

# Teacher perception of methodological habits for informal argumentation in text commentary

## Percepción docente sobre costumbres metodológicas de argumentación informal en el comentario de texto

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### Abstract:

This study explores Spanish secondary-school language and literature teachers' perceptions of their habits when teaching the development of informal argumentation in textual commentary. Using a qualitative methodology with an interpretive-phenomenological design to shed light on this aim, the teachers were interviewed about this question. Then, hermeneutic units were created from the reported data using a cyclical process of segmentation, codification, and conceptualization. These were analysed using the Atlas.ti program to establish comprehensive maps of the studied reality.

The results of this research show that: teachers choose a variety of texts for preparing argumentative commentaries, favouring literary and journalistic ones with less interest in multimedia sources; negotiating text choice with students is problematic due to the low quality of the resources students provide; there is a tendency towards written commentary with limited oral interaction, despite teachers' awareness of the learning benefits that speech

offers in the composition, revision and evaluation process through students' flexibility and well-founded cooperation in the learning processes. There is a strong preference for written feedback as this provides an individualised record of errors for further analysis and discursive evaluation follows guidelines and rubrics from handbooks, promoting self-evaluation and student co-evaluation with a variety of instruments. In conclusion, comparing these habits with the competence-based educational approach reveals the academicist survival of the philological canon in text selection and the cliché of commentary as an individual written practice that is more reconstructive than constructive, which hinders the democratic interest in promoting students' critical thinking, media literacy in the classroom, and oral practices in the process of teaching informal argumentation in text commentary.

**Keywords:** didactics, Spanish, Secondary Education, writing (composition), school attitudes, verbal communication.

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## **Resumen:**

Este estudio explora la percepción del profesorado de Lengua Castellana y Literatura de Educación Secundaria acerca de sus costumbres didácticas para el desarrollo de la argumentación informal en el comentario de texto. Desde una metodología cualitativa de diseño interpretativo-fenomenológico para esclarecer tal objetivo, se les ha entrevistado sobre dicha dimensión y por un procedimiento cíclico de segmentación, codificación y conceptualización, se han creado unidades hermenéuticas de los datos reportados que han sido analizados con el programa Atlas.ti a fin de establecer mapas de significado comprensivos de la realidad estudiada.

Los resultados de la investigación muestran la elección docente de textos multimodales para realizar comentarios argumentativos, con preferencia por los literarios y los periodísticos e interés menor por los multimedia; la negociación problemática con el alumnado sobre la selección textual debido a la escasa calidad de los materiales que aportan y la tendencia hacia el comentario escrito con

poca interacción oral aun sabiendo el provecho formativo que la oralidad reporta al proceso de redacción, revisión y evaluación del texto en agilidad y cooperación argumentada de los aprendizajes. Predomina la corrección escrita por dejar constancia individualizada de errores para la reflexión ulterior y, su evaluación discursiva sigue guías y rúbricas de manuales alentando la autoevaluación y la coevaluación discente con instrumentos variados. En conclusión, el contraste de tales costumbres con el enfoque educativo competencial revela la pervivencia academicista del canon filológico en la selección textual y del tópico del comentario como práctica escrita individual más re-constructiva que constructiva, lo cual merma la voluntad democratizadora de empoderar al alumnado en su pensamiento crítico, la promoción de su alfabetización mediática en el aula y las prácticas orales en el proceso didáctico de la argumentación informal en el comentario de texto.

**Descriptores:** didáctica, español, Educación Secundaria, escritura (composición), actitudes escolares, comunicación verbal.

## **1. Introduction**

This study presents the results of exploratory research into the views of Spanish secondary school level language and literature teachers of their own methodological habits when they cover informal reasoning in teaching textual commentary. This research was carried out as part of the R&D&i project reference EDU2014-56997-P in the Excellence category corresponding to the State Programme to Promote Scientific, Technical and Innovation Research 2013-2016,

sponsored by the Ministry of the Economy and Competitiveness (MINECO). It contributes to advancing international research into teachers' views of the process of composition in academic writing, research that mainly focusses on higher education (Ballano and Muñoz, 2015; Björk and Räisänen, 1997; Carlino, 2013; Castelló, 2015; Castelló and Mateos, 2015; Hyland, 2002; Kruse, 2013; Marín, López, and Roca, 2015; Tolchinsky, 2014), given how educationally important teachers' and students' argumentative compe-

tency is in this stage for establishing the validity of academic discourse (Araya and Roig, 2014; Cano and Castelló, 2016; Pra-dos and Cubero, 2016).

Studies on academic writing that focus on secondary education are less common (Applebee and Langer, 2009; Solé et al., 2005; Villalón and Mateos, 2009) and ones referring to argumentative practice are rare (Melero and Gárate, 2013, Sachinidou, 2015). These studies generally show that its teaching and learning in the 21st century displays the continued existence of traditional habits that are closer to reproductive writing than reflexive and epistemic writing. This aspect, as Bordieu and Passeron (1981) noted, corresponds with the *symbolic violence* that prevails in classrooms as certain pedagogical actions arbitrarily impose themselves as legitimate in accordance with what Jackson (1975) describes as the *hidden curriculum*, routine habits that obey authority. This derives from a lack of democratisation in teaching and diversity in learning, as well as the assertion of the school text book as a model of cultural reproduction (Torres, 1991).

This study sets out to reveal teachers' social representations of academic writing in secondary education to understand the current meaning they give their everyday practices. This has the dual aim of examining the state of the art regarding the model of language education best practice which is based on situated learning contexts that characterise the communicative competency focus and of deconstructing their stated objections to the socio-educational changes that this new focus entails in teaching writing.

Specifically, this is a pioneering initiative in its scrutiny of the viability of informal reasoning through its didactic possibilities in the discursive practice of textual commentary, in accordance with scientific foundations that are suited to the expectations regarding competencies of current education.

