USING MULTIMEDIA FOR THE TEACHING AND LEARNING PROCESS OF HISTORY OF ENGLISH- SPEAKING COUNTRIES

EL USO DE UNA MULTIMEDIA PARA LA ENSEÑANZA Y EL APRENDIZAJE DE LA HISTORIA DE LOS PUEBLOS DE HABLA INGLESA

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ABSTRACT

Communicative competence in English entails the understanding of history of English-speaking countries as an intercultural component. In this research context, some shortages concerning the bibliography of this subject have been evidenced in the degree course English Language with French as a second foreign language at the *Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de Las Villas*. The purpose of this research was to propose multimedia to enrich the existing bibliography of the History of English Speaking countries I. A qualitative methodology was used in the study including some methods from the theoretical, empirical and mathematical level. The context analysis confirmed some limitations concerning the quantity, quality and variety of the

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bibliographical resources, problems in respect to the students' accessibility to the bibliography resulting in poor motivation for the contents of the subject. For this research, professors on History of English-Speaking Countries as well as specialists from the ICTs were consulted. They both evaluated the didactic and technological design of the multimedia and agreed that it meets the necessary requirements as a valid proposal positively impacting on the teaching and learning process of the subject. The proposal included diverse multimedia resources of different historical periods and a set of activities for students' assessment.

Keywords: bibliographical resources; history of english-speaking countries; history of great britain; information and communication technologies; multimedia

RESUMEN

La competencia comunicativa en inglés implica la comprensión de la historia de los países de habla inglesa como un componente intercultural. En este contexto de investigación, se han evidenciado algunas carencias en la bibliografía de la asignatura Historia de los países de habla inglesa en el curso académico Idioma del inglés con una segunda lengua extranjera: el francés en la *Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de Las Villas*. El propósito de esta investigación fue proponer un Multimedia para enriquecer la bibliografía existente del tema mencionado anteriormente. El estudio utilizó una metodología cualitativa y se utilizaron métodos desde el nivel teórico, empírico y matemático. El análisis de contexto confirmó limitaciones en cuanto a la cantidad, calidad y variedad de los recursos bibliográficos, problemas con respecto a la accesibilidad de los estudiantes a la bibliografía, lo que trae como consecuencia una poca motivación por los contenidos de la materia. Para la investigación se consultaron especialistas en historia de los países de habla inglesa, así como de las TIC. Ambos evaluaron el diseño didáctico y tecnológico de la multimedia y acordaron que cumple con los requisitos necesarios como una propuesta válida que tiene un impacto positivo en el proceso de enseñanza y aprendizaje de la materia. La propuesta incluye diversos recursos multimedia de los diferentes periodos históricos y un conjunto de actividades para la evaluación de los estudiantes.

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Palabras clave: recursos bibliográficos; historia de los países de habla inglesa; historia de gran bretaña; tecnologías de la información y la comunicación; multimedia

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I.   INTRODUCTION

English has become increasingly dominant as a world language for communication in higher education. The simultaneous impact of globalization, the spread of English and technological development have transformed the learning and teaching methods of English as a lingua franca in an unprecedented way. (Warschauer, 2004). Consequently, being able to speak English has become crucial in the current professional world. That is why students, whose mother tongue is not English, often have to develop a high level of competence in this language to pursue their studies. This requirement is especially imperative for students majoring in English, who will have to perform as translators and interpreters in different contexts: tourism, business, commerce, international affairs, academic programs, and scientific communication, among others.

However, a good command of English also entails the understanding of history as a parameter of the culture of English speaking countries, in order to acquire a more complete overview of the Anglophone world. Kramsch said in her book *Language and Culture*: "…there is only one way of viewing culture: one that examines cultures from a historical aspect". (Kramsch, 2000)

On the other hand, the increasing development of information and communication technologies (ICTs) has led to the dominance of English as a lingua franca in many contexts. Terms such as e-learning, mobile learning, blended learning are now emerging in educational environments. This last modality of learning is conceived as "learning models that combine traditional classroom practice through ICTs in and out of classroom contexts with e-learning solutions". (Ibáñez, 2012). This means that students face both, different styles of instruction. Traditional face-to-face instruction works together with ICTs tools in order to foster the acquisition of knowledge through different ways." (Ibáñez, 2012)

Various are the advantages of including multimedia materials in the pedagogical scenarios that go from making the whole process more interesting for students to making it easier for teachers to keep their attention and improve their ability to retain information. ICTs can improve the quality of education and bring better outcomes by

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making information accessible to students, helping to gain knowledge and skill easily and making trainings more available for teachers. (Milea, 2013).

