Benefitting from a Relational and Cross-Cultural Approach to English and Literary Studies in West African Contexts

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Abstract: *The paper examines the nature of language studies, especially of English Studies, and projects it for an African context. Reviewing the assertions of some schools of thought that define English teaching and learning in English departments, whether in Literature or Language, it argues that the present conception of English Studies in West African contexts relies too heavily on the assumptions of representation or the correspondence of language to particular realities and hence promotes isolated views of reality and teaching based upon such conceptions; that is, it is more empirical than relational. The paper argues that such conceptions and approaches to language studies, especially of English, do not promote creativity and an expanded view of the role of language as an instrument of interaction, communication and meaning-making. It emphasizes that the view of language taking root from an assumption that language is mainly relational, and therefore, indexical and embodiment, enables the perception of language studies in its complex array of inter-disciplinarity and a projection towards cross-cultural understanding, meaning-making and interactions. Consequently, language studies in African English and literary studies also need to establish this infrastructure for creativity in language use, meaning-making, cross-cultural understanding and communication in learning situations in Africa in interconnection with the empirical emphasis.*
Key Words: *English studies, interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity, textuality, correspondence, and indexicality.*

I. Introduction:

As English studies in particular, and languages departments in general, come under increasing pressure to re-evaluate and justify their role and existence in the strategic plans of tertiary educational institutions measured in terms of economic outcomes and performance, the identity and role of the teacher of languages is increasingly under pressure, also needing clarification and relevance. And as they are required to evaluate studies related to English and languages in terms of objective development and social significance, the tendency to define language, and English in particular, ironically, along a reductionist path of restrictive boundaries seems to be gaining ascendancy in some West African contexts. 'This is not English', is a comment by some schools of thought connected with the gate-keeping role in English in Higher education, and is becoming a sustained comment on topics leaning towards the social, political, economic, cultural, and communication dimensions of language, and about other issues investigated in relation to language and the social in respect of English studies.

Such a comment raises questions about the definition of English and language studies in West African contexts, and does seem to contradict that of the most ardent scholars in the subject such as Scholes (1998), who, in attempting to describe who an English teacher is or should be, believes, among other things that: ''…. becoming an English teacher, includes a sense of one's own limitation, an awareness of how deep the sea of English is and how shallow and frail one's boat'' (Scholes 1998:70), referring to the ridiculousness of any attempt to put English studies within strict boundaries or limits. Drawing on the work of Scholes (1998) especially, this paper will examine why the 'This is not English' assertions could be more of a danger to English studies and their relevance than a help in West African contexts.

II. Significance of the study:

The concern about the study and scope of language studies is critical when examined through the mode of the thinking expressed in the words of Widdowson (2002:77) that language thoroughly 'pervades our reality' and is central to 'our lives as individuals and social beings'. For this reason,

'' To remain unaware of it, what it is and how it works is to run the risk of being deprived or exploited.'' For the same reason, ''Control of language is to a considerable degree, control of power. Language is too important a human resource for its understanding to be kept confined to linguists. Language is so implicated in human life that we need to be fully aware of it as possible, for otherwise we remain in ignorance of what constitutes our essential humanity.''

It is for this reason that the question of determining and understanding the possibilities and unlimited, hopefully, unlimiting scope of language studies, and in our case, English in West African contexts, and the concepts and approaches that best guide our understanding of the field is essential. It means that 'the risk of

being deprived or exploited' and hence being rendered powerless is at stake when the control of power over what 'is central to our lives as individuals and social beings' is determined by those who arrogate to themselves the power to determine what is English and what is not English in our educational system, especially if they ignore to acknowledge and re-examine the basis of the assumptions of correspondence upon which the policies they pursue are based, or fail to ask the basic question of what kind of correspondence underlie existing policies and decisions. Besides, as Bell (2002: 12) emphasizes, most nations in the African subcontinent are multicultural societies, 'and one must often work hard at understanding even one's neighbour'. Setting boundaries on what language can investigate rather than admitting the diversity of possibilities that language engenders for establishing what is essential for the humanity of persons and for finding 'closeness' in society while advancing knowledge poses a grave danger to education and society as a whole. For the same reasons, it is imperative to seek an understanding of what we do as teachers and policy makers in the department of language studies as a whole, and in particular, of English studies, for then, we cannot claim to study English without rooting it in the study of Language as Widdowson (2002) explains above, because language, whether local or international, 'constitutes our essential humanity' by the fashion in which it defines our experiencing. This is also important for both teachers and learners as they come under the influence of how they can understand and structure or restructure their experiencing and acquire their knowledge. Hence, to study language is to deal also with our human life and how our experiencing and humanity is being defined. This has implications for the resources and skills necessary to grapple with the unknown and for improving the quality of their own living and that of the societies in which they live or wish to live. On the basis of this, this paper argues that the understanding of language studies, particularly English, can lead to two possible outcomes:

