



AFLUENTE: REVISTA DE
LETRAS E LINGÜÍSTICA
ISSN 2525-3441

REVISTA AFLUENTE: REVISTA DE LETRAS E LINGÜÍSTICA

V. 7, N.21, P.135-159

DOI: 10.18764/2525-3441V7N21.2022.21

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FANFICTIONAL CREATIVE WRITING IN ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

O desenvolvimento da escrita criativa fanfictional em inglês como língua adicional

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Abstract: The Fanfictional Creative Writing (FCW) has been little addressed in contemporary Brazilian academic research. Therefore, the Fanfictional Creative Writing in English as an additional language has been addressed even less (MYERS, 2006; MORLEY, 2007; BLYTHE and SWEET, 2008; HEALEY, 2009; OBERHOLZER, 2014). According to the World Economic Forum (2015), creativity has been gaining more and more space and relevance in globalized educations and social entrepreneurship. However, there is little research that addresses the development of creativity in formal and informal schooling. This may indicate that the educational community is not encouraging the creative development among its students or does not even know how to develop it. For these reasons, the objective of this research was to identify if FCW students could develop their creativity and creative writing texts in English as an additional language (EAL). Thus, an extracurricular FCW course with EAL was organized and taught at USP in 2016. The research methodology encompassed both the organization and the delivery of this FCW course based directly on the Vygotskian sociocultural theory (VYGOTSKY, 2004; 2007). The focus of this article was a case study (DUFF, 2008; DUFF, 2012; DYSON, 2005; STAKE, 2006). As a result, the selected student's textual production showed that there were signs of creative and textual development on digital scripts, fanwriting-creative writing techniques and fandom-paratextual scripts.

Palavras-chave: Creative Writing; Sociocultural theory; Fanfiction.

Abstract: A Escrita Criativa Fanfictional (ECF) tem sido pouco abordada nas pesquisas acadêmicas contemporâneas brasileiras. Por conseguinte, a Escrita Criativa Fanfictional em inglês como língua adicional tem sido abordada com menor frequência ainda (MYERS, 2006; MORLEY, 2007; BLYTHE and SWEET, 2008; HEALEY, 2009; OBERHOLZER, 2014). Segundo o Fórum Mundial Econômico (2015), a criatividade vem ganhando cada vez mais espaço e relevância na educação globalizada e no empreendedorismo social. Entretanto, há poucas pesquisas acadêmicas que abordam o desenvolvimento da criatividade em meios escolares tanto formais quanto informais. Isto pode indicar que a comunidade educacional não vem incentivando o desenvolvimento da criatividade entre seus alunos ou mesmo não sabe como desenvolvê-la. Por esses motivos, o objetivo desta pesquisa foi o de identificar como os alunos da ECF podem desenvolver sua criatividade e redação criativa de textos em inglês como língua adicional (ILA). Desta forma, um curso extracurricular de ECF com inglês como língua adicional foi desenvolvido e ministrado na USP em 2016. A metodologia de pesquisa abarcou tanto a organização quanto a ministração do curso ECF baseado diretamente na teoria sociocultural vygotskiana (VYGOTSKY, 2004; 2007). O enfoque desta pesquisa foi um estudo de caso (DUFF, 2008; DUFF, 2012; DYSON, 2005; STAKE, 2006). Como resultado, a produção textual da aluna selecionada mostrou que houve sinais de desenvolvimento acerca dos digitalscripts, fanwriting-creative writing techniques e fandom-paratextual scripts..

Keywords: Escrita Criativa; Teoria sociocultural; Fanfiction.

INTRODUÇÃO



The World Economic Forum (2015) has claimed that creativity became the third most important skill in today's world. In contrast, creativity has still not been largely motivated and taught in Brazilian schools (FERRARI, 2002; REIS, 2017). In fact, there are not many courses about creativity in Brazil and even fewer about creative writing (MYERS, 2006, MORLEY, 2007, BLYTHE and SWEET, 2008; HEALEY, 2009; OBERHOLZER, 2014). On the other hand, based on Wattpad, one of the most accessed websites about fanfictions in the world, Brazilians are the third most prolific ficwriters on it. Ficwriters are writers who write mainly fanfictions.

The valorization of writing has also been intensified by the advent of the internet (LÉVY, 1999). The use of various social media platforms such as Facebook or Twitter has become a quite common activity in today's modern world. Millions and millions of people use these platforms to communicate with others with different goals in mind (LÉVY, 1999). Most of their communication may be materialized in writing. These constant and increasing communications have composed what both Pierre Lévy (1999) and André Lemos (2004) defined as cyberculture.

For Lemos (2004), cyberculture might present various complex and mutable definitions. However, he still advocated that cyberculture might be composed by some recurrent features. In turn, these cybercultural features usually encompassed a set of cognitive qualities such as transmitting, connecting and reconfiguring. In addition, these features also entailed a set of communicative practices such as social gaming and networking. For instance, the transmission of information on the internet may happen through a communicative practice denominated "do it yourself".

