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„McDreamy & McSteamy in the English Language
Classroom:

Television Literacy – A Model Applied to Grey’s
Anatomy “

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To Mum & Dad

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Introduction

With the dawn of the 21st century societies finally had to admit that we are living in a multimedia world, realising that multimedia is extremely pervasive in all areas of life. The term “media” stands for a variety of modern technologies developed to create human beings, who are becoming on the one hand informed consumers and on the other hand easy influenceable media users. Our everyday life is flooded with information and effects of various media, accompanying us from day one. Because of this circumstance it is essential to develop media literacy from the very beginning. This is easily stated but it entails the urgent question of how to foster this specific kind of knowledge. An outline of what media literacy comprehends, what it takes to process, and which effects go along with it, is presented at the beginning of this thesis before these components are related to television literacy and its application outlined in practical teaching examples.

Television emerged in the last decades as the leading medium in our technology centred world. It is, besides the newly developed medium of the Internet, the most widely used medium to gather information, and even more importantly, the unrivalled entertainment distributor nowadays. This situation led to a great demand for another kind of literacy, TV literacy. Television literacy, a specific knowledge based on television, is one of the main divisions of media literacy. In a word, it should deal with questions of how to make use and interpret the messages of television effectively. This claim demands that if this kind of knowledge is not evolving outside of the education system, adolescents should be educated in this area. Hence the following decision is that the most recent generation has to learn television literacy at school. This demand puts educational ministries, schools and especially teachers under considerable strain. In this thesis the requirements for the teaching staff on the subject of television literacy, especially teachers of foreign languages, particularly of English as a second language, is examined. In contrast to film analysis from which television analysis partly draws, TV literacy has not yet completely found its way into the English language classroom.¹ The questions of how television viewing influences second language acquisition and how this approach, which is in its fledgling stages can be expanded, will be discussed.

¹ See Sommer and Zerweck, 3.

McDreamy and McSteamy in the English Language Classroom is built on three core components. The first part gives an introduction to media literacy followed by the derivation of television literacy from already existing parameters. The second section focuses exclusively on television literacy and its four main divisions in relation to language teaching. Here one can find a short outline of television literacy and its more or less incorporation in the Austrian curriculum. The last and third part is a merely practical part featuring lesson plans including their descriptions, handouts, transparencies, and useful teaching materials according to the four main elements of television literacy applied to the television series *Grey's Anatomy*. Acting on the assumption that students need basic modules of a foreign language before they can fulfill certain tasks, the lesson plans developed here focus on the upper secondary level where students have to have the basic acquirement of the four main skills and it will be without difficulty to add new skills while working and deepening the knowledge of already existing ones. The activities presented are not exclusively tied to the hospital drama staged in Seattle Grace but are generally applicable to other television programmes. The appendix features an introduction to the working example and hit show, *Grey's Anatomy*, and a discussion of its genre. The decision which television programme to use was based on the background of the current immense popularity of programmes dealing with specialist working areas. Switching on the TV, one cannot avoid series dealing with this content, for instance *CSI* or *Grey's Anatomy*.

I. What is Television Literacy?

Television literacy (TVL) has evolved to a topic which cannot be avoided in the multi-mediated 21st century in which we live. Half a century ago television developed into “THE” mass medium, with its entering almost every single household, and has since been a major influence in almost every aspect of people’s lives. Since then a considerable number of things have changed, for instance the formation of an academic subject specifically dealing with media studies. Media studies is an overarching field, which is itself split up into further aspects. This division supports the detailed examination of the multifaceted parts of media literacy, of which, for instance, television literacy is one significant component. This field of television literacy, a fairly recently established one, has made the critical examination of a great number of existing features of television programmes its business. It can be approached from various viewpoints, hence resulting, in different outcomes depending on the approach of the investigation.

Television literacy is a complex area which has been neglected in scientific research for a long time, not from lack of interest but because it has been regarded as popular or even “low” culture in contrast to “high” culture. Following this assumption a basic example would be to designate an episode of *Grey’s Anatomy* as “low” culture and an opera written by W. A. Mozart as “high” culture. A fact undermining this view of high and low culture is that television products still compete for artistic appreciation.

As this thesis is situated in the academic field of pedagogy related to cultural studies, it is not the topic to investigate if television should be assigned to “high” or “low” culture. On the contrary, this aspect will be left aside and the main focus is therefore put on the investigation of how the coming generations can be equipped with television literacy. But before directly immersing into the topic of television literacy and its possible teaching methods, one has to take a broader look at the overall category underlying and including television literacy, namely media literacy. It is key to the understanding, examination and teaching of television literacy to know the basic elements of its major field.

1. Media Literacy

1.1. What is Media Literacy?

Media literacy denotes the overall term for an attentive exposure to all different kinds of media. There exists a number of different approaches of how to define media literacy, depending on the viewpoint of its investigation. For instance one can regard media literacy as a skill or as the ability to use media, on the one hand, having all of the media in mind, and on the other hand, concentrating on one medium only, for example television or still and moving images.² As there are several viewpoints of how to interpret this compound noun, superficially speaking, all of them can be summarised as the description of how to understand the meaning of media texts. As the plural form of the term “media” already indicates, it stands for media in general and deals with a variety of media. In the course of this thesis a special kind of literacy, particularly television literacy, should be derived from this general approach.

But how do we make meaning of texts? This question refers back to the traditional skill of reading, because the term literacy is traditionally used for print media, ‘having knowledge of letters; instructed; learned.’ (Silverblatt, 1). The term literacy includes the abilities of reading and writing, making use of letters to understand a message, and to construct a text. So the original definition of literacy stands for the traditional skills of reading and writing. From printed media the term has been expanded to include other varieties of mass media as well.

Comparing the definitions of two works on media literacy published three years apart, one can notice a different number of named media. Moreover, the lists vary in their inclusion of media. Silverblatt says that ‘[the] mass media now [in 1995] include print, photography, film, radio and television.’ (Silverblatt, 1f). While James Potter’s list includes the following mass media listed according to their industries three years later: book industry, newspaper industry, magazine industry, film industry, recording industry, radio industry, broadcast television, cable television and

² See Potter, xii.

computers.³ Looking closely at Potter's enumeration we can sum up that he too speaks of the same number of mass media, because as I see it, books, newspapers as well as magazines belong to the group of print and broadcast television. Recording and cable television can be combined in the overall classification of television. A further category would be film, and last but not least, the mass media of computers, especially the use of the Internet. Overall, both classifications consist of five large groups with Potter replacing the medium of photography with the more modern medium of computers. As can be observed, defining the class of mass media is a matter of opinion, nevertheless a medium can be classified as a mass medium if it is used by a multitude of people and what is more important, it is a mass medium if 'it can fulfil the needs of the public' (Potter, 180).

Besides the discussion of which medium can be characterised as mass medium, whereas one can be reassured that television is without a doubt a mass medium in our society, it is by far more relevant to examine on which ideas the term media literacy is based. But beforehand, one has to clarify what is commonly understood by the term media literacy. James Potter in his work, *Media Literacy*, defines the subject-matter the following way:

[It] is a perspective from which we expose ourselves to the media and interpret the meaning of the message we encounter. We build this perspective from knowledge structures. To build our knowledge structures, we need tools and raw material. The tools are our skills; the raw material is information from the media. (Potter, 5)

Although Potter's work, *Media Literacy*, is not the most recent work on this topic, it provides, in my opinion, a useful and well-structured introduction, covering all major aspects of media literacy. Therefore it will be used as one of the main reference sources in the development of the pedagogical approach to television literacy in this thesis.

The general definition given above summarizes the overall idea of media literacy. It describes the process of what is happening when one encounters media texts, and furthermore, it includes the ingredients and the knowledge structures we need when

³ See Potter, 178.

we are acting as literate media consumers. Hence this thesis provides a pedagogical approach to media literacy, specifically to one of its main parts, television literacy, toward which a more educational approach should be favoured.

This claim has been admitted by the Centre for Media Literacy in its publication, *Literacy for the 21st Century*, where media literacy is characterised as

[...] a 21st century approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms – from print to video and Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of democracy. (Thoman and Jolls, 21)

This description focuses on the role of pedagogy and methodology when working with a variety of media at school. Students should learn to interpret media texts competently and critically. This means students should make the most of the media surrounding them in their everyday lives by developing critical autonomy in asking the right questions and not letting the media control their interpretations.⁴ The authors get to the point when saying that ‘Media no longer just influence our culture. They *are* our culture.’ (Thoman and Jolls, 21). Therefore the coming generations should not be protected from media messages containing unwelcome or even dangerous information influencing them, but rather they should be adequately educated to handle with care the media culture in which they are living.⁵

The two described viewpoints of media literacy are two among many approaches to this complex topic, but outlining an extended selection would go beyond the scope of this thesis. Other approaches include Dieter Baacke’s definition, which ties media literacy to communicative literacy⁶, Bernd Schorb’s outline of four concepts of media literacy⁷, Stefan Aufenanger, who correlates media literacy to human skills⁸

⁴ See Thoman and Jolls, 21.

⁵ See Ibid.

⁶ See Neuss (12.3.2007)

⁷ See Schorb, *Medienkompetenz durch Medienpädagogik*.

⁸ See Aufenanger, *Lernen mit neuen Medien – Perspektiven für Erziehung und Unterricht*.

or Lothar Mikos' approach, who defines media literacy as a cultural competence analysing it in a broader frame⁹.

1.2. Media Literacy: Ideas, Characteristics, Features

After examining two definitions of media literacy, a more general and a more specific one, it is necessary to look at the ideas, characteristics, and features which constitute them. The plural indicates here too that although both definitions deal with the same complex field, they are composed of different components according to their areas of investigation.

Drawing on two differential outlines of the general concept of media literacy will help to define the topic of television literacy as it is considered in this context. It has to be said that those two chosen approaches are not the only ones in this area. There exist different aspects of this complex competence and they are of course made up by various features according to their original field of research. This chapter will outline the components responsible for the definitions quoted above, whereas the first one provides a general input to the basis of media literacy and the second one illustrates a pedagogical access appropriate for this thesis.

1.2.1. General Approach to Media Literacy

A general approach to media literacy is outlined by James Potter in his piece, *Media Literacy*. His framework of media literacy is based on five basic features or 'fundamental ideas' (Potter, 6) as he calls them. Although he states that he builds his description of media literacy on five categories, he only lists four of them in his book. Those mentioned include the assumptions that firstly, media literacy is organised on a continuum and we as media users move along this continuum. This feature states that being media literate is not a category, which someone can be part of, but that each media user is positioned somewhere on the continuum.¹⁰ This position is not stable, and according to the degree of involvement with the medium, it is subject to changes. This idea of the continuum is central to the concept of television literacy and its application in the language classroom as well. Because

⁹ See Mikos, *Ein kompetenter Umgang mit Medien erfordert mehr als Medienkompetenz*.

¹⁰ See Potter, 6.

there is no borderline between being illiterate and being fully-literate¹¹, teaching can only raise the degree of literacy and focus on the individual development of the students. In other words, teaching television literacy means regular and intensive exposure to the medium of television, which leads to an increased literacy and an upward movement on the continuum among the students.

Secondly, Potter states that one has to develop media literacy through maturation but also through active exposure and participation. The outcome of this is the need to distinguish between high and low literacy as measured on the continuum mentioned above. Being highly literate means to have control over the influence the media has on you and to select the information which is most useful for you in a certain situation. This means that you interpret the presented text on your own and filter out the messages from which you benefit the most. On the contrary, low media literacy is characterised by an overall acceptance of the superficial meanings presented by the media without scrutinising them.¹² Allocating this general feature of media literacy to television literacy, its pedagogical approach would contribute to the development of highly literate students, not only via maturation but also through active exposure and participation in the classrooms.

Thirdly, media literacy consists of four different dimensions which are closely related. This multi-dimensional framework is made up of cognitive, emotional, aesthetic, as well as moral areas. If one of these areas changes its position on the continuum, all the others are affected as well.¹³ Television literacy can also draw on these dimensions and each of them can be enhanced with separate teaching activities, which thus positively influence the remaining areas.

The fourth and last concept dealing with the interpretation of media messages play an important role with regard to teaching television literacy. According to Potter, interpretation has to be learned in order to raise the awareness of recognising direct, and more importantly, indirect media effects and filter out the intentional meaning.¹⁴ For instance, interpreting television messages requires a certain degree of literacy

¹¹ See Potter, 6.

¹² See Potter, 6-10.

¹³ See Ibid.

¹⁴ See Potter, 6-10.

because most of the transmitted texts do not present their precise meaning on surface level. On the contrary, hidden layers are used to convey the real sense. This ‘fundamental idea’ of the use of hidden layers cannot be neglected when analysing television literacy or teaching television literacy at school. Students’ awareness has to be raised in order to comprehend the different layers of meaning of television messages and to estimate the effects of the presented texts.

1.2.2. Pedagogical Approach to Media Literacy

Besides the general approach to media literacy above described, a more specific one situated in the field of pedagogy serves the purpose of this thesis. This approach has been outlined by Thoman and Jolls in their work, *Literacy for the 21st Century*. Like Potter, Thoman and Jolls base their work on five main features which they call “core concepts”.¹⁵ In contrast to Potter’s five basic features, these focus on different aspects taken from the Centre of Media Literacy including authorship, format, audience content, and the purpose of a media message. These five concepts function as the basis for their “Five Key Questions of Media Literacy”. The questions have been specifically formulated for teaching because the authors hold the view that the development of media literacy can be facilitated with appropriate questions rather than with theoretical concepts.¹⁶

These five concepts are influenced by various other scientific approaches, which I will discuss in general in the following chapters along with their applicable parts. First, an outline of Thoman and Joll’s five features concerning media literacy are presented. Thoman and Jolls start off with the assumption that all mediated texts are constructed, shaped and positioned. Since messages are created by someone who is affected by decisions of what to include or exclude, they are as a matter of course not “natural”, not real, and we as media literate users should look behind this construction and try to find out the motivations for each of them.¹⁷ It is said that the more “naturally” a message occurs, the more the media audience takes it for granted and for self-evident.¹⁸ This core concept relates to Cultural Studies, which is

¹⁵ See Thoman and Jolls, 22.

¹⁶ See Thoman and Jolls, 1-22.

¹⁷ See Kellner and Share, 8.

¹⁸ See Thoman and Jolls, 23f.

explained in detail in the following chapter (see 1.3. Cultural Studies and Media/Television Literacy).

Secondly, media texts are created following their own rules. The specific kind of language of media texts can be compared to a language system like English or German. It consists of rules, like grammatical rules in English, as well as of syntactical features. If we have developed an understanding of those underlying components of media messages, it helps to avoid superficial interpretations.¹⁹ This basic idea is closely related to semiotics, seeking to demonstrate how signs and symbols work in the media. In particular, the double aspect of denotation and connotation as well as of signifier and signified has to be examined. As it has been said above, the aim of media producers is to present “natural” messages or at least messages their audiences regard as “natural”. According to the semiotic concepts of denotation and connotation a mediated text is “natural” if denotation and connotation are one and the same.²⁰ An example of this is the representation of the dog “Doc” belonging to Meredith Grey and Derek Shepherd during season two of *Grey’s Anatomy* (from episode eleven 2-11 to the season finale 2-27). The sign presented on the screen is the moving image showing an animal, whereas the signifier of this sign is a dog, a four-legged domestic animal, in this case specifically a crossbreed dog acquired from the animal shelter. The connotation common in Western culture is that a dog is a loyal animal and man’s best friend and, as one can see in the episode “Owner of a Lonely Heart” (2-11) the dog is presented as the people’s friend.²¹ The surgical interns, who feel lonely after leaving their professional surroundings, seek and find company in a dog. These connotations are aided by the fact that “Doc” is a crossbreed instead of a thoroughbred dog. If we, the audience, perceive the dog the way it is described, we accept its representation as “natural”. According to Barthes, ‘connotation is the primary way mass media convey meaning [...and] what we see has to fit into slots of what we already know.’ (Seiter, 24.5.2007) The naturalisation of meaning is closely connected to the concept of myth by Roland Barthes, which plays a powerful role in naturalising meaning.²² (see 1.3.2. Television and the Problem of Reality) Myth presents the second order of signification, the

¹⁹ See Thoman and Jolls, 18.

²⁰ See Kellner and Share, 8.

²¹ See Seiter (24.5.2007)

²² See Thwaites, 69.

metalanguage, where the sign of the first order, in this case the moving image of the dog, becomes the signifier of the second order, of myth. Further, this signifier, the dog, inherits the position of a symbol. “Doc” becomes the symbol for, or it represents, the established friendship of Meredith and Derek in season two of *Grey’s Anatomy*. This symbol loses its reference when the dog dies in the season finale (2-27) and functions as a metaphor for the end of Meredith and Derek’s friendship. After putting their dog down because of cancer, the end of their platonic friendship is clearly indicated by reviving their romance with the scene in the on-call room. This second core concept relates to the linguistic turn further involving the iconic turn, both of which are explained in the following chapter (see 1.3.1. Linguistic & Iconic Turn).

Moreover, it is stated that different people receive a message in various ways with diverse interpretations.²³ As I see it, the outcome of the interpretation of a media message will vary according to the cultural and social background of the media consumer because ‘each audience member brings to the media a unique set of life experiences (age, gender, education, upbringing, etc.) which [...] create unique interpretations’ (Thoman and Jolls, 25). This can be observed in the example given above dealing with the representation of the dog in *Grey’s Anatomy*. It can be supported by another example taken from the series, for instance the 23rd episode of season two entitled “Blues for Sister Someone” (2-23), which deals with the case of a female patient delivering her seventh child. Although she does not want any further children she is not allowed to use any kind of contraceptives because of the strong religious belief of her husband. She therefore makes a bargain with the obstetric surgeon to cut her oviducts in two during the caesarean section without informing her husband. In my opinion, these two examples can be interpreted in different ways by media users according to their religious, cultural and moral beliefs. Especially the religious topic can lead to a possibility of misunderstandings in countries where this kind of strong religious belief is not common. This would be in contrast to the culture originating *Grey’s Anatomy*, the United States, where religion is an important part of the culture and 94% of Americans believe in God.²⁴ Christianity is not, however, the only religion in the United States. Americans can be characterised as religiously tolerant, accepting a great number of religions, for instance Judaism,

²³ See Thoman and Jolls, 18.

²⁴ See Campbell, 106.

Baptism, etc.²⁵ Therefore the scene described above might not be seen as controversial but as “natural” in contrast, for example to Austrian viewers who might judge this kind of religious attitude as out-dated and as “ultraconservative” for the 21st century. These kinds of scenes offer sufficient material for teaching cultural aspects of television literacy.

The last two concepts argue that all media include specific values and several points of view and that a great number of them are constructed to gain profit and/or power.²⁶ This means that a media text communicates information of what or who is considered as important and what or who is not. The constructed characters, the setting, as well as the props and the setting of a television series, for instance, have been assembled to present certain values and to convince the consumer to view something from a specific point of view. Because mediated content is in the most cases highly symbolic, we as users need a pool of skills to filter out the meaning of the text according to its multidimensional context.²⁷ To complete this outline, the audience has to become aware that all media messages, not exclusively advertisements as it has been often assumed, are created to gain profit or power. Concentrating on the television medium here, a series like *Grey’s Anatomy* is produced to attract a huge audience, not exclusively to commit the viewers to the story line of the medical drama, but also to sell time and space for advertisers who can in the course of the series present their products to a great number of the viewing population.²⁸ The last of the concepts focusing on profit and power will not be further developed for the context of this thesis as it figures not prominently in the development of television literacy via foreign language teaching, although it is without a doubt part of it.

1.2.3. Text or text?

After outlining the five core concepts of the pedagogical approach to media literacy it has to be said that the messages which are transmitted by the media are characterised as “texts”, although they might not consist of letters and are no longer presented in written form. A mediated text can be regarded as ‘an object such as

²⁵ See Campbell, 106-112.

²⁶ See Thoman and Jolls, 18.

²⁷ See Kellner and Share, 11.

²⁸ See Thoman and Jolls, 26f.

television programme, film or poem, considered as a network of meaningful signs that can be analysed and interpreted' (Bignell, 15). Any messages which present ideas through any kind of media can be regarded as texts, regardless if they are conveyed in verbal, aural or visual form.²⁹

Over the years one can observe a constant growth in the number of mass media, which would necessitate developing 'multiple literacies' (Kellner and Share, 1) to cope with the various influences of our multimedia world. Through this change in the medial scene several literacies are developing, for instance the one serving as the topic of this thesis, television literacy focusing on the medium of television. We get acquainted with the process of interpreting printed messages at an early stage of life but with the growing number of newly developed media texts we have to develop an awareness that also visual and aural messages, as they appear in combined form on the television screen, have to be closely analysed to be interpreted. Simply because these new types of mediated texts do not resemble the familiar text formation, we should not take them as self-evident.

As well as the structure of printed messages follows grammatical rules, aural and visual texts are constructed according to complex regulations too.³⁰ With regard to this thesis focusing on the medium of television, structures of a television series and themes which are presented as well as the appearance of characters are analysed to outline how meanings are created by using visual and aural input.³¹ Becoming media literate involves recognising those rules, the grammar constituting the text, and interpret the mediated texts according to them properly.

Interpreting media texts involves not exclusively the interpretation of the messages conveyed by the mass media themselves but also the understanding of the processes how meanings, through the rules mentioned above, are communicated to the viewers; which should lead in consequence to a meaningful and critical interpretation.³² Interpreted by Kellner and Share,

²⁹ See Thoman and Jolls, 6.

³⁰ See Thoman and Jolls, 6.

³¹ See Bignell, 15f.

³² See Silverblatt, 1-3.

Critical media literacy involves cultivating skills in analyzing media codes and conventions, abilities to criticize stereotypes, dominant values, and ideologies [eg. religion], and competencies to interpret the multiple meanings and messages generated by media texts. (Kellner and Share, 5)

This involves questioning the production side, who decides what and how to say it and of course the interpretation side, who interprets a certain message in a specific context. After the audience becomes sensitised to this procedure, a pool of strategies to analyse the media messages has to be developed, including for example the deconstruction of the format used by various mass media. As a final step the awareness of the social as well as of the individual impact the media have on us should be raised. Furthermore, the intense examination of media should provide insights into our own and particularly into foreign cultures.³³ Because as it has been already stated above, articulated by Thoman and Jolls, media are our culture.³⁴ Some of the components listed by Kellner and Share will be developed further in the practical section focusing on teaching television literacy.

The approaches of media literacy outlined above demonstrate what a media literate human being in the 21st century should be able to do with the mass media and their messages. But all those skills listed above, are not acquired from one day to the other. On the contrary, we need skills to work with the media and those skills have to be learned and trained.

1.3. Cultural Studies and Media/ Television Literacy

Cultural studies is an immense field of academic study addressing a variety of issues concerning the concept of culture, but it is of particular importance for media studies, such as television studies and therefore for the concept of television literacy. Moving images rightly establish a relationship with cultural studies because they ‘are important and valuable parts of our culture [and] of our cultural heritage’ (bfi Education, 3). Furthermore, cultural studies is of great value for teaching because of its pedagogical interest and its close connection, from the very beginning, to

³³ See Ibid.

³⁴ See Thoman and Jolls, 21.

pedagogy which has been realised with the aspect of critical pedagogy.³⁵ But what exactly do cultural studies do? Basically said, ‘Cultural studies is [...] the study of culture, or, more particularly, the study of contemporary culture.’ (During, 1). As Winter points out, not only “high” culture should be the area of investigation but also popular culture.³⁶ The term contemporary culture comprises the medium of television, which obviously produces popular culture, and media studies. Modern media, such as film and television, belong to the cultural industry, implying that they are part of contemporary or popular.³⁷ The introduction of cultural studies to media studies became increasingly important in the last decades, such as in the 90s³⁸, because of the growth of cultural industries³⁹, to which without a doubt television can be added. This is also the reason why this aspect is fundamental for the development of television literacy.

Cultural studies, a field of inter- and transdisciplinary studies, focused early on on the analysis of popular media which consequently led to the examination of television.⁴⁰ According to Storey, the ‘purpose of cultural analysis is always to understand what a culture is expressing’ (Storey, 45). This means that certain values shared by groups or even societies should be analysed. But not only the popular medium itself was interesting for cultural studies. Even more challenging was the analysis of the processes which happen when individuals and groups encounter this medium and how they react to it. As it has been said above, media output is seen as message or text, and this assumption leads to the act of reading, according to the classical notion of literacy, that is, of reading and writing. In the case of television programmes, their messages have to be read to draw meaning out of it. Therefore cultural studies is interested in the ways individuals and/or groups ‘develop their own readings of, and uses for, cultural products.’ (During, 6).

A special kind of pedagogy called critical pedagogy, which primarily focuses on popular culture, has been developed to support individuals as well as groups to advance their own reading of popular media. In the field of cultural studies it soon

³⁵ See Winter, *Cultural Studies und kritische Pädagogik*, 1.

³⁶ See Ibid.

³⁷ See During, 4f.

³⁸ See Ibid.

³⁹ See During, 26.

⁴⁰ See Krucsay (25.5.2007).

became clear that media and culture analysis should be linked together with critical pedagogy and thereby assist the 21st century population to articulate their interests as well as to unfold their freedom-to-operate.⁴¹ This shift to pedagogy entails the application of cultural studies in classrooms. The main task which should be developed through teaching is the encouragement and the expansion of students' "agency"⁴². That is to say, how people in different contexts create and experience culture in an active way. According to Winter 'It is crucial for them [the students] to be able to understand how their own experiences are reinforced, contradicted, and suppressed [...]' (Winter, 8). This critical approach should help the students to develop their own identities and forms of resistance in the 'image saturated culture' (Winter, 11) of the 21st century. The teacher undertakes the task of providing the students with activities supporting the development of agency, to create active citizens with an understanding for cultures.⁴³ The use of the term agency in this context refers to the reinforcement of the students' position as subjects, which supports the development of a creative and independent capacity to act. In other words, the reception of television texts implies a critical and productive examination including the challenge and the support of students' independence.

The term culture, here in its plural meaning, indicates one of the main issues concerning this context. The students are not only supposed to develop an understanding of the culture in which they are born and/or living, but they should also be sensitised for the appreciation of other cultures too. In our media saturated world it is common practice that we, the media users, try to get ourselves through the media and to absorb as much as we can from the presented world. Besides, it has to be said that with cultural practices identities are created. This includes the definition and perception of us through the constant influence of the media.⁴⁴

The basis for analysing popular culture adopted by cultural studies is the study of signs and semiotics, for example Stuart Hall's model of encoding and decoding.⁴⁵ Hall's model supports the concept of agency mentioned above. Television messages invite the audience to take up subject-positions, although those are mainly the most

⁴¹ See Krucsay (25.5.2007).

⁴² See Winter, 3.

⁴³ See Winter, 11f.

⁴⁴ See Heckmanns, 180f.

⁴⁵ See Winter, 4.

appropriate ones according to the preferred reading of the text.⁴⁶ Semiotics is not explored in greater detail here in the concept of cultural studies in this chapter, but rather in the following chapters focusing on teaching TVL.

As can be seen, cultural studies cannot be left out when talking about television literacy and teaching television literacy. It has to be remarked that cultural studies is split into diverse researching strands of which the investigation of American Culture⁴⁷ will be of great use in this context according to the chosen example of *Grey's Anatomy*. The ways American television programmes are regulated and arranged is a widely spreading norm due to the export of these programmes. As a result American formats are steadily becoming the norm for a great number of cultures. Although there exist cultural differences, those norms and formats became, and are still, accepted world wide and often remain unquestioned.⁴⁸ Speaking of the export of American products, the term globalisation cannot be left out. In this context it can without a doubt be used to describe the organisation of television in the 21st century. This kind of media imperialism states that 'powerful nations and cultures (especially the US) exert control over other nations and cultures through the media products they export' (Bignell, 62). Referring to what has been said above, although the United States impose their cultural and production norms to other cultures, this globalising process is received differently in other cultures. The cultural export practised by the United States is known as Americanisation, a kind of cultural imperialism⁴⁹, but one has to bear in mind that

[...] the meanings of television programmes are understood in relation to the cultural environment and expectations of the viewers, and are not injected like a pernicious drug into cultures where they are watched. (Bignell, 68)

1.3.1. Linguistic Turn & Iconic Turn

In addition to the cultural studies approach and the concept of semiotics, it is essential to take up the subject of the linguistic turn and in succession the subject of the iconic turn in order to examine more closely the development of the formation of television literacy. My reasoning is that these concepts are interconnected, partly

⁴⁶ See Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 147.

⁴⁷ See Campbell and Kean, *American Cultural Studies: An Introduction to American Culture*.

⁴⁸ See Bignell, 21.

⁴⁹ See Bignell, 66ff.

based on the linguistic turn, and therefore cannot be looked at in isolation. The linguistic turn in the second half of the 20th century, as the term already indicates, marks a turning point in the scientific world, especially in the subjects of cultural studies and humanities.⁵⁰ With Richard Rorty in 1967, the perspective was shifted from examining language as an object to language as a subject. The focus was put on language and transferred from the investigation of how something is, to how it is described. A characteristic trait is that language is seen simultaneously as the subject and as the producer of reality.⁵¹

Consequently Saussure's study of signs, namely semiotics, could establish itself as an independent discipline. Semiotics is not only limited to the analysis of verbal signs but also to visual and aural ones. The vocabulary developed through the work with language is nowadays also used for the analysis of media.⁵² The advantage characterising visuals in comparison with language is that they are independent of cultural contexts and of different language abilities.⁵³

But Rorty did not allow the 'visuelle Metaphorik'⁵⁴ (Maar und Burda, 15) to enter this new discourse. Decades after Rorty's linguistic turn had taken place, the pictorial turn, later renamed as the iconic turn, was introduced due to the cultural shifting from the text to the visual in 1992. The visual became interesting and questionable and the question "What is an image?" came to the fore.⁵⁵ Similar to the linguistic turn, the intention was to rehabilitate the thinking in images and about images. The already existing instruments for analysing an image should be enhanced and the permanent increase of images and their unquestioned acceptance should be combated.⁵⁶ As I see it, besides the effect named by Wulf and Schäfer of the iconic turn to include images as a source for pedagogy, it is also one of the crucial factors which necessitates the introduction and teaching of television literacy in schools. Adhering to the statement 'It is not the artist who makes the picture [image], but the picture [image] which makes itself' (Maar and Burda, 18), students have to meet the requirement of not only simply talking about how a visual is, but they should also

⁵⁰ See Das Gupta, 2.

⁵¹ See Stampehl (31.5.2007).

⁵² See Ibid.

⁵³ See Maar und Burda, 11.

