Fostering Fandom Literacy Practices Through an Affective Kaleidoscope: A Proposal for Second Language Teachers in Medellín, Colombia

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“Declaro que este trabajo de grado no ha sido presentado con anterioridad para optar a un título, ya sea en igual forma o con variaciones, en esta o en cualquiera otra universidad”. Art. 92, parágrafo, Régimen Estudiantil de Formación Avanzada.

Firma del autor:

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I dedicate this thesis to my beloved mom, dad, and brother. Thank you for your unconditional love and unwavering support. A special thanks to my thesis advisor and all my professors, who have paved the way for my academic and personal growth.

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Abstract

The present critical literature review is geared towards comprehending how, by embracing students' affective responses to fandom literacy practices, we can enrich second language teaching. Based on the qualitative research methodology, this study is an invitation for educators to go beyond what is on the surface, hidden but in plain sight; to innovate their pedagogical practices returning to the human essence. The paper situates the problem of the need for new strategies that nourish K-11 (from kindergarten to eleventh grade) students' second language literacy practices in the school setting, focusing on the context of Medellín, Colombia. This proposal draws on what international authors have found in the last 20 years to expand local research in the field of second language literacies. The main objective is to make teachers aware of the multiple possibilities of working within the framework of affect theory and fandom studies in order to help students develop their second language literacy practices.

Keywords: Literacy, affect, literacy practices, fandom, second languages, proposal.

Chapter 1

Second Language Education in Medellín, Colombia: Implementing Fandom Studies, Affect Theory, and Literacy Practices

Statement of the Problem

Reflecting on how education has paved the way for building human relationships based on reason and confidence allows us to envision new learning and teaching approaches. The latter will help both teachers and students focus our attention and concentrate our efforts on exploring how we perceive the world around us and how it affects our inmost selves. As teachers, when we help students delve deep into what makes us human, including the roots of our vices and virtues, we gain a better understanding of a person's behavior and demeanor, and avoid falling into stereotypes, misconceptions, prejudgments, and over generalizations. Holding dialogues with people is the greatest show of respect and rationality, for we are recognizing the other as 'our equal' in the sense that they have the same rights and thus deserve to be sharing the same space and time just as much as we do; it also means moving forward from words said and blunders committed on the spur of the moment, and giving the other person the opportunity to apologize or explain themselves. Only through dialogues inside and outside the classroom can we directly express our feelings, concerns, and intentions to someone else, and ask them their opinions about a certain topic or situation. As teachers, we value our students' points of view and appreciate when they engage in class discussions, for the latter are pivotal to reflect on our own pedagogical practices.

When students feel part of the class on how learning and teaching processes work, they are empowered to speak up, raise their voices, and fight for what is right, leaving aside both stereotypes and prejudices. This is where a sense of compassion is born: recognizing others for

who they want to be presented before the world, what they want to accomplish, and what showing their identity means for them. Accordingly, “The ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity and being” (Street, 1984, p.4). Furthermore, Freire and Macedo (1987) asserted, “Reading the world always precedes reading the word, and reading the word implies continually reading the world” (p.23). This calls for a change on formal schooling: today’s realities are permeated by a thirst for power and wealth that crushes human dignity for people have conformed to a passive role that strengthens the ruling class place in society (Freire, 1970; Giroux and McLaren, 1989). Embracing the notion of literacy also requires that neither teachers nor students overlook education’s potential. After all, as Cope and Kalantzis (2009) affirmed, “The logic of multiliteracies is one that recognizes that meaning making is an active, transformative process, and a pedagogy based on that recognition is more likely to open up viable life courses for a world of change and diversity” (p.14). This is where the transformative power of education is born: when teachers guide students towards understanding that there are gaps in society that perpetuate injustice and inequity.

While learning is a process triggered unconsciously as our brain collects bits of information from meaningful experiences storing them in the long-term memory, teaching is a choice that, when made, becomes a responsibility. Driven by the desire of inspiring others and guide them towards the relentless pursuit of meaning, teachers look for inordinate methods for approaching knowledge in all its complexity and forms. As second language teachers, we are aware of the influence we have in our students’ perception of language: More than just a tool, it is a vehicle that gives shape to images that are merely evoked through our senses, transforming them into ideas. As emotional beings, we cannot deny the necessity for human interaction,

therein lies the value of being able to communicate our world's perspectives. Ultimately, learning any language widens the perspective to understand reality better and to act out of a more profound discernment; through languages we find out that we are only a tiny a part of a much larger multiverse, where people are microcosms and need space to function properly. This gives room to the concept of "affect".

In Gilles Deleuze's and Félix Guattari's view, affect (<<affectus>>) entails: "a body's passage from one state of affection to another" (Seigworth, 2011, p. 184). Affect, then, involves: "the change, or variation, that occurs when bodies collide, or come into contact" (Colman, 2010, p. 11, cited in Ott, 2017, p.8), or also, "passages of intensity, a reaction in or on the body at the level of matter" (O'Sullivan, 2006, p. 4). For Massumi (2015), who drew inspiration from Spinoza's understanding of affect as having the capacity of affecting (other bodies) or being affected, affect is equal to intensity, and "intensity is embodied in purely autonomic reactions most directly manifested in the skin-at the surface of the body, at its interface with things" (p.85). A body's ability to change denotes movement, and as such, cannot be reduced to "emotion". It is not exclusively subjective, but every transition is felt. Massumi, in *Politics of Affect* (2015), explained:

> The experience of a change, an affecting-being affected, is redoubled by an experience of the experience. This gives the body's movements a kind of depth that stays with it across all its transitions – accumulating in memory, in habit, in reflex, in desire, in tendency. Emotion is the way the depth of that ongoing experience registers personally at a given moment. (p.4)

Affect, then, is a felt experience captured by the senses and registered as emotion but not limited by either of them, for it never stays the same. When students enter a classroom, they bring with them a whole assemblage (Wozolek, 2021) of feelings, dreams, fears, hopes, values, vices, habits, virtues, and experiences that make them who they are. They also have a culture with a particular background influenced by customs, traditions, and principles, and an identity that has been and continues being altered along the way. This means that they learn differently and have their own strengths and weaknesses, which ought to be considered in their process of learning a second language. Howbeit, if teachers do not overcome the discourse that renders languages and the processes of reading and writing static, the concept of affect cannot exist in this context. For this reason, it is fundamental to navigate what literacy means to give a closer look at its relationship with affect theory.

Literacy practices in out-of-school settings have raised questions in the context of pedagogy, as educators have wondered about how their students are taking charge of their own learning processes. Specifically in the case of second –or additional– language learning, people are creating and making part of communities set in alternate online spaces that transcend confined places separated by walls. Thanks to new Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), people all around the world are crossing "traditional, linguistic, and geographic borders" with virtual spaces where they meet people from all over the world and have the chance of learning from other cultures and practicing other languages (Black, 2006, p.1). New Literacy Studies (NLS) scholars have taken into account that "The ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity and being" (Street, 2013, p.4). This means that reading and writing texts –in all their various formats including audio, image, audiovisual, and kinesthetic– are inseparable processes

embedded in human discourses. Letters and words are never isolated from the narratives that give people meaning to their existence; they are shaped in accordance with people's identities and worldview.

Shifts on Second Language Learning (SLL) and Teaching call for new classroom practices that foster students' literacy skills and intercultural relationships. In a world permeated by technology and interconnected worldwide by the internet as a global network, researchers and teachers are studying the link that exists between Fan Studies and SLL in order to encourage students to carry out tasks that will help them improve their target language performance. This is why students who are also fans are often more interested in learning their fandom "original language" than non-fans. Fans follow their idols' social media accounts, watch their interviews, listen to their music and podcasts, discuss the meaning of the lyrics of the songs with other fans, make drawings inspired on the characters they played, edit videos, record their own covers, dress up as their favorite characters, and write fanfiction.

Justification

As a second language teacher who was a fan first, I have it on good authority that learning a second or an additional language is a limit-experience that pierces the self and changes it from the inside out; after all, learning itself is a process of transformation and the result of evolution (Boldt et.al, 2015). When someone decides to become a "fan" and wants to be recognized as such, they take on a new version of themselves that adds a layer to their identity (Black, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b; Korobkova & Black, 2014; Thorne & Black, 2011; Włodarczyk, 2014). Being a fan is more than testing the waters of a fandom, for it involves diving into it and making yourself at home on the ocean floor. There is no denying that fans

show their capacity of affecting and being affected when they transgress their limits and are welcomed into undiscovered worlds, but at the same time find the strength to carve into the walls their initials (Chauvel et al, 2014). Exploring the endless possibilities of fandom in the classroom and its proximity to the concept of affect, then, means letting go of stigmas that claim that students neither read nor write and are wasting their time on nonsense.

Colombian foreign language teaching and learning policies have been overly focused on standardized test results that show how eleventh graders' English level does not match the requirements set by the Colombian Ministry of Education. One example was that by the end of 2019 all students (100%) must certificate a B1 (intermediate), an unrealistic goal that was not fulfilled (Council of Europe, 2001; Programa Nacional de Bilingüismo 2004-2019). These government-led initiatives were formulated toward reaching a benchmark for proficiency levels proposed by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001), the reason why they are decontextualized and do not reflect on students' real approach to second language (not only English) literacy practices.

Even though foreign language policies in Colombia have been thought from the imaginary that this country is monolingual –leaving aside the 68 native tongues spoken–, research findings have shown that people all around Medellín use English as a means to communicate among the members of a community. "English is not only confined to the classroom practices or the official media" (Mora, et al. 2015, p.1). There are billboards, store advertisements, words in graffiti, tattoos, fashion (t-shirts), restaurant names (and their menu), and texts in local bookshops in English or other languages besides Spanish. Furthermore, recent studies include the role of Pop Culture and the realm of Fandom as a vehicle to foster second

language learning (Agudelo, 2019). In the context of Colombia, the next step would be to carry out research about the effectiveness of fan-related tasks.

Colombians are interested in practicing additional languages, especially English, in organic and non-institutionalized spaces (Mora, et al. 2015), which is why Colombian English language teachers ought to update their approaches in order to understand students' literacy practices and develop their own teaching practices. Whether students are fans or not, lessons from fan studies open up the conversation on challenges of today, such as human rights, public health, education for everyone, and climate crisis. Besides, some lyrics address global issues and moral dilemmas, and foreground history facts. There are ways in which Fanfiction could be adapted to a classroom where teachers propose tasks that boost students' critical thinking through questions that expose today's realities.

International authors like Black (2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b), Lam (2000, 2005); Yi (2007, 2008) have researched about how immigrant students' second language literacy practices are boosted by taking part in the fandom realm. However, in the Colombian context, there is no evidence of a study that elaborates on the nexus between second or additional language learning and fandom literacy practices. The latter are defined as the results of being involved in a fandom, including fanfiction, fan art, posts in online fan groups, chat rooms with other fans, engaging in social media, listening to music, wearing band merch (merchandise), watching interviews, movies, series, sports matches and TV shows, going to stadiums, concerts, music festivals, comic cons, reading books, magazines, blogs, comic books, or even doing karaoke (Black, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b; Cavicchi, 2018; Lamerichs, 2018). All these are examples of how people make use of an array of resources to sink into what being a fan means and take advantage of fandom literacy practices to learn an additional language. Finally, the use of multiple languages

supposes a visible perk within fan communities, for users are able to disclose their transcultural identities (Black, 2009a, 2009b; Thorne & Black, 2011).

Nonetheless, in order to fathom why and how tasks inspired by fandom studies could be useful for second language learning, it is essential to pore over the notion of "affect" so as to sift through learners' affective responses, dig deeper into where these come from, and track where they could lead to. In this sense, affect includes students' "feeling-histories, affective atmospheres, and felt experiences of time" (Ehret & Hollett, 2014, p.428). Additionally, Vasudevan (2009) called for looking at multimodal literacy practices by paying special attention to "the confluences of practices, interactions and relationships" (p.357). Affect theory, then, becomes a moment and a space for providing a dialogue between the pedagogy of multiliteracies and the experiences embodied in every student, so as not to lose sight of the goal of education, i.e., to empower people to think for themselves.

Finally, based on the above, studying students' affective responses to fandom literacy practices is a way of bonding with them and revealing what lies behind the former. Whether students are fans or not, there is no denying that when they have a learning experience that challenges their points of view, inviting them to go beyond what is on the surface, their limits are transgressed, and they can even face embodiment and disembodiment. This is something fans encounter every day, for they have to get out of themselves to find those nuances that become part of their nature (culture and identity). Learning from the aforementioned, then, will help second language teachers understand how students' literacy practices can be nurtured.

Objective

The purpose of this study is to show that students have affective responses to second language literacy practices triggered by their engagement with fandom. When teachers understand how fan-related activities can mediate students' affective responses to second language practices, they can reflect on and improve their pedagogical practices. Through the lenses of affect theory, we can open up new ways to research literacy, especially in the field of second language literacies. Both students and fans are enthusiastic about what they are interested in, which is why they are motivated to continue learning and expanding their knowledge. They also form communities based on their shared passions. As teachers, we can foster a positive affective atmosphere by adapting learning materials and lesson plans that focus on students' sense of belonging.

Research Question

What can second language educators learn from students' affective responses to fandom literacies to enhance the latter's second language literacy practices?

Chapter 2

Introducing the Study: The Context of Teaching and Learning Second Languages in Medellín, Colombia

Being a teacher has taught me that education is key to discovering one's talents and setting goals to develop them. However, discipline ought to be exercised to take advantage of and embrace those skills. Even though school is essential for socialization and strengthening virtues such as decision-making, autonomous learning, and critical thinking, it is paramount that the outside environment —constituted by both family and community members— is appropriate for the children. This means that the latter have their basic needs covered and that their rights are respected. To ensure this, we need to foster feelings of confidence, tolerance, and solidarity to build an equitable society. When people are welcomed and appreciated, they are motivated to give the best out of themselves and feel the need to help and learn from one another.

Young people are blurring the barriers imposed to them by previous generations in terms of national and international borders: Online spaces are a reality that can no longer be disregarded, for they are inhabited by real people, whose interests and concerns make up their culture and identity (Black, 2008). In the fandom realm, for instance, fans display their creativity through a myriad of resources in the shape of fan art (digital and material drawings), fan fiction (texts turned into stories that mix characters and plotlines from the writer's fandom, as well as aspects from their personal life), song fiction (a popular song melody that tells a story that borrows characters and plotlines from other fandoms), among others (Black, 2005). Consequently, there is an affective response from the fan, who has a sense of belonging to their fandom. In this study, then, there is an interest in demonstrating how students (whether they be

fans or not) engage in out-of-school practices and what teachers could learn from these in order to include them in their classrooms.

