

IMPROVING ENGLISH THROUGH THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH: A DIGITAL EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL PROPOSAL

“IMPROVING ENGLISH THROUGH THE HISTORY OF ENGLISH”: UMA PROPOSTA DE MATERIAL DIGITAL EDUCACIONAL

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ABSTRACT: This paper contextualize the material “Improving English through the History of English”, which resulted from a project produced for the subject "Digital literacy and critical approach: the use of technological tools for English Language Teaching" and its consequent updating as a project developed for this article. Aiming to contribute to digital literacies, the main purpose of the material is to include technology as a necessary and participatory tool in the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the Digital Educational Material uses the “History of the English Language” as content, specifically the Scandinavian (or Viking) influences in the British Isles. The union of the medieval, through content, and contemporary, through technology, proposes to promote the autonomy of students in the teaching and learning process of the English language. Thus, this paper initially presents the historical contextualization of the theme of the material, then brings the theoretical basis for Hypertext and Digital Literacy and concludes with a description of the structure of the material.

KEYWORDS: Digital Educational Material; History of English; technologies and teaching

RESUMO: O presente trabalho contextualiza o material “Improving English through the History of English”, resultado de trabalho produzido para a disciplina “Letramentos Digitais e Abordagem Crítica: o uso de ferramentas tecnológicas para o Ensino de Língua Inglesa” e sua consequente atualização como projeto desenvolvido para este artigo. Em busca do desenvolvimento de um trabalho que contribua para letramentos digitais, o principal objetivo do material é incluir a

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tecnologia como uma ferramenta necessária e participativa no processo ensino-aprendizagem. Por conseguinte, o referido Material Educacional Digital utiliza um recorte da “História da Língua Inglesa” como conteúdo a ser trabalhado: as influências escandinavas (ou *vikings*) nas ilhas britânicas. A união do medievo, por meio do conteúdo, e do contemporâneo, por meio da tecnologia, propõe promover a autonomia dos alunos no processo de ensino-aprendizagem da Língua Inglesa. Este artigo apresenta inicialmente, portanto, a contextualização histórica do tema do material, para então trazer o embasamento teórico relativo aos Hipertextos e Letramentos Digitais e finalizar com a descrição da estrutura do material produzido.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Material Educacional Digital; história da língua inglesa; tecnologias e ensino

Introduction

This paper aims to present the contextualization of the material “Improving English through the History of English”, regarding its production and theoretical contribution that we use for analysis. In this sense, this article is organized in three main sections, each one addressing a different aspect of the material and its creation process: a historical contextualization of the theme, the theoretical part related to the Technology and Education, and finally, a presentation of the production context and structure of the material.

The brief historical contextualization outlined in the section “Between Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians” is the ground of the content of the Digital Educational Material presented here. Such material was the final project for the course “Digital literacy and critical approach: the use of technological tools for English Language Teaching¹” part of the Graduate Certificate Program in English Language Teaching of the State University of Northern Paraná (UENP) (2018-2019). This Didactic Material was created with the aim to promote the teaching and learning process of English while leading the learners to get to know a significant part of the History of English

¹ Original name in Portuguese: *Letramentos Digitais e Abordagem Crítica: o uso de ferramentas tecnológicas para o Ensino de Língua Inglesa*.

Language, specifically concerning the Viking Age.

In the section “Technology in English Teaching”, we bring the theoretical framework that underlies the production of the Material. Based on Vilaça (2009) and Whyte (2017), we present a definition for Digital Educational Material. Then, we briefly define “Hypertexts”, as the research by Pires (2016) reveals. The importance of mentioning *Hypertexts* lies on the web pages and applications brought by the material as interactive tools for learning.

Finally, the last section describes each unit of the material. Besides presenting the lessons, the purpose of this section is to suggest, briefly and contextually, a path that students and teachers can take when using the material. In addition, we justify the choice of some activities based on the assumptions of Digital Literacy.

Between Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians

This section aims to present a historical contextualization of the presence of the Scandinavians (the “Vikings”) in England, with the purpose to explain how they influenced the English Language.

In this way, there are two subsections. The first one, “British Territories on Fire”, introduces the arrival of Vikings in England. Then, the second one, “The Formation of English Language between Old English and Old Norse”, explains the process of formation of English Language taking into account the influences from the language and the culture of the Vikings.

