Anzaldúa calls the *Coatlicue* state. According to Anzaldúa, the *Coatlicue* state is a rising of consciousness that comes from the darkness and from the inside. *Coatlicue* is a goddess from the inner self, who arises when people who have been oppressed find themselves in situations of pain, rage, and/or shame: "I've always been aware that there is a greater power than the conscious I. That power is my inner self, the entity that is the sum total of all my reincarnations, the godwoman in me I call *Antigua, mi Diosa,* the divine within, *Coatlicue-Cihuacoatl-Tlazolteotl-Tonantzin-Coatlalopeub-Guadalupe* – they are one" (72). Thus, the *Coatlicue* state is when the *Coatlicue* visits the psyche, in dark moments, and, then, a state of awareness starts to take place (that is if one does not try to escape this awareness. If the person prefers not to understand what this inner self is trying to show, one cannot have this awareness of conscious). Another word Anzaldúa uses to explain the *Coatlicue* state, in her interview to Irene Lara, is *conocimiento*, "just a good old-fashioned word that means knowledge, or learning, or *lo que conoces*" (44). When this *conocimiento* takes place, it is impossible to stop and return to ignorance. Once the borders are broadening they never return to their old limitations. The continuous movements of crossing borders create the needs of new identities, new selves, which are continually changing: "Every increment of consciousness, every step forward is a *travesía*, a crossing. [. . .] 'Knowing' is painful because after 'it' happens I can't stay in the same place and be comfortable. I am no longer the same person I was before" (Anzaldúa 70). In this sense, the Chicanas, by living under a double oppression (by their own Latina culture and the Anglo-American culture) are constantly crossing this state of mind, experiencing the *conocimiento*, being visited by *Coatlicue.*

However, although Cisnero discusses the raising of consciousness of the Chicanas under the oppression of *familia*, she goes beyond the critique of the traditional Latino family by criticizing also the traditional American Family. I ask for permission to bring here two white middle-class feminists who also criticized the institution of the family in the patriarchal system even though there are many Chicana feminists discussing this topic. And the reason I believe this intrusion is allowed is because these theorists constructed the background to discuss the problematic institution of marriage in the patriarchal society based on the experiences of white middle-class women, which is also under discussion here. First, Adrienne Rich asserts in "When we Dead Awaken" that the "usual" life allowed for a supposed "good" woman; a woman who fits perfectly her gender role – she gets married, has children, takes care of the house – was exactly what was holding her back in her professional life as a writer: "Now, to be maternally with small children all day in the old way, to be with a man in the old way of marriage, requires a holding-back, a putting-aside of that imaginative activity, and seems to demand instead a kind of conservatism" (Rich 23). The other theorist is Donna Haraway, who argues that marriage is a system which puts women in the role of woman according to hegemonic heterosexual normativity. For her, "[m]arriage encapsulated and reproduced the antagonistic relation of the two coherent social groups, men and women" (138). She continues by saying that:

> Withdrawal of women from the marriage economy was a potent figure and politics for withdrawal from men, and therefore for the self-constitution of women as personal and historical sub-

jects outside the institution of culture by men in the exchange and appropriation of the products (including babies) of women. (138)

What Haraway is arguing is that once woman is a part of the institution of marriage in the "old ways" (as Rich called it) she is objectified and becomes a commodity in the capitalist society where men are in the center of the discourse. In this sense, marriage is a hegemonic technology which keeps women and men in their social gender roles.

The short stories hereby discussed bring women to an empowered position, or becoming empowered, by taking them from the margins and putting them in the center of the debate. This is why it is possible to say that Cisneros is writing back against the current discourse. For Deborah Madsen, what writers as Cisneros are doing is using a counter-discursive strategy that contests dominant ideologies by resisting to the oppression Chicanas usually suffer. The oppression against Chicanas comes from discourses in two different positions: "first by the master discourse of colonialism (mobilized within Anglo-American culture) and then by the colonizing effect of patriarchy (within both Anglo and Chicano cultures)" (Madsen 65). Continuing, Madsen also claims that Chicanas, by the social position they occupy, also destabilize certain dichotomies that construct hierarchies in which some groups are in an inferior position in relation to other groups: "In post--colonial terms, the *mestiza* articulates a counter-discursive strategy: she does not simply contradict the oppressive discourse of colonialism but rather contests the dualistic thinking that empowers this discourse" (66). That is to say, by disrupting dichotomies what it has as a result is a more plural, and, as a consequence, tolerable group. As Anzaldúa also argues, Chicanas are multicultural and constructed by many contradictions: "The new *mestiza* copes by developing a tolerance for contradictions, a tolerance for ambiguity. She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be a Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures" (101). Accordingly, Cisneros' characters show those contradictions in a way that reinforce the multicultural background as a result of living in the borderlands and under different forms of oppression.

1. Woman Hollering Creek

In the short story "Woman Hollering Creek", the main character is Cleófilas, a Mexican who has just married a Chicano and moved from Mexico to live with him in the United States in a region of borderlands. She is a romantic woman in a conventional way that used to dream with marriage, love, and family. This dream about a traditional family is constructed and maintained by the *telenovelas,* and other sources of pop culture. The cultural traditions are taught to her since she was a child, mainly by those pop culture sources and the female gatekeepers. Kafka argues that gatekeepers are women within the community who help in the maintenance of the patriarchal system by training the youngers and reinforcing traditions: "In both their cultures of origin and Anglo culture, gatekeepers work ceaselessly to inscribe into their young female charges notion of female 'difference and inferiority'. Their goal is to reinforce female obedience to their cultures' construction of discriminatory models for them as ideal women" (Kafka 7). For Anna Marie Sandoval, the neighbors Dolores and Soledad work as gatekeepers: they spend their lives moaning their husbands and son, and they warn Cleófilas not to go near the creek (a re-

presentation of a rebel woman): "When they warn Cleófilas to 'stay near the house' they are also cautioning her to remain within the confined role that her culture and society at large has dictated for her. The neighbor women need her to validate their lives" (36-37). However, the creek is her friend, and she, as a first sign of rebellion, does not follow the neighbors' recommendation. But first, in order to become conscious of her own position and to go against it, Cleófilas needs to face the oppression and humiliation of marriage and society, suffer a disillusion, and, then, starts to realize she can control her own life.

