TOWARDS A MULTIMODAL FRAMEWORK FOR VIDEO-LITERATURE TEACHING IN THE EFL/ESL CLASSROOM

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Abstract: This paper reports on work carried out as the result of a UCM (Complutense University of Madrid) collaboration with the FLAME (Film, Languages and Media in Education) Research Group of the Manchester Metropolitan University. In this context, an inclusive multimodal framework for the implementation of literary works with film adaptations was developed as part of a video/literature workshop designed for one of our Master's courses aimed at the training of EFL/ESL secondary teachers in the UCM. This multimodal framework was motivated primarily by the fact that literature has recently become an essential part of the curriculum in Bilingual Secondary Schools in Madrid. The reality that the use of film adaptations of literary texts facilitates the implementation of literature in the EFL/ESL classroom was also a key factor. The lines following not only describe the framework developed, but also provide one example of implementation of the model for the teaching of Geoffrey Chaucer's The Wife of Bath (1477), among the best known of The Canterbury Tales (1478); without any doubt, one of the hardest texts to tackle in the EFL/ESL classroom out of the literary works recommended for the bilingual official curriculum.

Resumen: En esta publicación se recoge el trabajo realizado como resultado de la colaboración de la UCM (Universidad Complutense de Madrid) con el Grupo de Investigación FLAME (Film, Languages and Media in Education) de la Universidad Metropolitana de Manchester. En este contexto, se desarrolló un marco multimodal inclusivo para la implementación de obras literarias con adaptaciones cinematográficas como parte de un taller de video / literatura diseñado para uno de nuestros cursos de Maestría dirigidos a la formación de profesores de EFL / ESL en la UCM. Este marco multimodal surgió principalmente por el hecho de que la literatura se ha convertido recientemente en una parte esencial del currículo en las Escuelas Secundarias Bilingües de Madrid. La realidad de que el uso de adaptaciones cinematográficas de textos literarios facilita la implementación de la literatura en el aula EFL / ESL también fue un factor clave. Las líneas siguientes no sólo describen el marco desarrollado, sino que también proporcionan un ejemplo de implementación del modelo para la enseñanza de The Wife of Bath (1477), de Geoffrey Chaucer, que se encuentra entre las más conocidas de The Canterbury Tales (1478); sin duda alguna, uno de los textos más difíciles de abordar en el aula EFL / ESL de entre las obras literarias recomendadas para el currículum oficial bilingüe.

Keywords: Multimodality, Film, Literature, EFL/ESL, Curriculum, Higher Education

Palabras clave: Multimodalidad, Cine, Literatura, EFL/ESL, Currículum, Educación Superior

INTRODUCTION

The Master in Teacher Training for Secondary, Vocational Education and Foreign Languages was launched in the Spanish University during the academic year 2009/10 in response to the new demands of the Organic Education Law 2/2006 (Organic Law 2/2006, of 3 May), which required

new teachers to take a course on pedagogical skills, nowadays in the light of decree 3331/2010 of 11 June. This specifies, for the Bilingual Section, that contents are to be focused on English language and literature alike. As lecturers in one of these Complutense courses aimed at the training of EFL/ESL secondary teachers, it is our intention to present an inclusive multimodal framework for the implementation of video/literature-based EFL/ESL teaching plans. Our framework, developed as part of a video/literature workshop, focuses on the understanding of the role of texts in foreign/second language acquisition within the context of instruction. Special emphasis is set on text-based teaching; which means, on teaching language through literature as much as through its audio and film modes.

The emphasis on working with culturally authentic texts is one of the central claims for curriculum reform in EFL/ESL teaching nowadays (Swaffar, 1999; Arens and Swaffar, 2000; Dupuy, 2000). Moreover, the latest developments in text-based teaching point to a curriculum "in which language, culture, and literature are taught as a continuum" (Foreign Languages and Higher Education: New Structures for a Changed World, 2007). Nevertheless, the incorporation of literary texts into the language curriculum is not easy to tackle. Many linguists refer to literary content as extremely demanding for both teachers and students (McKay, 2001; Savvidou, 2004). Not surprisingly, many teachers tend to avoid using literary texts for this reason.