British Territories on Fire

The history of England sets a territory filled with invasions, disputes, and battles. England is a part of Great Britain, an island that was under Roman rule for approximately four centuries. Before the Roman invasions, British lands were inhabited by different Celtic tribes, which spread throughout the territory. Later, many

reasons led to the fall of Roman rule, facilitating the entry of different Germanic tribes, from Northern Europe.

Each tribe settled in a different region in the British lands. According to Drout (2006), “[...] the Angles settled the north of England, the Saxons settled the south, and the Jutes settled in Kent, to the east. Each of the three tribes spoke *Old English*, but of a different dialect” (p. 61). The term “Anglo-Saxon” refers to the outcome of the mixture of these different Germanic peoples, who shared similarities in their languages, customs, and beliefs.

Currently, the Scandinavians are inhabitants of the region located in the extreme north of Europe, which comprises Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and Iceland. Moreover, this term also refers to the ancient Germanic peoples who inhabited the regions that comprise only where today is Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. Another term for these peoples, which we use as a synonym for Scandinavians, is *Norsemen*. It is also important to mention the existence of the term *Viking*, which refers primarily to piracy that was practiced by some groups of Scandinavians, associated with navigation, invasion, and plundering. Nowadays, through a series of cultural appropriations, the term has become popular, and both *Viking* and Scandinavian are often used with the same meaning. These northern groups had pre-Christian beliefs, similar to the ones from the ancient Anglo-Saxons, who worshiped several gods.

It is important to highlight that Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians were peoples from the same Germanic group. In other words, it can be said that there was a certain kinship between them. Borges (2006) presents some considerations regarding the “Germanics” and some of their influence upon the English language:

They shared similar mythologies, from which only the Scandinavian had been preserved, at the furthest point in Europe: Iceland. We know from this mythology saved in the Eddas some correspondences: for example, the Scandinavian *Odin* was the German *Wotan* and the English *Woden*. The names of the gods remain on the days of the week, which were translated from Latin into *Old English*: “Monday,” *lunes*, day of the “moon”; *martes*, the day of Mars, is “Tuesday,” the day of the German god of war and glory; *miércoles*, the day of Mercury, was assimilated to *Woden* in “Wednesday”; the day of Jupiter, *jueves*, gave “Thursday”, day of Tor, with the Scandinavian name; the day of Venus is “Friday”, the German *Frija*, *Frig* in England, goddess of beauty; “Saturday” is the day of Saturn; Sunday, the day of the

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Lord - something that is seen in Italian, "domenica" - was like the day of the Sun: "Sunday". (BORGES, 2006, p. 3-4, our translation)

A great difference between Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians is regarding five hundred years of history, ever since the Anglo-Saxon formative groups (Angles, Jutes, Saxons, and others) left their regions to migrate to British territories and create a new culture. However, what distinguishes them, in their particularities, which is a consequence of this period of migrations, is the consolidation of Christianity in England. Religion has turned them into practically opposite groups in the historical context that we analyze. Nonetheless, as Borges (2006) states, there are remnants of his closeness that persist until nowadays, exceptionally through the English language itself, as shown by the days of the week.

The Formation of English Language between Old English and Old Norse

The Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians maintained significant cultural relations, as both descended from Germanic tribes. Consequently, *Old English*, the language spoken by Anglo-Saxons, and *Old Norse*, the Scandinavians language, also shared lexical and grammatical connections that facilitated communication among their speakers (MARTINI; SOARES, 2016). Drout (2006) explains this relationship:

[...] the language of the Vikings was a North Germanic language and possibly was understandable to the people who spoke the Anglian dialect of *Old English* — a West Germanic language. Most of the English in the Danelaw were Anglian speakers. (DROUT, 2006, p. 77)

However, some Germanic languages share more prominent features, dividing their family into specific groups: West Germanic, North Germanic, and East Germanic. While linguists consider *Old English* as a truly West Germanic language, Old Norse is classified as of North Germanic origin. West Germanic still has two branches: High West Germanic, which evolved into Modern German, and Low West Germanic, which

gave rise to many other languages, including Modern Dutch. It is believed that *Old English* evolved into Middle English and finally into Modern English (MARTINI; SOARES, 2016). According to the origin of Modern English, Emonds and Faarlund (2014) complement:

Modern English is unquestionably Germanic by virtue of its phonological history, its core vocabulary, and its morphosyntactic system. But nothing in what has been said implies that it is descended from the language of the Anglo-Saxons, and rightly so, since they were not the only Germanic-speaking immigrants from across the North Sea. Within the Germanic sub-family, the question of the genealogical descent of English remains open. (EMONDS, FAARLUND, 2014, p. 22)