This competence pathway is illuminated by the protocols of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), published by the Council of Europe (2001) to promote multilingualism and create consistency and transparency with levels of linguistic command across language programmes, and by the curriculum of the Instituto Cervantes (*Plan curricular del Instituto Cervantes*, 2006) regarding the large-scale functional features of the argumentative text type, especially in relation to archetypal processes and resources for development, inserting appropriate sequences, and verbal elements.

An important theoretical framework is also provided by various scientific publications about informal argumentation that cover day-to-day situations for arguing without fallacies (Lo Cascio, 1998), and by ones that cover reflexive actions with a dialogic perspective at the level of the enunciation (Camps, 1995; Ducrot, 1988), critical discourse analysis (Álvarez, 2001), and semantics that promote the development of a personal and committed meaning (Azevedo, 2006; Cros, 2003; Corcelles, Castelló, and Mayoral, 2016).

Regarding textual commentary, going beyond the academicist models where the reader's perspective was negated

with the single aim of reconstructing the author's intentions (Marín, 1989) and the writer's perspective was limited to summarising the content of the text and listing linguistic details, personal critical commentary is promoted, accepting the pragmatic-dialectical methodology where the commentator champions her own position in the face of likely counter arguments (Eemeren, 2010; Marraud, 2017; Nussbaum, 201) and, in particular, the dialogic methodology is aimed for which establishes various connecting arguments, such as hypotheses through abductive inference (Duarte, 2015), establishing intertextual links in the reading with anthologies with multiple text types that collect texts on a single subject, providing for interpretative reading (Mendoza, 2001), discussions that build shared ideas and opinions (Vega and Olmos, 2011), a portfolio for students to self-evaluate their own learning, and democratising writing practices (Cassany, 2008). These are the conditions that enable the development of informal argumentation in critical personal textual commentary (Caro, 2015; Caro and González, 2012).

In light of the foregoing, the general aim of this work is to explore the academic habits of teachers regarding the appropriate methodology for developing informal reasoning in textual commentary. This is done with the following specific objectives:

- To establish the variety of text types chosen by the teachers for students to prepare text commentaries and the reasons for choosing them,

with special focus on the case of multimedia texts.

- To verify whether there is a willingness to negotiate with students on the choice of texts for oral and written commentaries and the reasons for this decision by the teacher.

- To establish whether teachers design textual commentary tasks to combine oral and written activities, and what process sequence they use.

- To clarify the feedback and evaluation strategies and methods for textual commentaries that teachers and students use (oral/written, group/individual, with/without rubric; heteroevaluation, self-evaluation, and co-evaluation).

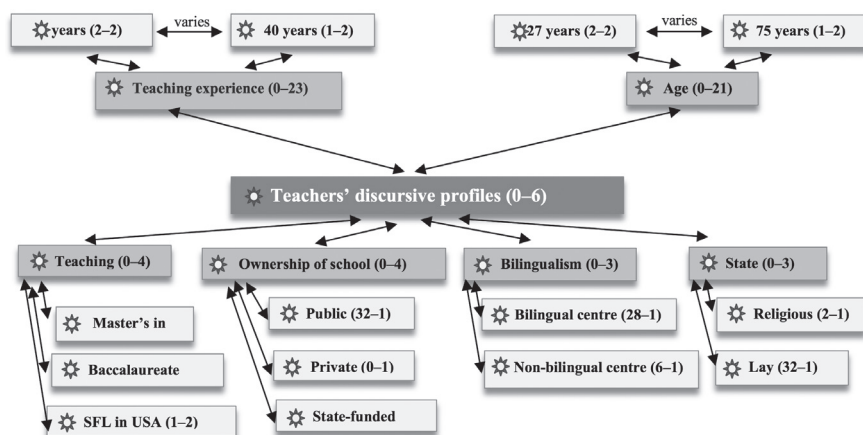
## **2. Method**

This study uses a qualitative methodology with an interpretative-phenomenological design to examine in-depth the results that give academic teaching habits meaning (Flick, 2007; Tójar, 2006). The information was obtained by interviewing teaching staff to examine the key aspects of their professional profile and experience on the topic that gives its name to the research project (León and Montero, 2015).

### **2.1. Sample**

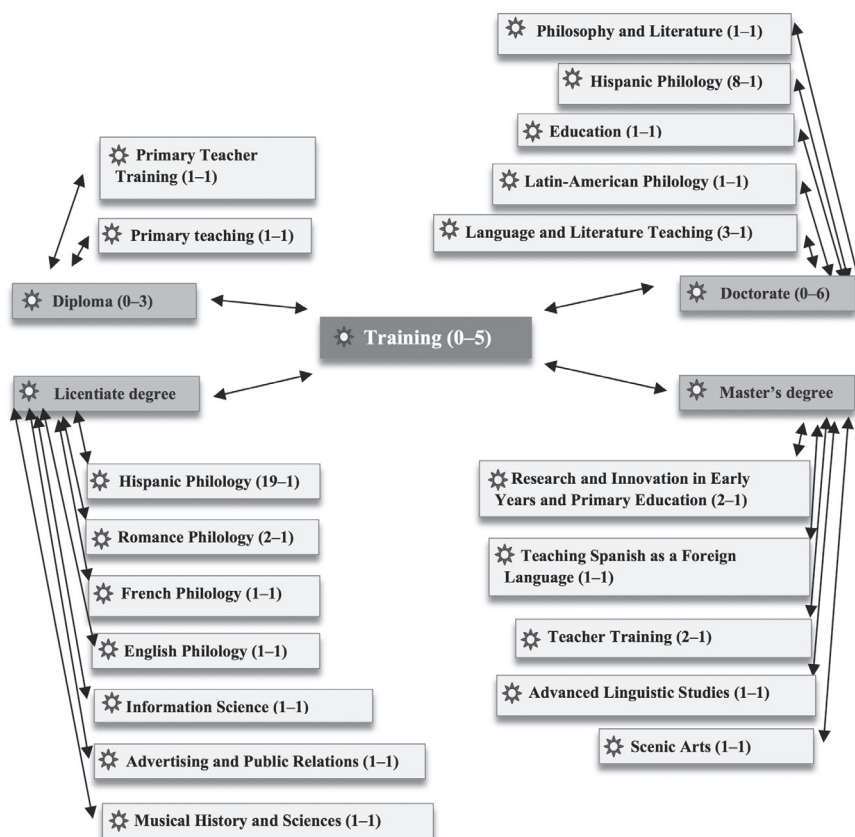
The key informants-participants were 34 Spanish Language and Literature teachers resident in Spain, whose discursive profile is shown in Graph 1 which shows their sociodemographic and professional differences.