The film mode facilitates the use of literature in the classroom. Many literary texts such as novels, short stories or theatre plays have been adapted into films and have, therefore, become easily accessible language products commonly associated with fun by students and teachers since films can be highly motivating and useful in the language teaching/learning process (Caixia, 2013). Properly selected and implemented in the classroom, they have an important role in the language teaching/learning process (Stempleski and Tomalin, 1990; Baddock, 1996). When it comes to comparing novels with films, most researchers admit that the film mode is more direct and accessible for students. Thus Montgomery (1992) affirms that films ensure easier intelligibility of the written texts. According to Caixia (2013), visual images seem to establish a more direct relationship with the depicted objects so that film stories are usually more understandable than novel stories. Sound and light are the other specific characteristics of the film mode that tend to contribute to general understanding. In certain situations, sound and light effects suffice to tell a story with no words (Bo, 2008).

These premises made, following this introduction, the inclusive multimodal framework that we developed as part of our video/literature workshop is provided preceding one actual example of implementation of this framework for the teaching of Geoffrey Chaucer's *The Wife of Bath* (1477). This is probably one of the hardest texts to be implemented in the EFL/ESL classroom among the ones recommended for the bilingual official curriculum.

PRINTED/MULTIMODAL TEXT-BASED TEACHING: TOWARDS AN INCLUSIVE, MULTIMODAL FRAMEWORK

A close look at the recent literature published in the field of EFL/ESL teaching and media studies clearly demonstrates that the use of authentic English and North American original version media forms and video materials brings multiple advantages to the classroom. As pointed out by Brown (2009), English speaking foreign films are "the most direct resource available to learning a target language and culture" (45). For Yassaei (2011), original videos represent a motivating means to teach grammar, and Eken (2003) explores the use of films as a way to Films and video materials also give rise to extra opportunities to explore literary texts through visual imagery, sound, light and performance (Eken, 2003; Caixia, 2013).

Multimodal-based texts, as opposed to printed-based texts, construct meaning through a set of visual resources such as layout, size, shape, colour, line, angle, position, perspective, frames, icons, links and hyperlinks, sound, movement, or animation with graphics (Kress, 2003, 2010). The narrative voice is usually achieved in these texts by a set of visual means such as camera position, angles and perspectives while visual imagery is similarly achieved mainly through the use of different visual and sound elements: colours, voice, or music. Beyond sight, though, these multimodal-based texts involve a great variety of senses which contribute to a more holistic perception of the textual reality: tactile, hearing and kinesthetic. Besides, in the case of films, multimodal texts give rise to non-sequential, non-linear narratives by means of extensive flashbacks and flashforwards within the storyline, a technique which contributes to the process of meaning making (Walsh, 2006).

Multimodal texts and printed-based texts, however, are not mutually exclusive. As explained by Avgerinou and Pettersson (2011), visual language often requires some verbal support. For this reason, the classic aspects of a literary work (language, cultural and personal growth) are to be also approached from different modes.

These considerations made, and the need for using different modes when teaching literature revealed, our inclusive model in four stages for the analysis and implementation of videos adapted from literary works in the EFL/ESL classroom was developed as follows:

1) CONTEXT / PRE-WATCHING:
The first stage of the model is focused on context analysis. The students analyze a poster of the video as well as other available images. They also watch a trailer to identify the most salient elements of the film. The ultimate goal is to predict the genre and discuss the elements they expect to find.

1. Focus on context: pre-viewing.
   a. Examine the poster of the video or any other available images and discuss them. What do you think is the message conveyed by the image? What makes you think so?
   b. Which do you think is the genre of the video? What kind of elements do you expect to find? Make your guess.
   c. Have you read the original book? If your answer is yes, what do you think about it?

2) VIDEO-MULTIMODAL-BASED TEXT / WHILE-WATCHING:
The focus of the second stage is on the multimodal text as a whole. Students watch a video and analyze its main characters, the mood and the way in which this is created, the editing means, the types of shots used, the main themes and messages, or the values transmitted.

2. Focus on text: watching the video.
   a. Characters:
      i. Describe the main characters of the video. How do they look like? How are they dressed? What do we know about their background? What do they do/say in the video?
   b. Mood:
      i. Describe the mood of the video. Do you find it humorous, sad, depressing, serious, uplifting, amusing, gloomy, or thoughtful? What makes you feel so? Reflect upon the music, sound effect, lighting, etc.
   c. Themes:
      i. What are the main themes of the video?
      ii. What do you think is the main message conveyed by the video?
      iii. Does it transmit any particular values?
      iv. How does the video make you feel?

