

The teaching of literature written in English: a dialogue with methodological proposals based on the Dialogical Analysis of Literature / *Ensino de literatura em Língua Inglesa: um diálogo com propostas metodológicas com base na Análise Dialógica da Literatura*

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Received: September 12th, 2019. **Approved:** September 20th, 2019.

How to cite this article:

BANDEIRA DE MELO JR, Orison Marden. The teaching of literature written in English: a dialogue with methodological proposals based on the Dialogical Analysis of Literature. *Revista Letras Raras*. Campina Grande, v. 8, n. 3, set. 2019. ISSN 2317-2347.

DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.35572/rlr.v8i3.1499>.

ABSTRACT

Studies on the teaching of literature written in English in Brazil are not many if compared to research and published works on the teaching of literature written in Portuguese, literary literacy, among others. This article aims to discuss the teaching of literature written in English based on the Dialogical Analysis of Literature. To do so, we analyzed two teaching proposals, namely, Cosson's expanded sequence and Cereja's dialogical proposal, based on six analytical procedures and three literary features alluded to in the works of the Circle (Bakhtin, Voloshinov, Medvedev). The main goal was to find contributions and/or gaps when transposing those proposals to the teaching of literature written in English. The analysis showed that despite the contributions they bring to the teaching of literature in general and the gaps they present when analyzed based on the assumptions of the dialogical analysis, some challenges also arise, such as the issue of the students' linguistic heterogeneity and the reduced amount of time teachers usually have to teach literature written in English.

KEYWORDS: Teaching of literature written in English; Dialogical analysis of literature; Cosson's expanded sequence; Cereja's dialogical proposal

RESUMO

As discussões sobre o ensino de literatura em língua inglesa no Brasil são em número bastante reduzido se comparadas com todas as pesquisas e obras voltadas ao ensino de literatura em língua portuguesa, letramento literário, entre outros. O objetivo deste artigo é discutir o ensino de literatura em língua inglesa a partir da Análise Dialógica da Literatura. Para tal, foram analisadas duas propostas de ensino de literatura em língua portuguesa, a saber, a sequência expandida de Cosson e a proposta dialógica de Cereja, a partir de seis procedimentos analíticos e de três particularidades do texto literário indicados na obra do Círculo (Bakhtin, Volóchinov, Medviédev), a fim de encontrar contribuições e/ou lacunas dessas propostas se transpostas ao ensino de literatura em língua inglesa. Foi possível perceber que, apesar das contribuições que elas trazem para o ensino de literatura, em geral, e de lacunas que se apresentam a partir dos pressupostos da análise dialógica, alguns desafios também surgem, como a questão da heterogeneidade linguística dos(as) discentes e o tempo reduzido que docentes têm para o ensino de literatura em língua inglesa.

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ensino de literatura em língua inglesa; Análise dialógica da literatura; Sequência expandida de Cosson; Proposta dialógica de Cereja

1 Introduction

Discussing the teaching of literature written in English (henceforth TLWE)¹ in Brazil has become an academic and professional imperative for two main reasons. First, many studies that theoretically, analytically or methodologically discuss the teaching of literature focus on the teaching of literature written in Portuguese, and their target audience are teachers who work with Brazilian students in elementary school, high school or college. I want to highlight two of these studies, which will be analyzed herein: Rildo Cosson's *Letramento literário: teoria e prática* [*Literary Literacy: Theory and Practice*], published in 2006 and reedited in 2018, and William Roberto Cereja's *Ensino de Literatura: uma proposta dialógica para o trabalho com literatura* [*Literature Teaching: A Dialogical Proposal to Work with Literature*], published in 2005.

Second, it is clear that research on and publications in the TLWE in Brazil are scarce despite the large number of undergraduate Teacher Education Programs in English and Portuguese/English whose syllabi contemplate courses related to the study of literature written in English. These courses are usually offered from two approaches: the *geographical approach*, which focuses on the study of literature in specific geographical areas, regardless of the literary genre used in the classroom, such as English Literature, North-American Literature, Irish Literature, among others, and the *genre approach*, which focuses on the teaching of poems, short stories, novels and plays, regardless of where the work was published.

It is important to emphasize that the focus of this discussion is the TLWE through literary texts originally written in English. In prior papers we have clarified our position on this matter (MELO, JR., 2015; 2016a; 2016b; MELO JR.; OLIVEIRA 2018a). Therefore, research that discusses the use of literary texts for the teaching of English or the use of translations or abridged texts in literature classes is outside the scope of this study.

¹ I am using the expression “literature written in English” to generalize literature originally written in the English language, regardless of the country where it was published.

In this vein, this article aims to analyze, based on what I call the Dialogical Analysis of Literature (DAL), grounded in the oeuvre of the Circle (Bakhtin, Voloshinov, Medvedev),² the methodological proposals for the teaching of literature formulated by Cosson (2018) and Cereja (2005). It seeks to investigate how they may contribute to the TLWE and to point out possible gaps when adopting these proposals in the TLWE context. Therefore, it seeks to answer the following research question: in the light of the Dialogical Analysis of Literature (DAL), to what extent studies on the teaching of literature written in Portuguese contribute to the TLWE in Brazil?

To answer this question and reach the objective of this study, I will first discuss the Circle's proposal for literary analysis and the concepts related to it. Then, I will briefly present Cosson's (2018) expanded sequence and Cereja's (2005) dialogical proposal, using the short story *The Foundations of the Earth* by African-American writer Randall Kenan as an example. Finally, I will establish a dialogue between DAL and the two teaching proposals so as to discuss possible contributions and gaps that their methodological transposition would bring forth in the TLWE context in Brazil.