"Because to suffer for love is good. The pain all sweet somehow. In the end" (45). In this passage, Cleófilas is trying to convince herself that her relationship with her husband can be good somehow. As the *telenovelas* show her, love can hurt and it is not easy. Thus, she cannot really imagine for her another kind of love, one that does not hurt, even though, somehow, it does not seem right to her. The strength of the *telenovelas* in Cleófilas' life is foregrounded. Women use the soap opera as models for fashion, and, as we can notice, not just for clothes but also for perpetuating a life style in which women are inferior. Soap operas, like "Tú o Nadie / You or No One", which are mentioned in the short story, reinforce that women should make sacrifices for love, must suffer for it. In this sense, as in the sentence above, suffering and pain are connected to love. Violence is naturalized as something women must go through, women start accepting this violence – it is for love.

The first time Juan Pedro, Cleófilas' husband, beats her, she does not react as she thought she would do. She is silenced: "when it happened for the first time, when they were barely man and wife, she had been so stunned, it left her speechless, motionless, numb" (48). In many passages of the story Cleófilas is depicted as silenced, first because she cannot speak English, only Spanish, and also because she is objectified, without interacting with Juan Pedro's friends, for instance: she "sits mute beside their conversation" (48). For Cleófilas, even the city is constructed in a way that does not allow woman to be independent. "Nothing one could walk to, at any rate. Because the towns here are built so that you have to depend on husbands. Or you stay home. Or you drive. If you are rich enough to own, allowed to drive, your own car" (51). The city in the story can be related to the community. As Cleófilas does not have her own money, she cannot afford to buy a car. Here, it is not only the violent man who abuses and is violent against the wife; the city, as a community, is violent by not allowing a woman to be independent and make her always need to rely on her husband, corroborating with this patriarchal tradition.

When they are just married, Cleófilas is depicted as the "self-sacrificing mother" described by Castillo, who is voiceless, dependent, victim of violence, and constructed as inferior. However, she has her *Coatlicue* state, as described by Anzaldúa, and becomes Castillo's "protofeminist daughter". In a first moment, she crosses the border to marry and have a family, like in the *telenovelas*, but her romantic view of marriage does not take long to dismantle:

> This is the man I have waited my whole life for.
> Not that he isn't a good man. She has to remind herself why she loves him when she changes the baby's Pampers [. . .]. Or wonder a little when he kicks the refrigerator and says he hates this shitty house and is going out where he won't be bothered with the baby's howling and her suspicious questions, and her request to fix this and this and this because if she any brains in her head she'd

> realize he's been up before the rooster earning his living to pay for the food in her belly and the roof over her head and would have to wake up again early next day so why can't you just leave me in peace, woman.
>
> He is not very tall, no, he doesn't look like the men on the *telenovelas.* [. . .]
>
> This man who farts and belches and snores as well as laughs and kisses and holds her. Somehow this husband whose whiskers she finds each morning in the sink, whose shoes she must air each evening on the porch, [. . .] and demands each course of dinner be served on a separate plate like at his mother's. (49)

From one sentence to another she changes her tone. From the man she waited her whole life, he becomes the man who is not that bad. In a certain way, she is modalizing to make him more realistic, once he is her husband but, at the same time, she knows he is not a good man. And she tries to negotiate the different views that start to collide with each other. As she continues, she can remember the problems of her husband, and the problematic characteristics start to be, gradually, more foregrounded. Like Castillo's description of the *familia*'s father, this man wants things done as her mother used to do for him ("demands each course of dinner be served on a separate plate like at his mother's"). These are moments of darkness, sometimes almost despair; somehow these moments bother her. Even though she tries to believe that she loves him, any sample of affection comes along with a sequence of things she dislikes in him. While she is trying to believe she loves him, almost forcing herself to believe in it, her inner self is absorbing all the violence she suffers, all the darkness she is living, and starts showing that something is wrong in this relationship and she does not need to keep herself in this position – the *Coatlicue* state is taking place.

This process of becoming aware is well represented in the short story by the creek behind Cleófilas' house. Since the beginning, something calls her attention about the name of the creek, Woman Hollering Creek: "La Gritona. Such a funny name for such a lovely *arroyo.* But that's what they call the creek that ran behind the house. Though no one could say whether the woman had hollered from anger or pain" (46). Here, *La Gritona* (woman hollering) is a revision of the myth of *La Llorona* (woman wailing). According to Anna Marie Sandoval, this mythic woman "has often been represented as a woman without agency", and continues: "she is seen as a representation of Mexico after the conquest and of La Malinche, crying for her conquered land and children. In each of these versions, she is crying and powerless" (35). In a first moment, Cleófilas cannot yet really see a different view of woman besides the one that suffers, and then, the hollering of the creek must be from anger or pain. This connection with the creek is a starting point for her to become aware of her position; she starts realizing she is in a position without agency, powerless, voiceless, but, better, she starts realizing she does not necessarily need to accept it. And that is the point where the myth is revisited and recreated as *La Gritona*, a powerful and rebel woman with voice.