The authors assume that *Modern English* has Germanic origin. In contrast, they question the particularities of this ancestry: does *Modern English* truly belong to the *West Germanic* branch? They believe that the involvement of *Old Norse* in the process of English language evolution was not simply related to influences and borrowings (MARTINI & SOARES, 2016). In this sense, Emonds and Faarlund (2014) suggest that the fusion of the languages spoken in British territory occurred only about 1300 AD, long after the Norman invasions, forming what is called *Middle English*. However, there is controversy among researchers and linguists about the development process of Middle English:

a. *Middle English* developed from *Old English* (a commonly accepted view). *Old English* under-went many fundamental grammatical changes, incorporated much *Norse* vocabulary (over two centuries), and became *Middle English*.

b. *Middle English* developed from *Norse* [...]. *Norse* underwent essentially no grammatical changes [...], incorporated somewhat more *Old English* vocabulary (over four centuries), and became *Middle English*. (EMONDS & FAARLUND, 2014, p. 44)

Traditional linguistics claims that *Middle English* evolved from *Old English*, with some *Old Norse* influence. On the other hand, for the researchers Emonds and Faarlund (2014), *Old English* practically extinguished and the *Old Norse* originated the *Middle English* receiving many influences of the *Old English* during its evolutionary process in the British Isles (*Anglicized Norse*). Other scholars, such as Poussa (1982), maintain the idea of “creolization”, or in other words, a balanced mix

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between *Old English* and *Old Norse*. Despite the divergence of these theories, the contribution of the old Scandinavian language to the formation of the English language was undeniable, as well as their relations as part of the same linguistic family facilitated the interaction between the different peoples who shared the same territory (MARTINI; SOARES, 2016).

Technology in English teaching

This section presents the theoretical part that surrounds the material. Firstly, it is important to clarify what is a “Digital Educational Material”. Bearing in mind that the material “Improving English through the History of English” works with a variety of websites, we also bring a explanation of “Hypertexts”.

The Digital Educational Material

According to Salas (2004), quoted by Vilaça (2009), a didactic material is anything that can be used to facilitate the learning process. In this sense, we can consider that didactic resources are all the objects around us as long as they are used for teaching and learning practices.

This definition presents a wide and general idea. However, Vilaça (2009) highlights its importance to understand “the existence of a wide range of didactic material, which goes beyond the restricted conception of textbooks and published materials as the only forms of didactic material” (p. 5, our translation). In this perspective, it is important to place the “didactic materials” in our current context regarding the digital technologies.

Undeniably, digital technologies have given rise to new dynamics of knowledge exchange. Consequently, “teachers of English as a foreign language need to improve their way of teaching in order to catch students’ attention” (SOLANO et al., 2017, p. 79). In this way, “[t]hrough a variety of communicative and interactive activities, effective use of technology can help foreign language learners strengthen their linguistic skills and learning attitude, as well as build their self-instruction strategies and self-confidence” (SOLANO et al., 2017, p. 79). In the age of networking and relationships, it is necessary to see and value the student as the

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digital native he or she is assumed to be: a creator and cooperator (AZZARI; CUSTÓDIO, 2013). Bearing that in mind, we have a new kind of didactic material: the digital ones.

Broadly speaking, digital didactic resources are “materials for teaching and learning that can be used with computers or mobile devices” (WHYTE, 2017, p. 3). There are several types of digital didactic resources, “including texts, images, audio and video” (WHYTE, 2017, p. 3). Furthermore, they may mix one or more of these types. Each type of digital didactic resource helps us to the development of a class or course according to the target group and the subject matter.

Whether in a traditional face-to-face classroom or online courses, choosing digital learning resources is a challenging task. Should we, as teachers, use prompt materials or build ours? Or should we modify the materials already available on the internet? There are many doubts surrounding the process of planning a lesson. It is undeniable that a material produced by the teacher has its particular value. In this way, the teacher can explain with her/his unique language and bring his/her point of view.

The teacher can design a lesson in different ways, inserting the most diverse resources, produced by her/himself or available on the internet. Varying the media type of the activities included in the digital material is an interesting strategy to foster student engagement. In this sense, we have a new conception of “text”, which instigates the teaching and learning process by encouraging the students to improve their own discovery skills and autonomy.

