

XIV CercleS International Conference 2016

Enhancing Learners' Creative and Critical Thinking: The Role of University Language Centres 22-23-24 September 2016 - University of Calabria - Italy

Does authenticity matter when it comes to teaching pragmatics and culture in L2 classes?

How relevant is the choice of teaching material in L2 language teaching?

Session: GIVING LEARNERS A MULTICULTURAL VOICE

- M.Antonietta Marongiu, Ph.D. - Università di Cagliari



LANGUAGE ACQUISITION & SOCIALIZATION

**functional,
communicative
competence, and
appropriate social and
cultural performance**



**LANGUAGE
ACQUISITION**



**LANGUAGE
SOCIALIZATION**

LANGUAGE ACQUISITION & SOCIALIZATION

Vygotsky (1962): Children and adults learn first on the social plane, then internalize the social onto the psychological plane.

Lantorf (2000): acquisition happens by placing cognition and the mind into the social.

An **ECOLOGICAL** perspective of language acquisition in the 1990s brought back **the importance of context** and the need to rethink the relation of language and other meaning-making practices.

CONTEXT is at the core of COMMUNICATIVE LANGUAGE TEACHING
(Ellis 1987)

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

A **MULTICULTURAL** perspective in **EDUCATION** takes into account **differences** in *abilities, styles, preferences* and *cultural traditions*.

L2 learning in the classroom goes from simply mastering the grammatical forms to the acquisition of functional and social use of these forms in the language community(ies).

Pragmatic competence, the ability to communicate and interpret meaning in social interaction, comes to be an essential component of L2 proficiency.

A **CONTEXT** for the teaching material and the use of **REALIA** create a **direct link to CULTURE**, allowing attention to subtle and not-so-subtle differences between the target culture and our own. (Berwald 1987).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In a post-methodology era such as the current one,

(a) is FLT driven by the underlying idea that the learning context, including the teaching material, should reflect the culture(s) of the language being taught?

(b) do teaching materials have cultural and pragmatic connotation?

Data

I carried out a qualitative analysis of currently available **ELT textbooks** (TB), specifically for teaching **EFL** in Italy, to see if and how they provide material that has adequate **socio-cultural connotation** and that is **pragmatically valuable**.

CORPUS

- CHANGE UP! (2009) Vol. Pre-Intermediate. Vol. Intermediate Hill, Freeman. Eli. With Audio material.
- COMPLETE PET (2010-2015) Student's Book + workbook with answers. Heyderman, May, Thomas. Cambridge English.
- CULT (2015) vol. B1, vol. B2 Broadhead, Light Calzini, Seita, Heward, Minardi. Libro Misto con Ambiente Educativo Digitale Black Cat. Dea Scuola.
- ENGLISH FILE (2012) Elementary. 3rd Ed. Student's book, workbook, Laham-Koenig, Oxenden, Seligson. Oxford.
- ENGLISH FILE DIGITAL (2012) Elementary. 3rd Ed. Student's book, workbook, Laham-Koenig, Oxenden, Seligson. Oxford.
- ENGLISH PLUS. (2011) vol. Elementary, vol. Intermediate, Libro Misto con Espansioni online. Plus: Everyday Listening & Speaking Culture & CLIL Literature. Wetz. Oxford.
- GET TINKING. (2015) Student's book, workbook, eBook, Virtual classroom & online expansion. Vol. 1 & 2. Puchta, Stranks, Lewis Jones. Cambridge.
- HEADWAY DIGITAL (2012) Pre-Intermediate. 4th Ed. Student's book, workbook. with Culture & Literature. Soars, Soars, Tabor. Oxford.
- INTO ENGLISH PLUS. (2013) Student's book, workbook, eBook, Vol. 1, 2, 3. Puchta, Stranks. Loescher.