As Sandoval argues, Felice, the woman who helps Cleófilas to escape, is the personification of the creek (35), and by this personification, having Felice a role model, Cleófilas can fully comprehend she has a voice and she does not need to accept her role of woman. Sandoval asserts that

"Felice avoids fixed gender roles, those which Cleófilas has embraced, if unwillingly, all of her life". Sandoval continues discussing how "Felice is gendered as a butch lesbian" (40). But, here, I have to disagree with her. I do agree that Felice does not accept imposed gender roles, but when, by not accepting imposed gender roles, by not being feminine as society claims a woman should be, she is described as a lesbian, once again the statement makes a return to dichotomies of gender and, in a way, imposing fixed gender roles. The sexual orientation of Felice is not at stake here. Her "lack of femininity" according to what society would argue comes as an opposition to the role Cleófilas has been playing through her life. This is more a sign of her independence than a sign of her sexual orientation. Whatsoever, Sandoval also argues that "Cleófilas, once unaware that independent women like Felice existed, finally has a positive role model" (43), and that is the model that helped her doing the crossing back to Mexico.

"But when they drove across the *arroyo*, the driver [Felice] opened her mouth and let out a yell as out as any mariachi" (Cisneros 55). When she yells, she hollers, she vocalizes her voice; she makes herself heard, she is not wailing like *La llorona.* Felice, the protofeminist daughter, is independent; she has a car, something considered impossible for the women in the world Cleófilas used to know. And the fact that Felice was not married and the car was hers amazed Cleófilas. "Everything about this woman, this Felice, amazed Cleófilas. The fact that she drove a pickup. A pickup, mind you, but when Cleófilas asked if it was her husband's, she said she didn't have a husband. The pickup was hers. She herself had chosen it" (55). When in contact with Felice, Cleófilas understands what was bothering her about those traditions: the concept of *familia* that makes her being voiceless, powerless. She expands her borders, she transforms herself, and, as Anzaldúa asserts, the borders that suffer changes cannot go back as the way they were before. Cleófilas crosses borders, geographical ones, when she goes back to Mexico, and psychological ones when she becomes aware she can have a voice and she can have choices. The yelling from Felice that scared her made changes; this yelling is voice, agency, choice, different from the wailing of *La Llorona.* And the scare can be interpreted as being scared of this new self, this new life she is going to face, which can be scary; however, it is this powerful yelling that takes her away from the gender roles imposed on her. She is going back to Mexico, but she is not going back the same way she came to the United States. The changes she suffers can never be undone; the borders do not go back to what they once were.

2. *Never Marry a Mexican*

From a different perspective of "Woman Hollering Creek", the short story "Never Marry a Mexican" already starts with the protagonist explaining why she will never get married. "Never marry a Mexican, my ma said once and always. She said this because of my father. She said this though she was born here in the U.S., and he was born there, and it's *not* the same, you know" (68). With this opening, the protagonist starts telling the differences between cultures. She knows about these differences, she has experienced them, and, for her, these differences are obvious, so she states "you know". What she discovers later on is that the sentence "never marry a Mexican" is also used by Americans. "A young girl like me. Hadn't I understood… responsibilities. Besides, he

could never marry me. You didn't think…? Never Marry a Mexican. Never Marry a Mexican…" (80). In her relationship with a white American man, she is reduced to being only Mexican, as if ethnicity was her only identity, being homogeneous, simple. However, she is aware that, by the traditional American gaze, she is reduced to fit one fixed category; she is the "them" in opposition to the American "us". Therefore, by keeping this reading in which the Americans are "us" while Latinas are "them", the expression "you know" becomes ironic, once the Americans do not actually know that "it's *not* the same" for, by the construction of the other as homogeneous, Latinas are seen as all the same. Moreover, because she is aware of this social construction that makes Mexicans and Latinas, including Chicanas, all the same, she is allowed to play with stereotypes. She does not only construct the problematic relationship with Mexicans, but also problematizes the traditional American family, which does not accept marrying a Mexican.

What our protagonist is doing, to a certain extent, is what Anzaldúa describes as a movement to take the slash in *nos/otras* (us/them) away and become one strong *nosotras* (us). "I started thinking of us as 'nos/otras' with a slash in the middle. The whole struggle of our movement for social change has been to take that little slash off so we're all in it together" (Anzaldúa, in Lara 43). The protagonist becomes obsessed with the wife of the white man she has an affair, to whom she is "guilty of having caused deliberated pain" (Cisneros 68). She knows how oppressed the wife in the American tradition is; however, she goes on and states "If she was a brown woman like me, I might've had a harder time living with myself, but since she is not, I don't care" (76). Even though it would be harder in the case of the wife being a brown woman like her, the protagonist becomes obsessed with the wife, showing that she actually cares, different of what she states ("I don't care"). The protagonist is constantly looking for traces of this white American oppressed woman, so much so that she asks herself: "Why was I so curious about this woman he lived with?". Hence, even though they are different, the protagonist as a Mexican and the wife as part of what Haraway calls "marriage economy", they are both oppressed. In a certain way, she pities this wife who cannot get rid of her gender role and, even worse, accepts this role living her life under the patriarchal oppression without questioning it. The protagonist is struggling with herself because, as a Mexican, she does not want to care about a white woman who is being betrayed by the husband, but at the same time she feels a connection because she is a woman suffering the consequences of accepting the rules of the oppressive patriarchal system.

