Literacy in English: A Bakhtinian Reflection from a Case Study /
Letramento em língua inglesa: uma reflexão bakhtiniana a partir de um estudo de caso

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ABSTRACT

In this paper, we reflect and problematize, from a Bakhtinian perspective and having a study case as the focus, how literacy in English is developed by analyzing dialogued critical-reflective journals exchanged between the English teacher and a student majoring in Letters (first term). The dialogued critical-reflective journal, written at the end of each class by the student, is conceived as a form of verbal interaction between the teacher-educator and the pre-service teacher. The content of this journal is concerned with an interpretative description in which the pre-service teacher describes, interprets and relates how he experiences the process of verbal interaction in his English studies. Thus, we approach some notions from the Bakhtinian architecture which are hypothesized to be the foundation of the pedagogical practice in focus; we analytically discuss how the journal, as literacy practice, may influence the education of the (future) English teacher; and we finally relate the Bakhtinian theoretical framework to this dialogical language practice translated into methodological aspects of/in the education of language teachers at the university.

KEYWORDS: Literacy in English; Language Teacher Education; Bakhtinian Theory

RESUMO

Com este trabalho, buscamos refletir e problematizar, numa perspectiva bakhtiniana, e tendo como foco um estudo de caso, como se dá o letramento em língua inglesa, a partir da análise de textos escritos por meio de diários crítico-reflexivos dialogados entre o professor e um licenciando de primeiro período de um Curso de Letras. O diário crítico-reflexivo dialogado é concebido como uma forma de interação verbal entre o professor formador e o professor em-formação, elaborado por este ao final de cada aula. O conteúdo deste diário se refere a uma descrição interpretativa em que o professor em-formação vai descrever, interpretar e relacionar como está vivendo o processo de interação verbal em seus estudos em língua inglesa. Nesse sentido, abordamos noções da arquitetura bakhtiniana, as quais hipotetizamos serem fundadoras desta prática pedagógica em estudo, discutimos analiticamente como o diário crítico-reflexivo, como prática de letramento, pode incidir na formação do (futuro) professor de língua inglesa e, finalmente, relacionamos o referencial teórico bakhtiniano com esta prática dialógica de linguagem traduzida em aspectos metodológicos da/na formação do professor de línguas na universidade.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Letramento em língua inglesa; Formação de professores de línguas; Teoria bakhtiniana

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Introduction

This paper has the aim at reflecting, from a Bakhtinian perspective, and having a case study as its focus, how literacy in English may be developed, by analyzing critical-reflexive journals which were put into dialogue between a teacher and a student majoring in Letters (first term).

We understand that, although the student has not acquired the writing skill in English, he reveals in his journals and by using his mother tongue, his comprehension concerning the dialogued exchanges with the teacher who interacted with him in English.

The dialogued critical-reflective journal is here understood as a form of verbal interaction between the teacher-educator and the pre-service teacher and is elaborated at the end of each class. The content of this journal refers to an interpretative description in which the pre-service teacher describes, interprets and relates how he is experiencing the process of verbal interaction in his English studies. This description reports the intrapersonal process of each student in relation to the exotopic process experienced with the teacher, with the material used in the classroom, with the methodology, with the classmates and with the foreign language studied.

At the end of each class, every learning subjective instance[1] writes a text for the journal and hands it to the teacher. In the following class, the teacher returns the journal which has comments – always in English – concerning what was expressed in the text produced by the student. The journals may be written in three forms: only in the mother tongue (Portuguese); by using an interlanguage register in which the learning subjective instance alters the mother tongue and English; or only in English in which many levels of interlanguage may emerge in the materiality of the utterances. At the end of the term, the students revisit their journals and they rewrite them so that they may (re)signify their enunciative-interactional experience in English. Furthermore, a synthesis-text is required with the objective of providing the pre-service teachers an opportunity to enunciate a *continuum* about their process of verbal interaction with the target language.

From all we have already presented, this article will firstly approach some notions of the Bakhtinian architecture, since we assume they are founding for the

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[1] TN. As there is no equivalent word for *aprendente* in English, we opted to use "learning subjective instance" to refer to the student who is in the ongoing process of learning.

pedagogical practice we expose here. Secondly, from the analysis of a case study, we will analytically discuss how the dialogued critical-reflexive journal, as a practice of literacy, may influence the education of the (future) English teacher. Finally, we will relate the Bakhtinian theoretical framework with this dialogic practice of language and how it may be translated into methodological aspects in/for the education of English language teachers at the university.

1 About Literacy

There is a diversity of discussions concerning the concept of literacy. This diversity encompasses literacy as an autonomous and ideological model (STREET, 2003) as well as literacy as a concept that comprises the social uses and practices of language under different perspectives of writing, valued or not, local or global, in a diversity of *ethé* (family, religion, profession, media, school, etc.), which are always oriented by sociological, anthropological and cultural perspectives (ROJO, 2009).