GRAPH 1. Semantic network of teachers' discursive profiles.



Source: Own elaboration.

GRAPH 2. Semantic network of teachers' training.



Source: Own elaboration.

Their ages range from 27 to 75, they have 2 to 40 years teaching experience, and their academic training (Graph 2) includes diplomas (2), licentiate degrees (26), master's degrees (7), and doctorates (14). They teach the Spanish Baccalaureate (26), the Master's in Training Secondary School Teachers (12), and Spanish as a foreign language in the USA (1). The schools they work at are mainly publicly owned (32) and secular (32), and their syllabuses mostly follow the bilingual programme.

## 2.2. Instrument

In accordance with the proposed objectives, the group of researchers involved in the project designed a semi-structured interview script (Table 1). The content of this script was assessed by experts with reference to the subject matter of each question and their degree of precision and conceptual, syntactic, and structural suitability. These independent assessments were discussed and agreed with suggestions to improve the final version.

TABLE 1. Teachers' academic habits dimension Questions from the interview script.

This questionnaire will ask about your academic habits concerning what you regard as the most appropriate methodology for developing informal argumentation in textual commentary.

- What type of texts do you usually choose as the basis of your students' textual commentaries? Why?
- Do you also choose multimedia texts? Why?
- Do you also give your students the chance to provide texts and topics for critical commentary? Do you do this more in oral or written tasks? Why?
- Do you usually combine both dimensions (oral and written) for this purpose? What sequence do you use? Please explain the process.
- Which do you prefer? Oral or written feedback? Why?
- Do you give individual or group feedback on the textual commentary? What is the aim of this?
- Do you use a guide or rubric for any of the textual commentaries (oral-written, individual-group) that your students do? What aspects do you evaluate? Can you explain them to us?
- Do you encourage students to self-evaluate their own textual commentary? With which strategies? Do you use a guide, rubric, portfolio, etc.?
- Do you also encourage your students to evaluate their classmates' text commentaries? How do you do this? Explain it to us.

Source: Own elaboration.

The interview is structured in four sections: introduction; sociodemographic, personal, academic, and professional details; questions; notes. The questions section is intended to consider in-depth

the senses that teachers give to the use of text commentary in teaching from their own unique, idiosyncratic perspectives which are defined by their discursive profiles.

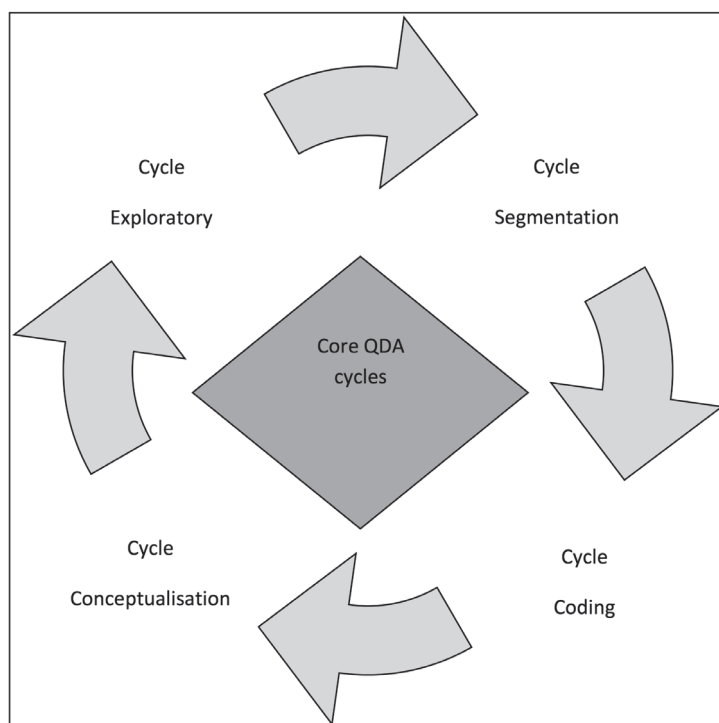
### 2.3. Procedure

The information from the interviews was transcribed into a written format as a primary source for each participant. This allowed for the creation of the corresponding hermeneutic units for analytic processing of the information using the Atlas.ti 7 program. The qualitative data analysis (QDA) was performed on two levels – the semantic content level and the discursive-narrative level – to give meaning to the qualitative information transmitted by *reducing* the set of data to «a map of meanings comprising a manageable number of elements, so that we can *arrange* them meaningfully and represent them in a way that finally allow us to *extract* and *verify* a series of comprehensive con-

*clusions*» about the reality studied (Miles and Huberman, 1984, p. 23).

The units of analysis were defined using thematic criteria. They were categorised-codified following an inductive system of conceptualisation of the qualitative data itself (Flick, 2007; Rodríguez, Gil, and García, 1996; Serrano, 1999). The grounded theory analytic procedure is used. As Sabariego, Massot, and Dorio explain (2012), this is exploratory as it «reveals theories, concepts, hypotheses, and propositions starting directly from the data» (p. 318). This is justified in new areas of research that still lack useful and well-funded concepts for describing and explaining events.