1. English can be understood and taught in ways that emphasize correctness and the consumption of texts as intrinsic facts or intrinsic truths, leading to the development of the penchant for setting boundaries to truth, facts, and knowledge. This establishes models of teaching, learning and attitudes leading to ideological imprisonment in homogenization, exclusion, social control, and social and political domination, the maintenance of rigid class distinctions, and the unequal share of resources. And with respect to education, it leads to an emphasis on areas of specialization instead of areas of interest, interdisciplinarity, cross-disciplinarity, and multidisciplinarity.

On the other hand, English can be understood as a social entity and taught through its role in society and how it is used, especially in the production of knowledge and social reality. Accordingly, it can emphasize:

2. The role of English as a social construct in our era of globalization and what it means for our human life here and now; that is, emphasize our humanity and how it is being achieved through the activities of all dimensions of life, or how it can be achieved to attain the fulfillment of our essential humanity. This is also important because in the era of globalization, language, and especially English, can be seen a product for consumption, as it is for all other things. How then can language be managed so that students do not become only consumers, but also producers of the type of languages that could aid and involve them in the most astute ways possible in the participation of buying and selling, as Tollefson (1991) articulated it, and in preparation for the 'unknown' as Scholes (1998) observed? And how can it then be made to lead towards the fulfillment of the essential goals of our humanity (Widdowson 2002); and, in learning how to make conscious the unconscious ideological systems and mental structures that underlie the products of history, globalization and politics and their consumption in order to enable them learn how to choose and own their own decisions as well as be able to 'talk back' when necessary (Graham 2003, Foucault 1989, Kress and Hodge 1979, Fairclough 1989, Pennycook 1994, Birch 1989), and also be able to create the kinds of cross-cultural understanding needed in a continent of such vast diversities like Africa? (Bell 2002).

In summary, the assumptions we make determine our approaches to understanding and teaching language, literature or English. The traditional and most common assumptions arise from empiricism and hence place emphasis on isolation and the identification of language with objective truth (Barry 2006). However, there exist alternative assumptions based on language as relations and as convention (Barry 2006). The former identifies language with truth, objectivity and conservatism. The latter identifies with language in emphasizing contingency, innovation, creativity, and the acceptance of conventions and the possibilities of the kind of change that conventions entail. These two different perceptions and mental structures generate different approaches to understanding, teaching and doing language studies and to how teachers of language understand and perceive their roles and relationship with their subject. Both approaches may yet not necessarily be exclusive but complementary to each other if they operate in spaces where the other cannot suitably operate rather than being considered as totally exclusive of and incompatible with each other. In this case, the effects are produced from which approach is emphasized over the other.

III.   Boundaries and Disciplines, and the Movement towards Interdisciplinarity, Multidisciplinarity and Cross-disciplinarity:

In the 1980s, at the height of the debates about the nature of language and how to study it, Frederick Newmeyer, in his 'The Politics of Linguistics' (1986), wrote about the study of language and its composition into Linguistics, and defined three broad orientations into which the study of language could be divided. His argument was, in spite of his defence of the relevance of autonomous linguistics, also largely a lamentation about the lack of tolerance for interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity, and the preference for mono-cultural and mono-methodological approaches that seemed to characterize the field of linguistics at the time. According to Newmeyer (1986:8), 'The field of linguistics, most broadly conceived, represents these three orientations – humanistic, sociological, and autonomous.' Identifying these different orientations, he explained that ''The interests of humanistic linguists are embodied in the related subfields of 'poetics' and 'stylistics' which are devoted to the linguistic analysis of literary texts and to the study of figurative, aesthetic, and creative use of language in literature. The function of language in society is the province of 'sociolinguistics', which addresses such topics as language variation, the ethnography of speaking, and national language planning, among others. 'Pragmatics ' and 'discourse analysis', two other sociologically oriented aspects of language study, describe language use in its interpersonal context. …Most work in autonomous linguistics falls under the heading of 'grammatical theory'.'' He concluded that ''Linguistics is certainly not unique in the fact that its subject matter can be approached from a variety of directions. Fields as diverse as philosophy, psychology, and history lend themselves to both humanistic and sociological orientations, one or the other of which has been more prominent at different stages of the field's development.'' (1986:13).

