Reading and inferential process: a study with chronicle genre in high school

Leitura e processo inferencial: um estudo com o gênero crônica no ensino médio

Lectura y proceso inferencial: un estudio con el género crónica en la enseñanza média

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Abstract: This article aimed at analyzing how the ability to "infer implicit information in a text" was developed in reading chronicles with 2nd grade high school students. In light of the interactionist conceptions of language and reading, diagnostic activities, intervention workshops and final assessment were developed. The results showed greater appropriation of the skill by those students who established textual and extratextual inferences, revealing that they are in the process of development to reach the maximum horizon of comprehension. The study reinforces the need for continuous work with the ability, since it is one of the most complex in the reader's development process.

Keywords: Reading. Inference. Descriptor. High School.

Resumo: Este artigo buscou analisar como a habilidade de "inferir uma informação implícita em um texto" foi desenvolvida na leitura de crônicas com estudantes da 2.ª série do Ensino Médio. À luz das

concepções interacionista de linguagem e leitura, desenvolveram-se atividade diagnóstica, oficinas de intervenção e avaliação final. Os resultados indicaram maior apropriação da habilidade pelos alunos que estabeleceram inferências textuais e extratextuais, a revelar que estão em processo de desenvolvimento para alcançar o horizonte máximo de compreensão. O estudo reforça a necessidade de trabalho contínuo com a habilidade, por se configurar como uma das mais complexas no processo de desenvolvimento leitor.

Palavras-chave: Leitura. Inferência. Descritor. Ensino Médio.

Resumen: Este artículo tuvo el objetivo de analizar como la habilidad de "inferir una información implícita en un texto" fue desarrollada en la lectura de crónicas con estudiantes del segundo año de la Enseñanza Media. A la luz de las concepciones interaccionista de lenguaje y de lectura, se desarrollaron actividad diagnóstica, talleres de intervención y evaluación final. Los resultados indicaron mayor apropiación de la habilidad por los alumnos de modo a establecer inferencias textuales y extratextuales, revelando que están en proceso de desarrollo para lograr el horizonte máximo de comprensión. El estudio refuerza la necesidad de trabajo continuo con la habilidad, pues ella se configura como una de las más complejas en el proceso de desarrollo lector.

Palabras-clave: Lectura. Inferencia. Descriptor. Enseñanza Media.

Introduction

When we reflect on the teaching of reading in Brazilian High School, a current concern is how to teach and assess, considering skills and competences, so that the learning process is focused on the students' development and preparation for the challenges involving language. This issue is discussed in official documents, such as in the National Curriculum Parameters (*Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais – PCN,* BRASIL, 1998) and, currently, in the Common National Curriculum Base for Secondary Education (*Base Nacional Comum Curricular do Ensino Médio – BNCC, BRASIL, 2017)*.

According to Oliveira (2019), elementary and high school students still have difficulties in reading texts, especially in activities aimed at implicit information. In teaching materials, it is common to have exercises that relate the work of reading with text comprehension, and these activities have allowed students to go beyond the decoding of information. This reality is the result, in particular, of the evolution of linguistic studies on the subject (KLEIMAN, 1996; 2007; MARCUSCHI, 1996; 2008 etc.) and its reflection in official guidelines on teaching, such as in the *PCN* (BRASIL, 1998) who state: "it is expected that the student, based on the articulation between his prior knowledge and the textual information, deduces implicit information from the text" (BRASIL, 1998, p. 96, Translated by the author).

By considering the ability to build inferences as a central element in the reader's training process, this work[1] aimed at analyzing how the ability to "infer implicit information in a text" – present in the System Reference Matrix of the National System Assessment of Elementary Education (Saeb)[2] – was developed in the process of reading a chronicle with students from the 2nd grade of High School in Computing (*Ensino Médio em Informática*

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1 This text makes reference to the dissertation: "The development of reading skills and competences in high school students" (PILATI-GOMES, 2019), articulated to PPG Letras (UFT). Research approved by the Ethics Committee for Research on Human Beings (CEP), under number CAAE 87938318.3.0000.8111.
2 Saeb is composed of external evaluations in order to diagnose Brazilian Basic Education and contribute to improve the quality and efficiency of teaching.

– *EMI*), from a Federal Institute of Science and Technology in the north of the country.

This study, with an interactionist bias, can be understood as a qualitative-quantitative research, with an interpretive nature, conceptualized as a case study (CRESWEL, 2014; MINAYO, 2001), supported by the assumptions of Applied Linguistics, a social science of language study of interdisciplinary character (MOITA LOPES, 1996). The research was based on works related to reading (DELL'ISOLA, 1996; 2001; KLEIMAN, 1996; MARCUSCHI, 2008; MENEGASSI, 2010; FUZA, OHUSCHI, MENEGASSI, 2020 etc.) and on the conception of language as interaction (BAKHTIN, 2003[1979]; VOLOCHÍNOV, 2012[1929]; VOLOSHÍNOV, 1976[1926]).

