

Proposal of Articulation Between Language and Literature: a movie task
Proposta de Articulação entre Língua e Literatura: uma tarefa com filme

Laura FRYDRYCH

Bruna SOMMER

1 Introduction

With the objective to articulate the process of language learning by including the teaching of literature inside the Additional Language classroom, we were faced with the difficulty of finding authentic materials to develop such project. Teaching grammatical structure of English language has been the most common practice in classrooms, while the teaching of literature, as well as the practice of reading texts, has been relegated to a period very often out of the regular school schedule. Considering the literary text is a genre which enriches the study of any language, including such genre in Additional Language classes is a possibility to raise students' awareness to the cultural, besides linguistic, aspects that are present in the texts. As an attempt to articulate, in our teaching practice, the relationship between language and literature, we developed a project that included, among many other activities, reading, writing and textual production tasks. In relation to the task we share here, the main objective was to read and establish relations with intra and extratextual elements, in other words, to establish relations of inherent elements of the text (eg.: textual genre, author, language, linguistic forms, etc) and those elements which are possible to infer, discuss and learn from the text (eg.: specific aspects of the depicted culture, dates, places, practices, lifestyle). The text selected was a short story written by Paul Auster, *Auggie Wren's Christmas Story*. Below we present one of the tasks that composed the project and that was created to work as a tool for the pre-reading of the short story itself.

2 Activity's name

Relacionando texto e filme (Relating text and movie).

3 Target students

High School students or intermediate students of other contexts (free courses, study groups, and so on).

4 Objectives

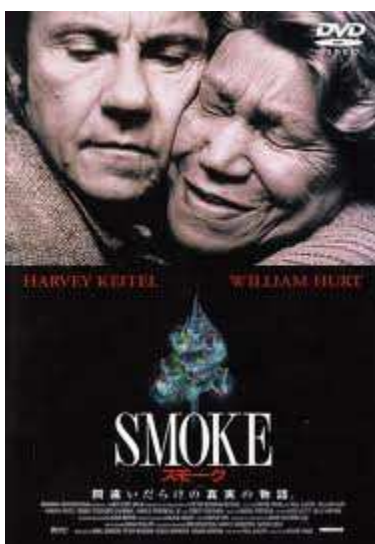
First of all, the main objective is to introduce the short story “Auggie Wren's Christmas Story”. Secondly, it is expected that the students are able, or at least, develop the capability to contrast and compare the snippet of a movie (available here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61pp51kxvVM>), and a text (in this case, some sentences) related to the movie. Thirdly, the task is planned in a way to raise students’ awareness towards establishing relations between the soundtrack, and the scenes watched. Estimulating the development of their critical sense and their detailed view about the text's plot (helped by the viewing of the snippet) is also an aim of such task. Finally, the plan presents an open space for students draw out conclusions and hypothesis about what happens next in the story.

5 Sugestions for the activity's development

1. In exercise 1, show students the snippet of SMOKE (available in YouTube in the link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=61pp51kxvVM>). Maybe your students will not have enough proficiency in reading and will not completely understand all the sentences. This task has the objective of providing an opportunity for them to get familiarized with the plot and vocabulary, rather than to test their reading skills. So, in order to facilitate the exercise and not to scary students that may not be used to this kind of task, we completed some alternatives with the numbers. If this exercise is still very difficult, you can ask them to do it in pairs or small groups.
2. Repeat the snippet how many times students need. Consider that this is not a memory task, so they may need to watch many times to get more details from it in order to do the exercises.

SMOKE'S ACTIVITY

1. You are going to watch an excerpt of SMOKE, an American independent film released in 1995 and directed by Wayne Wang and Paul Auster (who also wrote the screenplay). Below you will find some parts of the short story that are related to the film. Number them according to the scenes.



- () She has to be at least eighty, maybe ninety years old, and the first thing I notice about her is that she's blind.
- (1) A kid came in one morning and started stealing things from the store. He must have been about nineteen or twenty [...].
- () [...] so I decided to leave. I couldn't even write a note to say goodbye, seeing that she was blind and all, so I just left. I put her grandson's wallet on the table, picked up the camera again, and walked out of the apartment. And that's the end of the story.
- () He's standing by the rack of paperbacks along the far wall and stuffing books into the pockets of his raincoat.
- () [...] in that time Granny Ethel had fallen asleep in her chair.
- (3) [...] once I noticed what he was up to, I started to shout. He took off like a jackrabbit, and by the time I managed to get out from behind the counter, he was already tearing down Atlantic Avenue.
- () I chased after him for about half a block, and then I gave up.
- () In one of the pictures [...] he was standing with his arm around his mother or grandmother. In another one he was sitting there at age nine or ten dressed in a baseball uniform with a big smile on his face.
- (5) He'd dropped something along the way, and since I didn't feel like running any more, I bent down to see what it was.
- (8) I finally get to the apartment I'm looking for and ring the bell. Nothing happens. I assume no one's there, but I try again just to make sure. I wait a little longer, and just when I'm about to give up, I hear someone shuffling to the door.
- () It turned out to be his wallet. There wasn't any money inside, but his driver's license was there along with three or four snapshots.
- () [...] and then this old woman was suddenly hugging me there in front of the door, and I was hugging her back.
- (11) So we went into the apartment and spent the day together. The place was a real dump, I might add, but what can you expect from a blind woman who does her own housekeeping?

2. Watch the film again and pay attention to the chorus of the song *Innocent when you dream* (Tom Waits):

It's such a sad old feeling
 the fields are soft and green
 it's memories that I'm stealing
 but you're innocent when you dream
 when you dream
 you're innocent when you dream

The chorus says “it’s memories that I’m stealing / but you're innocent when you dream”. How can you relate these lines to the excerpt you have watched?

3. Based on the excerpts you read (short story) and watched (film), organize the main actions of the plot.

Actions	Scenes
The kid enters the store and steals a paperback.	
	3 & 4
The man picks the wallet that the kid has dropped.	
	6 & 7
The man rings the bell at Granny’s apartment.	
	9 & 10
The man spends the day with Granny.	
	12
	13

4. Read the excerpts of the short story and watch the film again. Identify the characters’ traits, both physical and psychological.

Character	Physical traits	Psychological traits
The kid		
The owner of the store		
Granny Ethel		

5. What do you think happens next in the story? Work in groups and write down your hypotheses.

Received: October 31, 2011

Accepted: March 21, 2012

E-mail:

laura.akummel@gmail.com

sommerbruna@gmail.com