⁵⁴ 'visual imagery' [translation Susanne Gruber]

⁵⁵ See Wulf und Schäfer, 345.

⁵⁶ See Maar and Burda, 15-20.

describe it. They have to be encouraged to interpret the images flooding them in their everyday lives as subjects with the help of semiotics.

1.3.2. Television and the Problem of Reality

“The camera never lies”. This statement tells us a lot about the way we accept many photographic or electronic images as real [...]’ (Seiter, 37). Ellen Seiter describes perfectly the problem of reality in connection with the mass medium of television. My reasoning is that when we watch TV these days, regardless of the programme, we are to a great degree unaware that what is presented via the screen is not real, although we perceive it that way. Here it has to be added that I am not exclusively talking about fictional programmes like *Grey’s Anatomy*, which are without a doubt not real, but also news programmes, non-fictional ones, are constructed and presented in a specific order with selected parts. Although those kinds of programmes are not fictional, they do not present “real” reality. The reality transmitted can be characterised as partial reality. News programmes present parts of reality in selected parts as noted above, and those tracts constitute another kind of reality.

Nevertheless, the messages presented via television give the impression that they are natural and real, but the realities conveyed by mass media only partly agree with reality.⁵⁷ As I see it, this aspect of television is of fundamental importance in developing television literacy and consequentially it should not be left out of teaching television literacy. The students need to become aware of this “problem” and become aware of this peculiarity of moving images. But what exactly is the problem with television visuals being perceived as real? The visual which is presented via television to a large audience is not only perceived, and what is more important, understood as visual. It is regarded as true and vivid.⁵⁸ Knut Hicethier gets to the point saying ‘Die magische Wirkung des Bildes führt zur Annahme, es vertrete und beherrsche das Reale [...]’ (Hicethier, 43).⁵⁹

⁵⁷ See Wendt, 13.

⁵⁸ See Hicethier, 43.

⁵⁹ ‘The magical effect of images leads to the impression that they represent and control the real.’
[translation Susanne Gruber]

The world, and in my opinion the audience, which receives the messages, and the authority, which produces the message, are the two main piers of investigation of realism and constructivism. The theory of constructivism, on the one hand, assumes that it is the authority which produces the world. On the other hand, according to the branch of realism, it is the world which affects the authority. But what both theories have in common is that in our mediated world “everything” is constructed.⁶⁰ The perception of a television programme as something real is called realism and to the extent a programme pleases the audience depends on its appearance as real or natural.⁶¹

‘But realism is a cultural construct and its appearance of naturalness stems from its relationship to the codes, or the ‘language of television’ as a mode, that give the impression of reality.’ (Marshall and Werndly, 83)

The codes which present something as natural, as real, are called realist codes. They become visible, for instance, via *mise en scène*⁶². An example is the construction of the hospital in *Grey’s Anatomy*. The sterile halls, the sick rooms, and the medical utensils, are all realist codes which evoke the connotation of a hospital surrounding and seem therefore to be natural to the viewer. Marshall and Werndly refer to this kind of realism as cultural realism. This means that those codes are drawn from cultural beliefs and values, and in the case of *Grey’s Anatomy*, activating the knowledge the audience has about medical institutions like hospitals and the characters working in it.⁶³ But here it has to be noted, concerning the above chapter of cultural studies, that this kind of cultural realism is a specific one, namely an American cultural realism, presenting codes drawn from American cultural beliefs and values.

The illusion of reality can be disturbed by production conventions, for instance by a voiceover.⁶⁴ Through a voiceover the audience can get an insight into the thoughts of a character. But this convention does not mean that the pleasure of watching a piece of reality is torn apart. On the contrary, in my point of view, the voiceover in *Grey’s*

⁶⁰ See Weber, 11-14.

⁶¹ See Marshall and Werndly, 83.

⁶² *Mise en scène* refers to everything the camera reveals in a scene. (Marshall, 84)

⁶³ See Marshall and Werndly, 84f.

⁶⁴ See *Ibid*, 86f.

Anatomy, which is featured in the majority of the episodes, functions as an introduction and as well as an ending. Each episode starts and ends with a voiceover by the main character Meredith Grey. There are no voiceovers interrupting the flow of the series in between. As I see it, those two parts of the episodes are very useful tools; on the one hand, to prepare the audience with a more detailed access to the following part at the beginning, and of course to leave the viewers with deeper insights and thoughts at the end of the episode.

Radical constructivism assumes that ‘[...]’Medien konstruieren Wirklichkeit’ per se und immer schon, [...], weil das Welt- und Wirklichkeitsverhältnis an sich konstruktiv sei’⁶⁵ (Weber, 13). We can clearly recognise that the theoretical concept of radical constructivism is of greater use for dealing with the problem of reality when working with television. According to Michael Wendt, the meaning of mediated texts lies not in the messages themselves. This means that television representations do not transport information, but rather a system of signs and codes from which the audience can construct reality.⁶⁶ As I see it, the media surrounding us in our everyday lives do not attempt to truthfully reproduce our world via their messages, but rather they convey certain signs from which we, as viewers, construct reality due to our system of knowledge stored in our brains. This leads me to the conclusion that “real” meaning can only be produced by the audience itself. But with this attempted conclusion another striking question arises, namely what is the “real” meaning? Jonathan Bignell rightly points out that ‘all “real meaning” is vanishing because experience and reality are now shaped or “simulated” by the discourse of the media’ (Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 161). This would mean that the population of the 21st century cannot definitely say what the “real” meaning is because what it is or what it should be is with the utmost probability shaped by the mass media.

Moreover, as was pointed out above, media messages are decoded according to cultural background. Those different kinds of decoding presuppose that there exists more than one reality. There have to be as many realities as there are cultures.

⁶⁵ ‘Reality has always and per se been constructed by the media, because the relationship of world and reality seems to be constructive.’ [Translation Susanne Gruber]

⁶⁶ See Wendt, 14f.

In [cultures] where people's experience is shaped by media representations, TV programmes are regarded as not denoting "reality" in the usual sense, but denoting the realities represented through the codes of other TV programmes [...] (Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 161)

Based on the fact that there exists multiple realities, Bignell points out that they define each other in relation and contrast to each other. My reasoning is that this aspect is central to television literacy, is culturally affected, and that it therefore should not be left out when teaching television literacy, especially with an example based on another cultural background.

2. Television Literacy

As outlined in the previous chapter, one has experienced that working on media literacy as the general category, including all kinds of media, can be extremely challenging. One of the reasons is that it is without a doubt a multi-faceted combination of various aspects. Dealing with all features of media literacy is close to an impossibility, and therefore one has to concentrate on one or just a few specific aspects. This chapter discusses one of the main pillars of media literacy and the central aspect of this thesis, namely television literacy. As well as media literacy, television literacy can be examined from a great number of aspects as well, but instead of looking at this aspect of media literacy from a holistic perspective, I want to focus on the educational side of TVL.

The medium of television is introduced into our daily lives from the very beginning. Children get acquainted with television at an extremely early stage of life, be it conscious or unconscious. Even babies cannot escape television. When they are still in their mother's womb they are in a sense also exposed to television. Acting on this assumption, as soon as humans come into being, they are surrounded by the medium of television and in the course of growing up, they take it for granted and life without it seems strange. At least one television set can be found in every single household and its existence has never been questioned. According to a calculation of the White Dot Society, an anti-television campaign group, we spend ten years of our lives in

front of a television set.⁶⁷ In these days, children learn how to use a television set and how to understand the televised texts before they start learning to read printed texts.⁶⁸

This means that even before children get introduced to the traditional meaning of literacy, of reading printed texts, they acquire basic concepts of television literacy. Therefore, it has become more and more important to deal with the medium of television at school or even in kindergarten. ‘Children come to school already with a high level of existing knowledge about the media’ (bfi Education, 6) and the fact that many other media are already covered by teaching, for instance the medium of books with activities focusing on reading or audio media with listening comprehensions, demands that students should be enabled to build upon their already existing knowledge with the goal of gaining new insights as well as new understandings.⁶⁹ But the medium which is at least used once a day by all of the students, and of course teachers, has been long neglected in the development of new educational structures. Because students are used to television from a very early age onwards, they experience it as something natural and self-evident. And this is what forms the starting point of introducing television into the classrooms. Students have to be made aware that television and its transmitted texts are not something natural which can be taken for granted leaving it unquestioned. On the contrary, especially because it is perceived so self-evidently, one has to be taken aback and try to look behind the surface of television messages. Before I develop this kind of approach further it has to be mentioned that this thesis focuses on the use of television and the consequential development of television literacy in the English Language Classroom, particularly in classrooms focusing on English as a second language, applied to the example of the ABC hit show.

Television literacy is concentrating on the medium of television and the texts presented by it. As has been shown in the previous chapter, literacy is not just acquired by, in this case, watching a certain amount of television programmes. On the contrary, literacy has to be learned and therefore being literary competent has to

⁶⁷ See O’Sullivan, 5.

⁶⁸ See Hicketier, 1.

⁶⁹ See bfi Education, 6.

be related to education⁷⁰, which brings us to the institution of schools, especially into classrooms. According to Kellner and Share ‘literacies are socially constructed in educational and cultural practices’ (Kellner and Share, 2), which supports the need for teaching literacy at school and the consideration of cultural studies. However, this does not mean that one can just become literate via teaching and learning at school, but also through the cultural practices surrounding the individual in his or her everyday life. This entails that not only the teacher and the pedagogical activities enhance television literacy, but also family structures and the social relations of a student in a specific cultural context play an essential role in becoming literate. In a word, teaching television literacy at school alone does not produce television literate human beings. It requires more than that. The personal as well as the cultural background plays an important part in this development. In other words ‘television is a domestic medium and texts are viewed as part of audiences’ everyday lives’ (Marshall and Werndly, 54) and therefore teaching television literacy is not the only source for equipping our generation with an appropriate literacy.

But I think that the structures which should be taught at school form a necessary and essential basis for television literacy, which can then be applied when using the medium at home. The connection between school and home is advantageous in both ways, because if children ‘can use their home lives to extend the centrality and relevance of the school curriculum [they] are less likely to be disaffected and disengaged’ (bfi Education, 6). Because of its constant presence in our everyday lives, television viewing develops rather fast to a regular practice and in doing so the cultural background plays an important part, especially when there is a visible outcome concerning social practice.⁷¹ Television literacy should be part of the curriculum from at least elementary school onwards, and arranged according to a metaphorical learning ladder which students climb up in the course of the educational process. When students enter school, they are already aware of how to use the television set at home and how to make the most out of the programmes they consume. But the bigger part of the knowledge they have is unconscious; this means that students are not aware of the processes going on while watching TV. For these already ongoing processes, which are in a sense clearing the way to television literacy, rules have to be learned. ‘Der Umgang mit audiovisuellen Medien ist für

⁷⁰ See Kellner and Share, 2.

⁷¹ See Mikos, 32.

jeden Menschen ein Lernprozess'⁷² (Mikos, 27) according to Mikos. This means that someone who starts with school is already equipped with a kind of starter's kit for television literacy, in my opinion an unconscious one, which is or at least should be called attention to and further developed with concepts taught at school.

Before I proceed with a more detailed description of how to teach television literacy and the concepts which can be taught, it seems to be necessary to list some peculiarities of television. Andrew Hart characterises media as 'devices for transmitting messages simultaneously to large numbers of people' (Hart, 4) and these media can be further differentiated by the technical devices of which they make use. He distinguishes three main kinds: presentational media, representational media and mechanical/ electronic media. In large part, television belongs to the category of electronic media because messages are transmitted via codes and the help of technical devices, but it also draws on the other two categories because the messages shown on the television screen also present and represent someone or something that is mainly perceived as natural.⁷³

Television literacy does not only mean working on the production level, but also and for the most part, on the reception level. Therefore it is important to look at the outcome of media messages as well and not only focus on their origin. According to Mikos, it is important how things are presented and transmitted but only in the course of reception does meaning develop. The transmitted messages unfold their effects only after meeting the audience side and hence meaning originates only on the side of the audience.⁷⁴ According to Jill Marshall and Angela Werndly 'television operates in a production-text-audience cycle' (Marshall and Werndly, 3). This means that a text is produced, in other words it is encoded, transmitted via television, and afterwards decoded by the audience. And this leads us straight to semiotics with its concepts of encoding and decoding. (see 4.1. Semiotic Skill) Following the thought that the audience produces the meaning, it has to be clarified that the television audience cannot be regarded as a unified group because 'different viewers construct different meanings in their decoding of the signs and codes of TV' (Bignell, *Media*

⁷² 'Being in contact with audio-visual media is a learning process for everyone.' [Translation Susanne Gruber]

⁷³ See Hart, 4.

⁷⁴ See Mikos, 21-40.

Semiotics, 137). This fact relates back to cultural studies which have been discussed above.

To conclude, television texts are on the one hand polysemic, that means open to a variety of decodings, and on the other hand multiaccidental, meaning that different audiences come to a different interpretation of the text.⁷⁵ The text which is presented by a specific programme consists of aural and visual information, therefore the audience has to decode the sign on two different levels, with the visual output being the main part of the sign. Marshall and Werndly say that ‘television texts are dependent for their meaning on a combination of language – mainly spoken – and visual signification’ (Marshall and Werndly, 27). For an accurate analysis of a television programme it is necessary to analyse the aural as well as the visual part and this complex signification has to be taught and learned at school. It has taken scholarly research long to realise that television, although it is a mass medium and an extremely popular one, has to be analysed and considered as artistic creation. But from a semiotic viewpoint it is still not regarded as aesthetic and artistic, influenced on the one hand by the fact that it draws on all channels of communication simultaneously. This means that it makes use of images, music, and printed words at the same time.⁷⁶ Although there are still quarrels about the aesthetic evaluation of television, a great number of articles and books have been written about it. And now, all the newly gained scholarly information has to be transferred to the curricula and included into teaching methodologies in order to equip the next generations with adequate tools and to make the most out of this mediated world and become television literate human beings.

2.1. Television Literacy Skills

‘To build our knowledge structures, we need tools and raw material.’ (Potter, 5). As Potter accurately describes it, to become media literate, to gain knowledge structures, we need specific skills and information taken from the media.⁷⁷ In other words, this means that we have to expose ourselves to the media in order to develop skills, or what seems to be more likely, to improve our skills. Media skills, in this context

⁷⁵ See Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 160.

⁷⁶ See Seiter, 45.

⁷⁷ See Potter, 10.

more importantly television skills, have to be worked on regularly and intensively to improve them or at least to keep the position on the before mentioned continuum. But where do those skills come from and more importantly what are our television literacy skills?

Potter answers this question with proposing the idea of rudimentary and advanced skills. The information presented in the subsequent paragraphs is taken from this clearly arranged outline.⁷⁸ Rudimentary skills are those kinds of tools which are acquired by media users during their childhood when they start to expose themselves to the media. This development can be observed when small children start watching television. At a very early stage of life they willingly accept the rules of television and their basic, rudimentary skills evolve. This first group includes the access and use of media themselves and in the course of media exposure, skills for recognising the mediated symbols and for adding meaning to the symbols are also included.

As I see it, rudimentary skills equip the early media user with the most necessary tools to use the whole range of media. In the process of growing up, those skills are practiced over and over again through regular use, which makes their application automatic. As soon as they have become automatic there is the danger that the media user is no longer working on developing his or her skills, which might lead to a mindless exposure to the everyday flood of media texts. With the medium of television the automation proceeds rapidly because of the constant and regular exposure to the “home” medium. This stage of stagnation with possible deterioration of the skills is the starting point of advanced media skills. This concept of rudimentary skills is summarised in the pedagogical approach under the skill of access. Access in this particular context means not only having access to media, to a television set, but at the same time being able to recognise symbols, signs, and attach meaning to them.⁷⁹

Advanced media skills should build on the rudimentary skills but working on them requires a higher grade of concentration during media exposure. In contrast to rudimentary skills, the media user should not only recognise the transmitted symbols but he or she should critically examine them and interpret them with scepticism. By

⁷⁸ See Potter, 10-345.

⁷⁹ See Thoman and Jolls, 28.

doing this a media user equipped with more power over the media's influence evolves. Those advanced skills are named by James Potter, partly including the categories of Benjamin Bloom's Taxonomy, namely analysis, comparison/contrast, evaluation, synthesis, as well as appreciation.⁸⁰ Bloom's concept defines six categories describing the intellectual level of learning. His taxonomy is arranged according to stages, whereas each category represents a specific stage of learning. Besides, it has to be noted that the various levels can be visualised as a continuum ranging from a low to a high level or as a pyramid, the top of which represents the highest level of learning. Bloom's categories include, listed from the lowest to the highest cognitive level: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis and to round it off, evaluation.⁸¹ On the following pages the close connection of Bloom's taxonomy to media and television skills will become highly visible; especially the pedagogical approach to media literacy bases its skills on Bloom's characterisation. At the same time, the pedagogical approach by the Centre for Media Literacy also puts the main focus on analysis, evaluation and adds a new skill, namely the skill of creation. This last fact can be compared to Bloom's category of synthesis, at which stage an advanced media user should be able to create, in the sense of communicate, their own messages making use of various techniques including their ideas.⁸²

Before the two groups of skills are looked at more closely it has to be clarified that becoming, being, and staying a media literate person is a life-long process of learning. There exists no clearly defined goal and no on-top perspective on the continuum; otherwise it would have to be a line with a clearly marked beginning and end. We as critical media users have to train our rudimentary skills after acquiring them and keep working on their improvement because if we do not, our position on the media literacy continuum will get worse and the media might gain the upper hand over our interpretations.⁸³ Equally important is here the concept of ideology because the medium of television is an 'ideological form' (Storey, 3) which constantly presents a particular image of the world. Talking about ideology is indispensable

⁸⁰ See Potter, 11.

⁸¹ See Joyce (7.3.2007)

⁸² See Thoman and Jolls, 28.

⁸³ See Potter, 345.

when talking about popular culture because it is made up of ideas of the dominant group.⁸⁴

2.1.1. Rudimentary Skills

Rudimentary Skills are those tools acquired during childhood which equip media users with the basic implements for dealing successfully with the media. This fundamental equipment can be divided into two separate parts: the component skills and the process skills. On the one hand those rudimentary skills are examined as processes but before we can do so we have to look at the components responsible for those processes. Potter distinguishes between four different rudimentary skills, including the exposure skill, the skill of recognising symbols, the skill of recognising patterns, and meaning-matching skill.⁸⁵ As I already outlined above, first of all it is important to expose oneself to the media and to use a medium, in this specific case the television set. The next step is to recognise signs presented by the medium, to filter out specific ones from the mass of signs flooding you with the media everyday. But as signs are often arranged as patterns and do not need to be interpreted in isolation, we have to learn to recognise patterns too. ‘Production techniques can help us identify these patterns, but we must learn how production techniques themselves cluster into patterns.’ (Potter, 69). The last step is to attach meaning from our already existing knowledge to the single pattern, or the group of patterns, filtered out before. An example for recognising patterns in *Grey’s Anatomy* would be the peculiarity of adding the prefix “Mc” to names and words, also referred to as “McLabeling”⁸⁶. Those “McTerms” are used to describe and characterise people and situations, for instance “McDreamy”, “McSteamy” or “McGuilty”. (for detailed information see Appendix)

When getting in contact with mediated messages, we are not using those skills isolated from each other. On the contrary, we mix those four steps to create a process of analysis. In making meaning of a television text we apply them in a combined form in order to make sense of the message.⁸⁷

⁸⁴ See Storey, 2f.

⁸⁵ See Potter. 66ff.

⁸⁶ See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grey's_Anatomy (11.2.2007)

⁸⁷ See Potter, 71.

2.1.2. Advanced Skills

When exercising those rudimentary skills regularly they gradually become automated. At this stage a literate user at his or her beginnings should not stop working on his or her skills. This means in particular not to expose oneself to the television set with little concentration. The group of advanced skills consist of message-focused skills, message-extending skills and appreciation, whereas the first two ‘families’ (Potter, 72) consist of the categories relating to Bloom’s Taxonomy mentioned above. This stage of media literacy is also referred to as critical media literacy. As I see it, the use of advanced skills relates to the concept of critical media literacy proposed by the Centre for Media Literacy. Particularly those skills need to be taught at school because as it has been explained above, the set of rudimentary skills, which are the basis for becoming a media literate consumer, are developed through maturation and regular exposure to the media by every user themselves. This exposure is unavoidable these days.

Message-focused skills include the tools of analysis, comparison and contrast, evaluation, and abstraction. Analysing a mediated message means the complete contrary to the general statements often heard after watching a television programme such as, ‘It was good’ (Potter, 73), namely to split the text into meaningful parts and examine it closely.⁸⁸ For example, a television user, after closely analysing for example a film has to be able to argue why he or she particularly likes it. In addition, it has to be noted here that analysing a television text does not mean to interpret it. Working with the method of close analysis draws the attention of the consumer to the denotative meaning only.⁸⁹ In other words, when watching a scene of *Grey’s Anatomy*, for instance, one of the last scenes of the 16th episode of season three, “Drowning on Dry Land” (3-16), where the main character, Meredith Grey, is rescued by her boyfriend Derek Shepherd from drowning in the sea, a television user capable of advanced skills should be able on the one hand to focus on the description of what and who can be seen. On the other hand the viewer should consider the use of music, the kind of shot, the camera angle, etc. After Derek pulls Meredith out of the water and carries her lifeless body to the ambulance, one should be able, without being emotionally involved, to apply the relevant core concepts in order to get a

⁸⁸ See Potter, 72f.

⁸⁹ See Thoman and Jolls, 29.

complete close analysis of this scene. Those would include the question of the author, the format, the audience, the message itself, and the purpose.⁹⁰

Comparing and contrasting a medium involves an examination of the elements and its comparison to the already existing knowledge structures, for instance investigating the presentation of stereotypes. If there are no similar elements saved in the brain of the consumer, he or she has to make use of the next advanced skill, namely the evaluation.⁹¹ An example for comparison when dealing with television, in particular with *Grey's Anatomy*, would be the examination of the development of a character across several episodes or even across seasons. But it has to be noted that the comparison of a character is not specific for the medium of television. For instance, one can compare the character of George O'Malley from the first season with his appearance in the third season. Such an analysis would show that the insecure and stuttering character developed to a doctor who is now aware of his needs, vouching for his principles, and not recoiling to speak up against his superiors. Another example would be to examine the role of Derek Shepherd in the first season. Is the presentation of this character stereotypical or is something new presented? One might come up with characteristics such as handsome, intelligent, a successful neurosurgeon with good manners, and polite but cocky. To sum up, his character combines gentlemanly as well as macho traits.

If the object of analysis is different to those existing ones in the knowledge structures of the media users, they have to apply the skill of evaluation. This tool includes cognitive and emotional skills which should help to examine the new element and to decide if it should be added to the structures already saved. Cognitive and emotional sub skills behave in totally different ways, but both of them are equally important to come to a balanced conclusion. Not everything can be examined logically and rationally, and if this is the case, one needs to apply his or her gut feeling.⁹² Evaluating is a personal skill, where the media consumer is allowed to link his or her own experiences and attitudes to judge the object of analysis.⁹³

⁹⁰ See Thoman and Jolls, 22.

⁹¹ See Potter, 75f.

⁹² See Potter, 77.

⁹³ See Thoman and Jolls, 28.

The last one of the message-focused skills is abstraction. ‘Abstracting is the ability to assemble a clear, accurate description of the media message.’ (Potter, 78). A television user capable of this skill is able to summarise in detail the various plot lines of television texts, for instance the season three finale of *Grey’s Anatomy*, and not just be able to discuss the series as presenting a group of interns dealing with their professional as well as private lives and that they are now becoming residents. A skilled viewer might, for example, sum up the season finale with the focus on the medical cases dealt with, or with the focus on the personal events affecting the characters.

The second ‘family’ (Potter, 72) of advanced media skills are the ones focusing on message-extending tools, which are taken from Potter’s outline as well.⁹⁴ Generalisation and synthesis, for example, can also be seen as advanced television literacy skills. Generalisation describes the process of making a conclusion of a general fact from analysing a small number of concrete examples. When exposed to the media one makes generalisations all the time and the more accurate we observe the elements used for generalising, the more precise will be the outcome. An example of a generalisation made at a low level of literacy, using again the example of *Grey’s Anatomy*, would be the assumption that all neurosurgeons are good looking and wealthy according to the example of the head of neurosurgery in the series, Dr. Derek Shepherd.

The second tool for message-extending skills is synthesis. When using this skill, we as media users build up new knowledge structures of the recently analysed elements transmitted by the media. An example for a basic kind of synthesis can take place during a commercial break while watching an episode during which the viewer thinks of how the plotlines might develop. He or she is piecing together what has been presented on the screen before making guesses of its continuation. A synthesis on a more advanced level can result in the writing process of a script of a whole episode or of a specific scene, which could also be done in the English language classroom. This more complex skill demands a detailed evaluation of ‘the appropriateness of dialogue, plotting points [and] character intentions [...]’ (Potter, 80).

⁹⁴ See Potter, 79-81.

The third advanced skill is called appreciation. Receiving a media message not only involves analysing and interpreting it according to clear cut rules but also to react on them appropriately according to our emotional, moral, as well as aesthetic attitudes. For instance, appreciating an episode of *Grey's Anatomy* at a highly media literate level includes focusing on the use of music, editing, lighting and props as opposed to only the basic features of plot and acting. Those skills outlined above should help to bushwhack through the jungle of media messages experienced everyday. Furthermore, being a media literate consumer should protect us from being effected by mass media. Although we are aware of media effects and can soften their consequences by applying media literacy skills, there are a number of them which have to be examined.

2.2. Television Effects

After discussing what the terms media and television literacy stand for and which fundamental skills are necessary to act as a literate consumer, we have to consider media effects, and in particular television effects because those impacts are the ones which should be controlled or even prevented by applying the skills discussed above. 'An understanding of the full range of media effects is an essential ingredient in media literacy.' (Potter, 259). So far it has become clear that the topic of television literacy is not a straightforward one, on the contrary it is very complex. And looking at media effects which triggered off studies for media literacy decades ago, the subject of research has become even more sophisticated. The area of media effects, characterised as 'measurable outcomes produced by [media exposure], such as becoming more violent or adapting a certain opinion' (Bignell, 306), includes a wide variety of aspects which invariably depend on the viewpoint from which they are investigated. This chapter should provide a short overview of effects concerning the medium of television, just touching on the subject to round off the introductory part of television literacy of this thesis.

Since the development of mass media, especially since the emergence of statistical methods in the 1920s, researchers concerned themselves with the effects mass media would have on the consumers.⁹⁵ This movement was considerably boosted with the

⁹⁵ See Miller, 74.

development of the medium of television and its entering into single households.⁹⁶ Therefore most of the studies dealing with effects of the media are centred on the medium of television, focusing on moving images. Toby Miller describes them the following way,

As a label, the term *media effects* commonly refers to [...] the influence of media images – particularly images of violence or of sexual activity – upon the attitudes, beliefs and behaviours of audiences [...]. (Miller, 74)

Various academic fields are working on the topic of media effects. But media and television effects cannot be fastened to a clear structure because one can never be one hundred percent sure what effects the media surrounding us will have on the single user. Therefore, there exists a wide range of media effects analysis proposing different solutions to this opaque matter. In the course of this chapter, only the effects concerning the medium of television will be outlined.

As it has been said above, there exist a great variety of approaches of how the mass media affect our lives, for instance the mechanic approach, the phenomenistic approach or the psychological approach of uses and gratifications.⁹⁷ Although those approaches belong to particular scientific branches, one has to admit that they ‘can be used to support socio-political goals that go far beyond the wide ranging collection of approaches and findings that define the field internally’ (Miller, 74). This chapter sets those aside and concentrates just on the discovered effects. Although those specific viewpoints are left out, it is necessary to state that there has been a difference between effects, uses and gratifications which has disappeared in the last decades and which have been re-established as difference between effects and consequences.⁹⁸ As I see it, the distinction is drawn between effects and consequences, whereas an effect can be described as the influence of the media itself and a consequence is something which follows an effect, for instance an action.

2.2.1. Positive and Negative, Direct and Indirect & Short and Long Term Effects

The outcome of media effects research offers a classification of media influences on human behaviour. First of all, media impacts are divided into good and bad ones, in

⁹⁶ See Rosengren, 133.

⁹⁷ See Rubin, 417-432.

⁹⁸ See Rosengren, 134.

other words into positive and negative effects. But it has never been clearly listed which media effects are regarded as positive and which affect the social behaviour negatively. Such a superficial description is in the most cases related to another classification, namely to the duration of effects, which can be either short or long term. As I see it, Rosengren says that long term effects can be considered as positive whereas short term effects tend to be more negative in their outcome, although Rosengren states that long term effects in the majority of the cases originate from short term ones.⁹⁹ As it is not the topic of this thesis to analyse the impacts of media on the consumers, one can without a doubt recognise that this controversial statement needs further investigation.

This brief insight necessitates a more detailed outline of short and long term effects. We already know that media can influence our lives immediately or after a longer period of exposure to a certain medium. An immediate or short term effect ‘happens during exposure to the media message’ (Potter, 260). This means that when one watches an episode *Grey’s Anatomy*, one becomes emotionally agitated and starts crying because one sees their favourite character suffer from a personal crisis or mourning for a beloved person. According to Potter such short term effects can also last for the rest of your life, if the new message changes something in your already existing knowledge.¹⁰⁰ Taking *Grey’s Anatomy*, “Let the Angels Commit” (3-06), as an example again, you might learn that it is medically possible that a woman can have two uteri and be pregnant with two babies at the same time, which both have different due dates. Long term effects, on the other hand, come to being only after an increased number of exposures. ‘Neither a single exposure nor a single type of message is responsible for the effect’ (Potter, 261). This means a user has to expose himself or herself to a pattern of mediated texts repeatedly and after a long period of time, for instance over years, the effect can be recognised.¹⁰¹

Besides these classifications of short and long term and positive and negative effects, there is also the arrangement of effects into direct and indirect. Both types can be short or long term influences of the media, distinguished through the alteration they have on the media user. A direct impact of a television message is something that

⁹⁹ See Rosengren, 133f.

¹⁰⁰ See Potter, 261.

¹⁰¹ See Ibid.

changes our knowledge structure through reading or seeing it. On the contrary, an indirect effect occurs if we modify our attitudes after being influenced by others, for instance by other people, schoolmates, or institutions, in this case the school.¹⁰²

Oversimplifying, one might say that media effects can be classified into six groups but unfortunately this is not the case. An effect can consist of several elements drawing on the various proposed classifications above and the admixing of those factors composes the effect in the end.

