Argumentation within Text Commentary: Spanish Language and Literature Teachers' Beliefs in the Current Context of Multimodal and Hypertextual Reception

La argumentación en el comentario de texto: creencias del profesorado de Lengua castellana y literatura en el contexto actual de recepción multimodal e hipertextual

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Abstract

Nowadays, it is a crucial challenge to investigate the didactics of argumentation that processes critical thinking in a complex multimodal and hypertextual semiotic framework. In addition, the analysis of teachers' academic beliefs, as a latent ideological background, is of interest, given their role as a guide for action. Thus, the general aim of the study is to explore the academic beliefs of Spanish Language and Literature teachers about the didactic development of argumentation in text commentary in the current context of multimodal and hypertextual reception. A qualitative methodology of interpretative-phenomenological design has been followed. Thirty-three teachers of Spanish Language and Literature, specifically selected as key informants for their teaching profile and professional experience, participated in the study. Regarding the instrument, a semi-structured interview was designed, through which data were collected and analyzed by means of the qualitative software Atlas.ti (version 7). Finally, the analysis of the teachers' beliefs reveals that there is still no adequate response in their pedagogical tendencies to the institutional and scientific demands concerning dialogical argumentation in a multimodal and hypertextual framework.

Keywords: beliefs, teachers, argumentation, text commentary, Spanish Language and Literature

Resumen

Actualmente supone un reto crucial investigar la didáctica de la argumentación que procesa el pensamiento crítico en un complejo marco semiótico multimodal e hipertextual. Por otra parte, interesa el análisis de las creencias académicas docentes, como fondo ideológico latente, dado su rol de guía para la acción. Así, el objetivo general del estudio se dirige a explorar las creencias académicas del profesorado de Lengua castellana y Literatura sobre el desarrollo didáctico de la argumentación en el comentario de texto en el contexto actual de recepción multimodal e hipertextual. Se ha seguido una metodología cualitativa de diseño interpretativo-fenomenológico. En el estudio han participado 33 docentes de Lengua castellana y Literatura,

seleccionados específicamente en calidad de informantes clave, por su perfil docente y experiencia profesional. Con respecto al instrumento, se diseñó una entrevista semiestructurada, a través de la cual se recogieron los datos que fueron analizados por medio del programa cualitativo Atlas.ti 7. Finalmente, el análisis de las creencias del profesorado revela que todavía no existe en sus tendencias pedagógicas una respuesta adecuada a las demandas institucionales y científicas en torno a la argumentación dialógica en un marco multimodal e hipertextual.

Palabras clave: creencias, profesorado, argumentación, comentario de texto, Lengua Castellana y Literatura.

1. Introduction

This investigation is part of the research, development and innovation project "Innovación epistémica de un modelo de comentario argumentativo de textos multimodales en la enseñanza del español como lengua materna y extranjera [Epistemic innovation of an argumentative commentary model of multimodal texts in the teaching of Spanish as a mother and foreign language]" (PGC2018-101457-B-I00), funded by the Ministry of Science, Innovation and Universities and by "FEDER Una manera de hacer Europa [FEDER a way of doing Europe]". This project aims to address the study of informal argumentation in text commentary, within the framework of the teaching of Spanish as a mother and foreign language, delving into dialogic and multimodal strategies in order to generate a solid model for competent teacher training. In this sense, some conclusions have already been obtained regarding teaching habits and teacher training demands (Caro et al., 2018; Caro & Vicente-Yagüe, 2022; Vicente-Yagüe et al., 2019), as well as future teachers in training (Pérez & Caro, 2022). However, it is of interest to delve into the focus on the academic beliefs that teachers project regarding their teaching practice, in the current context of multimodal and hypertextual reception.

Firstly, in the knowledge society era, it is a crucial challenge to explore the didactics of argumentation that deals with critical thinking in a complex multimodal and hypertextual semiotic framework. Critical thinking was already included in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (European Union, 2006). Specifically, this recommendation indicated that critical thinking would be one of the topics to be applied throughout the reference framework and that it would be involved in each of the eight key competences, together with creativity, initiative, problem solving, risk assessment, decision making, and constructive management of feelings. Similarly, critical thinking is considered a key skill for the shaping of the longed-for global citizenship (UNESCO, 2015). Education for the construction of an active and engaged global citizenship aspires to enable students to acquire and apply critical competencies for civic knowledge: critical inquiry, information technology, media literacy, critical thinking, decision making, problem solving, negotiation, peace building, and personal and social responsibility (UNESCO, 2015).

In addition, given that nowadays, information comes from various sources and is offered through a multimodal plural discourse, the development of critical thinking is an imperative need. Students must make decisions about which of the available texts is the

most relevant, accurate, or truthful (Rouet & Britt, 2011). Thus, it is necessary to evaluate the quality and veracity of the huge amount of information that reaches students through digital media, most of which is biased and mediated. In the world of so-called *fake news* and immediacy, a critical approach to information and reasoned and informed decision-making is key. Readers' digital literacy is crucial to be able to handle information and master the skills required in hypertextual, multimodal, and intertextual environments. Along these lines, the reading literacy assessment framework in PIRLS 2021 (Mullis & Martin, 2019) points out that this digital literacy is necessary for reading on the internet, as a competent reader must know how to effectively search for and comprehend information.

In this line, the conceptual framework of reading in PISA (OECD, 2018) already recognized the objective, critical, and intertextual nature of reading competence (McCrudden & Schraw, 2007; Rouet, 2006; Vidal-Abarca et al., 2010). Similarly, the category corresponding to text processing includes the process of evaluating and reflecting, focused on the following tasks: assessing quality and credibility; reflecting on content and form; detecting and managing conflicts (OECD, 2018). It can be seen how, in the framework of international assessment, reflective and critical processes are not alien to a multimodal context, where interest in simple and multiple texts (source), continuous and discontinuous (format), fixed and dynamic texts (organization and navigation), texts from different fields, in print and electronic media, are noticed. For that reason, a line of research on critical thinking in the classroom has currently been initiated (Wahyuddin et al., 2022; Fernández Millán et al., 2021; Ordem, 2017), but without inquiring into the role of argumentative texts from the necessary multimodal perspective.

