

POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE AS A TEACHING TOOL: FOSTERING INTERCULTURAL COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH TEACHER TRAINING

Literatura Postcolonial como Herramienta Docente: Fomentando la Competencia Intercultural en la Formación de Profesores de Inglés

Literatura Pós-Colonial como Ferramenta Docente: Fomentando a Competência Intercultural na Formação de Professores de Inglês

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ABSTRACT

This work consists, first of all, of a theoretical introduction to what is meant by postcolonial literature, what a postcolonial reading of a literary work entails, and how both can be pedagogical tools for teaching in the training of teachers of English as a Foreign Language with French as a second language. An analysis of a work will be carried out as a model, with the aim of demonstrating how this form of literary analysis contributes to the comprehensive cultural education of students, as it inherently outlines the intercultural competence of foreign language teachers. Building on the theory explained in the initial sections of the work, an examination of a novel by South African author Damon Galgut will be offered, reflecting the representations of sociopolitical events in South Africa in a historical context. The literary analysis itself will serve as a platform for integrating disciplinary content of various kinds that will enrich the teaching practice of the teacher and the level of interpretation and critical literary analysis of the students in training. Thus, the purpose of this article is to demonstrate the relevance of this type of analysis in the context of foreign language teaching as a teaching resource that promotes critical understanding of postcolonial literature and its historical and cultural context.

Keywords: training, literature, teaching English, foreign languages.

RESUMEN

Este trabajo consiste, ante todo, en una introducción teórica sobre lo que se entiende por literatura postcolonial, qué implica una lectura postcolonial de una obra literaria y cómo ambas pueden ser herramientas didácticas y pedagógicas para la enseñanza en la formación de profesores de inglés como lengua extranjera con el francés como segunda lengua. Se llevará a cabo un análisis de una obra como modelo, con el objetivo de demostrar cómo esta forma de análisis literario contribuye a la educación cultural integral de los estudiantes, ya que esboza inherentemente la competencia intercultural de los profesores de lenguas extranjeras. Basándose en la teoría explicada en las secciones iniciales del trabajo, se ofrecerá un examen de una novela del autor sudafricano Damon Galgut, reflejando las representaciones de eventos sociopolíticos en Sudáfrica en un contexto histórico. El análisis literario en sí mismo servirá como plataforma para integrar contenidos disciplinares de diversos tipos que enriquecerán la práctica docente del profesor y el nivel de interpretación y análisis literario crítico de los estudiantes en formación. Así, el propósito de este artículo es demostrar la relevancia de este tipo de análisis en el contexto de la enseñanza de lenguas extranjeras como un recurso didáctico que promueve la comprensión crítica de la literatura postcolonial y su contexto histórico y cultural.

Palabras clave: formación, literatura, enseñanza del inglés, lenguas extranjeras.

RESUMO

Este trabalho consiste, antes de tudo, em uma introdução teórica sobre o que se entende por literatura pós-colonial, o que implica uma leitura pós-colonial de uma obra literária e como ambas podem ser ferramentas didáticas e pedagógicas para o ensino na formação de professores de inglês como língua estrangeira com o francês como segunda língua. Será realizado uma análise de uma obra como modelo, com o objetivo de demonstrar como essa forma de análise literária contribui para a educação cultural integral dos estudantes, uma vez que esboça inerentemente a competência intercultural dos professores de línguas estrangeiras. Baseando-se na teoria explicada nas seções iniciais do trabalho, será oferecido um exame de um romance do autor sul-africano Damon Galgut, refletindo as representações de eventos sociopolíticos na África do Sul em um contexto histórico. A análise literária em si servirá como plataforma para integrar conteúdos disciplinares de diversos tipos que enriquecerão a prática docente do professor e o nível de interpretação e análise literária crítica dos estudantes em formação. Assim, o propósito deste artigo é demonstrar a relevância desse tipo de análise no contexto do ensino de línguas estrangeiras como um recurso didático que promove a compreensão crítica da literatura pós-colonial e seu contexto histórico e cultural.

Palavras-chave: formação, literatura, ensino de inglês, línguas estrangeiras.

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INTRODUCTION

The teaching of English as a foreign or second language has long been a subject of academic discourse, particularly in the context of postcolonial societies. Postcolonial literature plays a crucial role in understanding the complex relationship between language, culture, and power dynamics that have shaped the global spread of the English language. (Eoyang, 2003; Teke, 2013; Ugoji, 2016). As English continues to be taught worldwide, there is a growing recognition of the need to move beyond traditional language-centric approaches and incorporate a more culturally responsive pedagogy.