2 Dialogical Analysis of Literature (DAL)

In this section, I seek to discuss the architectonics of the literary text and examine the allusions the Circle makes to the analysis of texts/utterances/discourses, focusing on the dialogical analysis of literary works. However, before the discussion itself, I find it necessary to explain the reason why I have been using the expression *dialogical analysis of literature*. As it is known, the expression Dialogical Analysis of Discourse (DAD) was not coined by any member of the Circle; however, it has been adopted in Brazil to circumscribe the scope of this specific approach to discourse analysis based on the oeuvre of the Circle (BRAIT, 2010). Nevertheless, because DAD is often associated to Applied Linguistics, I have chosen to adopt the expression

² Vianna (2019) explains that the Circle brought together “at different moments in time, thinkers from different areas of knowledge, such as philosophy, linguistics, biology, music, poetry, literary criticism, history, philology, among others” (p. 20). However, I will use the term *Circle* to refer to Bakhtin, Voloshinov e Medvedev, the authors of the works to which we have more access in Brazil and make reference to specific authors of each work I quote. Text in original: “reuniu pensadores de diversas áreas do conhecimento e em momentos distintos, como a filosofia, a linguística, a biologia, a música, a poesia, a crítica literária, a história, a filologia, entre outras.”

Dialogical Analysis of Literature (DAL) in order to specifically delimit the scope of this area: the dialogical analysis of literature that takes into account its architectonics.

Morris (1994) explains that *architectonics* refers to the science of relations, that is, to the way parts of an object are related to create a dynamic whole. Machado (1995), in turn, defines it as a means by which connections between elements of different origins are established through dialogy. It is in this sense that Bakhtin (1990a) explains that the artistic object is comprised of three elements that are dialogically related, creating its dynamic whole, namely, content, material and form. In this vein, Faraco (2009a) defines architectonics as “content axiologically enframed by the author-creator³ in a particular composition that is concretized in a specific material” (p. 101).⁴

In relation to content, Bakhtin (1990a) explains that it is the “reality of cognition and ethical action that enters (as an already identified and evaluated reality) into the aesthetic object” (p. 281), the reality of “being and obligation” (p. 280), the “world and its constituent moments, to the world as the object of cognition and ethical action” (p. 281); that is, a world that is axiologically marked, a “*world where human action occurs*” (FARACO, 2009a, p. 99; emphasis in original).⁵ In this sense, content is understood as the human actions (SOBRAL, 2010) or the axiological relations around an object (FARACO, 2009a), that is, “the way the author-creator organizes the isolated ethical and cognitive components, transposes them to the aesthetic plane, and consummates them in a new unity of sense and value” (FARACO, 2009a, p. 103).⁶

Language, according to Voloshinov (1983a), is the material and the instrument of artistic creation. This second element of the architectonics has to be understood according to three different perspectives. The first refers to language as a system, that is, the language of linguistics. For Bakhtin (1990a, p. 297), “[t]he aesthetics of verbal art must not skip over linguistic language either, but must utilize all the work of linguistics

³ I will not discuss the concept of author-creator, but I would like to stress the difference the Circle makes between the author-person, “a constituent in the ethical, social event of life,” and the author-creator, “a constituent in a work” (BAKHTIN, 1990b, p. 10). Faraco (2009b) explains that the author-creator is an “aesthetic-formal position whose fundamental characteristic is to materialize a certain axiological relation with the hero and his world” (p. 89). Text in original: “uma posição estético-formal cuja característica básica está em materializar certa relação axiológica com o herói e seu mundo.”

⁴ Text in original: “conteúdo axiologicamente enformado pelo autor-criador numa certa composição concretizada num certo material”.

⁵ Text in original: “mundo em que a ação humana se realiza.”

⁶ Text in original: “o modo como são ordenados pelo autor-criador os constituintes éticos e cognitivos recortados (isolados), transpostos para o plano estético e consumados numa nova unidade de sentidos e valores.”

to understand [...] the technique of the poet's creation on the basis of a correct understanding of the place of material in artistic creation." The second perspective is related to the understanding that language is ideologically saturated, a world view (BAKHTIN, 1981), language that is stratified into socio-ideological languages (BAKHTIN, 1981), into a "multiple and heterogeneous set of voices or social languages, that is, a set of verbal-ideological formations" (FARACO, 2009a, p. 107).⁷ The third perspective refers to the structural elements of the narrative, for as words are organized into clauses, sentences, chapter, acts, scenes, etc., they also "create the whole of a hero's appearance, his character, his situation, the condition of his life, his actions, etc." (BAKHTIN, 1990a, p. 297). This is the reason why the process of artistic creation is the "process of consistently transforming a linguistically and compositionally conceived verbal whole into the architectonic whole of an aesthetically consummated event" (BAKHTIN, 1990a, p. 297).

In relation to form, it is important to highlight that Bakhtin understands it not only as the "form of a given material" (BAKHTIN, 1990a, p.303), that is, as the expression of "[a]ll the compositional divisions of the verbal whole (chapters, paragraphs, stanzas, lines, words)" (BAKHTIN, 1990a, p. 311), but also as the expression of "the active, axiological relationship of the author-creator and of the recipient (who co-creates the form) to content" (BAKHTIN, 1990a, p. 306). In other words, form must be analyzed as the form of the material and the form of the content that axiologically refers to the material (BAKHTIN, 1990a).

Aside from Bakhtin's (1990a) discussion on the architectonics of a literary work, which suggests an analytical path, I would like to bring other quotations that directly or indirectly guide the researcher. By understanding how he/she methodologically should act, it is possible to draw conclusions about the path a teacher must follow as he/she is the one who will help students analyze literary works in a critical and answerable manner.

A sociological analysis can of course only start with the purely verbal linguistic substance of the work; but it should not and may not confine itself to these limits as linguistic poetics does. The artistic contemplation of the poetic work in reading starts with the grapheme (that is the visual image of the printed or written word), but at the very next moment of perception this visual image breaks open and is

⁷ Text in original: "conjunto múltiplo e heterogêneo de vozes ou línguas sociais, isto é, um conjunto de formações verbo-ideológicas."

almost eradicated by other elements of the word — articulation, sound image, intonation, meaning — and then, these elements take us right beyond the confines of the word (VOLOSHINOV, 1983b, p. 21).

