

The Daily Reading Practices of Teacher Training Student

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ABSTRACT – The Daily Reading Practices of Teacher Training Student. This article examines the daily reading practices of primary education teacher training students. With the aim to discuss the stigmatization attached to the quantity and quality of readings performed by this population, the daily reading practices of three female students from this teacher training institution were analyzed. The main results of the research show that, on a daily basis, teacher training students engage in multiple reading sessions which are associated with diverse meanings and social connections, and are culturally valuable within the concrete conditions of their lives.

Keywords: Social Anthropology. Reading. Teacher Training. Written Culture.

RESUMEN – Prácticas Cotidianas de Lectura en Estudiantes de Magisterio. En este artículo se presenta una indagación sobre las prácticas cotidianas de lectura de estudiantes de Profesorado en Educación Primaria. Buscando discutir sentidos estigmatizantes sobre la cantidad y calidad de lecturas que realiza esta población estudiantil se analizan las prácticas cotidianas de lectura de tres mujeres estudiantes de este profesorado. Los principales resultados de la investigación permiten sostener que las/os estudiantes de magisterio realizan múltiples prácticas cotidianas de lectura, que éstas se encuentran asociadas a sentidos y relaciones sociales diversas y que resultan culturalmente valiosas en el marco de las condiciones concretas de vida de los sujetos.

Palabras-clave: Antropología Social. Lectura. Formación Docente. Cultura Escrita.

Introduction

My intention is to eventually revisit education and for this it is important to start taking into account what happens in society with respect to the daily use of literacy outside the school context, instead of starting from the educational assumptions of our own culture (Street, 1993).

Those of us who are written this article have worked for several years as teachers of different curricular areas in state-run higher education institutions in the city of Córdoba, Argentina. One of the careers in which we have more teaching hours is the Primary Education Teacher Training Program (hereinafter referred to as “PEP” in Spanish), aimed at training future primary or elementary school teachers. From our work in these institutional spaces we have found that, with certain frequency, different institutional actors (teachers, directors, pedagogical coordinators, among others) hold a fairly generalized and widespread idea: their PEP students “read little” and/or engage in readings that are not very relevant or of little cultural value.

With the socio-anthropological research presented in this article, we seek precisely to put in tension this assumption based on the analysis of the daily reading practices of PEP students. Pursuing this objective, we investigated materials from a fieldwork conducted throughout the year 2020 with Evelin, Alana, and Genesis, three students of a state-run public institution of PEP in the city of Córdoba.

By daily reading practices we understand those readings that the students carry out beyond their academic studies in the teaching profession. That is to say, the readings they engage in during work and/or domestic activities, in moments of rest, in their interrelations with their families, with their friends, or in the different areas of socialization they frequent. We assert that these readings are “beyond” the readings proper to teacher training and not necessarily “excluding them” since, as we will see from the analysis of the fieldwork, in the daily lives of the students, the readings carried out for the purpose of study often become inseparable from those carried out for other purposes. Furthermore, while addressing this everyday dimension of reading, we will question whether the reading practices of the subjects can be classified a priori and by the researcher as reading for pleasure/obligation, educational/aesthetic, childish/juvenile/adult. Additionally, although we will focus on reading practices for reasons of space, we will do so from a perspective of analysis that will show that these particular forms of reading are always indissolubly linked to practices – also particular – of writing.

This article is organized into five sections, developed as follows: in “Background of this research” section, we present some research on the reading practices of teachers or future teachers and analyze them critically; in “Theoretical references and methodological decisions” section, we develop the theoretical contributions that have nourished our analysis and the methodological aspects of the research; in “PEP students and their daily reading practices” section, we

present the most significant information for the study problem that we were able to reconstruct from the fieldwork; in “Analysis of daily reading practices” section, we proceed to analyze this information using the theoretical categories and proposals previously recovered. Finally, in the section “Final Reflections,” we point out the contributions of the research and place them in the framework of the more general concerns of research and educational practice.

Background

The first work that we take as background for this research is Rockwell (2018 [1992]). Although it does not address teachers' reading in their daily lives but rather in terms of their professional performance, it is a study that informs issues relevant to our research. The author seeks to relativize the generalized idea that teachers “do not read” by means of a detailed contrast of the characteristics of the professional practices of written language in the academic world and in the school world. From this analysis, she concludes that:

[...] perhaps the myth that teachers do not read is generated in opposition to the idea that the universal models of reading are fixed in the academic world [...] one tends to forget that the working conditions of the group teacher lead to other uses of books, very different from the academic ones, although not so far from the uses of written language in most literate contexts in human history (Rockwell, 2018 [1992], p. 558).

