Instituto de Enseñanza Superior en Lenguas Vivas
"Juan Ramón Fernández"

Título del trabajo: What do we teach when we teach language in Language IV at Teacher Training College? A discussion on material selection and syllabus design

Nombre(s) y apellido(s) del adscripto/a: Guadalupe Méndez

Dirección de correo electrónico: guadamen@gmail.com

Nombre(s) y apellido(s) del director de adscripción: Daniel Ferreyra Fernández

Nombre de la cátedra: Lengua Inglesa IV

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Abstract

Una de las inquietudes más desafiantes en la enseñanza del idioma Inglés es cómo diseñar un programa y seleccionar material que atienda a los objetivos definidos para un curso, especialmente en el caso en el que el uso de libros de texto no aplica. En el contexto del Profesorado, y particularmente de Lengua Inglesa IV, la selección de material depende enormemente y es funcional a los objetivos de la materia, a saber, consolidar la competencia lingüística, promover la reflexión metalingüística, tomar conciencia la lengua como una forma de expresar la identidad y la cultura, y desarrollar la autonomía en el rol del docente como tomador de decisiones. Este trabajo procura discutir la selección de textos que permitirá alcanzar estas metas. Con este propósito, en primer lugar, explora el marco teórico y los principios subyacentes a la razón fundamental para estas elecciones, como ser la relación entre cultura y discurso, discurso y poder, la construcción del otro a través del lenguaje y la competencia intercultural, y en segundo lugar, propone criterios a seguir y una variedad de textos como ejemplos de elecciones basados en los criterios presentados.

Palabras claves:

lengua - selección de material - textos - autonomía - cultura

Abstract

One of the most challenging concerns of English teaching is how to design a syllabus and select material that will cater for the aims set for a course, especially one in which the use of textbooks is not applicable. In the context of Teacher Training, and particularly English Language IV, material selection is strongly dependent on and instrumental to the objectives of the subject, namely to consolidate linguistic competence, to foster metalinguistic reflection, to raise awareness of language as a way of expressing identity and culture, and to develop autonomy in the role of teachers as decision-makers. This paper sets out to discuss the selection of texts that will allow for these goals to be met. For this purpose, it first explores the theoretical background and principles underlying the rationale for those choices, such as the relationship between culture and discourse, discourse and power, the construction of the other through language and intercultural competence, and secondly, it proposes criteria to be followed and a variety of texts as examples of choices based on the criteria presented.

Key words:

language - material selection - texts - autonomy - culture

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is firstly, to present some theoretical framework underlying the selection of material and syllabus design for the teaching of Language IV at Teacher Training College and secondly, to illustrate how I have attempted to implement aspects of these theories in my own work as a substitute teacher for this subject. It should be added that the purpose of this paper is not to recommend or prescribe specific approaches to the topic under discussion but rather to provide a reflection on the outline I followed for material selection and syllabus design for this course.

As a teacher of English language and as a coordinator of the English Department in bilingual secondary schools, I have always regarded the selection of material and curriculum design, especially in those cases where printed commercial textbooks are either not available, not applicable or not suitable for the curriculum, the most challenging and daunting of skills when planning and designing a course. While I was doing the "Adscripción", and later on, when I had the opportunity to teach this subject as a substitute at the Teacher Training College Instituto de Enseñanza Superior en Lenguas Vivas "Juan Ramón Fernández", I was faced with the challenge of outlining a proposal for the course and reflecting on the selection of discourse material which would serve twofold purposes: (1) complying with the objectives and core content ("contenidos mínimos") stated by the 2015 Study Plans for the Teacher Training College while providing a content-based backbone suitable for the students/teachers-to-be, and (2) helping them develop autonomy in their own material

evaluation and selection skills for their future practice.

At the same time, within the first purpose, Language IV is particularly demanding as it presents the teacher with a dual challenge: the student teachers, usually heterogeneous in terms of English language proficiency, should have opportunities both to improve their linguistic skills and to be educated as English teachers and prepared to become professionals.

It is therefore of paramount importance to, in this way, harmonize and integrate content and practice, which, without turning this into a course on Methodology, will help the student teachers become aware of the dual demands of the subject.

A) Theoretical framework

1) Teachers as material designers

Much has been said about the role of teachers as material designers and the need for teacher education programmes to "prepare teachers, psychologically as well as theoretically and practically, for this role, a role which involves evaluation as well as creativity" (McGrath 3). In this sense, it is key for teachers "to possess the confidence and at least basic competences to (1) make informed decisions about the choice and use of materials and (2) develop materials when existing materials are found to be inadequate" (4-5).

Teaching material design has a central role in the process of educating student teachers and in guiding them to make informed choices that derive from thinking

critically about their rationale and underlying beliefs. The design of teaching materials requires the student teachers to make informed decisions when choosing and selecting and explain the reasons for those decisions. This will grant them autonomy in decision-making, and also create opportunities and foster the need for the beginning of an ongoing process of metalinguistic and metacognitive reflection on their own present/future practice and on language – the language they are learning and the language they will teach -- at the same time.

1) a. Teaching materials

Although the materials selected for the proposal/syllabus and used in the course include a variety of media (articles, literary texts, podcasts, scripts, TED talks, films, recorded radio interviews, TV series, documentaries, speeches, performances, advertisements, etc.), for the purpose of this study, the scope of the materials to be discussed and exemplified has been narrowed down to written text only. Thus, the focus will be primarily, and almost exclusively, on *text* materials, authentic texts that have been specially selected and exploited for teaching purposes by the teacher; teacher-written materials; and learner-generated materials.

1) b. The role of teaching materials in the teacher training programme

Teaching materials play a central role in teaching and learning, but materials cannot be viewed independently of their users. This assertion presents two important characteristics of teaching materials that imply their relevance in teacher education:

they are a fundamental part of language learning and teaching and they are dependent on their users (both teachers and learners).

Precisely because of the dependent nature of teaching materials, when a teacher has the role of designing them, a number of contextual decisions have to be made that have a great potential to raise designers' reflection about what and how to teach (who/where the learners are; what they are learning the language for; time constraints; the availability of resources, among others).

In this sense, Augusto-Navarro points out that "choosing and adapting materials and designing a curriculum represent quite a challenge for most language teachers." Even when using only a textbook, very frequently some level of adaptation is necessary since textbooks or pre-prepared teaching materials seldom fulfill entirely or precisely the needs of any given class. That is why it is important that teachers realise the need to "develop skills to perform this task of selecting and/or adapting materials, inherent to the profession".

Following this approach in Language IV, the last Language subject in their course of studies, has the aim of giving future teachers tools for reflection on classroom practice, a critical understanding of what is at stake in teaching English as a foreign language, an awareness of the theoretical principles underlying teachers' options and decisions made, and a recognition of the complexities that teaching English not only as a lingua franca but also as a language that undeniably carries power poses. This can allow the student teachers to become reflective and critical about issues related to methodology (without delving or stepping into specific skills, strategies and techniques dealt with in the Methodology subjects), and about the contents they are exposed to,

what they experience and on the topics discussed in class, while at the same time enriching their own previous 'personal theory' of teaching and language learning. In addition, as Halbach contends, this approach empowers them by establishing the foundation for their own continuing development and helping them to adapt to various teaching contexts that they will surely encounter in their future practice.

2) The Lenguas Vivas Language IV Study Plan

The 2015 Study Plan for Teacher Training ("Plan de estudios 2015 para Profesorado de Inglés y Profesorado en Educación Superior en Inglés") states that English Language IV "aims at the consolidation of the command of the more subtle aspects of the target language-culture, as well as at a deeper insight into the exploration of the interface between language, culture, gender and power".

In this sense, Language IV should provide the students with the opportunity to consolidate their linguistic competence, to improve their proficiency in the English language and to develop their capacity for metalinguistic reflection, while reinforcing their skills in the understanding, analysis and use of figurative speech and more complex discursive features of the target language-culture, such as humour, irony, parody, conceptual metaphors, euphemisms, politically (in)correctness, variations in register and tone, dialectal varieties, ideological components of language, among others.

The objectives following this rationale are "that the future teachers:

- become aware of the variety of the pragmatic-discursive options and ideological-discursive nuances present in their own statements and the texts produced by others

- are able to express their own cultural content in English

- deepen their knowledge of the varieties of English and participate in the discussion on the supremacy of the standard language and its implications

- reflect on the construction of the other through discourse, identifying stereotypes and representations"

The core content of the subject consists of:

1. Discourse and power. The construction of stereotypes and representations. Political correctness. Play on words and puns. Taboo language. Irony, sarcasm and humour.

2. Discourse genres and types. Press articles, short stories, poems and novels from diverse English-speaking cultures. Advertising and humorous texts. Political discourse. Visual and digital texts. Development of academic writing conventions. Abstracts, debates, conferences, papers and lectures.

3. Language as the expression of identity and culture. The construction of the other through discourse. English language in post-colonial times. Appropriation of the English language by expert users. The intercultural speaker. World englishes and the standard language.

As seen above, the language taught in Language IV goes beyond a concept of language as exclusively task and effect-oriented. Language in this light, and specifically discourse, is seen as a way of expressing and constituting identities and social relations,

including relations of power, and language speakers are seen, consequently, not merely as effective task performers but mainly as producers and interpreters of that discourse.

Given this core content and the objectives of the subject, and in order to focus on the selection of teaching materials coherently and in keeping with this perspective, it is important to first discuss and try to define concepts such as culture, the construction of the other, cultural competence, power, hegemony and ideology both in relation to language and discourse, and in relation to the teaching context.

2) a. Culture and language

The definitions of culture are many and diverse; they change their focus depending on the perspective they are drawn from, but most keep the same common root in that they all, in one way or another, are attempts at or ways of defining a social community. In "The cultural component of language teaching", Claire Kramsch narrows down this variety to the following two definitions:

> The first definition comes from the humanities; it focuses on the way a social group represents itself and others through its material productions, be they works of art, literature, social institutions, or artifacts of everyday life, and the mechanisms for their reproduction and preservation through history. The second definition comes from the social sciences: it refers to (…) the attitudes and beliefs, ways of thinking, behaving and remembering shared by members of that community.

Moreover, she bases her theory on language and culture in language teaching on the latter, inasmuch as culture "refers to widely shared ideals, values, formation and uses of categories, assumptions about life, and goal-directed activities that become

unconsciously or subconsciously accepted by people who identify themselves as members of a society" (Brislin 11).

One of the major ways in which culture manifests itself is through language. As Kramsch poses in "Why should language teachers teach culture?", material culture is constantly "mediated, interpreted and recorded — among other things —through language". Language is probably the most influential factor in the dynamic interrelationship between cultures. Language is not only communication, but as importantly, it is an expression of culture. It differs from other artifacts of culture in that it can be used to express itself about itself. Along with values, beliefs and behavioural norms, language is a component of culture. Unlike other components of culture, however, language interacts with it in different ways, because, as Young et al. point out, "language is both a transmitter of culture, and is the main tool for the internalization of the culture by the individual" (qtd. in Autio 31-33). Discourse as a whole, as an entity of form and content, is the carrier and expression of culture.

