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THE USE OF TEXTBOOKS IN THE SPANISH SCHOOL CONTEXT

An analysis on teachers' perspectives

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Abstract

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The tendency in the use of textbooks in Spain has raised questions in relation to the way teachers perceive the use of these materials, what are the reasons behind their use and the possible alternatives that can be introduced. With the use of a virtual ethnography, the present dissertation aims to examine a series of forums and blogs and this way, extract the reflections of Spanish teachers among these issues. The topics that arise derive on matters related to the role of teachers and textbooks, the teaching profession, educational values and the purpose of Education, which have been analysed while being based on Basil Bernstein's theory. The results have shown that these resources are indeed influencing the way education and society is configured. Teachers position very contrastingly either in favour or against the use of these materials, reflecting on the establishment of weak or strong frames and classification and also emphasizing the instrumental or the expressive orders. While textbook supporters believe that Education should be based on the accomplishment of the established demands specified on the curriculum, textbook detractors propose a series of alternatives that are based on the development of more moral contents in contraposition to an instrumentalized approach. However, in response towards a series of pressures that textbook detractors criticize at an institutional, political, and social level, some part of the teaching staff argues on their desire of implementing these materials. On the other hand, some teachers that position against the use of textbooks criticize precisely the fact that the way the teaching profession is configured does not allow them to introduce alternative materials, opening a debate that widens the distinction between teaching and educating and the way they see the purpose of Education.

Key words: textbooks, school context, teachers, publishing houses, education

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Throughout several decades the introduction of edited educational materials in the school context has become more apparent in Spain, where an important number of teachers make use of these materials in their daily basis. Several research works and data bases have reflected this tendency in the use of textbooks, which are known for their way of structuring, organizing and modulating the curriculum. These materials are formulated in a follow-up format comprising methodological guidelines, evaluation sheets, assessment criteria and educational contents and activities for every subject and stage of the school year. Due to their presence in the school setting, the debate among their legitimacy has confronted detractors and supporters of textbooks while arguing over their possible influence over education and society. Different factors that have encouraged teachers to implement these materials are incorporated and debated in this dissertation, which reflects on such matters as the teaching profession, educational principles, policy and society, all in relation to the use of textbooks in Spanish education. Teachers are at the center of the analysis, which focuses on examining the interactions, reflections, perspectives, and experiences that they share in a series of online blogs and forums.

1.1 Background

The textbook business in Spain

As it will be later presented, several authors have reflected the tendency in the use of textbooks in Spain by developing researches in this respect. However, they are not the only ones confirming the existence of this tendency. Data revealed by the reputable National Association of Book Editors and Teaching Material (ANELE) in Spain provides with specifications concerning the work of publishing houses and more concretely that of textbooks in Spain.

The report “El sector del libro de España” (The book sector of Spain) gathers the most relevant data from known statistics sources into a compilation of information concerning the commercialization, use and edition of books in Spain. As the report states, it has a permanent character, meaning that the new data is incorporated progressively every year with the aim of providing with the most updated information. This way, the data that is collected for the

elaboration of this report consist on the information extracted from specialist sources such as: The Spanish Editing Panoramic, Editing production Statistics, Survey of Cultural Practices and Habits, the Yearly Cultural Statistics, etc.

As the report states, Spain continues being one of the main publishing houses powers of the world. It is one of the countries in Europe with the most billing rates from publishing houses together with Germany, United Kingdom, France and Italy. Internationally speaking, it does also occupy an outstanding position in the ranking, being the 9th leading country in the publishing houses business.

It has been argued that this worldwide presence very likely relies on the fact that the Spanish language is shared among many countries, especially in Latin America, which as ANELE comments, it is the main receptor of Spanish book exportations. As the report claims:

“The publishing house industry in Spain is one of the most powerful and ancient of Europe and one of the Spanish industries with most international projection”.

It has been calculated that every week, 5 new publishing houses are born in Spain, A figure that is at the same time reflected on the levels of billing which are showing an increase during the last years. More specifically, the subsector with the greatest growing rate is that of textbooks (with almost the 40% of the total billing), an affirmation that provides this dissertation with a greater relevance. Textbooks are the type of books that generate more income in these publishing houses. In the year 2015, almost 46 million textbooks were sold, with a billing of 830.3 million euros. In fact, as the report states, the evolution of publishing houses production in Spain showed in this year a decrease in all of its products except for textbooks. This has been argued to be motivated by the implantation of the LOMCE (The Law for the Improvement of Educational Quality) in 2013 by the Ministry of Education and Culture from the conservative political party, known as “Partido Popular”.

What do we mean by textbooks?

By the term textbook are meant those books, and only those books, that students and teachers use in the school context, and that were produced explicitly for the purpose of supporting teaching and learning. Textbooks, in short, aim at educating readers in topics and subjects taught at school or university. Textbooks normally exist for every subject—Geography,

Mathematics, Biology, History, etc—with the aim of providing the students with the knowledge they are working with throughout the year.

Textbooks are characterized by their structure, which organizes different topics into a series of didactic units that include the contents that are generally designed with colourful and attractive texts and images, depending on the student's stage. These materials include activities and evaluation models for every unit.

Together with the student's textbook, publishing houses generally design a teacher's textbook containing the same information as the one for the pupils but with more details and proposals on the way to work every topic. They include the solutions to the exercises and several guidelines, sometimes even including the possible sentences that can be read out loud to introduce or explain the activities. These resources, as the ABC definition for this concept suggests, are constantly changing from one year to another, encouraging teachers and students to update this resource.

The literature review (chapter 3) will provide with a series of definitions provided by different authors that have carried out research works on textbooks to expand on the concept.

Why research on textbooks?

There are three main arguments that can be provided in order to explain the importance of conducting this study. On the first place, the prevailing research gap that will be later exposed suggests that this area has not received enough attention, especially in the Spanish setting. Therefore, the results that this dissertation aims to extract are until now unknown. Secondly, the growing tendency in the use of textbooks that was presented in the previous section underlines the relevance of the study in the actuality. The political, educational and social changes that characterize the Spanish context seem to have had possible repercussions over teaching practices, where an increasing number of teachers adopt textbooks as main pedagogical resources in the classroom context in response to a debated shift towards performativity. Finally, understanding these materials as potential influencers of education and society and vice versa from a socio-realistic perspective emphasizes its importance. It is therefore not conceived as an isolated didactic instrument in the school practice but a potentially influential element, also enhanced by its distinguished presence and predominance in teaching practices.

The political and consequent educational and social changes that have been characterizing the Spanish system have been reflected in the educational curriculum, which has changed its focus several times throughout the history. Some authors such as Martínez Bonafé (1991) suggest that there has been an increase in what he calls as the ideology of professionalism that was impelled by the sociodemocratic shift. In his research work, he commented on how teachers were presented to increasing demands and a turn towards a more technoburocratic, efficient and curricular character. Some arguments support that textbooks have become an indispensable guide in the implementation of the curriculum, simplifying the labour of teachers throughout these modifications developing this way an extended tendency in the use of this materials, which some authors such as Santomé (1989) describe as 'the current norm' (Santomé, 1989). Textbooks are predominantly assumed as facilitators of teaching practice and although some authors have considered this aspect as one of the great advantages in the use of these materials, understanding the need of establishing efficiency demands and curricular specifications to introduce common goals, others criticize precisely the fact that textbooks are specifically designed for teachers and not for students (Marín, 1997), questioning this way the legitimacy or ability of textbooks in relation to learning.

On both sides of the debates, however, it is essential to consider these materials as influential factors in the teaching and learning process. If the school context is considered the scenario where Education and learning takes place, there is an undeniable need of examining the educational instruments that are being implemented, especially if there is an outstanding use of these materials in a specific setting. In addition, bringing up the voice of teachers, who are considered the professionals in teaching also constitutes an important aspect when analysing educational matters since they are the ones that finally make the decisions and decide on how to interpret, implement the curriculum or define the power-relations in the classroom context.

It has been argued that the teaching responsibility that textbooks are acquiring leads to further questions in relation to the specific educational direction that Spain is currently taking. Although the definition of Education can hardly come to an agreement and the formulation of what should be taught or not depends on different variables and perspectives, understanding the aim of Education as a "facilitator of learning" (Roger, 1969, p.105) does motivate the need for further analysis on the way textbooks are accomplishing this aim. Teachers are in this sense the guides in self-learning or self-directed learning process of students, who are really the ones in

charge of their own learning and of making their personal choice in willing to learn or not. In this sense, if textbooks are considered educational materials, it is therefore important to establish a dialogue on the extent to which the sorts of educational practice they support, or implicitly or explicitly advocate, are driven by a more traditional curriculum-driven concept of education or allow also for more pupil-centred or problem-based learning, in which students can follow their own interests and initiatives in a variety of learning contexts.

1.2 Purpose and aims of the study

This research project aims to motivate a reflection on the way teachers perceive the use of textbooks and their influence on Education. It intends to establish a dialogue that reflects the insights on the kind of educational principles teachers believe in, how do these resources acknowledge or not their own principles and a debate among the purpose of Education. This study will come closer to an understanding on how teachers interpret teaching practice and what invites them to make use of these resources, offering an explanation for the extended tendency in the use of these materials while helping to critically analyse and describe the current landscape, hopefully encouraging the formulation of further questions in relation to this matter.

1.3 Research questions

- How do teachers perceive textbooks in the school context?
 - What is their position and what they think are the practical utilities of textbooks?
 - What obligations do they see to use these materials?
 - What do teachers see as a reasonable alternative to textbook guided teaching?

Further discussions might take place along their definition of education and how the use of these materials intervene in their description. Also, the freedom and teaching autonomy together with curriculum and political matters will be also present in the discussion

CHAPTER TWO: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Basil Bernstein's preoccupation with sociology, education and language has been manifest throughout his career and he developed remarkable studies that serve as an inspiration and reference for research in these areas. Although the sociologist is commonly acknowledged for his initial publications on linguistic codes and the influence of language on class configuration, his later work on pedagogic practices and educational transmissions is especially relevant for this study and is therefore in focus in what follows. Bernstein developed a complex and progressive body of thought that interconnects the sociology of language and the sociology of education, linking macro and micro levels of analysis. The coming section aims to synthesize and support the social realism (Moore 2012) of "Bernsteinian theory" while providing a justification for the selection of this analytical framework.

In his numerous studies, Basil Bernstein reflected on matters of social structure and reproduction, as well as on the formulation of identities and professions. A great part of this attention has been dedicated to the study of school organization, linguistics, and power relations. Several researchers have argued over his links to structuralism, due to the author's interpretation of the school organization (Sadovnik, 2001). Influenced by the classical structural sociology of Durkheim, the Bernsteinian theory describes a social context regulated by class differences, where the formation of social categories is the consequence of several influential factors that at different levels contribute to its reproduction. In his definition of Education, Bernstein describes it as an agency of social control, where the transmission of symbolic systems plays an essential role in social reproduction. According to this line of thought, schools are "major sources of social, occupational and cultural change" (Bernstein, 1975, p.37). Hence Bernstein attributes great relevance to schools (as educational institutions) in the configuration of society and education.

2.1 Educational Transmission of society and culture

An important part of Bernstein's work aims at establishing the principles that govern the transmission of educational values, specifically paying attention to the influence of formal

educational procedures over teachers, students and families, and vice versa. Bernstein notes the “critical importance of both the organizational structure and the knowledge structure of the school and the principles of transmission” (Bernstein 1975, p48), attributing an eminent relevance to the way in which educational contents, which he classifies into an expressive and an instrumental order, are addressed. Thus, the role positions of teachers, students and families are both tangible (expressed as facts) and reliant on the type of commitment they share with the educational practices that take place. Aiming to exemplify possible ways of individuals relating to school, Bernstein develops a framework of involvement that establishes five main roles that each depend on acceptance of the transmission of expressive and instrumental order: commitment, detachment, deferment, estrangement, and finally, alienation. The effect of shifting from one category to the other can be mirrored on the relationship between teachers and students, as well as on the relationship of the pupil to his family and community.

In his chapter on ‘Sources of consensus and disaffection in education’ (1966), Bernstein makes a comparison between socially divisive elements that take place, generally concerning prestige and economic function, and their role in the way the instrumental order ranks students. This concept of socially divisive elements enables him to comment on the influence of schools in society, and vice versa how society does also have an effect over the school:

“My point is simple. The more important a school is in re-ordering an individual’s place within society, the more can the type of involvement in the role of pupil have critical consequences for society. In pluralistic societies like ours, where there are many and conflicting images of conduct, character and manner, and where technological change is rapid, the school system is subject to many of these pressures. These pressures are translated to the pupil in terms of the character of his role involvement. The external pressures of the society as a whole are crystallized out and felt and experienced by the child in terms of each of these five roles he moves towards.” (Bernstein, 1975, p49)

While commenting on the social pressures that are directed towards school and students, Bernstein expresses what he believes to be the role of the school system in this context: “the school system need not necessarily be a passive mediator or, at worst, an amplifier for these general social pressures” (Bernstein, 1975, p49).

