

# TRANSLATION, LITERATURE, AND LANGUAGE TEACHING: DO THESE THREE AREAS COMPLEMENT EACH OTHER?

## TRADUÇÃO, LITERATURA E ENSINO DE LÍNGUAS: ESSAS TRÊS ÁREAS SE COMPLEMENTAM?

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aims to propose a possible methodological path in practices with literary texts in foreign language classes. Firstly, the idea of interpreting the literary text and the role of literature in an increasingly technocratic society will be debated. Secondly, the teaching of literature in foreign language classes will gain prominence in this study, and the role of pedagogical translation, among other factors, will be highlighted in this process. Therefore, recommending the use of literary texts as a genre with which grammatical content can be worked is not the intention. On the contrary, strategies that contemplate the specificity of the literary text will be outlined and a methodological path in the 21st-century school context will be proposed.

**Keywords:** literature; language teaching; translation

### RESUMO

Este artigo tem como objetivo propor um possível caminho metodológico nas práticas com textos literários em aulas de língua estrangeira. Em um primeiro momento, será debatida a ideia de interpretação do texto literário e o papel da literatura numa sociedade cada vez mais tecnocrática. Na sequência, o ensino de literatura nas aulas de língua estrangeira ganhará destaque neste estudo, e o papel da tradução pedagógica, entre outros fatores, será destacado nesse processo. Portanto, não se pretende recomendar o uso de textos literários como gênero com o qual se pode trabalhar o conteúdo gramatical. Pelo contrário, serão delineadas estratégias que contemplem a especificidade do texto literário e será proposto um percurso metodológico no contexto escolar do século XXI.

**Palavras-chave:** literatura; ensino de línguas; tradução

### INTRODUCTION

Literary discourse plays a crucial role in linguistic development in first language (L1) and foreign language (FL) teaching. For a student to be able to problematize the culture of the other and make intercultural relations in FL classes, it is essential to integrate literature into this context. Furthermore, when the teacher presents the literary text, the student's semantic, rhetorical, and expressive horizons are effectively developed. Literature is, therefore, an amplifier of the students' world of meanings and culture. This idea has as its starting point the postulates of the School of Tartu, with particular emphasis on the works of Yuri Mijáilovich Lotman (1979). For this group, the literary text has a primary role of "plural codification", since it holds the artistic and ideological codes of a given society.

Therefore, this paper introduces strategies and possibilities for teaching a foreign language based on literary texts. In order to do so, one of the first difficulties arises precisely from the non-mandatory nature of a subject or a literature approach in the classroom. When it appears as a theme in classes, the literary genre is commonly used only as a method of conversation and debate, without considering its cultural, philosophical, and sociological aspects – which are essential in learning a new language –, and the education of literary readers.

The problem surrounding the absence of literary texts in FL teaching is a consequence of a change in the function of literature in contemporary society, besides the emergence of communicative approaches. We are currently living under a great paradox: in a technocratic society, how (and why) would we teach literature? How can students see literature as something essential for their education? Lázaro Carreter (1973) emphasizes that as early as the 1970s, literature teaching was discredited, making the author question whether a manual based on teaching literature would be worthwhile. For the author, literary studies seemed to be on the verge of extinction.

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In the last few decades, the Bakhtin Circle has strongly influenced language teaching. Many studies try to compare language teaching and the role of the literary text in this context. Janzen (2012), for example, discusses Bakhtin's conception of literature in language teaching, taking concepts such as polyphony, exotopy, and vision surplus as a starting point. Therefore, for followers of Bakhtin's ideals, literature is considered a communicative phenomenon, as a "socially recognized discourse", and, consequently, reading and literary competence become fundamental in teaching, especially in L1 classrooms. Likewise, authors such as Santoro (2007) consider the teaching of language and literature to be inseparable, as the language of literature is a language in operation. In other words, a discourse that develops and updates all language possibilities.