One key aspect of this shift is the emphasis on developing intercultural competence among learners of English. This involves the acquisition of linguistic skills, as well as nuanced understanding of the cultural contexts in which the language is used. Also, the power dynamics at play, and the diverse perspectives and experiences of language users. Teachers can foster this intercultural awareness and help students navigate the complexities of language and identity in a globalized world by engaging didactically with postcolonial literature (Taguchi, 2014).

Postcolonial literature, with its focus on the experiences of marginalized communities and the legacies of colonization, offers a valuable resource for teaching English as a foreign or second language. These texts can provide students with a deeper understanding of the sociocultural and historical contexts that have shaped the origin, development and use of the English language, as well as the role of colonialism in the global positioning of this language.

This colonial process affected the spreading of the English language and, in consequence, the linguistic perspectives of literary creations in nations where colonizers removed native populations from their lands and relocated them in other spaces, separating them from their lands and their selves. This parting affected their identity to a great extent, specially from a linguistic point of view considering the way in which language, as cultural representation became a tool of colonial repression (Daniels, 2001, pp. 3-5). As such, postcolonial literature provides a powerful lens through which to examine these cultural and linguistic complexities.

In South Africa, for example one of the forms of colonialism was Apartheid. Translated from the Afrikaans voice 'apartness', the term referred to the separation of the black population from white population but, as a policy, turned into an official system of racial segregation from 1948 to 1990. After the regime was overthrown in 1994, the issue of land ownership and its equitable distribution persisted despite expectations to the contrary as post-Apartheid governments' corruption increased (Mathiba, 2021). The significant negative effects this system brought to the country remains as a main theme for South African literature with significant impact on narrative.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This paper is intended as an examination of the relationship between land ownership and race, two important concepts in literary studies through the lens of postcolonial criticism. The emphasis is on investigating Apartheid and its racist structures, as well as its impact on interracial interactions and land ownership in the novel *The Promise* by South African author Damon Galgut.

In the context of South African literature in the post-Apartheid era, this study demonstrates how literature serves as a medium for depicting long-term repercussions of settler colonialism. It will provide a brief theoretical introduction to what is meant by postcolonial literature, what a postcolonial reading of a literary work entails, and how both can be pedagogical tools for teaching in the training of teachers of English as a Foreign Language with French as a second language.

RESULTS

The relevance of incorporating postcolonial literature into the curricula of the Foreign Language Teaching major

Incorporating postcolonial literature into the curricula has benefits for both teachers and students in the major. First, it allows students to engage with diverse perspectives, points of views, and narratives that challenge the traditional Eurocentric bias in many language-learning written materials.

As students explore the works of authors from formerly colonized regions, they gain a more nuanced understanding of the cultural, historical, and linguistic diversity of the English-speaking world promoting intercultural competence “which can be found in the humanistic perspective of the intercultural model (...) in order to strengthen the ethical formation (...) and the quality of intercultural classrooms which are characterized by respect to the other, to dialogue and reflexion” (Frómata et al., 2020, p. 221). The earlier suggestion is appropriate given the foreign language educational environment in Cuba, where training intercultural mediators for a globalised society is one of the main objectives.

Having said this, the postcolonial literary analysis provided through this paper will serve as an example for the integration of critical thinking skills in the context of language teaching in the major Education in Foreign Language Teaching through the use of literature in language teaching. It also provides a rich framework for exploring complex themes, such as land and race, that are prevalent in South African literature.

By examining the ramifications of Apartheid and the historical connections to colonialism, educators in the major can facilitate interdisciplinary discussions that encompass Discourse Analysis, Lexicology, History of the Culture of English Speaking Peoples and others. This approach allows students to critically engage with the dominant elements of postcolonial power structures, thereby deepening their understanding of social dynamics in post-Apartheid South Africa. Ultimately, this connection underscores the importance of literature as a tool for fostering critical engagement and interpretation within the broader context of language education in Cuba and in Latin America.

Theoretical essentials about Postcolonial Literature

Postcolonial literature refers to literary works, such as short stories, novels, essays and others created by authors residing in or outside of countries that were once colonies of European superpowers. It emerged in the 20th century and it examines how colonialism affected these cultures and how they sought to reclaim their autonomy and cultural identity after colonization.