According to Kramsch in *Language and Culture*, "language is the principal means whereby we conduct our social lives. When it is used in contexts of communication, it is bound up with culture in multiple and complex ways." In this sense, the connection between language and culture is fundamental. Autio contends that from the early attempts of defining the relationship between language and culture the current explanations have progressed toward an understanding of language expressing, symbolising and embodying cultural reality (31-33).

Culture, thus, is "always linguistically mediated membership into a discourse community that is both real and imagined", as Kramsch posits in her article "The

cultural component of language teaching". Language plays a crucial role not only in the construction of culture, but in the emergence of cultural change. She synthesises it eloquently:

> Culture has become a discourse, that is, a social semiotic construction. Native and non-native speakers are likely to see their cultural horizons changed and displaced in the process of trying to understand others. (…) Culture, then, is the meaning that members of a social group give to the discursive practices they share in a given space and time and over the historical life of the group. Learning about a foreign culture without being aware of one's own discursive practices can lead to an ahistorical or anachronistic understanding of others and to an essentialized and, hence, limited understanding of the Self" ("Culture in foreign language teaching" 68-69).

2) b. The construction of the other and cultural competence

Attempting to establish what cultural competence is seems impossible without considering the construction of identity and the other; most literature and my own experience in teaching have led me to believe that learners (and teachers themselves) learn about their culture and about who they are through looking at the other. As Kramsch poses, they cannot understand the other if they don't understand the historical and subjective experiences that have made them who they are. But they cannot understand these experiences if they do not view them through the eyes of the other.

Michail Bakhtin's works provide an interesting view on this social phenomenon. For him, "cultural and personal identity do not precede the encounter with a foreign

other, but rather they get constructed through the obligation to respond to that other, through dialogue that links not only two interlocutors in each other's presence, but readers to distant writers", and present texts to past texts (Kramsch "Culture in foreign language teaching" 61-62).

He distinguishes his view on language from that posed by Saussure, and considers it limited. For him, language is not a neutral medium; "it is populated –overpopulated– with the intentions of others" (Irvine). As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. A word in language is half someone else's. Instead of being set and pre-fixed by a code, the word, with its semantic indetermination, places the subject in a border situation, to the service of others' intentions and meanings, in a situation of mutual approach and nearness, which fosters –and even generates— dialogue and the exchange between subjects.

According to Bakhtin, language is not simply a means to communicate information and it cannot relate directly to an external world. Rather, a social field of interacting ways of seeing always mediates the relationship between each speaker and the world. "Any particular way of seeing illuminates some aspects of an object and obscures others. The idea of language as simply descriptive turns it into a 'dead, thing-like shell'" (Robinson). Any language-use is mediated by social ways of seeing. Furthermore, these social ways of seeing are always contested, in dialogue, and changing.

This seems fundamental in our understanding and realization that the English we teach is a construct that does not exist as a neutral and impersonal language but rather

“it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions; it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own.” (Irvine 294). It poses the question of what “other’s” or “someone else’s” voice we are going to “make our own” in the language classroom. I will address this further in the discussion on the teaching of culture that follows below.

2) c. Teaching culture

It is because of the mediatory role of language discussed above that culture becomes the concern of the language teacher, especially in Language IV in the Teacher Training Programme, which, as the last Language subject in the course of study, is the last instance for the students -imminent teachers- to reflect on, question and probe the nature of the target language/culture they will soon be teaching.

The importance of culture as a part of language education is nowadays widely accepted, as can be illustrated by what Atkinson argues: “there is no more central concept in the field of teaching English than culture” (Atkinson 625). The pedagogical reasoning for including culture in language education has its roots in the acceptance of the inseparability of language and culture. Like Atkinson, Byram emphasizes the significance of culture by posing that “to teach culture without language is fundamentally flawed and to separate language and culture teaching is to imply that a foreign language can be treated in the early learning stages as if it were self-contained and independent of other sociocultural phenomena” (qtd. in Autio 31-33).

Culture cannot merely be regarded as a body of knowledge that can be transmitted to the learners by the teacher or the texts he or she selects, which can be a risk when

one only concentrates on the subject-matter of the text or on specific linguistic or pragmatic features (Fenner and Newbit 144).

Teaching culture in the foreign language class poses yet another challenge to the teacher, especially to the teacher in the role of materials designer: what materials will allow the learner not to *learn culture* but to *become cultural competent*.

As Kramsch argues in *Context and Culture in Language Teaching* "[c]ulture in language learning is not an expendable fifth skill, tacked on, so to speak, to the teaching of speaking, listening, reading and writing". In other words, acquiring intercultural competence is much more complex and time consuming than portrayed by many of the guidelines offering a "quick-fix to intercultural understanding" (Autio 37). Byram contends that the advances made in terms of defining the 'content' of language teaching, the emphasis on speech acts, functions of language and the analysis of needs, for example, have led to a greater awareness of learners as social actors in specific relationships with the language they are learning, relationships which are determined by the sociopolitical and geopolitical circumstances in which they live (Byram and Grundy).

Even though most authors do suggest cultural content areas that appear to be rather comprehensive, they do not address the question: which culture? When the language is English the question that invariably arises is that of what English or "englishes" and what culture to teach. As English expands around the globe it is naturally represented by a great diversity of forms. Traditionally, the texts found in English language textbooks and the materials used in ELT in our educational institutions are representatives of British language/culture, or to a lesser degree, American. However, in recent years there has been a rising approach to question the ownership of English,

and as shown above, part of the objectives and content outlined in Language IV is to display varieties of "englishes" and to spark the discussion on the supremacy of "standard" English and its implications. What is questioned is whether a true native form of English exists and more particularly whether any native form of English ought to be taught as a model for language use, if we acknowledge that "even within the inner circle cultures there are great regional variations which are just as authentic representatives of English as any other". This also brings up the concern that the prioritizing of standard or 'inner circle' models for language learning may lead to a "poverty of language" (Autio 34) that silences and makes these other language/cultures invisible. This is even more complex and challenging, if we consider that English is a language which has not only been adopted as a "lingua franca" or an "international language", but which, through a long process of colonization and imperialistic domination throughout the world, has been imposed and/or appropriated on numerous occasions.

In this sense, the notion of power and hegemony cannot be dismissed or overlooked. In Bakhtin's perspective, a view on language as a closed system is complicit in the creation of a unified language as a vehicle of centralised power. Far from being "neutral" English, as the concept of English as a "lingua franca" has sometimes misled us to believe, the 'standard' language such as standard English (mostly British, in this case) is the speech of a powerful elite that has been naturalized as standard precisely from the position of power it holds. Such a heightening of a particular hegemonic language silences all other language/cultures and "suppresses the heteroglossia of multiple everyday speech-types" (Robinson).

In “Culture in Foreign Language Teaching”, Kramsch also discusses these aspects of culture in language teaching; she is concerned about these questions, specifically: whose is the language/culture we are teaching? In the case of student teachers, the question goes further: how do the future teachers view culture in relation to the language/culture –or languages/cultures-- that they are not only learning but are also being trained to teach in the future? She adds that, in the foreign language classroom, it is necessary to have a discursive perspective of language, because “[…] between the learner and the language, between the teacher and the learners and among the learners, discourse is the process through which we create, relate, organize and realize meaning” (“Context and Culture” 11).

In this regard, it is relevant to bring up Bakhtin’s concept of polyphony as “multiple voices” as he introduces it in *Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*. He reads Dostoevsky’s work as containing many different voices, unmerged into a single perspective, and not subordinated to the voice of the author. Each of these voices has its own perspective, its own validity, and its own narrative weight within the novel, which is the genre that, according to Bakhtin, allows for a variety of conflicting ideological positions to be given a voice and to be “set in play both between and within individual speaking subjects, without being placed and judged by an authoritative authorial voice" (Lodge 86). He counterposes his “dialogism” to a “monologism” or monolithic position of an authorial voice by which “one transcendental perspective or consciousness integrates the entire field, (…) all the signifying practices, ideologies, values and desires that are deemed significant”. In a dialogical or polyphonic text, the author does not place his own narrative voice between the character and the reader, but rather, allows characters

to shock and subvert. It is thus as if the books were written by multiple characters, not a single author's standpoint. Instead of a single objective world, held together by the author's voice,

> [the dialogical novel] is constructed not as the whole of a single consciousness, absorbing other consciousnesses as objects into itself, but as a whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other; this interaction provides no support for the viewer who would objectify an entire event according to some ordinary monologic category (thematically, lyrically or cognitive1y) and this consequently makes the viewer also a participant. (Bakhtin 18)

A dialogical work constantly engages with and is informed by other works and voices, and seeks to alter or inform it. It draws on the history of past use and meanings associated with each word, phrase or genre. Everything is said in response to other statements and in anticipation of future statements. This style is, according to Bakhtin, typical of everyday language use. Its use in novels accurately represents the reality of language use. If we consider the implications that this literary analysis has in the social analysis, it can be derived that the social world is also made up of multiple voices, perspectives, and subjective 'worlds'. "To exist is to engage in dialogue, and dialogue must not come to an end. People are also transformed through dialogue, fusing with parts of the other's discourse. The other's response can change everything in one's own consciousness or perspective" (Robinson). Dialogue can produce a decisive reply which produces actual changes.

In the discussion of what --or whose—language/culture should be taught and learnt, and more specifically of what materials should be selected in the last Language subject in a teacher training programme, this view takes special relevance as a key point for curriculum design, and it both sheds light on and challenges the choices that any approach on this topic entails.

Along these same lines, Kramsch highlights the importance of developing the "ability of language learners to explore, understand and appreciate a foreign language and culture while maintaining their own cultural point of view as a crucial part of successful intercultural understanding" and being able to express their own cultural content in the foreign language ("Context and Culture"). Central to Kramsch's idea of an intercultural approach is the assumption that the perception of our own culture and the culture of the other is never direct but always tainted by the lenses of our own culture.

Developing cultural awareness in foreign language learning is dependent on communication with oral and written texts, (and preferably authentic texts, whose importance will be discussed later in this study). This is where the learner encounters language as culture. Dialogue with authentic spoken or written texts is necessary if we understand language as discussed above. It is, therefore, not sufficient for the learner to encode or decode language. Learners need to become aware of the fact that communication, and intercultural communication in particular, entails misunderstanding and conflict (Fenner and Newby 147).

2) d. The text as a site of contention between identities

Part of what it means to learn someone else's language is to perceive the world through the metaphors, the idioms and the grammatical patterns used by the other, filtered through a subjectivity and a historicity developed in one's mother tongue (Kramsch "Culture in Foreign Language Teaching" 61-62). This negotiation and tension in identifying, classifying and categorizing people and events through the worldviews of both cultures are reflected in language, which makes the task of the language teacher both more complex and more relevant than ever.