3) SCENE-MULTIMODAL-BASED TEXT / WHILE-WATCHING:

The third stage involves the analysis of a selection of scenes from the video. Students make a list of the most memorable parts and, after a second viewing, analyze the way in which each particular scene is filmed. Aspects to be taken into consideration include: the use of sound effects, music and songs, camera work and editing, or points of view and narrator voice. The following terms and film techniques can be taken into consideration: extreme close up shot, close up shot, medium shot, long shot, extreme long shot, pan, track, zoom, point-of-view shot, and cut. If necessary, students discuss these concepts in a pre-teaching session.

3. Think of the most memorable parts of the video. Watch them again and analyze the following aspects.
   a. Sound:
      i. Is there any music in the excerpt? What mood does it create? Does it help to transmit the message? How?
      ii. Are there any songs? Are you familiar with them? What do they add to the story?
      iii. Are there any sound effects in this excerpt? What is their role?
      iv. Are there any silent moments? What role does silence play in the extract?
   b. Camera work and editing:
      i. How do we see the scene? Analyze the main camera shots (extreme close up, close up, medium, long shot and extreme long shot) and explain why they are filmed like that.
      ii. Analyze the way the scene is edited. How does the scene finish? Are there any fades, dissolves, abrupt cuts, etc.?
   c. Point of view and narrator's voice:
      i. Who is the narrator of the story and how is s/he portrayed in the video?

4) PRINTED-BASED TEXT / POST-WATCHING:

The fourth stage is centered on the printed-based text. Students are asked to read the most memorable moment of the novel and to see how this has been adapted for the video while trying to justify the changes introduced, with a focus on the scenes and characters finally excluded from the video script.

In this regard, the model allows for the implementation of both print-based and film texts on a symbiosis basis, looking to facilitate the familiarization of students with new textual modes as much as with the acquisition of new literacies. In exchange, students need to assume a new role of reader-viewers approaching texts from a perceptual dimension focused on the image, thorugh a structural dimension based on the analysis of visual grammar, to an ideological dimension that includes the analysis of the context, culture, and history of an image. Classic aspects such as language, charcaters, theme, or narrator are thus treated from different perspectives.

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE - MULTIMODAL FRAMEWORK: A MODEL FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF GEOFFREY CHAUCER'S *THE WIFE OF BATH* IN THE EFL/ESL CLASSROOM

Following the indications of Decree 2154/2010, the present section provides an actual example of how our framework can be used for the implementation of one specific text and its adaptation into video: Chaucer's *The Wife of Bath* (1477). The decree recommends the use of legends, myths and fables in the bilingual classroom, preferably in the format of a literary workshop (projects in small groups in which students can research the author's life, historical context, literary movement, acting out scenes, producing their own texts, etc.). *The Canterbury Tales* (1478) are on the list leading our choice.

The Wife of Bath (6 min) *Canterbury Tales* by Joanna Quinn
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_XJCOmcKadQ

1. CONTEXT / PRE-WATCHING:

a. Watch the following images from the video and try to guess what the story is going to be about.



Fig. 1. Images from the story.
Source: http://www.berylproductions.co.uk/wife-of-bath/

b. Pre-watch the beginning of the video with the sound off. Discuss the setting of the story and its genre.

c. Make a list of the words that you will probably hear in the video.

d. The *Wife of Bath* is the only story by Chaucer that is set in the time of King Arthur. Think of some other tales that are set in the same period of time.

e. The story belongs to the genre of medieval romance. This type of literature was widely popular between the 5th and 15th century, and mostly followed the epic tradition of Ancient Greek and Latin authors. These fantastic stories were full of adventures, and usually portrayed the deeds of the noble hero knight and his quest for love. Look for the typical characteristics of this literary genre and provide some examples. Do you consider that this story represents a standard medieval romance? Justify your answer.

f. The video is based on one excerpt from *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer (1343-1400). Are you familiar with the author? What do you know about him?

2. VIDEO-MULTIMODAL-BASED TEXT / WHILE-WATCHING:

a. Characters:

i. Describe the main characters of the video.

1) The knight.