Therefore, higher education institutions should lead in drawing on the advantages and potential of the ICTs, ensuring quality and maintaining high standards for education practices and outcomes in a spirit of openness, equity and international co-operation. In Cuba, universities actively interact with ITCs at a social and institutional level, which is expressed in a new vision regarding its use, availability and access in order to fulfill their mission. The *Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de Las Villas* is also engaged in these goals. Professors and students use Moodle platform to facilitate the access to various sources of information for different courses.

However, in the context of the teaching and learning process of the subject History of English- Speaking Countries I, devoted to the study of British History, taught in the degree course English Language with French as a second foreign language, some difficulties in respect to the bibliography have been evidenced. The contents are mainly taken from British History, a book written by Harold Shultz and some other complementary materials in digital format. Yet, those materials are still not enough and accessible in a way that, both teachers and students can manage the information of the subject successfully. Thus, teachers and learners demand more bibliographical resources and interactive environments to meet students' needs and eventually enable life-long learning.

In the light of this problem, this paper seeks to find out:

-How can the bibliography of the subject History of English- Speaking Countries I of the degree course English Language with French as a second foreign language be improved?

The **overall aim** of this term paper is:

✓ To propose Multimedia including more and varied bibliographical materials, as well as a set of self-assessment tasks, to support the teaching and learning process of the subject History of English- Speaking Countries I in the degree course English Language with French as a second foreign language.

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II. Theoretical Considerations about ICT´s and their Implementation in the Teaching and Learning Process

2.1. Defining Information and Communication Technologies

According to Megha Gokhe (2012), ICT´s is the technology that supports activities involving information. Such activities include gathering, processing, storing and presenting data. Increasingly these activities also involve collaboration and communication. (Gokhe, 2012).

ICT´s are often associated only to computers; however, it actually involves a wider variety of technological means. The UNESCO referred to ICT´s as: "… forms of technology that are used to transmit, process, store, create, display, share or exchange information by electronic means, which include radio, television, video, DVD, telephone, satellite systems, and computer and network hardware and software, as well as the equipment and services associated with these technologies, such as videoconferencing, e-mail and blogs." (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), 2007)

These definitions deal with two major assumptions underlie the role of ICT´s:

"…the first assumption is that the proliferation of these technologies is causing rapid transformations in all areas of life; the second is that ICT´s function to unify and standardize culture." (Robins, 1999)

According to the report given in United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (2003), ICT´s offer generic advantages of efficiency gains, information-sharing, communication and faster knowledge accumulation, dissemination and application, in support for which they are used. (Biggs, 2003). This is reason ICT´s have become, within a very short time, one of the basic building blocks of modern society.

ICT´s are used, applied, and integrated in activities of working and learning on the basis of conceptual understanding and methods of informatics. (Robins, 1999)). They can reshape, reorganize and fundamentally restructure working methods, and ultimately the sectors in which they are assimilated. (Biggs, 2003)

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In this sense, there is no doubt that ICT´s are deemed an essential tool of the 21st Century, whose major aims entail the improvement of efficiency and a more sufficient access to knowledge.

2.2 Integrating ICT´s into the teaching and learning process through Multimedia. Features and principles

Multimedia is a digital, organized and comprehensive collection of information, which may include texts, images, audios, videos, graphics, and animations in a variety of application environments, with interactivity between the user and the software.

Each new development of each passing year is absorbed into next year's technology, making the multimedia experience, better, faster, and more interesting.

In the book Multimedia Learning (2001), Richard E. Mayer discusses twelve principles that shape the design and organization of multimedia presentations that facilitate the process of learning:

- Coherence: people learn better when extraneous words, pictures and sounds are excluded rather than included.

- Signaling: people learn better when cues that highlight the organization of the essential material are added.

- Redundancy: people learn better from graphics and narration than from graphics, narration and on-screen text.

- Spatial Contiguity: people learn better when corresponding words and pictures are presented near rather than far from each other on the page or screen.

- Temporal Contiguity: people learn better when corresponding words and pictures are presented simultaneously rather than successively.

- Segmenting: people learn better from a multimedia lesson is presented in user-paced segments rather than as a continuous unit.

- Pre-training: people learn better from a multimedia lesson when they know the names and characteristics of the main concepts.