This aspect of Newmeyer's arguments seems to me relevant for the discussion of English studies in West African contexts today. The question of what is English studies, and what are or should be considered as its content is not new. It is a question that has preoccupied scholars of language studies for a long time – in fact, since the nineteenth century, and even before, as far back as the renaissance when the nature of language was being debated (Rebhorn 2000). The debate intensified in the 1970s and 80s, but it has largely been settled in favour of widening rather than narrowing the meaning of English studies and limiting it within stringent boundaries of disciplinary compliance. The trend also shows several types of shifts and theoretical underpinnings in English and language studies, which make English and language studies a multi-various undertaking rather than a monolithic undertaking (Barry, 1995; Scholes, 1998; Culler 1988). The debates have been guided by different epistemologies, that is, theories of knowledge or the way we get to know things, and the way we understand social reality. For instance, the renaissance debates were guided by world views centred around a geocentric universe, and later on, a heliocentric universe (Moseley 1988).These are usually referred to as assumptions in ordinary discourse. The empiricist theory of knowledge, grounded in the philosophy of John Locke, established knowledge in correspondence to direct sensations from objects and became identified with object-centred knowledge. It led to seeing knowledge as fixed in items and objects and hence in order to know an object or item one has to be in direct contact with it and experience it. As objects could be experienced only in isolation, fixed knowledge was regarded as discrete in correspondence to the objects or items described or referred to at any particular instance (Appleyard 2007; Barry 1995). The other view of knowledge and the source of knowledge depended on an epistemology that argued that knowledge is relational. Its proponent was Ferdinand de Saussure who argued from language that since objects cannot be directly apprehended, they are apprehended through an intermediary – language. For this reason, objects are known, not as they are but as they are described by language. Yet language describes things only by the relations it sets between sounds and words. Consequently, being formed by the description of the relationships between sounds, objects are thereby apprehended through the construction of the objects they perceive rather than apprehended in correspondence to the objects perceived (Hawkes 1977; Birch 1989).

The consequences of these two different views of knowledge affected the debates on the definition of language and its content. The empiricist view of knowledge placed an emphasis on direct apprehension of objects and hence of contents as reality and truth. They developed a method of understanding and appreciating language and texts, especially literary texts, referred to by critical theorists as 'liberal humanism' (Barry 1995) or 'intrinsic criticism' (Birch 1989) and limited its ambience to a fixed canon of texts and fixed knowledge. On the other hand, the approach to English that is grounded in the relational view of language has argued and established its way of viewing English studies through modes and forms of expression, establishing it as both process and content, instead of limiting English studies within the confines of a deposit of fixed knowledge or content to be acquired without regard to context, history, source and other things such as the ideology that determine it, and thus understanding it simply as disembodied items. This means that an emphasis on language as a system of signs also leads English to be seen as socially constructed and hence approached, above all, in its presentational modes and forms of expression rather than in its supposedly representational forms (Culler 1988, Birch 1989; Stephens and Waterhouse 1990). The essential difference between the two approaches is thus that while the liberal humanistic approach is grounded on fixed and disembodied knowledge, the language approach

is grounded in knowledge as social, and hence knowledge and meaning as socially constructed, interactional, and even ideological. (Atkinson 1990).

The argument above and the problems it tackles may be summarized in an idiomatic way through Donaldson's (1987) debate regarding the teaching and learning of language by children, in 'Children's Minds' . She argues that:

'While at the most general introductory level, the child needs to understand that these marks that he sees on paper correspond, in some way still unspecified, to the spoken language, his later task is to figure out the details of this correspondence. Yet between the extreme generality of understanding that there is correspondence and the extreme detail of learning what each configuration of letters stands for, there arises the intermediate question: what kind of correspondence is it?

In answering what kind of correspondence, Donaldson indicates:

The most obvious hypothesis for a child to entertain concerning the answer to this question is that the correspondence is of a one-to-one kind. That is, once he realizes that written words are composed of letters and spoken words of sounds, he is most likely to suppose initially that each letter corresponds to ('stands for') one and only one sound.