2.2.2. What do effects do?

As a media literate consumer one has to be aware not only of the fact that there exist a great number of media effects (twenty according to Potter), but also of how they influence our societies, including those factors affecting the effects. Before those factors are presented, the areas which television can influence have to be mentioned too because it is known that mediated texts can influence the audience on the behavioural level, in other words, it can trigger of an action. Nevertheless, there are four other levels which can be affected too. The levels that are often left out are the cognitive, attitudinal, emotional and physiological. Affecting the cognitive level implies that a certain kind of learning, intended or not intended, occurs in the mind of the media consumer. ‘Media can immediately plant ideas and information into our minds’ (Potter, 261).

That television messages influence the consumer’s attitudes, means that either already existing beliefs can be strengthened or new ones can be created. Furthermore, the emotional state of the audience can be affected too. Weak emotions, like boredom, as well as strong emotions, for instance fear, can be caused on the emotional level. Equally important, but not often consciously controllable, is the influence on the physiological level. The raising of the heart beat and blood pressure or the contraction of the iris of the eye can be reactions to media messages which take place without even being noticed by the media user.¹⁰³ Media effects are not the only elements affecting something, particularly the consumer, during exposure to a television programme. In fact, television impacts can be subjects of influences too. At this stage we have to differentiate between two groups, on the one hand factors

¹⁰² See Potter, 294.

¹⁰³ See Potter, 260ff.

affecting short term and on the other hand long term effects. As the size of this thesis does not allow a detailed outline of those factors, just the two most appropriate ones concerning television and *Grey's Anatomy* are highlighted.

A factor affecting long term effects concerning the topic of personal information assumes that 'media entertainment is most likely to cultivate social beliefs in those areas where the least real-life information is available' (Potter, 352). For example, the average television consumer does not know how the life of a surgical intern or neurosurgeon looks like. The mass medium television portrays the life of the characters with the hit show *Grey's Anatomy* and gives the audience an insight into the life of persons occupying such prestigious professions. Because the average consumer has limited knowledge of the life of a surgeon, it is impossible for them to prove the presented message to be false. Moreover, another factor influencing long term effects deals with the context of portrayals analyses and what kinds of behaviour can be learned via media texts. When watching *Grey's Anatomy*, the audience concentrates on the behaviour of the characters and filter out which kind of demeanours are appropriate, and therefore rewarded, and which ones get punished.¹⁰⁴ The viewer can concentrate on the behaviour of the interns towards their superiors and filter out which manners are appropriate when occupying a position at the bottom of a hierarchy.

Through this introduction to media effects it is obvious that this part of media and television literacy is an extremely complex one and that it is not sufficient just to list the effects media messages can have on its users. As it is presented, effects are subject to other influences as well and the way media effects develop on each single media user depends in the end on the user and his or her social surroundings. In which way the school surrounding and English language teaching can influence those effects can be observed in the practical part of this thesis.

¹⁰⁴ See Potter, 352.

II. Teaching Television Literacy

In the last decade a great number of educational projects have been initiated to introduce and include the mass media surrounding our everyday lives into the classrooms. But the introduction of some of them has not yet fulfilled the hope for an effect of substantial change. For a long time a certain amount of scepticism in pedagogical science has anticipated the use of technical modes in pedagogical contexts.¹⁰⁵ The introduction of media literacy into the classrooms and the national curricula has slowly but surely taken place. And nowadays teachers and researchers, after accepting the outstanding position of television in our society, work on the introduction of television literacy as part of media literacy into the classrooms.

Although the topic of media literacy should also cover the medium of television, its close analysis has often been neglected in favour of film analysis. This is because film material has been much more easily available on DVDs or VHS cassettes.¹⁰⁶ But this is a paltry excuse because these days' television series are available on DVDs and VHS cassettes. Most of them can be accessed or downloaded via the internet and then they can be used equally for teaching media literacy or, in this case, for teaching television literacy.

Before immersing into teaching television literacy and its four main concepts, it has to be annotated why the education environment is especially suitable for teaching television literacy. Based on the fact that any kind of literacy is a social practice and schools and classrooms are socially powerful institutions, there seems to be no better condition to communicate and teach literacies to the upcoming generations than via the classroom setting. Although schools have been obsessed with supporting the dominant literacies, for instance the traditional literacy of reading and writing, other, 'vernacular literacies' (Barton and Hamilton, 12), which are inherent parts of people's everyday practices, have to be included to 21st century teaching as well.¹⁰⁷ TVL fits into this category. When teaching literacy, it is essential to bear in mind that students' learning should result in understanding of the medium, not only in

¹⁰⁵ See Kerres, 1-11.

¹⁰⁶ See Sommer und Zerweck, 3.

¹⁰⁷ See Barton and Hamilton, 12.

responding to the medium.¹⁰⁸ At which it has to be said that the competences of understanding and responding to a medium are linked and that they cannot be looked at separately.

3. General Remarks

My general remarks on the topic of teaching television literacy refer to a diverse range of themes of which the most considerable ones are mentioned below. These include the role of the teacher, two useful approaches for developing this ability of teaching TVL, its aims as well as television's contribution to EFL, the disadvantages and advantages of including this medium into the language classroom, and the often discussed question of assessment.

In teaching television literacy, besides that there does not exist a wide range of supportive literature, the teacher has to take the bulk of responsibility of how to teach this specific kind of literacy.

‘[E]ducation and literacy are intimately connected [...], education must meet the dual challenges of teaching media literacy in a multicultural society and sensitizing students [...] to the inequities and injustices of a society based on gender, race, and class inequalities and discrimination.’ (Kellner and Share, 3).

This definition reveals the great amount of pressure put on the teacher. Apart from equipping the students with a sense of multicultural acceptance and sensibility¹⁰⁹, a teacher has to be first of all familiar with media studies itself. Andrew Hart outlines four kinds of problems emerging when planning to work with media, in this case with television, in the classroom. The difficulties mentioned are those of curricular, conceptual, practical and assessment.¹¹⁰ The problem is that teachers have always been asking and still ask themselves where to put those kind of studies on the timetable, and the involvement of different kinds of media has always been regarded as ‘a bit of extra’ (Hart, 16) because it has not been included to the curricula. Watching a film or a series has often been an additional bonus for students, for

¹⁰⁸ See Hart, 8.

¹⁰⁹ See Kellner and Share, 6.

¹¹⁰ See Hart, 15.

instance kept on for one of the last lessons of the year. But this should not be the intention of using television at school. On the contrary, this idea of letting television just wash over the students is not conducive to the favoured development of television literacy.

If a place has been found to fit television into the curriculum, the teacher, who is urged to respect and follow official guidelines, has to make sure that also the purpose of the viewing and the outcome is clear to the students.¹¹¹ An activity including moving images also has to be accompanied by pre- and post-viewing activities, which are dealt with in more detail in the activities section of this thesis. A further essential part for teaching television literacy is reflection.¹¹² The teacher has to encourage the students to reflect upon their work and development. Of utmost importance is that the students should not be flooded with moving image based activities, but instead the teacher has to provide an even assortment of activities.¹¹³ The medium of television equips the teacher with the advantage that it allows the students to start off with something with which they are already familiar. The students have a connection to television and its programmes, they already know something, although just superficial things, about it. This will raise the willingness of the students to actively participate during the lessons.¹¹⁴

With the following two helpful tools for teachers, two approaches to teaching will be presented, namely the pedagogical approach to critical media literacy and the more analytical approach called the “inquiry process”. As it has been said above there does not exist a wide range of appropriate literature on this subject, but among the already published information some useful approaches have been developed. One of those is the pedagogical approach which ‘attempts to teach students to read, analyze, and decode media texts’ (Kellner and Share, 5). This pedagogical approach known as critical media literacy should help the students to analyse the media culture surrounding them critically, and what is more important as social products, produced by someone for someone. In other words media or specifically television messages are, on the one hand products of subjects and therefore not objective, and on the

¹¹¹ See CEFR, 141.

¹¹² See Barton, 167.

¹¹³ See bfi Education, 51f.

¹¹⁴ See bfi Education, 5.

other hand are also perceived by subjects which do not objectively approach the messages.

This way of learning in the classrooms via critical media literacy, with the teacher in the position of a guide or an assistant, does not only teach students to learn something from the messages transmitted and to recognise the manipulative system in their background, but it ‘will help create good citizens and [it] will make individuals more motivated and competent participants in social life.’ (Kellner and Share, 6).¹¹⁵

The second approach worth noting, is presented by Elizabeth Thoman and Tessa Jolls, who developed a method called “inquiry process”. This approach includes deconstruction and analysis skills production and construction skills.¹¹⁶ This means that teaching television literacy includes two areas named by Thoman and Jolls: ‘Free your Mind!’ and ‘Express your View!’ (Thoman and Jolls, 20). This approach is based and focused on analysis. The analysing process of ‘Free your Mind!’ is stressed here and the main focus is definitely laid on analysing a television programme. It should equip students with decoding and analysing skills. In other words, they should be able to read the message transmitted via television. Working critically with media messages ‘develops critical thinking skills and involves all the competencies of Bloom’s Taxonomy (knowledge, analysis, comprehension, application, synthesis and evaluation)’ (Thoman and Jolls, 20).

The production side of teaching television called ‘Express your View!’, is also called the writing part according to the traditional reading/ writing literacy.¹¹⁷ This part derives from the more important part of the analysis that has to come before because without analysis input there is no output. This traditional reading/ writing literacy assumes that something is read and that the intense examination leads to a written output. With the development of modern media the meaning of this traditional dichotomy has been enlarged and, as one can see, it can also be used to describe the study of television. The writing or production side does not only stand for putting words on a sheet of paper but also for creating various outcomes of the discussion of

¹¹⁵ See Kellner and Share, 5f.

¹¹⁶ See Thoman, 20.

¹¹⁷ See Thoman and Jolls, 20.

a television message, for instance a Power Point Presentation or a poster. This method will be explored in greater detail in the following chapters, emanating from selected scenes of *Grey's Anatomy*, leading to various kinds of output involving all types of language skills.

The question of how to teach television literacy involves the aspect of the results on the students too. Before four particular aspects of television literacy are examined a general definition of the outcome has to be outlined. The task of defining a general purpose for media education is not a straightforward one because, like media and television literacy, it can also be approached from different viewpoints. Andrew Hart is of the opinion that students should be instructed in media literacy from primary school onwards. This would include an introduction to television literacy as well, considering the exceedingly high influence of television from an early age onwards. Following Hart's approach, students should have naturalised the "inquiring" of mediated messages until a certain age. The questions of who wants to transmit a message to whom and why should help the students to view media messages critically 'and not to accept things blindly' (Hart, 8).¹¹⁸ Thoman and Jolls add that as a result of the increase of the number of information providing media in the last decades the availability of it has been eased as well. Therefore students nowadays have 'to learn how to find what they need to know when they need to know it [...] and evaluate whether the information they find is useful for what they want to know.' (Thoman and Jolls, 6).¹¹⁹ One of the main aspects mentioned by Wendt is that it should be made clear to the students that our possibilities of understanding other cultures is restricted and that we can just approach different cultures in the way it is allowed by our history of socialisation.¹²⁰ A more general definition of the purpose of media education is that it

'seeks to increase [student's] critical understanding of the media [...] Media Education aims to create more active and critical media users who will demand and could contribute to, a greater range and diversity of media products.' (DES, quoted in Hart, 10).

¹¹⁸ See Hart, 6-8.

¹¹⁹ See Thoman and Jolls, 6.

¹²⁰ See Wendt, 17.

According to the definition given above and in the context of this thesis, I suggest to focus on the general idea of media literacy, which can be without difficulties transferred to television literacy, and to stress the cultural aspect. In other words, teaching television literacy in the English language classroom should contribute to create active and critical television users who develop in the course of teaching cultural empathy and intercultural understanding.

The application of the medium television to the classrooms and especially into the English language classrooms can be tremendously useful. After overcoming the inhibition that television makes children violent, stupid and complacent¹²¹, one started to include television and its various and multifaceted programmes into the classrooms. Outlined by the British Film Institute ‘[...]if English is an additional language, moving image work can be central to active and autonomous learning.’ (bfi Education, 6).

Currently, researchers focus on the contribution of television in second language acquisition, succeeded by practical investigations. Television ‘can serve as a powerful tool for second language instruction’ (Meskill, 65) and although ‘the role of television outside of the classroom and the link between these viewing practices and the classroom’ (Meskill, 65) has been neglected at the beginning, this connection seems to be or at least should be the launching pad for an effective education. Starting from the point that ‘television has enormous potential as a third educational institution’ (Miller, 81) besides school and family¹²², it leaves no doubt that it has to be introduced to second language teaching too. Teaching enriched with television and its ‘non-threatening and non-punitive’ (Miller, 81) character can enhance the acquisition of a language other than the mother tongue. Besides this fact there exists a multiplicity of aspects which enable the teacher to draw on abundant resources for teaching all four language skills and language aspects, which are outlined in the following chapters.

When aiding lesson plans with television, the teacher draws on the viewing habits of the students. Something that is usually done in their leisure time for enjoyment and relaxation and with what the students are highly familiar is introduced into the

¹²¹ See Miller, 80.

¹²² See Miller, 81.

classroom for teaching purposes. The fact that television is a medium toward which all of them, without exceptions, will have positive feelings, will reduce prejudices and emotional barriers which tend to influence the acceptance of new teaching methods and aids. Leaving aside the critical opinions which exist in a great number arguing, for instance that the ‘time spent viewing television is time taken away from other language and literacy activities’ (Meskill, 64), it is therefore necessary to stress the positive effects that using television programmes in language teaching can entail.

[...] television can be viewed as a powerful medium of models whose use of language is lively and highly contextualized and that these qualities motivate [student] viewers to process language deeply in order to understand what they watch.’ (Meskill, 64)

The information presented by a television programme works on two main levels, on the visual and on the aural level. The simultaneous transmitting of visual and the aural messages, which complement one another, considerably enhances the contextual understanding of the students.¹²³ Aural and visual messages not only complement each other but also develop and challenge the students’ language skills. The visual part supports the aural message, and the understanding of the aural text is in reverse aided by the visuals.

It has to be annotated that although the input provided by television messages is rich and multifaceted, the ‘”minipackages” of televised information’ (Meskill, 65) cannot be used with all groups of learners. It has been proved that students already need some language skills to understand and profit from the messages presented on television.¹²⁴ Before starting working with television input in a language classroom the students should already be equipped with some basics of the traditional skills of reading, writing, listening, and speaking, as well as with an understanding of visual and aural input.¹²⁵ As it has been outlined, television programmes can enormously contribute to second language learning. This in turn imparts television literacy knowledge which should lead to active and critical media users in the end. Television acts as a learning aid for the four traditional skills, which are expanded through the literacy facilitating aspects of semiotics, production, linguistics and interculturality.

¹²³ See Meskill, 64f.

¹²⁴ See Meskill, 65f.

¹²⁵ See Hart, 3.

As well as other teaching materials, moving images as appearing on the television screen have advantages and disadvantages. Barry Tomalin assigns the following benefits to the use of television in the English language classroom. Firstly, the target language is presented in a context and the message is transmitted via sound and moving images, which enhances the understanding on the side of the students. Furthermore, as it has been pointed out before, the connection between home and school is tightened with the inclusion of the outside world. This means the world outside the school building, is transported into the classroom, which enhances too the communicative aspect of teaching. Focusing also on the cultural aspect, a kind of cross-cultural education is favoured with the presentation of various unfamiliar cultural practices, for example with the presentation of scenes showing the celebration of Thanksgiving in the United States in Austrian schools.¹²⁶ Other positive aspects worth mentioning are that, when using DVDs or VHS cassettes, a single scene can be selected from a programme, which can then be played again and again with or without sound. Those aspects provide the teacher with an ample scope for activity planning and flexibility concerning the apprehension of the students.

Considering the use of television programmes in the classroom also has its disadvantages. On the one hand, the classroom has to be provided with the appropriate equipment¹²⁷ or at least the school should have beamer or television sets with DVD players at one's disposal. There is great possibility to encounter the latter difficulty because schools often do not possess the necessary funds. On the other hand, Tomalin claims that television programmes feature 'low language density' because of their dual presentation of visuals and language and are 'unsuitable for intensive study' (Tomalin, 11). At this point I would like to interject that in my opinion teaching via moving images can without a doubt be considered as part of second language acquisition. Its appliance is, however, restricted since you cannot teach every single aspect of a foreign language through television programmes. But with all the other methods, whose application is limited too, it is responsible to form the pool of teaching methods of which a well-trained and mindful teacher can choose to offer his or her students for a diversified second language instruction.

¹²⁶ See Tomalin, 9-11.

¹²⁷ See Hart, 21.

When teaching, assessment has always been a point of principle. This is also the case with teaching the special literacy of television. Since the development of media studies and its introduction to schools, appropriate assessment criteria have been devised.¹²⁸ But those suggestions cannot be taken over for teaching television literacy as part of traditional subjects like English in the Austrian curriculum. Assessment as a form of evaluation can be explored in many forms, so that the teacher can get an idea and that the students can be provided with an description of their proficiency.¹²⁹ Based on the fact that the degree of literacy cannot exactly be measured because literacy is arranged on a continuum, it is nearly impossible for a teacher to evaluate students with the regular grading system. Every single student is situated somewhere on the continuum, that is to say, some are more literate than others when they enter the school system. Therefore, a teacher should focus on the development of students during the use of moving images and the teaching of television literacy aspects. This means that at the beginning it might be useful to define and formulate a favoured learning target which should define the best rate of achievement for each student at the end of the year. Assessment can fulfill various functions and the standards appropriate for one purpose may not be useful at all for another. The Common European Framework outlines a number of assessment types of which several can be applied to evaluate the proficiency of students of television literacy, for instance achievement and proficiency assessment, continuous and fixed point assessment, formative and summative assessment, or direct and indirect assessment to name some.¹³⁰

As the teaching suggestions of this thesis are arranged in combination with the four traditional skills, and television literacy aspects should accompany a wide range of topics, it is manifest that the focus of assessment is not directly on the television literacy output. But this does not mean that it has to be completely left out when evaluating. On the contrary it has to be taken into consideration, besides the ‘understanding [of] learning processes in their great variety’ (CEFR, 141), to which degree television literacy aspects are included in student’s works based on reading, writing, listening and speaking.

¹²⁸ See Hart, 23ff.

¹²⁹ See CEFR, 177.

¹³⁰ See CEFR, 180-187.

4. Four Aspects of Television Literacy

When speaking about television literacy, it means speaking about a relatively new subject of investigation, especially in terms of teaching. This thesis focuses on four aspects which together in my opinion constitute television literacy. These four dimensions are taken from Roy Sommer's and Bruno Zerweck's article *TV Literacy in der Fernsehgesellschaft*¹³¹. According to the authors the four crucial "ingredients" of television literacy can be named as follows: semiotic, product-oriented, intercultural and the aspect of language.¹³²

In short, those four components which will be called skills in the course of this chapter, are used to develop a model of television literacy which can be applied in the English language classroom, demonstrated here with the American television series *Grey's Anatomy*. They are named skills because each of those should equip the students with a certain competence. The application of all four skills together should in the end predispose the upcoming 21st century generation to act television literate. Although each aspect is taken from a different type of literacy, they have been combined to form a completely new literacy, namely television literacy. Media literacy, cineliteracy, cultural literacy as well as the traditional literacy of reading and writing serve as the four background literacies on which television literacy is based. The reason for piecing together TVL of several other literacies is, because on the one hand it is multi-modal and it includes and works on a wide number of areas and on different levels of reception. On the other hand, the subject of television studies itself draws on a number of other studies, for instance on film studies or sociology¹³³, and this fact refers to the multipart structure of television literacy. In the course of this chapter the four skills are outlined according to their relevance for television literacy.

4.1. Semiotic Skill

The first "ingredient" for television literacy is taken from media literacy, which has been outlined in detail at the beginning of this thesis (see 1. Media Literacy). The decisive factor taken from media literacy is the semiotic aspect. In other words, this

¹³¹ See Sommer und Zerweck "TV Literacy in der Fernsehgesellschaft". *Der Fremdsprachliche Unterricht* (2005/5).

¹³² See Sommer und Zerweck, 4.

¹³³ See Bignell, 3.

skill is based on the study of signs, on semiotics. The reason why semiotics became this important for visuals and moving images has been outlined above too; namely because of the linguistic and the iconic turn. (see 1.1.3. Linguistic & Iconic Turn). A further aspect according to Fiske is that content analysis alone is not sufficient to respond and to interpret moving images, therefore it is necessary to take a step beyond content analysis and make use of the field of semiotics.¹³⁴

The semiotic skill is named by Sommer and Zerweck in the context of television literacy in ‘Learning to View’ (Sommer and Zerweck, 4). By acquiring this skill, students should learn how to view visuals, especially moving images, properly. The crucial point here is that they should learn to view visuals consisting of more than one code, in this case visual and audio codes, appropriately.¹³⁵ In this context, codes are seen as systems in which signs are combined in groups, for instance the group of visual codes and aural codes¹³⁶, which can convey other codes again, like cultural codes. As it was said by Thwaites, signs suggest ways to read them, ‘they cue in codes’ (Thwaites, 10). Those two codes mentioned above, according to Hickethier, are arranged as “Doppelstruktur”¹³⁷. They have to be analysed together when working with television texts because a separate examination would not be of much use.¹³⁸ It has to be said that analysing these two codes separately would not only be of no use at all, but more importantly it is not a part of television literacy and would lead to an inadequate analysis.

The semiotician Stuart Hall developed the model of encoding and decoding to analyse those codes and the accompanying discourses. The term discourse, the practice which uses signs to communicate a certain viewpoint, is used here in the plural because in the case of a television programme one discourse can be superposed by others which leads to multiple readings of the message, depending on the viewer.¹³⁹ The meaning of a television message does not simply originate through its transmission but even more through the production on the side of the audience. The process of encoding takes place before the message is transmitted and

¹³⁴ See Fiske, 16.

¹³⁵ See Sommer und Zerweck, 4.

¹³⁶ See Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 9.

¹³⁷ Twofold phenomenon [Translation Susanne Gruber]

¹³⁸ See Hickethier, 24f.

¹³⁹ See Mikos, 57f.

we have to be aware that signs are never produced in a vacuum, on the contrary they are always produced in a context.¹⁴⁰ Each message is encoded with ideas and meanings to affect the audience.

The process of decoding takes place on the audience side and can be described as ‘the active process of meaning making’ (Marshall and Werndly, 56). The audience is simultaneously the source and the receiver of the message. When an encoded television message is received by the viewers the process of realisation and meaning making begins. The intended meaning of the encoding side may not be the same received at the decoding side because of the diverseness of the codes. The cultural codes may, for instance, not be symmetrical and this leads to misunderstandings. This means that viewers who have difficulties in understanding a certain message are operating in another than in the preferred code.¹⁴¹ If someone operates in another system of codes their interpretation depends on the society surrounding the individual, the nation he or she belongs to, and the cultural background¹⁴². For instance, students in a language classroom in Austria might encounter difficulties in understanding when watching an American television programme. Hall developed three positions for decoding, the dominant hegemonic position, the negotiated code and the oppositional code.¹⁴³ The dominant reading of a message means that it is decoded with the same code as it has been encoded before transmitting it. When a viewer negotiates between the encoded intended meaning and his or her slightly different decoded meaning, Hall’s second reading position, the negotiated code, applies. In the oppositional reading of a television message, a viewer is aware of and refuses to accept the dominant encoded meaning and he or she decodes the message in an ‘alternative frame of reference’ (Marshall and Werndly, 57).¹⁴⁴ But one has to be aware that because of television’s polysemic characteristic, more than one position from which to decode the message is offered and that the way the viewers do the decoding is always related to how they view themselves.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴⁰ See Thwaites, 180.

¹⁴¹ See Hall, 509-514.

¹⁴² See Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 171.

¹⁴³ See Hall, 515.

¹⁴⁴ See Marshall and Werndly, 56f.

¹⁴⁵ See Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 147-150.

Based on the works of Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce, semiotics is the study of signs. Originating with the assumption that

language is made up of signs (like words) which communicate meanings, and that all kinds of other things which communicate meanings could potentially be studied in the same way [...] (Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 5)

This idea has been assigned to television studies as well. In the following section, the most important concepts will be outlined, focusing on their relevance for television literacy.

4.1.1. Visual and Aural Signs

The starting point for semiotics is the sign. This can be a visual or an aural sign, or a combination of both when dealing with the medium of television. Signs, which develop their meaning through interpretation and their difference to other signs, can be looked at from various points of view.¹⁴⁶ The two most dominant mindsets are the Saussurean model according to Ferdinand de Saussure and the Peircean model named after Charles Sanders Peirce. The Swiss linguist Saussure divided a sign into a signifier and a signified, characterised it as arbitrary but man-made, which entails that a sign is culturally determined and culturally different.¹⁴⁷ A signifier is ‘the image, object, or sound itself – the part of the sign that has a material form’ and the signified is ‘the [mental] concept it represents’ (Seiter, 33). If a sign refers to actual things in contrast or in addition to the signified, it is called a referent.¹⁴⁸ It is important to note that the referent does not belong to the original model developed by Saussure. On the contrary, he neglected the addition of a referent, but current semiology supplements it.¹⁴⁹ Using the example of the dog “Doc” in *Grey’s Anatomy*, Meredith tells her fellow interns in the episode “Owner of a Lonely Heart” (2-11) that a dog would ease their loneliness. The word “dog” is the signifier, an aural sign, and the signified is the mental concept in each of the viewer’s mind. Needless to say this concept will vary. For example, some might have the concept of a Golden Retriever in mind when the word is uttered, or others a sausage dog. But at

¹⁴⁶ See Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ See Fiske, 23f.

¹⁴⁸ See Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 12.

¹⁴⁹ See Copley, 248.

the end of the episode when Meredith and Izzie come home with an actual dog, the viewer gets presented with the referent.

The same example can be used to visualise the triadic Peircean model in contrast to the dyadic model of Saussure. Peirce named three components that qualify a sign: the representamen, the interpretant and the object. According to Peirce, the word “dog” is the representamen and it creates in the mind of the viewer another equal or more developed sign, called the interpretant. The interpretant is the concept of a dog in the viewer’s mind and it stands for something, namely its object. The object is the third component of Peirce’s model and it is the part which is referred to, in this case to the dog on the television screen.¹⁵⁰

When dealing with visual signs one has to distinguish between symbolic, iconic and indexical signs. This differentiation goes back to Peirce who classified three ‘modes of relationship’ (Chandler, 36) between representamen and interpretant, or in Saussurean terms, between the signifier and the signified. But as Copley points out ‘There are no all-or-nothing categories with respect to signs.’ (Copley, 37). The signifier of a symbolic sign has no relation to its signified, meaning that its relationship is arbitrary. Take the word “scalpel” used in *Grey’s Anatomy*. Here the word itself, the signifier, uttered by a surgeon when demanding this specific surgical instrument, is not related to the concept in the minds of the viewers.¹⁵¹ Likewise clothes and colours belong to the group of symbolic signs. For example pink or salmon are girl colours, they refer to femininity¹⁵² as it is shown on *Grey’s Anatomy* by Addison Montgomery-Shepherd with her salmon-coloured scrubs. The signifier of a symbolic sign does not resemble the signified at all but the relationship has to be learned and agreed upon.¹⁵³ Continuing the example with the scalpel, if then the scrub nurse hands the scalpel over to the surgeon and the viewer actually sees the signified and it resembles the referent, we speak of an iconic sign. The signifier of an iconic sign resembles its signified in that they share some qualities and the signifier often imitates the signified. Another example is realistic sound on television or a dubbed soundtrack, which imitates the real soundtrack.¹⁵⁴ Last, indexical signs ‘have a

¹⁵⁰ See Chandler, 29ff.

¹⁵¹ See Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 15.

¹⁵² See Marshall and Werndly, 15f.

¹⁵³ See Chandler, 36.

¹⁵⁴ See Chandler, 36.

concrete and often causal relationship to their signified' (Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 15). The signifier of an indexical sign is directly connected to the signified.¹⁵⁵ For example, if a person covered in blood is hospitalised with the ambulance, the blood is indexical for an accident or illness which calls for hospital treatment.

A television text, as it has been shown above, can present all three types of signs which are arranged to a text according to the rules of television. In this manner, various camera techniques can be compared to the grammar of a language. For the most part the viewers see iconic signs, for instance the people on the screen, in this case the surgeons in *Grey's Anatomy*.¹⁵⁶ Besides this differentiation into three types of signs of which a sign can be in various degrees one of them all at the same time, it has to be pointed out that those signs can also be read in different ways, namely symbolically, iconically and indexically.¹⁵⁷ The way a sign is looked at and read depends on the context of the viewer. Although this differentiation should not be conducted strictly, it is of importance to be aware of it. To exemplify the stated, the indexical sign mentioned above, such as a television shot showing a surgeon covered in blood can be read in different ways. Approaching it for example from a symbolical context, one might think of how brutal the world is, that there are too many accidents and that this surgeon just performed surgery and in the best case the patient hopefully survived.

4.1.2. Connotation and Denotation

Furthermore, the concepts of denotation and connotation by Roland Barthes play a role in the semiotic analysis of television texts. The distinction between those two is made on the signified level, referring to a denotative and a connotative signified, of which both can change over time. The denotative meaning of a sign has the function of labelling, for instance a shot of the Seattle Grace Hospital denotes a building in Seattle. Denotation is regarded as the definitional, literal and common-sense meaning, like a description provided by a dictionary.¹⁵⁸ Seeing it this way, it is automatically accompanied by a truth-effect because it names a sign. This labelling function imparts a naturalised meaning of a specific sign. The viewers accept it as

¹⁵⁵ See Chandler, 37.

¹⁵⁶ See Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 19.

¹⁵⁷ See Cobley, 37.

¹⁵⁸ See Ibid.

natural because of its literal meaning. Therefore denotation espouses the concept of naturalisation.¹⁵⁹ Barthes analysed it as follows,

‘[...] connotation produces the illusion of denotation [...] Thus denotation is just another connotation. [...] denotation can be seen as no more of a natural meaning than is connotation but rather as a process of *naturalization*.’ (Chandler, 138)

According to this, the denotative meaning of a sign creates the illusion that it has to be taken as literally without being ideologically influenced. But as soon as we learn denotations we get acquainted to the connotations of the dominant ideology.¹⁶⁰

The denotative meaning of a sign is also accompanied by another kind of meaning, the connotative meaning, which is based on our social and cultural experiences and which is even used to transmit ideological meanings.¹⁶¹ Relating those two notions to television, denotation is concerned with what is filmed and connotation is concerned with how it is done.¹⁶²

Connotation, usually consisting of a set of signifieds¹⁶³, includes values, emotions, as well as attitudes based on subjective experience and on context. Television producers enforce connotations using specific methods, for example certain camera angles or various lighting techniques.¹⁶⁴ Television images assist the connotation and make sure that the viewer gets the favoured connotative meaning for a visual.¹⁶⁵ Equally important is that through the process of connotation, metaphors and metonymies are evolving.¹⁶⁶ For instance the connotative meaning of the Seattle Grace Hospital can be described as life saving, medicative and busy. Connotation leads over to Barthes' concept of myth. Myth as well as connotation takes place on the second level of signification.