Furthermore, Bakhtin goes deeper in posing that dialogism is not simply different perspectives on the same world. It involves the distribution of utterly incompatible elements within different perspectives of equal value. Bakhtin criticises the view that disagreement means at least one of the people must be wrong. Because many standpoints exist, truth requires many incommensurable voices. Hence, it involves a world which is fundamentally irreducible to unity. It denies the possibility of transcendence of difference. There is no single meaning to be found in the world, but a vast multitude of contesting meanings. In her article "Shall we leave it to the experts?", Arundhati Roy argues that "the only thing worth globalizing is dissent". In this sense, it is vital for the teaching of a foreign language to be able to raise awareness in students about this sustained tension around conflicting worldviews and cultures –and the languages used to express them-- that cannot be "translated" and resolved.

In this sense, Bakhtin views humanity as fundamentally indeterminate and unfinalizable. People constantly struggle against external definitions of their thoughts and actions. For him, "dialogism characterises the entire social world. Authentic human

life is an open-ended dialogue. The world thus merges into an open-ended, multi-voiced, dialogical whole, which is overcome through awareness of its dialogical character – in effect, as one big borderland" (Robinson). Thus, dialogic expression is always incomplete, meaning is never closed.

According to Bakhtin, a mature subject (in our case, a mature student/teacher) should selectively assimilate others' perspectives, rejecting authoritative discourse and adopting only those parts of others' perspectives which fit their own values and experiences. It is the standpoint of 'outsideness' which makes something new of the other's perspective by merging it with one's own. Such subjects would have an active, independent and responsible discourse, respecting the alien word in its autonomy, and being aware that the "multiple social identity" (or in other words, multicultural competence) that they will acquire will always be an irreducible plurality of belief-systems and a site of struggle, where they "do not lose their identity by learning a foreign language but where they might be led to change subject positions" (Kramsch "Culture in Foreign Language Teaching" 67).

This opens up several questions that concern teachers and students in our teaching training context: Are we aware that the English we speak –and teach—is also a hybrid construction? What is our stance as speakers of English in our culture? In trying to answer them, what arises is the need to develop consciousness in our students of our own 'third space', which is the language classroom. The concept of "third place" or "third culture" (Kramsch "Context and Culture") has been conceptualized under various names in various disciplines in the social sciences, such as the theorization of 'thirdness' in Bakhtin's dialogism in literary criticism just discussed above, and Homi

Bhabba's 'third space of enunciation' in cultural studies. The metaphor of a third place does not seem to aim at resolving the tension and conflict that arises from the sustained polarity self/other by creating a space that would be neither the culture of origin nor the target culture, but highlights an important aspect of the intercultural approach: the multiplicity of cultural identities to which we belong.

This displays the complexity of the interface language/culture in the case of English, and raising awareness of the elusiveness of a definition of that interface is precisely part of the rationale and the objectives of Language IV. Thus, we are left with the question of how we can provide the best possible grounds for our learners to gain knowledge of the foreign culture and their own (Fenner and Newby 149), as well as the awareness of the ever-present conflict that this interface implies. This approach aims at reinforcing the construction of their own identity, the awareness on themselves as "borderline subjects" and the reflection on their consequent standpoint as future teachers of that foreign language/culture (Autio 39)

Hence, it is important for teachers as material designers to cater for a variety of encounters with the foreign culture(s) and provide possibilities for reflecting individually and in a social context upon these encounters. This also means reflecting upon the multiplicity of meanings which can be made potentially available through various types of texts.

2) e. Power and language

It is impossible to raise awareness of these notions in culture and language without considering power. Bakhtin touches upon it when he contrasts 'dialogism' to

‘monologism’, where the truth is constructed systematically from the dominant perspective, and this dominant perspective, the ‘authorial or monolithic voice’ integrates all the signifying practices, ideologies, values and desires that are deemed significant.

In the study of discourse and power, Norman Fairclough introduces the concept of “‘common sense’ assumptions which are implicit in the conventions according to which people interact linguistically”. He poses that those assumptions, those belief systems that are normalized as ‘common sense’, are ideologies, closely linked to power inasmuch “the exercise of power, in modern society, is increasingly achieved through ideology, and more particularly through the ideological workings of language” (2), which contributes to hegemonic domination through unconscious consent rather than coercion.

Fairclough proposes an approach to the study of language and power, ‘Critical Language Study’, that aims at analysing “social interactions in a way which focuses upon their linguistic elements, and which sets out to show their generally hidden determinants in the system of social relationships, as well as hidden effects they may have upon that system” (5). He posits that the context of English teaching is a key instance to develop a critical consciousness of discourse and the awareness of how language can be used to empower or disempower peoples, and how, at the same time, if that awareness is raised in the students, language can also be used to challenge and contradict the aforementioned ideologies, and empower and assert the students’ own cultural content and identities.

One of the many realizations in which power is exerted through language is gender discourse. It is useful to remember at this point that ‘gender’ is a term which describes the cultural and social construction of femininity or masculinity and, therefore, cannot be separated from the culture that produces it.

For the purpose of this study, two feminist philosophers and their theories are going to be briefly addressed: Rosi Braidotti and Judith Butler. The reason for my choice is that although they propose divergent approaches to gender theory, both philosophers kept an open dialogue for many years about the discussion around the materiality of the body and about establishing relationships between body and language. The theories they introduce are relevant to the discussion of how discourse can shape identities and worldviews.

Butler starts from the deconstruction of the body-matter notion and redefines in terms of performativity the materiality of the body, conceived as an effect of the power of discourse. In *Bodies that Matter*, she establishes a link between the materiality of the body and the performativity of gender. She claims that “there is no reference to a pure body which is not at the same time a further formation of that body” (10). Thus, the author proposes a performative view of materiality in which this results from a process of signification through the repetition of norms, where discourse creates that which it names through reiteration. For her, the sexual difference works as the normative effect of a gender binarism or heterosexual hegemony, what she calls 'heterosexual matrix’.

On the other hand, Braidotti emphasises an exploration of the sexual difference embodied and experienced by women. She argues that the notion of gender challenges the pretense at universality and objectivity of conventional systems of knowledge and

of accepted norms of discourse. She agrees with the concept of discourse as a “network of circulation of texts, meant both as material, institutional events and as symbolic or "invisible" effects. A text is a term in a network that creates meaning, values, and norms and distributes them in a social context” (Braidotti 260). In that sense, she poses that the ‘multilayered’ power of discourse is based on the exclusion-subordination of the feminine, and that the feminine constitutes the unrepresented in a ‘phallogocentric’ discourse.

3) Selection of material as a teaching device: teacher autonomy

This study contends that the process of selection of material for this subject should not be carried out only to comply with the core contents aforementioned, but also to make it a teaching device in itself that can foster in the future teachers autonomy and critical reflection on their own teaching-learning experience, namely in their roles as future decision-makers in the selection of material in their own future practice.

The importance of including this dimension in teacher-training is expressed in the words of María Saleme de Burnichon, who makes use of a chess metaphor and compares a teacher to a pawn. In her publication “Decires”, she proposes that if a pawn does not know that it can neutralize the king, it will not check the king. In this way, teachers who behave like pawns do not command knowledge strategies, even if they can manage to pragmatically solve situations in their concrete action scenario. They will not teach more than what they have been taught and in the way they have learnt it. They will not touch upon the problem roots of their fields. If they were prepared to

question themselves instead of chasing answers, they would be able to challenge the object of knowledge and the knowledge itself, without disregarding the specific task or the teaching role. She wonders how they can be educators if they do not possess autonomy, if their relationship with power is ambiguous, if they know only what has been learnt, if their approach to knowledge consists in reproducing it, or if teaching consists in infantilising knowledge. In this sense, the need of fostering autonomy in students is a fundamental element when we are training and educating future teachers, and directly related to professional development.

Learner autonomy is a complicated concept to define. It does not merely mean that the learner is self-sufficient and independent. Autonomy in foreign language learning is more of an 'attitude' or even a philosophy than a methodology. It is not concerned with one specific method, but allows for any method which the individual leaner finds beneficial to his learning purposes (Fenner and Newby 78).

Holec provides a rather holistic learner autonomy definition: 'the ability to take charge of one's own learning', as in 'to have, and to hold, the responsibility for all the decisions concerning all aspects of this learning' (qtd. in Fenner 78). This definition of autonomous learning describes a fairly complex process, and one which does not come naturally to the learner. It has to be learnt. Holec regards autonomous learning as a double process: "on the one hand, it entails learning the foreign language; on the other, learning how to learn" (Fenner 80). And in the context of teacher training, the focus should shift towards learning how to teach; reaching a consensus on how to define autonomy becomes even more complex, especially due to the fact that fostering autonomy in this studentship involves the "notion of teacher autonomy growing out of

and incorporating learner autonomy in the transition from learner to teacher", a transition which should be an on-going process. In this sense, teacher autonomy should be developed in a process that incorporates learner autonomy while student teachers are learning to teach, and towards a hands-on understanding that: "the teacher's purpose is not to teach materials at all: the purpose is to teach the learners and the materials are there to serve that purpose" (qtd. in Augusto-Navarro).

B) Field work: text samples

As mentioned in the introduction, this study will now focus on several samples of teaching material, namely text, which were selected for Language IV in my teaching practice, and on discussing (1) how they follow the outline I have proposed in the theoretical literature researched, and (2) whether they served the purposes set when designing the course.

The first variable considered for selection was the lack of availability or suitability of commercial textbooks which would cater for the objectives and contents set by the plan for this subject. Beyond that, the starting point in planning the syllabus was to opt for a text-based syllabus, as defined by Richards, "one that is built around texts and samples of extended discourse". This approach "starts with the texts which are identified for a specific context" and is often used "when an overall context for language learning has been defined, such as in a specific workplace or a university or other further study context" (163). One of its main advantages is that each unit of work

can be designed in relation to the texts, which can be grouped together around related topics and concepts, and which allows, in this way, for a thematic backbone for the course to be developed.

The selection of these texts followed to a certain extent the five-part cycle that Richards (165) proposes in teaching from a text-based syllabus, and this involved, in turn, further selection of texts:

1. building the context for the text (theoretical background provided)
2. deconstructing the text (reading guides and tasks)
3. joint construction of the text (group discussion of the text and guides)
4. independent construction of the text (individual reflection on the text and guides)
5. linking related texts (extension texts that add to the understanding, interpreting and decoding of the text in question, or non-related texts that provide new perspectives or stances on the same concept to be dealt with)

1) Criteria for selection

The learners must be provided with sufficient scope for personal interpretation. This, in turn, entails that the teacher does not stand between the learner and the text by interpreting it, or worse, digesting it on behalf of the learner. On the other hand, we have to be aware that the students have to learn how to make qualified choices, a process which needs to be assisted by the teacher, precisely by displaying the selection and sharing the rationale behind that selection, by providing guides and tasks that will help students arrive at the purposes set, and by monitoring the students' analysis and

reflection on the material (Fenner and Newby 81). Consequently, if the learners are to have the opportunity to choose their own approach to a text without the teacher standing between learner and text in an attempt to interpret and simplify, it is important that the text has both quality and potential. There must be certain qualities inherent in the text that different learners can use to further their learning (81-82).