Hypertexts

Regarding this new form of “text”, Rojo (2012) asserts that it encompasses many “languages” which demand practices and abilities of comprehension and production to create meaning: the “multiliteracies”. According to Lemke (2010 apud ROJO, 2012), the text is now simultaneously a database. Based on this assumption, Pires (2016), quoting Xavier (2002), explains that:

From the conception of text as a form of social cognition that systematizes and constitutes knowledge, it can be verified that, due to the evolution of new digital technologies that allow the reduction of time and distance for the

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interaction between text producers and readers, the digitization of these texts seems to make way for hypertext (PIRES, 2016, p. 50, our translation).

Varying the media resources in student interaction with texts in a digital material is a practice that does not need to follow a predetermined routine. Within this context, in addition to media such as texts and audio, it is possible for the teacher to add videos, simulations and even games related to the content. Hypertexts, therefore, encourage the student to explore a variety of "links" referring to the content that is under study. Xavier (2002) defines hypertexts as:

[...] multimodal and semi-linguistic digital "textual" devices (endowed with verbal, imagery and sound elements) that are online, namely, those that are indexed to the internet, cross-linked to each other and that have a URL domain or electronic address in World Wide Web. (XAVIER, 2002, p. 26 *apud* PIRES, 2016, p.50, our translation)

In this perspective, the author believes that hypertext is a flexible form of language, which dialogues with other interfaces and conditions of texts (XAVIER, 2002 *apud* PIRES, 2016). Consequently, students can read and approach this "new kind of text" in different ways.

Koch (2007 *apud* PIRES, 2016) claims that the hyperlinks break the linearity of the texts, dividing them into blocks of information. According to the author, the hyperlinks may be fixed or dynamic and perform important functions, such as deictic, cohesive and cognitive.

[...] the links have a deictic function, as they monitor the readers' attention, leading them to certain subjects, making them able to deepen their reading, as well as treat it from various angles that may be convergent or divergent (KOCH, 2007). In addition, cohesive hyperlinks are those that agglutinate information, linking it coherently (XAVIER, 2002). [...] Therefore, in order to perform the cognitive function, hyperlinks must contain loads of meanings, and the producer must strategically build these links so that they are able to trigger models that lead the reader to infer what is behind of each of them, being able to formulate hypotheses about what he/she will find if following them. (PIRES, 2016, p. 51, our translation)

Pires (2016) concludes that hyperlinks are tools that guide readers to read and to interpret the text. Therefore, hyperlinks are *traces of authorship* that the producer

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leaves as a suggestion for reading and “even if the reader does not accept the map given to him, he/she is aware of its existence” (PIRES, 2016, p. 51, our translation).

Improving English through the History of English

This section contains three subsections that discuss the context of production of the material. The first subsection presents the elaboration of the material, while the second describes its structure, organized in four parts corresponding to each lesson of the material.

Elaborating the material

The presented Digital Educational Material was produced as a final work for the subject “Digital literacy and critical approach: the use of technological tools for English Language Teaching”² from the Graduate Certificate Program in English Language Teaching of the State University of Northern Paraná (UENP) (2018- 2019). The material was created by Isabelle Maria Soares, inspired by her research on the History of Medieval England during her Undergraduate (Letras - UTFPR) and Masters (Letras - UNICENTRO) trajectory.

According to Gilster (1997 apud FREITAS, 2010), dealing with the digital world is “learning to deal with ideas, not memorizing commands” (p. 338, our translation). Thus, there are some competences involved in the “Digital Literacy” process: the critical evaluation of digital content, the hypertextual reading, the ability to associate information from different sources, and the search skills through the “virtual library”.

² Original name in Portuguese: “Letramentos digitais e abordagem crítica: o uso de ferramentas tecnológicas para o Ensino da Língua Inglesa”.

Therefore, the elaboration of the material used the most diverse educational tools available in the digital environment, such as *TedED*, *LyricsTraining* and *Kahoot!*, and other virtual resources that do not have educational purposes, but can be adapted and used as teaching and learning tools, for instance *YouTube* and *Google* devices. In this sense, by presenting the content through a variety of digital tools, the material is committed to move beyond merely functional knowledge of technologies, developing in students the reflective and critical ability concerning how and why they can use such tools.

