

**CRITICAL READING AMONG BRAZILIAN AND AMERICAN
STUDENTS OF PORTUGUESE: FOCUSING ON
“RETRATO” BY CECILIA MEIRELES.**

*LEITURA CRÍTICA ENTRE ALUNOS DE PORTUGUÊS BRASILEIROS
E AMERICANOS: EM FOCO “RETRATO” DE CECILIA MEIRELES*

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Abstract: This article presents the results of a research conducted with a group of students from the University of Oklahoma, Norman Campus, in a Portuguese summer course (2017) in comparison with the same research done with a group of students in Brazil in November 2018 in the city of Iturama, Minas Gerais. For both groups, the poem “Retrato” by Cecília Meireles was presented before and after a series of activities with the step-by-step method of reading and writing developed in a postdoctoral program, with the objective of verifying the students’ ability to read (interpret) a poem with their own strategies, and then with a reading model. After the experience, it was shown that their level of understanding increased after the introduction of the method in both groups and the cultural aspects of the grammar of the language were also important in understanding the meaning within the poem and in the written expression. A theory that accounts for meaning objectively and critically in this regard seems essential.

Key-words: Critical Reading, Literature, Semiotics.

Resumo: Este artigo apresenta os resultados de pesquisa realizada com um grupo de alunos da Universidade de Oklahoma, Norman Campus, em um curso de verão de português (2017) em comparação com a mesma pesquisa feita com um grupo de estudantes no Brasil em Novembro de 2018 na cidade de Iturama, Minas Gerais. Para ambos os grupos foi apresentado o poema “Retrato” de Cecília Meireles antes e após uma série de atividades com o método passo a passo de leitura e escrita desenvolvido em um programa de pós-doutorado, com o objetivo de verificar a capacidade dos alunos de ler (interpretar) um poema com suas próprias estratégias e, em seguida, com um modelo de leitura. Após a experiência, foi demonstrado que o seu nível de compreensão aumentou após a introdução do método em ambos os grupos e os aspectos culturais da gramática da língua também foram importantes na compreensão do significado dentro do poema e na expressão escrita. Uma teoria que dá conta do sentido de maneira objetiva e crítica, neste aspecto, parece imprescindível.

Palavras-chaves: Leitura Crítica, Literatura, Semiótica

Introduction

Santos researches in partnership with Amorin, Nakamura and Gomes (2014-2017) indicate that one of the problems faced by Public School students, elementary and middle school, at least in Três Lagoas area in the state of Mato Grosso do Sul and Andradina, in the state of São Paulo, it is the lack of a theory or model that can give a north to the process of analysis of texts. This is due to an academic formation in which new Portuguese-language teachers and literature come to school after four years of study where they get their license to teach English, Portuguese, Spanish or Literature, depending on the course they have enrolled in, with a general knowledge of theories presented to them in college and no deep knowledge about a specific theory with which to identify and work into the classroom.

These teachers did not make the choice to go deeper into this or that theory, since the demand for academic work required by each teacher and disciplines did not allow them, then students of the course of Letters, to delve into any of them. There are many activities required such as reading, seminars and, depending on the semester, even the writing of articles. In order to complete the affective filter problem that this scenario of simultaneous activities causes, many of the students work during the day and study at night and sometimes to meet the workload required by the course curriculum, they must also attend classes on Saturdays.

The number of hours required by the curriculum of certain courses is simply impossible to be fulfilled in the ideal way with timely, physical and mental rest, in four years. There is concern about the number of disciplines and hours to be fulfilled by the curriculum of the courses in the area of Literature, but the students, for the most part, feel in a straitjacket. Because of circumstances of daily work and because they live outside the city where they study, they are late to class and are not able to respond to the demands of the course. The four hours of classes end, by virtue of all these circumstances, being reduced to three, to be quite optimistic. This is certainly not an environment that will positively interfere in cognitive terms in the formation of this future teacher. So getting out of the University as it should be, choosing a theory, at least getting to know it in depth, “marrying” with this theory on his/her way to public school would be the solution to this problem of a superficial knowledge of all theories of language teaching, or text analysis, and no deep knowledge of one of them, to adopt as a modal object for their performance with their students in primary and secondary education.

This article, therefore, is inspired by researches developed by Santos (2014), Amorin & Santos (2015), Nakamura, Gomes & Santos (2016), Amorin & Santos (2017) in his researches in the classroom of Três Lagoas and surrounding areas along with his students of Letters in The English, Portuguese, Spanish and Literature Teaching License and also

as participating members of GEALLES, the Group of Research in Teaching Languages and Semiotic Readings, which has been in course since 2013.