According to Santoro, even learning grammatical and stylistic factors are possible from literary activities in foreign language classes. Thus, the poetic relevance of the literary text can be developed through the "discursive function of grammatical facts" (SANTORO, p. 27, 2007). In this sense, it is worth mentioning Manfred Bierwisch's work, whose generative theory discussed a literary competence that enables the production and reception of poetic texts. Furthermore, it is important to highlight that the foreign language class can serve as a bridge to literary teaching in general. By presenting canonical or non-canonical texts in language classes, students can be introduced to texts by authors who are part of – or break with – the tradition of national literature.

## 1. WHY DO WE TEACH LITERATURE?

This article begins by discussing the importance of teaching literature. This is important to reveal the relevance of practice with literary texts in teaching foreign languages. The crisis in literary studies is a common topic in postmodern studies. The problem lies in the loss of importance of literature in the face of other discourses, such as cinema, the Internet, streaming, and all mass media. The loss of the aura of literature – which was already addressed by a considerable amount of literary theorists, especially by the Frankfurt School through texts such as Walter Benjamin's (2012), "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction", and by Theodor Adorno, in *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, based on the concept of the cultural industry – did not result in its democratization. Instead, it led to a crisis in literary studies. The exit of art from museums, concert halls, and rare libraries is a concurrent process to the increasingly ferocious utilitarianism within capitalist and post-industrial society. Humanities, in turn, gradually lost their space and function since the arts and other fields such as History, Sociology, and Philosophy do not have a specific function within the increasingly technocratic social division of labor.

Consequently, teaching was the area that most suffered the impacts of the loss of the aura of literature. Universities, schools, and the teaching of foreign languages were radically affected by digital acceleration and the constant lack of interest in the arts in general. As Compagnon states:

Car le lieu de la littérature s'est amenuisé dans notre société depuis une génération: à l'école, où les textes documentaires mordent sur elle, ou même l'ont dévorée; dans la presse, où les pages littéraires s'étiolent et qui traverse elle-même une crise peut-être funeste; durant les loisirs, où l'accélération numérique morcelle le temps disponible pour les livres (COMPAGNON, 2009, p. 21).

The Collège de France philosopher proposes a reflection on the place that literature occupies in the 20th century, both in teaching and society, emphasizing its crisis and possible death. According to the author, the crisis started with the supremacy of the Sciences over the Humanities, a factor that often generated hatred among readers given the "uselessness" of literature:

La lecture doit désormais être justifiée, non seulement la lecture courante, celle du lecteur, de l'honnête homme, mais aussi la lecture savante, celle du lettré, de l'homme ou de la femme de métier. L'Université connaît un moment d'hésitation sur les vertus de l'éducation générale, accusée de conduire au chômage et concurrence par des formations professionnelles censées mieux préparer à l'emploi, si bien que l'initiation à la langue littéraire et à la culture humaniste moins rentable à court terme, semble vulnérable dans l'école et la société de demain (COMPAGNON, 2009, p. 23).

Therefore, given the apocalyptic scenario, Compagnon highlights that it is necessary to discuss the social role of literature outside its assumptions. The French author states that since the end of the 19th century, literature has retreated to the Ivory Tower and approached its themes based on internal criteria, focusing more on formal and stylistic issues than on socio-historical elements; "On ne regardait pas en arrière ni sur côté, les bas-côté de l'autre littérature" (COMPAGNON, 2009, p.25). The formalist stance of literary criticism separated literature

from society, which led to the weakening of literature teaching in schools and FL classrooms. In addition, it was all concurrent with the development and spread of neoliberalism.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, issues related to the literature crisis took on a new aspect with social distancing and the closing of concert halls, theaters, cinemas, libraries, universities, and cultural centers. According to Compagnon, literature lost space in contemporary society and it is crucial to rescue its social importance. The consequence of this recovery would be the expansion of the imaginary and the resistance to utilitarianism, which is increasingly fierce in the 21st-century society. This solution proposed by the French philosopher becomes even more complicated to fulfill, given the difficulty that education and literature have been subjected to.