Also following PISA, critical thinking and the development of argumentation must also be connected to creative thinking, which has recently been assessed internationally (OECD, 2019). Creative thinking promotes the interpretation of experiences in a new and personally meaningful way, elicits problem solving, can become a vehicle for understanding, and guides students to express their ideas. Thus, argumentation is a positive factor for the critical perspective in education.

Therefore, the importance of generating argumentative reflection in an educational context must be emphasized. Making a judgment on real events should not be limited to the passive action of simple positioning or opinion, but it is necessary to explain and justify the reasons and causes that support such an idea or reflection. According to De Zubiría (2006), argumentation has three particular functions: to sustain (to find causes, evidence or reasons that ratify an idea), to convince audiences of the convenience or correctness of a position or thesis in order to gain followers, and to evaluate (to allow for investigation, and evaluation of the different alternatives with a view to choose the best one). Likewise, critical thinking is a mental process that makes use of strategies and various forms of reasoning to analyze and evaluate arguments and, consequently, to make a decision.

Furthermore, in the educational discipline, the analysis of teachers' academic beliefs is of interest, as a latent ideological background, given their role as a guide for action, as Peirce's pragmatism (2007) already warned. Beliefs play a relevant role in the decisions

that teachers make regarding the importance of the knowledge they teach. Hofer & Pintrich (1997), and Prawat (1992) have already shown their interest in understanding how teachers' beliefs influence their teaching practices. Hofer & Pintrich (1997) stated that epistemological beliefs are social constructs and are shaped by interaction with the educational context. Studies in recent decades have shown that the beliefs held by teachers and students influence their understanding of the world (Hofer, 2001). Pajares (1992) also established a relationship between teachers' epistemological beliefs and their conceptions of what teaching should be like.

Nevertheless, despite its importance, the didactic development of argumentation in text commentary has hardly been investigated in the teaching beliefs that support it. The international demands for educational quality in communicative competence (European Commission, 2004; OECD, 2005), as well as the Spanish educational laws since the LOGSE already claimed models of interpellation between the work and the reader -the expression in democratic dialogue that nourishes the critical and argumentative sense of the students, which can be based on revealing scientific studies (Austin, 1962; Grice, 1975; Halliday, 1978; Searle, 1969). However, teachers' resistance to change has led to the continued application in classrooms of textbook commentary models that reflect authoritarian, nationalistic patterns that do not contemplate any interaction in their discourse, as is the case of the model of Lázaro & Correa (1957), used in Spain since the second half of the twentieth century. It is not until 21st century, when it is possible to find dialogic approaches in teaching models (Snell & Lefstein, 2017; Zhang et al., 2016), a critical level of reading (Jiménez, 2015) where the individual contributes to the meaning of the text their experience and socio-cultural background (McNamara & Magliano, 2009; Mendoza, 2001; Zwaan & Singer, 2003), and text commentary manuals where the critical interpretation of the reader and the invention of arguments from diverse sources matter (Caro & González, 2018; Cassany, 2008). Regarding the development of informal argumentation, also in the current century, it is possible to highlight new scientific approaches of dialogic applicability (Leal, 2016; Santibáñez, 2012).

Thus, argumentation literacy must be seen in the context of multimodal discourses that hybridize languages, formats, and genres. Argumentation must be understood in a broad textual framework that transcends typological specificity, that enables intertextual dialogue, and that can be articulated in both oral and written contexts. In this sense, it is of interest to study the educational framework in which the constructive processes of argumentative enunciation must be integrated. Analyzing teachers' beliefs about the practice of argumentation in text commentary is a first step towards scientific didactic progress in dialogical training models on argumentation in language teaching.

In this regard, the general objective of the present study is aimed at exploring the academic beliefs of Spanish Language and Literature teachers about the didactic development of argumentation in text commentary in the current context of multimodal and hypertextual reception. This general objective is expressed in the following specific objectives:

1. To know the beliefs that teachers have about the presence of argumentation in texts and, specifically, about its didactic treatment in text commentary.

2. To understand teachers' preferences regarding the interpretation of what is explicit or implicit in the text.
3. To find out teachers' opinions about the convenience of introducing texts and topics connected to the students' reality for the didactic task of the commentary in a multimodal framework.
4. To inquire into the manuals used by teachers as well as the type of argumentative guide chosen in their teaching practice.
5. To detect the causes of students' difficulties in the development of argumentation in critical commentary, as well as to discover the possible solutions proposed by teachers.

2. Methodology

Research Design

The present research has followed a qualitative methodology of interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) in order to delve into the meanings that seek to explain the teachers' beliefs in the Spanish Language and Literature (Tojar, 2006). The information was obtained through interviews with teachers, with the aim of delving into the key issues of their professional profiles. In addition, it has followed the ethical guidelines established by the AECL (the *Spanish Association of Reading Comprehension*) for information gathering studies conducted with individuals.

Participants

Thirty-three Spanish Language and Literature teachers who teach in different Spanish schools participated in the study. The age range of these teachers was between 25 and 70 years old, and their professional experience ranged from 2 to 40 years. The academic background of the participants consists of diplomas (4 teachers), bachelor's degrees (29 teachers), master's degrees (7 teachers) and doctorates (14 teachers). The levels and stages taught include Secondary Education (26 teachers), Master's Degree in Secondary Education Teacher Training (12 teachers), and bachelor's degree in Primary Education (8 teachers). The educational centers are mostly public (32) and secular (32). Specifically, these teachers have been specifically selected as key informants due to their teaching profile and professional experience.

Research Instruments

Taking into consideration the objectives formulated, a semi-structured interview was designed to respond to them. Content validity was assessed by experts (three specialists in the area of Didactics of Language and Literature, and two specialists in Research and Diagnostic Methods in Education), who judged the degree of precision and conceptual, syntactic, and structural adequacy of each question.

The interview was structured into four distinct sections:

- Presentation.
- Sociodemographic, academic, and professional data.
- Main body of questions.
- Observations.

The following is the main content of the interview (Table 1).

Table 1
Main content of the interview

1. Is argumentation in all the texts of the language or is it only in some of them? Give your reason.
2. How do you consider the text commentary with respect to argumentative projection? As a space for exposing the author's intention or as a space for a dialogue of perspectives? Why?
3. What do you prefer to interpret, what is explicit in the text or what is implicit? Why?
4. Do you consider convenient to introduce themes and texts from the learner's world? Why?
5. Do you have a manual or textbook that provides you with didactic materials appropriate to your academic beliefs about the most suitable methodology for developing informal argumentation in text commentary? If you have such a manual or textbook, can you indicate its title?
6. If you do not have this manual or textbook, please explain why this is the case. Furthermore, do you compensate for such gaps or dysfunctions with personal notes or materials? If so, what do you provide in such personal notes or materials?
7. What do you prefer, a very rigid argumentation guide or a freer one? Why?
8. Considering the difficulties of your students in the development of the argumentation of the text commentary, explain their plausible causes and offer suggestions to help your students to solve them.