Fig. 2. The knight.
Source: http://www.berylproductions.co.uk/wife-of-bath/

- Do you consider the knight to be a hero in the traditional sense of the word? Is he a convincing character for the audience? Justify your answer.
  - ¤ How does he look like? How is he dressed?
  - ¤ What kind of adventures is he engaged into? Are there adventures to be expected from a standard hero such as fighting, protecting a lady, defeating enemies of the realm, etc.?
  - ¤ Does he behave as a hero?
- The knight is a nameless character in the story. Why?
- He is also the only male character in the video. How are the male and the female characters represented in the video?
- The figure of the knight is often used as a symbol of masculinity. Why?

2) The old hag.



Fig. 3. The old hag.
Source: http://www.berylproductions.co.uk/wife-of-bath/

- When do we first meet her in the video? How does she look like?
- What does she say and how does she act in the story?
- Throughout the video she goes through the process of metamorphosis: from an old ugly hag towards a young beautiful lady. What do you think this process represents?
- What is the role of this female character in the video?

3) The Queen.



Fig. 4. The Queen.
Source: http://www.berylproductions.co.uk/wife-of-bath/

- What kind of character is she? How is she depicted in the video? How does she act?
- The role of the Queen in *The Wife of Bath* is very meaningful. Why? Justify your answer.
- Some critics say that the Queen may represent womankind. Do you agree with this statement? Justify your answer.

b. Mood:
   i. Describe the mood of the video. Do you find it humorous, sad, depressing, serious, uplifting, amusing, gloomy, or thoughtful? What makes you feel so?
   ii. How are the mood and the atmosphere created in the video?
   - Reflect upon the use of colors to depict the setting and the characters of the story.
   - Reflect upon the graphic style of the video. It does not only show the literal movement of the characters but their psychological and emotional changes. How is this effect created?
   - Close up and very close up shorts are of outmost importance in the video. Think of the moments when these kinds of shorts are preferred. Explain their use in the video.
   - What are the moments in the video that are accompanied by music? What kind of music and sound effects are used in the video? How do they help to create a particular mood in the video?

c. Themes:
   i. What do you think are the main themes of the story?
   - Women and Femininity
     ¤ How are women described in the video? What do they mostly desire?
     ¤ Do you think that the story confirms the assertion of women's desire of sovereignty over their husbands?
     ¤ What do women expect from marriage?

     Power
     ¤ Reflect upon the moment in the video when power resides in the hands of men and women.

¤ Are there any objects in the video that symbolize power?
¤ The story begins and ends with the power being in the hands of men. Why? What does the author want to tell us?
¤ At the end of the story the ugly hag turned into a beautiful lady relinquishes her power. Does it demonstrate that women do actually desire love rather than power?
Appearance
¤ Why is appearance important in the story?
¤ How does appearance break out the possible expectations for this particular genre?

ii. What do you think is the main message of the video?
- Some critics say that the message of the story is that, ugly or fair, women should be always obeyed by their husbands. Do you agree with them? Justify your answer.
- What idea of marriage is transmitted by the story? Do you agree with this message?

iii. Does it transmit any particular values?

iv. How does the video make you feel?

SCENE-MULTIMODAL-BASED TEXT / WHILE-WATCHING:

Think of the most memorable parts of the video. For example, the following scenes can be offered:
- The knight meets an old hag
- Raping a young maiden
- The knight in front of the Queen and her court
- The knight brings the answer to the Queen
- The wedding night: transformation of an old hag into a beautiful lady

Choose one scene, watch it again, and analyze its film characteristics according to the following aspects: sound effects and music, camera work and editing, point of view and narrator's voice.

The example in Table 1 below describes a sample scene. You would need to fill in the table explaining the main film characteristics of the scene. Consider the use of camera shots, sound, lighting, music, dialogue, costumes, etc. Please follow the examples for "The knight meets an old hag" scene analysis provided.

