

ONLINE LITERARY CIRCLES: AN ADAPTATION IN ENGLISH AS AN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE

CÍRCULOS DE LEITURA ON-LINE: UMA ADAPTAÇÃO PARA INGLÊS COMO LÍNGUA ADICIONAL

CÍRCULOS LITERARIOS EN LÍNEA: UNA ADAPTACIÓN EN INGLÉS COMO LENGUA ADICIONAL



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ABSTRACT: Literature is recognized as a profound expression of language and culture, yet it is often avoided in English as an Additional Language (EAL) courses in Brazil, either due to its perceived difficulty or to teachers' lack of experience in teaching it. This paper presents and discusses an online pedagogical practice conducted during the COVID-19 pandemic with a literature group called "Conversas Literárias," a teaching project implemented at a federal high school. Participants of various ages and proficiency levels read a short story in English, and to ensure comprehension, the session included scaffolding strategies to support language learning. Participants felt encouraged throughout the activity and were able to understand and discuss the plot and other literary elements of the story. Given the positive feedback, this practice can be adapted and replicated by other teachers working with mixed-level groups—a common scenario in most high schools.

KEYWORDS: Online literature circles. English as an Additional Language. Pedagogical Practices. Literature in EAL.

RESUMO: *A literatura é uma elevada expressão de língua e cultura, mas é frequentemente evitada nas aulas de Inglês como Língua Adicional (EAL) no Brasil, devido à sua complexidade ou à falta de preparo dos professores. Este artigo descreve uma prática pedagógica online, realizada durante a pandemia, com o grupo "Conversas Literárias", um projeto de ensino em um Instituto Federal. Participantes de diferentes idades e níveis de proficiência leram um conto em inglês, e estratégias de apoio foram utilizadas para facilitar a compreensão. Os envolvidos sentiram-se apoiados e conseguiram discutir o enredo e elementos literários do texto, mesmo em outra língua. O feedback positivo sugere que a prática pode ser adaptada e replicada por professores que lidam com turmas de níveis mistos, realidade comum no ensino médio.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Círculos literários online. Inglês como Língua Adicional. Práticas Pedagógicas. Literatura no ensino de EAL.

RESUMEN: *La literatura es una expresión profunda del lenguaje y la cultura, pero suele evitarse en las clases de Inglés como Lengua Adicional (EAL) en Brasil, ya sea por su dificultad percibida o por la falta de experiencia docente. Este artículo presenta y analiza una práctica pedagógica en línea realizada durante la pandemia con el grupo "Conversas Literárias", un proyecto en una escuela secundaria federal. Participantes de diversas edades y niveles de competencia leyeron un cuento en inglés, y se emplearon estrategias para facilitar la comprensión y el aprendizaje del idioma. Los participantes se sintieron motivados y lograron comprender y debatir el argumento y otros elementos literarios. Dada la respuesta positiva, esta práctica puede adaptarse y replicarse en grupos de niveles mixtos, comunes en la mayoría de las escuelas secundarias.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: Círculos literarios en línea. Inglés como Lengua Adicional. Prácticas pedagógicas. Literatura en EAL.



Introduction

Working with literature in basic education is always challenging. Teachers must be careful not to fall into the trap of literary historiography and must be able to provide opportunities for the development of critical reading. The power of literature relies on its capacity for “humanization,” as it activates imagination, intellect, feelings, and empathy, enriching one’s subjectivity and their relationship with others and their surroundings (Candido, 2011; Cosson, 2015; Hall, 2016; Rouxel, 2012). For these reasons, Candido (2011) argues that having access to literature is, above all, a right for every individual.

Through the lens of Sociocultural Historical Theory (henceforth SCHT), based on research and writings by psychologist Lev Vygotsky, the human arts are the apex of higher mental functions (Kozulin, 1998), especially literature, because it engages with language—in itself considered the most sophisticated symbolic artifact (Poehner; Lantolf, 2014). Due to this view of language, this theory guides a wide range of research in Applied Linguistics and language learning, also informing the approach for the case study presented in this chapter.