And that is where the problem lies:

This, as we know, is untrue. And if a child believes that the relationship has this kind of structure he will soon be in very serious difficulty. Yet teachers often systematically encourage him to believe just this falsehood which he is so ready to accept. They teach him that the letter *e* corresponds to the sound */e/,* as in *hen,* although it is plain that he cannot progress any way at all as a reader without encountering words like *he* and *me.* ''(Donaldson 1987:104)

A similar argument may be transferred whether directly or by homology to the different levels and domains of English and language teaching. Language studies seem to suffer from the identification with correspondence and hence the correspondence of language with items, an empiricist method that discounts language as relational and insists on language as discrete and isolationist. Such correspondence view of language leads to a strong conservative tendency of separating English or language from other domains of knowledge, insisting on the strict boundaries between disciplines. As long as this orientation of English studies prevails in the West African context, the relational view that enables interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity will remain suppressed, and with it, the suppression of the potential of the huge transformations in language studies that have swept the field releasing their resources for other disciplines as well as receiving resources from others, particularly from the social sciences as made possible by the linguistic turn in the social sciences and humanities (Culler 1988; Foucault 1989). A successful orientation towards interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary in English studies and language teaching, on the other hand, has the potential of releasing the resources of other disciplines towards the kind of critical thinking, meaning-making and cross-cultural understanding (Bell 2002) needed in the kind of context of diversity in languages, culture, philosophies, and emphasis which is the reality of the African continent.

IV. How do the assumptions upon which English Studies are based affect teachers of Language?

The assumptions upon which English studies are based affect the identity and role of the teacher because the same dilemmas and insights posed by the nature of understanding the subject apply to the English teacher. Scholes (1998:3) in attempting to answer the questions concerning the nature of language, its content and its teaching could not begin to answer the question without reference first to the teacher of English by referring to the question posed by the philosopher and critical theorist, Jacques Derrida: ''What do teachers of language in the university teach?'' According to Scholes, Derrida posed his questions as follows:

"And who are we in the university where apparently we are? What do we represent? Whom do we represent? Are we responsible? For what and to whom? If there is a university responsibility, it at least begins, with the moment when a need to hear these questions, to take them upon oneself and respond, is imposed. This imperative for responding is the initial form and minimal requirement of responsibility".

On the surface, this citation does not give any factual information and definition of the subject called English; nevertheless, it reflects, above all, an attempt to prompt a redefinition of the identity and role of the English teacher alongside a definition of the nature of language, particularly of English studies as a pursuit of self-knowledge, self-consciousness, and responsibility, or generally stated, as the knowledge and development of consciousness. English can, therefore, not be taught apart from the teacher, as he composes part of the embodiment of the discipline. In effect, the teacher is the guide towards making it possible for language to be

used by its learners to make sense of and to define reality in its various modes, expressions and forms. In effect, this is what English, as a language can also be expected to pursue. Scholes (1998), building upon the responsibilities of teachers of language outlined through Derrida's questions, constitutes and designates this pursuit of the knowledge and development of consciousness specifically as the 'love of truth':

''The' love of truth' seems to me the first protocol of teaching, upon which any others that we might devise would depend. And I mean to include the admission of the weak or dubious elements in what we profess. Truthfulness begins in a rigorous attention to the grounds of our own beliefs and a willingness to be corrected. As a habit of mind, the love of truth is one of the great things that we, as teachers, have to offer, but we cannot offer it by merely talking about it; we have to enact it, to embody it in our whole practice as scholars and teachers. This means being truthful we are serving, and what good we can hope to accomplish.'' (Scholes 1998:3)

For Scholes (1998), the implication of 'love of truth' points to the embodiment of the teacher as part of the discipline of language of English studies. Hence, the 'love of truth' concerns putting an end to what he refers to as 'hypocriticism', and instead adopting a new approach to culture, the textual canon, the curriculum, and to classroom practice. For English teachers this means ''reconsidering how we became what we are and what we do. And above all, it means trying to answer those questions posed by Jacques Derrida, … .'' (Scholes 1998:3)

A similar search towards the redefinition of what English teachers and practitioners do is undertaken through the discussion of literature by Eagleton (1983), describing it as an engagement in the practical construction of culture through the meaning making and definition, or redefinition of historical processes and the re-evaluation of the processes of material production of human existence, activities and life – in effect, the creation of what it means to be a human being in any society and in the universe.