Therefore the analyses that follow are not linguistic in the strict sense of the term. They belong rather to metalinguistics, if we understand by that term the study of those aspects in the life of the word, not yet shaped into separate and specific disciplines, that exceed—and completely legitimately — the boundaries of linguistics. Of course, metalinguistic research cannot ignore linguistics and must make use of its results (BAKHTIN, 1984, p. 181).

Here historico-linguistic research into the language systems and styles available to a given era (social, professional, generic, tendentious) will aid powerfully in re-creating a third dimension for the language of the novel, will help us to differentiate and find the proper distances within that language. [...] mere knowledge of the linguistic and stylistic profile of the languages involved will be insufficient: what is needed is a profound understanding of each language's socio-ideological meaning and an exact knowledge of the social distribution and ordering of all the other ideological voices of the era (BAKHTIN, 1981, p. 417).

The first task is to understand the work as the author himself understood it, without exceeding the limits of his understanding. This is a very difficult problem and usually requires introducing an immense amount of material. The second task is to take advantage of one's own position of temporal and cultural outsidership. Inclusion in our (other's for the author) context (BAKHTIN, 1986a, p. 144).

Literature is an inseparable part of culture and it cannot be understood outside the total context of the entire culture of a given epoch. [...] If it is impossible to study literature apart from an epoch's entire culture, it is even more fatal to encapsulate a literary phenomenon in the single epoch of its creation, in its own contemporaneity, so to speak (BAKHTIN, 1986b, pp. 2, 3).

The work is a link in the chain of speech communion. Like the rejoinder in a dialogue, it is related to other work-utterances: both those to which it responds and those that respond to it (BAKHTIN, 1986b, p.76).

As I mentioned before, these quotations are direct and indirect suggestions to study/analyze literary texts. From my point of view, they also point to the teaching of literature because the dialogical teaching of a literary text should focus on helping students to analyze it dialogically. Besides, what the teacher teaches and what he/she does in the classroom cannot and should not be contradictory; otherwise, his/her teaching will become abstract theoreticism, a mere transmission of concepts and

methodological steps to be memorized and/or reproduced by the students. As Bakhtin states, “[i]t is not the content of an obligation that obligates me, but my signature below it-the fact that at one time I acknowledged or undersigned the given acknowledgment” (1993, p. 38). Therefore, to adopt a dialogical perspective of literature teaching means to undersign a dialogical-analytical-answerable position toward the literary text, which leads us to the following analysis procedures based on the quotations above: (1) a dialogical analysis starts with the text; (2) it is semiotic-ideological: although it does not ignore the purely linguistic elements of the text, it belongs to metalinguistics, that is, to the dialogical relations between ideologies, senses, discourses, voices, social languages, positions, etc.; (3) it must carry out a historical-linguistic and a socio-ideological study of all the languages that comprise the heterodiscourse introduced in the work; (4) guided by the architectonics of the work (its aesthetic-discursive elements), it should relate the text with the context in which it was written (author’s context; the small time of the work), with discourses, voices, social languages that strive for sociocultural significance in the contemporaneity of the work; (5) it should liberate the work from the boundaries of its own time and bring it to the great time (BAKHTIN, 1986b), dialogically striving for sociocultural significance in the context (the here and now) of the reader (teachers and students); (6) as a concrete utterance, the work, brought to the great time, should also dialogue with other works (utterances), be them contemporary to it or not, in an interdiscursive, intercultural and/or intersemiotic manner – of course it depends on the delineation of the analysis to be carried out in the classroom.

This relationship between the culture of the literary work and the culture of the reader does not lead to the fusion of cultures or the superimposition of one over the other. As I work with literature written in English, for example, not rarely do I have to justify teaching it, as we live in a country where English is not the native language and the culture in which this literature was produced is different from the culture of the Brazilian reader. However, it is necessary to point out that “[s]uch a dialogic encounter of two cultures does not result in merging or mixing. Each retains its own unity and open totality, but they are mutually enriched” (BAKHTIN, 1986b, p. 7). Studying African-American literature, for example, does not mean favoring literature produced in the United States; it means creating possibilities for the mutual enrichment between literatures [African-American and (African-) Brazilian], cultures, senses and discourses,

which allows a differentiated view of the *self* when in dialogue with the *other* and vice-versa. In this sense, teaching foreign literature in its architectonics is providing a place of linguistic, aesthetic, cultural, discursive, critical enrichment (MELO JR., 2016a) in which people and cultures are mutually challenged and placed on the border, the zone of *cultural dialogue*, the privileged locus of mutual enrichment.

Based on this discussion, I also point out that a dialogical analysis of literature has still to observe three peculiarities of the literary text:

- (i) it unveils but is not limited to the discourses and the voices that penetrate the work, as the literary genres have specific features that set them apart from non-literary genres: language, which is world view (BAKHTIN, 1981) and is socially and axiologically saturated, is the same language that creates the aesthetic world, in which narrators, characters, space, time, and other structural elements of a literary work are dialogically related to these discourses and voices and should not, for this reason, be relegated to a secondary place in the analysis;
- (ii) the architectonics of the work integrates its content and form. Therefore, the researcher should focus not only on the unveiling of the heterodiscourse and the socio-ideological voices that penetrate the literary work, but also on the investigation of how this heterodiscourse and these voices are aesthetically and axiologically mobilized in the work. For Bakhtin (1990a), we have to understand “how form is, on the one hand, really material, and how it is realized entirely in a given material and is bound to it; and on the other hand, [...] how *form takes us axiologically beyond the bounds of the work as organized material, as a thing*” (pp. 273-274; emphasis in original).
- (iii) the literary world, despite being created through language, in which the author, while choosing words not from the dictionary (VOLOSHINOV, 1983b), but those that “[taste] of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p. 293), uses “words that are already populated with the social intentions of others and compels them to serve his own new intentions, to serve a second master” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p. 300). It is in this context that Bakhtin (1981) declares that the intentional project of the author is

refracted⁸ under different angles, in which the discourse not only represents, but is also represented, and that “social language [...] (whether generic, professional or that of a literary trend) becomes the object of a re-processing, reformulation and artistic transformation that is free and oriented toward art” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.336). This is due to the fact that in literature we analyze the literary representation of a language or “the image of a language” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.336) and not the “empirical given of that language” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p.356). Based on Bakhtin’s thought, Marchezan (2015) summarizes this relationship between the reality of life and the reality of the literary work:

Thus, the artistic form, understood as such, characterizes autonomy, the relative autonomy of literary work, as considered by Bakhtin: art is not opposed to reality, to the world of life, which is completely found in it, as its indispensable element. However, art is not confounded with life: by giving content a new form, the author-creator penetrates, with empathy, the object, which is always axiologically saturated in order to, without incorporating it, from the outside – it is about “exteriority” that we are dealing here, a notion which is always present in the Bakhtinian work – (re)adapt it, axiologically, into the world of culture. In this sense, not only are artistic language and everyday language not opposed – which means taking into account only the material – but also the concrete utterances of everyday life and the literary works are not opposed either (pp. 209-210).

Therefore, based on this discussion about the analysis of the literary text, which involves its teaching grounded in the DAL, I now present the two literature teaching proposals of Cosson (2018) and Cereja (2005) so that the TLWE in Brazil is discussed at the end of this article.

3 The Teaching of Literature Based on Cosson’s (2018) and Cereja’s (2005) Proposals

As I mentioned in the introduction of this paper, the methodological proposals will be exemplified with the short story *The foundations of the Earth* (KENAN, 1992).

⁸ Bezerra (2015) defines refraction as the “stratification of the author’s intentions in different settings of the plot of a literary work and in the different planes of poetic discourse” (p. 249). In the original: “[e]stratificação que sofrem as intenções do autor em diversos ambientes do enredo de uma obra e nos diversos planos do discurso poético.”

The short story is about Gabriel's visit to the fictional city of Tims Creek, located in the south of North Carolina. In fact, Gabriel goes to the funeral of Edward, the protagonist Maggie's grandson. With his death, Maggie finds out that her grandson was gay and meets Gabriel, Edward's white partner. In this sense, a double conflict related to sexuality and race is provoked and in the background we find the conservative African-American Protestant church, which, through its authoritative discourse regarding homosexuality, dialogues with the hegemonic discourses of heteronormativity. The short story shows that Gabriel provoked the destabilization of these discourses in Maggie, becoming the link of otherness that operates with non-normative discourses, which broaden discursive horizons. Gabriel's words (*ideologemes*) and actions, as an ideological position, offer Maggie "a perspective of alterity (otherness) that finds in respect (and not the negation of religion) the discursive horizon of re-signification of the relationship with her grandson and thus with herself and her truths" (MELO JR.; NUNES, 2018b, p. 81).⁹

After this brief summary of the short story's plot, the methodological proposals of Cosson (2018) and Cereja (2005) will be presented, the focus of the next subsections.

3.1 The Expanded Sequence of Cosson (2018)

Cosson's (2018) book is divided into two large sections: the theoretical, titled *Os pressupostos* [The Presuppositions], and the practical, titled *As práticas* [The Practices]. The latter is comprised of four chapters, viz., *Estratégias para o ensino de literatura: a sistematização necessária* [Strategies for the Teaching of Literature: The Necessary Systematization], *A sequência básica* [The Basic Sequence], *A sequência expandida* [The Expanded Sequence] and *A avaliação* [The Evaluation]. In the first chapter, the author defines the objective of the whole section: "to present two concrete possibilities of organizing strategies to be used in Literature classes in elementary and high school" (p. 48).¹⁰ He then organizes or systematizes two sequences of activities to be used by

⁹ In the original: "um olhar alteritário que encontra, no respeito (e não na negação da religião), o horizonte discursivo de ressignificação da relação com o neto e, por conseguinte, de si mesma e suas verdades."

¹⁰ In the original: "apresentar duas possibilidades concretas de organização das estratégias a serem usadas nas aulas de Literatura do ensino básico".

teachers: the basic sequence and the expanded sequence, the latter being the focus of this study.

The basic sequence comprises four stages: motivation, introduction, reading, and interpretation. To exemplify it, Cosson (2018) uses Moacyr Scliar's short story *No retiro da figueira* [At the Fig Tree Retreat]. The expanded sequence increases the number of stages without eliminating the ones from the basic sequence. To exemplify it, he uses Aluísio Azevedo's novel *O cortiço* [The Tenement]. According to him, the expanded sequence resulted from high school teachers' uneasiness when looking for activities that would foster learning *of* and *about* literature and combine "literature experience, knowledge and education in the literacy purview of the school" (COSSON, 2018, p. 76).¹¹ Thus, the expanded sequence is composed of the following stages: motivation, introduction, reading, first interpretation, contextualization, second interpretation and expansion.

The *motivation* stage prepares students to the universe of the literary work. This is not the introduction to the work yet as this will be done in the second stage. In motivation, teachers arouse students' curiosity about the work, thus making them closer to it and motivating them to read the text. *Introduction* is a brief presentation of the author and the literary work, which can be done by introducing the theme, analyzing the different editions of the book in the library and/or reading the first pages of the work. The third stage is *reading*, which, according to the author, preferably should not be done in the classroom. Teachers should set a time limit for reading and may provide students with enrichment activities during reading pauses. In the *first interpretation* stage, teachers analyze the students' general understanding of the work. *Contextualization* is "an in-depth reading through the contexts brought by the work itself" (COSSON, 2018, p. 86).¹² As these contexts may be manifold, the author guides teachers by presenting seven different types of contextualization: (i) theoretical (the ideas that support or are present in the work); (ii) historical (the time represented in the work or the time of its publication); (iii) stylistic (the styles of the time of the work or the literary periods, analyzing the dialogue between the work and its time); (iv) poetical (the structure or

¹¹ In the original: "experiência, saber e educação literários inscritos no horizonte desse letramento na escola."

