

The use of manga for the teaching of reading: An investigation on the insertion of Japanese literature with elementary school students



<https://doi.org/10.56238/ptoketheeducati-046>

Elielma de Oliveira Lima

Master's student in Science, Technology and Education at Centro Universitário Vale do Cricaré.

ABSTRACT

Mangas can be seen as a teaching tool, enabling the student to be the protagonist of the process of encounter between the word and the subject who reads and establishing an experience that can modify the conception that both have of the world and their own existences. The main objective of this article is to investigate the acceptance of the use of Manga as a methodological practice in the classroom, as well as to analyze the contribution

that it has been bringing to students after a school period by participating in activities with readings with this new literature. In order to verify the students' acceptance of this methodology, we conducted an investigation study of the initial conceptions through an investigative questionnaire. With the result of the investigation, it was possible to find elements that enable the use of manga as part of the teaching and learning process and also realize the potential of such materials as didactic resources capable of contributing to the mediation in the teaching of contents and concepts of Portuguese Language and New Literatures.

Keywords: Education, Reading, New ways of reading, Japanese Literature, Manga.

1 INTRODUCTION

Currently teachers have been facing many challenges in the classroom, one of them is to mediate so that students can relate content considered difficult to understand with topics that call their attention. One proposal would be the use of manga to facilitate the understanding of content, an alternative that has been drawing the attention of students (BRAGA; SPADETTE, 2018).

For Macuso (2010) the main ingredient of manga is the ability to make people immerse themselves in the stories, showing their emotions and feelings and delighting readers. Thus, building individuals full of knowledge and experiences to be considered and thought in the school environment. Therefore, this system of reactions is determined by the construction of the environment in which this individual grows and develops, giving a social character to education, emphasizing that the experiences of students are extremely important for pedagogical work (VIGOTSKI, 2003; Nemerski, 2016).

However, manga in Brazil are still seen as an example of entertainment literature, without exploring its pedagogical functions. Linsingen (2007) points out that in addition to entertainment, manga contain in its plot a search for identification with the reader, both by everyday discourses, that is, by experiences similar to those that the reader has experienced or wants to experience, and by the



characters, so that there is a greater interactivity between the reading and the reader, an invitation for him to participate in the action and atmosphere of the stories.

Some authors highlight this importance for the use of Manga in the classroom, saying that we can use it as a pedagogical tool not only to develop in the student the habit of reading and writing, but to stimulate in the students the desire for drawing, to improve communication with human experiences and to relate the images with the reality experienced by them (LUYEN, 2012; LINSIGEIN, 2007; Nemerski, 2016).

From the above, the main objective of this article is to investigate the acceptance of the use of Mangas as a methodological practice in the classroom, as well as to analyze the contribution that it has been bringing to students after a school period by participating in activities with readings of this new literature.

1.2 KNOWING MANGA AND ITS POTENTIAL AS A DIDACTIC RESOURCE

Manga is the word commonly used to refer to Japanese comic books. Luyten (2012) explains that this term was conceived by the artist *Katsushika Hokusai* (1760-1849), a specialist in the production of *ukiyo-ê*, an art and technique of making relief engraving on wood and creator of the famous work *The Great Wave of Nakagawa*.

According to Schodt (1996) the word Manga was originally written with the two kanji characters *man*, in Japanese (meaning "involuntary", "in spite of oneself", with a secondary nuance of "morally corrupt") and *ga* (meaning "images"). Technically, "manga" can now mean "caricature," "comic book," "comic strip," "comic book," and sometimes even "animation," though younger generations invariably use "anime" for the last on the list.

Luyten (2012, p.32) points out that "[...] The word manga itself has the meaning not only of comic books, but of comic book magazine, caricature, cartoon and even cartoon [...]". Showing that manga is not limited only to the format of comic book magazines, but goes beyond that, combining caricatures, cartoons, among other formats, because the term manga in Japan is used to refer to comic books, soon a comic book of *Monica's Gang* will be considered manga in Japanese lands.