GRAPH 3. Core QDA cycles: textual information reduction.



Source: Own elaboration.

In the core stages of the QDA (Graph 3), the segmenting stage was preceded by the exploratory stage which is required to make appropriate decisions about the system of categories, metacategories, and families adopted. This was followed by the axial stage whose code relationships and types (descriptive, interpretative, and explanatory) correspond to the concepts transmitted by the teachers; all of this compared and agreed by two analysts. Finally, the semantic networks and matrices are used to represent graphically the information analysed.

### 3. Results

#### 3.1. Results for specific objective 1

The texts teachers usually propose for their students to prepare commentaries in class have a range of types of concept depending on their thematic-linguistic specialisation (journalistic, literary, scientific, etc.), their discursive type (argumentative, expository, etc.), their channel and even other criteria, such as how contemporary they are. Some of the teachers interviewed use as criteria for selection to ensure they are appropriate to the academic level, the syllabus, texts from useful manuals, and ones collected for university entrance tests. Other teachers do not specify or prioritise any type because they use all sorts of texts to provide their students with a more comprehensive edu-

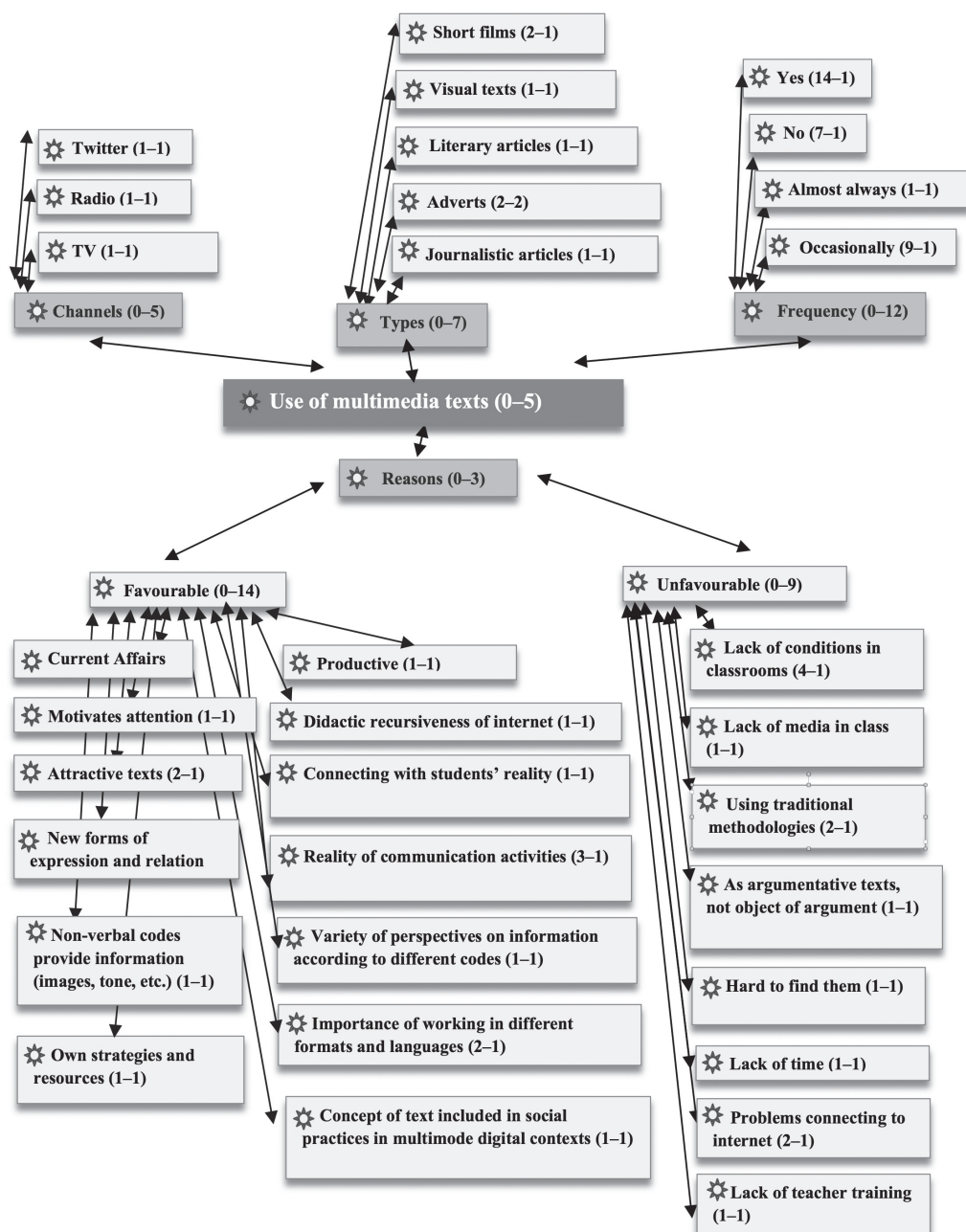
cation in linguistic-cognitive skills.

There is a notable preference for journalistic texts which has two convincing argumentative justifications; on the one hand they make it possible to cover themes that are topical, global, and easy for the students to understand, and on the other, they encourage discussion and group work which develop reflexive and critical capacity, respect for other ideologies, and students' involvement in the society in which they live.

The teachers believe that journalistic and literary texts motivate students. They are also objects of study in the teaching approach for training teachers. Literary texts are associated with the established curriculum and journalistic and argumentative texts with university entrance tests. Knowledge acquisition is attributed to scientific texts and these are more appropriate for the linguistic-literary specialism of the Master's in Training Secondary School Teachers.