Today's world is recognized for being globalized, just as languages. In this respect, knowledge and information are limitless, which has led to a constant negotiation of meaning due to the many voices through which language is constructed. Language as a constructed discursive action and grammatical system holds together social roles, paradigms and uses to allow social agents to express and evolve through the composition of speakers' discourses. That is why we need to shift the focus of updating curricular guidelines if we want to reflect on the new language ecologies that permeate language teaching and learning. Plus, we ought to emphasize on approaches particularly designed and planned by teachers, if we seek to pace up with globalization and technology velocity, we have to move on to the next level by making our voices heard and not excluded from the policymaking process.

A Shift of Focus: Second Language Learners through an Affective Kaleidoscope

This study aims to provide Colombian second language teachers a proposal to understand how K-11 students' (from kindergarten to eleventh grade) affective responses to fandom literacy practices can influence their learning experience. To do so, I dive into the main concepts of literacy, fandom practices, and affect theory to develop a broader view of how these are interrelated and can work together to explain the ways in which students create affective bonds with their literacy practices. Everything that students bring to the classroom is part of what makes them individual beings and affects their choices, decisions, answers, and literacy practices. When teachers value students' background (or prior) knowledge, they are helping them take charge of their own learning process. This is why affect is the cornerstone of my thesis: as

teachers, we are aware of how our guidance leads students to a greater understanding of their reactions.

Additionally, when teachers reflect on how students make sense of the information they are exposed to and receive in different shapes, sizes, and formats, they realize that learners read and write incessantly. Young people are always up-to-date with what is going on with the world. Through social networking, they are able to speak their mind and relate to their peers' experiences. For this reason, we cannot simply put them into boxes and expect them to stay still, nor can we ignore that they are creating their own environments (physical and virtual) in non-institutionalized places where they feel safe. We have gotten used to labeling youths as zombies who swallow anything presented to them on a screen and who believe everything that is on the media. When, in truth, adolescents and children are in a process of negotiating meaning with their literacy practices and the information they find on the web. They do not just remain isolated away from what is happening around them, instead, they have taken collaborative work to the next level, for their passions are shared by others who live on the other side of the world (Black, 2008; Lamerichs, 2018; Włodarczyk, 2014).

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Students make them most of today's globalized world, in which knowledge and information are limitless and available to everybody thanks to the Internet: there is a constant negotiation of meaning due to the multiple voices and resources. Therefore, no one is the only bearer of knowledge, like Freire (1970) denounced in his book *"The Pedagogy of the Oppressed"* with the banking concept of education: the teacher used to be the expert, while the students were empty vessels who had to be filled with information. Nowadays, young people are conscious of the endless resources they can make use of to direct their own learning. Approaching these new ways of learning with openness will bring us closer to understanding how students construct and deconstruct meaning (Derrida, 1976).

Situating the Study: The Case of Colombia

The present research is about how Colombian second language teachers may take examples from international researchers regarding students' affective responses to literacy practices mediated by fandom to enhance their own pedagogical practices, resulting in an approach that places students at the center of their learning process. By revisiting the existing literature on affect theory applied to literacy, I intend to construct a framework that shows that second language learners have affective responses to what they feel, perceive, breathe, take in, and interpret from the environment and relationship to other beings and things. This is relevant in that it opens up new viewpoints to consider when it comes to comprehending why people are so different and how their particularities make them unique.

This research is significant for the field of literacies in second languages (Mora, 2015c)– and especially, for second language teachers– because it contributes to continuing questions about how educators might take advantage of affect theory to comprehend phenomena around the classroom. Besides, it is an opportunity to help them focus on students' needs and interests before judging why they do not feel drawn to certain topics or the language itself. This, then, is a matter of allowing students express themselves and reminding teachers to keep a close eye on students' affective responses to the tasks proposed for the classes in order to assess and value their literacy practices.

Teachers ought to seize what they see, hear, smell, touch, feel, and sense inside the classroom. If they recognize that they are dealing with human beings before these assume the role of students, we might get closer to understanding that they are able to affect and be affected by others (people, living organisms, things, ideas, etc.). Tapping into the concepts of affect theory and fandom literacy practices will aid in theorizing on how students' affective responses to fandom literacy practices can be explained through the latter. In this way, educators all around the world could develop a sense of compassion and improve their pedagogical practices, so they suit their students' tastes and expectations.

This study seeks to fill a gap in literacy studies that overlooks how students feel, see, hear, smell, taste, and touch; how their ideas are scrambled and being shaped like clay, how they inhabit new spaces (both physical and virtual), how they come in contact with other beings and objects, how they establish relationships with other subjects, how they find their passions, make decisions on what to eat, read, write, do, and who to spend time with. In short: How they affect and are affected. In the end, students' affective responses are analyzed through interactions that

take place in the classroom and also through the former's creations (oral and written answers, texts, drawings, behavior, actions and reactions, attitudes, etc.).

Going back to making questions about the nature of things to realize textual engagements and their affective responses is one of the main goals of affect theory applied to second language literacy teaching and learning (Leander & Ehret, 2019). Only through the appreciation of "the other" can we notice how human beings are always in a "raw process of becoming, of change" (Leander & Ehret, 2019, p.8). Change is part of growing and learning: education could not exist without the willingness to be better (a kinder person, a more responsible student, a more hard-working employee, a more confident subject, a more attentive teacher, a more courageous citizen, a more trust-worthy boss, a more honest individual…). Denying change would be denying humanity. It is worth broaching Heraclitus Homericus' assertion: "Into the same rivers we step and do not step, we are and are not" (Graham, 2019). This means that humans are always in motion, consciously or subconsciously taking bits and pieces of what they feel and sense through experience.

In spite of the extensive international literature on literacy and second language studies, as well as the research in national contexts, affect theory applied to both literacy and teaching and learning in second languages is still nascent and scarce when adding fandom studies to the equation. In the case of Colombia, it is nonexistent but presents great opportunities for second language teachers who are immersed in the schooling system (official or private).

The Colombian Ministry of Education has launched second language policies drawn from the imaginary perpetrated by colonizers, rulers who flaunt power, and upper-class individuals, of Colombia being an uneducated and monolingual country, which has been denounced by authors like Correa and Usma (2013), the actions proposed by the National Bilingual Program 2004-

2019 (“Program for Strengthening the Development of Competencies in a Foreign Language”) – launched in 2004– are geared towards maintaining a bureaucratic policymaking model that excludes the participation of all stakeholders. Its goal is: “to have all citizens be able to communicate in English so that they can insert the country into universal communication processes, in the global economy, and cultural openness, with standards that are internationally comparable” (Ministerio de Educación Nacional [MEN], 2004, p. 6). This signifies that the Colombian Ministry of Education expects Colombians to hold conversations in English with the main purpose of facilitating commercial transactions and increasing the country’s economic competitiveness.

One of the biggest flaws in policy making is the lack of continuity from one document to the other, remaining a dead letter. This is due to the government’s insufficient efforts to change the conditions many teachers work in, which also affect students’ performance. There is no doubt that the former stem from the interests of those who wield power disproportionately and wish to continue doing so through a discourse that reproduces structures of inequality. To counteract such practices mediated by power relationships, that deny our country’s cultural heritage, and that are dominated by policy makers, who are often against implementing actions that promote a bureaucratic, rationalist, and traditionalist model (Correa and Usma, 2013), it is necessary to propose approaches that “go against the current”, giving rise to research on the field of teaching in second languages through literacies.

In Colombia, the aforementioned gap stems from The Colombian Ministry of Education’s attempt to propose policies that would insert the country into the global market through the improvement of its citizens’ English level (Correa and Usma, 2013; Usma, et al., 2018), introducing the National Bilingualism Program (PNB), Colombia 2004-2019 (MEN, 2004), The

Colombia Bilingual Program (MEN, 2014), and the National English Program (MEN, 2014), which were merely focused on English as the second language to be implemented, undermining the 68 indigenous languages that make of Colombia a multilingual and multicultural nation (Usma, et al., 2018). However, this has helped understand the teacher's role, which remains crucial but needs to be reinvented: today's social dynamics call for educators who be willing to walk the extra mile to adapt school curricula to their students' needs and interests, without turning the blind eye to local concerns and global issues. Nevertheless, it can only be made possible if policymakers truly hear the stakeholders' voices; after all, they are the ones who know firsthand how positive changes can become a reality.

In favor of giving more weight to how students learn outside of school and how teachers could find it beneficial to involve them more in curriculum planning (McDonald & Leander, 2020), it is worth looking into what researchers have found in their work. Black (2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b) has wondered about how participants of an online community construct identities that change over time, expanding their literacy practices and language learning skills. According to her, the online site Fanfiction.net becomes a common space where dialogism interactions (Bakhtin, 1981) among fans are possible and recurrent, since there is always an active and instant author-reader feedback through a tool implemented in the platform called "author's notes". Readers respond to each section of a given chapter making suggestions about rhetorical choices and uses of language (Black, 2005), which help the writer make appropriate changes and learn from their mistakes.

Chapter 3

Understanding Second Language Literacy Practices, Fandom Studies, and Affect Theory

The present chapter defines the working concepts that will enlighten this critical literature review, which were identified after refining the research question: Second Language Literacies, Fandom Studies, and Affect Theory. The first one lays the foundations for the type of study chosen by the author, focused on the multifaceted and polymorphous ways of reading and writing a text, conferring particular meanings depending on a person's culture, identity, and context. The second concept inserts fandom into second language literacies to elucidate how teachers can hone their pedagogical practices through fan-related dynamics, activities, and tasks. The last notion raises the matter of how human beings perceive themselves, what surrounds them (objects), and those who are around them (living organisms), and how feelings, emotions, and senses may accompany affective responses.

Second Language Literacy Practices

As the concept of literacy used to be deemed to refer to the activities of traditional reading and writing, which were the focus of formal schooling, New Literacy Studies (NLS) research has suggested that the social practices and conceptions of reading and writing vary greatly across cultures. "Literacy" viewed through the lenses of NLS takes into account all forms of responses imbued in people's discourses and narratives. Street (2013b) stated,

> Literacy practices, therefore, refer to both the activities of reading and/or writing in which people are involved in specific contexts and also to the ideas that such people have of literacy, involving the particular ways of thinking about and doing reading and writing in cultural contexts. (p.37)

People make sense of their own world in unique ways mediating their perception and reactions with the outside world. Street (1984) argues that traditional literacy is not confined to the use of western scientific 'essay text', but it entails all forms in which cognitive skills are expressed. From this standpoint, the autonomous model of literacy, reinforced by David Olson in 1994, suggests that:

> The focus on literacy skills seriously underestimates the significance of both the implicit understandings that children bring to school and the importance of oral discourse in bringing those understandings into consciousness in turning them into objects of knowledge. The vast amounts of time some children spend on remedial reading exercises may be more appropriately spent acquiring scientific and philosophical information. (Olson, p.14)

In a broad sense, language is a complex system, a vehicle for communication that allows interaction between users; it comprises a set of codes, governed by grammatical structures and rules of behavior, which ought to be decoded to unveil its message. According to De Saussure (1959): "The system is a complex mechanism that can be grasped only through reflection; the very ones who use it daily are ignorant of it" (p.73); and further on, he says: "Language […] is at every moment everybody's concern; spread throughout society and manipulated by it, language is something used daily by all" (De Saussure, 1959, p.73). This means that moving on from the simplistic view of language as a set of letters that form words, it is necessary to reflect on the social, political, and economic spheres embedded in human discourse. As stated by Bourdieu (1977), the different meanings of a word in a dictionary does not suffice to entirely cover the power of language:

> Understanding is not a matter of recognizing an invariable meaning, but of grasping the singularity of a form which only exists in a particular context. The all-purpose dictionary word, produced by neutralizing the practical social relations in which it functions, has no social existence: in practice, it only exists immersed in situations, so much so that the identity of the form through different situations may go unnoticed. (p.4)

It is evident from the foregoing that language does not exist without a context, and thus is never static. Such undeniable characteristic of language renders it a social construct, superseding the vision of language that only considers its linguistic component. Bourdieu (1977) claimed, "Linguistics reduces to an intellectual encoding-decoding operation what is in fact a symbolic power relation, that is, an encoding-decoding relation founded on an authority-belief relation" (p.6). Language users speak among themselves not only because they want to cause a reaction or an answer, but also to express their feelings and world views. When interchanging ideas, people are aware of the power held in the speech they give, expecting others to believe what they have said; speakers recognize the listeners and this regard the former as worthy (Bourdieu, 1977).

Literacy, then, entails "reading the word and the world" (Freire & Macedo, 1987) in the sense that the processes of reading and writing are not limited to practices in which the written word is privileged over all sorts of texts. Knowledge is not only "transmitted" but deconstructed and morphed into every person's culture and identity. Consequently, when people make use of language, they are performing actions in the shape of drawings, paintings, gestures, the written and spoken word, sounds, among others, which are guided by desires that, in turn, come from their own vision of the cosmos, encompassing culture and identity. Here, aside from recognizing culture as a social construct that recollects all the artifacts that represent a group of people, including their traditions, customs, rites, habits, and values passed down like generations, it also

comprises an individual's likes, dislikes, relationship with other human beings, animals, nature, and objects, passions, fears, dreams, goals in life, religious or spiritual beliefs, strengths, weaknesses, etc. All in all, it should be taken into consideration that "The ways in which people address reading and writing are themselves rooted in conceptions of knowledge, identity and being" (Street, 2013b, p.4). Texts only come alive when they are construed by humans, who draw from their experiences, identities, and cultural backgrounds to assign meaning to what they read.

From the foregoing, the concept of literacy refers to the human act of interpreting and creating texts in varied manners and through multiple modes and formats following a particular context. Ergo, it is a process of making sense of the world and leaving a footprint in the shape of a response that may or may not lead to action. This is precisely why it could be related to the notion of affect: intensities are always felt even if they are not caught by language patterns. Both literacy and affect demand that teachers, scholars, and researchers on the fields of pedagogy and education acknowledge the multi-semiotic and multimodal nature of texts (Kress & Van Leeuwen, 2001; Lemke, 2009).

Since literacy is viewed from a socio-semiotic perspective (Street, 2013a), the concept of multimodality helps to allude to the several forms a text is presented (e.g., image, font, style, video, sound, color, etc.) as a means for displaying a message. Breaking texts into simpler components aids the interpretation of meaning-making resources. As Kress and Van Leeuwen (2001) posited, "Multimodal communication is comprised of 'modes,' forms within various sign systems that carry the meanings that a social collective recognizes and understands. For example, photography, paint, watercolor and clay are modes within a sign system of art" (p.11). Therefore,

providing second language learners with the tools to grasp the intention of texts – regardless of their age and level of schooling– should be a goal set and pursued by teachers.

Literacy is manifested when people make it palpable by approaching any text: Through literacy practices, the latter comes to life; they are the results of mediating the meanings given to semiotic objects (texts) and marked by a subject's experiences (Lemke, 2009). For second language learning, this denotes a shift from the "top-down" method of teaching, for students' literacy practices cannot be apprehended if they are reduced to traditional models of schooling. Ultimately, learners will not make sense of the experience of their feelings from a place of fear, where they are forced to put it into words. After all, literacy practices are affective experiences that move through our bodies along the trajectories of our lives (Lemke, 2009).

