

CONNECTING WITH THE FUTURE-USE OF CONNECTORS IN OPINION ESSAYS.

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1.- Introduction.

To start with this activity, it is compulsory to state that it is a unique and authentic activity designed for my classes, and consequently it is exempt from plagiarism, although some materials, especially the audiovisuals one belong to private film companies.

2.- Target

This activity is planned for a class of 2nd of Bachillerato, at the Spanish educational system, which covers up students from 17 to 18 years old. At these ages students are expected to have a high level of maturity and critical thinking that helps them to receive and produce complex discourses.

3.-Objectives

Because it is an activity that deals with topics related to social networks and new technologies, we could divide this activity into two major objectives, the linguistic and the non-linguistic ones.

Among the non-linguistic objectives the most important one is to increase the critical thinking and critical awareness on how social networks and new technologies have revolutionized our way of life, but also there are some other minor objectives such as stating what a good use of technologies is.

Regarding the linguistic objectives, since it is an activity that belongs to the ordinary course of 2nd of Bachillerato. At this school year students are demanded to write opinion essays in an accurate and adequate way, addressing both form and content, regarding the text structure and register but also the cohesion and coherence of the text that helps to consolidate the communicative intention.

Therefore in this activity students will deal with two types of opinion essays, the "archetypical" opinion essay that consists in providing a clear and detailed opinion and the "advantages and disadvantages" essay in which the topic is explored to find out the benefits and drawbacks of some event, action or phenomenon.

4.- Sequencing

The activity consists of 4 classroom sessions.

First session

On the first day they reviewed the connectors using the notes that were given to them previously about connectors and their usage and meanings.

The most important objective is the fact of being aware of the multiple types of connectors divided upon the linguistic function that they perform. They are demanded to experiment with the language and be able to use effectively different connectors that also settle the difference among the diverse kinds of text.

In this activity, sequencing, contrast and addition connectors hold a meaningful role since they help us to build up our discourse and connect the different ideas, by ordering the text to improve its inner cohesion, by settling down the differences or the multiple perspectives upon

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a specific topic and also by adding information or different nuances to the message provided in the writing piece.

This was the material that I used for this activity, which it is basically an explanation of why the connectors are important in written texts and how they ease the communication process, including some examples of the different types of connectors with their meanings and their context of use.

Connectors as its own name states, are the elements used in discourse both written and oral to mix the sentences together while giving some consistency and uniformity to the text.

This is an example with a lack of use of connectors:

Last day I went with my best friend to movie theatre to watch the new film made by Rodrigo Sorogoyen called "El Reino". We had watched a few trailers, we were aware of what the film dealt about.

The introduction of the film lacks some intensity, the film keeps winning rhythm over time, it ends with one notorious duel between the protagonist and the journalist. This final apart from finishing with a conclusive force it also sums up the spirit of the film itself.

And with the use of connectors

Last day I went with my best friend to movie theatre to watch the new film made by Rodrigo Sorogoyen called "El Reino".*Firstly* I have to say that we had watched a few trailers, *so* we were aware of what the film dealt about.

Although the introduction of the film lacks some intensity, the film keeps winning rhythm over time. *Moreover* it ends with one notorious duel between the protagonist and the journalist. This final apart from finishing with a conclusive force it also sums up the spirit of the film itself.

Second session

On the second day, the students watched Black mirror's episode, "Nosedive" (at least a great part of it) which is the 1st episode of the 3rd season. Black Mirror is a series that consists of independent stories that are related on dystopian societies or futuristic use of technology.

This episode was chosen due to its message, topic and its current relevance, since it proposes the idea of a society where there is a class division based on social network's prestige, which defines their condition and human beings and determines all their life choices.

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There are many remarkable lessons in the narrative of this episode that are linked to the boundaries of social networks and human dependency on those, which obviously are just the tip of the iceberg so that there are other deeper readings such as the social injustice and the society's hypocrisy.

In fact, even though this episode is a fictional product, it doesn't seem as fictional as it could be thought since there are many similarities between the dystopian society proposed in the episode and our current society which can make the students to feel shocked.

Third session

On the third session, students were asked to analyze two different type of essays, an opinion essay and "in favor/against(advantages/disadvantages)" text. In these two texts the communicative purpose was fulfilled through the use of different linguistic structures and resources, such as impersonal construction, adverbs of manner, etc...

These two texts fulfilled two main roles, firstly there is the mere observation of how communicative intention is developed and lastly they could be also used as a text pattern that will help the students in their activity.

In this session there is a progression from the reception of oral and written texts to the production of written texts, which is the final product of this activity, when they were asked to write a short essay based on a specific topic, in this case regarding the social networks.

not enjoy the great amount of life pleasures. Furthermore there are people who live completely attached to their social networks pretending to live an ideal life and to show it off to everyone else. Moreover there are extreme cases of people that have become so addicted to their social networks that have got infuriated when they have been taken away from them or technological devices.