The results obtained regarding the didactic use of multimedia texts show many arguments for and against (Graph 4). The possible types of them include short films, adverts, visual texts, and journalistic and literary articles. The teachers whose answers included the broadcast channels identified television, radio, and the Twitter social network.

GRAPH 4. Semantic network of use of multimedia texts by teaching staff.



Source: Own elaboration.

The results relating to the teachers' use of multimedia texts show differences of opinion regarding the high

or low frequency and in arguments for and against. The problems do not derive from their teaching efficacy but from

the lack of appropriate equipment inside and outside the classroom, teaching hours for working on them, good online materials, and teachers' skills at finding them. Multimedia texts are sometimes used as reference material to support the text being studied, but as such are not part of the body of texts used for commentary. The lack of training in media literacy for teachers to handle digitised texts well –often audio-visual ones– is also identified. This often means they favour using traditional methodologies.

The teachers understand that using multimedia texts makes it possible to consider in-depth digital and practical social contexts connected to the everyday reality of the students, with the motivation, appeal, and involvement derived from this. They are aware that multimedia texts are linked to the new forms of communication, the multiple formats and languages, the approach to studying non-verbal codes, working on the viewpoint, and triangulating the information, all of which requires the development of particular strategies and resources.

### **3.2. Results for specific objective 2**

The discursive variant that considers in depth the opportunity teachers offer their students of contributing texts and topics for critical commentary shows results aimed at encouraging students to participate in their learning in an active and connected way. Teachers regard this as positive and constructive for students as it helps make them interested and involved, gives them practical training,

and improves their skills. The students learn to *look* at what surrounds them and they find it easier to argue and interpret topics and texts that they have found and selected themselves to create a mosaic of ideas that represent the set of freedoms of society. As they are citizens situated in a social, political, and cultural context, it is important to encourage their critical and self-critical spirit. Likewise, students' contributions in audiovisual formats stands out, as does creating blogs to organise consultation material about what has been experienced.

Some teachers comment on the limited success of this practice, as students do not generally contribute texts and the ones they do suggest are simplistic and clichéd. Therefore, some teachers believe it is better if the students only suggest themes. Furthermore, teachers see other added difficulties: finding interesting topics for the whole group-class and ideal texts for analysis and, in addition, knowing that their students only read texts for obligation and are not inclined to accept new suggestions for what to read.

They note that in oral commentary, students are encouraged to exchange interesting ideas and topics, and faced with the difficulty of selecting texts for these purposes, they increase the range of topics. In contrast, some of the interviewees –teachers on the Master's in Training Secondary School Teachers– state that this type of contribution is done in the written commentary tasks, as the final research task students perform –the master's dissertation– is fundamentally evaluated based on their written report.

### 3.3. Results for specific objective 3

The results of the examination of teachers' habits in the design of didactic tasks concerning textual commentary that combine the oral and written dimensions show the limited use of the oral mode owing to the lack of teaching time, the difficulty of equally combining the two dimensions, and the view of the written dimension as fundamental for consolidating the process of working on and perfecting textual commentary (Graph 5). Writing takes precedence over speech because there is a preference for reinforcing the teaching of it as it is deemed to involve more problems with expression. It is even noted that there is a tendency for the students do less work on oral expression in the school as their socioeconomic level rises, as the correct practice of it is acquired in the home environment. In any way, most of the teachers consulted claim that the fact that oral expression is neglected in the classroom must be rectified in a coordinated way and in connection with the written language tasks.

The results that acclaim work on the oral dimension, emphasising its teaching benefits and advantages, relate to the students' involvement in the scheduled tasks: teachers use it to encourage students to participate in class and see it as a resource for motivating students and building a connection with them, which should also be relied on in commentaries on oral texts, for example, videos.

Despite the time limitations that affect the oral dimension, it is interesting to note that most teachers believe it is advisable to combine both dimensions: one sector favours starting with an individual

written commentary and ending with a group reflection task, plenary, and discussion; another group of the same size favours starting with oral practice so that the students can then shape their final written commentary. Some interviewees include an initial phase of reading comprehension of the written text, either as a group task in class or individually at home, focussing on solving all key elements for subsequent interpretation and taking a critical position.

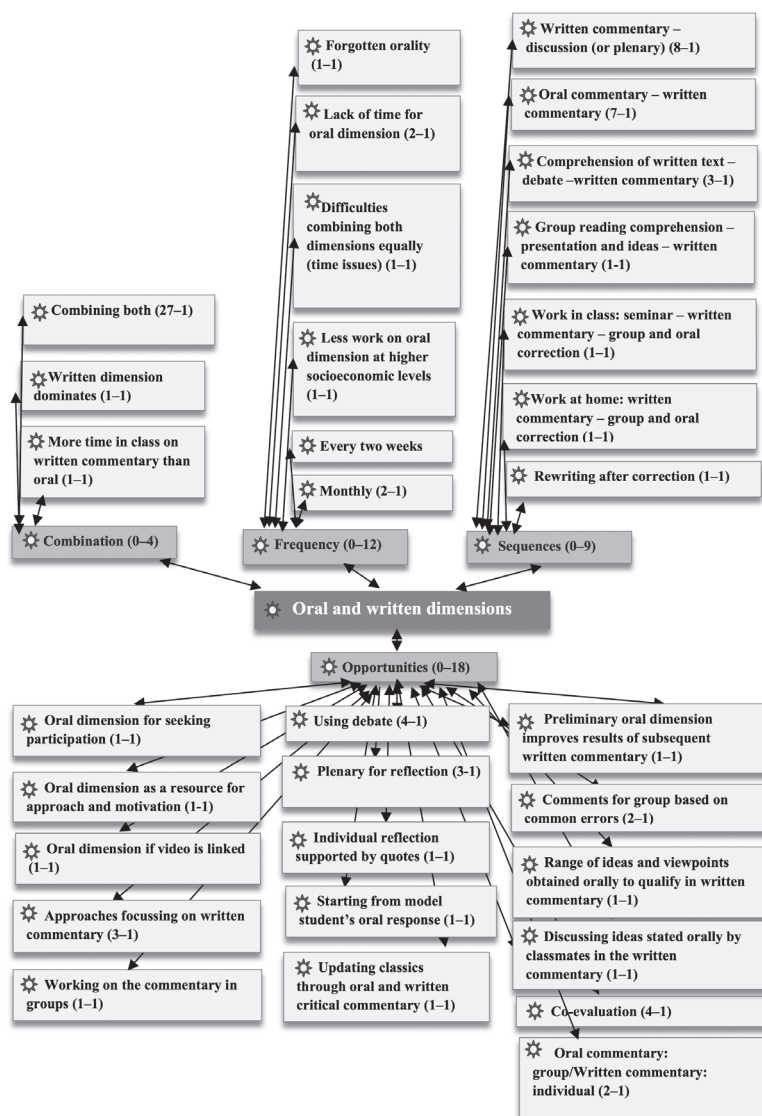
Other situations that make it possible to differentiate the type of organisation or sequence in the commentary are provided by the time available in class (written commentary if there is ample time, oral commentary if there is limited time) and the type of cooperative work by students (oral commentary in group, written commentary if working individually). The students are often organised into small groups before the joint oral discussion in the class-group.