Remote teaching, the various platforms created, and the even harder work of the teacher contributed to the fact that teaching was even more dismantled. Literature, in particular, was also marginalized since several public school students needed more computers, Internet access, and even an exclusive and silent place to study. Therefore, the discrepancy between public and private education has increased radically.

Before the pandemic, Compagnon's proposal to rescue the social function of literature was already met with skepticism by several formalist intellectuals. Compagnon believes in the positive impact of literature on society and that there is a humanizing nature in literature. During the pandemic, the solution signaled by the author of *Le démon de la théorie* became almost impossible to reach. In this regard, André Cechinel and Fabio Durão present a different viewpoint from the one the French theorist defended. According to these authors, literature does not have any social function, neither from moral and ethical standpoints nor from the point of view of correcting ills and social inequalities. According to Brazilian critics, literature does not humanize human beings; no matter what is said to the contrary, it does not make anyone a better person (CECHINEL & DURÃO, 2022).

That is, the belief in a supposed social function of literature does not collaborate with the collective, nor does it contribute to the development of concepts from the point of view of literary theory. Taking Machado de Assis to the favela does not help the poor population or Machado de Assis. Trying to bring Machado closer to this population through adaptations or facilitations is even worse (CECHINEL & DURÃO, 2022). Cechinel & Durão highlight two important issues in this excerpt: 1) dysfunction as a sine qua non of literature; 2) the separation between education and the moral world. Considering that literature can eventually broaden the imagination and mental horizons, it can be used for any purpose, including the most harmful ones. That is, the intrinsic non-function of literature differs radically from Compagnon's solution to the crisis of literary studies in contemporary society.

Based on the assumption of non-function and the separation between teaching literature and morality, Durão suggests that reading is essential in developing interpretation. The act of interpreting does not occur when a teacher reads but through the formulation of hypotheses by the students. That is, a reading that starts from the theoretical and literary readings of the teacher presupposes a passive and hermetic stance on the part of the student.

Thus, the development of the imaginary is blocked, as well as the development of interpretive hypotheses. All information about the literary text, such as the author's date of birth, biography, unknown vocabulary, literary influences, historical period, and social context are only relevant when subordinated to a hypothesis. In this regard, as Cechinel & Durão indicate, the validity and legitimacy of the hypothesis are mediated by the teacher: issues such as the scope and depth of the bibliography, the solidity, and complexity of the concepts used, the familiarity with the field in which the work is included, the exposition of the argument" (CECHINEL & DURÃO, 2022).

According to Durão in *Metodologia de pesquisa em literatura* (2020), interpretation presupposes both the creativity and subjectivity of the reader, as well as research and reading of sedimented knowledge. Interpreting means adding something to the literality of an object so that, in the end, what was added appears to belong to the thing itself. That is, the interpretation needs to be glued to the literary object in such a way that it seems that reading is always part of the literary text.

An example of a closed interpretation of the literary text without losing sight of its historicity is the analysis of *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*, by Roberto Schwarz, presented in *Um mestre na periferia do capitalismo*. Schwarz relates creativity and the reader's own subjectivity in the interpretation of *The Posthumous Memoirs of Brás Cubas*. The narrator's volubility, as well as the oppressive aspects in the *logic of favor*, are elements that belong to Schwarz's interpretation, who, through the mechanism of close reading, seems to be intentionally linked to Machado de Assis's intention. Using the Close Reading mechanism, Schwarz analyzes the arbitrary character of our elites, which oppress the underprivileged from the *logic of favor*. However, before

developing a deep analysis like Schwarz's, the reader goes through what is called the elaboration process. That is, raising ideas, impressions, and meaning associations, as in a psychoanalytic consultation.