By being a mistress of a white American man and by scrutinizing the life of his wife, the protagonist comes to a conclusion that this woman is like a Barbie doll (82). The Barbie doll – and its representation of the idealized woman according to the Western hegemonic culture – cannot act by itself, it is a toy, a bibelot, and depends on a person to command it, and direct the action – in this case, the Barbie, as a wife, is dependent on the husband. And as a perfect Barbie she has all the accessories such doll needs to fulfill its role perfectly:

> I found myself opening the medicine cabinet, looking at all the things that were hers. Her Estée Lauder Lipsticks. Coral and pinks, of course. Her nail polishes – mauve was as brave she could wear. Her cotton balls and blond hairpins. A pair of bone-colored sheepskin slippers, as clean as the day she'd bought them. On the door hook – a white with a MADE IN ITALY label, and a silky night shirt with pearl buttons. I touched the fabrics. *Calidad.* Quality.

She is the perfect wife, the perfect housewife, even when the mistress calls her husband at four in the morning she answers politely: "Just a moment, she said in her most polite drawing-room English" (77). As the good wife she must be, it is not her role to ask questions to the husband. At any instance she must perform perfectly her gender role. For our protagonist, "no Mexican woman would react like that. Excuse me, honey. It cracked me out" (77). By saying so, she states that no Mexican woman could ever be the perfect housewife in the white American tradition, and, by this perspective, she shows how positive it is being unable of accomplishing such role.

In the protagonist continuous play with intercultural marriage, she tells the story of her parents and how her father supposedly married down because of her mother ethnicity:

> Having had to put up with all the grief a Mexican family can put on a girl because she was from *el otro lado,* the other side, and my father had married down by marrying her. If he had married a white woman from *el otro lado*, that would've been different. That would've been marrying up, even if the white girl was poor. But what could be more ridiculous than a Mexican girl who couldn't even speak Spanish, who didn't know enough to set a separate plate for each course at dinner, nor how to fold cloth napkins, nor how to set the silverware. (69)

The oppression against Mexicans is so strong that they themselves consider their people inferior. The inter-ethnic marriage could only be considered positive if performed with someone from a superior ethnic group. The irony in saying "what could be more ridiculous than a Mexican girl who couldn't even speak Spanish, who didn't know enough to set a separate plate for each course at dinner, nor how to fold cloth napkins, nor how to set the silverware" is that a white woman would not be able to accomplish these requirements as well. However, to marry a white woman, even poor, would be to marry up.

Hence, by showing the problematic relation of marriage in both American and Mexican cultures it is understandable why she refuses to get married. She knows that once married she would get into an oppressive tradition, be it in any of the cultures. "I've never married and I never will. Not because I couldn't, but because I'm too romantic for marriage. [. . .] It's because I believe too much in marriage that I don't. Better to not marry than live a lie" (69). For Barbara Curiel, stories such as the ones by Cisneros "bring romantic conventions down from the lofty and idealized levels", this "critique of romance, courtship, and marriage hinges on a confronta-tion between romantic expectations and social reality" (56). By stating the problematic relation of marriage, and by her perspective as a mistress, she contests the social view of relationships and family. Different from what is expected from a woman, to be silenced, passive, Barbie, or to be brutalized and humiliated, she is in control of her relationships, choosing not to marry, choosing who is going to love her; she is in control.

However, this assertion about not getting married is one of the "many defense strategies that the self uses to escape the agony of inadequacy" (67), as described by Anzaldúa. Many other attitudes of the protagonist can be seen as some of those strategies, such as having a love affair with the son of her lover and leaving gummy bears in places where the wife would certainly find them. Anzaldúa compares these strategies to a cactus plant, typical from Mexico, *Nopal de Casilla*. When tired of feeling shame and/or fear, the person under oppression develops "need-

les, nettles, razor-sharp spikes" in order to protect themselves (67). These are reactions against actions that constantly humiliate the individual. Thus, being single and a mistress is a choice and a defense in opposition of being oppressed by traditions and gender roles. Keeping in mind what Rich states, being married like in the old ways, meaning the way traditions force women, is a holding-back for a woman who intends to be independent, free, powerful and in control of her own life.

This is so that in the short story "Woman Hollering Creek" the representation of an independent woman is Felice, who is not married, like the protagonist of "Never Marry a Mexican". Cleófilas could only take control of her own life, have a voice, after running away from her husband. As Sandoval states, Cisneros and other Chicana writers "involve themselves in redefining and transforming family institutions, critiquing patriarchy in the larger culture and within their own communities, collectivizing certain relevant cultural symbols, and questioning harmful dualisms" (17). Curiel states that "Cisneros also undermines the cultural and social notions that consider single womanhood to be taboo by representing single women as independent, successful, and powerful" (55). In the case of Cleófilas, she could be independent only by being single again. The experience that had imprisoned her was the one that gave her the possibility of becoming conscious and broadening the borders of her *conocimiento.* Even though going back to her *familia* in Mexico with two children would be considered a shame, a humiliation, she chooses to face it armed with the consciousness she raised by her experience of crossing borders – geographically and psychologically. She, then, became the protofeminist daughter who will question the traditions and try alternative family compositions, as Castillo defends.

On the other hand, the protagonist of "Never Marry a Mexican" is already conscious of gender roles both in the traditional Mexican *familia* as in the American family. Hence, even though she criticizes the Mexican *familia,* she knows the American family structure is not an example, even less a solution, to escape the gender roles that oppress women. She finishes her story considering herself crazy, and, if does not accepting what society considers normal is to be crazy, yes, she is crazy. The protagonist is crazy, and, by being so, she destabilizes dualist structures of oppression forcing the reader to rethink about gender discourses. Because Cisneros writes against the hegemonic discourse, it is possible to say she is resisting, through her writing, dominant ideologies and disrupting such problematic traditions. In both short stories, the end does not bring a solution once, as Anzaldúa says, living in the Borderlands is living constantly juggling with cultures. And, in this process of juggling, sometimes the oppression comes from inside the community and sometimes from the hegemonic white American tradition that oppresses not only the Chicana women but white women as well. Rather, the short stories show the intricate gender relations that make it so difficult for a woman to be independent and free from the patriarchal oppression.