Based on what my teacher practice has led me to learn, and on the theories explored in this study, my contention is that the material used should meet, fully or at least partially, the following criteria:

a) Texts should be authentic

The issues relevant to authenticity have been widely discussed in the ELT literature. However, as authenticity is such a broad term and so difficult to define, the exact meaning of authenticity is still unsettled and remains an open question. For the purpose of material selection, most authors seem to agree on a definition of the term 'authentic text' around the idea that it is “taken from the target situation, and therefore, not originally constructed for language teaching purposes”, “originally produced for a purpose other than the teaching of language”, and “unsimplifled or genuine texts that were used in ELT materials but were originally written for purposes other than language teaching” (qtd. in Hsu). Accordingly, 'authenticity' is closely linked with the target situation or purposes. In summary, most definitions regard authentic texts as genuine texts which are not directly produced for language learning purposes but were written for a non-pedagogical purpose.

In addition, most studies and approaches on the use of authentic material propose an authenticity regarded as a means of incorporating culture into language education.

Mishan argues that authentic texts are the “treasure chests” of cultural exploration as they in a way “contain” the culture. In addition, the potentials of authentic texts for cultural exploration lie in that they are direct products of and for a target culture, consequently, they function as “mirrors” of that particular reality. However, as Mishan remarks, the cultural elements in authentic texts are not always explicit: “Rather like a page written in invisible ink, the cultural message is there to be read, but only if one has learned how to make the invisible writing appear” (qtd. in Autio 41). In other words, the importance of designing tasks that allow students to discover the cultural codes of authentic texts needs be recognized. To maintain the authenticity of the text, the tasks proposed as guidelines to explore the text should be designed to follow the communicative purpose of the text (51).

If we adhere to the definitions outlined above, and authentic texts “mirror” or voice a particular target culture, then the question that appears to open up is which target culture, which voice we are going to expose the students to. Moreover, the question is twofold: what cultures we are going to provide the students with and within these cultures, whose voices we are going to select as authentic representations of that culture.

In this sense, it is important to keep the notion of authenticity resting on the Bakhtinian dialogical assumptions explored above. Neither the image of a group, imposed by others, nor one produced from within, is capable of representing the complex reality of group identity or culture. The criterion of authenticity should contemplate, therefore, the way different voices, inner and outer, interact in defining the cultural content of that group.

b) Texts should be polyphonic, dialogical and intertextual

Texts should be regarded as a place of contention between multiple, clashing voices, and they should provide the opportunity to raise awareness about multiculturalism and provoke reflection on how words carry multiple world views.

They must contain the language that fully

> holds Otherness, ambivalence, ambiguity, doubleness and irony. They should be texts that display voices that, while interrelated, maintain the autonomy and power of resistance in relation to each other, and where there is no monopoly or hegemony of one over other: texts that formalize an ideal linguistic stage in which dissent and inconclusiveness are the only possible reality (Fanini).

Following Bakhtin's reasoning in which he sees language as an ongoing, unending chain of meaning which is constantly renewed and reborn through each link in the chain, texts should also be intertextual, referring back to others' statements and views.

c) Texts should contain metalanguage and provide instances of metacognition

It is important that materials allow the students to reflect on how language works in different ways, for different purposes and for different audiences. Texts need to be able to become a dialogue between the reader, the writer and the text, with language that displays different pragmatic-discursive nuances that will allow students to appreciate how texts are either consciously or unconsciously formed and shaped by different means for a variety of purposes and effects.

d) Texts should display the relationship between language and power

They should spark the discussion on power and language, on how language carries ideological-discursive options and naturalized hegemonic nuances. They need to allow for the reflection on the supremacy of the standard language and its implications, including gender and its representation in language, as a way of exerting power through discourse.

In this regard, and borrowing the concept of "the single story" that Chimamanda Adichie introduces in her Ted Talk "The danger of a single story", the selection of texts should be broad and varied enough in perspectives and voices to show more than "one single story" and thus be able to raise awareness and engage in the reflection of how power and hegemonic forces are present in discourse.

2) Literary texts:

If some of the objectives of the subject are that the future teachers become aware of the variety of the pragmatic-discursive options and ideological-discursive nuances present in the texts produced by others, and reflect on the construction of the other through discourse, then the role of literature is unquestionably fundamental in the curriculum design.

When reading is regarded as a communicative dialogue with the text, new opportunities open up in the encounter between two cultures, as reflected in the literary

text. As Fenner points out,

> reading an authentic literary text in the foreign language can be seen as a personal encounter with the foreign culture. If the process of reading and interpreting a text is seen as an attempt to produce meaning from the multiplicity and polyphony of that particular text, the learner enters into a dialogue with the text and the foreign culture (…) becom(ing) a participant in a creative process of establishing knowledge of a culture as well as developing culture as a dynamic force (Fenner and Newby 146-147).

One of the literary texts that embody many of the features and the concerns set in this study is *The God of Small Things*, by Arundhati Roy.

In the particular context of Language IV in Teacher Training College in Argentina, English being the target language and a second language to most of our faculty staff and our studentship, the treatment of English in the novel as an imposed hegemonic second language poses an interesting dialogue with our own identity construction, the relationship that we have with the English language and culture, and the place English occupies in our worldview as teachers of English. Despite the differences between the situation depicted in the novel and the one that concerns this study, we can draw some parallelisms in the way we regard English, primarily in the fact that, although English was not imposed on us as the language of a colonizer, it does connote an undeniable cultural hegemony in our society.

In *The God of Small Things*, postcolonial Indian writer Arundhati Roy plays with the English language, by moving away from the linguistic rules that govern the English language in order to express "an Other's" local, social and cultural meanings. Roy

makes use of the English language in her own style, she "makes a sport with language" (Chaudhury), repeatedly breaking the standard rules of spelling, grammar, syntax, and punctuation. She "reworks capitalizations, coins neologisms, employs phonetics, imports typographical devices, inserts lists, catalogues, and numerations, scatters the novel with anagrams, puns, and creates new words in the process" (Dharwadker), thereby appropriating the language to reflect an alternate, different cultural content, engaging with the language of the colonizer until it becomes a hybridized and indigenized form of English. In this process, she creates a postcolonial English that questions and subverts the language of the colonizer. Through her use of these techniques, which include unconventionally placed capitals, extensive use of sentence fragments, and playful reflections on the sound or construction of words, the reader is shown what it is like to have English imposed. Like Caliban in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, which she refers to intertextually, she appropriates the imposed language and uses it in her own distinct way, to "write back", to defy it and rebel against it, in a way, to "curse" "for learning [her] [their] language". The novel mimics the cognitive processes by which language is acquired and understood, which is reinforced by narrating the story from the point of view of children, the twins Rahel and Estha. The twins, like most children, play with language; they enjoy making up words and breaking rules of grammar. But at the same time, they resist the acquisition of 'proper' English, giving voice to the resistance against the imposition of English as the embodiment of colonialism and a means of colonizing.

In this way, *The God of Small Things* is metalinguistic and metacognitive on different levels: it speaks about language as a means of oppression while manipulating

the language while making the characters talk about manipulating the language. In creating this new language, Roy questions, subverts and recasts the dominant language of today, but she also subtly confirms that this transformed, resignified, appropriated English eventually turns out to be the best way to reflect a hybrid conscience through which she can express her cultural content and assert and vindicate her own identity. (Reyes).

Roy's intention of pushing the constraints of meanings and discourses is displayed in the linguistic struggle she conveys, which she relates with the struggles taking place in the real political world (Sharma). The way she portrays how language has power to construct meaning and identity through her interest in naming, classifying and categorizing, shaped in Pappachi's obsession with the naming of the moth, for example, or in the pickle labeling episode, underlines the fact that cultural differences cannot, and should not, always be easily translated or explained. This struggle or tension echoes the Bakhtininan idea, discussed in the theoretical framework, of unfinishable polyphony: that different voices coexist in a state of constant play or productive tension, giving the word the qualities of a living organism. "The word, directed towards its object, enters a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value-judgments and accents, weaves in and out of complex interrelationships, merges with some, recoils from others, intersects with yet a third group" (Bakhtin 276). As Alex Tickell explains, "the mobility, restlessness, and liveliness of this word strongly resembles the creative way Rahel and Estha use language in the novel. There is no impulse to rigidly classify, fix and solidify meaning" in their, and Roy's, discourse.

The novel also raises interesting questions about the role of English language and literature teaching. The treatment given in the novel to the teaching and learning of English language reflects the view that "language is often used as an instrument of power- it can hurt, exclude and even deprive a person of their rights- the right to speak, the right to be heard and the right to be one's self and to have that self-acknowledged by one's surroundings" (Vogt-William 394). In this regard, we can see many instances in the novel in which the learning of 'proper/standard' English is used as a means to reinforce or indicate relationships of power. This is considerably exemplified in the family's, especially Chacko's, Anglophilia, and in Baby Kochamma's rigid impositions for the twins to "always speak English". In addition, "canonical English literature is often reduced to a status symbol in the novel, and its recitation is frequently a show put on by children to impress adults" (Tickell 52), which in turn, highlights the force of power relations, as it is family elders, members of the upper castes, police, and men, that are represented as having power of speech, to the extent that their words can decide the fate of the powerless characters of the novel: children (Rahel and Estha), women (Ammu) and lower caste men (Velutha).

The issue of gender as another source of exerting power is also raised in *The God of Small Things*, namely as an instance of "double colonization" or "double oppression" of women. In this manner, whereas colonized men had to be subservient to their colonial masters, colonized women had to be subservient to both their colonial masters and to the patriarchal nature of their own societies. Tickell points out that "Roy's narrative is unrelenting in its need to bear witness to the routine cruelties of patriarchy (male

authority), and women characters are consistently bullied, harassed and made to defer to the needs of male relatives and family members" (35).

Judith Butler's theory of gender as a performance is extremely relevant to the characters in *The God of Small Things* who are forced to conform to society and learn to perform according to a heteronormative matrix. It helps to reveal Ammu and Rahel's subversion against this performativity. In desiring untouchable Velutha, Ammu "breaks the boundaries of sexuality" and goes against the accepted performative desire of heterosexual respectability. Rahel, "as the next generation of subversion", takes her body as the site whereby she can put an end to her naturalized performed self. "Rahel's incest with her twin Estha grants her an 'altered bodily ego' that can replace her unapproved one, thus resisting by acknowledging and claiming of control over her body" (Khalili).

All the issues displayed in the novel that are mentioned above make *The God of Small Things* a very good example of a literary text that can be a rich source of reflection in the Language IV course. This work, as many others that have not been explored in this study for time and space constraints, can enable teachers, and consequently students, to raise key questions in the shaping of our identity as English teachers:

- What is our position towards English? How do we relate to it?
- Do we aim at our students (and ourselves) sounding 'native'? Native speakers of what or 'whose' language?