Bernstein's perspective clearly addresses questions related to the purpose of Education and the relationship of teaching, education and society, and these are relevant questions also in this dissertation. Furthermore, his theory highlights that the formal classroom procedures, aside from governing the strictures and habits of pedagogical practice as such, are also critical to the configuration of both society and education. This way, the use of specific pedagogical choices in the school context is not considered an isolated feature in the social and educational context, but instead is treated as an influential factor that has an important effect over the whole structure of education and society. The exercise of pedagogical choice, governed as it is by formal educational procedures, can therefore be analysed as a phenomenon within a specific context. In the case of this study, that context is the Spanish school system and the way it is shaping the transmission of social reproduction through education, including in particular how knowledge is translated from teachers to students and society. This theoretical assumption at the same time emphasizes the importance of conducting research on the particularly sizable role that educational publishers seem to play in the educational transmission of society and culture in Spain.

2.2 Social class and pedagogic practices

Bernstein's study of social class and pedagogic practices focuses on the different modalities and types of practices by which school practice is characterized, and their effect over students and society. In his analysis, Bernstein addresses, from a critical perspective, matters related to market-oriented forces in pedagogic practices, reflecting on their structure and the way knowledge is administered. This body of thought is especially relevant to the present dissertation, since it names and constructs the connections between economy and knowledge, education and society. Furthermore, Bernstein's constant references to the school context provide examples that may equally be applied to the use of textbooks in the school setting and will allow me to introduce relevant concepts to my analysis, such as the concept of visible and invisible pedagogies.

Bernstein distinguishes between practices that are focused on the procedures or competences of the students, which he names invisible pedagogies, and practices which emphasize the performance or external product of the child, which he names visible pedagogies. In this section, the analysis of Bernstein's visible pedagogies will be prioritized, since it correlates

with the kind of practices that take place in the Spanish school context with the use of textbooks, as we will see later.

Visible pedagogies are considered to be ordering and regulating, or in Bernstein's own words, "stratifying the practices of transmission" (Bernstein, 2004, p201) since they potentiate differences between children through the settlement of specific demands that are explicitly formulated to each and to all. This way, students, teachers and families are aware of the exact positioning of the pupil with the help of gradable evaluations that are considered to be 'objectively' performed according to supposedly clear standards (Bernstein, 1975). Reflecting his concerns about social classes, Bernstein elaborates on students who are unable to accomplish stated requirements. In his view, the working class and other ethnic groups in particular are most affected, due to their being constrained "to local, context-dependent, context-tied skills; by a world of facticity, making this visible pedagogy likely to distribute different forms of consciousness according to the social class origin of acquirers" (Bernstein, 2004, p205).

A further argument is achieved by establishing a link between visible pedagogies and market-oriented practices that create their own forms of instructions (i.e., teaching materials, manuals, etc.). These markets are primarily based on and driven by effectivity measurements, synthesized contents and success indicators which are generally explicitly listed. As Bernstein describes:

"Its arrogance lies in its claim to moral high ground and to the superiority of its culture, *its indifference to its own stratification consequences, its conceit in its lack of relation to anything other than itself, its self-referential abstracted autonomy.*" (Bernstein, 2004, p213)

The influence of educational materials such as textbooks and courseware over society and education are therefore clearly outlined in Bernstein's theory, which also raises important questions about the consequences of establishing such particular frames on working class pupils and thus on the reproduction of social stratification. Bernstein's theory therefore sharply portrays the social implications of education, and more specifically the educational transmission and pedagogical practices in the configuration of knowledge, education and society, including several references to teaching and the school context. In analysing pedagogy as set of tools for the reproduction of social structure, Bernstein's theoretical apparatus thus

constitutes a powerful baseline for the present dissertation. In the case of textbooks, for example, the structure of contents and the primary role it gives to assessment criteria and evaluations are explicitly stated and foregrounded throughout all of the material. Bernstein comments on the way in which frames (another key Bernsteinian concept) delineate knowledge and how competitiveness is enforced by the explicitness of criteria (Bernstein, 1975).

2.3 Framing and classification theory

The concepts of framing and classification proposed by Basil Bernstein are especially relevant in the present dissertation, since they delineate the structure of the educational transmission code of pedagogic discourse (Moore, 2013). Previous research works have also been influenced or inspired by this theory. For Maton and Muller (2007, p.17) they “enable not only the thick description prized in much educational research but also thick explanation”.

This way, the educational knowledge code proposed by Bernstein analyses what he names as “the three message systems” which correspond to: curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation. Rob Moore described these three fundamental pillars by referring to “what is transmitted, the teaching ‘style’ and the examination or the criteria of evaluation as to the success of the transmission” (Moore, 2013, p.128). Thus, the theory on classification and framing aims to provide with some relevant focus on the boundaries of education where the classification corresponds to the ‘relationships between contents’ and the frames to the ‘structure or pedagogy’.

This last concept—of frames, and framing—is key to Bernstein’s theory and highly relevant to this dissertation, since it focuses on the boundaries of the knowledge that are transmitted, and the way of doing so. As it was previously discussed, textbooks are considered pedagogic resources that contend the knowledge to be learned by the students, being situated in the intersection between teachers and students. The use of these materials as the main pedagogic instrument will therefore shape and define the boundaries of the *pedagogic relationship*. Bernstein (1975, p.88) emphasizes the importance of understanding the exact meaning of this concept by underlining that “frame does not refer to the contents of pedagogy but to the strength of the boundary of what it transmitted and what is not”. Thus, as the author states when a frame is strong, there is a bigger boundary between “what may and may not be transmitted”:

“Thus, frame refers to the degree of control teacher and pupil possess over the selection, organization, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted and received in the pedagogical relationship” (Bernstein, 1975, p.89).

On the other side, the concept of classification does also play an important role in the theoretical background behind textbooks since they do not only frame or shape the pedagogic boundaries in the formulation of pedagogic identity but also organize the teaching practices into the educational contents that are to be taught. For Moore (2013, p. 130), “it can be further noted that classification has to do with power over the pedagogic process in terms of the social distribution of category relations (macro) and framing with control within it in terms of the regulation of the transmission process (micro). This way, as Bernstein suggest, classification refers to the relationships between contents. As he states (1975), when classification is strong, contents are isolated from each other. Where classification is weak, contents are diffuse and unstable, and boundaries between them are vague. This point again contributes to a wider description of this resources, which appear to reflect a strong classification while structuring the educational contents in different subjects, which are also physically separated into different textbooks.

While pedagogy is connected to the variations in frames, classification relates to those of the curriculum. In his analysis of both concepts, Bernstein describes teacher’s and student’s positioning throughout this perspectives and comments on how strong framing increases the teacher’s power over the student but at the same time strong classification reduces it due to the differentiation or separation that is made of what is to be transmitted and the possible difficulties in “over-stepping”.

Finally, evaluation, as the author states, “is a function of the strength of classification and frames” (Bernstein, p.89, 1975), it would therefore consist on the “valid realization of this knowledge (Bernstein, p.85, 1975). which can also vary from each other. It is therefore a feature that depends on the strength of the boundaries of both concepts and that will delineate the criteria to determine the successfulness of the pedagogic transmission.

CHAPTER THREE: LITERATURE REVIEW

Several research studies have analysed the use of textbooks, due to their obvious relevance to the school context. Textbooks are pedagogical resources that have played and play a persistent role in the classroom routines of the private and public Education of several countries—indeed, their persistent ubiquity makes them as relevant a phenomenon, and as characteristic of education, as the use of teachers. Therefore, textbooks have attracted the attention of many researchers, who have described this tendency for education systems to spawn a thriving worldwide market for textbooks, sold by publishing houses that in some cases serve education as their original, primary or even sole business. In the research that has been done on textbooks, arguments in favour and against textbooks confront each other. This confrontation tends to focus on two topics that seem to consistently characterize the subject matter of the available scholarly literature: the role of teachers and their use of textbooks, and educational policies and its use of textbooks.

In the context of both a historically steadily growing rate in the use of textbooks and the current shift towards the centralised, government-controlled introduction of ever greater performativity in education systems world-wide, the subrogation of teaching practice is being widely proclaimed and questioned.

Gert Biesta closely related the concept of traditional teaching to ‘teaching as control’ and argued that the emergence towards focusing on the learner rather than on the teacher has been driven by this relationship. In this line and since textbooks have been considered traditional resources that have acquired a teaching responsibility throughout their follow-up formats, his contributions are especially relevant in understanding the effect of these materials and therefore the importance of researching on this topic:

“The problem with the idea of teaching as control is that in such a relationship the student can never appear as a subject but remains an object. In a world that is not interested in the subjectness of the human being this is, of course, not a problem. The question is whether this is a world we should desire”. (Gert Biesta, 2016, p.387).

Furthermore, when reflecting on what the educational responsibility and the responsibility of the educator is in this context, Biesta (2017) establishes a connection between “emancipation and freedom”:

“The educational work should aim for or be interested in: arousing the desire in another human being for wanting to exist in a grown-up way (...) by seeing it in existential rather than developmental terms”. (Biesta, p.20, 2017).

The detractors of textbooks base their criticism on arguments about the negative effects of textbooks and their standardised forms of knowledge and knowledge transmission on the critical faculties of students, on the deprofessionalisation of teachers, and on a reputed political interference and proletarianization of knowledge in Education. Along a similar line, textbook researchers following a trend that seems rooted in contributions made by critical sociologists such as Bourdieu and Shultz, focus more on human and social capital and their connections to a current landscape in which the marketization of a pre-designed education seems to be shifting the education towards the accomplishment of pre-designed, pre-packaged and thereby necessarily constrained goals and objectives. This latter perspective contrasts most starkly with a neoliberal movement that precisely highlights the urgent need of achieving specific demands, namely those of a particular type of labour force. Neoliberal ideas are of course highly compatible with a capitalist ideology in which the obsessive pursuit of greater effectivity and higher performance play an essential role in maintaining economic systems. Indeed, several supporters of textbooks precisely understand textbooks as powerful instruments that offer a synthesized and coherent interpretation of a curriculum that needs integrally to be met by all learners, so driving education to ever higher standards while expressing common objectives. This perspective can therefore be considered neoliberal precisely because it argues the purpose of Education by proclaiming the need for adapting learning to current economic and labour demands, for which specific contents and achievement criteria are required. The two sections in which I discuss the literature below follow the order of the two main topics that emerged in the scholarly literature: the role of textbooks in relation to teaching, and the role of textbooks in relation to education policy. In each of these two sections, I have attempted to capture, across the various researchers’ contributions, scholarly debate about particular educational features that textbooks are claimed to either support or put at risk. The chapter will close with a summary of those features and the risks/support that textbooks offer.

3.1 Negotiating the concept “textbook” in education

The definition of this concept has been discussed by several authors who have approached the research on this topic from different angles. Mainly, there appears to be two different understandings or recognitions of the concept of ‘textbook’ in the literature that has been selected for the analysis: textbook as tools for teaching practice on the one hand and textbooks as Education and knowledge carriers, on the other. These materials, as Choppin (1992, p102) states, can be studied from different viewpoints, since “they are at the same time products of consumption, supporters of scholar knowledge, ideological vectors and cultural pedagogical instruments”. The following section will analyse and provide some examples of the different definitions and approaches of some of the selected literature works.

Textbooks as Education and knowledge carriers

The Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research (2016) defined textbooks as knowledge and information carriers that one generation is willing to hand to the next one. Several authors in this section have approached the research throughout a similar understanding of textbooks, building arguments in relation to the type of Education that is introduced by textbooks, the methodologies that are being implemented and the effects of these materials over knowledge and society. The research in this area is mainly characterized by the use of a critical voice -both in favour and against the use of textbook- that aims to reflect upon this matter which they all consider especially relevant in the current setting, were the presence of textbooks in the school context is very noticeable. This way, aspects related to organizational and structural aspects of textbooks in teaching practice are avoided and instead debates along the relevance of textbooks in Education, knowledge and society build up the discussions.

Manifesting her awareness of what she says is one of the main if not the principal resource for the teaching profession, Aran (1996) defines textbooks as a curricular material that is prioritized by the majority of the teachers, which importantly depend on their use and confine their teaching to what the textbook states. Throughout her research and specially in her concluding section the author emphasizes the importance of building a dialogue between the educational sector and the publishing houses in the elaboration of curricular materials in order to propitiate an improvement of educational quality. As she states there is a need for promoting “more reflexive, critical and autonomous decisions of teachers over their own approaches, which will

help improve the quality of the professional performance of the teaching staff and consequently improve the educational quality” (p.150). Following a similar reasoning of the concept of textbooks Braga Blanco and Belver Domínguez, (2016, p201) refer to textbooks as “transmitters of a specific vision of the reality that represents the official knowledge”. The authors elaborate on the contributions of 120 students in relation to this topic and conceive these materials as resources that are uniformizing and standardizing learning processes while offering a unique vision of cultural messages and introducing an individualistic methodology. From a different perspective however, Escolano Benito (2009) perceives textbooks not as transmitters of these processes but as a reflection of the society, where the values, attitudes, stereotypes and ideologies of dominant mentalities are embodied. Throughout his article he elaborates on how textbooks are synthesizers of the culture and representations of the world we live in, adjusting to what educational institutions aim to transmit suggesting a different way of understanding textbooks.

Textbooks as tools for teaching practice

Moving away from a debate or discussion along the Educational and knowledge dimension of textbooks and its effect upon society, some authors have focused specifically on labelling the organizational and structural aspects of this topic, aiming to contribute to a broader understanding of the current teaching practices, instead. This way some of them comment on matters of lesson programming, structure of activities and content, and contextualization of the materials.

