RECONFIGURING GENDER THROUGH DIGITAL NARRATIVES: MULTILITERACIES AND SOCIAL JUSTICE IN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGES TEACHER EDUCATION

LA RECONFIGURACIÓN DEL CONCEPTO DE GÉNERO A TRAVÉS DE NARRATIVAS DIGITALES: MULTILITERACIDADES Y JUSTICIA SOCIAL EN LA FORMACIÓN DEL PROFESORADO DE LENGUAS ADICIONALES

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the integration of multimodal narratives and feminist perspectives in additional language education to promote social justice. Drawing on the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies, which emphasizes the need to engage with diverse modes of meaning construction, the text discusses how digital resources contribute to challenge traditional gender roles and foster inclusive learning environments. Through a theoretical framework grounded in the dimensions of literacy, learning by design, and social justice, and under a feminist lens, we examine the transformative potential of incorporating gender discussions into language education. Additionally, the role of multimodal texts in expanding students' multiliteracies is explored, offering a practical learning path to promoting gender equity and empowering future teachers as agents of change.

Keywords: digital narratives, feminism, multiliteracies, social justice, additional languages

RESUMEN

Este artículo explora la integración de narrativas multimodales y perspectivas feministas en el aprendizaje de lenguas adicionales, con el objetivo de promover la justicia social. El texto, basado en la Pedagogía de las Multiliteracidades, que pone el énfasis en la necesidad de interactuar con diferentes formatos para construir significados, analiza cómo los recursos digitales contribuyen a la ampliación de los roles de género tradicionales y a la promoción de contextos de aprendizaje coeducativos. A partir de un marco teórico basado en las dimensiones de la literacidad, el aprendizaje mediante el diseño y la justicia social desde una perspectiva feminista, se examina el potencial transformativo de la incorporación del debate de género en los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje de lenguas adicionales. Además, se analiza el uso de textos multimodales para expandir las multiliteracidades del estudiantado mediante una ruta de aprendizaje diseñada para promover la equidad de género y empoderar a las futuras maestras/os como agentes de cambio.

Palabras clave: narrativas digitales, feminismo, multiliteracidades, justicia social, lenguas adicionales.

1. Introduction

While the ability to read and write remains a fundamental component of any educational system, technological development and visual media have transformed the notion of literacy. Indeed, nearly all texts that students encounter nowadays can be considered multimodal. Consequently, over the past three decades, scholars, inspired by the seminal work of the New London Group (1996), have advocated for a shift away from viewing literacy as a singular skill acquired at a fixed point in time. Instead, literacy is now conceptualized as a dynamic and multidimensional process that encompasses multiple literacies (Kern, 2000; Robertson & Hughes, 2012; Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Zapata, 2022). This transition challenges the traditional notion of literacy and highlights its evolving nature in contemporary society. As a result, in the academic sphere, many scholars have adopted the term "multiliteracies," connoting the evolution required by current educational approaches (New London Group, 1996; Kern, 2000; Kalantzis et al., 2019). This evolution is particularly significant in the context of redefining gender norms, as digital literacies offer unique opportunities to question and reshape traditional gender roles (Wickens & Miller, 2020). Just as books are no longer published solely in print, the meaning of many texts is no longer produced solely through words. Therefore, it is not only about enabling students to develop reading and writing skills as processes of decoding and encoding, but also about acquiring a set of skills that allow them to interpret the combination of verbal language with other modes of representation, and to reflect and develop their own discourse as social, critical, and creative agents, particularly in the context of gender dynamics (Alarcón-Arana, 2023).

Furthermore, we recognize the need to incorporate various modes of meaning construction into language instruction. In today's landscape, oral and written communication are complemented by diverse semiotic modes that expand conventional approaches to language and cultural education. This is particularly significant when considering gender, as digital texts provide platforms for feminist narratives and the exploration of diverse gender identities that disrupt the dominant cultural discourses and offer new spaces for gender expression.

The central focus of this chapter revolves around the use of digital resources in the teaching and learning of additional languages in the classroom setting. Specifically, we discuss the learning and use of English as an Additional Language (EAL) and a linguistic, literary, and sociocultural work proposal that integrates the decoding of digital texts that pose a challenge for the reader, with a teaching methodology based on the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies (New London Group, 1996; Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Paesani & Menke, 2023). This methodology not only fosters linguistic and cognitive development but also actively engages with gender as a critical aspect of social interaction and personal identity. To this end, the use of texts born in digital format in the EAL classroom in addition to favoring the acquisition of vocabulary and linguistic skills of the students, also proves to be an effective resource in the development of multiliteracies and in the process of meaning construction, particularly in terms of gender awareness and redefinition.

