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The Reader: a research on the fictitious character in the text and on the study of literature in a foreign language.

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Introduction

Introduction

It has always been evident that reading is an essential part of the human existence as it enables men to develop intellectual knowledge, mental faculties and social prestige. In the early years of their lives, people learn how to read, start assembling letters and try to confer a concrete realization with the sound of their voice, which may lead them to a personal awareness of their identity as homo sapiens. It follows that the more they realize their faculties, the more they thirst for discovering the reality in which they act and reading can turn into a fascinating experience of life. The boundless greatness of reason and thoughts can heighten the soul and provide them with a feeling of satisfaction. In other words, it brings genuine pleasure. Nevertheless, when children start to go to school they tend to lose this enthusiasm because they are generally forced to read something which they are not interested in, and unfortunately, it leads to scant participation and low motivation.

This paper is dedicated to the huge field of studying literature in a foreign language at school, therefore it tries to explore the major influencing areas concerned in this process. It starts with a theoretical part regarding the theories of the reading act which, in particular, identifies its purpose, the reader who is the fictitious character playing in the text, the different kinds of readers which have been hypothesized by recent studies, and at the end it talks about the communicative aspect of the text.

In the second chapter, the research moves to the analysis of second language acquisition (SLA) since students deal with literary texts written in a foreign language. For this reason, psycholinguistic processes and mechanisms need to be considered: attention is focused on the brain's functioning, on the importance of input and instruction in language learning, and on the relevant characteristics and findings of experiments with learners.

At this point, the paper proceeds to the study of literature regarded as an opportunity to improve linguistic competences in the second language. Basically, when learners read poems or extracts from novels, they are immersed in a different reality where they are expected to be able to understand the language, to grasp the meaning of the text connecting it to social and historical contexts, to create a personal interpretation and appreciation. Thus, this chapter is about the concept of literature and its development during the years, and it also studies the student and teacher's perspective. It includes the introduction of an innovative approach where learners' motivation is encouraged by didactic activities and technologies, according to

the assumption that people learn when they are allowed to do things, whereas words are likely to be forgot.

Once the teaching methodology has been explored, a survey demonstrates how students perceive the study of literature and analyses their interest and involvement. Finally, this paper proposes the creation of a literary teaching unit for students in the final year of high school. Activities in the five acquisition units concern the theme of the reader as a character in the text and they are organized on the basis of the survey's results, considering students' preferences in order to raise motivation and active participation in classes.

The true essence of this final paper has come forth after a five-year cycle of studies on English and English literature. Significant contributions were given by Psycholinguistics of Second Language Acquisition course, attended during the semester in Paris, and by Didactics of Italian Language course. This research is supposed to form the basis for a future career in teaching so as to increase personal awareness on the methods which need to be considered when dealing with young or adult students. In conclusion, it fervently supports the attempt to apply a teaching methodology that looks at students' sensitivity, interests and needs. It promotes real involvement strengthened by motivation, enjoyment and pleasure in what they are studying. The teacher must be able to make students understand that they must not be afraid of committing mistakes or making fool of themselves. For these reasons, students must be the main protagonists during the learning process. They are expected to retain a fond memory of what they have learned.

Chapter 1

Theories on the Reading Process. The reader in the text: interpretation, communication and categories.

There is a long tradition of theories of literature concerning the act of reading with all its participants, interactions and reactions; studies and research have tried to explore this process where the main character, the reader, comes into the text, lands in an unknown reality which has never been discovered before and then fights against the risk of failing or seizes the chance of success. The most essential characteristics of the literary text and its aim have to be investigated in order to get familiarized with the reading act.

1.1 Introduction to the aesthetic response

Assuming that the reader acts successfully means that he is able to generate his personal interpretation as a reaction to the text and that he can provide an assembling of meaning after having put together the text's components; the result is a full participation and actualization of things unsaid. It is important to remember that the reading process is constituted of a series of activities which involve some basic human faculties. It develops a particular relationship among the reader, the author and the text itself since they get in contact by their interaction, and its final aim is to convey a certain meaning. As for this aspect, the written text, especially the literary one, becomes a kind of communication because it has repercussions on the existing world, social structures and literature; mental and thought systems are reorganized after the addressee has been encouraged by the text to find associations with reality, and finally the piece of work achieves its purpose of communication. In other words, by the search and collections of meaning, the text is recreated according to the personal parameters of the reader so that it can communicate a message as his own reaction, his own response.

Once the act of reading has been mentioned, the distinction between aesthetic response and theory of reception can be introduced. The former, called the *Wirkungstheorie* by Iser, is a relationship where reader and text influence each other; it also triggers the reader's imagination and his perceptive faculties so he is able to modify and change his focus. When the addressee is involved in the study of literature, something happens to him and the product

is the reformulation of reality, but at the same time it brings something new that did not exist before. Conversely, the theory of reception, *Rezeptionstheorie*, refers to already existing readers whose reactions give proof of their experience of literature, thus real and historically documented. Moreover, it arises from a history of the reader's opinions, whereas the aesthetic response originates in the text. As a consequence, the reaction to a literary work may be compared to an aesthetic response for it is a reformulation of a previously existing reality and it fosters the exchange of individual interpretations among conscious subjects. To confirm this, Iser believes that "The literary text, then, exists primarily as a means of communication, while the process of reading is basically a kind of dyadic interaction" (Iser, 1978: 66).

Another aspect worth considering is the fact that the literary text is said to refer to any concrete situation, so that the reader has to solve a degree of indeterminacy within the text and with reality, building a situational structure which includes himself and the text. According to J. M. Lotman, the latter shows the ability of communicating a huge amount of information in a short space, as well as delivering it to different readers; moreover, the literary text provides the reader with the language so he can understand the data as he reads. As a result, it becomes a "living organism" connected to the reader, who is instructed by a feedback system; all works out to judge the new information to be added in the process of communication. The interaction with the text might then be seen as a self-regulating or self-correcting system where the reader receives sign impulses, or signifiers, and modifies them up to the point that this dynamic relationship acquires the character of an event, creating the impression of being involved in something real.

Then, it should be concluded that in literature the reader experiences constant realization since he receives feedback while reading and learning new data; this actually seems to be an event which is really happening, thus belonging to reality. A further conclusive suggestion is offered by Barthes in his work on the pleasure of reading, defining the text as a cloth: he claims that the text is generated through a never-ending interlacing work where the active subject is so much engaged that he ends up destroying himself (Barthes, 1975: 63).

1.2 Extracting the meaning by interpretation

The search for the meaning of a text is one of the reader's main aims as he tries to find a response to contemporary situations and problems in which he is involved, and he can do this

by interpretation. It should also be stated that "the function of interpretation is to extract the hidden meaning from a literary text" (Iser, 1978: 4). On the basis of a reference to a novella by James, Wolfgang Iser hypothesizes that the narrator reveals the meaning of a story in order to observe the reader's reaction: there is evidence that when the text loses its mystery, the only person to blame is the author. Once the hidden meaning has been found, put on display and given to the reader, there is nothing left to do except for recognizing the skills of the searcher and drawing the attention to the reading public; as for the meaning, the heart of the literary work can be extracted from it causing its consumption. As a result, literature is believed to become an item for consumption through interpretation.

Furthermore, according to Iser's reading of the novella by James, he is firmly convinced that meaning has two sorts of framework. On the one hand, there is the subjective disposition of the critic of the story, which should have the target to say his personal interpretation, explanation and judgments; in the nineteenth century the critic was lifted to an exalted position because he was able to provide an explanation of the meaning of the work and could mediate between this one and the reading public. This connection between literature and criticism was put forward by Thomas Carlyle in 1840, a Scottish man of letters. On the other hand, we have the critic's orientation: it can be proved that he gained great importance in the nineteenth century because literature could offer answers to problems which could not be solved by the scientific, social and religious systems which used to promise to reveal universal truth. Hence, readers seek messages in literature and possible orientations for the problems left behind before. Carlyle's opinion confirms it: "Literature, as far as it is Literature, is an 'apocalypse of Nature', a revealing of the 'open secret'" (Iser, 1978: 7). Nevertheless, Iser disagrees with him claiming that the critic fails because meaning cannot be reduced to a thing and the literary text refuses to be torn and thrown away.

1.2.1   *Production of the meaning*

If we take a closer look to the way the meaning is produced, it is impossible not considering the textual strategies implied in the reading process. Basically, after the selection of social norms and literary allusions has occurred within the repertoire, which brings the text into a referential context, they allow the actualization of the systems of equivalences, they decide how their elements have to be linked and compared, and they care for the formation of a meeting-point between the repertoire and the active character, the reader.

Furthermore, Iser explains that when a text has to be summarized, it is disembodied and the reader has to advance his own personal organization and combination of elements; consequently, it can be stated that "textual strategies can only offer the reader *possibilities* of organization" (Iser, 1978: 86). Nevertheless, this should not be a total organization otherwise there will be nothing left to be done by the reader, as everything is clear and comprehensible; this is why the literary text is not overtly organized, so as to avoid that the reading public rejects the work.

Lastly, the textual strategies are responsible for the speech act to succeed which means that speaker and listener share the same rules and processes in communication; for this purpose, they also have to defamiliarize the familiar. From Roland Posner's perspective, a German linguist, the structure of the text can be regarded as the first code, whereas the aesthetic object constitutes the second code that must be produced by the reader and is assembled in the text; as it might be expected, not all the participants have access to the meaning, but only the reader who can find it out and experience the aesthetic pleasure as he reads, a subject which will be analysed later in this paper. Thus, the secondary code is variable according to the social and cultural characteristics of each reader, while the primary code, the schemata, does not change. It is carried by the strategies and used to decipher the text.

What can be inferred at this point is the presence of a foreground-background relationship which comes out from a selection and composition of the repertoire, the thought and social system of references belonging to the reader that are crucial in the reading act. This sort of relationship manages to achieve the creation of the aesthetic object from a series of tensions and interactions induced by the strategies of the text. As it has been stated before, the reader selects and combines references and equivalences of his repertoire in order to preconstruct the aesthetic object's shape. In particular, on the one hand, selection triggers the foreground-background relation, or the inner link, allowing access to the text; on the other hand, combination allows comprehension of the work through the organization of its elements, that is the outer link. The result is an assembly of different perspectives, namely that of the narrator, of the characters, of the plot and the reader's one which is juxtaposed with the others.

Another aspect worth considering is that the function of the different perspectives is to lead the reader to produce the meaning of the text: they open up to each other and engage in a continuous interaction. For instance, the dialogue among characters, the narrator's detailed commentary on a scene and the development of the plot are all interrelated and suggest

several different points of view, the so-called inner perspectives, opposed to the outer perspectives connecting reality to the text.

For a further definition put forward by Gadamer, we may turn to the 'theme' and 'horizon' concept for which the former denotes the reader's perspective and the latter designates all the possible perspectives standing before him. Besides, they may influence the present reader since they have been the themes in the previous readings; therefore, the reader's attitude is likely to be affected by the horizon of the preceding attitudes, as the narrator's point of view, the other characters and the events in the plot towards this very theme. In conclusion, the structure of theme and horizon represents the connection between text and reader because it actively involves the reader by putting together the viewpoints, influencing past and future combinations, in a process of communication based on transformation of positions, and it is based on an imaginary system of reference.

1.2.2   Grasping a text

To a great extent, communication between text and reader is essential for the understanding of the literary work and it seems necessary to mention some models which can foster this process, since textual strategies, codes and perspectives offer possibilities of organization for the creation of the aesthetic object. According to Iser, textual structures and structured acts form the two poles in the act of communication which is bound to succeed if it finds its reflection in the reader's consciousness. If this 'transfer' works, it will set the subject's faculties of perceiving and processing into motion. As a consequence, the literary text will present its data and at the same moment it will try to guide the reader in the comprehension, or the reception, so that the reading act can be defined as a dynamic interaction between text and reader. In more practical terms,

> Un message ne se comprend qu'à partir de la complexité de la situation pour laquelle il fonctionne, en quelque sort par les 80% de l'information globale (connaissance du monde, connaissance sur l'écrit, connaissance du sujet: ce qui est derrière les yeux) dont il constitue le complétement (les 20% d'inconnu devant les yeux) (APLV, 2010 : 17-18).

However, this fundamental concept concerning the relationship between the two will be widely studied later in point 3.

1.2.3   Metaphor of the travelling reader

Going back to the function of interpretation, it has been declared that it aims at conveying the meaning of the text which, in its turn, should not be already formulated otherwise the reader could not experience it. He is expected to provide his actualization and reactions to the literary work, revealing the potential and becoming the critic of himself. An interesting image is offered by Scott and Fielding who compared the reader to a traveler in a stagecoach: he has to undertake his journey through the novel, he looks out from his moving perspective and fixes in his memory all that he sees in each phase, establishing a pattern of consistency which depends on his degree of attention, as well as on his interest and his mental capacities. Scott writes:

> I do not invite my fair readers, whose sex and impatience give them the greatest right to complain of these circumstances, into a flying chariot drawn by hyppogrifs, or moved by enchantment. Mine is a humble English post-chaise, drawn upon four wheels, and keeping his majesty's highway. Those who dislike the vehicle may leave it at the next halt, and wait for the conveyance of Prince Hussein's tapestry, or Malek the Weaver's flying sentry-box. Those who are contented to remain with me will be occasionally exposed to the dullness inseparable from heavy roads, steep hills, sloughs, and other terrestrial retardations; but, with tolerable horses, and a civil driver, (as the advertisements have it) I also engage to get as soon as possible into a more picturesque and romantic country, if my passengers incline to have some patience with me during my first stages.[1]

Then, there is incontrovertible evidence that there are many different subjective realizations and interpretations of a text.

Firstly, in connection to this, we are now to study the concept of "availability" because the reader cannot have a general outlook of his journey and if we enlarge our view, "just as all his experience is not available even to the most gifted creative writer, so all of the writer's work is not available to even the most interested reader", as Philip Hobsbaum believes (Iser, 1978: 16). This lack of availability during the understanding moment is closely related to the wandering viewpoint since the addressee of the text cannot perceive it as a whole, unlike given objects. A first consequence is that the literary object is to be imagined by consecutive phases of reading and it follows that the relationship between text and reader is not properly like that of object and observer, or of subject and object: it consists of a travelling eye inside the literary work, which is a particular characteristic of grasping the meaning of literature. Particularly, the wandering viewpoint is overcome by the object it is to understand because

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[1] Scott W., 1814, *Waverley*. [This quotation is taken from] *Waverley*, New York, Oxford World's Classics, 1986, p. 24.

comprehension takes place in phases which contain some aspects of the object but they cannot be regarded as representative of it. Therefore, during the reading process they do not represent the aesthetic object because of their incompleteness and they need synthesis, through which they bring the transfer into the reader's consciousness, during all the journey of the wandering viewpoint. An example of this synthesis is the sentence perspective, especially the sentence correlate, of which literature is constituted. As a result of their intersection, they care for the semantic fulfillment that takes place in the reader, instead of in the text; after the activation of the contact between the correlates, these sentences trigger "the formation of the aesthetic object as a correlative in the mind of the reader" (Iser, 1978: 110).

Secondly, there is an element that plays a crucial role in the reading process since it implies some expectations: we are talking about the "protensions", as Husserl calls them. The realization of these expectations and their modification build the basic structure of the wandering viewpoint and the reader's position is placed between retentions, the memories, and protensions, the anticipations. Now, the reader's role is to formulate and modify these factors during the act of reading, he makes them interact and connects memories; by so doing, he starts a synthetizing activity that brings the transfer and the translation of the text into his mind; in conclusion this can be defined the hermeneutic structure of reading.

What should be inferred at this point is that the moving viewpoint is a means of defining the reader's presence in the text because he travels through the text, he discovers the rich possibilities of interconnecting expectations and memories, thus the perspectives in the text which are evaluated when he switches from one to another. This network of connections gives proof of the relationship between stimulant and stimulated perspectives, although the potential, the collection of all the interpretations of the text, can never be fully realized. As for this, we should give a brief account of the concept of inexhaustibility of the text.

In Sartre's opinion, as the literary text exists thanks to the reader, the more he goes further in his reading, the more he creates and discovers. However, this makes the work appear as an inexhaustible and impenetrable object, so much so that it is compared to the "rational intuition" that Kant assigned to divine reason. With reference to the function of interpretation, we may as well examine which type of intention is sought and takes full advantage of the text.

1.2.4   Interpretation as the search for an intention

In his work on the act of reading and the theories related to it, Umberto Eco hypothesizes three kinds of interpretation, namely the interpretation as the search for the *intentio auctoris, operis* and *lectoris.* If we are to consider the reader's intention, we need to go through what the author wanted to say in the text and what the text says, separately from the author's intentions; then, if we accept the second distinction, another opposition arises between the search in the text of what it says with regard to its contextual coherence and reference systems, and of what the recipient finds in connection to his systems of meaning and/or to his own feelings and desires.

However, it might be accepted that, from a hermeneutic point of view, the main purpose of interpretation is to find the real message the author wanted to convey, or the one suggested by the character through language, thus denying that the character's word is determined by the addressee's emotions. In fact, we can read a text looking for the multiplicity of meanings, inserted by the author, or we may search for the meanings he ignored and that will be introduced by the reader, even though it is not clear whether it depends on the *intentio operis* or not. Indeed,

> Même si l'on affirme qu'un texte stimule une infinité d'interprétations et qu'*il n'y a pas de vrai sens d'un texte"* (Valéry), on ne dit pas si l'infinité de ces interprétations dépend de l'*intentio auctoris, operis* ou de l'*intentio lectoris* (Eco, 1992: 31).

Furthermore, preferring the reader's intention does not ensure to achieve all the possible readings and it also implies that a reader is supposed to adopt an unambiguous reading of the text and to pursue this unequivocal aspect. A few examples may be useful to understand the diverse possibilities of reading. A text is likely to be interpreted in a thousand of ways, though it had been conceived as completely unambiguous, or it can be unequivocal in connection to the work's intention if it keeps to the characteristics of the genre to which it belongs, as a telegraph without understatements and allusions. On the contrary, we can follow an unequivocal reading of a text where the author imagines to encourage many interpretations, or yet the open text might be read from the work's intention, expressing conflicting meanings.

Similarly, Iser foresees another type of intention: he conceives the text as represented meaning, thus what it is about and with a supposed meaning, and as potential effects, then what it does and with a supposed recipient.

Finally, there are three movements on literary studies that should be mentioned as they focus on interpretation. First, sociology of literature delate the three intentions, choosing to consider how individuals and society make use of texts. Second, aesthetics of reception believes that the more the passing of time, the richer the text becomes because it includes the relationship between social effects of the work and the receivers' expectations in history; however, it states that interpretations have to be strictly connected to the real intention of the text. And thirdly, interpretative semiotics looks for the figure of the reader that the work wants to build, in other words it searches in the *intentio operis* the right criteria to evaluate the *intentio lectoris.*

Lastly, it can be advanced that interpretation considers both the participants of the reading process, author and reader, and the work itself; shifting from one perspective to the other implies that different reactions and answers will be created. Moreover, it may undertake the form of semantic, or *sémiosique* interpretation, on the one hand, or of critical or *sémiotique* interpretation, one the other hand: the first is the product of the reader when he fills in the linear trace of the text, whereas the second explains the structural reasons for which the text produces these semantic interpretations.

As a conclusion of this second paragraph, it might be summed up that first of all, the most important function of interpretation is that of extracting the unrevealed meaning, which must not be already formulated in the literary text, otherwise it will turn into a failure for the author. Since the work is then used up and analysed, it can be considered as an item of consumption. Secondly, two sorts of framework are identified by Iser, as far as meaning in concerned: one the one hand there is the subjective disposition of the critic and, on the other hand, there is the critic's orientation, both emphasizing the relevant position he covers. Going into detail, in the production of meaning we meet the textual strategies which provide the actualization of reference systems, they decide how to connect elements and find a meeting point between the repertoire and the reader; the latter puts forth his own actualization, that is to say his organization and combination of equivalences and references. Therefore, these interesting strategies are said to offer possibilities of organization and to be responsible for the speech-act to succeed, by defamiliarizing the familiar.

The difference between first and second code has been mentioned: in particular, the second code refers to the aesthetic object which depends on the social and cultural characteristics of readers, so that each of them experiences meaning accessing his repertoire whose elements are selected and combined to create a presumable shape for the aesthetic object. In this sense, interpretation is compared to an assembly of different perspectives which

lead the reader to the production of meaning. Another distinction has been introduced: that between theme and horizon for which all the possible perspectives may influence the reader in his past and future attitudes.

In addition, the communication with the text has been briefly discussed in terms of their main participants, the textual structures and the structured acts, and they also guide the reader in the process of comprehension. Moreover, the concept of the traveler reader has been worth of consideration because he can be regarded as a moving perspective through the novel during his journey. However, for the idea of availability, he is not able to perceive the text as a whole, so he collects the experiences he lives. According to the wandering viewpoint, comprehension occurs step by step in the reading process, thus the aesthetic object cannot be represented by its incomplete aspects; then a synthesis is needed, as the intersection of sentences which become correlates in the addressee's mind. In this act, protensions and retentions are formulated and constantly modified. Finally, this kind of point of view proves the presence of the reader in the text, even though the potential is not fully realized, for its inexhaustibility.

Lastly, interpretation is believed to be the search of an intention, being that of the author, text or reader: it has been explained that to some extent there are many possible interpretations of texts, notwithstanding the intention has been specified; this may lead to the degree of indeterminacy which will be investigated in the following paragraph.

1.3 The reader: the addressee of the text

The great innovation Iser introduced in the field of theories of literature consists in the changing of perspective for which the reader's oriented concept focuses on the receiver of the text, rather than on the text itself. On the basis of Jauss's ideas, the theory of reception places its main character in the middle of the literary work and it tries to investigate how he processes and experiences the events of the act of reading. One of the utmost significant implications consisted in the fact that the traditional approach paid attention to the author's intention, as well as to the search for a particular meaning in the text and the way it was built, so that it did not realize that the work gains meaning only when it is read, which seems obvious enough and for this reason it has been taken for granted and ignored. Thus, reading becomes "the essential precondition for all the processes of literary interpretation" (Iser, 1978: 20) which is confirmed by Walter Slatoff's words:

One feels a little foolish having to begin by insisting that works of literature exist, in part, in order to be read, that we do in fact read them, and that it is worth thinking about what happens when we do. […] Equally obvious, perhaps, is the observation that works of literature are important and worthy of study essentially because they can be read and can endanger responses in human beings (Iser, 1978: 20).

We are now to tackle with the central point of discussion of this chapter which focuses on the reader, the fictitious character of the act of reading, and his crucial relationship with the text, within which he accomplishes his duties and his role.

1.3.1   Interaction between structure and recipient

To begin with, in the study of a literary work it might be taken into consideration both the real text and the actions to respond to it: an interesting example is the production of the subject that takes place through an act of concretization. Then the text is believed to present two poles: the artistic one that is the author's text, and the aesthetic one, the realization by the reader. This characteristic implies that the literary work cannot be identical to the text, nor to its realization, therefore it stands between the two; what is more, it is also endowed with great dynamism, brought about by the virtuality of being neither reduced to the reality of the text, nor to the reader's subjectivity. In *The Implied Reader,* the author adds that owing to the convergence of text and reader, the literary work is brought into existence and this meeting point remains virtual because it does not find any appropriate correspondence. As a result, the active character in the text explores it passing through its perspectives, he relates its elements and creates patterns, setting the work in motion, as well as provoking the awakening of responses inside himself.

In the light of Laurence Sterne's comment in *Tristram Shandy*, the literary text is compared to an arena where reader and author take part in a game of the imagination: as stated before, if the former already knew the whole story, he would not act and his imagination would be useless, which would lead to boredom; on the contrary, "A literary text must therefore be conceived in such a way that it will engage the reader's imagination in the task of working things out for himself, for reading is only a pleasure when it is active and creative" (Iser, 1974: 275). Hence, it has been demonstrated that the interaction between text and reader produces the actualization of the work.

Now, Iser insists saying that if the focus was on the author or on the reader's psychological involvement, the reading process would be left apart once again; we have to bear in mind the relationship between the work's virtuality and two participants. If they were acting like receiver and transmitter, sharing the same code and establishing an accurate communication, there would be evidence that their relationship is true, for the message would only be conveyed one way; but in literature it is expressed in two ways because "the reader 'receives' it by composing it" (Iser, 1978: 21) and there is no common code, unless it arises during the reading process. At this point, there emerges some structures that allow the description of interaction. The German author firmly believes that even though they are in the text, they do fulfill their function when they have an impact on the reader; for this reason, they reveal the verbal aspect, which enables the reaction to be spontaneous, and the affective aspect, that concerns what has been anticipated by language in the text. When these aspects come into contact, the structures of effects, that is to say the text, and the structures of response, the reader, must be taken into account.

1.3.2   The degree of indeterminacy

In the study of interaction, a second point of discussion concerns the degree of indeterminacy of a text because it is responsible for the communication with the reader and its exhortation to participate. But before, we ought to clarify that fictional texts do not imitate reality, so they cannot display the total determinacy of existing objects. From here it derives that the text's indeterminacy invites the reader to participate in the production and in the comprehension of the work's intention, the *intentio operis* seen examining interpretation; in other words, these elements constitute the essential basis of communication. The fact that determinacy and indeterminacy have an impact on the relationship between text and reader it follows that comprehension cannot be defined as spontaneous; consequently, the experience of reading is generated by an interaction which is not private or arbitrary. Especially, with 'private' Iser refers to the reader's luggage of experience where he inserts the text, but in the reader-oriented perspective this implies that subjectivity belongs to a final stage in comprehension, or when the aesthetic effect is concerned with restructuring experience.

Turning to the nature of the literary text, it has been stated that its sentences do not correspond to the reality around them and for this reason Ingarden has invented the *intentionale Satzkorrelate,* the intentional sentence correlatives which are "component parts"

since they convey an idea, make observations and provide perspectives, but they do not constitute the whole text. He interestingly declares that:

> Sentence link up in different ways to form more complex units of meaning that reveal a very varied structure giving rise to such entities as a short story, a novel, a dialogue, a drama, a scientific theory… In the final analysis, there arises a particular world, with component parts determined in this way or that, and with all the variations that may occur within these parts − all this as a purely intentional correlative of a complex of sentences. If this complex finally forms a literary work, I call the whole sum of sequent intentional sentence correlatives the 'world presented' in the work (Iser, 1974: 276-277).

In this world, the correlatives establish connections that are not as much relevant as real statements, but the latter acquire their meaning through the interaction of the sentence correlatives. Moreover, in literature the sentences are about something that really exists, they come into contact, forming connections and achieving their aim in the text. At the same time, carrying information and comments, they give an anticipation of what is happening after and the very content of the text arises through a process set by the correlatives. Nevertheless, in literature expectations are not supposed to be fulfilled otherwise there would not be a proper individualization of it; in fact, readers feel that the confirmation of expectations is rather a disadvantage than a benefit for the comprehension of the text: once they are aware of the text's didactic purpose, they can only accept or reject what they are offered. As for the sentence correlatives, the expectations aroused are likely to impinge on each other so that they are necessarily modified during the reading act; to put it simply, they unfold a precise horizon which is then changed by the following sentences.

To continue, in *The Implied Reader* Iser briefly describes the moment when reading enters our memory: at first it is reduced and loses its original shape, but it can be recalled later in a different background so that the reader can develop unpredictable connections. Indeed, when he works out the unrefined information of the text, sentences and observations included, he is supposed to interrelate these new aspects and those emerged from the background, allowing a communication between past, present and future, thanks to memory and anticipations; in other words, he encourages the text to show its potential multiplicity of connections. As a result, the reader feels he is acting inside the events of the reading, as if he was touching reality; in addition, there is evidence of the fact that there are many reactions to texts due to the way literature fosters imagination and creativity in the readers' minds, what was called virtuality and dynamism, describing the interaction between structure and

recipient. This is also a confirmation that reading can be regarded as an assembly of perspectives, recollections and anticipations.

To sum up, it can be claimed that the process of reading, as far as interaction is concerned, is endowed with great dynamism because in the fulfillment of the potential of a text, anticipations and retrospections are put forth, expectations arise and are continually modified as the reader passes from one perspective to another. He is encouraged to participate and understand the text's intention, for this reason he is supposed to connect sentences and information and make them interact; since it would be better for the author not to reveal the whole picture of the text before the reader's eyes, imagination joins in to project the reality of the literary text. As a matter of fact, the written part provides the reader with the knowledge, and in turn he cares for the unwritten part by solving the indeterminacy of elements in the text. In conclusion, when the reader plays an active role in connecting and making the parts of the text interact with each other, the final result is the communication between the two and the transformation of the text into an experience for him. Indeterminacy moves from the unfamiliar world to the ground of anticipations and expectations, it leads to the search of meaning and to the individualization of the text, up to the point that the reading act becomes a true experience for the reader.

1.3.3   The reader's involvement

It has been repeated several times that in the relationship between text and reader, he is essential for the comprehension and realization of the literary work. The three main aspects of this interaction are the anticipation and retrospection of data, the transformation of the text as a living event and the feeling of being acting in real situations. However, during the reading process we know that the text depends on our presence in order to exist but we are not aware of what really happens to us: indeed, when we are particularly impressed and fascinated by a work of literature, we are excited and need to discuss about it. Rather, "we have undergone an experience, and now we want to know consciously *what* we have experienced" (Iser, 1974: 290).

The literary text is particularly efficient in bringing about what seems to be the familiar and then to deny it: it means that when we read our expectations and illusions are likely to be confirmed but at last we must reject them and re-orientate ourselves. Only when our first opinions are left behind and fall into the 'past', while the text becomes our 'present',

can we undertake the new experience of the text. Iser reports a fascinating quotation by George Bernard Shaw: "You have learnt something. That always feels at first as if you had lost something." (Iser, 1974: 291), as we are obliged to detach from our attitudes and beliefs if we want to discover the unfamiliar world of the literary text.

Besides, the process of incorporating the unfamiliar is commonly designated as the 'identification' of the reader with the written information, but Iser promptly disproves this idea in *The Implied Reader*. He begins by reasoning on the term which would rather indicate the affinities with the author, as the latter wants to communicate an experience and the approach towards it; therefore, the identification would better be conceived as a stratagem to evoke attitudes in the reader. Not only the reader participates during the act of reading, but he also feels that there is no distance between him and the text, or with the event narrated.

