

# THE PLURAL DIMENSION OF CLASSROOM READING PRACTICES: ANALYSIS OF A 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM<sup>1</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

In this paper, we analyze the literacy practices focusing on reading, conceiving it as a complex process, multifaceted and plural, irreducible to a single theoretical model. Basing on the ethnographic perspective and articulating the contributions of our recent literacy studies to Paulo Freire's conception of reading and Bakhtin's conception of language, we investigated an elementary 4<sup>th</sup> grade classroom in a public school. The results indicate that reading is a cross-sectional practice in the daily classroom life, due to the presence of a variety of texts, objectives and events that reaffirm the principle of the inherent plurality of literacy in school.

**Keywords:** Literacy – reading – ethnography – dialogicity

## Introduction

The teaching of reading and writing has been the subject of many investigations over the past four decades in Brazil. Anchored in different theoretical and methodological perspectives, we perceive the dominance of those that seek to relate such teaching to the autonomous model of literacy formulated by Street (1984), ignoring the constitutive plurality of literacy in school. In this text, we aim to problematize this perspective by analyzing the practices of reading in the classroom as a complex process irreducible to a single theoretical model. Such practices are marked by specificities of the socio-cultural context and school culture. When discussing the teaching of reading, Soares (2011) states that any reading practice at school is inevitably marked by elements of the particular culture of that social space, that is, any text that enters the school space will inevitably be schooled to meet predetermined objectives and contents, formal assessments to verify the achievement of objectives (or lack of it), among other aspects. Our argument is that this does not mean that such practices are homogeneous, but rather, that there is plurality in school literacy as it is a process built on the interaction with different subjects and both in printed as in unprinted materials. In addition, school literacy, as well as education in general, is marked by a political dimension, as thought by Freire (1996, p.69-70):

The existence of objects, contents to be taught and learned, involves the use of methods, techniques, materials; it implies, due to its *directive* nature, objective, dreams, utopias, ideals. Hence its *politicalness*, quality that has the educational practice of being *political*, of not being able to be neutral". (Emphasis added).

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In this sense, we ask ourselves what textual genres circulate in the school? For what purposes? How are they read? Whom are they read by? These and other questions are being answered in the scope of a broader project of ethnographic investigation in classes from 1<sup>st</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> grades of a public school in Recife with focus on literacy practices, seeking to contrast their similarities and differences. In this text, we will limit the observations to the reading practices of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade.

The text is organized in three topics. Initially, we introduce a discussion indicating the concepts of language, literacy and reading that support our perspective of analysis and a description of the data production process. In the next topic, we indicate a set of elements that evidence the plurality of reading practices in the classroom. Finally, we present a reflection that aims to point out subsidies for pedagogical practice and future research.

## **1. A theoretical-methodological lens for the analysis of reading at school**

Studies on literacy as a social practice appeared in the 1980s with the seminal work of Brian Street (1984) questioning the dichotomy between oral and written, literate and illiterate, present in the work of anthropologists such as Jack Goody, Walter Ong, among others, considered to be the theorists of the great division. Such dichotomy is based, according to Street, on a view of writing as a neutral and universal technique and does not hold up when observing the effective use subjects make of writing in society, as also shown by Heath (1983) and Barton & Hamilton (1998; 2000). His ethnographic investigation in Iran (STREET, 1984) found different ways of using writing in villages considered to be illiterate by UNESCO. There were literacy practices related to the reading of the Koran, literacy practices related to schooling and literacy practices in trade. Based on this, Street proposed two models to understand writing in society. The autonomous, hegemonic model, which underlies the literacy projects of UNESCO and other international organizations around the world, especially in the countries of the global south, taking writing only in its cognitive and universal dimension, disconnected from the social and cultural context. The ideological model, which opposes to this view and considers writing beyond a universal technique, writing in its cultural, social and ideological dimension, marked by power relations. The author therefore formulated the concept of literacy as a social practice, conceiving it in the plural - literacies - and became a pioneer in the construction of the field later called New Studies of Literacy.

