

ARTICLE

READING BEFORE AND AFTER RETIREMENT: SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS AND PRACTICES OF TEACHERS¹

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ABSTRACT: This article discusses the constitution of the practices and social representations of reading of retired teachers, mapping the processes and functions of reading before and after retirement. For this, qualitative research was carried out with the participation of 55 teachers. In the literature review, we used the studies of Batista (1998), Britto (1998), Corsino (2010), Guareschi (1995), Moscovici (1978; 2015), and Zilberman (1999). In light of Serge Moscovici's (1978) studies on the Theory of Social Representations, we found that during the trajectories lived, there were changes related to the purpose of the reading practices. In childhood and adolescence, the social representations of reading were built in the context of the absence of books and reading and in the attitudes linked to the encouragement and practice directed at the family and school. In adulthood, before retirement, reading had an obligatory character, seen as fundamental for teaching in the classroom. After retirement, the reading practices of female teachers take on new contours and are based on their interests, meaning they read what they want and when they want, without the imposition of reading to meet a professional need.

Keywords: Reading practices, female teachers, retirement, social representations.

LEITURA ANTES E DEPOIS DA APOSENTADORIA: REPRESENTAÇÕES SOCIAIS E PRÁTICAS DE PROFESSORAS

RESUMO: Este artigo tem o objetivo de discutir a constituição das práticas e representações sociais de leitura de professoras aposentadas, mapeando os processos e as funções do ler antes e depois da

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aposentadoria. Para isso, realizou-se uma pesquisa qualitativa com participação de 55 docentes. Na revisão de literatura, lançou-se mão dos estudos de Batista (1998); Britto (1998); Corsino (2010); Guareschi (1995); Moscovici (1978; 2015); Zilberman (1999). Constatou-se, à luz dos estudos de Serge Moscovici (1978) acerca da Teoria das Representações Sociais, que, no decurso das trajetórias vividas, ocorreram mudanças relacionadas à finalidade das práticas leitoras. Na infância e adolescência, as representações sociais de leitura foram construídas no contexto da ausência de livros e leituras, e nas atitudes vinculadas ao incentivo e à prática, direcionadas à família e à escola. Na fase adulta, antes da aposentadoria, a leitura tinha um caráter obrigatório, vista como fundamental para a atuação docente em sala de aula. Depois de se aposentarem, as práticas de leitura das professoras ganham novos contornos e passam a ser realizadas a partir de seus interesses pessoais, ou seja, leem o que querem e quando querem, sem terem consigo a imposição de realizarem leituras para atender a uma necessidade profissional.

Palavras-chave: Práticas de leitura, professoras, aposentadoria, representações sociais.

LA LECTURA ANTES Y DESPUÉS DE LA JUBILACIÓN: REPRESENTACIONES SOCIALES Y PRÁCTICAS DE LAS PROFESORAS

RESUMEN: Este artículo tiene como objetivo discutir la constitución de las prácticas y representaciones sociales de la lectura de profesoras jubiladas, mapeando los procesos y funciones de la lectura antes y después de la jubilación. Para ello, se realizó una investigación cualitativa con la participación de 55 docentes. En la revisión de la literatura, utilizamos los estudios de Batista (1998); Britto (1998); Corsino (2010); Guareschi (1995); Moscovici (1978; 2015); Zilberman (1999), entre otros. Fue encontrado, a la luz de los estudios de Serge Moscovici (1978) sobre la Teoría de las Representaciones Sociales, que, en el transcurso de las trayectorias vividas, hubo cambios relacionados con el propósito de las prácticas de lectura. En la infancia y la adolescencia, las representaciones sociales lectoras se construyeron en el contexto de la ausencia de libros y lecturas y en actitudes vinculadas al estímulo y a la práctica, dirigidas a la familia y a la escuela. En la edad adulta, antes de la jubilación, la lectura era obligatoria, considerada fundamental para la enseñanza en el aula. Tras su jubilación, las prácticas lectoras de los docentes adquieren nuevos contornos y comienzan a realizarse en función de sus intereses personales, es decir, leen lo que quieren y cuando quieren, sin tener que realizar lecturas para satisfacer una necesidad profesional.

Palabras clave: Prácticas lectoras, profesoras, jubilación, representaciones sociales.

INTRODUCTION

The field of research on reading practices is a profitable space for discussions and reflections. The act of reading is fundamental for the subject to learn about the most diverse subjects, interact and communicate through the written word. Reading is a social phenomenon in a graphocentric society, commonly related to appropriating knowledge and access to socially legitimized culture, enabling learning and social development.

“The attention to reading has expanded, in recent decades, to a set of different areas of knowledge” (BATISTA; GALVÃO, 1999, p. 11), being the object of interest of Linguistics, Sociology, Literature, History, Anthropology, Pedagogy, among other fields. Studies have focused on the history of reading and its supports, the practice in the social, educational, and cultural context, the production and editing of books and printed matter, reading protocols, or focusing on the reader subject.

Some studies focus on the appropriation of reading by certain individuals, in which groups are investigated to know their practices, conditions, and representations, as is the case of the research presented in this article, which seeks to understand the constitution of the social representations and reading practices of retired teachers, professionals who, for a long time, were the protagonists in educational institutions and whose job was the teaching and learning process.

Before exercising their professions, teachers had experiences with reading, whether positive or negative, which constituted (or not) them as readers. Placing the teachers at the core of this study, the purpose of this article is to discuss the constitution of the practices and social representations of reading by retired teachers, mapping the processes and functions of reading before and after retirement.