Description	**Analysis**
The camera shows the Knight with his rusty armor and his helmet on. We cannot see his face but we can feel that his spirit is broken.	*The medium and close shots of the Knight are used to bring his movements closer to the viewer. There is no voice, just the horse neighing is heard. The movement of the Knight's head and arms clearly indicate that the man is desperate.*
There is a narrator voice that introduces us to the scene.	*The background sounds (people's voices, horse's neighing) become even stronger. The narrator's voice sounds tragic and confirms the fact that the man's spirit is broken.*
There is a sudden cut and the camera offers a long shot of 24 young ladies dancing in the forest. Their image is faded but they seem to be naked.	*The extreme-long shot is chosen to get a chance for the spectator to appreciate the whole scene.*
A very low background music starts to sound.	*The soft background music changes the viewer's perception of the situation and brings the light of hope.*

There is bright light coming out of the depth of the forest.	
The camera switches from the ladies towards the Knight offering his close shot.	
The women are disappearing misteriously as if driven away by a cyclon. Their image is fading away.	
We still can hear some low background music when, suddenly, there is a sound of a horse neighing while the wind is howling.	
The place of the young ladies is occupied by a figure in a dark coat. It is curled up, with the body leaned against the tree. The long shot of the scene does not allow the viewer to distinguish any other details.	
The camera switches again towards the Knight. There is a close shot of him. We can hear him gasping loudly and his horse groaning.	
The camera gets us closer to the figure of the old hag. Now we can distinguish her facial features.	
A new switch of the camera brings a close shot of the Knight's head in a helmet and a very close shot of his purse full of money.	
We can hear the sound of his money.	
The camera switches again from the Knight towards the old hag. This time a medium shot of her is offered.	
The camera focuses on the Knight's figure again; this time he is not wearing his helmet, though.	
The last switch brings us towards the old hag once again. The camera approaches her and offers us a close shot of her face and her finger inviting the Knight to get closer and to listen to her.	

Table 1. Table of scene analysis

PRINTED-BASED TEXT / POST-WATCHING:

a The video is based on Chaucer's *The Wife of Bath*, which is part of his Canterbury Tales. When transforming a story from a textual to a multimodal tone, it is inevitable that some changes are made: characters are removed, dialogues are edited out, and certain scenes are deleted or modified. Why do you think this happens? Could you think of any example?

b. In case the of Joanna Quinn's adaptation of Chaucer's tale there are no major changes as far as the plot of the story concerns. However, there are some elements that have been removed and some others that have been added.

i. Make a list of the elements that have been removed from the film version. Why do you think that the creator opts for their elimination?

- The Prologue of the tale does not appear in the video. Reflect upon the author's choice.
- The character of the Wife of Bath plays an important role in Chaucer's tale. In the video, however, it appears as a secondary character.

- Ovid's story of Midas has been omitted in the video.
- The figure of King Arthur does not appear in the video. Predominance is given to the Queen.

ii. What does the film adaptation add to the story?

- The theme of Women and Femininity is highlighted in the film version. How does the film creator manage to do this?
- The character of the Queen in the video is rather different form the one depicted by Chaucer. Discuss the scenes with the Queen at the court and identify the differences.

CONCLUSION

The inclusive multimodal framework that has been described in the immediately preceding sections (framework and implementation example) was put to practice with our Complutense students in a workshop that was part of one of our Master's courses aimed at the training of EFL/ESL secondary teachers. This framework contributes to students' understanding of the importance of literature and its film mode as a useful tool for the teaching of English. More specifically, it enhances the usefulness of multimodality for the teaching of specific literary texts and their video adaptations in the language classroom. Typically film aspects such as costumes, light or camera angles are also seen as useful tools for the approach to literary texts in the classroom. Additionally, the Integrated-Skills Approach is enhanced through the interrelation of traditional language skills and cultural knowledge. All this makes the framework especially attractive for integrating meaningful cultural learning into the EFL context.

NOTES

1. The list in question recommends *The legends of Davy Crockett, Pocahontas, The Tales of King Arthur, or The Canterbury Tales*, together with H. E. Marshall's *Stories of Beowulf Told to the Children,* world famous folk tales such as *Rumpelstiltskin* or *The Emperor's New Clothes,* and Greek and Roman myths such as *Pygmalion* or *Aeschylus* and *Hercules*. Equally recommended are Nathaniel Hawthorne's *Twice-Told Tales,* Washington Irving's *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* or *Rip Van Winkle*, Rudyard Kipling's *Just So Stories,* Edith Nesbit's *Beautiful Stories from Shakespeare*, or *Robin Hood,* and *The Arabian Nights: Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves*, and Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court.*

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