CORPUS

- INSIGHTS (2013) Vol. elementary, vol. Pre-Intermediate, vol. Intermediate. Wildman, Myers, Thacker. Oxford.
- MOVING UP, (2011) vol. 1 and vol. 2. Student's book, workbook, eBook, Kennedy, Maxwell. Black Cat.
- NEW ENGLISH FILE. (2004) Vol. Elementary. Vol. Intermediate. Vol. Advanced. Oxenden, Laham-Koenig, Seligson. Oxford.
- NEW HEADWAY ENGLISH COURSE. (2003) Beginner Italian Edition. Soars, Soars. Oxford.
- NEW HEADWAY. (2005) Vol. Beginner, vol. Elementary, vol. Intermediate. 4th Ed. Soars, Soars, Tabor. Digital Teaching Resources. Oxford.
- PERFORMER FCE Tutor (2012) Student's book, workbook. eBook. Spiazzi, Tavella, Layton. Zanichelli
- PERFORMER First Tutor (2015) (Edizione aggiornata di Performer FCE Tutor) Student's book, workbook. eBook. Spiazzi, Tavella, Layton. Zanichelli
- PERFORMER B1 with PET Tutor. (2014) Student's book, workbook. eBook. Spiazzi, Tavella, Layton. Zanichelli
- SPEED UP YOUR MIND, (2015) vol. 1 and vol. 2. McKinlay, Hastings, Foody. Pearson, Longman. Con libro digitale.

General Analysis Results

ALL TEXTBOOKS provide PICTURES of:



people with
geographical/ethnic
connotation



famous people to
represent their
countries



famous places to
represent the
country



social issues: child
labor, social
illnesses,
environment



aspects of western
life: shopping,
teenagers, music



Social aspects:
family, work, sports,
school, travelling



cultural
productions: films,
theatre, literature

General Analysis Results

ALL TEXTBOOKS have ANONYMOUS DRAWINGS about:



School environment



The family



The house, rooms, furniture



Means of transport



Giving directions



Clothes



daily routine & the time



Sports & leisure activities



jobs



Food & drinks, recipes



Body parts & illnesses



the weather & natural disasters

General Analysis Results

ALL TEXTBOOKS have NON-AUTHENTIC TEXTS about:

- Famous people or places, or special events to represent a country
- Social issues: child labor, social illnesses, environment
- Aspects of western life: shopping, teenagers, music
- Social aspects: family, work, sports, school/university, travelling
- Cultural products: films, theatre, literature

6 TEXTBOOKS over 18 have CULTURE & CLIL Sections

CULT B1-B2
Black Cat

GET THINKING vol.
1, 2, 3
Cambridge

SPEED UP YOUR
MIND Vol. 1, 2
Pearson/Longman

MOVE UP Vol. 1, 2
Black Cat

INSIGHTS Vol. 1, 2,
3 Oxford

PERFORMER B1, B2
Zanichelli

ALL TEXTBOOKS are organized into UNITS around a
SOCIAL / CULTURAL / FUNCTIONAL TOPIC

ONE TEXTBOOK only offers TEXTS ON
CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

TOPICS of the CULTURE & CLIL Sections

Geography (the UK, the USA, Australia, New Zealand, Ireland, Bormeo, Hong Kong, Brazilian uncontacted tribes, the Basque language)

Famous cities (London, New York, Dublin)

Famous places/events (markets in London, Glastonbury Festival, Universal Children's Day, wildlife in India, life in the North Pole, the Carnival)

Science (math, physics, chemistry, astronomy, applications of new technology)

History (of British, American, of British sports, St Patrick's Day, Monument Valley, the Royal Family, Gandhi, Hiroshima & Nagasaki, September 11, 2001, Eurozone crisis)

Legends (Loch Ness Monster)

Literary productions (Sherlock Holms, Funeral Blues by W.H. Auden, Gulliver's Travels, etc.)

Fiction (Casablanca, Poirot, The Namesake, The Dead)

Contemporary issues (education in the UK & in the USA, The Internet, extreme sports, relationships, crime, violence at school, Money, microcredit, Summer jobs, old & present Migrations, religion & stereotypes, eating habits vs. disorders)

Modern heroes (Mark Zuckerberg, Steve Jobs)

Socio-Cultural Connotation

Lie, lie, lie!

- 98% of teens say they lie to their parents.
- 96% of teens say that lying is wrong.
- Younger teens are better at lying than older ones.
- 40% of parents believe it is normal to sometimes lie to their children.
- 65% of people think it's OK to lie in order not to hurt someone's feelings.
- Most people lie three times in ten minutes of conversation.
- Men and women lie the same amount, but about different things.
- We lie most frequently to the people we love.

- TO WHICH COUNTRY DO DATA REFER TO?
- CAN THESE FIGURES BE APPLIED TO EUROPE/THE WORLD?
- **WHICH ONE IS NOT TRUE?**

- DOES THE SPEAKING ACTIVITY STIMULATE INTERACTION AMONG STUDENTS BASED ON THE QUESTIONS PLACED?