In this respect, Artiles (1994) provided with some relevant results that comment on the way teachers make use of these materials in their daily basis. Exceptionally this is the only research paper that is settled in the Spanish context and which also settles teachers as one of the main subjects of study. Thus, the main focus relies on understanding textbooks as useful tools in the programming of activities and the organization of classroom routines. The author suggests that teachers conceive textbooks as valid and faithful translators of the curriculum and that generally understand them as a powerful instrument in the configuration of the classroom programming. This way, one of the teacher’s comments “*there is a programming with the most important objectives, the contents and the activities...otherwise it would be very difficult to work*” (Artiles, 1994, p.109). Although the research questions in the study initially pointed also at a possible dialogue over the way teachers “conceive and believe in Education” (Artiles, 1994, p.60) and

how these perceptions are translated in teaching practice, throughout the research, the specific questions that were raised in relation to this matter were predominantly based on the way teachers structure and organize their lessons. This way one of the initial objectives of the research paper was excluded but on the other hand, other kind of results that contribute to the understanding of how teachers work with textbooks and what they find useful about them in relation to the school routines were favoured.

Gomez Mendoza (2016) is perhaps more explicit in the way of approaching the topic. He defines the concept as a “didactic resource that contains lessons, activities and is simultaneously a reference tool and a space for school training” (Gómez Mendoza, 2006 p.34). In an attempt to label the main utilities of textbooks for teachers, the author argues on the main characteristics that highly influence the selection criteria of Chilean teachers: the overall organization of activities in a coherent and progressive way and the scientific correctness of the content, among others. This way the professor comments that textbooks are designed for a specific audience (referring to teachers and students) which genuinely search for a resource capable of accomplishing the mentioned demands. Following a very similar line, we can find another example in Ceballos and Blanco (2008), where the authors make an analysis of the kind of activities that are included in textbooks dealing with some mathematical problems and point out the problematic in the absence of real life problems that can contextualize rather than simulate situations in the math exercises, the lack of variety in the activities and the importance of visual input.

3.2 The role of teachers and textbooks in the school context

In a context where textbooks are very often the only resource introduced in the classroom context as Ceballos & Blanco (2008) affirm, the whole educational practice seems, for some researchers, to be aiming towards the accomplishment of “what the textbook states”. In fact, Marín (1997) describes these materials as rigid, unstimulating, lacking of critical analysis and ideologically unneutral, and claims that the scholarship is organized around the consumption of the textbook business, which she as she states:

“Instead of being an auxiliary support for learning, the monopoly in the use of these materials has turned into the final goal, impoverishing this way the function of teachers” (Marín, 1997, p.1).

The consequences of settling textbooks at the head of educational practices is for the author affecting the professionalization and autonomy of teachers, which he argues have been excluded from any kind of decision in educational matters while handing over the interpretation of the curriculum to publishing houses. In his article Marin uses Apple's (1989) theory arguing on the double intentions of textbooks in controlling the curriculum and teaching practice to reflect on the way that for him textbooks are intending to "socialize individuals into a specific social model" (Marín, 1997, p.1). Along his article, he highlights the importance of teachers being trained to develop critical and reflective competences and criticizes the way textbooks are specifically designed for teacher's use and not for students'. The author claims that the production of these curricular materials is done by subjects that are aliens to Teaching, the publishing houses. They are the ones supposedly interpreting the compulsory contents legislated by the administration and therefore structuring and deciding on how and what is to be done in the classroom context, something that for the author is a task that professionally corresponds to teachers. This, as she comments, has specific consequences over the lack of autonomy and deprofessionalisation of the teachers, who seem to lose its power not only on deciding upon educational issues but also missing the opportunity of formulating their own interpretation of the curriculum.

Supporting this statement, Caputi (2014) points at the problematic in the exclusiveness that is being handed to textbooks. For the author, the textbooks have stopped being an ally for the teacher and instead are occupying the charge of planning the whole educational structure. They appear to offer this way a specific and complete formulation of contents, sequences, assessment criteria, activities, etc. leaving very little space, if any, to the input made by the teacher. Subsequently this leads to a vicious cycle, where deprofessionalisation leads to teacher's dependency on textbook and dependency leads to deprofessionalisation. She describes textbooks as tools of "symbolic violence through which hegemonic social groups are imposing meaning" (Caputi, 2014, p4) and also reflects on the relationship of publishing houses and teachers, which as she states lack of participation in the decision among educational issues and the elaboration of curricular materials. Furthermore, she emphasizes the need for teachers to select throughout a critical analysis the different textbooks and claims that in several cases marketing strategies affect their choices.

These arguments are also present in Beck and Young's (2005) article, that basing their arguments on the Bernsteinian analysis, comment on the restructuration of teacher's profession and the way publishing houses are challenging the "once securely established legitimacy and autonomy of professional and academic work" (p193). This perspectives that have been described label one side of the panorama in the debate of the use of textbooks. However, there is a dimension that describes a completely opposite role of teachers in this setting and their relationship to textbooks.

Basing himself on Bernstein's work, Mascaro (1995) proposes that the parameters that are settled in textbooks could be useful in order to embrace what has already been discovered and what still has not. In this sense, textbooks could be important facilitators of teachers' work and at the same time a way of collecting, schematizing, and organizing the information. Using a very similar approach, the work of Campanario (2001) is especially similar to Mascaro's since it also labels some of the most important advantages of the use of these materials. The author comments on the information input that facilitates teaching and learning process, the diversity of activities and the numerous assessment/evaluation exercises that are available for teacher's use. In her article the author also makes a series of recommendations in the use of textbooks and provides examples of some possible new uses of these materials while defending that depending on the use that is made of them, they can be conceived as innovative resources or not.

Similarly, Alberto (2012) approaches his study in Honduras by introducing a mixed method analysis in the examination of student's achievement and textbook selection. The results of this research suggest that textbooks significantly influence student's performances and as part of his study he also outlines the selection criteria that teachers should consider when selecting textbooks. For the author, these resources are considered valuable, illustrative and practical tools in the transmission of pedagogical contents. In order to measure the student's outcomes, the author makes numerous references to TIMSS, making use of these schemes along the study in order to measure the improving factors.

Allwright (1981) on the other hand focuses on the side of teacher's profession by arguing that textbooks are according to the *difference view* the carriers of the decisions best made by

someone other than the classroom teacher because the expertise required to elaborate these materials is importantly different from that required of classroom teachers- who the author describes as “people who have the interpersonal skills to make classrooms good places to learn in” (Allwright, 1981, p.6). In addition, he also comments on a contrasting view-the *deficiency view*- claiming that teaching materials are important in order to avoid the deficiencies of teachers from intervening in the correct formulation of the syllabus and the teaching of exercises.

The role of teachers in the school context has been defined by several authors differently. There are some descriptions that settle teachers as the main Education carriers, lending them a significant relevance in the learning of the students, whereas others conceive them as managers of a previously established system, being the vehicles of Education, instead. In a similar way, when debating among policy and the use of textbooks as educational resources different conceptions are reflected.

3 .3 Educational policy and use of textbooks

Following the debate among Education and textbooks, a big number of literature works have discussed matters related to educational policies and the use that is made of textbooks. Several criticisms towards the publishing industry point at the influence of both the effects of marketizations and government intervention (Beck and Young, 2005). This way, as a product of these interferences, the textbooks have been even categorized by Santomé (1989) as “political tools” that are being implemented to reproduce specifically the conceptions of the “cultural capital” of dominant groups. The author affirms that textbooks are highly dependent on the approval of the Ministry and therefore, as he comments, “*deep inside, it is only an authoritarian imposition of what is good, valid, or truthful*” (Santomé, 1989, p.2) Furthermore, he reflected on the consequent “expropriation of knowledge and abilities of the working class and the teacher”, and the mass production of disqualified teachers.

With a similar perspective, Martínez Bonafé (1991;1994) strongly positioned himself by arguing on the linkage of education, proletarianization and knowledge expropriation. For the author, it is important to understand teaching practice in a context of production and capitalist accumulation, where tensions between teachers and state culminate on the external control of their activities and as he describes, the State acts as a servant of Capital. He continues by arguing

that the schools are reproducing the stratified social order that leans on sexual, class and race inequalities, maintaining the actual relations of domination and exploitation in the capitalist societies.

“The teacher is displaced into the work of a technician making a prescription whereas the conception level is carried by the curriculum contents (...) From a Marxist perspective, it has been affirmed that the employer buys the working strength from the employee, who possesses the value of “use”. The professional knowledge of the teaching worker is worth the technical competence to execute plans, whereas the conception and design of the plan is managed by the employer which is situated in a superior level of the system.” (Translation from Martínez Bonafe, 1991, p 14).

Furthermore, Nicholas Burbles (Roth and Gur-Zeev, 2007) comments on the current purpose of education by highlighting the fact that the main goal seems “to prepare people for a lifetime of work”. This, as the educationalist suggests, delineates the linkage between education and economy, which is, as he describes “fundamentally shaping the aim and purposes of education”. The result is however a significant concern in what relates to the measurement of performance through testing. This same author also argued the fact that many teachers are blinded towards the achievement of these demands and also, how in the search towards the accomplishment of specific testing scores, teachers are unable of thinking reflectively about their own educational performances:

“In this society, many educators are preoccupied with these instrumental goals. They have no time, they have very little energy, and they have very little incentive for thinking reflectively or philosophically because they have so much to worry about, in terms of the very specific goals that are defined for them, not defined by themselves (...) In these high stakes situations, getting higher test scores becomes an end itself, not as an evaluative tool, not as a mark of better teaching, but as an instrumental goal. Hence, many teachers are understandably desperate to make sure that they cover the material in their classes that will help their student do as well as possible on these examinations, whether it is educationally important or relevant information or not.” (Nicholas Burbles at an interview for Education in an Era of Globalization (Roth and Gur-Zeev, 2007, p.17)

On the other side, questioning this perspective, authors such as Benejam (1993) and Hargreaves (2000) point at the fact way textbooks guarantee the formulation of the already preestablished educational contents and how they restore the centrality of the discourse, communication and the authority of teachers, understanding this way textbooks as synthesizers of the political educational decisions. Very similarly, Mascaró (1995) positions himself by arguing on the advantages of having the public, explicit an open information in textbooks that is not only is organized and gradually structured but also contributes to building up frames that can serve as reference and formulate in a precise way the idea of learning and its different stages.

Also defending the use of textbooks Cabero Almenara, Hueros, María and Romero (1995) argue on the systematicity that textbooks offer in relation to psychological and didactic principals that facilitate the understanding and assimilation of the established contents. This way, the study underlines aspects such as the compartmentalization of the contents (both present in the curriculum and the textbooks) and also the progressive order by which they are organized. Textbooks are in this sense viewed as organizational and sometimes necessary resources in the correct implementation of educational contents. This aspect, was similarly emphasized by other authors such as Alzate Piedrahita, Gómez Mendoza, and Romero Loaiza (1999) who consider that these resources have an incalculable value since they are intermediaries between political decisions, students and teachers and are situated in the intersection of education, culture and market. They defend the relevance of textbooks in structuring the “basic knowledge that students are supposed to acquire” (1999, p.51) and the coherent connection between school practice and educational policy through the use of these resources.

3.4 Chapter summary

The literature review reflects two major perspectives in the conception of textbooks. The scholarly literature that has been selected deals mainly with matters related to the role of teachers, the use of textbooks and political matters. As the literature suggest, textbook supporters claim that there are a series of advantages derived from the use of textbooks that comprise, for example, the accessibility to information, the explicitness and organization of the contents and its progression and the need towards establishing common educational goals. Whereas on the other hand, detractors of these resources criticize the consequent deprofessionalisation of teachers, a possible governmental intromission in the establishment of specific demands and the instrumentalization o education.

At the same time, the literature review has reflected an important gap in the research related to textbooks. Some studies have shown to be similarly connected to this topic but have either excluded teacher's perspectives or have only limited the study to comment on the organizational aspects of teaching practice. In addition, there is also an important characteristic to be considered in this respect which is the inexistence of recent literature works that label the current educational situation describing teacher's perceptions. Furthermore, various of the literature works are settled in the Latin American context, which although could in a way offer relevant insights on the situation of textbooks in these countries they do not elaborate on the outstanding and almost exceptional presence of these materials in Spain. This way, it is possible to determine that there is indeed a prevailing gap in the research in relation to textbooks in the current Spanish context that analyses teacher's perceptions.

CHAPTER FOUR: METHODOLOGY

The methodology that has been selected is based on virtual ethnography. Virtual ethnography is a variety of traditional ethnographic method but treating technological environments as the ‘field’ in which to collect data. Discussion of it here is indebted to the contributions of Christine Hine, who has reflected on this innovative form of doing research in various relevant publications (Hine, 2000). The data extracted for analysis will be the product of an active involvement on specific forums and blogs, aiming to address the way teachers perceive the use of textbooks through the use of their own contributions and reflection. This way, the use of technology as the main field for this research allows the participation and involvement of the researcher in the interactions among the teaching community, who share experiences, concerns, and debate among specific educational and social matters. Furthermore, it also grants the possibility of analysing the virtual interactions and the way informants experience the use of technology.