A clear example is advanced by a critic who comments on his reaction while reading *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë: he admitted he completely identified with the main character in all her adventures and misfortunes, forgetting about object observations and criticism. Similarly, Roland Barthes (Barthes, 1975: 4) asks himself if the pleasure felt by the writer while composing the text would be perceived by the reader too; the answer is that it is not completely ensured, for this reason the receiver has to look for it, for the space of enjoyment and the possibility to realize it. Georges Poulet tries to explain this kind of relationship: "Whenever I read, I mentally pronounce an *I*, and yet the *I* which I pronounce is not myself" (Iser, 1974: 292). This comes as an intermediate conclusion after claiming that, although it is the reader who is the active part in the process, the ideas presented in the text are brought about by the author. So, what the subject thinks has been inserted to him but since every idea obviously has a subject that thinks it, this thought is alien to the reader, because it belongs to the author who in turn is an alien subject too. As a result, the reader mentally produces 'I' in the reading act but it is not himself. It is rather the potential presence of the author and his opinions may be internalized by the reader who stops being alienated when he is aware that those ideas belong to the author. In this sense, communication is believed to depend on the disappearance of the author's life-story in the work and the reader's attitude in the reading act; the proper basis for the relationship between the two protagonists is achieved when thoughts are characterized by subjectivity in the reader.

What is more, if we take a look at his individuality and personality, we may recognize that they shift into the background, still existing, but they are replaced by these foreign thoughts. Then, according to Iser there happens a separation of the self because we introduce in ourselves something strange from the outside: on the one hand there is the alien 'me', on

the other hand there is the virtual 'me', or the real self that assumes different forms in conformity with the context and the impact of the literary text on him.

After that, the act of reading implies the understanding of something new and the discovery of something that could already been formulated in us and which has to be decoded through a capacity that arises automatically during this process. It can be compared to the study of a new hostile subject whose concepts have never been heard before, but gradually our imagination and mental faculties start to familiarize with them and to internalize these ideas, with the result that we unconsciously develop some particular mechanisms that allow us to be successful in processing, or deciphering them. It might be concluded that experiencing the production of meaning would mean bringing to light the unformulated and formulate ourselves by coming across something that was hidden: "there are ways in which reading literature gives us the chance to formulate the unformulated", as Iser declares (Iser, 1974: 294).

1.3.4   Categories of readers

Once we have determined the importance of the reader in the text to permit the communication with the text and to look for its meaning, we should now move to the classification and analysis of a few categories of readers which have been hypothesized in the theory of literature. There is evidence that the text is written to be read but the question is: which kind of reader is foreseen and expected?

1.3.4.1 Real reader and hypothetical reader

There are two main categories: the real reader and the hypothetical reader. On the one hand, the former is concerned with the history of responses which means that his reactions have been recorded and documented; he is awaken when we want to investigate how literary texts have been received by the reading public. Therefore, in a second moment he gives information about the attitudes and characteristics of that public, so that literature is believed to reflect the cultural code that influences the work's criticism, as well as the norms, tastes and preferences of that society. As a matter of fact, the concept of the real reader is strictly connected to the documentation collected through the years and for the time being we can dispose of a great corpus of reactions to literary works, dating back to the eighteenth century.

However, when one goes through these reactions, is he dealing with the reader himself or rather with the role that the author expected for him?

To answer this question we might consider the other category, the hypothetical reader, who is linked to the potential effect of the literary text and absorbs all possible actualizations. This category is divided into ideal reader, who does not exist objectively, and the contemporary reader. As for the latter, he exists but he is not likely to fit in a general description, due to his variety. In addition, another category may be mentioned, that of the psychological reader, based on heuristic qualities: he is evidently characterized by psychoanalysis' findings and postulated by Lesser and Holland. Despite this is not properly a literary type, it can be evaluated as a rather efficient figure since the reader seems to have a real existence.

At this point, the movement from the real to the hypothetical reader clarifies the search for the reader in the text because it might be a contemporary reader, who is real and historical and his presence is openly asserted; otherwise, we may deal with two sorts of hypothetical readers, the one emerged from social and historical knowledge of the time in which the text has been written, or the one supposed by the reader's role stated in the text.

1.3.4.2 The ideal reader

Let us now turn to an aspect worth of note: the concept of the ideal reader. First of all, we have to admit that it is fairly complicate to trace his origins, but to some extent it might be related to the critic and philologist's inventions. In spite of this, he remains a cultured reader because it is an impossible structure for literary communication: indeed, it would mean that he shares the same code and intentions of the author, thus making communication useless since it would be about things already known. It could be inferred then that the author is the only possible ideal reader, if it was not that he has already experienced what he has written in the text; thus being both author and ideal reader proves the limitations of this notion. A third point to discuss is another disadvantage regarding the ideal reader insofar as he is thought to be able to realize all the possible meanings of the text, a heroic adventure as the potential can be fulfilled in many distinct ways, at various times and after at least one reading. Not only must he perform this action, but he also has to do it exhaustively.

Lastly, the true essence of the ideal reader is his aspect of being a fictional character, oppositely to the contemporary reader, who has no roots in reality, therefore he can fill the

gaps that are encountered in the study of the literary effects and responses, and he shows the ability to solve whatever problem he is called to.

1.3.4.3 Heuristic readers

Furthermore, another category of readers may be added as it introduces a concept based on experience as a method of research for learning and sorting out situations: we are referring to the heuristic readers, theorized by Riffaterre, Fish and Wolff, aiming at specific areas of discussion and of criticism. Respectively, for the first linguist, his superreader is conceived as a group of informants who participate in challenging moments in the text, they exchange views on their responses and establish a 'stylistic fact', or a fact of responses; his role is to verify the stylistic fact in which his presence is absolutely fundamental for its formation. The second is the informed reader who is concerned with the description of the text's processing: in particular, the more he observes his reactions during the actualization, the more he acquires expertise. While reading, the sequence of responses brings to the production of the meaning that occurs in the surface level, this is the reason why each reader offers contrasting reactions. And thirdly, the most relevant characteristic of the intended reader is the ability to take on appropriate forms according to the text considered; moreover, he is a fictional character that displays the main traits of the contemporary public and the author's aim to reconstruct a guide through him.

Now, a question remains unanswered: why, a long time after the text has been composed, a reader can still find its meaning, or only one meaning, although he is not the intended reader? One possible intuition explains that the author of that time has been influenced by the historical conditions in which he was immersed and that were passed down to the image of the reader; however, if this allows us to understand the author's plan, we still miss the precise response by the addressee.

1.3.4.4 Characteristics of the fictitious reader

At this point of the discussion on the numerous types of reader supposed in the literary text, we may go into detail about the fictitious reader and the slight difference with his role. It seems necessary to remind that that he is present in the text by signals and that he is one of the textual perspectives, to which he is connected, like the narrator, the plot and the other characters. As a result, his role comes forth from their interaction for he has to mediate

between them. Nevertheless, the drawback of this figure is that he can only embody one perspective.

1.3.4.5 Implied reader

It has been illustrated that all categories and concepts of the reader impose limitations to their effectiveness and applicability. In few words, as for the real reader, his concept is closely related to the documents collected; the idea of the contemporary reader cannot be fully described but requires a large generalization which would not be appropriate; the ideal reader makes literary communication impossible as he is rather an idealized character; the heuristic readers' group does not say much about their practical role; thus, the fictitious reader is merely a structure of the text. This is the reason why Iser suggests that we should pass over the reader's character and his historical situation: the product would be the formation of the implied reader who is identified with all the features assumed by the literary text in order to ensure its effect.

Besides, he owes his origins to the text since he is a pure fictional character but, by anticipating the presence of an addressee, he is expected to fulfill his role and understand the literary text. It means that the implied reader indicates that there are structures that evoke the reader's participation to express his reactions.

In addition, he always assumes a particular part in the text insofar as his role is regarded both as a textual structure and as a structured act. With regard to the first aspect, in the world of the text that does not look like the real one and is built anew, there are many degrees of unfamiliarity for readers; these need to be placed in a position that eases actualization, a sort of privileged view, namely a vantage point, from which he is able to realize what he could have not from his perspective. What is more, he can also observe the four textual perspectives coming into contact and converging in a meeting point, or the meaning of the text. Of course, this two points are not visible in the text, they have to be imagined for they are generated during the reading process.

It could be concluded then that "the reader's role is prestructured by three basic components: the different perspectives represented in the text, the vantage point from which he joins them together, and the meeting place where they converge" (Iser, 1978: 36). Now, as the two points have to be imagined, the reader is forced to produce a sequence of mental images to build what is implied in the text, otherwise called the unsaid; using the words of Umberto Eco:

"Non-dit" signifie non manifesté en surface, au niveau de l'expression: mais c'est précisément ce non-dit qui doit être actualisé au niveau de l'actualisation du contenu. Ainsi un texte, d'une façon plus manifeste que tout autre message, requiert des mouvements coopératifs actifs et conscients de la part du lecteur (Eco, 1985: 65).

Lastly, the concept of the reader is deemed to be an expression of the role offered by the text, it does not derive from a real reader but in turn it is the force that influences a tension produced by the reader when he accepts his role. In this tension, two selves are generated, the role and the reader's attitude, and it comes to light because one can never overcome the other. Generally speaking, the reader's role is likely to prevail; notwithstanding this, his disposition is not to disappear as it serves as background and frame of reference in order for the receiver to access the text and understand it. In fact, it is thanks to the readers' experiences that contrasting interpretations are put forth. Even though we may not be aware of these unconscious events, they are to guide us and in the end we will feel that we would be pleased to include them in our personal learning.

In conclusion, we are provided with different actualizations of a text, depending on historical and individual circumstances, and there is always a selection behind the fulfillment of the structure of the text: this one can convey information about the frame of reference where individual reactions can be communicated. As a consequence, the concept of the implied reader furnishes a connection between historical and individual actualization of the text that can be analysed.

To sum up, the notion of this new figure contrasts with the other ideas of the reader because, even though he is not a real character, he shows a strong connection with the text: firstly, the implied reader comes from it and is invited to participate so as to disclose his reactions; secondly, he is expected to produce mental images for the unsaid to be conceived; and thirdly, he provides a link for the actualizations of the text. Interestingly, a comparison with the hypothetical reader would be a stimulating point of discussion as they are the two concepts that most resemble each other. In particular, they both absorb the possible actualizations or dispositions postulated in the text because they are supposed to fill in the textual structure, grasping and finding a meaning, and formulating their own interpretation; then, we deal with two fictional characters, even if the hypothetical reader could also be real when he is considered as a contemporary reader. Anyway, his fictitious counterpart, the ideal reader, is believed either to emerge from historical and social knowledge, while the implied reader tries to avoid social and historical implications, though he is to link them with personal

actualizations at the end of the reading process; or he is bound to be deduced from the indications on his role, like the implied reader who is an expression of it offered in the text.

1.3.4.6 Psychoanalytical category

We are here to examine the theory of reception and response from a psychoanalytical point of view so as to verify if psychology could actually have influences in the reading process and provide original suggestions to the subject.

To begin with, the theory of Norman Holland considers literature more as an experience related to other events, than as a simple form of communication or as a happening belonging to the past; for this reason, he wants to investigate the way in which reactions are evoked in the text, using the terms borrowed by psychoanalysis. One of the strongest points of his reasoning is that meaning is a dynamic process, characterizing literature and its works: "they transform the unconscious fantasy discoverable through psychoanalysis into the conscious meaning discovered by conventional interpretation" (Iser, 1978: 41), that is to say that psychoanalytical meaning stands at the basis as it is concerned with the reader's unconscious. For instance, Holland refers to the story *The Wife of Bath*, written by Chaucer in *The Canterbury Tales:* he claims that there are different layers of significance, like the historical and social meaning, and the psychoanalytical one too, which is the essential element to look for because it allows the transformation of the unconscious imagination into the conscious reality. Moreover, this aspect plays a crucial role in the formation of the text for it can be understood according to the psychological lines of the reader, so that meaning will be communicated by the text reflecting his psychological elements, or by the reader himself who will be aware of his own processes of reaction.

However, Iser highlights the drawbacks of this theory admitting that nothing new is brought to the reader due to the reflection of his features; so he begins searching for the meaning only when it is obscure, when he feels attracted by the need to familiarize the unfamiliar. With regard to literature, Holland believes that it provides the audience with relief insofar as it may provoke disturbing feeling but it also conveys a solution to suppress and overcome them; as a result, the reader will find satisfaction. According to his words:

> When literature 'pleases', it, too, lets us experience a disturbance, then it masters it, but the disturbance is a fantasy rather than an event or activity. This pattern of disturbance and mastery distinguishes our pleasures in play and literature from simple sensuous pleasures" (Iser, 1978: 43).

This concept is fairly represented by gothic literature: in fact, its purpose is to introduce supernatural events when they are not expected so that they produce a feeling of anxiety and fear in the reader; he is troubled by the story which seems to affect both the protagonist and himself. Obscure thoughts and mystery unsettle him until the novel unfolds the plot and he solves the case.

At this moment, we can agree with Holland on the fact that literature relieves our soul and gives us comfort by governing our unconscious. An excellent example is drawn by Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde:* through all the story the reader is pervaded by contrasting emotions, perturbation and feelings of disgust; he feels repulsion owing to the dark events which appeal to his subconscious and increase his sense of unease. But this lasts until facts come to light and the lawyer Utterson discovers about Jekyll's transformations into Mr. Hyde and his final tragedy; what the reader feels now is relief and peace of mind. Likewise, in *Lector in fabula* Umberto Eco talks about the power of a sign to produce an emotional interpreter, for instance while listening to music: it is our reaction to its charm which also implies a mental and muscular effort, which can be defined as an energetic interpretation.

Leaving Holland apart, we should now turn to the other psychological theory advanced by Simon O. Lesser. He formulates a system of communication based on psychoanalytical elements: the reader must appeal to the superego, then the ego and the id to enter the world of fiction; besides, the more they are involved, the more the text acquires relevance, but this engagement necessitates that the requests made by the literary work should be ciphered in order to produce an effect upon the reader. Indeed, if they were too direct, they would not affect him. Influence is increased by overlapping, disguising and exchanging directions intended for the opening of a conflict between superego, ego and id which may lead to a relative break in the components of the psyche. As a result, the reader will perceive "a sort of liberation because, during the period of our reading, we can free ourselves from the censorship operative within the established hierarchy of the psyche" (Iser, 1978: 45).

Lastly, the reader is engaged in a similar situation when he finds an overdetermined text because it may convey various meanings, so that the receivers would imagine that there are several layers of significance, seemingly arisen from the degree of indeterminacy of the text. In order for the work to be understood, the reader is invited and is also able to relate these different levels in many ways. In conclusion, the literary text will uplift him from the pressure of experience in such a manner that the repressed will come to light; it would then be evident that when the reader is expected to produce the meaning under unfamiliar

circumstances, rather than in his comfort zone, he is to put forward a trait of his personality that he had not managed to do before, being aware of it.

Now, we should turn the attention to the communication with the text, which has slightly been analysed in terms of textual strategies to guide the reader in the formation of the aesthetic object, as well as the system of reference implied to decipher the unfamiliar elements of the text; furthermore, it has already been introduced with regards to the interaction between structure and recipient. However, there are other aspects which are worth considering.

1.4   Functionalist communication with and within the text

In the process of examining a text, the reader's frame of reference is engaged so as to enter the fictitious world of literature; it is defined as 'fictitious' because it does not indicate reality but wants to express something about it which is not present yet. Therefore the receiver of the literary work is concerned with "what literature *does* and not with what it *means*" (Iser, 1978: 53). It follows that fiction and reality are connected to communicate and to reveal some aspects of reality. As fiction is not made of reality and it cannot be identical to the message it is to convey, the focus moves to the addressee and the interaction with the text, in particular to its effects rather than on its meaning, that is to say to the function of literature. According to this functionalist perspective, finding the effectiveness of the text may be described as assuming the pragmatic point of view observing how signs are related to the text.

Towards the end of our discussion on the act of reading, in the analysis of the reader and of his role in the literary work language becomes another interesting element for the communication with the text, thus its characteristics and nature need to be explored.

Firstly, as language consists of signs, which are inevitably linked to syntax and semantics in writing, it takes on a pragmatic essence and its failure or success is influenced by certain factors, studied by the speech-act theory of common language. In fiction, the linguistic act is a simple attempt to understand the text or what it aims to convey relating the receiver to the text; for this reason we need to investigate the production of reality through language. J. L. Austin's concept of communication looks at linguistic acts not as symbols, words, sentences or tokens of them, but rather as the production and issuance of these components of the speech-act event; as a consequence the speech-act constitutes the basic unit of communication to the extent that it organizes the signs and affects the way they will be

received. So far, we may deduce that the speech-act theory introduces a new idea of linguistic acts because they are deemed as utterances with a particular purpose and placed in a precise context from where they take on their meaning; thus, the text's pragmatics is fully realized when there is a great variety of contexts to be brought into play.

In addition, the English linguist suggests that there are two sorts of linguistic utterances: on the one hand, there is the "constative" statement, which is about facts and is evaluated as true or false; on the other hand, there is the "performative" statement which originates an action that is esteemed as successful or failing, and it begins to exist when the utterance is produced. It appears to have a more practical aspect, also indicated by the term itself which denotes doing something, instead of telling something about it; in fact, the verb 'to perform' is usually followed by the noun 'action', so that the moment we pronounce a sentence, we carry out an action.

After that, Austin distinguishes between three speech-acts in the performative utterance because they may have different control on the intended effect and they guide to various types of performance. First, there is the *locutionary act*, or the action of commonly pronouncing a sentence with a particular meaning; in other words, the "group of things we do in saying something"; second, the *illocutionary act* consists in warning, informing and ordering, like producing sentences with a certain force through which it generates the type of access, attentiveness and reaction on the reader; third, the *perlocutionary act* is achieved by saying something, for instance when we persuade, convince and surprise that occurs when the sentence produces the intended effect and right consequence on the reader. For these characteristics the two last types are relevant for pragmatics of the text, so when the addressee's responses give proof that the speaker's intentions have perfectly been received, then the conditions for the linguistic act to succeed are completely fulfilled because they would share the same conventions and procedures (cf. Iser, 1978: 57).

Secondly, Austin firmly believes that the poetic utterance is empty because it does not create a linguistic action as it shows the qualities of the performative act but they are enacted incorrectly, which means that like the illocutionary act, literature aims at informing and denoting but what is said is different from what is meant. Iser takes the example of Hamlet insulting Ophelia and he comments that in this episode literature imitates a speech act but it would be declared by the English expert as void because the production of Hamlet's words does not correspond to his intention. However, Iser argues that the audience does not notice this lack of reality and Hamlet is indeed awakening the real knowledge of situations, events and relationships within the spectators, so that the fictional world of the linguistic act could be

left apart, in favour of the real environment in which the public is enabled to experience emotions and sensations, contrasting with what Austin claims.

Thirdly, the literary linguistic act seems like the illocutionary one for the want to inform, but is has a different function; nevertheless, Iser suggests that even if it does not generate real actions in real situations, this does not deprive it of its effect, even though it may be less successful than the explicit and performative statement and cannot be called an action. In few words, fictional language displays the basic characteristics of the illocutionary act; it refers to conventions that he carries with it and assigns procedures, namely the textual strategies to guide the reader in the comprehension of the selection operating behind the text; finally, it seems a "performance" because the reader is expected to discover the code of the selection and thus, creates the meaning. "…it takes on an *illocutionary force,* and the potential effectiveness of this not only arouses attention but also guides the reader's approach to the text and elicits responses to it" (Iser, 1978: 62).

1.5 Conclusion to the theories on the act of reading

In this initial part we have analysed the main aspects of the process of reading, in particular the act of dealing with a literary text. Especially, it has been pointed out how meaning is to be produced through textual strategies, with the organization of unfamiliar elements in the text; the process of grasping a text has been described with reference to the two poles of communication, namely the structured act and textual structures that guide the reader in the search of meaning. After that, the receiver has been depicted as a traveler and his wandering point of view seeks for the aesthetic object and tries to advance his own interpretation of the work; a brief look has been given to the intentions of the text and to the literary movements which suggest innovative approaches to study interpretation.

In a third moment, we have tackled with the fictional presence of the reader acting in the literary space, regarded either as the real participant, and the recipient or addressee of the author's message. In particular, the interaction with the text has been examined in terms of actualization and expectations of what he is supposed to do and how he participates. As for this, he is exhorted to solve the degree of indeterminacy which influences the relationship with the text: anticipations, suppositions and sensations of being playing in a real situation. Indeed, these elements characterise his involvement in the text, to which the identification with the author is added, but it has been demonstrated that it can be overcome once the reader

realizes that those are not his thoughts, but the writer's. As a result, he may as well discover something unfamiliar in the surrounding reality and inside himself too.

Categories of readers followed in the discussion and there aroused the predominant distinction between real and hypothetical reader, the latter dividing into ideal and contemporary; we considered the heuristic readers, in the forms of superreader, informed reader and intended reader; and a few features of this fictional character have been highlighted in contrast to his role in the text. Consequently, we have dealt we the implied reader, an extraordinary character who absorbs the work's possible realizations, and we ended with the psychoanalytical category, in accordance with the theories of Holland and Lesser. Lastly, literary language has been explored in its fictitious nature, utterances and linguistic acts, where three relevant types have been remarked.

Now, as a conclusion to this theoretical part based on the theories of linguists and philosophers, we should ask ourselves why the common reader decides to take a book in his hands and start reading: what is the reason of his action? What brings him to continue the reading experience? As for this, Iser can explain it again by declaring that when the text allows the subject to use his mental faculties and systems of reference, he starts producing his realization and feels active; if it were too explicit, he would not derive any enjoyment. On the contrary, if it were too hostile he would give up his reading: boredom and overstrain are considered to be the limits for the reader's dedication. In fact, a pact is signed, as Sartre believes:

> When a work is produced, the creative act is only an incomplete, abstract impulse; if the author existed all on his own, he could write as much as he liked, but his work would never see the light of day as an object, and he would have to lay down his pen in despair. The process of writing, however, includes as a dialectic correlative the process of reading, and these two independent acts require two differently active people. The combined effects of author and reader bring into being the concrete and imaginary object which is the work of the mind. Art exists only for and through other people (Iser, 1978: 109).

As for the reason that moves the reader, the pleasure of reading is the perfect answer: Roland Barthes has dedicated a work to this subject where he not only reveals that writing has to long for the reader and he has to feel desired by the text, but he also describes two ways of reading. The first one concentrates on the general meaning of the text, avoiding the shades of language; the second one does not leave anything apart, it examines words, it is entailed in the text and captures each detail of language. In this kind of reading, its essence is willing to overcome the limits of the written word. Moreover, he distinguishes between texts of pleasure

and texts of enjoyment. On the one hand, the former gives satisfaction, euphoria and peace, in connection with culture and a slow reading; on the other hand, the latter makes you feel you are missing something, thus you are not at ease and passes judgment on history, culture and psyche, as well as on the strength of the reader's tastes, values and memories. Finally, it also questions the relationship with language.

Barthes continues his manifesto of the pleasure of reading claiming that it occurs when the body follows the thoughts; pleasure is satisfaction and enjoyment is deficiency, therefore sometimes pleasure agrees with enjoyment, some other times they are in contrast. What is more, in a psychoanalytical point of view, the text of pleasure can be described because writer and reader accept the letter itself and are fascinated by language: they can talk about the text for the letter is their pleasure. On the contrary, the text of enjoyment cannot be delineated. As a confirmation, criticism is always concerned with texts of pleasure because of their quality of being explicable. Likewise, we can talk about the pleasure of the text when it turns into a practice in the space and time of the reading act: "the greater the culture, the more the pleasure, cleverness, delicacy, irony, euphoria, mastery and security: the art of living" (Barthes, 1975: 50). In conclusion, the self becomes stronger, whereas the unconscious becomes cloudy because the text of enjoyment is made of pieces of language, pleasure and culture; it has no purpose as it does not necessarily lead to pleasure but could bring boredom; therefore, it is traceable within the void, movements and unpredictable happenings.

Chapter 2

Reading and studying a text in a foreign language

This second part moves towards the belief that studying literature can be considered as a means of learning a foreign language and towards the perspective of the reader dealing with literary texts. In order to understand the work he is submitted, the fictitious character who is now becoming alive and assuming the characteristics of a real student, needs to access the written world and to be familiar with an innovative expressive vehicle which is considerably different from his first language. For this reason, this chapter is dedicated to the main aspects of second language acquisition (SLA) and psycholinguistics. In particular we will explore language acquisition theories, factors that influence language learning, input and output processes. Besides, we will also look at the role of language instruction, relevant differences among students and types of learning, which can be implicit or explicit and incidental or intentional. In the end, there will be evidence that reading can turn into an effective method to expand vocabulary knowledge as well as improve language learning competences.

2.1 The environments: language and learning requirements

To introduce the exploration on the acquisition of a second language we may start with the basic components and mechanisms involved in this lifelong programme, that is to say the most important organ for human faculties, the brain, and the way it works, processes information and acquires new data.

2.1.1   The human hardware: the brain

With regard to psycholinguistic involvement in language acquisition, contributions have been suggested by neurology which studied the brain lateralization and the fact that the two halves of the cerebral cortex, the right and the left, have different and specific functions.

Psychology has advanced that the left hemisphere deals with analytical thought, sequences and logic reasoning; conversely, the right hemisphere is concerned with creative

and emotional tasks, but also with memory processes, referring to the way it stores information which can be recollected later.

As for neurolinguistics, it examines how language is represented in the left hemisphere and how the different kinds of messages are elaborated, which give rise to the notion of brain bimodality and directionality. In particular, the bimodal nature of our brain shows that both the hemispheres are involved in language learning: the left one for its analytical approach and the right one for its global or holistic perspective. Indeed, during language learning process, the initial phase of motivation is characterized by interest and curiosity that belong to the right part of the brain and are jointed together for the fulfillment of necessities coming from the left part. Consequently there occurs a global analysis of the input, followed by analytical study of the language and a conclusive synthesis ends the process.

Similarly, the principle of directionality shows that, first of all, human brain deals with emotional elements contained in the text, the interest aroused and the new aspects of foreign language and culture: they are all components of the right hemisphere. In a second moment, it takes a look at professional and personal needs connected with the left hemisphere; after that, context and cultural references are provided for the reading of the text, a modality of the right brain, so that the student can subsequently concentrate on language forms through grammatical exercises and explanations, which are left brain's competences.

The active subject is endowed with a mechanism for linguistic acquisition, the *Language Acquisition Device* (LAD) hypothesized by Chomsky, which is reinforced by the *Language Acquisition Support System* (LASS) embodied by the family as a support in first language learning, as well as by teachers and schoolmates, and by society for the second language. The LAD is constituted of five moments: the student observes the communicative and linguistic input; he formulates some hypothesis on the functioning of a particular mechanism; he examines them and finds a confirmation or correction with the help of adults. Then, he tries to memorize it through activities of rehearsal; he carefully considers the studied event with someone who guides him, like adults or teachers at school. According to Chomsky, the LAD is hard-wired in our genetic makeup and has no connection with other cognitive functions.

2.1.2   Krashen's Theoretical Model

Stephen Krashen, an American linguist and educational expert, has tried to analyse the process of second language acquisition and the ways in which students can develop their linguistic competences. One of his most remarkable achievements is the construction of the Theoretical Model based on five hypothesis which not only explain the way language is internalized in the human brain, but it also explores the processes of word recollection, the existence of a precise order of acquisition, the role of self-correction and personal awareness of what happens in the speech act.

2.1.2.1 The Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

First of all, he distinguishes between acquisition and learning. On the one hand, the former indicates that in SLA language is used to communicate, like children do in learning their first language. It is a natural way and, most of all, it is implicit and subconscious since students are not completely aware that they are acquiring a language, but they are simply communicating. Likewise, when they make a mistake they may not be able to recognize which rule has been infracted, but they feel that there is something wrong: it means that processes and results of language acquisition are subconscious. On the other hand, learning corresponds to the formal knowledge of the language which is conscious and refers to the explicit recognition of grammatical rules, enabling subjects to talk about them.

Naturally, teaching may foster competences' development but results show that it is particularly appropriate for language learning, which aims at raising intense awareness of language correctness. Conversely, it cannot be applied to language acquisition because it does not seem to be effective. For instance, parents tend to correct only a part of children's language because they focus on what is said rather than on its form; with the passing of time children will formulate their hypothesis on language functioning and will be able to correct themselves autonomously.

2.1.2.2 The Natural Order Hypothesis

Secondly, Krashen firmly believes that in acquiring a second language, grammatical structures follow a predictable order and appear at different moments. According to him,

The natural order hypothesis does not state that every acquirer will acquire grammatical structures in the exact same order. It states rather that, in general, certain structures tend to be acquired early and to be acquired late. It also allows the possibility that structures may be acquired in groups, several at about the same time (Krashen and Terrell, 1983: 28).

For example, a study conducted by Brown shows that children learning English as a first language tend to acquire some morphemes or function words generally early and others generally late. In particular, the progressive tense morpheme *–ing* and plural formation with *–s* emerge earlier than the third person singular morpheme *–s* or the *'s* possessive maker, which are acquired up to a year after. A similar result has been obtained with children acquiring English as a second language (ESL) with different language background: both Chinese and Spanish subjects produced the same difficulty with particular function words and grammatical morphemes. Finally, adult acquirers of English as a second language confirmed the natural order of acquisition of grammar rules.

It can be concluded that first language's natural order of acquisition does not properly correspond to that of second language but similarities enable us to present an average order of acquisition. Firstly, we find the *–ing,* plural *–s* and copula morphemes which are followed by the auxiliary, i.e. the progressive form, and articles *a* and *the*. After, regular and irregular past, third person singular and possessive morphemes are acquired. In addition, for adult students this natural order seems to be realized when the focus is on communication and not on grammar tests. This well introduces the third point of Krashen's model: the presence of an individual monitor.

2.1.2.3 The Monitor Hypothesis

As stated above, the Monitor is considered as an editor which corresponds to conscious learning when the adult is involved in second language performance: when he speaks, the sentence is mentally generated by the acquired system and after that conscious learning intervenes, which can occur before the utterance has been pronounced or written. If it happens after, it is called a self-repair. Krashen emphasizes that acquisition and natural picking up of elements are responsible for the speaker's fluency coming from communicative situations we have experienced. Thus, our formal learning is implied only as far as correction of the output is concerned. As a consequence, the Monitor has remarkable limits and three basic conditions must be satisfied to grant success: the subject needs some time to think about rules, he has to

focus on form and be concerned with correctness, and he is expected to know the grammatical rules.

Generally speaking, the Monitor reflects the most frequent errors of children's acquired systems because when they are communicating they do not make total use of conscious knowledge. Besides, children and adults produce the same results. As a revealing conclusion, the Monitor Hypothesis does not exclude acquisition from self-correction because it is implied both in first and second language; the crucial point is that this function is strongly connected to learning and it cannot generate language production.