Similar researches were made with a group of students of Portuguese from the Oklahoma City Public Schools in the summer of 2017 who took part on the program called Upward Bound. This is a program which offers a grant provided by the U.S. Department of Education and the sponsorship of the University of Oklahoma every year and it has been like this for over 50 years now, “which have been providing students from first-generation, low-income, and ultimately underprivileged backgrounds with education and opportunities to help them excel in high school, graduate high school, and help them attend the post-secondary college or university of their choice”¹ as their site informs.

The same research was developed with a group of 35 students of the 9th grade (freshmen) from the “Escola Estadual Antonio Ferreira Barbosa” in the city of Iturama, Minas Gerais, in November 2018.

The group in the U.S and in Brazil have about the same age (15-17 years old) and they were presented the same *corpus*, that is, the poem “Retrato” by Cecília Meireles. They had the opportunity to write about it one first time and then again after a sequence of activities where they were introduced to the “Fundamental Level of Reading”, following a “step by step method of reading and writing” which had the inspiration in the semiotics theory by Algirdas Julien Greimas and his followers. Instead of focusing on the grammar or linguistics aspects of the writing, as orthography or verbal concordance, we focus on the meaning as a critical reading ability.

We have defended the inclusion of a fifth ability to those four ones already known when the subject is the teaching of a specific language. That is what we call “critical reading”, somethings that goes beyond the translation or understanding of a text. As Luiz Antônio Marcuschi suggests, we should give value to a reflection on the language itself, going beyond a normative teaching (2008, p. 55). The experience with both groups took us to that challenge.

Eni Orlandi (2001) suggests that we should see the text in a discursive way. That is what she calls to trouble the ways our students read and to take the students themselves to analyze what they write and listen in the different manifestations of language (p. 9). From that perspective, it is possible to make the students perceive that we are subjected to language and that in the language there is opacity and mistakes. Orlandi makes us understand that there is no neutrality when we work with words (signs).

That is what Greimas (1983-1989) says about knowing and believing as one fiduciary universe. Although journalists keep on saying that the news is impartial, all making know

presupposes a believing. They both belong to the same fiduciary universe (p. 132-154). Therefore, it is essential as Greimas and Orlandi in a certain way agree that we have to interpret and not just translate or understand the text.

Mikhail Bakhtin (1997, p. 279) also says that all human sphere activities, although varying a lot, are related to the use of the language. Reading and writing are ways for using the language. Here is the analysis of six of the writings of the American Students in comparison with four writings of the Brazilian students and the results reached by the researches.

The corpus: “Retrato” by Cecília Meireles.

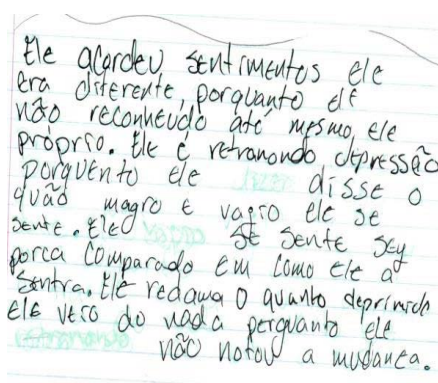
Eu não tinha este rosto de hoje,
assim calmo, assim triste, assim magro,
nem estes olhos tão vazios,
nem o lábio amargo.

Eu não tinha estas mãos sem força,
tão paradas e frias e mortas;
eu não tinha este coração
que nem se mostra.

Eu não dei por esta mudança,
tão simples, tão certa, tão fácil:
- Em que espelho ficou perdida
a minha face?

(Meireles, 2001).

Student first writing in The United States.



Ele acordou sentimentos ele
era diferente, porquanto ele
não reconhecido até mesmo ele
próprio. Ele é retratando depressão
porquanto ele ~~disse~~ disse o
quão magro e vazio ele se
sente. Ele ~~vazio~~ se sente se
porca comparado em como ele at
sente. Ele redava o quanto deprimido
ele veio do nada porquanto ele
~~sentiu~~ não notou a mudança.

This was the very first contact of this student with the Portuguese Language into a classroom. It is possible to comprehend or to infer in Portuguese what he meant by writing “Ele acordou sentimentos ele era diferente, porquanto de não reconhecido até mesmo ele próprio”. That was the best he got for his writing in English: “He woke up feeling he was

different, as he didn't recognize even himself". Therefore, his interpretation for the poem, was about a "he" and not a "she" who had waken up different from the day before.

The student could not get the whole picture based on this beginning of his text. However, he is able to describe a transformation that this "he" had in his textual sequence, although he does not separate the texts by paragraphs. He points out for the disphoria. He identifies the state of mind of this subject, by characterizing him as someone in "depressão", "magro" and "vazio".

