The eclectic landscape: examining Spanish secondary school teachers' beliefs on literary education

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Literary education aims to promote the teaching of reading from an academic, social, and personal perspective. At present there is a consensus on the central role that the school institution plays, which can be translated into explicit and implicit approaches. The objective of this article is to explore Spanish Secondary school teachers' beliefs about literary education to determine their proximity to each of these two approaches, as well as the coherence within such beliefs, unpacking the relationships between adherence to principles and declared practices. To obtain the data that supports the study, the *Beliefs About Literary Education of Secondary School Teachers* (BALESST) scale has been elaborated. 1,544 Secondary Education teachers from the 17 Spanish communities and the autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla have responded to the scale. For the analysis of the data, the statistical packages of IBM SPSS Statistics, 24.0 and G* Power 3 have been used. The results suggest that Spanish Secondary school teachers are in an eclectic position in the debate between explicit and implicit literary education, reveal relevant discrepancies between the two factors that make up the scale (adherence to principles and declared practices), and allow identify majority and minority representations and practices among teachers.

KEYWORDS

literary education, Spanish secondary school teachers, beliefs, explicit and implicit approaches, adherence to principles, declared practices, BALESST scale, eclectic position

1. Introduction

Literary education is currently understood as a process oriented toward the training of readers through the design of reading and writing plans, in accordance with the general objective of linguistic education: to develop the students' potential for their participation in literate practices (Lorenzo, 2016; Colomer et al., 2018). The idea that to learn how to read literature students must read literature is today central in literary education, but until a few decades ago this centrality was occupied by the history of literature and the formal and rhetorical characteristics of the literary text (Núñez-Molina, 2016; Patte, 2023). This change, which places the reader in the spotlight, began in the mid-20th century with contributions from pedagogy and literary studies, such as L. Rosenblatt's transactional theory or I.A. Richards' observations on literary judgments. Such contributions were extensively developed later with concepts of great impact in schooling such as J. Culler's "literary competence" or W. Iser's "implicit reader"

(see Jauss, 1982). This perspective maintains that without the reader who decodes, understands, interprets, and creates a response to the literary text within a particular social, historical, and cultural context, that text can never come to life (Mendoza, 2017; Koek et al., 2019).

In the classroom, this perspective translates into the need to cultivate the reading habit, assumed in the 70s (see, for example, Patte's, 2023 reflections about the French context) and explored from various points of view, among them from the students' engagement in reading (Hogan, 2018), the support provided to the learner (Colomer et al., 2018; Fabregat, 2022), the professional development of the teacher (Taylor, 2014), the guided interpretative processes (Ballester and Ibarra, 2015), the role of writing in literary education (Schneuwly et al., 2017), free reading (Jiménez-Pérez et al., 2019) or classroom intervention (Colomer et al., 2020).

These studies highlight the important role of the educational institution when it comes to promoting a friendly, trusting, and respectful encounter between the student and the book, and they open the debate on the advisability of modulating this encounter either in an explicit or an implicit way. This dichotomy reflects the dilemma that is reproduced in other educational domains, such as the teaching of grammar or writing instruction (e.g., Ellis and Roever, 2021).

2. Explicit or implicit intervention in literary education

The explicit teaching presents a restricted corpus of works on which to guide the students' gaze toward narratological, sociological, symbolic, and intertextual aspects through exploring specific discursive genres (Mendoza, 2017). Along this line are the so-called instructional sequences (Milian, 2020), in which different types of activities on procedural and conceptual content are explained, strongly supported by written production.

From this point of view, to educate the reader's response, a natural type of reading does not suffice, since learning alone cannot equal learning with the active help of a more qualified peer (a classmate, the teacher, etc.) (Colomer et al., 2018). The figure of the teacher would be like that of the literary critic who helps to relate the work with different époques and cultures, with life, science, the economy, etc., a set of measures to guide students toward elaborate levels of understanding (Hollis, 2021). This perspective seeks to develop reading strategies and efferent responses, as well as consolidate a repertoire of interpretive strategies, highlighting that the school has a compensatory and formative function. The direct transfer of social practices to the classroom would be questioned, assuming for this the need for extrinsic motivation with teachers capable of provoking the desire to learn (Engeström et al., 2022).

