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Lectura literaria en clases de español como lengua extranjera (S/FL) en Brasil

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VOL. 3 (2024)

ISSN 2952-2013 pp. 44-58
<https://doi.org/10.33776/linguodidactica.v3.8162>



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Abstract:

We understand that the literary text (LT) provides the student with a familiarity with the forms and uses of the language studied, in addition to the chance to acquire practical, functional, communicative, cultural, discursive and literary knowledge. With this, it can be a strong ally for the success of teaching and learning foreign languages, in order to develop the communicative and especially reading competence of language learners. In Brazil, it has already taken fifteen years of teaching, research, extension and practices for the inclusion of literature in Spanish language classes, considering the activities carried out in the Research Group LEER - Literature: Study, Teaching and (Re)reading of the world (Grupo de Pesquisa LEER - Literatura: Estudo, Ensino e (Re)leitura do mundo), at the Research Center of Teaching and Languages (Núcleo de Pesquisa em Ensino e Linguagens - NUPEL) and at the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN). This article presents data from a survey conducted with twenty-seven public school high school students in Brazil and a Spanish language teacher from these classes and aimed to investigate the perceptions of students after participation in a systematic work of literary reading practices in Spanish in Brazilian High School. The instruments that served as the basis for our reflections were: the class observation protocols carried out by the researcher, as well as the students' responses to the evaluation questionnaire applied at the end of the school year. After carrying out our study, we noticed that the students began to have more confidence and feel more capable to understand and interpret texts in Spanish. We also point out that, for most of the participating students, the novel was the text chosen as the one they liked the most, followed by theater, poetry and short story, respectively.

Keywords:

Literacy reading; Spanish as a foreign language (S/FL); Brazilian students.

Fecha de recepción: 08 de enero de 2024

Resumen:

Entendemos que el texto literario (TL) proporciona al estudiante familiaridad con las formas y usos del idioma estudiado, además de la oportunidad de adquirir conocimientos prácticos, funcionales, comunicativos, culturales, discursivos y literarios. Con esto, puede ser un aliado sólido para el éxito de la enseñanza y el aprendizaje de lenguas extranjeras, con el objetivo de desarrollar la competencia comunicativa y, especialmente, la competencia lectora de los aprendices de idiomas. En Brasil, ya han pasado quince años de enseñanza, investigación, extensión y prácticas para la inclusión de la literatura en las clases de español, considerando las actividades realizadas en el Grupo de Investigación LEER - Literatura: Estudio, Enseñanza y (Re)lectura del mundo, en el Centro de Investigación de Enseñanza y Lenguajes (NUPEL) y en el Instituto Federal de Educación, Ciencia y Tecnología de Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN). Este artículo presenta datos de una encuesta realizada con veintisiete estudiantes de secundaria de escuelas públicas en Brasil y un profesor de español de estas clases, con el objetivo de investigar las percepciones de los estudiantes después de participar en un trabajo sistemático de prácticas de lectura literaria en español en la escuela secundaria brasileña. Los instrumentos que sirvieron de base para nuestras reflexiones fueron: los protocolos de observación de clase realizados por el investigador, así como las respuestas de los estudiantes al cuestionario de evaluación aplicado al final del año escolar. Después de llevar a cabo nuestro estudio, notamos que los estudiantes comenzaron a tener más confianza y a sentirse más capaces de entender e interpretar textos en español. También señalamos que, para la mayoría de los estudiantes participantes, la novela fue el texto elegido como el que más les gustó, seguido por el teatro, la poesía y el cuento, respectivamente.

Palabras claves:

Lectura de alfabetización; español como lengua extranjera (S/FL); estudiantes brasileños.

Fecha de aceptación: 09 de marzo de 2024

1. Introduction

Literary genres, both in antiquity and in contemporary times, have always been studied from the angle of literary theories, and do not gain prominence in linguistic studies, as if they were not part of the numerous list of textual genres of the present day. We argue, however, that the literary text (LT) can be a strong ally for the success of teaching and learning foreign languages, in order to develop the communicative and especially reading competence of language learners.