- What are the implications of teaching “proper” English? Are we or do we want our students to be Anglophiles? Do we sometimes behave like “Baby Kochammas” in our teaching practice?
- Can there be a “neutral” English? One that is dissociated from culture, from power? Are we careful enough not to instill that dangerous illusion of one to our students?
- What culture/power does “our English” carry?

3) Articles

“Dying Metaphors Take Flight”, by Cathleen Schine, is an example of an article that is authentic, polysemic, that not only includes figurative language but is a discussion itself on the ambiguity and nuances of words, and that provides an opportunity for reflection on how language works and for developing metalinguistic awareness. (Appendix A)

It was presented to the students within a unit which explored conceptual metaphors, metaphor systematization, ambiguity, polysemy, puns, irony and humour, and whose theoretical background was set by *Metaphors We Live By*, de George Lakoff y Mark Johson.

The reading guide (Appendix B) was designed to spark the discussion and critical analysis of the text in order to enable students to process and reflect on the stance the author poses and to explore their own take on figurative speech. In addition, the text is rich in sophisticated lexical items and idiomatic expressions and provides a wide variety of grammatical structures and cohesive devices.

It was recycled later in the course, used to compare and contrast perspectives on ambiguous and figurative speech in "Robert Fulford's column about euphemisms" (Appendix C), with the aim of fostering reflection in the students and helping them come up with a conclusion, or at least an approximation, as regards their own stance on the use of figurative speech and more complex discursive features of the target language-culture, such as euphemisms, metaphor, irony, puns and political correctness.

"Relatos Salvajes Won't Win The Oscar. Here's Why.", by Emily Jensen (Appendix D), is another example of an article that is authentic, taps on stereotypes and cultural identity, compels the reader to recognize how language (stories, tales) can be used to perpetuate hegemonic representations, is intertextual and uses irony and humour as the pivot around which the whole article is framed.

In the reading guide (Appendix E) the focus is clearly on how the writer has used language to denounce stereotyped "powers that be" through irony and sarcasm that borders the absurd.

The intertextual reference to Chimamanda Adichie's Ted Talk "The Danger of a Single Story" allowed for the reinforcement and consolidation of the topics addressed, as the talk, despite not being technically text but audiovisual material, was part of the teaching selection.

4) Students' Article Portfolios

With the aim of providing instances outside the classroom to develop reading comprehension skills, to acquire vocabulary, and especially to foster autonomy and systematization in the selection of authentic text material for their future teaching practice, the students had to submit an Article Portfolio, following the guidelines provided by the teacher.

The advantages of including this materials development component into the curriculum lie at the intersection of content and pedagogy, in the capacity of a teacher to turn the content knowledge he or she possesses into forms that are "pedagogically powerful and yet adaptive to the variations" in skills and background presented by students (Richards 261) .

Another goal of this component is to understand what kinds of reflection the design of teaching materials generates in the future teacher education process, with a focus not on methodology but on language, and more specifically, on the selection of text materials. Students' insights, comprehension, confidence, and autonomy will vary, depending on their educational phase and experiences, but all of them may benefit from having an instance of active role in the planning, designing and redesigning of their own practice, which can bring a significant contribution, not only because of the resource itself, if they should ever find themselves having to face the challenge in a similar future teaching context, but also as a means for reflection on their own learning experience and for taking responsibility for their own training process (Augusto-Navarro).

Thus, this assignment can provide the student-teachers with an opportunity to have a hands-on experience to develop and reflect on the following skills:

- preparation: critical interpretation and analysis of texts, structuring and segmentation, and clarification of purposes
- selection: research and choice from among a wide repertoire, taking into account how different texts are shaped through their language and style, how this contributes to meaning and effect
- adapting and tailoring to student characteristics: consideration of conceptions, preconceptions, misconceptions, and difficulties; language, culture, and motivations
- reflection: greater understanding of the characteristics of effective materials

(Richards 261-2)

The assignment consisted in selecting articles aimed at a target studentship (the task included language level and age) and providing a reading guide for each article, including questions for discussion and focus on linguistic (grammar structures, vocabulary) and rhetorical aspects (organization, cohesion, parallelism, tenses, nominalization, modality and other devices), especially on the writing choices of the author that contribute to the framing and building of the message being put across in the article.

The criteria for selection proposed in the guideline for this assignment included:

- The article deals with the topics discussed in class (controlling metaphors, language and power, language and cultures, PC, identity and the construction of the other, stereotypes, diversity, etc.) or any other topic related to language and discourse, either explicitly or displayed through the style in which it is written.

- The article includes rhetorical devices such as: irony, parody, euphemisms, metaphors, sarcasm, hedging, etc.

In addition to this, the students were required to include a brief comment on the reasons for their choices and on why they deemed each article relevant and appropriate for the task and target.

- Example 1 (student A) - Appendix F: "Donald Trump tries to kill political correctness – and ends up saving it" :

According to the criteria proposed in the guideline for the assignment, the article is a good choice in terms of topic, as it explicitly discusses political correctness, stereotypes and taboo language. It also touches upon power and discourse/culture, although the author's stance is posed rather blatantly with few or little nuances in the language used, leaving no room for ambiguity, despite some ironic statements.

In terms of the criteria discussed in this study, the text is authentic, as in not written with pedagogical purposes, and contains, to some extent, instances for metacognition. However, this could have been further exploited through the questions for discussion (Appendix G). In the same way, the student could have framed questions to raise more awareness on how power can indeed be exerted through language, a concept which the author seems to contradict, and on how the voices of "others" are displayed in the text.

- Example 2 (student B) - Appendix H: “How Intelligence Leads to Stereotyping”:

As regards the topics dealt with in class, the choice of article complies with the requirements of the assignment as it discusses stereotypes. Except for a few paragraphs including the introduction, however, there is no use of rhetorical devices, and most of the body of the text displays scientific and informative language, not really allowing for either the discussion of how the shaping of language and style creates effects or conveys ideology or the exploration of metalanguage.

Although the text is authentic and the title and the first paragraph hint at a deeper exploration of the topic, displaying intertextual references and irony, neither the article nor the questions proposed (Appendix I) actually deliver, and they do not bring up opportunities for discussion of power and discourse, for metacognition or for raising awareness of how language works.

Conclusion

The goal of the analysis presented in this paper is to explore and describe the importance of materials selection and syllabus design in the teaching of Language IV within the Teacher Training context. As discussed in the study, it is necessary for teachers educators to provide students –future teachers– with a selection of texts that will, on the one hand, help them consolidate their linguistic skills, improve their understanding and use of figurative speech and more complex discursive features of English, and foster their metalinguistic reflection, while, on the other hand, grant them

opportunities to develop an active and autonomous role in their hopefully on-going process of decision-making in their future practice. Furthermore, it is to be expected that this materials selection can help students gain awareness of what is at play in the learning and teaching of English, engage in a critical reflection on the role of the target language/culture in the construction of a multicultural identity, and develop a personal view on teaching English. The criteria for text selection proposed in this study have proved to work in fostering such a perspective in the students.

APPENDIX A

ON LANGUAGE; Dying Metaphors Take Flight

By Cathleen Schine;
Published: August 8, 1993 – The New York Times

I HAVE BEEN THINKING about metaphors lately, and I think you should think about them, too. I have been thinking that the dying metaphor deserves to live.

In his classic 1946 essay, "Politics and the English Language," George Orwell made a simple division: There is what poets do, the metaphor newly invented that "assists thought by evoking a visual image," and there is the dead metaphor, which no longer evokes any visual image at all. The dead metaphor has been around so long that it has reverted; it is now just an ordinary word.

"Brand-new" is one example. When I've thought about it, which is not very often, I've assumed it was an expression that had something to do with Madison Avenue thinking up new names for old products, or new products for old markets. But the dictionary says it probably derived from a "brand" that was a piece of wood burning on a stove and so meant, originally, fresh from the fire. And there's "deadline." A deadline is something I have never looked forward to. I just never realized why. It means a line around a prison beyond which a prisoner will be shot.

Even dead metaphors are poetry to poets. Randall Jarrell was a master at breathing life into these poor creatures, and what life! Here, with the word "overtone," is one of thousands of examples from his novel "Pictures From an Institution": "Gertrude thought children and dogs overrated, and used to say that you loved them so much only when you didn't love people as much as you should. As much as you should had a haunting overtone of as much as I do -- an overtone, alas! too high for human ears. But bats heard it and knew, alone among living beings, that Gertrude loved."

But what about Orwell's third category, the dying metaphor, gasping uncertainly, neither ordinary word nor vivid image? Dying metaphors disgusted Orwell. Euphemism, vagueness or any kind of lazy, unthinking use of ready-made phrases covers up meaning, often brutal political truths. And dying metaphors are nothing if not euphemistic, vague, lazy, unthinking and ready-made.

Still, dying metaphors will always be with us, for metaphors must make their way from newborn to corpse somehow. They cloak not only the politicians' brutal designs; they cloak ordinary thoughts and intentions as well. But what do they cloak them with? Odd, intriguing figurative speech. Look beneath the metaphor to the true meaning of a statement. Clarity is intellectual morality. But then, for the sheer joy of it, look at the cloak itself, at the dying metaphors. They, too, are poetry, and we are poets because of them.

I am often accused of "flying off the handle." What does that mean? It used to mean, to me, that some member of my family was insensitive, unsympathetic, uncooperative and unsupportive. Now, I see myself flying through the air, flung from the handle of an ax like a loose blade, sparkling steel cutting through the blue of the bright sky, soaring, noble and alone, toward the heavens! My life has been considerably enriched.

Some years ago, I experienced a metaphor epiphany while watching "Chariots of Fire." On the screen, one of the skinny young men in flapping white shorts drew a line in the dirt with his foot, then carefully stood, placing the toe of his primitive running shoe against that line. The music began pumping, the scrawny Brits in their underclothes ran like gods, emotions soared, mine among them -- "Toe the line!"

I forget who won the race. But I'll never forget that moment -- an awakening, a usage revelation. Unblock that metaphor! My mother, left with the dog when my brother and I went off to college, called me one evening, miserable, and said, "The dog is . . . dogging my steps." Pause. "He's hounding me, too!" she cried out in excitement of her linguistic discovery. And so, understanding, she forgave.

"Toe the line" was one of Orwell's examples of a dying metaphor. It has so thoroughly lost its pictorial power, he wrote incredulously, that it is often written "tow the line." Until my "Chariots of Fire" epiphany, I, knowing full well how to spell it, had nevertheless pictured its meaning as "tow the line." But it was a picture: a downtrodden, oppressed sort of fellow in a blue peasant blouse, a rope over his bent shoulder, hauling a barge heavy with its cargo of conventions, rules, expectations.

Now here's a question. In a recent newspaper article on women in film, a high-level female producer was quoted in this way: "You do have a responsibility to make movies that are commercial, and you do try to tow the studio line." Was she misquoted? Did she in fact say "toe the studio line"? Very likely. But perhaps, on the other hand (a lovely dead metaphor: "on the other hand"), perhaps she's never seen "Chariots of

Fire" or read "Politics and the English Language." In which case, she might have imagined, as she spoke, a downtrodden, oppressed sort of female producer in high heels, a rope over her bent shoulder, hauling a huge barge heavy with studio conventions, rules, expectations.

