

The Civil War And The Franco Dictatorship In Spanish Literature And Cinema: State Of The Question From Educational Transdisciplinarity

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Abstract

The aim of this work is to assess whether the Spanish Civil War and the subsequent dictatorship of Franco are cross-disciplinarily approached in the pre-university education system based on the History, Literature and Cinema trident. Departing hypothesis is that still several deficiencies exist in the cross-disciplinary approaches to Spanish recent History. To test this idea, a thorough bibliographic research has been undertaken to show up how many works exist relating cross-disciplinary works to the study of Spanish Civil War as well as their contents. This work concludes with an analysis of the results and with a proposal for further research action lines in the short and middle term.

Keywords: cross-disciplinary; Civil War; literature; cinema

1. Introduction

Currently, the Spanish educational system defends the need to guarantee knowledge of the History of Spain in secondary education in order to "transmit a collective imaginary in defense of truth, justice and reparation as fundamental values in every democracy." (Díez-Gutiérrez, 2022, p. 11). This affects the History of Spain in the 20th century in a very special way, due to the closeness in time that this period presents, as well as the consequences that its understanding has on current political relations. In this direction, "a desirable objective for the

near future would be for the controversies and divergent interpretations of the recent history of Spain [...] to be neutralized by a scientific and rigorous teaching of the historical method.” (Fernández, 2021, p. 16)

This need for didactic treatment that a discipline like History has is reflected in the administrative and legal texts that regulate the bases of our Education, as well as in the care of our own civic coexistence. It should also be noted that the pedagogy of the historical period on which this work focuses has been highly studied, since the approach to this period is treated with special sensitivity, after understanding that even today its interpretation is delicate, as There is “living memory” that represents diverse positions, even in conflict with each other. For all these reasons, “the treatment proposed for the Civil War in educational curricula is a very detailed treatment, which contrasts with that given to those topics in the History of Spain that do not refer to contemporary times.” (Folgueira, 2013, p. 13)

In this sense, Royal Decree 217/2022 , of March 29, which establishes the organization and minimum teachings of Compulsory Secondary Education, presents important information on this issue. When describing the general stage objectives that must be achieved, a specific one is included that concerns historical knowledge, which is indicated as necessary: “know, value and respect the basic aspects of one's own culture and history, and of the other people, as well as the artistic and cultural heritage” (Royal Decree 217/2022 , p. 9) It is also necessary to cite Royal Decree 243/2022 , of April 5, which establishes the organization and minimum teachings of Baccalaureate. In this standard, the mention of the Spanish Civil War is reiterated: (1) In the History of Spain curriculum, in specific competence 5 (p. 180), in evaluation criterion 5.3 (p. 183) and in the knowledge basics (point 14 of block A, p. 184); (2) In the Contemporary World History

curriculum, in specific competence 2 (p. 194) and in basic knowledge (point 11 of block A, p. 200); (3) In the Spanish Language and Literature II curriculum, in basic knowledge (point 2 of block C, p. 231). Finally, article 44 of Law 20/2022 , of October 19, on Democratic Memory includes a special mention on historical education in which the following is proposed:

The Spanish educational system will include among its purposes the knowledge of Spanish democratic history and memory and the fight for democratic values and freedoms, developing in textbooks and curricular materials the repression that occurred during the War and the Dictatorship. To this end, the curricular contents for Compulsory Secondary Education, Vocational Training and Baccalaureate will be updated. (Law 20/2022 , of October 19, on Democratic Memory, sec. I, p. 142398)

In light of the legislation, it is important to study with what methodologies the Civil War and the dictatorship are taught in our educational centers. The researchers argue that

The methodology proposed in both ESO and Baccalaureate is not the most appropriate for working on critical consciousness and the affective dimension. The curricular model presented in current legislation according to Bolívar's (1999) classification is academic (based on conceptual content) and technological (based on effectiveness and the acquisition of skills). The socio-critical model designed to become aware of an unjust reality and the need to transform it does not appear. (Díaz de Greñu, 2020, p. 45)