In this interim, we also have to take into consideration the theoretical position of Gee (2004), who inserts discursive practices in the concept of literacy. He understands discursive practices as the forms of using the language, attributing meanings to it not only in speech but also in the writing process. We should also consider Kleiman (2006, 2007, 2011), who defends and argues that teachers should be agents of literacy.

Thus, in order to accomplish the purpose of this study, we will be theoretically supported by Rojo (2009), who postulates that one of the main objectives of school is to create possibilities so that the students may participate in the many social practices in which reading and writing (literacies) are used in the city life, in a critical, ethical and democratic way. We also agree with Rojo (2009) when she affirms that it is the school's responsibility to promote multicultural dialogue by giving priority not only to the valued, dominant and canonic culture, but, mainly, to local, popular and mass cultures which must be translated into polyphonic dialogues.

Bakhtin (2013)[2] also affirms that the language to be taught at school must comprise the demands of everyday life, of existence and of the professions, since we

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[2] The English version of this article, translated from Russian into English by Lydia Razran Stone, was entitled *Dialogic origin and dialogic pedagogy of grammar: stylistics in teaching Russian language in*

live in a globalized society in which communication and information are continuously shared. Therefore, it should be taught taking into consideration its ethical, democratic, identity and heterogeneous conditions.

It is in this perspective that we are conceiving literacy in English, that is, interacting with a language demands experiencing this language by social practices that integrate the skills (reading, writing, listening, speaking), so that the learning subjective instance may become an enunciator in this language without losing his discursive inscription in his mother tongue. By taking this theoretical position, we understand the discursive teaching/learning process (SANTOS, 2006) as language exchanges in which the social individual talks about himself to constitute himself in the other language, expressing his vision of the world and his perceptions and ideological inscriptions which are shaped by conflicts/confrontations of cultures and discursive practices.

In the next section, we explicit how literacy may dialogue with the Bakhtinian theory.

2 Elements of the Bakhtinian Architecture

In order to discuss the Bakhtinian architecture and its influence in the literacy studies in English, we start with Brait (2005), who defines this architecture as the set of works of the Circle that motivated the birth of a dialogic theory/analysis of discourse, a perspective whose influences and consequences are visible in the literary and linguistic studies, as well in the Human Sciences in general.

In fact, the author does not aim at constructing a restricted conceptualization, considering that such a proposal would not be justified in an enunciative theory. Brait (2005) understands that the relation between language, history and subjects is inseparable, since these references, as a support for the Bakhtin Circle, are constitutive in the studies that deal with language and its use.

In this perspective, the Bakhtinian architecture we refer to is consonant with Brait's epistemological vision, especially when she says that the

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secondary school. It was published in the Journal of Russian and East European Psychology (vol. 42, n. 6, November-December 2004, p.12-49).

conceptions that traverse the works of the Circle allow a less naïve and a more property understanding of some of the essential positions towards language, life and subjects that are, in this process, implied and constituted (2005, p.9).[3]

That means the Bakhtinian framework represents our theoretical yearnings to prolematise the issue of literacy in English, since it establishes inter- and transdisciplinarity among fields of knowledge to focus on the process of teacher education.

In this perspective, it is important to point out Vološinov's position (1986)[4] concerning the acquisition process of a foreign language, especially when he affirms that

Language cannot properly be said to be handed down – it endures, but it endures as a continuous process of becoming. Individuals do not receive a ready-made language at all, rather, they enter upon the stream of verbal communication; indeed, only in this stream does their consciousness first begin to operate. Only in learning a foreign language does a fully prepared consciousness – fully prepared thanks to one's native language – confront a fully prepared language which it need only accept (p.81).

First, in order to examine the process of literacy in English, we would like to focus the dialogued exchanges that happen as a consequence of the verbal interaction between the teaching subjective instance[5] and the learning subjective instance by the use of the dialogued critical-reflective journals. We understand these journals as a genre and we support our position in Vološinov (1986)[6], when he states that genres are constituted in different social-historical-ideological realms of the ideological sign and, therefore,

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[3] Original in Portuguese: "concepções atravessam as obras do Círculo e permitem compreender com maior propriedade, ou menor ingenuidade, alguns posicionamentos essenciais diante da linguagem, da vida e dos sujeitos que aí se insinuam e se constituem".

[4] TN. Here, differently from the Brazilian translation of *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* [*Marxismo e filosofia da linguagem*], which was referred by the author of the paper in Portuguese and in the references, the reference is the English translation. In the Brazilian translation Bakhtin and Voloshinov appear as authors, and in the English translation only Vološinov's name appears. The complete reference of the English translation is: VOLOŠINOV, V. N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and I. R. Titunik. Cambridege: Harvard University Press, 1986.