In addition, the key informants talk about the process and the features of its didactic phases in depth. An initial oral stage using discussions provides training to help improve the result of subsequent written commentaries, as an initial analysis of a group of ideas and various points of view can be qualified, specified, and personalised coherently in writing in the second phase. After the discussion, students are also encouraged to prepare a written personal critical commentary in which they argue their position in the face of the oral opinions of their classmates. On other occasions, the teacher suggests the directions the commentary can follow.

Individual reflection based on quotes and authoritative arguments is encouraged. Rewriting and remodelling what was initially written after an initial correction by the teacher is also regarded as important. The teachers sometimes ask

students to draw up a mind map after the students reading their written commentaries, and it is even worth updating the interpretation of the classics by comparing their message with topical issues that are relevant to the students.

GRAPH 5. Semantic network on the use and sequence of the written and oral dimensions in textual commentary.



Source: Own elaboration.

Finally, the oral element of the final phase of correcting the commentary allows the teacher to offer appropriate instructions based on common errors spotted in the teaching process. Co-evaluation can also be used as a feedback strategy.

### 3.4. Results for specific objective 4

The process of feedback and evaluation of the textual commentary uses a discursive variant that differentiates written feedback from oral feedback. The results obtained show, thanks to its significant frequency, that most teachers prefer a combination of the two types of feedback, as they are different, complementary, fundamental, and require particular handling as they are linked to different forms of expression. In contrast, the feedback sequence reported by some teachers places written feedback before the oral revision. At other times, the practice of commenting out loud on the written activity is mentioned.

The results concerning the particular features of written feedback emphasise its individual efficacy as it allows teachers to be more precise and detailed in their corrections of grammar, spelling, and the argument, as well as observing the correct progress of each student. Written feedback requires more time from the teacher, but does offer a more thorough overview of each case. It enables students to organise their thinking better, encourages knowledge retention, and increases time for reflecting on suggested improvements. Furthermore, any written feedback leaves proof of the work done and becomes material for evaluation. Finally,

compared with oral feedback, written feedback avoids putting students on the spot as it does not show the rest of the class their possible errors and suggestions for improvement.

On the other hand, oral feedback is direct, fast, constructive, effective, and enriching; it positively recognises the student's efforts, makes it possible to share good points and errors in class, and allows students to judge their own intervention. It also develops their critical spirit and civic tolerance to opposing views. It makes it possible to check the students' comprehension immediately and improve their communication, including non-verbal forms. In addition, all of these positive aspects of oral feedback are reflected in written expression.

The discursive variant focussing on individual and group feedback on the textual commentary again offers results aimed at the interviewees' preferences for a combination of both. Some teachers also identify individual feedback with the written form and group feedback with the oral form. Teachers who use both confirm that this way they respond to the range of students, improving their learning. In relation to the sequence of work, they tend to start with individual feedback, followed by group feedback, although they maintain that using each type depends on the students' level. Likewise, those who use both types of feedback sometimes favour individual feedback and sometimes group feedback.

The results that go into depth on individual feedback focus on examining the particular good points and errors as each

student has their own distinctive critical capacity and reasoning. Individual feedback is taken on by the student with a more central role and responsibility. In addition, written feedback enables students to become better aware of their errors than group feedback in order to improve their discourse in future textual commentaries. The interviewees from the Master's in Training Secondary School Teachers link this type of feedback to the individual tutorial sessions. Finally, individual feedback frequently takes place after the group briefing, as a process of reflection on the individual's strong and weak points, a feedback process of good practices in the commentary between the students.

In contrast, group feedback makes it possible to solve common doubts and errors with the class as a whole to improve future commentaries, all in less time than written feedback. Despite the shyness and embarrassment some students might show, this type of feedback makes it possible to catch the attention of the class by involving students and enabling them to participate directly. In general, the interviewees state that group feedback promotes discussion and critical thinking, and results in enriching teaching experiences. For example, it creates an appropriate context for encouraging co-evaluation between students; similarly, seeing classmates' strong points and errors encourages students to self-evaluate their own work. Procedures such as combining small groups with the whole class for giving feedback, a student reading their model commentary aloud, or the sole use of this feedback in the case of comments made in a group are also identified.