Therefore, although the current general situation does not allow us to be optimistic, the main objective of this research is to know if, even partially or through specific proposals, the teaching-learning of our Civil War and our dictatorship is carried out

from a transdisciplinary approach. in which artistic manifestations such as literature and cinema (and the intertextual relationships they maintain between each other) become tools for learning historical content, as well as vehicles for promoting reflection and critical thinking in students.^{1/} This statement can be considered valid when considering that “cinema and literature constitute two ways of telling stories. “Literature taken to cinema or cinema extrapolated to literature can be understood as the creation of new texts that imply new readings of those productions.” (Svensson, 2013, p. 8)

As an immediate consequence, it is interpreted that these new stories of an artistic nature can be study materials from a historical perspective and that the inclusion of intertextual elements in the educational process significantly improves students' understanding of reality and makes it more accessible. for young people, for whom technological reality is key in the development of their own identity and their training. From this approach, “literature and cinema form a binomial that could be called social absorption, since it allows the educational field to be approached through flexible criteria” (Escalona, 2019, p. 344), which facilitates the adaptation of methodologies. more conventional to others that are more diverse, varied and respectful of learning styles. For this reason, currently, the advantages of the didactic application of cinema are not questioned, among which are the facilitation of lasting learning, the attraction it creates in the student body, and its interdisciplinary nature (Guichot and Rueda, 2010) .

In this direction, it must be assumed that the hermeneutic reception process allows us to verify that artistic works are completed thanks to the cultured and critical reading or viewing of readers and spectators. For this reason, “both the literary work and the audiovisual narrative work are conceived for reception and their

interpretation depends on this. [...] If a viewer has a great audiovisual and cultural background, he will be able to better understand the text presented” (Vela, 2019, p. 305).

This evidence, in turn, entails a strong commitment for teachers. These have to prepare their classes conscientiously to train their disciples, with the ultimate goal that the latter can improve their reading and artistic comprehension capacity from the initial educational levels; as a learning process that will last throughout life. For all this, from an educational perspective it has been possible to demonstrate the benefits that this varied and enriched reading has on learning and, on the other hand, it has been possible to question the mere instrumentalization of artistic products that occurs on some occasions within the classrooms.² Thus,

intertextual reading [...] stimulates the joint education of basic competencies by activating the cognitive capacities of intellectual connection without which it is impossible to convey authentically coherent and meaningful understanding and interpretation. [...] Here it is argued that intertextual readings inevitably invite collaborative thinking between disciplines and, consequently, bring the curriculum closer to the life world of learners with the consequent motivation for knowledge and affection for reading that makes it possible. (González, 2015, p. 179)

In this sense, the present research is based on the hypothesis that there have not yet been put into operation enough didactic proposals with a transversal nature that allow studying the recent History of Spain from literature and cinema. This hypothesis is based on the fragmented distribution that is still offered of the various areas of knowledge in the educational system and the isolated evaluation of the various subjects, which radically hinders the transdisciplinary approach. Likewise,

it is necessary to make changes to the evaluation to be able to adjust it to coherence from a transdisciplinary level.

Throughout the investigation it will be possible to verify whether this initial hypothesis corresponds to the pedagogical reality completely, partially or, directly, does not correspond. Likewise, in the discussion of the article the state of the matter and the need to address new transdisciplinary approaches in the near future will be analyzed.

2. Methods and materials

The present research is defined as a state of the art on educational transversality in the teaching of 20th century Spanish history, taking literature and cinema as essential artistic disciplines to understand and analyze historical phenomena with an open and critical perspective. that can provide added value to the History explained in orthodox manuals.

To achieve this objective, the research will have a theoretical, analytical and qualitative nature. The methodology will consist of carrying out a detailed bibliographic search of the academic publications presented in the last decade on Spanish history, literature and cinema, which present a transdisciplinary approach. Once these publications have been found and their content has been analyzed, conclusions can be presented about the situation of history education in our country and the methodological needs it currently presents.