In this text, by indicating the diagnosis of the activity carried out with the students, the direction given in the intervention and the final reading assessment, we seek to reflect on how the process of teaching reading can be enhanced, It is expected to contribute to the reflection on the work with reading, showing that when the teacher knows and analyzes the items of external evaluations, he can contribute to the development of strategies for the readers' training and development.

Thus, the article is organized as follows: it writes about reading and comprehension of texts; then, the inferential process is approached; the skill is delimited and the diagnosis and intervention process is described; later, the final reading activity and its results are analyzed, compared to the diagnostic evaluation; finally, the conclusion and references are highlighted.

Reading and comprehension of texts

In the analysis of textbooks, Marcuschi (1996) defined language as a system of signs that need identification and are outside the speaker's social reality. In contrast to this view, the author states that "language is much more than a system of phonological,

syntactic and lexical structures" (MARCUSCHI, 1996, p. 71), it is a historical, social and cognitive phenomenon that manifests itself in use.

This perspective is a reflection of what Volochínov (2012[1929]) postulates, for example, in view of his criticism of the way of understanding language as a product of the human mind (Idealist Subjectivism) and as an abstract linguistic system of rigid and immutable norms (Abstract Objectivism). In contrast to them, language comprehension is presented as a social phenomenon, constituted by verbal interaction. Thus, the linguistic system is affected by the needs of the interlocutors who produce concrete statements[3], to establish new links in the chain of verbal communication.

From the interactionist bias, defended by Bakhtin and his circle, and thinking in the school context, reading is understood as interaction, involving author-text-reader for the construction of meanings and production of meanings in the text (MENEGASSI, ANGELO, 2010; FUZA, OHUSCHI, MENEGASSI, 2020). Thus, in reading, intralinguistic and extralinguistic aspects are considered, such as culture, history, ideology, social context, that is, the social situations that enable the production of meanings.

Reading as interaction allows readers to go beyond the level of decoding linguistic codes, building ideas, answers and exchanging information to the challenges suggested. Thus, a reading which refers to aspects of reality is approached, adding aspects of participants' valuation in the expression of signs, since, according to Volochínov (2012[1929]), signs are never neutral, but covered with a social situation usage.

Koch and Elias (2015, p. 11) conceive of reading as a "highly complex interactive activity for the production of meanings", because, like Kleiman (2007), they believe that reading is a social act, carried out based on objectives and determined social needs. Thus,

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3 We understand the "concrete utterance" as an uninterrupted, unique, non-repeatable communication link, effected in verbal interactions through discursive genres, related to social spheres. The genesis of the concrete utterance is the discursive alternation between the self/other in situations of language use, not necessarily face to face, but which can be a response to other utterances, whether oral or materialized in written form.

comprehension is considered a collaborative activity (MARCUSCHI, 2008), which predicts the relationship between author-text-reader, with reading being a process "in which the reader performs an active work of understanding and interpreting the text" (BRASIL, 1998, p. 69-70).

As reading is a process, scholars of Psycholinguistics, as well as of Applied Linguistics in Brazil, consider it to be composed of concomitant and recursive steps, namely: decoding, understanding, interpretation and retention (SCLIAR-CABRAL, 1986; MENEGASSI, 2010). Decoding refers to the "recognition of the written code and its connection with the intended meaning in the text" (MENEGASSI, 2010, p. 44), a moment inherent to the development of reading and the construction of textual comprehension. The author deals with phonological decoding and decoding aimed at understanding. In the first case, the reader cannot always understand what he reads, as he can "pronounce, through his voice or silent reading, the word he is reading" (MENEGASSI, 2010, p. 44), which can affect the text comprehension. For example, in "12 gauge shotgun"[4], "shotgun" can only be decoded phonologically, if it is not part of the reader's memory, who pronounces it through his voice or through the mental production of his image. The lack of knowledge about what "shotgun" is may imply a gap for the reader and the resolution of this can be given by observing the context in which the word is found: "[...] I've already killed the thief with a shot from a 12-gauge shotgun, which I keep at home for these situations" (VERÍSSIMO, n/d). Through an inferential process – this reveals how the steps of the reading process are concomitant and recursive –, the reader seeks prior knowledge and concludes that if there was a shot and the thief died, therefore, a shotgun is a weapon.

Decoding aimed at comprehension reveals itself in the possibility of a more global comprehension of the text, that is, the reader performs the reading in a more automatic way, with a view to its development. For example, in "Learn to call the police", the word "police", being understood by the reader, leads him to decoding

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4 The examples presented are fragments of the chronicle "Learn to call the police" (VERÍSSIMO, n/d), employed in one of the activities carried out with high school students (See section "4.1 Organization and execution of Workshop 3").

in dialogue already with the textual comprehension. Therefore, if there is no consistency in the decoding, the comprehension may be affected.