Procedure and data analysis

The interviews were transcribed into a textual support, resulting in a primary document for each teacher that gave rise to a set of hermeneutic units. For the analysis of these units, the qualitative data software Atlas.ti (version 7) was used and the instructions of Saberiego-Puig et al. (2014) were followed. The information was reduced by employing a system of categorization and coding of the data (descriptive, interpretative, and explanatory codes), which contemplates the meanings transmitted by the teachers. The results are presented through the semantic networks generated by the software Atlas.ti (version 7), according to the categorization and connections of meanings made.

3. Results

In order to respond to the general objective aimed at exploring teachers' academic beliefs about the didactic development of multimodal argumentation in text commentary, the results obtained according to the specific objectives set at the beginning of the study are presented below.

Results of specific objective one

The question focused on the presence of argumentation in the texts offers meanings that denote teachers' divided opinions. Thus, some of the teachers comment that argumentation is based on a communicative intention, not subject to a single type of text; in this sense, one of the key informants indicates, as an example, that even in a poetic text, one can reason about the political causes for which one writes or the reasons why one loves a person. Any topic can create controversy especially in the current context of multimedia impact, and, therefore, it is always possible to discover argumentation in texts, even if only indirectly. Every word has connotations; for even the most seemingly innocent definition can be loaded with connotations that come from the very choice of the word. Argumentation is present even in the most immediate students' environment, a clear example of which is the invasive advertising that influences young people so much through different digital media. For this reason, teachers should develop in their students the capacity for critical analysis since the reader's critical ability and expertise will be proven by their ability to perceive intentions, arguments, or allegations in the texts within the current communicative framework dominated by *fake news*. In addition, one of the interviewees comments that total objectivity, or asepsis, is a chimera and that perspectivism is indispensable, although argumentation in texts can be measured or graded. The author of the text always shows his vision of reality; it is possible to read their own and other people's opinions, both explicit and implicit. At the same time, any text can be used for argumentation and any text can be exploited for students to express their opinion on the content or their own expression, among other aspects.

On the other hand, those teachers who consider that argumentation is not in all texts, although it is in many, argue that argumentation is not found in purely objective texts and that the emisor/sender/encoder does not always intend to convince the destination/receiver/decoder of something. However, this sector does not deny that argumentation is a common practice of human thought and that, even in all texts, an intention can be noticed. Likewise, it is argued that argumentation is associated in texts with other complementary modalities, such as exposition, narration, and description, in order to support itself.

Regarding the second question of the interview about the conception of text commentary with argumentative projection as a space for exposition of the author's intention or as a space for dialogue, a significant number of interviewees prefer the second plural option of exchange of perspectives, as opposed to those who do not opt for one of them and consider both possibilities, as shown in Figure 1. However, when analyzing the meanings given by the former, it is observed that this option already includes the exposition of the author's intention as a first phase in the process of text commentary, so that all these responses should be integrated into the same group.

For those who initially advocate the convergence of both conceptions, text commentary should be understood as a comprehensive-interpretative exercise and, at the same time, as a creative-dialogical exercise, which implies a more complete vision of the task as well as being the most didactic and positive option for learning.

Likewise, those who conceive the option of exchanging opinions, the text commentary with argumentative projection is constituted as a space for dialogue with the author's

ideas, dialogue with the student's cultural knowledge, and dialogue with their own environment. The student must adopt a critical awareness of reality, which requires them to recognize at first the author's intention and, subsequently, to question, admit or refute it with their reasoning. From this approach, the student should not limit themselves only to expose the expert's viewpoint offered in the text, demonstrating their reading comprehension, but should take that viewpoint to be able to develop their own ideas, present a personal vision and build their own opinion even based on information coming from different channels, social networks or diverse format. The construction (not reproduction) of the assessment by the reader is proposed here. The commentary should not run the risk of being a partial reproduction of previous assessments by other authorities, but, on the contrary, should leave room for the contributions of a reader who must be able to construct their own assessment.

In the same way, teachers seek to create a tolerant spirit and demonstrate to their students that there are no absolute truths, but complementary ones, and that their ideas are just as valid as those read and listened to, as long as they are made from acceptance and respect, a fundamental aspect in the new communicative model of virtual interaction. In this sense, it should be added that some students show their insecurity, and the teachers discover their fear of expressing their own opinions. Finally, one of the key informants stresses that this conception, although desirable, is not evident at all educational levels.

Focusing on the author's intention has serious risks since, as even another of the key informants points out when characterizing this option, "the teacher's 'opinion' on 'their' appreciation of the 'author's intention' could also be objectionable." Precisely, the only teacher who claims to have always promoted the text commentary from the option of a space of exposition of the author's intention, comments that the approach of dialogue of perspectives seems interesting and novel and leads them to consider the persuasive force it would have if the development of the commentary is directed to cooperative group work.
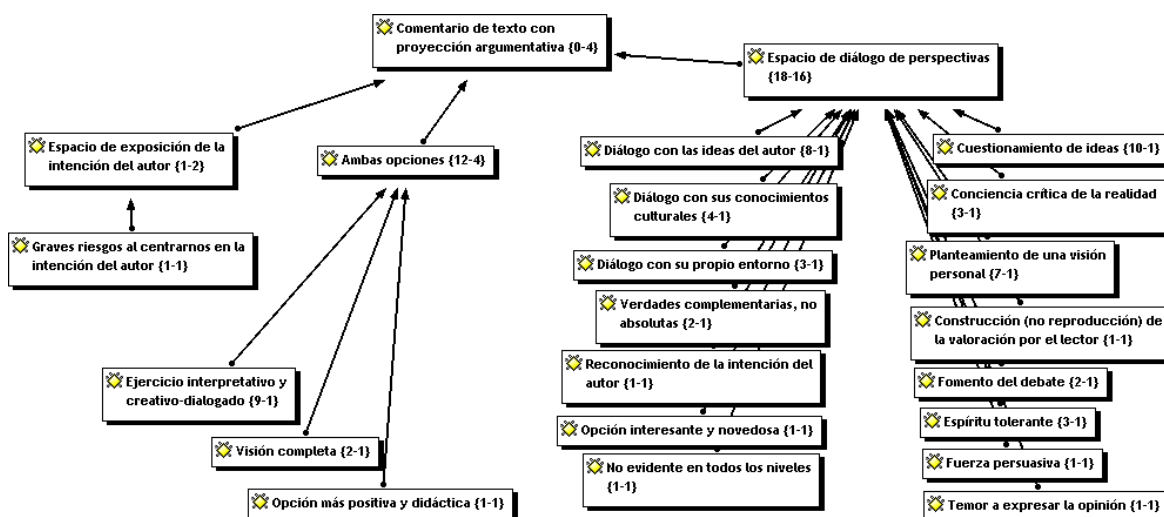