Important notes

It is important to mention that there was the concern to make explicit all the references used to produce the material, such as texts, websites, videos and images. All the used imagery was sourced through *Creative Commons* searches and we properly cited them in the final pages of the material.

“Improving English through the History of English: between Anglo-saxons and Scandinavians” is available at *Academia.edu*³. As the material aims at educational purposes, the product has a *Creative Commons* license that allows its free sharing and possible adaptations, exclusively for non-commercial endings.

Presenting the material

The cover of the material “Improving English through the History of English” anticipates that its proposal is for those who want to improve their English language skills. Moreover, going beyond language abilities, it offers students an interesting topic that takes up some of the history of English language. In this sense, the target group

³ Available at:

https://www.academia.edu/40287398/Improving_English_through_English_History_Between_Anglo-saxons_and_Scandinavians_For_Upper-intermediate_Students_B2_-C1 Accessed on: Set, 9th, 2019.

is composed of those who speak and study English as a Foreign Language (EFL) and are at an Upper-intermediate level or higher and those who wish to learn the English language more thoroughly.

In addition, the material aims the independence of teaching-learning process of students by encouraging them to use technology through different virtual tools. The material is structured in four lessons, presenting a plurality of hypertext. Activities, texts, images, videos, and games are organized in each lesson to guide the process of teaching and learning both language and content.

However, bearing in mind the flexibility of a hypertext as proposed by Xavier (2002 *apud* PIRES, 2016), it is also understood that students, as well as the teacher who will mediate the class, have the freedom to read, reread and work in different ways with this material permeated by a variety of hyperlinks. In this sense, it is important to note that even if the material is structured in a linear way, this does not imply that it is the only possible way to engage with and/or study it.

In this sense, the next topics of this paper will describe the activities proposed in each lesson of the material, following the sequence as intended by the author of the material.

Old Norse Influences on English Language

The first lesson, “Lesson 1 - Old Norse Influence on English Language”, raises students’ awareness of the influences from the Old Norse on the English language.

To this end, the first activity includes a hyperlink to the *TEDEd.com* platform, which features a short video on the history of the origin of some English words, such as “window”, contextualizing the relations between the Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian peoples. Therefore, the video explains “*kenning*”, a kind of metaphor which is very common in Germanic medieval literatures. The material suggests that the student watch the video and perform the subsequent activities on the page. However,

as already mentioned, students and teacher are free to decide how to proceed with the exercise.

In the same lesson, another hyperlink is available, this time to an article in *Babbel.com*, which discusses the *Old Norse* influences in the English language and presents 139 words derived from them. In order to deepen the reading, the material proposes some questions for reflection and discussion, inciting the readers to do a research on the Internet.

Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians on TV

The ideas brought in the first Lesson introduce what comes next. In this second lesson, the students will deepen their knowledge through *Youtube* videos. The focus is to reflect on how the process of the contact between Old English and Old Norse is presented on TV, specifically by the *Vikings* series (2013-).

“Lesson 2 - Anglo-Saxons and Scandinavians on TV”, exposes the television series *Vikings* (2013-), including selected scenes available on *Youtube*, which feature both Old English and Old Norse languages and contrast the relationship between the two cultures. The main purpose of the exercise is to provoke reflections on cultural and linguistic exchanges that have occurred throughout history and still occur nowadays.

This thinking activity considers students' own opinion, which is considered very important to the principals of Critical Literacy, since “the language education, which we, English teachers, are devoted to, needs to involve the critical component, so that our students could be well equipped with the language skills of CL” (ZHANG, 2015, p. 1318).

Critical Literacy is concerned with getting students to read critically and creating new questions about current ideologies in order to promote social transformations. Learning to read and to write in a foreign language presupposes that learners develop their skills in social practices with their language and culture, which contributes to their development as citizens. In this perspective, the reading

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process, in any language, goes far beyond decoding, since the students use, participate in and critically analyze the language as it is materialized in the text (ZHANG, 2015; GIRÓN-GARCÍA, 2015).

Despite the concern to insert the technological tools in the educational environment, it is necessary to use them in order to both students and teachers engage with language as a social practice. In other words, it is necessary to develop activities that take advantage of the condition of interaction, which technological tools can provide. In short, this approach demonstrates that the unit is aligned with the principles of Critical Literacy, which aims for students “to learn not only [...] vocabulary, grammar and discourse; but they are also learning new ways to structure their thoughts” (GIRÓN-GARCÍA, 2015, p. 72).