After decoding, the reader starts to recognize and understand the meanings presented in the text, storing them. Comprehension is defined as literal, textual inferential and extratextual inferential (SPINILLO, MAHON, 2007; SPINILLO, HODGES, 2012; MENEGASSI, 2010). In the first case, the information requested from the reader is already explained in the text, just for him to capture it. In "Learn to call the police", the reader grasps the information that it is necessary to learn to call the police, to establish literal relationships. There is also the inferential textual comprehension allowing for "incursions into the text, capturing information which is not always at a superficial level, but which are possible to be constructed from textual clues" (MENEGASSI, 2010, p. 47); in the above example, the reader is able to grasp the meaning that someone needs to learn to call the police; understanding that knowing how to call can be useful in emergency cases, there is work with extratextual inferential comprehension, because "the reader articulates information from the text with information from their previous knowledge about the topic addressed, giving rise to information which is not explicit in the text" (MENEGASSI, 2010, p. 48), such as it is necessary to learn to call the police so that there is help in an emergency. For Spinillo and Hodges (2012), inferences occur through the integration between intra- and extra-textual information, that is, connections between parts of the text and the reader's prior knowledge, such as linguistic and world knowledge.

Marcuschi (2008, p. 237) points out two hypotheses regarding comprehension: (a) comprehending is decoding, focused on the "notion of language as code"; and (b) comprehending is to infer, corresponding to the "notion of language as an activity, taking comprehension as an inference or at least as a construction process based on a broader activity with a socio-interactive basis". In (a), the reader is the one who understands the contents and meanings of the text, employing an upward reading processing

(KATO, 2007) which emphasizes the text and its information. In (b), the reader participates in the reading process in a collaborative way, producing meaning.

In the interpretation, the reader analyzes, issues his value judgment on what he read, and in this reflection "new meanings are produced from this relationship, allowing the reader to produce a new text" (MENEGASSI, 2010, p. 50). In "I've already killed the thief with a shot from a 12-gauge shotgun, which I keep at home for these situations" (VERÍSSIMO, n/d), it is possible to consider that the person keeps a gun at home, that is, he is someone who manages to solve his security problems without the help of the police, even though he knows that, in the chronicle, the character uses this statement to draw the attention of the police, since, in reality, he did not kill the thief. This interpretation comes from analysis, evaluation of the text information, which can be expanded throughout the reading.

In retention, information is stored in the reader's memory, based on understanding and interpretation. In this case, there is a change in the reader's prior knowledge "not only with the addition of new textual information, but with the addition of information resulting from a judgment made by the reader, on the text read, changing their topic point of view and allowing the construction of a new text" (MENEGASSI, 2010, p. 54).

In view of the focus on the descriptor who deals with "inferring an implicit information in a text", the next section addresses the inferential process.

The inferential process

The comprehension activity is complex and the inferences act in the relations between the linguistic and the extralinguistic, configuring a fundamental skill for the comprehension of the text. The *PCN* (BRASIL, 1998) considers that the competent reader is

the one "who is able to read between the lines, identifying, from what is written, implicit elements, establishing relationships between the text and their prior knowledge, or between the text and other texts already read" (BRASIL, 1998, p. 70). The Common National Curriculum Base (*BNCC*) states that in reading, skills must be articulated which permeate the "information retrieval processes (identification, recognition, organization) to processes of comprehension (comparison, distinction, establishment of relationships and inference) and reflection on the text (justification, analysis, articulation, appreciation and aesthetic, ethical, political and ideological valuations)" (BRASIL, 2017, p. 75). Therefore, in comprehension, there is an overlapping of inference, given that the subjects, in reading, establish a dialogue between text ideas present and in its framework of knowledge to produce a new meaning.

About inference, Dell'Isola (2001) defines it as "a cognitive process that generates new semantic information, based on previous semantic information, in a given context [...] it is, therefore, a mental operation in which the reader builds new propositions from others already given" (DELL'ISOLA, 2001, p. 44). Thus, when in the chronicle, it reads: "I've already killed the thief with a shot from a 12-gauge shotgun, which I keep at home for these situations,", even without knowing whether a shotgun is a type of weapon or not, the reader takes the information given (thief, death, shot, caliber 12) and builds new propositions. He can search, extratext, information and knowledge acquired in his experience, to fill possible "textual gaps" (DELL'ISOLA, 2001, p. 44).