Furthermore, the Monitor is believed to perform better in simple sentences with regard to word formation processes and semantic properties. More precisely, it may refer to easy rules such as the attachment of final *–s* for the third person singular because it does not require complex movements like inversion in the sentence, which occurs with *wh-* questions. It also regards semantic implications, like English determiners which depend on the context. In the light of this suggestion, we can understand why late acquired third person singular rule causes problems even to advanced learners of ESL when the Monitor is not completely used. On the contrary, they may turn into proficient performers in written texts and prepared speech.

2.1.2.4 The Input Hypothesis

It assumes that learners acquire language by understanding input that is placed after their current level of competence: in other words, "in order for acquirers to progress to the next stages in the acquisition of the target language, they need to understand input language that includes structure that is part of the next stage" (Krashen and Terrell, 1983: 32). It can be represented by *i+1* where *i* stands for the acquired level of competence and *+1* represents the succeeding stage in the natural order. Clearly, the student is helped by context, extra-linguistic information and visual aids to grasp the meaning of these new structures; then, the teacher will ensure that students have actually got the idea of the message conveyed. By so doing, the input *i+1* will be covered spontaneously.

We can now give a brief anticipation for caretakers' modification of input where the focus is on communication and input comprehension. While speaking to children, adults tend to simplify their language in order to help them acquire language rather quickly: this kind of speech aims to communicate, so it is about present situations, the structure is notably simple and the older the child, the more complex the speech. As the child grows up, adults' speech

will become more organized in terms of functional structures, time and space. Similarly, in natural conversation, the foreigner's talk and the teacher's talk are two forms of input modification because the native speaker makes use of repetitions, restatements, simplification of questions and he slows down his speech, as well as classroom's explanations tuned to students' level. Interlanguage talk between different second language acquirers may be useful for acquisition as it could contain additional input to increase language acquisition.

In relation to the Input Hypothesis, the silent period gives evidence of the fact that linguistic competence is acquired through listening, while speaking abilities arise only when the input is processed and understood. As a matter of fact, in second language acquisition the subject is bound to say very little after the first months of exposure because he has not developed any acquired system yet; when he pronounces whole sentences, it must be the case of expressions learned by heart without knowing their meaning.

Further research has concentrated on the correct methodology to support language acquisition and it has been observed that either audio-lingual and grammar-translation methods are important for language learning. However, results show that students perform better with methods based on direct input, like the innovative Total Physical Response technique. It consists of obeying the teacher's commands given in the target language starting from simple imperatives to more complex sentences and involving an active movement. By so doing, students are not forced to speak and production comes about after ten hours of input, more or less, so that they break the silent period. As a confirmation, a 1972 study reported that after 32 hours of Total Physical Response adult learners of German performed the same as students who were exposed to 150 hours of college instruction, in a listening test; language acquisition had incredibly developed.

2.1.2.5 The Affective Filter Hypothesis

Last but not least, there are affective variables which greatly influence language acquisition, such as motivation and good self-image. They are responsible for excellent or disastrous performance in second language because the lower the anxiety levels, the more satisfying the output. Particularly relevant for acquisition, when the affective filter is low students feel to be motivated, they have an appropriate image of themselves in their mind so they assume a correct attitude and feel at ease. At the same time, they are to receive more input because an acquirer with a lower filter will retain more. This is an astounding finding because it makes

teachers aware that optimal input is needed but it should be provided in a relaxing atmosphere where students are motivated and involved in activities, otherwise acquisition will not occur.

In neurolinguistics terms, the affective filter is a defensive stratagem activated by anxiety, fear of being wrong and ridicule. In fact, in situations of emotional significance and motivational relevance the human brain responds to cognitive stimuli and adrenaline turns into noradrenaline, a neurotransmitter which eases data storage. But in stressful emotional states, a steroid is introduced and blocks the noradrenaline, creating a conflict between the amygdala, an emotive gland, and the hippocampus, which is responsible for the activation of the prefrontal cortex to enhance information assemblage in long-term memory.

Krashen specifies that the concept of affective filter and the importance of lowering it is the main goal of the Natural Approach he hypothesized. Students "should begin to develop confidence in their ability to comprehend the target language as well as have a positive attitude towards acquiring a new language in general" (Krashen and Terrell, 1983: 91). The image below is a representation of this final hypothesis of the Theoretical Model.
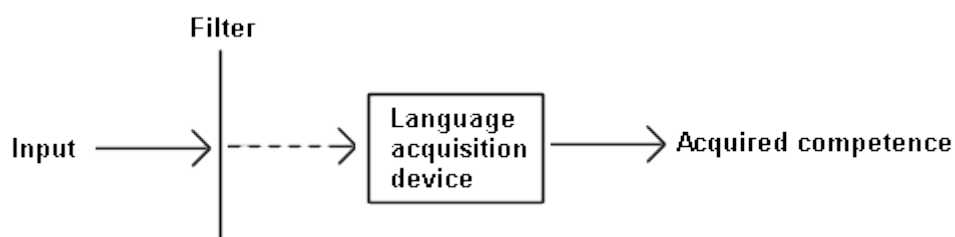
2.1.3 Language learning requirements

As far as the study of a second language is concerned, we are now to ask ourselves how learning takes place and which information learners need in order to build their formal knowledge.

To begin with, we find the difference between nature and nurture. Nature shows the possibility that learners may own innate knowledge about the language, namely the Universal Grammar, a structure which enables them to learn language, or "the child's prelinguistic state", as Chomsky puts it. While nurture refers to the development of linguistic abilities thanks to the influence with the environment, where learners engage in interactions with other people.

In addition, another type of information that learners must own to build their L2 grammar corpus is the notion of evidence in language learning. In her essay published in *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition*, Susan M. Glass postulates positive, negative and indirect negative evidence. Positive evidence is defined as the most direct way inspiring hypothesis on language functioning and it is the assembling of correct sentences to which the learner is exposed; he has access to them by oral conversations and written texts. It is also a fundamental requirement for L2 learning and can be extrapolated from authentic material; when it is modified, it can be simplified or elaborated by the participants of the conversation. On the contrary, negative evidence is concerned with the incorrectness of sentences which is shared with learners. It can be pre-emptive, thus anticipating an error, or reactive; when it is reactive, it can be explicit, like an overt correction, or implicit, as in the form of communicative interruption or recasts, where grammatical changes are suggested. As it has been stated before, explicit evidence may not be useful for first language learners because it stems the natural formation of hypothesis; similarly, for second language students, only positive evidence offers relevant contribution. Besides, the third kind of information required is clearly input, to which a specific section is to be dedicated.

2.1.3.1 The role of input

In the history of language learning, input has been considered from different perspectives and theories have widely speculated on its nature and role. For early twentieth century views, the received input was the only element where language acquisition could be based on because the child would have learnt by imitation. In Bloomfield's opinion "Each member of the social group must upon suitable occasion utter the proper speech-sounds and, when he hears another utter these speech-sounds, must make the proper *response*" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 228). These speech habits and responses are in turn imitated by children in the first years of life, which makes the process of learning a language deeply connected to the stimuli-response notion and habit formation. Indeed, a few American psychologists believe that "learning is the forming of associations between sense impressions (stimuli – S) and impulses to action (response – R)" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 350), for example, learning first and second language word pairs or verbal chains which are naturally word associations.

Interestingly, in SLA particular problems and difficulties may arise from the first language acquired system of references and dispositions. However, the role of input has been recently reduced, as some approaches still regard it as significantly important for acquisition

but it interacts with innate structures. For example, Krashen's Input Hypothesis focuses on comprehensible input which is essential for language acquisition and less important in information processing.

2.1.3.2 Modification of input

It seems logical that input needs to be modified according to stages of language development, ages and functions; for this reason, at early stages the most appropriate communicative aim is to learn vocabulary, basic semantic structures and pragmatic functions. When the linguistic task becomes more complex, a more demanding speech pays attention to morphology and syntax. Correspondingly, in second language learning, modification is applied in order to make input comprehensible and ensure acquisition; it happens that in a mixed class of English native and non-native speakers tasks and rules are differentiated.

The following example of Kleifgen's research gives a confirmation of this: each native speaker was told a different instruction, as drawing "a great big pointed hat"; an intermediate-level speaker of Urdu was told "No her hat is big. Pointed."; to a low-intermediate-level native speaker of Arabic "See hat? Hat is big. Big and tall."; further modifications are made for a beginning-level native speaker of Japanese "big, big, big hat" and finally for a beginning-level native speaker of Korean "baby sitter. Baby" (for further insights see Doughty and Long, 2003: 230-231). It can be concluded that the nature of input is greatly modified and adjusted to the acquirer's language development and perceived level of proficiency.

2.1.3.3 Processing input and information

Several models of processing information have been analysed in language theories and they are useful to understand how the human brain recollects and stores data. Marslen and Wilson's cohort model of oral comprehension suggests that words detectors are activated the moment in which the utterance begins and they search for the words beginning with the same acoustic sequence. The following input is observed and mismatches are removed until a single word remains, which is helped by syntactic and semantic contexts. Similarly, serial models or search models look for the word equivalence making use of phonological, orthographic and semantic cues, and the retrieval of the whole word come next with morpho-syntactic, lexical and phonological aspects. Of course, this mode of processing information takes longer than

the previous one and is much more complicated than Chomsky's LAD based on the creation and evaluation of hypothesis.

The third model to be mentioned is the connectionist and parallel distributed processing which refers to the brain's linking of synapses: likewise, information travel horizontally from one element of the communicative act to another creating a chaining process, where phonemes, morphemes, syntax and lexicon are considered at the same time. Nevertheless, information travel bottom up, that is to say from linguistic units of speech or text, to semantic concepts that represent our expectations on what is going to happen in a situation; moreover, they move top-down, from the concept to the textual surface conveying meaning.

We can infer that there are several views on speech processing and text's comprehension: it may be a bottom-up model, from phones or morphemes, to syllables and words; a bottom-up priority view which needs some evidence before lexical and semantic information are brought in; the top down approach, a sort of expectancy grammar for which the reader is able to anticipate what word or sentence will come next. And finally, the interactive model where all sources of information, both from the context and from the single linguistic unit, are to influence the way speech is received and processed.

In conclusion, further suggestions have been offered by VanPatten who conducted a study on input processing within a pedagogical context (Doughty and Long, 2003: 231). Two models were submitted: the first presented grammatical information to the learner and then it was observed; the second presented input only before the internalized system could start. Results showed positive effect for the second model of processing information which was also confirmed in a following research where structured input activities outperformed explicit information regarding advantages of instruction.

2.1.4   Interaction Hypothesis

It has been displayed how in conversations English native speakers tend to modify their speech so as to help non-natives to understand the input given in the target language. Of course, these changes occur within oral interaction which has gained considerable relevance in developing second language learning. Indeed, not only negotiated interaction is a means of practicing, but it also puts the basis for SLA. Long declared that:

> *negotiation for* meaning, and especially negotiation work that triggers *interactional* adjustments by the NS or more competent interlocutor, facilitates acquisition because it connects input, internal learner capacities, particularly selective attention, and output in productive ways (Doughty and Long, 2003: 234).

The following examples taken form *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* (Doughty and Long, 2003: 233-237) are clear illustrations of the Interaction Hypothesis. Firstly, interaction can check comprehension in order to make sure that both the interlocutors have understood, as in the second line:

NNS: what are they (.) what do they do your picture?

NS: what are they doing in my picture?

NS: there's there's just a couple more things

NNS: sorry? Couple?

Secondly, reformulations with questions providing an alternative are used when there is evidence of non-comprehension:

NS: what did you want? A service call?

NNS: uh 17 inch huh?

NS: what did you want a service call? or how much to repair a TV?

The third type of negotiated interaction involves topic-focused questions, where the focus is on concepts that have already been mentioned in the conversation, defined as topics:

NS: When do go to the uh Santa Monica?

You say you go fishing in Santa Monica, right? (topic-focused question)

NNS: Yeah

NS: When?

After that, we can find an example of recasts, where the NS changes the incorrect NNS utterance into a grammatical sentence:

NNS: why he want this house?

NS: why does he want this house?

Now, we can deduce that negative feedback received during negotiation for meaning may encourage L2 development because the acquirer's attention is drawn to the discrepancies between what he knows of the target language and its very reality. Therefore, learning might occur in the course of interaction and negotiation stands at the beginning of the learning process. In the next conversational extract, a new word is created through interaction, as a result of negotiation:

NS: there's there's a pair of reading glasses above the plant

NNS: a what?

NS: glasses reading glasses to see the newspaper?

NNS: glassi?

NS: you wear them to see with, if you can't see. Reading glasses

NNS ahh ahh glasses to read you say reading glasses

NS: yeah

And finally, in the last interaction's example negotiation makes the non-native speaker aware of a pronunciation problem and after listening to more input she manages to understand the correct pronunciation:

NNS1: Uh holding the [k^p]

NNS2: Holding the cup?

NNS1: Hmm hmmm…

(seventeen turns later)

NNS2: holding a cup

NNS1: Yes

NNS2: Coffee cup?

NNS1: Coffee? Oh yeah, tea, coffee cup, teacup.

NNS2: Hm hm.

Even though interaction seems to foster language learning, one of its most crucial problems is to determine if the corrected word or sentence is repeated because the speaker has worked out its meaning or if it is only a repetition without understanding:

NS: Number two,… is… the man… look for help

NNS: Uh-huh, ((yes)) for help.

NS: Help, you know… "Aah! Help" (shouts softly)

NNS: Uh-huh. ((yes))

NS: No *Up* …HELP.

NNS: Help

NS: Yeah… He asked, … he asked… a man… for.. help.

NNS: …for help

NS: Yeah.. he asked… the man… for telephone.

Here, obviously the non-native speaker has not grasped the meaning of the word which is later replaced with an inexact correspondence. However, corrected forms created by interaction will appear later in the learner's production; in particular, they will be incorporated in their speech.

2.1.5   Interaction and learning

Generally speaking, it appears rather difficult to establish the degree of learning coming from interaction's input or the learner's participation in the conversation. We are now to present a corpus of studies concerning interaction and those elements and feedbacks which may have an effect on particular aspects of language learning and oral negotiation.

2.1.5.1 Interaction's effects

Linguistic researchers have conducted several investigations on the extent of language learning and its indeterminacy, and results are not very consistent and revealing. Some claim that the development of morphosyntactic aspects is not influenced by interaction, as for vocabulary retention. Despite this, other results prove that input modified by interaction has positive effects for comprehension and acquisition of new words; similarly, negotiated interaction successfully performed in language production.

We may now turn the attention to which type of interaction or feedback the student ought to be provided with so as to help him in language learning. Two different feedbacks have been identified: negotiation, which has been extensively analysed in the previous section, and recasts, which occur when the interlocutor corrects a wrong utterance with a

more appropriate one, maintaining the basic structure. For instance, "What you have eaten?" is a common error for English beginners and may be recast with "What have you eaten?", considered as a form of implicit negative feedback.

Other aspects worth considering are the results of teachers' immediate correction of errors and students' uptake, or their reaction. It has been demonstrated that recasts were not satisfying and effective, so they would rather be used to move from one lesson to another focusing on content, not on language form. As for advanced learners, recasts and negotiation were more helpful than negotiation alone; however, students showed no reactions to the corrective feedback, since recasts do not give the opportunity to make a comment. Thus, this kind of interaction better fits for topic shifts, like in Doughty and Long (2003: 240):

NNS: a [c]lower tree.
NS: A flower tree. How tall is the trunk?

2.1.5.2 Attention

Both Long and Gass acknowledge crucial importance to attention as a fundamental mechanism of interaction and as a means to explain the way new knowledge is created or modified. Despite acquisition is an unconscious process and the student is not aware of things occurring inside of him, Schmidt declares that there is no learning without attention. This one can only focus on linguistic aspects by interaction, i.e. negotiation and recasts, and take notice of mismatches between first and target language.

In the large perspective of SLA, learning without attention will not play a relevant role. With regard to mismatches, it can be argued that if the student is to detect them and to use them as a basis for grammatical analysis and comparison, he will also retain the target language utterance. In short term memory the two utterances are compared and when they have been processed they move to the long term memory; but a trace remains in the short term memory so as to be juxtaposed to new sentences. Finally, in case of another linguistic mismatch, memory of the utterance can be reactivated.

Furthermore, learners have proved that learning new forms is a product of conversation, feedback is recognized by interaction but sometimes the feedback intended does not correspond to that which has been received. It seems interesting to take into consideration the research by Mackey and other experts (Doughty and Long, 2003: 245-246) who examined phonological, lexical and morphosyntactic feedback in ESL learners and in Italian as a foreign

language students. They attempted to analyse whether the recognized feedback was actually the one intended or not. In the first extract, the morphosyntactic feedback was believed to be a lexical feedback because in a later comment the learner confessed that he or she was not sure of learning the word exactly:

NNS: c'è due tazzi

INT: due tazz-come?

NNS: tazzi, dove si può mettere il tè, come si dice questo?

INT: tazze?

NNS: ok, tazze

On the contrary, in the following example phonological feedback was appropriately perceived; then the speaker added that he/she had wondered if the pronunciation was right:

NNS: vicino la tavolo é

INT: vicino?

NNS: la, lu tavolo

And thirdly, lexical feedback is perfectly perceived, with the subject saying that he had made a mistake on the word referring to the object in his mind:

NNS: there is a library

NS: a what?

NNS: a place where you put books

NS: a bookshelf?

NNS: book?

NS: shelf

NNS: bookshelf

As a conclusion, feedbacks have different roles according to linguistic areas: morphosyntactic feedback is bound to be forgot because the learner would concentrate more on meaning than on form. In fact, lexical and phonological feedbacks are noticeable since meaning is to be shared between the interlocutors.

2.1.5.3 SLA testing and correction

To introduce this part dealing with evaluation of students' acquired linguistic competence, Krashen argues that it seems rather unfair to grade language acquisition which is a subconscious process. It also depends on two components: the input provided and the affective filter. As a matter of fact, it is up to the teacher to submit a satisfying amount of comprehensible input which, in turn, enters the student's world according to the openness or closeness of the filter, a mechanism beyond student and teacher's control. For this reason, only attendance and active participation should be evaluated.

However, it is possible to suggest a valid and effective way of testing in which students are encouraged to prepare for it by accessing more input and teachers furnish it. As a result, the classroom would become the place where messages are exchanged through natural communication and error correction would focus on the application of grammar rules, so as to avoid language disasters.

Carroll hypothesizes four criteria for the description of an adequate test: relevance, acceptability, comparability and economy. Firstly, he discusses whether "the test actually measures the communication skills that students need" (Krashen and Terrell, 1983: 165) or if it does not attain the course goals. For instance, translation could be an appropriate testing as far as the ability of moving from one language to the other is concerned. On the contrary, it would not be applied in everyday life conversation with a native speaker. Secondly, acceptability displays students' willingness to participate in the test, which shows if they feel comfortable and relaxed or anxious. It also indicates if the format of the test can be understood, if students are likely to familiarize with it, and if the content of the test corresponds to goals and activities done in class. Thirdly, Carroll points out the importance of being able to compare test scores of different classes trying to achieve the same goals. And finally, economy accounts for the amount of time, information and energies implied by both students and instructors for examination.

In addition, with regard to language proficiency, linguistic and communicative competences are analysed. The former refers to the formal knowledge of language, that is pronunciation, morphology and syntax, and the latter to the ability to use it for particular purposes and in distinct situations. Of course, language acquisition aims at both linguistic and communicative competences. In spite of this, Krashen declares that in the Natural Approach tests are more concerned with the ability to understand and convey messages, rather than being formally correct: once communicative competence is achieved, linguistic awareness

will follow. Indeed, "a focus on communicative facility entails greater participation in real communication, which in turn entails more comprehensible input, resulting in a greater acquisition of grammar" (Krashen and Terrell, 1983: 167).

After test has been carried out, correction follows in language learning process and we may now consider students' errors, especially in early stages. Starting with Total Physical Response activities, errors may arise when students fail to understand and perform commands; it has been proved that subjects tend to correct themselves immediately by comparing with their classmates. Thus, at the beginning of language learning, proper mistakes seems to appear when language is produced and three types of error have been identified. First, when the answer is incorrect, like answering "chair" instead of "table". Second, when there is a pronunciation problem but the answer is correct and well-structured; here, the teacher may give confirmation and repeats it with the correct pronunciation. Third, when the answer lacks of grammatical appropriateness, such as when the subject or the article is missing; in this case, the instructor replies through expansion: "yes, that's right, this is *a* dog".

As a consequence, expansions are inserted to provide further input to students who are not expected to correct themselves and retain the right grammatical form. In particular, when they are not ready for the acquisition of a precise rule, expansion will be considered on the level of comprehension and communicative success, but it will not pertain to grammar acquisition. Therefore, despite expansions are not regarded as essential elements in language learning, they may be useful to increase the amount of clear input.

Lastly, linguists wonder whether error correction brings benefits or disadvantages. Talking about the input, it has been discussed that direct correction of speech does not reveal positive effects on first language and child SLA: parents and instructors tend to correct only a few forms as they focus on the content of the speech. Moreover, grammatical development does not seem to be affected or enhanced by error correction. Similarly, in adult SLA non-natives' errors are not always highlighted because communicative success is preferred to formal appropriateness which is supposed to come in a later stage. Thus, caretakers or native speakers try to encourage communication and make it comprehensible by reformulations, restatements and expansions.

Once again, there is no substantial evidence that these methods are responsible for students' language correctness. Nevertheless, it is a means to supply additional input which may occur when the instructor checks the non-native's intent and reformulations turn to be particularly meaningful for the acquirer. So, Krashen concludes that in the Natural Approach

error correction is used for conscious learning, i.e. a suitable situation for the Monitor to be applied.

2.2 Learning the L2 in instructed environment

The post-critical period of second language acquisition is particularly difficult because there occur many changes with little output; for this reason L2 instruction tries to tackle with these problems. However, there arouse some doubts concerning the effectiveness of instruction on SLA and, in case, about the benefits of it. Besides, another point of discussion is whether in adult SLA implicit or explicit learning are involved and which one seems to be the most effective type of instruction. Firstly, we will analyse findings contrasting or supporting instruction for adult second language acquisition: in particular, we will take into account the theories against L2 instruction, the analysis of presumable benefits and the difference between explicit and implicit learning. Secondly, we will have a look at the active characters of SLA, either children and adults and at the contrast between them; we will talk about developmental mechanisms and the classification of language students. Thirdly, we will deal with differentiation in terms of rules according to students' age and contexts.

2.2.1   Findings on SLA instruction's effects

In this paragraph we are to explore effectiveness of instruction since early studies on SLA claimed that a non-interventionist position would have been recommended in classrooms, whereas more recent view support slight incidental learning and negative evidence. Then, it has been stated that learning can never turn into acquisition in the perspective of implicit and explicit learning. Nevertheless, there is some evidence of the importance of general L2 instruction with adult learners, as it constitutes the only exposure to the foreign language and it speeds up language development.

After that, the two types of instruction, implicit and explicit learning, will be presented, together with three types of attention, namely attention on form, attention on forms and on meaning. Instruction will prove to make a relevant difference because the explicit learning approach brings more advantages rather than the implicit one.

2.2.1.1 Skepticism about L2 instruction

There are several arguments against L2 instruction which hold non-interventionist positions. Some claim that foreign language learning in classroom does not completely reproduce the natural processes of language acquisition which is characterized by universal and common principles involved in language learning and suitable for many different conditions. As a result, it is rather complicate to control and modify students' verbal behavior in the classroom. Therefore, either in second and in first language acquisition there is a Universal Grammar constituted by the before mentioned principles and rules. Others believe that SLA, similarly to first language acquisition, is definitely incidental, so comprehensible input is the only relevant contribution and no external interventions are needed.

As for the first proposal, we find two contrasting views. The full-transfer or full-access hypothesis suggests that in first and second language acquisition universal principles' parameters should be reset through positive evidence, i.e. input. Consequently, negative evidence is not involved. On the contrary, negative evidence provided by instruction is needed when it is not very much informative; it means that when some L2 aspects belong to the group of the L1, the learner has to deduce something from the general hypothesis generated from the L1 which cannot be retreated from positive evidence. On the basis of these assumptions, we can infer then that instruction is definitely or widely unnecessary. With regards to the second proposal, which states that in SLA only clear input can intervene, Catherine J. Doughty refers to Krashen's Input Hypothesis and to the non-interface position which studies the relationship between implicit and explicit knowledge. In this perspective "*learned* knowledge can never become *acquired* knowledge" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 258).

Significantly, two types of performance have been observed: the fluent use of language, brought about by intuitive knowledge, and the deliberate use, in relation to formal knowledge. Indeed, recently language teachers have been preferring a non-interventionist approach where they limit themselves to supply the input.

Nevertheless, some studies have pointed out that L2 instruction is fundamental for some aspects of SLA, especially if we compare children with adult acquisition. It seems well assured that young acquirers learn incidentally and fully and their outputs make them nearly native speakers. In contrast, for adult students acquisition is likely to change continuously within and across learners. It follows that they are not very successful because it remains incomplete and takes long to improve. These overall disadvantages easily identify adult speakers of a second language as non-natives. Thus, it might be advanced that instruction for

adult SLA is necessary, otherwise it would be even slower, complicate and limited. Using Doughty and Williams' words:

> [...] it is not the case that adult second language acquisition cannot take place in absence of instruction... ; for many learners, clearly much of it can. However, our interest is not limited to what is merely possible, but extends to a determination of what would compromise the most *effective* and *efficient* instructional plan given the normal constraints of acquiring a second language in the classroom (Doughty and Long, 2003: 259).

2.2.1.2 General effectiveness of L2 instruction

In *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* several studies have been reported to give confirmation that L2 instruction may be meaningful in adult SLA. Early analysis focused on Krashen's distinction between learning and acquisition and took into account the amount of instruction against exposure to the second language. Results prove that in classroom learning, instruction is the only opportunity for students to be exposed to L2 input. Then it has been observed that it is either beneficial and provides more input when it is added to exposure. Vice versa, when exposure is added to instruction, advantages of instruction support it. Therefore, it is firmly believed that instruction makes a substantial difference.

Later research, always carried out by Long, came back to the importance of instruction, this time within precise domains of SLA. Firstly, in SLA processes such as transfer, elaboration, noticing and omissions, results differed from instructed and naturalistic learners, even though they had followed the same learning order. For example, as far as the emergence of the morphological system is concerned, non-instructed subjects tended to forget about obligatory morphemes, whereas instructed learners even oversupplied them, probably as a consequence of the instructed environment. Secondly, in SLA there have been identified some routes, i.e. sequences of language acquisition, like in the acquisition of negatives, interrogatives and word order, which have to be followed. This developmental readiness shows that in language acquisition there are fixed learning stages that cannot be ignored. Thirdly, the rate of instructed SLA revealed to be faster than that of naturalistic SLA, but "it is sometimes the case that what is learned quickly is forgotten equally fast" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 262). And fourthly, with regard to the level of ultimate attainment, instructed subjects seem to be more successful towards the L2, presumably due to precise input exposure, such as marked examples.

2.2.1.3 Types of instruction

Once the general effectives of L2 instruction has been demonstrated, we should now consider which type of instruction is the most efficient and recommended. Implicit and explicit learning are the two terms of the major debate on the best approach to instruction and on the way learners' attention is drawn to the elements of language. Implicit instruction does not overtly refer to rules or forms; on the contrary, explicit instruction explains them and directs acquirers to focus on forms.

Then we find three different kinds of attention: the focus on form that makes the students look at formal language elements during communication and meaning processing; the focus on forms keeps to its focus; and the focus on meaning excludes language examination. We may now enumerate those operationalizations found in studies, put forth by Norris and Ortega (see Doughty and Long, 2003: 267): focus on meaning implies "exposure to L2 targets or experience with L2 tasks, *but* no attempts to effect shifts of learner attention". Focus on form means the "integration of forms and meaning: designing tasks that promote engagement with meaning prior to form; seeking tasks essentialness/ naturalness of L2 forms; ensuring unobtrusiveness; documenting L2 mental processes; selecting target forms by analysis of learner needs"; considering language constraints. Focus on forms is limited to elements of the language and learner's attention is focused "on the particular structure targeted for learning".

In conclusion, in second language acquisition L2 instruction makes a significant difference, precisely, the explicit approach brings more positive advantages in comparison with the implicit one. Putting together the nature of instruction with attention on form, we obtain the following pattern suggested by Norris and Ortega: "Explicit focus on form (large effect) > Explicit focus on forms (large effect) > Implicit focus on form (medium effect) > Implicit focus on forms (small effect)" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 267).

2.2.2   *Children and adults in the instructed environment*

After having determined the effectiveness of L2 instruction, we should ask ourselves to what extent SLA processes resemble those involved in the first language and if there is a possibility that children acquisition may differ from adults'. In relation to this, three main views could be presented claiming that there is substantial distinction in different age language acquisition.

Furthermore, the developmental sharpening needs to be mentioned with respect to language emergence, the way it becomes structured and improves in the course of life.

2.2.2.1 Child acquisition VS adult acquisition

From Bley-Vroman's Fundamental Difference Hypothesis, child language learning is thought to be implicit, spontaneous and domain-specific, similarly to first language acquisition, whereas adult SLA is more explicit and aims at finding problem-solving strategies. DeKeyser agrees with it insofar as adult learning is explicit and subjects tend to rely on analytical reasoning while studying the L2. For Felix and Hahn's Competition Hypothesis, at the beginning implicit Universal Grammar of the L1 contrasts with explicit problem-solving strategies of the L2, which, in the end, overcomes the former.

These perspectives admit that there are progressive constraints on language acquisition, for example the fact that if exposure to input does not occur at the proper moment, language learning risks being incomplete. Moreover, they share the concept that processing linguistic input moves from the child mode, i.e. automatic acquisition when the subject is exposed to language mechanisms, to the adult mode, which is non-domain specific, explicit and implies analytical thinking. Besides, this processing shift and changes in L2 comprehension might be influenced by the learners' experience with the target language.

2.2.2.2 Developmental sharpening

In instructed language acquisition, developmental sharpening occurs early in child language progress and mechanisms for input processing start increasing and strengthening. On the one hand, the so-called developmental sharpening helps learners enter the language system pertaining to the environment in which they are immersed, and speeds up natural speech processing of every-day life. By so doing, it enables the speaker to anticipate and predict the input. With the flowing of time, the product of analytical thinking changes the way information is processed and learner ameliorates in all areas of cognition.

As for very early child language acquisition input processing involves structuring the sentence from scratch starting from speech signals. Van De Weijer has declared that 91% of language addressed, and modified, to an infant from 6 to 9 months was complex fluid speech and only 9% was isolated words: it appears as a very hard task for children to process adult

speech. Nonetheless, children manage to receive, internalize and remember the structure in which linguistic information are provided so that they can map acoustic signals onto meaning and produce mental representations of the phrase and clause's structures.