Already, it should be dawning that the most ardent scholars of language, including English, are not focusing on the study of language as an end in itself; hence they cannot even begin to define and discuss the subject without reference to other areas or fields of knowledge that we might traditionally consider as 'extraneous' to it such as philosophy, ethics, metaphysics, sociology and others. The assertion, 'This is not English' therefore appears to be a signifier of a reality of the study of English in isolation of other fields of knowledge – a phenomenon referred to by Barry (1990) as 'liberal humanism', and by Birch (1989) as 'intrinsic criticism'. To understand the liberal humanism or intrinsic critical stance further and its consequences better, we may turn to Birch (1989) who explains its origins and impact pointing out its Cartesian origins and implications thus:

''The Cartesian view that we are individuals free from context is still a dominant one in many circles; it is a convenient means of maintaining classist and elitist views, of suggesting that a minority of people are more sensitive, more able to 'understand' the world than the larger mass of people. It is a view that is at the very roots of intrinsic literary criticism, and is something that is vital to any understanding of how certain views of how texts mean have developed, and continue to be developed, in linguistic and literary studies.'' (Birch 1989: 44).

Birch is here indicating the isolationist and disembodied view of language studies established through the Lockean view of reality and which when linked with the individualism of Descartes' philosophy of 'I think and therefore I am', has over-emphasized the role of the individual in knowing and determining meaning as well as the 'discovery' of reality and the essences of things without regard to context. And what this kind of thinking conducts towards is the creation of power for a privileged few, those few individuals who are supposed to possess the mettle and special tools to 'understand' the world more than others because of their ability to apprehend context-less essences or possess objective knowledge. It leads to the creation of an ideology for English studies. Nonetheless, on account of their conviction about the context-less essences or objective knowledge, the adherents of such thinking are apt to deny that their knowledge is built on the assumptions of a particular way of apprehending knowledge.

Thus, those who have not encountered ideology in English and language studies can begin to notice it; and this is necessary for any self- reflexive analysis and understanding of what we do as teachers and practitioners of language, for ideology concerns power – the exercise of power on behalf of a particular cause, and the alignment of knowledge and its construction to the service of inequality and its maintenance. And language is apt to become the service provider for ideology (Foucault 1989; Birch 1988; Tollefson 1991; Fairclough 1991, Kress 1979, Wallace 2003). The Fung Global Fellows Program of the Princeton Institute for International and Regional Studies (PIIRs) recognizes the ideological and social components of language and its studies, making it a specific point of research in its inauguration of the programme indicating that the Fung Fellows Programme '' … and the accompanying seminar program will focus on how languages interact with political, social, economic, and cultural authority.'' (British Applied Linguistics emails 2012)

Bain (1983) and Wittgenstein (1953), on the other hand, have done much to create the understanding about the sociogenesis of language and hence the fact that language does not stand alone from its context, in as much as it does in its contribution to the production of human conduct and knowledge. The social genesis of language also invests it with the ideas of society both diachronically and synchronically. Woolcock (2001),

while discussing a distinctly sociological area dealing with social capital, thus has no hesitation in asserting the linkages between language and other areas of knowledge, saying that 'All ideas are grounded in language and history'; and others like Atkinson (1990), have no hesitation in exploring how Sociological texts, social scientific texts and scientific texts are embedded in language, projected and imagined through language, and when referred to in the West African educational context, particularly through the English and French languages.

Thus, Derrida's contention about what teachers of language teach, and Scholes' perception of the same question point to the necessity of the study and teaching of language as primarily a self-reflexive activity in the presentation and representation of consciousness and interaction. This presupposes not only a synchronic but also a diachronic reflexivity – that is, including both historical and socio-phenomenal dimensions of both consciousness and interaction. This may also be translated as that language is about consciousness and interaction. Being so, it has also a social and therefore a relational basis. Because of its interactional and social component, it is also firmly related to power, ideology, social control, culture and all the other domains that produce society's discursive practices.

V. The self-reflexive presentation of consciousness and the interactional character of English Studies:

The self-reflexive presentation of consciousness and the interactional character of English studies can be gleaned from the history of the English Language and the various underlying drivers, ideologies and varying emphases that have characterized it over the ages.

In the 1990s, the development of the ideas-led track of language studies led to the interrogation of the way in which English is taught in schools and the role it plays in social control, colonialism, the development of dependency, the distribution of power, ideology, and meaning creation. Notable among these include Phillipson's (1992), 'Linguistic Imperialism', Pennycook's (1994), 'The Cultural Politics of English as an International Language, and Canagarajah's (1992) 'Resisting Linguistic Imperialism' , Fairclough's (1989) 'Language and Power' and Tollefson's (1991) 'Planning Language, Planning Inequality'. They argued that English is a cultural product fraught with an ideology of inequality which has hitherto played the role of social control and the cultivation of dependency in what is suggestively referred to as 'the periphery', or the non-native English speaking countries formerly colonized by the native English countries. This made the English language the official language of formerly colonized countries and also the medium of instruction in schools.