In line with this approach, we begin by introducing the theoretical framework underpinning the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies. Subsequently, we present a learning scenario crafted to empower students as social agents and encourage reflection on gender issues within the context of language learning. Our focus lies particularly on gender dynamics in this additional language practice setting in teacher education. To achieve this objective, we have designed a learning path focused on working with multimodal compounds, which consists of using born-digital texts as a source of linguistic, literary, and sociocultural knowledge and communication for English instruction. This approach is especially important to address and reflect on gender issues through digital and multimodal texts, which serve as powerful tools for engaging with and challenging traditional gender norms. It fosters an inclusive and equitable environment where gender perspectives are interrogated and redefined through the lens of multiliteracies, thereby promoting a deeper, more critical engagement with the language and its cultural context.

This chapter builds upon empirical research conducted as part of the I+D+i project *(Re)alfabetizar la mirada* (CIGE/2023/75) and the *Literacy, Gender and Diversity (LITGENDI)* project (UV-SFPIE_PID_2732068). Spanning academic years 2022-2025, these research and methodological innovation projects have already yielded several publications that document specific classroom practices aimed at redefining literacy and gender roles, including works by Castellano-Sanz (2023; 2024); Castellano-Sanz and Domene-Benito (2024); Domene-Benito and Reyes-Torres (2023); and Reyes-Torres et al. (2024).

By integrating these methodologies into the EAL and aligning them with the required level of the Common European Framework for References (CEFR), we aim to empower future teachers to become not only proficient language users but also critical thinkers and active participants in reshaping gender narratives in their communities and beyond. This endeavor supports a broader educational goal of cultivating learners who are capable of understanding and influencing the sociocultural dynamics that shape their world, especially in relation to gender equality and representation.

2. Theoretical Framework

This work is grounded in an approach to literacy as a dynamic and multidimensional process through which pre-service teachers develop linguistic skills, visual thinking strategies, dialogic attitudes, and social practices. This enables them to access, understand, organize and make sense of the information, transforming it into knowledge they can use in their own teaching careers (Kern, 2000; Kucer, 2014; Zapata, 2022; Paesani & Menke, 2023). The theoretical foundation is organized into four parts: (1) The Dimensions of Literacy; (2) Learning by Design; (3) Social Justice Through the Lens of Feminism in Educational Contexts, and (4) Texts Born in Digital Format in the EAL Classroom; in all of which gender considerations are kept in mind.

2.1. The Dimensions of Literacy

The concept of literacy is fundamentally characterized by its inherent multidimensionality, as noted by Kern (2000) and Kucer (2014). These dimensions—personal, conceptual, and sociocultural—interact synergistically and are balanced equitably, reflecting the fluid nature of literacy, which is especially relevant in discussions of gender.

The personal dimension of literacy encompasses the students' identity, values, attitudes, and prior knowledge, including their perceptions and expressions of gender. As Kucer (2014) points out, literacy is a reflective process wherein students connect written, visual, and environmental elements to their existing knowledge and their broader sociocultural and gender contexts. Kern (2000) emphasizes that students are not merely passive recipients of information but active "meaning makers," tasked with designing knowledge that reflects their understanding of gender dynamics. Therefore, an essential objective for educators is to engage students with cognitive strategies that leverage information provided by multimodal texts to initiate and advance the meaning-making process, particularly through a gender-sensitive lens.

The conceptual dimension focuses on content and the diverse modes of representation that facilitate meaning production (Kucer, 2014). This involves guiding students to recognize and learn different sign systems present within texts, enabling them to forge new understandings that challenge traditional gender norms. Kern (2000) highlights the importance of educators deliberately selecting texts that not only enhance students' capacity for meaning construction, but also promote gender equity and challenge stereotypes.

Finally, the sociocultural and aesthetic dimension draws attention to the reader as a participant within a specific sociocultural milieu in which the pervasive influence of gender is included. This focus on the reader and their context provides students the opportunity to share and reflect on their unique gendered perspectives, influenced by their personal identities and cultural backgrounds. In this respect, recognizing the variability in how students interpret and analyze multimodal texts underscores the nonexistence of a singular, definitive meaning, particularly in relation to gender narratives.

All in all, the construction of meaning is not merely cognitive but also deeply rooted in conceptual and sociocultural elements, including a critical engagement with gender issues. The way a reader interprets a text, represents its meaning, and interacts with it is profoundly shaped by their cognitive, conceptual, and sociocultural literacy dimensions, which contain an acute awareness of gender dynamics. This complex interplay ensures that literacy remains a dynamic and evolving capacity, essential for navigating and understanding the multifaceted realities of the world (Kalantzis et al., 2019).

2.2. Learning by Design: How the Pedagogy of the Multiliteracies Can Foster Gender Awareness

In 1994, aware of the rapid technological and communicative advances shaping society, a group of professors from prestigious universities across various disciplines gathered in New London, Massachusetts. Their goal was to explore the diverse modes of representation that extend beyond language, incorporating studies of multimodal, literary, visual, and sociocultural content (Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). After several days of deliberation, they drafted a manifesto of intentions which they published in an article titled "A Pedagogy of Multiliteracies: Designing Social Futures" in the *Harvard Educational Review* in 1996, where they first coined the term multiliteracies.

