

NON-FICTION ILLUSTRATED BOOKS AND READER FORMATION: AN ANALYSIS FROM THE VOICES OF FUTURE TEACHERS

LIVROS ILUSTRADOS DE NÃO-FICÇÃO E FORMAÇÃO DE LEITORES: UMA ANÁLISE A PARTIR DA VOZ DE FUTUROS PROFESSORES

LIBROS ILUSTRADOS DE NO FICCIÓN Y FORMACIÓN DE LECTORES: UN ANÁLISIS DESDE LA VOZ DE FUTUROS DOCENTES

Manuel Francisco ROMERO OLIVA¹
Ester TRIGO IBÁÑEZ²
Hugo HEREDIA PONCE³

ABSTRACT: This work is focused on establishing the basis for a model of reader formation supported by the illustrated non-fiction book (TABERNERO, 2018). It is considered to put the focus of analysis on the voice of the future mediators of reading promotion in schools, which is why in this study a diachronic vision of the figure of the teacher was chosen, starting with the initial formation and ending with their professional performance. Our research is qualitative, through semi-structured interviews with student teachers (in their various formative moments: undergraduate and graduate) and active teachers. The participants' viewpoint, based on biographical narratives (CHÁRRIEZ, 2012), will serve to bring together the concept of non-fiction books and social reading practices (RUBIO, 2007), which show the changes that the educational system needs to make to form readers.

KEYWORDS: Reader formation. Initial teacher formation. Non-fiction book. Reading. Biographical narrative.

RESUMO: *Este trabalho está centrado em estabelecer a base para um modelo de formação de leitores apoiado pelo livro ilustrado de não-ficção (TABERNERO, 2018). Considera-se colocar o foco da análise na voz dos futuros mediadores da promoção da leitura nas escolas, razão pela qual este estudo optou por uma visão diacrônica da figura do professor que começa com a formação inicial e termina com o seu desempenho profissional. A nossa investigação é qualitativa, por intermédio de entrevistas semiestruturadas com professores estudantes (nas suas várias fases formativas: licenciatura e pós-graduação) e professores em exercício. O ponto de vista dos participantes, baseado em narrativas biográficas (CHÁRRIEZ, 2012), serviu para reunir o conceito de livros de não-ficção e práticas de*

¹ University of Cádiz (UCA), Puerto Real – Cádiz – Spain. Professor of the Department of Didactics of Language and Literature. Doctorate in education. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6854-0682>. E-mail: manuelfrancisco.romero@uca.es

² University of Cádiz (UCA), Puerto Real – Cádiz – Spain. Professor of the Department of Didactics of Language and Literature. Doctorate in linguistics. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3035-4398>. E-mail: ester.trigo@uca.es

³ University of Cádiz (UCA), Puerto Real – Cádiz – Spain. Interim Substitute Professor of the Department of Didactics of Language and Literature. Doctorate in education. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-3657-1369>. E-mail: hugo.heredia@uca.es

leitura social (RUBIO, 2007), que mostraram as mudanças que o sistema educativo precisa fazer para formar os leitores.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Formação do leitor. Formação inicial de professores. Livro de não-ficção. Leitura. Narrativa biográfica.*

RESUMEN: *Este trabajo está centrado en establecer las bases de un modelo de formación de lectores sustentado por el libro ilustrado de no ficción (TABERNERO, 2018). Se considera poner el foco de análisis en la voz de los futuros mediadores de la promoción de la lectura en la escuela, de ahí que en este estudio se haya optado por una visión diacrónica de la figura del docente que partiera de la formación inicial y llegara a su desempeño profesional. Nuestra investigación es de corte cualitativo, mediante entrevistas semiestructuradas a estudiantes de magisterio (en sus diversos momentos formativos: grado y posgrado) y a docentes en activo. La visión de los participantes desde narrativas biográficas (CHÁRRIEZ, 2012) servirá para aunar el concepto de libro de no ficción y prácticas sociales de lectura (RUBIO, 2007). que evidencian los cambios experimentados a los que debe atender el sistema educativo para formar lectores.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Formación de lectores. Formación inicial docente. Libro de no ficción. Lectura. Narrativa biográfica.*