Literary texts offer numerous possibilities for work, ranging from the goal to the training we intend to achieve. Literature functions as an exponent of cultures and discourses from different regions of different countries and offers numerous possibilities of choice to the teacher, mainly due to the universality of literary themes and brings linguistic-communicative references that help in learning a foreign language (FL).

Authors like Mendoza (1998, 2002, 2004, 2007), Albaladejo (2007), Silva (2011, 2016, 2022), Aragão (2006), among others, argue that literary reading is present in S/FL classes and that it can help students communicate better in the language they are studying.

This work presents data and activities resulting from an experimental doctoral research carried out with students of the 2nd year of High School in a Public School in Natal/RN and the respective Spanish language teacher of these classes (Silva, 2016), as well as reflections of fifteen years of teaching, research, extension and practices aimed at the inclusion of literature in Spanish as a foreign language (S/FL) classes in Brazil, but specifically in the states of Ceará and Rio Grande do Norte, considering the activities carried out in the Research Group LEER - Literatura: Study, Teaching and (Re) reading the world, Research Center in Teaching and Languages (NUPEL) and the Federal Institute of Education, Science and technology of Rio Grande do Norte (IFRN).

From the perspective of twenty-seven students on the contributions of reading classes to the development of reading comprehension and their literary competence, our objective in this article was to investigate the perceptions of students after participation in a systematic work of literary reading practices in Spanish in Brazilian High School.

2. Theoretical framework

We argue that reading should be worked on in the teaching of S/FL in school, because just like Albaladejo (2007), we understand that from the development of students' reading competence, consequently, other skills will be developed.

In Silva (2011), we noticed that many high school teachers still have the idea that the most important thing to be studied in a foreign language class at school is grammar. However, although it is easier to evaluate the student by grammatical knowledge, the school cannot stop working on reading, whether in the mother tongue or in a foreign language, because it is a valid means for teachers and students in the acquisition of knowledge, by providing a rich field of information, which is not limited only to structural aspects of the language. It also is, according to Cosson (2014),

a process of sharing, a social competence. Hence, one of the main functions of the school is precisely to constitute itself as a space where we learn to share, to process reading (...). When the school fails in this sharing, in the reading process, in the function of becoming readers, it fails in

everything else, because there is no knowledge without reading, without the mediation of the word and its interpretation, of reading, finally (Cosson, 2014, p.36).

Silva (2016, 2022) found that Spanish-speaking high school students subjected to literary reading practices showed significant improvement in the following aspects of literary competence: reflection on an element of the narrative (literary code: narrator), reflection on an element of the narrative (narrative time), identification of knowledge about literary genres and reflection on an element of the narrative; as well as in the following aspects of reading comprehension: understanding a text, identification or recognition of a textual element, reflection on the text, obtaining information and interpretation: inference.

For Jouve (2012), literary reading is understood as "complex, plural activity that develops in several directions" (Jouve, 2012, p.17), being a neurophysiological, cognitive and affective process. According to the author, the neurophysiological process has a subjective character and refers to perception, anticipation of structures and interpretation. The cognitive emphasizes the competence that the reader must possess to continue a reading, and have some knowledge of the world. The affective, on the other hand, appears in reading, according to the author, because it provokes different emotions in the reader.

Although we know that it is impossible to dissociate the linguistic knowledge present in a written text and that, therefore, when working on literary reading, the teacher also uses it for a linguistic approach, we defend that literature is not underused as a simple instrument to give examples or work linguistically isolated sentences. Reading should be in the foreground, helping the student in the development of their reading and literary competence.

By favoring the understanding and interpretation of literary texts, we provide that literature becomes more visible and attractive to the student, building their literary competence, which involves "both interpretation and creation skills that, equally to knowledge, refer transversely to many other concepts and areas of knowledge" (Sanz, 2006, p.18). It involves, therefore, a series of varied knowledge ranging from linguistic, cultural and historical.

