

# New Challenges in Language and Literature

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Organizers

# New Challenges in Language and Literature

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# Foreword

## New Challenges, Daring Responses

The Brazilian Association of Teachers of English Language and Literatures in English – ABRAPUI was founded in 1970, and since then has organized several conferences that focused on a variety of topics. At first the language and literature meetings were held separately, but as the years passed we witnessed an ever increasing approximation between the two fields. After two joint conferences for language and literature in the years 2003 and 2005, there was little doubt as to the validity of such interface, and the organizers of the 2007 meeting – ABRAPUI’s first international conference – at the Federal University of Minas Gerais, in Belo Horizonte, searched for a theme that would be equally relevant and would incite enriching presentations and contributions to both fields of investigation. Among the first questions raised were: instead of a retrospective gaze at what has been done already, what are some of the issues that affect – and perhaps afflict – both the research and teaching in the fields of language and literature in our own present time? What are some of the strategies that researchers and educators have been employing to deal with these issues?

Somewhat surprisingly, we stumbled upon the extent to which interdisciplinarity has been effecting changes in both fields. For instance, on today’s agenda is the relation between language teaching and technology, as well as the connection between literature and other forms of art – just to name two examples, for the sake of illustration. The common denominator behind all our queries and our probing into contemporary issues became then the conference theme: *New Challenges in Language and Literature*.

In recent years research on language and literature has become increasingly interested in challenging issues concerning the forms of approaching specific queries and potential responses to them. This interest has led researchers to question current ways of investigation in order to switch over to new systems of inquiry. A wide range of scholars in both areas of thought has addressed several questions on a number of specificities without necessarily arriving at satisfactory conclusions that could reveal an accurate picture of the phenomenon under analysis. Bearing this in mind, this volume of essays recognizes the need to present new challenges by raising questions such as: what changes have the research and teaching of language and literature undergone in the recent past? What are some of the challenges of researching and teaching a foreign language and its literature within the Brazilian university system? What sort of cross-cultural interactions have proven beneficial? The problems addressed by the various authors and their texts move toward considerations that ultimately hope to enlighten the following concerns: how to take advantage of the fast technological innovations to promote curriculum changes; how to foster autonomy and better equip our students for their academic pursuits in the twenty-first century; how changes in the cultural, social and political setting, both in Brazil and abroad, have positively influenced research and teaching activities; how to assure that yet unheard voices will be made audible; how to induce and foster the development of new topics of research and teaching that have emerged in recent years in our areas; how to cope with challenges posed by the classrooms, by learners' identities and the identity of the English language itself; and how to create learning ecologies going beyond the classroom.

The conference resulted in the electronic proceedings, but the urgency of the theme and its appeal to the conference audience have also led to the publication of this homonymous volume of essays. The reader will find here not a printed version of the oral presentations, but rather selected essays that are the product of the presenters' discussion and post-conference further considerations.

The Organizers.