Introduction

Non-fiction illustrated books (hereinafter, NFIB) represent a legacy of the most important scientific currents of the last centuries: rationalism, positivism and scientism (LARTITEGUI, 2019). For children and young people, this type of book finds its antecedents in volumes, such as *La enciclopedia de Álvarez*, which accompanied, during the 40s and 50s of the last century, the school life of many Spanish-speaking boys and girls. However, until 1994, at the Bologna book fair (Italy), the term *non-fiction* was not coined to encompass a new style of scientific dissemination aimed at young readers (ALEXANDER; JARMAN, 2018).

Some critics, such as Burgos (2019), consider NFIB as a subgenre of children's literature. To do this, the author starts with the following question: why, if they are not fiction books, are they considered within children's literature? The answer to this question is based on the fact that both what is said and the way of saying it are important because, often, they resort to literary resources and linguistic games to get their message across (KESLER, 2017), as indicated Duke (2004), there are informative, narrative-informative and informative-poetic non-fiction books; They contemplate a variety of formats very close to the illustrated album, where there is an important relationship between the image and the text (COLMAN, 2007);

promote interaction with readers and experimentation (GARRALÓN, 2005); From the conception of the *book-object*, the materiality of the book and the manipulation strategies are integrated (TABERNERO, 2018; 2019); they invite self-learning from an unregulated vision (HUGHES, 2006; MOSS, 1991); they require a high aesthetic-literary competence so that readers can understand the discourse they contain (KESLER, 2012); and, finally, they require adult mediation (CERRILLO; YUBERO, 2003) for a true encounter between young readers and these books to take place (BRUGAROLAS; MARTÍN, 2002) because, as Topping (2015) demonstrated in his research carried out with 150,220 students from 967 schools, it is more difficult for young readers to read non-fiction books than fiction books.

However, from our point of view, NFIB, although they are a key element in the formation of young readers, cannot be integrated into children's literature, since the contact of young people with this type of books is not aimed at development of their literary competence, but rather, a pleasant experience, they are situated, as various investigations have shown, in the perspective of reading to *explore and learn* (LI; BEECHER; BYEONG-YOUNG, 2018; KUHN *et al.*, 2020). In fact, they are generally books made by one or more specialists who manage to disseminate scientific, truthful and quality information to children and young people, making it understandable and easily accessible.

In this sense, taking as a reference the characteristics attributed to this type of books by Young, Moss and Cornwell (2007), we consider that they are very useful for the formation of critical readers from a double perspective: the intrinsic one, directly related to the characteristics from the reader himself; and the extrinsic, connected with the school environment and its learning environment.

However, while it is true that research on NFIB has been carried out on the international scene for several years (HODGES; MATTHEWS, 2017; RUTH, 2009), providing selection criteria (COLMAN, 2007; MOSS; HENDERSHOT, 2002), possibilities of use by teachers at school (BORTNEM, 2008; MOSS, 2003), reflecting on its potential to develop creative writing (DOLLINS, 2016) or information literacy (TEACHING, 2009; TOPPING; SAMUELS; TREMBLAY, 2008), in the Spanish-speaking field it is still a line of research that is scarcely explored (GARRALÓN, 2013; LARTITEGUI, 2019).

In line with the above, we consider it vitally important to establish the bases to develop a model for the formation of readers based on the NFIB. The initial formation of teachers takes on special relevance since today's students will be in charge of the literary reading formation of young readers (CERRILLO; YUBERO, 2003).

In accordance with these approaches, previous investigations, such as that carried out by Elche and Yubero (2019), have detected a high percentage of future teachers who seem not to meet the precise personal conditions to develop voluntary reading behavior in their students, whether it is a literary reading, already a non-fictional reading. For their part, the work of Trigo, Juárez and Santos Díaz (2019), showed that the readings that future Primary Education teachers usually do are not in line with those that they will offer to their future students. In addition, among the repertoire of works named, there is no reference to the NFIB, from which it seems to be clear that future teachers associate reading only with its literary facet.