We investigated the social representations of reading of retired teachers based on the Theory of Social Representations. When using this theoretical construction, we rely on the research of the Romanian Serge Moscovici, who, in the early 1960s, introduced the concept from the book *Psychanalyse: son image et son public*, published in 1961, in which he investigated how the French popular thought was penetrated by psychoanalysis. Moscovici (2015) defined social representations as a system of values, ideas, and practices that has two functions: the first determines an order that directs the subjects in both the material and the social world, controlling it, while the second enables the communication between people of the same collectivity, offering them a code that names and classifies issues involving individual and social perspectives.

The theory proposed by Moscovici (1978) indicates that social representations are constituted by two inseparable faces — the figurative and the symbolic- guiding us to understand the faces of a given practice, in this case, those of reading. In this study, we are interested in the relationship of female teachers not only with the act of reading and with individuals and groups that influenced (or not) this practice. By discussing the social practices and representations of reading, we seek to understand how they were constructed and what transformations they underwent during the teachers' trajectories. Social representation is “a dynamic, generative, relational, broad, political-ideological (evaluative), and therefore social concept” (GUARESCHI, 1995, p. 203).

Investigating the social representations of retired teachers allows us to penetrate the universe of people who had reading as the main object of their professional practice, regardless of which subject or teaching modality they worked in. It is also possible to understand how their relationships with reading were established since childhood and adolescence — when reading presented itself as a possibility concerning access to books, media, and reading practices - passing through adulthood, when reading is the support for the development of the teaching profession, and, finally, culminating in the current moment, when reading no longer has an obligatory character and can be performed (or not) based on personal interests.

In doing this study, we sought to advance the studies on the reading practices of teachers without giving up discussing their singularities since they are professionals who played an important role in the teaching process and constitution of individual readers. “Teachers [...] are not seen only as ‘those who teach’ [...]. They are historical subjects; they are producers of language. Language that constitutes them as human and social subjects always immersed in a collectivity” (SOUZA; KRAMER, 2003, p. 15, emphasis added).

By understanding female teachers as historical subjects, in the scope of this study, we sought to build answers to the following questions: how were the reading experiences of retired teachers in other phases of life in which reading did not have a professional character? How often and how intensely did they read? Were these experiences positive or negative? Where did the encouragement (or lack of it) come from? What were these practices like when the teachers were teaching? Was it predominantly professional or did it also have other purposes? And now that they are retired, have these practices gained new contours?

The search for answers to these questions allowed us to understand the relationship of these professionals with reading since childhood. We understand that the closeness or distance of this practice can only be understood when “the objects that are taken to read and their relationship with political, aesthetic, moral or religious issues are examined in the different times and places in which men and women, alone or accompanied by others, have delved into written texts” (ABREU, 1999, p. 15).

From the point of view of its organization, this article is divided into five sections: the first brings the methodological path of the research; in the second, some considerations are made about reading and its practices; in the third section, the reading experiences of teachers in childhood and adolescence are addressed, presenting their contacts with the act of reading. The fourth section discusses the role of reading before retirement, especially in the teaching profession. In section five, the social representations of reading in the life phase in which, the teachers are, highlighting the changes in reading

practices, pointing out the similarities and differences in social representations. This article ends with the final considerations, which intend to leave the way open for new research to be carried out that addresses the reading of retired teachers.

METHODOLOGICAL PROCESS

The study falls within the scope of human problems inscribed in social reality. Therefore, the qualitative approach was chosen in methodological terms, as it is the most appropriate for this type of study. This approach works with the universe of meanings, “which corresponds to a deeper space of relationships, processes and phenomena that cannot be reduced to the operationalization of variables” (MINAYO, 2010, p. 21). According to the author, human phenomena are part of social reality, since man, from the reality he lives and shares with others, is distinguished not only by his actions but also by his thoughts and interpretations of them. The universe of human production that can be summarized in relationships, representations, and intentionality, and is the object of qualitative research, can hardly be translated into numbers and quantitative indicators. Qualitative research also guarantees richness in data collection, allowing a reflexive analysis of the information gathered to reach the set objectives.

To gather the information that would enable the analysis regarding the practices and social representations of reading, a set of questions was developed and applied, which, at the participant’s choice, was sent in a printed or online format. Composed of seventeen questions, the instrument was applied to a total of 55 teachers, made up of 53 women and 2 men, representing, respectively, 96% and 4% of the participants. We chose to refer to the participants as a female, given the predominance of women in the research, a reflection of the protagonism of the female gender in education. Their ages ranged between 60 and 80 years old because the participant should be 60 years old or older as a criterion for inclusion in the study.

Their academic backgrounds are varied: 36.36% graduated in Pedagogy, 18.18% in Languages, 9.09% did Teacher Training, and 7.27% studied Law. Universities of Geography, History, and Licentiate degree were attended by an equal number of female teachers, corresponding to 5.45% each. Social Sciences represented 3.64% of the interviewees, the same amount as Social Studies. Only one female teacher participated in the courses Administration, Biology, Accounting, Philosophy, Mathematics, Dentistry, Psychology, and Social Work. As for continuing education, 61% have graduate degrees, *Lato Sensu* specialization (53%), Master’s degree (4%), or a Ph.D. (4%).

Aiming at greater freedom and space for the manifestation of the participants’ voices, the teachers answered the proposed questions without the researcher’s presence during the collection of information. According to Moscovici (1978, p. 49), open questions can better capture social representations, since “a person who answers a questionnaire does nothing more than choose a category of answers; they transmit us a particular message.” For this reason, the instrument was mostly made up of open-ended questions to allow the free expression of the participants.

After applying the instrument, the information collected was tabulated and analyzed, which allowed the identification of the speeches about reading, which are similar or opposed, in childhood and adolescence, adulthood, and after retirement. In this process, the theories and access to works that highlight reading and social representations served as support to substantiate the analyses.