Building on this foundation and taking into consideration that in today's multimodal society communication occurs through various modes of expression—text, typography, graphics, images, music, sounds, spaces, actions, peritexts, etc.—the New London Group (NLG) underscores the need to guide students in developing their multiliteracies within the sociocultural realities they inhabit. To this end, the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies incorporates the concept of Learning by Design, which consists of three elements: Available Designs, the Act of Designing, and the Redesigned (Kalantzis et al., 2019).

- **Available Designs** are conceived from the understanding that any text incorporates signs and features—pre-existing meanings—open to interpretation. It is crucial for educators to be familiar with these in order to plan how to guide students in identifying and making semiotic, grammatical, and lexical sense of these meanings. Attention must also be paid to the diverse cultural, literary, or multimodal aspects used to create them.
- **The Act of Designing** refers to what students do to understand and interpret the available designs. It is not merely about decoding or repeating ideas, but about creating new meanings, that is, imparting new significance to the text based on the meanings it presents. The idea is for students to connect what they read, see, and perceive with their knowledge and experiences (Lacorte & Reyes-Torres, 2021).
- **The Redesigned** is the transformed meaning, i.e., the new product—text, discourse, image, video—constructed from the previous two steps. Thus, learners exercise their creativity, produce new texts, and convert initial information into new texts with new meanings.

To implement this type of learning, the NLG established a Framework for Knowledge Processes (hereinafter, FKP) involving four pedagogical acts by the educator: (1) Experiencing; (2) Conceptualizing; (3) Analyzing; and (4) Applying. Below is a brief description of each:

- **Experiencing** engages students in meaningful lessons that incorporate both spontaneous reflection and lived experiences. This allows them to immerse themselves in the text. The initial purpose of the educator is to activate the students' minds by conducting a situated practice, for example, through an initial discussion on the themes and features of the selected texts. Learning activities should initially be based on questions and tasks that arouse students' interest.

- **Conceptualizing** involves guiding students in learning specific content and how certain forms produce concrete meanings. Thus, educators should introduce students to the metalanguage necessary to discuss the Available Designs and guide their interpretation. The goal is to enable students to gain awareness and control over what they are learning and to participate competently.

- **Analyzing** aims to reflect on the text, discuss its themes or possible messages from various perspectives, and consider how it might relate to specific cultures and/or social contexts. In other words, it is about helping students become aware of the need to approach the text from various viewpoints.

- **Applying** allows students to develop their interpretations based on what they have learned. In short, this act constitutes the transfer of knowledge to other situations and the production of new designs. Thus, the objective is to guide them to take meaning from one context and adapt it in such a way that it functions well in another.

Since these four pedagogical acts are conceived as a non-linear sequence, they often appear together at any point in the lesson (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Lacorte & Reyes-Torres, 2021). Indeed, the goal is to combine them throughout the lesson to actively engage students in using EAL to communicate, elaborate their ideas, and develop their multiliteracies. For this purpose, we have combined the four acts with the following five-phase model. While the order of the phases is conceived as a fixed sequence that responds to the approach of the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies, the order of the acts may vary depending on the interests and needs of the educators.

1. **Ignite**: Aims to capture students' attention, positively surprise them to gain their interest, and have them start using their previous knowledge. We want them to connect with the topic being discussed. This involves applying what Garcés (2013) calls a "boundary practice."

2. **Enable**: This phase facilitates students' engagement with some of the basic ideas or points about the topic under discussion. We pose questions to initiate the process of meaning-making and encourage students to begin developing their thoughts on the subject. This phase is supported by what Mora (2013) defines as "sacred curiosity," which enables the commencement of any learning act.

3. **Deepen**: In this phase, students are guided to develop an interpretation of the topic by addressing the various modes of expression (linguistic, visual, auditory, etc.) observed in the selected resource, and if possible, establishing a connection with the previous resource.

4. **Elaborate**: Learning to develop ideas requires frequent practice both individually and collectively. The aim of this phase is to provide students with the opportunity to exchange their ideas and approach the topic from other perspectives (social, cultural, historical, or ideological).

5. **Transfer**: Students use their interpretations and the conclusions reached to undertake a new task. The goal is for them to transform the ideas they have developed and apply them in some way. Ideally, we might ask them to express themselves by creating a multimodal text.

This sequence, although fixed in its phases, allows for flexibility in the application of the pedagogical acts, depending on the dynamics of the classroom and the specific learning objectives. The integration of gender perspectives is crucial throughout this process, as it enriches the students' analysis and understanding of texts, ensuring that their educational experiences are inclusive and reflective of diverse identities. By doing so, we prepare pre-service teachers not only to engage critically with content, but also to become agents of change in creating socially just and equitable environments. The table below illustrates how each phase incorporates various pedagogical acts to engage students in the process of meaning-making through different actions, focusing on multiliteracies:

Phase	Pedagogical act	Multiliteracies
1. Ignite	Experiencing	Language use, cultural knowledge, multimodal text decoding, reflection, art appreciation.
2. Enable	Experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing	Language use, cultural knowledge, multimodal text decoding, interaction and reflection, art appreciation.
3. Deepen	Experiencing, conceptualizing, analyzing	Language use, cultural knowledge, multimodal text decoding, interaction and reflection, art appreciation, intertextuality.
4. Elaborate	Analyzing, conceptualizing, analyzing	Language use, cultural knowledge, interaction and reflection, art appreciation, intertextuality.
5. Transfer	Applying, analyzing	Language use, cultural knowledge, interaction and reflection, art appreciation, intertextuality, multimodal creation.