At the end, the lesson proposes a research, analysis, and production activity based on a *Youtube* video of the “Lord's Prayer” in four languages: *English*, *Old English*, *Old Norse*, and *Icelandic*. It is recommended that the students create a comparative table in *GoogleDocs* (there is a model available in the hyperlink), focusing on similar words between English and Old English and/or between English and Old Norse.

Viking world on current Music World

The third lesson brings the world of music as a way to continue the theme. However, the focus here is only on the Scandinavian world. In this lesson, the students will use *YouTube* and *LyricsTraining* platform to play with their colleagues. The lesson also proposes reading and writing activities.

In “Lesson 3 - Viking World on Current Music World”, students are induced to meet the Folk Metal band “Leaves' Eyes”, which produces music and music videos about Norse mythology and Viking Age history. The material suggests two songs from the band as objects of study: “My destiny” and “The waking eye”. The first dynamic proposes a playful listening activity through the online platform *LyricsTraining*: learners should select one of the songs, access the page, choose

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a level (the material recommends Intermediate) and play completing the lyrics while listening.

The second part of the lesson presents two excerpts from an English translation of “*Ragnars Saga Loðbrókar*”. The goal is to read them by carefully, focusing on the *kennings*. A production activity is then proposed. Students will watch on *YouTube* the same video clips used in the previous activity, pay close attention to each story, and choose one of the two options to develop their writing task. The material requires a writing of a short story based on the narrative of the chosen music video. In addition, students should use at least two *kennings* and include images to illustrate their tales. The material suggests that students share their *GoogleDocs* productions with their peers to exchange comments and suggestions, thereby promoting collaborative work to enhance their revision process, considering that:

[...] *GoogleDocs* is a free virtual online collaborative writing environment where [...] it is possible to host a document and allow its editing to be open to the public or a restricted group of contributors. The contributors may modify the content initially exposed as often as necessary. The tool organizes all versions chronologically and can be stored and retrieved at any time by any contributor.

(AZZARI, CUSTÓDIO, 2013, p. 87-86, our translation).

By combining this tool with the writing activity, which promotes collaborative work in order to contribute to the reflective process of rewriting, students are able to achieve the skills needed to use information critically and strategically. According to Freitas (2010), all these competences define Digital Literacy, presenting itself “in multiple formats, coming from various sources and presented through computer-internet [...]” and whose goals are “[...] often shared socially and culturally” (p. 339-340, our translation).

What did you learn from this Medieval World?

“Lesson 4 - What did you learn from this Medieval World?” is the final unit and its main goal is to review and reinforce the theme using the *Kahoot!* platform. Students

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apply the knowledge they have acquired in order to deepen their learning. Three quizzes are available for students to choose in order to play with their peers and/or teacher: 1. Kenning, 2. Old English and 3. Vikings.

Kahoot is an interactive online digital platform that uses elements of the games from which it is possible to create an educational game with multiple choice questions including videos, images, diagrams etc., which can serve as a basis for the activity. [...] It is possible to play the games created on the Kahoot platform in pairs or groups and the platform allows the creation of three types of activities: *quiz*, *discussion* and *survey*. The *quiz* typology consists of multiple choice questions that can range from questions of text interpretation (oral or written) to vocabulary review, grammar, concepts etc. In this typology, feedback is immediate because it presents the right answer after all players click on their respective options. (GAZOTTI-VALLIM; GOMES, 2017, p. 7, our translation).

The inclusion of games in this lesson, not only enables the review of content as the ending part of material but also promotes conditions for the teaching and learning process as long as it is something motivating and enjoyable. Alves (2014) argues that “the insertion of games in the educational context and the use of their elements of mechanics, aesthetics and thinking (working together) can provide the possibility of producing engaging experiences” (*apud* GAZOTTI-VALLIM; GOMES, 2017, p. 3, our translation).

Conclusion

This work presented the conception and elaboration of the material “Improving English through the History of English”, which is the result of the final activity for a course and its subsequent updating as a project developed for this article.

Using a part from the “History of the English Language” as content, the Scandinavian influences on the British territory, the material combines medieval content with contemporary technology. Therefore, it aims at the autonomy of the students in the English teaching and learning process. In this sense, incorporating the concepts of Hypertext and Digital Literacy was essential to support and contextualize the development of the material.

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Available online, we can consider the exposed Digital Educational Material as the starting point of a project that aims to enhance the English Language and convey its history.

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