Considering the ethical procedures necessary for conducting studies involving human beings, this study was submitted to the Research Ethics Committee of the State University of Montes Claros via Plataforma Brasil and approved on December 26, 2019, under opinion number 3,790,539.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS ABOUT READING PRACTICES

The studies about reading and its interfaces in Brazil gained greater proportions from 1970 on, when the development of language sciences was responsible for granting a new status to the act of reading. From that decade on, “reading was elevated to the condition of a delimited field of theoretical and methodological investigation” (ZILBERMAN; SILVA, 1988, p. 7), gaining new clothes and autonomy in relation to literacy and writing practices, contributing to other disciplines: “psycholinguistics,

sociolinguistics, and discourse analysis, among the most recently expanding areas, literature theory, and pedagogy, among the most consolidated” (ZILBERMAN; SILVA, 1988, p. 7).

Regarding reading practices, Batista and Galvão (1999, p. 13) stated that this expression “designates a tendency to deal with reading in its concrete event, as developed by real readers, and situated within the processes responsible for its diversity and variation”. Furthermore, the authors show that the term also points to other contours that seek to expand the interest in reading to other disciplines in the field of social sciences, not only seeking to examine the act of reading from a historical, social, and cultural perspective, but integration of reading studies with other possibilities, addressing everyday life, the mental universe of people and groups, orality, writing, etc. This gives the studies of reading practices “an interdisciplinary dimension and an intense incorporation, by the social sciences, of the results, methods, and perspectives of different disciplines” (BATISTA; GALVÃO, 1999, p. 13).

Resorting to the Ceale Glossary, in the voice of Batista (2014), the pedagogical use of the expression reading practices in Brazil comes from two traditions of studies on reading. First, it emanates from historical and sociological studies, especially those from French lands, which gained greater expression from the mid-1990s. The second tradition consists of a line of research from an Anglo-Saxon perspective and is known as “literacy studies.” In the first perspective, the expression has its field reading in its concrete form, which encompasses elements that compete for a situation to be created through history; in this way, it is diversified. The interest of the studies is based on certain moments and specific social groups to understand who reads, what they read, when, where, for what reasons, in which ways, and in which intensity. In addition, the investigations of this first line are interested in understanding how some processes — of a technical or broader social nature — influence the expansion of the reading public, the ways and means of attributing meaning, and the very organization of printed matter and media.

The second perspective points to the concept of “literacy practices,” of which reading practices would be part (BATISTA, 2014). Additionally, the author reported that a literacy practice has an abstract character and can always be perceived based on a “literacy event.” This, in turn, has a concrete character and characterizes a circumstance in which writing is part of the interaction, directly or indirectly, through writing or by influencing speech.

In terms of a recent pedagogy, the term reading practices “refers to (i) the creation of real reading situations in the classroom and to (ii) the search for apprehension and negotiation of the meanings that learners attribute to reading in general, as well as to the reading of different genres” (BATISTA, 2014, online). As for the creation of real reading situations, it summarizes the notion of “social uses of the written language” or “social uses of reading,” seeking to bring and recreate, within the educational sphere, the reading practices that occur outside it, not limited to activities to develop the learning of reading and writing.

Magda Soares (2009) associates reading with social practices, in the context of literacy, understood as the “state or condition of those who not only know how to read and write but cultivate and exercise social practices that use writing” (SOARES, 2009, p. 49). In the context of literacy, the author points out the social and cultural use of reading and its importance for the individual to be part of society and be able to participate in social practices, which involve the skills of reading and writing learned and developed, most often, in schools, where reading practices have their field of dissemination. It was legitimized that it is within this institution that reading should be taught, encouraged, consolidated, and made a habit, aiming at acquiring knowledge and educational, cultural, and social progression.

For the practices of reading, various senses and meanings have been produced and today, there is unanimity about the value that the act of doing it provides. Far beyond being limited to the benefit of acquiring knowledge, reading has “the task of forging critical citizens, aware of their collective strength in the process of social transformation” (MELO, 1999, p. 93).

Nonetheless, to forge this citizen reader, before having contact with reading at school, many individuals already have proximity to this practice through family influence and encouragement, either by reading stories, teaching their parents, or by their own reading of the world around them. The next section will discuss some of these relationships with reading during childhood and adolescence.

BETWEEN CHILDHOOD AND ADOLESCENCE: READING EXPERIENCES

In proposing an analysis of the social representations of reading of retired teachers from the Theory of Social Representations, we sought to highlight the knowledge of common sense, produced and socially engendered, given that, in this theory, “the phenomenon in question is of the order of different types of popular theories, common sense, and everyday knowledge” (WAGNER, 1995, p. 150). From affective, cognitive, and social investments, the teachers produce social representations for reading, permeated with values and beliefs and built from their teaching experiences.

Moscovici (1978) reported that every social representation is formed by images and expressions that run through society. A social representation is concomitantly formed from the organization of both these images and expressions because it has the characteristic to accentuate and symbolize actions and situations that are habitual to us. “Viewed passively, it is apprehended as a reflection, in the individual or collective consciousness of an object, of a bundle of ideas that are exterior to it” (MOSCOVICI, 1978, p. 25). In other words, the construction of social representations happens in the relationship of the individual with his social group, picking up figures and languages based on common actions inside and outside his environment. The production of these representations occurs through two social processes: anchoring and objectification, according to Moscovici (1978). These mechanisms are cognitive elaborations engendered in the social world that make concrete what is abstract, allowing the insertion of an idea in the universe of representations of individuals.

Veloso (2001) emphasized that understanding the processes that constitute a social representation is as important as mapping its content so that the networks of meanings produced by subjects in their daily relationships are reconstituted. Hence, it is salutary to investigate how the participating teachers constructed their meaning references for the practice of reading, the individuals who influenced them, and the contents in circulation that fed their relations with the act of reading. For this, it is necessary to know the reading experiences of the teachers in previous phases to the one they are in and, thus, shed more light on how their meanings were constituted and configured at different times of life, verifying changes during their trajectories.