However, as Pennycook (1994) realized, it is an unrealistic project to attempt to change the reality of English studies in the contexts in which it has assumed the prerogative in shaping consciousness and interaction since it is already firmly entrenched as the first language of some elite and their families; meanwhile, it also provides the easiest means by which persons from the periphery can connect with the 'centre' or former metropolitan residents, hence globally. He, therefore, advocated that while English should be maintained in the manner it is already entrenched, it must nevertheless be interrogated through 'talking back'; that is, using English to question the ideological discourses which English studies produce in shaping the consciousness and interaction in the societies in which it plays such significant roles. Such a project could, however, not be made possible through the close reading or practical criticism approach, which is aligned with the projects of liberal humanism or intrinsic criticism, but through the literary theoretical or the ideas-led approaches to reading texts and their discursive practices which are capable of penetrating the embedded discourses in the texts produced through the English language and studies. Such approaches had already been adopted in different degrees by Edward Said (1978) in his 'Orientalism', and by other writers who had worked to deconstruct colonial discourses and to interrogate new discourses produced about peoples in subordinate positions and social classes especially, and to unmask the discourses of authority, dependency, enslavement and patronage (Fairclough 1990; Tollefson 1991; Pennycook 1994) engendered in texts produced in the English language and studies. These are also the tasks that Scholes (1979), Birch (1989) and those in the critical tradition of language studies expect learning to achieve for humanity. For this reason too, Birch (1989:31), for example, agreeing with Burton (1982), argued against 'knowledge for its own sake', describing it as 'self-indulgence', and cites what Burton proposes as the project of English studies in insisting that: '' All knowledge is ideologically determined and we are politically irresponsible if we do not recognize this. … we live in a society that is classist, racist, and sexist, and responsible analysis should be working towards the elimination of these three major injustices'' . However, other phenomena in West African society could be added to Burton's list – globalization, traditionalism or Cultural conservatism, ethnicity and tribalism, and corruption.

VI.   Globalization and the objects of deconstruction through language studies:

The domination of the effects of globalization, as an orientation leading to the emphases on commodification, consumption, patterns of consumption, media and the production of symbolic forms and art and culture for consumption, and hence, the commercialization of language and experience, make the tasks

defined by Scholes (1998), Birch (1989), Burton (1982) and the others in the critical and ideas-led tradition and orientation of language studies even more urgent. It means that language teaching must guide people towards understanding how discursive practices are formed and how they are encoded in language, the forms in which they are encoded and the effects they produce. This will enable consumers of language to discern how to make their choices; otherwise, they will become unknowing participants in discourses in which they have no control and hence become pawns in the games of the producers of language and their discourses, even as we already see to a large extent in the creation of need for consumers.

Language teaching, according to the social orientation and relational or interactional perspective enshrined in the literary critical or ideas-led approach to the study and learning of language primarily combines the humanistic and the social. Its orientation towards co-existence and cooperation (social capital) rather than the individualistic disembodied approach in practical criticism, and the contribution of different disciplines towards a single goal of eliminating poverty, discrimination, and promoting the equality of rights of peoples, leads inevitably to interdisciplinarity, vitality, distinctiveness, and complementarity (Woolcock 2001). It is in this regard that Harvey (1989) distinguishes even between the modernist literary critics and the postmodernist ones. He points out the boundary insistence by modernists and the anti-boundary, interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and intertextual-insisting stance of the postmodernists. Thus, ''Modernist' literary critics tend to look at works as examples of a 'genre' and to judge them by the 'master code' that prevails within the 'boundary' of a genre, whereas the 'postmodern' style simply views a work as a 'text' with its own particular 'rhetoric' and 'idiolect', but which can in principle be compared with any other text of no matter what sort.'' (Harvey 1989: 44).