Figure 1. Semantic network of the commentary conception as a space for exposition or dialogue.

Results of specific objective two

In the third question of the interview, aimed at finding out teachers' preferences with respect to the interpretation of the explicit and implicit in the text, the rejection of the explicit as the only way of approaching the text is verified. Some of the teachers point out their inclination for the implicit, while most of them opt for both (explicit and implicit), as shown in Figure 2. One of the interviewees even comments that "the explicit does not need to be interpreted, only described, because it is there." The interpretation of the implicit will depend on the level of the group, and, therefore, students with a limited level of comprehension will only be able to opt for the explicit content of the text.

Some teachers believe that it is not a matter of preference but a dual process in which one must first understand the explicit and then move on to the interpretation of the implicit. Both phases of interpretation (the explicit and the implicit) are essential and required bilaterally to fully understand the meaning of the text. Similarly, other teachers comment that both perspectives are open to interpretation and useful for argumentation.

The interpretation of the implicit is associated with a great richness of meanings. A deep reading must account for the implicit, the connotative, the suggestive, the hidden, the possible. It is about reading between the lines in an exercise of conscious freedom to discover hidden interests, to understand ironies, to notice ambiguous communicative aspects, to reveal pragmatic implications, and, in short, to achieve a better understanding of the text. In this sense, it must be considered that nowadays the referents of the students' experiences are made up of the audiovisual, the digital and the hypertextual. One of the key informants points out that they prefer to "interpret how the explicit determines implications that contribute to the objective of persuading the receiver." The implicit meanings of a text enrich the reflexive hermeneutics of the fragment, involve introspection into the shared social and cultural world, and give rise to elaborating the receiver's own discourse according to their beliefs.

The interpretation of what is implicit is a task that needs to be worked on, which prompts questions to be asked and has a repercussion on the student's cognitive development. It is a teacher's challenge for students to be able to identify this level of significance and, after that, to make a critical judgment. In addition, it is useful in their daily lives in the current communicative context of audiovisual and multimedia impact since almost all messages have an implicit charge that is important to grasp and that may entail different interpretations. It is a more complex and richer interpretation, aimed at the most perceptive and competent students. In fact, according to a certain teacher, if a student knows how to interpret what is implicit in a text, it is likely that he or she will have developed his or her argumentative capacity. Likewise, once the implicit is grasped, the student well understands the explicit content.

Finally, one of the interviewees relates the implicit with the emotional content, a concept to which modern criticism is beginning to give importance, as they state. In all argumentation, there is an emotional, psychological, and intimate motivation of the person who makes it. In this sense, this teacher cites as a reference of interest the work of García Berrio and Hernández Fernández entitled *Crítica literaria. Iniciación al estudio*

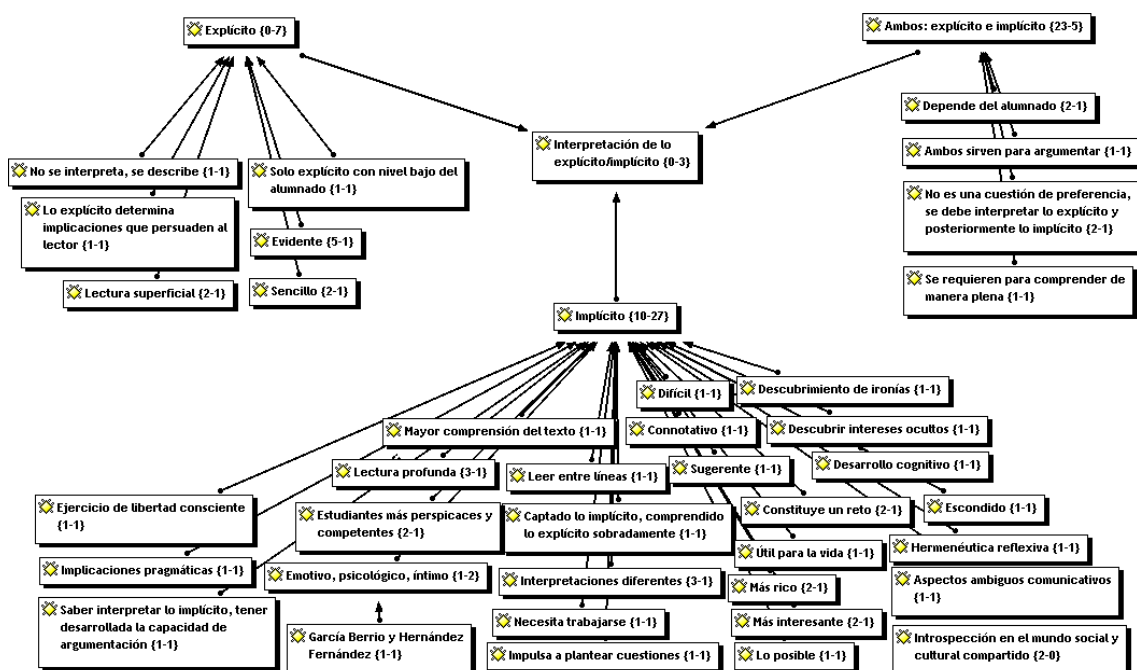*de la literatura*, in which a chapter is devoted to the aesthetic-sentimental concept in poetics.

Figure 2. Semantic network of the preference for the interpretation of what is explicit or implicit in the text.