When bringing up their reading experiences in childhood and adolescence, the speeches of the female teachers participating in the study were divided. Most — 67.27% — emphasize a positive relationship with reading, whether through contact with books and printed materials at home and school or through encouragement from teachers or the example of reading parents. Nevertheless, 23.64% of the participating teachers declared an absence of reading practices during childhood, either because of a lack of encouragement or a scarcity of books and materials to read. A third group, consisting of 9.09% of the respondents, said they had contact with reading, although these practices were devoid of elements that aroused interest because they were imposed by the school.

For the first group, whose teachers affirmed positive experiences with reading, this practice was configured in different ways: 36.11% referred to the positive character of reading in different situations, 30.56% said that the act of reading was based on the encouragement and example provided by parents or family members, 22.22% designated the school institution and the teachers as responsible for providing access to reading, and 11.11% said they were interested in reading, but alleged the difficulty of access to books and reading materials.

The family, the first social institution that welcomes children and inserts them into the world of culture, can contribute to the formation of readers. Considering that the habit of reading is a behavior that develops in the long term, the earlier the proximity with reading occurs, the closer the individual's ties with the act of reading will be. Many are the speeches that point to this institution as a propeller of the practice of reading, developed with interest and satisfaction:

My fondness for reading started in childhood and intensified in adolescence through the influence of adults who subscribed to several newspapers and bought collections of novels and the classics of Brazilian literature (TE03, 70 years old, graduated in Geography, retired for 12 years).

It was very positive [the experiences with reading]. I remember the books I read in childhood, the poetry. My father used to buy books to encourage us to read (TE15, 73 years old, graduated in Social Work, retired 30 years ago).

Since my childhood, I was encouraged by my father, who always read a lot, in a time when there were not so many options, books allowed us to have fun while contributing to our education (TE31, 63 years old, graduated in Pedagogy, retired 20 years ago).

These pleasant memories constitute an idealized image of the family mediating the act of reading, which is associated with the encouragement and access to reading materials: parents, in addition to encouraging, acquired books, magazines, and newspapers that provided access to content that could be read. This encouragement was not limited to acquiring materials, since the adult could simply purchase books and not have the habit of reading himself. Some testimonies, such as TE31, show that the encouragement to read also happened by example.

Parents' involvement with reading practices and encouragement to insert their children into the reading circuit indicates that familiarity with books and reading can establish practices, form communities of readers, and produce a literate culture. In these experiences, people not only read but also talk about the readings, revealing what they feel, provokes, and instigate. "Reading is not only an abstract operation of intellection; it is an engagement of the body, inscription in a space, relationship with oneself and others" (CHARTIER, 1999, p. 16). During reading, the body and gestures also give visibility to this positive relationship with the book, just as the text and the reader's intentions determine gestures. Through the teachers' statements, it is perceptible that there was a mobilization on the part of family members with the intention of awakening and maintaining a reading habit: they bought and subscribed to newspapers and magazines so that the teachers, as children, always had content to read. Batista (1998, p. 36) resorts to the words of François de Singly to justify that "when it comes to reading, inheritance or intergenerational transmission is one of the main factors responsible for creating the taste or the need for reading."

For the female teachers who recall their experiences from the educational institution, reading is remembered by the strategies established by the school, which has the responsibility of teaching the child to read. It is important to remember that "reading has a historical existence, as it is associated with the adoption of the alphabet as a form of communication and the acceptance of the school as the institution responsible for learning" (ZILBERMAN, 1999, p. 71). In this scope, reading was institutionalized and inserted into the school curriculum, presenting itself as a practice in different disciplines and as an object of learning and systematic teaching. As an object of teaching in Portuguese classes, literacy is the first learning process that will support the development of reading skills and the full immersion of the reader in the universe of writing. Taken as a practice, it is up to the school to teach to read, to promote and encourage reading, even if this occurs from a pragmatic character, but that can generate learning and development for the students, meeting the curricular demands and building conditions for its social use, according to the most diverse demands that go beyond the school universe. However, the educational institution can be responsible for developing the practice of reading by the nature of pleasure and enchantment, of involvement with the texts and with knowledge, according to the teachers' statements:

[The reading experiences] were always positive because I studied in a private school where we had to read 1 (one) book a week, obligatorily, thus creating the habit and pleasure of reading (TE28, 62 years old, graduated in Pedagogy, retired 4 years ago).

My experience with reading during adolescence was positive. When I was a student, I read several books to present literary works, and I enjoyed it a lot because, at that time, I didn't have other commitments; I was more dedicated to reading. I was more interested because my goal was to discover new horizons and get good test grades (TE47, 65 years old, trained as a teacher, retired 15 years ago).

TE28 and TE47 described mandatory practice at school; however, far beyond meeting these needs, reading characterizes an opportunity for pleasure, entertainment, and charm. Even if the institution intended to perform assignments, and tests, among others, aiming at evaluation and assigning

grades, it was possible to build a relationship of encounter with reading and books. Corsino (2010, p. 188) reported that “school occupies an important place in the formation of readers both through access to quality works and through the quality of mediation between children and books.

Of the teachers who highlighted the positive experiences with reading, 11.11% directed their statements to the difficulty of accessing books and libraries, which was not an obstacle for them to develop ways of reading:

It wasn't as easy in my childhood as it is today. Everything was copied from the blackboard, but I read and reread it many times at home. I read *Almanaque*, *Folhinha Mariana*, *Jeca Tatu's* book. Any written paper I found on the street, I took home. In my adolescence and adulthood, I would borrow books and go to libraries to read (TE21, 75 years old, graduated in Languages, retired 16 years ago).