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TONI MORRISON'S *BELOVED,* WRITING ONESELF INTO BEING

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Abstract: This research discusses in what ways Toni Morrison's *Beloved* can be considered a significant narrative not only within African American and North American literature, but also within African American and North American history. By canvassing certain concepts and tropes, for example Du Bois' (1903) 'double-consciousness,' while contextualizing them with specific historical periods of the United States, this research presents arguments which suggest the significance and validity of *Beloved* not only as a novel, but also as another chapter within the history of the United States.
Keywords: double-consciousness; identification; language.

Resumo: Esta pesquisa discute de que maneiras o romance de Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, pode ser considerado como uma significante narrativa não apenas dentro da literatura Afro Americana e Norte Americana, mas também dentro da história Afro Americana e Norte Americana. Ao discutir certos conceitos e idéias, por exemplo, o conceito de 'dupla consciência' de Du Bois (1903), e o contexto específico dentro da história dos Estados Unidos que estes conceitos e idéias estavam inseridos esta pesquisa apresenta argumentos que sugerem a significância e validade de *Beloved* não apenas como um romance, mas também como outro capítulo dentro da história dos Estados Unidos.
Palavras-chave: dupla consciência; identificação; linguagem.

1. See through the revelation of the other

In 1903 Du Bois wrote,

> the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world, – a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the other world[1] (2).

1. Du Bois, W. E. B. *The souls of the black folk.* New York: Dover Publications, 1994. Print.

And what might have been this American world which Du Bois mentions? In the late nineteenth century, 75% of the African Americans that lived in the south were farmers, sharecroppers. They represented 50% of the population of the south.[2] The industrial and seemingly progressive north, on the other hand, opened up possibilities for people like Du Bois and Marcus Garvey who, despite their somewhat discrepant views, managed to lift up their voices above all mishaps and inequalities. However, in a general sense, in a constitutional sense, and in a humanistic sense, this American world was a world out of reach for African Americans, who were still second class citizens, not to mention forced to withstand indescribable horrors, as the lynching.While the northeastern and northwestern parts of the country were becoming thriving economic centers, in need of laborers and technicians, the south was still stuck in a colonial economy that could barely sustain itself, and seemed direly surpassed – the soil was severely depleted, and the cotton industry was at a record low in many regions. 'White primaries,' which prohibited blacks from voting in the Democratic party primaries in the south, were only outlawed during World War I (Zinn, 450).[3] The 'Separate but Equal' doctrine, which had been established in a Supreme Court decision dating back to 1896 (Plessy v. Ferguson 163 U.S. 537), and stated that states had constitutional rights to have racial segregation in public facilities so long as they provided separate but equal facilities, – which was never the case – was only repudiated in 1954 (Brown v. Board of Education).[4] Up until World War II blacks were still segregated in the army. Throughout the country a black worker would receive less money than a white worker for the same job. These specific instances in time, these situations, these legal clauses, and this strong economic contrast between the northern and the southern part of the country give us a rather basic, and perhaps naïve overview of the United States in the beginning of the twentieth century; it is dangerous to narrow down specific moments in history to opposites, because what remains is a pure and inescapable bias. Nonetheless, if we stop to think about, say, all the work these senators and congressmen had to go through in order to create these legal clauses, these constitutional black holes for the sole purpose of maintaining an invisible socioeconomic barrier between people of a different skin color, we might get a precise and objective portrait of a moment in history; after all, these were the people elected to represent the masses. At the very core of this clear distinction between whites and blacks one could see the foundations of language. This world which let the Negro see himself, or herself, only through the revelation of the other, gyrated around the enlightened principle that the ability to speak and write – the pillars of language – were paramount to the condition of becoming or being human. Jenifer Fleishner discussed this (Fleishner, 15-16),[5] as well as Toni Morrison (Morrison, 69),[6] and Henry Louis Gates Jr (Gates, 19);[7] amongst others. Interwoven with Du Bois' sentence is the reasoning and mentality of the late eighteenth century and nineteenth century which

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2. "African American Studies." *Open Yale Courses*. Yale University, n.d. Web. 5 July 2012 < http://oyc.yale.edu/african-american-studies/afam-162/lecture-3 >

3. Zinn, Howard. *A People's History of the United States*. New York: Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2005.

4. "Termination of court supervision" *US supreme court online*. US supreme court, n.d. Web. 5 July 2012 < http://law.justia.com/constitution/us/amendment-14/82-education.html >

5. Fleischner, Jeniffer. "Introduction." In: *Mastering Slavery: Mamory, Family, and Identity in Women's Slave Narratives*. New York University Press, 1996. 11- 32.

6. Morrison, Toni. "The site of memory." In: *What Moves at the Margin*. University Press of Mississippi, 2008. 65- 80.

7. Gates Jr., H. L. *Figures in Black: Words, Signs, and the Racial Self*. London: Oxford Univeristy Press, 1989.

equated the ability to read and write with the condition or the capacity of being human; in other words, citizenship and literacy walked hand in hand. That is why there were severe penalties for anyone caught trying to teach a black man, woman or child to read or write before 1865, or after, in many southern states. Reading and writing were the first steps towards freedom and independence. Yet, if an African American wanted to learn to do such things it would inevitably stumble over Du Bois bad omen: to see oneself through the revelation of the other. This grotesque and compulsory process which African Americans endured in order to learn a language was pivotal to the formation of the double-consciousness which Du Bois talks about.