Finally, he does the contrast between the past and the present by saying "Ele se sente sey forca comparado a como ele asentara". Our aim here is not to correct the ortographic mistakes in Portuguese languages, but to verify how much longer his perception of meaning went through the series of activities involving the levels of meaning. Thus, what we can see is that he meant the character in the poem feels powerless compared to how he felt before. He limits himself to summarize hios idea of the poem.

The text retrato is an non-verbal text. the poem is a sad reminiscing text. the narrator is looking on how much they've changed. The years have passed that they don't recognize themselves.

The poem is ~~not~~ negative as his tone towards change. The poem is implicit as it ~~states~~ inferred that the face has a deeper meaning. Also, the author description was ~~to~~ figure out how they relate to how he's feeling ~~lost~~.

The poem has plenty of oppos as they state how they ~~change~~ was busy yet didn't notice the change.

The addresser is Cecilia because she uses first person concluding that she's talking about herself. The addressee is the listeners and people who's gone. She's portraying how with time you'll change and you won't notice it.

In his second writing we can see some progress:

Now it is divided into paragraphs and there is evident the use of some terms of his learning, as the addresser and the addressee. He starts by identifying that the text refers to the nonverbal language, conclusion that he got through the title of the poem, a "portrait", that is, a text that presents only an image. The use of the lexeme "reminiscing" which is normally associated with euphoric aspects, considering that it means to indulge in enjoyable

recollection of past events, that is the way he refers to the poem. The good remembering, in this case, was the youth opposing to aging. Another fact he brings about in this first paragraph is the change and the time. Although not using the term narrativity, he is able to detect it. Although not using the term opponent, he is able to see the time through the expression. “the years have passed”. Therefore, the activities showing the students the levels of Reading, as the fundamental and narrative level have marked his performance in this second writing. We could also add that he was able to make us think of a study of a semiotic passion in the poem when he uses the term “reminiscing”, because it refers to a person who lives in the present by thinking about the past and this suggests a kind of nostalgia, a sentimental longing or wistful affection for the past, typically for a period or place with happy personal associations. This reminiscence makes us think of all this sentimentality this subject presents, as far as in the poem this narrator is in a physical and psychological conflict: wanting to be Young and not being able not to change with the passage of time.

This changing, which is the modal object for reflection by the narrator, is well grasped by the student because it appears in the first paragraph and continues in the second paragraph as the tone of the poem.

The euphoria and dysphoria are also put into play, although he does not use the terms as in the semiotic theory. He speaks about not being able to “recognize theirselves”, in the first paragraph. There is a not appropriate use of English language, because he uses “teirselves” instead of “themselves”. At the end of the second paragraph he uses the terms “feeling lost”. Those two lexemes along with the “negative” tone of the poem he identifies show the dysphoria.

In the third paragraph he speaks about the opposite terms who work, according to him, to show how the “change” happened, in a “easy” and fast way. Therefore, we may say that he also discovered the thematic of ephemerality of life.

He finally speaks about the authoress of the poem that manifests herself as a narrator in first person and he concludes “she is talking about herself”. Well, for Greimas’s semiotics, that authoress is an entity of flesh and bone and is out of the text. On the other hand, the narrator is in there. And it is about this narrator that we have talk about. We should not confuse the narrator with the addresser. Although they are very similar, almost inseparable, the take different roles in the play. He associates the addressee with listeners and people who have been getting old and once again he perceives the time as the anti-subject in the Narrative Program of life by everyone.

No need to say that there is more in quantity and quality in this second writing. This confirms what we expected regarding the use of the step by step method for reading and writing based on the three possible levels of reading the text. Since our objective was not

mainly the teaching of Portuguese in this specific part of the course, but the amplification of their ability to read and see the meaning within the text, we have evidences, in this second writing, that the student's performance has improved a lot.

The second student first writing in the US.

O poema é nomeado "retrato"
O ator é chamada Cecília
Meireles. O ator é uma
Brasileira poeta.

No primeiro verso do poema
diz "Eu não tinha esta rosto
de hoje." Isto provavelmente significa
que a pessoa sentiu diferente
o dia anterior. Eu não penso
que é o sign. f. cado literal.
Eu penso a pessoa no poema é
triste. O pessoa é triste porque
no segundo verso diz "assim triste"

No geral eu gostei do poema. Mas
eu gostei do poema porque é
um bom poema. O que é legal
sobre ele é que é muito artístico
é talvez alguém que está passando
a mesma coisa que eles podem
relacional.

Right in the beginning of this writing it is possible to see that the student, a girl, uses her experience in the English language and tries to print it into Portuguese, when she uses the verb “nomear” com a desinência “ed”, “nomed”. What she meant by that was to say “named”, “chamado”, in Portuguese. Instead of using “autor”, in Portuguese, she uses “ator”. She finally identifies Cecília Mereles as a Brazilian Poet”. The regular order in Portuguese is “Poeta Brasileira”.