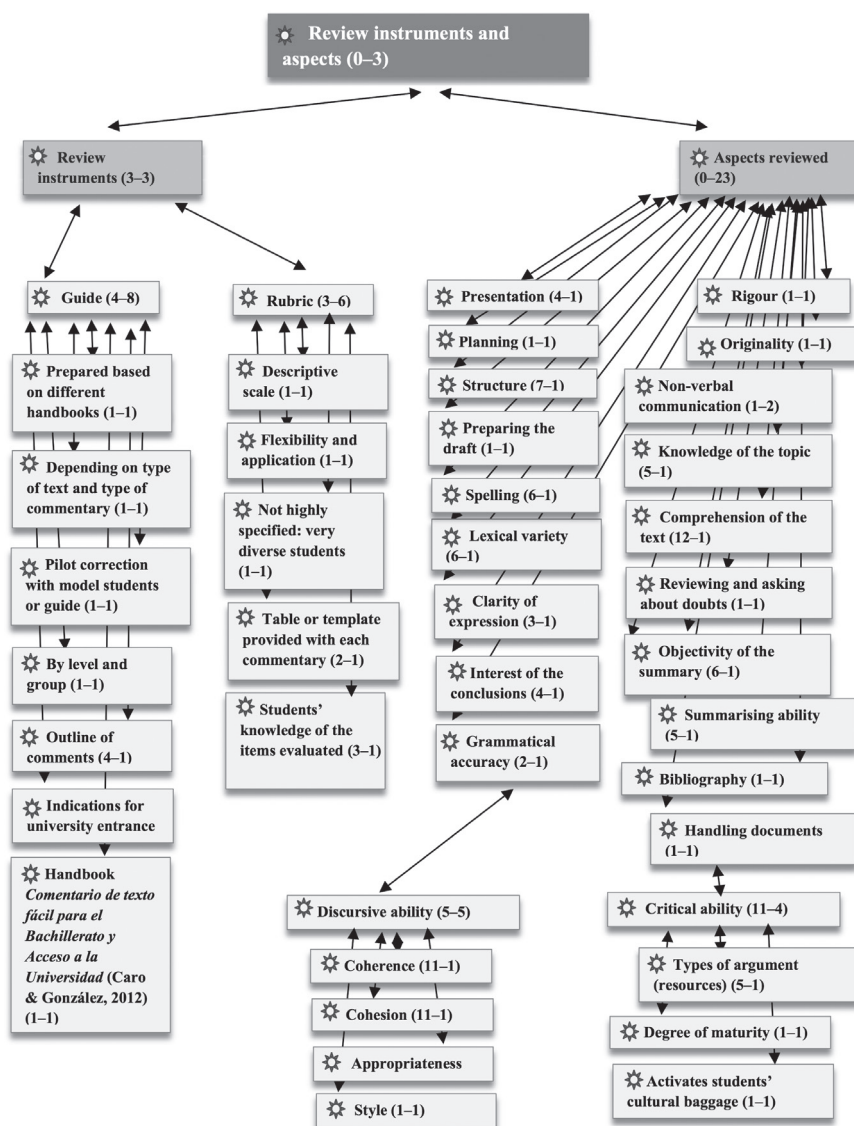
Teachers identify guidebooks and evaluation rubrics as feedback instruments (Graph 6). Use of the guide depends on the type of text and commentary, and the level and profile of the group of students. Its design is inspired by different manuals, compiling guidelines offered by the university access tests or with outlines for preparing commentaries. It is also worth taking the «pilot correction» of the commentary made by a student as a model or guide. The rubric, however, is defined as a descriptive scale whose items should be known by the students; it is represented in a table or template distributed and incorporated with each comment for the student. To allow for the diversity of students, it should be applied flexibly and comprise general or loosely defined items. Teachers who do not usually use a guide or rubric for feedback do report that they have a rubric they have developed themselves or have one in the process of being prepared.

As for the aspects evaluated with these instruments, a wide range of results are collected that reflect the rich diversity of feedback options given by the key informants: correcting grammar, reviewing spelling, and lexical variety are linguistic elements that are traditionally evaluated in any expressive task. The process of preparing the commentary (planning, drafting, revision and checking doubts, presentation), knowledge of the topic, handling the necessary documentation and the bibliography provided as proof of prior research are also of interest. Other aspects of interest are the rigour shown, originality, the structure of the commentary, the objectivity of the summary, the

ability to summarise, the clarity of the exposition of ideas, and the interest of the conclusions. Discursive capacity is evaluated in its parameters of coherence, cohesion, appropriateness, and style; critical capacity in relation to the students' cultural baggage, their level of maturity,

and the types of arguments used as a vital resource in any personal critical commentary. In the case of oral commentaries, non-verbal communication elements that shape the meaning and comprehension of the ideas and opinions expounded are also considered.

GRAPH 6. Semantic network of the feedback process used in textual commentary.



Source: Own elaboration.

Most of the teachers promote student self-evaluation of the commentary. The aim is for them to improve their commentary through subsequent rewriting informed by reflection. Among the effective strategies used, students are encouraged to take a position and use professional correction techniques, and reading aloud for revision is promoted. Prior reading of other commentaries is sometimes used. Self-evaluation is sometimes done after the teacher has reviewed the commentary, although the teacher identifying any problems without saying how to correct them so that the students find solutions is also an interesting option. In some cases, the sequence starts by setting out on the board the guide of elements revised to inspire an oral discussion about the different aspects and conclude with each of the students rewriting their work. A preliminary group reflection task about the range of possible options in the commentary is also an option. Students self-evaluate their vocabulary and syntax by comparing their work with their classmates' work and the model texts suggested by the teacher.

The instruments used in self-evaluation vary according to the needs and academic habits of the key informants. They include the following types: portfolios, descriptive scales, weighted mark tables, lists of evaluation criteria for the university entrance tests, personal interviews, generic rubrics owing to the diversity of the students, questionnaires with essential aspects and detailed indicators, and guidelines for making comments in accordance with the competence-based curriculum focus.