¹⁵⁹ See Thwaites, 62ff.

¹⁶⁰ See Chandler, 139.

¹⁶¹ See Seiter, 41.

¹⁶² See Chandler, 138.

¹⁶³ See Thwaites, 60.

¹⁶⁴ See Fiske, 28f.

¹⁶⁵ See Silverblatt, 114ff.

¹⁶⁶ See Thwaites, 60.

If signs and connotations are combined to groups, one is talking about myth, which includes ‘ways of thinking about people, products, places, or ideas which are structured to send particular messages’ (Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 16). Myths assist us to make sense of our experiences within our cultures.¹⁶⁷ On this level of signification messages and ideas about the world are transmitted which are perceived by the viewers as natural, real, and true, which consequently is connected with ideology. (see 1.3.2. Television and the Problem of Reality) And as Barthes called it ‘myths are the dominant ideologies of our time’ (Chandler, 144). Myth is an extremely powerful tool in naturalising meaning which leads us back to the discussion of denotation and naturalisation. Looking at television texts in this context, most of them are commonly structured by myth but on a hidden layer. This is so because the text structured by myth disguises the concept to maintain the appearance of being natural to the viewer.¹⁶⁸ And what is presented as natural by myth and ideology are the values of the dominant groups. Mikos adds that television texts cannot be controlled by one dominant ideology because they are many-voiced and potentially controversial according to their polysemic arrangement.¹⁶⁹ A media text being polysemic means that the signs and codes presented can be decoded, in other words read, in various ways. Furthermore, television messages are multiaccental too.¹⁷⁰ In a word, they can be understood ‘in different ways by different audiences’ (Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 160), according to their cultural and social surroundings.

Denotation and connotation have been proposed for a “close analysis” in the classroom by Thoman and Jolls. According to their idea, the students, after watching the scene, should start out with a plain description of what they have seen and not seen, and what they have heard or not heard.¹⁷¹ Only after describing the denotative meaning, the students should try to get to the bottom of what they have seen and heard. This can be compared to ‘peeling back the layers of an onion’ (Thoman and Jolls, 29).

¹⁶⁷ See Chandler, 144.

¹⁶⁸ See Thwaites, 69, 85.

¹⁶⁹ See Mikos, 101.

¹⁷⁰ See Bignell, *Media Semiotics*, 160.

¹⁷¹ See Thoman and Jolls, 29f.

4.1.3. *Metaphor and Metonymy*

Equally important for the semiotic skill of television literacy are the concepts of metaphor and metonymy. Both can be expressed visually or aurally. Metonomies are especially grounded in our experience. On the one hand, a sign used metaphorically does not necessarily represent the thing or idea directly. ‘A word or image may be used symbolically, to represent something else entirely, something with which it has certain features in common’ (Marshall and Werndly, 32). Semiotically speaking, one signified is acting as a signifier referring to another signifier.¹⁷² Metaphors are culturally dependant and make up a great deal of our everyday phrases. Lakoff and Johnson argue that ‘human thought processes are largely metaphorical’ (Lakoff and Johnson, 6). This means that metaphors are not only present in everyday language and visuals, but also in mere in thoughts and action.¹⁷³ According to them ‘Our ordinary conceptual system, in terms of which we both think and act, is fundamentally metaphorical in nature’ (Lakoff and Johnson, 3). Metaphors are also present in *Grey’s Anatomy*. For instance, in “Scars and Souvenirs” (3-18), the garden swing on the porch of Meredith’s house functions as a metaphor for, this means it demonstrates or compares symbolically, the relationship of Meredith and her father. When at the end of the episode her father pulls out a screw which keeps it from swinging, it starts swinging again, which can be interpreted that the relationship between Meredith and her father is not stuck still anymore, but they are moving on and growing closer again. A metaphor, described beforehand as a kind of comparison can be both implicit and explicit.¹⁷⁴ One has to be very careful when dealing with metaphors in order to not mix them up with similes. Similes can be best described as a subcategory of metaphors but in their case the comparison is made explicitly with using the words ‘like’ or ‘as’¹⁷⁵, for example ‘my love is like a red rose’.

A metonymy, on the other hand, is a sign which resembles a part of something. This means that a part of something refers to something whole or, in other words, one thing substitutes another.¹⁷⁶ Semiotically speaking, one signified stands for another

¹⁷² See Chandler, 127.

¹⁷³ See Lakoff and Johnson, 3.

¹⁷⁴ See Thwaites, 48.

¹⁷⁵ See Chandler, 127.

¹⁷⁶ See Thwaites, 51.

signified, and both are directly or closely related.¹⁷⁷ In contrast to metaphors, whose primary function is one of understanding, a metonymy has a referential function but also provides understanding.¹⁷⁸ In *Grey's Anatomy* the title sequence with the actor's names at the beginning of each episode can be interpreted as a metonymy.¹⁷⁹ It is a metonymy for a special kind of life. The viewer is presented with the two sides of a surgeon's life, the professional and the private one. The cuts between the shots are blurred and shots presenting work related aspects are alternated with shots showing private aspects of life. At the beginning of the opening, one sees a close shot of a hand arranging surgical instruments on a tray which is followed by a close shot of a woman's left eye where the eyelashes are made up with an eyelash curler. Another dichotomy shows the backside of a woman and male hands helping her close her cocktail dress, and then the shot blurs and clears up to the backside of a surgeon where a pair of hands is tying the surgical gown. The last opposition shows a hospital bag with fluids dripping down a tub which blurs to a full cocktail glass. Those contrasting shots convey the feeling that although the professional life of a surgeon is demanding, the private life is glamorous and that this kind of life consists of both in equal shares. As I see it, this metonymy is enforced with the filming technique of close shots. Another very simple metonymy are the white lab coats resembling the profession of doctors. According to Chandler, television is a metonymic medium, where 'a depicted object represents a related but non-depicted object' (Chandler, 129).

Furthermore, metonymy is utilised to present stereotypes. One person, for example, can stand for a whole group. Here again, Derek Shepherd, the handsome, smart, successful but cocky neurosurgeon functions as a metonymy for the stereotypical group of handsome, smart and successful men. Besides being metonymic, stereotypes are also mythic as well as denotative.¹⁸⁰

Those two stylistic devices can also be used together. A combination of metaphor and metonymy is often arranged to convey a great number of information in a very short amount of time, for instance in trailers.¹⁸¹ Trailers are often connected with

¹⁷⁷ See Chandler, 129.

¹⁷⁸ See Lakoff and Johnson, 36.

¹⁷⁹ See Marshall und Werndly, 35.

¹⁸⁰ See Thwaites, 52, 128f.

¹⁸¹ See Marshall and Werndly, 35.

television series and are supposed to arouse the interest in the viewers and to make sure they tune in for the next episode. For each episode of *Grey's Anatomy* there are usually three different trailers aired in a time span, most often a week, between two episodes.

According to this outline, there are a number of aspects which can be taught in the English language classroom. All of the points mentioned above can be to a greater or lesser extent integrated to language teaching. I would suggest to work on the aspect of denotation and connotation, as well as on metaphors and metonymies. In hindsight to Peirce's distinction of signs, I would choose to work on indexical signs. Aspects which cannot be left out, but which will also be part of the product-oriented skill, are the filming techniques which have been described as the grammar that ties together those kinds of signs. The presentation of reality should also be analysed in the classrooms.

4.2. Product-oriented Skill

The product oriented aspect described by Sommer and Zerweck as 'to look behind the scenes' (Sommer und Zerweck, 5) should allow the students to gain an insight into the production and the background of television programmes. The focus of this skill is not put on the television text itself, but on the structures, ideas and purposes behind a television programme. Students should learn that a television series is not just a sequence of pictures presented on the television screen for a certain amount of time, but that behind and all round those images a great number of procedures are going on. Via acquainting this skill, students will notice those processes and with a newly raised awareness they will extract more information and gain deeper understanding of a television production. Due to the extent of this thesis and the intended level of teaching not all the processes involved in a television production can be outlined.

This skill is partly taken from cineliteracy, which is a fairly new literacy in connection with teaching, described as a skill through which students will be able to understand how a television programme is made and 'how setting, characters, camera

angles and lighting are being used to help tell the story' (Miller (11.5.2007)).¹⁸² Charles Eidsvik dealt with the topic of cineliteracy and art over thirty years ago and from his work we can nowadays draw the definition that cineliteracy is the language of moving images.¹⁸³ Approaching television programmes from a cineliterate viewpoint that it is like a language means that this skill has to deal with the 'words' and the 'grammar' that make up this specific kind of language. The following components are relevant for developing a product-oriented skill having an educational background in mind: Mise-en Scène including sound, lighting, the camera, stylistic devices as well as special effects. According to Mikos, Mise-en Scène is a key feature not only in analysing but also in perceiving a television programme. It helps the viewers to relate the images to each other.¹⁸⁴ The better this arrangement is done, the more the viewers can immerse themselves into the presented world and consider it as a real presentation.

But as aforesaid, cineliteracy alone does not account for the product-oriented skill of a television literate person. Knowledge about television genres and forms, the design of a television production, as well as the equipment with a specific television product-oriented jargon, are responsible for the development of this skill. To enable the students to analyse the background of a television programme, it is more needful than anywhere else to equip them with the necessary vocabulary concerning the production site of television programmes. This entails that with the introduction of every single aspect of this skill, the students' vocabulary will expand through numerous new words which will not only be learned by heart but used for the analysis of a television programme.

4.2.1. Characterising Television Programmes

Trying to characterise a current television programme might not be easy or straightforward because, as one can quickly recognise, today's hit shows, including *Grey's Anatomy*, do not fit into one specific television genre. Besides categorising television programmes into genres, they also differ in their formats. At the very basis one can find clear defined genres. According to Silverblatt, genres are neatly organised categories.

¹⁸² See Miller (11.5.2007)

¹⁸³ See Eidsvik, vii.

¹⁸⁴ See Mikos, 50-52.

The word genre itself means “order”. A genre is a standardized format that is distinctive and easily identifiable. [...] A genre is not confined to one medium. [...] Genres are characterized by formula - that is, patterns in *function*, *premise*, *structure*, and *plot*. (Silverblatt, 78)

The theory of non-confinement of genres to one medium is supported by Jason Mittel who argues ‘that television genre is best understood as a process of categorization that is not found within media texts, but operates across the cultural realms of media industries [...]’ (Mittel, xii).

Assigning television productions to genres is a way of categorising and arranging them in strict classifications. Television studies inherited the various categories from other cultural forms, for instance from literature, or from other media, such as the radio.¹⁸⁵ Classifying television programmes into categories entails that as soon as the audience assigns a programme to a certain genre it raises their expectations. ‘Genre provides categories for structuring anticipations’ (Eidsvik, 62). The viewers look out for genre specific patterns and conventions, which on the one hand help them to classify the programme and on the other hand to make it easier to derive meaning from it. If the audience is not able to associate the media product to one of the categories in their minds, comprehension problems are inescapable.¹⁸⁶ As aforementioned, our and the upcoming generation grows up with a basic knowledge about those categories, and although they might not be able to define it in detail, they would certainly be able to arrange and recognise television programmes of the same genre. One of the things the audience would definitely figure out would be the theme because all genres have dominant themes, which are recur every time they are produced.¹⁸⁷

Looking at television productions from another point of view demands the classification into forms. Established forms are the season, the series and the serial, which might not be perceived in the first place by the audience¹⁸⁸ because what the viewer perceives is a sequence of moving images that are presented on a weekly or

¹⁸⁵ See Bignell, 114.

¹⁸⁶ See Mikos, 54.

¹⁸⁷ See Marshall and Werndly, 51.

¹⁸⁸ See Bignell, 55.

daily basis. The following chapters will focus on television genres and forms whose definition constitutes an inevitable part for a television literate user.

4.2.1.1. Television Genres

This part focusing on television genres will be brief and will just offer a quick introduction to the three most prominent genres used for television. Drama, comedy and soap opera, whose techniques and peculiarities are widely accepted within the television consuming community, belong to the main piers of television entertainment. Although the television audience is aware of the differences between those three genres and might also know about their subcategories and hybrid forms, there is an overall structure which can be found in all of them. The majority of television genres are arranged according to a standard formula, which alleges the overall narrative. This formula consists of three elements: order, chaos, and the restoration of order.¹⁸⁹ Each programme starts out with order, which is then disturbed and until the end when the order is restored again.

One of the most prominent and well known genres in 21st century television is the soap opera. It is characterised by an open-ended narrative structure, is not produced in seasons and its average length does not exceed thirty minutes. Furthermore, in a soap opera the great number of main characters always stays the same and the setting does not change either. A reason for the last mentioned facts is to tie the audience more closely to the programme. The themes dealt with, concerne the main characters and their love, conflicts, secrets and confidences, sicknesses and injuries as well as skeletons in the cupboard.¹⁹⁰ Silverblatt adds that much of the attention of a soap opera is put into the reaction of characters instead of on the action itself.¹⁹¹ Another feature of soap operas is the concept of community. As Lou Alexander points out, the storyline depends on the relationship of the characters who live and/ or work together. It is also the characters the viewers can most often identify themselves with and this relationship and the developing themes get them hooked and comitted to tune in again to the next episode.¹⁹² All the characters are linked by the categories of family and/ or working relationship, and age group. Since these categories often

¹⁸⁹ See Silverblatt, 79.

¹⁹⁰ See Alexander, 28-31.

¹⁹¹ See Silverblatt, 31.

¹⁹² See Alexander, 29-31.

overlap because of the affiliation of the characters to more than one category, miscellaneous story lines can easily develop.¹⁹³

Another popular genre is the drama, which is split up into several subcategories such as medical or hospital drama. This specific television category has been taken from theatre and has influenced the television production to a great extent. The drama function has become more and more important over the years. This can be observed since drama, functioning as a television genre, is preferred to depict professional working life. One cannot, for instance, avoid *CSI* or *NYPD Blue*, *Grey's Anatomy* or *Emergency Room* these days. These kinds of series have become extremely popular in the last decade of the 20th century and are still highly favoured in the 21st century. Drama is characterised by starring regular main characters and it is aired in completed weekly episodes. After some development in the 1990s, the so called “action mode” entered television dramas. This “action mode”, another component of the show, presents a rapid change between scenes of action, procedures and scenes of reflection and introspection.¹⁹⁴

As a third main genre comedy has to be mentioned. A comedy, nowadays well-known as sitcom or situational comedy, is characterised by a fictional narrative as well as by the use of regular characters and familiar locations, for instance a hospital.¹⁹⁵ Baker adds that the storyline is based on a certain group and it is often set in a work environment and that further elements of sitcoms are that it shows a symbolic family as well as using synchronising motifs like catchphrases. He distinguishes three main character types in a sitcom, namely the main characters, the supporting characters and the transients, the non-regular characters who change every episode. As well as drama, this genre can be broken apart into subcategories, for example the workplace sitcom, which is characterised by ‘a constant focus upon the relationships within the workplace, often revealed through flirtation [and] sexual tension, [...]’ (Baker, 28). Another example is the dramatic comedy, the dramedy.¹⁹⁶ According to Baker,

¹⁹³ See Bignell, 118.

¹⁹⁴ See Creeber, 24-26.

¹⁹⁵ See Bignell, 122.

¹⁹⁶ See Baker, 22-31.

Plots are thought-oriented and examine the effects on characters [...] [and] Characters are generally complex, with multiple and conflicting emotions and a sense of self-reliant dependence upon one another. (Baker, 30)

Mostly all of today's television programmes cannot be described by one genre alone. What the audience is presented with in the 21st century is a mix of television genres, hybrid creations. As outlined by Brian Rose, the creation of new genres by merging already existing ones seems to be common in the latest history of television production.¹⁹⁷ Art Silverblatt argues that 'changes in the genre often signal shifts in the culture' (Silverblatt, 82) and as I see it, this mixing of various television patterns can be regarded as a change in the general genre outline, clearing the way for new types, mixed ones, of genres. This hybridity consists of at least two or more genres.¹⁹⁸ Another reason for this might be that television producers have the need to develop new ways to attract and keep their viewers. These new things have to be different and it has to be something which has not been on screen before. Therefore, as I see it television producers try to exploit all their possibilities and attempt to merge different genres. If the new form works out and attracts enough viewers, the programme is flooded with series and films based on the new format and in the meantime television companies are searching for new intermingled types. Bignell offers an explanation for this phenomenon,

All television texts participate in genre to some extent, and often participate in several genres simultaneously. Different genres of television programme address their audiences in different ways, and reveal different assumptions about the interests, pleasures [...]. (Bignell, 132)

For instance, when looking at the *International Movie Database* to gather information about the genre of *Grey's Anatomy*, we find out that it is characterised as drama as well as comedy.¹⁹⁹ Although those two classifications seem to be extremely oppositional, they seem to be combined in *Grey's Anatomy*, and as it seems, this mix of genres is responsible for its huge success. Nowhere near enough had a third genre found its way into the "hit-mix" of *Grey's Anatomy*, in particular the soap opera.

¹⁹⁷ See Rose (17.2.2007)

¹⁹⁸ See Marshall and Werndly, 47.

¹⁹⁹ See <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0413573/> (19.2.2007)

4.2.1.2. *Television Forms*

Two forms relevant in this context will be outlined in the following part: the series and the serial. A television series consists of seasons and episodes and it can last from thirteen weeks to twenty years.²⁰⁰ Each season is usually composed of twenty-two to twenty-five episodes. Every episode is centred around a different topic or story, although the characters, the setting and the actors stay the same.²⁰¹ Moreover, the overall content, for instance the relationships among the main characters, remains the thread of the whole production, the only change being the topics of each episode. As an example, *Grey's Anatomy* is a series and until now four seasons have been produced and aired in the U.S. Each season consists of a different number of episodes but, since the first episode, the characters and the setting have not changed.

Besides the series one can find the form called serial. A serial 'consists of a developing story divided into several parts' (Bignell, 94). A serial, in contrast to a series, deals with a certain topic across several episodes.²⁰² Serials are nowadays also included into series. In *Grey's Anatomy*, for instance, one can find a serial in the second season in episode sixteen and seventeen named after the R.E.M. song "It's the End of the World" and "As We Know It", as well as in the third season where serials seem to be extremely popular. Episode ten and eleven of season three form a two-part serial entitled "Six Days Part 1 and 2" (3-10, 3-11) and another narrative stretches from episode fifteen to seventeen, "Walk on Water" (3-15), "Drowning on Dry Land" (3-16) and "Some Kind of Miracle" (3-17).

4.2.2. *Mise-en-Scène*

'The lighting, music, sound, shot composition, props and objects in frame, costume, and camera movement' (Bignell, 150) are integral parts of *Mise-en-Scène*. The term literally stands for 'putting on stage' and includes all elements, also characters, that can be seen in a scene, single shot or sequence, and all procedures that make a contribution to the conveyance of meaning.²⁰³ As Mikos points out, not only are the elements on their own of importance but also their relationship to each other.²⁰⁴ This

²⁰⁰ See Silverblatt, 30.

²⁰¹ See Bignell, 313.

²⁰² See Bignell, 313.

²⁰³ See Bignell, 151.

²⁰⁴ See Mikos, 52.

reflects that the necessity of a flawless interaction is the crucial factor for its perception as real.²⁰⁵

4.2.2.1. *Sound and Lighting*

Both sound and lighting contribute to the successful composition of *Mise-en-Scène*. This chapter provides an overview of the main characteristics concerning both, which are mainly taken from the works of Knut Hickethier²⁰⁶ and Art Silverblatt²⁰⁷.

In addition to the pervasive natural lighting including light and shadow, television programmes make use of artificial light. Following the insights of painting and theatre, lighting is important because without this additional light the audience would not be able to see plasticity on the screen, meaning that due to the use of certain light the two-dimensional moving images appear to be three-dimensional.²⁰⁸ Furthermore, the illumination is responsible for the creation of mood and its conveyance across the screen. As Hickethier puts it, ‘Die Ausleuchtung des Raumes setzt Stimmungen, schafft Atmosphäre’ (Hickethier, 77).²⁰⁹ Lighting supports the narrative and provides clues on the development of the presented story. Overall, there are three main kinds of lighting taken from black-and-white photography providing information about the luminosity of the images: standard lighting, high-key lighting and low-key lighting.²¹⁰

Standard lighting can be compared to our daily viewing habits. This means that all the details in the picture are clearly recognisable and the distribution of light and shadow emphasises its perception as natural and real.²¹¹ High-key lighting is characterised by brightness which depicts the images with extreme accuracy and conveys an amiable prevailing mood, emphasising happiness, hope, confidence, innocence, purity, religious faith, delight, discovery and trouble-free surrounding. Shadows and unlighted parts of the image characterise low-key lighting. Television programmes make use of this type to present mystery, crime, death, evil or psychic traumas.

²⁰⁵ See Marshall and Werndly, 84f.

²⁰⁶ See Hickethier, 77-103.

²⁰⁷ See Silverblatt, 98-124.

²⁰⁸ See Mikos, 199.

²⁰⁹ The illumination of the room places moods and creates atmosphere. [Translation by Susanne Gruber]

²¹⁰ See Mikos, 201.

²¹¹ See *Ibid.*

Sound accompanies the visual and it has an assisting function for the viewer, but is without a doubt as important as the image itself. Moving images without audio-support seem to be fragmentary and the comprehension is negatively affected. Nowadays one distinguishes between three forms of sound: background sound, music and dialogue. All three forms can be on- or off-screen, diegetic or non-diegetic. Diegetic, synchronal or on-screen sound means that the source of the sound can be seen on the screen. On the other hand, the source of off-screen, asynchronous or non-diegetic sound is not visible on the screen.²¹² Background sound added to moving images conveys reality. This so called natural sound is added to create the feeling of naturalness and avoid artificiality. The audience assumes that they are presented with real life and not with a movie. For instance when watching an episode of *Grey's Anatomy* the calling out for doctors and nurses over the loudspeakers in the background supports the feeling of reality. Silverblatt distinguishes between natural sound and sound effects, such as the tearing of sheets or the clangour of glass at a car accident, which are added to the moving images to emphasis drama.

The second form of sound on television is music. It can also be diegetic, for instance someone playing the piano on screen, or non-diegetic, for example as background music. According to Hickethier, music functions on its own communication level (eg. soundtracks) in connection to the visuals, accenting their meaning. Music is used to

“punctuate” or emphasize the major points of the presentation. [It] elicits an affective response in the audience, arousing feelings of excitement, tension, drama, or romance [...].’ (Silverblatt, 124)

Mostly the audience is not aware of the impact the music has on their reception. Besides highlighting certain aspects of the visuals and transmitting unconscious messages, music can function as a narrative device to provide thematic continuity, foreshadow an upcoming event or can prepare the viewers for a narrative shift or narrative continuity.

²¹² See Mikos, 228ff.

Dialogue and language are accountable for the third form of sound. ‘Dialogue is a primary vehicle for media messages’ (Silverblatt, 122). The conversations presented on the television screen, on- or off-screen, give not only information on the spoken text but they also characterise the speaker. Information about the age, the gender, the cultural background and the attitude about what is being said (eg. irony, sarcasm) or the emotions towards it, for instance happiness, sadness or anger, are given.

Written words also account for language on the television screen. In large part, those are not primarily noticed by the audience. Moving images include various texts, for instance direction signs, advertisements, posters, documents or the information presented in the trailer and the final credits. An example of language in the visual can be found in ‘The First Cut is the Deepest’ (1-02) of *Grey’s Anatomy* when Meredith puts up a flyer in the locker room telling that she is looking for roommates.

4.2.2.2. *The Camera*

‘Der Kamerablick organisiert das Bild, er setzt den Rahmen, wählt den Ausschnitt, der von der Welt gezeigt wird, er bestimmt, was zu sehen ist’ (Mikos, 182).²¹³ The audience observes the events on the screen through the camera, but in doing so the camera is not the substitute of the viewer, it merely places the viewer.²¹⁴ When analysing the work of the camera, television literate users should be aware of the following: the camera angle, the frame and the movement.

The camera angle presents the audience with a prechosen perspective from which to look at the events. ‘[It] refers to the level which the camera is shooting in relation to the subject’ (Silverblatt, 113). This level can affect the attitude and emotions of the audience towards the images.²¹⁵ We differentiate between three main perspectives which can change during the course of events: eye-level angle, high angle, and low angle.²¹⁶ The eye-level angle is situated, as the term already points out, at the eye-level of the actor. This puts the viewer and the figure on screen on the same level. It is the most neutral angle. Looking at events from a high angle or the bird’s-eye perspective, makes it easy for the viewer to survey the events. It is often used for

²¹³ The view of the camera organises the visual, it frames it and it chooses which extract of the world is presented. In a word it decides what can be seen. [Translation by Susanne Gruber]

²¹⁴ See Mikos, 182.

²¹⁵ See Mikos, 190.

²¹⁶ See Hickethier, 61f.

introducing shots, for instance to present the audience with a view of a city (eg. Seattle in *Grey's Anatomy*) to acquaint them to the area of action. Looking at actors from a high angle gives the viewer the impression that the person is small, weak, vulnerable and/or frightened, but it can also be used to present proportions, for example a grown-up talking to a child.²¹⁷ On the other hand, a child looking at a grown-up necessitates the use of the low angle. People depicted in this angle appear larger, powerful and important.²¹⁸

The frame of a shot is responsible for closeness and distance of the camera, as well as of the audience to the events presented on the television screen. Those relations are defined according to the size of the person depicted in a shot.²¹⁹ Hickethier differentiates between eight categories of frames, which appear to be too detailed for a beginning user of television literacy. Therefore I will follow Hickethier's simplified system taken from Bernhard Wember. This system is based on three categories: the long shot, the medium shot and the close-up.²²⁰ The descriptions of the afore mentioned are based on Mikos' characterisations.²²¹ A long shot defines the area of action, presents it to the audience and raises expectations. For example, a long shot at the beginning of an episode of *Grey's Anatomy* shows the viewer the area of action, namely Seattle Grace Hospital, and in doing evokes the anticipation of the audience as they get introduced to the scenery. A medium shot shows the figure or figures on the screen from the hip upwards and their immediate vicinity. This kind of shot is often used if people just exchange information without focusing on feelings. In *Grey's Anatomy* one can observe medium shots when the doctors discuss a patient's course of disease in one of their debriefing rooms. With a close-up the screen displays only one feature, such as the head of a person, or one special thing, such as a scalpel in the hand of a surgeon before starting to cut. In using this kind of shot the audience' attention is called to the facial expression of a person or to a specific thing on screen that is fulfilling a certain task.

²¹⁷ See Mikos, 191f.

²¹⁸ See Silverblatt, 113.

²¹⁹ See Mikos, 184.

²²⁰ See Hickethier, 60.

²²¹ See Mikos, 186-188.

The camera is characterised by another feature, its movement. On the television screen one can identify movement in front of the camera, which can take all directions, and the camera movement itself, which is arranged according to the possibilities of the alteration of the human view. Mikos distinguishes between four different camera movements, whereas Hickethier concentrates on two which will also be of importance for the development of this thesis: panning and travelling. When panning the camera remains at the same position but turns horizontal, vertical or diagonal around its own axis, which provides the audience with the opportunity to gain new information, for instance they get to see parts of a room they were not able to see before. During panning the frame can also change. Travelling, the second form of camera movement is always in relation to the action displayed on the screen. The camera travels through the scene and is often used to keep track of the movement of the person on the screen.²²²

4.2.2.3. *Stylistic Features of Television Programmes*

This chapter deals with the stylistic features and special effects involved in the production process of a television programme. These include the narrative, the plot, themes and various special features applied on television. The narrative of a television programme is ‘an ordered sequence of images and sound that tells a fictional or factual story’ (Bignell, 87). Simply speaking, the narrative of a television series consists of the presented story. Usually the viewers get easily engaged with the narrative, they get involved in the “assumed” world’ (Eidsvik, 8), which leads to the above mentioned fact that they tune in on a regular bases. They get hooked on wondering what might happen next and those speculations about the ‘what if’ ties them to the programme.²²³ A narrative is arranged according to a certain structure. Marshall and Werndly define it as the beginning-middle-end structure, the equilibrium-disequilibrium-equilibrium.²²⁴ At the beginning of a programme the audience gets presented with a balanced situation, the equilibrium, then something happens that disturbs the ideal world, the disequilibrium, and at the end balance is restored, the equilibrium, again. For example, the equilibrium of an episode of *Grey’s Anatomy* is disrupted by the arrival of a sick patient who needs immediate

²²² See Hickethier, 62-63.

²²³ See Eidsvik, 9.

²²⁴ See Marshall and Werndly, 24, 50.

surgery. At the end of the episode, as long as it is not a serial, the equilibrium is reestablished when the patient survives the surgery.

Experimenting with the narrative leads to narrative pleasure according to Lou Alexander. Those delightful devices include cliffhangers or open-ended narrative structures, as already mentioned afore a serial included into a season of a series.²²⁵ A cliffhanger as well as an open-narrative at the end of a television programme leaves the audience with speculations about what might happen next. Especially cliffhangers leave off at a very dramatic situation, mostly before the equilibrium can be restored.

According to the given description, a story on television is narrated by images and the accompanying sound. This narration can also be done by a person or just a voice complementing the visuals, for instance a voice-over. A voice-over is a speech going along with ‘visual images but not presumed to derive from the same place or time as the images’ (Bignell, 316). The voice-over takes the role of telling the story and in doing so it establishes a link between the audience and the narrative of the programme. This link is used to invite the audience to engage in the story.²²⁶ In *Grey’s Anatomy*, the main character Meredith Grey occupies the role of the narrator. At the beginning and at the end of each episode the audience gets an insight into her thoughts. Many television series including *Grey’s Anatomy* also feature a narration at the very beginning of each episode starting with ‘Previously on ...’ (Bignell, 100). This kind of voice-over is used to help the viewers to refresh their memories about what already happened and it is followed by a sequence of visuals featuring the most important scenes.²²⁷

Each narrative includes a plot which is made up of an introduction, a body and a conclusion. The basic module of a plot is conflict. A narrative can contain more than one plot, whereas only one plot can be the main plot and, besides this, subplots support the storyline.²²⁸ The plot involves all the visual and aural elements presented on the screen and is often referred to as discourse. In contrast to the sequence of the narrative, the plot, a television programme also has a story. The story consists of the

²²⁵ See Alexander, 30.