As a result of the end of the Edo period (1603-1868) and the isolation of Japan with foreign countries, the opening of the ports provided the entry of books, newspapers and magazines from the West that added to the productions already existing in the country, generating an intense cultural exchange that had not occurred since the blockade of the ports (LUYTEN, 2012).

Faced with this context, cartoonists such as *Charles Wirgman* (1835-1891) and *Georges Bigot* (1860-1927) insert cartoons with their Western style in Japanese society and in their productions the same cartoonists had the practice of using sequenced balloons within the cartoons, hence the manga such a characteristic, because until now it was not used balloons (LUYTEN, 2012). However, it was



after World War II (1939-1945) that the manga acquired, under the influence of *Osamu Tezuka* (1928-1989), a more cinematic style and the famous characteristic of characters with large, bright eyes, which continue to this day.

From the emergence of manga to the present, this cultural asset has undergone several transformations to have the form it has, either by Eastern, Western influences or by "requirement" of the context. For example, the characteristic newsprint is due to the poverty that existed in the post-war period, a period in which several products became scarce and required the use of cheaper paper, making the manga cheaper. With this, a striking feature refers to a well-segmented publishing market, so as to reach a wide variety of readers. Amaral and Carlos (2014, p. 15) explain that each magazine has specific audiences, according to age and gender, because of this, the main divisions are:

[...] Shogaku for children aged 6 to 11, Shounen for boys aged 12 to 17, Shojo for girls of the same age, Seinen and Redikomi/Josei, respectively, for adult men and women, whose themes are more mature. In addition, the manga market is quite articulated with the audiovisual market, resulting in adaptations of the same title for television (in serials, telenovelas, cartoons, for the cinema, for the radio and also for the games) (AMARAL; CARLOS, 2014, p. 15)

Another peculiar feature concerns the form of reading that happens in an inverse way to Western reading, which causes the following comment "the manga is read by the end", because its reading happens from right to left, but to avoid problems to the reader, Brazilian publishers usually put a warning to draw the attention of beginners. Thus, even with peculiar characteristics, the manga did not fail to gain popularity outside the Japanese nation, spread worldwide and reached Brazil still with immigrants, in 1908, with the function of entertainment and as educational material so that children could maintain contact with the mother tongue and its culture as a whole, because they had the goal of returning to Japan (LUYTEN, 2012).

But even before the manga became popular in Brazil, several anime were televised (name given to the cartoon produced in Japan), and after its acceptance and success of the series *Knights of the Zodiac* and *Dragon Ball* that there was, in fact, the opening of the market for production and sale of manga, occurring an avalanche of publications in the early twenty-first century.

It is noteworthy that comic books were not always well accepted in Brazilian society, but were classified as subliterate and as dangerous material by parents and educators in relation to young readers. The aforementioned conception occurred from the book *Seduction of the Innocents* (1954), in which the psychiatrist and author *Fredric Wertham* (1895-1981) argued that comics were causes of violence and damage to the minds of young people. In this context, changes have occurred and comic books are currently configured as entertainment material, pedagogical material and object of study of academic research. The PCN also recognized the importance of comics as a didactic resource and indicated the material in the PCN of Arts and Portuguese Language.



Many scholars and teachers already recognize the importance of using comic books as a didactic resource. Given this, Santos (2001) states that the union between text and image of the comic book help children to better understand concepts that could present difficulty if it were treated only with writing. Vergueiro (2009) explains that comic books increase the motivation of students in relation to the contents worked in the classroom, sharpening curiosity and challenging their critical sense. In addition, the strong identification between students and icons of mass culture is, therefore, an element that reinforces the use of comic books in the process of teaching learning.

In this way, comic books constitute a valuable form of language to be used as didactic material, both to entertain and to educate, but there is still much to explore, especially when it comes to manga. Thus, in the current context of the information society, which provides a large amount of means of communication, it is interesting to think about the use for the learning of contents.