We therefore argue that the teacher, by using literary texts in foreign language classes, provides the student with an understanding of human behavior, in addition to enhancing their training as a complete and conscious human being. And, surely, this teacher will find one (or more) literary text(s) for each topic you want to work on in your foreign language reading classes (love, youth, birth, death, etc.), because "through literature, we have access to a great diversity of texts, since the multiplicity of forms and the plurality of themes are typical of literary discourse" (Cosson, 2014, p.49), resulting, therefore, in a valuable resource for the classroom.

The reading classes carried out throughout our work were written texts and always with a communicative focus. Communicative foreign language teaching is one "that organizes learning experiences in terms of activities/tasks of real interest and/or need of the student so that he/she is able to use the target language to perform real actions in interaction with other speakers-users of that language."(Almeida Filho, 1993, p.47). It seeks, therefore, to teach what is meaningful and what makes sense for the student.

For the selection of texts, we follow the guiding principles proposed by Silva (2016), as well as the theoretical contributions of Accquaroni (2007), Albadalejo (2007), Aragão (2007), Mendoza (2022, 2004, 2007), among others, in which we consider that:

- The texts chosen must be accessible, authentic, that allows the integration of various skills and that are motivating. In addition, it is necessary that the teacher knows well and has done previous readings of such texts;
- The choice must be made based on the preferences of the students and the teacher, one cannot exceed the other;
- The teaching practice must work the affective filter, always observing the motivations of the students, raising their self-esteem;
- The planning should contain pre-reading, reading and post-reading activities, which work on prediction, understanding and interpretation, according to the need of the class;
- The LT cannot be used only as an example, as a pretext for other subjects, it must be used for the formation and enrichment of communicative competence, from reading comprehension;
- The LT is not the only type that has resources that allow students to develop language skills, however, a systematization with literary reading provides an improvement in the development of the skills of literary competence and reading comprehension;
- The most extensive works can be worked on in the classroom through fragments well selected by the teacher, it must contain a unity of meaning in itself and be an important part of the work, in addition to following the other criteria already mentioned, since this can stimulate students to read more complex works;
- The LT goes far beyond a source of culture, it is a source of communicative situations that enables an appropriation of linguistic and sociocultural forms of the language studied, in addition to fostering the literary reading habit of students;
- Reading and group activities should be stimulated, since the exchange of knowledge that these activities provide allows a better development of the communicative formation of students;
- Reading comprehension and interpretation should be the focus of literary reading classes; however, this does not prevent the teacher from developing activities that stimulate other language skills.

The formulation of our proposals was based on the contributions of Cosson (2006, 2014), Mendoza (1998, 2002, 2004), Solé (1998), Silva (2011, 2016), among others, which indicate that the literary reading class should be structured in three distinct moments, being them: the pre-reading, introductory moment of the LT, where the teacher captivates the student to the theme to be worked seeking to resume the previous knowledge of the students; reading, where the student has contact with the text and performs the reading procedures (it can be mediated by the teacher, alone or both); finally, post-reading, in which the teacher works the text with related activities, in order to make the student systematize the entire subject addressed.

Regarding the importance of literary reading in teaching foreign languages, we highlight that some studies have been carried out internationally, such as those carried out by Chou (2022), LeBlanc, Mussa, & Fente (2020), Spann, & Wagner, Siepmann (2023), among others. However, they always focus on English as a foreign language and not Spanish as a foreign language.

3. Methodology

The present research can be classified, regarding its objectives, as explanatory. This type of research "aims to deepen the knowledge of reality, looking for the reason, the why of things" (Andrade, 2010, p. 112) and according to Gil (2010), these researches are "the ones that deepen the knowledge of reality, because they aim to explain the reason, the why of things" (Gil, 2010, p. 28).