Two other concepts from the New Literacy Studies are quite operational in school literacy research. The notion of literacy events as formulated by Heath (1983), situations of interaction structured by writing. To this notion, Street (2003; 2014) adds the idea of practices to indicate the importance of the investigation taking as reference the unobservable, not visible elements that constitute each literacy event. The values, the attitudes, the power relations that permeate the events connected to the dominant institutions or literacies as defined by Barton & Hamilton (1998).

In the 1960s, Paulo Freire appears with a concept of literacy that dialogs directly with the ideological model of literacy that Street would formulate 20 years later, as already pointed out by Bartlett and Macedo (2015). Emphasizing its political and cultural dimension, Freire proposes a conception of literacy as a practice permeated by the reading of the world, which must precede and constitute the reading of the word. Literacy as a cultural action towards freedom (FREIRE, 2006). This critical perspective has the potential to contribute to social transformation, says the author. When analyzing literacy concepts in circulation in Brazil, Soares (1996) identifies Freire's perspective with a radical view of literacy, focused on the social and non-individual dimension of writing. In this sense, we consider that the articulation between these two perspectives can be fertile to analyze the reading practices carried out in the school context, considered by Street as one of the social literacy practices.

Focused on literacy practices that occur in the classroom, we take reading as a social and dialogical practice, which constitutes the chain of verbal interaction of which we are part, as taught by Bakhtin ([1929] 1995). Verbal interaction thus becomes the ground in which the word is inserted, and this is a bridge between the speaker and the listener, a bridge of social inter-relations and actions. Thus, language is considered an action: to speak is to act. In other words, language is an element of culture, which accompanies historical, cultural and social dynamism. Based on Bakhtin, Geraldi (2011, p.91) defines reading as “a process of interlocution between reader/author mediated by the text” as does Goulemot (2009 p.107) when he defends reading as a practice of “production of meaning, understanding and enjoyment”.

Emphasizing the contextual dimension of reading, Freire (1989) makes clear the relationship between context and reading – what he calls *word-world* –, stating that the *reading of the world precedes the reading of the word*. Reporting stages of his own life, Freire shows us that the reading of the world consists in the continuous apprehension of what (for us) is context, that, based on our experiences, “texts”, “words” and “letters” are built and, along with them, our perceptions. For Freire, the reading of a text, “taken as a pure description of an object, is done in the sense of memorizing it, neither is it real reading, nor does it therefore result in knowledge of the object of which the text talks about”. (FREIRE, 1989, p.12). As noted by Marcuschi (2008 p.87), thinking in context is not just understanding it as a physical environment, but in a broad sense, involving relationships that are established “between the text and its situationality or cultural, social, historical and cognitive insertion (which involves individual and collective knowledge)”.

In the case of schooling practices, the teacher is the main mediator of reading since they select the texts to be read and establish the entire pedagogical process to approach them. We consider reading in the classroom as a transversal practice present in practically all situations of interaction between students and teacher and not only those defined as reading teaching practices, but also the moments when the text appears, for example, as an element fruition, and/or support for the teaching of diverse school contents. Thus, we are based on the assumption that reading practices at school are multiple, plural, even though the schooling process pushes them towards homogeneity and univocity.

### 1.1 Data production

The data were produced from immersion for five months in a 4<sup>th</sup> grade elementary school class of in a public school on the outskirts of Recife, in which we stayed from February 15<sup>th</sup> to July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016, from the first to the last day of school of the first semester. The school district is predominantly inhabited by low-income people, occupied by houses located on hills and most commercial establishments are small markets and bars. There is no sewage system. The school is small, and attends an average of 200 students enrolled in classes from the 1<sup>st</sup> to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade of Elementary School. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade consisted of 16 children, 10 girls and 6 boys, aged between 8 and 10 years. The teacher has a degree in Pedagogy and has over 15 years of experience, but she was in her first year of work at the researched school.