The teacher, as a mediator, must bring to terms both the close reading and the primacy of the reading experience by describing and confronting the ideas with the form and structure of the literary work. Elaboration is part of the interpretation since the students' imagination and creativity arise from improvisations, collaborating with the interpretation and the development of arguments. According to Cechinel & Durão, this is not about relativism or a type of a priori dialogism, as if the conversation had some didactic or epistemological primacy. It is about respecting the interventions and ideas of the students at the time of elaboration of arguments during the interpretation. Finally, it is about recommending the teacher's role in validating and adjusting the comments in the work with the close reading of the literary text. The central point is to let the procedural character of the interpretation shine through, the singular aspect of what is happening, whether through the teacher's recapitulation or didactics of questions and answers.

Fabio Durão, in the same line of thought as Compagnon, addresses the importance of interpretation based on pleasure. However, it is not the pleasure caused by the cultural industry but the one generated by the negativity of the text. According to the Brazilian professor, literature cannot compete equally with mass media and social networks, and the constant attempts to equate literature and entertainment are doomed to failure if not ridicule. The relationship between literature teaching and entertainment is more detrimental to literature than it contributes to the success of its teaching.

Therefore, according to Durão's analyses, the rescue of the importance of literature would be precisely in the interpretation whose strength lies in its intrinsic relationship with the work of art. As previously stated, literature does not have a social function, nor does it have the power to solve social inequalities. This point of view is markedly humanist and conservative. Interpretation, in turn, arises from the bridge between students and teachers. Students must use their imagination, which was already expanded in reading the literary text, to elaborate associations of ideas and meanings.

Therefore, based on the assumption that interpretation is a long process that encompasses both impressions and subjectivities, as well as sedimented knowledge, the pleasure of reading differs from the pleasure caused by the cultural industry. Following Adorno's theory, in *Aesthetic Theory*, Durão emphasizes that literary pleasure would not be immediate but would come from hard work and concentration in reading and interpreting the literary work.

The difficulty of approaching literature in teaching foreign languages became evident due to its change of function and space. Thus, in the following section, we will briefly reflect on how to contemplate language teaching aspects that concern both literature and pedagogical translation within the current context of modern foreign language teaching. Literature must be worked not from a humanist and civilizing point of view. The objective is to present literature as a critical element, which is part of the current social debate. Hence the relevance of presenting an activity with Colombian literature produced by black women at the end of the text.

## 2. PEDAGOGICAL TRANSLATION AND FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING

Bohunovsky (2011), based on Welker (2004), distinguishes the concepts of translation and pedagogical translation. On the one hand, the simple translation of some lexical items and utterances by the teacher in the context of teaching and learning a foreign language would be configured as using the L1. The pedagogical translation, on the other, is thought of as a methodological practice that contemplates the exercise (the activities) conducted by the students. Bohunovsky (2011) also points out that pedagogical translation can be seen as a strategy of "raising awareness of grammatical structures" of the foreign language, contrasted with the mother tongue. Likewise, Alcarazo López & López Fernández (2014) suggest that every foreign language learner has a "natural contrastive knowledge" that is, an intuition that makes translation inevitable: "a naturally occurring phenomenon in all foreign language learners' minds. Asking students to think into the target language without using their mother tongue is not natural". (ALCARAZO LÓPEZ; LÓPEZ FERNÁNDEZ, 2014, p. 4).

This possibility of working with pedagogical translation combined with contrastive grammar has been gaining ground in linguistic studies. For Spanish language teachers in the Brazilian context, this work involves an analysis that focuses much more on the differences between Portuguese and Spanish than the similarities. The chapter "Conhecendo assimetrias: a ocorrência de pronomes pessoais" by Adrián Fanjul (2014) illustrates

this methodological practice really well. In a text whose focus is to demonstrate that Spanish and Portuguese maintain different functions regarding not only complement pronouns but also subject pronouns, the author uses several examples of literary texts, such as Clarice Lispector translated into Spanish. This practice, however, is not restricted to a methodological path typical of scientific texts and can easily be used in the classroom.