In my time, access to books was more limited, although as I liked to read a lot, I read whatever was available to me (TE29, 72 years old, graduated in Pedagogy, retired 26 years ago).

In my childhood and adolescence, I didn't have access to books, but when I did, I liked to read (TE13, 64 years old, trained as a teacher, retired 2 years ago).

Given that the female teachers participating in this study lived their childhood and adolescence between the 1940s and 1960s — since they are between 60 and 80 years old — access to books, libraries, and reading materials was more difficult than it is today. According to Paiva (2014, online), “in Brazil, actions to promote and access to reading have been implemented by the MEC since its creation in 1930. However, it was only in the 1980s that the formation of readers started to be discussed by public policies. Some initiatives were significant in the distribution of literary books, for instance, the National Reading Room Program (1984–1987); Proler, created in 1992 by the National Library Foundation of the Ministry of Culture; Pro-reading in teacher training (1992–1996) and the National Teacher's Library Program (1994). In 1997, the National School Library Program was created, which, according to Paiva (2014, online), “is intended for the composition and distribution of literature collections for the libraries of Brazilian public schools that serve all segments of Basic Education.

Different from the first group that reported positive experiences with reading, a second group, represented by 13 teachers (23.64%), reported the absence or mismatches with reading, attributed to lack of encouragement (5 answers), lack of access to books and reading materials (5 answers), and early entry to the job market, and lack of interest (4 answers). The illiteracy of parents is present in the teachers' justifications and reveals social inequality and exclusion:

I almost didn't have the habit of reading in my childhood or adolescence because then I didn't have much knowledge or incentive from my family. Because they were illiterate and had little knowledge. I started to like reading after working (teaching) (TE08, 73 years old, Mathematics graduate, retired 5 years ago).

In these two periods, I didn't have the habit of reading. Only what was necessary at school. Illiterate parents didn't read anything (TE23, 71 years old, graduated in Pedagogy, retired 29 years ago).

TE08 and TE23 reveal late processes in their constitution as readers, and they built habits and the habit of reading mediated by their profession. The reports confirm research data on the relationship between reading and parents' schooling. Failla (2016) stated that the reading practice is a construction influenced by the genitors: “the family has a fundamental role in awakening the interest in reading, either by example, by reading in front of the children, or by promoting reading to the children” (FAILLA, 2016, p. 35). The author pointed out that the children of parents who do not master reading and writing tend to read less than those of parents who have a higher literacy level and frequently exercise these practices.

Nevertheless, the absence of family stimulus does not mean any reading is the destination. Galvão (2004) pointed out atypical cases of reading trajectories built by people who did not have favorable circumstances for reading within the family. In our study, we identified parents who, despite

not having a command of reading practices, play a fundamental role in the school lives of their children, as reported by TE40, who came from a large family in which siblings and nephews formed a large class in the living room with the purpose of reading, doing chores, and listening to stories. The mother, even though she did not master the technology of reading and writing, had the role of inducing the practice:

[...] Mom, despite illiterate, was the one who pushed her children to undertake the world of reading, each day, someone was responsible for reading a story for the group. [...] (TE40, 63 years old, graduated in Languages, retired 8 years ago).

According to Faria Filho (1999), research has shown that, since the dawn of the 20th century, “there was already a fairly crystallized tendency, even among poor and working populations, to consider schooling and the attributes of literacy as the way to access a superior culture” (FARIA FILHO, 1999, p. 147). In more recent surveys — such as *Retratos da Leitura no Brasil* (Pictures of Reading in Brazil), published in 2016 — beliefs remain present, mainly by less educated people with a precarious socioeconomic situation, who see the act of reading as a way to access knowledge and the possibility of economic advancement, since, according to Failla (2016), they are the ones who most claim that an individual can win in life through reading.

A third group — 9.09% of the teachers — reported their contact with reading from a perspective of displeasure and obligation. Unlike the previous group, who had difficulty accessing books but discovered the pleasure of the text, this group read in a compulsory manner and in compliance with the impositions of the school institution, which required reading for assignments and evaluations. The relationship with reading proved to be tense and difficult:

I don't have much recollection of reading in childhood. It was in adolescence that the practice of reading happened because from the 5th to 8th grade, it was required to read books to take written tests (literary books) (TE12, 61 years old, Licentiate degree, retired 6 years ago).

I read very little, both in childhood and adolescence, almost as an obligation, not for pleasure; in my time, there was not much emphasis on reading at school. Access was restricted (TE46, 72 years old, graduated in Pedagogy, retired 5 years ago).

The reading conditions and practices of the participating teachers show varied constructions so that they highlight the positive character in their lives and the relevance it represented, being seen as a foundation for personal and professional life: “Reading helped me in my life and profession” (TE53, 65 years old, with a Licentiate degree, retired 7 years ago). For those whose experiences were configured negatively, reading is described as a difficult and limited practice performed compulsorily. Between these two groups, there is still a third way — that of reading imposed as work, which was constituted as a positive reference in reading education. The pleasure of text overlapped with school impositions.

THE CRAFT AND ADULTHOOD: SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS OF READING IN TEACHING

According to Alves-Mazzotti (2008), to study social representations is to seek to understand the formation and functioning of reference systems that are used for the classification of individuals and groups in order to interpret the events of everyday reality. To this end, it is salutary to know the relationship of the female teachers participating in this study with reading in the period when they were teaching and the meanings they attribute to this practice when associated with teaching. The author also reported that it is in everyday events that human beings have access to information, words, images, and ideas that guide their behavior and conduct and constitute their social representations.