The help provided to the learner should not be limited to general guidelines (such as the repertoire of readings or themes) but would be specified in interventions in the classroom (Colomer et al., 2020), which would address a range of varied aspects, putting the reader at the center and combining perspectives to develop the students' awareness of the critical discursive genre (Camps et al., 2022) (see Table 1).

While the benefits of an explicit approach are currently highlighted, some authors defend the implicit approach, based on promoting reading through a generic selection of literary works among which the students establish their own reading itinerary, triggering a sustained reading habit over time (Hogan, 2018). According to this, the mission of the educational institution is to guide only indirectly, based on generic (although well-oriented) recommendations from the teacher with the

TABLE 1 Prospects for intervention in the classroom (our elaboration).

Perspective	Type of exploration	Fields
1. The text from within	Structural-rhetorical	Linguistic structuralism (Scholes, 2009)
2. The text from outside	Historical-cultural and sociological	Literature history (Romero-Tobar, 2004)
3. From the text	Creative	Reader intertextuality (Mendoza, 2017)
4. Behind the text	Critical-ideological	Critical discourse analysis (Cassany, 2021)

aim of influencing the two variables considered essential to consolidate the reading habit: the reading frequency and the students' emotional intelligence (Bennett and Royle, 2004; Allen, 2009; Álvarez-Álvarez and Viejo, 2017; Patte, 2022). From this perspective, according to Jiménez-Pérez et al. (2019) the central question is that in the classrooms "teachers recommend reading, since this will train reading competence naturally, without specific activities or stipulated texts" (p.29), the latter measures not having any role for "training the common general reader" (p.29) but only a remedial role for students with difficulties.

The objective is developing reading for pleasure as well as esthetic and critical responses. Classroom intervention is be based on general measures aimed at stimulating free interpretation, emotional involvement with the book, development of habits, and learning by impregnation. The intention is to emulate extensive extracurricular reading (based on intrinsic motivation) and aspire to transfer this type of reading to school. The horizon is the literary practice of adults, surrounded by agents (critics, literary supplements, etc.) that orient the reader's interest toward specific options without determining such interest (Hogan, 2018).

Yet, many works developed in the last decade defend the importance of being in the continuum between these two positions: the need to cultivate both the efferent response and the esthetic response in the apprentice (see for instance Mínguez-López, 2014; McCarthy, 2015; Koek et al., 2019; Hollis, 2021; Bloome et al., 2023). The work oriented to the students' emotional involvement and their esthetic response should rest on notions such as those linked to the structure of the text or its intertextual dimension so that the students see the literary object not as a "rain of flowers" but as an "artifact," the result of constructive principles determined at the service of ideological, esthetic, and historical positions.

In turn, all the cultural baggage generated around the literary text (historical data, narrative particularities, etc.) should be at the service of greater emotional involvement and greater confidence in their own abilities to understand and interpret, as far as "emotional involvement" and "understanding" are tightly connected. Studies such as Elkad-Lehman and Greensfeld (2008) and Mendoza (2017) consider that the relationship in the classroom between these two poles constitutes a highly relevant aspect to trigger educational change in literary education and point out in this sense a crucial aspect: that of teachers' beliefs.

3. Teachers' beliefs about literary intervention

Teachers' beliefs constitute a field widely explored in various areas of the school curriculum such as mathematics (Piñeiro et al., 2019), natural sciences (Laudadío and Mazzitelli, 2019), social sciences (Altamirano and Pagès, 2018) or musical education (Colás and

Hernández-Portero, 2018). Also, specifically within linguistic education, in areas such as writing and grammar (Camps and Fontich, 2019), discursive genres (Repaskey et al., 2017) or learning foreign languages (Fernández-Álvarez et al., 2022). In relation to literary education, different perspectives have been addressed, such as beliefs about the role of families in linguistic and literary education (Fons and Palou, 2015), the teachers' vision on training (Romero and Trigo, 2018; Neira, and Martín., 2020; López-Rodríguez and Núñez-Delgado, 2022), or the belief system related to children's literature (Piñero, 2020).

These studies highlight the important role of beliefs in conceptual change, a complex and gradual process by which previous concepts can be abandoned, reformulated, reintegrated, and reactivated in specific situations (see from science learning, Vosniadou, 2012). In their study on beliefs and literary education, Elkad-Lehman and Greensfeld (2008) consider cognitive conflict as the most relevant mechanism for generating self-awareness of mental constructs, together with motivational and contextual aspects; beliefs would play an important role in the process of conceptual change, which would materialize in strong or weak changes or in the absence of changes.