In the prosodic bootstrapping process, infants are supposed to own specific and adaptive abilities for language processing that they develop from birth, and even before. Actually in the first year, children move from oral features of input, the phonemes, to the use of the recently acquired knowledge as a basis for further input processing, like rhythm and distribution. These are crucial for the succeeding stage where the subject is able to determine words, phrases and the limits of the sentence. A few examples taken from *The Handbook of Second Language Acquisition* may clarify the mechanisms involved. Firstly, Annex 1, taken from Doughty and Long (2003: 277-278) deals with the discovery of phrase and clause's structure where the initial mechanism allows to choose between real or nonsense function words. After that at about 16 months infants acquire the ability to trace words' position with the advantage that in the L1 they can pay attention to details within a narrowed processing space, but some mismatches appear in adult SLA between segmentation output and input. Secondly, another interesting point is the process to encode and remember words, based on segmentation: from 9 months children store forms with no relative meaning which brings about fast mapping as an L1 advantage. But again, in adult SLA there occur mismatches between the produced segmentation and input. In fact, a most tragic example of developmental sharpening is the before-mentioned phonemic discrimination because between 6 and 9 months infants can process all kinds of foreign languages but afterwards, the native language arising from adults' input starts to prevail. At this moment infants' sensitivity to non-native elements starts declining and phonemic categories begin to fix, imitating adults' language. Therefore, at 6 months children already prefer to process native language input.

Similarly, from 0 to 6 months, refinement to the predominant rhythm of the native language develops: some infants may show no preference among rhythm types, being stress-based, syllabic or mora-based, while others may display some favourite patterns. For instance, 9 months American children would better listen to English words with the English stressed system. This is clearly an attempt to segment words from oral rapid input based on the rhythmic pattern of the native language, a mechanism called the "metrical segmentation strategy" by Cutler (Doughty and Long, 2003: 279). In addition, between 6 and 9 months infants develop a preference for frequent native phonotactic sequence, i.e. the arrangement of sounds in the sentence, rather than for infrequent native sequence. Thus, prosodic bootstrapping for word learning can be described like this: "at age 7.5 months, word

segmentation from fluent speech only approximates adult ability, but by 10.5 months, sensitivity to additional cues has developed" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 280); after that, segmentation abilities are developed like adult English speakers.

We may now focus on the way children encode words in memorial representation. As anticipated before with reference to processing mechanisms, from 7.5 to 10.5 months they encode word forms even without relating meaning. However, memorial representations are the basis for the following stage, namely the fast-mapping the lexicon, so linking forms to meaning. In the second year, there is evidence that this happens normally: children do not consider all the possible hypothesis about the meaning of a word but they trust their innate constraints to consider only certain signals.

Markman has advanced three main constraints on word meaning. The whole-object constraint, when adults point to an object and name it, then the child thinks he is referring to the entire object, not just to a part of it. The taxonomic constraint, which indicates the whole class of objects, like when a dog is seen, it will be put in the dog class. And the mutual-exclusivity constraint, such as when children deal with two objects and already know the name of one of them, then they would assume that the unusual word refers to the object whose name is unrecognized.

These three indications are fundamental for lexical acquisition, whereas joint attention is a newly introduced mechanism that seems to facilitate acquisition; it can be focused on objects, as in noun learning, or on actions, like verbal learning. Particularly, vocabulary acquisition appears to be fostered by naming succeeding and completed actions: joint attention during visible context is considered to lead to noun learning and impending context enhances verbal learning, like "now I'm going to draw a flower". As a result, responding to joint attention displays differences in vocabulary development, but it can also be stated that including active participation of the child in the activities remains the most effective way for learning new words.

Thus, in child language acquisition developmental sharpening is beneficial because familiarization follows input and interaction, but what seems intriguing to investigate is whether adult SLA works in the same way. Indeed, it presents an incredible drawback to advanced L1 processing because adult speakers are rendered "disabled second-language learners later in life", using Cutler's words (Doughty and Long, 2003: 284). This is because of the great amount of L1 experience which clearly influences L2 inasmuch as they generally process L2 input with L1 mechanisms. The pre-lexical segmentation strategy perfectly explains it for which the dominant rhythm pattern of the native language is used in the L2. For

instance, adult English speakers do not use a segmentation strategy based on syllables when they listen to their native language; likewise, when they process French input, a syllable-based language, they do not rely on syllabification. On the contrary, native speakers of French always use it, whether it is French or English, which cannot be divided into syllables. Moreover, when listening to their native language, L1 English adults make use of their segmentation strategy, as well as with a foreign language which has an unusual rhythmic pattern, like Japanese which is mora-based. Several studies on English and Japanese speakers were conducted on phonemes detection and it was proved that Asian subjects keep the mora-based strategy during non-native language listening, while English speakers were undoubtedly not influenced by the mora system.

It can be inferred then that "segmentation strategies are language-specific, not universal, processing routines" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 285) and in SLA and L2 processing speakers use their perceptual habits and the system they are more familiar with, as "language-specific segmentation is in the listener, not in the speech" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 285).

Besides, an additional study on bilinguals could give a confirmation of it. When subjects were made to choose which language they would retain if they had to undergo brain injury, it was proved that when they processed the two languages, they used the preferred language's segmentation. As a matter of fact, subjects who preferred French used the syllabic strategy, whereas when English was the favourite choice they used the stress-based strategy. In English-Dutch bilinguals, stress was used in both languages because the two are based on stress-segmentation. In addition, there was no manifestation of simultaneous use of two processing methods. Nevertheless, it seems that for proficient bilinguals the segmentation strategy is never misapplied in listening to other languages and, actually, subjects preferring French did not employ syllable-segmentation in listening to English and vice-versa for English speakers. Thus, Cutler concludes that "Inappropriate language-specific segmentation is avoidable" (Doughty and long, 2003: 287).

Lastly, a crucial question needs to be explored: can adults be trained to use different processing strategies from their dominant native language? Unfortunately, non-native listening skills are not flexible, for instance, when there is noise comprehension is disturbed, which does not occur with the first language. Again, innate procedures implied in the L1 listening are likewise used in the L2, but more appropriate mechanisms do not emerge.

In conclusion, instruction has little relevance because training in processing the non-native language can only bring limited improvement since the native phonemic categorization cannot be modified; only different morphemes are discriminated.

2.2.3 Students' differentiation

So far, we have analysed language emergence and formation, looking at the processes involved, so the time has come to turn to the other crucial participant in language learning: the student. We can draw a distinction between the baby, adolescent, university and adult student, each of them presenting individual characteristics, needs and requiring specific teaching methods. Thus, first of all we are to trace these main differences, secondly we are to talk about teaching differentiations for their second language acquisition, and thirdly, we are to tackle with age and context variations.

2.2.3.1 Different age, different students

As an introduction to the discussion, it should be stated that as far as children are concerned, it would be inappropriate to talk about teaching a foreign language; we would rather suggest that they are guided in a sort of "éveil au langage", as French experts call it, followed by approaching a language. However, adults and teachers have to bear in mind that the future perspective has changed since infants start primary school which has no longer national features, but is oriented towards an European direction. Being European students and inhabitants, they are to deal with the globalization of people, goods and ideas where intercultural comprehension stands at the basis of this innovative view. Therefore, very young children could grow up with bilingual abilities and, perhaps, identity.

Taking these inexpert subjects into account, bilingualism seems to bring brain richness as speaking two languages requires that the two hemispheres are more involved than in speaking one language; the right hemisphere plays a greater role in generating language representations; and bilinguals' brain dominance is more flexible than monolinguals'. As it has been examined in developmental sharpening, language acquisition produces excellent results from the very beginning of the learner's activity but it declines in puberty. In accordance with studies carried out by Daloiso (Balboni, 2012: 92), we can identify critical and sensitive periods. For the first ones, language acquisition can reach native speaker's

levels because up to 3 years learners can develop excellent pronunciation and linguistic abilities, while from 4 to 8 years they are likely to achieve perfect pronunciation but it constraints extensive mental effort. Later on, from 8 to 22 years learners can still develop a satisfying linguistic competence but they will always be recognized as non-natives. The iceberg metaphor formulated by Cumminis could represent language acquisition: when ice comes out from the sea, it is only a small part of the whole existing volume which is submerged, like in "it's only the tip of the iceberg", because the invisible ice allows the superficial emergence. Therefore, the more we increase the amount of underwater ice, the more it will come into view; likewise, the more the input and language progress, the more the language acquisition. For this reason, it is important to enhance SLA in schools starting from 3 and 4 years, that is when first language mechanisms are solid and ascertained, so that the Language Acquisition Device is kept active and extra input is to be added for L2 as well for L1 development.

When children grow up, adult students change the relationship inside the instructed environment: they start being concerned with social relations where the teacher is excluded and they try to be part of a group, their schoolmates. Therefore, the affective filter is no longer influenced by adults but by their peers' evaluation and if they put in a bad performance the class will probably laugh at them, which in their opinion is the most awful thing to avoid. With regard to their cognitive abilities, they are able to conduct analysis and accurate description of language processes, communication becomes more fluent, they talk about formal aspects of the language and manage to produce complex mental representations. They are supposed to show linguistic and metalinguistic competences.

Besides, the university student is now an adult person but he has not immediate needs, as he is not immersed in the real world of work. In comparison with his professor, he feels inferior and pedagogical methods are used.

On the contrary, the adult student has professional needs for the foreign language and a materialistic vision of the language course because it displays job requirements; so the learner must attend it if he wants to gain success and promotion in his career. He is responsible for his actions and shows autonomy; besides, a lifelong learning takes place with continuative instruction. There is no close relationship between student and teacher who is now considered as a language expert. Therefore, he expects to reach some results in a short period of time, even though he is aware of his cognitive limits, for adult SLA is rather slow and he generally prefers to systematize rules.

2.2.3.2 Differentiation of rules

Because of this extensive variety of characteristics in language learners, one of the most essential aspects in studying a foreign language is to notice the different degrees of difficulty which are undoubtedly individual. In fact, the rule's implied complexity is strictly connected to the acquirer's ability to cope with it:

> What is a rule of moderate difficulty for one student may be easy for a student with more language learning aptitude or language learning experience, and therefore the rule of instruction for that element of grammar may vary from bringing about the learning of a structure that otherwise would not be learned to merely speeding up the learning process (Doughty and Long, 2003: 331).

For example, with a beginner student, he might be conducted to notice the rule's functioning rather than make him learn and use it; he would implicitly acquire its mechanisms through observation too. For this reason, explicit instruction heavily depends on the subjective difficulty of the rule. Whereas, objective difficulty is composed of complexity, unfamiliarity, abstractness and relevance of the rule. For instance, in yes-no questions subject-verb inversion is easily noticeable and rapidly learned, with respect to *wh*-question because of its salience. Or, thanks to its importance preposition distribution is learned before pied piping mechanism, even though this one is evidently more marked. Distinctions of rules being considered, we can move to individual contrasts in language teaching.

2.2.3.3 Individual discrepancies

Broadly speaking, rate and extent of second language acquisition are influenced by the amount of comprehensible input and to what degree the affective filter has an impact on the subject. Moreover, according to the use of the Monitor we can identify three categories of acquirers. Firstly, there are those who make over-use of the Monitor, they are always checking and self-correcting even in the middle of the utterance using the formal and conscious knowledge of their L2; as a consequence, they are not fluid in speaking and tend to hesitate. It can be caused by learning without acquisition, probably where language exposure only occurs in grammar-based classes, or due to speakers' personality which shows no confidence in their language acquisition. They are bound to ponder too much over grammar rules before starting to talk. Secondly, Monitor under-users seem to forget about self-correction: they only rely on their language acquisition and on the way it sounds, as native

speakers do. Thirdly, optimal Monitor users are able to recognize those situations in which the focus is on communication, rather than on form, and when language accuracy is implied, such as in writing and when there is time to recollect conscious knowledge. Consequently, optimal Monitor users integrate acquired competence with learned competence: for example, advanced speakers of a foreign language displaying a satisfying amount of acquired language might commit occasional errors which are presumably due to late-acquired rules. Conscious knowledge can intervene to correct themselves so as to resemble native speakers.

Coming back to the categories of students, we may now concentrate on the teaching methods to adopt according to the differences of age, background of experiences and personal features explained before.

In teaching children, the study of the foreign language should basically be included within other school subjects in terms of common aims and contents, such as in playing music, practicing sports and discovering science by Total Physical Response, or the so-called CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning). Then, individual variations in language processing have to be borne in mind as children present contrasting cognitive and learning procedures, long or short periods of time in which they systematize the new input and relevant life experiences which can partly be shared with their schoolmates. Another interesting aspect is that children oriented methods are expected to be based on human senses which means that language teaching involves touching, smelling, indicating objects. They need to live real experiences within their world. Similarly, language learning may be combined with physical movement as it responds to the true nature of language that is to do practically. Finally, playing language activities has revealed to be very productive because subjects feel at ease, they are not completely aware of being learning and do not fear to be wrong. In conclusion, as it has been analysed at the beginning of the chapter, when they find pleasure in actions adrenaline is transformed into noradrenaline which is responsible for information storing; children learn continuously provided that their LAD keeps processing language input.

As for younger students of secondary school they look at themselves as adults so they refuse infant tasks, like repetition, copying and reorganization of words in a sentence. A possible way to make use of them is to anticipate their specific role from a cognitive point of view, challenge students and explain the processes involved. In addition, a part from their very usefulness, interest for foreign languages needs to be encouraged with films, exchange projects, personal correspondence with foreign students and reading newspapers.

The third category of student is the adult learner. He ought to be confronted with his linguistic competence and to work autonomously, thus he will realize activities of self-

correction and evaluation, like dictation, cloze patterns, relating words to images as well as text extracts, pieces of dialogues and cartoon words. On the contrary, activities which promote cooperation, public speech and direct interaction with the teacher are not recommended at all.

Finally, cooperative learning is strongly suggested with young learners as they turn into possible colleagues where they all contribute in understanding a text, searching for its meaning and writing a composition. Each of its member offers his ideas, point of view, consideration and, most of all, his language abilities. In case of different acquisition levels in a single classroom, tasks may be distinguished between advanced and weaker learners in such a way that every student is provided with additional L2 input.

2.2.3.4 Summary of age and context differences

As it might be expected the process of second language acquisition is characterized by several factors which widely influence subjects and their output, like age, personality, behavior, cognitive skills and experiences' background.

According to the Fundamental Difference Hypothesis, Bley-Vroman believes that children make use of their Universal Grammar and domain-specific learning mechanisms mainly unconsciously. Whereas adults tend to rely on their native language knowledge and on problem-solving systems, which implies analytical reasoning to compare L2 structures with their L1. Moreover, adults vary in their verbal abilities which seem to be strongly correlated. On the contrary, children abilities are not connected to their language aptitude. Studies have proved that for younger students who started grade 1, analytic abilities were not relevant factors for L2 proficiency; conversely, for grade 7 students they turned to be the only significant predictors. Likewise, it has been demonstrated that for Hungarian students living in the Unites States, age was considerably relevant for learners with a low language aptitude, but it was not the case for higher aptitude students; instead, aptitude was more indicative for older, not younger learners. In other words, children acquire implicitly, while adults explicitly.

DeKeyser suggests that we should consider the critical periods as the moment between early childhood and puberty where children gradually lose implicit language mechanisms for acquisition and where linguistic processes separate from cognitive learning, as Skehan states. However, Krashen argues that adults can still acquire second languages and they still own this ability. The only drawback consists in lower possibilities of success as native speakers and of

perfect acquisition, but they keep developing language learning and acquisition. Consequently, it can be maintained that:

> children learn better and adults learn faster. [...] Children do better in terms of ultimate attainment because many elements of language are hard to learn explicitly (especially, of course, for those adults who have limited verbal ability); adults learn faster because their capacities for explicit learning let them take short cuts (Doughty and Long, 2003: 335).

and, the longer the uninstructed period for language learning, the better the results for children; whereas, the shorter the time for language instruction, the greater adult language learning.

Therefore, age differences prove that it would rather be preferable to differentiate instructional methods, rather than focusing on the importance of starting SLA early in life because implicit learning is more appropriate for children and explicit approach for adults. In addition, young acquirers' silent period should be respected without forcing production before a large quantity of listening input has been given. Topics of acquisition activities need to be differentiated, according to learners' age; and finally, the amount of conscious learning has to be distributed differently since young people tend to reject to learn rules consciously. Thus, it is mostly addressed to adults.

2.3 Processes in second language acquisition

In the section concerning instructed environment, we have already mentioned the two acquisition processes, implicit and explicit learning. They have been defined as two types of instruction for which the first does not overtly refer to rules or forms, whereas the second explains them directly and focuses on forms. Indeed, we find three types of attention: focus on form, focus on forms and focus on meaning. At this point of our analysis on SLA, we should distinguish between the role of implicit and explicit learning mechanisms that intervene during the acquiring process and in particular: are language aspects to be taught explicitly or implicitly, in order to foster linguistic development? To answer this question, we need to provide further definitions of the two types of learning and then we can move to the examinations of laboratory and classroom studies.

2.3.1 Elucidations and personal perspectives

The first researcher on implicit learning, Arthur Reber, described it as "a primitive process of apprehending structure by attending to frequency cues", whereas in explicit learning "various mnemonics, heuristic, and strategies are engaged to induce a representational system" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 328). He slightly hints at incidental events occurring in implicit learning and at instruction's intentional characteristic of explicit instruction. More precisely, Hayes and Braodbent define implicit learning as "the unselective and passive aggregation of information about the co-occurrence of environmental events and features" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 328). Others also involve intentionality and automaticity in these processes, even though automaticity can be regarded as a final product of learning rather than as one of its characteristics. However, DeKeyser offers the most effective explanation of implicit learning which is basically an instructive process where students are not aware of what they are learning.

There are two additional concepts which are worth considering: inductive learning and implicit memory. Inductive learning moves from the particular to the general, that is from examples to rules, and it comes into contact with implicit learning in absence of awareness. On the basis of DeKeyser's figure proposed in Doughty and Long (2003: 314), L2 teaching can assume four different forms:

	DEDUCTIVE	INDUCTIVE
EXPLICIT	When teachers overtly explain rules to students.	When students are told to find rules from examples in the text.
IMPLICIT	When students manage to remark language characteristics from the setting of grammar parameters.	When students acquire linguistic competences, as for their L1, without focusing attention on forms.

A laboratory study can offer an example of these teaching distinctions. In the analysis of easy and hard grammar rules, such as subject-verb inversion after adverbs, four groups were formed, each with precise aims. The incidental group focused on meaning, implicit learners were told to remember rules, then rule-search subjects had to find the rules and finally the instructed group was offered a grammar explanation. The latter, explicit deductive

category, performed best in both tasks and there is further evidence that awareness remains considerably crucial for language learning. As for the third group, explicit inductive learning did not perform perfectly on grammar tests. Scores report 9 correct rule productions for the incidental group, 6 for the implicit one, 11 for rule-search students and 22 for the explicit-deductive method.

Moreover, these four forms stand independently from the concept of implicit memory because, generally, implicitly acquired knowledge tends to remain implicit, as for explicitly learned knowledge. However, it can occur that this one may become implicit when students lose awareness of its structure and recognize that of implicit knowledge through accessing it.

To a great extent, studies on implicit and explicit learning of new L2 material seem to favour explicit learning conditions as results outnumbered those of implicit one. The first laboratory study concerned Welsh's grammar rule of soft mutation of initial consonants: a group was only provided with exposure to examples, a grammar group was given grammar explanation of the rule, while a structured group looked at the way the grammar rule works in a few examples. The first group proved to be the fastest learners to judge the example considered but the slowest to comment on new sentences. The second demonstrated solid knowledge of the grammar rule but, again, the ability to apply it was very scant; whereas the third performed well in both tasks, confirming that explicit knowledge made students aware of the rule's functioning. Likewise, in a Greek pronunciation activity for English natives, explicit relation of word and pronunciation revealed to be the most effective method, as for practice applied to rule explanation. A study on Esperanto, an artificial language, involved an implicit group in structural and meaning-focused activities, while an explicit group was provided with rule explanation in addition to these activities. Here again, results coincide with the belief that explicit learning is more productive than implicit learning. A fourth confirmation comes from instructed learning with reference to relative clauses. Explanation was offered to rule-oriented students, meaning-oriented learners were given extended and elaborated input, and other learners were simply exposed to examples. The first two groups had better results in production, especially in comprehension for meaning-focused subjects and they seemed to be aware of relative clauses' aspects. DeKeyser concludes that "all laboratory studies that involve a direct comparison of implicit and explicit learning conditions show an advantage for explicit learning, except perhaps where that learning is inductive" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 324), as in the example of rule-search task where result were partly satisfying.

Similarly, a significant advantage emerged for the explicit group in a classroom study where a group of students was told about rules on relative pronouns and other students were not. The same results appeared with object pronouns in Spanish as a foreign language: learners provided with rule explanation, practice and explicit feedback did best, there followed the group with a structured input and those who had only received explicit information. Thus, classroom studies too are in favour of explicit instruction to enhance language learning. Nevertheless, time pressure was the fundamental variable for it allowed a fairly degree of monitoring of explicit knowledge and the formation of implicit knowledge takes longer than the amount of time allowed in the tests.

2.3.2 *The use of explicit and implicit learning*

Bialystok's study (Doughty and long, 2003: 326) examines the role of the two types of knowledge in L2 learning: it proves that proficient students are equally good at passing grammatical judgments under time pressure and in more comfortable conditions. Therefore, grammatical considerations are put forth on the basis of implicit learning, and explicit learning is only used for more detailed language aspects. It is true that time pressure does not encourage explicit learning but it does not hamper it completely.

To conclude, Krashen suggests that explicit learning can never lead to implicit knowledge and that L2 instruction is expected to provide a comprehensible input, rather than overt explanations on rules and their systematic practice. This perspective takes on the denomination of non-interface position. Nevertheless, explicit instruction and practice may be useful for some aspects of language rules because they can fill in the gap between explicit knowledge and its use. Precisely, explicit knowledge aims to make learners notice the gap between input and output, while practice serves for item's learning and fluency's improvement. Focusing on form and not on forms, thus on a single feature of the input, encourages students to become aware of a structure which is not necessarily explicit.

2.4 Incidental and intentional learning

This final paragraph on SLA wants to concentrate on two additional views of learning a second language which can take on the shape of unexpected chance or proper design. It means

that in intentional study of a foreign language, memory is forced to store thousands of words, meanings, pronunciation and spelling, as well as grammar rules. While in incidental study students learn words and language's structures in natural circumstances, like communicative activities where their attention is not focused on forms but on meaning. In relation to this, intentional and incidental learning are also believed to play an interesting role in vocabulary development through reading, which in turn is a crucial moment in SLA.

To begin with, Hyde and Jenkins' example (Doughty and Long, 2003: 355) clearly represents researchers' investigations on the effect of incidental learning in information processing and retention. In particular, when students know about the task with presented stimuli but are not told to learn the additional stimuli. They were made to perform different orienting tasks, unconscious of a post-test on words recollection. It has been demonstrated that when they rated words according to a pleasantness scale, which is a semantic-oriented task, students managed to retain a greater number of lexical items compared to those participants who had to remember words of a section of speech, a non-semantic oriented activity. Thus, the distinction lies in the presence or absence of announcement that students are to take part in a psychological examination and that they will finally be tested. This implies that researchers cannot even refer to a "learning experiment": it is likely to induce students to feel in " danger" because they will subsequently be evaluated, a situation which leads to the activation of the affective filter and to particular information-processing techniques unexpected by the experimenter.

As Jan H. Hulstijn concludes,

incidental learning has acquired the status of a tool in the cognitive psychologist's experimental research kit to investigate some way or ways of information processing as intended by the investigator, not contaminated by ways of information processing not intended by the investigator (Doughty and Long, 2003: 356).

In addition, the linguist refers to further definitions of incidental learning presented in a work by Schmidt (Doughty and Long, 2003: 357). It is described as "learning without the intent to learn", or as the learning of one aspect of the linguistic stimulus while the learner concentrates on another one. In addition, incidental learning can be defined as the learning of formal aspects when the focus is on semantics. In Schmidt's words, the "learning of one thing (e.g., grammar) when the learner's primary objective is to do something else (e.g., communicate)" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 358). Significantly, incidental learning is closely connected to the learning of vocabulary through reading, which is demonstrated by the literate

community who makes use of texts for language development, rather than dealing with word lists relating forms to their meanings. Likewise, Krashen agrees that vocabulary and spelling are acquired through exposure to comprehensible input.

2.4.1   Vocabulary learning under incidental and intentional conditions

As it has been suggested, vocabulary learning seems to be the most effective area for intentional and incidental learning because it can be regarded as a declarative knowledge. For instance, intentional processes act with memory aids and incidental ones through reading and listening. Therefore, it appears that they are more appropriate for different language areas, i.e. incidental learning for abstract and factual knowledge, and intentional learning for factual knowledge. Moreover, they can either participate in language learning so as to access vocabulary, writing systems, spelling rules and social convention. Intentional mechanisms also concern other fields of study, such as geography and history with specific names, dates, events, as well as for technical micro languages.

With regard to attention and noticing, Schmidt declares that they are both involved in the two types of learning, in particular intentional learning requires attention to commit new information to memory, whereas in incidental learning it is not directed towards a precise learning goal.

It might be inferred then that most of vocabulary learning is incidentally acquired both in the L1 and L2 as a result of listening and reading activities which do not focus on learning items. On the contrary, intentional learning in vocabulary activities seems either to hamper items storage and ignore rapid access to them. Research by Nagy, Herman and Anderson reveal that American high school students control an amount of 25,000 up to 50,000 words that cannot have been learned only through explicit learning, but they must have included some incidentally acquired knowledge as a product of extensive reading. In fact, Swanborn and De Glopper state that "students learn about 15 percent of the unknown words they encounter" (Doughty and Long, 2003: 362).

Apparently, unconscious learning of new items is influenced by several factors like the sensitivity to evaluation and its methods which not always consider learners' characteristics, grade levels, reading abilities and whether the surrounding paratext is useful or not. With regard to the last aspect, some experts believe that it is possible for students to learn all the vocabulary they need from the context of numerous readings. Others claim that they need to

be aware of their vocabulary learning task and that there are specific strategies to increase their knowledge. Besides, another probable influencing aspect during information processing may be the student's involvement, that is to say the motivational component. It includes the need to determine the meaning of a word and the cognitive component. Lastly, other factors may play a part in incidental L2 vocabulary learning: we are referring to new words' density, frequency, oral input quality, preference of oral or written input, predictions and explanations. It has been proved that elaborating and being involved in information processing determine lexical retention more than any of the factors mentioned before. For example, glossing fosters comprehension but if it only occurs once in the text it is not that effective; when glossed words appear more frequently, they are easily stored. Word retention can increase when meaning is inferred, though it risks being incorrect.

To continue, relevant vocabulary achievements through extensive reading have been displayed by some studies concerning incidental L2 learning. In a German high school, grade-7 students' vocabulary production has been monitored for seven months where an immersion class was compared to two control groups. The former included the study of history in English, while the latter did not. As a result, it was the immersion group that produced considerable larger vocabulary in oral post-tests, rather than control learners.

We may deal with intentional learning for vocabulary development, where the most diffuse activity is L1-L2 word pairs. It has been demonstrated that the phonological loop, which is a part of the working memory concerned with spoken or written input, is absolutely fundamental in L1 and L2 vocabulary learning. When L2 items with a high semantic association value are orally missed, learning is not affected, but if they have low semantic value it is. This explains that articulatory rehearsal is very significant for L2 vocabulary learning, especially when semantic association is not evident. Another study examined phonological similarity between English L1 and L2 words and their associative value; so whether their meaning could be easily imagined or not. It has been proved that either adult and young learners took advantage of phonological and semantic similarity. Further research focused on the importance of word frequency, cognate status and learning methods of translation against pictures. Lotto and De Groot's experiment presented eighty words in the second language with a translation in the L1 or with a picture; in vocabulary production both helped to recall the L2 correspondent word, but translation seemed to be more powerful; after that, cognates and more frequent words resulted to be easier to learn. Lastly, even though learners tend to rely on their L1 as word and concept mediation, unusual perceptive information, like upside-down pictures, can benefit vocabulary learning.

Leaving spoken and visual dimensions apart, we must now return to the importance of reading and of written input to encourage vocabulary development.

2.4.2   Vocabulary enhancement through reading

Starting from another study, we are to deal with the question of reading as a means of learning vocabulary. This analysis concerned twenty native speakers of English who read *A Clockwork Orange* and met 241 unknown words with a Russian origin belonging to the *nadsat* slang. Participants were not aware that they would have been tested, they were only told that a comprehension test would have followed. Results show that repetitions were helpful for learning but factors like meaningfulness of the context and similarity to the L1 complicated the learning process. Other students were tested immediately after reading two chapters and they produced small vocabulary achievements. We can infer that reading can positively be regarded as a method to acquire vocabulary, but incidental learning does not seem not to be always efficient in every situation.

However, if we keep to the perspective that reading can enhance language development and progress, we should consider once again Krashen's studies on the Natural Approach.

2.4.3   Reading for comprehensible input

The final point of this chapter that explored second language acquisition claims that additional input for language development may be offered by reading. As soon as students know enough of the foreign language, they are presumably able to derive the meaning of the text in such a way that reading gives strong contributions to overall proficiency, as well as to the four abilities. Therefore, when reading constitutes a comprehensible input and students are focused on the meaning of the text, it might improve language competences, underlying written and spoken abilities since it would contain the *i+1* concept, leading the learner to the following linguistic step.

Even in absence of explicit instruction, all the student needs is appropriate texts and some goals: reading comprehension will lead to language acquisition. As for appropriate texts, they are supposed to present a suitable degree of difficulty and raise interest and

curiosity in the reader. For instance, the difficulty level depends on vocabulary, as too many unfamiliar words can hamper comprehension. Though it is hard to determine the exact number of tolerated unknown words, it depends on the interaction with other sources and with the context. Secondly, syntax might interfere with the message of the text, such as long sentences and embedded clauses; even though, syntactic troubles are generally overcome by semantics, it has been demonstrated that acquirers with low syntactic competence are still able to extract the meaning from a text. But when the topic discussed is completely unfamiliar for the reader and does not stimulate him, semantics becomes an obstacle for comprehension.

With regard to the goals of reading, it is not necessary that learners understand every word in the text: sometimes grasping the main ideas can fulfill the comprehension task. Four reading skills have been identified: scanning, which is a rapid overview of the text while looking for specific information; skimming, which consists of quickly going through the text in order to find its main ideas and gist; extensive reading, where we do not pay attention to details but read a large amount of text for the main ideas; and intensive reading, which conversely aims at thorough understanding. For instance, a proficient reader rapidly explores the text, taking into account linguistic cues, like graphic, syntactic and semantic information; then, he involves his knowledge of the world, the so-called reader's repertoire, and hypothesizes on the meaning of the text. He verifies them with re-reading and analysis of details. In other words, these readers use many sources of information, develop particular strategies for each reading skill and practise reading for meaning; at the end, they manage to apply the correct skill at the right time. Annex 2 reproduces Krashen's model of reading without instruction, summarizing these concluding concepts.