Table 1. Phases of the learning path and pedagogical acts.

This table aligns each pedagogical act with the targeted multiliteracies to ensure a holistic educational approach that not only encompasses traditional linguistic and cultural knowledge, but also integrates modern skills such as multimodal text decoding and intertextuality. Each phase builds on the previous, strengthening students' abilities to critically engage with and transform their learning environments through multimodal creation, ultimately preparing them to apply these skills in broader contexts. This structure is particularly beneficial in addressing the complexities of contemporary communication and the diverse modalities through which today's students interpret and interact with the world.

2.3. Advancing Social Justice Through a Feminism Lens in Educational Contexts

Feminist perspectives and the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies can be powerfully combined to enhance and transform educational practices. When brought together, these frameworks offer a comprehensive approach that not only broadens students' modes of representation, but also actively challenges traditional gender norms and promotes gender equity within digital literacy. The Pedagogy of Multiliteracies, as conceived by the New London Group (1996), gains depth and relevance when integrated with feminist theories, particularly those of Nancy Fraser, who addresses social justice and gender in educational contexts. Fraser's work critically reevaluates social justice through a tripartite model—redistribution, recognition, and participation—providing a robust framework for understanding and addressing gender differences in education (Fraser, 1997, 2008, 2022). This model challenges earlier foundational theories of social contract proposed by philosophers such as Rousseau, Kant, and Locke from the 17th and 18th centuries. Toward the end of the 20th century, Rawls introduced an interpretation of justice that emphasized equity, closely linked with the principles of equality, freedom, and solidarity, as fundamental to human rights (Antón-Morón, 2013). From here, the main theories of social justice establish three classic parameters above mentioned: (1) Redistribution; (2) Recognition; and (3) Participation:

1. **Redistribution**: Rawls (2010) emphasizes equitable distribution of primary goods and justifies situations of inequality when they are used as a tool to favor the most oppressed, also linked to a model of fair priority (Turégano-Mansilla, 2022). In the same vein, Nussbaum (2012) supports the development of social justice starting with the recognition of basic human capabilities: life, health, integrity, emotions, play, control over one's environment, senses, imagination, thought, etc. This distribution of knowledge through school justice necessitates teachers' critical role in fair knowledge distribution and equal opportunities (Connell, 1997; Dubet, 2011).

2. **Recognition**: The absence of recognition results in certain identification patterns and social representation linked to hegemonic patriarchy, reflecting a lack of representation for marginalized groups (Gil-Blasco, 2016). Fraser (1997; 2022) emphasizes that redistribution alone is insufficient, stressing the need for recognition as a crucial element in building social justice. Authors like Toninello (2021) and Honneth (2006) underscore the relevance of social esteem, often denied to marginalized groups, necessitating reflective curricular practices from an early age (Burgos-Méndez & Ruiz-Peña, 2017).

3. **Participation**: Traditionally linked to the public sphere, participation is tied to Freirean ideals of democracy, social justice, and the construction of democratic citizenship (Lucio-Villegas, 2015). In the educational realm, this translates into considering students' voices in material selection, visibility of marginalized groups, and practices promoting curricular justice (Torres-Santomé, 2011).

From a feminist perspective, linking the feminist movement and its premises with proposals for building a more just society and for a redefinition of the notion of citizenship in a feminist key is crucial (Palacio, 2012, p. 177). In addressing this issue, Fraser (2008), Young (2011), and Benhabib (2009) place special emphasis on the domain of a cultural perspective through which to model and transform the different social values traditionally associated with both sexes that result in a stereotyped vision especially of women. Fraser (2008) examines a three-dimensional conceptualization of the complex phenomenon of social justice through the interpretation of redistribution and recognition as two interdependent elements and in continuous transformation to achieve a gender-sensitive social justice. This idea is shared by Young (2011), who also reflects in his model of social connection on the relevance of global responsibility of all agents in the eradication of structural injustices. Related to this responsibility, Benhabib's right to membership (2009) can also be connected, as the right to have rights, in accordance with the subsidiary responsibility of the global community, regardless of gender.

In summary, the understanding of social justice, viewed through the lens of feminism, transcends geographical boundaries and finds its place within the discourse of global justice (Brenner, 2003). Furthermore, this discourse must be applied to the school curriculum through equality, equity, and the dignification of women's realities via practices centered on critical, democratic, intercultural, and feminist education (Apple & Beane, 2000; Ballarín, 2008; Vera-Vila, 2011). Consequently, this educational model promotes a conception of full citizenship, which collectively acts in favor of the common social good. This global notion of citizenship, grounded in ethical principles, encourages the development of skills necessary for questioning and reflection (Castoriadis, 2007).