I don't know the answer to my question, but I think that for many reasons, including all those downtrodden folk unnecessarily hauling all those barges when they could simply be standing with their toes neatly aligned, we should revive the dying metaphor.

I used to think a potboiler was a book that bubbled with trashy sex and intrigue. A beach book. Now I know the reference is not to the book itself but to the author's boiling pot, brimming with meat and potatoes earned through his hack labors, writing, you know -- a beach book.

One can become overenthusiastic, it is true. I interpreted "Curses! Foiled again," to mean "Curses! My opponent's narrow, flexible sword has touched me again!" Then I looked up "foiled" in the dictionary. It means . . . foiled. But so what?

The dying metaphor gives to the world a fresh and vivid sense of absurdity. We are sticks in the mud stabbing in the dark. Think what a stick in the mud really is. Feh! And think, now, what you yourself are. A living body of language: nosy, handy, tongue in cheek. You can have a belly full and go belly up, stomach one thing, palm off another. Headstrong, hotheaded. And best of all: cheek by jowl. Picture a cheek by a jowl. Very close indeed. We're homesick one day, suffering from cabin fever the next. We're windbags or razor-tongued. There is a preposterous, literal-minded grandeur to the deconstructed dying metaphor, a quality otherwise found only in Greek myths and Saul Steinberg drawings.

Cathleen Schine, a novelist, is author most recently of "Rameau's Niece," a satire of New York intellectual life. William Safire is on vacation.

APPENDIX B

On Language: Dying Metaphors Take Flight

Cathleen Schine

Reading guide

- How does the author include the reader in the first paragraph? Comment on the repetition of “think”
- Discuss the following statements from the text, focusing on the controlling metaphor and its lexical realizations:
    - “… the dying metaphor deserves to live.”
    - “… was a master at breathing life into these poor creatures, and what life!”
    - “... the dying metaphor, gasping uncertainly, neither ordinary word nor vivid image”
    - “… metaphors must make their way from newborn to corpse…”
    - “The dying metaphor gives to the world a fresh and vivid sense of absurdity.”
- What is a dying metaphor?
- What does the author pose as regards metaphors and poetry? What is her take on dying metaphors?
- Discuss the examples she provides as evidence for her arguments:
    - Fly off the handle
    - Toe the line
    - Potboiler
    - Foiled
- How does she “unblock the metaphor” and play on the polysemy of source domains?
- How can “deconstructing dying metaphors” enrich somebody’s life, according to the author?

APPENDIX C

Robert Fulford's column about euphemisms

(*The National Post*, July 24, 2001)

More than a generation after the sexual revolution, the mere word "sex" still flusters us so much that in public we handle it with tongs of delicacy. This sentence, lifted from the Internet, demonstrates the discomfiture of its author: "Friday, July 6: Rep. Gary Condit has admitted to Washington, D.C., police that he had a romantic relationship with missing intern Chandra Levy, a police source told Fox News."

Romantic? In some contexts, "romantic" might have meant they read Keats and Shelley to each other or played soft music during dinner while candles flickered. But that's not what the writer was trying to convey. "Romantic" has become one of the words we use in place of "sexual" because we remain nervous about a subject that everybody decided, 30-some years ago, not to be nervous about any more.

By our euphemisms you shall know us. Using them, we pay tribute to the dangers of speech and writing. A euphemism is the verbal tool you reach for when you want to express something but don't quite want to say it.

A euphemism (the word comes from the Greek for "good speech") functions as a calming device, making unruly feelings manageable, though it can also be employed with malice aforethought. Euphemisms that hide or obscure ("outplacing" used by the human resources department instead of "firing," for instance) constitute vicious language abuse. But normally, those who cherish language enjoy coming upon a euphemism, because they know that it's a snapshot of words and ideas in motion.

In recent times, "seeing" has become a synonym for what was once called a love affair: Twice in the last year I've heard, "they are seriously seeing each other." It's evasive and weirdly imprecise, which is what language should never be -- yet it makes the point. In some circles, it's replaced "sleeping with," which was used on several million occasions when no sleep took place or was contemplated.

Have events in Washington since the Clinton-Lewinsky period placed "intern" in this category? *Newsweek* recently mentioned polls demonstrating that "an overwhelming number" of American parents don't want their daughters to be Washington interns. The parents may fear the moral swamp of Washington, but probably they fear the word just as much.

The other night, a commentator on CNN said recent events have given "intern" a prurient meaning. It may soon be one of those words that mere punctuation can render libellous, like protege. If you say Professor Jones has adopted a certain student as his

protege, you do no harm. But put quotation marks around "protege" and the leer is unmistakable.

In the days when *Time* tried to generate fresh language, it produced one of the most famous euphemisms. Because William Randolph Hearst, the newspaper publisher, was unable to persuade his wife to divorce, he simply lived ("in sin," as they once said) for the rest of his life with his great love, actress Marion Davies. Year after year, *Time* described her as Hearst's "great & good friend," a term that became part of the American language. (Davies turned out to be a pretty great friend; when Hearst's empire collapsed in the '30s she pawned her jewellery and lent him back much of the money he had given her.)

"Intimacy" has been used so often in this sexual context that it has almost moved beyond euphemism and turned into simple description. In court you can hear the question "Were you intimate with him?" This query has nothing to do with whether two people exchanged, say, emotional memories of childhood.

In 1995, a Methodist singles group in the United States held a retreat on the theme "Intimacy Is Not a Euphemism for Sex." Wrong: The *Oxford English Dictionary* describes "intimacy" as "euphem. for sexual intercourse," and claims it goes back to 1676.

Euphemism, in the wrong setting, may brand anyone using it as comically genteel. Honey, the young woman guest at the nightmare dinner party in *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, says she would like to powder her nose. George, the host, turns to his wife and says, "Martha, won't you show her where we keep the euphemism?"

Laurence Sterne accidentally created one of the great euphemisms of his day, but it quickly went into reverse and became a vulgarism. In Sterne's novel *The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman*, Tristram tells us how he figured out the precise date he was conceived. He says his father was a man of regular habits in all spheres of life, and he made it a rule always to wind the great house-clock on the first Sunday night of every month. Gradually, he "brought some other little family concernments to the same period, in order, as he would often say to my uncle Toby, to get them all out of the way at one time, and be no more plagued and pestered with them the rest of the month." Tristram tells us that "my poor mother," upon hearing the winding of the clock, knew that something else was about to happen. In this way Tristram dates "my geniture" to Nov. 5, 1718.

Tristram Shandy was the great literary best-seller of 1760 in England, and this passage created a euphemism that was apparently used by both the gentry and the masses. Soon, streetwalkers took to asking potential clients, "Sir, will you have your clock wound up?" Before the year was out, an aggrieved craftsman published anonymously a pamphlet called *The Clockmaker's Outcry Against the Author*, claiming Sterne had ruined his business. He reported that women who had commissioned him to make clocks for them had cancelled their orders "because no modest lady now dares to

mention a word about winding up a clock, without exposing herself to the sly leers and jokes of the family." The clockmaker claimed that virtuous matrons were even hiding their clocks in storage rooms, to keep the sight of them from exciting family and guests "to acts of carnality."

This was a euphemism that raged out of control, like a rogue elephant. Robert Burchfield, who edited the *Oxford English Dictionary*, claimed that "a language without euphemisms would be a defective instrument of communication." True, but euphemisms, like metaphors, require careful management.

APPENDIX D

‘Relatos Salvajes’ Won’t Win The Oscar. Here’s Why.

by Emily Jensen - Feb 2, 2015 The Bubble

I would really love it if on February 22 this headline were proven wrong. That’s partly because living in Argentina means I’m emotionally obliged **to root for** *Relatos Salvajes* (Wild Tales) as it competes for the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, just as I rooted for the *Albicelestes* in July during the World Cup. Loyalty aside, *Relatos Salvajes* was one of my favorite movies of 2014, but it’s not going to pick up any awards. Not in the US anyway.

And no, I haven’t even seen the other nominees in the category. But I don’t need to see those films to make the case that one of them will win (probably *Ida*, since it’s gotten the most **buzz**, or *Leviathan* as it won the Golden Globe).

Relatos Salvajes won’t win because it doesn’t **fulfill** popular US **stereotypes** of Latin America. Despite perfectly capturing the feelings of frustration and ineptness that can come with living in Argentina, *Relatos Salvajes* doesn’t reinforce the stories the U.S. is accustomed to hearing about its southern neighbors. There are no mentions of corrupt regimes, no coups d’état, no dictators. No illicit drug trade. And though the film depicts the intersection of race and class in South America, the majority of the characters are white Hispanics, an identity much of the U.S. is not prepared to deal with or even acknowledge exists. This is not Latin America as we’ve come to know it. This movie doesn’t even have tango! How is Hollywood supposed to know where this film even takes place?

Argentine films have twice won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film. *La historia oficial* (The Official Story) won the prize in 1986 for its portrayal of a family adopting a child shortly after the end of the 1976 to 1983 military dictatorship. *El Secreto de sus Ojos* (The Secret in Their Eyes) won in 2010 for telling a story bookended around that same conflict. Contrast to that *Nueve reinas*, a drama about two con men that while considered a classic of Argentine cinema, has received very little recognition outside of Latin America. The most recent Latin American film, prior to *Relatos Salvajes*, to have been nominated for Best Foreign Language film was Chile’s *No* in 2013. The film depicts a 1988 ad campaign for a public vote to remove dictator Augusto Pinochet from power. It is Chile’s first and only nomination in the category. Also recently nominated for the award was Peru’s *La teta asustada*, which centers on the after-effects of Peru’s period of extremist violence in the 1980s. It lost the prize to *El secreto de sus ojos*. The film is also Peru’s only nomination.

The singularity of the Academy’s recognition of the Latin American experience extends beyond the Best Foreign Language Film category. Catalina Sandino Moreno earned an Oscar

nomination for Best Actress for her turn in *María, llena eres de gracia*, a rare **feat** for non-English language roles. Her character is a young, impoverished Colombian woman who agrees to act as a drug mule by swallowing capsules of cocaine to bring them to New York. Both Sandino's performance and the movie itself **earned widespread acclaim** in the US. Benicio del Toro is the only Latin American actor to have won an Oscar for a Spanish-speaking role; he was awarded Best Supporting Actor for *Traffic*, in which he plays a Mexican cop hunting members of a drug cartel.

This is not a criticism of those above films, which are wonderful and deeply moving. But what they share in common is that they all fulfill common perceptions of Latin America as a place of violence, drugs, poverty, dictatorships and instability (although the role of the US in many of those dictatorships is best **left off the table**). Of course those very issues affect many parts of Latin America, and those stories should be told. But they are not the only ones.

In her TED talk, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about "the danger of the single story". The Nigerian author discusses the singular image Western culture has of Africa, which erases the diversity that exists in the continent. Like Africa, Latin America often exists in the popular US imagination as a monolithic region, one of wild landscapes and **subjugated** peoples, when in fact it is home to a multitude of nations, cultures, races, ethnicities, classes and languages.