What we can see here is the student's trying to transfer her learning of English to the learning of Portuguese. The student repertoire is shaped in the English language. In English, according to the grammar, we use first the adjective and then the noun. In Portuguese it is the opposite.

The following paragraph shows her ability to understand the poem in a relation between past and present. She also identifies that the person in the poem is sad. She also identifies the poem as made of a figurative language. The student lacks the use of the relative pronoun when saying “eu penso (que) a pessoa no poema é triste”. She exchanges the definite article that, in Portuguese, has to be specific for the designation of sex. Instead of using “a” pessoa, she uses “o” pessoa.

This is a very common inappropriate use of Portuguese language by Americans. It is because in English the definite article does not define the sex of the person, but in Portuguese it does. However, from the meaning point of view, she limits herself to describe the poem as of a person who is sad, a Brazilian poet and she finishes her first writing by judging the poem as something artistic. To express her liking for the poem she uses the verb “gostar” in Portuguese, in the past tense. Here it is possible to see some influence by Spanish language, because instead of writing “gostei” she uses the form “gustei”, the past tense for the verb in Spanish. It is understandable because this student is from Hispanic origin. At the end of her first writing we see her trying to make an analogy between the character in the poem and some people in real life. “é talvez alguém que está passando a mesma coisa que eles” “podm” “relacional”. The verb missed the vowel “o”, as in the word “podem”, plural for the verb “poder” in Portuguese and the verb “relacionar” in the infinitive.

Her second writing it is a different story:

Some euphoric things in the poem. The line that says “so simple, so sure, so easy:” the line has only euphoric things in it.

The poem uses seductive manipulation through seduction. The narrator uses manipulation through seduction because they use pretty words to get the reader/audience's attention. The narrator also talks about something interesting to also grasp the reader's attention.

There are two antinomial subjects in the poem “Retrato.”. The first role is subject one. Subject one is the narrator. Subject two is the reader/audience. We know subject one is the narrator because they are the ones addressing. The ones being addressed are subject two, the readers.

Finally, the narrator of the poem, is basically saying that they miss their old self. They are longing for that feeling to be young and new again. The line “In what mirror was my face lost?” kind of gives this away. The narrator probably is wondering when did they lose their youth.

Instead of 3 now we have 8 paragraphs. In the first paragraph she identifies the poem as by Cecilia Meireles, a verbal text for it is composed by words.

In the second paragraph she indicates she understood the concept of euphoria and dysphoria by giving evidence from the text, using the term “negative” in reference to “sad/depressing things” as “eyes so sad”, “cold and dead”. All these lexemes related to the character in the poem take us to a dysphoric state of mind.

She sees the “I” in the poem as the addresser and the reader or another person whom the narrator is talking to as the addressee.

In paragraphs 4 and 5 she uses the terms “The strengthless hands” to show the evidences of dysphoria and “so simple, so sure, so easy” to show they are euphoric terms.

Paragraph 6 is used to show she got the concept of manipulation through seduction, when she mentions the poem itself as a seduction for the use of “pretty words to get the reader/audiences attention”.

Paragraph 7 she gives the evidence for the addresser and the addressee. Last paragraph she speaks about the narrator’s longing for the youth against aging.

Although confusing the narrator with “they”, the student is able to see that “lost face in the mirror” as a key for the understanding of the poem: “The narrator probably is wondering when did they loose their youth”, she says. The fact of looking for the mirror where to find that young face shows the narrator’s trying to get back the youth and that is the portrait, the “Retrato”. This is what links the beginning, or, the title of the poem, with the end of it. The portrait as a mirror. And here we have the passage of the static to the dynamic. The portrait is still in time and the mirror is capable of getting an uptodated image. These two objects are essential to show the difference on her physical shape. They are like a clock that ticks the time.