4.1 The cyberspace

Throughout the last decades, the increase in the use of social media has propitiated a greater participation on public forums and blogs, where different virtual communities have been brought together with the intention of sharing experiences and concerns. This expansion of the online world has brought the attention of several researchers, who as Christine Hine, have considered this scenario as a great opportunity for addressing different cultural and social characteristics, subjected by the modern society. In this setting, the virtual and the real are connected in the cyberspace, whose technologies as Hine (2000, p. 67) expresses “are used and understood differently in different contexts, and which have to be acquired, learnt, interpreted and incorporated into context”.

This understanding of the internet as a contextualized rather than as an isolated system allows the researcher to benefit from several advantages. On the first place, the access to a specific community or context is facilitated by the fact of not having to organize or coincide in a physical or face to face interaction, breaking all the geographic barriers. In addition, the people

participating in forums and debates about specific matters are those who are interested in sharing their opinion and perspective on specific topics, either because they make use of textbooks or because they are willing to express their viewpoints. In this sense, the researcher is able to contact very easily with the target informants. In the case of this dissertation specifically this point is especially important since it contributes to connect with the teachers in Spain who are making use of text books or are interested in debating among this specific issue, something that perhaps could have been more complicated in a face to face interaction.

On the other hand, the opportunity to go back in time allows the researcher to contact with previous information which might be as well useful. In the case of researches which do not necessarily need data gathered from immediate interventions, the possibility of doing so facilitates the work of the researcher and also contributes with relevant information. In the case of researchers that aim to examine a process or development of a specific aspect this kind of method can be completely recommendable. In this dissertation, although the information aims to reflect the present perceptions in the use of textbooks, interventions or reflections that have been formulated some months ago are also considered of relevance. Finally, the written text in the virtual scenarios offer the chance to pay special attention to the development of discussions and reflections. The analysis in this case of linguistic symbols and codes also supposes an interesting input that can be gathered as data. Thus, as Hine (2000, p.22) expresses, such structured responses “reinforce the sense of an ongoing discussion rather than isolated utterances”.

4.2 An ethnographic approach

Implementing an ethnographic approach to the research project encourages to build a reflexive dialogue on the experiences and interpretations of a specific context. As Hine expresses, it enables a “deeper sense of understanding of meaning creation” (Hine, 2000, p.26). The use of this dynamic kind of methodology has been implemented by several researchers who defend the need of familiarizing with an unknown context by participating in it in order to learn from its natural state. Although there are many different ways of approaching an ethnography, one of the suggestions that the author expresses is to avoid making use of disturbing techniques, which as surveys or experiments might deform the natural status of the context. Following some of these recommendations, the research project makes use of an active participation with the main objective of avoiding any interruption or intrusion in the blogs and forums that have been

selected. Instead, motivating the participation and active involvement of the informants is enhanced by including my own input to the conversation, sharing and proposing ideas and also answering to any questions that might come up. This kind of participation is therefore not limited to an observation but it also requires from an involvement and constant learning. Sharing opinions, ideas and interacting through the forums and blogs allows the researcher to get involved in the situation and reflect among the practices that take place by also analysing its own experience in the setting.

Furthermore, the use of the ethnography enables in this case to amplify the research scope by analysing two main aspects: On the one hand the input that is given by the informants where they comment, reflect and position in relation to their teaching and on the other hand a reflection on the way they experience the use of technology along the process. This way, the objective is no longer reduced to the understanding of the informants when dealing with matters of the 'offline world' but also to understand the context and the use that is made to internet as a resource. Thus, the role of technology in this specific provides with relevant information on the relationships and perceptions of the informants. Indeed, for Hine (2000, p.11) "Ethnography can therefore be used to develop an enriched sense of the meanings of the technology and the cultures which enable it and are enabled by it". This way, especial attention is paid to the way people describe, reflect and define specific concepts and perspectives through their texts.

4.3 The methodological dilemma

The implementation of this revolutionary way of approaching research has also promoted the formulation of different perspectives that argue over the heuristic approach of research on the Internet. This way, Hine (2000, p.12) expresses two main possibilities in the conception of the online world; On the one hand, the realization of the internet representing "a place, cyberspace where culture is formed and reformed" and on the other hand the viewing of this virtual scenario as a product of culture, a *cultural artefact*. As the author expresses, (Hine, 2000, p.55) "The status of the Internet as a way of communicating, as an object within people's lives and as a site for community-like formations is achieved and sustained in the ways in which it is used, interpreted and reinterpreted".

Conceiving the internet as cultural artefacts encourages researches to dig into the way human being has developed a new form of communication, specifically shaped by a social context and

in a historical moment. It can be therefore understood as an object or resource with “meanings outside a restricted technical elite” (Hine, 2000, p.32). This way the development of the internet through history is seen as a cultural achievement whereas on the other hand, the concept of internet as part of culture understands the online world as a context itself. It therefore “offers up the possibility of seeing online phenomena as functional in a social sense” (Hine, 2000, p.21). Thus, internet can be, for the author, considered a reflection or extension of the cultural modern world concerns, being relevant the use of observational practices as a form of approaching specific behaviours, relations, meanings and interactions.

Although these two different ways of understanding the internet might apparently contrast with each other in some cases these two methodological lines have been intertwined. An example is described by Hine on the Louise Woodward case (Hine, 2000), where the internet was portrayed as a significant location of events (since the judge of the case released his ruling on the internet) and at the same time as an object for readers and viewers to access the case. The combination of both meanings of the internet can be therefore possible in a single given situation. This interpretation can be also extrapolated to the present dissertation where the internet can be understood as an object or as part of the culture.

Thus, the development of thoughts, perspectives and discussions position the internet as a location of context of a specific cultural situation. This way teachers interact with each, reflecting conjointly among educational and social matters, expecting responses and input from other members and constructing a series of dialogues and debates. On the one hand, the internet is implemented by teachers as a way of communicating or approaching to others with the intention of transmitting the offline world to the net and at the same time solving concerns that are later introduced in their teaching practice. It is therefore also a way of accessing information given by other teachers who might be in similar situation, asking doubts and using the internet as an instrument rather than as a cultural space.

4.4 Selection and collection of data

The selection of the forums and blogs for the study consists on the following four main criteria: On the first place, forums and blogs that are specifically focused on educational aspects are prioritized in order to find greater implications of teachers in the conversation. Secondly, and as it has been mentioned before, the selected discussions and conversations must have a close

relationship with the research questions. Although the dialogues might vary, especially with the interventions in the conversation, a close relation to the educational aspects of textbooks and on the expression of perceptions and perspectives in the use of these materials in the school context must be established. In this sense, the forums which are led by teachers arguing on the different publishing houses or on talking about specific ways of structuring some activities, for example, are excluded. Thirdly, the forums and blogs selected for the research project are Spanish examples in order to adhere to the research setting.

Intending not to interrupt the natural status of the conversations in relation to the use of textbooks in Spain, surveys and experimental techniques are avoided, and instead an intervention in the conversations with other teachers is introduced. As Hine (2000, p.57) expresses, the aim of ethnographic research is to "attempt to make the invisible visible by asking questions or exploring scenarios with willing informants". This way, the dialogues are experienced in a dynamic and active way, involving on the augments and debates along the use of textbooks and also the sharing of ideas, concerns and perspectives. At the same time, although the natural path of the interactions is respected, specific questions in relation to the research topic are presented in order to encourage an active participation of the other teachers to discuss about the use of textbooks from an educational perspective, aiming to raise responses and feedback in relation to the way they perceive these materials, how do textbooks acknowledge their educational principals and the motivators in the decision of applying these resources in the classroom context.

A total of two forums and four blogs were selected for the data collection. The blogs that were used belonged to teachers that generally used this platform to comment on educational matters. In this case not only the content of the blogs was used but also the responses of several teachers. In the case of the forums, several conversation lines were dedicated for different topics: teaching practice, school organization, personal experiences, teaching exams, doubts, etc. The selected forums were specifically directed to teachers in Spain, who quite regularly commented on about different aspects. The data collection process lasted for about 4 to 5 months. In order to propitiate more interactions, I remained quite active in the conversations, making comments two or three times per week. The amount of data that was collected did not always dealt with the research questions, so the initial corpus that had over 50 pages was reduced to 30. The data that was collected provided with more information than needed to answer the research

questions. However, my interactions in these forums and blogs still take place for personal interest. Finally, I would like to add that the reason for not providing any more specification about the forums and blogs is to ensure the anonymity of the participants. However, it is important to say that these sources are publicly available.

4.5 Ethical implications

The increasing participation on social media has challenged the original vision of ethnography which until now has characterized several research works. The criticism towards implementing this methodology is indeed present among researchers, which have argued on the impossibility of verifying the identity of the informants and also on the effects of invisible interactions. For this reason, the following point will deal with a discussion among the ethical implications on the use of virtual ethnography, serving this way as a justification for the implementation of this methodology in the present dissertation and discussing one of the most debated aspects in relation to virtual research which is the identity and authenticity of the informants. As Hine expresses while commenting on the contributions of Poster and Turkle, there are two ways of approaching it:

“Identity play might simply be viewed as people exploiting the potential of the medium to try out a different role, or it might be seen as a fundamental threat to the idea of a unified self “(Hine, 2000, p.23 on Poster, 1995; Turkle, 1995).

Identity and authenticity

The interactions in the electronic space have been severely questioned by those who doubt of their authenticity. This aspect is strictly connected to the unpredictability that the virtual scenario is characterized with and also with the unknown identity of the informants, which can be hardly be confirmed. As Hine (2000, p.127): “the net is a dangerous place to get information (...) anyone says just about anything they want to and people tend to believe what they read without wondering about verifying the source of the information”.

For the author, since ethnography has always involved a physical space that implies face-to-face interactions, this has always been considered the most appropriate. In this sense, virtual ethnography might be breaking the schemes by transcending to this physical face-to-face interaction and instead allowing visual anonymity which might at the same time as the author

stated allow people to “deliberately play with their identities and adopt different personae” (Hine, 2000, p 121).

The reliability of the internet and the impossibility of confirming what is truthful has led to several debates. Authors such as Harrington and Bielby (1995), comment that “the conditions for people to trust one another are absent in computer-mediated information exchanges”. In this sense, in order to evaluate the quality of the information face-to face interactions are considered indispensable.

On the other side, however some researchers have supported these virtual scenarios by stating that although the internet does have several users who lie about their identity, there are many others that “produce quite stable and consistent identity performances” (Baym (1998) or that “the lack of physical travel does not mean, however, that the relationship between ethnographer and readers is collapsed”. (Hine, 2000, p.48). Thus, it is essential to consider the identity of the informant as one of the several parts that conform an ethnography and understand the role of ethnographer and the context in the study of virtual scenarios:

“The point for the ethnographer is not to bring some external criterion for judging whether it is safe to believe what informants say, but rather to come to understand how it is that informants judge authenticity. This also entails accepting that ‘the informant’ is a partial performance rather than a whole identity”. (Hines, 2000, p.52).

Therefore, rather than testing the authenticity of the identities, there is another aspect that should be prioritized which is understanding the context where the interactions take place and analysing how these interactions are developed. As Hines (2000, p.125) states while commenting on Potter (1996), who developed several works in relation to this matter, “Rather than considering whether the accounts that people give one another are true or false”, the point relies on “how people themselves manage and understand descriptions and their facticity”. Both the internet discourse and the context become the target for the ethnographer, which through the constant interaction and participation in a specific context can establish a relationship with the informants. In this sense, the offline and online do not share so many differences. For the author, there is a connection between these two that brings them together in the testing of authenticity:

“Where authenticity and identities are performed, a link between the offline and the online is also rendered. People speaking about who they are and what is the case are making a statement about a feature of the offline world. Rather than the Internet severing links with the offline, these links are strategic performances. The offline world is rendered as present within the online spaces of interaction. It is not true to say, then, that the virtual automatically transcends the real. The spaces of interaction might be differently configured and differently experienced, but they do not lose all reference to offline realities”. (Hines, 200, p.148)

A further debate in relation to this matter is presented by Hine, who reflects among the meaning that is given to authenticity by suggesting the connection between what authenticity and a person are according to different assumptions:

“The question remains then whether interactions in electronic space should be viewed as authentic, since the ethnographer cannot readily confirm details that informants tell them about their offline selves. Posing the problem in this way, however, assumes a particular idea of what a person is (and what authenticity is). Authenticity, in this formulation, means correspondence between the identity performed in interactions with the ethnographer and that performed elsewhere both online and offline” (Hine, 2000, p.52).

4.6 Data analysis

This section aims to provide with a description on how the data was analysed, the resources that were used and the text modifications that were carried out in order to obtain the results. This way, the coming information will expose the methodology that was implemented for the data analysis. This will serve as an explanation for the following section (chapter 5), which will include the actual analysis results.

The data obtained from the two selected information sources (forums and blogs) was, as it has been previously explained, the result of a series of conversations and debates where teachers shared their perspectives, experiences, and opinions about textbooks. The information obtained went through a series of examinations that aim to extract the relevant data to answer the research questions, reflect on the collected information, and identify patterns. Different levels of analysis

were carried out, including frequency listing and especial attention to the keywords used and their relation to other concepts.

Furthermore, the data was modified in order to ensure the anonymity of the informants. This way, the names and nicknames of the people that participated in the discussions were deleted. Also, the information concerning the source of information (the forums and blogs) also remains confidential to avoid any connection to the informants.