In short, second language literacy practices are concerned with how second language learners engage with texts that can be found anywhere and, in many shapes, such as social media posts, photographs, advertisements, graffiti, drawings, sketches, paintings, sculptures, sounds, songs, music, movies, TV shows, books, comics, magazines, cartoons, scents, and any other object (tangible or intangible) attached with an emotional baggage. All these expressions of art fuel second language learning, for they are instilled with meaningful experiences. In the classroom, students get in touch with other people and things, provoking responses and learning opportunities. Literacy practices are the products of those interactions and teachers are the ones who are in charge of mediating them, so they are pushed forward.

Fandom Studies

People recognize themselves as "fans" when they feel drawn to a certain musical band, a singer, an actor, a TV show, a literary saga, or a videogame, and decide to be a part of a

"fandom", namely the realm containing each of the former. Moreover, fans from all over the world create online fan groups to cross borders of space and time; and also, local ones so they can have 'reunions' and meet up at a public place. Owing to the spread of pop culture through information and communication technologies (ICTs) and mass media, the English language has become the entry point for allowing human interaction. In this sense, since the source material of, for example, DC Comics was originally written in English, fans feel motivated to learn it to dive into its realm. Members of fan communities, then, will necessarily acquire knowledge both of the language and of the fandom itself, leading them to participate in group conversations that will help them develop their second language skills, take charge of their own learning process, and shape their identity. As teachers always reinvent their classroom strategies, they ought to look for alternatives that appreciate students' needs and interests. On the one hand, language teachers have studied the link that exists between fandom studies and second language learning (Black, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009; Lam, 2000, 2005; Yi, 2005). They have wondered how they could adapt to their pedagogical practices, resources and materials, as well as develop engaging, effective tasks that meet the course's purpose and goals. On the other hand, researchers have introduced affect theory to work with literacies on how students (and second language learners) digest those learning experiences they encounter every day, both in school and out-of-school settings (Leander & Ehret, 2019; Lenters & McDermott, 2020).

The term "fanatic", and its abbreviated form "fans" according to the Oxford Latin Dictionary, in late seventeenth-century England referred to: "Of or belonging to the temple, a temple servant, a devotee"; however, later, it took on a negative connotation: "Of persons inspired by orgiastic rites and enthusiastic frenzy" (Jenkins, 1992, p.12). Cavicchi (1998 and 2018) has traced the notion of "fandom" in his research dating back to the nineteenth century

with Swedish singer Jenny Lind spectators. Since these people were seen as “mad” and “obsessive” and crammed into the space prepared for the show or the match, architects were forced to set up barriers and design platforms to keep the artists from being harmed. This reputation that preceded fans of movies, music, baseball, theater, among others, is described by Theater Magazine: “The movie habit, the same as the baseball habit, the cabaret habit, or any other habit growing out of a desire for something to do, has developed a great many movie ‘fans’ who revere their Mary Pickfords and their Charlie Chaplins” (Edwards, 1915, p.177, as cited in Cavicchi, 2018, p.28). As fans proliferated in the 1900s, sports journalists started to use the concept to draw attention to people who displayed disruptive behavior and distracted the players. In contrast, other magazines encouraged favoritism and baseball fans to be competitive, as it is shown in The American Magazine (1910), in “Fans. Motto: May the Best Team Win but Ours is the Best”: “The baseball fan is an [sic] unique American species and the most rabid of all enthusiasts. Compared with him the golf fan, the bridge fan, even the bowling fan are mild. Baseball is the most serious pleasure ever invented” (Fullerton, 1910, p.463, as cited in Cavicchi, 2018, p.28).

Other authors (Cavicchi, 1998; Jenkins, 1992) date back to the origins of fandom: even if the noun “fan” was not used, similar terms such as “the fancy”, circulated in British boxing and pigeoning contexts (Cavicchi, 1998, 2017, and 2018). Literature readers of 1840, music lovers and Lind fans of 1850, and “matinee girls” of the late nineteenth-century theater were other records of fan audiences (Cavicchi, 2018). Anne Jamison (2013) pinpoints in “A Prehistory of Fanfiction”, in her book “Fic: Why Is Fanfiction Taking over the World?” how Aristotle’s work Poetics influenced several writers. For instance, English playwright (1564-1616) William Shakespeare’s plays were inspired by multiple voices, experiences, readings, and actors’

performances. Similarly, Duffet (2013) reflects on how Shakespeare's birthplace in Stratford upon Avon, open to the public since the mid-eighteenth century, had become a famous spot for Victorian-era visitors like the renowned English writer Charles Dickens. It is evident that fan-related activities have existed since ancient times in the shape of religious, royal, political, and cultural institutions (Duffet, 2013).

Moving beyond the aforementioned misconception of fans, since 1960 scholars started to make research about Star Trek Fans ("Trekkies") (Black, 2005, Coppa, 2006), due to the growth of information and communication technologies (ICTs). Nevertheless, these fans were still frowned upon by the media. Trekkies were portrayed as "nerdy guys with glasses and rubber Vulcan ears, "I Grok Spock" T-shirts stretched over their bulging stomachs …" (Jenkins, 1992, p.17). Jenkins (1992) starts his book "Textual Poachers: Television Fans & Participatory Culture", which became a reference point for fan studies, by recalling a skit in which Star Trek star William Shatner (aka Captain James T. Kirk) was a guest for *Saturday Night Live*. After being asked a bunch of questions, he turns to the crowd in anger: "Get a life, will you people? I mean, I mean, for crying out loud, it's just a TV show!" He also tells the crowd to live adult experiences ("you, there, have you ever kissed a girl?"). Even though this was rehearsed, it reveals stereotypes of fans being immature, not having a social life, and living in their parents' basement. These kinds of misrepresentations are still real, but the field of Fan Studies has tackled this issue with new approaches.

Fiske's (1992) view of fandom as a "textual productivity" is interpreted by Nicolle Lamerichs (2018), in her book "Productive Fandom: Intermediality and Affective Reception in Fan Cultures", as "the creation of fan works that are intimately connected to the source text". These are not limited to "written texts but include forms of play, critical interpretations, and

material or embodied performances" (p.18). Fans make use of a wide array of multimodal sources to display their meaning-making processes (Kress and Van Leewen, 2001). Finally, in his sequel to Textual Poachers (1992), Jenkins (2006), agrees with Lamerichs (2018) in that fan culture should not be reduced to passive media consumption. This means that fans have different levels of engagement and they do not necessarily have to produce material to learn about a fandom and train their second language skills. Jenkins (2006) posits:

> One becomes a 'fan' not by being a regular viewer of a particular program but by translating that viewing into some kind of cultural activity, by sharing feelings and thoughts about the program content with friends, by joining a 'community' of other fans who share common interests. For fans, consumption naturally sparks production, reading generates writing, until the terms seem logically inseparable. (p.41)

Despite the foregoing, Jenkins (2009) stresses: "Not every member must contribute, but all must believe they are free to contribute and that what they contribute will be appropriately valued" (p.6). While there may be fans who are avid fanfiction readers and writers, who enjoy watching interviews of their favorite actors or authors, follow them on social media, who are part (or are the administrators) of online communities and fan groups, and who even manage YouTube channels, Wikis, blogs, and web pages, there are others who prefer to remain anonymous, often called "Lurkers" (Costello and Moore, 2007), but who still identify themselves as fans and whose affective responses are valid and never weakened. Despite their level of fandom, fans are not passive consumers who are easily manipulated by the media industry, they are active producers who are critical of the content they receive and form their own interpretations based on what they read and watch in the shape of fanfiction, fan-art, cover songs,

and cosplay: “Media fans are consumers who also produce, readers who also write, spectators who also participate” (Jenkins, 1992, p.208).

Another category that belongs to fandom taxonomy worth highlighting is “*Stans*”, a name given to fans who are devoted and passionate about their fandom, whether it is an artist, a celebrity, an actor, a writer, an author, a literary saga, a movie, a book, a sports team, a T.V. show, a singer, a music band, an athlete, a dancer, an influencer, a particular fictional character, among others. These people are often seen as obsessive and intrusive in their idols’ personal life. They may engage in behaviors such as relentlessly sending messages, letters, gifts or commenting on social media posts, which can lead to threats, harassment, and violent competition within or outside the fandom.

The origin of the term “*stan*” goes back to 2000, with rap singer Marshall Mathers’ (better known as Eminem) single “Stan” (ft. Dido), a song that describes the story of Stan (short for Stanley) Mitchell, an obsessive fan who becomes frustrated because Eminem does not reply to his letters and threatens to hurt himself if there is no response. Then, he ends up trapping his pregnant girlfriend in the trunk of his car and drives off a bridge. The song is a critique of unhinged fans whose extreme behavior may bring dire consequences. Nowadays, the notion of “stan” has evolved from its derogative connotation to refer to fans who are very devoted to their fandom (Álvarez-Trigo, 2020; Sandvoss, 2005).

Affect Theory

Tackling the concept of experience not as a mere, isolated occurrence or happening, but as an “experiment” undergone whether consciously –with a predisposition– or not, is key to grasping how affect works. This means that spontaneous encounter with a story awakens

emotions, feelings, and memories in the person. The latter gives room for affective responses. Foucault calls these experiments “limit-experiences”, for they: “tear the subject from itself in such a way that it is no longer the subject as such, or that it is completely "other" than itself so that it may arrive at its annihilation, its dissociation” (Foucault, 1991, p. 31). In a nutshell, limit-experiences are events that metamorphose the inner self into something else, so the human being becomes someone else. That process of constructing one’s own identity is never prearranged but permeated by affective responses that are felt and often unarticulated (Lenters & McDermott, 2020).

According to Massumi (2002), when the concept of “body” is brought up, it points to “movement” and “feeling”, as these are interconnected: “[A body] moves as it feels, and it feels itself moving […] feelings have a way of folding into each other, resonating together, interfering with each other, mutually intensifying, all in unquantifiable ways apt to unfold again in action” (Massumi, 2002, p.11). Herein lies the first outstanding feature of affect: the feelings it triggers are always in motion and unpredictable; they are never static or foreseen. The changes that occur inside/outside the body are not only material and mediated through gestures: they can also be subtle in nature and displaced. The latter attends to the supposition that a body is defined by its position on the grid and the site it occupies is a “geography” of a culture that dictates every movement and prescribes every permutation (Massumi, 2002). This can only be unwound if the subject is recognized as a cultural being that cannot be placed into a box.

Going back to Massumi (2002), in the case of image reception, the affective is expressed through a gap between content and effect. The content of the image refers to “its indexing to conventional meanings in an inter-subjective context, its sociolinguistic qualification. This indexing fixes the determinate qualities of the image; the strength or duration of the image’s

effect could be called its intensity" (Massumi, 2002, p.24). Here, quality and intensity are not connected straightforwardly. Intensity is not "semantically" or "semiotically" ordered, since it "does not fix distinctions" and only signifies in paradoxes. "The level of intensity is characterized by a crossing of semantic wires: on it, sadness is pleasant " (Massumi, 2002, p.24). Both levels (intensity and qualification) are embodied, that is, felt or sensed. While intensity is "embodied in purely autonomic reactions most directly manifested in the skin –at the surface of the body, at its interface with things" (Massumi, 2002, p.25), qualification involves 'depth reactions' marked by heartbeat and breathing (which also are autonomic functions). However, they require a great deal of consciousness and narrative continuity. Intensity is "outside expectation and adaption, as disconnected from meaningful sequencing, from narration, as it is from vital function" (Massumi, 2002, p.25). When fans find themselves before an image, be it a screenshot of a post, a photo from their fandom, a trailer from their favorite movie, a piece of fan art, an excerpt of fanfiction, or a meme, these elements from affect theory come into play. Ranging from the nerve-wracking experience of seeing the band one has been fan of for years, to that cathartic feeling when one is at a concert singing along to the songs at the top of one's lungs, to the goosebumps one gets when the song one relate to the most is playing… But also to one's tired body after a long journey to get to the concert plus waiting in the line for hours, or even camping for days so one could be the first in line; to the adrenaline rush that allows one to keep on jumping and cheering despite one's hoarse voice.

In words of Massumi (2002): "Linguistic expression can resonate with and amplify intensity at the price of making itself functionally redundant" (pp. 25-26). Human beings need "words" to name what they see, touch, hear, and smell; to channel emotions, feed lingering thoughts, create fantastic worlds, evoke feelings, capture memories, store lessons, heed

warnings, freeze time, bury skeletons, and burn ashes. Through words every person builds their own reality in which they will give meaning to mental images displayed in their imagination. Words can heal and destroy, mend and break hearts. That is why choosing the right words is a complex art that can be mastered only by reading, imitating, and contemplating nature. There is beauty in daylight, but it can also be found in the darkest of places. Whether it is a poem (in verse or prose), a narration, a short story, a folk tale, or a lyrical song, there is no denying that writing is a supernatural force only humans can harness. The language of music and any other tongue (including the sign language) are dynamic entities that inhabit a human body which hosts them, giving them life and shaping their meaning.

What makes long-lasting impressions is what is remembered the most. When someone decides to be a part of a fandom, there is a displacement of themselves, since their identities feed off the new emotional relationships being forged with both experiences and artifacts. Just like a tattoo is carved in the skin, leaving a map upside down that cannot be traced back by no one else but oneself, a myriad of needles is better felt when the soul is silent, floating on space, where you are weightless and infinite. Even though affect is not to be entirely defined or conceptualized due to its mercurial nature, at its core, like being close to the limit is dancing at the edge of the abyss and at the mountain summit, dressed as the black swan, affect should be dealt with, tasted, smelled, seen, felt, translated into words, if only for the sake of aesthetic and poetry. It is true, then, that: “An emotional qualification breaks narrative continuity for a moment to register a state –actually to re-register an already felt state, for the skin is faster than the word” (Massumi, 2002, p.25). Whether affect can be expressed is not the question here, rather than how it can bolster second language learning through fandom experience. In the end, second language

learning is about establishing connections between meaning making practices and identity processes.

For Massumi (2002) the closest term that covers the complexity of affect is “intensity”, for it could be associated with nonlinear processes. Besides, “Intensity is qualifiable as an emotional state, and that state is static–temporal and narrative noise. It is a state of suspense, potentially of disruption” (Massumi, 2002, p.26). And it is “filled with motion, vibratory motion, resonation” (Massumi, 2002, p.26). The two halves of an expression-event are called suspense, which belongs to the superlinear dimension, and expectation, which belongs to the linear dimension. An event, then, is outside structure, for it is not premeditated or planned, but: “the collapse of structured distinction into intensity, of rules into paradox” (Massumi, 2002, p.27). It is to experience transgression; in a word, it is “the unassimilable” (Massumi, 2002, p.27). When a fan is experimenting an affective state, they are immersed in a void, in an endless loop of emotions, sensations, and feelings that seem rather contradictory. Herein lies the beauty of affect: although it is unmeasurable, it is not ‘invisible’, but transparent and full of nuances that cannot be caught at ‘normal’ speed; these are volatile and even beyond reason.