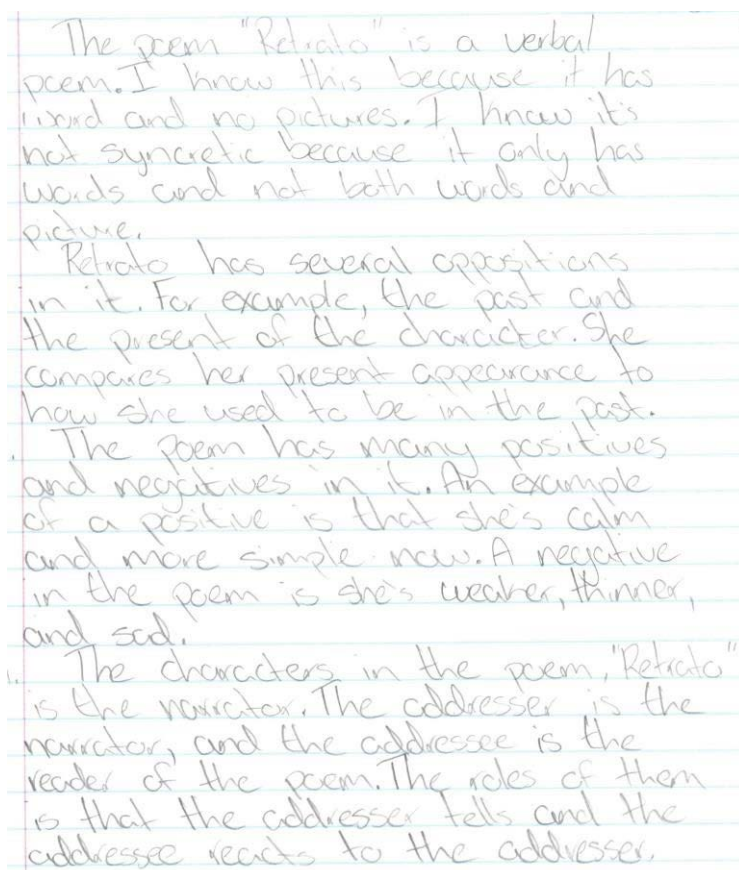
Retrato Red
 "Retrato" esta escrito por Cecilia
 Meireless. É sobre alguém que passa
 por mudança. Ela conversa sobre ela
 mudança no poema.
 No primeira estrofe ela descreve
 ela facial aparência. Por exemplo, ela
 dissa ela cara é triste, calmo, e
 magro.
 Ao contrario do primeiro estrofe,
 segunda falar sobre ela coracao
 e maos. Contudo, falar os deis dela
 aparência.

This is a third student first analysis of the poem. He is a boy. In the very beginning of his writing we see that he is still not able to see the difference between “é” and “está” in Portuguese. This is because they had only two classes of Portuguese of one hour each. I had taught them the use of the verb “ser ou estar” through the lyrics of a song by Paulinho da Viola, “Sinal Fechado”, part of the material that I have produced for the summer course. He is able to detect the change in the poem, although he misses letters in the word “conversa” and uses the personal pronoun (subjective case) “ela”, instead of “essa”, which would be the appropriate way in Portuguese, since it refers to the change in the poem.

The same “mistake” is in the next paragraph when he tries to say “ela descreve “ela” facial aparência”. What he meant was to say that the narrator describes her facial appearance” what would be in Portuguese “ela descreve sua aparência facial”. When referring to the first stanza of the poem he uses the form “no primeira”, instead of “na primeira”. This is because in English the combination “in + the” indicates both genres.

This is a typical when the student makes an effort to use his knowledge of a first language to the learn of a second one. This same “mistake” may be seen in the sequence of his writing when he exemplifies “ela dissa ela cara é triste, calmo, e magro”. He was not able to use the verb “dizer” in the past tense. This is understandable for he had learned only how to introduce himself in Portuguese. He had not been given any activity in the past tense. Following his thoughts, he tried to say that the narrator did not have that sad, calm and thin face. He could not see that the word “face”, in Portuguese, is a feminine word. In this case, he should have used “ela disse (que) sua cara é triste, calma e magra”.

In the last paragraph he keeps on his “mistakes” in Portuguese using “do primeira estrofe” instead of “da” primeira estrofe. Instead of writing “na segunda (estrofe) ela fala sobre seu coração e mãos”, he uses “segundo falar sobre ela coração”. He uses the subjective case pronoun “ela” in the place of the “possessive adjective” “seu” which, in Portuguese, refers to “her heart”, or “coração dela”, “her hands”, “suas mãos” or “mãos dela” forms not recommended in Portuguese. He says that both paragraphs are about her appearance. In his second writing we see his progress regarding the perception of meaning:



The poem "Retrato" is a verbal poem. I know this because it has word and no pictures. I know it's not syncretic because it only has words and not both words and picture.

Retrato has several oppositions in it. For example, the past and the present of the character. She compares her present appearance to how she used to be in the past.

The poem has many positives and negatives in it. An example of a positive is that she's calm and more simple now. A negative in the poem is she's weaker, thinner, and sad.

The characters in the poem, "Retrato" is the narrator. The addresser is the narrator, and the addressee is the reader of the poem. The roles of them is that the addresser tells and the addressee reacts to the addresser.