Vidal Abarca and Martínez Rico (2003, p. 140) state that "To properly comprehend a text, we have to capture its explicit ideas, at the same time that other ideals related to the previous ones we have in our memory come to mind", this causes the effect of the production of the text meanings with expansion of information on the topic, with, according to Kintsch and Rawson (2013, p. 237), "filling in gaps" by the reader, that is, the inference.

The inferences can be classified into: a) textual link inferences, called textual inferences and b) extratextual inferences (VIDAL ABARCA, MARTÍNEZ RICO, 2003). In the first case, starting from a textual referent, the reader, supported by the text, creates new semantic information. Extratextual inference goes beyond explicit text information, in order to activate the reader's prior knowledge.

In this same sense, Marcuschi (2008, p. 233) considers inference as a cognitive activity in which the subject gathers known information to reach new information. For the author, "comprehension is not a simple act of identifying information, but a construction of meanings based on inferential activities".

Regarding the ways of comprehending a text, Marcuschi (2008) compares the text to an onion, according to Dascal (1981). Thus, the inner layers of the onion would be the objective information of the text (factual data, names, etc.). Above these layers, there are intermediate shells, open to interpretation, but with a limit and valid, that is, in this layer, inferences occur. Next, there is the layer farthest from the core, which is more prone to misunderstandings, composed of personal beliefs and values. The last layer would be the extrapolation layer, with interpretations that are not allowed by the text. Based on this, Marcuschi (2008, p. 258) suggests a diagram divided into five horizons.

In the first level, "lack of horizon", there is explicit information and the reading only foresees the repetition or copying of what is said in the text. In the "minimum horizon", there is the paraphrastic reading, with the repetition of the text information, through other words, with minimal inference. In the "maximum horizon", inferential activities in the comprehension process are considered, between the lines, going beyond paraphrase and repetition. The "problematic horizon" is one that is far beyond the information in the text itself, standing at the limit of interpretability. Finally, in the "inappropriate horizon", are the readings not allowed by the text.

In addition to Marcuschi (2008), Applegate, Quinn and Applegate (2002) address the levels of reading processing, namely:

"linear", aimed at reading explicit information in the text; "low inferential level", which requires small inferences from the reader, with full support in the text (level "minimum horizon"/Marcuschi's paraphrase); "high inferential level", in which the reader uses prior knowledge and the text to understand what he reads; and "global reflective inferential", in which the reader reflects on what he reads, positioning himself in relation to the information in the text. In this article, the horizons proposed by Marcuschi (2008) and the levels of theory proposed by Applegate, Quinn and Applegate (2002) may help to analyze the results of practices aimed at the inference process in High School.

Inferring information from a text

Brazilian assessments of Portuguese language are structured with a focus on reading and require the competence to comprehend a text as a construction of knowledge at different levels, analysis and interpretation. Its Reference Matrix brings descriptors[5] who have as principle some discursive skills considered essential in the reading situation and guide the elaboration of items.

In an analysis of results at the national level of Brazilian education, in the 2017 Saeb, students in the 3rd grade of High School obtained, on average, 268 points[6] of proficiency in Portuguese. Students from the same grade in Tocantins[7] obtained 260.1 points, which places the state in level 2 of learning[8] (performance greater than or equal to 250 and less than 275 points), being lower than the national average in relation to the score (268 points).

Given the above, it is essential to present the data of this study to understand the reality surrounding the teaching of reading. Although the research was carried out in a class from the 2nd

5 The descriptors are the implication of each skill and the reference for the construction of items/questions, establishing the relationship between curriculum content and students' mental operations.
6 The result of the students' Portuguese language assessments is presented in points on a scale, represented by Levels from 1 to 8 and scores from 255 to 400 (Saeb Scale).
7 Available at: "Press kit Saeb 2017" (http://provabrasil.inep.gov.br).
8 Level 2 is considered the minimum for reading proficiency, requiring you to find information in the text, recognize your main idea, etc. (BRASIL, 2016).

grade of High School, the results, described so far, focused on the 3rd grade of High School, as it is this audience that performs the *Saeb* assessment. The choice of the 2nd grade of High School is justified because it is the class in which one of the teachers in this text acted as a teacher in 2017.

The ability verified in D4 of Topic I – Reading Procedures, seeks to investigate the reader's ability to make inferences from linguistic and textual elements. According to the Education Development Plan (BRASIL, 2011), the items related to D4 must involve "elements which do not appear on the surface of the text, but which can be recognized through the identification of presupposed data or inferential processes" (BRASIL, 2011, p. 30).

In this study, reading skills and competences[9], worked on in the workshops, were those still under development. To select them, we took as a reference Carvalho's the idea (2018, p. 22) which are based on the identification of skills, in this case, those which are absent or under development in students, it is possible to determine what students need to be taught in order to the perform the reading.