Within the notion of research described by Rudio (1986), our study falls into the so-called causal-comparative study, in which, according to the author, the researcher starts from the observation of the phenomenon that was produced, and seeks to find, among the various possible causes, the factors that are related to the phenomenon or contribute to determine its appearance. Thus, the independent variable (such as, for example, the insertion of literary genres in classes), which can be manipulated and measured, causes effects on a dependent variable (such as, for example, the development of literary competence) that should only be measured, and not manipulated.

3. 1. Research subjects

The research participants were twenty-seven high school SFL students of a public school, aged between fifteen and sixteen years old, 60% (sixteen) girls and 40% (eleven) boys. The students were in the 2nd year of high school and were subjected to reading literary texts in Spanish during the 2015 school year.

3. 2. Research instruments

The instruments considered for the data presented in this article were the student experience assessment questionnaire, as well as the protocols for recording observed classes and the didactic material produced by the researcher and the teacher.

Because we believe that understanding what students think is essential for understanding how the process of teaching and learning a language occurs, at the end of the school year, in order to obtain information about the level of awareness of the development of their reading comprehension skills in Spanish, as well as about the acceptance (or not) of reading activities, we applied an evaluation questionnaire, consisting of four questions, only for students in the experimental groups.

During the classes, we recorded the experiences and facts in a class registration protocol, since we understood that only in this way would we be able to account for this complex universe that is the classroom.

According to Marconi & Lakatos (2005, p.192), observation "is a data collection technique to obtain information [...] and it does not consist only in seeing and hearing, but also in examining facts or phenomena that one wishes to study" (Marconi & Lakatos, 2005, p.192) and, with this, in our observations, we also recorded our impressions and our observations regarding the teacher's work with the texts, as well as the reception of the students, in addition to the results of the exercises carried out in the classroom with the texts (which ones seemed more accepted, which ones promoted greater discussions, level of deepening of the students).

4. Results and Discussion: Teaching Spanish as a foreign language (S/FL) with literature

4.1. S/FL classes with readings of literary texts

The classes were carried out working on communicative competence focusing on the development of reading comprehension skills and literary competence. Although all classes were reading, we still worked on writing, listening and speaking skills. We used five distinct literary genres: poetry in five classes, short stories in four classes, fragments of novels in three classes and fragments of theatrical works in three classes, totaling fifteen classes with literary reading. For the sake of text limitation, in this article, we will present only five classes: one of each genre worked.

The class with the small poetry *Hombre de color* took as its main theme the issue of racism, more specifically color prejudice. This small poetry can be accessed online (verboclara.wordpress.com). The teacher only worked on the prediction after delivering the text and, many of the students, read before giving any opinion, which compromised the pre-reading phase. The reading was performed easily, since many of the students identified with the reading and did not have many vocabulary questions. Regarding the genre, the teacher explained that it was a poetry, literary text characterized by the composition in verses structured in a harmonious way.

The post-reading phase was more coordinated and there was a participation of students, who reported situations in which they suffered prejudices (by hair type, color, among others). We saw that many of the students projected themselves to the text, proving that "in the poetic instant of the text, the individual recognizes himself as the subject of his own destiny, identifies himself with the joys and sorrows of the text and begins to understand his own joys and sorrows" (Cruz, 2012, p.210).

The final activity consisted of completing the sentence "El *prejuicio es ____". At first, the students were frightened and said that they would not know how to do it. However, the teacher encouraged them and said it was a one-line sentence. They tried to write on their own and when they couldn't, they called the teacher to find out how to write some word they were trying to put in the sentence. After ten minutes, the students read the sentences and the teacher wrote them on the board: "El prejuicio es la pura ignorancia"/ "El prejuicio es un color sin color" /"El prejuicio es horrible"/"El prejuicio es una manera de agresión a los humanos" /"El prejuicio es intolerante"/"El prejuicio es caótico"/"El prejuicio es una cosa muy mala" /"El prejuicio es una manera de ver algo como no es" /"El prejuicio es una soledad".