- Modality: people better learn from graphics and narrations than from animation and on-screen text.

- Multimedia: people learn better from words and pictures than from words alone.

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- Personalization: people learn better from multimedia lessons when words are in conversational style rather than formal style.
- Voice: people learn better when the narration in multimedia lessons is spoken in a friendly human voice rather than a machine voice.
- Image: people do not necessarily learn better from a multimedia lesson when the speaker's image is added to the screen. (Mayer, 2001).

On the other hand, there are some features that should be taken into consideration when designing a multimedia, among them Nemetz and Mactavish point out the fact that:

- It is **multi sensorial**: it uses a lot of the user's senses while making use of Multimedia, for example hearing, seeing and talking.
- It is **integrated**: all the different mediums are integrated through the digitization process.
- It is **flexible**: being digital, this media can easily be changed to fit different situations and audiences.
- It can be used for a wide variety of audiences, ranging from one person to a whole group.
- **Naturalness**: it has the potential to make more appropriate and efficient use of human perceptual and cognitive capabilities, by making the interaction more natural. (F. Nemetz, 1998).
- **Multiple media**: it combines types of information that traditionally have been considered different media. This is made possible on the computer through digitization. The computer stores all information, whatever its original form, as binary digital data so it is possible to combine media into multimedia. To be more specific, Multimedia works tend to bring together media that are incompatible in other means of distribution, especially synchronous and asynchronous types of information like audio (which is time-dependent) and text (which is not.)
- **Interactivity**: one of the properties of Multimedia is the interactivity or the programming that structures for the viewer's experience. Some level of interactivity is assumed in any computer-based work, but by this definition interactivity

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becomes a defining feature that helps weave the multiplicity into a whole. (Mactavish, 2004).

Finally, Bartlett and Strough state that, "…besides potential advantages to students, multimedia formats may offer benefits to instructors teaching multi-section courses because this type of format ensures uniformity in the lecture content across the sections". (Bartlett, 2003).

In fact, students who are given access to multimedia courseware, whether as individuals or in groups, can take control of their own learning, constructing knowledge at a pace and in a direction that suits their needs and interests.

2.3 The teaching and learning process of the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I

This research work focus the attention on the contents of Great Britain's history and the fundamental role they play in universities all over the world and the possibility of learning them from a more attractive environment using ICTs for improving the bibliography of the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I.

British History has become a crucial part of the educational program in the UK, and in both English-speakers and non-speakers countries. According to the National Curriculum of this subject in England, the aim of the subject that is named History of Great Britain and the English Commonwealth is to ensure that all pupils:

- know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world.

- know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world: the nature of ancient civilizations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; achievements and follies of mankind.

- gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilization', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'.

- understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make

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connections, draw contrasts, analyze trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses.

- gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales. (Department for education, 2013)

In the research context similar goals are established to ensure the knowledge of the contents. It is considered that with the implementation of Multimedia as a particular ICTs application in the teaching and learning of History of English-Speaking Countries I, the subject will become more attractive, learner-centered and personalized, fostering long lasting knowledge. The solution to the challenge of giving a quality education and motivate students on the study of history relies in an extensive and appropriate selection of didactic materials to be included there.

III.   Methodology

Considering the real situation related to the bibliography of the subject, and the participants of the research, the use of a qualitative methodology was deemed to be the most apt in the accomplishment of the research purposes. Some methods from empirical level were used among them observation, document analysis, surveys to students and interviews to professors as well as specialists' criteria for the evaluation of the proposal.

3.1 Description of the sample and research methods used

The research was carried in the context of the course English Language with French as a second foreign language at the *Universidad Central "Marta Abreu" de Las Villas*. This course is intended for students to deal with real communicative situations by means of interpreting and translation of texts, as well as the teaching and learning process of English and French languages. The course is studied for six years and provides an extensive professional profile for students: as translators, interpreters and professors.

The subject History of English-Speaking Countries I was the context chosen for this study, and the participants' selection was carefully considered through an intentional and reasoned sampling criterion. The sample was composed by 17 students of fourth

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year, since they are currently involved in the aforesaid subject. Moreover, 5 professors also participated, which included the main professor of the subject, the department authorities and others who had taught the subject or had interdisciplinary relationships with History of English-Speaking Countries I. Hence, the total number of participants was 22. In this research work, two dimensions were identified:

-The systematization of the subject bibliography History of English-Speaking Countries I

-The selection of the contents to be included in the Multimedia for the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I

IV. Results derived from the needs analysis of the research context

The results are described following the information obtained from the different research methods using triangulation of sources and methods.