A possible example of communicative practice denominated "do it yourself" in writing is fanfictions. By and large, fanfictions may be understood as texts written by fans. To be quite honest, I would call this definition texts written by fans the classic(al) definition. It can be easily found in its barren and fruitless academic literature (JENKINS, 1992; TUSHNET, 2007; PUGH, 2010; THOMAS, 2016). To better understand fanfictions and/or its process (fanwriting), people must look deeper at its classic definition through the contemporary lens.



Having said that, the main objective of this article was to pinpoint if the participating Fanfictional Creative Writing (FCW) in English as an additional language student (also known here as student A) could have her fanfictional creative writing developed. However, to better understand her developmental writing process, a brand-new concept of fanfiction had to be more carefully analyzed and even more substantially configured. For these reasons, I then attempted to propose a more modern approach to defining fanfictions and investigate if student A was able to develop her fanfictional creative writing in English as an additional language with the support of the FCW course

FANFICTIONS: A (PROPOSED) MODERN APPROACH

Fanfictions are texts written by fans. This has been a quite recurrent definition of fanfictions (JENKINS, 1992; TUSHNET, 2007; PUGH, 2010; THOMAS, 2016). Although this recurrent definition has not received a proper nomenclature, I have called it the classic(al) definition of fanfictions. On the other hand, some researchers have considered fanfictions to be a synonym of fanzines (JENKINS, 1992; TUSHNET, 2007). Fanfictions and fanzines may be similar, but they have distinctive features. Fanfictions were byproducts of the cyberculture and have presented features related to it.

In addition, for Jenkins (1992), fanzines (or fanfictions) were intrinsically connected with fanwriting and people's various necessities of expressing themselves artistically. Still for him, these necessities did not appear only in adults, but also appeared in teenagers and children quite frequently. Jenkins (1992) noticed that ficreaders, people who read fanzines, especially teenagers, became ficwriters to fulfill their innermost needs. By innermost needs, Jenkins (1992) meant any type of desire, objective and/or interest: "(...) they have a necessity of expressing themselves, an inner drive that makes them write" (JENKINS, 1992, p. 17). Ficwriters may be writers of fanzines, due to their strong willingness and burning desires to write.

In the same vein, Tushnet (2007) verified that ficreaders did not only become ficwriters to fulfill their innermost needs. They were constantly encouraged, motivated, and instigated by their respective fandoms. In other words, I have called fandoms the



fanfictional social networking. Usually, the fandom would encourage the ficreaders to read, share, comment and write fanfictions: “(...) fandoms provide many incitements for readers to cross that last threshold into composing and submitting their own stories” (TUSHNET, 2007, p.179). Ficwriters may also be readers, sharers, and commentators of fanfictions.

Furthermore, Tushnet (2007) attested that the various combinations between fanwriting and popular culture have also been one of the most recurrent research topics about fanzines (or fanfictions). He claimed that “(...) fanfiction, broadly speaking, is any kind of written creativity that is based on an identifiable segment of popular culture, such as a television show, and is not produced as professional writing” (TUSHNET, 2007, p. 665). Therefore, fanfictions may be casually linked to popular culture. In fact, still according to Tushnet (2007), this characteristic is one of the commonest found on various fandoms around the world.

Similarly, Pugh (2010) perceived that there was a constant ficwriters' penchant for popular culture inspirations. She pinpointed that the ficwriters' preferences for popular culture may be explained by its common representativity. Ficwriters usually came from popular backgrounds. Therefore, they would see themselves more often portrayed in textual productions related to their upbringings. However, Pugh (2010) also pinpointed that this has caused several problems such as lawsuits and fandom shutdowns. Although she admitted that copyright might be a problem for ficwriters, they should be protected if any law was broken. Fanfictions may reflect its surrounding popular culture and infringe some copyright laws such as course-based or direct plagiarism.

Enthrillingly, Thomas (2016) verified that it was quite difficult to separate ficreaders from ficwriters. For him, this attempted separation might be largely complex insomuch as ficreaders and ficwriters were usually both, i.e., they read and wrote fanfictions concurrently. In contrast, Tushnet (2007) had already perceived that “(...) many young people began reading stories on their own as a spontaneous response to a certain type of popular culture. In the same vein, for Jenkins (2007), the next step for these people was the discovery of fanfictions on the Internet, which provided alternative models for what it meant to be an



author. Thusly, fanfictions may be directly connected with fanwriting and fandoms. Most of these features together would account for a more organic fanwriting which would result in a more modern approach to understanding fanfictions. This more modern approach may also be proposed due to ficwriters' various emotive attitudes toward their fanwriting.

THE VYGOTSKIAN SOCIOCULTURAL THEORY

In *The Psychology of Art*, Vygotsky (2018) acknowledged the importance of emotions to the human development. He attested that this importance overcame the logical and intellectual reductionism related directly to the contemporary psychological studies. Furthermore, Vygotsky (2004, p. 152) pinpointed those emotions were as relevant to the human development as any other human phenomena. Subsequently, Vygotsky (2007, p. 114) claimed that the "(...) human development was a process of subjective sense production". Therefore, people's positive (or optimistic) emotions toward a certain product would indicate their development.