²²⁶ See Bignell, 100.

²²⁷ See Ibid.

²²⁸ See Silverblatt, 72.

logical and chronological sequence of events.²²⁹ Themes and topics covered in the plot mostly concern relationships, sex, health, family, love, secrets, conflict and eating and drinking.²³⁰ Looking at *Grey's Anatomy*, the audience is presented with all those topics, of course health as it is set in a hospital, relationships between interns and attendings as well as secrets.

In this context two further stylistic devices have to be mentioned: the flashback and the flashforward. The flashback allows the viewer to observe what happened in the past. It accords to the human ability of memorizing and usually one scene fades into the other. But the production also makes it possible to look into the future with flashforwards. A flashforward often takes the form of a dream or a vision and the shift is again realised with fading.²³¹

As a conclusion to the product-oriented skill, special effects are mentioned. Special effects are used to intensify the viewing experience of the audience. Mikos differentiates between four kinds: effects which have an impact on the events in front of the camera, effects which are created during the shooting, effects that are added during the adaptation period and effects which happen during the projection. For this thesis with regard to the example of *Grey's Anatomy*, only effects which have an impact on the events in front of the camera will be mentioned. Those kinds of effects include pyrotechnical tricks, stunts and make-up.²³² Pyrotechnic was used on *Grey's Anatomy* for the serial 'It's the End of the World As We Know It' (2-16, 2-17), when a bomb exploded on the surgical floor of the SGH. The hospital series makes regular use of make-up, especially when patients from accidents arrive with the ambulance.

All those procedures and features mentioned in this chapter seem to be appropriate for the beginning of teaching television literacy and they belong to the necessary basis a student should develop during his or her education. Everything mentioned above will be dealt with in activities and lesson plans in the following section of this thesis.

²²⁹ See Thwaites, 126.

²³⁰ See Alexander, 52.

²³¹ See Hickethier, 128-131.

²³² See Mikos, 237f.

4.3. Linguistic Skill

The language skill titled ‘Understanding TV’ (Sommer und Zerweck, 6) by Sommer and Zerweck should equip the students with an understanding of television specific language. This skill is based on the traditional literacy of reading and writing but it does not exclusively deal with oral texts. This aspect of television literacy offers a humongous assortment of topics and themes for the English language classroom but only a representative selection is outlined in this thesis. In the first place one has to anticipate that television is not ‘bad’ for orality. Quite the contrary, if it is used to a certain extent it animates and encourages orality on the side of the audience. Püschl even admits openly that television asks for orality because it offers a wide range of topics for conversations.²³³ Education, in my opinion, has to take advantage of this and integrate television into the classroom. This is especially important in the language classroom in order to stir up conversations besides merely conveying grammatical matters.

Before outlining methodological characteristics it is necessary to establish a theoretical background on television’s language. Theorists distinguish between a first and a second orality, where the first orality includes real speech. This second orality becomes important in context with television because with the new media also new kinds of communication developed. Therefore a new orality has been added to the already existing one. Television’s orality is called secondary for the reason that it is built on writing.²³⁴ This refers back to television’s difficulty with reality and is noticed by Fiske who is of the opinion that language on the screen is used as a powerful force to produce the natural.²³⁵ Of course the cultural background which might facilitate its acceptance as real and as first orality has to be taken into account as well as the register which usually is less formal but specialised in the content.²³⁶

There are two major characteristics of language on television that need to be mentioned. First of all the somatic attribute of language asks for explanation.

²³³ See Püschel, 181, 195.

²³⁴ See Holly, 29f.

²³⁵ See Fiske, 128.

²³⁶ See Fiske, 64f.

Quasthoff talks in his article about the somatic language of television, where somatic refers

‘to the human body as the foundation of communication. [...] it emphasises the multimodal or multisensory nature of communication between bodies, the inherent redundancy or resonance among these multiple modalities, the real-time rhythmic synchronies involved in such communication, and the essential co-presence of all participants to the communication.’ (Scollon/Scollon in Biere, 15)

Television is working on a somatic level to a considerable extent, for instance everytime the audience gets to watch the character speaking. On the other hand television is just pretending to be somatic due to its staged dialogues that have been written out before.²³⁷ This raises the question whether television should even be considered as somatic? As a start one can agree on its somatic properties, especially because language presented on the screen is a copy of real, therefore somatic, language.

Besides its somatic characteristic, language on the television screen gets various functions assigned to it: referential, emotive, conative, poetic where the message is concerned with itself, pathic where the act of the communication itself is stressed and metalinguistic where language transmits a message about language.²³⁸ These factors cannot be dealt with in detail due to the focus of this thesis and its inapplicability to language teaching at the beginning level. However, in order to provide the teaching staff with sufficient background knowledge it needs to be mentioned.

4.3.1. Television and Language

The language of television is characterised as multichannel where language aspects can be realised phonically or in written form. Therefore TV does not only concentrate on the spoken part of a programme, on the contrary there are a several more language aspects to be observed on the screen. Besides the most obvious, the spoken language, the audience can observe written language too, for instance advertising, flyers, signboards or posters in the background or the credits at the beginning or the end of the programme. Written language is most often used to hold on to the spoken word or to present complicated information, for instance in

²³⁷ See Quasthoff, 23f.

²³⁸ See Fiske, 62.

graphs.²³⁹ The efficacy of the visual is supplemented as well as relativised by the use of language on various levels. Hickethier distinguishes between, first the written language in the visual, the insert, second the written language between the visuals, the intertitles which most commonly substitute spoken language and third the spoken language.²⁴⁰ But it has to be acknowledged that television programmes mostly feature spoken language, called by Marshall and Werndly ‘spoken discourse’ (Marshall and Werndly, 61). This spoken discourse is a symbolic sign system which transmits meanings which cannot be visually presented.²⁴¹

In other words, this ‘language-in-use’ (Marshall and Werndly, 61) can be divided into two parts, the presented talk and the live talk. Only the represented talk is relevant for the development of television literacy in this specific context. Represented talk includes all forms of rehearsed use of language, for instance dialogues between characters, monologues or even voice-overs.²⁴² Represented talk is a ‘scripted dialogue which is performed by actors who utter the words in character’ (Marshall and Werndly, 77). Spoken language is not only characterised by the text but also by the character of the voice and the manner of speaking. This talk often reveals informative details about a character or a situation. Language is, on the one hand, used to transmit information or for communication between the characters.²⁴³ On the other hand it offers a kind of information point for the audience, where they can gain useful information. The voice presents hints to the age and the gender of the speaker. The dialect or accent of a character, for instance, points towards his or her social status, culture and origin. Further one can easily detect the attitude of the speaker towards a situation, for example through the use of irony or sarcasm as well as the emotions involved, for instance anger or happiness.²⁴⁴ The conversations we ‘watch’ cannot be compared to conversations of our everyday lives. In closer inspection Marshall and Werndly state that it is obvious that fictional talk lacks a number of actual talk characteristics. Usually real life dialogues consist of smooth turn takings, spontaneity and sometimes silent pauses. In a television programme silence, for instance, is tried to be avoided because it would create an awkward

²³⁹ See Holly, 29-31.

²⁴⁰ See Hickethier, 99ff.

²⁴¹ See Ibid.

²⁴² See Marshall and Werndly, 61ff.

²⁴³ See Mikos, 229.

²⁴⁴ See Hickethier, 103.

situation or even distance except when a moment of silence is used to create tension, for example when something bad happens. But if actors are whispering instead of speaking loudly with the intention to exclude the audience, distance is created on purpose. As actors are frequently restricted in their improvisations, the script offers detailed descriptions or markers for spontaneity. These for example include hesitation markers like ‘er’ or ‘em’, backtracking, interrupting and interjecting.²⁴⁵

The reason behind this is that it always has a narrative purpose. Hence the characters are not talking so that they can listen to each other, but they are talking so that the audience can listen and enjoy a narrative. On the side of the audience this creates the feeling of eavesdropping or even voyeurism which implies the impression that the dialogue under observation is unscripted. The viewers listen to seemingly trivial and ordinary everyday talk against the background of a developing narrative.²⁴⁶ Dialogues or even monologues also inform the audience about events or characters not presented on the screen.²⁴⁷

4.3.2. Narration and Narrative, Discourse time and Story time & Plot and Story

Continuing with the fact that the primary function of language on television is to narrate, that is to tell a story, a number of key terms affiliated with this purpose have to be outlined. Those include narration and narrative, plot and story as well as discourse time and story time. Both narration and narrative deal with the story presented on the screen. Narration’s main purpose is the development of the story in time, which is also the primary function of a fictional television programme. Narration can be understood as communication between the actors and the audience, whereas the narrative is concerned with the arrangement of the story elements to arouse the interest of the audience. Mikos acts on the assumption that every story that is told needs a narrator as well as a recipient. Therefore television needs a narrator as well. In the case of moving images the narrator does not necessarily have to be a voice-over as can be observed in *Grey’s Anatomy*. This function can also be inherited by the camera with its movement and shot composition.²⁴⁸ The question of the recipient is straightforward; it is the viewer in front of the television screen.

²⁴⁵ See Marshall and Werndly, 79-82.

²⁴⁶ See Marshall and Werndly, 78-80.

²⁴⁷ See Mikos, 230.

²⁴⁸ See Mikos, 123f.

Narrating a story is bound to a time-based dimension which is arranged in two parts: the discourse time and the story time. The discourse time or narrated time consists of the length of the series, for example the discourse time of an episode of *Grey's Anatomy* is an average of 40 minutes. The story time on the other hand, is made up of the time span of what is narrated, for instance an episode of *Grey's Anatomy* covers a story stretched over three days (3-11).²⁴⁹ Therefore the narrated time would be 40 minutes and the story time would be three days.

At the same time one has to differentiate between plot and story. The plot of the programme is exactly what is presented on the screen, whereas the story only develops in each of the viewer's minds separately.²⁵⁰ The story is what happens beyond the presentation and the plot, where the viewer uses the knowledge, the emotions and affects towards the presented images to generate a logical whole. It is the task of the audience to create a coherent message out of the transmitted signs of a television programme. Those signs include the visuals, the sounds and the language.²⁵¹

4.3.3. Intertextuality

When teaching the language aspect of television literacy the aspect of intertextuality cannot be left out. Intertextuality in this specific context stands for the relation of a television text to other texts, but originally it originates in linguistic as well as literary theory. Those texts do not necessarily have to be written texts like books or magazines, but they can also be paintings or posters as well as other television texts. A television literate user assigns meaning to a television text through references and relating to other texts.²⁵² In the context of a television series relevant texts include magazines, like the *Grey's Anatomy magazine*, TV guides or even books, for instance *Grey's Anatomy: Overheard at the Emerald City Bar/ Notes from the Nurses Station*. The idea behind intertextuality is that the audience, the readers, try to find meaning that is not displayed on the surface, but rather meaning that lies in the work itself. This goes back to linguistic as well as literary theory, namely to Ferdinand de Saussure and M. M. Bakhtin. Both their findings and theories were

²⁴⁹ See Mikos, 42.

²⁵⁰ See Ibid.

²⁵¹ See Mikos, 106f.

²⁵² See Mikos, 55.

combined by Julia Kristeva to one, to the definition of intertextuality we know.²⁵³ Intertextuality is dynamic and everytime the viewer starts to interact with a text, not necessarily with a television text, the compilation is expanded. For each single member of the audience the compilation is composed differently and not every viewer extracts the same thing out of a text because a text can narrate more than one story. This gives the users various pathways how to engage in the story.²⁵⁴ Everytime a reader interacts with a text it is incorporated into the already existing system of codes of other texts and culture, and as Allen points out

‘Reading thus becomes a process of moving between texts. Meaning becomes something which exists between a text and all the other texts to which it refers and relates, moving out from the independent text into a network of textual relations. The text becomes the intertext.’ (Allen, 1).

Semali and Pailliotet came up with another term, intermediality. This is used in the context of teaching and in many sign systems featuring language, for instance television programmes. ‘The concept of intermediality has intrinsic value for advancing our thinking on the use of multiple texts, especially those represented on videos, the Internet, [etc.]’ (Semali and Pailliotet, 1). As I see it, intermediality can be described as based on the same assumptions as intertextuality. However, it is more specific in terms of new media and teaching based on critical media literacy of which television is part because the interaction of not exclusively print media but also visual, popular and electronic sources are included.²⁵⁵

4.4. Intercultural Skill

A last ingredient to television literacy is taken from cultural literacy. As the title already points out, it deals with the presentation of different cultures in television programmes and what students can or should learn from it. Nothing is more qualified to introduce American cultural aspects into the English language classroom than a television programme produced in the United States and based on the American cultural background. Here, aside from critical voices, it has to be taken as an

²⁵³ See Allen, 1ff.

²⁵⁴ See Mikos, 55f, 135.

²⁵⁵ See Semali and Pailliotet, 4.

advantage that American programmes are distributed around the world.²⁵⁶ One of the main aims besides learning about specific cultural aspects and the differences between Austrian and American culture is that the students have to be made aware that ‘unsere Möglichkeiten, anderskulturell Sozialisierte zu verstehen, sehr begrenzt sind [und] daß eine Annäherung nur so weit führen kann, wie unsere eigene Sozialisationsgeschichte dies zuläßt’²⁵⁷ (Wendt, 17). Regarding the mixture of different cultural and social backgrounds in language classrooms, especially in urban centres, teachers have to carefully introduce and guide the students through this kind of cultural learning. An important matter is their responsibility, namely it is the teacher’s duty to equip the students with the necessary sensibility concerning this context. The curriculum encourages collective learning and understanding, as well as the experience and participation of and in cultural values. Interest and curiosity should be inspired to lead to a conscious discussion on cultural diversity and the accompanying realisations and values.²⁵⁸

Mass media, especially television, are an excellent transmitter of foreign cultures and various cultural aspects²⁵⁹, because they ‘are important and valuable parts of our culture’ (bfi Education, 1). Martin Jurga even describes television as an intercultural forum, in which diverse social values and world views can be presented and got to know. The cultural and social environment of the students establishes a relationship with the cultural discourses presented on television.²⁶⁰ Without this kind of alliance it would be impossible to make meaning of the transmitted messages. Students compare the aspects shown on the programme with their own cultures and as it has been outlined above (2.1.2. Advanced Skills), they compare the new structures with their already existing structures. If an aspect is nonexistent but relevant it is added.

An advantage of television is that according to its audiovisual properties cultural aspects can be observed by students via two different absorption channels, the audio one and the visual one.²⁶¹ Various kinds of sound are supported through the display of moving pictures. Maar comes to this point saying, ‘Bilder haben den Vorteil, dass

²⁵⁶ See Bignell, Media Semiotics, 14.

²⁵⁷ Our possibilities to understand people of other cultures are limited and the cultural approach can only be taken as far as the history of our socialisation admits it. [Translation Susanne Gruber]

²⁵⁸ See http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11668/lp_ahs_neu_allg.pdf (10.8.2008)

²⁵⁹ See Wendt, 11.

²⁶⁰ See Mikos, 58f.

²⁶¹ See Hickethier, 14.

sie unabhängig von kulturellen Kontexten und Sprachkenntnissen verstanden werden können.’ (Maar, 11).²⁶² The viewers, or in this case the students, get an insight to other ways of living and different cultural practices.²⁶³ Nothing seems to be more suitable to present foreign cultural aspects than foreign language teaching.²⁶⁴ The English language classroom, for instance, is creating the best conditions for presenting cultural aspects of English speaking countries. This peculiarity just mentioned is interconnected with the fact that it is out of reach to learn a foreign language without learning about its culture as well.²⁶⁵ A further positive aspect which makes this kind of “ingredient” for TVL essential is that television has to be counted as one of the first cultural experiences children have.²⁶⁶ This statement implies that television literate education dealing with its intercultural component has to start at an early age and continue through the entire school career.

4.4.1. Cultural Studies and Cultural Literacy

Before even advancing on analysing specific matters of cultural representation on television, it is indispensable to introduce the students to cultural studies and cultural literacy in general. Cultural studies, as the title already points out, deals with cultures, especially with contemporary cultures.²⁶⁷ Talking about this, the term culture has to be used in the plural because there are more than one across the nations. ‘Culture is the ensemble of social practices by which meanings are produced, circulated and exchanged.’ (Thwaites, 1). Simply put, cultural studies are interested in the production of meanings in different areas of the world.²⁶⁸ In Raymond Williams’ *The analysis of culture*, he speaks of its existence on three levels.

‘There is the lived culture of a particular time and place, only fully accessible to those living in that time and place. There is the recorded culture, of every kind, from art to the most everyday facts: the culture of a period. There is also, as the factor connecting lived culture and period cultures, the culture of the selective tradition.’ (Williams, quoted in Storey, 46)

²⁶² It is of enormous advantage of pictures that their understanding is independent of cultural contexts as well as of language abilities. [Translation Susanne Gruber]

²⁶³ See Jurga, 175.

²⁶⁴ See Wendt, 11.

²⁶⁵ See Vogt und Heinz, 208.

²⁶⁶ See bfi Education, 4.

²⁶⁷ See During, 1.

²⁶⁸ See Thwaites, 1ff.

In the second half of the 20th century the study of cultures became popular due to various reasons including the growing importance of the cultural industries, for example broadcasting, especially to the USA, and ‘the rise in the use of cultural heritages and cultural consumption to maintain or stabilize identities by nations, ethnic groups, and individuals [...]’ (During, 26). So why analyse culture? The purpose of looking critically at those products can be one of critical assessment, of evaluation or simply as a description. But in the end the main purpose is always to understand what a culture is expressing, namely shared values of groups or of a society.²⁶⁹

When talking about culture, theorists came up with a distinction between high culture, or culture with a capital C, and popular culture, or mass culture. My question is, if there is high culture there has to be the opposite of it too, that is a ‘low’ culture. Hence, is popular culture then ‘low’? The term culture alone, according to During, does not imply that it is high culture which is assumed to have constant value across time and space.²⁷⁰ Basically speaking, artefacts of high culture include operas and reading the classics such as a piece by Shakespeare. In contrast to this, mass culture consists of movie theatres showing Hollywood productions and in reading contemporary bestsellers. One has to bear in mind when talking about cultural productions that they change their meanings over time and their messages also change when they cross cultural borders.²⁷¹ This means that what is regarded as a hit show on television today does not necessarily have to be a hit in the following decades. Meanings are rarely fixed because they constantly depend on the social context²⁷² and they are permanently redefined depending on time and society. But when talking about culture, it is important to be aware that the concept of culture never comes alone and obviously undergoes permanent changes. It is always used in comparison to something or in opposition to it, for example high culture and low culture. The one helps to define and understand the other.

The upcoming generations, our generation, and the one of our parents take and took popular culture as their everyday culture, the culture they live and lived.²⁷³ Culture is

²⁶⁹ See Storey, 44f.

²⁷⁰ See During, 2.

²⁷¹ See Campbell, 300.

²⁷² See Thwaites, 2.

²⁷³ See During, 26.

everyday culture where societies define their identity and people realise themselves, which consists of small parts that in the first place appear like nothing special. But in second place those are the things that culture is made of. That something completely simple and ordinary can suddenly become exciting has to be conveyed in the classroom.²⁷⁴ The reason why the development moved in this direction can be easily answered with cultural studies itself. The genesis of cultural studies and its analytical approaches in the last decade of the first half of the 20th century and continuing, lead to a shift of the traditional attitudes towards cultural practices. For instance, the latest mass media, which were regarded as ‘low’ culture before, were incorporated into those practices, like television.²⁷⁵

Engagement with cultural studies involves the development of cultural literacy, ‘a deep understanding of mainstream culture’ (Hirsch, 19). The fact that culture is central to education, and that cultural studies are dependent on educational practices, eases the requirement for cultural literacy.²⁷⁶ This implies that via schooling upcoming generations learn to notice, live and understand cultural practices.

4.4.2. Ideology, Presentation and Reality

Closely connected to cultural studies and therefore to the intercultural skill of television literacy, is the topic of ideology. Relating back to Marx and his theories about society based on class conflicts, ideology is part of cultures and, in recognising its importance for cultural analysis, it has been lately developed as a product of discourse.²⁷⁷ ‘[...] ideology is a ‘logic’ of ideas held in common by social groups in their everyday lives. It also suggests that these ideas are organised in certain ways’ (Thwaites, 158). This implies that those ideas unify the group to understand the world in certain ways. Incorporating the medium of television into those considerations now, it is without a doubt an ideological medium. TV presents the viewers, or one or more social groups, with a particular image of the world and in doing so it takes sides.²⁷⁸ The ideas circulated via television programmes side with one set of ideas, which are mostly concerned with public topics such as democracy, justice, ethics and nationality but they also deal with more personal themes, for

²⁷⁴ See Heckmanns, 180f.

²⁷⁵ See Campbell, 13.

²⁷⁶ See Johnson, 247ff.

²⁷⁷ See Thwaites, 158.

²⁷⁸ See Storey, 3.

instance one's taste of music, food, clothing, entertainment or the expectations in personal relationships.²⁷⁹ Television works to a great extent on the concept of repetition constantly replaying of those favoured ideas. This encourages the audience to deal with the representation of those ideas in different ways. The readers, which may be from different social groups, will never analyse a text homogeneously. Each viewer or group is working with the concepts presented, which means they try to make meaning of and incorporate the presented identities in accepting, constructing, modifying or even rejecting them.²⁸⁰

According to Alexander, at this day there are different opinions on how television can transmit ideological messages and how those influence the audience. On the one hand, hegemonic theorists argue that '[television] produces a partial and selective view of reality. This in turn serves the interests of those with power in society' (Alexander, 46). Taking this into consideration, television can seriously influence the way people think and act and force a favoured set of beliefs on a particular audience. On the other hand, representatives of the plurist model are of the opinion that the ideologocial messages presented on the screen only reflect widely held beliefs and ideas of the society, and their representation just works as reinforcement of those. These two different viewpoints also vary in their characterisation of the audience. In the first case, the viewers are regarded as passive, whereas in the second they are seen as active.²⁸¹ Not leaving those two mindsets completely aside, both should be taken into consideration. In the context of this thesis, one has to ask what kind of messages and values are transmitted and if those vary according to the television genre they are making use of. In my point of view, the genre is a decisive factor for the choice of the message. For instance, messages or values concentrating on democracy or justice are best incorporated and transmitted via police dramas like *CSI Miami*. Topics about health fit best into hospital dramas as in *Grey's Anatomy* and messages about society in general fit into every genre.

Another aspect which I want to mention briefly in this context is television's representation of reality. The world presented on the screen is different from the real world people live in, but those two are related. It has to be clear that television is not

²⁷⁹ See Thwaites, 158.

²⁸⁰ See Thwaites, 175.

²⁸¹ See Alexander, 46.

mirroring the real world but rather only reflects structures and values.²⁸² In doing so a literate television user notices, for instance, how valued some professions are in our society. For example, being a doctor is without a doubt a preferred occupation in our society, what can also be observed in the presentation of doctors who are in the most cases the ‘good’ characters. So television programmes are considered one kind of reality but the culture to which the audience belongs is another one. Usually the audience perceives them as one single reality or at least as similar. According to Fiske, ‘Television ‘reduces’ cultural experience to another (no less valid) form of reality’ (Fiske, 48). This approach of creating its own reality is crucial in building audience loyalty of a certain programme. The guideline seems to be that the more realistic a programme is the more people watch it on a regular basis. This kind of realism is not a natural one, on the contrary it is an artificial construct but ‘it does correspond to the way we [the audience] currently perceive the world’ (Fiske, 128).

4.4.3. Stereotypes

A stereotype is a fixed or conventional image of a person or group of people. Stereotypes generally conform to a pattern of dress and behavior that is easily recognized and understood. Often, a judgment is made about the person or group being stereotyped. That judgment may be positive or negative. (Media Awareness Network (9.7.2007))

Those patterns described above clearly show why television programmes rely heavily on the presentation of stereotypical characters. Stereotypical characters created through culture and part of cultural knowledge support the accessibility to the programme, in contrast to archetypal characters which always have been part of the narrative itself. In other words the more stereotyped a character is, the easier people can identify themselves and establish a connection with the story. This means they commit themselves easier to the programme. Lou Alexander argues that this can be observed especially at the initial stages of a television production, for instance when the pilot or a spin-off is aired, which then usually ebbs away to individualisation.²⁸³ Stereotypes influence the audience subconsciously and cannot entirely be judged negatively, except the fact that as soon as the audience becomes aware of a stereotype they lump one together with the other. But before even talking about

²⁸² See Fiske, 10f.

²⁸³ See Alexander, 42-43.

negative or positive influence on the viewers, they first have to become aware of the stereotypes presented on the screen. Only after noticing and recognising stereotypes is it possible to form an opinion.²⁸⁴ This undertaking is not always simple and straightforward, as pointed out by Thwaites who argues that the media work with the permanent repetition of those structures, which inescapably leads to the unquestioned believe that the presented values are natural and that the cultural myths and norms are universally applicable.²⁸⁵

This leads to the question of how to identify and read stereotypes presented on television properly. According to Thwaites '[The media] encourage the reading of character in terms of fixed values, predetermined by social convention' (Thwaites, 153). The social identity transmitted via television's stereotyping bases its representation on the dichotomy of men and women. Male as well as female characters are shown with socially well-known values characterised by opposition. The most obvious one has already been mentioned, that of man and woman. Another example is boss and worker, or taking one from the analysed example, *Grey's Anatomy* it would be attending and intern.²⁸⁶

Talking about the fundamental opposition of men and women Potter²⁸⁷ and Alexander²⁸⁸ provide a complementing overview which is outlined in the following paragraph. Potter formulates two categories of women. Women who, on the one hand, are singles and sex objects, and on the other hand women who are mother-like, wise and nurturing. Women always have been portrayed as housewives shown in domestic as well as family situations, or they are described with adjectives like pretty, attractive and seductive. Nowadays this representation has shifted to successful business and social ladder climbing women. However, they still carry the image of non-professionalism which can be observed in *Grey's Anatomy* (eg. 'Oh the Guilt' 3-05) right after Dr. Bailey comes back from her maternity leave and all her actions and decisions are doubted by her male colleagues. In contrast to women, according to Alexander, men suffer from considerable disadvantages by stereotyping because a great deal of television programmes focuses on the domestic sphere, which stereotypically belongs to women. Potter assigns men to three main character groups

²⁸⁴ See Vogt und Heinz, 180.

²⁸⁵ See Thwaites, 153.

²⁸⁶ See Ibid.

²⁸⁷ See Potter, 164.

²⁸⁸ See Alexander, 43f.

which offers them a greater variety of roles. The first group includes professional and business oriented men, the second one consists of ambitious, smart, dominant and powerful or violent male creatures and the third category of men is characterised by the presentation of doing the epitome of male things, for instance ‘driving, participating in sports, using firearms, and conducting business.’ (Potter, 164). Men can usually be observed doing outdoor activities, for example the male doctors from Seattle Grace take a fishing trip to the mountains (‘Where the Boys Are’, 3-07). The main character is in most cases a white middle-class youthful man with positive characteristics like competency, bravery or leadership.

4.4.4. Americanisation & American Cultural Aspects

It is a fact that English programmes are distributed around the world. Usually the audio part is altered to the native language of the particular country where it is aired. Just a few programmes, mostly independent film productions, insist on subtitles, whereas television programmes are dubbed.²⁸⁹ As discussed above, television programmes are said to transmit ideologies, dominant ideas of certain groups in specific countries according to their cultural beliefs and attitudes. Bignell talks about ‘our’ television’ (Bignell, 15) which as far as I can see should reflect ‘our’ culture. But what if, and that is certainly the case here, the programme does not reflect ‘our’ culture one hundred percent of the time? And why do we accept it as ‘ours’?

The fundamental process behind all this is globalisation. Globalisation, taken here in the narrower sense of television globalisation, is where products of global corporations, including their ideological messages and values, like those from ABC²⁹⁰, for example *Grey’s Anatomy*, are distributed worldwide. This implicates media imperialism, which is ‘the critical argument that powerful nations and cultures (especially the USA) exert control over other nations and cultures through the media products they export’ (Bignell, 309) and subsequently cultural imperialism, which is described as ‘the critical argument that powerful nations and regions (especially those of the Western world) dominate less developed nations and regions by exporting values and ideologies’ (Bignell, 305). Acting on those quotations it is in a large part the USA which distribute their products around the world and therefore hold a kind of supremacy, in other words one can speak of an Americanisation

²⁸⁹ See Bignell, 14f.

²⁹⁰ Disney Capital Cities ABC: one of the biggest television-owning corporations (See Bignell, 70)

through the television screen. Although the programmes are received and processed differently in different cultures, the outcome is an approach to the American way of life.²⁹¹ A very simple and straightforward example is the imposition of American mass culture on other nations with the fast food chain 'McDonalds', called by Campbell 'McDonaldisation' (Campbell, 285).

This Americanisation, the cultural imperialism originating from the United States, is not exclusively a negative process. There is a vast array of cultural aspects, especially for the English language classroom, that can be known and understood. It has also to be positively remarked that there is no easier and cheaper way of getting to know a culture first hand than via television programmes originating from the particular culture. One of the main American cultural aspects, if not the most crucial one, is the concept of multiculturalism which is outlined as an example. Already from the very beginning a culture of many was the founding idea of America. In the development of critical cultural studies multiculturalism was defined as '[...] the belief that a healthy culture is made up of many different people with diverse systems of belief and practice' (Campbell, 11). This attitude entailed a critical discussion of topics like domination and oppression or social stereotyping.²⁹² But how did it work out throughout the centuries and in which way is it presented on television? It is also questionable if the motto 'E pluribus unum' (Hirsch, 96) underlying the multi-cultured society of the states stresses many or just one nation or culture. Looking at the historical development it has to be admitted that the 'one' has always been more favoured but there have been various attempts to completely eliminate the ethnic mixture of the USA through Americanisation. A new American identity should be created, regardless of the diversified existing ones. With further developments in cultural studies the question arose if there exists something like a distinct American identity. Theorists dissociated themselves from the concept of assimilation and converged to a newer sense of a plural society based on a hybrid view of ethnicity.²⁹³ Hybridity on the one hand stands for fusion but on the other hand it maintains the separation. Over the years a great number of concepts were developed, including the melting pot, the mosaic or the salad bowl image of the American identity. Whereas the one or the other allows the particular identity more

²⁹¹ See Bignell, 66ff.

²⁹² See Campbell, 11.

²⁹³ See Campbell, 47ff.

freedom, Shenton is of the opinion that ‘[...] to be American [means], above all, to be ‘an incomplete identity’’ (Shenton, quoted in Campbell, 69).