- **THE ACTIVITY LACKS CONTEXTUALIZATION**

From *Insight Intermediate* p.58

1 SPEAKING Work in pairs. Read the facts about lying. Which facts surprise you and why?

Which one is not true?

Pragmatics

TEACHING A PRAGMATIC FUNCTION: interacting at the Chemist's

Vocabulary providing

EVERYDAY ENGLISH

At the chemist's

1 Match a word in the box with a picture.
Write the words in the correct column.

a comb suncream aspirin shampoo
deodorant some plasters toothbrush
conditioner soap toothpaste

Things for your hair	Things for your teeth	Things for your skin	Things for your health



2 T 13.7 Listen and complete the conversation at the chemist's. **Practise it with a partner.**

A Hello. Can I help you?

B Yes, please. I'm not (1) _____ very well.
I'm (2) _____ for some aspirin. (3) _____
can I find them?

A Right here. What (4) _____ do you want?
Small or (5) _____ ?

B Large, please. And I (6) _____
some shampoo, as well.

A What (7) _____ of shampoo? For dry hair?
Normal hair?

B Um ... for dry hair, please.

A There's Sunsilk or Palmolive. (8) _____ one
do you want?

B Sunsilk's fine, thanks.

A (9) _____ else?

B No, that's all. (10) _____ is that?

A Four pounds twenty.

B (11) _____ you are.

A Ten pounds. Thank you. And here's five pounds
eighty (12) _____ .

B Thanks. Bye.

A Bye-bye. Thank you very much.

- These activities **DO NOT** allow students to practice a **MEANING-MAKING SOCIAL EVENT**
- They **DO NOT ACTIVELY INVOLVE STUDENTS**
- **The sequence** provides vocabulary, dialogue modeling, but **fails on its pragmatic purpose.**
- The **PRACTICE** with the partner would be **PURPOSEFUL** if it took place **before the modeling**

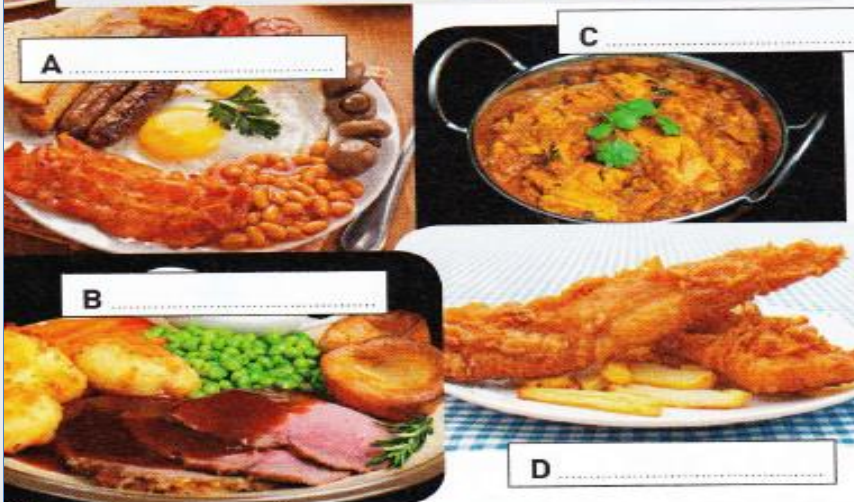
Socio-Cultural Connotation

Food in Britain

Warm-up

- 1 **MATCH** these dishes to the correct picture. Then discuss: What do you know about these dishes? Do you think they are good?

fish and chips • chicken curry
roast beef • full English breakfast



READING

- 2 **READ** the text below quickly and match each heading to the corresponding paragraph (1–6).
- Mealtimes
 - What breakfast is like
 - A sign of a multicultural reality
 - The new dinner
 - British food
 - Modern habits

- The reading text provides a real picture of present eating habits in the UK, and a comparison to the past.
- Then a traditional dish recipe

BEFORE YOU LISTEN, read the list of ingredients for cottage pie and look at the words in the glossary below.

Cottage pie: a traditional British dish

Here's the recipe for this traditional British dish.

Ingredients:

1 kg <i>potatoes</i>	450 g <i>minced beef</i>
6 tablespoons <i>milk</i>	350 ml <i>beef stock</i>
150 g <i>butter</i>	A few white <i>mushrooms</i> , chopped
A little <i>salt</i> and <i>black pepper</i>	A little <i>parsley</i>
2 <i>onions</i> , chopped	1 tablespoon <i>flour</i>
2 <i>carrots</i> , chopped	Some <i>Parmesan cheese</i>

3.22 **LISTEN** to the preparation of this dish and complete the sentences.