For the generation and recording of data, we are based on an initial diagnostic evaluation; a context of skills development through workshops; a final reading assessment (PILOTO, 2003; LIMA, 2017). The research began with a diagnostic evaluation, answered by the students without the help of the teacher-researcher. The 2017 High School *Saeb* Test was used as the initial diagnostic evaluation. As for D4, there was the following activity:

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9 According to Carvalho (2018, p. 20), reading competence mobilizes several skills which can be presented separately, as in reference matrices, but which, in the reading process, are used concurrently. The skill would be knowing how to do something punctual which shows the practical aspect as a result of consolidated skills. Competence, on the other hand, "must be built through learning, that is, [...] development of skills" (Translated by the author from CARVALHO, 2018, p. 22).

Kangaroo[10]

Everyone knows (does it?) that *kangaroo* comes from a native Australian language and means "I Don't Know". According to legend, Captain Cook, an explorer of Australia, upon seeing that strange animal taking leaps of more than two meters in height, asked a native what the saying was called. The native replied *guugu yimidhirr*, in the local language, *Gan-guruu*, "I don't know." Suspicious that I am of these amusing origins, I researched some etymological dictionaries. No dictionary mentions this. Only in Aurélio, our little Bible – in another version. Precise definition I found, as almost always, in Partridge:

Kangarroo; wallaby.

The words kanga and walla, meaning jump and hop, are accompanied by the suffixes rôo and by, two aboriginal sounds from Australia, meaning quadrupeds.

Therefore jumping quadrupeds and hopping quadrupeds.

When I communicated the discovery to Paulo Rónai, a notable linguist and great friend of Aurélio Buarque de Holanda, Paulo was pleased to know about the "real" origin of the name kangaroo. But he added: "Too bad. The other version is much cuter". I also think so.

Millôr Fernandes, 1999.

03. It can be inferred from the text that:

(A) scientific discoveries must be communicated to linguists.

(B) etymological dictionaries keep the origin of words.

(C) Kangaroos are quadrupeds of two types: jumpers and hoppers.

(D) the Aurélio dictionary has a religious tendency.

(E) the natives did not know the meaning of kangaroo.

Source: Saeb Test (2017, our italics). Available at: http://portal.inep.gov.br/web/guest/educacao-basica/saeb/instrumentos-de-avaliacao. Access on: September 28th, 2018.

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10 In the original: Canguru - Todo mundo sabe (será?) que canguru vem de uma língua nativa australiana e quer dizer "Eu Não Sei". Segundo a lenda, o Capitão Cook, explorador da Austrália, ao ver aquele estranho animal dando saltos de mais de dois metros de altura, perguntou a um nativo como se chamava o dito. O nativo respondeu guugu yimidhirr, em língua local, Gan-guruu, "Eu não sei". Desconfiado que sou dessas divertidas origens, pesquisei em alguns dicionários etimológicos. Em nenhum dicionário se fala nisso. Só no Aurélio, nossa pequena Bíblia – numa outra versão. Definição precisa encontrei, como quase sempre, em Partridge: Kangarroo; wallaby. As palavras kanga e walla, significando saltar e pular, são acompanhadas pelos sufixos rôo e by, dois sons aborígines da Austrália, significando quadrúpedes. Portanto quadrúpedes puladores e quadrúpedes saltadores. Quando comuniquei a descoberta a Paulo Rónai, notável linguista e grande amigo de Aurélio Buarque de Holanda, Paulo gostou de saber da origem "real" do nome canguru. Mas acrescentou: "Que pena. A outra versão é muito mais bonitinha". Também acho.

In this example, students needed to understand the general idea of the text, relating explicit and implicit information. Every statement in item 3 permeated the search to understand the origin of the word "kangaroo". The narrator exposes the information about what is popularly told and ends by saying about the etymology of the word, being the true story of its origin.

The expected answer was alternative (B), with 21.1% responding properly. However, the most indicated alternative was (C), with 36.8%, with a tie between (A) and (B), in 21.1%, and the alternative (D) was not marked. In total, 78.9% of the responses were inadequate. This reveals that the students did not reach the "maximum horizon" (MARCUSCHI, 2008) of understanding as they did not go beyond paraphrase and repetition. How they identified the explicit information in the text: "The words *kanga* and *walla*, meaning to jump and hop [...] Therefore jumping quadrupeds and hopping quadrupeds", consequently, they indicated alternative (C) as correct, as it indicates that kangaroos are "jumpers and hoppers".

From the answers to the Diagnostic Assessment items, we obtained a preliminary result to carry out the second stage of this investigation. The descriptors with the highest inappropriate response rates[11] composed the activities of the reading notebook which were worked on in the reading workshops. Looking at the results of adequate and inappropriate responses to the descriptors that made up the initial diagnostic activity was not to measure the students' learning, but to assist in the organization, teaching and the effective process of developing reading skills and competences (CARVALHO, 2018).