[5] TN. In footnote 1, we explained that, as there is no English equivalent for the word *aprendente*, we opted to use *learning subjective instance*. The same happens with *ensinante*, that is, the one who is in the ongoing process of teaching. We, thus, opted to translate it as the *teaching subjective instance*.

[6] See footnote 4.

they are materialized in the language event of a subject in verbal interaction, by the means of an enunciation or enunciations. Thus, verbal interaction constitutes the fundamental reality of language.

This way, journals mean a revealing genre of the verbal interaction, promoting the constitution of the subject in and by the language. This constitution is mainly revealed in the dialogic character of the language exchanges that permeate this interaction.

Verbal interaction, thus, represents a language act in which social individuals intersect their possible worlds that are marked out by the lens of a teaching language process. In this lens, some references are included: different interlanguage level of linguistic references, social references of different language *ethé*, pathemic[7] references of different cultural hierarchies, philosophical references from different fields and visions of knowledge, among other factors. This brings us to the comprehension of this language act as a responsible act (BAKHTIN, 1993)[8], that is, in Bakhtin's words, *a unique existing-event*, once it is by the plenitude of the word that the aspect of meaning (the concepted word) as well as the emotive-volitive aspect (the intonation of the word) are constituted.

We see, therefore, that the dialogue that is constructed between the teaching subjective instance and the learning subjective instance, by the use of dialogued critical-reflective journals, represents moments in which the full and unique word – in Bakhtin's words – is responsibly significative. In this sense, writing the journal constitutes, thus, *an unrepeatable and singular existing-event*, since we hypothesize in this act a state of becoming. Such a state would not exist without the dialogic perspective of this verbal interaction.

Regarding the exotopic aspects of this literacy process in English, we especially point out the nature of the existing relations among language, culture and social audience. When we refer to language, we mean its formal structure and its singular lexical and semantic aspects. When we refer to culture, we mean its ideological

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[7] Pathemic references are understood as the elements that represent the emotional relations in the constitution of the subject, that is, emotion as a constitutive part of the subject's language that involves knowledge and power, representations, identification processes, resistance, interpellation, among other factors which are linked to the manifestation of the *pathos*, when language is riddled. (GUILHERME, 2011, 2013)

[8] BAKHTIN, M. M. *Toward a Philosophy of the Act*. Translation by Vadim Liapunov. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1993.

idiosyncrasies which determine the discursive inscriptions of the subject in other languages. Finally, when we refer to the social audience, we highlight alterity as a factor of the subject's talking position in his discursive inscription in the enunciative universe of the foreign language he studies.

Another relevant aspect in the reflection we develop here is the relation between theme and meaning, which was built from the studies of Circle. The idea of theme[9] is directly related to the "orientation of the word toward the addressee" (VOLOŠINOV, 1986, p.86)[10].

Therefore, theme is built in the process of otherness by the dialogue, due to the "forms of particular utterances, of particular speech performances, as elements of a closely linked interaction – i.e., the genres of speech performance in human behavior and ideological creativity as determined by verbal interaction" (VOLOŠINOV, 1986, p.95-96)[11].

As a consequence, we understand that "the meaning of a word is determined entirely by its context" (VOLOŠINOV, 1986, p.79)[12]. We are taking meaning, thus, as an interpretation of the Circle studies and as possible significations in a conjuncture of possible contexts. So, meaning is founded as the ideological understanding of a signification in the scrutiny of a social audience.

It is relevant to point out the singularity of the Bakhtinian architecture as a support for this case study concerning literacy in English. Such a theoretical reference enables to examine the learning subjective instance in the construction of his process of literacy in the English language.

3. Critical-Reflective Learning in Language Teaching in a Bakhtinian Perspective

In a dialogic, discursive and enunciative perspective, we understand critical-reflexive learning as a set of language, culture and existence practices in which forms of

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[9] TN. Vološinov (1986, p.99) defines theme as the "significance of a whole utterance." We will use 'signification' with that meaning.
[10] See footnote 4.
[11] See footnote 4.
[12] See footnote 4.

communication, expression and identification are proposed from position taking and meaning production concerned with the constitution of the subject towards knowledge.

Critical-reflective learning assembles a set of pedagogical procedures that aims at promoting a metalinguistic vision of the learning process by the student. It comprises three steps in its approach: the process of communicational sensibilization, the process of integrating the skills and the ability of exposing linguistic experiences, and, finally, the process of experiencing practices of everyday language.