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In the same vein, according to Rey (2008), the process of human development was subjective. It was so, because it encompassed a plethora of factors such as emotions, tastes and opinions. If a process was hence subjective, the people involved in this process were agentic. Therefore, they acted upon or wielded powers over others, activities and even institutions. Consequently, the involved information, ideas or conflicts were usually considered truthful by the participants' perspective of a certain matter or matters. In other words, for Rey (2008, p. 152), an individual's development was then dynamic, changeable, and multi-faceted. To advance his point of view upon the human development as a subjective process, Rey (2008, p. 153) organized his theoretical tenets as follows:

First, they must represent symbolic-emotion units. It is necessary to understand the intellectual processes differently from the way in which these processes were treated in Soviet psychology and to advance a new comprehension of these processes within the "full vitality of life" as it was defined in relation to thought by Vygotsky. This integration of the "full vitality of life" in the study of the intellectual functions requires a completely new understanding of what "intellectual" means. Intellectual functions must be understood as complex subjective formations within which intellectual operations are inseparable from emotions and from other symbolic-emotional



processes such as imagination, fantasy, and other symbolic-emotional productions capable of embodying the history and the current context of life of the person as the subject of intellectual functions. The concepts used for the study of subjectivity must be capable of simultaneously advancing subjectivity both as a process and as dynamic configurations able to take different forms during the flux of human action. Subjectivity is not a fact that determines the action; it represents the actual psychological nature of the action as defined by Rubinstein in his formulation of the principle of the unity between consciousness and activity. The concepts used in the study of subjectivity must be capable of integrating a subject's lived experiences from the past with the imaginative ideas of the future into the present. These experiences would not appear as a sum of lived experiences, but as new symbolic-emotional productions based on these lived experiences, which represent new imagined experiences regarding them. These processes are always behind consciousness, which represents an epistemological and methodological challenge.

By and large, Rey (2008) emphasized that people should take into consideration the different tensions involved to better understand the processes of the human development. For him, development may encompass "(...) complex and contradictory processes" (REY, 2008, p. 161). If so, there were various tensions in the constitutive parts of these processes. For instance, a teacher of English decided to hand extra grammatical exercises to a non-proficient student. He or she did that to help his/her student to improve what he/she needed. Nevertheless, this student decided to not do these exercises whatsoever. As a result, it would create a tensive situation.

According to Rey (2008), the student's clear (or even sometimes unclear) refusal directly influenced his/her own development. To change this conflicting situation, the teacher may try to identify what (who) was creating the tensions between the teacher and the student. Still according to Rey (2008, p. 161), the complex and contradictory processes were "(...) characterized by permanent tension between already formed psychological repertoires and configurations and new social scenarios in a person's life." In other words, for this author, the reasons why some tensive situations were created were relevant to understand people's development.

Similarly, Chaiklin (2003, p. 11) recognized that the zone of proximal development (ZPD), proposed by Vygotsky, was also a subjective zone. According to Chaiklin (2003, p.12), people should call it subjective ZPD, because they were talking about



the development of a human being. In this way, each person was an individual case and should be comprehended dialectically. By dialectics, Chaiklin (2003) meant the various interactions a person may have with his or her environment, along with the tensions and conflicts presented in them. As an individual, a person's development was never equal and uniformized when compared to others. Each single person developed him/herself differently. Having said that, for Chaiklin (2003, p. 13), as the ZPD was subjective, people should take into consideration five distinctive features. These features were respectively:

(a) whole child, (b) internal structure (i.e., relationships between psychological functions), (c) development as a qualitative change in the structural relationships, (d) brought about from the child's actions in the social situation of development (reflecting what the child perceives and is interested in), where (e) each age period has a leading activity/contradiction that organizes the child's actions (within which subjective interests are operating) and which contributes to the development of the new functions.

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As a result, still according to Chaiklin (2003, p. 08), people must comprehend the Vygotskian zone of proximal development (ZPD) not only objectively, which was the person's ontogenetical development, but also subjectively, which was the person's potential development. If people could comprehend the ZPD as such, they would then end up considering it as "(...) both a theoretical and an empirical discovery". Therefore, the human development was not a linear process, but it was quite fluid, erratic, flinching, and complex. For these reasons, the methodology to better analyze the human development should also encompass these characteristics.

METODOLOGY

The chosen methodology can be defined as a case study (DUFF, 2012; DYSON, 2005; STAKE, 2006). According to Duff (2012), a case study methodology should entail quantitative as well as qualitative data. This entailment is necessary due to the researcher's necessity of attempting to understand his/her research more holistically. Regarding applied linguistics, researcher must consider a plethora of

facets related to his/her subjects such as experiences, behaviors, and even backgrounds.