2. Double-consciousness and language acquisition

In many cities of the south, during the Reconstruction Era (1865-1877), any African American that dared to try to vote was required to take a literacy test before voting. In some of these tests one could be asked "how many bubbles are there in a soap bar?"[8] These sadly pathetic, yet insanely horrific situations are perfect examples of what double-consciousness is. While these situations purportedly sustained a morally justifiable and democratic government system, they also revealed the atrocities behind a context which forced the African American to psychologically nullify himself/herself, while having to accept the pre-condition of being always already the Other. Seeing oneself through the revelation of the other is the idea behind double-consciousness. For you to recognize yourself, or even to be recognized by others, you would need first to adhere to this pre-condition of submission, of sub humanness, of not being white. Double-consciousness means to know yourself through the disapproving, disenfranchising, destabilizing, and delusional revelation of the other. In short, double-consciousness refers to a process of learning to describe oneself through someone else's language, while at the same time learning to see oneself through someone else's values and beliefs. The derivative of this assimilation process is the second sight which African Americans were forced to develop; to say that they were gifted with it seems too big a misnomer.

Malcolm X came across this dilemma when he noticed that the very word black, which was used to describe him, could also be associated with being tainted, unclean, and filthy, whereas the word white could be associated with brightness, cleanness, pureness, and goodness (Haley, 165-207).[9] Frederick Douglass also discusses the idea behind double-consciousness when he tells us about a watershed moment in his life, where his master prohibited his wife of teaching their son to read and write, while assuring them that they – African Americans – remained slaves because of their illiteracy (37).[10] At the core of double-consciousness lies the principle of distorted identification. The African American which Du Bois is addressing learned to describe himself/herself, and to position himself/herself inside the social realm through a language devised by a belligerent and paranoid people who hated and despised it. If this seems a bit

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8. "African American Studies." *Open Yale courses*. Yale University. n.d. Web. 5 July 2012. < http://oyc.yale.edu/african-american-studies/afam-162/lecture-3 >

9. Haley, Alex. *The Autobiography of Malcom X: As told by Alex Haley*. New York: Ballantine Books, 1987.

10. Douglass, Frederick. *The Narrative of the life of Frederick Douglass, an American slave, written by himself*. Boston: Bedford-St. Martin's, 2002.

rough, remember that the Civil Rights movement, which happened during the latter part of the twentieth century, was a fight for basic constitutional rights; Du Bois was writing from the dawn of the twentieth century. Only twenty years before he wrote that, there were other fights over civil rights, as was evidenced with Civil Rights Cases 109 U.S. 3 of 1883, which determined that Congress could not outlaw racial discrimination of private individuals and organizations.[11]

Language acquisition and self-consciousness came at a high cost for African Americans as they would learn to identify themselves through a language which degraded them, while they were forced to adopt the position of the Other, the unwanted, the infantile, the docile, the monstrous, or the cunningly evil before being accepted into white man's society. James Baldwin also discussed this relation between language and the identification process of people when he wrote:

> People evolve a language in order to describe and thus control their circumstances, or in order not to be submerged by a reality that they cannot articulate. (And, if they cannot articulate it, they are submerged).[12]

This twisted last sentence functions as a violent monolithic reality which relentlessly obliterates all illiterates – namely, the vast majority of African Americans – from the social, cultural, economic and political spheres of the country. This was the reality of the American world which Du Bois talked about, the world into which African Americans were submerged. A few lines after, Baldwin continues his argument by stressing the fact that when you open your mouth you confess "your parents, your youth, your school, your salary, your self-esteem, and, alas, your future."[13] And, although the context he gives for this last phrase is England during the late seventies, how different was it from Du Bois' 1903 context, or even today's context?

3. Personal narratives, writing oneself into being

Until 1865, because of their commoditized existence, African Americans were not identified as people, but as property. Citizenship was not an unalienable right, and subjectivity had a coating of objectification. One of the results of this imposed reality was that African Americans had to write themselves into being. They would have to tell their stories, narrate their memories, and (re)create their past through this process in order to be accepted into the present. If African Americans were to become citizens, then their stories would have to be on ink. This was the dividing line between the white man's burden, and the freedom of a people – language. A system which binds citizenship with literacy forces its citizens to abide by tradition, or in other words, you must first recognize these existing corpora for you to be accepted as a citizen. While this works wonderfully when forging historicity, it must be like looking over a bottomless hole for those who have no tradition, or no recognized language. Once you link citizenship to literacy,

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11. "Civil rights cases 109 U.S. 3 (1883)." *US supreme court online*. US Supreme Court, Web. 5 July 2012. < http://supreme.justia.com/cases/federal/us/109/3/case.html >

12. Baldwin, James. *New York Times online*. "If black English ain't a language then tell me, what is it?" New York Times. Web. 7 July 2012. < http://www.nytimes.com/books/98/03/29/specials/baldwin-english.html >

13. Ibid.

tradition becomes a metaphor for old books. African Americans had no corpus of their own, there were no old books they could go back to; only old stories they had been told.

This is the weight which the first slave narratives carried on their ink. These stories told by runaway slaves, or freed slaves in many ways, were the first written narratives North Americans had of African American history. At the time of their publication there was much debate regarding their historical validity, or whether they were factual or not. Toni Morrison discusses this a little bit when she tells us that "the crucial distinction[…] is not the difference between fact or fiction, but the distinction between fact and truth. Because facts can exist without human intelligence, but truth cannot" (73).[14] Debating whether or not these narratives are fiction or not would be as fruitful as conducting a Gallup poll on whether or not there really is an economic crisis today. Even if 99% of the things told in these stories were proven to be factual, and, alas, perhaps most of them would, it would not change what they stand for: personal narratives of a people, whose past has been usurped, trying to inscribe themselves in History.