Together with this, there seems to be a consensus when stating that the initial formation of teachers in reading and literature is insufficient (ROMERO CLAUDIO; JIMÉNEZ FERNÁNDEZ, 2019; TRIGO, 2016). In addition to not existing in the syllabi of the different subjects a specific space for the NFIB, the students perceive that their reading formation is insufficient (ÁLVAREZ-ÁLVAREZ; DIEGO-MANTECÓN, 2019) and their concept of reading, reader formation and literary education presents great opportunities for improvement (JUÁREZ, 2019; LÓPEZ-VALERO; HERNÁNDEZ-DELGADO; ENCABO, 2017) since students often consider children's literature, including children's books classified by Cervera (1984) as instrumentalized literature. Nor do they seem to be clear about the objectives pursued by the formation of readers or the corpus of suitable works for it.

Faced with these deficiencies detected, the research community has the obligation to share its main findings and advances with society because, as Imbernón (2017) points out, in the two-way relationship between the educational field and society, it is essential to know what social advances affect to school. To do this, future teachers stand as the ideal bearers of that information. These reflections highlight the need to work, in line with what Zeichner (2010) stated in the creation of a third space to share the approaches of the university and the school, creating spheres of collaboration, which will provide research of the meaning it should have when providing a direct service to society.

Our research, framed in the qualitative paradigm, aims to analyze, using the methodological approaches of the biographical narrative (CHARRIEZ, 2012), from the voice of participants a double plane: one, teachers, who have worked with the non-fiction illustrated books in the classroom, and another, undergraduate and postgraduate students from the University of Cádiz, who have had a specific formation, when carrying out their final degree and master's projects with the NFIB. This analysis will make it possible to determine their vision of this type of books, the selection criteria they consider appropriate and the

possibilities that the NFIB offer for the formation of critical, competent readers and, ultimately, prepared to face the challenges that the information society is imposing.

Methodology

The methodological option corresponds to non-participatory ethnographic research in educational contexts (ANGROSINO, 2012). Through the participants' first-person discourse, this methodology will allow us to study NFIB from interviews as life stories. Since the creation of Zeichner (2010) of the third educational space, we have integrated the voices of teachers with extensive experience and formation in this type of book; with the voices of undergraduate and graduate teaching students who face their future teaching performance; therefore,

[...] This narrative methodology cannot be conceived in isolation, apart from the context in which it occurs and, therefore, we approach it from the prism of the ecosystem in which various environments and agents - students, educational centers, teachers, plans and programs, institutions... - are interrelated and linked (PARRADO; ROMERO; TRIGO, 2018, p. 66, our translation).

Phases of the investigation

Our research is characterized by being of a qualitative nature, through semi-structured interviews with 4 teaching students from the University of Cádiz (in their various formative moments: bachelor's, master's and doctorate) and 14 active teachers. They were codified to safeguard their identity through areas of representation: for students, (INF_E01) ... (INF_E04); and for teachers, (INF_M01) ... (INF_M14).

The vision of the various participants from their biographical narratives (CHÁRRIEZ, 2012) will serve to unite the concept of a non-fiction book and social reading practices (RUBIO, 2007), which show the substantial changes experienced to which it must attend the educational system for the formation of readers since the revitalization of these books. The research design was conceived in four moments:

Stage 1: Detect good practices through interviews with teachers who had experience in the classroom with the dynamization of non-fiction illustrated books.

Stage 2: Develop formative processes with undergraduate and postgraduate students based on their final degree and master's degree projects, so that they could investigate the theoretical foundation and design of classroom experiences regarding NFIB.