Relevant for television literacy is the representation of this multicultural society on the screen. This aspect has also changed over the last decades. As Alexander clearly points out, ethnic minorities were under represented in television programmes.²⁹⁴ But today’s productions cast actors from different ethnical backgrounds to picture societies as accurately as possible. This can be observed when examining *Grey’s Anatomy*. The series not only tries to leave stereotypes accompanying ethnic backgrounds behind, but offers instead a group of main characters originating from various ethnicities, for instance black as well as Asian doctors and patients coming from a variety of ethnical as well as cultural fringe groups, for instance Chinese or Amish.

This part also offers a great variety of starting points for teaching. A teacher can explore a vast number of cultural aspects, for instance religion or customs, in the language classroom. But in my opinion it is important that students get introduced to the theoretical concept of culture as well. There is the need for understanding the term culture and to consider its usage in everyday life.

5. Television Literacy in the Austrian Curriculum

The development of media pedagogy in Europe was not a homogeneous process in the various states. Each country found its own way of how to incorporate and deal with the new aspect of pedagogy. But one condition was the same for all of Europe, namely that media pedagogy in its initiation was heavily contested.²⁹⁵ These observations allow a peek into the past because Mohn published his article *Perspectives for Practical Media Work* in Europe in 1992 and since then extensive changes in the media world have occurred, for instance the Internet joined the range of new media and nowadays it is included into the classroom and teaching due to the realisation that media pedagogy is key to 21st century education. The general remarks introducing the Austrian curriculum argue for the incorporation of mass

²⁹⁴ See Alexander, 45.

²⁹⁵ See Mohn, 224f.

media with its entering all areas of life. Therefore methodology has to stimulate critical argumentation. Teachers are instructed to use audio-visual media and new technologies like the Internet or E-mail as authentically as possible.²⁹⁶

In Austria media pedagogical work started decades ago in the 1960s. Although this movement had its beginnings on confessional and extracurricular levels, it developed slowly to the academic level.²⁹⁷ In 1989 the first edict concerning media pedagogy in Austria was published by the responsible ministry and since then two more followed, one in 1994 and the latest one in 2001. This recent version elucidates that media pedagogy has to be thoroughly integrated into the general field of pedagogy warranting that actually today's pedagogy has to be media pedagogy. Besides listing the advantages of the current media, for example worldwide communication and understanding, it mentions its disadvantages too including the higher risk of manipulation of the audience.²⁹⁸ A further problem is the widely held point of view and treatment of pedagogy and knowledge concerning communication as tools. As long as this matter is not changed those mentioned will only be mechanisms of power, although they are covered with euphemistic terms like media literacy.²⁹⁹

Having a closer look at the latest edict concerning media pedagogy it is clearly outlined that this field is split into two major parts, media didactics and media education. Media didactics stands for education through media, whereas media education represents education about media. In other words, media didactics uses media for teaching purposes and media education is teaching about media but not necessarily using media, although it is almost impossible not to. The goal of media pedagogy is media literacy.³⁰⁰ 'Medienkompetenz ist eine der "Hauptstraßen" auf dem Weg zur Sozialkompetenz!' ³⁰¹
(http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/prinz/medien_paedagogik.xml
(12.3.2008) Besides developing social literacy students should also learn to foster their self-competence and professional qualifications at the appropriate rate.³⁰² Media literacy includes the ability to deal with new technologies, to be able to select,

²⁹⁶ See http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11668/lp_ahs_neu_allg.pdf (10.8.2008)

²⁹⁷ See Paus-Hasenbrink, 6.

²⁹⁸ See <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/5796/Medienneueerlass.pdf> (12.3.2008)

²⁹⁹ See Paus-Hasenbrink, 10.

³⁰⁰ See <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/5796/Medienneueerlass.pdf> (12.3.2008)

³⁰¹ Media literacy ist he ,main road' to social literacy. [Translation Susanne Gruber]

³⁰² See http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/11668/lp_ahs_neu_allg.pdf (10.8.2008)

to differentiate, to structure and to recognise his or her needs.³⁰³ With media education in Austria the upcoming generations should become competent users instead of protected victims, action-oriented beings instead of controlled ones and the orientation should shift from a humanistic to a cultural as well as socioscientific approach. In the edict from 2001, media education was defined as the field of activity with media literacy as its goal.³⁰⁴ To pursue the defined goal and to underline the fact that media education is not restricted to specific subjects or learner levels but that it is the duty of each and every teacher, the federal ministry for education, art and culture publishes the magazine *Medienimpulse* featuring teaching materials since 1992.³⁰⁵ These quarterly issues should encourage teachers of all subjects to include media aspects into their preparations and teaching.

All those guidelines mention media in some way or another but none specifically talks about working with television. The usage of the Internet as a resource can be read quite often, also in the CEFR in the category of skills and know-how.³⁰⁶ Instead of walking the talk most of that advice remains mere advice because without further detailed instructions and inclusion into the planning of curricula they will not be utilised to their full extent. In terms of television literacy, the CEFR offers a detailed outline according to the different learner levels on audio-visual reception that provides information on skills students should be able to accomplish when watching films or television programmes. This might be a reliable guide for teachers who want to work on this topic not only sporadically but throughout the entire year.³⁰⁷

³⁰³ See <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/5796/Medienneueerlass.pdf> (12.3.2008)

³⁰⁴ See Paus-Hasenbrink, 20, 26.

³⁰⁵ See <http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/prinz/medienpaedagogik.xml> (12.3.2008)

³⁰⁶ See CEFR, 12.

³⁰⁷ See CEFR, 71.

III. McDreamy and McSteamy in the English Language Classroom

6. Lesson Plans

This chapter functions as the practical part to accompany the theoretical explanations given above. It features activities and lessons plans created based on the theory outlined on each skill. The activities are planned with having an upper level in mind. On the one hand, this enables the teacher to work on and include the already existing four skills (reading, writing, listening and speaking) and base the development of television literacy on them. On the other hand, themes and topics dealt with in the chosen television programme seem to be more appropriate for upper level students. This chapter includes lesson plans and activities arranged according to the four aspects with scene selections from *Grey's Anatomy* which can easily be replaced by any other scene of a different programme. The lesson plans can be seen as suggestions and ideas for teachers and do not have to be applied verbatim. Based on an imaginary classroom the tasks can be altered especially concerning the number of group members or the style of group formation, depending on the respective classroom setting. Each lesson plan is followed by a detailed description with notes from the Austrian curriculum or the CEFR and the particular handouts. There are also transparencies which can be found in the appendix. Most of the lesson plans include ideas for homework assignments, which joined together at the very end, present a television literate analysis of the individual student's favourite television programme.

6.1. Semiotic Aspect

When introducing the semiotic skill to the English language classroom it is best to start out with the obvious, namely with the foundation, with signs. After acquainting the students with the basic terms, the teacher can immerse them in the complex world of semiotics.

6.1.1. Signs: Introduction

6.1.1.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get to know and work with the term 'sign'. The students learn that television programmes consist of different signs. They get introduced to the different signs (aural and visual signs) and learn to distinguish between them.
Content:	Brainstorming 'What is a sign?' Collocation activity Create a story out of everyday signs Presentation of stories Define the term 'sign' Introduction of visual and aural signs
Materials:	Handout with collocation activity (see Handout 1) Handouts with signs of everyday life (see Handout 2) Overhead Transparency (see Transparency 1) <i>Grey's Anatomy</i> DVD
Aids used:	Blackboard Overhead projector Television screen DVD-Player

Groupings of learners:

Brainstorming:	whole class
Collocation activity:	in pairs
Creating a story:	groups of at least three students
Presentations:	groups of at least three students
Defining 'sign':	whole class
Introduction:	whole class

Timing:

Brainstorming:	5 min
Collocation activity:	5 min
Creating a story:	10 min
Presentations:	15 min
Defining 'sign':	5 min
Introduction:	10 min

6.1.1.2. Description

Introducing the complex world of semiotics to students is simply done by writing a single question on the blackboard or presenting it via overhead projector on a transparency (see Transparency 1). The question is ‘What is a sign?’. The students are provided with a couple of minutes to think about the question and utter their suggestions or anything that comes to their mind when they hear the word ‘sign’. The teacher collects all their suggestions in keywords on the blackboard or on the transparency. After collecting ideas, the teacher discusses them together with the students. Students will come up with terms like ‘traffic sign’, ‘special sign’, etc.

This leads to the next activity where students are asked to form groups of at least three. The teacher hands each group a number of signs taken from everyday life which are printed on sheets of paper (see Handout 1). The students are supposed to create a story using at least five out of the ten provided signs and write it down. After making up a story, each group gets to read their story outloud. This activity is supposed to lead over to the medium of television. The students notice with the help and guidance of the teacher that a story is made up of signs which follow each other in a certain order and that the stories presented on the television screen then have to be made up of signs too.

After coming to that crucial understanding, it is the task of the teacher to provide the students with a definition of the term ‘sign’. This gives an answer to the opening question of this introductory lesson, ‘What is a sign?’. The definition has to include the fact that signs are produced by someone for someone else and that therefore each sign bears meaning. When dealing with signs students have to be aware that there a message and some intention lies behind the production of every sign. A straightforward example is the sign showing a crossed out cigarette (see Handout 1). The meaning is obvious: it is not allowed to smoke here. The intention is to advise people that smoking is prohibited in a certain area, namely where the sign is situated. It is useful to discuss the definition with the students first and then offer them a definition written on a transparency, for instance see Transparency 1. After clarifying what is understood by the term ‘sign’ it is the duty of the teacher to draw the attention of the students to the actual topic of ‘signs and television’. As already pointed out, the students should have noticed by now that stories are told by stringing

together signs. In simple terms the message delivered is that television programmes are made out of signs.

The final activity is the presentation of the two different signs which can be encountered every time someone turns on the TV, namely visual and aural signs. The teacher provides the students with the information that television programmes consist of more than one type of sign. Then he or she presents the two types with one example each. For this activity the teacher can choose a short scene from any episode of *Grey's Anatomy*. Visual signs are presented with the television running on mute for a couple of seconds. This gives the students a direct hint to the visuals. Aural signs are best introduced with the television screen turned off but if this is not possible the teacher can ask the students to close their eyes to make sure that the students are exposed to the sound only for a short amount of time. The teacher can use the same scene for both presentations. The introduction of these two kinds of signs leads over to the next activities/ lesson plans, which deal in-depth with each of them.

This lesson works on various already existing skills while developing the basis for television literacy. Brainstorming at the beginning of the lesson takes the role of an interactive activity, where students occupy alternately the role of the speaker and the listener. This involves reception and production strategies and cognitive as well as collaborative strategies, for instance turntaking.³⁰⁸ The written production at the beginning of the teaching unit, in groups which fosters their study skills, engages the students in the production of a written text for a 'readership of one or more readers' (CEFR, 61), in this case listeners. The written production is then converted into an oral production, a speaking activity, when the groups read out their stories.³⁰⁹ Following the teacher's explanations on 'signs', one asks for auditory phonetic skills, linguistic and semantic skills as well as cognitive skills, till the message and definition is completely understood.³¹⁰ The last part of this lesson includes listening and reading (of visuals) skills which are further developed and worked on in the upcoming lessons.

³⁰⁸ See CEFR, 73.

³⁰⁹ See CEFR, 58-61.

³¹⁰ See CEFR, 90f.

6.1.2. Aural Signs I

6.1.2.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get introduced to aural signs. The students learn that a sign consists of several parts according to different mindsets. They learn to differentiate between the various parts of a sign according to the Saussurean model.
Content:	Watch scene (Dan Minahan, 2-11 'Owner of a Lonely Heart', 3:45-4:08) Write down signified/ choose a signified Group work: discuss your choice Discussion in plenum Introduce 'Signifier / Signified' Guessing Watch end of episode (Dan Minahan, 2-11 'Owner of a Lonely Heart', 39:00-40:29) Introduce 'referent'
Materials:	<i>Grey's Anatomy</i> DVD Pictures of different breed of dogs (see Handout 3) Transparency 'Signifier/ Signified' (see Transparency 2)
Aids used:	Overhead projector Television screen DVD-Player
Groupings of learners:	
Watching:	whole class
Writing/ choosing:	individually
Discussions:	groups of four students, then plenum
Introduction:	whole class
Guessing:	whole class
Watching:	whole class
Introduction:	whole class
Timing:	
Watching:	5 min
Writing/ choosing:	5 min
Discussions:	10 min
Introduction:	10 min
Guessing:	5 min
Watching:	5 min
Introduction:	10 min

6.1.2.2. *Description*

A very short scene from “Owner of a Lonely Heart” (2-11) introduces the lesson on aural signs. Before the teacher exposes the students to an aural sign, it is wisely to announce the topic of the lesson and after doing so the students focus their attention on the aural part of the following scene, where Meredith tells her roommates and colleagues that a dog would ease their loneliness. ‘A dog’ functions as the aural sign for this activity. The teacher shows the scene at least twice and the first two viewings present Meredith’s whole sentence, whereas the third one is stopped right after she says ‘a dog’. Following the second viewing the teacher asks the students for guesses what the aural sign might be. If the students are clueless of what the favoured sign is, the teacher shows them the scene a third time and stops the DVD right after the word ‘dog’.

Then the teacher can choose of two different kinds of follow-up activities. On the one hand, students can be asked to write down what kind of dog they have in mind when hearing the aural sign ‘dog’. On the other hand, the teacher can prepare pictures of different breeds of dogs and spread them on the floor and each student has to move to the pictures and choose the one which is closest to his/ her picture in mind. (see Handout 3) The decision depends very much on the character of the class, if the class is, for instance, loud and agitated it might be better to assign them with the simple writing task. After having written down or chosen a specific image the students sit together in groups of four and present their choice. The teacher has to advise them that they have to say what kind of dog they chose and the reason why. The reasons can vary, for instance one of the students has a dog at home. The group discussion is then moved on to the plenum. With guided questions the teacher leads the students to the desired outcome, namely the differentiation between signifier and signified. Possible questions include: ‘What kind of dog did you choose? And why?’ or ‘Did some of you choose the same kind of dog? Why do you think that is?’.

These questions clear the way to the conclusion that although everyone hears the same sound, the signifier, the concept in everyones mind, the signified, is different. With a transparency (see Transparency 2) the difference between signifier and signified is introduced. The students hear the word ‘dog’ but everyone thinks of another kind of dog. Figure 15 visualises the difference with the word ‘tree’.

Before presenting which kind of dog Meredith and Izzie chose in the end, the students should come up with guesses what kind of dog it might be and argue about their choice. The teacher makes notes of the guesses on the blackboard. Then the class watches the end of the episode where Meredith and Izzie visit an animal shelter to choose a dog.

The lesson ends with a short discussion of the ending, for instance, if the students had expected that they would take a dog from the animal shelter. Finally, the teacher introduces a new term, 'referent', and completes the lesson about signs and their components with providing the class with definitions. (see Transparency 2)

Besides the classical skill of speaking, the main focus is on the semiotic skill in this teaching unit. Students automatise strategies accompanying interactive activities during discussions and therefore become more secure and have the heart to speak up and establish and follow their line of thought.³¹¹ The reason for assigning a group discussion before moving on to the plenum is that the students can work in smaller surroundings with less fear to fail. In their knots they can prepare their line of argumentation, try it out, and speak more self-confidently in plenum afterwards. The guessing activity, a so called ludic use of language, is not only included to lighten up the lesson but also for teaching purposes.³¹² According to the CEFR 'the use of language for playful purposes often plays an important part in language learning and development' (CEFR, 55). The last part of the lesson as well as the introductory scene, ask for the students' aural reception skills, when they are provided with spoken input. First, they are supposed to listen for specific information, for THE aural sign, and later on they have to listen to the teacher for detailed understanding.³¹³

³¹¹ See CEFR, 73.

³¹² See CEFR, 55.

³¹³ See CEFR, 65.

6.1.3. Aural Signs II

6.1.3.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get introduced to another mindset of how to deal with signs, the Peircean model. Students learn to distinguish between the Saussurean and the Peircean model.
Content:	Introduction of Peircean model Compare different labellings Set up discussion Watch scene (Darnell Martin, 2-07 'The Self-Destruct Button', 4:41-5:50)
Materials:	<i>Grey's Anatomy</i> DVD Transparency 'Triadic model' (see Transparency 3) Transparency for comparison (see Transparency 4)
Aids used:	Overhead projector Television screen DVD-Player
Groupings of learners:	
Introduction:	whole class
Comparing:	groups of four students
Discussion:	two groups
Watching:	groups of four students
Timing:	
Introduction:	10 min
Comparing:	10 min
Discussion:	10 min
Watching:	10 min

6.1.3.2. Description

This lesson is taught subsequently or after a short period of time to the preceding one, called 'Aural signs I'. In the previous lesson students got introduced to the Saussurean mindset of how to analyse a sign. This lesson the teacher is presenting another model, the Peircean model, and the students listen to a short presentation on the triadic model of signs (see Transparency 3).

After putting Peirce and his model up for discussion, the students, in pairs, are asked to compare the Saussurean and the Peircean model. Where do both models agree and where disagree? How is the labelling different? The students get a couple of minutes to look over their notes and compare the two models with each other. Then all together discuss and compare the two models. It is useful to make use of both transparencies (see Transparency 2 and 3) and it is as well important to make sure that the students understand that both models deal with the same thing, the sign, but from a slightly different point of view, as Saussure was a linguist and Peirce a philosopher.

For the accomplishment of the next activity the class needs to be divided into two big groups, simply by splitting it into halves. This can be done by drawing an imaginary line in the middle of the classroom or by counting through the rows from one to two. One group is the representative of the Saussurean and the other group of the Peircean model. Both groups listen to the same list of words and look at the same pictures. Their task is to analyse the aural signs according to their assigned mindset. Every analysis has to be accompanied by a thumbsketch and the correct labelling. After five minutes both groups are presenting their findings and the respective other group is allowed to vote against the presented analysis. The final outcome of this activity, which hopefully leads to a discussion, is the conclusion that neither the one nor the other mindset is better and that both lead to the desired outcome. The students have to notice and remind themselves that they can make use of both but they have to be careful not mix them.

The final activity, after learning and working with these two complex models, is to apply them to moving images. The teacher shows a scene including an aural sign and after watching it twice the students, still in their groups, try to come up with the Saussurean and the Peircean interpretation of it.

In this lesson the students get the chance to enlarge their technical vocabulary on semiotics and besides building their semiotic skill, they work on their speaking as well as their listening and reading skills. Presenting and defending their analysis and outcomes makes them work on their pronunciation and fluency, their so-called phonological competence. Besides they deepen also their reception and production skills. This includes making use of their knowledge concerning phonemes and allophones, syllable structure, prosody, as well as phonetic reduction.³¹⁴ Participating in a discussion and being involved in spontaneous talk with turntaking and turngiving, all this demands students' lexical competence. They need to be able to produce fixed expressions, as well as come up with phrasal verbs and appropriate collocations.³¹⁵

³¹⁴ See CEFR, 116f.

³¹⁵ See CEFR, 110f.

6.1.4. Visual Signs

6.1.4.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group: various levels

Aim: The students are introduced to three different types of visual signs (indexical, iconic and symbolic signs).
The students work on the classification of visual signs into those groups.
The students identify different types of signs during watching a scene of *Grey's Anatomy*.

Content: Vocabulary: Match the word with the definition
Compare the results & explanation
Classify pictures and justify your choice
Watch a scene from *Grey's Anatomy* (Dan Minahan, 2-25 '17 Seconds', 39:14-40:37)
Discussion

Materials: Handout with definitions (see Handout 4)
Transparencies with pictures (see Transparency 5)
Grey's Anatomy DVD

Aids used: Overhead projector
Television screen
DVD-Player

Groupings of learners:

Vocabulary: individually
Comparing results: whole class
Classification: groups
Watch a scene: whole class
Discussion: whole class

Timing:

Vocabulary: 5 min
Comparing results: 5 min
Classification: 10 min
Watch a scene: 10 min
Discussion: 10 min

Homework:

Watch your favourite TV show and try to identify different types of signs. Make notes on a chart on a piece of paper!

6.1.4.2. Description

After introducing the students to the world of signs they get to know different types of signs, namely visual signs. At the very beginning they have to work on their vocabulary, while matching the three types of signs with appropriate definitions and examples. (see Handout 4) After a couple of minutes the teacher compares the results with the students and goes through the definitions and explanations, visualising them with pictures. As an example one can take a picture of Addison Montgomery-Shepherd from *Grey's Anatomy* (see Transparency 5). On the basis of this screenshot the teacher can present a symbolic sign, the salmon coloured scrubs, as well as an iconic sign, the doctor herself. The second screenshot can be used to visualise an indexical sign, where another surgeon in scrubs covered in blood indicates an accident or a surgery. Before moving on to the next activity, it is important to make sure that the students understand the difference between the different types.

The next activity can be done with the whole class but also in groups of three or four. The teacher is showing different pictures or screenshots of television programmes (see Transparency 5: Figure 24: indexical and iconic; Figure 25: indexical and iconic; Figure 26: iconic, symbolic and indexical) on a transparency and the students have to identify as well as classify the different types of signs. If they are working in groups they can first discuss their choice in groups and then justify it in plenum. The teacher has to make sure that the students are able to explain why they think a picture belongs to a specific group of sign.

After practicing with visuals on transparency and getting used to the new vocabulary as well as the differentiation between signs, the students move on to work on moving images taken from a real television series. The teacher is presenting a short extract of *Grey's Anatomy's* '17 seconds' (2-25). It is necessary to play the scene at least two times and if necessary a third time as well. Alternatively, the teacher can ask the students if they prefer to watch the scene without sound. During the viewing activity the students have to take notes. It works best if they prepare a simple chart saying: symbolic sign, iconic sign, indexical sign, where they fill in their findings. This model can then also be used for their homework.

The concluding after-viewing activity is a discussion held with the whole class. First of all, the teacher watches with the students the scene again but stops every time one of the signs is seen on the screen. Then the students present their suggestions and discuss their choice with their colleagues. The final outcome should be the awareness that most of the signs on the television screen are iconic. As homework the students take a closer look at their favourite television programmes and try to identify different types of visual signs. Therefore, they are supposed to take notes on a chart as it was used in class.

This lesson predominantly works on the speaking and study skill. At the beginning, students are provided with new input and then via group work, this means extending their study skills, they apply their newly adopted knowledge. Doing this via interactive speaking tasks allows the teacher to correct their errors immediately to avoid incorrect acquisition of the new element.

6.1.5. Metaphor and Metonymy

6.1.5.1. Lesson Plan

- Target Group:** various levels
- Aim:** The students are introduced to the stylistic devices metaphor and metonymy.
The students learn to differentiate between those two new terms and try to identify them on the television screen.
- Content:** Discuss your found definitions in small groups
Discussion in plenum
Come up with two definitions for the whole class
Work on examples
Watch scenes from *Grey's Anatomy* (Peter Horton, 1-01 'A Hard Day's Night', 11:53-14:34)
(Jeff Melman, 3-05 'Oh the Guilt', 6:03-6:30)
(James Frawley, 3-18 'Scars and Souvenirs, 37:07-38:05)
(Jeff Melman, 3-02 'I Am a Tree', 40:42-42:10)
- Materials:** Blank transparency to write definitions on
Transparency with definitions (see Transparency 6)
Handout with examples (see Handout 5)
Grey's Anatomy DVD
- Aids used:** Overhead projector
Television screen
DVD-Player
- Groupings of learners:**
- Discussion:** groups of at least three students
Discussion: whole class
Definitions: whole class
Work on examples: pairs
Watching: groups of at least three students
- Timing:**
- Discussions:** 10 min
Definitions: 5 min
Work on examples: 15 min
Watching: 20 min

Homework: Watch your favourite TV show and try to identify at least one stylistic device! Write a short observation report!

6.1.5.2. Description

Following the introduction of signs, the students' knowledge is expanded with two stylistic devices, such as the metaphor and the metonymy. The preceding homework draws the students' attention to those new features. The task was to look these two terms up in the Internet and bring the most explainable definition plus the source of it, this means the URL, the website address, with them the next lesson.

Right at the beginning of the lesson the teacher announces today's topic and divides the students into small groups of at least three members. This can be done by counting through the rows to get a new mixture of students working together and to prevent the same group of students of always working together. In their small groups they read aloud the definitions they found and discuss the similarities and differences. At the end of the discussion each group has to agree on one definition per term and write both of them on an overhead transparency. The teacher is responsible to provide them with guidelines of how to prepare a transparency, for instance to write quite clearly using big letters.

After coming up with two definitions per group, each group presents theirs in front of the class with the overhead projector. Every group needs to pick a speaker who displays the transparency on the overhead and reads out the definitions. At the end the teacher sums with the help of the class up what all their definitions had in common or what was different. Finally, the whole class should agree on two definitions. The teacher can write these down on a transparency and the students copy them, or the instructor presents the 'ultimate' definitions (see Transparency 6). Now that two definitions are established, the teacher accompanies them with examples (see Transparency 6) to provide them with practical hints to the theoretical explanations.

The next activity is carried out in pairs where the students apply the new information to practical examples. Every student gets a handout with a number of sentences on it which is either a metaphor or a metonymy. The students get the assignment of figuring out, with their neighbour, if the stylistic device used in the sentence or phrase is a metonymy or a metaphor. After a couple of minutes their classifications are compared with the rest of the class. To develop television literacy skills, students

have to be exposed to moving images and try to recognise these stylistic devices there as well. Therefore, the teacher presents them various scenes from *Grey's Anatomy*. The lesson plan given above contains four possible scenes. Depending on the classroom time two or even all four scenes can be watched. After each scene the teacher gives the students, in their groups, time to identify the stylistic device and to advance their opinions. After agreeing on one they watch the scene again. The teacher should work in full length on each scene and make sure they really notice the stylistic device.

This lesson gives the students the chance to switch roles for a short amount of time. In preparing a transparency for their classmates, they take the role of instructors or simply presenters of new information. Getting to know simple details of how to work on and how to create an appropriate and useful transparency they expand their orthographic knowledge, for example typographical conventions and font varieties when writing a transparency.³¹⁶ Besides working on their speaking skills, as already outlined above, the audio-visual reception channel is used. Students need to activate their visual reception as well as their aural reception skills to read and listen at the same time, in this case for specific information on metaphor and metonymy.³¹⁷ This implies functional competence, especially microfunctions to discover and identify the stylistic devices.³¹⁸

³¹⁶ See CEFR, 117.

³¹⁷ See CEFR, 65-71.

³¹⁸ See CEFR, 125f.

6.1.6. Denotation and Connotation

6.1.6.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get introduced to the terms “Denotation & Connotation”. The students learn to examine a sign with regard to this distinction.
Content:	Work on transparency: - denotation - connotation Handout “Denotation & Connotation” Watch a scene from <i>Grey’s Anatomy</i> (Peter Horton, 2-17 ‘As We Know It’, 33:20-35:27) Comparison of notes Handout “Denotation or Connotation?”
Materials:	Transparency (see Transparency 7) Handout “Denotation & Connotation” (see Handout 6) <i>Grey’s Anatomy</i> DVD Handout “Denotation or Connotation?” (see Handout 7) Sticky tape
Aids used:	Overhead projector Television screen DVD-player Blackboard
Grouping of learners:	
Transparency:	individually and report back to whole class
Handout:	pairs
Watching:	whole class – individually take notes
Comparison:	pairs – then whole class
Handout:	pairs
Comparison:	whole class
Timing:	
Transparency:	15 min
Handout:	5 min
Watching:	10 min
Comparison:	10 min
Handout:	5 min
Comparison:	5 min

6.1.6.2. Description

This lesson plan focuses on the introduction of two new terms associated with signs, namely denotation and connotation. The students will directly access the new topic with the teacher displaying them a picture of Dr. Shepherd, McDreamy, on a transparency (see Transparency 7). First, the teacher asks the students to individually write down a plain description of what they can see on the visual sign (eg. a caucasian man with black curly hair, wearing a blue shirt and pants, a lab coat etc.). After some minutes they talk about it in plenum and the students are asked to briefly read out their descriptions. The rest is allowed to add things that have not yet been mentioned. It is useful to keep the transparency displayed on the overhead projector to give the class the chance to check on the details given by their colleagues.

This introductory task is followed by a second part, where the teacher asks the students to take notes on their arising values, emotions and attitudes when looking at the photograph (eg. seems to be a friendly doctor, etc.). They again get some minutes to collect their thoughts and write them down. This task is ended by another open talk and comparison of their findings. When talking about personal feelings, the teacher has to be careful not to overwhelm students with calling on them, but to ask for volunteers first.

Then the teacher takes over and informs the class that they have been working on two different levels of examining a sign and asks them if they can explain what they have been doing. After collecting ideas, the teacher passes out handouts with two new terms, “Denotation and Connotation”, on it as well as the appropriate definitions (see Handout 6). Now the students are supposed to match the right definition with the right word. This can be done individually or in pairs but they should not encounter any problems doing so.

After clarifying the meaning of denotation and connotation as well as associating the words with the practices done at the beginning of the lesson, the students get to use their newly acquainted knowledge on the television screen. They watch a scene from “As We Know It” (2-17). After a bomb explosion at SGH Derek is frantically looking for Meredith. The first viewing task asks the students to take notes on a denotative level. The teacher has to make sure that they just describe they see.

During the second viewing the students have to note down everything they encounter as striking on the connotative level. It might be helpful to stress the two new terms and repeat them several times when giving the instructions. The after-viewing activity is a discussion of their observations. First, the students discuss their observations, their similarities as well as differences with their partner, and then the discussion moves on to the plenum.

The last activity closing the lesson on denotation and connotation is a pair work where the teacher hands out at least two descriptions to each pair (see Handout 7). The blackboard is divided into two parts, whereof one part gets labelled “Denotation” and the other one “Connotation”. The students read through their handouts and attach their pieces of paper with sticky tape to the appropriate side of the blackboard, depending if they have a denotative or a connotative description. This activity ends, as well as the lesson, with the teacher going through all the handouts pinned to the board and comparing together with the students, if they are positioned on the correct side.

Besides acquiring a further element of the semiotic aspect of TVL, students draw on several of their traditional skills, during this teaching unit. The lesson starts out with a writing activity. Although their lexical as well as grammatical competence is not challenged to a great extent, the students get to work on their writing competence of taking notes which is not something that can be done without encountering problems at the beginning.³¹⁹ Students have to learn to make it short and they have to adjust to note down only single words. The teacher includes them in the derivation of the meaning of the new devices from the very beginning, which can be characterised with ‘learning by doing’.

³¹⁹ See CEFR, 110-113.