Many of the teachers interviewed encourage co-evaluation. Some state that they especially use this procedure at the start of the course, when the students are more unsure; others prefer to use it at the end of the course and emphasise the different attitudes observed among the students when evaluated by their peers.

Co-evaluation tasks aim to foster students' critical judgement by using a variety of strategies; students are encouraged to raise questions, and they are allowed to add to and amend other classmates' comments respectfully and constructively. Most teachers do this with a group or class discussion but on other occasions the students are split into small groups.

As an oral task, co-evaluation can be performed by reading selected comments out-loud. The rest of the group can then make comments on them in accordance with a previously-provided rubric. The immediacy of this process is underlined through the oral comments made in spontaneous interventions. The whiteboard is often used to make a visual note of the aspects and comments for all of the students.

Co-evaluation can also be written as a separate text where each student notes her particular observations in class or at home. Publishing this on a teaching blog is a good idea. Sometimes pairs exchange comments and written correction is provided that leads to the oral transmission of the ideas analysed to the evaluated classmate. Anonymity or the use of pseudonyms is normal in these practices.

The instruments used are similar to the ones already described for the case of

self-evaluation. Accordingly, the answer fall into three types: a list with criteria from the university access tests, a rubric, and a table with specific scores depending on items.

## 4. Conclusions

The relevant conclusions of this research are established by comparing the results of the analysis of teachers' academic habits in developing textual commentary with informal argumentation through the prism of the most appropriate didactic methodologies in the area according to a competency-based focus.

It is important to note this exploratory study's novel contribution to academic work on teachers' perceptions of the development of academic writing for two reasons: firstly, because it focusses on secondary education, a stage at which this matter is little-studied in the Spanish academic sphere; secondly, because it specifically examines the habits of teachers in the area of Spanish language and literature about teaching textual commentary and developing arguments in it.

This analysis shows that, while secondary education teachers use a wide range of text types for practising textual commentary and teachers from the Master's in Secondary Education also recommend this multi-mode approach at this intermediate stage, the use of literary and journalistic genres dominates. The literary genre is present at all levels by curricular tradition given its cultural, artistic, and content benefits, showing the currency of the literary canon in relation to the educational canon (Cerrillo, 2013).

Journalistic texts are used at levels that involve preparing personal critical commentary for university access tests. Opinion pieces are ideal for this given their brevity, informal themes, and ease of comprehension, and in addition the teaching guides that are starting to appear favour quality learning of them (Caro and González, 2012). In contrast, multimedia texts are barely used for commentary, as, although the teachers note their teaching benefits in making knowledge accessible and semiotic richness, they are frequently used for seeking information but present technical difficulties, all of which agrees with recent analyses that place the media competencies of teachers at a basic level (Ramírez and González, 2016).

Teachers believe that it is positive for students to participate in selecting the texts on which they will comment. This democratising aim can improve the learning elements of joint responsibility and critique, something which is in line with the new curriculum paradigm of the competencies focus (Prensky, 2015). Nonetheless, as teachers also note that these prejudices the quality of the anthology given the limited reading repertoire of their students and they prefer to get them involved with discussions on topics that interest them, it is agreed that in teaching habits, meaningful learning plays a role, but the new competencies-based educational paradigm, the first step of which has to be empowering students, has not yet matured.

This immaturity is also influenced by the limited use of speech in teaching textual commentary, even when it is vital for developing the argument on dialogic

pathways that guarantee cooperation, equality, and meaning (Aubert, García, and Racionero, 2009; Giménez and Subtil, 2015). The teachers' different proposals or sequences and groupings regarding the combination of speech and writing in the process of producing and evaluating argumentative textual commentary show a gradual move towards active methodologies. However, as the academicist tradition of identifying textual commentary with an individual written exercise where the student must interpret the author's intention still persists, teaching time for oral commentaries is barely present.

Feedback and evaluation of textual commentary is given by combining the oral and written dimensions in group and individual situations respectively. Secondary school teachers in the Spanish language and literature speciality and teachers from the Master's in Secondary Education in this specialism alike, recognise the virtues of oral revision (immediacy, authentic and established knowledge, versatility of modes of evaluation), but they value written feedback by teachers and students more highly, given their responsibility, precision, and profitability in correcting errors and their function as a witness in final tests. Consequently, their pedagogical position fluctuates between cultivating writing as a process and evaluating it as a product.

Furthermore, they comply with the competence-based focus when they positively regard the use of rubrics and guidelines for revising commentaries (Guzmán, Flores, and Tirado, 2012). They prepare these in accordance with two different types of content: on the one hand gram-

matical and lexical-semantic, and on the other the rhetorical process of composition. They do not include logical reasoning processes that are needed to achieve good educational practices in communicative competencies (Giménez and Subtil, 2015). This important omission is repeated with the question about aspects evaluated and self-evaluation, hetero-evaluation and co-evaluation procedures.

The results of this study show that the habits of Spanish language and literature teachers still feature academicist traits that prevent them fully developing competency-based educational initiatives: apart from the literary and journalistic types, they do not often use other text types for commentary; they also do not usually allow students to propose texts for commentary or use multimedia resources beyond the merely informative, at the expense of empowering students and of a curriculum that is open to informal settings; they have a positive view of the interaction between oral and written dimensions in the production, feedback, and evaluation of textual commentaries, and they use effective strategies, but they exercise this little in class because they give more importance and teaching time to strengthening written practice; they use evaluation rubrics, but the indicators in these do not include the logical reasoning processes in building an argument. Therefore, there is a clear need to insist on deconstructing teachers' academicist habits that impede the full democratisation of classroom communication and training them in informal argumentative logic to encourage the appropriate use of textual commentary in accordance with the com-

petencies-based educational paradigm, as this training is a key issue to ensure that the word serves the knowledge society.

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