In the previous paragraph, we highlighted how translation can work to contrast different syntactic structures between the L1 and the FL being taught. Furthermore, we can also tackle the issue from the communicative-pragmatic point of view of linguistic mediation. It is foreseen in the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* that speakers must adapt and use their knowledge in at least two different languages to solve problems that arise in the context.

With the inclusion of issues related to translation in the CEFRL, foreign language teachers worldwide have not only been trying to understand what pedagogical translation is but also how to make its application feasible. Alcarazo López & López Fernández (2014), based on the British context of Spanish teaching, propose practical strategies that cover the different language levels listed by the CEFRL (A1, A2, B1, B2, C1, C2).

These proposals, however, present several problems as they need to integrate pedagogical translation practices with current approaches to language teaching. An example is one of the proposals for the A2 level. The authors demonstrate that pedagogical translation can work out the difference between the verb SER and ESTAR with English-speaking learners taking Spanish classes. According to the authors, a possible practice would be to ask students to translate several sentences from English and, in a second moment, to define the contexts in which the verb SER and ESTAR are used. However, translation appears as an unnecessary and simplistic mechanism that does not compare and contrast the L1 and the FL in a complex and well-structured manner. That is, in this sense, we are confronted with a proposal that is like the grammar and translation methodology presented above. As for the advanced level, we have a proposal with little elaboration. The authors ask students to translate verbs that have prepositions uncommon for Spanish speakers, highlighting possible interferences.

The strategies for the basic and advanced levels do not present an understanding of language as part of a society, with all the dynamism and implications that such a statement holds. A possible question thus arises: How do we work with pedagogical translation without falling into a proposal that reflects traditional methods? A possible path that can be traced is to work with textual genres and the implications that these texts have in the socio-historical contexts in which they are inserted.

Therefore, a proposal that presents a short story written in Spain or Chile and verifies the possibility of translation and adaptation to the Brazilian context of the 21st century fits within the most current context of FL teaching. Furthermore, this is also in line with the theories of translation that emerged from the 1970s onwards, with the *Cultural Turn*. In the next section, we will discuss what these theories are and how they can help proposals that envision a new look at pedagogical translation.

### 3. THE TURNS OF TRANSLATION STUDIES IN THE LAST DECADES

The communicative approach that remains present in several materials for foreign language teaching discredits translation tools. The main argument for this rejection is that language teaching through grammar-translation methodologies is no longer in vogue and that today it is necessary to listen, read, and speak only in the target language, always prioritizing interaction. However, is it possible to read in another language without resorting to one's mother tongue? We believe it is not once we understand reading as translating. Therefore, it is up to the teacher to take advantage of this propaedeutic role of the L1 as an ally in discursive production in the FL. That is, translation here would be applied as a procedural mechanism and should not be mistaken as the final goal of an activity.

According to Pedrosa (2003), the L1 inevitably works as a mediator in interpreting any discursive genre in a foreign language, and this would not be different for literary texts. What is new when you are learning a new language only works when the learner returns to what is already established, making comparisons and relativizations. Therefore, the possibility of saying what is not fully internalized yet is greater when inferences are made in the L1 or, to use Pedrosa's (2003) terminology, interpretive reading injunctions, which achieve greater visibility when inferred through literature. According to the author, readers of a literary text in a FL inevitably

attribute to the piece its color, resonances, and voice, which cannot be alien to their visions, words, or memories (PEDROSO, 2003).

Thus, teaching materials and teachers themselves must consider this translation process, which also permeates literary activity once it is the L1 that supports the construction of meaning. This implicit translation should be seen as a process that can help the student work in their mother tongue and, consequently, show that they could satisfactorily interpret the literary text. That is, during a literary activity, if students can express themselves through their L1 to demonstrate that they have satisfactorily understood the text presented to them, this should be seen positively.