Given how difficult it is to define the start and conclusion of colonial periods, the definition of postcolonial literature is somewhat controversial. These literary works address conventional colonial values which postcolonial writers frequently challenge, alter, or rewrite.

About what it means and how it illustrates the literary production of the colony or what Ashcroft, et al., refers to as “colonial discourse” (2018, p. 204) it has been said that it ponders the supremacy of the dominating class emphasizing superiority of one group over the other one by reinforcing the supremacy of their domain and culture. That is why that the way in which the West sees these cultures, in terms of literary representation and art also modifies the perceptions of the decolonized world.

Postcolonial literature subverts these visions working to strengthen the voices of the oppressed, including themselves and other marginalised voices raised by the colonising power. In this direction the outstanding work of Edward Said *Orientalism* (1979) is a critique of the way in which the West perceives, represents and expands the notions of the formerly colonized world from the historical, economical and literary point of view.

According to Said, the appropriation of land in colonialism is “fundamentally an act of geographical violence, a geographical violence employed against indigenous peoples and their land rights” (qtd. in Young 2016, p.19). This geographical appropriation necessitated not only the dominance of a physical, tangible piece of land, but also the exploitation and control of the inhabitants, thereby influencing their culture and way of life.

This author considers that, as a result of the years of colonial dominance, the West, a term used to refer to the colonizers, created knowledge and stereotypes of the East, which is the term used to denote the colonized: “what gave the Oriental's world its intelligibility and identity was not the result of his efforts but rather the whole complex series of knowledgeable manipulations by which the Orient was identified by the West” (2003, p. 40).

The creation of this knowledge by the West, as Said calls it and history proves, has been characterized in most cases by the impossibilities that Globalization imposes scarcity of opportunities for the colonized to be heard or talk about their visions, consequently denying them the opportunity to speak.

Fidel Castro already pointed to this, saying that “[c]olonies do not speak. Colonies are not heard until they are granted permission to express themselves” (1992, p.39). This opportunity for self-expression is occasionally overshadowed by the limited opportunities colonies have to speak. These spaces can exist in the international arena for countries that have emancipated themselves from colonial rule and struggle to maintain their autonomy on their terms, such as Cuba and other Latin American regions, but not in countries whose configurations are still bound to political structures that adhere to colonial representations of their societies.

This manipulated knowledge, to which Said referred, gave the West a significant amount of power, allowing them to dictate global culture while imposing limitations on the creation of national knowledge and identity that threatened their power. This applies to the numerous ethnic groups in South Africa that lacked access to historical education and were oblivious to their culture and traditions. The population composed by white people and black people received the same education in which the history of the nation related only to the arrival of the Europeans.

Following Said ideas, colonialism acted as a suppressor of the culture of nations, preventing the oppressed from accessing the true history of their own nation, and with much less opportunity to contribute at it, while simultaneously imposing their own perspectives by influencing the way colonised people search for their own identities.

As a result, the past of the colonized will be devalued and the Eurocentric norms and practice will continue in a higher status. Postcolonial works are concerned with both individual identity and cultural reconciliation. In such a manner, this literature fosters conversation between two cultures, those of the colonised and the coloniser, as well as their unequal relationship.

It is said that “Postcolonial literature is a broad term that encompasses literatures by people from the erstwhile colonial world, as well as from the various minority diasporas that live in the west” (Baldick, 2015). These literary works are produced mainly in response to colonization; they serve as a mode of representation of colonial imprint which molds cultural manifestations and social imaginary.

As a result, it challenges the representation of the way in which the construction of national identity is conditioned by colonial impositions and cultural assimilations in the subconscious of individuals. That is Robert Young refer to as “a body of writing that attempts to shift the dominant ways in which the relations between Western and non-Western people and their worlds are viewed” (Young, 2008).

Another criterion relates to the temporality of the term. Postcolonialism entails a chronological signification and it was a term originally used by historians, referring to the period after the Second World War, “designating the post-independence period. However, from the late 1970s the term has been used by literary critics to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization” (Ashcroft, et al., 2013, p. 201).

Postcolonial readings in Language Teaching

In the teaching of English and French as foreign languages for example, the incorporation of postcolonial literature serves to illustrate the impact of colonization on the relationship between language, culture, and power. It highlights these elements intertwined in the formation and evolution of the languages under study, whether in the countries that originated them or in those colonized by them. This literature aids in understanding the historical context in which these languages were imposed as mechanisms of colonial control over other nations, where literary expressions in English and French play a predominant role in shaping national identities.