These studies also highlight the contrast between adherence to principles and declared practices. Such a contrast reflects the existing tension between theory and practice in teacher training and manifests itself in mismatches between what is thought that is done and what is said that is done. Clarà (2019) points to different causes, including the difficulty in transferring theories and experiences from theory to practice, the teachers' preference for prescriptive and inductive approaches (the so-called "good practices," Álvarez-Álvarez, 2015) versus deductive approaches (theoretical models), and the clash between initial teacher training (especially for Secondary School) and the reality of the classroom.

In this text we intend to explore teachers' beliefs in relation to literary education and the place that explicit or implicit procedures occupy in it, observing to what extent a mismatch between declared practices and adherence to principles can be appreciated. We will focus on the context of Secondary school teachers in Spain, represented by the enormous diversity of initial formative experiences, both in their itineraries within the studies of philology (see for example Bravo, 2018) and with respect to the plethora of degrees that allow accessing the teaching profession (after completing a compulsory master's degree).

4. Research questions

The three research questions we asked ourselves are:

1) To what extent are Secondary school teachers in Spain involved in explicit or implicit literary education?
2) To what extent does adherence to principles correspond to stated practices?
3) What representations and what practices regarding literary education are more widely disseminated among the teachers represented in the study?

5. Method

This work is part of an investigation in which different variables are considered (teaching experience, university education, etc.) to carry out an inferential analysis. This article has made it possible to validate and apply a scale of explicit-implicit perspectives.

5.1. Measure instrument

The scale (which has been called *Beliefs About Literary Education of Secondary School Teachers,* BALESST), consists of 21 items. Within a continuum between explicit-implicit, five of them are clearly connected with an explicit perspective (items 4 5, 11, 16 and 18, see Table 2), and five of them with an implicit vision (items 1, 6, 8, 15, and 20). All 21 items are in turn grouped into two factors: a factor one (F1) of adherence to principles (items 1, 2, 3, 8, 9, 10, 15, 17, 19, and 20) and a factor two (F2) of declared practices (items 4, 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 18, and 21). For each item, participants must indicate their response on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (totally disagree) to 4 (totally agree). The instrument is preceded by a series of personal, academic, and professional questions that will allow, in a later research phase, to analyse and compare the results based on the possible resulting groupings and to determine the inferences of these variables on the factors studied (see Supplementary Annex 1).

5.2. Procedure

The process of creating the instrument has been divided into two phases. In Phase A, the Delphi technique has been used (Paixão et al., 2019). The authors of the questionnaire met to discuss the object of study and identify the factors. After the first phase, we proceeded to develop a proposal of open-response variables considered important to evaluate the study factors and decide what type of measurement was going to be carried out to evaluate them. Next, we analysed the variables with a panel of experts made up of five university professors, with extensive research experience. Additionally, eight Secondary school teachers, who teach the subjects of Spanish Language and Literature and Catalan Language and Literature, qualitatively evaluated the instrument. After the necessary corrections and the elaboration of the items of the scale, we sent back the scale to the panel of experts so that they could issue new suggestions. After this process, we reconfigured the scale by 40 items.

In Phase B, the questionnaire was applied to a control group (152 Secondary school teachers who volunteered to collaborate) to check its validity. Next, a dispersion analysis was performed to verify the distribution, checking skewness and kurtosis. After this analysis we rejected four items because they had skewness and kurtosis values greater than ± 2.0 and ± 4.00, respectively, of the deviation from normality (Schmider et al., 2010). Another item had to be dispensed with because it had corrected Homogeneity Index (cHI) values <0.200. We repeated the test with the resulting items, and we threw out one more item due to its low value. With the resulting scale, the reliability index was calculated by applying Cronbach's alpha test, and another item was dispensed with, since it did not reach 0.700, the minimum value indicated for its reliability (Oviedo and Campo, 2005). The definitive results obtained have been for Cronbach's F1 alpha = 0.772 and for Cronbach's F2 alpha = 0.723.

The questionnaire has been configured by a 21-item scale preceded by the metadata, from which an online form has been created. This form has been sent to the institutional addresses of the

TABLE 2 Variables and measures of central tendency, dispersion, and reliability analysis.