In the last fifty years, translation theories have been taking on the most diverse contours. Influenced mainly by Post-structuralism, different strands have been heavily influenced by Jacques Derrida. The primordially logocentric theory and practice gave way to the unstructured writing of the Franco-Maghrebi theorist, whose basis is in the deconstruction of the text with the Other, which would have profound consequences in the relationship between the original and the translated text – or between texts belonging to *here* and *now*.

On the other hand, Antoine Berman (1984) introduces an ethical and political component into his theory of translation that would revolutionize the area and have enormous resonance among Brazilian researchers. The central point of Berman's theory is the criticism of the translation he calls "ethnocentric". That is, a practice that discredits the culture of the Other, of what is foreign and "strange" to the culture of the country of the translated text – which is often a central nation. For Berman, translation must maintain its foreign character, giving prestige to typical characteristics of the culture of the translated text, in the opposite direction of a translation that is fluid for the reader of the translated text, without any reference to linguistic issues inherent to the text and – consequently – to the language culture of the original.

Lawrence Venuti (2008) follows the same line as Berman in highlighting how in the United States, there has been a culture of making the translator invisible, enacting a regime of fluency. That is, the translator must provide the reader with an illusion of transparency through "natural", "elegant", and "lovely" prose. The translation of a text like *Yo el supremo* by Augusto Roa Bastos, full of linguistic and specific marks of Paraguayan indigenous culture, must, according to this criterion, go through a process of simplification and adaptation to the translated language. Thus, the reader will have the illusion that this text was originally written in the translated language. Venuti (2008) also indicates that even when the ideal of fluidity does not prevail in a nation's publishing market, every translation has a violent essence.

To lessen the violence, it is up to the translator to recreate the translated text. The result will be a new text, located in a new here and now, in an autonomous and – at the same time – reciprocal process. In other words, it is a text that tries to honor the characteristics of the original text, through a recreative work, that elevates the translator to the leading role of a new author. This work should not, however, be thought of as simplifying the structures of the original text for the translated text. Instead, there must be work toward putting the two cultures in dialogue.

Based on the cultural turn in translation studies and the proposal of pedagogical translation presented earlier, in the following section, we will propose an activity that addresses these ideas for the teaching of Spanish as a FL.

#### 4. A PRACTICAL PROPOSAL OF PEDAGOGICAL TRANSLATION CONTEMPLATING THE LITERARY TEXT

This section presents a possible methodological path that considers contributions from translation theories and presents activities designed with the aim of pedagogical translation. A sequence is developed, contemplating the work with literary texts and privileging the language in its pragmatic-discursive functioning, and not with a humanist and civilizing vision of literature. Likewise, issues relevant to cultural translation will be discussed, highlighting the work of language learning in a context of languages and cultures clashing.

Válmi Hatje-Faggion (2011) highlights the difficulty translators encounter when translating culturally determined words. Information about a country, its culture, and social characteristics, or even references to different people and objects are often culturally marked. For André Lefevere (1992), every language expresses a culture. As words are part of a limited system and are connected to that culture, there is an enormous difficulty in transferring meaning from one language to another. In this sense, the question of how to translate peculiar manifestations and typical of some communities remains. Thinking about the teaching context, the translation of culturally marked

linguistic elements must be compared with the socio-textual practice that currently stands out in FL teaching. This does not mean otherizing foreign culture, but precisely thinking about it based on its own assumptions. Returning to the main arguments from Fabio Durão and André Cechinel, the humanist vision of literature approached in different schools is based precisely on an Enlightenment assumption that otherizes peripheral cultures.

Thus, Hatje-Faggion (2011) highlights how, in addition to the relationship built with the world, there is a combination of words and phrases that, when joined together, determine a culturally marked meaning. Therefore, in many cases, idiomatic expressions appear and translators must decide whether their use is an essential part of the meaning of the text and whether they will choose a conventional expression in the target language or they will have to make another choice (HATJE-FAGGION, 2011). This decision that the translator is forced to make is part of any translation practice and will also be a central point in the process of pedagogical translation that we advocate for. This choice must also consider the non-exoticization of the translated culture.