For example, in the Caribbean, colonial power was established through military force, economic control, and political influence. The English language became the dominant language in administrative and educational spheres, marginalizing indigenous languages and even other European languages. This dominance was further reinforced by the implementation of laws, educational systems, and religious practices designed to subjugate local cultures. Consequently, a social structure emerged that perpetuated English supremacy. Postcolonial Literary works were a way to demonstrate this.

To better illustrate the above-mentioned elements, it is worth referring to *The Farming of Bones* by postcolonial author Edwidge Danticat. The presentation of the historical backdrop of the Parsley Massacre through the voice of Amabelle, reveals how exile, racism and otherness are analyzed and represented as the lasting ramifications of colonial dominance on social structures and cultural identities. About these elements in the novel DeBacker has referred that “the traumatic experiences of the protagonist cannot be accommodated by the dominant classes, they are registered in the eloquent silences and gaps of her voiceless testimony” (2011, p.65).

From the intercultural point of view, the traumatic experiences of the protagonist do not find an appropriate place in the discourse or narratives of the dominant classes. This implies that her suffering and experiences are ignored or minimized by those who have the power to shape history and culture.

Instead of being recognized and validated, these experiences are trapped in an eloquent silence, where the unspoken speaks as much as what is expressed. This "silence" becomes a void in her testimony, an absence that reveals the lack of space for her voice in a social context that is unwilling to listen to her. Thus, trauma manifests not only in what is told but also in what is omitted, highlighting the disconnection between her reality and the perception of the dominant classes.

These elements emphasize key aspects of intercultural competence which is the ability to recognize and validate diverse narratives, especially those that are being marginalized by colonizing cultures. For students in the major, developing intercultural competence involves understanding that language is not just a tool for communication but also a medium through which power dynamics are expressed and contested. This critical engagement fosters a deeper appreciation for cultural nuances and promotes inclusivity, essential components of intercultural competence.

The topic "History of the Culture of English-Speaking Peoples" provides students with a cultural approach to the origin and evolution of the English language as it also incorporates the linguistic manifestations in the Caribbean. The topic brings about the history of the English language as well as the elements that link the cultural and political landscapes that have shaped its development over time.

Tracing the origins and evolution of English from its humble beginnings to its current status as a global lingua franca, this subject explores the complex interplay between language, culture, and the legacy of colonialism. From a historical and cultural perspective examines the linguistic and extralinguistic elements that contributed to the formation of the language.

As a conclusive element it can be said that postcolonial literature plays a crucial role in understanding the position of England both as a nation and as an empire. These studies reveal how English emerged and evolved within England, as well as how its expansion into other regions became part of its colonial legacy. Furthermore, the analysis of postcolonial literature sheds light on the contextualized linguistic diversity intertwined with the history of colonization. Trainees will recognize the impact of the nation and empire not only in the language but in the cultures of countries colonized by the British Empire by examining the linguistic diversity that characterize the literary creations in these nations.

A postcolonial reading of literature, then, involves analyzing how texts engage with and challenge colonial discourses and power structures (Ashcroft et al., 2003). This can involve examining representations of identity, otherness, and cultural hybridity, as well as exploring how language itself is used to assert or subvert colonial authority (Nuttall, 2001).

A postcolonial reading of texts provides also a critical lens to evaluate cultural, economic, political and religious issues with reference to power, hegemony and exploitation (Brizee et al., 2015). It is also “A way of reading and rereading texts of both metropolitan and colonial cultures to draw deliberate attention to the profound and inescapable effects of colonization on literary production”. This re-reading also expands to areas such as anthropology, historic records and scientific writing. (Ashcroft et al., 2008, pp. 201-202).

As it was said in the previous section postcolonial literature refers to the writings that have been influenced by the impact of imperial process and its representation. A postcolonial reading of a text would imply then the identification of the perpetuation of colonial thinking and would stress the relation of Europe within those texts, with Eurocentric notions related to dominating perspective of superiority and supremacy.

A postcolonial reading of a text can be an interesting tool in the instruction of English in a postcolonial context. It fosters critical thinking, cultural awareness and a deeper understanding of the power dynamics involved in language use and representation.