2.5 Conclusions and transition

In this second chapter second language acquisition has been explored in general terms and in its more significant aspects. Starting from the human hardware, we have taken into consideration the fundamental distinction between acquisition and learning, language learning requirements, especially the nature of input, its modification, role and processing. In addition, the Interaction Hypothesis has shown the importance of negotiation in conversation for language development and following influences of direct or indirect correction in non-native speakers' speech.

Secondly, the instructed environment has been examined, focusing the attention on the differences occurring in SLA instruction, regarding young and adult subjects, relative differentiation of rules on the basis of age, context and individual characteristics.

In the third paragraph we have illustrated the processes involved in linguistic input reception and production, i.e., explicit and implicit learning, a subject which boasts numerous interesting studies which discuss whether implicit or explicit learning is the most effective method for second language acquisition.

Similarly, the fourth section has introduced the concepts of incidental and intentional learning, usually related to the previous notions. To sum up, the difference between implicit and explicit learning lays in the presence or absence of awareness while learning; conversely, incidental learning differs from intentional learning because it does not focus the attention on what is being internalized, while the other deliberately commits information to memory. However, to a great extent, implicit learning tends to involve incidental learning, but it is not the same for explicit and intentional learning. For example, explicit learning occurs when students look at final –s in verbs relating to third singular person, while intentional learning implies practicing oral production talking about one classmate, thus using *he/she*. These concepts have largely been studied, especially in the vocabulary area in order to establish which one better fits for non-native learners. There is evidence that in intentional learning conditions, words are more easily retained, whereas it is less probable in incidental conditions where learning is affected by factors like the quality of the input, word frequency, presence or absence of cues, and the reader' s involvement.

The last point that has been considered offered an innovative idea concerning the act of reading as a means of learning a second language. Extensive reading of texts has proved to improve vocabulary knowledge and provide additional input when it can be understood. Moreover, it is responsible for language development fulfilling the *i+1* concept for which students receive new information, manage to access them and progress in their linguistic path. Then, it must be admitted that this is the most relevant aspect which needs to be highlighted. If we look at reading common text as extra sources of input for language learners, it seems almost immediate to include many real-life events and situations which can contribute in this process of life-long learning. Therefore, it may be proposed that the study of literature is bound to become a real means of learning a foreign language. Besides, what is surprising of reading literary texts in a foreign language is that individuals experience new communicative methods, make expression be the language of their hidden feelings and most intimate emotions. They become aware that texts give answers to their questions and may help them in

ordinary troubles. When students are fully involved, reading literature in a foreign language is generally strongly motivating. In conclusion, Otto Jespersen advances his *inventional grammar* for which in language learning students need to find, discover, explore, invent, but also systematize and shape their findings. In other words, they must perceive pleasure in what they are doing so as to encourage language learning. Thus, either studying a second language and studying literature can provide acquirers with intense pleasure; we only need to know the strategies and the correct methodology to stimulate active participation.

Chapter 3

Studying literature in a foreign language: an opportunity of language learning

The second chapter has ended with the assumption that reading texts can provide even more input to foreign language learning and literature can be considered as a part of this additional exposure to authentic material. Linguistic education comes into contact with literature teaching in terms of fostering language learning, thus, linguistic objectives can be achieved through literary education; but what about literary education *per se*? What do we exactly mean by "studying literature"? Is it the traditional and chronological perspective of authors and literary movements of the past, or does it aim to individual competences in reading a work of art? And, in turn, how is the concept of literature received by students and how do teachers deal with it? For this purpose, glottodidactics which explores foreign languages' teaching, helps establishing clear objectives and objects of study, i.e. the texts, for students of literature in a foreign language.

Therefore, in this third part the point at issue is the convergence of language learning with literary education: firstly, it will investigate the evolution of approaching literature in schools; secondly, it will look at the student's perspective, particularly at the act of reading a literary text with its many features; and thirdly, the figure of teachers will be analysed, including activities they can organize and technologies they may use.

3.1 Literary education: definitions and objectives

In language learning, the first phase has been described as an "éveil au language", the birth of conscious processes occurring in second language acquisition; similarly, literary education can be defined as an initiation into the study of literature. On the one hand, the student is expected to discover social and moral values by language, come across cultural and historical identities and experience the aesthetic use of language to provoke a particular reaction on the reader. On the other hand, he will realize that language is also enriched by representations of art, such as music, dance and body language. Concerning teachers, Freddi (Balboni, 2004: 6) sees them as literate figures who guide students in dealing with literary texts, feeling pleasure and putting forth critical evaluation; in addition, they help to activate psychological, cultural

and mental processes to appreciate literary heritage. However, studying literature has not always been conceived like this.

3.1.1 Literature in history

At the beginning, the study of literature coincides with history of literature, that is to say a chronological denomination of major literary movements and the most important authors, with a brief presentation of their works and poetics. During Italian Renaissance, teachers suggest that literary texts should be taken as forms of imitation and in the Romantic Age, with the rise of European States, they became models for national identification and belonging. In particular, in the XXth century literature focuses either on individual sensitivity or on the sociological and Marxist point of view for which the literary text turns into historical document and political instrument. Moreover, new fields of the linguistic research are concerned especially with the literary text, such as semiotics, formal and structural approaches, which ignore the importance of objectives and methodologies of literary teaching.

In Italian schools, Giovanni Gentile and Benedetto Croce bring back Plato's ideals of an innate predisposition to poetry hidden inside of each man, which makes literary education aiming to develop "lyric intuition" and "poetic imagination", as they state. According to them, the poet is placed in the middle of aesthetic expression and tries to inspire the reader, while the surrounding environment does not affect him; then, literature and, let us say, poetry heighten students' souls, reaching the Sublime. It must be explained that the notion of literature as the utmost aesthetic experience derives from the theories proposed by Cassio Longino, an ancient orator who lived in the 3rd century AD: the Sublime is generated from noble thoughts and great passions, it seeks innovative figures of speech to express human feelings, precise terms to produce an exalting effect, and an elegant stylistic disposition of the text.

A faithful representation of these ideas are found in Sir Walter Scott's masterpiece, *Waverley,* where he writes:

> The next day, traversing an open and unenclosed country, Edward gradually approached the Highlands of Perthshire, which at first had appeared a blue outline in the horizon, but now swelled into huge gigantic masses, which frowned defiance over the more level country that lay beneath

them. Near the bottom of this stupendous barrier, but still in the Lowland country, dwelt Cosmo Comyne Bradwardine of Bradwardine.[2]

In this short description, the Sublime is a gradual feeling which starts from the image of the horizon, the huge mountains and their beauty, and moves to the village of Tully-Veolan where the baron lives. It is here defined as a great emotion in front of impressive manifestations of Nature; it produces delight and surprise in the spectator who is completely trapped but at the same time it conveys a sense of relax and peace. This is the fundamental idea of Scott's concept of Sublime.

As for the most appropriate form of expression, literary education is also regarded as rhetoric education because it is completely devoted to the accurate choice of words, to the creation of new metaphors and figures of speech so as to let language describe intimate passions and thoughts. Indeed, in 1706 Alexandre Pope wrote:

True Wit is Nature
to advantage dresst:
What oft was thought
but ne'er so well expresst (Balboni, 2004: 9).

which means that literature has to explore over the centuries how expression has adapted to social and historical conditions and how language has developed to give voice to human feelings and emotions.

Concerning the teaching of literature in Italy, in the 1970s there was a widespread tendency focusing on history of literature of the foreign language studied at school and it prevailed on the analysis of texts, which were usually short and written by the most famous writers. In fact, this literary approach focused on the main differences between literary movements, it mentioned a small number of authors and presented a few relevant excerpts. Of course, it did not consider neither students' interests nor language difficulties: what really mattered was the fact that they should have been aware they were reading such a well-known work of art. The following table, taken from Stagi Scarpa (2005: 17) shows the connection between students' age and authors of the most recent period:

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[2] Scott W., 1814, *Waverley*. [This quotation is taken from] *Waverley*, New York, Oxford World's Classics, 1986, p. 32.

Students	Authors
Born in between 1986-1988	……………………………………..
Parents born in between 1955-1960	A. Carter, A. Byatt, P. Ackroyd, B. Chatwin, J. Barnes, I. McEwan, K. Ishiguro, M. Ondatje, S. Rushie, J. Fowles, M. Atwood, D. DeLillo.
Grandparents born in the 1930s	W. Golding, J. Osborne, D. Lessing, H. Pinter, N. Gordimer, T. Hughes.
Great-grandparents born in the 1900s	S. Spender, G. Orwell, G. Greene, W. H. Auden, S. Beckett.
Great-great-grandparents born in 1875	V. Woolf, J. Joyce, W. B. Yeats, T. S. Eliot, D. H. Lawrence, A Huxley.

Generally speaking, what can be inferred is that students do not come into close contact with authors as old as their parents; sometimes they may study some writers belonging to their grandparents' generation, or even before; but the most striking thing is that their study of literature finishes at the period of their great-great-grandparents, namely with James Joyce, T. S. Eliot, Virginia Woolf, etc. Whereas, reading and studying contemporary authors bring two relevant advantages because it makes students aware of social and cultural changes and because they learn how to pass critical judgment on texts which have not been chosen because of their notoriousness.

To continue, in Italy teaching literature has been widely influenced by crucial theoretical works written by French, English and German researchers in which they started to look at the literary text immersed in the social and cultural context, moving from the single perspective of the work. In particular, in 1975 H. G. Widdowson published his *Stylistics and the Teaching of Literature* and introduced the distinction between literature as "discipline" and as "subject": according to him, the first aims at acquisition of particular abilities and ways of reasoning related to specific areas of human knowledge on the basis of theoretical requirements; whereas the second is divided into education levels which try to achieve established pedagogical objectives. Moreover, literature as a subject has to ensure a basis for competences' development that is either a conclusion of a learning process and a starting point for succeeding studies. Thus, Widdowson suggests that studying literature neither corresponds to literary criticism nor to history of literature; on the contrary, it has to encourage individual growth of awareness and abilities which can increase even further. And also it has to constitute a concluding moment.

Another point in his discussion is the new approach to literature through *Stylistics*. Generally speaking, "stylistics" deals with the study of texts with regard to expression, style

and linguistic aspect, but in his work Widdowson conceives it as the connection of linguistics to literary criticism. Especially, it firmly believes that *Stylistics* mediates between foreign language and literature, which are school subjects, with linguistics and criticism, which are disciplines. For instance, a linguist is more concerned with the concept of the text as the product of a linguistic system, while a literary critic tries to find hidden meanings and the aesthetic object, thus looking at literary works as messages. *Stylistics* is supposed to explain how linguistic elements are combined in the text to create messages with the result that the literary text is a form of communication. Secondly, literature turns into *discourse*[3] because it examines how linguistic units produce communicative effects and through linguistic analysis it investigates the way the message is conveyed. *Stylistics* can be represented as follows (Stagi Scarpa, 2005: 19):

DISCIPLINES:	Linguistics		Literary Criticism
		Stylistics	
SUBJECTS:	English language		(English) literature
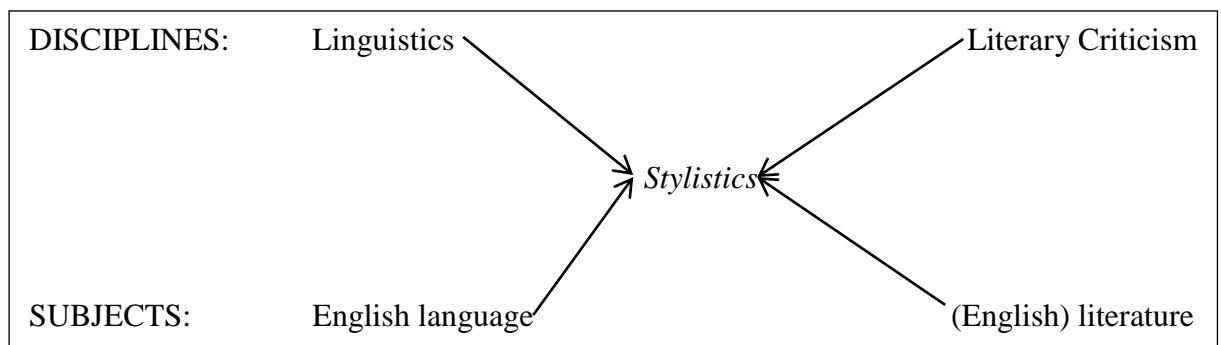
Lastly, thanks to foreign influences, in 1986 Italian secondary school programs focus on the development of textual competences in studying literature, for the first two years; after that, they are guided in the analysis of the text with its historical, social and cultural characteristics, and with a final comparison with the correspondent work in Italian literature. In the last two years, literature includes historical, social and philosophical perspectives and teaching methods tend to avoid the historical and temporal sequence, in favour of modules based on authors, literary movements, themes or textual genres.

In accordance with social and cultural changes, literature experiences new ways of communication and expression: visual innovations, such as films and adaptations; musical modernization with songs, and music video; and the streetpole poetry, the post-it poetry, the graffiti poetry. On the other hand, with the creation of the Internet, the distribution of the literary text is definitely altered: authors are bound to write the incipit of a novel and virtual

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[3] "The manner in which linguistic elements function to communicative effect" (Widdowson, 1975) in (Stagi Scarpa, 2005: 137).

students have to continue it; or, they can modify texts, take part in discussion about literary works and tell their life story in personal blogs.

In conclusion, time and progress have transformed the way literature is taught at school and also the way it is diffused and communicated; therefore, it has changed its role, which will be analysed in following paragraph.

3.1.2 Why teaching literature in a foreign language?

At the beginning of this chapter it has been stated that linguistic and literary education converge in a precise point because reading a literary text in a foreign language offers an excellent opportunity to enrich language knowledge. It is highly recommended that students enjoy reading and discovering literature, for this reason they need to get involved in what they are doing. As for literary education, many objectives have been identified in the teaching of literature. Firstly, students have to acquire theoretical knowledge about texts, their authors, literary movements and the historical and social context in which they are situated; secondly, they are supposed to be able to distinguish between textual differences, namely the literary genres such as drama, poetry, prose, fairy tale, fable, novella and essay. Another objective concerns analytic abilities, which means analyzing a text from the linguistic and structural point of view, and to apply this competence in other texts. Then, students are expected to develop a literary competence which entails the ability to: recognize the characteristics of literary texts, give personal interpretations, identify the relation between text and context, and text and author, and finally to classify the main features of literary genres, including figures of speech, textual structure and prosody. Lastly, literary teaching aims at raising aesthetic and emotional sensitivity, so as to make students experience new feelings; furthermore, it also includes the respect and observation of civil values and multicultural differences.

We need to remind students of literature in a foreign language that its objectives are the same as those of literature in their L1, and that literary competences have already been developed as a consequence of exposure to literature in the first language, so literature in the foreign language can take full advantage of them. There is a further goal of literary education for which the student is stimulated to create his individual method of mapping his knowledge and adding further analysis of literary works.

After all that has been said, a question raises naturally: why should we teach literature? First of all, because it makes use of language in all its possible expressions and

realizations, enriching language at the same time. Secondly, it offers interesting inputs to language learning so that students can improve the quality of their vocabulary with descriptions, narrations, explorations of extraordinary worlds and stimulating topics to talk about. In relation to this, literature opens up mental boundaries as it shows different cultures, inspires the formation of a national identity with a sense of belonging and leads to solidarity. Indeed, students realize that they share the same experiences and feelings as their schoolmates, like the falling in love, satisfaction and joy, as well as the fear of death, sadness and grief. Thirdly, we are supposed to teach literature because we cannot separate the study of a foreign language from its culture: they are two parts of the same whole. For this reason, we are expected to consider people's traditions, lifestyles and responses to common problems, like eating, dressing and making relationships, as well as looking at the nation's literary heritage, history and architecture. And finally, literature is useful to recollect social and ethical values which people tend to forget about and which are also essential characteristics of their culture. To this purpose Cesare Segre, an Italian philosopher and critic, wrote that:

> L' aspetto principale di un'opera letteraria è proprio quello etico vale a dire il riconoscimento dell'alterità, il rispetto dei diritti e delle libertà altrui, la lotta contro qualunque prevaricazione e ingiustizia (Stagi Scarpa, 2005: 15).[4]

Most of all, this invitation to the teaching of moral values should involve all kinds of secondary schools, not only those which focus on classical and humanistic subjects; it also needs to be enlarged to technical and professional schools. Every student has to benefit from literature and increase his own personal value, especially if his origins do not allow him to.

3.2 The student's perspective

We are now to move to the point of view of the student because he is the direct addressee of literary education and he has to deal with the process of reading a literary text in a foreign language. Therefore, firstly we will define this specific action, the way he is involved and we will provide a short anticipation of the teaching act. Secondly, we will talk about the crucial

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[4] The main aspect of a literary work corresponds to the ethical value, that is to say recognizing the diversity among men and respecting other people's rights and freedom; it is a fight against any form of dominion and injustice.

element that sets acquisition into motion which is motivation; and thirdly we will analyse the characteristics and nature of the literary text.

3.2.1 The concept of reading a literary text

It is not simple to explain what reading a literary text exactly means: this concept seems to be complex and intricate. Firstly, reading a text may lead a person to wonder about the power and effects of writing and to inform about reality, which does not correspond to mere representation but it considers language's functions: the referential, emotive, conative, phatic, poetic and metalingual function. Secondly, it implies combining strategies together for reading comprehension to occur, which is mainly based on the functioning of the Language Acquisition Device, (the LAD) studied in chapter 2: it starts with a silent reading for global understanding of the text, then hypothesis are formulated and verified in the following phases. Thirdly, it consists of an association of linguistic elements, particularly concerning the semantic fields. And fourthly, the concept of reading is about relations among texts which have been analysed and connections to their relative paratext or cultural context, to which texts make reference.

As for the role of the reader, a Latin phrase might serve as an introduction: *quidqiud recipitur ad modum recipientis recipitur*, for which each notion is to be received according to the reader's manner of understanding (Balboni, 2004: 26). The reader participates in the realization of the text but he can be an implied reader, whose role is predicted by the text, or he can be a learning reader who is not aware of what to do. Thus literary education joins in to make him improve from unprofessional to competent reader who is able to continue on his own the scholastic progress and tries to increase his abilities of critical examination.

Considering another goal of literary education, it may be assumed that teaching also implies guiding students in reading the text towards a complete involvement and the creation of personal interpretations. However, Umberto Eco clearly states that literary works invite the reader to interpret texts freely since he can adopt different perspectives, encounter language ambiguity which he needs to solve, as it has widely been explained in chapter 1. But in order for texts to be correctly contextualized, the intention of the text has to be respected. In other words, readers have to keep to what the text wants to convey, rather than offering unrestricted explanations.

In conclusion, glottodidactics' objectives of reading a literary text attempt to encourage the reader to find the hidden meaning and to relate past with present contexts; moreover, it tries to examine formal aspects which characterize this particular literary composition and create a literary hypertext for the foreign language taken into analysis.

3.2.2 Motivation

According to what Balboni declares (Balboni, 2004: 14-21), literary education has to make students discover the pleasure of literature, referring to the excitement of evading ordinary lives as in fantasy novels, overcoming fears, empathizing with frustrating experiences of characters, sympathizing for tragic events or witnessing antagonists' punishment. In addition, literature offers satisfaction when we meet well-constructed plots, amazing dialogues, astounding metaphors and unpredictable linguistic structures. To cut it short, the reader has to experience personally the pleasure of literature. What is more, literary education aims at unfolding concealed needs, like understanding the sense of life, love, relationships, power, justice and the natural course of existence, which are recurrent themes in everyday life. In turn, literature can solve adolescents' doubts and it offers answers to them. The emergence of this awareness is one of the main goals of teaching literature.

With regard to the methodology of raising motivation and involvement, literary texts share the same objectives of common texts since, at first, they do not focus on syntactic issues, but rather on linguistic features, historical contextualization in relation to genres, school subjects, critical evaluation and emotional appreciation. Then, this search is productive when motivation highly supports it: it is a relevant factor for learning and acquisition.

Therefore, how can a young student be involved in literary education? Three types of motivation models have been hypothesized.

The first is Renzo Titone's dynamism of the ego for which the student processes some strategies that are applied to solve situations, in our case while reading literary texts at school; if the result gives confirmation to his strategies, he plays an active role in the event and is stimulated to go further.

The second one is the stimulus appraisal by Schuman which is based on neurological factors where emotion is the fundamental element in the acquisition process: stimuli are caught by the brain which evaluates and appreciates them; then it decides whether to accept or reject the input and elaborates new information from stimuli. These ones are selected on the

basis of five dimensions: novelty, because they encourage curiosity; attractiveness, if they show pleasant and interesting aspects; goal/need significance, when they are useful in satisfying needs and achieving goals; coping potential, because when a task seems to be easy, acquisition is motivated, whereas if it is too demanding, it tends to be rejected; and finally if they respect self and social image because the student cannot risk his self-esteem and dignity in front of his peers.

The third model, advanced by researchers at Ca' Foscari University in Venice, appears to be a pragmatic analysis of human needs; for this reason, the system is based on three elements: duty, need and pleasure, as the following image shows (Balboni, 2006: 57):

Pleasure

Duty   Need
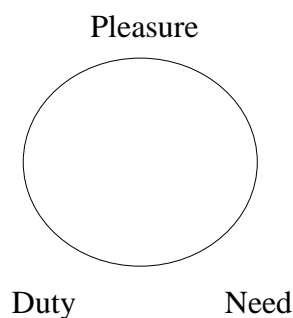
It can be stated that duty does not lead to acquisition but rather to temporary learning which is stored in the short-term memory; in addition, it activates the affective filter, hampering information's retaining. As a result, the acquirer has to be completely involved because it is him who has to study literature and feel the need and enthusiasm for it. The last two factors determine and ensure his interest that can be summarized with Confucius' words: "Tell me and I will forget, show me and I may remember, involve me and I will understand".

Then, as it has been anticipated, students should realize that literature could be useful to answer their adolescent dilemmas and lack of confidence because they are already making use of it without being aware, like listening to songs, watching films and posting personal thoughts in social networks. To sum up, literary education attempts to offer solutions and to guide students in recognizing that they have been seeking for the same answers as other people did in the past, but they shall learn how to read texts if they want to access the literary world; consequently, it encourages the development of personal criticism so as to be able to choose and select among authors, texts and literary movements; and finally, teaching literature tries to enlarge acquirers' mental boundaries and have an overview of the literary corpus. For this purpose, teachers of literature, as well as other school subjects, begin a process of initiation to literature, adding contributions from art, philosophy, history, foreign

and classical languages, towards the understanding and emergence of individual expression of emotions.

Finally, there is evidence that pleasure is the highest level of motivation because it depends on personal choices and parameters to organize and systematize elements, in our case literary texts, giving proof of human intellectual power. Thus, the need and pleasure of literature are combined to produce an hypertext where literature is provided with a precise structure and historical contextualization; the latter takes part in the study and analysis of literature because it has existed and still exists in history. As a result, mapping knowledge helps students connect texts to their contexts, make comparisons among them and recollect notions which appear clearly in their minds. At the end, they will be satisfied about their work because they have done something for themselves, not merely to please the teacher. The most outstanding example is the *Encyclopedia* written by Diderot and D'Alembert where knowledge is accurately stored, responding to a general need of intellectuals.

In conclusion, an efficient approach to teaching literature plans to guide students identifying analogies and differences during the centuries and storing information; it tries to react to personal needs, experience enjoyment in reading, make learners appreciate texts and find strategies to understand them.

3.2.3 *Nature and characteristics of the literary text*

After analyzing the objectives of literary education and the actions entailed in reading texts, together with the fundamental role of motivation to set the acquisition process into motion, we are to examine the nature and characteristics of literary compositions; after that we will look at the choices made to produce such a work of art.

3.2.3.1 Nature

The literary text can be defined as a well-structured and organized discourse obeying frequent rules that aim to systematize its grammatical functioning. When rules are properly combined the product is a coherent text and it can be analysed. In addition, it is also a communicative event which requires a speaker, who composes the message, and a receiver or addressee. The examination can focus on the process of writing, the enunciation, or on the object of communication, the sentence. This communicative act is expected to improve textual

criticism and to pass over textual surface; to show that textual meaning does not lie in the main theme but in the way the text is written; to highlight creativity and art; and to project students towards the importance of their role because it is thanks to them that the literary text exists and can be understood, as it has been discussed in the theories of reception by Iser.

3.2.3.2 The object of literary communication

As the text has turned to be a communicative event, we have to explain what it means to communicate and we should mention the main features of communicative events. First of all, communicating and teaching to communicate correspond to exchanging and teaching to exchange effective messages. In particular, we use the word "exchange" because communication has a direction and addresses a receiver, who can be either real or fictitious, like in a diary; in fact, the Latin origin "cummunis" indicates that several participants share or modify meanings and information. Therefore when someone studies a foreign language, he learns to exchange messages with other people. "Effective" suggests that there is a purpose in communication, i.e. to inform, persuade, obtain or reject something and to provoke reactions in receivers. We talk about "messages" which are constituted of verbal and non-verbal contents; the acquirer learns to transmit messages, not just simple sentences.

As for the main aspects of the communicative event, Hymes has summarized them with a few key words that form the acronym SSPEAKING. The first "S" for scene, referring to the original cultural scene that should be provided in order to understand the literary work; the second "S" for the setting, that is the physical place where the communicative event occurs: of course there is considerable difference between reading a literary text on the computer and on a piece of paper, and seeing a play in a theatre or in the cinema. This is the reason why teaching literature should also consider what could be done in class and at home. "P" stands for participants, the author and the reader, but we can add a third one: the teacher, who has to mediate between the first two. "E" is for ends, the results expected by the author, so that the work's intention is respected, and those expected by the reader: to explore a surprising world to escape from his reality. When author and reader's intentions correspond, they are fulfilled. "A" the acts of communication, or the actions that provoke astonishment, suspense, amazement, fascination in the reader owing to the way they have been realized in the text. "K" relates to the keys, such as psychological attitudes of participants towards the study of literature as they can be interested or indifferent to it. Their behavior and dispositions have to be taken into consideration otherwise they will not be stimulated. "I" for

instrumentality and the instruments used to achieve the objectives of literary teaching, which is typically an anthology. "N" indicates the characteristic communicative norms of literature, namely stylistics, that can be regarded as the convergence point between discipline and subject, advanced by Widdowson. And finally, "G" is for communicative genres, like landscapes and characters' descriptions, dialogues, monologues and the different points of view.

3.2.3.3 The product of choices

The literary text is said to be easily recognizable by several formal characteristics which allow the reading public to identify it like this, in contrast with scientific, juridical or common texts. As a matter of fact, the literary text shows a particular style and linguistic choices made by the author; therefore, it results as a product of a process of selection regarding textual, morphosyntactic, lexical, phonological and graphic choices. The first area of selection concerns the literary genre, whether prose, poetry or drama, and the textual genre, that is a novel, a novella, a biography or an aphorism. Each textual or literary genre has its own grammar, or its nature, as well as precise rules; the student must be aware of them so as to activate the expectancy grammar to make predictions for comprehension and to evaluate whether the author has kept to the genre's particularities or not, and if he has mixed them up with other genres. Concerning lexical choices and figures of speech, we refer to adjectives, verbs, collocations that can convey different meanings; the importance of denotation and connotation, clearness and ambiguity; figures like oxymoron, metaphor, synesthesia and metonymy. Innovative and traditional figures of speech have to be recognized by learners. Likewise, morphosyntactic choices relate to the choice of coordination, subordination and absence of syntactic rules which influence the rhythm of a text. As for this, the author has to select among phonological elements, such as rhyme, rhythm and alliteration, and among graphic ways of writing a text, for instance, using verses, caligrams or visual poetry. And finally, there are pragmatic choices in a literary text because language can be used differently from common situations.

To sum up, it seems evident that teaching literature means teaching how to read texts which implies noticing this kind of properties, language and stylistic modifications which distinguish the literary work; and lastly, we also have to evaluate themes, content, ideas and values conveyed.

In conclusion, it might be added that a literary text is not necessarily written: thanks to technologies and the assembling of different languages, for example songs, films and music videos, we might deal with oral works of art, perhaps with a translation in the first or foreign language. Similarly, Internet has brought great contributions with the creation of websites, blogs for discussion, open books and literary hypertexts. Literature is likely to assume the form of music because songs have always existed and may provide verbal support to the text; in relation to this, literary works represented on a video may be considered as another demonstration of literature.

3.2.4   The participants in the teaching act

We have already referred to the student and the teacher as the participants of the communicative event in literary education, and now we would like to narrow the focus and to specify a few aspects of these subjects: firstly we will look at the student and secondly at the teacher.

In the second chapter different types of students have been presented as far as second language acquisition was concerned; talking about studying literature we can similarly identify a few categories of students on the basis of their age. To begin with, we have primary school's students who discover the existence of literary texts such as fables, fairies, limericks and short poems; they also realize that there are typical structures, like "once upon a time" and phonological patterns, for example, the rhyme. However, these students are not properly taught to read literary texts but rather to produce them, as short humoristic compositions. After that, there are high school's students: it has already been stated that teaching literature has always tended to focus on the history of literature, rather than on the process of reading and analyzing texts. Indeed, contemporary approaches prefer to "focus on the learner" for which teachers ought to present short texts otherwise students are likely to refuse them, the paratext has to serve as a meaningful instrument, for instance images, boxes and notes explaining novels' plot, so as to bring acquirer close to the literary text. And most of all, this one must be interesting: here we use the imperative because adolescents have to read what can stimulate them even though the most famous works are left apart. Then activities have to follow bimodality and directionality of the brain: from the general to the particular, and from the right to the left hemisphere. And lastly, students have to be reminded that they are not completely forced to study literature but they may feel like doing it, according to individual

learning strategies and methods, disposition and sensitivity. Thirdly, there are university's students who are experts with works of literature because they have chosen themselves a literary career: they need and must have historical and cultural knowledge because they have to achieve professional preparation. Under these circumstances, duty plays an important role for motivation. Finally, there are adult students who approach literature late in life: they are already fascinated by it, therefore what they need is strategies and indications to put forth critical observations, tools for analysis and to create a cultural and historical hypertext.