Far from meaning just “emotion” or “feeling”, affect is everything that lies beneath the surface. It encompasses sensations captured by the skin and also irregularities that might be unnoticeable but that somehow burden or lighten the soul. What is more, it has to do with changes that may seem imperceptible, for they are quite mild. Because of its nature, it never stays the same, but is always gravitating towards multiverses and galaxies, forming constellations and paradoxes. Most of all, affect is at the core of the human condition: as human beings, we are in contact with the objects, subjects, animals, and nature that surround us and make part of the world we live in. From the inside out, the bodymind is expressed through

actions and reactions. Similar to Newton's third law of Physics that claims that: "You cannot touch without being touched," the potential of affect theory lies in "a body's capacity to affect and to be affected" (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010, p.2). In the classroom, teachers permanently perceive students' agreement or nonconformity; their pleasure or discontent, or whether they are engaged, daydreaming, or having "daymares". The reasons behind this kind of behavior might be alien to educators, consequently, the latter ought to remember that as affective beings, we are all traveling between emotional states that we do not truly comprehend what matters the most is that we grasp affect's complexity by understanding that living creatures carry within themselves an aesthetic sensitivity, allowing them to be open to otherness. In the same way, people deal with their experiences at their own pace, space, and time. This is where they face the limit and savor its iron-flavored pointy edges, then craving affective experiences.

Chapter 4

Navigating the Existing Literature in Second Language Literacy Practices, Affect Theory, and Fandom Studies

Literacy as a Concept

Current research on literacies in second languages in Medellín, Colombia has shown how inhabitants have approached other languages aside from Spanish to hold conversations and write texts, whether they be on restaurant or store names, on billboards, graffiti, or fashion (Mora, et al., 2018). Colombians have interactions with English, which defies the assumption that the latter is a "foreign language" (Mora, 2013) that is only restricted to the classroom (Mora, 2022). The realities of out-of-school literacy practices (Hull and Schultz, 2001; Street, 1995; Tannock, 2001; Warriner, 2009) suggest that English is part of the local culture, for it is present in every corner and crevasse of the city: Members of the research group Literacies in Second Languages Project (LSLP), "[…] see the city [Medellín] as a polychromatic, nuanced and layered place where different texts converge and help generate a world with a certain identity and layers of expression and understanding" (Mora, et al., 2018, p.38). This conveys that the city brings people together, who have their own meaning-making practices and ways of expression.

New Literacy Studies (Gee, 2000; Heath and Street, 2008; Street, 1984, 1995, 2013a, 2013b) has given greater visibility to literacy practices outside of school in terms of people's mother language. Nonetheless, when second languages are brought into the equation, "this symbiosis becomes even more dynamic and multilayered" (Mora, et al., 2018, p.39). This happens due to the symbiotic relationship that exists between literacy and the city, for languages take place in physical and virtual spaces. Consequently, there is a need for a deeper

understanding of how second language users play with other languages, and, at the same time, the city shelters these interactions and empowers them.

As the research group LSLP –founded in 2012 at Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana (Medellín, Colombia)– highlighted, walking around Medellín city helped them realize that the sum of its parts constitutes a wider view of how second languages become communicative and semiotic resources (Mora, et al., 2018). Findings obtained from their ethnographic research study carried out in 2013-2015, demonstrate the "varying degrees of sophistication" of the messages included in the gathered data, based on the analysis of 140 photographs (shop windows, advertisements, and signs) (Mora, et al., 2018, p.54). Finally, describing Medellín as "polylanguaged" transgresses the vision of a "monolingual" city, allowing organic encounters with other languages.

Fandom and Second Language Literacy Practices

Fandom scholar Rebecca Black has researched about how immigrants, who are also fans, display literacy practices in their target language and add new layers to their identity (Black, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b). Her study indicates that members of an online fan community create an intercultural environment, for their willingness to participate there, is born out of their drive to share their experiences regarding what led them to discover that particular fandom. When fans read and comment on others' stories, interactions take place and remain in motion. Blogs, instant messaging tools, and fanfiction websites are examples of internet-mediated spaces where people develop situated identities (Thorne & Black, 2011).

Lam (2000, 2005) conducted research on the relationship of literacy practices and second language learning and how these influence identity formation. Through a case study that used ethnographic and discourse analytic methods, the author shows the experience of a Chinese

immigrant teenager learning English is boosted by his correspondence with a transnational group of peers on the internet (Lam, 2000). The twelve-year-old boy moved from Hong Kong to the United States in 1992. As a high school senior, he was enrolled in an after-school tutorial class for he had failed the composition test required for graduation. Even after having spent 5 years in the USA, he claimed that his English skills were insufficient, which would negatively affect his career and future life. However, when Lam interviewed him again, 6 months later, he had signed for an introductory class on e-mail and browsing for information on the web and had become interested in designing home pages and chatting online. He focused on a Japanese pop singer (Ryoko Hirosue) and created a home page about her. Being a J-pop fan, and since he had taken Japanese classes at his school in Hong Kong, he was able to post images, write information, and chat with other fans, allowing him to feel more confident expressing himself in English.

In 2005, Lam carried out two case studies: the first one was of two Chinese students who emigrated to the United States of America and limited themselves to talking with their Chinese-speaking peers, for they felt embarrassed to use English. This was until some friends from school invited them to join a Multilanguage chat room: they were able to meet youths from all around the world, practice their English, and share their experiences. The second case study was about a Japanese boy who had moved to the USA when he was 9 years old. At first, he only used English at school, in public places, and on the internet, since there were many Cantonese speakers who interacted with him. But then, he became interested in Web site design and started working on an anime web site. In this way, he socialized in English with people who were also passionate about anime. These two examples show how internet-mediated spaces can support second language literacy practices, for they value both linguistic and intercultural backgrounds.

The previous cases lay out how people create ties with others who have the same interests or passions through the participation in fan groups. Fans congregate in virtual spaces in an organic manner: They are driven by the desire of acquiring more knowledge about their fandom (Gee, 2004, 2007, and 2018). Since they interact with fans all across the globe, they use English as an entry point to communicate with one another (Mora et.al, 2018). This urge to connect with others is what composes human nature: We are political beings, or, as Aristotle (1946) asseverated, "[…] man is by nature a political animal [zoon politikón]" (p.5). Humankind is both social and political for we need others to pursue the common interest and ensure our survival. Resultantly, the notion of literacy also supports this idea.

Literacy, as a social practice (Street, 1984, 1995, 2013a, 2013b), has the potential to understand how people come together in communities to share different ways of reading, writing, and interpreting texts (Gee, 1992; Cope & Kalantzis, 2000). What is more, thanks to new communication technologies, geographic boundaries are blurred and people all around the world build relationships that cross borders. Here, the concept of "affinity space" (Gee, 2004, 2007) is essential to fathom how individuals decide to join a community and interact with one another. The resulting literacy practices are used to share content and propel learning, providing support and solidarity to every member. In this way, there is a "participatory culture" (Jenkins, 2006) where everybody contributes to its growth by commenting, reading, writing, editing, sharing, posting images, among others. According to Gee (2004), in a "community of practice", learners are "apprentices" who are motivated to take part in a group in which peers are more advanced than others, helping them improve their abilities. Howbeit, Gee (2004) proposes the notion of "affinity spaces" to differentiate it from that of "community of practice", since the latter draws a line between those who are inside of it and those who are outside, while the former

refer to “loosely organized social and cultural settings in which the work of teaching tends to be shared by many people, in many locations, who are connected by a shared interest or passion” (Gee, 2018, p.8). Here, folks are not required to be in a certain “level” to “enter” the group, since both “newbies” and “masters” collaborate and no one is segregated (Gee, 2004, 2007).

Black (2005), as both an English as a second language (ESL) teacher and a fan, experienced how these affinity spaces became places where people’s background knowledge led them to come together and continue learning from their fandom. Thanks to a “common endeavor” or desire to gain experience and interact with each other, no matter their gender, ethnicity, social class, nationality, mother tongue, age, race, or level of expertise; there are not rigid roles (Gee, 2007). Accordingly, “Teaching and learning are not confined to one site or one kind of person; they are distributed across many locations, people, and practices” (Gee, 2018, p.9). This also leaves room for “affective ties”, due to a feeling of belonging and a commitment to the fan group (Gee, 2004; Black, 2005). Likewise, there is a sense of solidarity, since members are always looking forward to helping others move forward in their learning process (Black, 2005).

American professor Rebecca Black has materialized the link between fandom studies and second language learning. As a fanfiction writer herself, she has upheld how her students have developed their identities and second language skills by entering a fanfiction network (fanfiction.net). Fanfiction comprises the products of fans who write stories using their favorite characters, settings, and plotlines. Fanfictions are: “original works of fiction based on forms of popular media such as television, movies, books, music, and video games” (Black, 2005, p.2). Thanks to ICTs, people all around the world are crossing “traditional, linguistic, and geographic borders” (Black, 2006, p.1). Such virtual spaces allow second language interaction in out-of-

school settings: people who belong to a fandom and are active participants of an online fan community are constantly practicing their second language skills, for English acts as a bridge among fans who intend to gossip about their fandom and find out about new releases.

To show how fanfiction can be a vehicle for second language learning, Black (2005) conducted an in-depth case study of a native Chinese, Tanaka Nanako, who moved to Canada when she was 11 years old and did not speak English. Since she was a fan of the Card Captor Sakura anime, she used *Fanfiction.net* as a means to become involved within her fandom. This online platform was a space where fans could publish their fanfiction works and, through a tool called "author's notes", receive comments from readers about language use and suggestions on plot twists and the development and fate of the characters. The researcher evinced how Nanako scaffolded her writing through a supportive social context and shaped her identity as a Mandarin, Japanese, and English speaker.

Engaging in literacy practices supposes constructing a fluid identity that shifts over time and that is constantly in motion. In the case of fanfiction, there is an appropriation of varied linguistic, social, and cultural resources the individual decides to incorporate in their writing process (Thorne & Black, 2011). Additionally, the author "**hybridizes** his or her identity with that of a preexisting media character to express interests, issues, or tensions from his or her own life" (Black, 2005, p.124). This is a clear example of how fanfiction writers embody their culture to bring forward social issues that do not have enough visibility in the media. Through these hybrid characters, they are able to take on different identities and share their personal concerns, which other fans may relate to. As a result, fanfiction texts are situated in specific contexts (Thorne & Black, 2011).

Literacy and Fandom in Affect Theory

There is no denying that there is an affective component in fanfiction: Fans are intrinsically motivated to write about what troubles them and what makes them happy. The experience of being inside an online fan community where people "do not know you" so you do not feel misjudged is a virtual reality that is more malleable and thus people are encouraged to "enact multiple aspects of their identities" (Black, 2005, p.124). This is why the concept of affect theory is at the middle of fandom literacy practices and second language learning (Lamerichs, 2018; Leander & Ehret, 2019; Lenters & McDermott, 2020). Fans have it on good authority that everything they do, from writing fanfiction to only being spectators and reading what others post on social media, is triggered by how they feel in each experience they walk into.

Ehret et al. (2018) explored how people's participation on a YouTube (a video platform) subculture, namely BookTube, where members produce and upload videos on their YouTube channels talking about their favorite books, the impact they have had in their lives and identity, sharing book reviews, commentaries in response to other videos, etc. Such literacy practices allowed them to become engaged with other youths in an online participatory culture (Alvermann, 2016). The age group ranged from teens who were in their last year of high school to young adults in their early to mid-twenties. Ehret et. al (2018) observed how these young people shared their experiences with one another and constituted both their identities and reading lives outside of the formal school setting.

Going beyond the concept of affect as emotion –a culturally bounded definition–, it should be noted that affect theory researchers, who take a poststructural perspective, differentiate between both terms. When someone has been affected by something, their body has registered that movement, which may or may not be given the name of a specific emotion (Massumi, 1995

and 2002; Leander & Ehret, 2018). Sometimes, experiences with other people are unspoken. What is more, there are literacy encounters that sparkle the "making and reading of word and image, screen and page" (Ehret, et al. 2018, p.3). There is also room for pedagogic relationships resulting from experiences of being together, where the desire for learning and writing texts is propelled (Ehret, et al. 2018).

Affective experiences are not to be limited to "tangible" spaces, for digital and technological realms, like YouTube, are part of a set of relationships among people, materials, texts, and settings that have the power of moving and being moved. In the case of BookTube, an online culture where youth readers and writers are passionate about sharing their own experiences and connecting with others, affect is manifested in the creative process of translating their feelings and displaying a particular voice or style that stands apart from the rest. However, at the same time, there has to be a sense of belonging recognized by the other members of the collective. In this way, there is an affective force that creates a "tension" between what makes an individual unique and what allows them to be in a community (Ehret, et al. 2018).

Following their study, researchers Ehret, et al. (2018) observed BookTuber's channels according to their affective radar: they watched videos that moved them in a myriad of ways, a process they called "affective digital encountering". Whenever they felt "awkward, ambivalent, or disconcerted, or laughed or were jolted with aesthetic pleasure" (p.4), they marked those moments to go back to them later on. Then, they hashtagged when they felt pressure or humor being expressed in a segment of a video for a specific purpose. After six months of having encounters to debate and review what they had observed in the 376 videos they watched, they decided to interview two Booktubers in order to seep into their understanding and expand it (Ehret, et al. 2018).

In their findings, Ehret, et al. (2018) affirm that 20-year-old Emma, a BookTuber who had been in the platform for three years (since 2015) –chosen by the authors for her focus on issues related to BookTube culture–, expressed feeling pressure to include certain content and produce aesthetically pleasing videos to get more views, followers, and continue being part of the community in and outside of BookTube. This gives room for the "transindividual role of affect": the desire to display one's authenticity (and creativeness) combined with the drive to develop a sense of belongingness, creating tension between what is new (variation) and what is accepted (common). As for the sense of humor perceived in BookTube, Ehret, et. al. (2018) highlights how their second interviewee, 25-year-old Sara, describes "the pressure to be funny" as a catalyst to develop her identity, instead of a straitjacket to fit in the community. Her videos are inspired by what makes her laugh, giving them a comedic mark. In terms of participatory culture, humor acts as a unifying element that directly speaks to people's experiences. New media platforms like YouTube provide online spaces where youths engage in literacy practices and enter an out-of-school reading community that fosters them.

In fanfiction, although neither researchers nor fans have reported experiencing "pressures" in the sense Ehret, et al. (2018) did, it is safe to assert that, at some point, they have felt inclined towards pointing to popular culture references. Also, something that is highly valued in BookTube and any other fandom is the accuracy of the facts members use in their videos, posts in online fan groups, and commentaries, what has been named "connoisseurship". Both the BookTube and Fan culture have "crossover" elements that relate to the ways in which literacy practices are interpreted. For example, even though literary sagas, (e.g. Harry Potter, The Hunger Games, Twilight, Divergent, and Hush Hush) constitute particular fandoms, they can be regarded in BookTube due to their literary nature. Finally, the affective responses that sprout from

interactions within fan and BookTube communities validates that online media making and participation are both felt experiences and rational activities (Ehret, et al. 2018).