¹² In the original: "aprofundamento da leitura por meio dos contextos que a obra traz consigo."

composition of the work); (v) critical (reception of the work); (vi) presentification¹³ (the relationship between the work and the reading's present); and (vii) thematic (the reverberation of the theme within the work). It is important to point out that, after presenting these types of contextualization, Cosson (2018) argues that they can be reconfigured according to teachers' class work. *Second interpretation* is an in-depth reading of one aspect of the work and thus differs from the first interpretation as the latter aims at a general understanding of the literary text. This is the reason why the author explains that contextualization and second interpretation cannot be dissociated from one another and may be done as a single activity. Finally, *expansion* is the stage in which the teacher establishes a relationship between the literary work and other works from the past, present or future. These other works need not be restricted to the literary field, as the author suggests films and TV miniseries based on the work. In fact, they should be understood as new elaborations of the text.

By deciding to work with Kenan's (1992) short story in the classroom, I would suggest the following activities:

- (1) motivation: a video about the Black Protestant church in the US so that students could be introduced to the universe of the African-American Protestant religion.
- (2) introduction: as Brazilian students may never have heard about Randall Kenan and his works, a brief presentation is a possibility;
- (3) reading: the reading of the short story, which is divided into seven sections;
- (4) first interpretation: discussion on the short story to check if students have a general understanding of the plot;
- (5) contextualization: as the process of contextualization is flexible, I would choose five types that I deem essential to interpret the short story: (a) theoretical – explanation and discussion about racialism, heteronormativity and some tenets of Protestantism regarding homosexuality; (b) historical – explanation and discussion about the history of African slavery in the United States and the legalized segregation, usually known as Jim Crow(ism), as well as the development of African-American churches in this context; (c) poetic – explanation and discussion about the different styles materialized in the short story, focusing on the religious

¹³ TN. Cosson (2018) uses the word “presentificadora,” which is related to the idea that the work is brought to the readers' present time. To keep the English word close to the idea of “present,” I chose to use “presentification” in this regard.

discourse, which presents itself as authoritative discourse (BAKHTIN, 1981), the other discourses that populate the short story and their different styles, and the ideological development of the protagonist; (d) presentification – discussion about the themes of the other types of contextualization in the here and now of the students, the readers of the short story, seeking to establish a dialogue between cultures (African-American and Brazilian); (e) thematic – discussion about the two major themes of the short story, namely, racism and homophobia, and the relationship between the latter and the heteronormative discourse of conservative Protestant religions;

- (6) second interpretation: a second reading of the short story to pinpoint elements discussed in the contextualization stage, reading specific passages of the work and offering an in-depth interpretation;
- (7) expansion: the reading of Langston Hughes's (1996) short story titled *Blessed Assurance*, aiming to draw parallels between both works. It is important to point out that Hughes's short story dialogues with Kenan's (1992) as it represents the conflicts faced by a father who finds out his son is homosexual. The background of the short story is also the African-American Protestant church.

3.2 The Dialogical Proposal of Cereja (2005)

Cereja's (2005) book is comprised of five long chapters, and his dialogical proposal to the teaching of literature in high school is the fifth. In the first chapter, he shows the results of a research study conducted with 134 high school seniors and four teachers from four different schools; in the second, he discusses the relationship between the tradition of transmission and the pragmatic technicism as he analyzes textbooks, teacher's manuals, workbooks, etc.; in the third, he analyzes the body of laws that regulates the teaching of literature as well as official documents; in the fourth, he discusses the different conceptions of literary historiography and its history in the school universe; in the fifth, he presents a dialogical proposal to the teaching of literature.

It is important to point out that, differently from Cosson's (2018) proposal, Cereja (2005) does not present a teaching sequence, but a process of didactization in

which *nationalism* is the main theme and the text, “the central object of literature classes from which other teaching activities and discourse productions are articulated” (CEREJA, 2005, p. 188).¹⁴ It is divided into two reading moments and exemplified with two poems of Oswald de Andrade:

- (1) Reading 1 – the reading of an excerpt of the *Letter* of Pero Vaz de Caminha and the poem *As meninas de gare* [Gare Girls] of Oswald de Andrade. This reading is divided into five activities in the form of questions: (a) questions about students’ linguistic-ideological understanding of the excerpt of the *Letter*; (b) questions about students’ historical-cultural understanding of the poem; (c) questions in which both texts are compared; (d) questions related to *nationalism* and its relation to modernism; (e) questions about the contradictions the poem denounces.
- (2) Reading 2 – the reading of the poem *Capital da República* [Capital of the Republic] of Oswald de Andrade and the listening of the songs *Joia*, *Geleia geral* and *Batmakumba* from the records *Tropicália* (1969) e *Joia* (1975). This reading is divided into eight activities in the form of questions: (a) questions about the social, natural, cultural or ethnic representation in the poem and the materialization of contrasting elements in the text; (b) questions about the two scenes found in *Joia*; (c) questions about the oppositions found in *Joia* and its representation of nationality; (d) from an excerpt of *Manifesto da poesia pau-brasil* [*Manifesto of Pau-Brasil Poetry*], questions about the ideological values (from a Bakhtinian perspective) of words from the excerpt; (e) questions about the similarities between the poem and *Joia* in terms of ideological values related to Brazil; (f) questions contrasting the songs *Geleia geral*, *Joia*, and the poem; (g) questions about linguistic procedures and cultural suggestions between *Batmakumba* and *Geleia geral*; (h) question about the similarities between the four texts of Reading 2.