Preparation:

SPEAKING

7 IN PAIRS ask and answer questions about your meals and eating habits.

- 1 Do you prefer fish or meat?
- 2 Do you prefer eating at a restaurant or at home?
- 3 Do you prefer your country's food or other kinds of food?
- 4 Do you believe that 'we are what we eat'?

SPEAKING



ACROSS CULTURES

8 DISCUSS in pairs.

- 1 Chicken curry is a popular dish in Britain; make a list of typical Italian foods.
- 2 British people love international cuisines. Do Italian people like foreign foods? What foreign foods do you like?
- 3 A lot of supermarkets sell foods from Asia, Africa, the Americas and the Middle East in the UK. Are there any Chinese, Thai, Mexican and Indian restaurants in your town? If yes, describe what you can eat there.
- 4 Are British meal times the same as Italian ones? What are the differences?

WRITING



INTERNET LAB

9 WORK IN SMALL GROUPS of two or three.

- 1 Research the top five slow food restaurants in London on the Internet.
- 2 Choose two typical slow food dishes.
- 3 Then write down their recipes using the Grammar and Vocabulary from this Unit.
- 4 Add some pictures to illustrate your work.
- 5 Compare your recipes with the other groups'.




Watch the Culture video about food in the UK

Socio-Cultural Connotation

These activities make students think/talk about:

- (1) personal preferences,
- (2) cultural differences,
- (3) good/bad eating habits.

Socio-Cultural Connotation

7  3.24 **LISTEN AND READ** the poem by the British poet Benjamin Obadiah Iqbal Zephaniah (1958–), the son of Caribbean immigrants. Underline the words connected to cooking.



- **A British citizen**
- **A British poet**
- **A contemporary poet**
- **A multicultural representation of the British society**
- **A message of reciprocal tolerance**

Socio-Cultural Connotation

The activities guide the students' interpretation of the poem with:

- Aspects of **stylistic analysis** (metaphors),
- **Sociolinguistic distinctions** (colloquialisms),
- **Socio-cultural connotation** of language features (ethnicities & nationalities),
- A **pragmatic approach** (ingredients for a better society).

Performer B1, p. 53, Zanichelli

Comprehension

- 8 DESCRIBE** the features of the poem 'The British', using the words from exercise 2.
- 9 READ** the poem again and discuss the following questions in pairs.
- 1 What different groups of people does the poet introduce in lines 1–18 to describe the creation of Great Britain?
 - 2 The poet plays with the literal and colloquial meanings of the terms 'melting pot' (line 18) and 'to be cool' (line 22). Match each phrase to the correct definition (A or B).
 - A A multicultural nation where a lot of ethnicities and nationalities are mixed together, like a complex dish with lots of ingredients.
 - B To be less hot, or to be modern and up-to-date.
 - 3 In the second part of the poem (lines 19–29), Zephaniah lists the ingredients of a recipe for a better society. What are they?

Your turn

- 10 DISCUSS.** What key idea do you get about 'The British'? What does the term 'melting pot' imply for multicultural countries? Do you find the cooking metaphor used by the poet effective?

Socio-Cultural Connotation

READING

She only eats junk food

New Headway Beginner, p. 94, Oxford

1 Guarda le parole e rispondi alla domanda:

What food is good for you?

2 *What's your favourite food?*

Parlane alla classe.

3 Leggi l'articolo e rispondi alla domanda: *What's unusual about Mary Alston?*

fruit

BURGERS

fish

chocolate

vegetables

pizza

fries

BURGER QUEEN

She's 109 years old, and she only eats junk food.

Yesterday was Mary Alston's birthday. She is 109 years old, and she is one of the oldest people in the world. And she only eats junk food.

Mrs Alston had a party with six generations of her family. Her daughter, Jenny Morgan, who is 85, said, 'My mother loves chocolate, and eats only popcorn, pizzas, and burgers. She never eats fresh food. She says she doesn't like it.'

Mrs Alston lives in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. She was born on a farm in Pennsylvania, and worked as a teacher. In 1915 she married James Henry Alston. He died in 1983.