To sum up with, I strongly believe that social networks have revolutionized the way we communicate each other, but they should be used moderately in order to avoid getting addicted to these new technologies which can provoke a greater problem.

1.- Which is the function of each paragraph?

2.- Which are the connectors that remark contrast or addition?

Nosedive's is a gloomy prediction of our future. Do you agree with this statement?

Nosedive's stands out as one of the most remarkable story among Black Mirror's episodes, and consequently it's one of the episodes which creates a greater matter of discuss.

First of all, I must confess that from my humble opinion the most terrifying Black Mirror's episodes are not the ones which propose a darker future but the ones which propose a more possible future. In this case the episode presents a dystopian society whose social classes are created based on a mark that represents people's prestige on a global social network. This division clearly marks the jobs, the housing or the lives that people can aspire to.

Secondly but not least, this society helps to create a negative atmosphere which prioritizes social prestige and the society based on the façade, so basically, the image that the inhabitants of this society project to their peers. Consequently this society based on appearances provoke the repression of people's emotions creating an empty, disheartening society where people can't show off their feelings upon the fear of being sanctioned with a downgrade on their social prestige.

To conclude, I would like to point out that I strongly agree the statement above since making a comparison between that society and our current society there aren't many differences, and consequently that makes me feel really scared upon the perspective of reaching this future.

1.- Which is the function of each paragraph?

2.- Which are the connectors that remark contrast or addition?

3.- Which are the elements that show writer's attitude or opinions about this topic?

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After having read these texts and answering the questions, the students were asked to write an essay in couples about three different topics

Choose one of these topics and write a short essay about it (120-160 words)

1.- After having watched Black's Mirror episode "Nosedive"..... do you think that the future that is proposed in the episode it's a close or a distant one?

2.- Social networks and new technologies provoke nothing but dependency.....do you agree with this statement? Which are the most common feelings regarding the new technologies and social networks?

3.- What are the advantages and disadvantages of social networks and their usage?

Fourth session

On this forth session, the students, who had previously handed out their pieces of writing, would observe their mistakes in class.

This would be done thanks to the presence of a projector and a computer. After gathering all the essays, I used a mobile app called "CamScanner" whose function is scanning written texts by taking a photo to the text.

This is the final product:

Choose one of these topics and write a short essay about it (120-160 words)

1.- After having watched Black's Mirror episode "Nosedive"..... do you think that the future that is proposed in the episode it's a close or a distant one?

2.- Social networks and new technologies provoke nothing but dependency.....do you agree with this statement? Which are the most common feelings regarding the new technologies and social networks?

3.- What are the advantages and disadvantages of social networks and their usage?

① Black's Mirror episode "Nosedive" shows how in a future we will classify people depending on their social media pervasion. This could be a real fact due to many reasons.

Firstly, in our daily life we deal with the technologies for everything and if we don't do it we feel like a stranger. This cause us to be continuously giving points and marks to people. The most liked you are on Instagram, the most popular you are, and I think that all of us want to achieve this because our society has always taught us to be like the best way to be a good person and a fulfill one.

Another fact is that we are still improving and making more advanced technology, so this feeling of being popular in social media increases too because we are using it more than ever.

Everything consider, in my opinion, this episode can be showed in a near future due to the technology advanced and the technology adiction of nowadays people.

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Every piece of writing was projected without the name in order to keep student's privacy, and then I started to make questions about what mistakes can be observed within the text regarding text structure, cohesion, vocabulary. The students will be asked to participate in this collaborative correction by providing synonyms, words that can be perceived as more suitable, or by reformulating the sentences in order to make them more coherent or more similar to their context.

This activity was done with the use of common materials such as a whiteboard, some pens, a projector and a computer, and it is highly motivational for students because they can clearly see their mistakes and learn from their classmates.

5.- Competences

This activity helps to develop linguistic competence, regarding the two written skills both production and reception of written texts, but apart from the linguistic competence it is also promoted the digital competence as they can see how technologies can be used in a purposeful and meaningful way to encourage language learning.

Another major competence that is developed in this activity it's the "learn to learn competence" since this activity fosters both the peer learning and the collaborative learning in its 3rd and 4th session respectively.

In addition there are also some other competences that are developed, in a lesser extent such as the "cultural awareness and expression" and "social and civic competences", thanks to the analysis of Black's mirror episode.

6.-Conclusion

In my personal opinion, this is a really complete activity that has many different positive features, such as the improvement of writing skills, the inherent motivational aspect and the development of multiple competences.

However it is important to state that this activity strongly depends on student's participation, so whereas the students keep their motivation up and participate as good as they can, the activity will be developed correctly but if some of the steps is missing the whole activity will fall apart.

To conclude I would like to point out, that I have already put in practice this activity and the results have been highly satisfactory, being, up to this day, one of the best activities I have done with my students of 2nd of Bachillerato.

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