In total, 40 classes were recorded in the field diary, some in audio, in addition to photographic records (of artifacts produced by the research subjects and physical spaces). We produced narrations and descriptions of the participants’ actions, some dialogues were transcribed, resulting in a general frame of reading events. In addition to the field notebook, we conducted an interview with the teacher and analyzed documents of the curricular proposal of the city school system.

The ethnographic perspective with which we work derives from new literacy studies (STREET & HEATH, 2008) and the work of Mexican anthropologists Elsie Rockwell and Justa Speleta (1985). The authors highlight the school's *social construction* bias, which for us is a space that produces its own practices and culture. Each country has its set of transformations in the educational system, according to the social struggles and political and "development" projects that it builds: "In the undocumented history, in this daily dimension, workers, students and parents appropriate the state support and prescriptions and build EACH SCHOOL \*" (ROCKWELL; EZPELETA, 1985, p.155; \*emphasis added by the authors).

Thus, ethnography contributes to the writing of this undocumented history, since it is based on the description and interpretation of concrete social practices, from a holistic perspective, which goes beyond the explicit-action and apprehends the implicit, contextual, political, ideological, historical and cultural action. Participant observation, basic tool of ethnography, consists of a practice that goes beyond a data collection technique, it is a theoretical-methodological proposal for investigating cultures, for investigating local realities, social practices contextualized in a given cultural space. The authors affirm that

The important is to interpret the phenomenon studied from its relationships with the broader social context and not only in terms of its internal relationships. Methodologically, this implies complementing the field information with information referring to other social orders (for example, the country's structure and educational policy), and on the other hand, seeking interpretations and explanations from external elements to the particular situations observed. (ROCKWELL; SPELETA, 1985, p.15).

Even considering the impossibility of the research to apprehend a totality, an ethnographic posture seeks to approach this whole from the description of the most varied cultural aspects of a group. In addition, it seeks to recognize the unique aspects and the consequent identification of patterns in the classroom practices, continuities and discontinuities developed.

Over the first two months, we were present daily in the classroom, watching classes on all disciplinary contents and not just Portuguese. As stated by Green, Dixon and Zaharlick (2005), when an ethnographer decides to investigate reading events, he needs to observe not only the moments called "reading time", but also those that are not, and from the contrast understand more broadly the reading practices. After feeling somewhat familiar and more aware of the patterns and recurrences of the events observed, we started to sparse our presence, on average three days a week, but making ourselves present every week.

In addition to the observations of the classes, we conducted an interview with the teacher in order to understand her conception of reading and what she had to say about certain situations observed in the classroom. When discussing the research interview, Bourdieu is aware of the fact that "scientific interrogation", no matter how hard it tries to avoid symbolic violence, all sorts of distortions run through research relationships and, therefore, it is necessary to be aware of such distortions and try to dominate them (being impossible to cancel them), through a "reflexive reflexivity", "striving to make a reflexive use of the knowledge acquired from social science to control the effects of the research itself" (BOURDIEU, 1997, p.694). The more you know about what you can or cannot question, the less violent the communication will be and the less distortions it will have.

## 2. Classroom reading: a plural and multifaceted practice

Seeking to answer the questions what is read, how is read, who reads, why is it read in this classroom, the general frame of reading events organized by the researchers indicates the realization of practices around nine different textual genres, which are: reading of the class' pacts; image caption reading; reading research conducted at home; reading the student's own textual production; map reading; reading music lyrics; poem reading; reading short stories and reading informative texts from the textbook. Among these genres, the reading of stories was the one that occurred most frequently (10 times) indicating a pattern in the culture of this classroom and a plural dimension of literacy built there, as we will see in more detail below.