Results of specific objective three

The following is an analysis of the interview question that delves into the convenience of introducing topics and texts from the world of the learners in the commentary. All the meanings obtained manifest the positive aspects of this practice, by detailing its educational benefits and showing the details of the procedure. The teachers consider that students should be participants in their own education, so it is considered appropriate to include topics that concern, motivate, and seduce them, linked to their own individual experiences. In addition, the connection and involvement that this practice brings to the students allows them to master the text and understand each of its fragments. Likewise, the connection with their world encourages participation, facilitates the expression of ideas, captures attention, and encourages them to take a position, express their opinions, and argue. On the contrary, the distance is boring and difficult, and students may fall into simplicities and paraphrase the text being commented on. In addition, the students' refusal to work on topics that are not to their liking is noted.

Additionally, this approach of the students to the texts and topics results in the teacher's approach to the students themselves by means of their realities. In addition, the teacher can learn from these inputs and build new repertoires. However, a certain interviewee points out that, while the topics can be provided by the students, the texts should only be chosen by the teachers based on pedagogical criteria. In this sense, other teachers also

indicate that the texts and topics should not necessarily be taken from students' often small and partial world, although they should arouse their interest, so that in the future they are related to their lives and can broaden their vision of their own reality.

Some of the key informants highlight the use of virtual reading and writing platforms for the exchange of opinions. These platforms give rise to new spaces and styles of communication and, therefore, it is possible to consider a type of social or collaborative reading based on texts with topics of interest to the students.

It is shown how, through contact with the student's world, real links with meaningful learning are created, previous knowledge is used, and the usefulness of what has been studied outside the educational context is promoted. On their part, students should understand the social purpose of their work and share the texts they have produced in current communicative environments. Finally, after the students have achieved commentary skills through this practice, it will be necessary to incorporate texts that are less related to their reality.

Results of specific objective four

With regard to the question focused on manuals or textbooks used by teachers with didactic materials suitable for the development of informal argumentation in text commentary, key informants specifically point out the titles of some of them: *Argumentar: convencer y persuadir a través de la palabra* by González Díaz; *Argumentar y razonar* by García Moriyón; *Argumentar para convencer* by Dolz and Pasquier; *Guía para la redacción y el comentario de texto* by Cervera Rodríguez; *Guía para los ejercicios de Lengua y Comentario de Texto de Selectividad* by Almela, Caro and Lozano; *Comentario de texto fácil para Bachillerato y acceso a la Universidad* by Caro and González; *Didáctica de la Lengua y Educación Literaria* by Guerrero and Caro; *Enseñar y aprender lengua* by Vicente Mateu and Vicente Ruiz. Also noted are the works of Cassany and the textbooks used in the second year of baccalaureate, among which the Edelvives publishing house is mentioned.

The use of material from the web is also mentioned, as well as the general use of varied and complementary manuals that respond to different teaching needs (types of arguments, examples of argumentation, structure...). In this sense, there is not a single perfect manual that is complete; certain teachers state that they have not found any specific manual that meets their needs; "everything can and should be improved," says one of the interviewees. The scarcity of manuals that guide the practice of argumentative commentary in a didactic way and that offer detailed guidelines to teachers is also highlighted. The manuals currently published for the secondary education stage do not deal with argumentation with the specificity that would be necessary. Therefore, there is a need for a manual that is more practical than theoretical, with different solutions that nurture the learning of argumentation in the different superstructures.

On the other hand, a high number of teachers state that they do not use any manual and assure that the development of informal argumentation in text commentary is a function of the training, experience, and capacity of each teacher. In this sense, one of the key informants, when trying to explain the reasons why they do not have any manual adequate

to their academic beliefs, explains that any commentary guide or scheme already conditions in some way the "degree of informality": "I understand that it is very difficult to foresee the types of informality that some or other texts could assume... Therefore, it is even more difficult to elaborate a guideline that, in the case of trying to do so, would have to be based on what is considered formally conventional."

Given the lack of a specific manual suitable for daily classroom practice, some teachers choose to develop their own materials and notes, in order to complete, adapt, and make up for the shortcomings of the works already published in the discipline. The following is a list of the diverse and rich contributions of teachers in their personal materials: types of arguments, selected authoritative arguments (quotes, movie websites, documentaries...), tables with connectors, textual models with argumentative examples, brief guide with general guidelines (which is modified according to the student's level), notes on the structure of the commentary and highlights of each section, questionnaire for specific texts, evaluation tables, cards with the most used rhetorical figures in argumentation, linguistic aspects, cards with the most frequent topics in the Baccalaureate Evaluation for University Access. In addition, one of the key informants comments on his interest in covering different textual typologies in his materials and delving into the field of multimedia textuality, a field already explored to some extent with the promotion of movie forums, as stated by the informant.

Some adjustments are also made to specific textbooks and materials selected from the web, according to the teacher's particular approach and methodological approach to text commentary and according to the needs of the students; the aim is usually to provide brevity and clarity in the commentary process. On other occasions, a sketch or draft of the commentary made by the teacher is offered, from which the student can begin to write their personal critical commentaries or even commentaries on specific texts already resolved as a model for successfully tackling future argumentative tasks. Some teachers prepare a PowerPoint to explain the commentary methodology to their students. One of the interviewees indicates that, in the materials prepared for their students, they summarize their own ideas on how to develop the commentary technique, among which they emphasize making students see that they are citizens who give their opinions and are capable of explaining why they think what they think.

The teacher also normally provides the texts for the commentary, compiled as a personal list, when they do not find the texts published in the students' textbook adequate or appropriate. This selection responds both to their critical experience and to the expectations and daily reality of the students, for which they frequently resort to texts from the web, related to recent events of interest.

On the other hand, with regard to the teachers' preference for a guideline or free argumentation guide, a division of opinions is shown among the interviewees (Figure 3). The meanings associated with a very structured, rigid guide explain that this type of guide helps the student who is less skilled or has less practice, by offering in detail the process of making a personal critical commentary. Students need guidelines and tools that teach them how to develop an outline, how to generate innovative ideas, and how to state an argument, all in a detailed, clear, and evident manner. Creativity and freedom in the development of argumentation will come when the student masters the technique,

although it is necessary to lay the foundations beforehand. Once a certain level of skill and fluency in argumentation has been acquired, students will be able to work individually and freely, but not the other way around. On the other hand, although the guide should be structured, it should leave an open space for the possible personal contributions of the students, which is a prominent issue in the critical commentary under study.