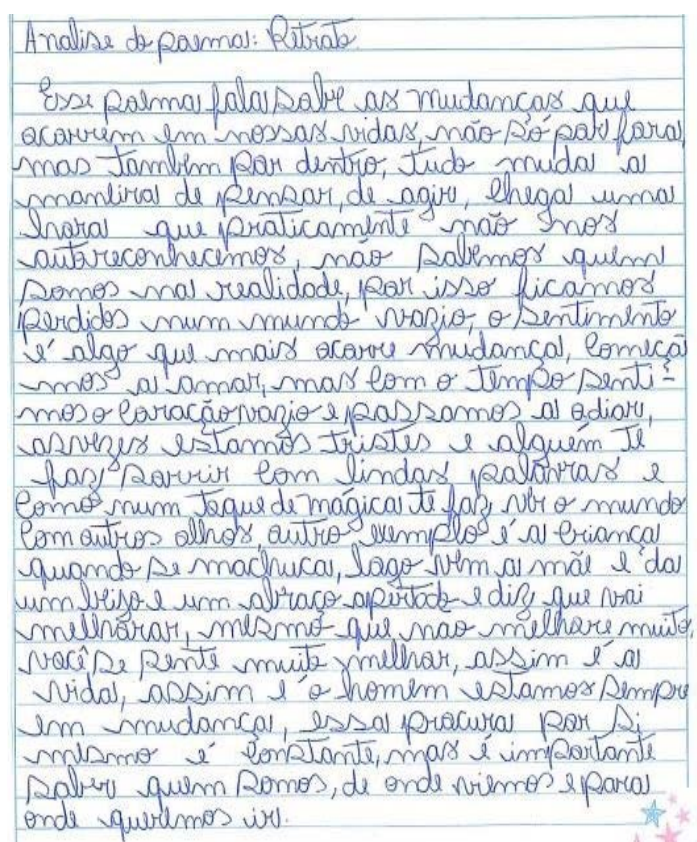
His text now is divided into four paragraphs with aspects of the theory as he mentions the use of verbal language in distinction with a non verbal and syncretic text in the first paragraph.

In the second paragraph he speaks about the oppositions, following the step by step method that was taught in the sequence of didactic and pedagogical activities right after their first writing on the poem. It is through the finding of the opposite terms in the fundamental level of reading that one can reach meaning through the differences. The student is able to see and make the relation between past and present and the results of it: “she compares her present appearance to how she used to be in the past”.

He also finds what is euphoric and dysphoric in the poem by saying that “the poem has many positives and negatives”. As euphoric terms he says “she is calm and more simple now”. As dysphoric elements he mentions “she’s weaker, thinner and sad now”. Although there is no comparative of superiority regarding the dysphoric adjectives in the poem, the narrator uses the qualifiers calm, sad and thin in reference to her face and weak referring to her hands. Finally, he talks about the addresser and addressee. For a matter of time, only the fundamental level of reading was presented to the group.

Now let us see how the performance was with the Brazilian students.

Student first writing in Brazil.



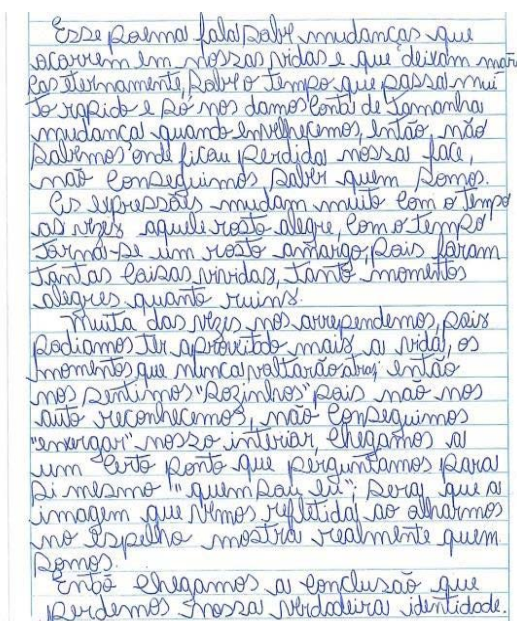
If we start from the second level of reading, we may say that the student was able to capture the change the narrator had, which we call “narrativity” in a certain way, if we consider it as the succession of states of mind one character has along the way to find a certain object of value. It is observed that the enunciating actant-subject cries out for the absence of something that is no longer part of her life. In this case, the face she has today is not the same she had in the past.

The student also saw that this change has a dual perspective, as physical and psychological. These in and out changes, according to the student, are responsible for us

to feel lost. Although he/she identifies this two-side change, he/she keeps on telling us as readers that the change happened in the feelings, which means it was not physical. Then, the student goes through some analogy with his/her own life. He/she speaks about somebody who come up and makes difference considering his/her state of mind, travelling between euphoric and dysphoric sensations.