Regarding research that specifically addresses the reading practices of teachers outside the professional environment, we have works such as Granado and Puig (2014), Merino, Barrera, and Albornoz (2020), and Guevara and Semmoloni (2020). The first two works reveal an enormous heterogeneity of reading practices among teachers in training and present a similar thesis as a central result of their research: the passage of these students through the first levels of the educational system did not have a positive influence on the construction of the reading identity of future teachers.

On the contrary, the school context is presented in the two studies as an environment associated by the subjects with compulsory reading, imposed and therefore dissociated from pleasure. It is argued from here that: “Future teachers, even with different reading identities, describe a quite similar and negative school experience of reading” (Granado; Puig, 2014, p. 58). Additionally, it is argued that:

[...] just as the mediating role of parental figures is highlighted, including grandparents and uncles and aunts, it is surprising to note the scarce mention of the teacher. The reason would be in the obligatory nature associated with reading in this space [...] What disappears at this stage is the relevance of reading pleasure, since parents endorse the imposition of reading [carried out by the school] (Merino; Barrera; Albornoz, 2020, p. 17).

We consider that certain methodological inconsistencies allow us to relativize what appears as a shared conclusion between the two studies. In the first place, both studies ignore the fact that the per-

centage of respondents who have reconstructed valuable scenes of appropriation of written culture in the framework of their previous educational trajectories is not lower. In the case of Granado and Puig (2014), for example, of the 88 people in the sample analyzed, there were 17 who, although the questionnaire did not specifically ask about the role their own teachers had in relation to reading practices, said that they had had teachers who motivated them to read and become passionate about reading. Only 8 respondents said the opposite (i.e., that they had had negative experiences with reading as part of their schooling). The fact that 63 people did not mention the school institution as a shaper of their reading identities (we repeat: a question that was not explicitly asked about in the questionnaire) does not directly imply that the experience was, in general terms, similar and negative.

In the case of Merino, Barrera, and Albornoz (2020, p. 17), although it is recognized that “[...] on occasions, the imposition of books [by the school] will become the only way to reach literature for those who have difficult access to this good”, it is reaffirmed as the main conclusion that the school participates scarcely in the mediation between readers and readings, since it constitutes an obligatory approach (far from pleasure and aesthetic enjoyment) between both.

Secondly, the very tools for reconstructing the information can be questioned in both cases insofar as surveys are conducted that focus on “literary” readings, ignoring the existence of other types of reading practices that take place within the framework of the subjects' daily lives. In other words, the starting point of the research is the assumption that those readings that legitimately construct reading identity are those associated with literary texts, aesthetic enjoyment, and moments of pleasure.

Thirdly, and also at a methodological level, it can be pointed out as a limitation of Granado and Puig (2014, p. 48) the fact that the information is reconstructed within a curricular space of the respondents' own teacher training: a Seminar on “reading education” in the framework of which students were surveyed and questioned about “[...] the degree to which they felt prepared to face the task of educating readers and the value they gave to the training received in this regard”. We consider that this type of questioning in the framework of the last course of their own teacher training very possibly predisposes the subjects to construct negative responses about themselves and about the training received, insofar as this positioning allows them to appear before their teachers as reflective subjects regarding their personal limitations for future work performance.

Finally, we are interested in analyzing the research of Guevara and Semmoloni (2020) on the “non-specialized reading” practices of pre-school teachers in the city of Buenos Aires. Through a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews, these authors reconstruct the “reading preferences” of teachers, their ways of reading and the meanings attributed by the subjects to their reading practices. This is

an extremely interesting study, although we consider that the notions on which the research is built are, as in the two works reviewed above, too restricted. That is to say that they respond more to the researchers' own assumptions and notions about what reading should be than to the "native" or "vernacular" practices that they manage to recover from the interviews with teachers. Thus, for example, "reader" is understood as one who "reads by choice" and "non-specialized reading" as reading that is not linked at all to professional practice. On the other hand, regarding the readings that are identified as chosen and not specialized, Guevara and Semmoloni (2020, p. 125) conclude that "[...] the range of readings preferred by teachers is narrow and not very diverse, since the genres are limited and the spectrum of readings within them is also narrow". Thus, for example, in the analysis of "mass" literature such as the books by Jorge Bucay and Gabriel Rolón (literature that, according to the study, is widely consumed by early childhood teachers), it is argued that it is a literature that operates "[...] on the level of established opinions without promoting changes in the sensibilities of its readers" (Guevara; Semmoloni, 2020, p. 122).