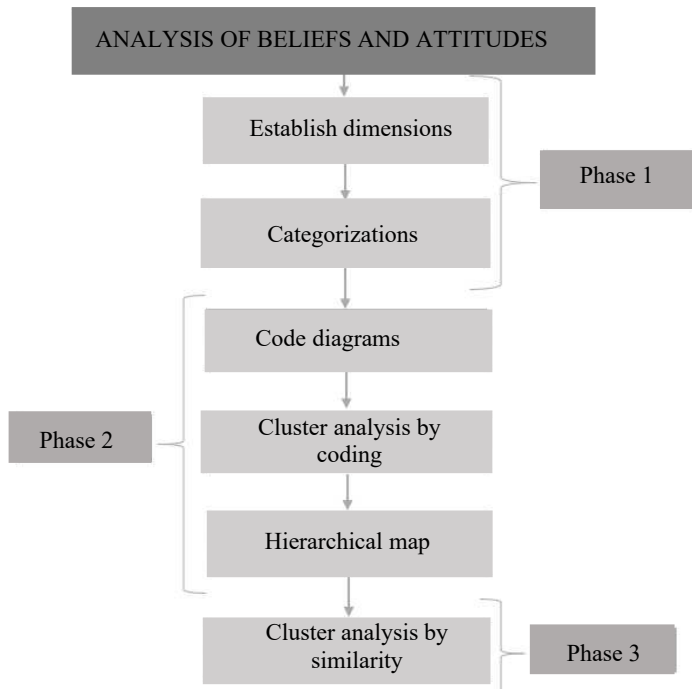
Stage 3: Analyze the beliefs and attitudes of the students from their biographical narrative so that they share their experiences in the discovery of the NFIB in the formation of readers at school. It is at this moment where the focus of the investigation is placed.

Stage 4: Reflect on the most relevant aspects offered by the research itself in the development of the final considerations.

Analysis techniques and instruments

The techniques used were specified in semi-structured interviews lasting between 15 and 30 minutes. Given the time limitation, it was necessary to insist on the project's line of argument and prevent the interviewee from scattering his gaze towards issues that could be far from the focus of the investigation. The design and analysis of the interviews are detailed in Figure 1:

Figure 1 – Interview analysis design



Source: Devised by the authors – Adapted from Cambra (2003)

These were carried out according to four dimensions of analysis and their corresponding key questions that acted as generating topics:

Dimension 1: What do you understand by “non-fiction”? *Key questions:* What is a non-fiction book to you? Are non-fiction books for information?

Dimension 2: What place does it occupy in your work context? *Key questions:* What are these works for in Child and Elementary Education? What or how are they used in classrooms / libraries? What / how would you use them for?

Dimension 3: Selection criteria. *Key questions:* What do you look for when choosing a non-fiction book? Would you recommend the reading any book?

Dimension 4: How do they read the works and what do they contribute? *Key questions:* How are these works read? How does the mediator read them and how the children? What do they bring to the reader?

Results

The results are linked to the findings obtained at different times due to their integrative nature. It is intended an interrelation referred to the evidence of teachers who have developed actions in the classroom with their students and decision-making in the initial formation of university students regarding NFIB.

Stage 1. Teaching biographies and good practices: Educational research should take as a reference not only the developed literature but also its verification from reflective practice: learning and experience for professional and teaching development. We refer to the critical-reflective paradigm in which reflection, research and its consequent critical dimension are integrated (DOMINGO; GÓMEZ, 2017). Hence the relevance of a participating teacher that we take as a reference:

[...] I have been working as a teacher for 31 years. I had contact with the illustrated album around 2004-2005 with the program launched by the Department on the promotion of school libraries, and with very important and very powerful programs such as Knowing how to read. So, through Knowing how to read I got more in contact with the non-fiction book (INF_M14, our translation).

Their testimony was significant and relevant in illustrating the results of attitudes, beliefs and representations from the voice of experienced mediators/teachers. In this way, in the interview with the teacher (INF_M14) two ideas converged: the first, the need to renew the idea of what the library was and the use of printed resources as learning material and language development, and, in addition, to know the content or the catalog that there was at that time, which was not very extensive, on non-fiction books, but that at that moment were

included in the more literary approach, in quotation marks, that is, read all kinds of texts, to know all kinds of literature, and the second, the purpose of seeing different options, among the publications, that would be beneficial for the improvement of the linguistic development of boys and girls.