The implications of this understanding of English and its study is that it has been recognized as a textual production that is indexical of 'realities' outside it rather than as a cast iron product of content and correspondences. English studies have, therefore, largely moved away from merely defining specific contents to prospecting self-reflexive methodologies for the representation or presentation of 'facts', 'realities', social action, events and their processes. The emphasis on self-reflexivity and processes also leads it to the movement of understanding language and English studies through interests and focus rather than through expertise. Interests presuppose and connote processes that enable flexibility, interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity, intertexuality and the employment of textual strategies to examine the production of realities in other domains of life and disciplines, signifying also a kind of pragmatism. There are thus no strong boundaries among disciplines as liberal humanists or what Birch (1989) refers to as 'intrinsic' critics postulated and practiced owing to their atomized and itemized view of reality and its influence on the conception of language studies in their belief that literary texts contain their own meaning within themselves and hence require no 'elaborate process of placing it within a context' (Barry 1995: 17) or that form should never be separated from content (Culler 1988). In this regard, too, the possibility of developing different methodologies for examining textual processes are postulated as texts can be perceived in different ways and in different contexts as well as regarding different contents and their media of transmission. In all this, consciousness and self-reflexivity define and legitimize the methodologies rather than necessarily content and genre, as form can be transferred from one domain to another on the basis of self-reflexivity. An example of how this exposition can be seen to be working today in the field of language and Applied Linguistics is contained in an advertisement posted by the Philological Society of Language, Music and Interaction and the Interaction, Media and Communication Group on a British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) website exploring the sociogenesis of language and the link between language, music and interaction. (Ahearn, M. 2012):

'' With the conventional assumption that language ability has to be seen as separate from language use, there is now a familiar divide between explanations of language as a system (language competence) and explanations of language use (performance). Nonetheless, in socio-linguistics, pragmatics, and historical linguistics, it has continued to be assumed that explanations of social aspects of language and language change must make reference to how language is used in social interactions. Moreover, since the turn of the century, psychologists and those working on core properties of language - semanticists, syntacticians, phoneticians - have increasingly been exploring different versions of the view that the language has to be seen as grounded in terms of participant interaction. Strikingly, over the same period, there has been parallel work emerging in music theory and philosophy arguing that music is grounded in participant interaction; and there are clear points of contact between these two research directions. To draw these research trends together, this event gathers representatives of these groups to explore issues relating to interaction raised by their research, with the goal of exploring the consequences of seeing both language and music as mechanisms for interaction.''

The new directions of research in language studies hence beckon strongly towards exploring the role of language in interaction, in building contexts and in how contexts build language in turn, in whatever forms they manifest.

This view of the Philology of Language, Music and Interaction group is articulating a perspective already embedded in Birch's (1989) view in *Language, Literature and Critical Practice*, regarding the study of language and criticism in the classroom and in other academic domains in language studies observing:

''I am acutely aware of the lack of fit that can exist very often between the progress of linguistic and literary theorists as intellectuals, and the curriculum and classroom practices they, and others influenced by them, are institutionally involved in. This … is an attempt to show to students, who are usually powerless in the institutional decisions and practices of teaching literary text analysis, the development of a critical practice/textual analysis that is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary, intertextual, historically and socially aware, and politically motivated – a critical practice that draws from a number of related and competing theoretical and methodological positions, and that questions those positions as part of its practice.'' (Birch 1989:1).

Consequently, the social, historical, interdisciplinary, intertextual and interactional character of language cannot be ignored. Because of its interactional character, it can only have a social genesis.

VII.   Conclusion:
7.1. The relation between teaching, learning and truth in Language studies and its outcomes:

Scholes (1998) uses the example of Althusser to illustrate his argument about the essential features of good teaching and learning for English studies, or what the learning outcome of language studies ought to engender – the learning of skills that enable the learner to explore himself/herself under different conditions, contexts and historical time to discover who he/she really is or could be, or the skills that enable self-discovery in a way that supports a person's choices in life, choice and adaptation of identity, and capabilities for contribution to humanity, to social space and interaction, and the advancement of humanity through liberation from both mental and material slavery and control over one's own choices, being and consciousness.The 'love of truth', thereby, is the development of the skills and capabilities for the exploration of oneself, one's choices, and the development of the confidence to contribute to the liberation of humanity from all that hinders its development – ranging from the individual to the social, to the historical, and the global. This involves essentially the development of dialecticism, interaction, interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity, intertextuality, and, above all, self-reflexivity.Althusser, one of the social theorists who had a great influence on the development of critical theory, had his initial education based on a tradition of rhetoric in which his teachers restricted themselves to specific content bases that set strict boundaries between items and knowledge and thus promoted a gurgitation and regurgitation approach to learning based on correspondence. It was conducive for a 'chew, pour, pass and forget' type of learning which left a student with a certificate at the end, but an empty shell also, since those items and contents learnt could not be retained in memory, or perfectly co-ordinated again afterwards, or even could not fit in with changing contexts either in time or space. His later education, nonetheless, differed in that it depended on a different rhetorical basis that emphasized understanding which created skills and enabled students to utilize these skills as tools by which to operate after their education even after the contents of that education had long been forgotten. The skills developed through understanding the rhetorical basis of the learning did not need the contents to operate; the skills could always find new content according to changing contexts both in time and space to operate and to reform themselves both dialectically and self-reflexively. This approach also forms the basis of the difference between the pursuit of expertise or specialisms, which is based on content, and the pursuit of interests, which is based on understanding, methodological concerns, and the ability to cope with changing contexts and contents.