Lenters and McDermott (2020) have explored the ways literacy is permeated by unconscious, visceral responses felt in the bodymind during any encounter. These, in turn, activate a process of responding in a discernable (with emotion) or an unarticulated manner. Aside from taking place in the individual bodymind, literacy is also a collective process that considers an assemblage, meaning "[a] larger body of people, practices, objects, and events" (Lenters and McDermott, 2020, p.29; Deleuze, 2002). When participants come into contact with one another, there is an "intra-action". In the classroom, which is an assembled body, students and teachers intra-act with human, non-human, and more-than-human members to shape literacy encounters, objects, and practices. As a consequence, literacy is always embodied, whether individually or collectively (Lenters and McDermott, 2020). Intra-action is sparked by affect to produce "agency", encouraging permanence and dynamism.

Another example is given by Lenters (2016), whose case study of 11-year-old Nigel, a fifth grader, showed how he became engaged in a writer's workshop class through multimodal literacy practices: He enjoyed drawing stick men in the margins of his notebook, school planner (agenda), and worksheets. He also regularly logged on to public websites like Stickpage.com to play online and continue establishing his identity as a kid who loved riding his skateboard and scooter and who, although was not excited to write conventionally in his classes, ended up telling a story about a time he played a game called "Line Rider", letting his affective intensities flow. In a similar manner, Kuby (2020) shares how she and her research partner, Tara Gutshall Rucker, experienced an occasion in which Billy, a second grader in Tara's class on writing personal narratives, created a "game board" in the shape of a baseball field, which had cards that

described some moments related to a baseball game he had gone with his dad. This is a vivid picture of how affective responses can lead to materialize literacy practices.

Viewed from a post humanistic perspective, things or objects (the non-human and more-than-human) are agentful in the sense that they evoke memories, stories, feelings, and emotions. After any intra-action the assemblage shifts, a movement referred to as *becoming* or *line of flight* (Lenters and McDermott, 2020). If we, as teachers, truly want to support and cultivate this modus operandi in favor of our students' literacy practices and affective responses, we ought to get rid of stagnant notions of rationality, still praised in politics and education (Massumi, 1995 and 2015). Before "rational creatures", we are "affective beings" who affect and are affected by all that is inside of and surrounds us. A clear image of this is when we listen to our favorite song or we eat a kind of food that reminds us of our childhood (Lenters & McDermott, 2020).

Human beings make sense of the external world by the interactions they have with other animals and plants, with what surrounds them (objects), and with others (their equals); and of their internal world by the mental representations created unconsciously. Words, or more specifically, conversations, are also part of the latter. This is evidenced through how dreams are configured by the subconscious: images that flash before our eyes are conjured up and we even hold dialogues with the "characters", who personify real or fictional people. Material things (living and non-living) are given meaning when a person attaches to it memories, feelings, and images and how they are intertwined in a complex picture drawn by our imagination.

Affect and Fandom Literacy Practices in the Classroom

Continuing with the reflection on students' affective responses and how teachers can make room for intra-actions, it should be taken into account that the latter are nurtured when

students' interests are included in unit planning, as these involve them in meaningful ways and allow them to become agents of their own learning. Fandoms around video games, literary sagas, musical bands, musicians, TV shows, movies, and sports teams are being recognized as agentful and productive for fans' literacy learning (Black, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b; Lam, 2000, 2005; Yi, 2007, 2008). If we, as educators, realize the potential they have for students' intra-actions, as well as literacy practices captured through affective responses, classroom assemblages will move more effectively toward creating new affects. Assemblages are a "[…] mix of bodies, ideas, words, and things. […] They include the coming together of memory, affect, senses, and time" (Bartlett and LeBlanc, 2020). Affective intensities escape the logic of production the same way fans are not passive consumers but have embodied reactions: their identity is carefully crafted and mediated through affective responses.

Based on the aforementioned, identity is not an observable phenomenon circumscribed to a set of common practices and preferences (likes and dislikes), but a complex construct mutable and dynamic in nature. As people grow older, they spend their energy on experiences and collect memories that will be forever stored in their brains and when brought up will evoke sensations, images, and feelings. Even those events that are blurry and difficult to recall affect the way they see the world. In a similar way, identity shifts over time and never stays the same, for it is at the mercy of affective intensities present everywhere. Lemke (2009), reflecting on his previous work in 2008, highlights that "Identities can be multiplex, strategic, logically inconsistent or incommensurable, and call for quite different conceptualizations when considered at different timescales" (p.6). This means that they are multilayered and are constantly changing, evolving, morphing into new versions without losing their essence. Through literacy practices, and in virtual communities, we enact our identities.

Research has suggested that literacy transcends the one-size-fits-all view of education and, as affect, it does not admit absolute answers (Lemke, 2009; Bartlett & LeBlanc, 2020). Literacy practices have undergone positive conceptual changes in literary and academic literacy; formal print texts are no longer predominant in education circles, but multi-semiotic and multimodal texts that circulate through the media are acknowledged (Lemke, 2009). Nevertheless, the pandemic that shook the world and the different challenges formal schooling is facing (e.g. students' lack of motivation to study), have led scholars like Amanda Smith (2016) to question the fact that we need to "access other aspects of the doing of literacies". She continues stating that "affective, embodied and other non-cognitive domains of literacies are often more mercurial and difficult to unearth through traditional theoretical approaches" (p. 125). This is why, there is a rising interest in researching about literacy approaches that have affect at their core (Lemke, 2009; Lenters & McDermott, 2020).

Following the same line, Lemke (2009) argues that "meaning and feeling are inextricable" (p.1). Since we make sense of what affects us, our literacy practices are necessarily mediated by our affective experiences. Meaning making processes, then, depend on the ways the bodymind perceives an encounter and generates an affective response that can be either expressed through language or be only felt. Lemke (2009) posits that computer and video game players and engaged in sophisticated literacy activities "integrating in real time textual, visual, and auditory information from a computer program (and often also from other players) which (and who) react in turn to our responses to their moves" (p.2). Gamers get into character and feel a whirlwind of emotions that cannot be always put into words; some of them are: panic, freight, tiredness, joy, and fun. Players are so immersed within the game that they experience the joy of "ilinx", a sense of vertigo similar to a drop on a rollercoaster, made real due to the telepresence

in the virtual world (Lemke, 2009). Such affective responses keep on motivating people, especially school-aged youths to play.

Gamers, just like fans, are not passive consumers: They are involved in meaning-making processes that account for their literacy practices (Gee, 2007; Lemke, 2009). With their well-coordinated visual responses and strategies, they calculate their next moves and make choices. All these depend on "how [they] feel (e.g. pressed for time, at leisure; frustrated, empowered) and how [they] want to feel (thrilled, dizzy, proud, victorious, noble, wicked) as well as on our rational calculations of strategic goals and means" (Lemke, 2009, p.3). From this perspective, cognition and affect should not be regarded as separate or isolated, for they are processes that happen together in unison within an assemblage (Deleuze, 2002; Bartlett & LeBlanc, 2020). On this basis, feelings, thoughts, and understandings of the world do not precede reason or take place after it, for they often arise suddenly –they are not planned–. This does not mean that we cannot sense the places, people, objects, living organisms, and emotions that trigger those kinds of affective responses: we are drawn (conscious or unconsciously) to what makes us feel alive. Although we might not be able to choose what and how we affect and are affected by something, researchers in the field of affect theory invite us to think of the possibilities we open up when we bring to the classroom what students like and enjoy doing.

Understanding in what ways we can learn from students' out-of-school literacy practices is also a matter of wondering how and why they feel drawn to those in the first place. In this vein, it is worth drawing from the posthuman concept of "desire". Deleuze and Guattari (1983), in *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, question the view of psychoanalysts, who conceive desire intrinsically as the production of fantasized objects, while extrinsically, there is a real object it lacks; for them, desire produces reality. Accordingly, "[…] Desire is the set of

passive syntheses that engineer partial objects, flows, and bodies, and that function as units of production" (p.26). Even if it does not lack its object, a fixed subject is missing, one that has been repressed. As a consequence, "Desire is a machine, and the object of desire is another machine connected to it" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p.26). This is why it cannot be matched with "need", for the latter is derived from it and lost in a void. Objective beings know that desire has very few needs and thus, has the power of existing in the real world, where everything becomes possible (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983).

As desiring machines, humans have a productive energy that is in constant movement and flow, randomly and even unconsciously taking up elements from other bodies, materials, feelings, words, and worlds, and arranging them into "assemblages" in a rather chaotic fashion. During this process, there are differences in intensities (flows of energy), which create unplanned experiences (MacDonald & Leander, 2020). The act of creating is properly human, for: "The artist is the master of objects […] the work of art is itself a desiring-machine" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1983, p.32). An artist's creativity is born of its desire to make new things, to materialize their intensities and differences, to embody their affects. For this reason, desiring machines "produce a body without organs all by themselves and make no distinction between agents and their own parts" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983, p.32). Artists are desiring-machines and meaning-makers who are always producing.

Comparably, fans are artists who are affected by their fandom. Fans are motivated by their desire to navigate the fandom they are attached to: with each literacy practice, they reaffirm their condition as fans. Their drive to create artifacts such as fanfictions (fanfics), songfictions (songfics) –"fictions based around lyrics of a song"–, poetry fictions (poetryfics) –"based around stanzas of a poem"–, chatfictions (chatfics) –"fictions written as IM or Internet Relay Chat

conversations–, and movie fictions (moviefics) –"based on or written in the format of movies and screenplays"– (Black, 2009, pp.12-13) stems from their desire to be immersed in the fandom they are devoted to. These carefully crafted products are literacy practices due to the complex skills embedded in them. There is no denying that such fannish activities involve reading and writing processes required to ensure that their works of art are read by other authors: their choices regarding style, format, images, font, sound, music, among others, are significant in constructing their identities. In addition to this, writers conduct extensive research for consolidating their authenticity seal (Black, 2009). Online out-of-school settings provide affinity spaces for fans who want to belong to a community and bolster their literacy skills. Nonetheless, this goal is not always explicit, since fans do not engage in literacy practices expecting to refine those skills but are moved by the desire to be affected. What teachers should learn from this logic is that students' desire for learning cannot be forced; rather, it is inherent to all human beings and ready to come out when the conditions are right: when they are not only heard but listened to (Boldt, et al. 2015; Aukerman and Jensen, 2020).

Given what has been said, it is worth noting that the greatest attempt to bring fandom literacy practices to the classroom can be made if and when teachers and scholars take a leap of faith and acknowledge that students read and write incessantly (Black, 2008). To this end, it is essential to stop disregarding fannish activities, labeling them as a "waste of time", for they are an entry point that will help us fathom why and how our students are willingly dragged to those affinity spaces. Although the answer, just like affective responses, is never straightforward or simple, researchers (Lenters and McDermott, 2020) all over the world have shown that there is more to literacy education than scattered bits and pieces that seem random at first glance: "Literacy [is] an act of relating [that entails] multiplicity and interconnectedness" (Aukerman &

Jensen, 2020, p.103). It is not by chance that some people are more passionate about certain things than others and that every person gathers what comes their way to carve out new meanings.

Within this framework, multiplicity refers to: "[…] the wide range of creative ideas, perspectives, and possibilities generated by diverse thinkers who bring their unique relationships with the world around them into the reading and writing that they do". (Aukerman & Jensen, 2020, p.103). Following the same line, interconnectedness has to do with "the relations humans forge with the material world around them and with each other" (Aukerman & Jensen, 2020, p.103). Recognizing what students find meaningful is a matter of valuing the manifold ways they play with their environment, adding layers to their identities. For this reason, it is imperative to foster a "classroom culture of belonging and dialogue" (Aukerman & Jensen, 2020, p.104). When children and teachers are aware of the potentialities of sharing their experiences, stories, and histories, they create a "safe place" where they all feel comfortable and confident, for they know they are speaking to each other's humanity. Deepening into what makes us human is a sign of humility, one that has been lost to the predominance of right answers and a traditionalistic vision of popular culture.

Fans and Students

There is an evident relationship between how fans and students have been misjudged: they used to be described as madmen (Jenkins, 1992) and empty vessels (Aukerman & Jensen, 2020), respectively. What they have in common is that they were both part of "the subaltern" and thus, had no voice. Before the concept of literacy was refined, formal schooling only had one goal: uniformity. Students were taught to read and write and to follow rules; they were put inside

a box. Even though nowadays children's rights are defended, and we have recovered the main ideal of education, i.e. thinking for oneself, there are still efforts that can be made in order to fight conservative views that limit our perspective. Just as fans have positioned themselves as intellectual beings who have mastered different literacy skills (Bahoric & Swaggerty, 2015; Lenters, 2016; Sauro, 2014), overcoming the misconception that rendered them "passive consumers", students are raising their voices and demanding to be listened to. Teachers have the responsibility of adapting the curriculum to suit learners' needs and interests. Equally, if we want this to work, we ought to have a glimpse at what constitutes a person's culture.

Culture is a symbolic system in the sense that an individual chooses which elements reflect their identity and define who they are (Damasio, 2019). Comprehending the wider meaning of culture is a matter of celebrating people's identities, multicultural backgrounds, and particularities. Traditions, customs, rites, religions, languages, values, beliefs, principles, among others, are representations of a territory that tell it apart from any other. However, they are not necessarily culture indicators for the simple reason that every individual decides whether to take part in them (Damasio, 2019; Alim & Pennycook, 2007). If someone does not enjoy participating in the aforementioned, it does not mean that they do not belong to that community: they just do not agree with some practices others feel drawn to. Culture cannot be ascribed to a set of observable streamlined phenomenon owing to its multilayered nature that poses varied interpretations; at its core, it is defined by how every subject makes sense of their world, their experiences, and presents themselves to others (Alim & Pennycook, 2007).

Culture, as a human construct, is made up of elements that are both independent of each other and interrelated, yet the sum of them all does not equal to its total. Far from being only a complex system, culture is subjective in nature, and as such, accounts for a flowing process that

is never complete. Although there are patterns of behavior identifiable among groups of people who share a common ethnicity, religion, country, etc., these answer to social consensus achieved by a certain community due to their relationship of proximity or geographical nearness, more than an accurate depiction of what culture entails (Alim & Pennycook, 2007). This is backed up by the assertion that language is arbitrary, since there is no innate relationship between the signifier and the signified. Human beings are not born "knowing" a language, they learn it through interaction with language users and animals and objects found in the environment that surrounds them. Similarly, culture is not preconfigured but also learned: it comprises rules of behavior and irregularities given by experience.