From the 40 reading events, 35 were held collectively and loudly and only five individually and quietly. We consider reading events all the moments when different texts were present structuring the interactions (HEATH, 1983) between students and teacher. Therefore, collective and aloud reading represented the dominant literacy pattern in practices in this classroom. The events of individual and silent reading were moments when the children had their desks separated and were subjected to formal assessments and, then, they had to read a text to answer questions, to produce a written text or make a drawing. However, there were times when, even during evaluation, the teacher read the text to the whole class and, only after, the students answered the questions individually.

From these collective aloud readings, 18 were performed only by the teacher. In these moments, she always encouraged the children to develop their listening, to pay attention to the reading, which was respected. Another 10 were performed by the teacher and the children, and the child who asked to do the reading went to the front of the class, read a part of the text. Virtually all children participated in this moment and spontaneously. The ways of reading were alternated – between higher or lower voices – but the children remained attentive at all times when their classmate was reading. In these moments of collective reading, the teacher made different observations, such as: “were”, instead of “was”; “This reading has to be more agile”; “What’s the title?”, “Are you listening?”, “Louder!”, “Put the notebook in the right position on the desk; straighten the posture, so that the reading comes out right; follow the reading with the index finger”. These observations demonstrate that the focus was not the meaning but the aspects involved in the performance of reading aloud, such as posture, fluency, rhythm, intonation.

In the interview, the professor ratified one of our first findings when immersing in the research field: the vast presence of reading in the classroom. After the end of the observations, we asked about the frequency with which she worked on the reading, to which she replied:

I think within the five days. I'd say four, *see?* Because when it wasn't directly connected with Portuguese, we had history, geography, math, even in arts; because math, if you can't understand what you're reading, you won't be able to solve the problems.

Her speech indicates the perception that reading is a transversal practice, performed daily and not only at the moments provided by the formal curriculum materialized in the online diary of the Recife's School System. A practice that crosses and constitutes literacy at school, as identified by other studies (MACEDO, 2005; BUNZEN, 2009; DEZZOTTI, 2019; MACEDO; LIMA, 2020;).

The reading objectives were many and diverse, ranging from reading to learn about the language and appropriating knowledge of the school curriculum in the sense pointed out by Geraldini (1984; 1995) to reading literary genres for enjoyment and the construction of meanings, as we will see later.

These events do not represent a carefree reading and/or enjoyment reading. Mostly, the reading was present in the classroom as a support for working with the production of texts, drawing and linguistic analysis activities. The text has always been a support for teaching the most different contents so that it was not only present as an object of teaching, but for teaching *with* the text, in the sense advocated by Geraldi (1984; 1995). We consider that these data evidence the marks of the school culture constituting literacy practices in the classroom since, as discussed by Soares (2011), texts enter the school and go through a schooling process, being used for pedagogical purposes particular of this socio-cultural space, and from which is expected that, by the end of a given year, children will appropriate curriculum knowledge taught from the texts.

The objectives described here are part of the nature of school literacy practices, carried out in a social and cultural space, marked ideologically and permeated by power relations. The teacher establishes the mediation of reading attentive to external elements that constrain her practice, such as the curriculum materialized in the online diary, the textbook (used especially in history and mathematics classes), the external evaluations carried out by the city education office, among others.

In the next topic, we analyze a discursive sequence extracted from the field diary where the focus is the reading of a short story, one of this classroom's literacy patterns.

1. "Who remembers what I read yesterday?"

The observations of the classes show that the textual genre short story was the most read text in the classroom. In the dialogue below between teacher and students, we can see, in more detail, how familiar the children were.

T: Who remembers what I read yesterday?

Cr: Tales of Death.

P: What was his name?

Cr: Zé Malandro

T: Can anyone explain?

MG: He was a man who had to die, but he kept delaying it, delaying it, delaying it ...

T: But who appeared in the story?

AM: The old man.

T: Does anyone remember what he did?

HL: He was going to take the rock to heaven, but he didn't want to.

MR: He said "I prefer to fly, but I don't want to go to heaven".

RY: He asked for a big bag.