Similarly, for Dyson (2005), in Applied Linguistics, a proper case study should also apprehend its subjects in their complexities. However, he also pinpointed that this apprehension was a quite difficult and, sometimes, an even impossible issue. As a result, Dyson (2005) indicated that the case study researchers should assess their research through the lens of the collected data and then avoid making lay assumptions about aspects they could neither investigate nor evaluate scientifically.

Furthermore, Stake (2006) noticed that case study research was a quite frequent methodology in Applied Linguistics, mainly in the additional language teaching and learning field. This frequency could be explained due to its political, temporal, and interpersonal approach to the namely pedagogical field. In other words, Stake (2006) ascertained that additional language students would share their personal experiences, behaviors, and even backgrounds, conscious or unconsciously, in their classes. Hence, the case study methodology would provide its researchers with proper tools to investigate the different facets of the teaching and learning process.

This article data collection happened in the Fanfictional Creative Writing (FCW) in English as an additional language (EAL) course. This extracurricular course took place at University of São Paulo (USP) in 2016. The researcher was also the teacher. Therefore, he also organized and taught the namely course. In total, there were 5 participants, all female EAL undergraduate students. The case study researcher could and should focus on only one subject (DUFF, 2012; DYSON, 2005; STAKE, 2006). Thus, to better roll out his research, student A was selected. She was carefully selected owing to her impetus to doing all the required tasks and eager to take part in various class discussions.

The FCW course in EAL had a total of eight presential classes. A written consent form was distributed to and signed freely by all the subjects on the first class. All the students agreed to have their information and textual productions recorded, assessed, and published by the researcher-teacher for scientific purposes. This case study research tools were namely: 1) the initial fanfictional creative writing, required on the first class, 2) the feedback session 1, produced on the first class, 3) the final fanfictional creative writing, required on the last class, and 4) the feedback session 2, produced on the last class.





For the initial fanfictional creative writing, student A had to hand in her teacher a fanfiction written by herself. The teacher required this task to investigate her initial concepts about fanfictions. To a more holistic approach, the teacher interviewed student A on the first class. This was called feedback session 1. For the final fanfictional creative writing, student A had to write a fanfiction based on the FCW course in EAL concepts about fanwriting. She then handed it in her teacher on the last class. To verify student A's fanfictional creative writing in EAL development, the teacher also interviewed her on the very last class. This was called feedback session 2.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF FANFICTIONAL CREATIVE WRITING IN ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

This research has proposed that a (modern) fanfiction would entail a more organic fanwriting process. Organic texts should encompass centration and cohesiveness (TRIFONAS, 2015, p. 81). According to Trifonas (2015), the organic texts should present thematic and rhetoric organizations interweavingly. Semantically speaking, he pointed out that the textual organicity was a knotting discursive construction in which every semantic-pragmatic element would and should come together in harmony.

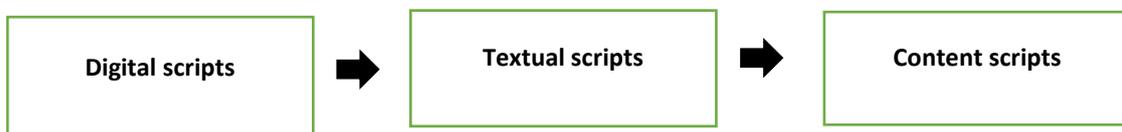
Consequently, for people to better understand the (modern) fanfictional concepts, the readers should be able to identify and investigate how the sum of all the main digital scripts (memes, hypertexts, social gaming, etc.), textual scripts (grammar, lexicon, rhetoricity etc.) and content scripts (feminism, racism, homophobia, etc.) would be brought together to compose a more suitable as well as integrated text, i.e., a (modern) fanfiction.

Regarding student A's fanfictional development, it could be perceived throughout her participations in the FCW in English as an additional language. Student A's developmental fanwriting process entailed: 1) the digital scripts-, 2) the textual scripts and 3) the content scripts. Based on the Vygotskian perspective of human development (2004; 2007), her various approaches to the use of these scripts would also be signs

of development. Therefore, student A's fanfictional development could be summarized in the following figure:



Figure 01 – Student A's fanfictional creative writing development



Student A's initial fanfictional creative writing indicated that her fanwriting had no digital scripts-textual scripts (see appendix 01). In fact, I could only notice one single image, which were used merely to illustrate her fanfictional texts. For Jenkins (2007, p. 27), although images could be found on the internet, they were not exactly cyberliterary features, i.e., elements specifically found on the cyberculture (LÉVY, 1999; LEMOS, 2004).

In addition, student A's single image seemed to have no direct connections with her first fanfiction. To make matters worse, the chosen image showed the vocalist of the female pop band without relevance to her fanwriting process. This may indicate that student A did not take into consideration the available digital scripts-textual scripts in her writing. Student A's first fanfictional creative writing displayed unawareness in her fanwriting.

According to Vygotsky (2004, 2007), the unawareness of the learning process would indicate that the person did not learn. Therefore, there would not have a sign of development. In relation to student A's fanwriting, she indicated that she did not apply the digital scripts consciously. In fact, she placed it on her fanfiction to mainly to illustrate her fanwriting.