At the end of the class, after the students left, the teacher acknowledged that she had forgotten to work on the prediction before delivering the text and that, with this, she thought she had compromised the beginning of the class a little. She also said that in the next ones she would do differently and justified that it was the first time she worked reading divided into three parts (pre-reading, reading and post-reading). She also stated that, in the end, she was satisfied with what the students were able to do, even in the face of adversity, and that she was able to work on vocabulary, writing, and speaking.

As an example of the lesson with the short story genre, we present "Una carta para un cartero" (eljardinonline.com.ar). The teacher explained, at the beginning of the class, that the text to be worked on would be a story and when asking what the students remembered about the characteristics of the story and the types of narrator, they talked about the character-narrator and the observer. The teacher asked about the characteristics of each one, they said that the character is part of the story

and the observer is not. She added, further, the omniscient, and explained that, in this type, the narrator knows everything about the characters and about the plot.

The teacher put the title of the text on the blackboard (*una carta para un cartero*) and worked on the prediction. They were building a story complementing each other's ideas: one began by saying that there was a dog in one of the houses that the postman delivered the mail, then another said that he had been bitten and went to the hospital. And then someone would write to him while he was there. Then the teacher asked if postman was a profession and everyone said yes. Then she asks them what professions were perhaps in that text. They spoke doctor, nurse, writer and veterinarian, as well as postman.

When the teacher handed over the text, many complained about the length and said they would not read, however the teacher insisted and, when they began to read, these students were expressing their opinion: "Ah, it's long, but it's easy". "Oh, well, it's good to read." Regarding this relationship between reading and easy or difficult text, Smith (1999) states that when inexperienced or learner readers find a text easy to read, they tend to read it as experienced readers.

At the end of the reading, the teacher asks the students if what they said about the story before the reading was confirmed. The students laughed and said they "got it wrong." With regard to the professions, they identified only that of postman and captain. The non-confirmation of some predictions made by students before reading shows us that

Formulating hypotheses, making predictions, requires taking risks, since by definition they do not involve the accuracy of what was predicted or formulated. To take risks you need to make sure that this is possible, that is, that no one will be sanctioned for having ventured. [...] the predictions made by students are never absurd, that is, with the available information - title and illustrations - they formulate expectations that, even if they do not come true, they could come true; although they are not exact, they are pertinent (Solé, 1998, p.108).

In the final activity, the teacher asked the students to write in Spanish what profession they wanted to practice and why, completing the sentence "Pienso ser un_____ porque____". During writing, students had difficulties with vocabulary and connectives in Spanish. Since there was little time for them to write, the teacher could not ask them to read. Just collected the sentences to correct them at home and give to students in the next class.

It should be emphasized, once again, that the activities designed for writing did not aim to train writers in Spanish, but to offer them the opportunity to produce texts in the foreign language studied.

At the end of the class, after the students left, the teacher told us that she was very satisfied with the result of the classes and said that she was taking the activities to the 1st grade classes so that she would be practicing more teaching practices with the use of literature and so that the first-year students already had this contact. The teacher internalized, therefore, that with each literary event we participate in, we modify our relationship with the world and, as teachers, we can also modify our teaching practice, working on literature, including in classes and grades that we had not worked before.

For the class with romance, we chose the first fragment, to be worked on with the students, from the book "El baile de la Victoria" by Antonio Skármeta. The teacher started the class talking about victories (in a pun on the name of the book: El baile de la Victoria) and asked the students what they needed to achieve victories and writes down on the board the answers: *dinero, trabajo, alegría*. Before handing the text to the students, the teacher explained that the text of the lesson would be a fragment of a novel. Then she read the summary of the work and only then handed the fragment to the students with a situation that occurred only with one of the characters in the work: Santiago.