Cereja (2005) explains that this proposal could be modified with the inclusion of other texts depending on the perspective the teacher adopts (thematic, historical, etc.). He reminds readers that we “cannot see only the ideological layer, the content, of literary texts,” for doing activities of literary reading is “*teaching to read*, the first and foremost objective of literature classes” (CEREJA, 2005, p. 191; emphasis in original). In this sense, he believes that as teachers promote the study of texts from different areas

¹⁴ In the original: “o objeto central das aulas de literatura e que a partir dele se articulam todas as outras atividades didáticas e produções discursivas.”

of the human sciences, such as history, history of art, history of literature, philosophy, among others, they should create activities that allow the transfer of knowledge between areas and establish dialogues “between what [students] learned about language and the theoretical discussion about this cultural production” (CEREJA, 2005, p. 191).¹⁵

Based on Cereja’s (2005) proposal, two moments of Reading could be suggested:

- (1) Reading 1 – the reading of the short story *The foundations of the Earth* with questions that may relate to the ideological and sociohistorical aspects that penetrate the work; the main themes of the short story, such as racism and homophobia; the role of religion as authoritative discourse and promoter of heteronormativity; the understanding of specific words in the short story, understood as semiotic-ideological signs (VOLOŠINOV, 1986), among others.
- (2) Reading 2 – the reading of the short story *Blessed Assurance* (HUGHES, 1996) with questions that are similar to the ones done in Reading 1. However, I would add contrastive questions between the two texts, pointing to the similarities and differences between them in terms of the material (linguistic), social, historical and ideological aspects that saturate both short stories.

In the process of contextualization, it is possible, for example, to read excerpts or watch short YouTube documentaries that discuss the historical processes of subjugation of Africans and their descendants from the period of slavery to the Jim Crow; the history of the African-American Protestant church in the US, among others. These texts would encourage a dialogue between the represented world of literature and the concrete sociohistorical world of life as well as between literature and other human sciences, such as history, sociology, religious studies, among others.

After the exemplified presentation of the two proposals for the teaching of literature, in the next section it will be possible to examine them based on the analytical procedures discussed in the section *Dialogical Analysis of Literature (DAL)*.

4 Searching for a Path for the Teaching of Literature Written in English (TLWE)

¹⁵ In the original: “entre o que [o/a discente] aprendeu sobre a linguagem e a discussão teórica acerca dessa produção cultural.”

In the prior section, it was explained that the two teaching proposals targeted high school seniors and that they focused on the teaching of Brazilian literature. As I mentioned before, Cosson's (2018) proposal was exemplified with the novel *O cortiço* [*The Tenement*] of Aluísio Azevedo, and Cereja's (2005) with two poems of Oswald de Andrade. Unfortunately, the different literary genres they utilized bring limitations to this comparison, but I will try to establish a dialogue between the analytical procedures indicated by the DAL and the teaching proposals, seeking to point out possible challenges in the search for a path for the TLWE in Brazil. I will continue to use the short story *The foundations of the Earth* (KENAN, 1992) as an example. Therefore, for each analytical procedure, I will show its pertinence in the proposals of Cosson (C1) and Cereja (C2), the challenges (Ch) related to the TLWE, and suggestions (S) to minimize the challenges.

(1) The analysis starts with the text.

C1: The stage of contextualization comes after the first reading; that is, the teacher starts with the text and then goes to the context, selecting the types of contextualization that are pertinent to the study of the text.

C2: The author repeatedly points out that the literary text is the primary source of the study, which will allow the dialogue between the text and other texts, literary or not.

Ch: The major challenge of a foreign literature teacher is the students' heterogeneous level of knowledge on the foreign language. Therefore, Cosson's (2018) indication that the reading of the literary text should be primarily done at home may create an obstacle, as only some students may be able to do this reading on their own.

S: The actions of the teacher will surely take his/her target audience into consideration. In general, in case the students' level of English is very heterogeneous, I would suggest reading the text in the classroom. Depending on their English language skill, a read-alone experience may frustrate their experience of reading a literary text in English. In this situation, the teacher should choose shorter texts, such as poems and short stories, as they seem more adequate in this context. In the case of *The foundations of the Earth*, as it is divided into sections, the teacher can divide the reading stage and include activities between sections, as suggested by Cosson (2018).

(2) The analysis should be done based on the semiotic-ideological elements of the text.

C1: In this proposal, it is not clear whether the semiotic-ideological relation of words and expressions are analyzed by the students. It suggests the poetic contextualization, in which linguistic elements should be used. However, there is no description of how this analysis takes place and at what level.

C2: Through the questions posed in the reading activities, Cereja directly presents the relation between the concrete material of the text and its ideological content, pointing to specific words and asking for their contextual meaning.

Ch: Similarly to the prior procedure, the teacher may have, in the classroom, students who are not able to understand English at the syntactic, semantic, and/or pragmatic levels, which makes it difficult for them to understand words and utterances at the discursive level. Besides, the little knowledge they may have about the sociohistorical processes of the country in which the work was published makes it difficult for them to recognize the ideological content that penetrates words/utterances of the literary text.

S: The teacher should provide students with the necessary knowledge about the sociohistorical context of the country in which the work was published by using materials that elucidate it, such as excerpts of specific works that discuss it (i.e., *Jim Crowism*, African-American Protestant religion), videos and/or websites. The challenge, in this case, lies in the fact that most of these materials are in English and students may not be proficient in the language. In terms of specific words that, as ideological signs, are “the most sensitive *index of social changes*” (VOLOŠINOV, 1986, p. 19; emphasis in original), students may need assistance in this process, as it may be difficult for them to understand the axiological values that saturate certain words mobilized in the literary text.

(3) All the languages of the heterodiscourse of the work should be analyzed

C1: The closest type of contextualization to this level of analysis is also the poetic, which is related to the analysis at the macro level (genre’s organization) and the micro level (language elaboration); that is, it analyzes “the way [the work] is constituted in

terms of its verbal fabric” (COSSON, 2018, p. 88).¹⁶ However, in the example given by the author the different social languages orchestrated in the novel are not analyzed.

C2: In the author’s proposal, there is no activity that clearly refers to the languages of heterodiscourse and their social meaning. However, some questions allude to a possible analysis at this level.

Ch: The challenge here lies in the knowledge students have of the different *Englishes* orchestrated by the author. In African-American literary works, the use of the Black vernacular English by African-American characters is very frequent. This may make it more difficult for the student who is still trying to learn the “standard” English.