This assumption was also certified in student A's feedback session 1 answers.

Based on student A's answers taken from her feedback session 1, she inferred that she used the chosen image to merely illustrate her fanfiction (This is the first time I think better about images and fanfictions, but I believe it's important to attract people's attention). Therefore, student A's chosen image had no creative writing function whatsoever. Conforming to the concepts proposed by this research, a (modern) fanfiction should entail cyberliterary elements, i.e., elements that could only be found on the cyberculture such as memes or social gaming. Through a different perspective, student A's first fanfiction would be classified as the classic(al) one (or fanzine).

Moreover, student A's emotions toward her first initial fanfictional creative writing seemed to be quite nonchalant, almost negative (I have no idea how to use in the correct way). She even paused for about 3 seconds after answering the first question. Student A appeared to not be comfortable about her creative writing decisions. Hence, this would also indicate no development. According to Rey (2008), a person's intellectual functions were intrinsically connected with their emotions. Consequently, there would not be intellectual development without the proper (positive) formations and expressions of symbolic-emotional processes toward the construction of a certain social-cultural artifact.

In contrast, by the end of the FCW in English as an additional language course, student A applied some digital scripts more artfully and purposefully in her final fanfictional creative writing (see appendix 02). In her feedback session 2, student A claimed that she had learned more about fanfictions, cyberliterature and digital scripts throughout the FCW course. Still based on student A's final fanfictional creative writing, she did not only use images illustratively, but she also used cyberliterary elements (digital scripts) such as hyperlinks and soundtrack listings (fanfictional playlist) to further her narrative arc, to construe more complex characters as well as to instigate her readers' attention.

For instance, student A applied hypertexts to propose a musical set list, so her ficreaders could have a more complex experience while reading her final fanfictional creative writing. In student A's feedback session 2 own words, she stated that



“(…) by suggesting songs would make her readers feel more integrated to her writing”. Interestingly to notice, she pinpointed that the musical set list was well-thought to be a constitutive part of her fanwriting. This may be a sign of development (VYGOTSKY, 2018), because she seemed to have started conceptualizing fanfictions as a genre which entailed digital, textual, and content more organically.

In addition, student A selected images from the cyberculture (LÉVY, 1999; LEMOS, 2004) to help her elaborate more consciously on her final fanfictional creative writing. As stated by Chaiklin (2003), this organicity would be a sign of development insomuch as student A attempted to understand and then conceptualize more holistically her fanwriting processes. Chaiklin (2003)’s assumptions may have been corroborated in student A’s feedback session 2 answers when she claimed that she carefully chose the photographs to be incorporated in her fanwriting. This occurred because through the FCW in English course, she signaled she had learned that these “so-called” digital scripts could be literary resources to advance her narrative skills.

Still based on student A’s final fanfictional creative writing, her first selected image may have helped her establish a warmer, cozier, and more romantic setting. As a result, this fanfictional setting may have become more relatable to her ficreaders and provided her protagonists with a more accessible place to meet. Student A’s second and third images were human eyes. Interestingly to notice, she may have used both sets of eyes as narrative tools. These narrative tools were: 1) characterization and 2) metaphorization. Both these creative writing techniques were taught in the FCW in English as an additional language course.

As a narrative tool of characterization, student A’s second and third images may have helped her ficreaders’ flourish their imaginations. Student A’s craft in delineating more adroitly her protagonists’ irises, eyelids, eyebrows, and retinas brought her ficreaders’ attention to details of characterization and proposed more intense imagistic metaphors. As a narrative tool of metaphorization, she inferred in the plot that her protagonists’ eyes were the doors to her characters’ souls, which thus intensified their psychological configurations.



Again, student A connected the digital, textual, and content scripts.

Another digital script feature was related to her layout choice. Student A's first fanfictional creative writing had not distinguishable layout. In her feedback session 1, she indicated that she did not care about this. Nevertheless, her final fanfiction seems to have had a more well-thought layout. It was worth mentioning here two features of her layout choice: 1) the color and 2) the final trace.

In relation to student A's color layout yellow, she declared in her feedback session 2 that she opted for yellow, because of its significance. Student A stated that yellow was the color of "(...) happiness and optimism". In relation to the final trace, she mentioned that it did not mean the end of her fanfiction, but it should mean privacy. Additionally, she complemented that this final trace was placed at the end to incite her ficreaders' imagination and to serve as a cliffhanger as well. For Chaiklin (2003), the constant tension between people's actual state of development and their zone of proximal development may also indicate that they were in the throes of learning.

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FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The World Economic Forum (2015) have claimed that creativity became the third most import skill in today's world. However, creative writing courses in English as an additional language were quite few in the world (JENKINS, 1992; TUSHNET, 2007; PUGH, 2010; THOMAS, 2016). Therefore, the researcher-teacher decided to organize and teach a Fanfictional Creative Writing in English as an additional language (FCW) course based on the Vygotskian sociocultural perspective. In total, 5 undergraduate students concluded it and were able to develop their fanwriting.