SCHT understands that humans are in constant development, which occurs through their interaction with the world. This interaction is mediated by artifacts that can be material or symbolic. Language, as previously mentioned, is one such symbolic artifact and is the element engaged in many other symbolic fields of human interaction with the world. Formal schooling is seen as a valuable space for human development, especially in terms of scientific knowledge, and teachers play an important role because they can guide students through their Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) (Vygotsky, 1978). For Vygotsky (1978), the ZPD is the distance between the Zone of Actual Development (when the learner solves problems independently) and the Zone of Potential Development (when problem-solving happens with the support of more experienced peers). That is, the teacher is a fundamental part of structuring what and how to learn and must be aware of the learners’ ZPD in order to help them. Teachers are more experienced peers and, therefore, through their planned action, they can scaffold learners’ access to different knowledge more effectively. In the specific case of developing reading skills in a foreign language, the teacher initially has the task of selecting texts whose linguistic characteristics are most suitable for the group of readers with whom they will work (Bland, 2018; Urbanski, 2023). In addition, it is also up to the teacher to find the reading, comprehension, and interpretation strategies that will be most effective (Paran; Wallace, 2016).



Returning to literature, how can one avoid the above-mentioned “trap” of literary historiography when working with literature at school? It is sometimes difficult, since teachers must address institutional curricula and national selection processes, especially in high school, which is the context of this research. Additionally, teachers face the dilemma of assessment (Paran; Sercu, 2010)—though this will not be addressed in this text.

Authentic literature: planning and reading flash fiction

One possibility to escape this trap and carry out activities with an emphasis on the enjoyment of literature—in other terms, to engage in aesthetic reading (Rosenblatt, 1985)—is to work with students in what is known as literary circles (Contreras; Delacroix, 2019; Troian; Seerig, 2020). In these circles, participants are able to read and engage in conversation about their reading, without the curricular demands of a “formal” school subject (which are subject to assessment policies). By speaking freely, and perhaps more importantly, by listening, students develop important language skills (in the realm of reading comprehension and interpretation, when interacting with the more experienced peer, such as the teacher) and also their own subjectivity, in their impressions of the story, the characters, the writing style, and the colleagues’ perceptions. Bajour (2012) beautifully describes reading in a group as making a music sheet come to life by an orchestra: several voices, several perspectives bring the many layers of a text for participants to see. This is the proposal of the teaching project called Conversas Literárias⁴ (“Literary Talks”), which has been carried out at a Brazilian Federal Institute⁵ since 2018. The project consists of weekly one-hour meetings with students and teachers, in which a short story (usually in Portuguese, but from authors of several countries) is read and discussed. Since it is not part of the core curriculum, no attendance or assessment is required, and participants can come and go whenever they want. Because of this unpretentious style, the project has been a success since then.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, when distance measures were rapidly imposed, participants requested that meetings continue online. To our own surprise, the group, with its traditional variation in attendance, continued to engage in the meetings, and eventually, many requested a reading practice in English.

⁴ For a full description of the project and its outcomes, refer to Seerig and Troian (2020).

⁵ These institutes are public and offer High School and Undergraduate courses. In this case, the teaching project was offered to High School students.



Language is the symbolic artifact engaged in literary works, also requiring language to be understood by the reader/listener (in the case of oral literatures). Thus, language learners might face difficulties comprehending a text fully in a language they do not know completely (Urbanski, 2023). Teachers, then, are essential to offer support (or scaffold) along the process (Martín de León; García Hermoso, 2020; Swain; Kinnear; Steinman, 2015), and we felt compelled to develop a section of activities in order to provide participants with the level of comprehension required for the reading. This also bearing in mind that the purpose of reading literature is, as it is in the first language, to humanize—that is, we want learners to reach literary literacy (Cosson, 2015), or meaningful literacy (Hanauer, 2012)—not simply to learn vocabulary in a new language.