S: The teacher should provide students with the knowledge about the different *Englishes* found in the literary work, which may even include the study of the phonetics of the English language. It is important for the student to study these languages not as “dialects” only, but as “languages that are socio-ideological” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p. 272), “specific points of view on the world” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p. 291). In relation to the short story, the teacher needs to point to these different languages and show, for example, the English used by religious characters when they quote verses from the King James version of the bible. Furthermore, he/she needs to work on the social stratification of these languages with the students.

(4) The analysis should relate the text to its context (small time)

C1: In this proposal, as the types of contextualization are the “context that the work brings” (COSSON, 2018, p. 86),¹⁷ the historical type is the one that is closer to this procedure, as it “opens the work to the time it represents or the period of its publication” (COSSON, 2018, p. 86).¹⁸

C2: The author makes it clear that a historical contextualization has to be done in a dialogical proposal for literature teaching, but does not relate the activities of the historical contextualization he presents with the activities from Reading 1 and Reading 2. Besides, he does not state when these contextualization activities are to be done, which weakens the perception of the proposal.

¹⁶ In the original: “do modo como foi constituída [a obra] em termos de sua tessitura verbal.”

¹⁷ In the original: “contextos que a obra traz consigo”.

¹⁸ In the original: “abre a obra para a época que ela encena ou o período de sua publicação.”

Ch: The major challenge at this level is related to the little knowledge students may have about the sociohistorical context of the place (city, region, country, etc.) represented in the work and/or the place where it was published.

S: Similarly to the suggestion given in the second procedure, the teacher needs to provide students with informative materials, such as excerpts of books that contain information on the place of representation or publication as well as videos and/or websites. The challenge, in this case, is that if students are not proficient in the language, many of these materials are in English. In the case of the short story, a discussion about the context of African-Americans in the US is necessary; it should include Jim Crowism, movements for equal rights, which includes the LGBTQ movement, and the role of the conservative Protestant church in this period.

(5) The analysis should establish a dialogue between the text and the here-now of the reader (great time)

C1: One of the types of contextualization suggested by the author is the presentification, which corresponds to this analytical procedure (of teaching). Bakhtin's quotation (BAKHTIN, 1986a, p. 144), presented in the section Dialogical Analysis of Literature (DAL), indicates that this analysis should be done after the analysis of the context of its production, as a second task. However, in this proposal there seems to be no *order* for the presentification to occur, as it is one of the types of contextualization in this stage of the expanded sequence.

C2: There is no question in Reading 1, Reading 2 or Historical context that guides students to bring the work to their time and to discursively dialogue with it.

Ch: This type of contextualization is a little more accessible to students as it is related to their reality. The teacher needs to be mindful, however, of the knowledge students have of their own history and the sociohistorical processes of Brazil (or their state, city) that may dialogue with the analyzed work.

S: Working with literature of the so-called minority groups in the US allows an approximation with the reality of many students in Brazil and with Resolution No. 2/2015 of the National Council of Education. According to it, the alumni of undergraduate teacher education programs in English, that is, teachers of foreign literature, must be able to “identify sociocultural and educational questions and problems with an investigative, integrative and propositional attitude towards complex

realities in order to contribute to overcoming exclusions, such as social, ethnic-racial, economic, cultural, religious, political, of gender, sexual, among others” (BRASIL, 2015, p. 8).¹⁹ Thus, teachers may use African-American, Chicano(a), Native, queer short stories in the classroom, for example, in case they need to work with short literary texts. As to Kenan’s (1992) short story, students will have to establish a dialogue, for example, between the context of segregation of African-Americans and that of African-Brazilians, as well as of the movements for social equality in both countries.

(6) The analysis should dialogue with other works (utterances)

C1: This dialogue is done in the stage of expansion, the “movement that surpasses the limits of a text, reaching other texts” (COSSON, 2018, p. 94).²⁰ As I mentioned before, this dialogue can be established with literary works, films, TV series, etc.

C2: The activities from Reading 1 already create a dialogue between texts. As described before, Reading 1 proposes the analysis of an excerpt of Pero Vaz de Caminha’s *Letter* and Oswald de Andrade’s poem *As meninas de gare* [Gare Girls]. Reading 2 proposes a dialogue between Oswald de Andrade’s poem *Capital da república* [Capital of the Republic] and the songs *Joia*, *Geleia geral* and *Batmakumba*. However, no activity is proposed in which the texts from Reading 1 and Reading 2 are placed in dialogue, despite their common theme, namely, nationalism. I suggested this dialogue between texts when I exemplified the proposal with the short stories *The foundations of the Earth* (KENAN, 1992) and *Blessed Assurance* (HUGHES, 1996).

Ch: The major challenge at this stage refers to the choice of the other utterance (text) by the teacher, who has to choose a text that interdiscursively dialogues with the first. This selection is usually challenging as, depending on the students he/she has in the classroom, he/she will have to take into consideration the level of linguistic difficulty of the text, its size, and the discourses that will promote this dialogue.

S: It is preferable to choose a short text with which students more easily notice a dialogue between both texts. In regard to *The foundations of the Earth* (KENAN, 1992), I suggested a dialogue with *Blessed Assurance* (HUGHES, 1996), which is shorter than

¹⁹ In the original: “identificar questões e problemas socioculturais e educacionais, com postura investigativa, integrativa e propositiva em face de realidades complexas, a fim de contribuir para a superação de exclusões sociais, étnico-raciais, econômicas, culturais, religiosas, políticas, de gênero, sexuais e outras.”

²⁰ In the original: “movimento de ultrapassagem do limite de um texto para outros textos.”

Kenan's short story and is clearly saturated by discourses related to race, sexuality, and religion.