Additionally, another modification that has been made to the original text was that of preparing the corpus for the analysis by eliminating the grammatical features and only exposing the lexical ones. This step was carried out with the use of the corpus analysis program that was selected, Voyant Tools, which among other options, offered the possibility of adapting the frequency list content by removing specific words. Also, in relation to the data treatment, it is important to note that since the original data is in Spanish, the information presented is a translation from the original language to English.

The frequency lists analysis examined the words that appeared the most in the text with the objective of providing with a general overview of the main topics that raised throughout the interactions. This step took place in several occasions, as it will be later shown. The first time aimed to provide with some relevant information on what the whole data contended. This way, the full text was selected. During the analysis, part from the changes made in the corpus (where several grammatical words that did not provide with relevant information were eliminated exposing only the lexic), another aspect was configurated to ensure a correct word count. This way, all the concepts that made reference to the same meaning were counted together. For example, the word “student, students, pupil, pupils” were compiled in the same group when the context of the text referred to the same definition.

At this point in the analysis, the most frequent concepts were indicated. However, the frequency list analysis did not provide with relevant information concerning the context of the words. For this reason, the most relevant words were typed into the “context” section that Voyant Tools provides with in order to acquaint what these words really referred to. The results of this part of the analysis motivated the need to divide the text into two main section and to carry the second and third frequency list analysis, which will later be presented.

In addition, the data was manually coded in order to separate the content of the informants and classify them in different subtopics. This took place in order to facilitate the whole understanding of the corpus, organize the content and simplify the posterior extraction of conclusions. Thus, specific sentences that made reference to the same topic were highlighted and classified. In several occasions in the selection, only searching for the main concept was enough to see the context of the word and then proceed to the classification. However, in many other cases, the main concept was substituted by pronouns “it, them, they”, which is why at this point in the analysis, doing a manual coding was more accurate than using Voyant Tools. The objective of this kind of method was to provide with the relevant information and to confront the limitations of the analysis program, which as many others, was unable to connect the content that referred to the same topic if the exact word was not used.

CHAPTER FIVE: FINDINGS

The following section will present the research findings, which have been organized into two main blocks comprising the initial analysis and the analysis of the two main perspectives that arise in relation to very interrelated subtopics: the role of textbooks, educational values, textbook alternatives and teaching conditions, the role of teachers and finally, the purpose of Education. Aiming to justify the findings, exemplary quotes from the data analysis section will be included, as well as the frequency list analysis results and the supporting statements from the literature review and theoretical framework previously presented.

5.1 First analysis: Global approach

The first analysis of the data aimed to provide with a general notion of the topics that were most relevant by carrying a frequency list analysis on the whole text. Some grammatical words (such as articles, pronouns...) were deleted at this stage in order to focus on the relevant concepts. The following table shows the frequency list for the first level of analysis:

	Terms	Number of times
1	Textbooks	307
2	Teachers	96
3	Students	66
4	Alternatives	60
5	Teaching	44
6	Education	33
7	Learning	32

Table 1: First frequency analysis on whole text

As it can be reflected on the results of Table 1, the most frequent words that appear throughout the whole data are textbooks. Since textbooks are the core topic that is analysed, this information might not be as relevant as the one presented on line 2. However, it does reflect that the data that has been selected for the analysis does indeed coincide with the core topic. Apart from this word, the most repeated concept is “teachers” with a total of 96 repetitions in

the text. Following the analysis, we find students (66), alternatives (60), teaching (44), Education (33) and learning (32).

This first introductory analysis suggests that the data that has been selected concurs with the previous sections of the dissertation, which also included information on teachers, education, teaching and students. This aspect is beneficial for the research, since it can provide with some relevant support in the following sections.

Since the most frequent words were signalled, the following step that was taken in this first approach to the data was to examine the context of the selected concept. Voyant tools provided with the option of selecting the desired word and increasing the context scale in order to see the content situated before and after the main concept. At this point, the analysis described two different and opposing contexts around the concept textbooks. The sentences that were provided consisted on either positive or negative descriptions that were intertwined in the text. The following table shows an example of the context-word analysis that was carried out at this point. As we can observe, the selected word (textbook) was contextualized and two different perspectives seemed to predominate:

the teaching practice	textbook...	constitutes a deprofessionalisation element
can be useful	textbook...	keeps its utility in my

Table 2: Example of the context of ‘textbook’

The results on this first approach to the data lead to the second analysis, which focused specifically on analysing the two contrasting perspectives that were identified.

5.2. Second analysis: The debate on textbooks

Since the distinction between the supporters and detractors of the use of textbooks was made latent throughout the text, the second level of analysis separated both sides of the debate into two different texts. This way, the coming analysis will be the result of the division between the teachers that supported the use of textbooks and the ones that situate against it, aiming to provide with some relevant information in relation to the way they express their opinions on this matter, the subsequent topics that arise and the use of specific concepts and descriptions.

At this stage, the classification of the information into “in favour and against textbooks” was facilitated by the general tendency in the use of very explicit adjectives and descriptions that

can be seen throughout the text. The way the informants express their opinions and perspectives in relation to textbook is indeed very descriptive and, in some cases, radical, being very rare to use “middle-ground” arguments. At this point, it was not therefore complicated to make the determination on whether if the informants situated themselves in favour and against. As an example, we could determine a great contrast between the use of lexic such as “improve, help, are useful” which described textbook as beneficial materials and on the other hand, words such as “deprofessionalize, worsen, disable”, which intended to emphasize the disadvantages or negative effects of textbooks, positioning against the use of these materials.

As it was done in the previous point, this part of the analyses started with a frequency list search in order to identify the most present concepts of this side of the debate. The intention of repeating this step that previously took place in a general way (analysing the complete text) is to determine which are the subtopics or concepts that are most used and whether if the results obtained on the first analysis coincide with this one. The following tables show the results obtained from textbook detractors, with a total of 6486 words in the corpus and textbook supporters, with a total of 2968 words.

Textbook supporters

	Terms	Number of times
1	Textbooks	210
2	Students	56
3	Teachers	32
4	Education	29
5	Alternatives	20

Table 3: Textbook supporter’s frequency list

We can observe that the most repeated word after textbook is student (with a total of 56 results). In the third position we find teachers (32) and following this word, Education (29). In the last place but also showing a big relevance in the text we fin ‘alternatives’, with a total of 20 times.

Textbook detractors

	Terms	Number of times
1	Textbooks	90
2	Teachers	37

3	Alternatives	24
4	publishing houses	15
5	learning	8

Table 4: Textbook detractor's frequency list

As we can observe on the table above, the most repeated concept is again teachers, with a total of 37 repetitions. The following topics “alternatives”, “publishing houses” and “learning”, also show to be relevant in the text. In order to deepen on the analysis, a keyword context analysis took place in order to determine how do teacher describe the different subtopics that are presented. The data at this point was coded and divided into the different sections: the role of textbooks, educational values, textbook alternatives and teaching conditions, the role of teachers and finally, the purpose of Education.

5.2 The role of textbooks

The role of textbooks in the school context has shown to be acknowledged by both sides of the debate. Teachers not only agree in that there is a tendency in the use of these materials but also provide with evidence throughout the whole text on their experiences with these resources. This way, they comment on how these materials seemed to be implemented in an exclusive way by many teachers. One of the informant's comments:

“The majority of teachers continues implementing textbooks in a unique and exclusive way” (Informant).

This aspect evidences that indeed there is a tendency in the use of textbooks in Spain where several teachers, if not the majority, is making use of these materials in their daily basis. Both the data obtained from the informants, together with the information provided by the National Association of Book Editors and Teaching Material (ANELE) and finally, the literature review works, have reflected this result. Furthermore, Bernstein provides with very relevant theorization to this point by underlining the social realism behind it. It is therefore not a social construction but a reality in the existence of this textbook business which is shaping Education in a specific way. Although, as we can observe through the data, this can be considered a positive or a negative aspect depending on the perspective we take, it is undeniably true that the introduction of this business in the school context is actually having an impact on both education and society. In Bernstein's analysis, we can observe the clear connection that the

author establishes between these two pillars, where the social setting is regulated by a series of class differences and whose categories are a result of several factors that propitiate its reproduction. Furthermore, when referring to the concept of “Education”, the author makes a very interesting description by claiming that it is an agent of social control, where the transmission of symbolic systems is essential in the social reproduction. This way, the author comments on how school influences and transforms the way students feel about his surroundings:

“I want to talk about some of the consequences of education where the school acts as a major source of social, occupational and cultural change. It is well known that the school transforms the identities of many children: transforms the nature of the allegiances to their family and community and gives them access to other styles of life and modes of social relationships.” (Bernstein, p.37, 1975).

The repercussion of the textbook business in the social and educational panorama, however, is perceived by textbook supporters and detractors in a very different and almost contrasting way. Probably, when discussing the role of textbooks in the school context, the only common ground between both sides of the debate is the fact that indeed, textbooks have an important and impacting role. This way, while detractors criticize the role of textbooks in the school by highlighting disadvantages in its use, supporters claim different beneficial aspects that these materials provide with.

Thus, teachers against the use of textbooks claim that there is no utility in the use of these material and criticize the illegitimate role of publishing houses in driving educational matters. Finally, several of the comment outlines the expensive price of these textbooks, who for several authors were difficult to access for some families. The position of these teachers when reflecting among textbooks showed a prominent critical voice that was kept throughout the whole discussion. The following table will show some of the examples of the different subtopics that raised in relation to textbooks by its detractors:

Textbooks exclusivity and utility
In the 21 st century, textbooks should disappear from classrooms.
Textbooks are not good reference manuals.
The problem is that in my case, I have very reasonable doubts on its utility and necessity.

They substitute any other source of information. If there is a textbook, everything else is unnecessary.
Textbooks acquire a prescriptive value setting the programming and its tracing.
They survive to every curricular change: their chameleon ability to adapt undermines any innovation that is attempted through the curriculum.
Criticisms towards publishing houses: legitimacy and aims
On the first place, the publishing houses are there in order to gain money, and a lot. They are lucrative and really, their way of gaining it is building a business around education.
Are publishing houses really pedagogically capable? Many of them do not even have a teaching team to review their works.
I could keep going on talking about the business that publishing houses have with education, who could also shut up and not enter in the controversy, since they are the ones and only to blame for so much inequalities in children all around the world.
Textbooks are garbage, they are only the pretext for corrupted business to indoctrinate and for bad teachers.
On the first place, the work of publishing houses is strongly conditioned by public administrations y changes in educative legislation: new curriculum, new norms...
They are elaborated and distributed according to the market criteria instead of social and pedagogic ones.
Textbook's price
Can someone explain me why the math textbook that was used last year by one student can no longer be used by his or her brother because it has been changed? What for?
I do not agree with textbooks, they are too expensive and right now in Spain there are more than two and a half million children living in extreme misery and cannot afford to buy them.
It has never been pleasant that families have to make such an important economic disbursement.

Table 5: The role of textbooks by detractors

On the other side, however, textbooks supporters claimed that these materials are not only useful but also necessary for both teachers and students, and commented on the beneficial way that these materials were structured and organized and the legitimacy of these products. This aspect was also reflected on the literature review, where Mascaro's (1995) works were

highlighted in the discussion among the need towards common and explicitly settled objectives. This way, the author argued on the advantages of having the public, explicit an open information in textbooks that is not only is organized and gradually structured but also contributes to building up frames that can serve as reference and formulate in a precise way the idea of learning and its different stages. The contributions of this author, as it was previously discussed were very similar to those of Campanario (2001), who underlined a series of advantages in the use of these materials that have been also expressed by the informants. As she claimed in her article among other benefits, textbooks provided with an important information input that facilitated the work of teachers but also that of students. Furthermore, the use of activities and evaluation possibilities was seen for the author as an important aspect that again, positively served as a support for teachers. The following table will present some of the contributions of the textbooks supporters while commenting on the utility, content, structure and legitimacy of these products:

Utility
Definitely, I think textbooks can help and be convenient.
They are useful, a lot actually.
Textbooks are a tool that can be useful in many cases.
They serve as a guidance for the teacher that are in charge of making substitutions.
For a great number of educational professionals, textbooks are a control tool for the daily turmoil.
Content and structure
I think textbooks are more updated.
They provide with didactic resources and educational materials (reinforcement activities, extension activities, reviews, evaluation, etc.).
A textbook has the obligation to present the information in an organized way.
The textbook is an artefact with a certain unity and organization.
In my way of understanding, it gives you a global vision of the matter and you know what to hold on from the beginning.
The textbook is important as a reference since it has the complete course program, you can look through not only the topic you are teaching but everything that you will do along the course.

Legitimacy
They are elaborated by professionals that incorporate pedagogic proposals adapted to the new educational paradigms.
Textbooks have been an indispensable prothesis to supplement the cultural and scientific deficiencies of some teachers.
Nowadays textbooks require the work of several authors for the simple reason of expecting to be written by specialists on the matter.
The same reason why I go to the baker not only for convenience but because he bakes the bread million times better than I do, I use textbooks.

Table 6: The role of textbook by supporters

5.3 Educational values

Very similarly connected to the last section that dealt with the role of textbooks, the informants made many references towards the kind of educational values that textbooks contributed with. Again, we could observe a clear contrast between both sides of the debate that struggles to define their own concept of educational quality and clashed with very distinct arguments. When debating among the educational values, the distinction is made clear. Supporters of textbook defend the need of establishing common standards and following the curriculum demands that are reflected on textbooks and on the other side, detractors criticize the fact that in their way of understanding Education, textbooks exclude, for example, the development of critical thinking, among others.