In this paper, thus, teachers will find the steps of these procedures, founded on the first author's previous experiences while working with literature in English as an Additional Language (EAL) (Seerig, 2018; Seerig; Nicolaides, 2022), based on SCHT (Lantolf; Thorne, 2008; Swain; Kinnear; Steinman, 2015; Urbanski, 2023). The approach chosen to work with the text in English was scaffolding (Martín de León; García Hermoso, 2020). Data compiled and presented here were obtained from the lesson plan⁶, our annotations regarding the meeting, and two questionnaires answered by 15 participants in the meeting, one prior and one after the practice. The final questionnaire, which is the most relevant, consisted of eleven questions: open, closed, and on a Likert scale. It was elaborated through Google Forms and sent to the WhatsApp group used by the participants. Both teachers and students (who participate equally in the group) answered the questions. In the following sections, we present each step of the developed practice, from the choice of the literary text to the analysis of some of the answers from the questionnaire.

⁶ Although aware that this is not a traditional “lesson,” there was a step-by-step preparation that consisted in somewhat “teaching” some language and expressions to scaffold participants along the reading practice. These can be applied to any other lesson plan by teachers who read us.



Defining the language used in pedagogical practice

Choosing the text to work with in an additional language is not easy. Thus, a preview questionnaire was developed with some questions for the participants of Conversas Literárias regarding their interests and preferences for the meeting in which the English text would be read.

It was also important to find out the participants' proficiency in the language. This information is useful in terms of research, since most EAL classrooms in Brazil, in basic education, consist of multi-level groups. After a questionnaire in which participants self-reported their level of English language proficiency, we had a balanced result between those who identified themselves as basic (four participants) or pre-intermediate (three participants), totaling 46.7%, and those who recognized themselves as being at the intermediate (six participants) or advanced levels (two participants), totaling 53.3%.

The high rate of students who self-identify as having a basic or pre-intermediate level makes it not surprising, therefore, that when asked whether they wanted the whole meeting to be carried out in English, only nine chose this option (60%), and only five of them (35.7%) chose to read out loud, in case this was an option. Because of these factors, it was decided that the interactions in the meeting would be mostly in Portuguese, in accordance with the idea that language use (L1 and L2) must be an agreement between teacher and learners (Swain; Lapkin, 2013).

Choosing the literary text and developing pre-reading strategies

This multi-level context poses a question that is very common—and that leads teachers to avoid literature in their EAL: what to read with a group of learners that ranges from basic to advanced, and how to make them all engaged? At this point, it is important to state that, whereas advanced learners will engage in the reading (because literature is engaging) and will need more support with aspects such as inferences (thus moving forward from comprehension towards the more important interpretation (Paran; Wallace, 2016)), basic learners will need to be scaffolded along the reading process in order to achieve comprehension—they will need help with vocabulary, expressions, etc. Considering that one of the principles for reading instruction is to structure lessons around pre-reading, during-reading, and post-reading tasks (Grabe; Stoller,



2011), this support is often offered in pre-reading activities—which are developed based on the chosen text.

This text, thus, should not be too challenging: a simpler language that conserves the story and the literary aspects is preferred. This is an alternative offered by graded readers (Bland, 2018; Lazar, 1993)—however, they are graded and we have a multi-graded group. In addition, these materials are usually longer, and Conversas Literárias is a one-hour meeting where we should develop pre-, during-, and post-reading stages to experience the text fully, since we have different attendees every time.