The process of communicational sensibilization aims at promoting linguistic-discursive experiences that lead the student to a process of identification with the language studied. It is, thus, a language mobilization that interpellates the subject by its cultural, linguistic and pedagogical character. In this phase, it is essential to present a concept of interlanguage to the students, taking as a support the studies developed by Selinker (1972), who defines it as a stage of contact, exposure and experience with the foreign language in which the learner delineates relations of different cognitive, mental and sensorial nature. It is by the recognition of his interlanguage process that the learner starts to build his process of identification and constitutes himself a language subject by taking a position concerning the studied target language.

From the theoretical reflections about Selinker's concept of interlanguage, and form pedagogical observations concerning how interlanguage process is revealed by the learners in English classes, we observed that this process happens in different steps, in a discontinuous form but not necessarily in all its manifestations, depending, therefore, on the degree of the learning subjective instance's interpellation with the target language and on the involvement in the trajectory of his literacy relation in the foreign language.

A first moment could be called *silent period*, a step in which the student begins a suspect contact with the language, going through a trajectory that oscillates between observation and enchantment, being this trajectory a process of resistance. This observation allowed an academic denomination of these stages with the purpose to facilitate the comprehension of Selinker's epistemological concept.

Another moment could be called *comprehension stage*, in which the learning subjective instance is able to understand ideas in the foreign language, but he can only express this comprehension in his mother tongue. In the sequence, we have the *interim stage*, in which the learner expresses what he knows by switching the language studied

and his mother tongue. The next step, which could be called *translation stage*, represents the moment in which the learner lives the illusion he knows the foreign language because he is able to transpose his thought in the mother tongue to the foreign language, without the adjustments and linguistic flexibilizations that are specific to each language.

In the following step, which we would call it *linguistic transition stage*, the student starts to make transpositions from his mother tongue, respecting the structure of the foreign language studied. Another step would be called *fluency stage,* in which the learning subjective instance starts to outline a perception of the linguistic dynamics of the studied foreign language. After the fluency stage, the *stage of proficiency* starts, being the step in which the individual becomes a speaker in the foreign language because he develops a linguistic and enunciative process of identification with it.

There is also the *almost-native stage*, a step which is evaluated in speakers who live in the countries where the language is spoken and that make them integrated to its culture. A last stage, which opposes to the *almost-native stage*, may be called the *anomic stage*, a linguistic pathology in which the speaker, consciously or unconsciously, loses his identification with the mother tongue due to the illusion of linguistic and discursive completeness in the foreign language and culture.

The process of integration between skills and abilities of exposure to the linguistic experiences promotes a formalization of social practices that allows the development of literacy in the foreign language concerning the comprehension and oral production in this language, besides text reading and written production. The learning subjective instance expresses his world perception mediated by oral and written production and by the process of reading as a consequence of his process of verbal interaction with different social audiences in a process of knowledge memory (re)construction.

This process encompasses a dynamic of abilities which are situated in thematic routes and present a diversity of linguistic and discursive manifestations in the target language. Among these manifestations are reading to write, reading to understand, reading to speak; writing to read, writing to understand, writing to speak; understanding to read, understanding to write, understanding to speak, and, finally, speaking to read, speaking to write and speaking to understand. The process of integration of abilities and

capabilities involves, therefore, local, regional, national, general, universal ad formal knowledge. This knowledge is built by language exchanges in the language studied from linguistic materialities that reveal a semantic and enunciative signification, besides morphosyntactic aspects.

Concerning the process of experiencing language everyday practices, we understand it as a multifunctionality of discursive practices in different interlanguage levels. It is a pluralism of linguistic and discursive focuses that show a diversity of activities, according to the interlanguage level of the participants and the process of identification/disidentification of the learning subjective instances. In this perspective, interlinguistic instances function taking into consideration its differences and singularities and from a routine that reveals an enunciation of the self, of the other, of the objects, of time and space, an enunciation of the memory that is aesthetic and historical.

These everyday language practice experiences will produce a repercussion of concepts from its construction and use in singular situations, involving the subject position towards the processes of signification. Therefore, meaning expansion effects, signification transferences and intersectional relations between concepts will occur

In the dialogical verbal interaction among these steps, we could say that the teaching process may be called discursive teaching, since there is the experience of a dialogic perspective forwarding meaning negotiation between social subjects that results in the production of shared knowledge. That happens because the process is proceeded by a relativization of language positions before knowledge, being these positions marked by inversions, focalizations and extensions.

By inversions, we refer to the controversial character of ideological signs, in this study approached under conditions of contradiction, conflict and causality. Focalizations refer to displacements, movements and meaning transposition in the production of utterances which have the aim of problematizing themes and topics in a social audience. Lastly, extensions refer to the resonances, refractions and (re)signification in established meanings with the purpose of provoking a cognitive interpellation in the subject that interacts with the language.