In general terms, we consider that the approaches taken in the background studies analyzed here are based on dichotomizing visions (for example, between reading for pleasure/reading for obligation or "assigned") or univocal or essentialist characterizations of certain spaces or cultural objects (for example, about educational institutions or "mass" books). These underlying assumptions are informed, in our opinion, by a certain readerly ethnocentrism that traces in the practices of others those practices and notions about reading that are held by those doing the research. By failing to recognize the diverse ways in which individuals engage with reading within their cultural contexts, these studies inadvertently perpetuate the notion of a deficiency or passivity among teachers or future teachers regarding written culture. This tendency was highlighted by Rockwell (2018 [1992]) in his analysis of teachers' utilization of written language. He emphasized the significance of distancing oneself from personal cultural biases to comprehend alternative cultural realities accurately.

Theoretical References and Methodological Decisions

Throughout our fieldwork, our perspective was guided by theoretical contributions from the fields of Anthropology of Education, New Literacy Studies, and Cultural History. We embraced these contributions as they allow us to approach the daily reading practices of PEP students from a non-disjunctive and reflexive viewpoint regarding our own concepts about reading. We refer to contributions condensed into theoretical categories such as written culture (Kalman, 2002; 2008), vernacular literacies (Zavala, 2009), practices (Chartier, 1995a), and appropriation (Chartier, 1995b; Rockwell, 1996).

The concept of Written Culture proposed by Kalman (2002; 2008) refers to reading and writing as multiple, socially, and historically situated practices constructed between the writer, reader, and

other subjects, traversed by power relations. From this perspective, the category of written culture shifts the emphasis from individual capacity to learn to read and write – or to manage certain types of reading and writing – to place in the social and historical context in which these reading and writing practices are being developed in a particular way:

Reading and writing are social activities, they are situated practices [...] because their forms and uses are historically constructed through continuous diversification and because they are used to interact with others; they are situated because they are performed in specific situations, with defined communicative purposes and with consequences for the users' lives (Kalman, 2002, p. 16).

Thus, it is essential to emphasize that these practices are always contextualized, as they occur in situations linked to the world and whose meaning makes sense in relation to it. As situated practices, reading and writing practices are inscribed in the social world and have socially constructed meanings (Street, 1993). Studying writing culture as a social practice involves analyzing observable aspects – actions developed or technologies used for writing – and the social relations framing them, their implied knowledge, beliefs, values, and uses in different socio-historical contexts (Street, 2009; Kalman, 2018). Likewise, reading and writing practices are framed within power relations: who has access to reading and writing, what they read and write, who decides what others will read and write, and who determines correctness and conventionality – are all ways of exercising power through language practices (Kalman, 2018, p. 256).

In line with Kalman's approach, and framed within the NEL perspective, Zavala (2009) seeks to emphasize the diversity of possible ways of relating to reading and writing and recovers the category of vernacular literacy. This notion highlights the multiplicity of written culture practices deployed in different contexts and purposes. Vernacular literacy comprises those practices of written culture that have their origin in people's daily lives and that are not regulated by the formal rules and procedures of dominant social institutions (Barton; Hamilton, 1981¹ *apud* Zavala, 2002). Vernacular literacies are – generally – informally appropriated by subjects and “involves a relationship between learner and expert that is flexible and changes contextually, integrating learning with use” (Zavala, 2002, p. 133). Vernacular practices, embedded in people's emotional lives, can be distinguished from the dominant literacies associated with formal organizations such as educational, religious, legislative, bureaucratic and/or work environments. Dominant practices are more formalized and are given a higher value, both legally and culturally. Whereas vernacular literacies, less valued, lack institutional support (Zavala, 2002, p. 134). This recognition allows us to identify the multiple community and domestic literacy practices differing from official writing practices (such as academia).

The concept of *practices* was used by Roger Chartier (1995a, p. 190) to reflect specifically on popular reading. The author defines cul-

tural practices as “inventions of meaning limited by the multiple determinations (social, religious, institutional, etc.) that define, for each community, the legitimate behaviors and norms incorporated”. Here, we emphasize both the agency of subjects – who use and appropriate available cultural elements – and the structural processes configuring and delimiting the boundaries of that agency. Written culture practices by popular sectors are not mere receptions of culturally available offerings but imply – within power relations conditioning them, albeit not entirely – multiple uses and appropriations by subjects.