Other teachers are more inclined towards a freer and simpler guide that can be adapted to diverse types of text and that does not condition the commentary itself; an established guideline does not include all the possibilities that can arise in an argumentation. In addition, this more flexible guide allows the teacher to "improvise," introduce diverse materials, and also adapt to the characteristics of the group of students: simplify or expand the guidelines, infer them with the students from the text proposed for the commentary. As mentioned above, it is emphasized that freedom is more creative in the field of this type of argumentative task. Although some teachers understand that guidelines are necessary in the first practice because students need clear references, they still prefer a more open approach focused on the objective of persuading the reader with arguments, which allows for more creative texts. In short, according to one of the key informants, "diaphanous methodological orientations are preferred, which help the natural development of the mental processes of argumentation but not closed guidelines in prototypical behaviors;" the latter does not respond to authentic commentary tasks, but to exercises that are excessively controlled and poor in cognition. The preferred model is one that favors free expression and requires strategies or formalisms in a recurrent way but not sequenced by obligation.

Finally, other teachers state that it is desirable to use several types of guides and argue that their choice is always conditioned by the type of student. Firstly, they point out the experience or degree of expertise in this type of student's task: in the first practices of critical commentary, it is preferable to have more concrete guidelines; later, once the students have understood the argumentative structures and their models and are more familiar with the mechanism of argumentative writing, a freer guide that encourages personal critical commentary is required. Secondly, the expressive capacity of the student is emphasized: a brilliant student can develop a good commentary based on general guidelines (it is preferable in these cases not to restrict freedom, as we would possibly hinder their argumentative task). On the contrary, more limited students need a structured guide that provides them with the necessary instruments to carry out adequate commentaries.
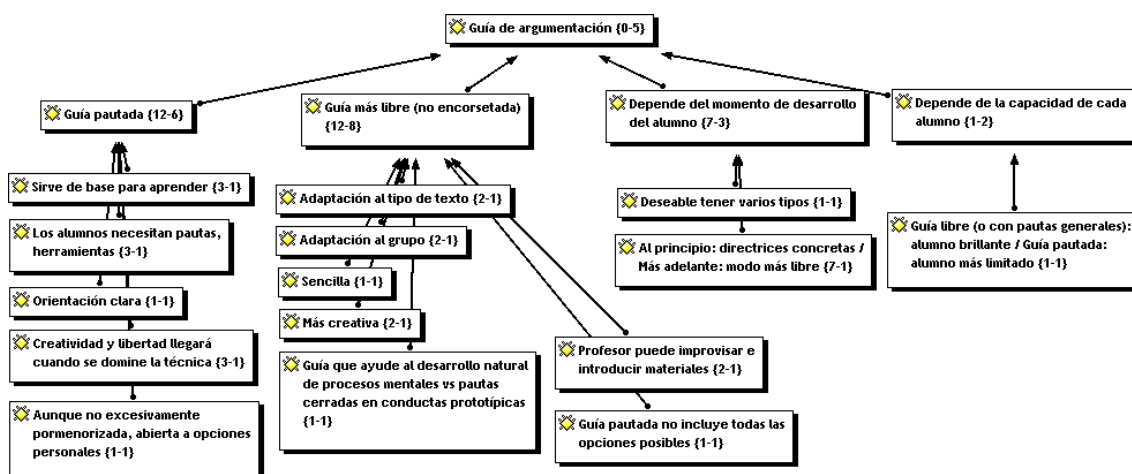
Figure 3. Semantic network of the type of argumentation guidance preferred by teachers.

Results of specific objective five

In the following section, the reasons for students' difficulties in the development of argumentation in critical commentary, as well as possible solutions for solutions put forward by the teachers, are presented. In the first place, a considerable number of teachers indicate that argumentation and critical commentary of texts have not been sufficiently addressed in the classroom and, moreover, most of the time, their practice has not been approached until the last year of compulsory secondary education or even the baccalaureate. Therefore, students are not used to developing their capacity for critical reflection and offering a well-founded argumentation; they are faced with a task that is practically unknown to them (they lack experience and guidelines in this regard), which is complex to solve and which, however, they must solve with ease and rigor in their final years of secondary education, which prepares them for the Baccalaureate Evaluation for University Entrance.

In order to redirect this situation, the key informants identified certain suggestions for solutions as follows: starting to develop logical thinking from primary school; carrying out a center project and requesting coordination to work on these aspects from the first year of compulsory secondary education; granting more time to argumentation in the curriculum at all levels by the Ministry; making argumentative practice and critical commentary evident in the school textbooks themselves, avoiding implicit, residual, complementary, and unconscious activities; encouraging the regular practice of personal commentary tasks; proposing a work sequence with three basic consecutive phases: reading, debate, and writing; selecting motivating topics, from which students can get involved, give their opinions and raise counterarguments; using the blackboard as an instrument for group construction of ideas for commentary; providing examples of different types of arguments; using the methodology of error; starting from a basic scheme and appropriate guidelines for critical commentary; seeking further training of teachers in the development of argumentation for personal critical commentary.

Secondly, another of the important causes of difficulties in the development of argumentation is focused on the problems of expression that students generally present (lack of vocabulary, problems of coherence and cohesion, etc.). The work on written expression is poorly focused in secondary education, its correction and improvement being understood as the exclusive responsibility of the language teacher. In addition, one of the interviewees points out that "in school we do not teach how to write, but how to reproduce;" the command of language is very limited, and the students do not know how to really express what they want to say, their opinions being reflected in anecdotes or superfluous ideas. This issue is also observed, even in university students pursuing a master's degree in Teacher Training, who limit themselves to paraphrasing the author's ideas without any dialogue or discussion; they are not able to organize their ideas or the arguments that support them.

In order to confront this reality, the interviewees proposed various solutions, such as the implementation of a center project for the development of written expression with the collaboration of the teachers of the different subjects, since only by raising the problem as a common objective is it possible to improve it (one of the interviewees questioned in this sense how it is possible for students to face subjects such as History or Philosophy with the difficulties of comprehension and expression that he detects). Other proposals for solutions are aimed at frequent reading by students; continuous and revised practice of written tasks; and monitoring or guiding the linguistic expression of argumentation and other textual modalities, by means of templates with the structure to be followed by students and differentiated discourse markers that ensure the coherence and cohesion of the text.