Just as Adichie's fiction on middle-class Nigerians like herself was rejected for not being "authentically" African enough, *Relatos Salvajes*' characters are too middle-class, too free from repression to be "authentically" Latin for US audiences. The single story, Adichie says, "robs people of their dignity." The stories of dictatorships and poverty are just as important as the stories of the educated or middle-class. Adichie also admits to her own **preconceptions** of Mexico as a place of violence and instability before she visited Guadalajara and found a normal, functioning city. And as far as the US is concerned, Latin America is one giant Mexico. But Latinos can only exist as subjugated to be visible in the US.

Or, you can be Sofia Vergara. Vergara's entire career and public persona is the most recent incarnation of the "feisty, fiery, sexy Latina" archetype. Vergara's career struggled before she went brunette, she claims. "I'm a natural blonde, but when I started acting, I would go to auditions, and they didn't know where to put me because I was voluptuous and had the accent – but I had blonde hair," Vergara tells *Self*magazine. "The moment I dyed my hair dark, it was, 'Oh, she's the hot Latin girl.'" Vergara (and her publicity team) found the perfect way to sell her as Latina in a way that is **palatable to mainstream** American audiences (for the opposite story, listen to Margaret Cho discuss how her network gave her an Asian consultant to help her appear more Asian to American audiences). Thanks for letting us put you in a box, Sofia, or better yet, on a revolving platform.

It may lack drugs or violence, but the fiery Latina archetype can win Oscars too, as Penélope Cruz proved when she won Best Supporting Actress for *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*. Cruz is Spanish rather than Latin American, but the **archetype** can be transferred to any woman with dark hair and an accent. *Relatos Salvajes* does have its story of "fiery Latin lovers," but they are

a Jewish couple at a very clearly Jewish wedding, which again complicates Latin American identity as one of multiple faiths and cultures.

There's room for diverse portrayals of Latin America in the broader culture and in US consciousness, but the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences is simply not the place to go for them. The Academy's resistance to award diverse stories isn't just limited to Latin American films, but also notable in its recognition (**or lack thereof**) of black filmmakers and actors.

Hattie McDaniel was the first person of color to win an Academy Award. She won Best Supporting Actress in 1940 for playing Mammy, Scarlett O'Hara's slave/maid in *Gone with the Wind* (full disclosure, I totally love *Gone with the Wind*, don't even care that may be kinda super racist). Flash forward to 2012 and Octavia Spencer wins the same award for playing a maid in *The Help* (a pile of racist revisionist history I refuse to see). Two years later and Lupita Nyong'o wins the same award for playing a slave on *12 Years a Slave*. I'm not saying those roles aren't well-defined or of any interest, but let us just acknowledge for a moment that we don't even know Mammy's real name. She is only defined by her servitude to a white woman. And yet, the Academy is determined to keep her legacy alive and relevant.

Again, this is not a criticism of Spencer or Nyong'o or any of their cohorts. They earned their Oscars, and they are not responsible for the fact that the Academy is most comfortable seeing black women play slaves and maids.

You could respond by pointing out that the brutal look at American slavery *12 Years a Slave* won many major awards at last year's Oscars, including Best Picture. And you'd be right, but the Academy seems to feel it fulfilled its quota of films about people of color for the next few years by shutting out just about any non-white films from this year's ceremony. Not a single person of color was nominated in any of this year's acting categories, and Alejandro González Iñárritu represents the only non-white person in the major categories.

Historical dramas like *Selma* are usually total Oscar **bait**, but somehow the film about the historic civil rights march **didn't stick with** Academy voters, as it received nominations only for Best Picture and Best Original Song. But Selma diverges from other dramatizations of racially-charged historical events by lacking any **white savior** character, and it was **widely criticized** for portraying President Lyndon B. Johnson as resistant to promoting the Voting Rights Act. A ridiculous criticism considering the film is not about LBJ and all historical dramas take some liberty with historical events to tell a story. But guess which films do have a white savior figure: *12 Years a Slave* (Brad Pitt as the benevolent Canadian hippie he imagines he would have been had he been alive in antebellum Southern United States) and *The Help* (Emma Stone as the nice white lady who uses her maids' stories to launch her career). Those films received nine and four Oscar nominations, respectively. Academy voters will see what they want to see.

Given that the film was totally locked out from any acting, directing or writing categories, *Selma*'s inclusion in the Best Picture category (where the amount of nominees is not limited to five as in other categories) gives the impression that the Academy just wanted to make sure everyone knows it has at least one black friend.

Meanwhile, *American* Sniper, aka *Hollywood shoots Arabs: The movie*, took the box office by storm *on Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend*, and picked up six Oscar nominations. I mean, *come on*.

Relatos Salvajes, or should we say *Wild Tales* (wow, that title did not translate well) as it is known to English-speaking audiences, is most likely to go home **empty-handed** later this month. Come back when you have more dictators, Argentina.

APPENDIX E

‘Relatos Salvajes’ Won’t Win the Oscar. Here’s Why. – Reading guide

1. What effect does the headline produce on the reader?
2. How does the writer convey objectivity in the first and second paragraph?
3. Why does the author claim that Relatos Salvajes doesn’t fulfill popular US stereotypes of Latin America?
4. What point is the author trying to make by mentioning many of the foreign artists and movies that have earned Oscar nominations?
5. How does the reference to Chimamanda Adichie’s talk serve the author’s claim? What is Latin America’s single story?
6. How can the notion of “hegemony” be related to the article? In what way has the hegemonic discourse about our country and other Latin American countries been addressed?
7. What arguments does the author put forward to assert that the Academy is resistant to award diverse stories?
8. What do you think the author means by “white saviour”?
9. What is the overall tone of the article? How does the author manage to set it?
10. Discuss the real purpose of the article and analyse how predictable it is judging by its title.
11. Why does the author claim that the translation “Wild Tales” is not suitable for “Relatos Salvajes”? What does “tales” entail?
12. Comment on the clincher at the end of the article and the ways in which it reinforces the claim that the film wouldn’t win the award.

Focus on these excerpts and discuss the tone and use of irony in the article:

- “‘Relatos Salvajes’ characters are too middle-class, too free from repression to be “authentically” Latin for US audiences.”
- “This is not Latin America as we’ve come to know it. This movie doesn’t even have tango! How is Hollywood supposed to know where this film even takes place?”
- “Thanks for letting us put you in a box, Sofia, or better yet, on a revolving platform.”
- “Selma‘s inclusion in the Best Picture category … gives the impression that the Academy just wanted to make sure everyone knows it has at least one black friend.”
- “Come back when you have more dictators, Argentina”

Focus on the following vocabulary items from the article:

- *Relatos Salvajes won't win because it doesn't **fulfill** popular US **stereotypes** of Latin America*
- *Relatos Salvajes doesn't **reinforce** the stories the U.S. is accustomed to hearing.*
- *El Secreto de sus Ojos won in 2010 for telling a story **bookended** around that same conflict.*
- *Catalina Sandino Moreno earned an Oscar nomination for Best Actress for her turn in María, llena eres de gracia, a rare **feat** for non-English language roles.*
- *Although the role of the US in many of those dictatorships is best **left off the table**.*
- *Adichie also admits to her own **preconceptions** of Mexico as a place of violence and instability before she visited Guadalajara.*
- *Latinos can only exist as **subjugated** to be visible in the US.*
- *Vergara (and her publicity team) found the perfect way to sell her as Latina in a way that is **palatable** to **mainstream** American audiences*
- *The Academy's resistance to award diverse stories isn't just limited to Latin American films, but also notable in its recognition (or **lack thereof**) of black filmmakers and actors.*
- *…but somehow the film about the historic civil rights march **didn't stick with** Academy voters.*

APPENDIX F

The Washington Post

Donald Trump tries to kill political correctness — and ends up saving it

Republican presidential nominee Donald Trump. (Evan Vucci/Associated Press)

By **Barton Swaim**

November 1, 2016

Barton Swaim is author of "The Speechwriter: A Brief Education in Politics" and a contributing columnist for The Post.

It's true that Donald Trump's support has little to do with policies. It's not true, however, that those who support him have no rational or cogent reasons for their preference. They are misguided, in my view, but they aren't stupid, and we flatter ourselves by assuming their preference for Trump is evidence merely of economic forces they don't understand.

Donald Trump says the United States is too preoccupied with being politically correct. (Peter Stevenson/The Washington Post)

If the Trump supporters I've met and know are a fair representation of their outlook, what binds them together is a deep hatred for political correctness. No groundbreaking analysis there: Trump has railed about political correctness many times, and of course he relishes expressing himself in ways that can reasonably be called politically incorrect. He may be a bigot and a scoundrel, the thinking seems to be, but the one thing he isn't is politically correct. I don't dismiss that view. PC culture has been the source of jokes and satire for 25 years or more, but it's no less real for that. Trump's supporters aren't wrong to hate it.

But what is it, exactly?

There's more to political correctness than an obsession with racial and sexual sensitivities, though those are at the root of it. Political correctness, if I could venture my own admittedly rather clinical definition, involves the prohibition of common expressions and habits on the grounds that someone in our pluralistic society may be offended by them. It

reduces political life to an array of signs and symbols deemed good or bad according to their tendency either to include or exclude aggrieved or marginalized people from common life.

PC was born of a generous impulse, maybe — it's good and right to avoid giving offense, when you can. But it has long been a blight and a menace. It obliges us to think constantly about a few topics — topics having mainly to do with racial and sexual identities, but other sorts of identities as well — even as it makes it impossible for us to speak openly and honestly about those same topics. You must consider every facet of life in light of racial sensitivities, sexual politics or some kind of cultural imperialism; but you'd better not talk openly about any of these things unless you're prepared to negotiate their exquisite complexities and unless you're up to date on all the latest banned phrases.

Political correctness is an unwritten and constantly changing code of forbidden language and practices, and most Americans sense its unfairness. They sensed it most acutely, I think, over the past few years, when three political controversies coincided in a way that seemed to proscribe all but center-left or progressive interpretations: race relations as a result of the riots over police conduct in Ferguson, Mo., and Baltimore; same-sex marriage as a result of the Supreme Court's Obergefell v. Hodges decision; and transgender rights after Caitlyn Jenner's self-revelation and the Obama administration's executive order regarding public school restrooms. Americans take all sorts of reasonable and conflicting views on all three of these topics, but all three are subjects on which, depending on the nature of their views, many feel a keen reluctance to speak candidly.

That feeling of delegitimation, of not being able to state one's beliefs without attracting accusations of bigotry and backwardness, isn't something most Americans will put up with for long. Many of them felt gagged and irritated, and Trump shrewdly named the thing that troubled them: political correctness. A lot of people fell for it. And in falling for it, they made two disastrous mistakes. First, by promoting political incorrectness as a remedy to the taboos they rightly detest, they gave us a man so loathsome as to make those taboos seem almost sensible. In the saddest irony of this deeply strange election year, Trump's supporters have managed to enhance the credibility of political correctness: Given the choice between political correctness and the bigoted tirades of a dirty old man, I'll take political correctness.