For this reason, the first author chose a flash fiction classic: *Popular Mechanics*, by Raymond Carver (Carver, 1989). It is very short, in modern language, and does not present difficult structures. To identify language that can be challenging to participants, the first author⁷ used a very useful tool called Compleat, provided by the Canadian website Lextutor⁸. There, teachers can paste the text, and the application separates the vocabulary presented by level of language knowledge, placing words into groups (e.g., “group 1” indicates words understandable by learners who know up to 1,000 words; “group 2” compiles up to 2,000 words; and so on—, which presents the vocabulary for the chosen text). Thus, more difficult language can be previously identified and presented to learners. In the case of *Popular Mechanics*, most language belongs to group 1 (more basic—knowledge of one thousand words in English), which makes the text adequate. In class, and in the case presented here, we made a table where the entire vocabulary is inserted and delivered to students. Since it is a multi-level group and time is sparse during the online meeting, we shared this table in the Conversas Literárias WhatsApp group, and it was expected that at least the less proficient participants would review it prior to the meeting. In addition, the first author developed a set of cards on the online application Quizlet⁹, in which some new language was inserted (those words belonging to groups 3 and above, in the Compleat classification).

These activities, thus, belong to a pre-reading stage. In regular classes, they would be carried out in a prior lesson—this was not done because the focus of Conversas Literárias is also that no participant should be a “regular,” and every meeting is independent of the others.

⁷ From this stage on, the first author, who teaches English in the same institution and developed the activity. Professor Amália, the second author, coordinated the project along 2021, organizing readings, presentations in events and engaging the group in such experiences, offering all necessary support in the meetings.

⁸ Available at: <https://www.lex tutor.ca/vp/comp/>.

⁹ Available at: <https://quizlet.com/>.



Thus, some extra scaffolding was offered to less proficient readers of English prior to the meeting. One must bear in mind that the ultimate goal of the project is the same as the goal for the meetings held in Portuguese: students should develop what is called literary literacy (Bertinha, 2021; Cardoso, 2019; Cosson; Souza, 2011), that is, their ability to read the literary text beyond the words. Regarding how to put this perspective into practice, Cosson (2006) defines “literary literacy” as a social practice that assumes that, if reading is a solitary act, interpretation is a solidarity act:

We adopt as a principle of literary literacy the construction of a community of readers. It is this community that will offer a repertoire, a cultural framework within which the reader will be able to move and build the world and himself. Therefore, it is necessary that the teaching of Literature provides a continuous movement of reading, starting from the known to the unknown, from the simple to the complex, from the similar to the different, with the aim of expanding and consolidating the student’s cultural repertoire¹⁰ (Cosson, 2006, p. 47-48).

Thus, the aim in Conversas Literárias is to provide this expansion of the participants’ repertoire, built by themselves while they develop their thoughts and perceptions together with the group. That means that knowing the language is a means to achieving the interpretation that we aim for—the focus continues to be on the literary elements. In the next section, we describe how the meeting was held.

The meeting: development

During the meeting, there was also a pre-reading stage. This was carried out through a slide presentation that covered aspects such as the reference to the title: “*Popular Mechanics*” is the title of a famous USA do-it-yourself magazine, established in 1902. The first author presented the title and the magazine website¹¹ so that participants could infer some relationship between this and the plot of the story. Also prior to reading, some important expressions that are more complex were presented on the slides, in order to preview their meaning. This way, the reader does not “get stuck” during the group reading.

¹⁰ Original quote, in Portuguese: “Adotamos como princípio do letramento literário a construção de uma comunidade de leitores. É essa comunidade que oferecerá um repertório, uma moldura cultural dentro da qual o leitor poderá se mover e construir o mundo e a ele mesmo. Para tanto, é necessário que o ensino da Literatura efetive um movimento contínuo de leitura, partindo do conhecido ao desconhecido, do simples para o complexo, do semelhante para o diferente, com o objetivo de expandir e consolidar o repertório cultural do aluno”.

¹¹ Available at: <https://www.popularmechanics.com/>. Access on: 2 May 2023.