Regarding Social Justice applied to the educational field, the relationship established between being, knowing, and power, highlighted by Sánchez-Lara and Druker-Ibáñez (2022) is particularly interesting when they express that this relationship "corresponds to a concurrency that, institutionalized in educational narratives, reproduces dynamics of domination associated with the recognition of otherness, to mechanisms of participation and the distribution of capacities for agential development" (p. 113). To address this, it is

necessary to reconsider the educational and social relationships that are desirable to encourage fair and sustainable curricular practices, and what experiences are most valuable for students to face current challenges and obstacles (Beyer & Liston, 2001).

Following Adichie, we emphasize the concept of social justice from the necessary intersectional feminist point of view:

> […] [to] choose to use the vague expression human rights is to deny the specific and particular problem of gender. It would be a way of pretending that it was not women who have, for centuries, been excluded. It would be a way of denying that the problem of gender targets women. That the problem was not about being a human being, but specifically about being a female human. (Adichie, 2014, p. 23)

This intersectional approach, first and foremost, includes education as a tool to equip young individuals with critical skills and empower them to shape their understanding of the world that surrounds them. Indeed, "these skills are very important for young adolescents as they are starting to reflect on moral and political judgments to integrate themselves into society" (Moreira et al., 2015, as cited in Moreno-Vera & Cruz, 2023, p. 143).

Building on the theoretical foundations of social justice and feminism in educational contexts, the integration of gender perspectives within born-digital texts in EAL classrooms represents a practical application of these theories. By critically engaging with digital texts that challenge gender norms, students develop a nuanced understanding of gender issues and enhance their linguistic and cultural competencies. This transition from theory to practice highlights the importance of embedding social justice principles into educational methodologies, facilitating the development of inclusive and critical learning environments. As we delve into the application of multiliteracies in language teaching, we recognize the transformative potential of incorporating gender perspectives in shaping students' perceptions and interactions with diverse cultural narratives.

However, the conceptual dimension of literacy must also consider the challenges posed by digital translation tools, which often default to masculine pronouns and forms. This automatic preference for masculine defaults is not merely a technical oversight; it perpetuates gender biases and reinforces patriarchal norms within digital communication. Such biases can distort the original gender nuances expressed in various languages, leading to a misrepresentation of gender identities and roles. For instance, when translating languages with gender-neutral or gender-specific forms, these tools often simplify or ignore the intended gender distinctions, resulting in a skewed interpretation that aligns with traditional gender binaries. This misrepresentation has far-reaching implications, as it not only affects

the accuracy of translations, but also perpetuates gender stereotypes and biases in the minds of learners. Educators must therefore be vigilant in addressing these biases when using digital tools in language teaching, ensuring that students are aware of these limitations and are equipped to critically engage with and challenge such biases (West et al., 2019). By doing so, we can promote a more equitable and accurate representation of gender in language education, aligned with the broader goals of social justice and feminism.

2.4. Digital Texts and Gender in the EAL Classroom

According to Kern (2000) and Kress (2010), written, oral, visual, and audiovisual texts provide a space for reflective and creative acts, offering opportunities to make connections between grammar, discourse, and meaning; between language and content; between language and culture; between language and art; and between language and interculturality. These aspects are integral to the development of literacy, which should be incorporated into the acquisition of additional languages, specifically in the teaching of EAL.

Since the late 20th century, the impending technological revolution identified as an information exchange revolution has necessitated a shift in language teaching to meet the needs of decoding diverse and multimodal texts of the 21st century (Kern, 2000; Kress, 2010). The fact that students are exposed to information and can easily acquire it does not mean they can differentiate the quality or even the reliability of texts unless all the pieces of the digital puzzle are arranged and processed coherently through a profound process of decoding and meaning-making. Digital technologies have influenced information exchange, human communication, and literature at all levels: the way texts are produced, received, and decoded has been transformed, but more importantly, new literary forms have developed under the label of "born-digital texts" (Hammond, 2016). The combination of traditional printed texts with multimedia elements has led to the expansion of new textual and literary forms that have brought significant changes in literary communication and the way readers perceive, decode, and understand literary productions. In this regard, e-literature is an artistic and cultural genre born in digital format that exploits its full expressive potential to expand students' multiliteracies (Hayles, 2008). As Flores-Morador and Cortés-Vásquez (2016) indicate, if we work with e-lit texts in the classroom, students will learn how to work with digital media, how to read, and how to produce texts that incorporate different textualities: video, audio, images, and hyperlinks. The inclusion of born-digital texts in classrooms provides teaching that goes beyond developing students' digital competence and leads towards the development of critical thinking.