To carry out the documentation phase, the following databases were searched: Dialnet, Scopus and Rebiun. Those investigations that were not older than fifteen years have been selected and those that have been published in the last five years have been prioritized, in order to provide maximum validity to our research. The

search was carried out using a filter with the following keywords: Civil war, transdisciplinarity, literature and cinema.

3. Literature and Cinema: transdisciplinary didactic proposals to learn about History.

As a starting point, before delving into the specific topic of the research, it is worth considering that both interdisciplinarity and transdisciplinarity are didactic approaches that arise after understanding the necessary connectivity between the established areas of knowledge, as well as in the desirable rupture of the closed and conventional limits that have described these areas. This is necessary for the collective progress of nations, since currently, in the socioeconomic system in which we find ourselves, the main Western companies require work teams made up of employees with very different qualifications and with an important capacity to work cooperatively. and creative. Therefore, the contribution of men and women who are capable of finding solutions to the challenges that arise from different areas of knowledge is required.

For this reason, educational systems have the obligation to transform themselves to educate the citizens of tomorrow in this new multifaceted, transdisciplinary and changing conception of the world in which they will live. As a consequence of this, at the educational level it is necessary to introduce “a new paradigm, that is, a fundamental transformation of our way of thinking, our way of perceiving and our way of valuing” (Martínez, 2007, p.4) , which allows us to achieve these interconnections between planes of reality.

In this sense, through transdisciplinarity, the disciplines establish a deep dialogue between them and work begins in the classroom through projects, which allow us to understand the topic being learned in all its complexity. Consequently, it can be

concluded that “transdisciplinarity is a cognitive scheme that allows one to cross the disciplines or the space between two dimensions where a constant flow of information is evident” (Peñuela, 2005, p. 57).

We can still go one step further and consider transdisciplinarity as the only real way to access knowledge, and not as a mere opposition to the disciplinary paradigm. In this sense, as De la Herrán (2011) has pointed out , the transdisciplinary paradigm would in itself be a fallacy, since transdisciplinarity:

It is a phenomenon with an external and supradisciplinary focus that is not incompatible with traditional disciplinarity. Properly understood, it leads to a convergence, encounter and even identification. Similarly, it is possible to complete a circle by surrounding it or heading towards a center. Because, just as every discipline inevitably participates in others, all subjects participate in everyone at least to a negligible degree. This being so, it could be concluded that the transdisciplinary approach is not only the natural approach, but it is the approach of approaches, one of whose readings is disciplinary.

This transdisciplinarity decisively affects the teaching of the Social Sciences and, especially, that of History, by defending the need to approach the discipline within its understanding in a global culture. This is reflected in the Baccalaureate History curriculum itself, which states that the competency approach and the most active learning scenarios “are also the appropriate framework to propose interdisciplinary proposals with which to work in a coordinated manner with other areas of knowledge, “in a way that facilitates the interconnection of knowledge and allows its consolidation” (Royal Decree 243/2022 , p. 177).

Consequently, current theories on the teaching of History defend “the need to interweave philosophical, sociological, and psychological knowledge - to name a

few examples - in the understanding of historical content; and apprehend the concepts of relationship, system, development - among all - from interdisciplinarity.” (Hernández, 2022, p. 307)

Once a minimum approximation has been made to the significance of general transdisciplinarity and its significance in the teaching of History, we will then summarize the didactic proposals published in the last fifteen years with a transdisciplinary approach to teaching the Civil War and the Francoism as key historical periods through literature and cinema.

Previously, it should be noted that various projects of significant significance have been implemented in Spain, whose essential objective has been to use cinema as an essential artistic tool in educational processes. As the research by Fuentes-Moreno and Ambrós-Pallarés (2020) has presented , proposals with an autonomous or institutional nature have been developed that have had a notable level of relevance. Among these, the following can be selected: the “Cinema Classroom” (educational program of the Government of Aragon, 2003-2012); “Cinema in progress” project that began in Catalonia and was exported to the Basque Country, Madrid, Galicia, Germany and Chile, which makes it an international education and cinema project; From the University of Valencia, “EspaiCinema” has been founded as an educational innovation project of the Faculty of Education and, finally, the “Drac Màgic” project can be rescued, which was founded in the year 71, within a cultural cooperative framework. , in which audiovisual culture and the importance of its inclusion in Education are disseminated.