Among the sentences and idioms found in the short story, a few were: “shoulder-high window that faced the backyard,” “In this manner, the issue was decided,” “I’m glad you’re leaving,” “Let go of him/her,” “she grabbed,” and “[...] her fisted fingers.” These expressions also work as a pre-reading strategy in terms of content—students were asked if they could guess the topic of the short story from them, promoting engagement and conversation. These pre-reading activities provide background knowledge as part of the process of reading (Paran; Robinson, 2016)

Since some participants previously responded that they would not feel comfortable reading out loud, the first author read the whole short story, which consists of only two pages. This decision was also made bearing in mind that, if a participant read out loud, they might do it too fast (possibly out of nervousness, based on our observations in class), making it more difficult for some less proficient participants to comprehend. Thus, the first author attempted to read slowly and made two pauses along the way, asking participants to retell what was happening and allowing them to ask any questions regarding vocabulary or general comprehension. In the second pause, towards the end, the first author asked what they thought would happen. During the pauses, Portuguese was used freely, as the first language is adopted as scaffolding to comprehend the additional one (Swain; Lapkin, 2013)

In total, the reading time was about seven minutes. At this stage, we were already in the middle of the meeting (which is one hour long). Prior to the meeting, the first author was a little apprehensive that the group would not have enough topics to discuss in the post-reading and even searched for extra elements—such as adaptations of this short story published on YouTube. However, this was not necessary. Participants were surprised by the ending, and we attempted to give them all the speaking time possible, only mediating when necessary. Some of them thought they did not understand the story well because of the abrupt ending that can only be inferred, but this was resolved through their own interactions (mostly in Portuguese). The link to the short story adaptation on YouTube ended up being sent to students on the WhatsApp group, because there was no time for any additional material.

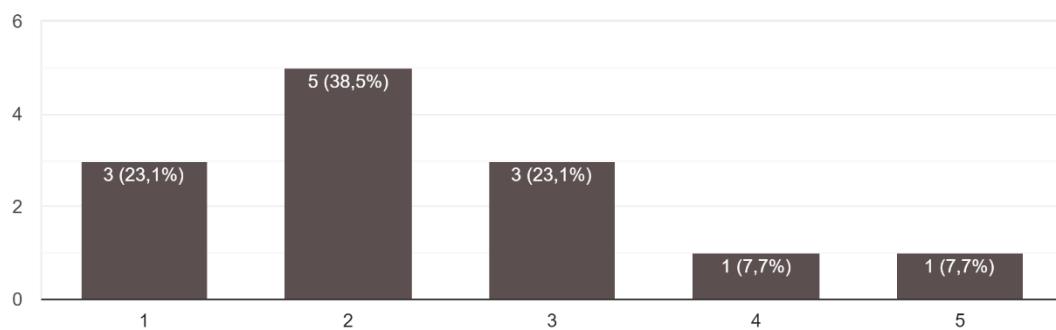
Discussion: a bilingual symphony

Those very important post-reading interactions—which consist of turning the “music sheet” into the “symphony,” in Bajour’s (2012) metaphor—were held in Portuguese, as previously stated, due to the answers to the first questionnaire. It was presented as the right



choice because it allowed readers to speak more freely about the events of the story. And they constitute the reason why the meetings—whether to read in English or in Portuguese—happen. Thus, even though we shifted language regarding the element read, this did not disturb the purpose of *Conversas Literárias*, because participants felt at ease to comment on and analyze the story. From a Sociocultural Historical perspective, even though participants are engaged in learning their new language (which is the case, because they requested the reading in English), the levels of complexity interfere in the process and affect each one differently. This is why it is important to use L1, considering that language is the symbolic artifact we use to mediate our interactions with the world: even in more proficient cases, L2 is not sufficiently developed and certain tasks (such as discussing literary characters' behavior, making inferences regarding the ending, relating the narrative to personal experiences) cannot be completed “without L1 mediation” (Swain; Lapkin, 2013); that is, L1 is used as a tool for thinking, as a mediator between the world of objects and the new language (Urbanski, 2023). By using our L1, we provided equal opportunity to debate for all participants—this was evident in the questionnaire participants answered after the meeting, in which they were asked about their level of difficulty if the meeting had been held completely in English, as Figure 1 illustrates.