One of the results that can be extracted from this section is related to the theory of educational transmissions proposed by Bernstein and how two main orders- the expressive order and the instrumental order- rule these transmissions. These two concepts were defined by Bernstein in the following way:

“I propose to call that complex behaviour and activities in the school which is to do with conduct, character and manner the *expressive order* of the school, and that complex behaviour, and the activities which generate it, which is to do with the acquisition of specific skills the *instrumental order*.” (Bernstein, p.38, 1975).

In the data corpus we can observe numerous references towards these two distinctions. The tables below show some of the informant’s comments in relation to their educational values as

we can observe, textbooks detractors underline on tables 7, 8 and 9 aspects that correlate with the expressive order. This order is more connected to a moral order, that at the same time excludes in a way the most instrumentalist kind of evaluation which is generally based on numerical assessments. Most contrastingly, the majority of t teachers that position against the use of textbooks insists on educational objectives such as “creativity, preparation, critical thinking, the love towards the profession, autonomous, responsible, free and respectful towards the diversity”. These aspects, are, for Bernstein complicated to introduce among the pupils due to the different ways of perceiving the image of conduct in what the “fluid society” (Bernstein, p.39, 1975). The contributions of the author about the possible effects of eliminating or reducing the expressive order also help to label the way textbooks detractors perceive education:

“The weakening of the school’s expressive order is likely to weaken the school’s attempt to transmit behaviours working for cohesion between staff, between pupils and between pupils and staff”. (Bernstein, p.39, 1975).

While commenting on these aspects, informants raise criticisms towards political and institutional aspects. They claim they are the ones responsible for the periodization of an instrumental order in textbooks formats and argument on the reasons why they believe this is negatively influencing Education. This way, they point at possible political interests that might be behind the enhancement of these type of contents while excluding their own educational values. The following tables will present some of the examples that relate to the kind of educational values that textbooks detractors share. The first table consists on the criticism towards textbook’s educational values, the second one on the claims that these teachers make to defend their own and finally, the last table focuses on the criticisms to policy and institutions.

Criticisms towards textbook educational values
It does not make sense to use homogenized materials
Textbooks have a conservative approach on comprehensive reading, they reduce it to the classic test questions of literal interpretation.
Textbooks are what they are and they do not allow any adaptation to heterogeneous students.
Textbooks are something completely static
I do not believe that textbooks improve the learning of our students and I think they are even less able to adapt to the student’s needs.

The concepts of sustainability and unsustainability do not exist in textbooks.
Textbooks contribute to the academic failure of students when they are the main or only source of information and they generate working dynamics where students have to listen in silence to the explanations based on those books to later memorize their contents, something that does not allow them to learn and acquire the competences that the nowadays society needs.
Textbooks do the work that children and young people should do by giving them the information already searched, selected and processed. They do not allow students the pleasure of searching, investigating, exploring, contrasting, experimenting...
Textbooks propitiate a learning based on the memorization of contents, which hardly allows students to reach a long lasting and useful learning for their training since memorized contents are usually easily forgotten after taking the exams.
Textbooks present the knowledge as something finished, objectives and not submitted to a critical review. They tend to present knowledge in a dogmatic way and to implant a classroom dynamic that does not motivate or help to construct knowledge, which is imposed instead. This way they reduce the critical capacity, the intellectual curiosity and the reflexion of the students. Furthermore, this way of presenting and divulge knowledge encourages it to vulgarize and trivialize, reducing the quality of that knowledge.
Textbooks propitiate individualism above collaborative learning base on team work.
Students do not find them motivational.
Textbooks impose knowledge and do not encourage to construct it.
They are too standardized and impossible to apply in real contexts.
They foment uniformity and homogeneity in the learning objectives and evaluation methods.
Textbooks pose a decontextualized, rigid and uniformed learning.
Textbooks have very closed approaches that obstruct the connexions with learning experiences outside the school

Table 7: Criticism of textbook detractors on textbook's educational values

Educational values of textbook detractors
We all know that the truthful learning happens when someone is motivated.
Probably the most practical think and the one that will serve the most to our children is to know English very well.

The students are more motivated and learn better when the type of activities is not always the same.
In education there must always be a change, which is what experts refer to as “update”, especially in technology.
What we are interested in is a personalization of learning
The personalized learning should be prioritized in heterogeneous groups.
Education should not be static, it should be flexible.
The teacher should know that the needs of every student are different and that should include the creativity, preparation, critical thinking, the love towards the profession, autonomous, responsible, free and respectful towards the diversity, etc because they are all different and they will acquire the knowledge in a gradual way depending on their abilities.
An active and participative educative model that banishes the concept of students as “empty boxes” or passive agents whose only function is to literally repeat the contents taught by the teacher. For that, a teaching that promotes the intellectual curiosity, critical ability and reflection is necessary.

Table 8: Educational values of textbook detractors

Criticisms towards policy, educational institutions and working conditions
Quality of Education? Right now, schools are enormous kindergartens where children and teenagers are relatively controlled while a small elite EXPLOITS their parents through their labour.
To be able to have an education for quality, there needs to be reduced groups that do not exceed 12 students and 2 teachers per classrooms. That would mean a lot more payrolls and having to reduce expenses.
The system is delighted with how the things are in Education and that is why the only effort is done is to make it look like they want to improve things. But why would they want to truly change them? If the majority of students will end up being servants for the system.
What the system wants is them to be docile and with the same thinking pattern.
They are the ones together with the educational entities that take the money and the teachers, always being badly payed, are left aside from the planification of the classroom and the desired educational change.

Table 9: Criticisms to policy, educational institutions and working conditions of textbook detractors.

On the other side of the debate, textbook supporters seem to emphasize the instrumental order and its strong links to economy. The kind of educational values that promote the development of this order in the classroom context are for the informants the same that textbook propose. In this viewpoint, the use of these materials is a coherent way of establishing the curriculum demands. Something that is especially interesting when we compare the previous comments. One of the most relevant surprising results that the data suggests is indeed that both sides of the debate coincide in describing textbooks as faithful translators of the curriculum. There are therefore no comments arguing on the inadequacy of these materials towards the curriculum demand. Thus, this aspect is taken by textbook supporters as one of the main advantages, which is described in the table below.

Education and learning
For me textbooks are the base for learning.
For a good teaching and a correct temporalization of the school year, what it should be done is to rely on the curriculum, which is the current legislation.
For the student having textbooks as a base is useful, and also for the teacher.
Textbooks today are complex, are formed by different pieces and have very under consideration the need for adapting to different students and different uses.
They adequate to the multiple changes that the curriculum suffers every time that the educational law is modified.
It allows to follow a methodological line “publishing house” throughout the whole stage without any abrupt methodological changes or learning models.
They minimize inequalities among different student groups of the same year but different class.
After all, there come the competency tests and children must pass them by law... I am fed up of people bragging about education.

Table 10: Educational values of textbook supporters

The data reflects a big interest over evaluation results, “passing the test”, something that strictly correlates with what Bernstein describes as “examination-minded” dominance (Bernstein, 1975, p. 39) while commenting on the instrumental order and its evaluation. These results

however raise a new problematic, which is the difficulty in the embracement of both orders at the same time. For the author, each one can exclude or deteriorate the other one:

“The greater the emphasis on this type of instrumental order, the more difficult it is for the expressive order to bind and link all the pupils in a cohesive way (...) It is also likely that a strong involvement in the instrumental order may lead, under certain conditions, to a weakening of the pupil’s involvement in the expressive order and the values it transmits” (Bernstein, p.39, 1975)

In addition, we can extract that generally the characteristics that textbook supporters emphasize is based on a strong framed and classified Education, whereas the detractors show to believe in the need of establishing weak boundaries in relation to Bernstein’s frame and classification theory. This way, while supporters comment on the organized, structured and well delineated contents that textbooks contend, the teachers against these materials comment on more flexible evaluation and teaching methodologies that prioritize on the development of social and personal skills. We have seen this throughout the last two sections where the role of textbooks and also the educational values of teachers was examined. In the tables, we can appreciate these numerous references to the framing theory of Bernstein that leads to further questions in relation to the contrasting perception of the purpose of Education, where this point will be expanded.

5.4 Textbook alternatives and teaching conditions

As it can be extracted from the information provided by the supporters of textbooks, the main arguments in this matter criticize the impossibility or the lack of capabilities of teachers on making use of textbook alternatives or creating their own didactic materials. This way, some of them underline how they had to suffer the consequences of teachers that made use of self-elaborated materials, highlighting again the inability of teachers to do so:

“I had to suffer the consequences of teachers that considered themselves better than textbooks and they were really bad” (Informant)

Thus, supporters of textbooks along these conversations showed to faithfully defend these materials, avoiding any other proposal and very interestingly focusing on criticizing other alternatives rather than on remarking the advantages of textbooks instead. For them, the only coherent approach would be to implement textbooks and avoid introducing any other

alternative, something that highly contrasted with the teachers who showed a positive response towards the question over the possible alternatives to textbooks.

The main alternative that was presented in the discussion was that of designing personalized materials by the teachers themselves, which both sides of the debate seemed to agree in that it “takes a lot of time and effort to elaborate” by pointing at time requirements and outstanding the complexity involved. The table below shows the proposed alternatives that were generally based as “self-elaborated” materials by the textbook detractors and supporters.

Proposed alternatives
In internet there are free resources way better than the didactic units of textbooks.
I personally like to elaborate my own material because I like to work with authentic materials.
There is a great amount of information available in much cheaper and reliable sources

Table 11: Alternatives proposed by textbook detractors

We can observe how teachers against the use of textbook briefly expose the kind of alternatives they agree with. However, most of the interactions were based on expressing the problematic of implementing these alternatives. Roth and Gur-Zeev among others described this conflict in their research works by labelling the difficult situation among accomplishing the instrumental goals. Their contributions definitely outline the data findings that have been analysed until now:

“In this society, many educators are preoccupied with these instrumental goals.

They have no time, they have very little energy, and they have very little incentive for thinking reflectively or philosophically because they have so much to worry about, in terms of the very specific goals that are defined for them, not defined by themselves (...) In these high stakes situations, getting higher test scores becomes an end itself, not as an evaluative tool, not as a mark of better teaching, but as an instrumental goal. Hence, many teachers are understandably desperate to make sure that they cover the material in their classes that will help their student do as well as possible on these examinations, whether it is educationally important or relevant information or not.”

Nicholas Burbules at an interview for Education in an Era of Globalization (Roth and Gur-Zeev, 2007, p.17)

The following table will now present some of the comments of teachers about the problems on implementing their proposed alternatives of making self-elaborated materials in order to provide with some example that justify the analysis.

Problems related to implementing textbook alternatives
Very beautiful, very idyllic, very modern, and very “Mr. Wonderful”. Now, you can go and prepare 9 months of self-elaborated didactic units and materials for the whole academic school year with 6 or 7 different subjects. If you manage to get to 3 weeks, then it will mean that you are not human. It is IMPOSSIBLE to do so, even nowadays with internet and free licenses to download materials. If you program my entire school year, I will take it to practice. But me, as a teacher that is teaching every day, I do not have time to do so.
It would be ideal to have remunerated time to elaborate these materials
It is an investment of several hours that you have to work at home, and I believe it shouldn't be like that.
In some schools there is no freedom and everyone uses the textbooks
With the amount of students, we have it is utopic to even propose it.
A lot of time and effort is required to make the whole process. And also having motivation and means to do so.
The alternative to the standard materials is impossible: it requires a self-elaborated programming and flexible materials.
If collaborative work was possible, it would be easier to elaborate alternatives
There do not exist any amplified and coherent samples that can help the teachers that want to avoid textbooks.

Table 12: Described problems in the implementation of alternatives by textbook detractors

A defensive attitude can be observed on both sides of the controversy. In several occasions, the data reflects that textbook supporters emphasized that teachers are unable to create self-elaborated materials over the description of the positive aspects of textbooks. In an almost identical way, the detractors of textbooks, tended to criticize these materials instead of elaborating more thoroughly on the benefits of the use of self-elaborated materials. In this discussion a lot of references were directed towards criticizing the problematics in the implementation of these resources, commenting this way on political, institutional matters and the teaching working conditions.

From this point we can also extract that although teachers against textbooks argued on the complexity and effort of creating these materials, none of the informants made any comments

that could suggest any kind of insecurity or doubt in relation to their abilities to elaborate self-designed materials. Whereas on the other side of the debate, teachers in favour of textbooks did highlight the way teachers are not prepared or able enough to create their own materials.

However, the predisposition of teachers in agreeing to create these materials was very different from one case to another. While some affirmed to make use of their own materials in a regular basis, others argued on the political, social, and institutional pressures they received and how these consequently made them unable to use these resources. The results reflect that the majority seemed to agree in that the most influential aspects were that of salary “not paid enough” or time “I do not have enough time to do so”. However, when deepening on the possible reasons for this shortage of salary and time, different perspectives settled down; This way, while some with perhaps a more radical perspective pointed at political interference and proletarianized knowledge, some commented on how the educational institutions organize the teaching profession in a specific way that appears to be incompatible with these kind of practices and others pointed at the way colleagues or families expected them to use textbooks and responded negatively to alternatives.