It implies the examination and formal analysis of texts through conceptualization of processes that characterize colonialism and its representation in literary texts. This analysis would take place from a perspective that recognizes and challenges colonial power structures and their long-lasting effects. When students are presented the historical implications of colonialism in the growth of the English language, postcolonial readings would enable the questioning of colonial narratives, the exploration of marginalized voices and identities as well as the fight for the recognition of literary diversity silenced by colonialism.

DISCUSSION

Land and Race: A Postcolonial Reading of Damon Galgut *The Promise* Introduction to the novel and the author

It narrates the story of the Swarts, an Afrikaner family descendant from Dutch colonists who arrived in South Africa in the seventeenth century. It revolves around a promise the dying matriarch, Rachel, asked her husband Mannie to keep after she passes away. This promise is overheard by the youngest member child, Amor who will commit to make the promise come true. The novel shows the family deteriorating as the members die without fulfilling the promise. The promise held that, upon the death of the matriarch, her husband would give the Lombard property to Salome, a black servant “who has been on the farm forever” (2021: 18), allowing her to inherit the small house in which she lives with her son.

The events of the story take place over the span of 31 years during a critical historical period in the nation. Starting in 1986, the novel shows the three children of the family coming of age as well as the social events that are happening at that time in the nation: from the struggles for the abolition of Apartheid, to the establishment of a democratic government, to the actual political changes the nation undergoes in 2017. The story is set on a farm in Pretoria which the family inherited from the paternal grandfather, and which will serve as the basic symbolic element to represent this convulsive historical period in South Africa. This farm comprises a vast territory of land in which there is a reptile park and the Lombard place, a piece of land inside the property.

The author, South African Damon Galgut, is well known as a novelist and playwright. His writing is comparable to that of South African authors Andre Brink, Nadine Gordimer, and J.M. Coetzee (Hope, 2003; Titlestad, 2009). Galgut’s literary approach, however, makes a more pointed argument about the ties people form and how historical and political circumstance influences these people. Despite the fact that his works have been greatly praised for their incisive picture of the nation (Jacobs, 2011; Kostelac, 2016; Slabbert, 2019), criticism from a postcolonial approach is surprisingly limited.

Therefore, the approaches to postcolonial concepts in Galgut's novel it is a rather new aspect in the existing criticism of his work, as well as the depictions of the land as a principal theme from a postcolonial perspective.

The Promise (2021) constitute a motive for the analysis of the significance of these aspects in the social difficulties of post-Apartheid South Africa, as notions of land and race have been highly discussed in both Postcolonial theory and South African literature.

A postcolonial perspective on land and race will also shed light on these interracial power relations as expressed through feelings of identity loss, alienation, and dispossession. Additionally, it also serves to demonstrate the relevance of this type of analysis in the context of foreign language teaching as an instruction resource that promotes critical understanding of postcolonial literature, together with its historical and cultural context.

As colonialism is the basis for the understanding of postcolonial representations, the postcolonial analysis focuses in the historical challenges that paved the way for the expropriation of land in South Africa. The historical context in which land ownership became an issue mediated by racial prejudice is essential to come to a better understanding of Apartheid and its impact on land ownership.

Colonialism in South Africa: A Historical Context

As a postcolonial reading implies the interpretations of a how colonial thinking penetrates in social subconscious relentlessly, it becomes mandatory to refer to the historical backdrop the novel is positioned at. The violent conquest of new lands was the core component of colonialism in South Africa as it was in other parts of the globe (Hamilton et al., 2000). The native population who lived there before the arrival of the Europeans suffered a drastic change in their lives as the expansionist nature of colonialism enabled the ownership of a territory that eventually became an entire nation. Consequently, the relationship between the land obtained and its ownership was mediated by the exercise of authority of those who were in power.

Even though the colonising process in South Africa had similarities with others around the world, it possessed a distinct aesthetic in this case. Robert Young, referring to general characteristics of colonialism in his historical introduction to postcoloniality, says that “[c]olonialism was motivated by the desire for living space or the extraction of riches” (2016, p.19). In South Africa, this wealth acquired another connotation when the discovery of diamond mines became known to the British Empire, who desired to assert authority over the regions already occupied by the Dutch. After World War II, the Boers regained control of the colony and, as a result, the living space Young refers to became an internal colony (see Chávez, 2011), which consisted primarily of Black people. Under the premise that each tribe should have its independent development inside the state, the segregation of a great number of black indigenous peoples into small parcels of land reinforced the supremacy of white people as they, an important minority, owned the most productive and richest land. More importantly, the internal colony was characterized by being composed of two dominant economic powers, where the black majority remained in the lowest social position.