Fans and students are "sensemakers [who] assign words to the texts in their world…" (Aukerman and Jensen, 2020, p.107). Throughout their process of reading, they find texts everywhere and establish connections tapping into their previous experiences. As desiring machines, some of those texts might evoke emotions that can be expressed or that are felt but not uttered. In the end, the idea is to provide a space in the classroom where learners can be set up in situations in which they can click with their peers and allow their affective responses to roam freely. Since children are experts at letting their imagination run wild, teachers ought to harness each opportunity they have to ask students questions about their meaning-making literacy practices. For example, Aukerman and Jensen (2020) narrate how Krista Jensen has her students bring to the classroom what she calls a "Bag of Belonging", containing physical objects (artifacts) they consider important to them. In these moments of sharing, the children read the representations of their classmates' lives and identified who they belonged to. Then, they must write about what they experienced during that period of time, including words, sketches, drawings, descriptions, and stories. Finally, they are asked to infer how everybody's objects and

stories were interconnected, what Aukerman and Jensen (2020) called “commonplaces”: people come together to make sense of the world and form new meanings.

Cole and Somerville (2022) present their empirical work with pre-school students, through which they explain the junction between literacy and mud, forgotten by today’s society. Affective literacy, then, embraces said linkage, enabling children to connect with nature, an approach often undermined by formal schooling. The researchers of this study draw from Spinoza’s (2018) definition of affect, focusing on a “metaphysical system of ethics” (Cole & Somerville, 2022, p.189). For them, affect is the basis for rationality, and it gives life to expression. Likewise, Spinoza’s mode of materialism is far from being idealistic, the reason why the authors were inspired to theorize about “dirt as mud-expression”. Also, they allude to the concept of “social ecology” to apply Spinozian affect in the classroom and make it practical for the purpose of changing society. Finally, with the aim of bringing the material affects of Spinoza as affective literacy and social ecology together, they acknowledge Félix Guattari’s insight into the dangers of capitalism for the psyche, separating the mind from nature. His solution was to “understand the damage from within…, and to attempt to turn this process inside out, to enable productivity of an entirely new order to that of capitalism” (Cole & Somerville, 2022, p.190). To do this, it is indispensable to break out of the never-ending cycle of language and economy.

The image of children playing with mud is the perfect example to illustrate how the flows of intensity of affect are comprehended by kids through a connection with the earth that is felt intuitively. Yet, grownups tend to forget that intimate relationship that exists between all living beings and nature (Cole & Somerville, 2022). Even teachers become caught up in trying to wash away that dirtiness: every time they give preference to “correct answers” over other kinds of learning experiences, they are mutilating their students’ imagination. An affective engagement in

the mud can help rise above traditional schooling. Cole and Somerville (2022) through their empirical work with preschoolers and pictures of young Aboriginal children in the mud, invite us to get over assumptions and prejudices regarding "the other" and honor the perspectives of indigenous people. For Guattari (1996), accepting a "subjective pluralism" is a desire for difference; it means embracing the multiplicity within oneself (p.216). When teachers set the scene for meaningful experiences in which affective literacy is present, students are placed before "sticky" moments that spur learning.

Just like affect, the process of learning cannot be planned or seamlessly calculated. Rather, "learning happens in moments that leak through curriculum when the children are able to snatch something that empowers their own "forces of life" (Boldt, et al. 2015, p.431). In any case, affect, as well as learning, are intensities, though unarticulated, felt; they are experiences that spill over the borders of the curriculum. Due to the prevalence given to standardization and testing, teaching practices have lost their ability to touch the other's sensibility. This is why "[…] our teaching must speak to our desire and must respect and be responsive to the power of our students' desires" (Boldt, et al. 2015, p.432). More than looking for "innovative" approaches informed by capitalistic views of pedagogy and education, the focus should be on going back to the roots (Cole and Somerville, 2022).

Affect cannot be limited to just emotions, for it is the force that propels movement and implies the capacity to move and be moved (Gregg & Seigworth, 2010; Leander & Ehret, 2019), going beyond what Ahmed (2014) stated above. This means that affect theory necessarily informs fan studies, since it "connects to fandom not only in terms of internal bodily emotions, but also in external performances" (Griffin, 2022, p). Moreover, Fiske (1992) brings forward two categories of productivity: "semiotic", which has to do with reading and making sense of a text,

and “enunciative”, which denotes sharing and talking about the meanings given to that text, allowing fans to perform their identities (Lamerichs, 2018). Such categories can be practical for the second language classroom since teachers can make use of them to scaffold students’ writing.

Chapter 5

Including Fandom-Driven Affective Responses in the Second Language Literacy Classroom

Doing research is a human capability powered by curiosity and nourished by experience; it stems from the survival instinct that dictates what a human being must do. Thanks to it, questions related to how things work arise to understand both the interior and the exterior world. Intrinsically linked to the raison d'être of science, research involves revisiting social phenomena to grasp the meaning of everyday praxis. As Stake (2011) affirms: “Research is inquiry, deliberate study, a seeking to understand” (p.13). It is an activity carried out willingly which aims to experiment the “state of affairs” in a particular context in order to make an interpretation and reach general conclusions that will allow the researcher to expand their mental and creative horizons. Research, then, is an ever-changing way of perceiving the factors that come into play in the process of living.

This critical literature review is placed within the qualitative research methodology. According to Saldaña (2011): “Qualitative research is an umbrella term for a wide variety of approaches to and methods for the study of natural social life” (p.3). This means that defining qualitative research entails looking through the lenses of multiple disciplines such as pedagogy, sociology, philosophy, psychology, anthropology, business, journalism, and health care, among others. Evidence includes “textual materials such as interview transcripts, field notes, and documents, and/ or visual materials such as artifacts, photographs, video recordings, and Internet sites, that document human experiences about others and/or one’s self in social action and reflexive states” (Saldaña, 2011, pp. 3-4). Qualitative research is focused on gathering experiential data obtained through observation and analyzed by professionals, who situate the

problem in a context that is close to them and treat it both generally and individually. In this sense, individual knowledge is “the knowledge about one thing in its time and in its own place and about how it works” (Stake, 2011, p.17), while general knowledge is scientific and theoretical. Although the two (particular and general) represent two different realities, they overlap since they seek to find out what is true about personal and collective experience (Stake, 2011).

The main goal of qualitative research is to comprehend social phenomena through a naturalist generalization: approaching them in a detailed manner. This implies a more rigorous disposition and an open-minded attitude towards how people make sense of their world, which are enhanced by participant observation and direct involvement in the groups or communities that will be studied more closely. Herein lies the relevance of the German term “verstehen”, defined by Mora (2015a) as “the deep, complex, and detailed understanding of social phenomena”. This concept encompasses the three dimensions of qualitative research, proposed by Mora (2015b): the historical-political (at the macro level), the sociocultural (at the meso level), and the pedagogical (at the micro level). The first dimension refers to the need of revisiting the past and embracing the present (Mora, 2015b) addressing the issues that still have an impact on people’s lives and encouraging their transformation. The second one pertains to the recognition of the particular situation the community is dealing with, taking into account and valuing its culture and the elements that are part of it. The last dimension situates the project within the framework of pedagogy and school practices, leading it into the context of education.

Drawing on the qualitative research methodology and with the purpose of conceptualizing by building on what has been researched, this study will be a critical literature review, which is an analysis of the theory found in texts to develop an argument with the purpose

of convincing a particular audience. Besides, it ought to target a specific audience or focus on a question. This means that the researcher has selected the literature that will be reviewed through their critical lenses interpreted the evidence, ordered and summarized the information and written the final account (Wallace & Wray, 2011). The author, then, has decided to constructively examine the chosen works and provide their synthesis about what is known in order to demonstrate how strong the evidence is and what is missing. According to Wallace and Wray (2011), the review questions may be:

- "substantive (about some aspect of the social world);
- theoretical (about concepts, perspectives, theories or models that relate to some aspect of the social world);
- methodological (about the approach to conducting an empirical or theoretical enquiry)" (p.151).

The significance of the aforementioned review questions lies on their type: A substantive review question focuses on "[…] a contribution towards the development of research or practice knowledge in the field of enquiry" (Wallace & Wray, 2011, p.152), a theoretical review question pretends to continue elaborating on related theory, and a methodological review question aims to justify the research methods (Wallace & Wray, 2011). In short, a critical literature review allows the author to expand the research in an area of study. To do this, it is fundamental to ensure that the claims are supported by the findings and that the reviewer is consciously constructive when evaluating the existing literature (Wallace and Wray, 2011). The latter is a characteristic any reviewer must have, which is far from diminishing others' work: Being critical is a matter of showing how one is able to make an affirmation backed up by evidence, reflecting the writer's intellect and personal experience.

Critical Literature Review

This critical literature review aims to navigate what other researchers have inquired regarding the existing link between students' affective responses and fandom literacy practices in a second language learning classroom, in order to determine the relevance of the study and draw conclusions that will lay the foundation for its future progress. With respect to the population, since this critical literature review is set within a formal schooling context, it will range from students who are in kindergarten (4 years old) to those in eleventh grade (16-17 years old). Furthermore, the methods that were used to carry out this critical literature review were: observation of interactions among fans on social media in online fan groups I am part of, and of students who enjoy sharing information about their favorite T.V. shows and video games, examination of the chosen texts (Stake, 2010), and highlighting key information found in the latter. It should be noted that in spite of the observations I did because of my involvement in some fandoms, these were not documented and only serve as a justification of why I picked this particular topic.

To answer the research question, "What can second language educators learn from students' affective responses to fandom literacies to enhance the latter's second language literacy practices?" I started by reading two books. The first one was "Affect, Embodiment, and Place in Critical Literacy: Assembling Theory and Practice", edited by Kim Lenters and Mairi McDermott, and published in 2020, and "The Affect Theory Reader", edited by Gregory J. Seigworth, Melissa Gregg, and published in 2010. The latter helped me begin to understand the concept of affect theory and the former to illuminate how it could be interwoven with literacy practices. Then, I realized I also wanted to make reference to the fandom realm, for I have been a self-declared fan ever since I was seven years old. Ultimately, as a primary school English

teacher with two years of experience, and as someone who has utterly adored learning English at school since she was five years old, I could not put aside this layer of my identity.

Once the research question was polished, and I had my mind set to what I wanted to do as my thesis, I did extensive research on multidisciplinary and education and pedagogy databases provided by the university (Universidad Pontificia Bolivariana), i.e. Jstor, Oxford Academic, Sage Journals, Springer Link, Taylor & Francis, and Emerald Insight. I also searched keywords on Google Academic to find more references useful for the present critical literature review. The values entered in the search engines were: “affect theory and literacy”, “affect and literacy”, “fandom and affect”, “fan and affect”, “fandom literacy”, “fan literacy”, “fandom and classroom”, “second language and fandom”, “English and fandom”. Among the bibliography and cybergraphy, there are books in digital format, research articles and articles from online magazines, which ranged from 1977 to 2022. Even though it was not possible to find a single article or book that tackled all the concepts exposed before, the references brought at least two of these together, which helped informed the research. For instance, some articles focused on the concept of affect theory and how it was implemented in the classroom with students in grades K-11, and define affect in relation with literacy practices, while others leaned more towards how fandom-related activities were seen from an affective standpoint.

The articles were classified in four categories: Fandom and Second Language Literacy Practices, Literacy and Fandom in Affect Theory, Affect and Fandom Literacy Practices in the Classroom, and Fans and Students. The first one was the starting point for the rest since I have done research in the field of second language learning and fandom studies before. Here, I incorporated the articles or books related to literacies, second language literacies, and fan/fandom-driven actions (activities, tasks, and examples). The second category aimed at

inserting the concept of affect theory in the equation and elucidating how it can be interconnected with the other two. In the third one, I wanted to position affect and fandom literacy practices in the classroom, so as to place them in a pedagogical framework and educational setting, given the scope of this research. The last category was a way of proving how close fan studies and the school are: Even if not all students are fans, they do share some characteristics that should be considered to foster an environment of dialogue.

I opted to do a critical literature review because I wanted to highlight what has been researched on the field of fan/fandom studies, connect it with second language literacies in the classroom, and explain how such a link could be enhanced through affect theory. Likewise, when I started reading the literature, I realized that there were some gaps that needed to be filled. For instance, when I tried to look for information regarding the three concepts, I only found a research article that included all of them, in which the question raised by the authors was "How can literacy educators better prepare adolescents for the affective experiences and pressures of maintaining their shared reading lives in online participatory cultures such as the YouTube community BookTube?" (Ehret, et al., 2018, p.1). Here, the researchers described how affect had an essential role in the online participatory culture of BookTube and the way youths played with texts, images, signs, and videos to make meaning and reaffirm their status as members of that community.

Nevertheless, the rest of the articles and books I selected were helpful for me to understand how the concepts can be merged together to contribute to the field of second language learning. Through an in-depth analysis of the references, I was able to identify the "common ground" in what the researchers and scholars had reported in their publications and indicate the strengths and weaknesses of the evidence given by them. Finally, I could express my

own judgement about how I would answer the research question based on the cited literature and my experience as a fan and a teacher. At the end, I am convinced that other people's work is essential to inform and guide my research. Thanks to the former, I consolidated my subject knowledge and clarified my research aim and objectives (Saunders & Rojon, 2011), without forgetting to situate the data within a certain context.

The detected conceptual void was that there is only one study from Canada that links fandom-driven second language literacy practices and students' affective responses, which is the research article by Canadian scholars Ehret, Boegel, and Manuel-Nekouei (2018) about 63 Booktubers they observed, although they focused on two (Emma and Sara). This is an example of how educators can implement fandom-related activities and tasks like asking students to watch a Booktuber's video about a book they read, write down their affective experience, and compare it with that of the Booktuber. Then, there could be a class discussion around how different or similar their reactions were and share them with their classmates and teacher. Only with these interactions and if teachers revamp their pedagogical practices and publish their work, will the void be filled.

Another constraint was that there is no research in Colombia that states the relationship between students' second language literacy practices and their affective responses to fandom. As a matter of fact, research on second language literacy practices in the past decade in Colombia has had significant advances (Mora, 2013a, 2013b; Mora, 2015; Mora, et al., 2018), but when it comes to fandom affective experiences in the classroom, there had been no evidence of a study until now. This makes this critical literature review innovative to the field of second language learning and feasible to be applied in the context of teaching English in Colombian schools.

The last hindrance was the lack of research on affect theory in the second language classroom and students' affective responses to fandom literacy practices, especially from first (6-7 years old) to eleventh (16-17 years old) grade, with the exception of 11-12-year-olds (fifth to sixth grade), a second grader, and a 16-year-old high school senior student. In the first stance, Black (2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2011) centered her research on a case study of an eleven-year-old kid, in which she manifested how this Chinese girl, who had just moved to Canada, and was a fan of the Card Captor Sakura anime, joined an online fandom community and started uploading her fanfiction works, constructing her identity and developing her English literacy practices. Similarly, Lam (2000, 2005) also conducted a case study of how a sixteen-year-old Chinese immigrant teenager, who had been living in the United States for five years and who was J-pop fan, became interested in creating home pages where he posted images and information about his fandom and chatted with other fans in English. Finally, Cole and Somerville's (2022) empirical work with preschool students, put forward the interplay between affect and literacy –even if they do not make remarks on the concept of fandom– with "dirt as mud-expression". For them, children's literacy practices can be nurtured through a direct contact with nature, just like indigenous people have taught us.