In this framework, integrating gender perspectives within born-digital texts in EAL classrooms can significantly enrich the learning experience. By critically engaging with digital texts that explore and challenge gender norms, students can develop a nuanced understanding of gender issues, enhancing their ability to interpret and interact with global cultures and discourses in a more informed and empathetic manner. This approach fosters not only their communicative competence and multiple literacies but also an environment of inclusivity and critical awareness.

To effectively address gender issues in the ESL classroom, the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies offers a powerful framework that aligns with feminist perspectives, leveraging the use of digital texts. As we acknowledge the vast array of born-digital texts available today, it becomes clear that our teaching methods must evolve to embrace activities that foster students' multiliteracies as well as actively engage them in critical discussions about gender. By harnessing these digital resources, educators can create dynamic learning environments where students are encouraged to explore and challenge traditional gender norms.

Incorporating feminist perspectives within this pedagogical approach ensures that students are not merely passive consumers of content but actively involved in constructing and conveying meanings that reflect a more inclusive understanding of gender. The Pedagogy of Multiliteracies empowers students to engage with digital texts in ways that promote critical thinking and creativity, allowing them to uncover and address gender biases embedded within these texts. In short, by guiding students to become meaning-makers, we equip them with the tools to critically analyze and reshape gender narratives.

3. A Learning Path to Exploring Gender Digital Narratives in EAL

Below, we present the learning path we have designed based on the concept of Learning by Design. By structuring the multimodal resources into five different phases, the aim of the learning path is to equip learners with the critical tools to decode digital and other multimodal texts, in order to facilitate a profound understanding of gender dynamics and enabling them to challenge entrenched cultural discourses.

3.1. Phase 1. Trigger

The selected born-digital text used to start the process is a reinterpretation by @femme.sapiens of Magritte's *Golconde*. This kind of trigger underscores the crucial role of art and art education within general education, advocating for their integration into EAL classrooms as a dynamic educational tool. Historically, language teaching and the arts were

viewed as distinct domains; however, recent shifts in educational paradigms emphasize the synergistic benefits of integrating art into language instruction. Schander et al. (2013) highlight that art in the additional languages' classroom serves as a potent motivator, enhancing student participation and text production, thereby making learning experiences more meaningful and emotionally resonant. Acaso and Megías (2017) assert the need for a contemporary rejuvenation of art education methodologies to align with the visual and cultural demands of modern society. This reevaluation encourages a more inclusive and contextualized approach to teaching art, ensuring it reflects the social realities of students' lives and integrates seamlessly with general education. Moreover, the use of art to introduce cultural elements in the EAL classroom is supported by Izadi and Baltagi (2019), who advocate for teaching culture through art as a practical method to connect classroom learning with the external world. This approach not only facilitates a deeper understanding of the target language's culture, but also allows students to critically examine their own cultural biases. Dinapoli et al. (2017) further enrich this discourse by suggesting that incorporating local art can enhance relevance and engagement, leading to a critical examination of cultural values and societal norms. In this sense, decoding a contemporary reinterpretation of Magritte's *Golconde* by means of introducing concepts such as Rebecca Solnitt's mansplaining (2014) serves multiple educational purposes: it enriches the learning environment, facilitates meaningful cultural exchange, and promotes critical engagement with current issues in society regarding micro-misogyny.

Image 1. Helena Sotoca's (@femme.sapiens) reinterpretation of Magritte's *Golconde.*

3.2. Phase 2. Enable

The learning path designed is followed by an acknowledgement of the perspective presented by Adrienne Rich, who articulately noted that "there is no universal poetry, only poetries and poetics and the streaming intertwining histories to which they belong" (Rich, 1979). This assertion underscores the inherent diversity and contextual specificity of poetic expressions.

In the realm of digital poetry, we observe a significant blur of traditional boundaries between authors and readers. Notably, digital poetry facilitates a dynamic interchange of roles, characterized by a fluid process of creation and perception. This interactive and participatory nature of digital poetry is exemplified by Deena Larsen's "What Women Say", a kanji-kus created in 2000 and preserved thanks to Electronic Literature Organization (https://archive.the-next.eliterature.org/larsen/kanji-kus/kanji/what-women-say/). This work comprises nine distinct nodes, each offering multiple interpretations within a single ideogram. Interaction with this digital poem—such as hovering over the kanji for "woman" or clicking on hyperlinked words—reveals evolving textual meanings, highlighting the mutable relationship between text and reader. This digital poem aims to deepen students' visual literacy by engaging them in the active interpretation and conceptualization of each node within Larsen's poem. For instance, when examining the node following the epigraph 'a woman's', students are encouraged to explore the connections between the visual elements of the poem and the textual content. This exploration can lead to discussions on themes such as the objectification of the female body and the cultural appropriation of female identities, further enriched by researching notable figures mentioned within the text, such as Maya Angelou, Simone de Beauvoir, and Emily Dickinson. By linking another node titled 'rises like' to Maya Angelou's poem "Still I Rise" (1978), students can explore themes of resilience and defiance against oppression. This approach not only illuminates intertextual relationships, but also encourages a broader engagement with the world through the lens of the poem.