4.1.   Results derived from the information provided by the research methods

  - Document Analysis

During this research five documents were examined. The analysis included Curriculum "D", the Syllabus of History of English-Speaking Countries discipline, the Syllabus of the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I, the Scientific and Technological Information Curricular Strategy, and the Computer Curricular Strategy of the degree course English Language with French as a second foreign language for the year 2019.

The curriculum "D" consists of 11 disciplines, from which two are basic: English Language and French; two are considered profession-related disciplines: Translation-Interpreting and Didactics of Foreign Languages; three are of general education: Marxism-Leninism, Defense Preparation and Physical Education; and four are deemed basic-specific disciplines: National Culture, Linguistic Studies, Literature of English-Speaking Countries and History of English-Speaking Countries.

The general objective of this curriculum states that the graduates must be able to develop as competent translators and interpreters of English Language and French, as well as professors of both foreign languages in higher education, contributing to the professional and cultural development of their society.

The Syllabus of the discipline has been conceived to provide a social, historical and cultural characterization of English-Speaking countries. It lays the foundations for specialized subjects, which are crucial in the intercultural and socio-linguistic students'

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training. Therefore, it is essential to determine the implication of the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I (as part of the discipline) in graduates' educational training.

On the other hand, the subject is deemed one of the basic subjects of the Discipline, and it is the ground of this research work. This subject is taught to fourth year students in the second semester. It includes the History of Great Britain and the British Commonwealth, which is delivered in 48 hours of both lectures and seminars.

According to the Syllabus, the main objectives of this subject are the development of students' capacity to consolidate their scientific view of the world, through a Marxist dialectic approach of the most relevant economic, political and cultural events in the British history. Students must be able to enrich their linguistic and socio-cultural competence on the Anglo-Saxon World, and understand the significance of Great Britain and the British Commonwealth from a historical point of view.

The methodological guidelines state that it is advisable for the professor to use videos, movies, books, recordings, pictures, maps and other visual and multimedia resources as a way of stimulating students' learning process. Some of these resources can be found in the digital folder of the subject in the Moodle platform.

The basic bibliography in the Syllabus is the book "British History" written by Harold Shultz, and the complementary bibliography includes "A People's History of England" by A.L Morton, "The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain" by Kenneth Morgan, "*La Revolución Inglesa de 1640*" by Christopher Hills and "A Short History of Britain" by D. Morgan.

After the analysis of the curriculum and syllabus of the subject the curricular strategies related with the research context were explored to find out about the feasibility of the multimedia proposal, students capabilities to deal with it.

In respect to the objectives of Scientific and Technological Information curricular Strategy students should be able to integrate knowledge, abilities and professional performance, as well as to participate in a more demanding methodological work; the use of ICTs and a proper training in computing skills is undoubtedly essential.

For fourth year students the specific objectives are: to develop research works; to process data and results obtained during the professional practice; to access

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information from reliable electronic sources, etc. This document also underscores the importance of consulting complementary bibliography and materials, in addition to publications and information that are accessible when surfing on Internet or accessing to the Local Network.

Then again, the Computer Curricular Strategy is also crucial for university students master computing skills such as: the use of Microsoft Office, databases and text tabs, the plotting of graphs and Power Point presentations, the access to information through Internet or a Local Network. The Strategy also highlights the importance of using terminological tools and other auxiliary programs, materials, electronic sources of information and professional software related with the specialty.

In the case of History of English-Speaking Countries I, the document states that students have at their disposal a digital folder with some bibliography, videos, documents and pictures of the different historical periods in the Local Network. Most of the complementary materials and bibliography of this subject are in digital format, but yet they are still insufficient.

So, the proposal of the Multimedia is in a great extent contributing to both strategies goals and could be a feasible solution to improve the bibliography of the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I.

- Participant Observation

Some observation units were also outlined for the analysis of the feasibility of the proposal as the infrastructure of computer labs in the faculty for the students to run the multimedia as well as the availability of technological resources by the students: personal computers, tablets, Wi-Fi connection, and internet access.