The postcolonial analysis this article is presenting, draws from the moment in which the process of South Africa’s emancipation gained victory over Apartheid. This is an important aspect to consider due to the historical connections white Afrikaners establish with the moment they were no longer a colony of the British Empire. It will be then explored the visions these Afrikaners has of themselves once the democratic power was established in South Africa.

The Denial of Landownership through Racial Domination

As in many colonized nations, the relation between power and the possession of vast territories were directly proportional in the history of South Africa. The interpretations of the history of the nation were crucial to maintaining the colonial power and, at the same time, to justify the will of hegemonic interest. The historical notion of a White South Africa disputed by other immigrants was reinforced by Eurocentric idyllic representation of colonization, and it was considered as the solution for the uncivilized (Beck 2000: 4-10). These ideas in the socio-cultural context of the country became the basis for the development of an aggressive nationalist thinking of Afrikaners. The British, influenced by the French Revolution and the ideas of equal rights among people, were against slavery and race discrimination. However, they supported the ideology of the superiority of Whites over the Blacks. In this regard, all whites united as one nation and in 1910, the Union Act was created.

As the name recalls, it comprised arguments to unify the people into a single nation composed of Whites, Indians, Coloureds, and Africans. Nevertheless, only White South Africans were to be considered true citizens. This act not only separated this heterogenous population into different racial groups perpetuating radical thinking of whiteness supremacy, but it also ensured land ownership rights remained in the hands of those with colonizing interests and, at the time, it denied the right to vote to those who disagreed.

Consequently, other legal mechanisms were established to deprive this marginalized population of the right of owning the land through which great profits were obtained. The Native Land Act of 1913 designated only seven percent of the country’s total territory for black people to inhabit. At the time, black people made up 75 percent of the country's total population. The white population that constituted the 10 percent, owned the other 93 percent of the land. A large amount of the Africans was to live in small areas with no right to own it and therefore no right to farm it. This Native Land act was related to the rural area mainly and the disposition of farming lands. The Native Urban Act in 1923 limited the crossing of Africans into urban areas where white population lived (p.113-115).

The government of the time continued to elaborate other racists mechanisms as the economy grew in profits, which were obtained by the exploitation of black peoples in mining as the primary economic activity, and agriculture as the second. However, these two Land Acts were essential elements that show in first place the limitations Africans had in terms of landownership. A permissible, institutionalized set of legislations that granted white people the irrevocable right to possess territory under the premise of the superiority of one race over another. These mechanisms inevitably caused a separation in the thinking and the psychology of the nation, and it influenced the way history was passed on from one generation to another.

In the novel, Galgut reinforces the permanent influence the notion of white supremacy will have on the nation's identity and the oppositions each race strives to maintain in which the white will prevail. To make this clear, the novel is written in English, and the author uses the surname Swart, to identify the characters. This is an Afrikaans, Dutch, and German surname that means 'black', which is a subtle reference to what this group of Afrikaners contrasted the development of their white identity with, and from which they derived their feelings of superiority and control when none of the family members gave Salome, the black servant in the novel, the

Lombard Place. Its subtle selection can also be interpreted as the feelings of white ownership of whatever 'black' may represent, be it a person, a name, or a piece of land: "My grandfather always talked about her like that, Oh, Salome, I got her along with the farm" (p. 18). Following this decision, the historical starting point of the novel is set as Swarts is also the name of the first State President of South Africa during Apartheid, Charles Robberts Swarts, who was also a historically recognised Hollywood actor president.

Looking at this issue from a postcolonial perspective, it can be said that there is a perpetuation of the colonial thinking of superiority in a subtle way, as this choice in last name also reinforces the division between superior individuals and how they perceive themselves in relation to colonized others. In this regard, this aspect constitutes an invitation to reflect on colonial identities. Students once aligned in the postcolonial knowledge and critical analysis, will perceived that the selection of the term Swart which means black in Afrikaans can be perceptions of racial superiority. This understanding is crucial for the development of feelings of sensibility towards the history and colonial experiences of South African culture in this case.