The results however, were very different to the ones proposed by textbook supporters, who commented that textbooks themselves were the coherent alternative. The following table will present some of the data that elaborate on this part of the debate:

Alternatives
My proposal is to follow the guideline set by the ministry
I do not agree in that teachers, without any specific preparation can simply become the authors of their own textbooks.
In relation to the curriculum, I think that it is good in order to have a guidance so that the students can have an idea of what they should learn.
I had to suffer the consequences of teachers that considered themselves better than textbooks and they were really bad.
There are no solid alternatives that guarantee the rentability between effort and didactic success.
Let's suppose that there is not such difficulty and teachers are able to elaborate textbooks of better quality...there are a careful series of mediations that valuably contribute in the

elaboration of the final product: edition, correction, design, illustration, cartography. None of those are included in teaching training.
Avoiding textbooks and generating their own materials instead, does not guarantee that the same thing is being made but with photocopies.
Some teachers prefer to work with self-elaborated materials but, isn't it equally respectable the option of choosing an educative project because they find it useful, powerful and nice?
What do self-elaborated materials guarantee? Why should we take for granted that they do not have the same mistakes as the ones elaborated by publisher teams? Or is it that there are no reactionary and conservationist teachers?

Table 13: Textbook supporters on alternatives

In the questioning over the subrogation of teaching practice to textbooks and the deprofessionalisation of educations that authors such as Marin (1995) elaborated on, we can conclude this section by supporting that, as the data reflect, teachers against the use of textbooks found themselves confident in being able to carry the decisions among teaching practices, while the supporters of textbooks expressed a need to rely on these materials and highlighted the inability of teachers of introducing alternatives. The supporters of textbooks remain faithful to the idea that the best option is to use these materials, including any other kind of alternatives. On the other side, the detractors of textbooks propose to make self-elaborated materials and divide themselves into the one that regularly apply them and those who, although being against textbooks, argue on how introducing these alternatives is impossible for them by highlighting political, institutional and social pressures.

The later point was probably one of the most highlighted ones and led to the following question: Are teachers responsible to teach according to their own teaching principles? Some informants showed a personal attachment to their profession by arguing on how, although the different pressures complicated the introduction of textbook alternatives, they believed that their job was to provide their students with what they understood as an Education of quality, even if they were not awarded with the salary or time they considered necessary to implement self-elaborated materials. This way, while some decided to work non-remunerated extra hours, others perceived their profession in a contrasting way by understanding that their working conditions did not allow them to introduce what they believed was the best teaching options. On the other side of the debate, supporters of textbooks were consistent in arguing on how their

responsibility was that of following the curriculum demands, and how textbooks were the perfect resource that contended these curricular demands:

5.5 The role of teachers

Together with all the previous points, teacher's role has also been on of the most debated subtopics in these forums and blogs. Probably one of the major impulsators of these discussion is the distinct opinions of the informants about the deprofessionalisation. The subrogation of teaching practice to the work of publishing houses is not, however, an isolated topic from the previous ones. There is a strict relation between all of these sections, and in the case of teacher's role, the answers received by the informants were not unexpected; while supporters claimed that teachers should implement textbook in their classrooms and follow the curriculum guidelines, detractors argued on being the teachers the ones responsible to teach.

As we will observe on the tables below, one of the points of disagreement would be in relation to teaching training and how teachers are enough prepared to carry an important role in the classroom or not. This point has also been commented by Bernstein about the relevance there exists in assessing teaching competence. Thus, he comments the following:

“In any teaching relation, the essence of the relation is to evaluate the competence of the acquirer. What you are evaluating is whether the criteria that have been made available to the acquirer have been achieved – whether they are regulative criteria about conduct, character, and manner, or instructional, discursive criteria: how to solve this problem or that problem, or produce an acceptable piece of writing or speech” (Bernstein, p.198, 2004).

As we can observe, two major kinds of criteria are settled by the author, which in connection to the previous results that have been found, it leads us to another assumption. The enormous distinctions between the two sides of debate among teacher's role suggests that while textbook supporters doubt of the ability of teachers to perform their duty, commenting on how “helpless” they would be without textbook's help, textbook detractors believe that “who else other than the teacher knows how and why to teach”.

These arguments go in a similar line to that of Allwright, who claimed that textbooks are, according to the *difference view*, the carriers of the decisions best made by someone other than

the classroom teacher because the expertise required to elaborate these materials is importantly different from that required of classroom teachers- who the author describes as “people who have the interpersonal skills to make classrooms good places to learn in” (Allwright, 1981, p.6). In addition, he also commented on a contrasting view-the *deficiency view*- claiming that teaching materials are important in order to avoid the deficiencies of teachers from intervening in the correct formulation of the syllabus and the teaching of exercises.

We could therefore extract as a result of the data analysis that there is a possibility in that textbook supporters’ priorities discursive criteria and in this sense, believe that teachers have not been well trained for it. Whereas on the other hand, textbooks detractors are more connected to a regulatory criterion which they do believe they can handle. It would therefore mean that when debating among teacher’s role and subsequently teacher’s capabilities and teacher’s training, both sides of the debate have a very distinct definition of the kind of criteria’s teachers should accomplish. This would then offer an explanation on the reasons why such a disagreement takes place.

As Bernstein suggests, “pedagogic practices are cultural relays of the distribution of power”. In relation to the authority roles of the classroom and following a very similar line of thought, Rob Moore (p.130, 2013) provides with a descriptive example on teacher authoritarian roles commenting on the traditional and progressive mode while basing on Bernstein’s works:

“For instance, a teacher operating within a ‘traditional’ mode (+C+F) will tend to identify with a subject and have authority by being an expert in the subject, whereas one operating in a ‘progressive’ mode will gain authority as an expert on ‘the child’ and will appeal to their knowledge of, say, developmental child psychology and an intuitive, professional sense of readiness.” (Moore, p.130, 2013)

The expertise of teachers would be thereof, depending on the type of mode (traditional or progressive different. Textbook supporters would perhaps have a greater inclination towards instrumental and subject-oriented teaching, whereas textbook detractors, which throughout the analysis have shown to correlate with a more progressive kind of education, would be more focused on the students rather than on the subject. We can therefore conclude that again, the point of debate relies in the fact that two different perspectives of understanding teacher’s

expertise collide with each other while being based again in two very distinct ways of approaching Education.

The following tables will now use some of the examples that will label with more detail the analysis that has been done. The first table present how textbook supporters view teachers role. The following one compiles the comments of textbook's detractors in relation to the same topic. Finally, the last table shows the perspective of textbook detractors on what teacher's role should be.

Teacher's role for textbook supporters
Some teachers do not know how to make textbooks be helpful.
I am not saying that in some occasions they are not incorrectly used, but I think it is unfair to blame the tool instead of the possible bad use that is made of it.
The textbook has been one of the omnipresent elements in school: such a consubstantial device, a way of understanding the process of teaching and learning that maybe some teachers would not know what to do without it.
Teachers would find themselves helpless, they would not know what to teach or how to do so.
The real problem is not the textbook itself but the use that teachers make out of it.
This manual is a proposal that must be followed in an active, reflexive, and critical way and not mechanically.
To learn how to use this complex device is an educational objective per se.
A teacher without a textbook is like practice without theory. The worse are the ones that think that their notes substitute the textbooks.

Table 14: Teacher's role by textbook supporters

Against textbooks: Textbook's effect over teacher's role
They contribute to the deprofessionalisation of teachers when they propitiate that many teachers and professors decline the development and execution of their competences while turning into mere followers of the established guidelines of these textbooks.
The majority of the teaching staff prefers to use a standard product of doubtful worth.
We can no longer remain attached to textbooks, that is something that old school teachers do not want to understand

I think that textbooks do not have any utility other from the one a teacher might find in not having to prepare anything for the lesson and only having to remember what the last page was the last lesson ended at.
The hegemonic thinking together with the mercantilist interests of publishing houses have made teachers accept textbooks in an acritical way, without questioning their effects, their pedagogic mode and the elevated economic cost that they involve.
Textbooks regulate, control, exclude and disqualifies the work of teachers.
We really (as teachers) do not need textbooks
Before entering the classroom (when, by the way, textbooks have already been bought), the needs of the students are unknown. And for that reason, unless you are Sandro Rey, it is absurd to make predictions about the needs of your students, which will too many times be wrong.
I understand that you prefer to have a textbook. It is much more comfortable and it can save you from many situations, but it shouldn't be like that.
I think that what you are really paying for is the tranquillity that saying "Yes, Mr inspector, here you have the programming that the publishing houses handed me".
Textbooks settle the planification, programming and the development of the subjects, even their tracking. They therefore acquire a prescriptive value that inhibits the initiative of the teaching staff.
They do not foment at all the initiative of teachers.
Having a blind faith in textbook is something that further than being a bad idea, is an abandonment of the functions as a teacher.
There is a tremendous stagnation among teachers.

Table 15: Textbook's effect over teacher's role by textbook detractors

The perspective of textbook detractors on what teacher's role should be
The creation of self-elaborated materials should be included in the teacher's duty, since it is the one that know the best what their students need.
We must be flexible and creative and know how to get out of textbooks when the students need to.
I believe that textbooks can be helpful and comfortable to use but we shouldn't get comfortable because of that.

By the way, the teacher, for the fact of being a teacher, supposedly has the critical spirit to be able to deal with the information provided by the net. If it is not like that, we must as well fold up and go home.
Who else other than the teacher knows how and why to teach?
The good teacher has sufficient criteria and ability to choose, prepare and create its own materials adequate to the students.
The teacher should know that the needs of every student are different and that should include the creativity, preparation, critical thinking, the love towards the profession, autonomous, responsible, free and respectful towards the diversity, etc because they are all different and they will acquire the knowledge in a gradual way depending on their abilities.
Being a teacher implies to be able to do didactic units and self-elaborated materials.
To know how to Access and use multiple information sources, search, discriminate and evaluate information in a critical way, know how to analyse, organize and extract the relevant one and obtain learning experiences from it that allow students to use it and apply it.

Table 16: The perspective of textbook detractors on what teacher's role should be

5.6 The purpose of Education

The way teachers define their own role and that of students in the teaching and learning process is therefore different; on the one side the authority of textbook supporters would rely on subject and on the other hand, teachers who position against these materials would generally rely on their knowledge on the student itself. Although these two different ways of conceiving authority might be contrasting, they do share a commonality, which has also been reflected on the data: the understanding of students as receptors of knowledge and teachers as knowledge carriers or transmitters. Paradoxically, although detractors in the use of textbooks seemed to constantly collide with the supporters in almost all the points previously discussed, they appeared to same notion of knowledge transmission. As we can observe, again the way the informant expresses his position reflect a sense of responsibility on the students learning, assuming that students depend, almost exclusively, on the teaching.

A further assumption on the student's learning is made at this point. It is therefore not only that students as viewed as passive agents of their own learning but also, it is assumed that they are

indeed interested or willing to learn. This, as Biesta comments, “transforms power into authority” (p.19, 2017). But, at the same time, this might be for author necessary:

“But this should not prevent us from taking this risk, because without it education would not happen either. It rather should help us to understand much better what the risky nature of teaching and education more generally is, if it is aimed at the subject-ness of the students, if it is aimed at arousing the desire in another human being for wanting to exist in the world in a grown-up way” (Biesta, p.19, 2017).

Gert Biesta proposes this way a possible answer to the question over the purpose of Education. This perspective, however has not been reflected on the data; the information obtained by teachers raise different ways of understanding the purpose of education, but as we will now see, none of them coincide with this vision: On the one hand, we can extract that teachers who expressed their agreement to strong framing and classification ideologies supported by the use of textbooks, understood the purpose of education to be able to transmit the educational contents that have been settled by the curriculum. They find, in this sense, the need of confining to the contents inside the legislation in an arguable traditional way. On the other hand, however, we find the teachers who showed to identify themselves with a more progressive perspective understanding the need towards the accomplishment of aspects which they argued not to be included in the curriculum (creativity, social skills, personal criteria...) diverged into other two groups. The first group being the ones that supported the need of implementing their own materials which they treat as synonyms of educational quality and who perceive that their role in society and education is that of introducing them nevertheless the pressures they described. And the second group, who expresses the impossibility of applying these self-elaborated materials by blaming the system, institutions and social response. It is then safe to assume that, in their own understanding of education, they create a distinction between educating and teaching. When commenting on the purpose of Education and more specifically that of schools, some informants claimed the following:

“Right now, schools are enormous kindergartens where children and teenagers are relatively controlled while a small elite EXPLOITS their parents through their labour” (Informant).

We can observe a clear criticism of some informants towards policy and institutions, which are in many cases as table 9 shows, considered the ones to blame for the lack of educational quality. These comments correlate to what Santomé (1989) included in his articles. For the author, textbooks are “political tools” that are being implemented to reproduce specifically the conceptions of the “cultural capital” of dominant groups. He elaborates by claiming that these materials are highly dependent on the approval of the Ministry and therefore, as he comments, *“deep inside, it is only an authoritarian imposition of what is good, valid, or truthful”* (Santomé, 1989, p.2) Furthermore, he reflected on the consequent “expropriation of knowledge and abilities of the working class and the teacher”, and the mass production of disqualified teachers.