The results from the observation showed that there are three computer labs for English Language students in the faculty, the first one for all the faculty is equipped with 26 computers. The other is the French lab that is mainly used for lessons with 8 computers, the third one is CAELTIC that used to be an access center, but now is used for lessons in undergraduate and postgraduate courses with 10 computers, but not all of them are in optimal conditions.

Due to the limitations in the lab schedule, students cannot access to the information at any time, besides there are few network cables for those students who have personal

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computers. Alternatively, the connection can be achieved through the WIFI. Currently in the faculty, there are five WIFI zones where students can access to the local network, as well as Internet without connecting in the labs.

It is important to highlight that there is a folder in the local network of the faculty for the bibliography of the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I, but, it has been noticed that it does not contain textbooks mentioned in its syllabus. There is only one hard copy of the textbook "British History" by Harold Shultz, and students only have access to it during the lessons in the classroom. The bibliography in the local network folder contains two complementary books, and some complementary materials and PDF files related to specific contents. There are also some videos and pictures related to specific contents.
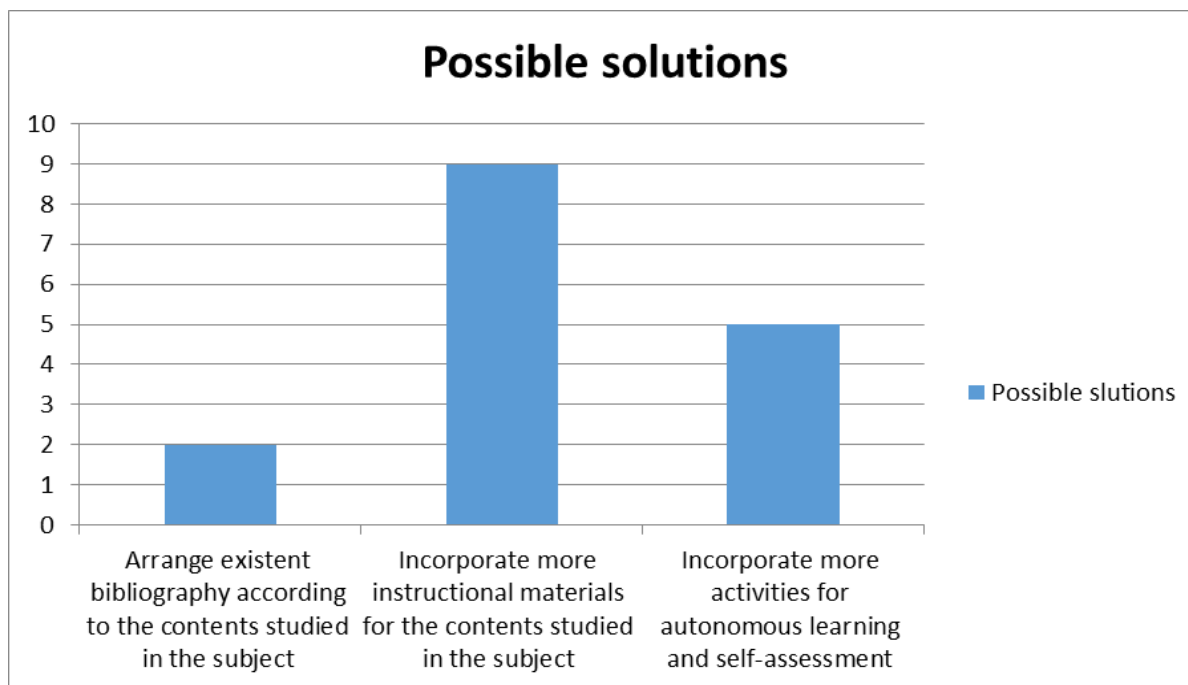
- Survey to the students

A survey was applied to 17 students in order to determine the situation regarding the bibliography of the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I.

The questionnaire used in the survey consisted of 4 questions. Most of them were (Yes or No responses or Sufficient and Insufficient) and multiple choice questions-delimited answers decided in advance, in order to facilitate the calculation in respect to the frequency analysis of the given information and demand less effort from the respondents. There were also included open-ended questions with the purpose to get a deep comprehension of the respondents' opinions and suggestions.