6.1.7. Reality

6.1.7.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students learn that what is perceived as real on the television screen does not necessarily have to be real. The students are made aware that everything presented on TV is constructed.
Content:	Warm-up discussion Write their outcomes on blackboard Teacher led discussion Prediction activity (John David Coles, 1-05 'Shake Your Groove Thing', 27:11-30:19, 40:27-40:44) (Rob Corn, 3-25 'Didn't We Almost Have it All?', 42:43-43:35, 44:52-46:40)
Materials:	Handout 'What is reality?' (see Handout <i>Grey's Anatomy</i> DVD)
Aids used:	Television screen DVD-player Blackboard

Grouping of learners:

Brainstorming:	groups of at least three students
Discussion:	whole class
Prediction:	pairs

Timing:

Brainstorming:	15 min
Discussion:	15 min
Prediction:	20 min

Homework:

Watch your favourite television series and look out for features you perceive as realistic and for those you do not. Write a short paragraph describing the scene and argue your choice!

6.1.7.2. Description

The lesson on reality starts out with a warm-up discussion³²⁰ on the topic of reality. The students work on their perception of reality through guided questions in groups of at least three students (see Handout 8). The questions call the students' attention to the problem of reality on television. Their awareness to this topic should be raised and they should come to an understanding that it is hard to define reality and that it as well differs in some aspects for each viewer depending on the cultural and/or social background. After ten minutes, the groups have to decide on their main points and write them on the blackboard, so that in the end a collection of thoughts and ideas can be looked at.

Then each group gets the chance to talk about their major items before the teacher takes over and leads the discussion. Each group presents their main points on what they think about reality and television. Afterwards the teacher discusses with them the important aspects and tops it off in underlining the key features or erasing the irrelevant points. This leaves the students with an almost complete definition of 'reality'.

After working on the theoretical part, the students get the chance to have a close look at the presentation of reality in a television series. The rest of the lesson is spent with a prediction activity³²¹, where the teacher is presenting two selected scenes. First, the teacher shows a scene once or twice, depending on the students wishes, and then the students have to make a guess what might happen next and what would usually happen in reality. Every pair writes their guess down and reports it back to the whole class. After collecting all ideas the teacher reveals how the scene continues. As homework, students have to watch their favourite television series and look out for things that are presented realistic and for ones that are not. They have to write a short paragraph about what they observed and why they perceived it one way or the other.

This last lesson on the semiotic aspect draws on the students' study skills when working in pairs and groups, as well as their interaction in the plenum discussion. Their speaking competences of reception and production alternating during discussing questions are fostered at the beginning of the lesson and carried on during

³²⁰ Thornbury, 103.

³²¹ Tomalin, 58.

the whole lesson.³²² The unit ends with language in ludic use when the students are encouraged to make guesses on how a scene might develop in reality. This removes the language usage from the general learning purpose and offers them to make use of lexical and grammatical structures outside of specially prepared activities. The task of writing their group work outcomes on the blackboard is chosen to remove the blackboard's usual usage of maybe vocabulary testing. In writing on the board, which in many classroom settings is only reserved for the instructor, the students create something together with every group writing down their notes and they end up with a covered board full of thoughts and ideas.

³²² See CEFR, 73.

6.2. Product-oriented Aspect

The second aspect TVL is built of can be taught as a whole unit or separate lessons can be interwoven into the annual plan of teaching. As well as the semiotic skill outlined above, this skill will be built through learning new vocabulary, wherever applicable in context with collocations and in word fields, and by applying the new skill with already familiar activities from the English language classroom. The lessons and activities accompanying this skill are arranged moving from general to specific topics.

6.2.1. General Information on *Grey's Anatomy*

6.2.1.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get acquainted with the series <i>Grey's Anatomy</i> . The students search independently the internet for basic information on the show, guided by questions. The students prepare a short presentation accompanied by a handout.
Content:	Introduction Group formation Independent research and preparation Presentation
Materials:	Handout with guiding questions (see Handout 9)
Aids used:	Computer / Internet: - www.abc.com - www.imdb.com - http://en.wikipedia.org - www.greysanatomyinsider.com

Groupings of learners:

Introduction:	whole class
Group work:	5 groups

Timing:

Introduction:	5 min
Group work:	45 min

6.2.1.2. Description

The first lesson introducing this skill, whether the series *Grey's Anatomy* or any other television programme is taught in isolation or imbedded to a bigger topic, provides suitable access to the production aspect of television literacy. The students gather background information on the series themselves, and become aware that a television programme consists of more than the pictures aired at a certain day and the actors portraying specific characters. They get to look behind the “world” presented on the television screen and find out basic information on the series. The students realise that in our multi-mediated world, a television series is not only present on the screen, for instance, for the forty-two minutes it is aired, but also in other media, in this case its Internet presence is examined too.

It is possible to introduce *Grey's Anatomy*, or any other fictional programme, as THE television series accompanying the various topics dealt with during the year to exemplify and visualise. Therefore, my reasoning is, that before starting to work with it in detail, the students search the Internet for useful and what is more important, for basic information on *Grey's Anatomy*. With this activity they get a first insight into, a glimpse of, the complex background and production aspect of a television production and for students who are not acquainted with the show, this activity works as an introduction to the series as well. To avoid mindless surfing in the Internet, which easily happens as soon as students are working on their own, and to get the favoured outcome, this starting activity is guided via questions prepared by the teacher. These questions help them and lead their Internet-based research, also with the restriction to four English speaking websites to avoid mindless ‘googling’. This helps them to exploit the reams of possibilities where to find detailed information on the series. Although it can be taken for granted that the current generation of students is used to search the Internet for information, it is without a doubt useful and time-saving to provide them with specific internet sites on this topic.

To cover this introduction completely, the class is split into five groups, of which each group gets a certain amount of questions which have to be answered. The suggested questions below act on the assumption that the class is split into five groups, but they are subject to change according to the particular classroom situation. I would devote at least one lesson to this activity. First, the students search in groups

for the answers to their questions and then, as they are already working on the computer, they design a short presentation including a handout. At the end of the first lesson, they should be finished with the preparation of their presentation, which should not take longer than ten minutes, and their handout for their fellow students. The following lesson will focus on the presentation of the background information of the series *Grey's Anatomy* and at the end each student should have a collection of basic information on the series.

This lesson focuses on independent group work where the students have to complete an assignment in a specified time frame. The teacher only provides them with the guidelines and sets the time limit. How they cope with the task is up to the students. This activity gives them the opportunity to work on their study skills and to learn how to organize themselves in a group, to share tasks and to finish on time. Their heuristic skills are also challenged in using new technologies, to find and extract information in the target language.³²³ From a language point of view, the students are using English native resources to answer their questions instead of material especially prepared for them. Noticing that they are able to work with native language products might motivate them in their language learning process. Besides this, the foundation for the product-oriented skill is laid.

³²³ See CEFR, 107f.

6.2.2. Television Genres

6.2.2.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get introduced to the term ‘genre’ and the main television genres. The students get an overview on the characteristics of the most prominent television genres and developments.
Content:	Vocabulary/ synonym activity Brainstorming: ‘What kind of television genres do you know?’ Characterisation of television programmes Classification of television programmes Survey Compare findings Classify <i>Grey’s Anatomy</i>
Materials:	Transparency ‘Television Genres’ (see Transparency 8) A3 sheets for posters (see Poster 1) Slips of paper with characteristics (see Handout 10) Handouts with popular television programmes (see Poster 2) Handout ‘Survey’ (see Handout 11)
Aids used:	Blackboard Overhead projector

Groupings of learners:

Vocabulary:	pairs
Brainstorming:	whole class
Characterisation:	whole class
Classification:	pairs
Survey:	individually
Comparison:	whole class
Classify GA:	whole class

Timing:

Vocabulary:	5 min
Brainstorming:	5 min
Characterisation:	10 min
Classification:	10 min
Survey:	10 min
Comparison:	5 min
Classify GA:	5 min

Homework : Have a look at your favourite television programme and try to label it with one main genre and list which other features it might include!

6.2.2.2. Description

Immersing further into the topic of television production, this lesson focuses on television genres. In the course of it, the students define the word 'genre', get to know its meaning and its subcategories, and they research their own television habits.

At the beginning of the lesson, the teacher presents a new word, namely the word 'genre'. After defining together with the help of the transparency (see Transparency 8) what the word stands for, the students get together in pairs and try to fulfill the task of thinking of a synonym, a word that can be used instead, for the word 'genre'. Each pair has to come up with a word which is then collected on the transparency. To conclude this introduction, the students have to think of the three main television genres, which are then, with an example each, presented by the teacher. (see Transparency 8)

As a follow-up activity, the class tries to classify together these main genres. The teacher hands out prepared slips with characterisations on them (see Handout 10) and divides the blackboard into three parts with the headlines: drama, comedy and soap opera (see Poster 1). Each pair gets one or two slips and after they come to an agreement, one pair after the other reads their characterisation outloud and suggests in which column they want to put it. After a short feedback of the teacher or the other students they put it on the board. To round up the characterisation, the list is completed with practical examples. The pairs get pictures of popular television programmes belonging to different genres, and as they did with the characterisation slips, they add it to the list on the blackboard (see Poster 2). At the end of the activity, the class is provided with an overview of the different genres as well as their characteristics and the teacher hands out the completed sheet. (see Handout 10)

The next part livens up the classroom atmosphere. The students undertake a survey where they have to interview one of their colleagues (see Handout 11). This can be done in different ways. On the one hand, the teacher can ask them to question one of their classmates who is not his or her neighbour and therefore they have to get up and move around the classroom. If the class is already a lively one, it might be better to avoid any more excitement and just tell them to ask their neighbours. After

completing the survey, the class compares their findings and the teacher takes notes on the board. In doing so, the students can figure out the average hours they are everyday watching TV, if they have the same favourite programmes or genres, and if one genre is especially popular among their age group.

To conclude this lesson, the class works with *Grey's Anatomy*. Checking their lists they try to categorise the series and they discover that it does not exclusively fit into one genre. In doing so, they learn about the concept of hybridity, which will be further explored in their homework. In the assigned homework, the students have to work with their favourite television programme. They have to try to label it to one of the genres dealt with in class and list the features it includes. This ties in with the last activity done in class, where they first came across the term hybridity.

Besides providing students with more details on the production aspect, this lesson focuses on the speaking skill. From the very beginning the teacher animates them to talk freely without preparation, which is enhanced through deriving the meaning and the synonyms of 'genre', which is noted down in the CEFR under semantic competence.³²⁴ Students work on their spoken interaction skills, in participating in spontaneous talk, asking questions, answering questions. Working on the speaking skill certainly involves expansion of their phonetic competence as well as sociolinguistic competence.³²⁵ In carrying out a survey the teacher gives them individually the task to talk to a colleague, to ask questions and to sum up afterwards what every individual found out. Overall, this lesson works on the principle of group achievement. The teacher coordinates and guides the activities but only with the help of the students they can be completed.

³²⁴ See CEFR, 115f.

³²⁵ See CEFR, 116ff.

6.2.3. *Mis-en-Scène and Lighting*

6.2.3.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get to know the overall term ‘Mis-en-Scène’. The students learn which categories are included in Mis-en-Scène. The students deal in detail with the feature of lighting.
Content:	Introduction ‘Mis-en-Scène’ Handout ‘Mis-en-Scène’ Different kinds of lighting Lighting and connotation Watch a scene (Adam Arkin, 3-17 ‘Some Kind of Miracle’, 28:21-31:25)
Materials:	Handout ‘Mis-en-Scène’ (see Handout 12) Transparency ‘Mis-en-Scène’ (see Transparency 9) Transparency ‘Kinds of lighting’ (see Transparency 10) <i>Grey’s Anatomy</i> DVD
Aids used:	Overhead Projector Television screen DVD-Player

Groupings of learners:

Introduction:	whole class
Handout:	pair work
Kinds of lighting:	whole class
Watching:	whole class

Timing:

Introduction:	10 min
Handout:	10 min
Kinds of Lighting:	15 min
Watching:	15 min

Homework: Watch your favourite television show and have a look at the different lighting styles and if it fits to the presented themes! Write a short observation report (at least 250 words)!

6.2.3.2. Description

A further lesson on the product-oriented aspect deals with the term ‘Mis-en-Scène’ in general and then starts with a close examination of one of its parts, namely with lighting. First, the students get introduced to the term ‘Mis-en-Scène’ and the components it consists of. The teacher presents a screenshot on a transparency (see Transparency 9) and tries to derive the concept of Mis-en-Scène through guiding questions. The suggested screenshot shows a hospital room with a doctor, a patient and a relative of the patient. With questions such as, ‘What and who can you see in this picture?’ the teacher can start from scratch and guide them through all the different parts of Mis-en-Scène. At this point the teacher can draw on already existing television literacy knowledge, for instance on the semiotic aspect of denotation. This might encourage the students and give them an idea what to do, in this case, namely to describe in detail what is presented in the picture. Two things, usually part of Mis-en-Scène, cannot be observed on the screenshot, namely sound and music. The teacher has to add those two after discussing the rest and make sure that the students understand that these two can only be observed in moving pictures. With the sketch of a puzzle on the transparency (see Transparency 9) the students visualise how the concept of Mis-en-Scène works. Presented like a puzzle, they can figure out through this metaphor that all these small parts form a whole.

To ensure that the students understand what they hear and talk about, they get a handout featuring a list of various components of Mis-en-Scène. Their next task is to fill them in with their neighbours and add examples. Before the class moves on to talk about one specific part in detail, the findings are discussed in plenum.

The rest of the lesson deals with the first ‘ingredient’ of Mis-en-Scène, which is lighting. The teacher gives the students an overview with a transparency making use of teacher-centred teaching. In contrast to the beginning of the lesson, the students are now asked to take notes and listen. They get information on the different kinds of lighting visualised with examples, screenshots of *Grey’s Anatomy*. At the end of the lesson, the class watches a scene of ‘Some Kind of Miracle’ (3-17) and pays special attention to lighting. The teacher shows the extract at least two times and the third time the DVD is stopped after each different lighting mode and the students’ notes are compared. The decision of why a specific kind of lighting is used is discussed as

well as the accompanying emotions. This prepares the students already for their homework which provides them with the task to watch their favourite television show and analyse the different lighting techniques.

Looking at this lesson from a television literate point of view, a very important part of the product-oriented aspect is introduced and it also is the beginning of a 'serial' of lessons on this subcategory. Therefore, the students get to know a lot of new information and technical terms but the focus is clearly on the product-oriented skill, although speaking as well as reading sections are included in this lesson plan. Looking at lighting specifically the students' media skills are moving on to a more advanced level on the continuum. As noted down in the chapter on skills (see 2.1.2. Advanced Skills), appreciation belongs to advanced in contrast to rudimentary skills. Therefore one can argue, if students are able to cope with this aspect they are definitely improving and changing their place on the continuum. Besides this, the students' speaking skill which is practiced in this lesson as well, they obviously have to work on their audio-visual reception. They do not only have to be able to follow the language, although this aspect is secondary here, but they have to follow and more importantly to analyse the visuals, which according to the CEFR asks for an intermediate level.³²⁶

³²⁶ See CEFR, 71.

6.2.4. *Mis-en-Scène: Sound*

6.2.4.1. *Lesson Plan*

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get introduced to different forms of sound. The students learn to differentiate between the established types of sound and their subcategories.
Content:	Listening activity Forms of sound Listen to and watch scenes again (Scott Brazil, 1-06 'If Tomorrow Never Comes', 1:50-2:16, 2:20-3:00, 25:11-25:30) Watching activity (Dan Lerner, 3-04 'What I Am', 1:20-2:11)
Materials:	Transparency 'Forms of sound' (see Transparency 11) Handout 'Types of Sound' (see Handout 13) <i>Grey's Anatomy</i> DVD
Aids used:	Overhead Projector Television screen DVD-Player

Groupings of learners:

Listening Activity:	whole class
Forms of Sound:	whole class
Watching:	two groups

Timing:

Listening Activity:	10 min
Forms of Sound:	10 min
Watching:	30 min

Homework: Have a close look at your favourite television show, prepare a grid of the different kinds of sounds, and make notes of the usage of sound!

6.2.4.2. Description

Another lesson; belonging to the ‘serial’ of *Mis-en-Scène*; deals with its sound component. Right from the beginning, the students immerse into the topic. During the lesson the students learn about the different types of sound used in a television production. The unit starts out with three short scenes of ‘Tomorrow Never Comes’ (1-06). The teacher plays these scenes and asks the students to make notes in their first grid on their handout (see Handout 13), about what they heard. It is advisable just to play the scenes without showing them, to make sure the students just concentrate on the sound. If it is not possible to turn off the screen of the TV-set or the computer, the teacher can also ask the students to turn around and face the screen with their backs. After listening to all three scenes the class compares their findings and the teacher reveals the topic of the lesson, namely sound.

Then the teacher introduces the three types of sound (see Transparency 11) and compares their findings, for instance which type of sound most of them wrote down. After explaining the difference between on- and off-screen sound, the whole class tries to find further examples to complete the grid on the transparency. To conclude this activity, the teacher shows the three scenes again and after listening to them a second time, the students try to categorise the sound according to the terms they learned before.

For the remaining time the teacher splits the class into two big groups. The two groups will watch the same scene independently from each other, but one group will watch it without sound and the other will just listen to it without visuals. The teacher shows the scene alternately while one of the groups always waits in front of the door. Afterwards, everyone has to find a partner from the other group and they sit together and try to explain each other what they saw or what they heard and write a summary as a team. At the end of the lesson, some of the summaries are read outloud and compared and the teacher solves occurring misunderstandings and the class watches and listens to the scene together in order to complete the activity, and each group gets to see or to listen to the missing part of their group activity. The homework task deals with types of sound too. The students have to prepare a grid such as the one they dealt with in class and take notes according to the use of sound in their favourite television show.

This unit focuses on a product-oriented side on the teaching of new terms concerning sound in television productions. At the beginning, the students define what they hear with their own words and afterwards they get to know the technical terms for their descriptions. At the second viewing, they apply the new terms and work with them. From a language point of view this lesson works on the speaking and writing skill. Besides class participation in the target language the students have to use the target language to describe their partner what they saw or heard in the last activity. After summarising and agreeing upon a story, they have to write a summary where they have to put their sentences into a clear grammatical structure. The writing activity draws on their lexical and grammatical competence. Knowing and working on their ability to use fixed expressions, phrasal verbs, appropriate collocations, choosing the right grammatical elements, and to apply ‘the set of principles governing the assembly of elements into meaningful labelled and bracketed strings (sentences)’ (CEFR, 113) composes the aspects behind this activity.³²⁷

³²⁷ See CEFR, 110-113.

6.2.5. *Mis-en-Scène: The Camera*

6.2.5.1. *Lesson Plan*

- Target Group:** various levels
- Aim:** The students get introduced to camera perspectives, frames and movement and learn how those influence their reception. The students learn to differentiate between different camera angles and learn vocabulary related to this production aspect.
- Content:** Guided questions
Vocabulary sheet
Camera Angles and Connotation
Framing: take pictures
Camera Movement
Watch scene (Adam Davidson, 2-14 ‘Tell Me Sweet Little Lies’, 0:31-3:00)
- Materials:** Handout ‘The CAMERA’ (see Handout 14)
Handout ‘The Camera’ (see Handout 15)
Transparency with screenshots (see Transparency 12)
Grey’s Anatomy DVD
Camera
- Aids used:** Overhead Projector
Television screen
DVD-Player
- Groupings of learners:**
- Questions:** individually/ whole class
Camera Angles: whole class
Framing: whole class and individually
Camera Movement: whole class
Watch scenes: pairs
- Timing:**
- Questions:** 5 min
Camera Angles: 10 min
Framing: 10 min
Camera Movement: 5 min
Watch scenes: 10 min
- Homework:** Choose one aspect and watch out for it in your favourite television programme! Write a short observation (at least 150 words)!

6.2.5.2. *Description*

This unit deals with another aspect of *Mis-en-Scène*, the camera. After announcing the topic of the lesson, the teacher hands out vocabulary sheets where the students work in pairs with the collocations of the noun 'camera' (see Handout 14). Upon completion of this activity, the students are prepared to talk grammatically correct about the use of the camera in television productions.

The vocabulary section is followed by a short brainstorming about camera usage with guiding questions, for instance, 'What is the function of the camera? What is the camera doing? In a TV series, is the camera always in the same position? What possibilities of adjustment are there?'. After brainstorming and acquainting the class to the topic, the teacher gives them another handout which is divided into three sections: angles, frames and movement (see Handout 15). Together with the teacher the class fills in the handout step by step. The teacher tells them on which aspect they are working, for example on angles, and shows them different screenshots with the appropriate technical terms on a transparency (see Transparency 12). For each visual they see, they get a moment to decide with their neighbour which of the terms labels the picture. Then they decide in plenum with the instructor which term is the correct one.

After completing the grids, the students get to practically apply their newly learned production aspects in taking pictures. For this activity to work out, the teacher has to inform them the lesson before that every pair of students has to bring a digital camera with them the next lesson. If this is not possible, also a few cameras suffice. If the class works in pairs every student gives his or her partner instructions from which angle to take a picture, for instance, 'Take a high-angle picture.' If there are not enough cameras, the class can also be split up in groups and they do as described in pairs. After the activity the teacher uploads the pictures on the computer and shows them. With each photograph the respective student has to say what the task for his or her picture was, and then the plenum agrees or disagrees on completion of the task.

The rest of the lesson is spent with watching a scene of 'Tell Me Sweet Little Lies' (2-14) and analysing different camera styles. According to their list of possible camera techniques the students try to note down as many different angles, frames and movements they can identify. After watching the scene a second time, they compare

their findings and the teacher assigns their homework. Their task is to choose one specific aspect, analyse the use of it in their favourite television programme and write a short observation on it.

The lesson, 'The camera', enlarges the vocabulary of the students, especially with collocations. Working with collocations makes the students aware that you cannot combine every word of the target language with each other. This very first activity enlarges their semantic competence on the level of lexical semantics. This means that students get to know a word's interlexical relations.³²⁸ A further language learning aspect is included in the activity of taking pictures, where students give instructions and orders using the imperative working on their grammatical competence. Besides this, their heuristic skills are improved in getting to know or deepen their knowledge of how to use a camera.³²⁹ They also spend time on working on their writing skill in completing their homework. Besides learning new technical terms belonging to the product-oriented skill, the students are encouraged to produce and use the new features, what furthermore consolidates their newly acquired knowledge.

³²⁸ See CEFR, 115f.

³²⁹ See CEFR, 108.

6.2.6. Narrative-Plot-Story

6.2.6.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get acquainted to the terms narrative, plot and story. The students learn to apply those terms to television programmes.
Content:	Group work: Define your term and present Work on examples Matching activity Watch scene (Peter Horton, 2-17 'As We Know It', 27:11-33:15)
Materials:	Dictionaries Handouts with texts (see Handout 16) Blank Transparencies Handout matching activity (see Handout 17) <i>Grey's Anatomy</i> DVD
Aids used:	Overhead Projector Television screen DVD-Player

Groupings of learners:

Groups work:	three or six groups
Examples:	whole class
Matching activity:	individually
Watching:	three groups

Timing:

Group work:	15 min
Examples:	10 min
Matching activity:	5 min
Watching:	20 min

Homework: Watch your favourite television programme but before you start choose one of the stylistic devices of today's lesson and analyse your show! Write an observation report of at least 250 words.

6.2.6.2. *Description*

The lesson on narrative, plot, and story starts out with a group activity. The classroom is split into three groups, or if the students outnumber fifteen the teacher can split them into equal groups and some of them can work on the same topic. Each group has to prepare their dictionaries and is then provided with a handout (see Handout 16). With the help of the dictionary and the text on their handout the students have the task to define the relevant term. Furthermore, each group gets a transparency where they write down their definition and with which they present it to the rest of the class afterwards. Then the teacher tries together with the students to add clear examples to their definitions, so that the students are not only equipped with a theoretical but also with a practical access to the topic.

The following activity, a matching activity, works on the vocabulary skill of the students. All the stylistic devices they defined at the beginning of the lesson, make use of various features, like cliffhanger or flashforward. These terms did not only occur in the texts used for the definitions but were also explained in them. Therefore, the students are asked in this activity to match the words with the correct definitions. This time they have to work individually. After a couple of minutes, the teacher asks them to compare their results with their neighbours and then they are discussed in plenum with the addition of examples.

For the following watching activity the teacher splits the class into three groups, but this time with counting from one to three through the rows. Now the students have to form groups according to their numbers but members with the same number are not allowed to be in the same group. Each group has to consist of three students, each with a different number. Then the teacher assigns every number with a task, for instance, all the 'ones' analyse the following scene according to its plot or all the 'twos' look out for the narrative in this programme. And all group members have to look out for stylistic features like cliffhangers, flashbacks or voice overs. At the end of the watching activity, every group member informs the rest of the group of his or her findings and together they come up with a detailed analysis of the scene. If there is still time in the lesson, they can write an observation report together, otherwise they have to do it as homework.

This unit works on a number of different kinds of classroom work. The students are asked to fulfill tasks in groups, in pairs, and alone. This teaches them to be flexible in their working scheme, to broaden their study skills, to get the most successful outcome, and they may notice which of the different working styles is most attractive to them. Besides working on the complex relationship between narrative, plot and story, they build their vocabulary and apply it with the follow-up activity. This lessons works to a great extend on the expansion of the individual's study skills. This includes adjusting to group or pair work, making regular use of the new structures and making use of the prepared materials for independent study.³³⁰

³³⁰ See CEFR, 107f.

6.2.7. Special Effects

6.2.7.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get introduced to different kinds of special effects. The students work on special effects on TV.
Content:	Associative writing ‘Special effects’ Share thoughts Different kinds of special effects Watch scene (Peter Horton, 2-17 ‘As We Know It’, 27:11-33:15) Group work ‘The Producers’
Materials:	Transparency <i>Grey’s Anatomy</i> DVD Handout ‘The Producers’ (see Handout 18)
Aids used:	Blackboard Overhead Projector Television screen DVD-Player

Groupings of learners:

Writing:	individually
Sharing:	whole class
Special effects:	whole class
Watching:	whole class
Group work:	groups of four students

Timing:

Writing:	5 min
Sharing:	5 min
Special effects:	5 min
Watching:	10 min
Group work:	25 min

Homework: Have a close look at the next episode of your favourite TV show and pay attention to the use of special effects. Write a short review of your observations!

6.2.7.2. Description

The final lesson working on the product-oriented aspect deals with another new feature and at the same time it is used to round off this part of TVL. The first segment of the unit is used to introduce special effects. This is done with a method called associative writing. Even before the teacher announces the topic of the lesson, he or she asks the students to take out a sheet of paper and a pen and writes ‘Special effects’ on the blackboard or puts on a transparency with the same headline. Then the students are asked to write down whatever comes to their mind when reading these two words. This can be a definition in full sentences, a list of keywords, or it can be a whole story or even a drawing, depending on the student. Before the students start writing, the teacher has to provide them with a time limit, usually a couple of minutes but not more than five. The writing part is followed by a section called ‘sharing’, namely the sharing of thoughts. It is important not to force the students but to encourage them to voluntarily read aloud what they wrote down. As soon as one of the students starts, the others usually follow the example.

Depending on the outcome of the associative writing activity the teacher can brainstorm different special effects with the students and create a mindmap on the board with ‘special effects’ in the centre of it and the different kinds of effects surrounding it. For instance explosions or special make-up. To conclude this last feature, the class watches another scene of ‘As We Know It’ (2-17) and takes notes about the various effects they observe.

The rest of the lesson and the following lesson as well are used to work on all the product-oriented aspects dealt with in the previous lessons. This activity should sum up and at the same time revise the whole production aspect of television literacy. The students get the task to develop their own television production in an activity called ‘The Producers’. Groups of four will work on all the categories dealt with, according to guiding questions, and prepare a folder giving information on their production. The group formation is in this case up to the students. Till this lesson they experienced different group work situations with several of their colleagues and they could figure out with whom they want and can work. In the following lesson each group will present their production idea and hand in a folder. During the presentation of one group the rest of the class plays the role of the production company.

This lesson works, besides introducing special effects, as a revision of the whole aspect and the final group work gives the students the possibility to deepen their knowledge about this skill and work on all the parts, which have been introduced in separation, together to create their own product-oriented unit. This activity gives them the chance to look at this skill as a whole, while working with all its features at the same time. From a language point of view, they work on their writing as well as on their speaking skills. The written production of the creative writing task at the very beginning of the lesson makes the students draw on their lexical competence, their grammatical competence, as well as their semantic competence to organise the meaning if they write a story.³³¹

³³¹ See CEFR, 110-115.

6.3. Language Aspect

The lesson plans and activities of the language aspect of television literacy focus on most of the aspects outlined in the theoretical part above. Due to the size of this thesis it was impossible to include general vocabulary and grammatical features but of course there is ample scope to include these regular requirements.

6.3.1. Fictional vs. Actual Talk

6.3.1.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students learn about presented talk and its characteristics. The students work on that topic and experience the difference between real life talk and TV talk themselves.
Content:	Introduction ‘Language on Television’ Handout ‘Transcript’ Acting out Watching (Peter Horton, 1-01 ‘A Hard Day’s Night’, 0:00-1:48, 21:38-22:15)
Materials:	Transparency ‘Language on Television’ (see Transparency 13) Handout with transcript (see Handout 19) <i>Grey’s Anatomy</i> DVD
Aids used:	Overhead projector Television screen DVD player

Groupings of learners:

Introduction:	whole class
Transcript:	pairs
Acting:	pairs
Watching:	whole class

Timing:

Introduction:	10 min
Transcript:	10 min
Acting:	15 min
Watching:	15 min

Homework: Write a transcript for a scene of your favourite television programme according to the example dealt with in class! Do not forget to be explicit about real life talk markers.

6.3.1.2. Description

This introductory lesson on language on television familiarises the students with the different kinds of language that can be but not necessarily have to be used in a television production. At the very beginning the teacher introduces spoken and written language via a transparency, whereas written language is left behind and the focus soon shifts to spoken language. The teacher establishes the basis for a close analysis which follows later by going through markers of spoken language. It might be encouraging for the students to confer with them if they can come up with examples themselves. In the course of listing speech markers they also learn new vocabulary, like backtracking or interjecting. It is important to take some time to explain the new terms and make sure that the students understand what they stand for.