Finally, I would like to draw some remarks about the transposition of these proposals to the TLWE context. Despite the contributions they bring to the teaching of literature in general, in the light of DAL, a direct transposition of these proposals faces a few challenges: (i) due to students heterogeneous level of English proficiency, a foreign literature teacher normally uses a lot of class time to help students understand the language of the text, often at the level of vocabulary meaning. This has to be taken into account when preparing classes; (ii) in elementary or high school, the number of English classes in which the teacher can work with literature is always lower if compared to the number of Portuguese and/or Brazilian literature classes. Even in higher education, the number of courses for the study of literature written in English is often lower when compared to the number of courses for the study of the English language and literature written in Portuguese. With that in mind, both proposal demand a large number of classes, either because of the number of stages of the sequence (COSSON, 2018) or because the analysis per se starts with various texts from the very beginning (CEREJA, 2005); (iii) in relation to the structural elements of the works (poetic voice, narrator, characters and their development, time, space, etc.), Cosson's (2018) proposal points to this possibility in the poetic contextualization. Nevertheless, as the types of contextualization are not fixed, according to the author, the teacher may even reconfigure them; thus, it is up to the teacher to decide to work these aesthetic elements in the classroom. In Cereja's (2005), there is only one question in Reading 1 which refers to the "enunciator, the one who speaks" (p. 180)²¹ of the two texts. If we take into account that the literary work to be analyzed in the classroom is a created world and that the structural elements and the mobilization of language are part of the whole architectonics of the work (BAKHTIN, 2002), these elements cannot be ignored – especially when teaching literature in undergraduate teacher education programs – because we may lead students to either make a direct transposition from the world of the literary work to the world of life or limit the analysis only to the discourses present in

²¹ In the original: "enunciador (aquele que fala)."

the work and not its aesthetic mobilization. These elements should be taken into account in a dialogical analysis of literature.

Final Considerations

This article aimed to discuss the TLWE in Brazil. Due to the limited number of works that focus on this academic-professional area, I sought to analyze to proposals for the teaching of literature written in Portuguese, namely, Cosson's (2018) expanded sequence and Cereja's (2005) dialogical proposal, in order to identify, based on the DAL, possible contributions and gaps if they are transposed to the specific area of the TLWE.

To do so, first I discussed the Circle's contribution to literary analysis, based on the assumption that the literature teacher will help students to dialogically analyze literary texts and that his/her teaching practice will not be based on an abstract theoreticism. In view of that, based on DAL, I proposed six analytical procedures and pointed out three peculiarities of the literary text that set it apart from texts from non-literary genres. Secondly, I presented, briefly and separately, the two teaching proposals and exemplified them with the short stories *The foundations of the Earth* (KENAN, 1992) and *Blessed Assurance* (HUGHES, 1996). In Cosson's (2018) proposal, Kenan's short story was the main text and Hughe's was the one used for expansion; in Cereja's (2005) proposal, both texts were at the same level: they were used at different reading moments (Reading 1 and Reading 2). Finally, I analyzed the two proposals based on each analytical procedure, showing the challenges that may be posed in the TLWE context and offered some suggestions.

Based on this discussion, it is possible to answer the research question, pointing out that although the proposals were designed and used for the teaching of literature written in Portuguese, in the light of DAL, they present some contributions, gaps and challenges. I will summarize them now.

The first contribution is that both proposals value the literary text, as the process of teaching and analyzing literature in the classroom starts with the text. Secondly, both show that they are open to the different types of contextualization evoked by the text;

that is, the text guides the sociohistorical and ideological contextualization that should be done as

The internal social dialogism of novelistic discourse requires the concrete social context of discourse to be exposed, to be revealed as the force that determines its entire stylistic structure, its “form” and its “content,” determining it not from without, but from within; for indeed, social dialogue reverberates in all aspects of discourse, in those relating to “content” as well as the “formal” aspects themselves (BAKHTIN, 2015, p. 77).

However, I noticed that the structural elements of the work (poetic voice, narrator, characters, time, space, etc.) are either analyzed in the poetic contextualization in Cosson’s proposal (2018), which may or may not occur due to the flexibility given to the teacher to explore this type of contextualization (or not), or are not mentioned at all in Cereja’s proposal (2005). This gap may become more worrisome in higher education (undergraduate teacher education programs in English or in Portuguese-English). Still in this aesthetic perspective, I noticed the lack of discussion about the constructed and aesthetically finished world of literature. As both proposals *seem* to establish a direct relationship between text and context, without mentioning the processes of representation (refraction) and mobilization of discourses that serve “a second master” (BAKHTIN, 1981, p. 300), the teacher will be the sole responsible for working on these elements with students. Bakhtin reminds us that “[a] poetics cannot, of course, be divorced from social and historical analyses, but neither can it be dissolved in them” (BAKHTIN, 1984, p. 36).

In relation to the challenges, I believe I pointed some out in the prior section. However, I would like to underscore two of them: the linguistic heterogeneity and the execution time of the proposal. In relation to the first challenge, the students of literature written in English are usually at different levels of learning and proficiency of English. This context may differ a little in bilingual schools or undergraduate teacher education programs in English. Such heterogeneity demands that the teacher find not only strategies to help students read the text in English but also short literary texts to be analyzed, because *maybe* the reading has to be done in the classroom and not as a homework activity as Cosson (2018) proposed. Regarding the second challenge, I believe that in the TLWE contexts, especially in higher education in which syllabi are more open-ended, professors usually face the challenge of choosing between teaching

more literary works with less analytical depth or fewer literary works with more analytical depth. In my point of view, both proposals – especially Cosson’s (2018) – embrace the second option, which is the one I embrace as well. However, regardless of the methodological choice, teachers in elementary and high schools or in undergraduate teacher education programs in Portuguese-English have to take into account the small number of class hours they have to work on literary texts written in English with their students. Therefore, they have to adapt their literature teaching to the linguistically heterogeneous context of the classroom and the reduced number of class hours.

Finally, I would like to highlight that this article is an attempt to continue a discussion that is still incipient in Brazil. I hope it can somehow contribute to the TLWE and the DAL and prompt responses from other researchers and teachers who have the same academic and professional concerns.

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