The results revealed that most of the students (13 students), who represented 76 % of the total recognized that there is complementary bibliography in the subject´s folder, however, 3 students (24%) seemed to believe that the subject's folder included its basic bibliography. 82% of the respondents considered that the bibliography is not enough and only 18% confirmed that it is in fact sufficient for the development of the teaching and learning process.(graph. 1)

When asked about the possible solutions to this problem, most of the students (52%) agreed to include more instructional materials from different sources over other solutions like the inclusion of interactive activities for self-assessment and conscious learning for each content studied in the subject (29%). Some students commented on

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the fact that it might include videos and films fragments that recreate the historical background of each of the periods

Graph. 1. Solutions given by the students in respect to the bibliography limitations

- Interview to professors

A semi-structured interview was applied to the department authorities, the former professor of the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I, as well as to the current professor of both: the aforementioned subject and the interdisciplinary subject English Literature- closely related to the setting chosen for this study.

The purpose of this interview was to find the professor's insights with respect to the importance of History of English-Speaking Countries I in students' professional development. Professors were also asked to offer suggestions concerning the inclusion of instructional and auxiliary materials in the subject. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for a detailed analysis of the information.

The following verbalizations illustrate professors' opinions on the significance of the subject and the limitations related to bibliography they considered that are affecting the teaching and learning **process of the subject:**

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Table 1. English professors' opinions concerning the significance of the subject and the bibliography of the subject

	Categories	Verbalizations
1	Importance of History of English-Speaking Countries I for students' professional development.	*"The subject History of English-Speaking Countries I contributes to the enlargement of students' knowledge, which is vital for their further development in the different professional profiles of the academic course"* *"This subject allows students to acquire a more specialized vocabulary related directly to historical events, while enriching the socio-cultural competence of each pupil."*
2	Knowledge about the existing bibliography in the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I	**"***The bibliography is only digital, the text books are out-of-date."* *"The number of textbooks in a printed version is quite limited in comparison to the number of students."*
2.1	Suggestions for improvement	*"It is essential to include recent studies, documentaries, and scholar findings."* *"A chronological arrangement through documentaries and maps could be a suitable way to systematize students' general comprehension of the subject."*

As it is shown in table 1, there is a growing need to deliver a wide variety of bibliography in different formats for the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I in order to meet the objectives of the subject and the students learning needs. Hence, the implementation of Multimedia is deemed to be crucial to improve the whole teaching and learning process. Even when didactic materials and information from Internet is widely used, the advantages of having a more controlled environment have proven to be more effective.

Summing up, all this analysis evidenced that there are also deficiencies concerning the access and quality of the existing bibliography of the subject. There is no textbook in digital version and only one in printed version, while the rest of existing materials is

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rather scarce. Both, students and professors agreed that the bibliography needs to be improved and complemented with some new instructional materials, and activities that reinforce students' learning and self-assessment.

Professors stated the importance of History of English-Speaking Countries I as an interdisciplinary subject, and in relation with some other disciplines such as the English Literature Discipline.

All in all, the information obtained from the research methods confirmed the limitations of the current bibliography in History of English-Speaking Countries I, resulting in the proposal of Multimedia for attaining the research overall aim.

In fact, Multimedia in History of English-Speaking Countries I as an integrator tool may facilitate students' access to a considerable amount of information and resources. As many authors state multimedia allows lecturers to integrate text, graphics, animation, and other media into one package to present comprehensive information for their students to achieve better course outcomes. (Berber M. Tolsman, 2000) (Bartlett, 2003). It permits the demonstration of complicated processes in a highly interactive, animated fashion and that instructional material can be interconnected with other related topics in a more natural and intuitive way. (Coorough, 2001)

4.2. Building HistoMedia, the Multimedia for History of English-Speaking Countries I

From the needs analysis presented above, it was decided to design the Multimedia in order to improve the bibliography of the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I, in an attempt to meet students' needs and enhance the teaching and learning process. Therefore, the **HistoMedia,** Multimedia for History of English-Speaking Countries I, was elaborated considering the theoretical framework presented, in addition to the results of the needs analysis.

The Multimedia includes a basic bibliography for the contents planned in the syllabus of the subject, as well as complementary bibliography, materials (videos, pictures, maps), designed to enhance students' comprehension of the Anglophone world. The incorporation and organization of the materials followed the syllabus organization into units and some other well-structured books related to the subject in question, such as: *The Oxford Illustrated History of Britain,* by Kenneth O. Morgan. Thus, the integrated

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materials cover the most relevant events and personalities of the History of Britain from the Roman Britain period to England of the Twentieth Century. All the information and didactic materials included in the Multimedia were taken from reliable sources: An illustrated *History* of *Britain 2006. British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data. McDowall,* National Geographic in the case of some videos, United Nations Publications, British History Encyclopedia, and some others.