All this is concentrated in the figure of the mediator embodied in the teacher since, as indicated by Cerrillo (2010), this becomes a determining pillar when coordinating the selection of readings based on the type of reader and managing the attitudinal transition of reading out of obligation to voluntary reading and curiosity for knowledge and understanding of reality.

Stage 2. Initial formation from prospecting for illustrated non-fiction books. The reality commented on by the participating teachers served as a reference in the tutoring of three undergraduate students in pre-school and primary education and another in postgraduate studies in their end-of-degree academic works (TFG and TFM). The prospective lines in their formation were adjusted to two approaches:

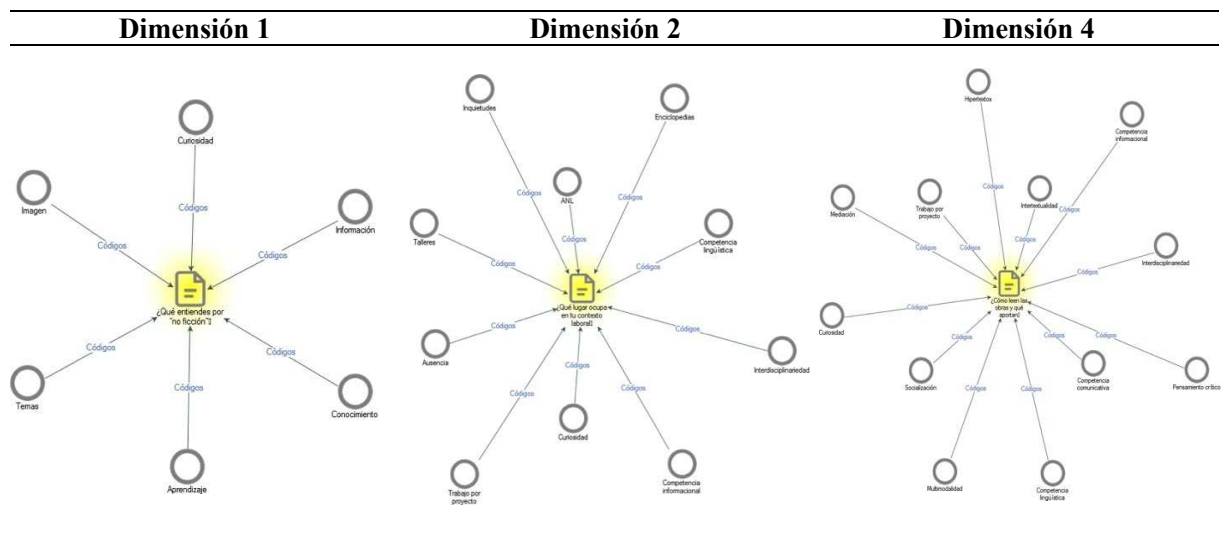
1. The delimitation of informational books versus those that make up the fictional universe of Children's and Young People's Literature (YOUNG; MOSS; CORNWELL, 2007).
2. The didactic qualification, from the knowledge of a corpus of works and reference texts, which would allow activating their knowledge and turning them into an object of learning from the educational purposes of non-fiction books (LOMAS; MATA, 2014; ROMERO; TRIGO, 2019).

The process of preparing these academic works made possible a triple reflection from the approaches of the didactics of language and literature (ÁLVAREZ-ANGULO, 2005) to transform knowledge of the subject into an object of knowledge from three approaches: a) *epistemological*, rethinking the contents referred to the conceptualization, characteristics of non-fiction books and literary reading formation, b) *psychological*, analyzing the conditions and characteristics of the recipients of these works and their cognitive abilities, and c) *praxiological*, emphasizing the teaching intervention itself, teaching research and innovation methods.