Figure 1 – Answers to the question: If the meeting had been conducted in English, what would be your “level of difficulty” in following the debate? (Where 1 indicates “no difficulty” and 5 indicates “Too much difficulty, couldn’t understand most of it.”)



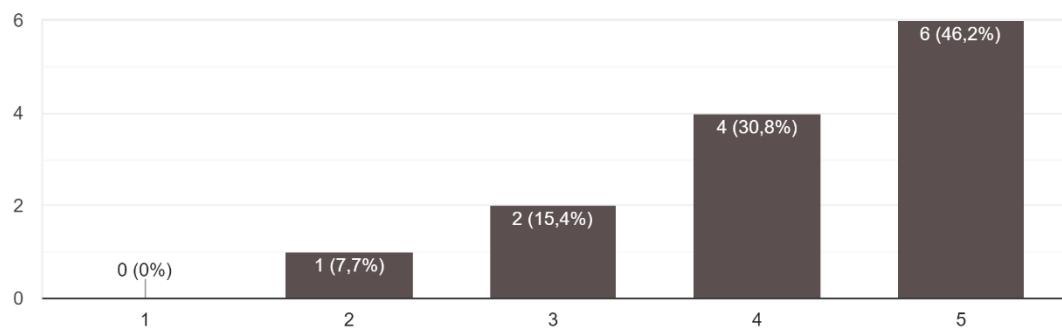
Source: Made by the authors. Based on the responses in the questionnaire.

According to Figure 1, five out of 13 respondents would have difficulty in interaction, as they indicated levels 3, 4, and 5 on the Likert scale, which indicates the “bilingual” approach was the right choice to respect all levels of proficiency. In the space given for comments, some mentioned they would like to attempt to do it all in English, although admitting there would be

“difficulties in expressing some thoughts in English,” or “things would come out wrong.” These answers might indicate that some of them are comfortable being pushed further in their Zone of Proximal Development.

It is interesting to note that even a student who considers her level of English to be high proposed the use of Portuguese during the activities. She commented: “I think it would be cool to mix maybe some English questions throughout the meeting, even if the answers come up in Portuguese.”¹² Regarding the relevance of the introductory activities (pre-reading), there was also positive feedback, as seen in Figure 2, which asked about the relevance of the pre-reading activity for text comprehension. The answer options were arranged according to a Likert scale, where 1 indicated “not relevant” and 5 indicated “very relevant.”

Figure 2 – Answers to the question: As for the initial exercise with some terms in the short story and the relationship with the title, what was the relevance for reading comprehension? (if you want to comment/explain your answer, you can do so in the next question), where 1 indicates “not relevant” and 5 indicates “very relevant”



Source: Made by the authors. Based on the responses in the questionnaire.

As shown, ten out of thirteen participants considered the introductory activities “relevant” (4 respondents – 30.8%) or “very relevant” (6 respondents – 46.2%) for reading comprehension, and one added in the comments that he would not have understood the reference if he had not been exposed to the vocabulary before reading. In general, the comments were positive and emphasized how helpful the activities were. In statements such as “It raised awareness for possibilities of interpretation¹³” and “they helped with the general

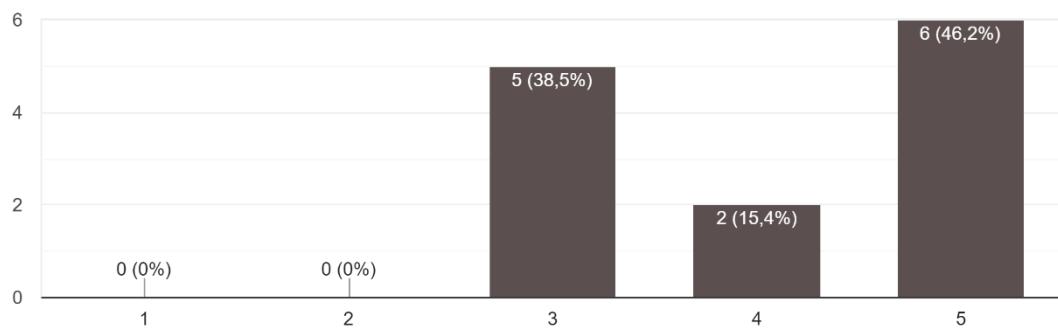
¹² Original comment: “Acho que seria legal misturar talvez algumas perguntas em inglês ao longo do encontro, mesmo que as respostas surjam em português”.