T: For what?

HQ: Because when the grandmother arrived, he cheated Death and asked for another 7 years of life.

T: And what did he like to do?

RC: Playing cards.

T: And what else?

AT: Sleep.

T: Now let's read another short story.

The event begins with the teacher recovering with the children a memory of the previous day in which a short story was read. Dialogically, she encourages the children to take part and we have the participation of 10 children, who answer the questions showing familiarity with this type of literacy event. The teacher's questions not only seek to recover the sequence of actions of the characters, but instigate the children to show the meanings built by reading the short story Zé Malandro: "can anyone explain?"

Our observations indicate that the teacher, when reading and talking about the tales with the children, sought to tie the texts to the context and knowledge of the class' world, valued the voice of the students, who were very excited to report events in their lives related to the reading. We observed events in which the children had the opportunity to go to the front of the class to make their oral summary of an urban legend read – the one they liked the most –, to say what they liked or disliked the text read.

The dialogue below shows the interactive dynamics of the teacher with the students and the way they talk about the tales read in the classroom:

T: What story have you read and missed?

HQ: The Three Little Pigs.

HL: Snow White.

T: Why?

HL: I like the apple part.

MR: Cinderella, I like the part she gets a dress.

T: And what do you find interesting about the Cinderella's story?

MR: That women ... the part when they dance.

YM: None.

T: Don't you remember any stories from when he was little and they read to you?

YM: Nobody read to me.

T: Who else?

AM: Beauty and the Beast.

T: Why?

AM: I don't know.

EW: Saci's.

T: Is it a tale, or a legend?

Cr: A legend.

AT: Woodpecker.

T: Is it a tale?

Cr: No.

MG: Peter Pan.

HL: Teacher, *Ariel*, because when her mother died, at sea she no longer had any joy, then she discovered a place and brought joy back.

RY: Beauty and the Beast, because that's when it happens ...

T: Always in fairy tales, there will be a kiss.

Cr: Not in all of them.

T: But there is always something that brings people together in the end. I like Rapunzel.

MY: Little Red Riding Hood.

RC: That thing is *cuca's*.

T: What is it, RC?

RC: Because it's *chicken's*

T: And can't a child like Little Red Riding Hood? There are other characters.

Cr: The wolf.

Cr: The hunter.

T: The hunter, the grandma. If you don't like it, fine, but if someone does, what's the problem?

T: Today we took a trip back in time and remembered several things, several tales. Within these tales, there are several other tales, but from the classic tales, which ones did we remember?

HL: Little Red Riding Hood and Cinderella.

AM: Snow White, Beauty and the Beast, Rapunzel.

AT: The Three Little Pigs.

EM: Sleeping Beauty.

T: Didn't everyone talk about the one you liked the most and why? So now you are going to write the story you like the most with beginning, middle and end. How does it start?

Cr: Once upon a time.

T: Very well! How else can I start? A certain day, in a beautiful day, in a beautiful afternoon, tomorrow... We have to create. Can I start by saying that the wolf has already eaten the old lady? No, we must have the step-by-step, beginning, middle and end.

YM: Teacher, I will not start like this, I will start with "it was an afternoon".

T: That's it, it can be.

AM: Teacher, how many lines?

T: Don't worry, go wherever your imagination goes.

JS: Teacher, is princess with s or z?

T: Don't worry about the correct spelling, no, I want you to tell it. HQ, you are writing your name wrong. I will not admit it here in the fourth grade. Come here, HQ. Did you set the beginning, middle and end? Where are the paragraphs?

T: Read *Cinderella* [Gata borralheira] again.

YM: She is a cat, that is, beautiful, but she is scruffy because she is crazy.

AM: No, because she worked a lot, she did a lot of work, while her sisters were at the piano and singing class.

YM: Teacher, me and [AM] are also a Cinderella because I clean the house in the morning, in the afternoon and at night, I have a sister and a stepfather, and another from another.