In third place, the fact that students are not taught how to search for and contrast information from a set of texts is also commented on. Students have difficulties in finding solid arguments to defend their position on an issue. The didactics of argumentation must consider the previous phase in which the student is supplied with ideas by resorting to what they already know and by learning to research the situations or topics that are proposed. Therefore, as a solution, it is important to work in the classroom with thinking routines from the initial stages; to promote research and selection of information, guided by the teacher, until the student manages to consolidate this skill; and, finally, to propose topics close to their interests that encourage and stimulate their curiosity to investigate.

In relation to the aforementioned cause, students are used to learning in a unidirectional way, in other words, to retain content without reflecting on it and sometimes without fully understanding it. Thus, when they reach the second year of high school, students have a passive attitude that is difficult to correct: they are asked for maturity, critical perspective, creativity, and they feel bewildered. Therefore, learning from practice and the real connection between its subsequent use or utility should be promoted. This problem is not only of the subject of language, but of the current educational system itself, which does not encourage the development of critical thinking, nor does society, with its hectic pace of life.

Students are disconnected from the world around them with respect to critical issues that may be related to literature. In this sense, it is interesting to propose alternative readings and, above all, to try to bring the readings of classical texts closer to their contemporaneity

in order to discover their actuality. However, students generally have poor reading habits, which lead to comprehension problems. Students do not go beyond the literal sense and find it difficult to discover hidden intentions and double meanings.

Moreover, the reader's opinion is not included in the commentary with the importance it deserves, remaining as a mere final addition, instead of being the driving force behind the development of the whole task. It is proposed that, with the aim of influencing this aspect, the formulation of a guideline that insists on personal reflection by means of rhetorical strategies oriented to the effective use of language and thought. It is also suggested as a solution to call for the student's opinion in any given exercise, as well as to grant the portfolio the function of recording their individual reasoning. Even so, students find it difficult to share and express their ideas out of embarrassment and fear of error.

Another cause mentioned by some of the interviewees is the overexposure of students to the digital universe and the consequent lack of concentration caused by technology. Students are raised in a multimedia culture that does not require them to deepen or organize their thinking through writing. The digital culture is dominated by the instantaneous, the fast, and the brief: "Students surf or navigate, but do not dive; they write short and perhaps sharp messages, but not argumentative texts; they multitask, so they get tired if they have to concentrate," states one teacher. And it is not just the usual spelling problems and the gradual disinterest in correcting them, but also the intellectual laziness and tendency to simplify. There is little taste for the culture of mental effort and association of ideas since a satisfactory result is not always obtained immediately. That said, it should be noted that it is not a matter of going against the digital and multimedia culture but of finding a way to balance the situation and make students see the importance of understanding and elaborating an argument with depth, beyond the slogan, the cliché, or the Twitter intervention. Likewise, considering that the completion of a commentary requires a slow exercise of thinking, writing, correcting, and reflecting, the necessary motivation of the students before such tasks is discussed, in order to "hook them to the pleasure of writing."

In the case of university students pursuing a master's degree in Teacher Training, in particular, the difficulties depend on the degree of previous knowledge, the strategies and resources already assumed, as well as their own experience in the practice of argumentative commentary. Consequently, the proposed solution is aimed at meeting the needs of each group of students in order to adapt the didactic task of the commentary. The specific features of each text, which could be dealt with by means of the elaboration of a special guideline or rubric to be considered in each specific case, are also indicated as a cause. Finally, the fact of not having effective didactic materials that work on argumentation in textual commentary, neither at the university level nor in previous educational stages, is a worthy cause of concern among teachers of the subject.
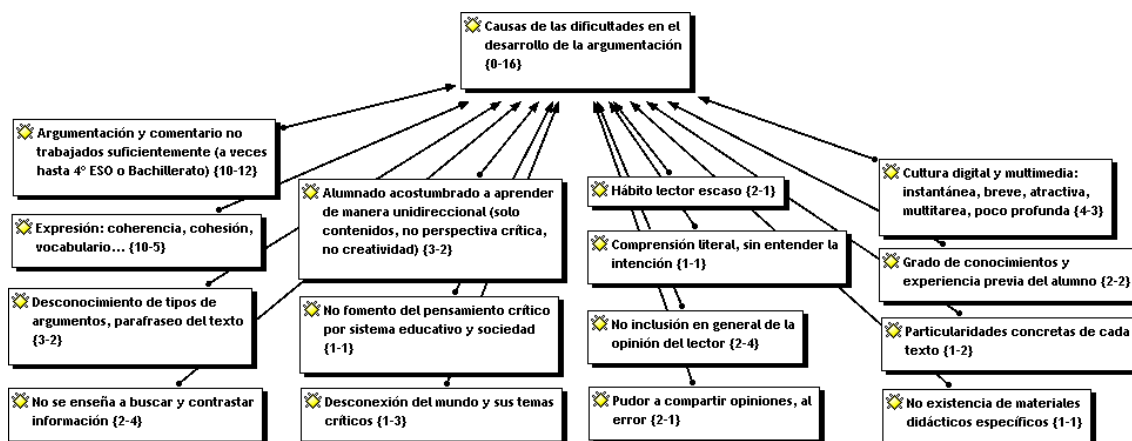
Figure 4. Semantic network for the causes of difficulties in developing argumentation in critical commentary.

4. Discussion and conclusions

The present research has aimed to explore the academic beliefs of Spanish Language and Literature teachers on the didactic development of argumentation in text commentary in the current context of multimodal and hypertextual reception, given its influence and link with their own teaching practice, as has already been pointed out (Hofer & Pintrich, 1997; Hofer, 2001; Pajares, 1992; Peirce, 2007; Prawat, 1992). According to the data obtained from the participants in the study, as key informants who have been specifically selected for their teaching profile and professional experience, it is possible to draw a series of conclusions that highlight the state of the didactic approach to argumentation in text commentary in the current educational context. In this sense, the analysis of beliefs reveals that there is still no adequate response to institutional and scientific demands regarding dialogic argumentation in a multimodal and hypertextual framework in these teachers' pedagogical tendencies.