The remarkable thing about these slave narratives is not their historical accuracy, or the factual story they reveal, rather, it is the fact that they were written by a slave, or ex-slave, hence the significance of the "written by himself, or herself," which most narratives titles contain. The idea that comes to mind upon reading these two words "by himself/herself" is that of utter isolation from the rest of us, as if this person's language acquisition has been done at great cost, and in some vast and forgotten desert. By himself/herself across the ocean, at the break of dawn, at work, eating, sleeping, learning to read, write and speak, and thinking; this is what crosses through my mind every time I read "by himself/herself". The significance of these narratives is the fact that they exist, that they have been produced. That these words, these letters have been assorted in such a way that they have become coherent not only to their authors, but also to those who detain the rules and regulations of the language in which such authors write in, that is the significance of these narratives. The emergence of such narratives inevitably placed above these authors the personal pronoun I. Whether or not they were factual, fiction, or imaginary was secondary, their importance lay in the fact that it was written by an African American. If citizenship is linked to literacy, then once you have an author, you have a citizen; ink produces identities – and not just the identification cards. Davies and Gates Jr. discuss this idea of writing oneself into being:

> Accused of lacking a formal and collective history, blacks published individual histories which, taken together, were intended to narrate, in segments, the larger yet fragmented history of blacks in Africa, then dispersed throughout a cold New World. The narrated, descriptive "eye" was put into service as a literary form to posit both the individual "I" of the black author, as well as the collective "I" of the race (xxvi). [15]

These personal accounts would not only turn their authors into distinct 'I's,' they would also mark the beginning of a collective memory on ink. More than anything these stories authenti-

14. Morrison, Toni. "The site of memory." In: *What Moves at the Margin*. University Press of Mississippi, 2008. 65 – 80.
15. Davies C. and Gates Jr., H. L. "Introduction: The Language of Slavery." In: *The Slave's Narrative*. Davies C. and Gates Jr., H. L. (eds). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995. xi – xxxiv.

cated forgotten memories. And this is paramount for history, because there may be memories with no discernible history trailing them, but all history casts a discernible shadow of memories. Singh and Skerrett remind us about the importance of memory, when they state that it "shapes narrative forms and strategies toward reclaiming a suppressed past and helps the process of re--visioning that is essential to gaining control of one's life and future" (17).[16]

4. Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, stories of a people

One of the most startling things *Beloved* does is it reclaims the past, while it redefines the present, enabling the future to be different. In 1856, Margaret Garner, a slave, along with her husband, also a slave, and their kids escaped from Kentucky to Ohio. Slave catchers and US marshals managed to siege them in a cabin. As the officers forced their way in, Margaret stabbed and killed her two year old daughter with a butcher knife. One of the reasons why the story is unnerving is because it reveals the similarities between slavery and infanticide. Behind the whole theatre of horrors which was slavery, as if sustaining the whole apparatus, stood the perhaps even more repelling world of infanticide. Slavery is the overkill of a people, while infanticide is the demise of the future by a permanent extension of the present. Yet, the story is not just about slavery, neither is it openly about infanticide. *Beloved* is the story of a people. It is the diachronic 'process of re-visioning' memories of a people, while giving them some form of historical agency. By approaching slavery as another form of infanticide, thus destroying any possibility of a future, Morrison is not only re-visioning the memories of Margaret Garner, she is also connoting the inescapable reality of slavery.

Slavery, or Beloved, in a sense, is what binds all the characters of the story together. Beloved is the thread which intertwines the irregular patchwork of the story. Sethe's conflicts with Beloved are all related to Sethe's inability to confront her gruesome and horrific past as a slave. While she wants to continue her life, Beloved's phantasm keeps bringing her back to this moment in time where she invalidated her future. The stronger are Sethe's emotional ties with Beloved the more docile and infantile Denver becomes. This is so because Denver is the future; so long as Sethe keeps on revolving around these brutal memories of Beloved, Denver is denied a future, and must resort solely to mourning the past she never had. Sethe's connection with her older relatives is also obfuscated after Beloved's killing. Baby Suggs, who was a gregarious talker, becomes a recluse; her relation with Sethe is completely destabilized after this event. Baby Suggs believes that the family structure lies at the core of the community's well-being. She is devastated with Sethe's action and loses her faith in the community; familial unity comes before the terrors of slavery.

Beloved also connects Sethe with Paul D. In many ways Sethe and Paul D represent the collective struggle of African Americans for freedom during the Reconstruction Era – they are both ex-slaves witnessing the dawning of a new and promising era. The more Paul D tries to distance Sethe from Beloved, the stronger Beloved becomes. Whenever Sethe's connection with

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16. Singh, Amritjit, and Skerrett, Joseph T. "Introduction." In: *Memory, Narrative, and Identity: New Essays in Ethnic American Literatures*. Singh, Amritjit, and Joseph T. Skerrett (eds.) Boston: Northeastern Univeristy Press, 1994. 1 – 17.

Beloved or her memory of Beloved becomes too pervasive, it blurs her connection with Paul D. During the Reconstruction period African Americans would have to start their story from scratch, while trying to move forward and not look back. In Sethe's and Paul D's case, this meant that for both of them to be together, and become part of the community they would have to keep the past solely in their memories. They would have to forgive themselves for having been brutalized in order to find themselves, accept the past as something which cannot be changed, and learn to love and live again. The more they reminisced about the past, the harder it would be for them to free themselves for the future.