In the social representations in circulation, reading is the foundation of a successful and long-lasting school trajectory, reading works as a facilitating agent in the learning process; it presents itself as a passport for entry into the world of knowledge. “Reading constitutes a fundamental element in the

structuring of Brazilian education because it forms its basis: it is at the beginning of learning and leads to other stages of knowledge” (ZILBERMAN, 1999, p. 79).

By also building a social representation of reading as a good in itself and attributing to it a basic character for the teaching profession, the participating teachers, during their performance, saw in the reading practice a tool that enabled a better performance in the classroom. It is evident that, in their speeches, in a more explicit or less accentuated way, the reading practices occurred in the educational environment.

Given the place of reading in the teaching profession, female teachers anchored reading in necessity and obligation. From these two meanings, it is possible to demarcate the social representations of their professional activity since they attribute the act of reading the function of meeting the needs imposed by the educational field, according to the statements that follow:

Reading was the basis of my work, a teacher who does not read does not develop their competencies (dies) (TE14, 60 years old, graduated in Geography, retired 11 years ago).

There was no way I could exercise my profession with dignity if I wasn't a reader. The word, therefore, that answers this question is: FUNDAMENTAL (TE17, 68 years old, graduated in Letters, retired 12 years ago).

Considering the teaching responsibility, the speeches point to reading as support and preparation to be in front of a class of students. TE14 talks about the importance of reading as the basis for good development of the work; when comparing the lack of reading to death, the teacher associates the reading practice with survival, meaning the teacher dies when they do not connect with the life that pulsates in books and reading. For TE17, the act of reading is an indispensable factor in performing the profession, based on the need to be a competent teacher who develops their craft with quality and adequate mastery of her subject.

In the teachers' statements, reading is essential for the acquisition of knowledge to qualify their professional performance as, in this way, they could guarantee to the students the appropriation of the disciplinary content and the ethical, political, and human formation:

[Reading was] Fundamental, mainly because my function was to transmit to the students the need and pleasure of becoming a complete human being, with integrity and ethics through readings and personal conviviality (TE26, 64 years old, graduated in Letters, retired 16 years ago).

Reading had a role of reflection, study, and information seeking the realization and resolution of the problems that arose during the students' learning (TE32, 80 years old, Pedagogy graduate, retired 22 years ago)

[Reading] It was very important because I needed to always seek knowledge, aiming at improvement and efficiency in the growth of my students (TE47, 65 years old, Teacher training, retired 15 years ago).

Because they are working professionally, it is understandable the need for reading as a way to improve their work. The concern with bringing quality content to the students reveals the effort to do readings that favor the appropriation of knowledge and know-how needed to be a good teacher and point to the student's constitution as a citizen.

However, Batista (1998) stated that “teachers would be, first of all, ‘school’ readers and would tend to invest, even in their readings not directly aimed at school and teaching practice, in school skills and dispositions” (BATISTA, 1998, p. 31, emphasis added). The speeches of TE03 and TE20 show the choices that characterize what this author considers as school readers, whose readings include textbooks, schoolwork, and subject content:

I read more out of obligation for textbooks to prepare classes, keep up to date on scientific developments and discoveries (TE20, 73 years old, Biology graduate, retired for 10 years, our emphasis).

[Reading] was very much geared toward my classroom improvement. I read a lot of textbooks and political books (TE03, 70 years old, Geography graduate, retired 12 years ago).

In this discussion, we emphasize the relevance of the teacher considering themselves a reader, that they read as part of their teaching job. However, it is necessary to remember that the “school reader” is limited, expropriated from wider access to culture.

In the universe taken as reference in this study, there is a record of reading practice with traits that go beyond the professional issue. Even seen as necessary for preparing classes and acquiring knowledge, reading is based on the pleasure of the text without disassociating it from a pragmatic function. Reading was not mandatory, and the pleasure of the text was not thought of only as evasion and entertainment. The teachers read with investments to meet professional and personal needs: to entertain, to get to know themselves and the world, to broaden references, and to become competent professionals:

I read for pleasure in the certainty of better preparing my didactic work and broadening my horizons (TE21, 75, Languages graduate, retired 16 years ago).

I think it [the role of reading in teaching] continued to be the same idea as at the beginning; the material that made me a good professional, information material, and at the same time, the pleasure of reading to know about the subject and the pleasure of reading to maintain that level of efficient professional, I wanted to be proud of having vast knowledge about the subject, and that made me read a lot (TE50, 75 years old, graduated in Pedagogy, retired 6 years ago).

In this same field of meaning, there is a reference to reading practices as personal improvement. In these speeches, it is noted that, even if not cited directly, the relationship with the work in the classroom is present because the investments reflect on the individual as a teacher:

Reading for me improved my vocabulary, favored my learning, developed my writing, and favored my learning in all senses, besides giving me pleasure (TE09, 62 years old, Social Studies graduate, retired for 06 years).

[The role of reading] was to expand the cultural universe and improve vocabulary and entertainment (TE13, 64 years old, trained as a teacher, retired 2 years ago).

In addition to reading as a fundamental need for teaching, some discourses anchor reading in obligation. Just as they performed compulsory reading in adolescence, they do so in adulthood in their teaching practice. The participants emphasize, in their speeches, reading only as a professional investment, associating reading with a compulsory character: it was necessary to read anyway. This is because reading is the main tool to be a teacher. Regardless of the content, reading is the basic principle for professionals in this area, whether in exact, biological, or human sciences. Moreover, the very system of student preparation and evaluation requires that reading be a commitment to all areas of knowledge.

Most [reading] was a professional obligation (TE12, 61 years old, Licentiate degree, retired 6 years ago).

[The role of reading in teaching was] Mandatory (TE44, 63, law graduate, retired 06 years ago).