The student creates a scenario of a mother related to her child affection through the modal object a kiss that makes everything changes and concludes by saying that “estamos sempre em mudança, essa procura por si mesmo” and reminds us that it is “importante saber quem somos, de onde viemos e para onde queremos ir”. As we can see, the student rescues the theme he/she was working about, the change, by saying it is constant and in this process, it is important to find out who we are, in other words, to search for our identity.

This writing was collected before the presentation of the proposal. Now let's see the second writing and compare it with the very first one:



Este pai me falou sobre mudanças que
ocorrem em nossas vidas e que deixam má
par eternamente, sobre o tempo que passa mui
to rápido e de nos damos conta de Samantha
mudança quando envelhecemos, então, mãe
sabemos onde ficou perdido nessa fase,
mãe conseguimos saber quem somos.
Os supostos mudam muito com o tempo
as vezes aquilo que é alegre, com o tempo
torna-se um resto amargo, pois foram
tantas coisas vividas, tantas memórias
alegres quanto ruins.
Tanta das vezes, nos arrependemos, pois
podemos ter aproveitado mais a vida, as
memórias que nunca voltam de novo, então
nos sentimos "sozinhos" pois não nos
sabe reconhecermos, mãe conseguimos
"encontrar" nosso interior, chegamos a
um certo ponto que perguntamos para
si mesmo "quem sou eu"; Será que a
imagem que temos refletida no espelho
nos espelha mostra realmente quem
somos.
Então chegamos a conclusão que
perdemos nossas verdadeiras identidades.

From the formal point of view, the second text presents the meaning, which most interests us at the moment, separated into paragraphs, and this does not occur in the first writing.

In the first paragraph, it is noted that the analyst detects the narrativity, the ephemerality of life and the loss of identity.

The theme of change remains, focused on the first person of the discourse, but in a more profound way and starting with the central theme that deals with the ephemerality of life and the frustration of the narrator to feel powerless before the operation of time, its antagonist, literary term that semiotics will call the opponent, or anti subject.

In the second paragraph the analyst perceives the lexemes of negative connotation as formators of a state of mind that mixes the euphoric and dysphoric sensations like “merry” and “bitter.” They are the results of the good and bad experiences of this narrator.

In the third paragraph one notices a reflexive doing, that same of the poet, in an analogy with his own life. Through the reading of Cecília Meireles’ poem, we have succeeded in making the analyst student think of his own life, reflecting on the search for his own identity.

His conclusion in the fourth and last paragraph that could be broadened reinforces our thesis that the text and the way the student analyst looked at it made him reflect on his own life and delve deeper into its meaning.

After analyzing the text, around the fundamental, narrative and discursive levels, it is observed that there was an understanding that there is an antagonism in the text that is about time, also in it, there is narrativity, which is related to a transformation of subject states. This narrativity perceived in text II can be conferred by joy and sadness, which are part of the stages of life, but which end in constant bitterness, because one can no longer experience these stages once time has passed and caused the marks that lead to a psychological reflection. This “bitterness” can be seen as anguish and this can be analyzed as a semiotic passion, since it marks the result of an impotence against the time, which is the opponent. It makes the subject to feel in a conflict of not being able to do anything before time. After all, the narrator seems to be wanting to be young and since he/she knows she is not able to do so, the conflict comes across. Therefore, there is an amplification of the capture of meaning in text II by the student.

Now let us see the first writing of another student. Let us refer to this student as he to make things easier.

Rábido

Eu era uma pessoa, de bem com a vida, mas um certo dia aconteceu algo que mudou sua vida, algo que se tornou seu teste, o futuro imaginou a dorção com o semblante Rábido.

Seu corpo me funde dos olhos um negro, foi algo muito abalante que se fez, pois se a vida se caiu como chusado.

Os mudanças foi acontecendo sem ele ver quando isso deu por si, já não estava no sentido de bem, ele só sentindo a dorção e que aconteceu para a dorção, tão abalante.

Ele quer saber onde estava o seu eu, sua felicidade e af mal o seu vida.

Quão grande era o que aconteceu para a dorção com a dorção uteridade? Talvez um amor não se tornou. É um por do? Não há palavra de não que realmente se teve, o vida, e talvez a por, que o dorção não teste tão abalante, sem sentir o seu próprio corpo.

Um momento um reflexo dirigindo a dorção do que se

It is observed that in this text there are many more linguistic problems than the text I, if we pay attention to the arrangement of the words and their extension. The cultural repertoire of this student in comparison to the first text seems less explored.

In this analysis, he begins with the idea that something very bad has happened in the life of the narrator of the poem, leaving her thin, that is, apparently failing health. This description is on lines 1 through 6, and is quite repetitive, thus showing the superficiality of understanding. In line 7, the passage of time is mentioned, but this theme does not extend as it happens in text I. The changes are sudden and very limited, implying that they occurred in the face of a transient situation, since it is mentioned as a consequence that when she found out she was not feeling well anymore. The analysis is more imprecise when it is stated that she is trying to find out what happened to make her so shaken.