Stage 3. Analyze the beliefs and attitudes of the students from their biographical narrative. The categorization of the interview in four dimensions of analysis (phase 1) allowed a distribution of codes by conglomerates —terms linked to the program used: Nvivo

— Following the premises of Cambra (2003), we enter phase 2 through categorical analysis and the relationships with dimensions 1, 2 and 4 (Figure 2), since for dimension 3 a data mining was carried out, whose representation was specified in a word cloud (Figure 5):

Figure 2 – Codes by conglomerates. Dimensions 1, 2 and 4



Source: Devised by the authors

The codes by cluster — Figure 2 — evidenced a tendency to relate the non-fiction book (dimension 1) with the curriculum development —*knowledge* or *information*— moving away from the fiction of the LIJ, whose end would be more related to the enjoyment than to the own curricular *learning*. This aspect was specified in dimension 2, when observing *linguistic and communicative competence* through curiosity and the development of *critical and informational thinking*. However, it is also true that a node appears that referred to the *absence* of this type of books among classroom practices despite allowing the integration of non-linguistic areas (ANL) and, consequently, curricular *interdisciplinarity*. Likewise, dimension 4, where it is specified how these books are energized and what these types of reading contribute, highlights those codes that favor a literary reading formation— *intertextuality, hypertext, multimodality...* - from a teaching *mediation* and the reader's *curiosity* based on the *socialization* of the classroom and its environment.

The testimonies of the students show that the NFIB can be linked to the learning and acquisition of various curricular contents:

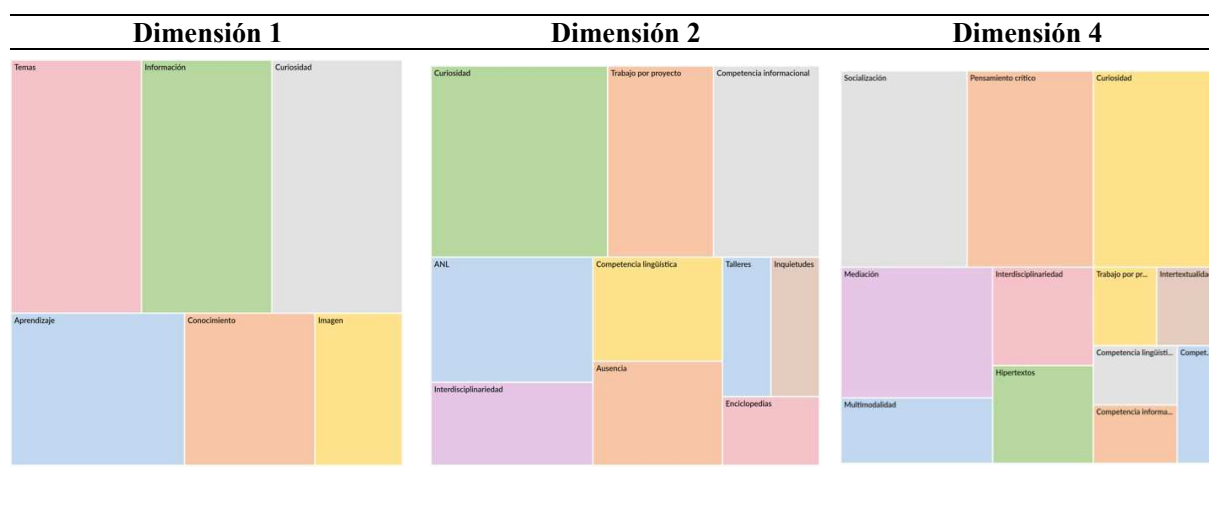
From my point of view, a non-fiction book is a book in which pertinent information on a specific topic is collected –animals, trades, cities, trips ...– and with which an investigation can also be carried out, it is that is, they

inform us about aspects that are related to knowledge and learning (INF_E02, our translation).

Another element that was manifested was the *curiosity* generated by the reader through the *illustrations* and the *information* that appeared in the NFIB: “There are many types of non-fiction books, and they are characterized by combining the image with the text and vice versa, since in most cases these images are a supplement that either illustrates the text or expands the information” (INF_E03, our translation); “Well, in it the information is true since, on many occasions, it is usually the final result of a research process, by the author, whether scientists or not, are specialized in the subject that the book is developed” (INF_E04, our translation).