The category of appropriation, disseminated by Chartier in relation to popular reading practices, was revisited for the field of Anthropology/Ethnography of Education by Rockwell (1996; 2018). Through appropriation we make visible how cultural materials circulating in a society are differentially used by subjects. It alludes to the active relationship between the particular subject and the multiplicity of available cultural goods objectified in heterogeneous everyday life environments. This notion aligns with Kalman's (2002) proposal, arguing that utilizing written culture entails not only reading-writing capacity but also carrying out inventions within social relations and specific social meanings.

It was in constant critical dialogue with these authors' contributions and other works employing these categories to investigate the written culture of popular sectors (Hernández, 2003; Lorenzatti, 2018; Arrieta, 2019; Lorenzatti; Blazich; Arrieta, 2018) that we conducted our research fieldwork. This research took place throughout 2020, affected by preventive and compulsory social isolation (ASPO) due to the COVID-19 pandemic. We implemented diverse methodological strategies according to the new limits and potentials of the health and social context.

Virtual tools were of great help, and through them, we conducted non-directed and virtual in-depth interviews as the primary method for gathering information. We conceived these interviews similarly to face-to-face ones, as dialogues seeking clues to access subjects' cultural universes (Guber, 2001). Simultaneously, during these interviews, we developed a form of participant observation, asking students to show us different spaces and material objects linked to everyday reading practices using their cell phones within their homes.

The information gathered from virtual interviews and such “observations” was supplemented with photographs, screenshots (mainly from social networks), and audio messages sent by students via WhatsApp to illustrate, explain, or expand on aspects previously discussed. Additionally, these informal exchanges yielded new research-relevant information.

When we textualized our analysis, we decided to preserve the anonymity of the institution where the three PEP students were studying and the identity of the students themselves. This choice, based on ethical considerations, aims to protect those involved in the fieldwork from any inconvenience (Restrepo, 2016). At the same time, preserv-

ing personal and institutional anonymity aims to shift focus away from specific individuals and institutions, enabling reflection on the research problem beyond these particular cases (Achilli, 2005).

We selected Evelin, Alana and Genesis because they represent the typical characteristics of the student body in public PEPs in Córdoba. They are young women from low-income backgrounds (their parents work in factories, are independent workers, or unemployed), two of them combine their teacher training with informal jobs, and two of them are also mothers.

These sociological particularities align with the general characteristics of Argentine primary education teacher students: a young, popular-sector, predominantly female student body (Cámpoli; Michati; Gorboff, 2004; Noel, 2010). It's important to note that while we knew Evelin, Alana, and Genesis beforehand, as they were former students of one of the authors, we no longer had any academic, personal, or institutional ties with them during the fieldwork, which we deemed advantageous for research objectives.

PEP Students and Their Everyday Reading Practices

PEP students deploy in their daily lives different reading practices that, as we have already anticipated in the preceding sections, imply, exceed and/or differ from the academic reading practices proposed in the framework of their formal studies. Below, we present Evelin, Genesis and Alana - the three students that we worked with - and show part of their life stories and their daily activities from which it is possible to visualize and understand their daily reading practices.

Evelin

Evelin is 35 years old. She lives with her husband and four children (aged between 17 and 5) in a middle-class neighborhood on the outskirts of the city of Córdoba. Her current residence is close to the area where she grew up and lived until, at the age of 17, she became a couple with her current husband after the birth of their first child.

An important group of reading practices that Evelin carries out are linked to one of the main activities of her daily life: raising and caring for her children. She performs school tasks with them that include practices such as reading passages from textbooks, reading Bible verses for the catechesis space (since, although Evelin does not consider herself religious, her children attend a denominational school), reading her youngest child's Classroom (virtual classroom) or checking that notebooks and folders are complete and up to date. At the same time, Evelin has practices of acquiring and preserving written works related to her children's schooling, such as old school textbooks that were hers or that were given to her by relatives and friends, and fascicles on scientific topics that are distributed along with local newspapers. As she herself points out, these materials "are always useful": to support the schooling of those in her care, but also to prepare the lessons she will give as a future teacher.

Beyond the completion of homework and schoolwork, there is an aspect of her teenage daughters' schooling that is also linked to Evelin's reading practices: the woman began to read the juvenile novels that the girls were required to read as part of their school literature classes. "They have to read them [those books] but... I always end up getting hooked!" she says. Some of the books bought and read with her daughters are classified by the woman as "movie books", such as "Charlie and the Chocolate Factory". Regarding this book, Evelin says that she and her daughters first watched the movie and later read the written work: "When we read it with the girls, we realized that the book is much better than the movie," she says.