Similarly, when learning becomes the result of processes of sensibilization, integration and practices, we say that a discursive learning is established and it is

concerned with practices of exposure, articulation and inference in which meanings are produced in the enunciative challenge constructed with other speakers, objects, spaces and times from (re) significations and evaluations of events, constituting, this way, the social individual as a subject of knowledge.

In the critical-reflexive approach, in a Bakhtinian perspective, there are evidences interconnected by knowledge which is linked to a domain of logical application. These evidences reveal existence conditions and ways of social place production. Such conditions and ways are explained from the perception of the relations of contradiction, opacity and dispersion that emerge in the everyday practices of an individual.

Concerning the discursive-teaching/learning process, we say that the verbal interaction in foreign language happens when the social individual uses the language to speak/listen/read/understand something related to himself and that interpellates him. Besides, when that happens he feels part of a universe of perception of his possible worlds. The learning subjective instance's degree of identification with the language he studies is directly connected to the intensity of his necessity to become a subject in this language, connected to what he is surprised by as well as to what he lacks, to the resistance and resilience that are established when he is in contact with this other linguistic field.

Thus, we see critical-reflective learning in the teaching of languages, in a Bakhtinian perspective, as an approach which is permeated by intertwined becomings in which the subject inclines himself, departs himself or takes a position towards what he is interpellated by. In this sense, we could say this is what we call the otherness, that is, the alterity of elements that provokes the individual in his way of thinking, in his relation with the others, in the places they occupy, in the time they live and in their particular forms of seeing the world. These elements confront the individual, conflict him, make him contrast them and compel him to transpose the linguistic-enunciative obstacle and construct his literacy in English.

4 The Critical-Reflective Journal as a Literacy Practice in the English Teacher Education

The utterances here analyzed were collected in the course *English Language: Critical-Reflexive Learning*, which is offered in the first term of a Letters undergraduate program in a Brazilian federal university. According to the Pedagogical political plan of the program, all the freshmen have to attend this course, concomitantly with similar courses in French and Spanish.

After two terms attending the courses in the three languages offered, the students have to choose the course they want to major in, that is, they choose if they want to study to be a Portuguese, English, French or Spanish teacher.

The utterance we analyze emerges from a pedagogical practice that requests learning subjective instances to produce a written journal about their knowledge of the language, their impressions about the class, their perception of the methodology used by the teacher. They are asked to write about their difficulties, conflicts, confrontations and opinions about their relation with the foreign language, in our case, English.

These journals may be written in English, in Portuguese or switching both languages, according to the learning subjective instance's level of interlanguage. In the activity's dynamics, every class, the teacher establishes a verbal interaction from each learning subjective instance's written journal by expressing himself in English and inviting the learning subjective instances to broaden their risk taking in the interaction with the language.

In the study here developed, we will analyze some written journals that were produced by an English student of the first term of the course, by giving priority to the operator-utterances (FERNANDES & SANTOS, 2008), which are determinants of a dialogical process that enunciates verbal interaction conditions with English within the process of literacy.

Operator-utterances are understood as a linguistic conjuncture that bears an enunciative configuration and that produces meanings in the extent of determined senses emerged in the materiality of a discursive object.

We understand that there is a sign-ideological signification in the utterances that dialogue among themselves and between the subjects who are involved in the enunciation process, that is, the teaching subjective instance and the learning subjective

instance. These significations reveal the focus of social individuals' involvement, explicating their social positions, their linguistic inscriptions and their degree of interaction with English.

We analyze, thus, some critical-reflexive journals that were written in the first term of 2013, by a student named Antônio in this study. His journals were selected, taking into consideration his linguistic inscription route in his English language literacy, since he stated he had studied English only in elementary school and Spanish in high school. He is, therefore, a subject who starts his Letters Program by inscribing himself in a linguistic deficit concerning his English knowledge.

From his profile, we see his journals as a possible linguistic materiality that may translate his English literacy course, considering his critical-reflexive experience in the discipline. These singularities ratify our thesis that literacy in English may happen when teachers recognize learning subjective instances' interlanguage level heterogeneity, by making possible the construction of a verbal interaction process that does not exclude those who present a linguistic deficit in the target language.

In his first journal, Antônio states in Portuguese:

> Achei a aula bastante interessante com os vídeos e a criação de textos com a turma. Só que já nesse primeiro dia de aula percebi que ainda possuo bastante dificuldade no entendimento da língua inglesa. Gostaria que o senhor falasse mais o português também, para eu ter uma maior compreensão da aula.[13]

Antônio inscribes himself in the lack of comprehension of the language studied and reveals his desire of completeness. Contradictorily, he expresses his wish to have English classes taught in Portuguese. Antônio expresses his resistance process in the contact/confrontation with the foreign language by inscribing himself in the lack of comprehension discomfort position as well as in the desire that this might be minimized by the use of the mother tongue.