To conclude, a good adult reader of literature should be able to read literary texts at different levels of complexity, to name various reasons of interest and to compare them and himself with his contemporary context. The following table sums up the student's competences and the strategies he uses in performing a linguistic and literary task (Stagi Scarpa, 2005: 129):

The reader's competences	The strategies he processes
General skills: -he knows about texts, data, events and literary techniques; -he is aware of the cultural comparison between the original world and that of the act of reading; -he knows how to learn, so to apply his competences to new texts.	Concerning text's organization: to systematize knowledge through maps and schemes that help him creating his expectancy grammar about messages' structure and content.
Linguistic and communicative skills: -he is able to trace relevant information within a text; -he distinguishes between primary and secondary information; -he suggests hypothesis on the meaning of words; -he draws personal inferences.	Concerning text's analysis: he identifies cues such as images, textual layout etc. to make hypothesis and predictions about the content.
Literary skills: In a literary text, he manages to: -identify the theme, the narrative sequence of events and to divide the text into parts from the content's perspective; -remark a character's main features, how it has been created and his role in the plot; -recognize the meanings of a particular setting, to distinguish between the narrator and his role, the point of view, the different types of speech (direct, indirect, free indirect speech) and, in case, to pinpoint elements of irony	Concerning evaluation and solutions: he verifies his hypothesis, relates cues and his referencing schemes; if he cannot find correspondences he seeks solutions and reconsiders his hypothesis.

With regard to the other participant of teaching literature, Balboni (2004: 37) offers three definitions of teachers: they can be like Islamic priests who have been allowed to read the scriptures; like Catholic priests who announce the Bible and make people read it; or like Protestant pastors who guide interpretation but do not impose theirs because there are several correct possibilities.

According to Freddi (Balboni, 2004: 37), the ideal teacher is:

> un letterato-educatore che guida gli studenti all'accostamento, al godimento e alla valutazione della letteratura nelle sue valenze primarie, in quanto portatrice di valori e bellezza, cultura e umanità e in quanto speciale codice semiotico-funzionale. […] attiva negli studenti i meccanismi piscologici, culturali e operativi che permettono loro di conoscere e apprezzare le grandi voci della letteratura[5]

and those texts that constitute the literary richness of a language and a country.

Furthermore, teachers are supposed to bring students to create connections with other sources and define objectives, tasks, theoretical knowledge and competences. They are responsible for teaching methods, i.e. levels of difficulty, strategies, activities and learning durations towards efficient and productive results, rather than exhaustive knowledge of literature.

3.3 The teaching methodology

In this paragraph the figure of the teacher moves from the notion of participant and guide, defined as a Protestant pastor, to the main character of the teaching act, considered as a director. We are now to study the process of teaching literature which is articulated in teaching and acquisition units, then to the technologies that can be used for this purpose.

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[5] A literate instructor who guides students in the process of initiation, appreciation and evaluation of literature within its main aspects, aiming at conveying ideals of beauty, culture and humanity since it is a particular linguistic code, where sings have precise functions. […] he activates students' psychological, cultural and mental processes that allow them to learn and sympathize with the greatest authors of literature.

3.3.1   The teacher as a director and didactic communication

Focusing on didactics, we deal with students, literature as the object of teaching and teachers who mediate between the other two components; consequently they stand in the background like executive directors. Moreover, they keep the same distance from students and literature so as to privilege none of them: for example, they neither pass over linguistic mistakes or modify authentic texts, nor offer too difficult or easy texts. This position let them be concealed in the teaching scene, but allows subjects and object to exist equally.

Starting from the 1970s, teachers have been regarded as facilitating characters in language and literary learning, and this is how we want to look at them; they have appeared as counselors, like in Total Physical Response and Community Language Learning where they speak very little and encourage students with a few pieces of advice or indications. On the basis of other methodologies they figured as referencing models, correcting mistakes with fingers' signs and specific codes, agreed with students; or from the 1990s, they have turned to be like tutors, ensuring support and a sort of protection. And finally, teacher have assumed the role of directors offstage, guiding students. All these denominations share the aspect that teachers are no longer considered as superior almighty instructors, but rather as useful figures and reference points without major importance.

In addition, didactic communication is the most relevant aspect for efficient teaching and it can be divided into three moments: the foreigner's talk, that is when a native speaker wants non-native speakers to understand him; the teacher's talk, where natural communication is modified to enhance comprehension and it is supposed to evolve in following stages; and the teacher's talking time which is the amount of time of the teacher's intervention during a lesson. It is evident that the more an instructor talks, the less students do it, and the less they are the real characters of learning.

Another aspect worth considering is the choice of language in didactic communication because we need to distinguish between moments where foreign language is used to learn and where first language is used for emotional and interpersonal relations, as well as for correcting mistakes.

3.3.2   The teaching act

Nowadays, the teaching act is believed to be formed by three components: teaching units, acquisition units and modules. We will describe these independent blocks, in particular, the first two as starting points of the learning path in which students actively participate, and the module which identifies linguistic competences that learners have to achieve. Besides, we will deal with didactic activities and technologies that appear to be innovative in comparison with traditional forms of teaching literature.

3.3.2.1 Teaching units and acquisition units

It has been ascertained that acquisition units have to observe the Gestalt psychology, according to which input perception occurs in the different phases. At first there is a global understanding which is followed by analysis and by a conclusion where students formulate their synthesis; it might be either conscious and unconscious. Under normal circumstances where the affective filter is not activated, perceived data turn into received elements and are acquired. The global phase consists of global perception of the text where the right hemisphere is involved and strategies try to find elements of frequency from the context in order to make predictions. These ones help put forth socio-pragmatic and linguistic hypothesis and examine metaphors which are characteristic features of the right hemisphere. Then, there occurs a general evaluation of hypothesis, called skimming, or of single elements, the scanning. Finally it foresees the search for analogies with known events. Recommended activities are listening or reading the text several times, each with particular objectives so as to get the student closer to a focused analysis, moving towards the left mode of the brain. In this case, the student can work alone or with a schoolmate in order to grasp the meaning of the text; notes, illustrations, cues from the paratext are fundamental to encourage students to read the text and analyse it.

The movement from global to analytical approach requires the teacher's guidance, at least to set the process up. In the analysis of a text, the communicative act has to be identified, explained and systematized; it considers linguistic aspects belonging to phonology, morphology, vocabulary and textual factors, and it also looks at cultural themes and non-verbal languages.

After careful examination, cognitive and emotional synthesis are parts of the same phase where information typically processed in the left hemisphere converge with emotions of
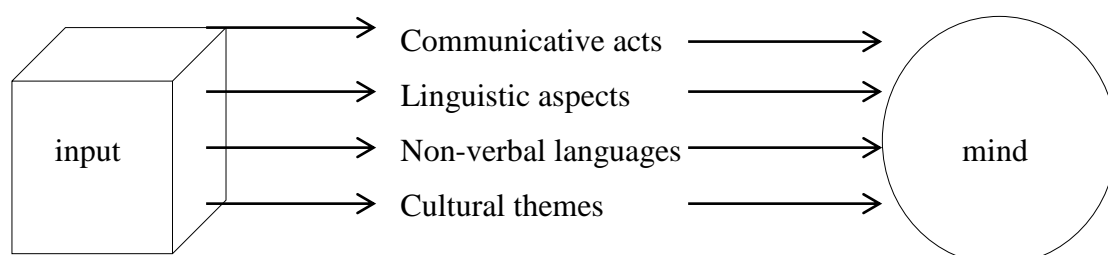
the right hemisphere of the brain. In fact, critical evaluation brings students to think over the text analysed: the way it contributes to the theme of the literary module, its classification in the historical context and relation to other literary works. With a few specified questions, teachers stimulate the emergence of critical appreciation and the opening of mental boundaries, perhaps with the creation of a literary hypertext which may be available in the classroom or on the Internet. It corresponds to their own analysis of works of literature adding other elements, like lexical, phonological and textual observations.

Whereas emotional synthesis is more concerned with feelings and reactions after the student's experience: he might be asked if it has been interesting and useful, if it has evoked curious sensations and inspired different forms of interpretation. Thus, learners may imagine about a distinct plot or to change the novel's ending.

At this point, it is firmly believed that this particular sequence has to underlay each acquisition unit because any type of text or communicative event has to be explored through global, analytical and conclusive methods. Personal considerations and appreciations have to be encouraged as much as possible in order to let learning develop into acquisition. An acquisition unit may last a few minutes or an entire lesson, and it refers to what students perceive and learn in the session; on the contrary, the teaching unit lasts from six to ten hours because it is a more complex linguistic and communicative block where precise situational events and acts are put together. For instance, a literary teaching unit based on the main author of an historical period will present his texts, then it will consider general aspects of the text and stylistic choices which endow it with the qualities of that literary genre and movement.

To put it another way, students will deal with a global reading of the text, then with a more detailed analysis and with a final consideration of the text which includes general evaluation and personal appreciation to conclude the teaching unit. The teaching unit appears as a well-organized and accurate system with a definite order, tasks and objectives; however, additional activities can be inserted along the path.

It can be represented as follows (Balboni, 2012: 163).

input → Communicative acts → mind
input → Linguistic aspects → mind
input → Non-verbal languages → mind
input → Cultural themes → mind

At the beginning, motivation introduces the object of learning with activities to share what students already know and expect form the subject of discussion: video, advertisements, songs, photos, Internet websites and authentic material can properly serve for this purpose. We can also provide key words and teachers shall tell something about their own experiences so as to give a realistic link with what they are going to study. Nevertheless, the teacher's talking time is reduced and directed to stimulating questions to inspire participation. After that, acquisition units can be modified because if something seems too difficult or boring, it can be replaced by students' interventions and activities proposed by them. As a consequence, a final test indicates whether linguistic, cultural and pragmatic objectives have been attained or not, and if elements of previous units have been acquired. On the contrary, evaluation is the teacher's judgment on students' performance: it looks at learning and knowledge improvements, considering personal characteristics or deficiencies. In conclusion, it is important to remember that in the transition from one unit to the other, motivation has to be kept alive with entertaining activities such as listening to songs, watching films, searching the Internet or planning Skype conversations with foreign schools.

3.3.2.2 The literary module

First of all, it can be defined as a portion of a curriculum with its own structure and it may also appear in the student's CV or portfolio. Differently from historical and chronological approaches, and similarly to teaching units, modules present refined structures but they do not exclude activity integrations: as it has been stated before, the study of literature does not aim at thoroughness but rather at systematic knowledge and sensitivity to topics of discussion. The module has to be independent, it stands *per se*, and at the end of it the student will be able to apply the acquired skills to similar situations; at the end, he can be evaluated in terms of competences.

A module of literature can be based on literary genres, which would not be very interesting unless it is students who choose the texts; while if it based on themes it is likely to draw students' attention because they are used to wondering about love, death, social injustice, the relation between man and nature, and so on and so forth. A module may focus on literary movements, such as the Renaissance, the Victorian Age or Colonialism, but also on particular authors and on the reading of a whole book.

In spite of this, the drawback of module's approach is the scaffolding, i.e. the general referencing point that connects modules: it might be history to which literary, philosophic and

artistic works are attached; but it is not as simple as those for modules based on themes or genres because they already share a common point.

Lastly, the natural order of exploration has to move from text or texts to the author and the context; the opposite sequence would be incorrect because we are not expected to start from the author and his life, with works, thinking and success, and then to consider the major texts of literary tradition. Therefore it has to respect a logical order and the Gestalt sequence of acquisition which has been explained.

3.3.2.3 Didactic activities

Now we would like to identify those activities that can be useful and fascinating for the study of literature. To begin with extensive comprehension, respectively with skimming and scanning information, charts may help in tracing elements to answer questions like where? who? what? and why?; whereas research for data in limited periods of time, for example one minute to find the responsible and the circumstances of a murder, would be applied for the second operation. Selective listening, like focusing the attention on particular information, and activities of transcodification, like drawing a picture of the main theme of a poem, are applied to improve comprehension. Other activities can be cloze exercises or jigsaws where there are missing parts or reconstruction of texts, or watching films in the foreign language (cf. Balboni, 2013).

For the analysis of the literary text, activities on the text foresee morpho-syntactic challenges where students work in pairs and have to answer questions as rapidly as possible to win the point; or they have to find the intruder in groups of words. For lexical learning, students can play at memory games and imitate interviews to check cultural knowledge. These simple techniques allow the deconstruction of the text into sequences which may lead to the understanding of textual characteristics. As for activities off the text, physical movements and active participation are involved: usually teachers are not willing to move desks and foster open debates but nice examples lead students to positive results. Balboni (2004: 46-47) hypothesizes that students have to direct the scene where Hamlet asks himself "to be or not to be": they become the director who decides about the tone of his voice, whether there is music or not, which words need emphasis, his position and so on and so forth. Of course, it requires time and the classroom will be quite noisy because students discuss and exchange opinions; but what is important is that it fixes a particular way of thinking in their minds where they consider different aspects of a literary work. However,

with narrative it would be a little more complicated, but through transcodification films and songs may be made out of texts. Again, with interviews as well as with role plays and rankings, history of literature can be introduced to students, in the perspective to encourage discussion with diverse points of view and evaluations.

Another interesting method is cooperative learning where students give contributions to the success or failure of the work. Even though teachers tend to consider teamwork as a loss of time, where students think it is a break and excellent students do the most part of the task, cooperative learning allows to attain high level objectives in comprehension, analysis and synthesis. It presents a detailed structure where every single person is assigned a precise and everybody has to join in. Besides, it aims at personal achievements like self-esteem, motivation to learning and responsibility for his role; it also encourages peers' recognition and acceptation, and their value. There occurs phases of group-processing, group evaluation and self-assessment; personal evaluation will be carried out by the teacher. The latter establishes objectives and decides how to organize the activity, providing instructions and feedbacks on performances. Furthermore, there are two typologies of cooperative learning. In the first one students share the same objective but they have been assigned different tasks or material; their role may be concerned with efficient functioning of the group where they participate to create a positive atmosphere: the facilitator verifies if roles and instructions are respected, then there is the time keeper, and the encourager who comments on interesting and useful ideas and stimulates his fellows' participation. Otherwise, roles may look at executive development of tasks: there is the note taker who records what has been said, the speaker reports to the class, the checker of understanding who asks about the clearness of contents, and the synthesizer who sums up the main points of discussion. These roles can be changed during the activity and be combined as well, in order to create a shared leadership where everyone is involved and experiences new abilities in establishing relationships and processing information. The second model is based on the use of structures to organize interaction and share knowledge. Annex 3 clearly explains which structures are used in specific situations. In conclusion, cooperative learning is a teaching method which requires students' participation and responsibility for their own tasks; when they get used to do this kind of work, they will easily take on the role established for them, hold discussions and confrontations, and work with other people, which is a basic skill in professional careers.

Another innovative activity would be the random volunteered group responses which is usually applied in early stages of second language acquisition; however, it can be used to induce students to speak, leaving the fear of being wrong apart. Here the teacher asks a

question and everybody answers without raising hands; it will occur that some students provide internal or silent answers, or that they will mumble something. Despite this, audible and comprehensible answers will be uttered. As a result, an approximate real communication takes place and students get used to open up their mouths.

Total Physical Response might be practiced in the teaching of literature, even if it concerns little acts of communication: we could attach some papers in the classroom's walls where names of authors or literary movements are written; then the teacher reads the title of a text, a few lines or the names of some major representatives and students move to their correspondents.

3.3.2.4 Didactic technologies

Generally speaking, it appears that thanks to modern technologies, language and literary teaching can benefit from the advantages brought about which aim at increasing motivation, providing pleasure on learning and experiencing new teaching methods where students are expected to collaborate with their schoolmates. The book *Educazione letteraria e nuove tecnologie*, edited by Balboni in 2004, presents some essays on innovative use of technologies in didactics and it is interesting to see how they can provide crucial help in the teaching of literature.

a. The creation of a literary hypertext

It enables representations of time and space which is characteristic of human reasoning in particular during operations, comparisons, interpretation and elaboration of information. Therefore, hypertexts allow the creation of multimedia texts that assemble communicative codes; at the same time they consider the emotional aspect that literature wants to convey. For this reason, linear thinking cannot be replaced by reticular structure; hypertexts have to organize knowledge in a way that agrees with learners' sensitivity. They separate texts from their commentary and introduce a new form of reading which is no more linear and continuous, but moves to one unit to the other so as to recollect information in a systematic way. This sort of structuring and organizing data creates in the student's mind some strategies to connect elements easily, like relating the life of an author to his works, the literary movement and the historical context.

With regard to teachers, they are no longer the superior instructors but turn into facilitators or learning managers because the student himself is the author of his own work.

The learner can add personal observations, decides how to link elements and integrate them with critical sources. However, it has to be clear, complete and comprehensible because it is no more addressed to the teacher but to a larger public which is the class. Moreover, this new experience might be highly motivating for the student because it is based on pleasure, active participation, autonomy, sense of individual responsibility and belonging to a group; as it has already been declared, self-promotion and self-realization are essential objectives of education.

Consequently, the creation of an hypertext reveals to be a complicated and demanding activity: it requires that students make personal research and investigations for analysis and connections; it develops critical synthesis and abilities to communicate notions; it helps formulating the meaning of events; and to project and write about concepts. To conclude, during its construction learners are induced to make decisions and to select elements according to their mental processes. They develop those basic abilities such as writing and reading, as well as transformation and integrative skills, like paraphrasing, summarizing and translating.

Similar to hypertexts, concept maps can be defined as mental organizations of knowledge which assemble notions to their graphic representation. It is a useful instrument both for teachers to arrange notions that have to be acquired, and for students to identify the main concepts of lessons, texts and other sources. Graphic representation is an important aspect for it establishes a hierarchy between the most meaningful ideas, it puts together different codes and languages, like photos and schemes, and it can be changed whenever it is needed. In this way it provides great delineation of the student's learning and the richness of contents. It was Novak and Gowin who firstly used concept maps where ideas are linked by arrows that represent their relations; the most common typology has a vertical structure and connections go from the most important to the least, from general to particular and from theoretical to concrete thoughts. Or, we can have spider maps where concepts are collocated around a central nucleus which allows others to be added; finally, reticular arrangements are not based on sequential order but it is more flexible, likewise the hypertext. Annex 4 offers clear illustrations of the three structures. Finally, not only maps do involve data organization, but they also activate meta-cognitive processes because students need to elaborate knowledge, and provide representations with a graphic structure.

b. From poetry to songs

In his essay, Giordano dall'Armellina believes that the study of literature and especially of poetry can be integrated with songs chosen by the teacher, as a conclusion of a module, or by students who agree on a piece of music. At least at the beginning, the teacher has to provide an example of an hypothetical lesson that might be imitated afterwards.

An interesting activity on the study of English Romanticism is the comparison of a ballad with an Italian song, "Geordie" written by Fabrizio de André (Balboni, 2004: 126): listening to the original and translated version would be a great experience for students, particularly if there is a third adaptation, as in this case, with a techno song. Students are expected to find similarities and differences between the two texts and to consider linguistic and textual characteristics. It has been proved that they will remember for a long time this activity and the object of study. Therefore, music is a fundamental influence in the learning process because it provides motivation and conveys literature's evocative power; it also gives confirmation that the text they have just analysed really exists.

Likewise, concerning the study of English Romantic poetry, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* by Coleridge is compared to Paul Simon's "Sound of Silence" because they both explore the theme of solitude and love for Nature. The author concludes that music is likely to provide considerable support for psychological behavior, the "K" we analysed in the acronym "SSPEAKING".

c. Use of Internet in literary education

It has been declared that the Internet could be used in a great number of ways in the teaching of literature: it is useful to find materials for additional input, to propose creative activities which definitely fascinate students, promote cooperative and collaborative learning where the focus is on acquirers, and consider students' dispositions and learning strategies. It also raises motivation and allows those students who have little deficiencies to catch up with their peers. The most interesting aspect is that the Internet presents activities as games, and we are perfectly aware that there is nothing stronger than the pleasure of playing to stimulate students in acquisition because they feel at ease. Games promote social and collaborative learning, as well as creativity and problem solving; finally, they aim at raising autonomy in students.

d. The tandem methodology

Paola Celentin advances this innovative form of learning in literary education which, for instance in reading comprehension, connects two students: they start emailing each other and

ask questions about a literary text that can be in a foreign language for both participants, or just for one of them. They will negotiate meanings of words and will investigate on words' connotations and collocations, on cultural references and idioms, and on sentences' structure because sometimes it is hard to access literary language. Besides, they are supposed to analyse impressions and emotions evoked by the text and to look for contemporary correspondents or music accompaniment. In this activity teachers get in contact with foreign schools to work together, decide the amount of time in which students communicate with their pen friends, give the input for analysis and encourage further research.

e. Radio drama

This unusual method is very efficient for motivation and competences' development. On the one hand, students discover that apart from cinema, theatre and television, radio drama is a powerful means to conceive literature and foster mental imagination. On the other hand, listening and reading, intonation and rhythm of the foreign language and lexical acquisition are all required for the comprehension of the work. Here too, it is the teacher who chooses what to study and students participate either in teamwork and individually: excellent results can be attained with radio drama activities.

3.3.3 Evaluating knowledge and competences

At the end of a teaching unit, teachers have to verify whether students have learned the notions explained and acquired mechanisms to process input. It is not an easy task because results are very different and there are many factors which influence the moment when students are assessed. First of all we need to distinguish between test and evaluation which are both involved in this process but focus on opposite data.

3.3.3.1 Test VS evaluation

Test is used to collect information about those objectives and levels of learning that ought to be attained: in this case, the teacher makes hypothesis on what it has been truly learned because tests report linguistic products and realizations of communicative acts, but they do not identify mental processes and competences. Moreover, we cannot differentiate between stable acquisition and temporary learning. The object of evaluation will be concepts and

notions' knowledge, and the ability to read, analyse and interpret a literary text. For instance, Balboni suggests a possible literary test on Romanticism (Balboni, 2004: 49): students will be submitted a text belonging to the movement, perhaps one they have already tackled with, and are asked to identify textual characteristics of that literary period, its main principles, differences and analogies with other Romantic texts. They can also recognize figures of speech, historical and cultural references and connections with previous literary movements.

On the contrary, evaluation relates the results achieved to the learning path but the teacher also has to look at the student's personal history, i.e. his dispositions in learning, his behaviour and interest in school activities and presumable learning difficulties. In addition, the instructor compares previous results of each single learner to check whether improvements have occurred or not. Then there follows a moment of analysis and explanation of results, strategies applied, demanding exercises and nature of mistakes, due to lack of attention or competence, misunderstanding and interference with the L1.

We are now to present feasible activities and methods to guide comprehension and to evaluate it after reading and listening to texts. The most common and direct technique is the open question; however, there are considerable drawbacks because it is a false question, as the teacher already knows the answer. Thus, it seems neither motivating nor acceptable by students, and the adult is seen like a judge. Secondly, in the study of literature, the foreign language constitutes another difficulty and the student might be unable to answer because he misunderstands the question itself, not the text. And thirdly, when he is forced to answer in the foreign language, the focus moves to the production rather than on comprehension. Questions can be of reference or inference type where information are contained in the text or answers have to be elaborated, fostering deep comprehension. As for data elaboration, this ability requires some time that should be granted to the student; for example, questions may be handed ten minutes before the oral test so as to let him recollect notions and structure his final answer. Similarly, when learners have to report activities done in class, they need some time to think over the most relevant points of discussion, care for accuracy and efficient strategies to organize their intervention. Thus, it would be completely fair to allow them to look at their plan or concept maps because they are part of their personal study.

After that, teacher can use multiple choice questions and, since students are likely to answer correctly by chance, it might be compulsory to explain the choice; or, when they fall into traps, they lose one point in the final mark.

Charts are considered to be useful in comprehension and evaluation as well: students simply have to collocate the elements of a text in the right column or line.

Transcodification has already been introduced for text's general analysis, but it turns into an evaluating technique when learners transform oral or written texts into drawings, street directions and charts. Despite it clearly indicates whether students have understood notions and communicative acts or not, it does not allow detailed analysis.

To continue, another interesting activity is assembling words to their definitions which has an essential advantage for students because before the exercise is finished, they may be aware of mistakes when mismatches occur.

Then, the creation of a Portfolio helps teachers and learners to observe personal improvements in writing skills, organizing ideas and analyzing texts, adding critical comments.

Finally, another method to evaluate knowledge is the composition of summaries concerning authors which consequently form a catalogue of literary movements' representatives. The teacher is supposed to guide students in precise research that they will carry on independently; evaluation will focus on the way concepts have been presented and how websites have been selected. By so doing, they are responsible of their choices, they will try to build a logical structure and care for aesthetic, linguistic, critical and pragmatic aspects.

3.3.3.2 Catching up

Teachers activate a series of catching up activities if there are students who do not achieve positive results when compared to other schoolmates. For this purpose they need additional input and exercises that can be done individually or in groups, aiming at setting into motion acquisition mechanisms which have not been applied so far. Of course, there are several reasons for weak results, such as scant participation in the study of literature, L1 inferences or learning gaps that are bound to affect the L2, or when the student finds difficulties in accessing the world of literature because of its supposed abstractness.

That is why learners should be actively and psychologically involved. These additional activities should be regarded as a special care for them by the teacher who chooses them on the basis of their disposition and interest, rather than as mere punishment. In other words, teacher and student sign a psychological pact. Balboni recommends some activities like finding a piece of music for a text or to think about a representative colour for a character of the text (Balboni, 2004: 51).

There are two types of catching up. The first one is used during the learning path by providing input at the end of teaching units, like songs, films or representations, that reveal

what they have actually improved; as for weaker students they are given connected activities to do at home. Alternatively, they can do additional exercises, for example copying excerpts, summarizing, writing answers to questions studied in class or doing self-dictation. The second type is intensive catching up aimed to support struggling students with grammatical rules: they may be provided with some examples and have to deduce their functioning, describing the mechanisms as well. In this way, acquisition processes are activated through aware learning. Otherwise, individual help may take place while students try to do some exercises. They must feel free to ask the teacher, so that they establish an intimate and trusting relationship.

On the contrary, it happens that there emerge excellent students in a class with persistent disparities; consequently, it is likely that they lose their interest because they have to wait for their peers to reach their level of competence. Therefore, some integrative paths have to be organized for them while teachers deal with struggling students. For instance, they can look for additional sources concerning the teaching unit they have been studying and explain it to the rest of the class in the following lesson; or they can either be engaged in individual activities which will be handed in to the teacher.

3.3.4   Final considerations

In conclusion, it is evident that new technologies may bring considerable support to the study of literature and to encourage students' participation. With a computer they can get in contact with foreign people and establish mutual relationships where they help each other in learning a language and understanding connotations and references; they are used in the creation of databases and hypertexts that collect literary texts, analysis of films and songs, summaries of authors and movements: in the class computer they have access to everything they need to increase their skills and competences. Similarly, CD players, tape and video recorders offer important sources for additional input for oral comprehension, such as adaptations of works, texts that are accompanied by music; they can provide authentic material showing plays and representations. Moreover, with these technologies students' performances can be recorded and showed from time to time to make them aware of personal improvements and achievements.

Nevertheless, it is true that with the wide spread of smart phones students manage to do all these activities with a single tool and they are very expert in using them; thus, by

involving extraordinary and unusual methods students cope with the study of literature in a foreign language. This should be considered as another strategy to encourage them getting closer to the world of literature: they have to understand that it is not as abstract and far from them as they think. So they need to realize that it may even help them to solve adolescents' troubles, and that they are likely to discover their hidden sensitivity, which they might be proud of.

Chapter 4

A survey on the study of literature

In Italy, secondary schools are attended by 14 to 19 year-old students and are the last compulsory form of education; after that, young people are free to decide whether to go to university, look for a job or follow other different paths. There are several types of high schools divided into three major categories of institutes: it can be concerned with technical knowledge, called "Istituto tecnico", with professional competences, "Istituto professionale" or focused on intellectual formation, "Liceo"; each specialization covers a particular area for a future job and career.

Of course, each institute foresees particular subjects of study, included approaches and the amount of time dedicated to them. As far as literature is concerned, it is studied mainly in the "Liceo" where students deal with humanistic subjects, and here, in languages' curriculum, they start studying it from the third year as an integration to first, second and third foreign language acquisition. Similarly, in the scientific curriculum literature is approached from the third year but only in one foreign language. Whereas in technical and professional institutes, literature is regarded as an integration to themes and issues studied in the foreign language, for example concerning the literary heritage of a town, particularly relevant for tourists, or for social relationships.

In order to investigate on students' attitudes towards the study of literature, a survey has been conducted among a few high school's classes. The first aim of the research was to examine how much young people are interested and feel involved during literature's lessons, especially when they deal with literary texts in a foreign language. Secondly, it questioned students on how they conceive literature: whether merely as a school subject or as something more real they do themselves. And thirdly, it aimed to draw a general profile on the possible activities that would attract and stimulate them in the learning act.

Four classes of two different institutes have participated: one class more concerned on languages (A) and the other one on scientific subjects (B); then, a class focused on social studies (C) and on touristic services (D). As for the methodology, an anonymous questionnaire has been handed over in class and students had to fill it in in a short time. In the following page, the original questionnaire has been reported, followed by the English translation as they were prepared in Italian, so as not to hamper comprehension.

Caratteristiche:

Data: Maggio 2015

QUESTIONARIO SULLO STUDIO DELLA LETTERATURA IN LINGUA STRANIERA:

nessuna risposta è più corretta o sbagliata dell'altra.

1. STUDIO DELLA LETTERATURA:

a. La letteratura italiana ti sembra interessante e stimolante? MOLTO   ABBASTANZA   POCO   NIENTE

b. Ti trasmette qualcosa? MOLTO   ABBASTANZA   POCO   NIENTE

c. Ti senti coinvolto, pronto a scoprire un nuovo mondo?   SI   NO

d. Studi letteratura in una lingua straniera? SI   NO

e. Se sì, in quale lingua?

f. Quale sensazione ti lascia?

- ☐ Curiosità e interesse, forse ti piacerebbe seguire un percorso letterario
- ☐ Abbastanza piacevole ma irrilevante
- ☐ Un senso di vuoto e perdita di tempo

g. Se lo studio della letteratura in lingua straniera fosse obbligatorio, come la prenderesti?

- ☐ Tragicamente
- ☐ Insomma, ma siccome è parte del mio piano di studi allora la studierò
- ☐ Perché no? Forse può piacermi

2. CONCETTO DI LETTERATURA

a. Secondo te la letteratura è (sono possibili più risposte):

- ☐ Un insieme di testi e poesie del passato
- ☐ L'espressione di una società in un determinato periodo storico
- ☐ La reazione popolare ad eventi storici
- ☐ L'espressione dei sentimenti umani
- ☐ Un possibile spunto per la soluzione dei problemi quotidiani

b. Cosa può essere letteratura?