In addition to her sons and daughters, during the interviews, Evelin introduces us to the universe of her "doggy children", as she calls the dogs that live in her house. Regarding her pets, Evelin carries out numerous daily reading practices on Facebook groups, Instagram and various websites. In these digital platforms Evelin not only appropriates knowledge about the characteristics of dog breeds or gets information about feeding and training practices but also reads texts that can be considered narrative or literary: tales that expose life stories of dogs that have stood out for some feat or admirable behavior. Following these examples of writing Evelin has created an Instagram account of her pets where she posts pictures of the animals and writes words alluding to the affection she professes for them.

Another sphere of Evelin's life in which numerous daily reading practices have developed and are still developing is that of extra-domestic work. For two years Evelin worked in a *call center* where she had to perform tasks "reading fifteen open [screen] tabs at a time". She has also read to train herself in numerous manual trades that she has practiced and continues to practice independently and in parallel with her domestic work and her studies at the Teacher's College: "country" doll making, waxing, baking, Spanish card making, among others. In addition to these activities, every day Evelin reads on her cell phone orders from different customers, since she cooks and sells empanadas, an activity with which she "collaborates with the family economy", according to her.

Evelin links her multiple readings associated with work to the parental reading practices she remembers from her childhood and adolescence. Her father studied "as a grown-up" some years of Electronic Engineering and then continued studying to become an electrician. Her mother started a career as a public accountant, which she abandoned when her first child was born, but during her adulthood she took several courses to become a *manager*: "[my parents] [...] they love to study! They study all the time! I think I got that from them," she explains. However, she recognizes that she is linked to reading in a somewhat different way than her parents: "[...] they read to study, to get new jobs... But they were not like me, I go on vacation with a book under my arm... While everyone enjoys the river, I like to lie in the sun with my "mate" tea and my book".

Among the books she chooses to read in moments of solitude and relaxation, Evelin mentions “Total Confidence”, a self-help book that she had wanted to read for a long time “because of things I had been feeling”. She also recalls having read “María”, a novel that is “[...] a real period novel and describes how they lived, how they dressed, the details of the costumes, how everything used to be” and “Mis putas lindas”, by Gabriel García Márquez. About this last book - which is the only one that Evelin presents associated with its author - she explains that she chose it because she thought it was a work “more in favor of women” because of the title. However, she explains that when she read it, she was disappointed: “[...] he completely undermines women... In other words, he treats them [women] as objects”.

Alana

Alana is 25 years old. She was born and lived in a poor neighborhood in the northern part of the city of Córdoba until 2018, when she got married and moved in with her husband in a rented apartment in a neighborhood close to where she came from. When Alana was a child, she rarely saw her mother: the woman had to work double shifts as a domestic worker and as an employee at a store to support her children, whom she raised without the presence of their father. For this reason, Alana and her siblings spent a lot of time with their maternal grandmother, with whom they established a very close bond. It was this grandmother who took Alana to an Evangelical Church when she was still very young. There, the girl began to read the Bible, a work that she remembers today as the first book she ever read in her life.

From those childhood moments to the present day, Alana maintains the daily practice of Bible reading since both she and her husband - as well as her entire maternal family - are evangelists. At present, Alana does these readings in the solitude of her home or in church during worship, but also from a collective practice that she develops at home with her husband and a group of friends: they all get together to read some biblical passages and to write devotionals, writings that Alana defines as personal or collective reflections that arise from the reading of the selected passages.

Also, since her inclusion in the religious world, Alana came into contact with what she calls “Christian literature”: texts that are bought in Christian bookstores in the city center, in the church or rented from the church library. Among these books, she mentions one entitled “The Blessing of a Consolidated Life”. It is an autobiographical work written by a couple of pastors who, as Alana explains, wrote this book to raise funds that would allow them to travel to India with the aim of “[...] helping there too [a mission]”.

As we could observe from Alana's movements around her home during the interviews, the television occupies a central place in the physical space of her home. When we inquired about the use of this object, Alana told us that both she and her husband watch series and

movies daily on platforms such as Netflix or HBO. Some of these series are based on literary works such as “The Hundred” (a book Alana bought and read after watching the series) or “Anne with an E” (she frequently reads its Facebook page). She also comments that she likes to watch TV series about “crimes” and that she also follows this topic on Twitter, a network where she finds “unsolved crime threads”.