The activity proposed here was designed to be applied in different levels of Spanish as a foreign language class. As the proposal involves linguistic issues, focusing especially on adaptations that provide similar meanings in different languages, the Spanish language teacher can adapt the activity for basic, intermediate, and advanced levels.

The main objective of this activity is to verify how students deal with cultural issues related to fragments of poems by the Afro-Colombian poet Mary Grueso Romero (1947). This author was chosen due to her position as one of the most relevant voices in Colombia's literature of the second half of the 20th century, and for representing a female and Black lyrical self with strong social and subjective appeal. The author belongs to the Colombian Pacific group and proposes an intense dialogue between Africa and the American continent in her work. This choice is not intended to "humanize" students, but to put them in contact with a foreign culture. In other words, this practice must be done not from a progressive, humanist and other-domesticating point of view, as condemned by Durão and Cechinel, but thinking about literary and cultural aspects of translated literature. The first poem, the object of our activity, is entitled "Negra soy":

### **Negra soy**

¿Por qué me dicen morena?  
Si moreno no es color,  
yo tengo una raza que es negra  
y negra me hizo Dios.

Y otros arreglan el cuento  
diciéndome de color  
dizque pa' endúlzame la cosa  
y que no me ofenda yo.

Yo tengo mi raza pura  
y de ella orgullosa estoy,  
de mis ancestros africanos  
y del sonar del tambó.

Yo vengo de una raza que tiene  
una historia pa' contá  
que rompiendo sus cadenas  
alcanzó la libertá.

A sangre y fuego rompieron,  
las cadenas de opresión,  
y ese yugo esclavista  
que por siglos nos aplastó.

La sangre en mi cuerpo  
se empieza a desbocá,  
se me sube a la cabeza  
y comienza a protestá.

Yo soy negra como la noche,  
como el carbón mineral,  
como las entrañas de la tierra  
y como el oscuro pedernal.

Así que no disimulen  
llamándome de color,  
diciéndome morena,  
porque negra es que soy yo  
(GRUESO ROMERO, 2010, p. 157).

Like the previous one, the second poem is also part of the anthology of Afro-Colombian poets, organized in 2010 in Colombia. Next, a fragment for the activity that will be proposed in the sequence:

### **Contando el cuento**

Soy mareña  
y lo seguiré siendo  
mientras aiga peje,  
mientras aiga río,  
mientras aiga mar  
y aún pueda soñá  
pescá y amá.

Mientras al bogá  
en la inmensidá  
mi sudor es mar,  
mi sonrisa río,  
y cuando yo muera  
quiero que coloquen  
una enorme ola  
para en las noches de luna  
salí a navegá  
con mi sombrero  
'e tetera  
canalete y banquetá.

Hecho mi canoa  
y empiezo a bogá  
cantando canciones  
que llegan al alma  
de un pasado de angustia  
que no volverá  
(GRUESO ROMERO, 2010, p. 159).



The main objective of this activity is to verify how students deal with cultural and linguistic issues in the Colombian universe, considering the style and specificities of a poetic text. The first poem presents octosyllable verses in the Spanish language meter, while the second presents hexasyllable verses. The two poems do not have a transparent rhyme scheme, although some lines do rhyme.

The activity's starting point should be the introduction of the poems within a Colombian oral tradition, with questions that verify if the student knows this literary genre. In addition, more generic questions can be raised, such as when students believe these texts were written and what historical issues they seem to address. It is worth mentioning at this point that the poems were written in the second half of the 20th century, in Colombia, by a Black woman. In a second moment, a more closed reading of the poems can be conducted, highlighting, in the first, the distinction drawn between being brunette and being Black. In the second, there is no way but not to emphasize the relationship between the lyrical self, the sea, and the different structures typical of Colombian orality that are introduced there.