- ☐ un pensiero scritto velocemente nel diario di scuola
- ☐ un tweet o un post su Facebook
- ☐ un ragionamento mentale ben strutturato e logico ma dimenticato dopo poco
- ☐ un grido di rabbia
- ☐ una canzone
- ☐ una dedica ad una persona
- ☐ un bigliettino passato di nascosto mentre il professore è girato alla lavagna

c. Ti capita di fare una di queste azioni?   SI   NO

d. Se sì, quale?

e. Potresti allora considerarti uno scrittore? SI   NO   FORSE

f. O ti senti semplicemente ridicolo?   SI   NO

3. LETTERATURA IN LINGUA STRANIERA

a. Cosa provi quando scrivi qualcosa o leggi un testo in una lingua straniera?

   ☐ Piacere: la lingua è fantastica

   ☐ Sfida: è un po' difficile ma voglio riuscirci

   ☐ Confusione: e adesso cosa faccio?

b. Secondo te la letteratura italiana o straniera può dare piacere, un' emozione e un insegnamento di vita? SI
  NO

4. STUDIERESTI LETTERATURA O LO FARESTI CON PIÙ COINVOLGIMENTO SE...

a. Stimolasse la tua curiosità? SI   NO

b. Fosse un testo piacevole, magari corto e semplice da capire?   SI   NO

c. Ti aiutasse a risolvere qualche tua insicurezza o bisogno, come dire al tuo migliore amico/a che è parte di te?
SI   NO

d. Comprendere il significato e sciogliere le metafore fosse un gioco da ragazzi, basta solo un piccolo sforzo del
cervello? SI   NO

e. Ognuno potesse dare la sua interpretazione che può essere diversa dal tuo compagno, senza vincitori né vinti?
SI   NO

f. Non vedessi l'adulto di fronte a te come un carabiniere?   SI   NO

g. Quello che conta non fosse veramente il voto ma ciò che guadagni a livello personale?

             SI   NO

5. ATTIVITÀ: TI PIACEREBBE STUDIARE LETTERATURA IN UNA LINGUA STRANIERA SE... :

a. Dovessi paragonare una poesia ad un minuto di musica (classica, pop, rap o techno)? SI NO

b. Fossi registrato mentre leggi un breve testo di qualche autore (come il momento di dubbio esistenziale di
Amleto)?   SI   NO

c. Potessi ascoltare una poesia medievale recitata da qualche attore?   SI   NO

d. Dovessi progettare un breve film o rappresentazione teatrale con i tuoi compagni sul testo appena letto? SI
  NO

e. Dovessi recitare una tua versione e adattamento? SI   NO

f. Dovessi rivisitare il testo in chiave moderna?   SI   NO

Study of literature from:

Date: May 2015

A SURVEY ON STUDYING LITERATURE IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE:

any of the following answer is more correct or inappropriate than the other.

STUDY OF LITERATURE:

a. Does Italian literature seem interesting and stimulating to you?

VERY MUCH   A LITTLE   NOT VERY MUCH   NOT AT ALL

b. Does it convey something to you?

VERY MUCH   A LITTLE   NOT VERY MUCH NOT AT ALL

c. Do you feel involved in the discovery of a new world?   YES   NO

d. Do you study literature in a foreign language?   YES   NO

e. If so, in what language?

f. What feeling does it evoke?

- ☐ A sense of curiosity and interest aroused, maybe you would like to undertake a literary path
- ☐ Quite pleasant but still of small relevance
- ☐ A waste of time and a feeling of emptiness

g. If the study of literature in a foreign language was compulsory, how would you react?

- ☐ It would be a tragedy
- ☐ I would not be happy with it, but as it's part of my curriculum, I will do it
- ☐ Why not? Maybe I will like it

2. CONCEPT OF LITERATURE:

a. According to you, literature is (many answers are possible):

- ☐ A corpus of texts and poems belonging to the past
- ☐ The expression of society in a precise period of time
- ☐ People's reaction to historical events
- ☐ The expression of human feelings
- ☐ A possible solution to every-day life's problems

b. What literature could be?

- ☐ a thought quickly written in your school agenda
- ☐ a tweet or a post on Facebook
- ☐ a logical and well-structured reasoning, even though forgot in a short time
- ☐ a roar of rage
- ☐ a song
- ☐ an inscription for someone
- ☐ a note given to someone while the teacher is looking at the blackboard

c. Do you happen to do one of these actions?   YES   NO

d. If so, which one?

e. Would you then consider yourself as a writer?   YES   NO   MAYBE

f. Or would you just feel ridicule   YES   NO

3. LETTERATURA IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGUE:

a. What do you feel when you write or read something in a foreign language?

     ☐   Enjoyment: the language is fantastic

     ☐   Challenge: it's slightly difficult but I want to succeed

     ☐   Confusion: what will I do now?

b. According to you, can Italian literature or literature in a foreign language bring pleasure, evoke an emotion and teach a lesson?   YES   NO

4. WOULD YOU STUDY LITERATURE OR WOULD YOU BE MORE INTERESTED IN IT IF...

a. It awakened your curiosity? YES   NO

b. You had to read a pleasant, simple and short text?   YES   NO

c. It helped you with your lack of confidence or needs, like telling one of your friends that he/she is part of your life?   YES   NO

d. Understanding metaphors was but a piece of cake, it only requires a little effort? YES   NO

e. Anyone could give his own interpretation, which can be different from the others', with no right or wrong answer?   YES   NO

f. You didn't look at the adult in front of you as a police officer? YES NO

g. What you retain was the only thing that really matters, not just the final mark? YES   NO

5. ACTIVITIES: WOULD YOU LIKE TO STUDY LITERATURE IN A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IF…:

a. You had to compare a poem to a one-minute song (pop, rap, classical or techno)? YES NO

b. You were recorded while reading a short literary text (as Hamlet's personal doubts on his life) YES   NO

c. You could listen to a medieval ballad read by some actors?   YES   NO

d. You were to make a short film or a play with you schoolmates on the text just read?   YES   NO

e. You were to play your own adaptation or remaking?   YES   NO

f. You were to provide a modern adaptation of a literary work?   YES   NO

Finally, this study wanted to test the hypothesis concerning the teaching of literature, i.e. if students look at the study of this subject as an obligation, a personal need or pleasure; if they can get a feeling of enjoyment from this experience; and if they would be more fascinated by doing unusual activities and using technologies. In particular, questions in point 4 are based on the stimulus appraisal concept for which the brain receives the input and chooses what can be internalized and what is rejected; the selection takes into account novelty, attractiveness, need/goal significance, coping potential and self and social image, as it has been explained in chapter 3.

Broadly speaking, results show that to some degree students are involved and interested in studying literature, ready to discover a new fantastic world, especially for students in A and C, but with rather indifference for those in B and D. Similarly, literature arouses curiosity for the first class and little irrelevant enjoyment for the others. It can be inferred that students dealing with foreign languages and relative literatures are having a nice experience so far and, likewise, personal curiosity for this subject keeps in line with the curriculum chosen, where it is fairly fundamental for their scholastic formation.

When students were asked how they would behave to the compulsory study of literature, they demonstrated positive reactions: in B, 11 learners over 20 would not completely disagree with it, while the other 9 said they would probably enjoy it, as students of social and touristic studies would do.

Surprisingly, they share the same idea of literature which is considered as the expression of human feelings and of society in a particular period of time; in addition, they all answered that literature can be a spontaneous inscription to a person. However, for people in A, it is also a yell of rage and a song; for students in B it is a rapid thought written in whatever piece of paper; students in C declared that it is also a song and a logical reasoning quickly forgot, which is D's students' perspective too. Though the majority of them are used to writing short compositions in school agendas, on social networks and to beloved people, they would not regard themselves as writers, nor feel ridicule, which seems to be encouraging because at least they do not fear doing this intimate act. Moreover, reading and writing in a foreign language is a challenge for them, which is a great source of motivation: they want to succeed and fight against difficulties to establish themselves. Another point worth considering is that "linguist" students declared that foreign languages bring them pleasure, which is definitely not for "scientific" students: here again, personal attitudes and scholastic choices are confirmed.

As far as involvement in studying literature is concerned, students agree on several crucial aspects: novelty, coping potential, self and social image (though not important for D), the fact of considering the teacher as a guide, instead of a judge, and personal gain, rather than the final mark. Pleasantness appears to be relevant, even if not fundamental, as well as goal significance; referring to the teacher's image, D showed general indifference, whereas some people in B added comments to emphasize it; in turn, the former highlighted that what really matters for them is intellectual enrichment.

Lastly, a part from finding a one-minute song to represent a poem, which was greatly accepted, teaching activities were evaluated in a various manner: listening to oral poetry would be interesting for students of A and D, but B and C would not at all; then D would be more enthusiastic in thinking of a short film or play, in comparison to A and C, and even more to B who are not likely to participate in it. Similarly, to a great extent, playing personal adaptations would involve students of A, on the contrary those in B and C would oppose themselves, and would be insignificant for D. Nevertheless, students of A and B would be happy to deal with modern adaptations of texts and to some degree it would be meaningful for C and D, though not so fascinating. Furthermore, everyone definitely rejected being recorded while reading a text.

In more detail, results demonstrate that original teaching activities introducing the use of technologies make the study of literature more intriguing for students: where interest is already high, it would greatly encourage it; where participation is unsatisfying, it would also stimulate it. Indeed, students in close contact with literature (A) feel involved and motivation would increase if these techniques were applied; as much as for the scientific curriculum (B), adolescents who are not inspired by literature would agree to participate and contribute to school lessons. In addition, this sort of activities would manage to attract students who are not concerned with the study of literature because it appears that they would have positive reactions to them, even if at first there is scant interest in the subject. However, a few students declared their aversion to the subject.

In conclusion, it can be suggested that learners are willing to study literature when it is about curious themes, when it helps them with ordinary problems, when they feel free of expressing themselves and retain something for them. Thus, motivation has to be kept as much high as possible in order to attract them. Presumably, shortness and simplicity of texts do not encourage adolescents as they like challenges, even though sometimes making efforts prevents them from studying. With regard to teaching technologies, video and tape recorder are likely to activate the affective filter because students fear unsatisfying performances. It is

therefore important to explain that they will be useful tools because they could verify their improvement, evaluate themselves and become more competent with the oral aspect of language. Furthermore, they need to know that no one would have access to them, except for the class.

Chapter 5

Organization of a literary teaching unit

Bearing in mind the survey's results, this chapter offers an attempt of organizing a literary teaching unit where the main focus is on the reader and the momentous act of reading literature. In particular, it firstly considers the motivation phase where students are encouraged to approach new texts; secondly, it proposes five acquisition units based on the following themes: the reason why people read literature and the experience they get from it; the relationship between reader and narrator/author; and the importance of exploring historical and social background before dealing with a poem or novel. Each acquisition unit is described in details including objectives, activities and technologies to be involved. Particular attention is dedicated to those activities that students declared to prefer.

5.1 Structure of the module

Module typology: based on themes of 19th and 20th century's poetry and prose.

Addressed to: students in the last year of high school.

Prerequisites: good knowledge of textual genres and of English, towards a B2 level.

Title of the module: "You, Reader, are the main character of the text".

Objectives: to look at the figure of the reader in the reading act and to realize the need of contextualization.

Affective objectives: to be aware of participation and involvement's importance while reading, to develop the abilities to provide a background and to notice meaning's connotations.

Time: six hours where each of them corresponds to a lesson and to an acquisition unit, including the motivation phase.

Texts: Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*; William Wordsworth, *Daffodils*; Wilfred Owen, *Dulce et decorum est*; Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea.*

Link with other subjects: history of WWI and Colonialism.

The following scheme represents the teaching unit's structure:

Motivation:	Acquisition units:	Additional unit:
-video;	-reading to evade reality;	-another kind of pact
-discussion;	-the aesthetic experience;	
-newspaper article;	-pact between reader and narrator;	
-research on the Internet;	-historical contextualization: a war poem;	
-concept map;	-social contextualization of a character.	
-students' video.		

5.2 Motivation phase

This is the starting moment of the teaching unit and we begin with motivation: though students have already studied literature in the two previous years, they need to receive stimulating inputs so as to read literature with a more critical approach, before moving to the examination of literary texts. The following activities have been planned for it.

a. Watching a video[6]: it lists four reasons why people should read literature. From the linguistic point of view, it seems appropriate to students' level; it is not a ridicule and obvious representation, so it might be well received.

b. Students will look at it twice then they will discuss the main points. Then, they will be given the following transcription[7]:

> You can probably remember the feeling of discontent that came when you were assigned literature to read in school. It's hard to find the desire to read old books about old things when there are things happening right now, but here are four very big reasons why you should anyway.
> Beyond the fact that reading is good for you anyway, there are several other big benefits. YouTube channel asks what literature is really for, and comes up with four great things you can pull from reading these books:
> 1.It saves you time: It might appear to be a time-waster, but literature lets you access and experience a range of emotions and events that would take countless lifetimes to encounter.
> 2.It makes you nicer: Literature gives you the chance to see things from someone else's point of view, which is the best way to develop empathy for others.
> 3.It's a cure for loneliness: Through books, writers are able to help us reflect on who we are. We're all a little weird—and sometimes you can feel like no one else is—but literature opens your eyes up to the truth everyone is a strange and interesting person.

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[6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RCFLobfqcw.

[7] http://lifehacker.com/four-reasons-why-you-should-read-literature-1644487950.

4.It prepares you for failure: Fear of failure can be within everyone, but when you read stories of the ups and downs of different characters, you can help show yourself that it's okay to fail. You can see that failure is a part of life.

So crack open a book and get lost in the tales of others. It can help you in more ways than you know.

c. "What do you think we are going to do? According to you, why do people read literary works?": divided into groups of three or four members, students talk together for ten minutes and at the end one of them will report the group's ideas,

d. Additional input: considering the second point discussed in the video, "it makes you nicer", students will rapidly go through a newspaper article where other reasons for reading literature are explained[8]:

Reading literary fiction improves empathy, study finds.

New research shows works by writers such as Charles Dickens and Téa Obreht sharpen our ability to understand others' emotions – more than thrillers or romance novels.

Have you ever felt that reading a good book makes you better able to connect with your fellow human beings? If so, the results of a new scientific study back you up, but only if your reading material is literary fiction – pulp fiction or non-fiction will not do.

Psychologists David Comer Kidd and Emanuele Castano, at the New School for Social Research in New York, have proved that reading literary fiction enhances the ability to detect and understand other people's emotions, a crucial skill in navigating complex social relationships.

In a series of five experiments, 1,000 participants were randomly assigned texts to read, … [they] used a variety of Theory of Mind techniques to measure how accurately the participants could identify emotions in others. Scores were consistently higher for those who had read literary fiction than for those with popular fiction or non-fiction texts.

"What great writers do is to turn you into the writer. In literary fiction, the incompleteness of the characters turns your mind to trying to understand the minds of others," said Kidd.

[…] "Some writing is what you call 'writerly', you fill in the gaps and participate, and some is 'readerly', and you're entertained. We tend to see 'readerly' more in genre fiction like adventure, romance and thrillers, where the author dictates your experience as a reader. Literary [writerly] fiction lets you go into a new environment and you have to find your own way," Kidd said.

Transferring the experience of reading fiction into real-world situations was a natural leap, Kidd argued, because "the same psychological processes are used to navigate fiction and real relationships. Fiction is not just a simulator of a social experience, it is a social experience." […]

"These are aesthetic and stylistic concerns which as psychologists we can't and don't want to make judgments about," said Kidd. "Neither do we argue that people should only read literary fiction;

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[8] http://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2013/oct/08/literary-fiction-improves-empathy-study.

it's just that only literary fiction seems to improve Theory of Mind in the short-term. There are likely benefits of reading popular fiction – certainly entertainment. We just did not measure them."

e. At this point, searching the Internet would be an interesting activity where learners have to find other advantages of reading literature: they are still divided into groups where one student is in front of the computer and the others select the information they have found.

f. At home, they might be invited to create a concept map, summarizing the main ideas, and to think about three of the strongest reasons for which they read literature. At the beginning of the following lesson, if they agree, they will be recorded in a video where the first person who does it is the teacher, so as to make them feel at ease, even though they make mistakes and laugh together. In other words, to avoid the activation of the affective filter.

5.3 First acquisition unit: *Jane Eyre*

In this unit the focus is on the representation of the reader in a literary work and the first chapter of *Jane Eyre* may provide an interesting example: the main character hides behind a red curtain to read Bewick's *History of English Birds* and to look at the images, but she is immediately found by her despotic cousin Master Reed, as he wants to be called, and beats her violently. Unconsciously and overwhelmed by pain she attacks him and is consequently imprisoned in the red room. What can be inferred from this extract is that readers seek and hide in literature to find peace and free their souls, but sometimes they are not allowed to do it openly and physical punishment will follow. Keeping to the acquisition sequence and brain functioning, these are the techniques implied in the study of this unit.

a. For global comprehension: starting from the image (Annex 5), students hypothesize on the scene: who is the child? What is she doing? Where is she? How does she look like?, etc.

b. They have a first reading of the text, taken from the novel that narrates the most important events (Annex 6). After that, they have to fill in a cloze test where, more or less, each seven words there is one missing, in order to formulate a few hypothesis on the contents:

Jane Eyre, a young girl, enters a ……………-room, where she finds a bookcase: she takes one with …………………, written by Bewick. Now she is feeling ………………, though the only

thing she fears is ………………., and it suddenly occurs. Her cousin John …………….. enters and finds her out: she is …………… with horrible words and, as he usually does, beaten ……………… , up to causing her bleeding. Then she reacts ………………….. as pain is harder than fear and ……………and…………… go calling their mother. They are parted and ………….. is locked in the mysterious ……………. room.

Students read the text again and in pairs check their tests: they verify their predictions.

c. Analysis of the text: they are presented with a chart and cues where they have to put events in the correct order; they will also provide correct explanations and solve the metaphors they went through:

Words: reaction, blood, book, quarrel, happy, red-room, hit, curtain, fear of, help.

Events	Why do characters act like this?
1)	
2)	
3)	
4)	
5)	
6)	
7)	
8)	
9)	
10)	

In the text, the colour red refers to: ………………. and ………………………. Usually, it is associated to ……………., something burning, hot and dangerous.
According to you, what does the author want to convey with the image of Jane reading behind the curtain?

d. Now, for further analysis of the text, the class may be divided into two fractions: one supporting the character of Jane Eyre and the other one agreeing with John Reed. The teacher will make a few questions to encourage the debate and to make students participate in the characters' quarrel. It is expected to last about 15 minutes.

e. For the emotional synthesis and the development of productive abilities, students work in pairs and pretend to make an interview to the real Jane Eyre; of course, one is the journalist and the other the fictional character.

f. And finally, for the critical synthesis, they will think about the narration of the reading act in the text and whether it appears as a prohibited action. Explanations and interpretations have to be advanced to understand the meaning. Moreover, at home, they will imagine a different reaction from John Reed's part and write it in a few lines. Creativity has to be encouraged.

5.4 Second acquisition unit: *Daffodils*

It moves to the pleasure of reading and to the aesthetic experience. The reader realizes that thanks to the evocative power of language, a delicate poem suggests feelings of peace, harmony and enjoyment of the soul. *Daffodils* by William Wordsworth has been chosen for this unit.

a. The phase of global comprehension and approach to the text starts with the teacher bringing a daffodil in the classroom: "How is it called in Italian? How do we say it in English?". Find the translation in the dictionary. Then, students have to look for the main characteristics of these flowers and they will find that daffodils contain a poisonous substance. Here the myth of Narcissus might be explained by the teacher.

b. Analysis: now, learners read the text and the second reading aims at explaining unknown words; after, they will relate words to their effects or author's intention:

Figures and words	Examples in the text	Definition / intention
Similes	- -	- -
Quantity	- -	
Daffodils' actions	- -	
Turning point and changes	- -	
Idea of pleasure	- -	
Other elements		

c. We report the questions proposed in a literary handbook for Italian students in the last year of high-school that started studying literature from the third year, as they seem particularly helpful for the organization of our acquisition unit (Spiazzi, Tavella, 2006: 147):

First stanza:
1. What was the poet doing? What was his mood?
2. What broke this mood suddenly?
Second stanza:
3. Where were the flowers?
4. What did the poet associate them with?
5. How many did he see? Is that possible?
Third stanza:
6. What was the environment like?
7. How did the poet feel? Why does the author say "a poet" in line 15?
Fourth stanza:
8. What kind of state does the poet describe?
9. Is this solitude similar to the loneliness of the first stanza?
10. What is the result of this experience?

And enlarging the student's perspective:

1. How are the daffodils introduced in the first stanza? What do you call this device?
2. What effect is achieved by showing the daffodils as a part of the universal order in the second stanza?
3. What view of nature is conveyed by Wordsworth in the second and third stanza?
4. How are the perception and thought related in the third stanza?
5. Lines 19-24 provide an exception to the use of the past tense which characterizes the whole poem. State what tense appears in these lines and what its function is.
6. Bearing in mind what Wordsworth said in his *Preface to Lyrical Ballads* about the process of poetic composition, explain how it applies to this poem.

d. For the synthesis, we suggest several activities to involve the oral dimension of the poem: firstly, students should read it mentally, paying attention to intonation; secondly, they listen to a recorded version[9] and thirdly everyone has to read it aloud, holding a daffodil in their hand. As it has been proved in the survey, students are willing to listen to oral poetry, played by expert intriguing actors.

e. Finally, learners might be asked to find a minute piece of music that manages to represent the poem; the first 10 minutes of the following lesson will be dedicated to the examination of their choices. As for writing skills, they can paraphrase the text and hand it in.

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[9] An example may be the video at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pVKt5cuZZ1U.

5.5 Third acquisition unit: *Jane Eyre*

Jane Eyre's conclusion has been chosen to introduce the theme of the relationship between reader and narrator/ author: in particular, this unit tackles with the reliability of the latter and the way he addresses the former, whether it is implicit or explicit. Consequently, students will consider the reader's participation and involvement in the act of reading, as if they were witnessing the narrator's truthfulness.

a. Firstly, learners look at two short videos[10] taken from the BBC series *Jane Eyre*, directed by Susanna White and published in 2006: the volume is turned off and they have to predict what is going on. A five-minutes discussion follows.

b. Through a jigsaw they have to restore the correct order of the summary's parts:

1. They spend days telling about their lives and what happened to them when they were parted. They finally decide to marry and have a child.
2. He catches her hands and takes her in his arms: she promises she will never leave him.
3. Jane goes to Ferndean and sees Mr. Rochester outside his house: his body looks like the same but his face is desperate and melancholy.
4. After two years of his birth, Mr. Rochester gains sight of one eye and acknowledges that his son has the same eyes as his.
5. Jane enters a room with a tray in her hands, but the man cannot see her and does not expect her to be there. When he realizes it is Jane he believes it is a ghost.

Now, volume is turned on and students check the exercise watching the videos.

c. They read the text (Annex 8), paying attention to the first person narration: they find the most relevant elements, like personal comments, and observe how the narrator addresses the reader (e.g. "Reader, I married him" or "one word respecting my experience… and I have done").

d. Transformation from the first to the third person narrator and answer:
1. Is the reader involved the same as before?
2. How would you define this kind of relationship?
3. Does it seem a pact between author/narrator and reader?

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[10] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNZJz3_hi_I (until minute 4.03) and
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vuvehRwGZLA (from 6.04 to 7.00).

4. Do you trust the narrator? Is he reliable?

5. What makes you feel so?

e. For conclusive synthesis, students have to imagine and write the official declaration of the pact between the two, for example:

OFFICIAL DECLARATION OF FAITH AND TRUST

Date:

Subscribers of the document:

I, narrator and author of *Jane Eyre*, promise to tell the truth concerning events; to express my most intimate and sincere feelings; and to…

I, reader of the novel *Jane Eyre,* promise to trust the author and narrator; to rely on him and to…

With this pact, we sign for mutual faith and ….

The subscribers:

…………………………   …………………………..
(author and narrator of *Jane Eyre*)   (reader of *Jane Eyre*)

5.5.1   Additional acquisition unit: Doctor Faustus

It might be proposed that students see a screen adaptation of *The Tragic History of the Life and Death of Doctor Faustus* written by Marlowe, as an example of a different deal between two characters in a literary work.

5.6 Fourth acquisition unit: *Dulce et decorum est*

In this section we want to highlight the fact that historical, cultural and social contextualization is crucial for studying literature because the reader risks missing the message and thorough understanding would be hampered by lack of knowledge. This is the

case for the two acquisition units arranged for this teaching unit: the first deals with War poets and the second with closely linked novels, as prequels to other books.

War poets have described their own experience with impressive words and images to tell what it really was, in contrast to patriotic exhortations of propaganda. Among war and anti-war writers, in *Dulce et decorum est* Wilfred Owen condemned governments' calls to arms and slaughters of young people, dying for the country.

a. Students look at images (Annex 9) of British propaganda: they try to describe them, observing elements that have great impact, the rhetoric and nationalist feelings evoked in the reading public. After that, the teacher explains and translates the Latin sentence for "it is sweet and right to die for your country", referring to Horace's Odes, borrowed from the Greek poet Tyrtaeus and written to encourage Roman citizens to show their military strength to their enemies, especially to the Pathians.

b. They read the poem (Annex 10) and briefly paraphrase each stanza. For the analytical approach, the literary handbook *Now and Then* (Spiazzi, Tavella, 2006: 278) suggests that students:

1. find the personal pronouns in the text and explain who the poet is addressing;

2. find phonological figures of speech like alliterations, repetitions and onomatopoeias;

3. fill in the charts:

Physical sufferings:	- - -
Psychological sufferings:	- - -
Verbs of movement and their connotation:	- - -

Similes or metaphors:	Semantic areas:	Aim of the author:

c. At this point, learners have widely explored the poem and its theme, thus an unusual activity might be included in the acquisition unit: students think over the debate and whether to support the war against the enemy's threat, or to stop deaths of innocent civilians and find peaceful agreements; they take their own decision about which side they stand up for. For this purpose they make trenches with their desks and pretend a verbal battle on the development of the war; the teacher guides them, makes questions, gives the turns to speak and cares for the classroom to be fairly quiet.

5.7 Fifth acquisition unit: *Wide Sargasso Sea*

The last acquisition unit wants to make the reader aware that sometimes characters of a literary work can be analysed from a completely different point of view, thanks to preludes, sequels and supplementary stories that have been attached to existing novels. As a consequence, they realize that by taking into account social, cultural and historical contextualization, novels are read with new consciousness and from interesting perspectives which could not have been considered otherwise. This is the case of Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* which is the prelude to *Jane Eyre* and narrates the personal story of the mad woman in the attic, Bertha Mason. Starting from the British novel, students will discover the existence of the postcolonial work

a. They begin with a brief summary of *Jane Eyre* (Annex 11) and make predictions on the previous wife of Mr Rochester:
1. Who is the new interesting character?
2. How can you imagine a mad woman in the attic?
3. Why has she gone crazy?

b. Richard Mason said that Bertha comes from the West Indies: work in pairs and fantasize about her past story and relationship with Mr Rochester. You should be able to play the roles orally for three minutes.

c. Now read the extracts from *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Annex 12): they tell about her story, starting from the West Indies. Then check if you had similarly imagined it.

d. An example of transcodification can be presented as conclusive synthesis: from the literary text to the song of Stevie Nicks, 'Wide Sargasso Sea'[11].

e. At home, they may find the plot's summary of *Wide Sargasso Sea* so as to figure out the events and the thorough story of Bertha Mason, or Antoinette Cosway.

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[11] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=586NQXJ1Ia0.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that this paper has analysed the act of reading from a theoretical point of view, from the perspective of language acquisition and from the teaching of literature in a foreign language. As for the first chapter, it has been demonstrated that the purpose of the act of reading is to give an aesthetic response with the creation of personal interpretation: it comes about after the meaning of the text has been grasped, examined and assembled by the reader. This implies that he participates in the actualization and realization of the text. Then, the reader who is a fictitious character also becomes the protagonist because he is expected to find what the literary work wants to convey, to identify its intention and to apply strategies to connect the text to reality. In addition, the figure of the reader is divided into two main categories: on the one hand, the real reader with the heuristic subcategory, and on the other hand, the hypothetical reader, including the ideal, contemporary, psychoanalytical and implied types. Finally, literary language is no longer considered as an amount of symbols but rather as the production of linguistic acts: in particular, the poetic utterance shows the practical aspect to inform about reality.

After that, the second chapter dealing with second language acquisition has proved that bimodality and directionality are the two main principles of human brain's functioning, presenting opposite tasks for the right and left hemisphere. With respect to input, it is assumed to be responsible for learning development and has to go a step forward in the scale of the student's knowledge. In addition, input interacts with L1 structures which are used to process L2 information; it might be modified and applied to correct or to focus the attention on particular aspects of language. As for instruction, it may be either implicit or explicit: the latter appears to be useful for adult acquisition as it is the only exposure to the L2; on the contrary, implicit learning turns to be more effective for children because it is spontaneous and closer to L1 acquisition. For this reason, we are supposed to bear in mind several differences in language acquisition concerning students' age, needs and contexts. Consequently, rules must be modified to give appropriate input and avoid the activation of the affective filter. Lastly, instruction can be incidental or intentional with a different use of memory, attention and awareness of the learning process. It has also been stated that the major part of vocabulary is incidentally learned through extensive reading which fosters language learning.

In the third part, it has been declared that the concept of literature has changed from history of literature, with a chronological approach, to major concern about linguistic competences in analysing literary texts. The most revealing moment for literary theories occurred in the second half of the XXth century thanks to English, French and German contributions. The student's perspective followed in our discussion on the study of literature: it appears that the act of reading is characterized by a precise acquisition sequence with the objective to raise personal criticism and interpretations. At the same time, motivation is the strongest engine to support the learning process. Then, the figure of the teacher has been described as an Islamic leader, a Catholic priest or a Protestant pastor who is no longer the protagonist of the teaching act but is replaced by the learner. Teachers take on the role of leading students into discovering and appreciating literature, developing competences and making them feel interested during literature's lessons. The final point of analysis talked about the new teaching methodology based on students' personal dispositions, ways of learning and needs. It aims to make them enjoy the study of literature, taking full participation as a real experience of life.

Finally, the survey has confirmed the validity of these methods since learners admitted that they would be more involved if they were stimulated and offered pleasant activities where, basically, they forget that they are learning.