For this research, student A was chosen to exemplify the FCW students' fanfictional creative writing in English as an additional language development. Although all the FCW students developed their fanwriting, student A was able to perform all the required tasks and finish the FCW course in due time. The three fanwriting developmental stages were correspondingly: 1) digital scripts, 2) textual scripts and 3) content scripts. As a result, student A displayed various

signs of development (VYGOTSKY, 2004; 2007; 2018). She did not only understand more profoundly these scripts, but she could also rearrange them more organically (TRIFONAS, 2015) to compose a (modern) fanfiction.



On the other hand, student A declared that she had had some difficulties with the fanfiction produced throughout the FCW course. According to student A's feedback session 2, she was not able to publish her (modern) fanfiction because her usual fandom of publications did not accept her digital scripts. In other words, this fandom only published fanfictions with textual and content scripts. This showed that the concepts related to reading and writing in Brazil were still quite traditional and outdated.

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APPENDIX 01

Student A's initial fanfictional creative writing

She'd moved to L.A. at the age of 19, with the dream of pursuing a career in music so that she could make enough money to help her Cuban family move back to the U.S.. She'd been separated from her parents at the age of 15 - when she came back from school one day and found out her mom and dad had been deported back to their home country just a little over a year after they'd moved to Miami. Ever since, she'd promised herself she would do the impossible to help her family.

Lauren and her brother, Chris, had lived at their neighbor's house until Lauren graduated from high school. During her senior year, she'd met Camila, who would soon become her first serious girlfriend. They'd really fallen for each other - the kind of love that one may find once, maybe twice in their lifetime, if they're lucky enough.

They started to build their future together when they moved to L.A., where Camila would start college and Lauren her musical career.



When Lauren got a record deal and started putting out singles, she soon became fairly famous and started touring all over the country. Camila, on the other hand, stayed in L.A. and focused on her studies and her internship at a recording studio. The distance - and the multiple fights that came with it - made them break up and live their separate lives.

Now, Camila has a boyfriend and a steady job as a songwriter and Lauren's just back in the city from recording her debut album. Just when they think they'd gotten over each other, destiny comes into play and makes them question everything.



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APPENDIX 02

Student A's final fanfictional creative writing

An Encounter

A.N.: So I created a playlist for every song that is played out in this chapter.

(<https://open.spotify.com/user/tinazardo95/playlist/3fTMqPcawYyvccRtyTbE5>) Every time you see a number like these (1),(2) and so son, you can play the corresponding song of the playlist to match the scenario. All of the songs I chose were released prior to or during the year 2013, which is when this flashback takes place. Enjoy!



It was close to 8 PM when the sun started to set and Camila found herself wandering around the hallways of Keana Marie's house. Everything felt as if she was entering a new dimension. A heavy bass line was all she could make out of the overplayed hip-hop song that was making people go crazy downstairs (1). Their shouts and conversations and the splashes of water in the backyard pool were also faint.

Camila's head felt lighter, but it was also running a hundred miles per hour. She couldn't explain it if she tried – it was like everything around her was suddenly more interesting. The bright orange reflection shining on the surface of the picture frames on the walls; the smell of smoke that followed her up the stairs; the soaked tips of her wavy brown locks caressing the small of her back; the beige-colored carpet sliding under her bare feet as she dragged herself slowly to the end of the hallway. Every image, every sensation and every feeling that would normally go unnoticed in that simple scene seemed enhanced.

Drawn by her curiosity, the 18-year-old reached the handle of the last door of the hallway – a light pink one, unlike the other plain white doors she'd followed down until that point. Her mouth fell the instant she set foot in the room. It looked just like the type of bedroom she'd always wanted and had seen countless of times on tumblr, but none in real life. It was big. Bright. Colorful. Vibrant. Peaceful. The adjectives came to her mind as she studied the details.



The wall tapestry adorned with those tiny lights people put on Christmas trees. The towers of books and magazines organized in a circle on the floor by the opposite corner of the room. An old guitar missing 3 strings leaning on the wall. A huge stereo system sitting next to a wooden desk that had a closed laptop on top of it. Camila could've never afford to have a room like that. Back at home in Mexico her room was half that size and she had to share it with her little sister. Here in Miami, she was stuck with makeshift bed in her cousin's room – which wasn't half bad, actually, but it still didn't even come close to this one.

In awe, she moved her attention from one detail of the room to another, wanting to take everything in at once and imagine what it would be like to sleep in there everyday, you know? Have that kind of life. "One day", she thought. Then, as if she had made the biggest discovery of the century, Camila took a few steps to the end of the room and oohed to herself as leaned forward to peep out of the window – "check out if the view was as

dope as her surroundings", the little voice in her brain told her. And yeah, it was pretty dope. She could see everyone in the backyard in their bathing suits or less, taking shots or drinking



beer from red solo cups, dancing, making out, smoking, playing games, all without noticing her wandering gaze. But someone else did.