2 METHODOLOGICAL PROCEDURES

The present research has a qualitative character as a procedure, seeking to "explore and understand the meaning that individuals or groups attribute to a social or human problem" (CRESWELL, 2010, p. 26). For Lakatos and Marconi (2010) the qualitative approach is a research that aims to analyze and interpret deeper aspects and provide more detailed analysis on investigations, attitudes and behavioral trends.

The study was developed with 29 students of the 5th year of Fundamental Education, aged between 11 and 13 years of a public school in the North of the State of Espírito Santo. Thus, throughout the 2022 school year, the class teacher worked with the students using manga as a form of didactic methodology through reading. In order to verify the students' acceptance of this new methodology, we conducted an investigation study of the initial conceptions through an investigative questionnaire. To perform the same, a questionnaire with 10 questions was distributed to the students, containing 5 objective questions and 5 discursive questions.

In this context, we used content analysis (BARDIN, 2011) to explore the data produced by the answers to the questionnaires. It was chosen, as a specific technique of content analysis, the so-called thematic analysis, which is based on the theme, understood as an assertion about a given subject, in the form of a sentence (subject and predicate), a set of them or a paragraph (FRANCO, 2005; BARDIN, 2011). Thus, the themes were constituted by the questions and the answers generated.

Finally, we analyzed the most relevant expressions described by the students in the discursive questions and the quantity of answers in objective questions. The answers recorded by the students in the questionnaires were used to verify the knowledge acquired and other factors such as whether the manga influence the students; whether they take readings daily or frequently; whether there is a reflection of these influences in their ways of thinking, in their schoolwork, in their leisure, in



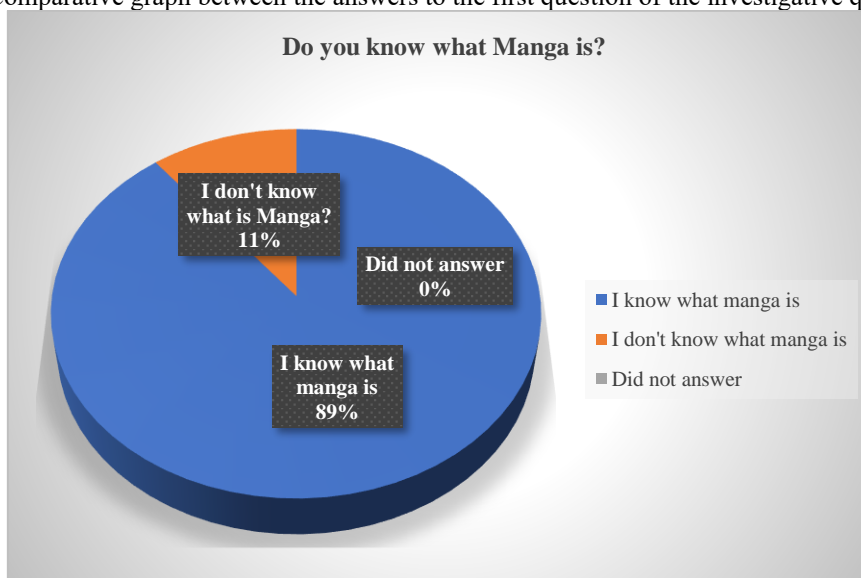
friendships; and why these manga are important in the lives of these students. The answers contained in the questionnaires remained the way the students recorded without any correction.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to investigate the initial conceptions of the students regarding the use of manga, as well as the acceptance of this methodology in the classroom, we performed an analysis through a questionnaire answered by the students. The analysis of these questions will take place through categories. According to Bardin (2011): "Classifying elements into categories imposes the investigation of what each of them has in common with the others. What will allow their grouping is the common part existing between them" (BARDIN, 2011, p. 118).