From the results of the first stage, a book of reading activities was created based on the Saeb Reference Matrix, carrying out the second stage. These activities were implemented in five meetings, as described below.

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11 We consider the term "inadequate" for answers that do not meet what is requested by the item/question. The term "adequate" is for responses that meet what is requested by the item/question.

Planning and preparation of workshops

Each workshop was formulated with the purpose of working the reading descriptors in which the students obtained lower performance in the initial diagnostic activity, namely, D1, D4, D6, D12, D20, D8, D11 and D13. Workshop 3 turned to descriptors 4, 6, 8 and 12, and here, due to the limited space for discussion, we specifically present the activities of D4.

The activities related to D4 have objective questions (questions 1 and 4) and discursive (question 3) for the chronicle genre[12]. Although large-scale assessments do not have a discursive question format, they maintained the proposal to meet the descriptor of the Saeb Matrix. This type of question was used to better observe the students' understanding of the utterance and to see if the mediations and interactions carried out through the texts helped when solving the activities.

Organization and execution of Workshop 3

As in the others, Workshop 3 began with pre-reading (SOLÉ, 1998), with the presentation of the main information about Luis Fernando Veríssimo's life and work. We tried to activate the reader's prior knowledge through questions such as "What do you know about Luis Fernando Veríssimo?", "Is he a current/contemporary author?" etc.

From this stage, we started the discussion about the author of the text from the valuations marked by the extraverbal situation of the student readers. We help students fill in the gaps regarding what they did not understand or they did not know in relation to the pre-reading questions. These valuations attributed to the statements are related to the students' social, historical, ideological and contextual issues. Therefore, the mobilization of the understanding

12 The discursive genres and the themes of the workshops were chosen from the curriculum planning of the Portuguese Language Subject of the 2nd grade of High School.

of an utterance is directly linked to the valuation given by the speaker and can be completed by the teacher-researcher.

According to the students' responses, referrals were given for the construction of a sequence of reflections about the author, such as: social role (chronist), contributions to society, ideological issues in their works, demarcating their reflections on current society. These questions make it possible to deal with social and ideological aspects that involve Veríssimo's role in society, triggering their understanding of the extraverbal context.

After the initial discussions, we approached the "chronicle" genre and its relationship with "Cronos or Chronos", the name given to the personification of time, according to Greek mythology. Our attempt was to instill in students prior knowledge about the most diverse circumstances in which we use the radical "chronos" and reinforce the necessary temporal sense to continue the characterization of the chronicle genre.

We followed the workshop asking the students "What is chronicle?" and, through their answers, we wrote characteristics on the whiteboard in order to build their definition together with the students. Here, we created the list of information genre. Student were guided to situate these attributes from the compositional organization of narrative chronicles. After that, we built the concept (entry genre) by joining the information listed by the teacher-text-reader interaction. Then, we designed a definition of chronicle, according to the Priberam online Dictionary, placing its semantic meaning in the field of literature, delimiting the meaning that interested us.

From the compositional construction of the chronicle narrative, we help students think about other present characteristics, conceptualizing each one of them together with the students, starting with the constituent elements "time, space, characters, plot, narrative focus (types of narrator)" and, afterwards, the structure of the narrative "introduction, development and outcome". We

conclude by presenting the forms of the language which could be found by the types of speech: direct, indirect and free indirect.

After this initial work on the genre, we started to address, specifically, the reading of "Learn to call the police" that was part of the activities book of Workshop 3. First we exposed some police capture images, for example, to draw students' attention to the possible topic. This anticipation of the theme, as well as the survey of students' prior knowledge, are reading comprehension strategies (SOLÉ, 1998). They allow the teacher to delimit the students' reading development. After reading the non-verbal text, the teacher-researcher made some prediction questions such as: "From the title of the chronicle, is it possible to imagine what it is about?", "Does this title catch the reader's attention?" etc.

During reading, the teacher asked the students to read silently initially. This activity is a necessary resource for the student's first contact with the text, without further external interference. In the second stage, the teacher started reading aloud, requesting continuity by the students alternately, that is, shared reading. During the reading, the teacher-researcher took breaks to ask students about the constituent elements of the chronicle genre already taught. Once the reading of the chronicle was finished, a dialogue was initiated through questions such as: "Have your expectations been confirmed? Why?", in order to confirm or refute the hypotheses made in the pre-reading; "The narrative focus is the point of view that the narrator uses to tell a fact. What type of narrator is present in the chronicle Learn to call the police?", with the aim of having readers look for new information in the text; "Why did the narrator-character reach the conclusion that he should call the police that way?", so that students should look for implicit information.