“Camila, what on earth are you doing here?” Lauren giggled when the younger girl jumped at her spot by the window as she was surprised by her voice. Then, realizing who it was, her expression turned into a bubbly, relieved grin.

“I felt like exploring” she answered simply, shrugging. Lauren shook her head in amusement, taking a step towards the girl. She moved one loose strand of hair out of Camila’s face, studying her eyes for a few seconds. The younger girl shuddered slightly at the sudden contact of Lauren’s fingertips against the back of her ear, but was quickly brought back to reality when she heard the girl laugh again.

“Are you stoned right now?” the green-eyed girl half-whispered, although nobody could hear them if they tried, and Camila gave her a slight nod.

“Guess there’s a first time for everything” she chuckled. Lauren was a bit in disbelief, but the tiny smile that formed on her lips this time showed a little pride in the girl in front of her – for letting go and allowing herself to be a teenager.

“So,” the older girl started, deciding she could have a little fun with this scenario “how does it feel?”

Camila sighed and looked up at the ceiling, altering her balance to each one of her feet and trying to find a good way to describe how she felt in that moment.

“It feels... wait, what? Where’d the music go?” she turned to look at Lauren, who had closed the door behind her, and started to make her way to the stereo system, quickly turning it on and reaching for the aux cord to plug it in her phone.

“Keana’s room is soundproof” she explained without diverting her gaze from her phone screen as she went through the playlists in her library. “I want to play the songs I promised to introduce you to”.

“Oh yeaah!!” the younger Latina exclaimed in realization. Lauren and her had connected through music since day one – when she met the girl, she was humming to a John Meyer song in her cousin’s friend’s basement and that was it. An instant bond. But Camila soon found out that the girl’s music taste went way



beyond that. Sure, she appreciated singer-songwriters just like herself, but she knew a larger variety of underground artists that sounded amazing and Camila hadn't ever heard of them before. All of their conversations that followed that day had a part in which they would just talk about music. Lauren would show her a new sound and always promised to make a full playlist for them to listen together. Their friends called her "whipped" when they overheard that promise.

Camila didn't know if she could classify what they had as "flirting". They had built a pretty strong connection as friends in the last two months. She could even dare to say Lauren was a very special friend. But, although she felt it, she wasn't ready to admit that she was starting to get butterflies in her stomach every time she was near the girl. It was scary to say something like that out loud when she wasn't sure she'd be reciprocated. So they just naturally let them be drawn to each other. Well, yeah, maybe "whipped" was a good adjective after all.

Lauren turned up the volume as the first song of the playlist came on (2). Camila laughed softly when the 19-year-old started to move to the rhythm of the song, humming the melody to herself. She took the girl's hands and started to mimic her movements; bouncing her head lazily and closing her eyes, letting herself feel the music as they did their little dance throughout the first half of the song.

"But you're sure that I'd learn, I'm pushing through bodies, avoiding me and walking around you. But you're cold and I burn, I guess I'll never learn cause I stay another hour or two" Lauren sang, making the younger girl's eyes open again.

"Their lyrics are like aaaargh" she clutched her fist shut at her own chest and grunted for effect. Lauren grinned and nodded strongly, squeezing the girl's other hand that was still in her own.

"Yeah, Matty's a genius, nothing less" she praised the lead singer of the band. Then, as the bridge of the song started, both girls decided to lie on Keana's bed and just enjoy the sounds ringing in their ears a little bit.

They stared at the ceiling in silence; watching the room get dark as the night came in and the only thing that allowed them to see their surroundings were the tiny Christmas lights hanging beside the bed. Camila was still in her bikini top and tiny jean shorts



– and the combination of her partially wet hair and clothing was leaving little stains all over the bed covers. Lauren’s dark hair was also sorta damp and the fact that it was beautifully spread over one of the colorful cushions wasn’t helping the situation – neither did the fact that her choice of outfit matched Camila’s almost perfectly, except she was wearing a loose tank top over her wet bikini top. None of them seemed to care.

They turned their heads to the side to stare at each other in amusement for a moment as the song faded out. Camila was about to thank her for being so amazing, for introducing her to this new musical world – but the very first seconds of the next song (3) made her stop in her tracks.

“I LOVE THIS SONG” she almost shouted, making Lauren laugh out loud, kicking the mattress underneath them slightly with her heels as she did so, entertained at how excited the younger girl could get, especially when she wasn’t sober.

“ME TOOOO” she mused in the same tone. Next thing they know, their voices were ringing smoothly in harmony to the song. As the chorus came closer, Lauren intertwined their fingers and started hammering their hands together against the bed to mark the pauses between the lyrics.

A moment.

A Love.

A Dream.

A Laugh.

A Kiss.

A Cry.

Our rights.

Our wrongs.

The two girls made the most of that song, getting up and running around the room, using a table lamp and a hairbrush for microphones, dancing, spinning around – forgetting there was a whole other world outside of that room. This was their reality, the here and the now. It was theirs.

By the end of this song, they lay down together once again, giggling and trying to catch their breaths as an instrumental tune started to play out (4).