She asked the students to silently read the fragment, and then read it aloud. Then she talked to them about the text, about what they understood and asked them to make a relationship with the current economic and unemployment situation in our country. They were motivated to speak, they said that they were with many unemployed family members, especially older ones (this is not the case with the character who is young). In addition, many of the students gave their negative opinions about employing people like the character Santiago, who was an ex-convict.

At the end, the teacher divided the class into groups of six students so that they could write in Spanish some dialogue in which Mr. Santiago could get a job. Although they said they would not employ ex-convicts, the written productions were with texts offering scholarships, as well as jobs as sellers, bootblacks, gardeners and electricians, which shows us, in part, that when a student is exposed to reading a literary text, the process of knowing himself and the world around him expands, thus making literature a space for experimentation and transformation.

And finally, for the theater genre, we take a fragment of the work "Don Juan Tenorio". The teacher took the students to the newly opened language room, which, in addition to being air-conditioned, is very spacious. The students followed excitedly into the room and, after everyone was accommodated, the teacher began the class by asking the students what they knew about the figure of Don Juan. The answers were given in Portuguese, but she noted on the board the words in Spanish: *conquistador, picaflor, guapo, fuerte, gentil, valente*.

Then the teacher explained that the text of the lesson would be a fragment of the theatrical work "Don Juan Tenorio" by the Spanish writer José Zorrilla, and before handing the fragment to the students, she read a short summary of the work to them.

After handing a copy of the fragment to each student, she asked them to read the text silently. After five minutes, the teacher asked if there had been any doubt in understanding and the students expressed doubt in conjugated verbs in the second person plural (vosotros). The teacher reviewed the use of Tú/Vosotros and Usted/Ustedes and then confirmed the predictions made by the students at the beginning of the lesson.

She also took a video with the staging of the play adapted for the students to recognize some of the excerpts read in class, but only put it for five minutes, which was enough for the students to recognize the part read and staged. After that the teacher asked: "¿Conocéis a un Don Juan?" and automatically, they recognized two "Don Juan" in the room and the recognized ones were happy with the nomination. Finally, the teacher divided the students into pairs and trios and asked them to write a text summarizing what a Don Juan is for them. Some groups wrote texts portraying Don Juan

4.2. The insertion of literary reading practices in Spanish language classes at school: contributions from the students' perspective

negatively and others positively and expressed much interest in the text, commenting that they did not know that the character was part of Spanish literature.

Finally, we highlight that after the literary readings, the students demonstrated more security and more autonomy for reading in Spanish, choosing the reading strategies they would use and also exercising an effective reflection on the text. Many related the text with their life and reading experiences, thus bringing the reader intertext, which is defended by Mendoza (2004) as essential for the development of literary competence.

The students were receptive to the readings and the proposed activities, worked and participated spontaneously in the discussions and when the teacher told them that it was the last day of reading literary texts, many students thanked and verbalized that they felt safer to read in Spanish and that the classes had helped in their lives, confirming the impressions we had during the observations. In the following topic, we will bring students' answers to the questionnaire after literary reading practices.

As we mentioned earlier, we bring here answers from the experience evaluation questionnaire, answered anonymously by the students, in order to obtain information about their level of awareness about the development of reading competence in Spanish, as well as about the acceptance (or not) of the reading activities.

In the first question, in which we asked if the student had liked the way the classes had been conducted, all students answered "yes". These data demystify the belief, which many Spanish language teachers still have, as we have seen in previous research by Silva (2011, 2016), that S/FL students are not interested in reading and that, in Spanish classes, they only like music.

In the same question, we asked the reason and realized that the texts were attractive to them for several reasons, the main one being due to the fact that they were able to understand the texts. In their speeches, we noticed that the few classes aimed at reading, have already attracted them and made them change their view on the language studied. In their speeches, the students highlighted that they took a break from the routine and were able to realize that the Spanish language can be part of their daily lives.