Near Alana's television set there is also a small bookcase. According to her, most of the books there were bought for her by her mother when she was a teenager and from the discovery of her passion for reading:

[...] [in high school] they gave us compulsory readings and the truth is... I was not used to reading... sometimes it was one book per week! We had to do the summary, the review, the whole thing... And from then on I loved it! They were nice novels, my mom started buying them for me because I started asking for them or borrowing them from the library.

Although she has not registered the authors of the novels she read as a teenager, Alana does remember - and very well - the title of several of those works: “October, a crime”, “Ham in the middle”, “If your sign is not cancer”, “Veronica” or “The eyes of the Siberian dog”. Other books in her bookcase are “psychology” books bought by her husband or that she gave him as a gift, since he, who is currently working as an employee, is waiting for her to finish his teaching degree to start studying for a degree in psychology. Nevertheless, Alana says that she hopes to have time in the future to read these Psychology books herself. Among all of them, she chooses one and shows it to the camera through which we are conducting the interview: it is the book “Los ausentes” by the Argentine psychologist and popularizer Gabriel Rolón.

Genesis

Genesis is 27 years old. She lives with her husband and two young children in a working-class neighborhood in the northern part of the city of Córdoba. Génesis was born and raised with her ten siblings in an irregular settlement (a “shantytown”) in the eastern part of the city of Córdoba. Neither her mother – a domestic worker – nor her father – a construction worker – finished elementary school. When asked if she has had any books of her own during her childhood or adolescence, Genesis tells us, at first, that she has not. However, after a few minutes, she recalls that a book did circulate in her childhood home: the Bible, brought to her home by Mormon preachers and read collectively by the whole family.

From her time in elementary school (which she dropped out in sixth grade, like all her siblings) Genesis recalls her visits to the library, marked by the lack of time to read the books available there: “At school there was a library... a very nice library. I used to spend... [silence] not reading, but looking at the books... because they wouldn't let us take the books [home]”.

When she turned 17, Genesis met the man who is now her husband and father of her children. According to the woman's story, it was him who encouraged her to finish her primary schooling at a school for young people and adults. Once she finished this cycle, Genesis began wishing to become a teacher, so she decided to attend high school as well. It is precisely in connection with her secondary schooling (also in an educational institution for young people and adults) that Genesis reconstructs her connection with a book that, although it was not hers, was extremely significant for her:

For my last subject in high school I had to summarize a book. Then my mother-in-law lent me one that... it was long... I don't remember the title... but honestly I got excited... I remember it was about animals, about a man who was a farmer and had animals and there was a kind of rebellion there... I liked it because of what was going on between the characters... But I didn't realize that it was a book that was giving some information or dealing with some political issue. Until my mother-in-law explained to me something like that the book was referring to political parties. I honestly read the whole book, it was the only one I read from the first to the last page.

Although Genesis returned this book to her mother-in-law, she has been collecting others that she jealously guards and that come, fundamentally, from her inclusion in the Primary Education Teacher Training Program. One of them is a pedagogical treatise on education (published in Argentina), another one is a manual for teachers with "tools for the classroom" and a third one contains the Priority Learning Nuclei [NAP] for the area of Language at the primary level. Two of these books were taken by Genesis from a box of "*take-away books*" located in the library of the institution where the PYP is taught. The third was offered to her by one of her teachers, in a situation that she recalls as follows:

One day the Language teacher arrived and put on her desk several books on the NAPs and said 'girls... I brought these books to give away because I don't use them anymore... so if you think you will need them, come closer... take them... and they will be yours'.... So I went straight to the first cycle books because it is the cycle that I like the most for when I start working....

This book, together with those that Genesis took from the Teacher's Library, make up the heritage of printed works that she has at home. However, and beyond these copies, that she points out as her own, there are other texts circulating in her home that are shared between Genesis and her family. First of all, the books that belong to her children: mainly school texts and children's stories, among which there is also an adaptation for children of the biblical text. Genesis dwells in detail on each of the books that belong to the little ones, explaining who gave them to her, for what occasion and commenting on the content of each one of them. She also comments that her children sometimes bring home texts that they rent from the school library. The other important book that circulates in the house is the Bible, since the whole family belongs to the Adventist Church. Regarding this text, Genesis comments that it is her husband who spends more time reading it, given that although she used to read it regularly in the

past, she is currently very busy studying to become a teacher, so she has less time for Bible reading.