Feeling a little dizzy than she already was after spinning around for so long, Camila found herself staring at Lauren and studying the details of the girl's makeup-less face. Her plumped lips, always chapped. Her thick, black eyebrows perfectly trimmed. Her lumpy cheeks covered in freckles by her nose. Her green eyes like two vast galaxies, one complementing the other.



The girl's collarbones peeking out of her tank top. The smooth ivory skin of her neck and chest. Her breasts. Her arms. Her left hand holding Camila's right one so delicately.

"But tell me – you didn't get to tell me," Lauren's voice was low when she interrupted Camila's wandering thoughts, noticing the way she was looking at her and reciprocating by staring intently at the girl's wide brown orbs

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"How does being high for the first time feel?"

Camila had her lips slightly parted. She found herself in awe, practically hypnotized by the girl in front of her after realizing she now studied her figure in the same way. The doe-eyed girl inhaled deeply, lost in thought as the sensations that Lauren's image and the gentle caressing in the palm of her hand took over any sense she thought she still had in her blurry little mind.

"It feels..." she started once again, trying to form the right words "It feels like everything is just..." she rambled, diverting



her gaze from the girl for a second, so she could focus. “My perceptions make everything seem bigger and better and more important and it’s overwhelming in a way...” she turned to look at Lauren once again. The playful look that was plastered across the girl’s face when they were singing and dancing had vanished completely, and her features now seemed calm and almost...

lustful? Her eyes half-shut and trained on her own, her mouth slightly open, her chest rising and falling slowly with every deep breath and her fingers lightly tracing patterns all around the extension of Camila’s right arm made the girl shiver. There was that overwhelming feeling again. But she also felt bold.

“But, at the same time,” the younger girl continued, “It feels... so... natural” Lauren’s face was now a mere inch from hers. Her head was spinning, the butterflies making a wild fuss in her stomach. Camila gulped, reaching her left hand to the green-eyed girl’s face “it feels ethereal”.

(5)

Lauren finally closed the distance between them. Both green and brown orbs fell shut as their lips connected for the first time ever. Camila felt like that was her first real kiss. She’d made out with a few boys in her hometown – rushed, awkward kisses during games of spin the bottle or at a secret corner of the school during recess. She never felt completely comfortable, never really into those guys – kissing them was just something girls her age were doing and, because of that, she thought she was supposed to do too. This was a completely different thing.

Lauren’s lips were soft and gentle, moving with hers slowly in perfect sync, almost as if they danced to the music playing on the background. The girl’s left hand now cupped the back of her head, playing with the baby hairs that adorned the nape of Camila’s neck.

Baby, we both know that the nights were mainly made for saying things that you can’t say tomorrow day

Crawling back to you

Ever thought of calling when you’ve had a few?

‘Cause I always do

As the first chorus of the song begun, she felt Lauren’s tongue run across her bottom lip asking for entrance and almost immediately granted it. The younger girl let out a



small moan as they deepened the kiss slowly, making Lauren's mouth vibrate slightly and igniting in her an even stronger need for Camila. Everything was magnified. Their breaths became erratic as their actions got more intense. Lauren's hand quickly traveled down Camila's side to reach the girl's thigh, grabbing at it so she would place it around her waist. Camila's left hand still cupped the side of Lauren's face, but, as the tension built up, she brought her right one underneath the other girl's shirt, feeling the smooth skin of her stomach shudder beneath her at the contact. Everything was unique. Their hearts beating against each other, the occasional nips on each other's lips, the rubbing of the bare skin of their legs as they moved in sync. It felt like nothing they'd ever experienced. It was all too much and, at the same time, not enough.

As the song faded out and another series of instrumental sounds started to fill the room (6), they slowed down their actions and separated their lips, resting their foreheads against each other with their eyes still closed as they caught their breaths once again. After a few moments, Camila opened her eyes to find Lauren's already staring at her accompanied by a shy smile on her lips and a light blush on her cheeks. The younger girl chuckled lightly, her face gradually turning as red as Lauren's as she started to laugh too.

They spent a few moments like that, with Camila caressing the small of the older girl's back and paying attention to the series of chills that Lauren's caresses provoked with her hand back on the girl's neck. Their hooded-eyed looks told each other something they both understood perfectly but couldn't put into words. As if all the time they'd spend together, every conversation, every laugh, every secret shared and kind words exchanged made complete sense now. They didn't know they'd been waiting for each other for so long until that very final encounter – but now it was impossible not to see it. It had to be them.

Camila pecked the girl's lips quickly, breaking their streams of thought for a second and making Lauren grin at the action. The older girl had never been in love, and Camila knew that. But the sparkle in her eyes in that very moment told Camila she might be starting to get to know that feeling very well.

“Guess this should be a day for first-times, then”.



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Recebido em 15 de abril de 2021.

Aprovado em 22 de maio de 2022.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF
FANFACTIONAL CREATIVE...
Afluyente, UFMA/CCEL, v.7, n.21,
p. 136-159, jul./dez. 2022
ISSN 2525-3441