When an investigation is carried out on the publications that have been made based on educational interventions or projects that use film and literature, it is found that both disciplines have been used in a disciplinary or inter/transdisciplinary way to

achieve various objectives (teaching diverse disciplines as they can. be health sciences, social sciences, law, education in values, etc.). In the same way, there are many didactic proposals that, through a literary work or a film, explain a historical period. However, these proposals are not united in the transdisciplinary trident (cinema, literature and history). We have only found one proposal³ published on the transdisciplinary use of literature and cinema to teach the Civil War and the Spanish dictatorship⁴, which is summarized below:

- AA.VV. (2019). The literature of memory in cinema, Ministry of Education and Sports, Junta de Andalucía. It is a transdisciplinary project in which various didactic proposals are developed that address the history of the Civil War through a selection of literary texts and their corresponding adaptations to the big screen. The selected corpus was the following: The bicycles are for Royal Decree 243/2022, of April 5, which establishes the organization and minimum teachings of Baccalaureate. In this standard, the mention of the Spanish Civil War is reiterated: (1) In the History of Spain curriculum, in specific competence 5 (p. 180), in evaluation criterion 5.3 (p. 183) and in the knowledge basics (point 14 of block A, p. 184); (2) In the Contemporary World History curriculum, in specific competence 2 (p. 194) and in basic knowledge (point 11 of block A, p. 200); (3) In the Spanish Language and Literature II curriculum, in basic knowledge (point 2 of block C, p. 231). Summer (Fernando Fernán Gómez, 1977), The Disputed Vote of Mr. Cayo (Miguel Delibes, 1979), Moon of Wolves (Julio Llamazares, 1985), The Sleeping Voice (Dulce Chacón, 2002) and The Blind Sunflowers (Alberto Méndez, 2004). The teaching sequences presented describe respective very useful teaching sequences so that secondary school teachers can take them to the classroom.

Educational research from the University deserves a separate issue and special treatment. In this group of publications, we find some publications of a theoretical nature and others focused on the description of didactic interventions to address the topic of the Civil War through literature and cinema. Thus, the state of the question changes substantially when we find a significant number of published didactic research. Among them, some of the most notable are publications in collective monographic volumes on the subject, as well as predoctoral research works. Below, we present a synthesized selection of some of them:

- Cinema in the classroom: The Spanish Civil War, by Gracia (2012) is a TFM presented within the framework of the Master of Secondary Education, Baccalaureate and Languages at UNIR, in which you can find a didactic proposal to address the topic of Franco's repression through the film *The Thirteen Roses* (Martínez-Lázaro, 2007).
- Cinema Teaching: the Spanish Civil War, by Cózar-Espejo (2019) is a TFM presented in the Master's program in Secondary Education, Baccalaureate and Languages at the University of Jaén, in which a teaching unit is presented to address the theme of the Civil War in a Second High School course, through viewing selected fragments of the following films: *Raza* (1942), *Rojo y Negro* (1942), *La Vaquilla* (1985), *Tierra y Libertad* (1995) and *Soldados from Salamina* (2003). After the viewing, the didactic proposal presents a battery of activities that allow critical reflection and encourage intellectual debate.
- Cinema about the Spanish Civil War in class: teaching tool in History, by Pérez (2020) is a TFM presented in the Master's program in Secondary Education, Baccalaureate and Languages at the University of Zaragoza, in which a proposal for didactic intervention for the last year of ESO and Baccalaureate with which the

aim is to teach this historical period through pedagogical viewing and the corresponding exercise based on three key Spanish films of historical cinema: *The Language of Butterflies* (1999), *Soldiers of Salamina* (2003) and *The Thirteen Roses* (2007)

- Civil war and literature for young people. A didactic reflection, by García (2011), is a research published in a collective volume titled *Education and Literature* (2011). This volume addresses various chapters on the importance of Literature in the teaching of other disciplines. In the case of the chapter in question, how through literary texts pre-university students can learn about the historical phenomena pertaining to the Civil War.