In respect to the layout, features such as color, structure, interactivity and search and retrieval were taken into account to create an attractive interface easy to navigate through. The Multimedia is portable so it can be accessed from any computer without being connected to the network.

For the design and the process of building the Multimedia, several software were taken into consideration such as: Picasa, Media Monkey, Inkscape and Creator. The chosen software in the design of the Multimedia was the last one since its integration of different types of media along with its dynamic processing of digitalized information and interactive interface make it highly suitable for the enhancement of the teaching. Also, for designing the HistoMedia, the principles described by A.M Eskicioglu and D. Kopec were used*.* Here, there is an explanation of how they were applied for the proposal:

- Ensure equitable and total access

The Multimedia was designed with a clear and broad view so it provides students and professors with the basic and complementary bibliography of the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I. Thus, the materials comprised in this program are available to all users with a viable and rapid access. Furthermore, the Multimedia homepage offers a search option, which allows the users to look for specific data instead of navigating throughout the whole software to find them.

- Facilitate the presentation, organization of data

Taking into account the bibliography shortages, the Syllabus structure of the subject and the users' needs and suggestions made in the needs, the contents were incorporated in the program in a way that access to the resources would be easy. Users can effortlessly find and have access to all the information, which is divided in ten historical periods (Roman Britain, The Anglo-Saxon Period, The Early Middle Ages, The Later Middle Ages, The Tudor Age, The Stuarts, The Eighteenth Century, Revolution

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and the Rule of Law, The Liberal Age and The Twentieth Century). Each period is comprised in a folder that contains a series of documents, pictures, videos, and maps of the most important events and personalities of the given historical moment.

- Alternation of data

According to experts, students retain 20% of what they see, 30% of what they hear, 50% of what they see and hear and 80% of what they see, hear and interact with. Due to these integrating principle of Multimedia- which claims that students learn best when alternating different types of information- the program includes maps, videos, text, and pictures so the users can manage the information successfully alternating different sources.

- Information search

Instructional materials are accessible from any webpage in the Multimedia. The software offers many options for searching through title, author or even through the keywords that appears in each document.

In respect to the main characteristics of Multimedia, previously described in the theoretical framework, the following were applied for the HistoMedia: (See fig. 1)

- Color

Since Green color creates a relaxed learning environment and provides a sense of well-being and tranquility, it was used as a background color. This color-considered the intellectual one- prompts enhance learning and improve comprehension, which it is essential in history study spaces. Contrast colors like black and white were used for readability since they are easier to read in papers and computer screens.

- Home Page

The home page of the Multimedia is the first web page displayed in the program. It has the name and a menu with the different historical periods included in the subject Syllabus, as well as maps, pictures and videos of all periods. These period sections display inner information, which include maps, videos, pictures, texts, web quest activities and links to web pages related to the period in question. Thus, the user would have two options: going directly to the option maps, for example, and then access to the period or event of interest related to this media, or selecting one of the historical periods and choose the information he or she prefers in a particular form. This page also

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provides a section up to the right, where users may search for specific information, and a section for bibliography to consult and web links. (See fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Home Page of the HistoMedia

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Currently, the HistoMedia proposal is in the stage of piloting implementation for further improvement of the contents before being given to the specialists for their evaluation and then proceed to the application in the degree course.

V. CONCLUSIONS

1. Multimedia is a digital, organized and comprehensive collection of information represented in human-computer interactions that facilitate the teaching and learning process. They have been used in higher education as an ICTs tool due to its flexible nature, which allows the designer to adjust the media and use it for a wide variety of audiences.

2. From the needs analysis concerning the bibliography of the subject History of English-Speaking Countries I, the results showed that there are some limitations regarding the amount, variety and availability of the existing materials in the Local Network. Students and professors agreed that the collection should be improved and complemented with new materials in order to enhance students' comprehension of the Anglophone world. Multimedia was proved to be essential from an interdisciplinary approach with Literature of English speaking countries

3. The HistoMedia contents were selected using a comprehensive approach with the syllabus of the subject and the suggestions given by the students and professors. All the information and materials included in the Multimedia were taken from reliable sources. The multimedia was designed using the Creator Software and the principles and characteristics suggested in the theoretical framework.

4. Although the HistoMedia is about to be put into practice the professors of the subject considered the proposal as a valid contribution for the improvement of the teaching and learning process of the subject.

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