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[13] In English: "I thought the class was very interesting with the videos and the creation of texts with the group. In this class I already realized that I still have many difficulties to understand English. I would like you could speak more Portuguese too, so that I could have a greater comprehension of the class."

The teaching subjective instance[14], on the other hand, makes the following considerations:

> How nice you enjoyed our class!
> Don't worry about your difficulties! As time goes by you are going to improve your performance.
> Let me know all your doubts to help you.

We can observe that the teacher shows an initial necessity of establishing a positive attitude towards the learner's words ("How nice you enjoyed our class!"). This attitude aims at initiating a verbal interaction in English that allows him to perceive his integration into the group, no matter his interlanguage level. In the following utterance ("Don't worry about your difficulties! As time goes by you are going to improve your performance."), the teacher tries to minimize the student's anxiety. Considering this anxiety as a barrier to his affective-linguistic development, the teacher gives the student the opportunity to expose his learning difficulties ("Let me know all your doubts to help you").

In the second journal, Antônio only writes in Portuguese, as he did in the first journal:

> A aula hoje foi muito produtiva, pretendo focar mais na matéria perante minhas dificuldades. Pra mim no momento, nesse inicio está difícil conciliar o curso com meu trabalho. Devido a isso estou pensando em deixar meu emprego pra ter um melhor desempenho no curso de letras. Em relação ao conteúdo e a aula de hoje, achei que os vídeos com legenda facilitam muito.
> OBS: Os vídeos com legenda facilitariam mais ainda.[15]

Although Antônio still inscribes himself in a resistance place, he signals he feels responsible for his learning process ("I am thinking about quitting my job in order to

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[14] It is relevant to clarify that the focus of the course is the development of a verbal interaction of linguistic sensibilization without the commitment with accuracy and without the obligatoriness of expression in the formal use of the language. That explains the fact of not considering possible linguistic mistakes and lapses in the teacher's informal expressivity. It was a priority in the analysis the informal nature of the interaction established with the learner.

[15] Our version in English: "Today's class was very productive, I intend to focus more on the subject to face my difficulties. To me, in this moment, in this beginning, it is difficult to conciliate the course with my job. Because of this, I am thinking about quitting my job in order to have a better performance in the Letters Program. Concerning the content and today's class, I thought the videos with subtitles helped a lot. NOTE: Videos with subtitles would help more."

have a better performance in the Letters Course"). In this interactive advancement, he expresses his satisfaction and emphasizes, by repeating utterances, the facility presented by the subtitles of the videos. It has to be pointed out that such subtitles were in English ("I thought the videos with subtitles helped a lot; Videos with subtitles would help more"). His satisfaction signals a point of inscription with the target language to the extent that these subtitles refer to a channel of perception and comprehension.

Utterances below show the teacher's comments:

> How nice you've got involved with our class!
> I hope you are going to develop a good level of perception to English language.
> I think it could be a good idea.
> How nice you enjoyed our Listening Sensibilization.
> Surely. You can look for videos with subtitles in Portuguese in you tube.

Once again, the teacher replies by evoking a positive attitude towards the student's relation with the language and with the class ("How nice you've got involved with our class!"). In the sequence, he writes an utterance to support the motivation recognized by the student ("I hope you are going to develop a good level of perception to English language"). With the objective to intensify the literacy process from this focus in involvement, the teacher interpellates the student to look for other videos on the web as an element to potentiate his linguistic perception of the foreign language.

In the third and fourth journals, the enunciative movement of verbal interaction is repeated[16]. From the fifth journal on, Antônio starts his first words in English:

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[16] Third Journal:

Student's text: Hoje sem dúvidas a aula foi muito produtiva, gostei muito dos aplicativos de aprendizagem apresentados (CLEVERBOT) e etc. Ainda possuo algumas dificuldades na língua, mas não é nada que o tempo e mais um pouco de estudo não resolva.

Our version in English: "Undoubtedly, today's class was very productive, I liked learning apps a lot (CLEVERBOT) and etc. I still have some difficulties in the language, but nothing that cannot be solved with time and more study."

Teachers's reply: How nice you've enjoyed our class. I really also believe our class was in fact productive. Please, send me a message telling me about your difficulties. I hope, in a short time, you can develop your performance in English. I appreciate your positive attitude.

Fourth Journal:

Student's text: Foi muito bom essa abordagem das notícias atuais no Brasil hoje na aula. OBS: gostaria que o senhor me enviasse o texto abordado em aula, pois eu não recebi.

Our version in English: "The approach concerning Brazil's current news in today's class was very good. NOTE: I would like to receive the text used in class because I did not receive it."

Teachers's reply: How nice you enjoyed our class today. Surely, Antônio. I'll send you the text.