¹³ Original comment: “Já despertou para as possibilidades de interpretação”.

comprehension of the text¹⁴,” we observe that both stages of reading have been addressed (nonetheless, participants do not know the difference between the concepts): whereas comprehension is more cognitive—though very important in the initial layers of the reading process—interpretation (open, interactive, with a wide range of possibilities) is what provides literacy in the critical, literary sense (Paran; Wallace, 2016)

The pre-reading Quizlet activity was also essential for participants, since most of them found it very relevant for comprehension, as we can see in Figure 3. The chart presents the answers about the level of relevance respondents attributed to the Quizlet activities for reading the literary text.

Figure 3 – Answers to the question: As for the vocabulary proposed in the Quizlet platform, point out its level of relevance for reading the story (if you want to comment/explain your answer, you can do so in the next question) – where 1 indicates “not relevant” and 5 indicates “very relevant”



Source: Made by the authors. Based on the responses in the questionnaire.

All participants evaluated the activity as relevant to some extent: almost half considered it “very relevant” (46.2%), and the others, at least medium (38.5%) or relevant (15.4%). One participant commented on its dynamics: “I found it quite dynamic; I will stick to it to do other things as well lol”¹⁵.

Another participant, who considered herself to have basic knowledge of the language, was able to establish relationships with other media, taking her new learnings beyond the limits of the meeting: “(It was) very important; I even realized the use of phrasal verbs like go away,

¹⁴ Original comment: “Ajudou para a compreensão geral do texto”.

¹⁵ Original comment: “Achei bem dinâmico, vou aderir para fazer outras coisas também kk”.

leave, and fall away, because hearing them on TV it doesn't seem to make any difference, but each thing has its translation, just like for us.”¹⁶

Another strategy—the pauses during reading, intended to check participants' comprehension of the narrative—was also seen as important, as all selected the option indicating the pauses as “facilitating comprehension”. One of them commented, in the general considerations about the meeting:

I liked it a lot. In some passages it seemed that I needed some time to catch the whole thing, one of them was at a moment before the pause, which fit like a glove for my understanding, and then at the end, which I needed to go back. I think that when I don't know the words, and also when there is a sequence of words that in Portuguese wouldn't be put in that order, the more “shuffled” it is, the more time I need to understand¹⁷.

It is interesting to note the mention of word order by this participant. Word order in English is a challenge for language learners whose first language is Portuguese, because English is not always as flexible with word order as Portuguese is. In addition, the pauses throughout the text were not random: they were somewhat “predicted,” considering where it is important to review in order to move forward in the text and comprehend it. This is another scaffolding strategy that can be used not only in an additional language but also in first language literary texts: how many times have we read complex literature and were unable to fully comprehend it? This is why the teacher is so important to mediate the literary text and promote literary literacy.