After Workshop 3, the teacher guided the students to carry out the activities in the reading book about the chronicle "The last chronicle". They were supposed to answer by themselves and so they did, except that if any of them needed help, they could ask for it.

D4 skill analysis in dialogue with diagnostic assessment and workshops

After the diagnostic activity, the Workshops (including number 3), students took the final reading assessment. Among the texts read, there was "The last chronicle" [13], with some questions, with numbers 1, 3 and 4 focused on D4:

1. The profession of the narrator-character, highlighted in the 1st paragraph, is

A) writer.

B) teacher.

C) retiree.

D) owner of the tavern.

E) tavern employee.

3. In the 3rd paragraph, can we infer that the <u>portrayed</u> family has good or little financial resources? Justify your answer by removing an excerpt of the text.

The family has few financial resources. The excerpt is "First the father counts the money and then places his order."

4. The text presents words in the diminutive form such as "tidy, black girl, little girl and little ribbon" when referring to the girl. We can infer that the narrator-character

A) shows emotion, compassion when referring to the girl.

B) expresses indifference towards the girl.

C) is close to the girl's family.

D) highlights the lack of empathy towards the girl.

E) uses a tone of contempt when talking about the girl.

13 Text available at: https://www.escrevendoofuturo.org.br/caderno_virtual/texto/a-ultima-cronica/index.html. Acessed on: August 7th, 2021.

In 1, the objective is the student to infer the narrator-character's profession from the information provided in the 1st paragraph; in 3, the inference is about the financial condition of the chronicle family with the justification; in 4, the focus is on the inference of adjectives and nouns in relation to the character of the text.

Table 1 shows the percentage results of student's responses compared to the diagnostic evaluation.

Table 1. Results of the percentage of responses with D4.

STAGES	QUESTIONS	ADEQUATE	INADEQUATE
	01	100%	0%
Final evaluation	04	100%	0%
	03	77.8%	22.2%
Diagnostic evaluation	03	21.1%	78.9%

Source: adapted from Pilati-Gomes (2019, p. 126).

Students obtained 100% percentage of adequate answers in questions 1 and 4 of the final assessment, with a focus on textual inference, as they relied on the text to create new information. In reading question 3, they obtained 77.8% of adequate answers. Only 22.2% did not meet the request for the statement.

In question 1, the students resorted to the first paragraph of the chronicle, as the item provided the information that the answer was contained in this part of the text: "[...] *I enter a bar in Gávea* [...] *I'm putting off writing.* [...] *I would like to be inspired* [...] *I'm not a poet and I'm out of touch. I then take a last look out of myself, where the subjects that deserve a chronicle live*" (SABINO, 2005, online, our italics).

Students could list keywords in the text that refer to the writer's occupation, such as: "writing; chronicle; inspiration". Although the author's profession was not explicitly stated, these words allowed the understanding of what the narrator-character's profession was. The student would be at his "maximum horizon" (MARCUSCHI,

2008) of inferential comprehension, given that he needs to seek, between the lines, possible meanings for the text, going beyond paraphrase and repetition. It is up to the student to establish the bridge of meaning between given textual information (such as words and facts) and extratextual information that make him conclude that the subject who writes, who likes to feel inspired, seeks information in daily life to build a chronicle is a writer. In the words of Applegate, Quinn and Applegate (2002), students would be at a "high inferential level", using prior knowledge and the text to understand what they read.

The information that signals the writer's role is impregnated with presumed qualities, however, capable of being understood by the readers' extraverbal knowledge of the written verbal utterance of the chronicle (VOLOSHÍNOV, 1976[1926]). The comprehension of the utterance was based on the assessments assumed by the attributes related to the occupation of the narrator-character and, based on them, the students reached the active responsive position when choosing the appropriate alternative.

In question 4, the students needed to understand the meanings attributed by the narrator-character to the adjectives, "little tidy, little black (girl)", and to the nouns, "little girl and little ribbon". From the textually marked – use of the suffix *-inha* (little) – they would need to assess the meanings implied in the expressions: use of diminutive words showed compassion. Therefore, the linguistic form cannot be worked on in the classroom as a pure sign, decontextualized from its effective use, but needs to be recognized by its social meaning (sign) (VOLOCHÍNOV, 2012[1929]).

In question 3 (*In the 3rd paragraph, can we infer that the family portrayed in the chronicle has good or little financial resources*? *Justify your answer by removing an excerpt of the text),* the students[14] need to build the written discursive response genre, from the reading of the third paragraph of the text: "*The father, after counting the money he discreetly took from his pocket,* approaches the waiter, leaning back in his chair, and points to a piece of cake under the dome

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14 We provided students with fictitious names and we transcribed their responses faithfully.

on the conter [...]. The man behind the counter takes the portion of the cake with his hand, drops it on the plate" (SABINO, 2005, online, our emphasis).