In response to Althusser's example, Scholes (1998) concludes: 'My point is that he did not absorb the values that even his best teachers would have liked to teach him. What he absorbed and retained was their good rhetorical habits, even as he ultimately rejected their values.' (Scholes 1998: 66). Consequently, Scholes (1998) concludes:''What I would advocate, as a theoretical way of looking at our student, is to start by thinking of what they need to know and what they need to be able to do, with respect to those things that are in our domain-and our domain is the domain of textuality. In constructing the syllabus for every class, as in the curriculum as a whole, we assign, with respect to how this will help our students toward the rhetorical abilities they need. How will knowing this or doing that strengthen them as thinkers, as teachers, as communicators? The one thing a curriculum in English must do, whatever else it accomplishes on the way, is to lead students to a position of justified confidence in their own competence as textual consumers and their own eloquence as producers of texts. This also means, of course, that along the way, we must be assigning the right texts and responding to the work of our student with an informed and rigorous sense of the rhetorical skills that they need to develop. ' (Scholes 1998:66)Thus, Scholes (1989) believes that for the language teacher to be able to meet the needs of students in this era of globalization, the student would have had to transform himself first through what Scholes describes as the 'love of truth' consciousness. Only then can he be equipped to learn more about those textual processes through which a specific culture and society are constituted and preserved. And only then can the

English teacher be able to set students on this same road toward ''becoming able to cope with the texts in various media that constantly bombard in their work and private lives.'' (Scholes 1989: 71).

In the conception of Scholes (1989), text also refers to the fabric of culture itself, for students find themselves already woven into the culture in which both the teachers and students find themselves. In this regard, the semiotic and deconstructive emphasis on social structure introduces us to the key to understanding how English can begin to be defined, and what it is capable of becoming. Hence, English and language teaching cannot divorce themselves from the social, cultural, economic, philosophical, and other domains of knowledge. Social structure has to involve a vision of upward social and economic mobility for everybody, regardless of logic and economic realities. Upon this basis, Scholes is now able to answer Derrida's questions summarizing it as follows: ''What our students need, as I see it, is first of all some guidance in learning how to understand their world and survive in it, and secondarily some grounds for criticizing and trying to improve it.'' (Scholes 1989:74).To be able to offer this is to be able to understand the needs of the students we teach. Yet we cannot understand the needs of students apart from the cultural situations in which they find themselves. In the light of globalization, the only way we can understand and present our present cultural situation is:

'' Without pretending to full command of such complexity … we-teachers as well as students- live in a society that is more fully and insistently textualised than anything people have experienced in the past….. What our students need to function in such a world, then, is an education for a society still struggling to balance its promises of freedom and equality, still hoping to achieve greater measures of social justice, still trying not to homogenize its people but to allow for social mobility and to make the lower level of its economic structure tolerable and humane. … This program is not strictly the responsibility of teachers of Language and Literature, but the highly textualised and mediated nature of our society has constructed for such teachers a position of great importance as educators-if we are willing to change our discipline so as to occupy this position. … Which doesn't mean that we must forget what we have learned-but we must put our learning to use, for instance, by beginning to deconstruct the opposition between the ' English' course and the 'service' course taught by English departments. (Scholes 1989: 83)

Language studies and English studies, therefore, need to go beyond the uncritical assertions of the normative and univocal orientations engendered in the attitude of 'This is not English.' They must instead be textually aware and liberating, following through their vast implications of interdisciplinarity, multidisciplinarity, intertextuality, and the widening of access to meaning making, and the understanding of the intersection of language with discursive practices and textuality.

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