With respect to the first specific objective, there is no unanimous belief in relation to the recognition of argumentation in texts, since while some teachers claim that argumentation can be found in any textual typology, others argue the opposite and comment that authors do not always have the purpose of justifying or convincing their receiver. However, in the latter, there is a sustained belief in the idea that argumentation is a widespread practice of human thought, that a certain intention is found in all texts, and that any topic can be the object of controversy (García Guirao, 2021), something that is accentuated in the current context of multimedia impact, where *fake news* is disseminated (Fernández-García, 2017).

Furthermore, most of the key informants understand text commentary with argumentative projection as a space for dialogue and exchange of approaches, which is in line with the desired new scientific approaches of dialogic applicability, where the reader's critical interpretation and the construction of arguments in a multimodal context are of interest (Caro & Gonzalez, 2018; Cassany, 2008; Leal, 2016; Santibáñez, 2012; Snell & Lefstein,

2017; Zhang et al., 2016). It is also indicated that text commentary is a creative-dialogical exercise, which connects with the current educational demands in creativity, recently performed with the international assessment of creative thinking in PISA (OECD, 2019), which pursues problem solving and questioning the text. In addition, it is possible to base the beliefs of those who argue that text commentary with argumentative projection is established as a dialogue with the student's cultural knowledge and their own environment on the educational concept coined by Mendoza (2001) of the reader intertext, defined as the meeting space of the contributions of the text with those of the reader. In this sense, it is even indicated that the reader builds his or her opinion based on information from different channels, social networks, or different formats. The construction (not reproduction) of the reader's valuation of the text is emphasized here.

In relation to these beliefs and in response to the second specific objective, it is possible to highlight the key informants' rejection of the explicit as the only way of approaching the text. In any case, the majority of interviewees confirm their preference for interpreting both explicit and implicit content in the text. Jiménez (2015) already differentiated a literal level from other representative and inferential levels in reading competence, which would allow reaching a critical level where the reader is able to make their own value judgments, as well as defend or detract from those made by others. Furthermore, students rely on their audiovisual, digital and hypertextual references to be able to interpret what is implicit in the text.

Regarding the third specific objective, the convenience of commenting on texts whose themes are related to the students' world is indicated. It is considered that they should deal with topics that are of interest to them, those that concern them, and those that connect with their own experiences. In this way, students will be more engaged and will be able to better understand the text and argue about it. Again, the value of the reading intertext is essential (Mendoza, 2001), as students build a more concrete and complete understanding of the text by combining their personal knowledge and experience with the information and meanings read. In addition, when talking about students' interest topics, it is noteworthy that key informants mention the use of virtual reading and writing platforms, platforms that have already been subject of study, as is the case of Wattpad, with the aim of understanding the mechanisms of interactive participation and the processes of reading formation in informal learning contexts (García-Roca & De Amo, 2019).

In relation to the fourth specific objective, key informants have highlighted the titles of certain manuals, although they have also pointed out the scarcity of manuals with didactic application guidelines. This causes that, in many cases they do not use any manuals and design their own resources according to their disciplinary training and didactic experience in the subject. These responses show that the didactic field of informal argumentation in text commentary has yet to be developed in depth, despite the demands of institutions that for some years have been calling for a more critical, dialogical, and problem-solving training of students (European Commission, 2004; OECD, 2005, 2018, 2019; UNESCO, 2015; European Union, 2006).

Concerning the preference for the use of a free or a structured argumentation guide, teachers justify both options according to their didactic use as well as to the type of

students with whom the commentary must work. Thus, while a detailed guide can help students with less practice or expertise, a simpler and freer guide does not limit or determine the commentary and adapts to a wider range of texts.

Finally, the fifth specific objective highlights the causes of the students' difficulties in the development of argumentation in critical commentary as well as possible proposed solutions. In this sense, it is possible to specify the informants' answers in the following causes: argumentation and critical commentary have not been sufficiently addressed in the classroom; students' difficulties in expression; students are not taught to search for and contrast information from a set of texts and reveal difficulties in constructing arguments to defend their opinions; students' disconnection with respect to the world around them and certain critical issues; the inclusion of students' opinion in the commentary is not encouraged; overexposure of students to the digital universe and consequent lack of attention caused by the inappropriate use of technologies; the degree of previous knowledge and their own experience in the practice of argumentative commentary (students of the Master's Degree in Teacher Training); specific particularities of each text that require specific guidelines; absence of effective teaching materials that deal with argumentation in textual commentary.

Among the difficulties exposed, it is proven that students are not taught to search for and contrast information from several texts, which is a fundamental ability of reading competence (OECD, 2018) in this world of plural reception characterized precisely by textual multimodality and by the invasion of information from diverse media. No response is being given to the renewed dialogic and multimodal didactic approaches that are committed to the construction of arguments from diverse sources (Caro & González, 2018; Cassany, 2008).

The over-exposure of students to the digital universe, mentioned by some key informants as a difficulty for the development of argumentation, confirms the reality of the type of format in which these students tend to read in their daily lives, which has shifted massively from printed to digital texts. The remarkable diffusion of digital requires a type of digital literacy that has already been indicated, among other documents of international relevance, in the PIRLS 2021 reading literacy assessment framework (Mullis & Martin, 2019). This digital reality must be harnessed in classrooms to direct the development of argumentation in multimodal and hypertextual environments, which involve the understanding of information in a complex reading framework.

According to the above, it is possible to state that training in argumentation has been for years an imperative educational need in relation to the acquisition of communicative competence, even more so nowadays, where the development of critical thinking must be promoted in a context of multimodal and hypertextual reception. However, the difficulties are not only to be questioned within the framework of the subjects of Language and Literature, but as a whole in the priorities of the educational system itself and in the hectic pace of society, which do not promote the development of critical thinking, as even some of the key informants pointed out.

Additionally, considering the results obtained, in future research it will be relevant to extend the participants to a larger number of teachers at other levels, from a qualitative

perspective, which will continue to complete the reality studied. The practice of argumentation should not only be reserved for high school and university education, but its development and achievement involve other competencies that should be worked on as early as primary education. In this sense, some of the key informants argued that logical thinking should be fostered from primary education and the first years of compulsory secondary education.

Lastly, the conclusion must be drawn by calling for the need to promote the publication of didactic studies on the dialogic methodology of argumentative text commentary to support the teaching staff in the new learning and communication environments. It is imperative to use reality to adapt to reality. In addition, such studies would allow teachers to clarify the viability of their innovative beliefs since the crossroads shown in this research suggest the necessity of increasing reflective professional training on this subject.

Acknowledgments

Funding

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