Table 10.7 Input processing mechanisms in L1A and SLA

A LA mechanisms that undergo developmental sharpening

Type of processing	Mechanism		Consequent processing change	Child L1A advantage	Adult SLA "disability"
	Initial	Developmental sharpening			
Segment sounds from speech (phonemic discrimination)	Categorical perception of all language contrasts	Tuning of phonetic segment perception to the adult language input 6–9 months	Decline in sensitivity to non-native contrasts	Early tuning of phonetic segment perception	L2 accent
Segment whole words from rapid, coarticulated speech (detect word boundaries) (metrical segmentation strategy)	No preference among syllables, morae, or stress patterns	Sensitivity to predominant rhythm pattern of the NL 6–9 months	Reliance upon only one segmentation strategy	Ignore "irrelevant" details to get major boundaries, thus narrowing the processing space	Mismatch of major segmentation strategy to input cues
Detect remaining word boundaries using less salient cues (phonotactics, distribution tallies, and allophonic variation)	Overly general rhythm-based segmentation strategy	Preference for NL over NNL and for frequent NL over infrequent NL phonotactic sequences; ability to track syllable following stress 6–9 months Preference for most frequent among allophonic variants 10.5 months	Decline in ability to process according to ALL features in the input (tuning to NL "details")	Pay attention to details within a narrowed processing space	Mismatch of details segmentation strategy to input cues

Table 10.7 *(Cont'd)*

	Mechanism		Consequent processing change	Child L1A advantage	Adult SLA "disability"
Type of processing	*Initial*	*Developmental sharpening*			
Detect phrase and clause boundaries	Sensitivity to prosodic cues (pause, pitch, final lengthening) in NL, NNL, and music input	Preference for native prosodic cues 4.5 months		Ignore "irrelevant" details to get major boundaries, thus narrowing the processing space	Mismatch of major segmentation strategy to input cues
Discover phrase and clause structure	Preference for real over nonsense function words	Ability to track position of function words 16 months		Pay attention to details within a narrowed processing space	Mismatch of details segmentation strategy to input cues

B Other constraining mechanisms

| *Type of processing*	*Mechanism*		Child L1A *advantage*	Adult SLA *"disability"*
Encode and remember word	Segmentation	Store forms in the absence of meaning 9 months →	Enables fast mapping	Mismatch of segmentation strategy to input
Map word forms onto meaning (whole object, taxonomic, and mutual exclusivity constraints)	Fast mapping	Assume that labels refer to whole objects, entire classes, and are unique 12 months →	Narrows the hypothesis space for forms–meaning mapping	Unknown
	Joint attention	Ostensive → nouns Impending → verbs 6–21 months	Temporary facilitation of forms–meaning mapping	Unknown

ANNEX 2

Krashen's model of reading.
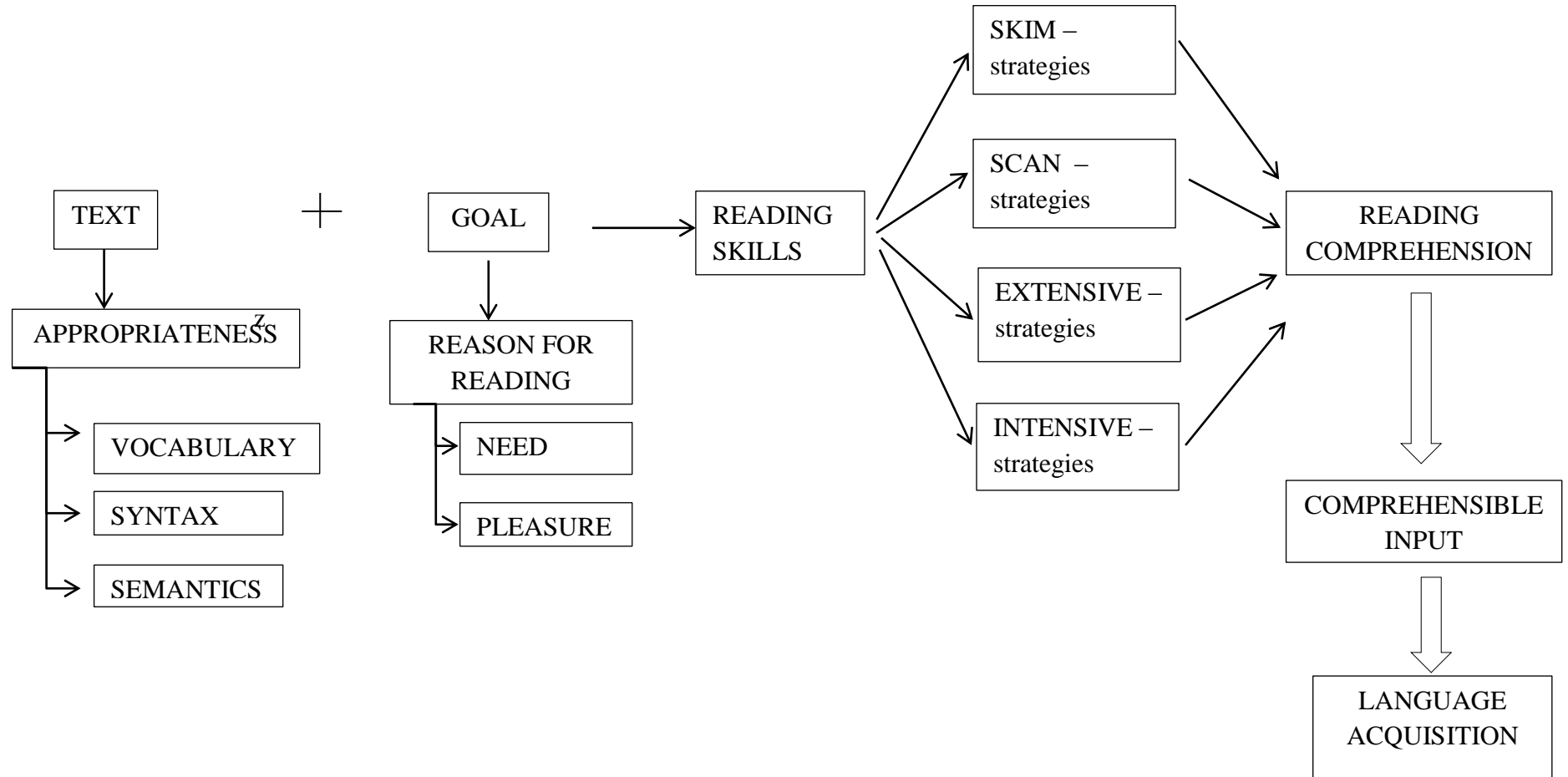
ANNEX 3

Adapted from Stagi Scarpa M., 2005, *Insegnare letteratura in lingua straniera*, Rome, Carrocci.

| Literary activities	Accessible structures
1 Collect previous information and expectations about a text, an author, an historical period, etc.	• *Team-mates Consult* (sharing essays) • *Telephone* • *Mix-Freeze-Pair-Share* (walk around the classroom, stop and discuss in pairs)
2 Reading and analysis of the text.	• *Jigsaw* • *Partners*
3 Test and exercises.	• *Numbered Heads Together* • *Paircheck*
4 Discussion on different aspects of a text.	• *Talking Chips* (give your contribution) • *Corners*
5 Reports.	• *Mix-Freeze-Pair-Share* • *Team-mates* • *Round robin* • *Team statement*
6 Remake of a text with creative writing.	• *Carousel* • *Gallery Tour* • *Brainstorming* • *Talking Chips*

ANNEX 4

Concept map:
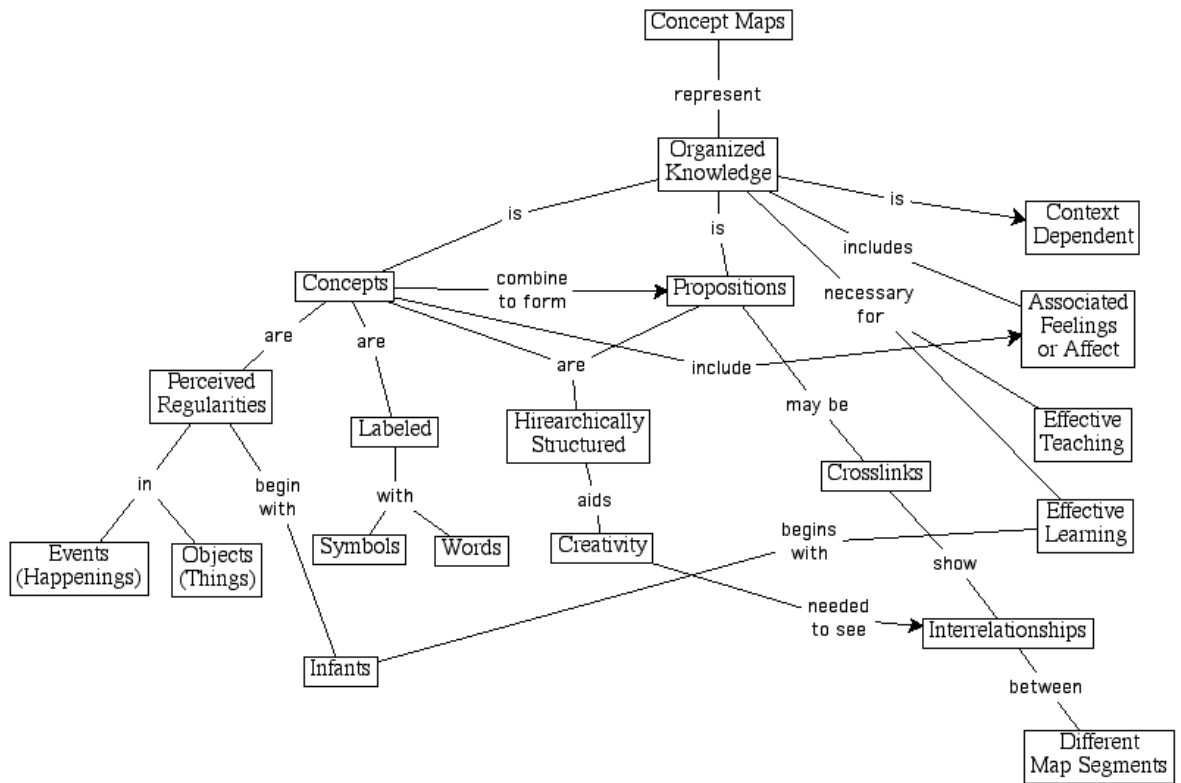
Spider map:
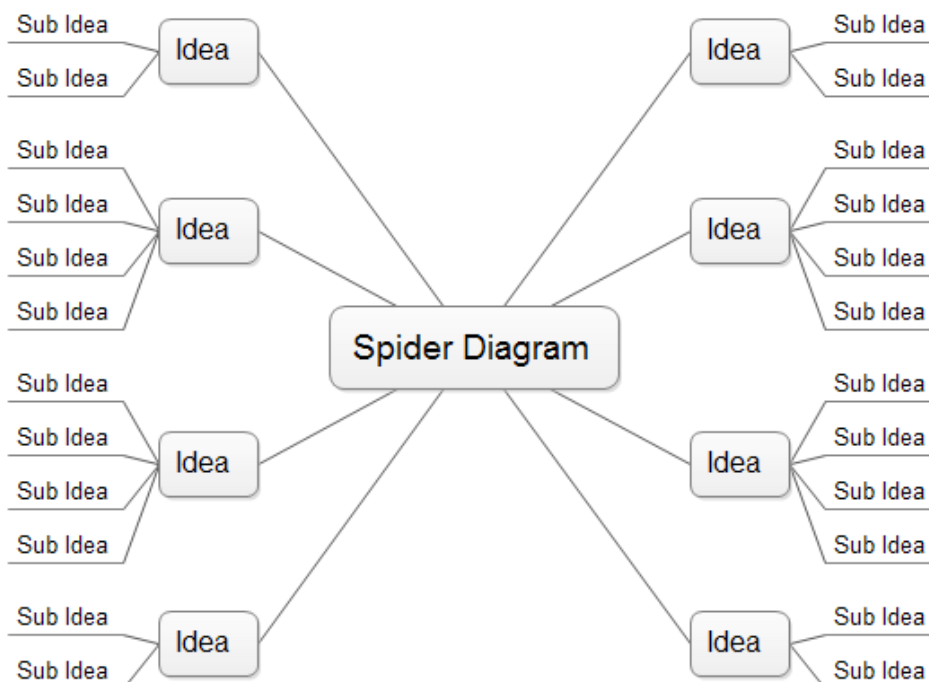
Reticular structure, typical of hypertexts:

User Interface Design Tasks
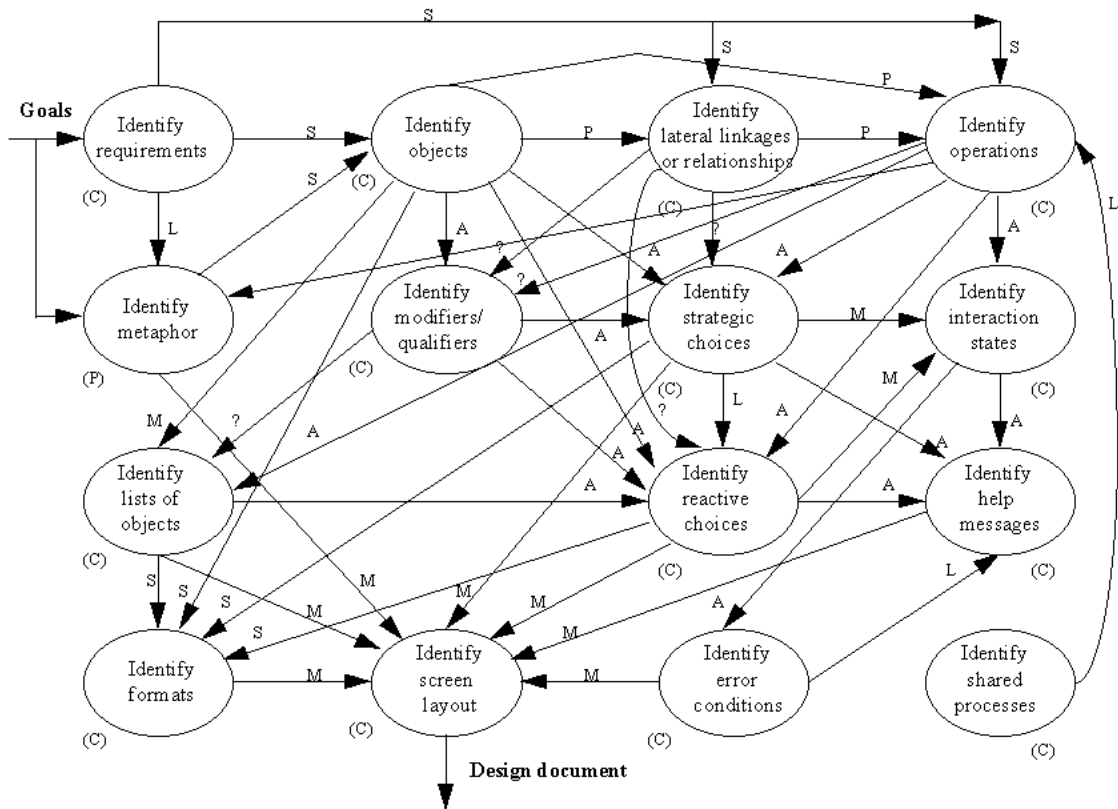
ANNEX 5

Jane reading Bewick's *History of British Birds.*

ANNEX 6

Taken from Brontë C., 2006, *Jane Eyre*, London, Penguin Classics: pp. 10-14.

A small breakfast-room adjoined the drawing-room, I slipped in there. It contained a bookcase; I soon possessed myself of a volume, taking care that it should be one stored with pictures. I mounted into the windows-seat: gathering up my feet, I sat cross-legged, like a Turk; and, having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was shrined in double retirement.

[…] With Bewick on my knee, I was then happy: happy at least in my way. I feared nothing but interruption, and then came too soon. The breakfast-room opened.

[…] Accustomed to John Reed's abuse, I never had an idea of replying to it: my care was to endure the blow which would certainly follow the insult.

'What were you doing behind the curtain?' he asked.

'I was reading.'

'Show the book. I returned to the window and fetched it thence.

'You have no business to take our books; you are a dependent, mamma says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mamma's expense. Now, I'll teach you to rummage my bookshelves: for they *are* mine; all the house belongs to me, or will do in a few years. Go and stand by the door, out of the way of the mirror and the windows.'

I did so, not at first aware what was his intention; but when I saw him lift and poise the book and stand in the act to hurl it, I instinctively started aside with a cry of alarm: not soon enough, however; the volume was flung, it hit me, and I fell, sticking my head against the door and cutting it. The cut bled, the pain was sharp: my terror had passed its climax; other feelings succeeded.

'Wicked and cruel boy!' I said. 'You are like a murderer – you are like a slave-driver – you are like the Roman emperors!'

I had read Goldsmith's 'History of Rome', and had formed my opinion on Nero, Caligula, etc. also I had drawn parallels in silence, which I never though thus to have declared aloud.

'What! what!' he cried. 'Did she say that to me? Did you hear her, Eliza and Georgiana? Won't I tell mamma? but first –'

He ran headlong at me: I felt him grasp my hair and my shoulder: he had closed with a desperate thing. I really saw in him a tyrant: a murderer. I felt a drop or two of blood from my

head trickle down my neck, and was sensible of somewhat pungent suffering: these sensations for the time predominated over fear, and I received him in frantic sort. I don't very well know what I did with my hands, but he called me 'Rat! rat!' and bellowed out aloud. Aid was near him: Eliza and Georgiana had run for Mrs Reed, who was gone upstairs; she now came upon the scene, followed by Bessie and her maid Abbot. We were parted: I heard the words –

'Dear! Dear! What a fury to fly at Master John!'

'Did ever anybody see such a picture of passion!'

Then Mrs Reed subjoined: 'Take her away to the red-room, and lock her in there'. Four hand were immediately laid upon me, and I was borne upstairs.

ANNEX 7

Daffodils by William Wordsworth, taken from Spiazzi M., Tavella M., 2006, *Now and Then*, Bologna, Zanichelli: p. 147.

I wandered lonely as a cloud
The float on high o'er vales and hills,
When all at once I saw a crowd,
A host, of golden daffodils:
Beside the lake, beneath the trees,
Fluttering and dancing in the breeze.

Continuous as the stars that shine
And twinkle on the milky way,
They stretched in never-ending line
Along the margin of a bay:
Ten thousand saw I at a glance,
Tossing their heads in sprightly dance.
The waves beside them danced: but they
Outdid the sparkling waves in glee;
A poet could not but be gay,
In such a jocund company;
I gazed – and gazed – but little thought
What wealth the show to me had brought:

For oft, when on my couch I lie
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye
Which is the bliss of solitude;
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.

ANNEX 8

Taken from Brontë C., 2006, *Jane Eyre,* London, Penguin Classics: pp. 517, 519, 520.

Reader, I married him. A quiet wedding we had: he and I, the parson and the clerk, were alone present. When we got back from church, I went into the kitchen of the manor-house, where Mary was cooking the dinner, and John cleaning the knives, and I said –

'Mary, I have been married to Mr Rochester this morning.' […] Mary did look up, and she did stare at me; the ladle with which she was basting a pair of chicken roasting at the fire, did for some three minutes hang suspended in air, and for the same space of time John's knives also had rest from the polishing process; but Mary, bending again over the roast, said only –

'Have you, miss? Well, for sure!'

[…] My tale draws to its close: one word respecting my experience of married life, and one brief glance at the fortunes of those whose names have most frequently recurred in this narrative, and I have done.

I have now been married for ten years. I know what it is to live entirely for and with what I love best on earth. I hold myself supremely blest – blest beyond what language can express; because I am my husband's life as fully as he is mine. No woman was ever nearer to her mate then I am: even more absolutely bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. I know no weariness of my Edward's society: he knows none of mine, any more than we each do of the pulsation of the heart that beats in our separate bosoms; consequently, we are ever together. To be together is for us to be at once as free as in solitude, as gay as in company.

[…] One morning at the end of the two years, as I was writing a letter to his dictation, he came and bent over me, and said –

'Jane, have you a glittering ornament round your neck?'

I had a gold watch-chain: I answered 'Yes'.

'And have you a pale blue dress on?'

I had, he informed me then, that for some time he had fancied the obscurity clouding one eye was becoming less dense; and that now he was sure of it. […] He cannot now see very distinctly: he cannot read or write much; but he can find his way without being led by the hand: the sky is no longer a blank to him – the earth no longer a void. When his first-born was put into his arms, he could see that the boy had inherited his own eyes, as they once were – large, brilliant, and black. On that occasion, he again, with a full heart, acknowledged that God had tempered judgment with mercy.

ANNEX 9

First World War propaganda's posters in the United Kingdom.
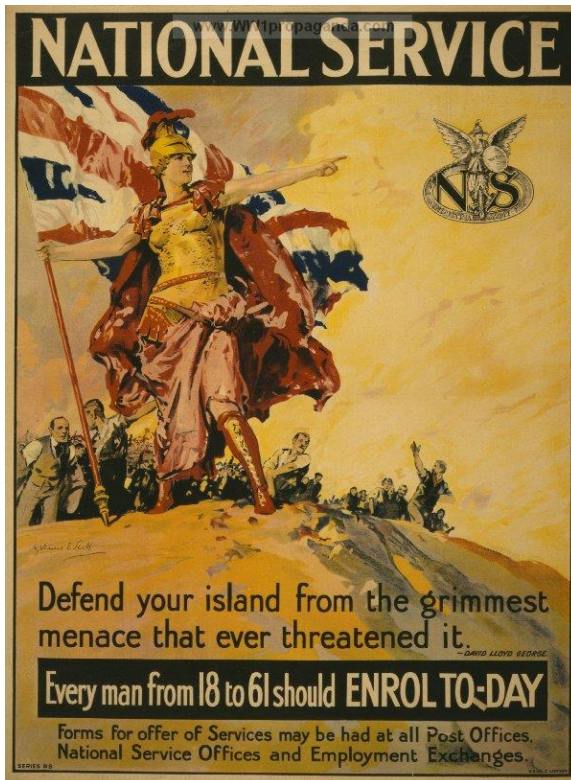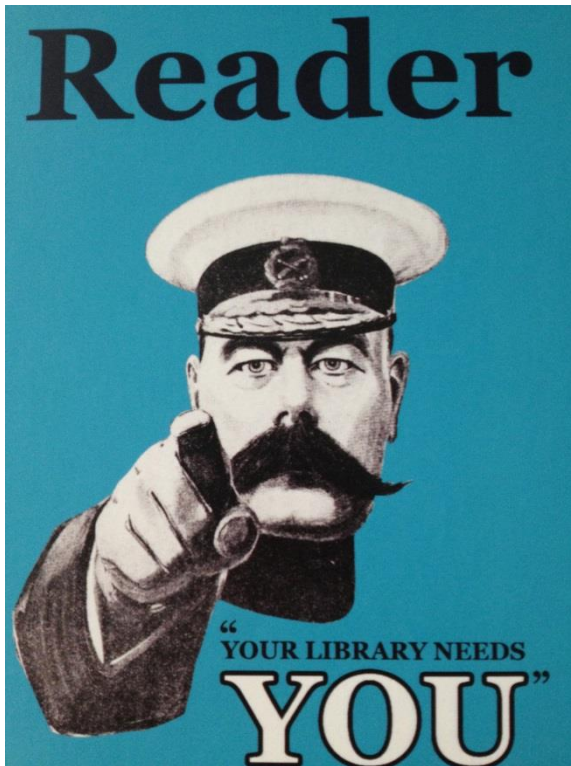
ANNEX 10

Dulce et decorum est by Wilfred Owen, taken from Spiazzi M., Tavella M., 2006, *Now and Then*, Bologna, Zanichelli: pp. 277-278.

Bent double, like old beggars under sacks,

Knock-kneed, coughing like hags, we cursed through sludge,

Till on the haunting flares we turned our backs

And towards our distant rest began to trudge.

Men marched asleep. Many had lost their boots

But limped on, blood-shod. All went lame; all blind;

Drunk with fatigue; deaf even to the hoots

Of tired, outstripped Five-Nines that dropped behind.

Gas! gas! Quick, boys! – An ecstasy of fumbling,

Fitting the clumsy helmets just in time;

But someone still was yelling out and stumbling,

And flound'ring like a man in fire or lime…

Dim, through the misty panes and thick green light,

As under a green sea, I saw him drowning.

In all my dreams, before my helpless sight,

He plunges at me, guttering, chocking, drowning.

If in some smothering dreams you too could pace

Behind the wagon that we flung him in,

And watch all the white eyes writhing in his face,

His hanging face, like a devil's sick of sin;

If you could hear at every jolt, the blood

Come gargling from the froth-corrupted lungs,

Obscene as cancer, bitter as the cud

Of vile, incurable sores on innocent tongues, −

My friend, you would not tell with such high zest

To children ardent for some desperate glory,

The old Lie: dulce et decorum est

Pro patria mori.

ANNEX 11

Summary of *Jane Eyre*, taken from Spiazzi M., Tavella M., 2006, *Now and Then,* Bologna, Zanichelli: p. 212.

Jane is a penniless orphan, brought up at Gateshead by her cold and hostile aunt, Mrs Reed. Jane is then sent to Lowood Institution, a very strict school where the pupils are not given enough food and clothing. When she grows up she becomes a teacher there but finally she decides to accept a job as a governess at Thornfield Hall where she soon falls in love with Mr Rochester, its owner.

Her stay at the Hall is disturbed by strange noises and frightening events.

After spending some time at her aunt's deathbed, Jane returns to Thornfield and Rochester proposes to her. She agrees to marry him, but two nights before the wedding she wakes up and sees a figure standing by her bed and her wedding veil torn into two pieces. The wedding is interrupted by Richard Mason who declares that Rochester is already married to his sister Bertha Mason, a mad woman he married in the West Indies and who lives in the upper floor of the house, looked after by Grace Poole. Rochester asks Jane to stay with him, but she leaves Thornfield and goes to live with her cousins at Moor House. There she meets St. John Rivers, a religious man who plans to become a missionary and proposes to her. Jane refuses and one night she hears Rochester's voice calling her; she returns to Thornfield Hall only to find out that the house has been destroyed by a fire caused by Bertha, who then threw herself downstairs and died. Mr Rochester lost an eye and an hand in the attempt to save his wife from the fire; he now lives in Fearndean. Jane visits him and agrees to marry him. He finally recovers his sight just when their first child is born.

ANNEX 12

Extracts taken from Rhys J., 1997, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, London, Penguin Classics.

1. pp. 46-47.

> Dear Father, we have arrived from Jamaica after an uncomfortable few days. This little estate in Windward Islands is part of the family property and Antoinette is much attached to it. She wished to get here as soon as possible. All is well and has gone according to your plans and wishes. I dealt of course with Richard Mason. His father died soon after I left for the West Indies as you probably know. He is a good fellow, hospitable and friendly; he seemed to become attached to me and trusted me completely. This place is very beautiful but my illness has left me too exhausted to appreciate it fully. I will write again in a few days' time.

[…] It was all very brightly coloured, very strange, but it meant nothing to me. Nor did she, the girl I was to marry. When at last I met her I bowed, smiled, kissed her hand, danced with her. I played the part I was expected to play, she never had nothing to do with me at all. Every movement I made was an effort of will and sometimes I wondered that no one noticed this. I would listen to my own voice and marvel at it, calm, correct but toneless, surely. But I must have given a faultless performance. If I saw an expression of doubt or curiosity it was on a black face not a white one.

2. pp. 47-48.

The morning before the wedding Richard Mason burst into my room at the Frasers' as I was finishing my first cup of coffee. 'She won't go through with it!'

'Won't go through what?'

'She won't marry you.'

'But why?'

'She doesn't say why.'

'She must have some reason.'

'She won't give a reason. I've been arguing with the little fool for an hour.'

We stared at each other.

'Everything arranged, the presents, the invitations. What shall I tell your father?' He seemed on the verge of tears.

I said, 'If she won't, she won't. She can't be dragged to the altar. Let me get dressed. I must hear what she has to say.'

He went out meekly and while I dressed I thought that this would indeed make a fool of me. I did not relish going back to England in the role of rejected suitor jilted by this Creole girl. I must certainly know why.

She was sitting in a rocking-chair with her head bent. Her hair was in two long plaits over her shoulders. From a little distance I spoke gently. 'What is the matter, Antoinette? What have I done?'

She said nothing.

'You don't wish to marry me?'

'No.' She spoke in a very low voice.

'But why?'

'I'm afraid of what may happen.'

'But don't you remember last night I told you that when you are my wife there would not be any more reason to be afraid?'

'Yes,' she said. 'Then Richard came in and you laughed. I didn't like the way you laughed'.

'But I was laughing at myself, Antoinette.'

She looked at me and I took her in my arms and kissed her.

'You don't know anything about me,' she said.'

'I'll trust you if you'll trust me. Is that a bargain? You will make me very unhappy if you send me away without telling me what I have done to displease you. I will go with a sad heart.'

'Your sad heart,' she said, and touched my face. I kissed her fervently, promising her peace, happiness, safety, but when I said, 'Can I tell poor Richard that it was a mistake? He is sad too,' she did not answer me. Only nodded.

3. pp. 106-107.

But all that's some months away. It's an English summer now, so cool, so grey. Yet I think of my revenge and hurricanes. Words rush through my head (deeds too). Words. Pity is one of them. It gives me no rest.

Pity like a new-born babe striding the blast.

I read that long ago when I was young – I hate poets now and poetry. As I hate music which I loved once. Sing your songs, Rupert the Rine, but I'll not listen, though they tell me you've a sweet voice…

Pity. Is there none for me? Tied to a lunatic for life – a drunken lying lunatic – gone her mother's way.

'*She love you so much, so much. She thirsty for you. Love her a little like she say. It's all that you can love – a little.*'

Sneer to the last, Devil. Do you think that I don't know? She thirsts for *anyone* – not for me… She'll loosen her black hair, and laugh and coax and flatter (a mad girl. She'll not care who she's loving). She'll moan and cry and give herself as no sane woman would – or could. *Or could*. Then lie so still, still as this cloudy day. A lunatic who always knows the time. But never does.

Till she's drunk so deep, played her games so often that the lowest shrug and jeer at her. And I'm to know it – I? no, I've a trick worth two of that.

'*She love you so much, so much. Try her once more*.'

I tell you she loves no one, anyone. I could not touch her. Excepting as the hurricane will touch that tree – and break it. You say I did? No. That was love's fierce play. Now I'll do it.

She'll not laugh in the sun again. She'll not dress up and smile at herself in that damnable looking-glass. So pleased, so satisfied.

Vain, silly creature. Made for loving? Yes, but she'll have no lover, for I don't want her and she'll see no other.

[…] She said she loved this place. This is the last she'll see of it. I'll watch for one tear, one human tear. Not that blank hating moonstruck face. I'll listen… If she says good-bye perhaps adieu. *Adieu* – like these old-time songs she sang. Always *adieu* (and all songs say it). If she too says it, or weeps, I'll take her in my arms, my lunatic. She's mad but *mine, mine*. What will I care for gods or devils of for Fate itself. If she smiles or weeps or both. *For me.*

Antoinetta – I can be gentle too. Hide you face. Hide yourself but in my arms. You'll soon see how gentle. My lunatic. My mad girl.

Here's a cloudy day to help you. No brazen sun.

No sun… No sun. The weather's changed.

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