The memory of Beloved also brings back the memories of Schoolteacher, and the boys with mossy teeth. The memory of Beloved brings back ominous echoes from the slave ship. Beloved is a threat to Sethe because she represents Sethe's aborted future. When a mother kills her son or daughter she erases herself out of time. She relinquishes her future, while at the same time she transforms her present into a series of unrelated events which seem only to bring back that frozen memory of the moment of the killing. When Sethe killed Beloved she was desperately trying to make her escape, but ended up creating an imaginary umbilical cord which would connect them through space and time. Beloved was Sethe's memory of slavery, a memory she kept trying to re-signify to see if her present life made more sense. Until the moment where Beloved is finally exorcised by the collective effort of the community, at the very end of the story, Sethe's torments seem far greater than life. Her vacillating tone while mumbling "Me? Me?" suggests not only disbelief in the fact that someone could find her the best thing, but at the same time a certain giving in to the future. She has come full-circle and is ready to step into the present.

5. Imaginary pains hurt too

Margaret Garner's story brought about an unusual legal case: if she were accused of murderer, she would have to be tried as a person, and not property. As it turned out, she was returned to a slave state, as was required by the federal law, the Fugitive Slave Law, and was never to be found by the legal authorities of Ohio to be tried for murder. She died in New Orleans, still a slave, and supposedly in 1858. Even though she committed a crime, she was never tried for it. There is a twofold experience to it which is disturbing and revealing: the people who tried her were willing to overlook an assassination in order to abide by a federal law regarding fugitive slaves. Were they to recognize that she was guilty of having killed her daughter they would have to recognize her as a person, which meant she would be entitled to rights and obligations. In short, recognizing the infanticide meant admitting the immorality of slavery. In Beloved, Morrison manages to transform the infanticide into a symbol of slavery, and in doing so she indicts Gardner's accusers of failing to trial her for murderer for fear of a total collapse of their system. By overlooking the murder they denied the existence of slavery, because the killing was all about slavery. By choosing to stick to a federal law which was concerned solely with economical factors – slaves were property, and losing them, thus, meant losing money – Gardner's accusers failed to approach the socio-cultural and psychological factors involved in the killing. This was the organizing mentality of the time.

In a sense, in Beloved Morrison is remembering how things were, before they were 'straightened out' (77).[17] Her imaginative power fabricates a text out of an image – that of Margaret Gardner. Through this process of re-visioning this woman's experience, imagining it into existence, Morrison creates and accesses, at the same time, the collective history of a people. Because African Americans were usurped of their past, they were forced to (re)create a lot of it through imagination, through a process of (re)signifying their memories. This was when language stepped in, where they developed the second-sight. Soon thereafter they began to write themselves into being, creating stories from old memories, and igniting imagination by resorting to imagination.

If identification is densely intertwined with language and memory, imagine just how belittled and stratified each and every African American must have felt upon arriving at Jamestown, Virginia, say in 1621 as a commodity of chattel slavery to increase the production of tobacco, imagine also how they must feel today while remembering this still elusive memory. So long as African Americans remained illiterate racism would prevail because we relate to each other through language, we articulate and promote ourselves through language, and we judge each other through language. All language is political, which means no language is neutral.[18] Still today we have not come to grips with the totality of this situation. A people who were bereft of their past, their culture and family, their home land and way of seeing the world are, alas, bound to their history through the volatile connection of the imagination. And as much as it may seem frightening to admit it, we cannot escape the fact that imaginary pains hurt too. Here is an excerpt from a slave narrative dating from 1770.

> I saw the book talk to my master, for I thought it did, as I observed him to look upon it and move his lips. I wished it would do so with me[…] I opened it, and put my ear down close upon it, in great hope that it would say something to me; but I was very sorry, and greatly disappointed when I found out it would not speak.[19]

As much as this may seem today as an excerpt from a psychedelic novel written in the mid sixties, it is still a perfect example of how it was that African Americans related to language. It would be through the mastery of this magical thing called language that African Americans gained their freedom. By re-visioning their memories through imagination, they wrote themselves into being. Du Bois understood this perfectly well when he wrote the sentence I quoted, he knew that African Americans needed desperately to write themselves into existence, to raise their voices and make people hear them. And, although many people sum up Du Bois' 1903 book The *Soul of the Black Folk* through this sentence, through the concept of double-consciousness, they forget something which is intrinsic to the very ink of the text: its call for action. The book was written as a sort of indignant reply to Booker T. Washington's idea of African Americans accommodating into white man's society, through a ridiculous compromise between unjustified racism and their purported citizenship. Du Bois' book was fueled by his indignation towards

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17. Morrison, Toni. "The site of memory." In: *What Moves at the Margin*. University Press of Mississippi, 2008. 65 – 80.
18. Brand, Dionne. *No Language is Neutral*. Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1998.
19. Ukawsaw Gronniosaw, James Albert. *A narrative of the most remarkable particulars in the life of James Albert Ukawsaw Gronniosaw*. Project Gutenberg. Web. 2 July 2012 < http://www.gutenberg.org/files/15042/15042-h/15042-h.htm>

racism and its accomplices. Yet, it is not only a diagnosis, but also a prognosis, and many people fail to read this. For those people, I would like to quote a passage from the chapter he dedicates to the training of black men, where he is addressing southern gentlemen:

> Negroes see all too clearly the anomalies of their position and the moral crookedness of yours. You may marshal strong indictments against them, but their counter-cries lacking though they be in formal logic, have burning truths within them which you may not wholly ignore, O Southern Gentleman! (65)[20]

Du Bois, Martin Luther King, and Malcolm X, to name a few, reached deep into the soul of the black folk, and managed to channel a lot of the energy and momentum that was burning all over the nation. Through *Beloved*, Morrison taps into an unnerving past, revealing not only our frail and unstable human condition as a whole, but also the importance of an individual within a people's history. Margaret Garner knew perfectly well that changes only come for those who are willing to sacrifice themselves, the greatest of all sacrifices, and expect nothing in return, but the honest and liberating truth.

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