Variables*	M	SD	Skew	Kurt	cHI
01 Scheduling visits to the theater and nearby libraries favors the development of readers.	3.64	0.615	−1.615	1.946	0.3. 4. 5
02 Reading a literary work is a good starting point for creating new texts.	3.67	0.554	−1.475	1.468	0.280
03 The oral presentation of readings by the students favors the creation of a community of readers in the classroom.	3.52	0.657	−1.088	0.298	0.442
04 I put the students in pairs or groups to discuss the meaning of the novel they have read.	2.58	1.012	−0.066	−1.093	0.476
05 In class I work on the contrast between literary works, films, and TV series with different themes and plots.	3.08	0.926	−0.620	−0.650	0.384
06 My students make videos about their reading experience.	2.31	1.077	0.191	−1.251	0.421
07 In the literature classes I organize my teaching using work projects.	2.22	1,003	0.269	−1.050	0.436
08 I believe that a well-equipped school library with a reading-promotion plan contributes to the training of readers.	3.67	0.634	−2.026	3.864	0.291
09 Writing favors literary learning.	3.70	0.550	−1.817	2.956	0.376
10 I consider it necessary to create spaces that allow students to explain and argue their interpretations about the course readings.	3.62	0.635	−1.647	2.260	0.439
11 I offer composition guidelines to be able to give a written opinion on the text.	3.38	0.776	−1.109	0.622	0.424
12 I propose projects to the students to disseminate and share their personal readings.	2.81	0.983	−0.335	−0.940	0.531
13 In my classes I offer spaces to collaboratively write opinion texts.	2.50	1.010	−0.002	−1.089	0.460
14 I promote literary education actions (fan-fics, book-trailers, forums, etc.) on networks.	2.17	1.068	0.399	−1.124	0.440
15 The basis for making students love reading is letting them choose the books according to their tastes.	2.95	0.843	−0.367	−0.609	0.236
16 I promote the writing of both creative (stories, poems…) and analytical (synopsis, comparative tables…) texts.	3.46	0.714	−1.110	0.452	0.438
17 The reading habit develops the ability to interpret the symbolic aspects of literary texts.	3.76	0.482	−1.886	2.981	0.337
18 I show models of composition that facilitate the elaboration of texts.	3.47	0.701	−1.160	0.737	0.411
19 Literary education should be oriented toward the development of the students' interpretive capacity.	3.48	0.637	−0.981	0.573	0.317
20 Sharing literary experiences online enhances literary education	3.06	0.844	−0.507	−0.545	0.382
21 From the reading I propose to create, above all, narrative texts.	2.92	0.854	−0.312	−0.686	0.288
factors	M	SD	Skew	Kurt	α
F1. adherence to principles	3.507	0.344	−0.875	0.757	0.709
F2. stated practices	2.807	0.524	−0.193	−0.352	0.785

* In gray plot, variables referring to adherence to principles and in white to declared practices.

schools by email written in the four co-official languages of Spain, with the objectives of the study and requesting the voluntary collaboration of the teaching staff. This text guaranteed anonymity and that both the data and the results would be used solely for academic purposes. The link to the questionnaire remained open for 1 month.

5.3. Participants

The participants in the study were 1,544 teachers from Spanish educational centers in the 17 communities and the North-African autonomous cities of Ceuta and Melilla (see Supplementary Annex 1).

5.4. Analysis of data

The data analysis has been done using the statistical package IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 24.0, and G* Power 3. The statistics used for the descriptive analysis have been: a) Mean (M), Standard Deviation (SD), Skewness (Skew), Kurtosis (Kurt) and Corrected Homogeneity Index (cHI), to evaluate the central tendency and dispersion of the variables and factors (Table 2); and b) Cronbach's alpha (α) to check the reliability index of the scale and the factors that make it up. Student's t statistic was applied when the variables are dichotomous and the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) when they are polychotomous variables. Previously, the Levene test was performed to verify the homogeneity of the variance, observing that all the groups studied are homogeneous since the significance value $p > 0.05$. The effect size was calculated using Cohen's d statistic.

6. Results

Table 2 shows the results obtained in central tendency and dispersion of the variables and factors, and the reliability index of the factors.

The following results are presented grouped around four axes. The first of them refers to the inferential analysis in terms of sex, teaching experience, type of school, orientation of the initial studies, and academic level where the work is taught. The following three axes connect directly with the research questions posed and in which the answers of the informants are analysed in relation to implicit/explicit literary education; the discrepancies observed between factors (F1 adherence to principles; F2 declared practices); and the representations and practices with a greater and lesser degree of implantation.