Even though other readings are implicit, the practice of compulsion stands out in the teachers' speeches. If Batista (1998) considers the teacher a school reader, Britto (1998) believes they are interdicted readers; they are fruits of a literate society but have a limited relationship with writing products. “The fact is that, for a good part of teachers, the practice of reading is limited to a minimum pragmatic level, within the very universe established by school culture and the textbook industry” (BRITTO, 1998, p. 78).

In the teachers' system of meaning, reading is seen as fundamental to the teaching profession, anchoring the need and obligation so that there is a predisposition to think of the reading practice from its educational function, which is a perspective that limits and constrains it. The female teachers mark

their positions in relation to reading, characterizing it as the main tool for constructing knowledge and updating that reflects positively on the students' learning. Thus, reading representations are imbricated with the educational institution, whose presence is recurrent when referring to their reading practices, performed as part of the teaching work or aiming at professional improvement.

BETWEEN INTEREST AND NECESSITY: READING AFTER RETIREMENT

Retirement is a right assured to Brazilian citizens after completing a certain period of work and social security contributions. For some, this new stage can be seen only as the end of a professional life, which now culminates in the opportunity to enjoy moments of tranquility and rest. For others, it means a new phase characterized by the opportunity to carry out projects, activities, or simply to do what they wanted to do but were prevented for various reasons.

When analyzing the representations of retired female teachers, it is interesting to think with Guareschi (1995, p. 218) that “the RS [social representations] is a constant construction: they are dynamic realities, not static ones. They are being re-elaborated and modified daily and expanded and enriched with new elements and relations. In this study, we found that, after retirement, the participating teachers' reading practices gained new configurations and most of the social representations moved in other directions.

The relationship with reading in the current situation in which the teachers find themselves is permeated by a consensus, no longer equivalent to those of yesteryear — which does not mean, exclusively, an expansion or decrease of this practice. There are other ways, types, and forms of reading, but consensually, they are not compulsory since they can dedicate their readings to what interests them the most or to what meets a need that is no longer required by formal education. Women teachers may even give up this practice in favor of other activities, as is the case of TE47 and TE50 when they point out the changes in their reading practices after retiring:

There have been many changes because, due to having closed the activities, my interest in reading has decreased because I have no professional commitment and also, the house chores take up all my time (TE47, 65 years old, trained as a teacher, retired 15 years ago).

[Reading] Reduced a little bit because, for example, if I don't teach anymore, I don't need to read to prepare a class. I need to read if I am interested in that material, a book that comes out, someone comments on it, and I want to read it. So, it really has to catch my attention (TE50, 75 years old, graduated in Pedagogy, retired 6 years ago).

Given that before they had an obligation to read as part of the job, the readings of their interests, when they had them, were often left aside, so that now they can be done in a relaxed and nonchalant way. Religious and political purposes are some of the types mentioned by the teachers who now shift their reading to daily facts and information, aiming at updating themselves rather than the duty of taking knowledge to other people, in this case, the students.

There were significant changes [in reading practices]. I started to read books referring to contents that I learned to fight without knowing them, such as Occultism, Kabbalah, Freemasonry, Theosophy, Esotericism, Numerology, etc. (TE35, 67 years old, graduated in Pedagogy and Philosophy, retired 05 years ago).

The main purposes of my readings today are different, and it is more reading for everyday practice, also religious, distraction, and political. I like to keep up with the national political “movement” (TE52, 70 years old, graduated in Literature, retired 10 years ago).

In these changes, there is a reference to readings that the school does not always contemplate, so TE35 and TE52 allow themselves to read books with more transgressive contents, many times not legitimized or authorized, including Occultism, Freemasonry, Kabbalah, which differ from those that were primordial to teach. TE35, before retiring, read contents of a more critical nature since they were fundamental for the performance of social and union movements he was part of. However, now he

directs his readings to new subjects. TE52 now reads more unpretentiously, even when focused on a more critical perspective, which involves political issues; the teacher reads without imposition since it is a practice that has the function of following daily facts and being able to position herself if she so wishes.

Those who have reduced the intensity of their reading are justified by the fact that, since there is no longer an obligation, they use the time to perform other tasks, whether for leisure and entertainment or daily activities. Because there is no longer a professional commitment, they can now read when they want and if they want. In this perspective, TE47 and TE22 pointed out changes and stated that they dedicate their time to domestic activities and to those that involve other types of work:

There have been many changes because, due to having closed the activities, my interest in reading has decreased because I have no professional commitment and the house chores take up all my time (TE47, 65 years old, trained as a teacher, retired 15 years ago).

I became more dedicated to other interests such as arts and crafts, religious work, etc. (TE22, 71 years old, Languages graduate, retired 30 years ago).

Reading loses its protagonism and gives way to other activities and household chores. Now that they are not working in the profession, the teachers can dedicate themselves to other practices, which they were even interested in during the phase before retirement but did not have time for. The end of these activities inherent to teaching has allowed for more free time, which can be devoted to reading, leading to an expansion of this practice if the act of reading is a desire of the teacher:

I have more time and more opportunity to diversify the type of reading (TE11, 70 years old, trained as a teacher, retired 31 years ago).

I dedicate more time to reading because I have more time, making reading pleasurable (TE46, 72 years old, Pedagogy graduate, retired 5 years ago).

Now I have more time to dedicate to reading (TE48, 67, Social Sciences graduate, retired 12 years ago).

Present in the teachers' speeches, the Internet is a factor that made possible changes in their relations with reading. Technology has made possible a variety of media and supports that have facilitated access to texts and changed the ways of reading, according to the studies of Chartier (1999a). Giving up the need for physical supports reading on computer screens and cell phones became more constant and more fragmented, sliding toward the most distinct objectives: reading news, recipes, curiosities, instant messages, and shorter texts with faster access. Digital social networks have also become a distraction that has replaced reading books, magazines, and other physical supports.