In this direction it comes the question: In which way can this element be an opportunity to invite the reflexion of these colonial thinking in the major ? How can this contribute to develop intercultural competence? The implications of the perpetuation of colonial thinking in identity is present in the critical examination of the language selected by the author. The discussions around the term Swart offers an opportunity for students to analyse the way in which language can reflect and reinforce colonial hierarchies. It encourages the students in the major to question the implications of language choices in literature and in every day life.

The historical context in which the novel is positioned provides a historical awareness of colonialism in South Africa , providing elements to ponder how colonial legacies shape contemporary identities and social dynamics. This awareness leads to deeper discussions of processes such as cultural decolonization to preserve cultural values and traditions, as it is the example of the Cuban government efforts which aligned with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Superior Education have designed to.

The Swarts had three children, Anton, Astrid and Amor, all starting with the letter A, the first letter of the alphabet, indicating they were the first to arrive on the land and that it belongs to them by right. In *A Colonial Alphabet for the Nursery*, a book written in 1880 which served to educate children on England's domination, A "is Australian, our colonial pride. He is nimble, and handsome and clever beside" (p. 2). One interesting analogy with the fact that the Dutch arrived on those lands before the British empire did, and its brutal colonization became a point of pride and the three children in the novel are named with A. Coincidentally, there are three adjectives in this *Colonial Alphabet*, one for each of the children in the family, providing descriptions in which the personality of each of the children (coloniser) is highlighted with superiority throughout the novel.

Through these open-to-interpretation character representations, Galgut makes a case for the colonial and dominant identities of white Afrikaners, who would be perceived as superior both by themselves and the black characters, without commitment. These depictions mirror the ways in which white people viewed themselves as superior and powerful while viewing Africans as inferior and unworthy of notice during the Apartheid.

The intercultural learning in the previous analysis leads students to reflect upon their personal identities and self-reflection in a more globalized world. Through the study of the colonial history of South Africa through this novel, teachers invite students to a personal engagement which not only fosters deeper understanding of colonial narratives and its influence on individual and collective identities, but also it encourages discussions about colonial thinking to create a safe space for students to express their thoughts and feelings about race and identity. This dialogue promotes understanding and respect for diverse perspectives as well as effective intercultural communication.

Central Theme and Narration Style

The ways in which themes are introduced to the reader are an interesting element to consider when analysing the formal aspects of the novel. The style in which it is narrated is introduced in the first three pages. The characterizations of the characters Amor and Marina are in stark contrast with each other as Amor is characterized as a sweet, quiet, and tender girl and Tannie Marina as an intolerant and disrespectful person who is unable to show compassion to her grieving niece. A quick change of perspective from Amor to Tannie Marina calls the attention to a narrative style, which remains throughout the novel, with abrupt changes between different character's points of view.

The predominant style the author uses is called free indirect style. This style is when the third voice narrator moves the narration to the perspective of a specific character, where the character's thoughts are intertwined

with those of the narrator. Randal Stevenson argues that this technique is “perhaps best reserved for instances where words have actually been spoken aloud” (1992, p. 32). Through this technique, the narrator shows the character's emotions and thoughts, as well as their own feelings or comments on the matter (12).

The Struggle with Change

One characteristic of colonial thinking is its resistance to change. In the novel, it is evident that some of the characters are indifferent to this imminent change, and the narration style accentuates this aspect. While Amor is coming back from boarding school to attend her mother’s funeral, Ockie, Tannie Marina’s husband, listens to a podcast playing on the radio. However, before narrating the events that are being described in the podcast, the narrator introduces this idea of a group of unidentified voices:

Trouble in all the townships, it’s being muttered about everywhere, even with the State of Emergency hanging over the land [...] and the mood all over it electrified [...] there is no silencing the voices that talk away under everything [...]. But whose are they, the voices, why can’t we hear them now? Shhh, you will hear them, if you pay attention if you will only listen (p.10)

The switch from omniscient narrator to a first-person “we” brings about the question on who is really speaking. In the context of what the State of Emergency means, it is difficult to delimit whose voices “we” can’t hear yet. Is this “we” the people who are against the system and are rebelling against a racist structure or is this “we” the beleaguered leaders that are struggling to keep the system as it was? Which voices “talk away under everything” (p.10). There is no distinction between, on the one hand, the voices of the oppressed and discriminated others who have no voice to speak with and no voice to be heard and, on the other hand, the voices who claim that whatever the change might be, it will be useless.