> O estudo do texto pela thematic unit, meaning operations e meaning cores facilita muito o enterpretamento do texto. É mais uma forma de leitura e interpretação que eu pretendo levar para o meu dia-a-dia estudantil.[17]

We realize, in this moment, an attitude changing from the period of comprehension in English expressed in Portuguese to the level of interlanguage known as *code switching*, when speakers intercalate both languages. That means that the learner already inscribes himself in English literacy, though he still has linguistics lacks ("O estudo do texto pela thematic unit, meaning operations e meaning cores facilita muito o enterpretamento do texto"). The use of the word "entrepretamento" ("the right word in Portuguese would be 'interpretação'") shows this inscription, in a signification level, of a subject who inscribes himself in the process of English literacy by oscillating between the foreign and the mother tongue, not only by the use of isolated words but also by the construction of language lexicon itself.

As a reply to this text, the teacher writes the following text:

> I'm glad, Antônio, you are definitely becoming integrated to our classes.
> I'm sure such strategies will be useful for you in your academic practices.
> Thank you for your collaborative and motivating attitude.

The words of the teacher keep a positive attitude concerning the student's literacy process in English ("I'm glad; I'm sure; Thank you") and the relevance of his interlanguage level improvement ("you are definitely becoming integrated to our classes; such strategies will be useful for you in your academic practices"). The process presented so far confirms the relevance of considering the use of the mother tongue in the construction of a literacy process in a foreign language, emphasizing, therefore, the linguistic-discursive investment for a position taking concerning learning subjective instances' levels of interlanguage. In this perspective, we insist on the argumentation

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[17] Our version in English: "The study of the text by the thematic unit, meaning operations and meaning cores facilitates text interpretation a lot. It is one more way of reading and interpretation that I intend to extend to my student's everyday life."

that the foreign language learner is, first of all, a mother tongue subject who is searching for an enunciative inscription in a foreign language.

This process of *code switching,* that continues in journals 6, 7, 8 and 9[18], represent another insertion of the learner in his process of English literacy. We recognize that this insertion is justified by the necessity of experiencing another stage in

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[18] Sixth journal:

Student's text: The class was very good. Ainda tenho muitas dificuldades no entendimento da língua, usando todas as formas de estudos abordadas pelo senhor facilita muito o entendimento do inglês. Nesse mês infelizmente não está sobrando tempo para focar nos estudos em casa, fora da universidade. Mas, a partir do próximo mês pretendo focar mais no curso, dando 100% de atenção a ele.

Our version in English: "The class was very good. I still have many difficulties to understand the language, using all the study forms approached by you facilitates my understanding of the language. Unfortunately, this month I do not have enough time to focus on my studies at home, out of university. But, from next month on, I intend to focus more on the course and give a 100% attention to it."

Teacher's reply: I'm glad you've enjoyed our classes. I reinforce: you should study at least an hour a day, reviewing our material and listening to the videos. I hope you'll find time to dedicate to your studies on English Language. As Mr. Duncan says: "I hope so."

Seventth Journal:

Student's text: Achei bem interessante os vídeos do misterduncan, e também as informações de aprendizado inclusive referente ao site repassado. Pretendo focar bastante nesse mês em todo conteúdo e também nos materiais a serem entregues. E já em setembro pretendo entrar no instituto de idioma para aprimorar meu entendimento do inglês.

Our version in English: "I found misterducan's videos very interesting, and also the information about learning, especially the presented site. I intend to focus a lot this month on all the content and on the activities to be done. In September I intend to attend a private English institute to improve my knowledge in English."

Teacher's reply: Mr. Duncan is an excellent way to practice the language and get vocabulary acquisition.

I think you can develop your performance a lot if you make your application in the site www.livemocha.com. There will be someone who can help you with the activities developed during our classes. It will be good for you to start an English Course!

Eighth Journal:

Student's text: The class was very (produtiva). Com o auxilio da monitora a aula rendeu bastante. Mas ainda tenho muita dificuldade no inglês, pois não estudei nenhuma língua estrangeira no ensino médio, e agora que estou tendo um conhecimento mais aprofundado da língua. Acho essa metodologia de ensino aplicada na matéria e principalmente nas provas muito difíceis, dessa forma não sei se terei capacidade de ser aprovado nesse semestre na sua matéria.

Our version in English: "The class was very productive. With the help of a monitor, the class was very fruitful. But I still have many difficulties in English, because I did not study English in high school and only now do I have a more detailed knowledge of the language. I think the methodology used in the course and the exams are very difficult, so I do not know if I will be able to pass your subject this term."

Teacher's reply: How nice, Antônio! You've written your first sentence in English! How nice you are finding your place in the English Language. Be sure! It's a question of time for you to be integrated to your foreign language studies. At least try to go ahead!