Now I read less because I spend a lot of time on social networks (TE55, 62, Geography graduate, retired 1 year ago).

Yes [there were changes], reading "very" little, especially after using the Internet, I get involved with messages, voice messages, videos, etc. And that left the practice of reading a little forgotten (TE08, 73 years old, Mathematics graduate, retired 05 years ago).

I started reading the news from electronic newspapers on my cell phone. But I intend to go back to reading novels in physical book format (TE43, 69, Accounting graduate, retired 5 years ago).

There is a clear replacement of book reading with Internet activities, which are characterized as fragmented practices that circulate and change with a certain speed. There are no references to reading literature on the computer, for example. TE43 speaks of the intention to read the physical book again. The manifestation of this supposed desire for reading may not find an echo in reality but serves the purpose of legitimizing their social place, corresponding to a consensual image that teachers are readers, that they like to read and get involved with books and reading. On the other hand, this interest may result from the characteristics of the material support that the electronic one could not reach: the pleasure of leafing through a book, smelling it, being surprised by an event after turning the page, corroborating the

statements of other teachers who, when asked to talk about the relationship of their reading mediated by digital technologies, said

I like technology. I read the news on my cell phone and computer. But I really like the physical book. The contact with the paper, scratching, and taking notes, which catches my attention, is very rewarding. I like the smell of paper (TE16, Psychology graduate, retired 3 years ago).

I prefer to take the newspaper, the book, and the texts and flip through them, touching them. I like and prefer concrete and tangible things (TE51, 65 years old, graduated in Literature, retired 4 years ago).

Soares (2002) pointed out that reading a text in digital format brings changes that refer not only to the support but also changes of cognitive nature since “the screen as a space for writing and reading brings not only new forms of access to information and new cognitive processes, new forms of knowledge, and new ways of reading and writing” (SOARES, 2002, p. 152).

Even with the changes in the social world, some female teachers stated that their practices remained the same as before retirement. They declare that they have been readers of literature since childhood, refer to fruitful reading, and present a constancy of this practice. On the other hand, three female teachers did not have such an intense relationship with reading either now or in other phases, one of them even talks about the lack of the habit of reading: “I would like to be a reader, but I am lazy and never had the habit of reading” (TE10, 76 years old, trained as a teacher, retired 18 years ago).

In this context where reading is not configured as a central practice for teachers, we ask: how can professionals who do not like to read teach reading? How can reading mediations be established without their training enabling their formation as readers?

In contrast to the teachers who maintained retirement practices similar to the time of professional activity, some point out variations in reading practices: 18.18% state that their readings have moved towards other fields and read different texts from those read in other times, 10.91% associate the use of the Internet and digital social networks with the transformations of the type and intensity of reading, 16.36% point to a reduction in these practices, associating the preference to perform other activities and the lack of an obligation to read, which is one of the main justifications for 21.82% of the teachers who now direct their reading to the field of pleasure and entertainment, and 14.55% now read content focused on the religious field.

Given these perspectives, retired teachers show, through their speeches, that their social representations of reading gained new configurations after retirement. As the activities that involve the reading practices change — aiming at pleasure, learning, and profession — the teachers’ reading representations and practices also take on new contours to meet their needs, desires, and wishes.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Results of social interaction, social representations are particular constructions common to a collective group but do not lose each subject's individual specificities. Investigating them means dealing with the consolidation of the collective from the relationship and communication of the people who live and constitute the social environment. Regarding the chosen object, the social representations and reading practices of retired teachers, the Theory of Social Representations provided an opportunity to clarify the systems of meaning that this group produces and shares. It also enabled us to shed more light on how the social representations of reading were constituted, the role that reading practices had in the lives of teaching professionals, as well as the changes that occurred. The mapping of these representations is essential to understand how the relationship of these people with the act of reading was, and still is, especially now that these no longer have a professional and mandatory nature of these practices.

In this article, as far as the chosen object is concerned — social representations of reading by retired female teachers — we were interested in knowing the reading representations of these subjects, as well as the changes that have occurred, given the social importance of this professional category.

The social representations of female teachers are made up of stabilities and transformations, conflicting elements and consensus, marked by their interests, daily activities, and the place where they are. In childhood, the experiences of reading transpose the views about the encouragement they received (or not) at home and the access they had to read materials at school. In the adult phase — similarly to other professions of those inserted in the graphic society — the reading practices integrate the teaching profession; they are seen as indispensable tools for professional performance because they update the contents taught aimed at a better student experience. Now retired, reading is directed to changes that abstain from a pragmatic character, considering that they have freedom disassociated from the teaching exercise.

The analyses showed that the social representations of reading constructed by the participants circulate, sometimes in the context of the scarcity of books and reading, sometimes through images and attitudes associated with the encouragement and practice in childhood and adolescence, directed at the family and school institutions. In many speeches, the teachers' memories are marked by exclusion and social inequalities, but the representations are directed toward an idealized image of the act of reading. In the adult phase, the social representations also point to an idealized perspective. They are anchored in the need and obligation to read, aiming at professional excellence and adequate performance in the classroom. In retirement, the current phase of life of the research participants, reading is anchored in autonomy and freedom, since the teacher defines their relationship with the act of reading based on their interests, which are now unlinked to the obligation.

The teachers' social representations of reading are transmuted and adapted according to the phase and context in which they find themselves, considering their interests and needs, whether of a school, professional or personal nature. Thus, based on the interpretation of their daily realities, the teachers give new meanings to their social representations, reaffirming their dynamic character. Nevertheless, reading remains an asset that cannot be discarded. The teacher may not read and replace it with something more interesting, but reading does not lose its status and central place in the teachers' social representations.

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