T: But you have time to study and have fun, don't you? Cinderella didn't have it.

YM: I don't know.

T: Of course you have, but I will talk to your mother about it.

JS: Teacher, can you make it up if you don't remember the whole story?

T: Yes, but it must have a beginning, middle and end, it must start with "once upon a time" and it has to be in the context of the story you are going to tell. There's no prince in Little Red Riding Hood, for example.

As in the previous dialogue, the teacher starts the mediation by asking about the tales that have already been read and that were memorable. Students respond with a list of classic tales that are part of the school culture of the early years of elementary school and also include some legends. "Is that a tale, or a legend?". The teacher mediates the conversation aiming to make students perceive differences between classic tales and legends, but for the students the focus is on the literary narrative and not on differences between genres.

While they report, the teacher adds new questions that allow students to express their opinions about the texts, if they liked it, what they liked most and why: "Teacher, Ariel, because when her mother died, at sea she no longer had any joy, then she discovered a place and brought joy back". Until a boy indicates he doesn't like Little Red Riding Hood because it would be a "chicken's" thing. This expression, in Recife, refers to homosexuals. The teacher asks "If you don't like it, that's fine,



but if someone does, what's the problem?". Not only in this excerpt, but also in other moments of the dialogue, we notice the students' voice evaluating the tales, producing meanings and relating them to their social and cultural experience: "Teacher, me and [AM] are also a Cinderella, because I clean the house in the morning, in the afternoon and at night, I have a sister and a stepfather, and another from another ". In this speech, the child clearly expresses her condition of economic and social disadvantage, showing that she is fully aware of the situation in which she finds herself. The teacher's counter words (BAKHTIN, 1995 [1929]) try to problematize the child's speech by stating that she may be a Cinderella but still has time to study. The child responds by saying that she does not know, that is, she questions the teacher's interpretation, who ends the conversation by stating that she will seek the family to find out about the child's conditions in regarding the time available to study. This mediation creates a space in which readers produce meanings for the texts they read, relating them to their daily lives, emitting a evaluative appreciation (Bakhtin, op. Cit.) and building a critical reader's posture. As noted, the interaction with the text read does not occur only under the physical possession of the text, but also in those moments when children are called upon to speak about the texts read, their preferences.

As observed in the dialogue throughout the teacher's practice, the texts read often served as a basis for the production of new texts. Students are invited to write from memory the text they liked best: "Didn't everyone talk about the one you liked the most and why? So now you are going to write the story you like the most with a beginning, middle and end. How does it start? ". The students' familiarity with formal aspects of this textual genre is visible: a child replies: "Once upon a time". The teacher responds expanding the child's comment, offering other ways that can be used to start the writing: "Very well! How else can I start? A certain day, in a beautiful day, in a beautiful afternoon, tomorrow. We have to create ". This attitude of stimulating children's creativity from a tale also stands out when a child asks if there is an established limit of lines, to which the teacher replies: "Don't worry, go wherever your imagination goes." or when a child asks about the spelling of a word: "Teacher, princess is with s or z? ". "Don't worry about the correct spelling, no, I want you to tell it". We observed that the concern with certain formal aspects does not include spelling as a fundamental element in the expression of writing at that moment. The teacher aims for students to be able to develop the narrative with a logical and coherent sequence, much more than spelling correctly: "Come here, HQ. Did you set the beginning, middle and end? Where are the paragraphs? ".

The teacher ends the dialogue picking up on her initial proposal. Children, despite the freedom to write, must be attentive, as noted in the excerpt: "Teacher, can you make it up if you don't remember the whole story?". "Yes, but it must have a beginning, middle and end, it must start with "once upon a time" and it has to be in the context of the story you are going to tell. There's no prince in Little Red Riding Hood, for example". In other words, they can create, but they cannot exchange characters, they must start the writing with the classic Once Upon a Time and the canonical structure of the tale must be followed, which shows the teacher's attachment to a formal structure that does not always match diversity present in the different tales. It can be noticed that the students did not have experiences with other narrative forms of modern and contemporary tales, which break with the structure of the fairy tale already internalized by them. This passage clearly indicates a tension between univocity and dialogicity (BAKHTIN, [1929] 1995), opening and closing of possibilities in writing. Pedagogical mediation reveals the dimension of authority (and not authoritarianism) that constitutes the social role attributed to the teacher (MACEDO, 2005).