6.1. Inferential analysis

The results of the inferential analysis regarding gender have shown statistically significant differences, with women scoring higher in the two factors, with the results of Adherence to Principles (F1) $t_{(1,539, 2)} = -4,208$; $p \leq 0.001$; mean difference (MD) = 0.85; Cohen's d $(d) = 0.25$ and the Declared Practices (F2) $t_{(1,539, 2)} = -4.323$; $p \leq 0.001$; MD = 0.13; $d = 0.26$.

In the years of teaching experience, there is a statistically significant difference in the F2 factor, although only between those who have been teaching between 26 and 30 years and those over 30, the latter being the ones with the highest scores ($F_{(1,537, 6)} = 2,590$; $p \leq ,05$; DM = 0,20; $d = 0,35$). Regarding the type of school where they teach, the two factors show statistically significant differences, with the Public Centers scoring higher in both factors (F1 $t_{(1,542, 2)} = 2.737$; $p \leq 0.01$; DM = 0 0.97; $d = 0.28$ and F2 $t_{(1,542, 2)} = 2.141$; $p \leq 0.05$; MD = 0.16; $d = 0.29$).

The orientation of the studies shows statistically significant differences in F1 ($F_{(1,540, 3)} = 5.172$; $p \leq 0.001$), with those who had a Literary and Linguistic training scoring higher than those trained in Linguistics (DM = 0.092; $d = 0,29$). Those who were trained in Literature scored significantly higher than those trained only in Linguistics (MD = 0.090; $d = 0.22$). In F2 (F $_{(1,540, 3)} = 7.365$; $p \leq 0.001$), those trained in Literature and Linguistics also scored statistically significantly higher than those trained in Linguistics (MD = 0.158;

$d = 0.34$), and those trained in Literature than those who did so in Linguistics (MD = 0.135; $d = 0.21$).

Regarding the Academic Level, in F2 those who have completed a Master's degree score statistically significantly higher when compared to those with a Bachelor's or Bachelor's degree (F2: F $_{(1,540, 3)} = 5.010$; $p \leq 0.005$; DM = 0.111; $d = 0.21$). The Age, the Level and/or the Specialty they teach, and the university training do not show statistically significant differences.

6.2. Implicit literary education versus explicit literary education

The results obtained by BALESST in this study suggest that Spanish Secondary school teachers are in an eclectic position regarding the debate between implicit and explicit literary education. A comparison of the five items on the scale most clearly connected with an implicit vision of literary education (variables 1, 6, 8, 15 and 20) yields an average of 3.12, very similar to that offered by the five variables with an explicit perspective (variables 4 5, 11, 16 and 18), whose average is 3.19.

It is observed that certain representations that support an implicit concept of literary education have a high degree of adherence, with a value of 3.64 in "01-visits to theater and libraries" and 3.67 in "08-well-endowed school libraries." Both representations are associated with the importance given to the social dimension of reading and the reading project (school library and environment), although they involve a certain degree of intervention and planning by teachers, with terms such as "scheduling (outputs)" or "planning (promotion)." However, the informants seem to perceive that giving students total freedom to choose their reading is not the ideal way to train readers, judging by some low values: 2.95 in "15-free selection of readings" and 2.31 in "06-making of videos," which suggests that they hardly promote the tasks of free dissemination of reading experiences on the net.

Regarding an explicit vision of literary education, supported by the role of the teacher as a guide and as an active mediator, certain practices have a high degree of implementation, with a value of 3.46 in "11-guidelines to express one's own opinion" and "16-creative and expository writing," and 3.47 in "18-use of written models." Other practices, however, are among the lowest values on the scale: 2.58 in "04-interpretation in pairs."

6.3. Adherence to principles (F1) and declared practices (F2)

In general, BALESST reveals relevant discrepancies between F1 (adherence to principles) and F2 (declared practices). Both factors show an average of 3.51 (F1) and 2.81 (F2), data that suggest a high degree of identification of teachers with the statements that refer to adherence to principles (beliefs), and clear discrepancies in their stated practices with respect to those principles.