This universe of terms served to develop a hierarchical map of the codes that were linked to each dimension (Figure 3):

Figure 3 – Hierarchical maps. Dimensions 1, 2 and 4



Source: Devised by the authors

Next, we enter phase 3 of the analysis, which consisted of the interpretive study of the dimensions. Clusters were developed by coding similarity (Figure 4), which offered maximum representativeness values in the Jaccard coefficient (value 1), which evidenced the existence of correlations between the codes of the study dimensions.

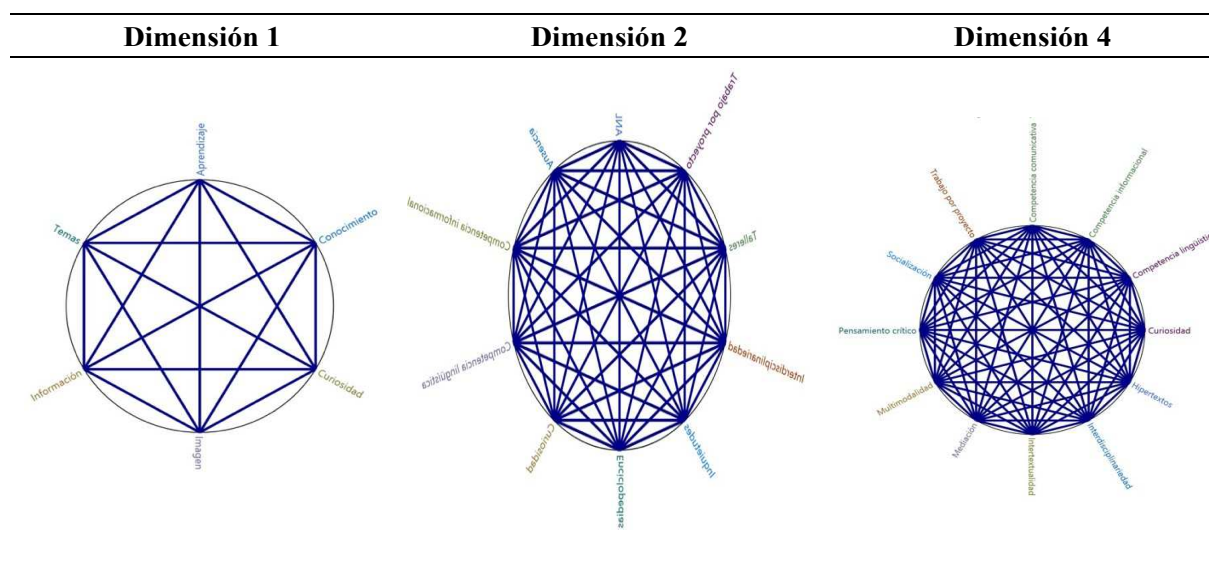
We also observe that all the relationships between the different codes are symmetrical because they obtain the maximum value according to the Jaccard index (value 1). Among all the correlations, we can extract that this type of book is used not only in linguistic areas (LA), but also in non-linguistic areas (NLA): “Reading this type of book serves to attend to the interdisciplinary nature of the language, because for its dynamization both linguistic and non-

linguistic areas are integrated” (INF_E02, our translation). It is also linked to the acquisition of linguistic and informational competence of students. “Its use in the classroom promotes the development of both oral and written linguistic competence [...]” (INF_E03, our translation):

In addition, the use of this type of books contributes to the development of informational competence, since these books fill in the deficiencies of online reading and present the information in a more orderly way, it helps them to protect themselves from the excessive information that can be found on the Internet (INF_E03, our translation).

Here we observe that they relate it to multimodality and hypertexts since “Some presentation dynamics of the book to be read may include reading a fragment of the book, viewing an illustration, displaying new and selecting books based on those objectives of reading, viewing booktrailers or booktubers” (INF_E03, our translation).