Chapter 6

Analysis and Contribution of Affective Responses to Fandom Second Language Literacy Practices in the Classroom

After examining the literature review provided by the books, research articles, and publications on magazines, selecting the ones that were the most suitable for my thesis, I grouped the data into four categories to show how the findings could inform my critical literature review: Fandom and Second Language Literacy Practices, Literacy and Fandom in Affect Theory, Affect and Fandom Literacy Practices in the Classroom, and Fans and Students. With the present chapter, I intent to answer the research question "What can second language educators learn from students' affective responses to fandom literacies to enhance the latter's second language literacy practices?" I would like to present an approach that has to be adapted to the context in which it will operate, for there is no denying that teaching and learning practices ought to be revamped to meet students' needs and interests.

Fandom and Second Language Literacy Practices

In this section, it became clear that researchers recognize the usefulness of bringing second language learning and fan practices together. For Black (2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b) and Lam (2000, 2005), this was particularly meaningful for immigrants, who have had to move to another country and learn a new language (English, in these cases) to adapt to a foreign place. Thanks to their fandom, these youths were able to consolidate themselves as fans and ended up acquiring their target language, as well as constructing their identities (Thorne and Black, 2011). With this, it was evinced that second language literacy practices are present in the fandom realm: There is no denying that fans are multilingual speakers.

Fans meet in online spaces like social media groups, webpages, or platforms designed exclusively for them with the aim of sharing ideas and experiences with other members, giving room to what Jenkins (1992, 2006) calls a "participatory culture". Here, everybody without exception has something to teach and something to learn, for they are affiliated by an interest or a passion (Gee, 2018). As a consequence, there are not any mastery levels to be differentiated: Everyone collaborates in their own way (Gee, 2004, 2007). Besides, since individuals worldwide convene in these fan communities, they often use English to communicate with one another more effectively (Black, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2009a, 2009b; Lam, 2000, 2005). This does not mean that other languages are disregarded; on the contrary, they bring people closer: Intercultural relationships are forged. If educators embolden intercultural dialogue in their classrooms, for example, in an English class, they could show students videos and audios about people from all over the world speaking English with different accents.

When interactions among fans happen, they catalyze the creation of blogs, wikis, podcasts, fanfiction, fan art, videos inspired by the fandom, song covers, choreographies, poems, journals, photos, portfolios, etc. (Sauro, 2014). The production of these works entails the appropriation of second language literacy skills, in addition to listening, reading, speaking, and writing, like photo taking, video recording and editing, aesthetically-appealing awareness, doing research, making a presentation, skimming and scanning information, note-taking, interviewing, problem-solving, critical thinking, among others (Goodman, 2003; Larson & Marsh, 2005). These skills are transferable to any language and prove that "young children are not simply media dupes or TV sponges but that they selectively appropriate material from popular culture which they assemble anew with home language traditions and school genres" (Comber, 2013, p. 590). This is particularly evident when we have students implement reading comprehension

strategies such as activating prior knowledge, visualizing, summarizing, questioning, and making inferences. For instance, if we show them the cover page of a book without its title and ask them to try to guess what the book is about, we are tapping into their background knowledge and helping them make connections.

Literacy and Fandom in Affect Theory

In this category, the aim was to demonstrate that there is an affective factor that has been considered in fandom studies: People's affective experiences matter in their experiences and reasons for becoming fans. Ehret et al. (2018) illustrated this with their research on BookTube communities and how participants carried out literacy practices in the shape of videos that required editing skills and portrayed their devotion to their fandom, which was motivated by their affective responses. In parallel, other scholars, even if they do not make reference to fandom, they acknowledge that literacy practices are imbued with affectivity, since feelings, emotions, and sensations happen before or at the same time as reasoning (Bartlett and LeBlanc, 2020; Lemke, 2009). This is why, it is pertinent to state that fans are "desiring machines" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983) who are willing to embody their affective reactions by writing fanfictions, songfictions, poetry fictions, chatfictions, movie fictions, songs, creating fan-art, wikis, and blogs, by attending comic-cons and live concerts (Black, 2009; Guzzetti, et al., 2010; Laflen, 2020), or just by doing karaoke alone in their rooms or singing in the shower.

On the other hand, other studies (Duffet, 2013; Grossberg, 1992; Hellekson & Busse, 2014; Hills, 2001, 2002; Jenkins, 2006; Sandvoss, 2005) have suggested that fan studies ought to be tackled from an affective approach, since fans' emotional attachments to their fandom is born out of their bodily experiences, sentiments, feelings, and emotions (Hansal & Gunderson, 2020). In this sense, before becoming fans, people undergo changes (be they colossal and felt or tiny

and unnoticed) that leave a visible or invisible mark in their lives. The former are not calculated but may happen either suddenly or progressively, while the latter, although they may be sensed, they happen unconsciously. According to Clare Hemmings (2005), affect has a "bodily meaning that pierces social interpretation, confounding its logic, and scrambling its expectations" (p.552). In a similar manner, Ahmed (2014), claims that emotions are "beneath the faculties of thought and reason" (p.6), for "to be emotional is to have one's judgement affected: it is to be reactive rather than active, dependent rather than autonomous" (p.3). Finally, she affirms that "emotions are 'sticky', and even when we challenge our investments, we might get stuck" (p.16).

From what has been previously said, it can be concluded that fans' textual productivity is infused with their affective responses, for they are involved in fannish activities. Karen Hellekson (2009) defines fandom as "a shared dialogue that results in a feedback loop of gift exchange, whereby the artwork or text is repetitively exchanged for the gift of reaction, which is itself exchanged, with the goal of creating and maintaining social solidarity" (pp.115-116). This definition goes in tandem with affect theory, in the words of Gregg and Seigworth (2010), "affect arises in the midst of in-between-ness: in the capacities to act and be acted upon" (p.1). The final product is not physical or material goods, but "immaterial" or "affective labour": the energy and time devoted to "discussing and consecrating love" (Gregg, 2009, p.209) of a fan object or fandom explains the passion embedded in fan-related actions (Spence, 2014). Then, it is not necessary to have a fan fiction story or a fan-art piece published, for it is something deeper, more internal, and affective.

Affect and Fandom Literacy Practices in the Classroom

Since in the last category, there was a closer approach among the concepts of second language literacy practices, affect theory, and fandom, this section aims to place them in the school setting. The main idea is to emphasize that teachers can lay the groundwork in their classroom "assemblages" (Bartlett & LeBlanc, 2020) to arouse moments that make affective responses conscious and that can turn into literacy practices, whether it be through paintings, drawings, sketches, written texts, digital art, poems, stories, and any other form of creative writing. As a consequence, students will use these artifacts to reflect their culture and identity (Lemke, 2009). The classroom, then, has to be a catalyst for dialogue, a place where teachers and students alike feel confident and comfortable enough to speak their minds.

Introducing affect to the classroom may be heavily criticized by those who are still bounded to traditionalistic approaches to schooling practices. Nevertheless, when dealing with a framework inspired by affect theory and fandom studies, it is mandatory to bear in mind that the classroom is an "assembled body" where students and teachers intra-act with human, non-human, and more-than-human entities (Lenters & McDermott, 2020). Educators should be made aware that to stimulate learning it is crucial to first and foremost comprehend that learning cannot be guaranteed, for it tends to happen in moments that "leak through curriculum" (Boldt, et al. 2015), instead of those that were predicted and planned. In this case, the process of learning has an "immediacy" that can be compared to an affective response: How we feel about an event, or an activity of life influences the degree to which we learn, even if there are elements that will only be grasped later (Lemke, 2009). For this reason, Lemke (2009) pinpoints "We cannot not learn". After all, he continues, "Everything that we do, everything that happens to us, potentially

alters out later choices and actions" (p.8). Learning, as a lifelong process, is undeniably connected with 'desire'.

Fans, like humans, are "desiring machines" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1983) that feel the need to produce (Lamerichs, 2018) in order to be closer to their fandom. In the classroom, teachers can tap the full potential of fan-related activities by setting the stage for affective responses to take place. To illustrate this point, Aukerman and Jensen (2020) highlight that teachers could have their students bring a "Bag of Belonging" with objects that are meaningful for them. Later on, they are asked to express through drawings, paintings, sketches, or written texts why those things are important to them, what they make them feel, and the emotions they spark. Additionally, they could narrate the story of how they came across them and what they represent for them. These meaning-making practices are precious and priceless, for they ignite experiences that give room to affective encounters.

On another note, the literature propounds that there are a few studies that exemplify how teachers take lessons from fandom and fan studies to put them into practice in their classroom as a means to integrate students' interests and passions. Guzzetti, Elliot, and Welsch (2010) posit that including "Do it yourself" (DIY) media is a great strategy, that although challenging, it is rewarding, for learners have the opportunity to choose among writing songs and zines (magazines), posting on blogs, and choreograph dances. The teacher, however, has to state the competences and task objectives and share them with their students. In a nutshell, DIY media are "those tools and practices that facilitate creating new media texts, such as a song, an online journal entry, or a videogame" (Guzzetti et al., 2010, p.17). This underlines the appropriateness of incorporating fan-related activities in the classroom through an affective lens. Likewise, through this practice, dialogues are brought up concerning the importance of giving arguments

that support one's claims in a respectful way and accepting that not everybody has to agree with them (Guzzetti, et al., 2010).

Fans and Students

This final section pretends to disclose the relationship between these populations, who have historically been silenced and undermined. Howbeit, thanks to the internet and the proliferation of digital technologies, both students and fans have found the power to raise their voices, asserting themselves as meaning makers. This has been duly noted by educators and scholars who value pupils' affective experiences and literacy practices. To conclude this category, some examples were given to present a more detailed picture of how affect theory and literacies can be implemented in the classroom. (Aukerman & Jensen, 2020; Cole & Somerville, 2022; Kuby, 2020). All in all, it should be mentioned that the research on students' affective responses to fandom literacies is still ongoing, due to its wide scope.

Second language learners' out-of-school literacy practices are influenced by the ways they socialize with others in physical and virtual spaces (Heath & Street, 2008; Hull & Schultz, 2001; Mora, et al., 2018; Street, 1984, 1995, 2013a, 2013b; Tannock, 2001). Within the context of Medellín, Colombia, city dwellers construct meaning from the texts displayed in restaurants, bookstores, clothes shops, sales advertisements, billboards, graffiti, and fashion, which showcases how they forge their relationship with other languages. The view of "The City as Literacy" has helped researchers, scholars, and teachers realize that citizens play with different semiotic resources to make sense of everyday interactions. When we understand that the city becomes dynamic because people build links with everything (and everyone) they bump into, we comprehend why Medellín is a multilingual city that fosters organic encounters among cultures and tongues (Mora, 2013a, 2013b, 2015c).

The abovementioned is also applied to the fandom realm: People who belong to a fan community become engaged with a second language due to the need to communicate with other members and end up acquiring it in an organic fashion. Such is the case of American professor Rebecca Black, whose work has been paramount for the field of fan studies and literacies (Black, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009; Thorne & Black, 2011), and that, along with Lam (2000, 2005) and Yi (2005) pioneered the tie between these two concepts. From their research, it can be asserted that "fandom literacy practices" are a reality that has been extensively documented in out-of-school contexts.

In the same vein, thanks to Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs), social interaction across cultures is made visible through an emerging passion for identities that revolve around popular culture, fashion, and lifestyles (Yon, 2000). In virtual communities and social platforms, fans worldwide share their experiences about how they began to take interest in a particular fandom and bond over them. For instance, the online site *Fanfiction.net* is a "common space" where dialogic interactions are held (Bakhtin, 1981), for multiple voices are valued. Authors and readers are dedicated to heightening their status as "fans" and to being recognized by others. This allows a dynamic participation among fans from all over the world, which creates an intercultural environment surrounded by cultural perspectives and identities that remain in motion (Black, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009).

Fan-Related Activities

A clear example of what was mentioned above is how fanfiction writers use a tool contained within the platform (fanfiction.net), namely "author's notes", in which there is an instant "author-reader feedback", for readers can respond to each section of any chapter making comments and suggestions about rhetorical choices and language use (Black, 2005, 2006). The

latter is especially useful for authors who have English as a second language. Accordingly, fan fiction's nature is fundamentally affective: It focuses on "the emotional life of texts" and moments of "high emotion in a text that instigate equally strong feelings in the reader; these heighten a sense of empathy, connection, or intimacy between the reader and the characters in the text" (Wilson, 2016, para.2.4-2.5). A fan writer draws on their understanding of a character found in a text to construct their backstory in a descriptive way to exhibit their knowledge regarding the character's actions, reactions, behaviors, attitudes, and affective expressions/responses, creating a believable fictional world (Wilson, 2016). Affect, as "the force that compels movement" (Leander and Ehret, 2019, p.12), is what drives the author to imagine stories that are a projection of their love, passion, and desire.

By the same token, blogs and wikis are other spaces where students can design personal blogs that act as online journals and write entries about what troubles or captivates them, or more public ones used to make commentaries on political, social, and cultural matters or denounce an injustice. Others might opt for book or movie reviews (Guzzetti, et al., 2010). Similarly, wikis are another option to promote the sharing of ideas and points of view, as well as to facilitate collaborative work and the construction of knowledge through research. Laflen (2020), declares "Wikis facilitate collaborative learning through community-focused enquiry and student-generated content" (p.2). Learners reflect on what they receive, whether it be in image, audio, video format, or in digital text. This is why teachers ought to help strengthen their critical and literacy skills with technology-mediated activities and tasks.

The best feature about wikis is that they are malleable websites, since anyone can post and edit information in varied formats without having to know anything about programming languages: "Wikis use simplified hypertext markup language. Anyone can change anything.

Linking within wiki pages is easy. Content is always evolving and never finished" (Laflen, 2020, p.4). Plus, wikis archive the changes made to a page, thus, students can follow the steps of the designing process. Ultimately, wikis empathize text instead of software, allowing co-authoring and focus on the writing process: both learners and instructors participate in scholarly conversations and utilize academic language (Laflen, 2020).