The first of these discrepancies affects the importance given to the creation of spaces to argue and interpret, with a value of 3.62 in "10-creation of spaces to argue and interpret," a principle with a low correlation in practice: 2.88 (04-interpretation in pairs). In this sense, although the participating teachers are aware of the importance of creating spaces to talk and argue about books, many of them declare

that they do not consider scenarios of conversation in pairs to discuss the meaning of the works, a practice based on interaction for collaborative construction of knowledge and meaning among equals.

A similar situation occurs regarding the use of technologies and digital environments referred to in literary education. The participants give importance to the students' social participation in the networks, although to a lesser extent compared to other more traditional approaches, such as promoting visits to the theater or school library (see above), with 3.06 (*20-share on the Internet*). The relatively "free" practices, associated with digital environments and the use of technologies, show a low level of implementation, with values of 2.31 (*06-making of videos*) and 2.17 (*14-literary education in networks*). This aspect illustrates a conception of reading promotion and reading that takes much more into account the physical environment of the center than the digital space and networks, based on practices strongly incorporated in the educational system.

A third focus that allows illustrating the discrepancy between F1 and F2 revolves around the work of formal orality associated with the dissemination of reading experiences and the creation of a community of readers in the classroom. The teachers widely consider that the dissemination of reading experiences through oral language favors the creation of a community of readers, with a value of 3.52 (*03-orality and community of readers*). However, the practices that are in line with this principle are much less widespread: a 2.81 in "*12-projects on personal readings.*"

These differences point to a fact: teachers identify with a series of principles when it comes to understanding education, but for reasons probably related to teacher training and the professional culture of Secondary school the percentage of informants who translate these principle statements into classroom practices is much less. On the contrary, it should be noted that the results obtained by BALESST show that the discrepancies between F1 and F2 practically disappear in the case of written composition.

In F1, there is broad agreement in "*02-read to create*" (3.67) and "*09-write to learn literature*" (3.70), and in F2 the following two items have a consistent score: 3.38 in "*11-guidelines for writing one's own opinion*" and 3.47 in "*18-use of written models.*" In this regard, it should be emphasized that teachers refer to texts that belong to different textual modalities (not just narratives) and different discursive genres are represented: "*21-narrative writing*" (2.92) and "*16-creative and expository writing*" (3.46). It is observed, consequently, that in Language Arts the work of written expression (based on composition guidelines and models) is much more established than the work of orality, information and communication technology (ICT), or the use of networks to support the reader. However, freer writing practices that involve interaction are much less widespread (*13-opinion writing*, 2.5).

6.4. Majority and minority representations and practices

The above analysis shows the presence of certain widespread representations and practices. Firstly, the use of discursive genres can be appreciated, especially the written ones, in the declared practices, with a 3.70 in "*09-write to learn literature.*" In this line, the informants state that they work on creative and analytical texts in class, with a value of 3.46 in "*16-creative and expository writing,*" based on composition guidelines ("*11-guidelines for writing one's own opinion,*"

3.38). In parallel, traditional activities aimed at promoting the social dimension of literary education (outside the classroom), close to an implicit conception of reading training, have also a high degree of adherence, with values of 3.64 in "*01-visits to the theater and school libraries*" and 3.67 in "*02-read to create.*"

However, other representations and practices have a much smaller presence, especially proposals linked to an interactionist conception of learning: 2.58 in "*04-interpretation in pairs,*" 2.82 in "*12-projects on personal readings,*" and 2.50 in "*13-writing opinions.*" Similarly, the effective use of ICT and social networks to promote the training of readers presents low values: 2.31 in "*06-video production*" and 2.17 in "*14-literary education in networks.*" In this same line, the declared practices referring to work through projects in the classroom are among the lowest values in the questionnaire: 2.22 in "*07-literature by projects*" or 2.17 in "*14-literary education in networks,*" in open discrepancy with "*17-reading habit*" (3.76) and "*19-interpretive capacity of students*" (3.47).

7. Conclusion

This study has enabled the validation of the BALESST questionnaire as a useful instrument when exploring the beliefs of Spanish Secondary school teachers in relation to literary education. The data from the inferential analysis point toward different directions on which it is necessary to continue deepening in later phases of the study. In this sense, the results analysed suggest that the practices related to literary education from a richer and more innovative perspective (based on the interpretation, interaction, and production of texts in different supports) are more widely represented among the participants in the study and, in general, among public school teachers with a longer professional career and more extensive training, jointly supported by linguistic and literary aspects, as well as postgraduate training experiences.