Figure 4 – Clusters by coding similarity. Dimensions 1, 2 and 4



Source: Devised by the authors

We cannot forget the role of the mediator to stimulate the literary reading formation in the classroom:

The mediator, when reading these works must be a great connoisseur of them and promote a reading before going on to read the book, in which hypotheses are established about what is going to be read, the elements outside the text are discussed and as much information as possible extracted from them; during the reading, in order to check if the hypotheses of the beginning had been fulfilled, highlight unknown or striking words and after reading, taking a short tour of everything that has been read and even inviting a student to do so (INF_E04, our translation).

A mediator who acquires his role from the very selection of the book —dimension 3 of the study—. In this sense, future teachers set their sights on the illustrations that contained the book, because as we have said in dimension 1, these play a key role in the content/information of the book. In relation to this criterion, the attractiveness, the facilitators and their organization also appear (Figure 5):

Figure 5 – Dimension 3 word cloud

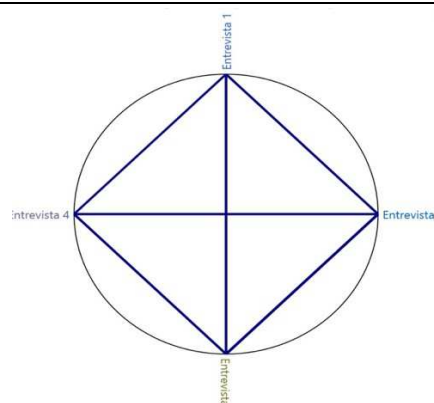


Source: Devised by the authors

Finally, the similarity cluster analysis of the interviews verified the effectiveness of the training developed with the students in the research (Figure 6):

Figure 6 – Cluster analysis by similarity

| Relation student interviews | Pearson's correlation coefficient |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Interview 3 Interview 2 | 0.946309 |
| Interview 4 Interview 3 | 0.8711 |
| Interview 3 Interview 1 | 0.862994 |
| Interview 4 Interview 2 | 0.85659 |
| Interview 2 Interview 1 | 0.847859 |
| Interview 4 Interview 1 | 0.796416 |



Source: Devised by the authors

It is determined that, according to Pearson's correlation coefficients, there is a direct relationship between the testimonies participating in a formative process whose focus was on the NFIBand the literary reading development of the boys and girls in the current school.

Final considerations

The results of the research show that the students conceptualized the NFIB (DUKE, 2004), as observed in figures 2 and 3 in dimension 1 of the study. In addition, the formative process helped them to differentiate their characteristics (YOUNG; MOSS; CORNWELL, 2007) compared to fictional books. From an intrinsic perspective in the formation of readers, the students agreed (Figure 2 and Figure 3) that these books helped to arouse curiosity from the motivation of reluctant readers, attracting them with visual supports and attractive formats and, finally; combine reading for pleasure with reading for information and research (dimensions 2 and 4).

Furthermore, from an extrinsic perspective, they saw how NFIB could contribute to developing critical reading skills and strategies, while expanding knowledge of the content area presented in textbooks - providing vocabulary and introducing readers to terms and academic language not often found in narrative texts. They also became an option to provide a variety of text structures and characteristics and to prepare children for the future by developing computer and information literacy.

Another key aspect was the selection and dynamization of the NFIB (dimensions 3 and 4) and since the acquisition of the role of mediators in their initial formation (CERRILLO; YUBERO, 2003; ROMERO; TRIGO, 2019) since this aspect allowed them to be placed in the context of the school and pose the challenge of developing literary reading competence in new readers.

Finally, the results obtained (Figure 6), although not intended to be generalized, did offer evidence to address the possible deficiencies detected in initial formation from the collaboration between research, developed by the university, and society, represented by the school (ZEICHNER, 2010). Thus, it is necessary to make NFIB visible in teacher formation programs to differentiate them from fiction books (LIJ) and integrate NLA into literary reading education from a centered point of view. In this way, we will be contributing to: "form intelligent, willing, assiduous, critical and autonomous readers who experience pleasure and incorporate reading into their daily activities, and who, in addition, can produce coherent and adequate texts" (MAC, 1999, p 109, our translation).

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