Finally, after the process of collaboratively reading, interpreting, and discussing with the students, the teacher can ask them to try to translate the poems, paying attention to issues of Colombian culture and adaptations that could be made in their target language. In the first poem, there are different structures that demarcate an oral language and, at the same time, that are linked to an idea of African ancestry: "Y de ella orgullosa estoy, de mis ancestros africanos y del sonar del tambó. (...) Yo vengo de una raza que tiene una historia pa' contá que rompiendo sus cadenas alcanzó la libertad". Here the challenge lies in maintaining the original meaning when translating the pieces to the student's L1, while also trying not to erase aspects of the Afro-Colombian culture. In this regard, following the theories presented above, how can we maintain the foreign character?

Following the same line, how can we translate the following lines of the second poem: "salí a navegá con mi sombrero 'e tetera canaleta y banquetá.". The challenge is to problematize with students the view that Spanish is a "pure" language, with slight variations and no influences from African culture. That is, the practice of translating these poems must aim to decolonize the idea of a standard Spanish that predominates over "dialects" spoken in Latin American countries.

As we have demonstrated above, an activity with poetry can be adapted to different levels, with more straightforward or more complex approaches. In the same way, they must realize that the translation work must underline this pragmatic-discursive character that the literary text also presents since it is inserted in a socio-historical context. It is also essential that students think about Colombian culture disconnected from humanist and civilizational elements, whose basis is the domestication of others and of literature itself. Returning to Durão and Cechinel's analyses, pedagogical translation, by problematizing the purist vision of the Spanish language, breaks with humanist ideas of canon, of literature as a civilizing and domesticating instrument for the student.

## FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Although literary discourse plays a specific role in L1 teaching, when it comes to foreign languages, its role is still relegated to a marginal position. Practices that contemplate the literary text tend to use it not as the center of activities, but as a pretext for teaching lexical, morphological, and semantic issues. In the 21st century, there is yet another aggravating factor: the arts in general, but especially mentioning literature here, are despised in a technocratic context. We are living in a society that reads less and less, and that is governed, many times, by governments that cut down on the budget destined for culture. Despite the belief that the teaching of literature should be solely based on moral values, the methodological path we proposed in this paper is rather hermeneutic - although one can say that it is also concerned with ethical values. All in all, teaching literature in foreign language classes must intend to boost students' interpretive capacity.

In this way, we bring together current theories on translation, literary theory, and Spanish language teaching, with pedagogical translation as the meeting point between these poles. By doing so, we fragment the idea that translation should not be used as a methodological strategy since it would reflect a traditional method. That is, the proposal we advocate has nothing to do with the Grammar and Translation method, rather it tries to relate the teaching of foreign languages and literature to cultural issues pertinent to postcolonial studies.

However, the contributions of pedagogical translation theories are discreet, presenting short bibliography, which shows that the area is still under development. The activity that we present in this paper aims to illustrate

the possibility of intercultural work in Spanish teaching and demonstrate how communicative approaches and literary texts can also contemplate translation.

In a globalized and postmodern context, there is no way one can ignore the contact between different languages – and, consequently, cultures – to which students are exposed every day. In this sense, Pedagogical translation can demonstrate how linguistic systems are even more complex than they seem and how language and culture are, indeed, inseparable.

#### DECLARAÇÃO DE CONTRIBUIÇÃO DOS AUTORES

Declaramos, para os devidos fins, que os dois autores participaram igualmente das etapas de elaboração do artigo.

#### DECLARAÇÃO DE CONFLITO DE INTERESSE

Declaramos, para os devidos fins, não haver conflitos de interesse.

#### DECLARAÇÃO DE DISPONIBILIDADE DE DADOS DA PESQUISA

Declaramos, para os devidos fins, que os dados públicos utilizados na pesquisa estão disponíveis nos endereços eletrônicos citados, permitindo amplo e irrestrito acesso.

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