In the first question, the students answered the question "*Do you know what Manga is?*". This question required the student only to know if he understood the concept of the type of reading activity that was worked during the school year in the classroom. Of the answers recorded, 89% of the students answered that they knew what manga was about and only 11% of the students answered that they did not know what it was, thus showing that most of the students understood what was the type of activity that was carried out throughout the school student. In the graph of Figure 1 we reveal a comparison between the answers of the first question of the investigative questionnaire

Figure 1. Comparative graph between the answers to the first question of the investigative questionnaire:



Source: Research data (2022)

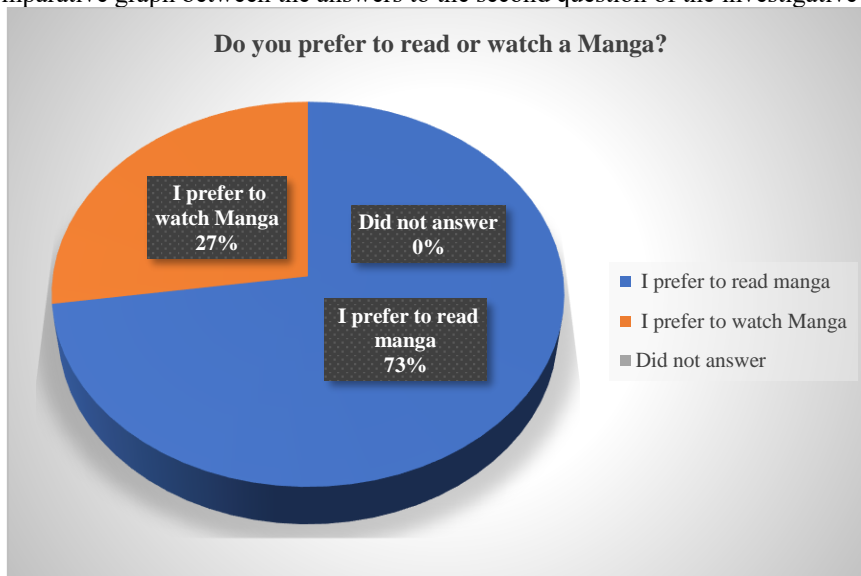
In the second question, the students answered the question "*Do you prefer to read or watch a manga?*". Through this question, it was possible to analyze if the students acquired the interest in reading through the manga, or if they were only interested in the drawings and engravings of the livres



that are often expressed in the cartoons. Of the responses recorded, 72% answered that they prefer to read the Mangas and 27% answered that they prefer to watch.

Through this question, we can infer that a large part of the class acquired the habit of reading, but a large part was still interested in the engravings and drawings expressed in this type of literature. In the graph of Figure 2 we reveal a comparison between the answers of the second question of the investigative questionnaire

Figure 2. Comparative graph between the answers to the second question of the investigative questionnaire:



Source: Research data (2022)

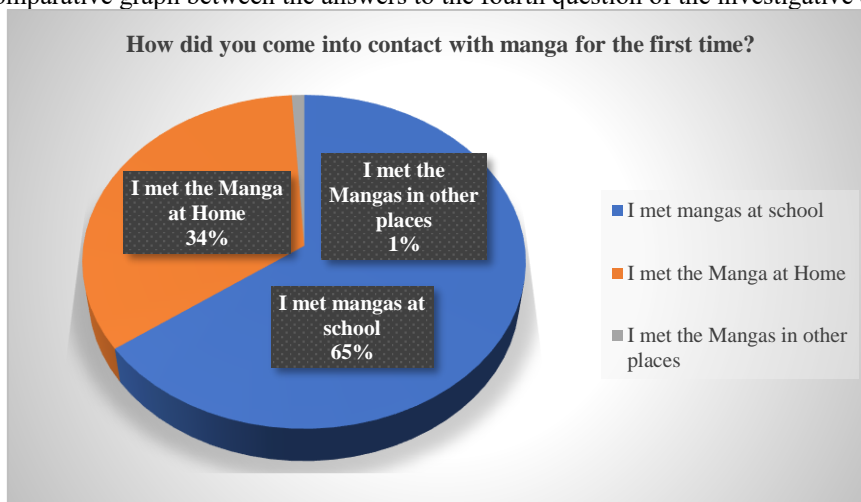
In the third question, the students answered the question "*When you think of Manga, what are the first 3 words that come into your head?*". In this question, we seek to understand what else was present in the imagination of the educating the use of manga. Through the answers found in the questionnaire, we verified the diversity of subjects that the students related. Thus, of the most commonly found words, we identified a higher percentage of students who highlighted the words "Reading," "Art," and "Competition" as the terms that most come to mind when they think of manga.