We highlight representative samples from students' responses:

> **Suggested answer -** The family has few financial resources. The excerpt that justifies this is "First the father counts the money and then places his order".
> Nara – The family pictured has few financial resources."[...] a simple, dark yellow cake, just a triangular slice [...]"
> Nielly – They are poor. After counting the money, the father pulled it out of his pocket discreetly...
> Lexia – The family pictured has few resources. "The father runs his eyes around the bar, satisfied, as if intimately convinced of the celebration success".
> Nardo - It can be inferred that the family has few financial resources. "The father, after counting the money he discreetly took from his pocket, approaches the waiter, leaning back in his chair, and points to a piece of cake on the bell jar."
> Fani – We can infer that the family has few financial resources. "The composure of humility, in the restraint of gestures and words, can be added by the presence of a three-year-old black girl, with a bow on her head, all tidy up in her poor dress". (Adapted from Pilati-Gomes, 2019, p. 134-135).

Students needed to infer the family's financial condition and justify this information from a fragment of the text. If we think about the elaboration of this item, its construction aimed to avoid "guessings" in the answers. This is because if they adequately answered the financial resources and justified inadequately, we would not consider the answer as adequate because we consider the answer active as long as there is a full and true understanding of the statement (BAKHTIN, 2003[1979]). The students Lexia and Nara responded adequately about the family's financial resources, however, the justification was not in accordance with the 3rd paragraph, characterizing the "improper horizon" (MARCUSCHI,

2008). When we resume reading the text, it is possible to locate excerpts from Lexia and Nara's justifications in other paragraphs, namely 4th and 5th. From this, we observed that the students did not understand the statement, perhaps because they were not guided by the writing in the verbal materialization of the 3rd paragraph, as they searched in other parts of the text that did not correspond to the request for the item.

As for the appropriate answers, the students Fani, Nielly and Nardo answered according to the information provided in the 3rd paragraph. This reveals that "every saying cannot fail to be guided by what has already *been said*" (FARACO, 2009, p. 59, emphasis added), that is, when inferring about the family's financial condition, the students established the link between what has already been said (for example, the fact that the father counts the money and then calls the waiter) and their prior knowledge (counting money may indicate that the person is not equipped with many resources), generating new information (the person has few financial resources, so he counts the money first and only then orders the waiter, so he is sure that he will be able to pay for what he consumed).

Nielly and Nardo were able to relate the father's attitudinal actions of "counting the money" to a modest financial condition. Fani, on the other hand, related the way the girl character was dressed "all tidy in her poor dress" to justify the family's limited resources. Therefore, capturing this information enables understanding at an inferential level as they are textual clues left by the author which allow the production of inferences built in the text (MENEGASSI, 2010).

When reflecting on D4, we observed an active understanding of the inference ability in the students' representative sample. They were able to mobilize what was said and unsaid, they sought information both inside and outside the text, based on their knowledge to show an active responsive posture towards the statements.

In developing this skill, the reading questions showed that the character's physical characteristics, as well as the father's actions, went far beyond simple descriptions. Thus, students understood that not everything can be read in its literal sense or on a linear level (APPLEGATE, QUINN, APPLEGATE, 2002), that is, it is quite possible to attribute meanings to what is perceived by the margins of the text and inferred by the reader's knowledge of the world, as the meanings we produce are refraction of the world, that is, the various interpretations are influenced by the diversity of historical and sociocultural experiences (VOLOCHÍNOV, 2012[1929]).

There was a considerable increase in the adequate answers when comparing the results of the diagnostic evaluation, of 21.1%, with the average of the reading questions, of 92.6%, of the final evaluation. These data indicate the satisfactory development process in relation to D4 and reveal the need to continue working with the skill in the school context.

Conclusion

The aim of this article was to analyze how the ability to "infer implicit information in a text", from *Saeb* Matrix, was developed in high school students. The activities carried out demonstrated the need for continuous work with the ability to infer information, given that students are still in the process of development. This means that working with reading competence requires from the teacher a continuous reflection on what and how to work, relating the different skills procedurally and concomitantly.

In general, in the work with D4, we seeked to explore the "maximum horizon" or the "high inferential level", because the activities required the reader to read the text more globally and to understand its entirety, paying attention to linguistic clues and marks, relating the text to the students' prior knowledge, enabling them to make inferences. We believe that this work with skills can enrich the process of students' training and development, in order

to expand their repertoire of reading strategies which involve the inferential process, opening up the moment of interpretation, a moment in which the reader analyzes, issues his value judgment, producing meanings.

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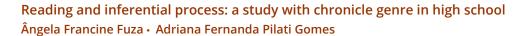SOLÉ, I. **Estratégias de leitura.** Porto Alegre: Artmed, 1998.

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