Finally, from the dialogues with Genesis we reconstructed a notorious amount of social networks that the young woman accesses daily in search of “interesting information”. She assiduously reads Facebook pages on educational topics (for example, on “disability at school”) or consults YouTube tutorials on handicrafts that she can use in the classroom (videos with instructions, lists of materials and written comments) but which she also uses to decorate her children's parties or to give to her relatives on holidays.

Analysis of the daily reading practices of PEP students

As we have just seen, Evelin, Alana and Genesis deploy multiple daily reading practices. These are carried out for different purposes and goals: the students read to relax, to work, to have fun, to get information, to get tools to cope with a personal problem, to learn about other historical moments or to know stories, of both human lives – as in the case of the book written by the couple of evangelical pastors- and animal lives – as in the case of the websites associated with famous dogs.

Reading practices are carried out in a solitary manner but also in relation to multiple other subjects: texts are exchanged with their adolescent children; they are lent and given as gifts by their teachers; they are given to their husbands so that one day – as they are doing now – they can fulfill their desire to study; they are recommended by friends, relatives or members of the Church. Within the framework of these links and these meanings, the students produce active reading practices: they appropriate the contents of these texts according to their daily activities, their life stories and the social contexts in which both these activities and these stories unfold. Thus, for example, Evelin's analysis of Gabriel García Márquez's “Mis putas lindas” awakens in the woman a critique in tune with the social discussions of her time regarding gender violence. Perhaps Evelin is more permeated by these social debates than by the “cultured” stereotype that García Márquez writes good books and that it is therefore worthwhile to value his works, recommend them and accumulate them in our libraries. By pointing out Evelin's distance from a book like this one, we seek to highlight the active subject that underlies this reading practice: a subject who takes up ideological elements of her time to produce a critique of the text she has appropriated. It is precisely Street (1993) who reminds us that it is for the purpose of the political resistance unleashed by different social movements (such as the feminist movement) that the social conventions surrounding written culture become more evident, thus opening up the possibility of appropriating them in order to transform them.

At the same time, and although it is possible to identify social tendencies in the reading practices of the students, it should be noted that these tendencies do not imply the automatic creation of classifications that assign defined attributes to the various types of reading.

For example in relation to the biblical text, we saw that it is present in the daily lives of the three young women and we know that this indicates the social weight that religiosity possesses for the popular sectors (and the linking of that religiosity to numerous practices of written culture, as Kalman, 2004; Rockwell, 2006 or Lorenzatti, 2018 have posited). However, it can be pointed out that it is a reading practice that is linked to meanings that exceed the merely “religious”: we have seen how Alana came to know the Bible through her grandmother, who raised her in function of her mother's absence because of her long working hours; how Genesis read in her childhood and together with her family the biblical text, which was the only one that circulated in her house; and how Evelin reads biblical passages together with her children and to do schoolwork, even when she does not identify herself as a believer.

In each of these situations, reading practices are linked to heterogeneous meanings and acquire different particularities: to include a girl in a social space - her extended family, the neighborhood church - in the framework of her mother's prolonged absence; to bring a girl into contact for the first time with a printed book that circulates, moreover, in the hands of her elders (which undoubtedly gives it a place of importance); to collaborate with the support of the educational trajectory of her own children and in the framework of an own history of school interruption. On the other hand, we have also seen how Bible reading acquires, in the case of Alana, her husband and her friends, a meaning linked to the exercise of bonds of friendship: it is with friends, who are at the same time fellow believers, that devotionals are read and written.

In relation to the media in which reading takes place, there also emerges the coexistence of reading practices carried out through printed works with those that are deployed in digital media. It is important to note that these media can function separately but also in an interrelated and mutually reinforcing way, as we saw with regard to literary works that are read in print but are first known through Netflix or film viewing -and vice versa- or with regard to crime stories that are followed both in an audiovisual way in television series and in a written way on Twitter. Reconstructing these diverse, multiple meanings and the interconnection between digital and printed media allows us not to restrict the analysis of technologies to the management of their operational aspects, but to analyze the appropriation processes carried out by subjects with respect to the possible social uses, scopes and limitations thereof (Kalman; Hernández, 2013).

Finally, and despite the particularities of the life contexts of the three students, the analysis of the reconstructed information reveals the importance of the educational system in the processes of appropriation of written culture. Evelin, who had to drop out of high school because of the birth of her first child, now reads the “juvenile” novels that her teenage children read as part of their schooling. Perhaps the woman is taking advantage of this to develop now, in her adulthood and thanks to her children's schooling, the reading practices that she

was unable to carry out as an adolescent due to the early interruption of her own schooling.