Thus, we highlight that the use of manga in the classroom can come as a didactic alternative stimulated by reading in order to be able to work grammar, literature and linguistics, as well as interdisciplinary themes by addressing scientific, technological and historical subjects that can be chosen by the reader himself.

In Figure 3, we present a word cloud with a comparison between the answers to the third question of the investigative questionnaire, allowing us to analyze in this image the large number of terms found, as well as their diversity.



Figure 4. Comparative graph between the answers to the fourth question of the investigative questionnaire:

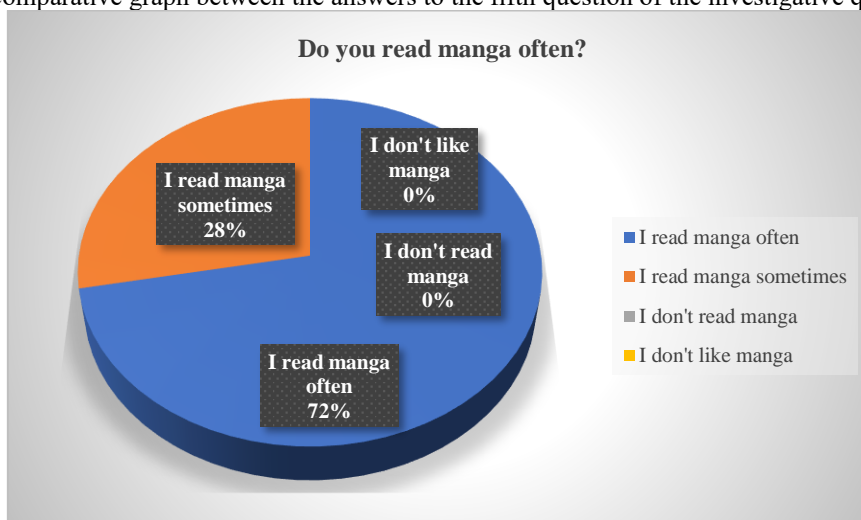


Source: Research data (2022)

In the fifth question, the students answered the question "Do you read manga often? ". In this question, we try to perceive how immersed the student is in the universe of reading. Thus, situations were taken into account in which the student does not read every day, due to other activities that he may perform, but that, in his leisure moments, he does so by reading manga. Of the recorded answers, 72% answered that they always read manga, 28% scored that they do not do this reading as often, and none of the students pointed out that they do not do any reading or do not like manga.

In this way, we noticed a great interest in the reading that the manga brought to them, so that they choose to spend hours or at least the time free of their obligations reading manga. In the graph of Figure 5 we reveal a comparison between the answers of the fourth question of the investigative questionnaire.

Figure 5. Comparative graph between the answers to the fifth question of the investigative questionnaire:



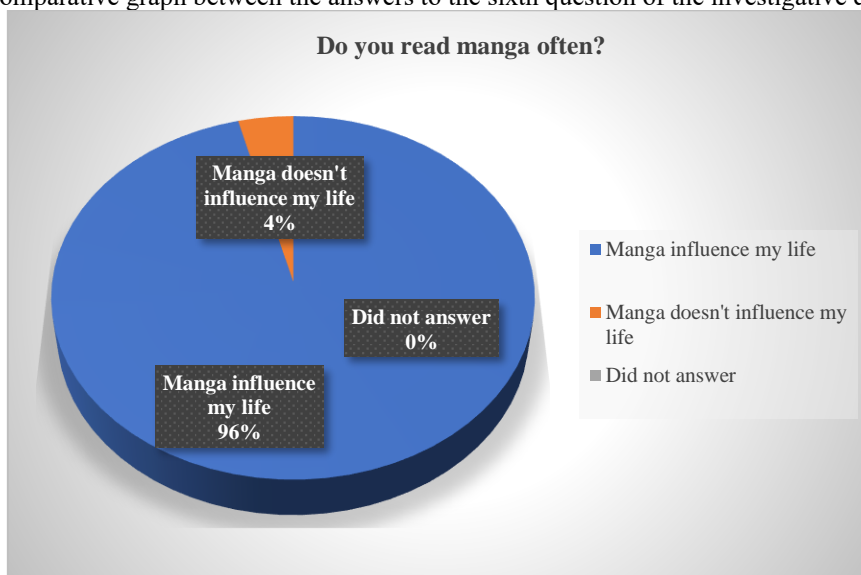
Source: Research data (2022)