The students, in addition to attributing the fact that they were able to understand the texts as the main reason for enjoying the classes, also mentioned that the classes were creative and interesting, and that through them they were able to increase the reading experience. This positive attitude towards reading may have contributed to them becoming habitual readers, since

Reading a text requires the reader to activate a series of knowledge, skills and attitudes (depending on their literary competence) to understand and interpret it. Of these elements, it is the third (the interest, the taste for reading, the desire to read) that contributes most decisively in the formation of habitual readers (Sánchez-Fortún, 2007, p. 250).

The students also stated that the texts were well selected and that they were able to understand the words and interact with their colleagues during the proposed activities. This interaction in group activities was, as we observed during the activities and from these speeches, one of the factors that favored the understanding of the text. Collie and Slater (1987) state that:

On a more practical level, working with a group, you can lessen the difficulties presented by the number of unknowns in a literary text. Very often another person in a group will be able to provide the missing link or fill in an appropriate meaning of a crucial word, or else the task of doing so will be shared. (Collie & Slater, 1987, p. 9).

In the second question, in which we asked if the students believed that they had improved reading competence in the Spanish language, all students answered in the affirmative. When we asked why, they used the word "learn" to justify, adding differentiated learning by each group.

The students highlighted as their main reason the fact that they had learned new words, which demonstrates that, for them, the improvement of reading competence is strongly linked to improved vocabulary comprehension, which was one of the main difficulties pointed out by them at the beginning of the school semester.

The second most pointed reason (having learned new pronunciations) leads us to reflect on two points: 1) that there is a belief that one advances in learning a foreign language when one advances in orality and 2) although it was not our intention, as we have already said before, we realized that focusing on reading competence, we can advance in other skills, such as orality. According to Lazar (2005), the literary text makes it possible to work with orality by promoting the exploration of opinions and/or debates related to the topics discussed.

It should be noted here that this advance in orality was not measured by us, not least because it was not the objective of this research, but it was one of the evolutions perceived during the class observations, verified in our class observations, as well as in the students' speech in the evaluation questionnaire.

In addition to these two reasons pointed out by them for the fact that they believe they have advanced in reading competence, the students also mentioned that they have learned to understand the texts better and to read more. Collie and Slater (1987) argue that, when exposed to the literary text, the student becomes familiar with the varied structures of the language, manifested differently in literature, allowing the development of writing practice.

In addition, as literary texts "are true interactive documents, that is, they seek, through keys, stimuli and clues, the implication and active response of the reader in the construction of meanings." (Sánchez-Fortún, 2002, p.137), the reader tends not to remain indifferent to it.

It should be noted that, in many of the students' statements, we noticed that, although they pointed out that the main reason that led them to believe that they improved their reading competence in Spanish was the learning of new words, they also understood that the literal translation of word for word was not necessary. This data was very important for the research, because like Smith (1999), we understand that, although a test and/or an observation indicates whether or not the reader under-

stands something and has advanced or not in his reading competence, only the individual himself can affirm what he feels, whether he understands something or not, whether or not he has improved his competence in something.

In the third question, we asked which text or activity the students liked the most and for what reason. Most of the participants answered that the novel (fragments) was the text they liked the most, followed by the theater (fragments), poetry and short story, respectively. From the students' statements, we noticed that there was a great acceptance of the fragments of romance and theater, since these were the genres pointed out as more "likable" by the students.

The students also pointed out that through the theater they were able to practice orality. According to Lazar (2005), when working on a part of a play, there is a possibility for the teacher to work on orality, because "as most plays are rich in dialogues, using them with students is a useful and exciting way to focus on colloquial language" (Lazar, 2005, p.138).

And finally, with regard to poetry and short stories, they recognized that they were interesting, but justified, for the most part, that they liked them only because they were short texts, which leads us to understand that they were not the genres that most seduced the students, even though they were the most worked on. While we worked poetry in five days and short story in four, it was only three days destined for the novel and three for the theater.

It is worth remembering that poetry and short stories were the genres chosen to be the most worked (especially at the beginning of reading activities) because they were the two most read by students in the reader profile questionnaire answered before literary reading practices.