Her granddaughter, Annie, who is 65, said, 'Grandma gets up every day at six o'clock, and goes to the hairdresser every Friday.'

Annie asked her grandmother what she wanted to eat on her birthday. Mary said, 'I'd like a cheeseburger and fries!'



Socio-Cultural Connotation

- What is the socio-cultural purpose of this not contextualized reading?
- Is it implying that:
 - a. all British people eat junk food?
 - b. eating junk food is good for your health?

4 Abbina le domande e le risposte. Completa le frasi.

Questions	Answers
1 When was Mary Alston's birthday?	a She was _____ teacher.
2 _____ she have a party?	b She gets up at six o'clock.
3 Does she eat fresh food?	c It <u>was</u> yesterday.
4 What _____ she eat?	d 'I _____ a cheeseburger and fries!'
5 What was her job?	e Yes, she did.
6 _____ was she born?	f She _____ to the hairdresser.
7 When did she marry?	g Popcorn, pizza, and burgers.
8 What time does she _____ up?	h No, she _____.
9 Where does she go every Friday?	i On a farm in Pennsylvania.
10 What did she say to her granddaughter?	j She married _____ 1915.

T 12.9 Ascolta e controlla. Poi esercitati con un compagno.

CONCLUSIONS

Pragmatics extending beyond grammar, involves knowledge of forms, of their functional possibilities, and contextual requirements that determine form-function mapping. (Taguchi 2011)

Pragmatic development entails acquisition of both language resources to perform communicative acts and discerning social perceptions of these acts, accordingly, teaching material needs to provide social contexts, occasions for functional language use and interaction.

More than 50% of the **teaching material analyzed** lacks adequate contexts where to perform the linguistic resources, yet they are used in public schools, in private English schools, and in University Language Centers. **WE HOPE TEACHERS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE IN THE CLASSROOM.**

CONCLUSIONS

In an **ecological** perspective of language acquisition as socialization the learning **context** is very important.



In a **multicultural society** the classroom should be a community of practice for socialization, and not an aseptic, neutral environment where to pretend that differences do not exist.

In our post-methodology era, language teaching has to consider **pragmatics** more than ever, since the meanings constructed in FL classes convey **cultural views**, influence the learners' opinions, can create **prejudice** or **misconceptions** rather than **tolerance**.

XIV CercleS International Conference 2016

Enhancing Learners' Creative and Critical Thinking: The Role of University Language Centres
22-23-24 September 2016 - University of Calabria - Italy

THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION

M. ANTONIETTA MARONGIU
marongiuma@gmail.com

Bibliography

- Berwald, J.P. (1987) *Teaching Foreign Languages with Realia and Other Authentic Material*. Washington DC: ERIC Clearinghouse on Languages & Linguistics.
- Byrnes, H. (2010) Revisiting the Role of Culture in the Foreign Language Curriculum. *The Modern Language Journal*, 94(ii) 315-36.
- Ellis, R. (1997) *Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford Introductions to Language Study. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gumperz, J.J., Jupps, T.C. and Roberts C. (1979) *Cross-Talk: A study of cross-cultural communication*. Havelock Centre, UK: National Centre for Industrial Language Training.
- Hymes, D. (1972) Models of the interaction of language and social life. In J.J. Gumperz and D. Hymes (eds.) *Directions in Sociolinguistics*. New York: Holt Rinehart & Winston, pp. 35-71.
- Kramsch, C. (ed.) (2002) *Language Acquisition and language Socialization. Ecological Perspectives*. London: Continuum.
- Kramsch, C. (2012) Authenticity and Legitimacy in Multilingual SLA. In *Critical Multilingualism Studies* 1(1), 107-128.
- Kramsch, C (2013) Culture in foreign language teaching. In *Iranian Journal of Language Teaching Research* 1(1), (Jan.) 57-78.
- Leather, J.H. and van Dam, J. (2003) Towards an ecology of language acquisition. In J.H. Leather and J. van Dam (eds.) *Ecology of Language Acquisition*. Amsterdam, The Netherlands: Springer Science+Business Media Dordrecht.
- Lifhtbown, M.P. and Spada, N. (1999) *How Languages are Learned*. Rev. ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Ochs, E. (1996) Linguistics resources for socializing humanity. In J.J. Gumperz and S.C. Levinson (eds.) *Rethinking Linguistic relativity*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 407-37.
- Tomlinson, B. (ed.) (1998-2011) *Materials Development in Language Teaching*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.