Chapter 7

Reflecting on Students' Affective Responses to Fandom-Mediated Second Language Literacy Practices

Fandom Second Language Literacy Practices as a Catalyst for Students' Affect

This chapter concretizes how the analysis of the findings helps us to understand the conceptual value of this critical literature review and its pedagogical implications for the field of second language studies. The invitation is to think outside the box and turn our attention to what is in front of us: Youth's literacy practices are present in a wide variety of ways that can be very useful for empowering collaborative work and second language learning (Cummins, 2000; Gee, 2003; Jenkins, 2006; Pennycook, 2017). Conjointly, fans' affective responses to their fandom teach us that affect is at the core of human existence and that it should therefore be given importance in formal schooling. Students listen to, speak, read, and write more than we care to admit: Teachers often forget that they were children once and saw the world in a different light (Brandt, 2015; De Saint-Exupéry, 2017; Garcia, 2009; Garcia and Wei, 2014; Gee, 2015; Freire, 1970, Street, 1993).

Even though the findings show that fandom is never devoid of affect, the research on how to implement it in the classroom is scarce. Scholars agree on the promising future of affective fandom literacies and underline that these can be applied to the school setting (Ehret, et.al, 2018; Griffin, 2022; Lamerichs, 2018; Lemke, 2009; Lenters & Mc Dermott, 2020; Spence, 2014; Wilson, 2016). Also, a few teachers have shared and published their experiences on what working with affect theory and fandom-related literacy practices has meant for them (Aukerman & Jensen, 2020; Boldt, et.al, 2015; Cole & Sommerville, 2022; Kuby, 2020), even though they do not make specific reference to fan studies. This is why there is a need to harness the potential

of theorizing about these concepts: We ought to ask ourselves how we can ground affective processes mobilized by fandom literacies in a classroom context.

Going back to the research question raised at the beginning of this critical literature review, what second language educators can learn from students' affective responses to fandom literacy practices, in the first place, is that learners' everyday occurrences are relevant. This is especially noticed in the discussion about how teachers can promote a "safe environment" where students' voices are listened to and their feelings, emotions, and affects are not regulated, but taken into account. When children are encouraged to provide insight into a certain topic of interest, a global concern, or a local issue, they display their identities, creating a special connection with the second language class (its members and the language itself).

The first step in transforming the stagnant approaches to an education guided by factual questions and "right" answers that are privileged over affective experiences, is to actually bring to the classroom activities and tasks that inquire about students' passions, hopes, fears, dreams, and nightmares. Although not everybody is a self-declared fan of someone or something, digging into the fandom realm can teach second language educators to be up-to-date with what is "trending" (TV shows, movies, local and international news, video games, celebrity gossip, etc.) and adapt popular texts to students' age and language level.

On that account, we cannot allow ourselves to be swayed by notions of "right" or "appropriate" taste and "wrong" or "inappropriate" taste, which used to be determined by social classes (Bourdieu, 1979; Jenkins, 1992). As a consequence, what grants the title of "proper" or "improper" taste is the power of a hegemonic cultural group that is perpetuated by educational institutions. In this sense, those who belong to dominant cultural hierarchies are the bearers of "exquisite" taste. As class differentiations are forged, "desirable and undesirable strategies of

interpretation and styles of consumption" (Jenkins, 1992, p.16) are born. This is how certain fandoms and groups of fans are regarded as "obsessive", "mad", "ignorant", and "uncritical": they are seen as people who lack judgement, discernment, and rationality, and thus, are passive consumers who are easily manipulated (Grossberg, 1992; Jenkins, 1992).

Nonetheless, such a simplistic view of fans can only come from those who are narrow-minded and blindly believe they are the possessors of a legitimate culture (Bourdieu, 1979), doing very little to grasp why fans are so elated about their fandoms. More than accepting and recognizing that fandom literacy practices can be worthwhile, the idea is to really embrace them and exploit their benefits in terms of teamwork, as it is the case of Wikis and collaborative writing (Laflen, 2020), DIY media like songs, poems, and blogs (Guzzetti, et.al, 2010), fanfiction, songfiction, chatfiction, poetryfiction, and movie fiction (Black, 2009). In addition to this, other examples can be practical, like the "Bag of Belonging" filled with artifacts that are significant to their owners (Aukerman & Jensen, 2020) and playing with mud and then asking children what they felt (Cole & Somerville, 2022). All these illustrations are opposed to traditional and purely grammatical fill-in-the-blank exercises.

Second, students have different ways and styles of approaching texts, depending on their interpretation and how they reflect on their needs, interests, desires, experiences, and lives. For this reason, each person's situation has to be addressed, for context is what sets a text in motion. Luckily, digital tools have made this more evident: People read texts that appear on the internet and shape them according to their interpreting resources, affective reactions, and available multimodal tools (O'Byrne, et al., 2022). Perhaps some would read what others post on social media –a text, an image, a photo, a video, an audio– and leave a comment, hit the "like" or "love" button, or just keep on scrolling down. This, however, does not mean that they did not

pay attention to the text, but that in that moment, it did not generate an articulated response. In the classroom, teachers ought to let students experiment with different texts and formats. As Grossberg (1992, p.52) states:

> The meaning of a text is not given in some independently available set of codes which we can consult at our own convenience. A text does not carry its own meaning or politics already inside of itself; no text is able to guarantee what its effects will be.

Third, it is important that teachers select varied texts that may capture students' attention. This, by no means, can guarantee that everybody will 'love' the chosen text: some may find it so appealing that they will reread it at home and look up information about the author and more of their works, while others may find it boring and pointless. In either case, the discussion around that text is what leads to encounters among students and teachers. Both positive and negative feelings form part of people's affectivity, something that is often forgotten in academic settings. Therefore, "Affective hermeneutics direct focus toward moments of high emotion in a text that stimulate equally strong feelings in the reader; these heighten a sense of empathy, connection, or intimacy between the reader and the characters in the text" (Wilson, 2016, par. 2.4). After all, affect does not need us to let it in, for it is always in transit; we require its fluidity to better foreground human sensibilities (Grossberg, 1992).

Along the same lines, teachers could take examples from fanfiction websites to show students how fans create their own artifacts by taking elements from their fandom and ask them to choose a fandom they are interested in and write a short story. For example, they could imagine they are in the Harry Potter or in the Star Wars fandom and are asked to write a story where they are the protagonists and describe what a normal day would be like, what they would

do, the subjects they would have, etc. They could also take a scene from the books or the movies and do a roleplay or change the ending of the literary saga. Students will be assessed on correct punctuation, grammar, cohesion and coherence, and presentation with different semiotic resources. If teachers implement fan studies in ways students find attractive, if they all agree on a movie or series to watch and do reflexive exercises where social and moral issues are studied, students will undoubtedly feel more engaged in the lessons. In the case of the Harry Potter fandom (fans are called "Potterheads"), each house (i.e., Gryffindor, Slytherin, Hufflepuff, and Ravenclaw), personifies certain values (e.g., loyalty, bravery, compassion, and wisdom); contrarily, the "unforgivable curses" (Schwabach, 2006) denounce the crimes of torture and murder, as well as the vices of revenge and envy. Additionally, students could be asked to review their classmates' work. As the topics for every term are included in the curriculum, English teachers will not lose sight of the course's objectives, competences, and goals.

As someone who loves learning from and with others, I am convinced that everybody has something to teach others and can change for worse or for better. Sometimes, we fail to see what is behind a smile or do not take the time to analyze our students' behavior. "It is only with one's heart that one can see clearly. What is essential is invisible to the eye" (de Saint-Exúpery, 2017, p.172). Herein lies the importance of not forgetting that we are dealing with human beings; some teachers are so obsessed with facts and having the "right answer" that they ignore that education stands for guiding people to think for themselves. Scientific or the so called "pure knowledge" was discovered by humans with the sole purpose of elevating human skills and intellect. Science was created for the dissemination of knowledge, so people could give names to experiments and expand their horizons in terms of expression. It was never meant to replace the human condition

or exclude feelings and experiences translated into art. Affect theory teaches us that every one of us is a chaotic whole universe with infinite galaxies and capable of expressing our creativity.

Drawing from my experience as an "aca-fan" –both an academic and a fan– (Jenkins, 1992), I strongly believe that, as Hills (2001) defines them, fandoms are "affective spaces" where fans' emotional attachments give room to meaning-making processes (Hansal & Gunderson, 2020). What draws the line between the "fan" and the "non-fan" is the fact that "it [the fandom] matters" and there is an "absolutely necessary investment" (Grossberg, 1992, p.61). Since it is placed in the fan's everyday life, it exists in an excessive way that relates to their identity. When a fan is near that object of appreciation, as is the case when their favorite song starts playing while at the supermarket or a shopping center, there is something inside of them that is triggered, which could be interpreted as joy, excitement, happiness, delight, peace, or bliss. This affective experience can be superficially fathomed if we take, for instance, the moment you are watching a horror movie and the suspense is 'killing' you and you can hear your heartbeats accelerate because of the background music and the scene.

Another representation of affective fandom is when you go to a concert of your favorite band or singer: Live music is a great pleasure fans experience. In her book *Ubiquitous Listening*, Kassabian (2013) covers the concept of affect theory in the field of music studies. For her, affect is "the circuit of bodily responses to stimuli that take place before conscious apprehension. Once apprehended, the responses pass into thoughts and feelings, though they always leave behind a residue" (p.13). She also describes how senses are heightened when listening to music, for it offers a kinesthetic experience: We hear and feel the vibrations. Listeners move to the beat with their feet, head, and even their whole body (Swarbrick et.al, 2019). Live music concerts are among "the most visceral and memorable forms of musical engagement" (Swarbrick et.al, 2019,

p.1). One of the most special moments in a live music concert is when people forget that they are strangers, for the crowd becomes one and everybody is joyously singing along to the songs at the top of their lungs. That instant carries loads of affective responses that may be shared among attendees.

Those kinds of experiences are the ones that linger on over the years and leave an indelible mark, for they are affective in nature. In the classroom, teachers and students can learn from the former that, "There is, in fact more to the organization of people's lives than just the distribution or structure of meaning, money and power" (Grossberg, 1992, p.55). This denotes the significance of affective responses: Since they are rooted in human beings' sensibilities, they appeal to their senses, feelings, emotions, forces, drives, and flows of intensity that cannot always be named. On some occasions, we do not stop to think in what ways something is moving us from within, for we are too busy with the hustle and bustle of everyday life. In our classes, we are often absorbed in following the lesson plan and finish tackling all the contents that we forget to have fun, to explore outside, to experiment, to walk the extra mile, to play with mud, and to carefully listen to our students.

I agree with Booth (2015) when he calls fandom "the classroom of the future" (par. 1.1), due to the multiple opportunities it offers in respect to second language learning. Likewise, as educators, we may wonder how we could reach out to our students and help motivate them to learn other languages and about other cultures. In fact, they already do so in their free time but do not delve deeper into how these encounters can be expanded and transformed into experiences that elevate their identities. Affect theory provides a framework that elaborates on how humans move and are moved by intensities that are fleeting and ephemeral, that might escape reason and exceed language, but that are real and embodied. I have no doubt that when people peacefully

have dialogues with others, who have different tastes and lives, they strengthen their sensitivity, empathy, and compassion. Through fan-inspired activities and tasks, teachers could enhance students' creative and critical thinking, collaboration, and aesthetic appreciation (Booth, 2015). Albeit there are still uncharted waters in the realm of second language students' affective responses stimulated by fandom literacy practices, which are yet to be navigated.

In conclusion, I believe that fan-related activities serve as lessons from the fandom to enliven students' second language literacy practices. In the words of Lenters (2016): "In literacy learning, consideration of affect provides a means for exploring those unconscious forces—physical and cognitive intensities—within an individual's learning assemblage that work to support, motivate, and inspire literate engagements" (p.286). In the second language classroom, I think that this is essential, for students find themselves in an environment in which they have to deal with a language different from their mother tongue, teachers ought to design tasks and ask questions that spark personal connections with the target language. People are constantly listening, speaking, reading, and writing, guided by their interests and desires (Lenters, 2016). Finally, the idea is to pay more attention to the affective responses that take place in literacy assemblages, for they catapult learning.

Further Research: Going Beyond the Theory

Students' affective reactions to fandom-driven second language literacy practices ought to continue being researched to assist learners in expanding their creativity and reflecting on their experiences. Moreover, to fill the gaps in population, specifically first, third, fourth, seventh, eight, and ninth graders, more research has to be done to have a clearer picture of how affect theory, second language literacy, and fandom can be merged and consolidated. In the context of

Colombia, no research has been reported, which is why second language teachers and scholars need to pore over their pedagogical practices to make contributions to the existing literature.

Another component that should be taken into account for further research is including multimodality in the study that integrates the three concepts: affect theory, second language literacy practices, and fandom. Adding such a notion might open new spaces for students to articulate their learning experiences and to amplify their creativity: By giving an array of options regarding font, style, texture, audio, image, color, frame, gesture, music, space, among others, they will set into motion their meaning-making processes (Masny & Cole, 2009). This is why it is worth inquiring about how students play with texts and wonder about the affective responses these interactions may engender.

There are a few studies that intertwine multimodality with affect and literacy practices. For instance, Lenters (2016) examined how an 11-year-old boy who initially manifested a lack of interest in his fifth-grade Writer's Workshop class demonstrated his multimodal literacy practices. By making use of stick figure drawings, he showed that he was capable of writing stories and approaching texts. Leander and Vasudevan (2009), who observed how a 13-year-old girl, fan of a punk band, exchanged pictures, images, and written texts with an online friend through instant messaging (IM) about the fandom both girls belonged to. Although in this case, there was no mention of affect, these examples address the multimodal nature of virtual social relationships and of identity formation. The next step, then, would be for teachers to document those moments in their classrooms that are visceral and passionate, those born in affective atmospheres.

Coda: Lessons from the Critical Literature Review

As an aca-fan (Jenkins, 1992) and an English teacher, I am aware of the potential fandom has to enlighten second language literacy practices and how these two concepts, along with affect theory, induce a chemical reaction that produces learning. Both students and fans share many similarities worth taking into account: they are people who harness the opportunities social media and the internet offer; they are permanently reading and writing in different formats and making meaning of what resonates with their personal experiences; they are always researching to find out more about what intrigues them and create new meanings. Over and above that, they are constantly interacting with others who may or may not have the same interests as them, but who help them grow as human beings capable of feeling, dreaming, and creating.

With this critical literature review, I have learned, first and foremost, that as teachers, we ought to dare to do things differently, for we have gotten used to asking the same types of questions and expecting the same set of answers. This means that instead of putting up higher and thicker walls between our students and ourselves to reassert our authority, we should bend down to tie their shoe laces and contemplate their might. We often think that our students lack motivation, when, in truth, their eyes are wide open to the possibilities presented before them, but we lack the courage and humbleness to search for ways to keep them engaged.

I am convinced that in order to renovate our pedagogical practices, we have to take the time and space to give room to students' affective responses. This can be done by setting an atmosphere of trust that encourages students to share what they are passionate about and build their confidence to elaborate on it. Only then, will we be ready and prepared to look through the lenses of the kaleidoscope affect entails and watch the intricate and colorful patterns that are

created when the mirrors reflect and refract light. The latter represent students' unique affective responses, which then will be translated into literacy practices.

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