We can affirm that the dialogues analyzed here indicate a perspective of literary literacy (PAULINO, 1999) that puts the text in dialogue with its readers aiming at the production of meanings and not just the mastery of formal aspects of this language, displaying the hybridism of literacy practices in this classroom. Even in a space that tends to restrict the meanings as the school, we notice in this discursive sequence a tension between dialogicity and univocity, however a productive tension that certainly tends to contribute effectively to the appropriation of literary language by children.

In the interview, the teacher comments on how her ideas for working with the tales and literary texts in the classroom emerge, as shown in the excerpt below:

**Res.** To carry out these activities, you said you read tales and what else?

**T.:** The textbook was offering the structure of tales, you know, the typology of the tale, so, in addition to what the textbook brought, I picked some accompanying materials, right ”.

In addition to the textbook, we realize that she chooses and picks the actual texts from the collection of books indicated by research and continuing education courses as well as her own choices. When responding about his goals with literary reading, she answers:

My goals were to sharpen their taste for reading; get it? So, I dramatized, called their attention, questioned; 'what will happen? What do you think? Why is this? Why is that? ', so that he would feel involved in the text and have another context, another ending. It is really sharpening the reasoning.

When we pay attention to the emphasis given by the teacher – *to sharpen their* [the children's] *taste for reading*, affirming that she wants to show them that *reading is not boring* –, she reveals herself committed to her role as a builder of readers, something that, according to Geraldini (2011), is rare at school, given that *reading for reading* does not focus on assessment, nevertheless, it is not devoid of results. Reading as a fruition, on the contrary, is one of the easiest paths from which readers are formed, since the reading we defend here is the one with which interaction is established.

## Final considerations

In this research we are based on the assumption that school literacy is plural, hybrid and inhomogeneous. Based on the ethnographic perspective, we immerse ourselves in the classroom of the 4<sup>th</sup> grade of Elementary School for an entire school semester, observing all classes of all subjects in the first two months, continuing in subsequent months with observations on an average of three times a week. We were faced with a variety of texts, objectives and reading events that reaffirmed the assumption of the plurality inherent in literacy at school and evidence how reading is a transversal practice in the school context. A practice that constitutes virtually all the activities in which the students participate, whether they are a systematic teaching of a curricular content or of fruition, thus, not meeting the dichotomy school literacy versus social literacy. According to Street, literacy at school is also social, produced in situations of interaction between subjects – students and teachers, with the school institution's own objectives, as indicated by Soares (2011). The textual genre tale, with a predominant presence to ensure the main objective of reading as enjoyment, was worked in a varied and dialogical way, with dialogues between teacher and students that indicate a tension between univocity and polyphony constitutive of the social role the teacher plays in her duty. In other words, at the same time it allows children to get in touch and appropriate texts from children's literature, there is the absence of a variety of tales with structures other than just fairy tales along with the requirement that students

represent this structure in their written productions. The plural dimension of reading was revealed not only in the different texts and reading objectives, but especially in the different meanings built by the students, indicating that they are appropriating reading in a more critical perspective, participating in situations in which their voices could somehow be heard and discussed. We conclude by reaffirming the need and the importance of research that carry out more effective and systematic immersion in the classroom's daily life, in an ethnographic perspective, from which the researcher, with frequent and regular presence in most classes and not only in classes of Portuguese language, may enable a better understanding, in a deeper manner, of literacy practices at school, its complexity, irreducible to a single theoretical model.

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