In summary, this academic exploration of digital poetry, particularly through Larsen's "What Women Say", serves as a profound educational tool. Beyond challenging students to navigate and interpret complex intertextual and visual dynamics, it also fosters a deeper understanding of the cultural and historical contexts that shape poetic expressions. This methodology promotes a critical engagement with literature, empowering students to analyze and appreciate the nuanced interactions between text, history, and culture.
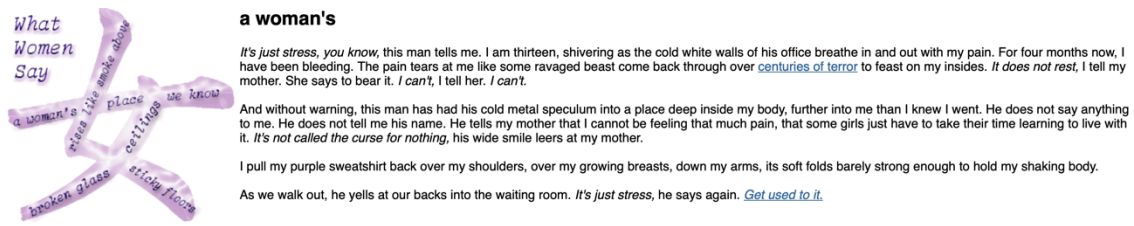
a woman's

It's just stress, you know, this man tells me. I am thirteen, shivering as the cold white walls of his office breathe in and out with my pain. For four months now, I have been bleeding. The pain tears at me like some ravaged beast come back through over centuries of terror to feast on my insides. *It does not rest,* I tell my mother. She says to bear it. *I can't,* I tell her. *I can't.*

And without warning, this man has had his cold metal speculum into a place deep inside my body, further into me than I knew I went. He does not say anything to me. He does not tell me his name. He tells my mother that I cannot be feeling that much pain, that some girls just have to take their time learning to live with it. *It's not called the curse for nothing,* his wide smile leers at my mother.

I pull my purple sweatshirt back over my shoulders, over my growing breasts, down my arms, its soft folds barely strong enough to hold my shaking body.

As we walk out, he yells at our backs into the waiting room. *It's just stress,* he says again. *Get used to it.*

Image 2. Caption from Deena Larsen's digital poem "What Women Say."

3.3. Phase 3. Deepen

If we continue with one of the nodes from Larsen's poem, we arrive at the node 'place,' which can directly evoke thoughts of actual displacement and authors such as Virginia Woolf, Sylvia Plath or Sandra Cisneros. Additionally, if we delve into its reading, we can discuss concepts such as the gender gap, the erasure of women from history and societies, and the different forms of violence against women. In this context, and according to the intersectional approach we are following, the learning path continues with the image by Yemeni photographer Boushra Almutawakel. She is renowned for her work in "The Hijab Series," which explores the complexities of the hijab in varied contexts and its impact on female identity, both in Yemen and in the broader Islamic world. This series portrays women and children in different states of attire, highlighting cultural norms and social perceptions related to the hijab. Almutawakel's work is significant as it addresses themes of gender, religion, and politics through a powerful visual medium, often inviting viewers to reflect on their own perceptions and biases.

Image 3. Boushra Almutawakel "The Hijab Series" (2008-2012).

3.4. Phase 4. Reflect

As we delve into the Deepen phase of our learning path, it becomes essential to incorporate diverse narrative forms, including the use of non-digital graphic novels. This choice, while seemingly traditional, is vital for fostering a deep connection with culturally resonant themes and decoding multimodal texts close to Young Adult (YA) literature genres in order to enhance critical literacy.

The graphic novel selected for this phase serves as a modern Bildungsroman, a literary genre traditionally focused on the protagonist's journey from youth to adulthood (Benyahia et al., 2006, p. 271). Notably, this narrative features a female protagonist, reflecting a conscious shift towards inclusivity and representation in storytelling (Demitürk, 1986). Graphic novels, with their interplay of text and images, align perfectly with the Multiliteracies framework by offering a multimodal approach that reduces cognitive load and heightens emotional impact (Barter-Storm & Wik, 2020). These narratives not only enhance language and critical literacy skills, but also foster an understanding of complex social issues, thereby supporting a critical engagement with themes of social justice and equity (Sun, 2017).

Incorporating the English version of the awarded *Estamos todas bien* (*We Are All Just Fine*) by Ana Penyas, originally published in 2017, serves as a poignant inclusion in this FKP. Penyas's narrative oscillates between the past and the present, tracing the lives of her grandmothers during pivotal moments in Spanish history such as the Civil War and Franco's dictatorship, a time marked by severe restrictions on women's societal roles (Aramburu, 2019, p. 14). The graphic novel not only revisits historical events but also addresses the pervasive silence surrounding these women's experiences. Through the lens of personal and national memory, Penyas confronts the so-called Pact of Oblivion, bridging past traumas with present realities (Smith & Watson, 2010).