Regarding question 1 "*To what extent are Secondary school teachers in Spain situated in implicit or explicit literary teaching?*," as already noted, the participants in the study show an eclectic position in the debate on explicit/implicit literary education. This apparent equidistance cannot be interpreted, in any way, as support for the idea that to promote literary education it is enough to create reading environments, without further intervention. In this regard, it should be noted that free reading lacks the majority support of those surveyed. From the results of BALESST it can be deduced, therefore, that in the opinion of the informants the creation of reading environments must be accompanied by interventions, even in aspects that can be considered less planned, such as going out to the theater or revitalizing the school library. In this sense, there is an awareness of the figure of the teacher as an agent who leads from the personal and from the intellectual, and who is responsible for guiding the reading of the students with the aim of expanding their repertoire of reading experiences (Colomer et al., 2018). This position connects with multiple initiatives that place the student in a framework that combines two dynamics: first, the school library and the possibilities of freedom in reading selection; and second, the discursive genre to guide literary judgments toward relevant aspects, beyond the very characters and the adventures that the narrative presents. In the opinion of the informants, resources such as reading time or school library are not enough to improve the students' reading competence (see Lorenzo, 2016).

Regarding question 2 "*To what extent does adherence to principles correspond to declared practices?*," a first analysis of the data confirms a significant gap between beliefs and practices. Among the informants there is a broad concept of what literary education should be, but this concept is not always endorsed in the declared practices. In this regard, it seems that an intervention model has been built through training, but that there are obstacles that prevent transferring and applying this knowledge from one context to another (Clarà, 2019). This is a reality that underlines the need to promote studies that take the classroom as a framework of reference as a research space (Camps et al., 2022). The discrepancy between F1 and F2 suggests the need to strengthen the actions of initial and in-service training, especially providing teachers with intervention models. This line of action should be inspired by training aimed at interventions that are respectful of the idiosyncrasies of students and teachers, the needs for support and guidance, and the demands of the curriculum (Camps, 2017; Devís-Arbona and García-Raffi, 2021; Engeström et al., 2022).

Regarding question 3 on majority and minority representations and practices, a global analysis of BALESST reveals that certain methodological approaches are still minority in literary education, such as interaction in the classroom (understood as a vehicle for the construction of knowledge), social use ICT and networks, and work projects. It is observed that teachers are concerned with promoting writing and do so mainly through composition guidelines. However, writing practices based on peer interaction are in the minority, as are reading practices. The existence of this gap is consistent with what has been observed by studies of sociocultural roots that highlight the absence of measures to accompany students when managing small group interaction (Mercer, 2019).

There are many works that have explored the benefits of this approach in diverse areas such as mathematics, social sciences, or art, and within linguistic education, grammatical reasoning, or interpretive discussion in literature. These studies underline the need to work on the so-called "basic rules" of interaction to educate students in a constructive discussion (Camps and Uribe, 2020). In the specific field of ICTs and networks applied to the object of study, the data obtained point to the need to provide a framework for teachers to put their digital potential at the service of literary education, addressing issues such as intertextuality, symbolic interpretation or the tension between the narrative and the plot (Lluch, 2014).

In the debate between explicit and implicit literary education, the practitioners' position therefore adopts a global perspective that includes both extremes, in line with the work developed to date, such as Mendoza (2017) and Colomer et al. (2018), and questioning approaches that defend an implicit-only approach (see above). The results of our study seem to suggest the need to develop an intervention model based on the following idea: to reach the reading habit as a source of pleasure, explicit training is needed as a framework for a better understanding of the literary phenomenon, while preserving on the horizon the pleasure of literature is a *sine qua non* without which explicit training lacks meaning and orientation. A model of this type would comprise four itineraries, referring to the four possible dimensions of the literary text, each linked to specific contents (see Table 1): narrative and formal, historical-cultural and sociological, ideological, and intertextual. Through the work of discursive genres (Camps et al., 2022), students would be expected to become aware of the different perspectives from which we can approach the text.

Data availability statement

The raw data supporting the conclusions of this article will be made available by the authors, without undue reservation.

Author contributions

SF-B: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing – original draft. XF: Conceptualization, Methodology, Investigation, Writing – original draft. CGGM: Formal analysis, Methodology.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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Supplementary material

The Supplementary material for this article can be found online at: https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/feduc.2023.1257976/full#supplementary-material

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