The purpose of Education as we have seen has shown to be very different from one perspective to another. As the results suggest, some teachers seem to see that there is no real purpose of Education other than that of following the established educational demands, while others believe that educational policy has a lot to do with the way Education is configured and show to be frustrated when elaborating on different pressures that are paralyzing them in taking the decisions, which as teachers, they believe they should have. It seems to be only the case of textbook supporters that there is really purpose established for them, which is to base education to what the curriculum and textbook states.

DISCUSSION

The data obtained from the informants together with the contributions of the authors of the literature review, the methodology and the theoretical framework have been determining in answering the research questions that were initially formulated and also to encourage further questions. The following section will therefore present a critical evaluation of the dissertation and propose a series of recommendations for further research works. Furthermore, several sub-questions were stated on Chapter 1 with the intention of fragmenting the main research question: “How do teachers perceive the use of textbooks in the school context?”. Another of the objectives of this discussion will be to explicitly answer all these parts and support them with the analysis that took place on the last section, the literature review and, finally Bernstein’s theory.

The first research question: “What is their position and what they think are the practical utilities of textbooks?” has been present throughout the whole data reporting. As the data shows, there are two major positionings in relation to the topic of textbook: teachers positioning in favor and teachers positioning against the use of textbooks. The lack of consensus on the topic of textbooks was something that had previously been presented on the literature review, where authors such as Mascaro (1995), Alberto (2012), Campanario (2001) Benjam (1993) defended textbooks and on the other hand authors such as Marin (1997), Bonafé (1991;1994), Caputi (2014), Santomé (1989), among others criticised and situated against their use. Several authors positioning against expressed that these materials had stopped being an ally for the teachers and were now occupying the charge of planning the whole educational structure (Caputi, 2014), something that the informants also reflected on Chapter 5 when they commented on how “textbooks regulate, control, exclude and disqualify the work of teachers”, criticising the utility and the exclusiveness that is being handed to these materials, who they had “reasonable doubts about”. This highly contrasted with the opposing view, who defended that textbooks were “helpful”, “convenient” and a “way of controlling the daily turmoil”. These aspects also received some backup from the authors on the literature review, who for Campanario (2001) and Mascaro (1995) were considered useful materials with important information input that facilitated teaching. Further criticisms of textbook detractors that provide with essential

information to understand how they position in this topic had to do with the arguable legitimacy of these products that are elaborated by external units: the publishing houses. Thus, while detractors commented “Are publishing houses really pedagogically capable? Many of them do not even have a teaching team to review their works”, textbook supporters claimed that they “bake the bread million times better” than they do, referring to the elaboration of teaching resources on textbooks.

Important contributions to the legitimacy of textbooks had been best given by Allwright (1981) who presented textbooks according to the difference view (as being the carriers of decisions best made by someone other than teachers, who did not have enough expertise) and the deficiency view (elaborating on how teachers interrupted the correct formulation of the syllabus and exercises). Allwright’s contributions propitiated a much more profound and precise understanding of the informant’s words by presenting these concepts and also providing with exemplifications throughout his analysis, which as we can observe, strictly correlate with the data reports.

Other essential concepts that raised in the dissertation were the expressive and instrumental orders proposed by Bernstein (1975), who constructed a solid theoretical basis and foregrounded with the explicitness of his analysis the characteristics of both concepts. This way, Bernstein defined both concepts by stating:

I propose to call that complex behaviour and activities in the school which is to do with conduct, character and manner the *expressive order* of the school, and that complex behaviour, and the activities which generate it, which is to do with the acquisition of specific skills the *instrumental order*.” (Bernstein, p.38, 1975)

Bernstein’s exposure of these two concepts contributed to establish a relationship with the data reports. It was therefore useful and essential in the elaboration of the following assumption: teachers in favour of textbooks emphasize instrumental goals over expressive goals, whereas textbook detractors show to be more attached to the expressive order. Thus, in the data report we could find references to the educational values of textbook detractors that commented on the need of including “creativity, critical thinking, responsibility, autonomy, respect” as part of the Education of the students. This did indeed highly outstand when analysing textbook supporters, who instead commented on the importance of acquiring the instruments to enable

‘passing the test’: “After all, there come the competency tests and children must pass them by law...I am fed up of people bragging about education”. This, as Bernstein (1975) stated, also demonstrates a clear distinction in the way of perceiving the boundaries of frames and classification and consequently, how evaluation “is a function of the strength of classification and frames” (Bernstein, p.89, 1975), consisting therefore on the “valid realization of this knowledge (Bernstein, p.85, 1975).

Basil Bernstein’s theory was essentially the basis by which the majority of the content of the dissertation was grounded. Indeed, the author did not only provide with the concepts and explanation that helped to frame and understand the relevance of the data but did also provide with some very specific and crucial information of the effects of such a lack of consensus of textbook supporters and detractors and the way they position in relation to the matter. Although the conflict among both sides of the debate was indeed reflected in the data, Bernstein contributed with a very relevant claim by stating that the emphasis of the examination-minded instrumentalism had a direct influence over the cohesion of pupils and the values that are transmitted (Bernstein, 1975). This indeed reflects the current teaching context in the Spanish panorama, where the way the orders are handled among teachers that coexist in the same setting are characterizing the conflict. Bernstein’s theory on educational transmission and the understanding of schools as major sources of change then reflect how important it is indeed to research on these matters from a sociological and educational perspective.

The signs of such a conflict are reflected in the second research question: “What obligations do teachers see in using textbooks?”. The descriptions provided by the informants against the use of textbooks have drawn a very uncomfortable and almost aggressive panorama in the school context for some of the teachers. Thus, while textbook supporters do not comment on any obligation, textbook detractors elaborate on the different pressures they claim to be receiving. Among those, the political pressures that the informants comment are strictly connected to the contributions of Bonafe (1991) and Santomé (1989) who almost identically express the same as the informants when arguing that textbooks are “political tools” that the implementation of specific demands take place in order to subtle the interest of specific powerful groups. However, the data did indeed move also in a different direction which was not covered by the literature and it was that of commenting on the social and institutional pressures that teachers also

received in order to implement textbooks: “In some schools there is no freedom, and everyone uses the textbooks”.

The conflict among both sides of the debate appears to materialize in the last question, which is: “What alternatives to textbooks do teachers see?”. Once more, the informants offer completely different viewpoints; when expressing the consequences of the obligations, textbook detractors claim that the way the system is configured does not allow the introduction of self-elaborated materials. Concerning textbook alternatives, the literature review did not provide with any other support from previous research works. This is probably due to the fact that the literature review showed to have a gap in the analysis of teacher’s perspectives, especially in the current Spanish setting. Although some authors as it has been now shown, did agree with some of the perspectives of the informants, none of the data or information that was stated belonged to the teaching community. In addition, although the literature labelled the two perspectives in an almost radical way, it did not provide with any relevant information to support one of the main outstanding findings in relation to the alternatives. This would be the case of those teachers who criticised textbooks but still decided to make use of these materials and stated the following while elaborating also on the previous section that dealt with pressures and the organization of Education in Spain: “The alternative to the standard materials is impossible”

The same way that the literature review showed some gaps, Bernstein’s theory did not cover a further research question that appeared throughout the dissertation as a result of the previous paragraph dealing with textbook alternatives: What is, for the teachers, the purpose of Education? This complex question, however was foregrounded by Gert Biesta, who contributed with a very clear and explicit answer:

“The educational work should aim for or be interested in: arousing the desire in another human being for wanting to exist in a grown-up way (...) by seeing it in existential rather than developmental terms”. (Biesta, p.20, 2017).

This perspective was not reflected however on the data reports. Textbook supporters this way believed that the purpose of Education was to transmit to the students the contents and structure that is stated on the curriculum and textbooks, whereas some textbook detractors who appeared to give up fighting the pressures that have been previously commented, claimed the following:

“Quality of Education? Right now, schools are enormous kindergartens where children and teenagers are relatively controlled while a small elite EXPLOITS their parents through their labour”. (Informant)

In relation to the methodology, the use of the virtual ethnography approach in this dissertation has proven to be successful, since it provided with more than sufficient data that was able to answer the research questions. Participating in such forums and blogs helped to get involved in the conversations in a very direct way, contacting straight away with a profile of teachers that were interested in sharing their opinions on textbook, who nourished the discussions with very different perspectives. I believe that this virtual experience has been successful in enabling, as Hine (200, p. 26) expresses, “a deeper sense of understanding of meaning creation”, that could very probably only had been possible throughout an ethnographic approach, since the involvement and full participation in this context throughout the analysis has been crucial.

After analysing all the points, I believe it is safe to claim that independently on the perspective of education that it is being taken, there is indeed a conflict in the use of textbooks that is having a negative effect over education and society. The lack of cohesion and the radically opposed perceptions of these materials do not enable teaching practices to be directed towards achieving any specific goal, but to shift education towards different and sometimes meaningless routes. Instead of arguing over the contents that should be implemented, I believe education should be based on exposing students to different stimulating environments and act as a “facilitator of learning” (Roger, 1969, p.105) rather than selfishly submitting them to what teachers know or don't know about the different subjects. It would be also meaningless to assume that teachers do indeed master these subjects when teacher training does not contain these kinds of contents. Teachers are not trained to know about history, geography or mathematics. Furthermore, it would not make sense either to assume that these contents are the ones students should learn, they are the ones that should be given the choice to learn what they want and how they want. There seems to be a very thin line in the definition of instruction and education where teacher's role is in my point of view sometimes mistaken. In this sense, I would like to refer to Biesta when commenting on the power relations between teachers and students:

“The problem with the idea of teaching as control is that in such a relationship the student can never appear as a subject but remains an object. In a world that is not interested in the subjectness of the human being this is, of course, not a problem.

The question is whether this is a world we should desire”. (Gert Biesta, 2016, p.387).

Another point that I would like to include in the discussion is in relation to the way the informants express their perspectives. As the data reflects, there is a tendency in the debate of teachers in favour and against textbooks to respond with a criticism or defensive argument towards the opponent rather than with a supporting statement of their educational preferences. In other words, in the majority of the cases, instead of exposing the disadvantageous or beneficial features of textbooks, they tend to, for example, underline the incorrect use that is made by some teachers or on the contrary, the laziness or lack of willingness of some them to elaborate their own materials. This aspect could, at the same time, be conceived as a limitation of the present dissertation, which instead of focusing on the way teacher’s express their positions, has prioritized the ‘what’ or the content of their arguments. Something, which at the same time, could have had some repercussions over the findings and results. The emotional connotations and linguistic features attached to the debate is something that could be very interesting to examine in future research works. The data provided with different examples that provide with this emotional distinction. For example, some authors showed a very consistent attitude when debating using a more radical voice:

“Now you can go and prepare the whole programming of a school year with 6 or 7 subjects and didactic units of self-elaborated materials. If you manage to get to 3 week it will mean that you are not human, it is IMPOSSIBLE”. (Informant)

On the other hand, some of them denoted certain guilt or responsibility by expressing a double moral in their arguments when commenting on self-elaborated materials:

“I congratulate the teachers and professors that have that ability and decide to dedicate their time to that duty (...) In my case, I prefer to dedicate my time to other things, or to rest...” (Informants)

Furthermore, the use that the informant makes of the virtual scenarios also enable to extract more information on the way they express their positions. This way, the use of emoticons, capital letters among others could also be a study area of future researches, since it definitely reflects relevant information on the feelings and emotional connotations that the data is also characterized with. Finally, the scale of this research can be considered quite small, since it

focuses on a very specific context inside the Spanish panorama. I would therefore suggest to expand the study among textbooks in different countries. For example, it could be of interest to examine the use of these materials in the Latin American context where as it has been commented before, they often make use of the same publishing houses in the classroom context.

CONCLUSION

Textbooks in the Spanish school context has proven to be a major topic of debate among teachers. The results have reflected how differently teachers in the same setting perceive these materials. The two major perspectives on textbooks in favour and against have confronted informants and also several authors when dealing with their educational and social influence. The school has been this way settled at the middle of the discourse as a major source of change (Bernstein, 1975), motivating the debates in relation to teacher's and textbook's role (Ceballos and Blanco 2008; Marín, 1997; Caputi, 2014; Beck and Young, 2005; Mascaro, 1995; Campanario, 2001 and Alberto, 2012) , and educational policy (Roth and Gur-Zeev, 2007; Benjam, 1993; Alzate Piedrahita, Gómez Mendoza, and Romero Loaiza ,1999 and Cabero 1995).

Thus, while some teachers claim that the system is inclined towards instrumental goals, others believe that education should be based on the accomplishment of the established demands. This has therefore left with different ways of understanding textbooks practicalities and the subsequent disagreement when commenting on their utility and legitimacy. Furthermore, the obligations that some teachers express in the usage of these materials have also received the attention of some other authors that comment on the political interference (Bonafé,1991;1994 and Santomé, 1989). Further pressures stated by the informants include social and institutional obstacles. Such disagreements lead to the dilemma over the implementation of alternative materials, which for a great number of teachers are something impossible to implement due to the way education, policy and society are configured. This indeed is causing further discrepancies among the questioning of the subrogation of teaching practices and overall, the purpose of Education. The two major perspectives have proven not to share any common Educational goal. They have shown to almost radically incline towards instrumental or expressive contents, excluding and impairing at the same time the opposing side, who gets "weakened" (Bernstein, 1975). Textbooks are indeed not only influencing education and society but also the relationship of the teaching staff, which while deciding among their pedagogic actions, are providing students with independent and apparently incompatible educational approaches.

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