And since we only work on novels and theaters in fragments, we realized that the beliefs of many high school Spanish language teachers, that time is too short and it is not possible to work on fragments of works or that fragments are not easy to understand, do not portray the current reality. Our thinking on this topic remains that, when well selected, the fragments can awaken the student to reading.

In the last question, the one numbered as four, we asked the students to comment on the reading practices carried out during the school year (positive and/or negative suggestions and criticisms). The students mentioned that the literary reading classes helped them in understanding and interpreting texts, and that they now feel more confident to read in Spanish.

In addition, some considered the classes to be great and stated that they felt pleasure in studying, managed to learn while having fun, and traveled without moving. It is interesting to note that literature made students travel and have fun. Since many of them do not have the opportunity to visit Spanish-speaking countries, the literary text presents itself as a window of a trip to contact with the language and culture of the native speakers of the language. The world represented in the text, finally, even distant in time or differentiated as an invention, led them to reflect on their routine and to incorporate new experiences.

The statistical data resulting from the application of these activities and the proof of the effectiveness of literary reading are described in Silva (2016) and Silva (2022) when we compared this group

(called experimental 1) that read literary texts with another group that read non-literary texts (called experimental 2) and the control group that was not subjected to any reading. Considering what each question could evaluate, the students subjected to literary reading made significant progress in aspects related to reading and literary comprehension, which was not possible to detect in the other groups. We understand that the fact that students in experimental group 2 and the control group were not encouraged to read literary texts in classroom practices would partially explain why their literary competence was not developed satisfactorily in comparison to students who did use literary texts.

Despite the growing number of research that relates language teaching and the use of literary texts, we are not aware of other research that investigates the improvement of reading and literary performance of Spanish-speaking students in Brazilian high school, based on reading practices literary activities, as well as the training of teachers already in practice to carry out these activities. Our study therefore fills an existing gap, and, with this, we justify, once again, the relevance of our research, mainly because it is a pioneer in the study, in practice, of the real contribution of literary texts in teaching and learning the Spanish language. in high school in Brazil.

5. Conclusions

After carrying out our study, we noticed that the students began to have more confidence and feel more capable to understand and interpret texts in Spanish. We also point out that, for most of the participating students, the novel was the text chosen as the one they liked the most, followed by theater, poetry and short story, respectively.

Although our focus for foreign language classes at school is not the study of literature itself, we understand that literary texts should be used for the development of reading and literary skills, which are skills that complement each other, in addition to the development of other skills.

Therefore, we recommend the insertion of the literary text in S/FL classes as an additional possibility in the classroom, helping the student to understand the language studied, as well as providing students with the ability to reflect on what is being read, also serving as a boost of the interpretation ability and the development of the student's reading and linguistic comprehension.

Finally, we emphasize that there is neither a model to follow nor a list of rules on the didactic treatment of literature in foreign language classes, mainly because the group of students is never equal enough to apply the same methodology or activity (without adaptations) and obtain the same results, but the important thing is to find strategies so that literature is part of our classes and for S/FL students to exercise their right of access to literary reading in the foreign language studied.

Although these perceptions are subjective, they corroborate what we proved in the doctoral thesis (Silva, 2016) and other study (Silva, 2022) that literary reading contributes more significantly to high school students of Spanish as a foreign language presenting better reading and literary performance than other types of texts.

To conclude, we point out some limitations of our study, as well as questions and subjects that would deserve further research to further confirm the efficiency of using LT in Spanish classes in high school in public schools.

The fact that we did not record the classes, mainly because most students were minors, required that the data be recorded by us only from the notes at the time of the observations and through the memory recovered from some events that occurred. As a result, we may have left out aspects that our observations, experience as a researcher and private experience do not reach.

Furthermore, although we observed advances in oral and written production, as they were not part of the objectives of our study, there were no instruments capable of measuring these advances and, therefore, they were recorded, but were not considered in the data analyzes and discussions.

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