By integrating *We are all just fine* (2023) into our learning path, we connect earlier discussions sparked by digital artworks and poetry on gender dynamics and the visibility of women. The graphic novel complements the digital artifacts previously explored, such as the @femme.sapiens creations, Deena Larsen's poem, and Boushra Almutawakel's "The *Hijab Series*," by providing a tangible, reflective medium that encourages students to explore memory, identity, and gender roles deeply. Penyas's work, with its meticulous collage technique and integration of personal photographs, not only serves as a documentary of women's lives but also as a medium for discussing the aging process and the evolving roles of women in our close society (Britland, 2022).

This integration illustrates the efficacy of using graphic novels to explore complex identities and societal roles through a feminist and intersectional lens. The graphic novel provides a powerful counterpoint to digital modalities, enhancing the pedagogical goals of fostering deep, critical, and reflective literacies. It emphasizes the importance of memory and the ongoing relevance of historical contexts in understanding contemporary gender issues, thus aligning with the overarching educational objectives of promoting social justice from an intersectional feminism point of view.

Image 4. Ana Penyas' *We are all just fine* cover.

3.5. Phase 5. Apply

Following the five phases designed to apply the pedagogical acts established by the Pedagogy of the Multiliteracies, this last session challenges students to creatively synthesize their understanding of gender dynamics, micro-misogyny, and social justice through the design of a guerrilla campaign. Inspired by the art-activism of the Guerrilla Girls in the 1980s and the powerful expressions seen in the *El violador eres tú* performance from Chile in 2019, students are tasked with crafting a campaign that brings awareness to everyday sexism in a manner that is both engaging and thought-provoking. The aim is to develop a campaign that utilizes the elements of guerrilla marketing—surprise, innovation, and a grassroots approach—to highlight and challenge the subtle yet pervasive forms of gender bias and discrimination that infiltrate daily interactions and societal structures.

Activities:

1. **Research and Ideation:** Students will begin by revisiting the themes and discussions from earlier phases, particularly focusing on the narratives and visual representations that have explored gender issues. They will conduct further research into local instances of micro-misogyny, gathering contemporary examples that resonate with their community or social circles.

2. **Creative Development:** considering the multimodal approach of the learning path, students will design visual and textual content for their campaign. This could include creating posters with catchy slogans, digital content for social media platforms, or even live performances that can be staged in public spaces. The content should aim to engage a broad audience and provoke reflections on the ingrained biases that are often overlooked.

3. **Implementation Strategy:** Students will outline a plan for deploying their guerrilla campaign. This includes selecting strategic locations that maximize visibility and impact, considering both physical spaces (such as university campuses, community centers, busy streets) and digital platforms (such as Instagram, Twitter, or TikTok) where younger demographics are likely to engage with the campaign.

4. **Reflection and discussion:** After the campaign launch, students will gather feedback and reflections on the impact of their efforts. This could involve tracking engagement metrics on digital platforms, collecting anecdotal evidence from participants or observers, and holding a debrief session to discuss the outcomes and potential areas for improvement.

Evaluation: The success of the guerrilla campaign will be assessed based on creativity, relevance, engagement level, and the depth of the critical reflection it sparks among the target audience. Students will present their campaigns, along with an analysis of their effectiveness and the lessons learned during the process.

Through this guerrilla campaign, students not only apply their theoretical knowledge of social justice and gender studies in a practical and impactful way, but also develop key skills in advocacy, public engagement, and critical media production. This project serves as a culmination of their learning journey, embodying the principles of the Pedagogy of Multiliteracies by requiring them to negotiate meaning across modalities and cultural contexts to advocate for a fairer society, free of gender inequalities.

Image 6. Image from performance in Chile *El violador eres tú* (2019).

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the integration of digital resources and feminist perspectives into language education represents a transformative approach with profound implications for reconfiguring gender norms and promoting social justice. By embracing the concept of multiliteracies, educators embark on a journey of empowering pre-service teachers to navigate and influence a more equitable and inclusive world. Through the Learning by Design framework, they equip learners with the critical tools to decode digital texts, thus contributing to facilitate a profound understanding of gender dynamics and enabling them to challenge entrenched cultural discourses.

Furthermore, the incorporation of diverse modes of meaning construction into language instruction by EAL teachers fosters inclusive learning environments that lead to the exploration and expression of students' identities. Advancing social justice through a feminist lens in educational contexts entails a comprehensive reassessment of traditional notions such as redistribution, recognition, and participation. By infusing curricular practices with feminist perspectives, educators not only advocate for gender equity, but also empower students to bring into reality meaningful change within their communities.

Likewise, born-digital texts, including e-literature, emerge as invaluable resources in facilitating critical thinking and reflection on gender issues. By integrating gender perspectives into EAL classrooms through digital texts, educators cultivate linguistic, cultural, and gender diversity. Ultimately, the adoption of multiliteracies, along with feminist perspectives and digital resources, enable educators to challenge gender norms and advocate for social justice within language education. Through these collective efforts, we aspire to promote learning environments that inspire students to actively participate in shaping a more just and balanced society.

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