Alana, for her part, says she “didn't read” until a high school teacher gave her “required” reading. These were juvenile novels whose reading made her discover how much pleasure she could find in consuming works like these. The value acquired by these works in Alana's life is materially expressed in the fact that her mother, a woman whose working hours kept her away from her children, bought these books for her and did so, surely, at great sacrifice. It is also evidenced by the fact that the young woman still keeps and preserves those juvenile books (whose titles she remembers perfectly well by heart) as the most essential part of her bookcase.

The link between Genesis' reading practices and her passage through the different levels of the educational system becomes even more evident than in the two previous cases due to the context of economic precariousness in which the young woman was born and spent most of her life. In elementary school Genesis spent her time “not reading but looking at books...” which reminds us that, as Kalman (2004) warns, availability and access to written cultural resources are not necessarily synonymous. However, although in this children's scene what emerges in the first instance is Genesis's impossibility to have access to those books, it is not minor that in that school library the young girl has forged a desiring gaze on those cultural objects. Because in the context of Genesis' childhood life, in whose home the Bible “brought by the Mormons” was the only book that circulated, it is significant to be able to enter a library, even if it is only to look at, smell and long for the books that are present there. Finally, the other educational levels through which Genesis circulated were also central to their appropriation of written culture. George Orwell's “Animal Farm” gripped her - notwithstanding her forgetfulness of the title and author - from “the first to the last page.” She was not only required to read it as part of her schooling, but it also helped her to graduate from adult high school and thus obtain a level of education that none of her ten siblings or her parents possess. In addition, it was through her passage through the Primary Education Teacher Training Program that she was able to appropriate (symbolically but also materially) the few printed books that currently make up her personal library. The importance of these written possessions can be glimpsed in her account of the event from which, almost as if it were a magic trick, a book finally became hers: “[the teacher said] whoever thinks they will need it, comes closer... and takes it... and [the book] will be theirs”.

Final Reflections

Within the framework of their daily lives, Primary Education Teacher Training students develop multiple reading practices. These practices are linked to different meanings and purposes, they are carried out through different modalities and supports, they put them in relation with different subjects and they are a way for those of us who

are interested in the link between these subjects and the written culture to know their stories and their life contexts. From the reconstruction, analysis and documentation of these reading practices it is possible, in the first place, to begin to question the image of lack and cultural passivity that is usually constructed about student teachers when they are portrayed as poor or bad readers. At the same time, approaching these daily reading practices allows us to know these students better in cultural terms: because their cultural consumption is a key to access their difficulties, their failures and their concerns, but also their desires, their successes, their dreams and their expectations. That is to say, to the things they do within the framework of their concrete living conditions, but also to those they do in spite of those same conditions.

The survey of these daily reading practices does not imply, however, claiming a cultural relativism that postulates diversity in written culture as an absolute value. If we were to do so, we would hide, in the name of cultural diversity, the inequality that really exists in access to cultural goods (Achilli, 2009). We would also make invisible the fact that, in fact, in the heat of the expansion of digital capitalism and contemporary modes of cultural consumption, we are witnessing the decline of reading (Berardinelli, 2024).

But the critical distance with respect to this relativism should not make us forget that the educational task must always start from the recognition of the other as a cultural subject of a particular and concrete world. In this sense, we believe, along with Street (1993) and Zavala (2009), that it is only by making visible the notions that the subjects already have about reading and writing and by valuing the “vernacular” uses they make of them that we can begin to bring these subjects closer to new meanings and new knowledge about written culture.

For this reason, although we focus on cultural practices that students develop “outside” of the teacher training course, we believe that our analysis can contribute to the field of teacher training and to the enrichment of the processes of appropriation of written culture practices that are forged during this course. Because knowing more and better the concrete cultural universes of those who will be teachers in the future can result in the design of educational plans or institutional initiatives that take into account their knowledge, interests and previous reading experiences. In short, that they contemplate more accurately the concrete cultural reality of the subjects for whom the policies and institutional actions are intended.

We hope that these pages have been useful to show that it is not the students of Primary Education who “read little” or things “of little importance”: possibly it is us (their teachers, their institutional authorities, their referents) who read little of their daily reading practices that have so much to inform us about their stories, their knowledge, their beliefs and their concrete conditions of life.

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Note

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