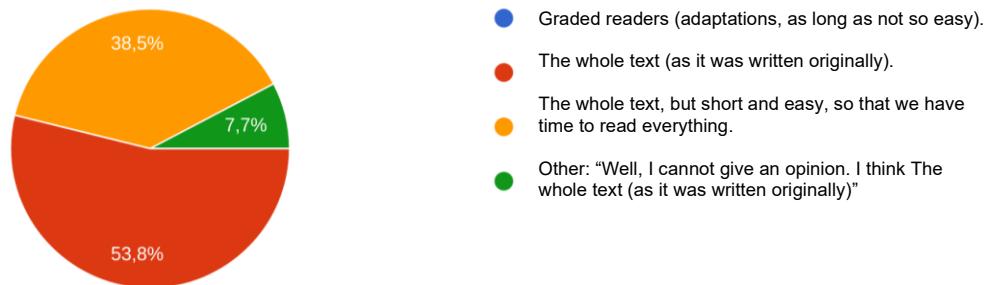
Figure 4 presents the responses to the question about which type of text the students preferred, whether full texts or adapted texts. This is an important question since teachers are usually in doubt about whether to adopt graded readers (which are not authentic material) or not.

¹⁶ Original comment: “Muito importante, até me dei conta do ir embora, sair e cair fora, porque ouvindo na TV parece que não faz diferença, mas cada coisa tem sua tradução, assim como pra nós”.

¹⁷Original comment: “Eu gostei bastante. Em alguns trechos parecia que precisava de um tempo pra pegar o todo, uma delas foi num momento anterior à pausa, que caiu como uma luva pra minha compreensão, e depois no final, que precisei voltar. Acho que quando não conheço as palavras e ainda quando tem uma sequência de palavras que em português não seriam colocadas naquela ordem, quanto mais “embaralhado” mais tempo preciso pra entender”.



Figure 4 – Answers to the question: There are, in English, adaptations of literary texts, for readers who still haven't "acquired" enough vocabulary in the language. This allows these readers to read fluidly. However, it may be that some stylistic nuances are lost compared to the original text. What kind of text would you rather read?



Source: Made by the authors. Based on the responses in the questionnaire.

Both red and orange slices represent the alternatives referring to the whole text. The difference is that the orange slice includes the addition that the original text would preferably be short and easy (as in the case of *Popular Mechanics*). The orange and red slices add up to 92.3% of the answers. No student indicated a preference for graded-reader type texts (which would have been blue). One of the respondents could not decide which type of text they preferred, although inclined towards the alternative in yellow. This demonstrates that participants of all levels of proficiency are inclined to read the original text rather than adaptations, even though they are aware of certain limitations in understanding the English language. It also indicates the importance of strategies such as those presented here, to provide language learners with the necessary scaffolding throughout the text.

Final considerations

Yunes (2014), one of the greatest advocates for reading circles, says that "Shared reading practices will never disappear, even for those who read apparently alone in their hidden places: one reads with many others (books, authors, films, works, readings...) who guide them towards an autonomous practice of reading¹⁸". The authors are sure we can agree with her. The

¹⁸ Translated from original text in Portuguese: "A leitura compartilhada nunca vai desaparecer, mesmo para quem lê aparentemente sozinho no recôndito escolhido: ele lê com muitos outros (livros, autores, filmes, obras, leituras...) que lhe fizeram caminhar até uma prática autônoma de ler."

project Conversas Literárias is still ongoing at the institution and in 2023 it will complete its sixth year of existence.

Throughout this period, meetings took place in different settings and were coordinated by different teachers, using the most diverse methods. What we present here is a snapshot, a photograph of an activity that sought to add strategies for the development of literary literacy alongside strategies for teaching English as an Additional Language. As we verified through the analysis of the questionnaire responses, participants evaluated the experience in a positive and enriching manner, regardless of their previous knowledge of the language. This demonstrates that it is possible to turn literature in an additional language into something engaging, as long as the teacher (or the person mediating it) is able to plan and organize its scaffolding in advance to address their multi-level groups.

Researchers have been developing a wide range of materials discussing and suggesting constructive approaches to literature in EAL lessons (see Bland, 2018; Paran; Robinson, 2016). We hope this case study can inspire other teachers, who are aware of the importance of literature for the development of learners, to develop literary practices not only in Brazilian EAL lessons but in any other classroom or out-of-classroom context, without fearing the circumstances posed by multi-level groups.



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