Ninth Journal:

Student's text: Today reflexive diary, we watched the apresentation of friends of study. Eu e a monitora revemos a prova aplicada anteriormente, e já usando todas as metodologias de ensino e aprendizado aplicadas pelo senhor desde o inicio do semestre.

Our version in English: "Today's reflexive Journal, we watched our classmates' presentations. The monitor and I reviewed the exam applied before by using all the teaching/learning methodologies used by you since the beginning of the semester."

Teachers's reply: Hi, Tony! I'm so glad you started trying some sentences in English. The Round Table was really great! Studying by the previous test is a good way to understand what is asked in our course. I think you can really improve your performance in the English Language.

his way of interacting with the foreign language, in this case, by means of a process of alterity that is marked by the alternation foreign language/mother tongue.

In the last journal, although he is still in a code switching process, we observe an intensification in the use of English:

> The class today was very good, I've enjoyed apresentation of Lucas aboute his (intercâmbio) estou utilizando bastante o my English online[19] e está sendo de muita utilidade, passei o final de semana revisando todos os exercícios, vou envia-lo e gostaria somente que o senhor desse uma revisão mesmo.[20]

We can observe that, in his learning process along the course, Antônio moves from an interlanguage level in which he only understands English by interacting in Portuguese to another interlanguage level in which he uses utterances in English, revealing, this way, his literacy process in English.

Although this may be seen as an insignificant advance from the linguistic-structural point of view, and taking into consideration the linguistic regularities realized, in an enunciative-interaction perspective, we postulate that Antônio inscribes himself in a process of literacy since he enunciates his own autonomy of studies of English in a virtual platform ("I am using my English online a lot and it is very useful, I spent the weekend reviewing all the exercises, I'll send them and I would appreciate if you could review them.")

His involvement is perceived by the teaching subjective instance who understands the relevance of this inscription in a process of autonomy, not only as a form of developing his literacy process but also as process of subject constitution in the interactional identification of the social individual with the foreign language. We can notice this perception from the teacher's final words:

> Dear Antônio, I'm too glad you've got involved with our classes.
> I'm sure if you organize your time schedule study sessions you'll develop a lot in you English studies.

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[19] Distance English Course which is offered by CAPES for the students who are enrolled in federal universities. Available in http://myenglishonline.com.br

[20] Our version in English: "Today's class was very good. I enjoyed Lucas' presentation about his interchange, I am using my English online a lot and it is very useful, I spent the weekend reviewing all the exercises, I'll send them and I would appreciate if you could review them."

I'm sure if you have an involvement with the language and study you'll certainly improve your performance.
I'd like to say it has been a pleasure to be your teacher this term.
Best Wishes.

The teacher expresses the necessity of constructing autonomy in language studies so that the learner may continue involved in his literacy process (I'm sure if you organize your time schedule study sessions you'll develop a lot in you English studies). He emphasizes the relevance of always keeping an interpellative attitude concerning enunciations that are part of the teaching-learning process of a foreign language (I'm sure if you have an involvement with the language and study you'll certainly improve your performance).

The analytical-interpretative conjuncture of this case study reveals an autonomy that is constructed by verbal interaction between subjects and permeated by a constant and continuous alterity that orientate subjects' position taking before the social audiences in which the literacy process is founded.

Final Words

In this article, to reflect about the development of a Letters student's literacy in English we analyzed some dialogued critical-reflective journals between the student and the teacher in the course 'English Language: Critical-Reflexive Learning.'

In the theoretical compilation of the designed approach to construct our reflection, we were supported by some elements from the Bakhtinian architecture to hypothesize that journals are a genre that reveals verbal interaction that promotes the constitution of the English learning subject in and by the language. This constitution happens, mainly, because of the dialogical character of language exchanges that permeate this verbal interaction.

In this sense, we can affirm that the teaching/learning subjective instance interaction we analyze here reveals different interlanguage levels which are considered as varied forms and references in the expression of comprehension in different linguistic manifestations in English. These forms refer to a literacy process that emerges from this verbal interaction and by language exchanges that allow an interlanguage communication, giving a feedback to the learning of a foreign language.

Our teaching-learning conception does not consider this process as a mere assimilation of linguistic structures without the construction of an identification movement with the foreign language by the means of verbal interactions. Antônio represents the profile of freshmen in the Letters Program he attends, that is, students who enter the university without the previous opportunity to reflect about the role of learning a foreign language and about its systemic-linguistic functioning.

If teacher-educators at university do not exercise this political-academic perception, they will hardly act as literacy agents (KLEIMAN, 2006, 2007, 2011) in the education of future foreign language teachers. In this perspective, we postulate the relevance of the Baktinian architecture as a theoretical framework for the studies concerning literacy in English.

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