In the fourth paragraph, line 10, an important point is noted by the student analysis who seems to have arrived at the central theme that deals with the search for the lost "I", but appears in a single paragraph and period.

In the last paragraph, line 12, we again see the idea that something related to the questioning of the lyrical "I" is the loss of someone, an unrequited love, but ends up referring to the past. In doing so he could have delved into the time theme that appears

as something negative in the life of the narrator. Therefore, it is a superficial and even insufficient analysis of the subject to be discovered.

In his second writing things change for better:

Retrato

Como pode uma pessoa se perder, descobrir que o tempo
ela sente. Mas isto é o recebo da vida, não temos a vida
por um uniforme, a natureza, a natureza enfim a natureza
Mas há a natureza que se apresenta, alguma coisa isto só
o período de vida.

Mas o tempo é que ele se perdeu de seu eu de sua vida
identidade, há algo extremamente abalante para o ser humano
tão rápido indolente uma pessoa que não vê o tempo e não
se dá conta que perdeu o tempo de sua vida e se tornou idoso, mas
é que ele tanto quereria se achar se apresentar de novo, talvez
ele sabe o que aconteceu, talvez não.

É aí algo tão abalante que ele viu o seu coração distante em
sua vida, pois que se esqueceu, talvez, talvez mas que
também tem a esperança de um dia se achar.

É aí algo tão abalante no mundo que nem mesmo ele não querendo
dele para não se esquecer, talvez, talvez, talvez, talvez, talvez
ele perdeu sua identidade.

It is observed that this second writing of this second student shows that there is a level of discursivity centered in the direction of the main theme of the poem. The student identifies time as the opponent for the eternity of life. It should be noted that the student, through analysis, was led to think in order to achieve this understanding. The teacher did not find out the meaning for him, which is done most of the time in the classroom.

The student speaks about the identity, in our opinion, the deep meaning of the text by Meireles.

“Ele se perdeu de seu eu, de sua identidade”. It is not the fact of losing her identity, but the fact of looking for the identity of someone who was young and is impotent to keep on being in her youth for the coming of the age. And the student sees the succession of states this narrator went through by saying that it was “tão rápida as mudanças que nem ele mesmo viu”. Therefore, although with some not appropriate use of the Portuguese Language from the verbal concordance point of view, the student did good by detecting the ephemerality of life before the invincible time.

What we conclude in this first session of analysis is that instead of the teacher delegating the mission to the student, asking open ended questions to the student’s exercise of thought, he or she asks the question and he himself, or she, herself, the teacher, ends up giving the answer. It is understandable that this is an intellectual exercise

to be developed by the student. He/she must be patient, and even if the student refuses to participate in the “game”, the teacher is the one to formulate and reformulate the questions to involve the student in the process of a genuine critical reading in order to make him a participant in the process.

In this text we see many problems of textual progression, but it is evident that the analyst had previously mentioned the loss of the “I”, that is, the loss of the identity, but the security is perceived in this affirmation. There is a reinforcement in this explanation of time, when the phases of life are referred to, thus showing that the questions relate to the time that has passed by and that the image in the mirror is not the same as that old portrait used to be.

Conclusion

The American students show they used their first language as a support to learn the second language. The same phenomenon was not detected in the Brazilian students’ writings.

The fact of the poem is written in Portuguese language helped the Brazilian students in understanding it and going a little bit deeper in the meaning.

The time designated to both activities was different. The Brazilian students have more time to discuss the poem and the American students followed the model more pragmatically and had less time than the Brazilian students to make it.

The American students had the first level of reading taught and the Brazilian students had also entered in the other two levels of reading, although in a very superficial way.

All of this has to be taken into consideration when comparing both groups working with the same poem interpretation.

The research shows that in both groups, American and Brazilian there was an improvement in terms of analyzing the poem in an objective way through the light of a theory. It was important to show the students that learning a language is not just translating a text, but to understand what is under it. And this was possible through the process of reading in a critical and objective way. It was satisfactory to see that they became proud of their second writing when comparing with the very first one.

They felt not only translators of a language, but they had the chance to see that there are levels of understanding within a text. From this point of view, not only the cultural aspects in a language are meaningful, but also their particularity in grammar and meaning itself for we carry in the language we speak an ideology that means a lot when we come to interpret it in a crucial and critical way.

Therefore, in teaching how to read a text, the teacher must take into account the grammatical aspects of the language he is teaching and that the students use the elements of their first language to learn a second language. Culture, therefore, and the particularity of a specific language are essential to better lead the students to a wider world of meaning.

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