The first activity of this lesson works with a transcript of two scenes of 'A Hard Day's Night' (1-01). The class reads through the handout, first in pairs and then with the whole class, and they mark all the characteristics of fictional talk and analyse the reason why a feature is used in this specific case. After reading and discussing the authentic material, the students are divided into pairs, and each pair gets a scene assigned. The next task is to prepare the scene as accurately to the descriptions as possible. In doing so, the students get the opportunity to gain an insight into the work of an actor who in real life gets presented with a script and has to follow the instructions given. Each pair will need some space to prepare their performance; therefore it might be an idea to allow them to spread out into the hallway, of course somewhere near the classroom. After a couple of minutes the teacher asks for volunteers and at least two groups per scene should give their acting a try and present their performance to the rest of the class. There is also the possibility to vote on the best performance at the end of this activity.

As a conclusion and to finish up the work on the transcript, the students get to watch the two scenes how they were aired. During the first watching, they get the task to just watch the scenes and then they are asked to compare it with the transcript and check how close the performance of the actors is to the written outline. At the end of the viewing, the teacher can discuss with them the difference between their performances and the acting of the professionals as well as what they expected only

through reading the transcript at the beginning. In their homework the learners have to write a fictional transcript for their favourite television programme.

This lesson focuses to a great extent on spoken language which plays a bigger role on television than the written one. The students get to work on their speaking skill but besides trying to make use of natural strategies, they have to follow a script and produce cognitive and collaborative strategies on demand.³³² While reading through and acting out the transcript they gain sociocultural knowledge, for instance on everyday life, social conventions or interpersonal relations, and intercultural awareness.³³³ The assigned homework, engaging in writing a fictional script, is building on an advanced skill, on the message extending skill (see 2.1.2. Advanced Skills).

³³² See CEFR, 73.

³³³ See CEFR, 102-103.

6.3.2. Narration and Narrative, Discourse Time and Story Time & Plot and Story

6.3.2.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get acquainted to key terms concerning language on television. The students learn to differentiate and how to analyse a fictional programme according to those terms.
Content:	Introduction Watching (Greg Yaitanes, 311 Six Days Part 1, 0:44-8:31) Group work
Materials:	Transparency 'Terminology' (see Transparency 14) Handout 'Grey's Anatomy' (see Handout 20) <i>Grey's Anatomy</i> DVD
Aids used:	Overhead projector Television screen DVD player

Groupings of learners:

Introduction:	whole class
Watching:	whole class
Group work:	groups of six students
Presentations:	groups of six students

Timing:

Introduction:	10 min
Watching:	20 min
Group work:	10 min
Presentations:	10 min

Homework: Choose a pair of the key terms dealt with in class, watch and analyse your favourite television programme. Make notes on the terms you choose!

6.3.2.2. *Description:*

Another lesson on the language skill works with key terms concerning the narration of events on a television programme. Therefore, the students' vocabulary will be expanded with new terms as well as the accompanying definitions. Furthermore, the theoretical input will then be practically used in an analysis of an extract of scenes taken from *Grey's Anatomy*. It is more convenient and less confusing for the students if the teacher presents them the new terms with a transparency. The teacher can also hand out copies of the transparency for the students to follow his or her talk easily so that they are not too concerned with copying words from the transparency and listening at the same time. Every new term has to be presented with sufficient examples to make sure that the students can grasp the differences and store the new information correctly in their existing knowledge structures.

Right away from the theoretical input, the students get to apply their new knowledge in praxis. They analyse an extract of 'Six Days Part 1' (3-11) according to the key terms introduced before. The teacher splits them into groups of six. This is done best and fastest with counting through the rows and then every student gets a key term assigned according to his or her number, for instance, all the 'ones' analyse the scene according to the aspect of its plot. Another variety of dividing the class into groups is to prepare coloured slips of paper with numbers from one to six on it and every student has to take a piece out of a box. Then the colours form a group and the number on the card indicates which aspect has to be observed. In the end, there should be groups of six with every member of the group observing a different aspect. The teacher distributes handouts (see Handout 20) with the key terms and grids where the students only have to fill in what they observe. After showing the scene twice, each group fills out their handout completely as every group member reports his or her findings to the rest. To round this up and to check if none of the terms was mixed up, the teacher compares with the whole class what they found out.

Subsequent to this viewing exercise, the teacher can assign the task of creating something they observed before by themselves. Therefore the groups are persisting and each member keeps his or her key term and then together, the students come up with notes for the narration of an event of their own. At the end of the lesson, each group gets the chance to present their ideas. In their homework the students will

focus on a pair of key terms and closely analyse their favourite television series according to it. As they did on the handout they have to take notes in form of a grid.

This lesson moves from a theoretical introduction to the practical application of a new aspect of TVL. The beginning of the lesson draws on the learners' listening skills where they have to follow the teacher's explanations. While applying their study skills in group work, they are exposed to audio-visual material which asks for the homonymous reception. The last task refers again to the students' advanced television literacy, the message extending, skill (see 2.1.2. Advanced Skills).

6.3.3. *Intertextuality*

6.3.3.1. *Lesson Plan*

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students are introduced to the concept of intertextuality. The students work on their understanding of intertextuality and are encouraged to come up with examples on their own. The students are exposed to texts relating to TV texts and they reflect on their experiences.
Content:	Disambiguation and examples Group work Reflections Create a text
Materials:	Handout 'Intertextuality' (see Handout 21) Transparency 'Intertextuality' (see Transparency 15) Handouts (see Handout 22)
Aids used:	Overhead projector
Groupings of learners:	
Disambiguation:	individually/ whole class
Group work:	groups of four students
Reflections:	whole class
Creating:	groups of fours students
Timing:	
Disambiguation:	15 min
Group work:	10 min
Reflections:	5 min
Creating:	20 min

Homework: Be attentive to texts relating to your favourite television programme. Look out for intertextuality, collect texts, articles, posters, etc. and write a short observation report!

6.3.3.2. Description

The lesson on intertextuality starts out with the disambiguation of the term 'intertextuality'. As a start the students get a handout (see Handout 21) with two critical questions on intertextuality and they are encouraged to think about the term and what it might stand for. After giving them time to gather their thoughts and ideas, the teacher discusses their opinions with them and offers a clear definition on transparency which they can copy onto their handouts. After filling in the definition, the students have the task to answer the last question on the handout before they move on to the next activity of the lesson.

The next activity is a group work where each group gets to work on an 'intertext' to *Grey's Anatomy*. These texts are interviews of actors, a writer's blog, the blog of the fictional character Joe the bartender, a newspaper article on an actress, and two posters advertising an upcoming season as well as the release of the previous season on DVD. If there are more texts needed the teacher can easily expand the assortment because all different kinds of texts can be found online. It is up to the teacher if he or she leaves it to the students to form groups or if they are put into groups by the teacher. Then each group, except the group with the posters, gets the task to read their texts and note down what they learned from the text, which new and additional insights they gained and if their opinion changed in some way or another. The last group gets, together with the posters, a couple of guiding questions to work with this special kind of text. After working on their texts, each group assigns a spokesperson and presents their reflections to the rest of the class, informing them what kind of text it is first and then outlining the extracted news.

The final task for this lesson puts the students in the role of the producer instead of being the receiver. They have to write an 'intertext' by themselves. In their groups they can decide on what kind of text they want to write. If they are not familiar with the different text types it might be easier for them to follow the example they already worked on. At the end of the lesson the students hand their texts in for correction. The following lesson the teacher gives the corrected versions back and asks them to rework the texts. After revising them, the teacher can make copies of the pieces to create a folder and hand it out to every student. In their homework the learners have to be attentive to texts relating to their favourite television programme and collect as

much material as possible and make notes on what they found out and how it added to their already existing knowledge about their show.

This lesson works on the reading and writing skill in the order presented by Thoman and Jolls in *Literacy for the 21st Century*, ‘Free your Mind’ (Thoman and Jolls, 20) in reading and ‘Express your View’ (Thoman and Jolls, 20) in writing. Reflecting and talking about their thought also enhances the students’ speaking skills, especially their free speaking skills. Creating their own text draws on the students’ discourse competence and their knowledge concerning text design. This includes ‘the ability [...] to arrange sentences in sequence so as to produce coherent stretches of language.’ (CEFR, 123). An upper level class should already have some knowledge of text design, how different texts look like, how they are structured, as well as the choice of the appropriate register, and they can also go back to their mother tongue education for hints to those devices.³³⁴ Furthermore, the writing activity asks for the students work on their lexical and grammatical competence.

³³⁴ See CEFR, 123.

6.3.4. Credits

6.3.4.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students' attention is directed to the credits of a TV programme. The students work with the credits and learn what they can discover when paying attention to them.
Content:	Collocation activity Introduction to credits Analysis (Michael Grossman, 3-13 'Great Expectations', 46:27-46:56) Comparison
Materials:	Handout 'Credit' (see Handout 23) Transparency (see Transparency 16) Handout 'Table of Content of Credits' (see Handout 24) <i>Grey's Anatomy</i> DVD
Aids used:	Television screen DVD player

Groupings of learners:

Collocation:	pairs
Introduction:	whole class
Analysis:	pairs
Comparison:	whole class

Timing:

Collocation:	5 min
Introduction:	15 min
Analysis:	15 min
Comparison:	15 min

Homework: Have a look at the credits of your favourite television series and make a list of what you can find out! Write a short reflection about what was new to you and what was different to the credits following *Grey's Anatomy* (150 words)!

6.3.4.2. Description

Another lesson working on the language skill is completely devoted to written language on the television screen, namely to the credits. Usually, the credits of a television programme are neglected by the audience. As soon as the final scene flickers across the screen the viewers change the channel and do not even notice that the programme is not over yet. This lesson should make the students aware of this detail that follows every production and for sure it will create an ‘ah’-effect.

A vocabulary and collocation activity opens the lesson. The students get to know that the lesson deals with the word ‘credit’ (see Handout 23). First step is to find family members for the word family of ‘credit’. In pairs they have to fill in the grid and find adjectives or compound nouns belonging to the same family. After going over their results in plenum, the pairs move on to the next part of the activity which is to find adjectives and verbs that go with the noun ‘credit’. This subpart is compared with the whole class again before the students fill in the blanks of the third part of the handout. The last question on the handout functions as transition between the single word ‘credit’ and its connection to television.

Then, the teacher explains with the transparency displaying credits what credits in this specific context mean and it is up to the teacher to go into detail with every single job title mentioned (see Transparency 16). But when presenting credits for the first time to students, it is advisable to read through the references with them together so that they get a feeling for it. The last part after this introduction consists of the analysis of the credits of *Grey’s Anatomy*. The students, here again working in pairs, are provided with a handout where they only have to fill in a number of job titles that are in their own opinion worth mentioning (see Handout 24). It must be clarified that it is not possible to catch and write down every single reference they see. This is also the reason, why they are working in pairs because every individual will notice something different and before discussing their findings in plenum they get the chance to exchange their observations with their neighbour. Examples presented in the credits include the actors, guest stars, the creator, the editor, the director of photography, special effects staff, medical consultants, and many more.

The task for the learners' homework is that they have to have a look at the credits of their favourite programme and note down what was new to them and what differences they could notice in comparison to the credits of *Grey's Anatomy*.

The beginning of this lesson deepens the learners's semantic and lexical competence. They expand their knowledge with working on the word family and the collocations of 'credit'.³³⁵ This theoretical input is followed by a more practical task where the students use the new structures in context. The last activity of this unit is a viewing activity drawing on the students's audio-visual reception as well as on their reading skills.³³⁶

³³⁵ See CEFR, 110-113.

³³⁶ See CEFR, 65, 71.

6.4. Intercultural Aspect

This aspect is finishing up television literacy, and like the language aspect, it offers a great variety of teaching possibilities of which just a few examples can be explored here. But instructors can be sure to find an enormous amount of cultural aspects in today's television programmes that can be exploited for teaching. This aspect has the advantage that it offers, besides the target language, interesting insights into the life of other people and in concentrating on other lifestyles language acquisition becomes secondary but it still takes place on a less conscious level.

6.4.1. Culture

6.4.1.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students are encouraged to think critically about 'culture'. The students learn about cultural studies. The students are introduced to the dichotomy of high and popular culture.
Content:	Crossword Read text and define 'culture' High vs. Popular culture Panel discussion
Materials:	Handout 'What is...?' (see Handout 25) Handout 'Culture' (see Handout 26) Transparency 'Culture' (see Transparency 17) Transparency 'Panel Discussion' (see Transparency 18)
Aids used:	Overhead projector Blackboard
Groupings of learners:	
Crossword:	individually
Text:	pairs
Types of cultures:	whole class
Panel discussion:	five groups
Timing:	
Crossword:	5 min
Text:	15 min
Types of cultures:	10 min
Panel discussion:	20 min

6.4.1.2. Description

The first lesson to introduce this television literacy aspect starts out with the basic terminology and general information on culture. The students are encouraged to think critically about the term culture and they will get a feeling towards the vague concept of it. The main question is printed on the first handout. 'What is culture?'. This question will guide the students through the whole lesson. At the very beginning, they have to individually fill in a crossword puzzle. The missing words and names are in a sense related to the topic of the lesson and the students should know all of these from general knowledge and everyday life. After a couple of minutes their solutions are compared with the whole class leading to the final conclusion that all these things mentioned are a part of culture.

The next part of the lesson consists of a short text taken from Thwaites *Introducing Cultural and Media Studies*. With the help of this abstract, the students should be able to answer the overall-guiding question of the lesson without any problems, namely 'What is culture?'. In pairs they receive the task to read the text and then answer the question. At the end of this section one or two definitions can be read out to make sure all the students filtered out the correct information of the text and are equipped with a more or less straightforward definition of culture.

This part is followed by a short teacher-focused presentation on what culture really is. The transparency should point out to the students that there is nothing like 'the culture' surrounding us. They will realise that there are more than one 'cultures' and that one always makes use of binary pairs to describe culture. It is the duty of the teacher to inform the students of the historical origin of the terminology of high and low culture and to make sure they do not divide all cultural products while categorising them either high or low. Additionally, the transparency offers them synonyms for the word 'opposition'.

The final part of this introductory lesson is a panel discussion on the topic of high and low culture. In counting from one to six the teacher can split up the classroom in equal parts. Then the students with the same numbers form groups and the teacher assigns them their point of view. One group is pro high culture, another one is against, then there is one pro low culture, another one against, and one group is for

culture in general without making the distinction between high and low culture at all. The last group consists of moderators leading through the discussion. They have to prepare questions to start and to keep the debate going. They also have to guide the whole forum which at the end has to come to an agreement on the topic of what culture is. Each group gets a couple of minutes to prepare their arguments. In the meantime, the teacher arranges a discussion forum for the five panelists and the moderator. While one group is participating in the talk the other group plays the role of the audience, which is allowed to ask questions and to demonstrate their mood with applause and jeers. On the transparency the students also find useful expressions and phrases for a discussion.

This lesson introduces the students to the term culture. They get to know the dichotomy between high and low culture and they are encouraged to critically think about the concept of culture, and they will realise that it is not straightforward and easy to grasp. From a foreign language teaching point of view, the students have to resort to their sociocultural knowledge, their 'knowledge about society and culture of the community' (CEFR, 102) and work on their reading skill plus their study skill while extracting information from a text, this means reading for information. The last two parts of this unit focus on the semantic competence of the learners.³³⁷ They expand their contingent of phrases for their speaking skill, and their vocabulary knowledge is enriched with synonyms for the word 'opposite'.

³³⁷ See CEFR, 68, 115.

6.4.2. Multiculturalism

6.4.2.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get to know the term ‘multiculturalism’. The students learn to work with its definition and apply it to the U.S. The students’ awareness of it will support them in critically analysing their own culture. The students apply it to television programmes.
Content:	Associative writing ‘What is a multi-culture?’ Text ‘Melting pot or salad bowl?’ Pyramid debate ‘American ethnicities in numbers’ Watch scenes (Peter Horton, 1-02 ‘The First Cut is the Deepest’, 26:21-28:11) (Michael Grossman, 3-13 ‘Great Expectations’, 13:15-15:43)
Materials:	Handout ‘Melting pot or salad bowl?’ (see Handout 26) Transparency with chart (see Transparency 19) <i>Grey’s Anatomy</i> DVD
Aids used:	Overhead projector Television Screen DVD Player
Groupings of learners:	
Writing:	individually
Reading:	individually and pairs
Debate:	start in pairs
Watching:	whole class
Timing:	
Writing:	10 min
Reading:	15 min
Debate:	15 min
Watching:	10 min

6.4.2.2. Description

In the course of this lesson the students will work with the term ‘multiculturalism’. The lesson starts with associative writing. The teacher opens the session without introducing the topic of the lesson. The only thing they are asked for, is a piece of paper and something to write. Then the teacher writes the question: ‘What is a multi-culture?’ on the blackboard or puts it on a transparency. Then the students get a couple of minutes to write down whatever comes to their minds. It has to be clear before they start writing that they do not have to hand in their writings and that it is up to their choice how they put their thoughts down. After giving them some time to structure and note down their ideas and thoughts the teacher first has to ask for volunteers before he or she starts calling on someone.

After discussing the different thoughts and ideas on this topic, the teacher does not go too much into detail about multiculturalism, which by then should be established as today’s topic, but assigns the students another task. In the following reading activity the students get introduced to two models of how American multiculturalism is metaphorically described (see Handout 26). It should be left up to the students, if they want to answer the questions after the text on their own or with a partner. To successfully conclude the after-reading activity their answers are briefly discussed in plenum and the teacher makes sure that everyone understood the difference of the two presented models.

The following activity is called ‘Pyramid debate’ (Thornbury, 103). In this debate students have to convince their colleagues or come to an agreement between each other. The topic of the debate is: ‘The percentage of ethnicities in the US’. The starting point are pairs. Each pair has to agree on a certain percentage of Whites, Blacks, Asians and Hispanics living in the U.S., which overall has to be one hundred. As soon as one pair comes to an agreement they move on to another pair that already agreed on a fixed number. At the end, the whole class should agree on one ideal distribution. The final step in this debate is the presentation of a graph showing the percentages as released by the US Census Bureau. If there is still time left, the students get to watch a scene of ‘The First Cut is the Deepest’ (1-02) and ‘Great Expectations’ (3-13), which is followed by a brief discussion if the distribution of

ethnicities on television conforms to the reality of the American multicultural society.

This lesson works on the students' reading and especially with the support of the debate on their speaking and argumentation skills. While working on a cultural topic, their critical questioning of circumstances often nicened up by television companies is increased and they add another specific American aspect to their cultural development. Their cultural awareness increases, this means that their 'knowledge, awareness and understanding of the relation between the 'world of origin' and the 'world of the target community' (CEFR, 103) grows.

6.4.3. Stereotypes

6.4.3.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get introduced to the notion of stereotyping in television programmes. The students define the most prominent stereotypes according to their own viewing experiences. The students realise in which ways media use stereotypes.
Content:	Text ‘Stereotypes’ Group work ‘Stereotypes’ Watch scenes (Peter Horton, 1-01 ‘A Hard Day’s Night’, 17:52-18:31) (Adam Davidson, 2-07 ‘Something to Talk About’, 6:50-7:09) (Wendy Stanzler, 1-09 ‘Who’s Zoomin’ Who’, 39:15-40:28) Pair work ‘Real or stereotypical?’
Materials:	Handout ‘Stereotypes’ (see Handout 27) Posters (see Poster 3) Transparency (see Transparency 20) <i>Grey’s Anatomy</i> DVD Sticky Tape
Aids used:	Overhead projector Television Screen DVD Player Blackboard
Groupings of learners:	
Reading:	individually
Group work:	groups of three students
Watching:	groups of three students
Pair work:	pairs
Timing:	
Reading:	10 min
Group work:	10 min
Watching:	20 min
Pair work:	10 min

Homework: Tune in to your favourite television programme and write a short observation about your favourite character. To analyse if your character is stereotyped or to which extent, make use of the questions dealt with in class.

6.4.3.2. Description

The lesson on the presentation of stereotypes in television programmes starts with a reading activity. The students get a handout featuring a text on stereotyping on television (see Handout 27). Every student has to read the text individually and answer the questions on as well as beyond the text. These two kinds of questions make sure that the students, besides filtering out facts from a piece of writing also consider their own opinion on what they just read. After giving them enough time, the whole class quickly goes over the correct answers of the questions and the teacher can ask for volunteers to share their thoughts about their favourite TV show.

Now that the students are prepared with a first insight into the topic of the lesson and the use of stereotypes in moving images, they are asked to form groups of three, and then the teacher hands out two to three slips of paper with stereotypical characters and posters to each group (see Poster 3). The assignment for this group work includes that the students write down the usual characteristics as well as the attributive adjectives of the particular stereotype and create a poster also featuring an example. If the students want to draw the stereotype, the teacher should offer them the possibility of doing so but they should not be forced to create a photofit picture. At the end of this activity, the teacher provides the students with sticky tape and one group after the other puts their posters on the wall, announcing which stereotype they worked on and which attributes they added to the characterisation as well as their example.

For the viewing activity, the students stay in their groups and the teacher explains what they are doing next. They will get to see three scenes, of 'A Hard Day's Night' (1-01), 'Who's Zoomin' Who?' (1-09) and 'Something to Talk About' (2-07) in a row. For every scene they have to answer the questions displayed on the overhead projector (see Transparency 20). At the end of this activity their findings are discussed in plenum and possible differences in their opinion will be openly debated.

The last activity on stereotypes is done in pairs. The students can work with their neighbours or the teacher can ask them to count through the rows from one to two. It might be even more exciting for them if the teacher has them sitting back to back and then he or she explains the rules of this task. The teacher reads out the name of a

character, for example 'king', and one of the pair, let's say the one sitting on the right, has to note down all the adjectives a king in real life would have. The one sitting on the left, has the task to write a list of all the stereotypical adjectives with which a king is usually presented in a television programme. After each character, the members of each pair compare their lists and a selection of adjectives is noted down by the teacher on the blackboard. The assigned homework deals with the questions practised in class. The students get to watch their favourite television programme and analyse it critically for the use and presentation of stereotypes.

This lesson involves all skills, whereat reading as well as writing come to the fore. The reading part at the beginning works as an input and it forms the basis with its questions, to prepare the students for their tasks which they work out on their own. In terms of television literacy, the students gain a necessary insight into the cultural skill and their awareness will be trained to recognise and face stereotyping on television critically. Becoming aware of stereotyping influences the learners' sociocultural knowledge which is often manipulated by stereotypes.³³⁸ Also their intercultural awareness is raised, which 'covers an awareness of how each community appears from the perspective of the other, often in the form of national stereotypes.' (CEFR, 103).

³³⁸ See CEFR, 102.

6.4.4. Ideology

6.4.4.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get introduced to the term ‘ideology’ and its presence on the television screen. The students’ awareness of ideological messages and values is raised. The students work on the development and conveyance of ideological messages.
Content:	Word family ‘Ideology’ Definition of ‘Ideology’ Read text and fill in the gaps Watch scenes and guess the message (Peter Horton, 2-01 ‘Raindrops Keep Falling on my Head’, 14:30-15:27) (Dan Minaha, 3-07 ‘Where the Boys Are’, 9:12-10:15) (Peter Horton, 2-02 ‘Enough is Enough’, 15:19-16:58) Script writing
Materials:	Transparency ‘Ideology’ (see Transparency 21) Handout ‘Ideology and TV’ (see Handout 28) Handout ‘Messages on GA’ (see Handout 29) Handout with instructions (see Handout 30) <i>Grey’s Anatomy</i> DVD
Aids used:	Overhead projector Television Screen DVD Player
Groupings of learners:	
Word Family:	whole class
Definition:	whole class
Reading:	individually
Watching:	in pairs
Script writing:	groups of four students
Timing:	
Word Family:	5 min
Definition:	5 min
Reading:	10 min
Watching:	10 min
Script writing:	20 min

6.4.4.2. Description

Another lesson focusing on the improvement of the intercultural skill of television literacy deals with ideology. Students are made aware that certain messages and values are transmitted via television programmes and those often pursue a plan. The lesson starts out with the work on the word family of 'ideology'. Together with the teacher the learners create the word family on a transparency (see Transparency 21). To avoid useless noting down of single words, it is of help to write one sentence for each word. Afterwards the teacher presents the students with a prepared definition of what ideology means.

This introduction is followed by a reading activity, which points out to the students the relation between ideology and television (see Handout 28). The class is asked to read the text individually and fill in the gaps on their own. The correct words for the blanks are displayed in the box below the text and most of them belong to the word family dealt with at the beginning of the lesson. After giving them enough time to read the text and finish the activity, their solutions are compared in plenum and mistakes solved.

The theoretical part of the lesson is followed by a practical one. Now the students get to watch three scenes of 'Raindrops Keep Falling on my Head' (2-01), 'Where the Boys Are' (3-07) and 'Enough is Enough' (2-02) and in pairs they have to find out what the underlying message of each scene is. Therefore, they get a handout with three suggestions for each scene and they have to tick the correct box (see Handout 29). At the end of the viewing activity, their findings and opinions are discussed. As a final step, the students get the chance not only to notice ideological messages and values on the television screen but also to create a script where they have to convey a certain message. For this activity, the class is divided into groups of four and the way it is done is up to the teacher or the students themselves. Each group gets a piece of paper with their instructions and the message they have to use. They have to write a script of a television programme of their choice, this can be a fictitious one or one all members of the group are familiar with. In this script which is not allowed to be longer than five to ten minutes, they have to include their message but it is not allowed to say explicitly what it is. The rest of the time is used for their work on the script. The following lesson is devoted to the presentation of the scripts. Each group

gets to read aloud and present their work and the other groups have to guess what the underlying message is.

The lesson on ideology works again on the students' sociocultural knowledge and on their intercultural awareness. Besides, their reading and writing skills are dealt with too. Writing a script, as a task belonging to advanced television literacy skills, draws on their semantic competence as well as on their lexical and grammatical competence. As they are working on something in the target language, the learners also need to pay attention to their sociolinguistic competence including being aware of linguistic markers, politeness conventions and register differences of the language in use. The viewing activity shifts the starting point of the students to a quiz and uses language playfully, in the so called ludic use.³³⁹

³³⁹ See CEFR, 118, 55f.

6.4.5. Religion

6.4.5.1. Lesson Plan

Target Group:	various levels
Aim:	The students get an overview of the variety of America's religions. The students learn to understand why there is such a great mixture of religions in the U.S.A.
Content:	Watch scenes and fill in handout (Sara Pia Anderson, 1-08 'Save Me', 14:29-15:22, 23:18-24:11) (Mark Tinker, 2-05 'Bring the Pain', 7:34-9:00, 28:28-29:21) (Jeff Melman, 2-23 'Blues for Sister Someone', 7:23-9:55) Read text 'Religions of America' Group work on selected religions Presentations
Materials:	Handout 'Religion' (see Handout 31) Handout 'Religions of America' (see Handout 32) Handout with texts on religions (see Handout 33) <i>Grey's Anatomy</i> DVD
Aids used:	Television Screen DVD Player
Groupings of learners:	
Watching:	individually
Reading:	whole class
Group work:	six to eight groups
Presentations:	six to eight groups
Timing:	
Watching:	15 min
Reading:	5 min
Group work:	30 min
Presentations:	following lesson

6.4.5.2. Description

The last lesson exemplifies the teaching of a specific aspect of American culture, namely religion. There exist a vast number of different topics, for instance the social system, which can be taught when dealing with American culture. Therefore, it is up to the teacher and maybe to the students if they get to make a choice or suggestions. The example taken here is religion. The lesson starts out with a viewing activity. The students get a handout that indicates the topic of the lesson and several questions which have to be answered during or right after the viewing activity (see Handout 31). Before the teacher shows the short scenes, the learners have to start thinking about this topic and therefore they have to briefly answer the first two questions to get their minds working. Afterwards, the teacher shows them the selected scenes cut together of 'Save Me' (1-08), 'Bring the Pain' (2-05) and 'Blues for Sister Someone' (2-23). After playing them two times in a row, the whole class has to fill in the rest of the worksheet and afterwards their findings are compared.

After focusing the students' attention on the new topic and encourage them to critically think about it, they receive more information. On a handout about religions in the United States, which is then read together, they get a general overview (see Handout 32). The teacher can ask for volunteers or simply call on students to read outloud. The reading part is followed by the instruction that they have to individually underline the religions mentioned in the text. This provides them with an answer to the questions from the first handout (see Handout 31).

The second half of the lesson is spent with group work. The class is divided into six to eight groups, depending on the number of students. The way how the groups are formed is up to the teacher and to the habit of the learners. Then each group gets a religion assigned on which they will work. There is the possibility to ask for preferences; maybe one of the groups is particularly interested in Judaism. Then the students are provided with handouts with general information on various religions (see Handout 33). Then they have the rest of the classroom time and if necessary the beginning of the following lesson to prepare a short presentation accompanied by a handout for their classmates. The handout has to be handed in at the end of the lesson, to give the teacher the opportunity to make copies for the whole class. The presentations are then held the following lesson.

This lesson works on a number of competences according to the Common European Framework. At the beginning, with the viewing activity and the introductory reading the students' sociocultural knowledge and their intercultural awareness are positively expanded.³⁴⁰ The reading activity where the teacher asks students to read out aloud improves their phonetic and orthoepic competence. This includes the 'knowledge of, and skill in the perception and production of sound units' (CEF, 116) and the ability to pronounce words correctly on their very first encounter.³⁴¹ The last task of the lesson again makes the learners work on their study skills in effectively working in groups and make use of materials in the target language. Filtering out the main information of a text for their classmates puts them into a mediating position. Mediating in this case is done, first by summarising the text for their colleagues, and then by giving them an oral presentation referring to the prepared handouts.³⁴²

³⁴⁰ See CEFR, 102-103.

³⁴¹ See CEFR, 117.

³⁴² See CEFR, 87.

Conclusion

McDreamy and McSteamy in the English language classroom clearly demonstrated that teaching with and learning from new media, especially from the television set, is essential to 21st century education. Children as well as adults have to be trained to live and act as television literate beings, being able to critically analyse any kind of television production. The whole purpose of this thesis is to present a new kind of literacy, expanding the already existing pool of literacies, and to show teachers and instructors that including new media and teaching a new competence is not as difficult or complex as it might seem at the first look. Based on the traditional literacies and their extension, teaching is in no way hindered by introducing television programmes.

Although there has to be an essential prerequisite, namely a television set or a notebook and a video projector in the classroom, which nowadays nearly every class or at least one class per school is equipped with, it should be possible for every teacher, especially for teachers of English to include at least some basic activities into their teaching. Optional subjects, for instance in English, are perfectly suitable for in-depth study of this topic. It has to be said that the presented lesson plans as well as their order simply are suggestions and that it should rather be considered as a basket full of fascinating topics accompanied with activities which can be chosen at discretion.

Finally, there is to say that this thesis hopefully offers inspiration to experienced and becoming teachers and that schools finally acknowledge and what is more important make use of the potential of the media surrounding our lives.

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Figure 11 :

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