4. Results

Unfortunately, the results we have obtained allow us to corroborate that the hypothesis from which this research was based is true: we have the publication of few transversal proposals that aim to teach the Spanish Civil War and the dictatorship through cinema and literature. We have only found one didactic proposal that works transversally with the three disciplines: History, Literature and Cinema, and the rest of the proposals remain in the binomials History-Literature or History-Film and, furthermore, these disciplines are not They are approached with a transversal methodology, but rather literature or cinema are considered means to teach historical content. They are not treated as artistic products in themselves, with their own interest, beyond the capacity they have to help the transmission of the curricular content associated with the corresponding level.

5. Discussion

The results that we have been able to achieve after the research allow us to understand that still, currently, transdisciplinary educational projects for the

teaching-learning of the Spanish Civil War and the Franco dictatorship are scarce and can be understood as anecdotal.

These publications, quantitatively scarce, present transdisciplinary didactic proposals that unite History, Literature and Cinema. They are signed by university researchers, but not by active Secondary and/or Baccalaureate teachers, so in many cases we find projects that They have not been brought to the classroom and, consequently, we do not have analysis data on their real pedagogical usefulness and on the advantages and disadvantages of their implementation.

Likewise, it stands out that we have only found one work in which a didactic proposal is proposed in which History, Literature and Cinema are worked on in a transdisciplinary way. The rest of the research either uses Literature as a vehicle to learn History, or does the corresponding thing with films, so we would not even be talking about the achievement of educational achievements along the path of transdisciplinarity.

The situation, therefore, is unrewarding and asks us to resolve the following questions: why is the Civil War not worked on transdisciplinarity in the classrooms? Are our teachers trained for transdisciplinary work on a daily basis? day? Do we have to make profound curricular transformations to be able to work on projects? What beliefs do both teachers and students have regarding this methodology?, etc. The investigation into these and other questions will allow us to provide an academic justification for the reality found in the pre-university classroom of Contemporary History.

6. Conclusions and future research lines

Although educational laws defend intra- and transdisciplinarity, in the case of teaching about the Spanish Civil War, it is found that these approaches are not

used. There is still a long way to go in this direction and in the real incorporation of the project methodology at pre-university levels, which allows young people to learn about the Civil War from different prisms so that they can construct in their minds the story of a historical period that is constitutes a unitary narrative in which the knowledge of all the disciplines involved converges into a truthful and mature interpretation of reality.

In order to overcome this transdisciplinary gap, it is necessary to carry out both qualitative and quantitative research, as well as theoretical and applied research, in order to make solid progress in the following lines of research:

- Ideological issues that affect the treatment of the Civil War and the dictatorship: concerns of teachers, families, and political and educational leaders.
- Analysis of the curriculum of the History subject: issues associated with the achievement of objectives and evaluation that directly affect the implementation of active methodologies. Specifically, the study of the possibility of transdisciplinary work with attention to current programming.
- Analysis of the training that History teachers have and receive in transdisciplinarity in order to detect the training limitations that may exist and, consequently, work to address them.
- Studies on the motivation of teachers and students in transdisciplinary work.
- Analysis of the management plans of educational centers to address transdisciplinarity. Abilities of teachers from the various areas of knowledge to work in a coordinated manner, which allows transdisciplinary work on the same topic in the various subjects, in parallel.

These are just some of the paths that research must take in the near future in order to improve the Spanish educational system, which is still very compartmentalized into areas of knowledge, and in which rote learning in humanistic areas continues to play a role. excessively protagonist.

Without further ado, we close this research with the hope that this reading suggests and encourages the carrying out of pedagogical research that is very necessary, as well as with the confidence that an increasingly broad theoretical and practical knowledge of transdisciplinarity among Secondary education teachers will allow for a better didactic treatment of our recent history.

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