Second, those who supported Trump on the theory that he'd push back against political correctness failed to understand that you can't change a culture from the top. Politics doesn't determine culture; culture determines politics, and transforms it. A president can do as much about political correctness as he can, say, about the hookup culture on college campuses. Or about the use of hard profanity in polite company. Or about the loss of appreciation for poetry. One may deplore each of these things (I deplore all three), but they are not political in nature and so cannot be withstood or even affected by politics.

Political correctness is an insidious presence in American life. That's true. But resisting it requires the long and patient work of a generation, not the election of a clownish president.

APPENDIX G

Reading guide

Discuss:

1) According to the author of the article, what seems to bind supporters of Donald Trump together? Why is it so controversial for a presidential candidate to be this way?
2) How is political correctness defined? Why can it be considered a form of reductionism?
3) "The road to hell is paved with good intentions". How can you relate this popular phrase with paragraph 5: "PC was born of a generous impulse, (…)"?
4) Amidst what type of controversies does the issue of political correctness come up?
5) Is the tone of the article completely biased against political correctness? How does the author treat each side of the argument?
6) Why does the author criticize the idea of voting for a candidate as a means to combat political correctness?

Focus on language:

1. Vocabulary items:
- cogent
- groundbreaking
- bigot
- scoundrel
- venture
- blight
- gagged
- insidious
- hookup culture
2. How does the author use concession to construct arguments? Focus on connectors
3. The writer of the article seems to have a negative view of (sic) both Donald Trump and political correctness. What lexical items support this? Focus on their connotation

Comments:

I chose this article because I found the language used in it both fruitful and appropriate for the task. (…) I found a recent controversial political issue suitable. I selected an article written by an American about their own politics not only because it's relevant to English learners but also because dealing with a topic that is more remote would prevent heated debates and encourage more unbiased forms of discussion.

APPENDIX H

SCIENCE

How Intelligence Leads to Stereotyping

A new study complicates the trope of the stupid bigot.

OLGA KHAZAN
Jul 29, 2017

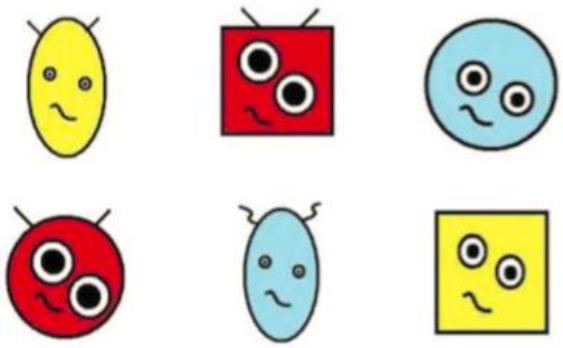
STEVE LAZARIDES / REUTERS

Upon seeing a young man hoisting a Hitler salute in 2017, most people likely do not think, "there goes a Rhodes Scholar." Racists stereotype other people, for the most part, but there are also stereotypes *about* racists. And the stereotype about racists is that, well, they're kind of dumb.

But a new study complicates the narrative that only unintelligent people are prejudiced. The paper, published recently in the *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General,* suggests smart people are actually more at risk of stereotyping others.

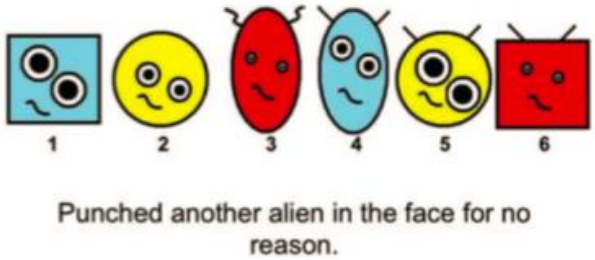
The study consisted of a series of experiments, all of which suggested that people who performed better on a test of pattern detection—a measure of cognitive ability—were also quicker to form and apply stereotypes.

First, researchers from New York University showed 271 participants a series of pictures of red, blue, and yellow cartoon aliens with different facial features, paired with a statement of either a nice behavior ("gave another alien a bouquet of flowers") or a rude one ("spat in another alien's face"):



Examples of the aliens (Journal of Experimental Psychology: General)

Most of the pairings were random, but two were skewed so that keen observers might pick up on a pattern: 80 percent of the blue aliens were paired with unfriendly behaviors, and 80 percent of the yellow aliens were paired with nice ones. The subjects didn't know if the statements about the aliens were true or false. In this way, the study tried to mimic how people actually form prejudices about certain groups, like through anecdotes in the media or through portrayals in TV shows.
Later, the subjects were asked to pick which alien had committed a given behavior from a lineup:



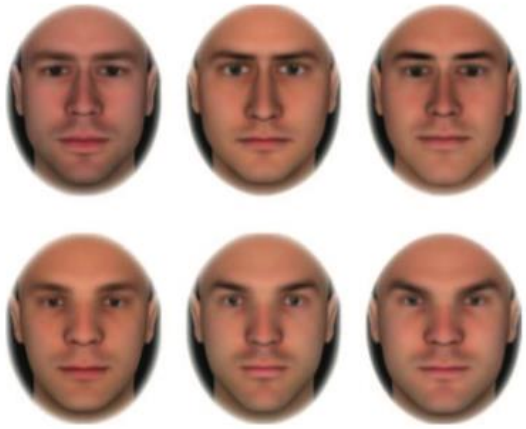
Example of an alien lineup (Journal of Experimental Psychology: General)

The participants then took a test called the Raven's Advanced Progressive Matrices, a pattern-based exam that's a common measure of human intelligence.

The participants who were better pattern detectors were more likely to make stereotypical errors: They tended to ascribe the friendly behaviors to the wrong yellow alien, and the unfriendly behaviors to the wrong blue alien. Meanwhile, they were less likely to ascribe the behavior to a different-colored alien.

A second study showed similar results, but for measures of implicit bias. That is, smarter participants were quicker to stereotype the aliens in the course of a word-sorting task, even if they didn't realize they were doing it.

Next, the researchers tried it with human faces, showing a new set of participants a series of computer-generated pictures of men with either wide or narrow nose bridges:



Computer-generated faces (Journal of Experimental Psychology: General)

Here too, 80 percent of the narrow nose-bridge men were paired with friendly behaviors, while 80 percent of the wide nose-bridge men were supposedly unfriendly. The participants were then partnered with a new set of pictures of men for a trust game using fake money. Again, superior pattern detectors gave more money to the characters with narrow nose bridges, suggesting they had learned the stereotype about friendliness and employed it in judging the new men.

These depressing results suggest there's a downside to being smart—it makes you risk reading too much into a situation and drawing inappropriate conclusions. But there's hope. In the second part of the study, the researchers showed that while smart people learn and apply stereotypes more eagerly, they also unlearn those stereotypes quickly in the face of new information.

When the smart participants were given new, contradictory information about the nose-bridge men, for example, they stopped lowballing them in the trust game. The worse pattern-detectors, meanwhile, didn't update their thinking in the same way. The same thing happened when the researchers tried to get the participants to un-learn some gender stereotypes.

Jeopardy champions and post-doctoral students might (reasonably) be a little offended by this study. After all, education is one of the best bulwarks against ignorance we have. Exposure to stories and information that are counter-stereotypical—often the kind of thing you get from schooling—are one of the best ways to beat back racial bias. Indeed, other studies have found just the opposite, that lower intelligence is linked to greater prejudice. In one 2012 study, for example, Americans who scored lower on a measure of abstract reasoning were also more prejudiced against gay people.

According to Geoffrey Wodtke, a sociology professor at the University of Toronto, it could be that, because this study focused on unrealistic stereotypes—about cartoon aliens or computer-drawn men, instead, of, say, real-life groups like gays or immigrants—smart people might have been less careful about suppressing their stereotypical thinking. “It's quite likely that high-ability individuals are … able to efficiently learn and apply stereotypes in a vacuum but also that they are better attuned to social norms and concerns about not inflaming intergroup conflict,” he said.

When researchers ask “what do you think of African-Americans?” rather than “what do you think of this cartoon alien?” smarter participants might simply be more careful about what they say.

Indeed, Wodtke did one study in which white people with better verbal abilities were less likely to be prejudiced against blacks, more likely to acknowledge racial discrimination, and more likely to support racial equality in principle. But they didn’t put their money where their mouths were: Compared to the less verbally skilled white people, the more eloquent whites were less likely to support school-busing programs or affirmative action.

He also cautioned that “the real world is a lot more complicated than the psychology laboratory.” Historical and social contexts play a major role in most types of real-world stereotyping. Wodtke provided an example via email:

… We know that racist stereotypes about blacks having low intelligence or a poor work ethic, for example, did not come about simply from whites observing the behavior of different racial groups, noting a correlation between skin color and perceived intelligence, and then naively applying these generalizations in novel interactions with blacks. Rather, they emerged because whites colonized and enslaved black populations in pursuit of their economic interests, and in an effort to legitimize these actions both to themselves and the subordinated population, they developed and propagated complex ideologies about, among other things, the intellectual inferiority of blacks.

When I asked Jonathan Freeman, a psychology professor at New York University and a co-author of this current study, about these contradictory findings, he said there might be other factors that predict both higher intelligence and less prejudice overall, like socioeconomic status or exposure to diversity. In that 2012 study, for example, “Individuals who had a greater capacity for abstract reasoning experienced more contact with out-groups, and more contact predicted less prejudice.”

In other words, being smart might put you at a greater risk of prejudice, but you can still fight against those instincts by challenging your thinking and getting to know people who aren’t like you. As Freeman showed, that new information may very well undo the stereotypes you’re prone to forming in the first place.

APPENDIX I

Reading guide:

1) What impact does the title have on the reader?
2) What effect does the introduction have?
3) Discuss the author's use of "drawing inappropriate conclusions. But there's hope" in the paragraph starting "These depressing results...". What does the author imply by saying this?
4) Discuss the author's expression "education is one of the best bulwarks against ignorance we have" in the paragraph starting "Jeopardy champions".
5) The author said: "When researchers ask "what do you think of African-Americans?" rather than "what do you think of this cartoon alien?" smarter participants might simply be more careful about what they say". Why do you think that participants might be more careful? Why is there a parallelism between cartoon aliens and African-American? For what purpose?
6) Is the author sarcastic? Do you find the author intolerant towards people who tend to stereotype all the time?
7) In terms of the structure of the article, do you believe that the first two paragraphs serve well as an introduction to the experiments?

Language focus:

- hoisting
- paired with
- skewed
- mimic
- ascribe
- downside
- to be attuned
- prone to

Brief comment:

I find this article suitable for upper-intermediate-advanced teenage students because the vocabulary range is sophisticated enough for their level and the topic is familiar to everybody since we are all used to stereotyping people. The idea behind this article is to leave students thinking about why stereotypes are prevalent in society today.

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