The narration that continues makes the choice. The voices that talk away are the ones that are silenced in the excerpt below, as they are in the whole novel:

He imagines himself one of ancestors, rolling slowly into the interior in an ox-wagon. Yes, there are those who dream in predictable ways. Ockie the brave pioneer, floating over the plain. A brown-and-yellow countryside passes outside, dry except for where a river cuts through it, under a huge Highveld sky (p.10).

The narration highlights the podcast on the white nationalist Afrikaans’ voices, the voices of those who continue to hold on to racism. Ockie wishes to ignore the current, changing political context. Instead, he reflects on the colonial past of South Africa and its past landscape, disregarding the fact that white Afrikaner settlers and colonisers did not discover an empty land. In those lands, which he romanticizes, the native population was removed from their lands as a result of colonization and forced to abandon their way of living. It is their voices the novel mutes, their voices which do not appear in radio podcasts. This creates tension throughout the novel because Ockie's views on the land, which the reader is made aware of very early in the novel, are put in opposition with those of Lukas for example, whose perspectives and views are only expressed at the end of the novel.

It is seen here also one of the historical elements that characterized colonialism in South Africa some of the elements analyzed in the historical context. Another important aspect of this technique is that, through a free indirect style, the author eliminates quotation marks allowing for the free stream of consciousness to reveal a certain flexibility, but also to bring about different interpretations. James Wood argues that, with this writing style, “[t]he narrative seems to float away from the novelist and take on the properties of the character” (2018: n.p.). This allows the reader to easily see things from the character’s perspectives, serving as an incentive to pay close attention to the events and how they relate with other formal aspects in the novel such as the themes and the characters themselves. Through this free indirect style, the characters’ personal perspectives are mixed with the narrator’s. In the novel, the characters’ perspectives is brought in through an unidentified group of people, giving an atmosphere that there is a global, grouped voice in which the perspective is a shared common thought. The narrator moves from an omniscient position to a collective voice. This style is called the “unidentified free indirect style” in which thoughts and perceptions “are indirectly attributed to a group of people, like a chorus effect” (Wood, 2018)

From a postcolonial perspective, the reader can not only understand and comprehend what the characters see and think in relation to the Black characters and the inferior role they play in the novel according to the Swart family, but also how this perspective becomes a universal thought that underlines the superiority of this white-race family in the novel. It is also possible to argue that this narrative style represents resistance to change. When Ockie romanticises his past, the way he reflects on the different, the narration focuses on his thinking and emphasises the fact that this family resists a multicultural and intercultural change of context in which their superiority may be threatened.

CONCLUSION

The main objective of this paper was to investigate the extent to which the South African author Damon Galgut's novel, *The Promise*, expands the current postcolonial discourse on land and race. By analysing the contributions of postcolonial theorists it was examined how notions of change, and language influenced the construction of dialogues in which the colonizers view themselves as superior to the colonized.

The novel employs a narrative style that allows the reader to access the different characters' perspectives, especially those of the white Afrikaner family, the Swarts. Through the use of free indirect discourse, the reader is able to gain insight into the characters' inner thoughts and feelings, as well as their prejudices and biases. In the other hand these elements constitute an important element in EFL/ESL classroom activities, since promoting a critical understanding of elements related to postcolonial theories would allow students to gain a deeper grasp of cultural differences and power dynamics in literature and also in their own contexts. Trainees will make a useful contribution to the field of EFL/ESL if they can translate these theoretical concepts into practical classroom applications. Teachers in the other hand will find these approaches particularly valuable in diverse classrooms, as they can foster intercultural awareness, critical thinking, and a deeper understanding of various cultural backgrounds. In the case of Cuba, a particular interest could arise given the nation's complex history of colonialism and its ongoing efforts to navigate its relationships with the United States, the former colonial power that have significantly shaped the Caribbean region.

The feelings of identity and belonging are conveyed to the readers through the White people's perception of themselves as the owners of the land, as well as their emotional attachments and sense of belonging due to their 'superior race' and 'divine right to rule'. This is contrasted with depictions of Black characters, in which they identify with the culture of their colonizers. The analysis of the novel has shown that the characters' perspectives on land and race are heavily influenced by their colonial background and their position of power within the South African society.

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Conflicto de intereses

Los autores declaran no tener ningún conflicto de intereses.

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Yuliet Blanco Castillo, Omayda Despaigne Negret y Elaine Frómeta Quintana: Proceso de revisión de literatura y redacción del artículo.