In the sixth question, the students answered the question "*Does contact with manga influence their way of thinking and/or acting? Cite examples.*" In this question, we seek to identify the direct or indirect influences that contact with manga exert on students, such as their ideals of not giving up on a dream, defending friends and working together to achieve their goals; if they dress, they use lines or gestures used by their favorite characters.

Of the responses recorded, 96% scored that there was some change in their way of thinking or acting and 4% said no. In the examples cited, students point out that they have learned new words, slang, styles of clothing and clothing, among others. Therefore, we infer the influences that reach the level of vocabulary, visual and behavioral aesthetics. In the graph of Figure 6 we reveal a comparison between the answers of the sixth question of the investigative questionnaire.

Figure 6. Comparative graph between the answers to the sixth question of the investigative questionnaire:



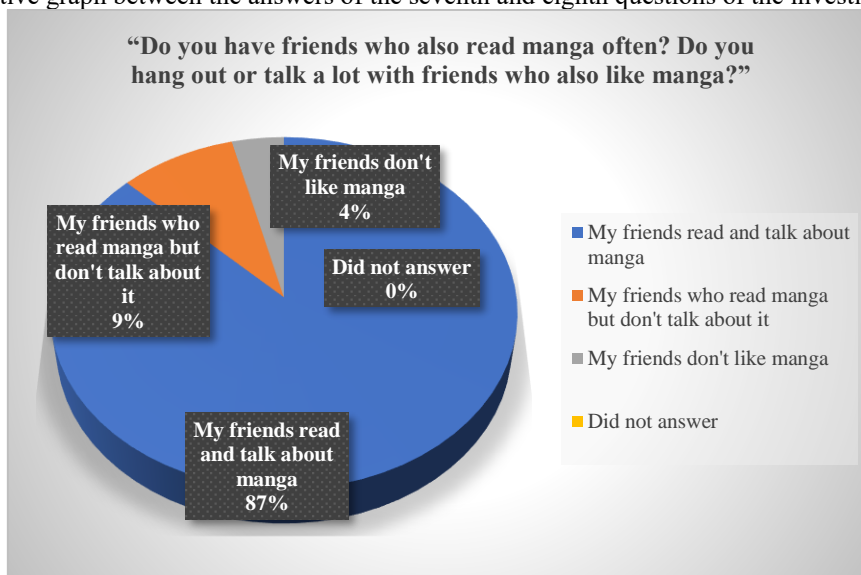
Source: Research data (2022)

In the seventh and eighth questions, the students answered the question "*Do you have friends who also read manga often?*" and "*Do you go out or talk a lot with friends who also like manga?*". In this question, we seek to investigate whether students have friends who share the same taste for manga anime, discuss about a certain chapter or argue about what they think will happen in the next episode, thus influencing them to practice reading.

Of the responses recorded, 89% point out that they and their friends read and talk about manga, 9% say they have friends who read manga but do not talk about it and 2% point out that they do not have friends who like manga. In the graph of Figure 7 we reveal a comparison between the answers of the seventh and eighth questions of the investigative questionnaire.



Figure 7. Comparative graph between the answers of the seventh and eighth questions of the investigative questionnaire:

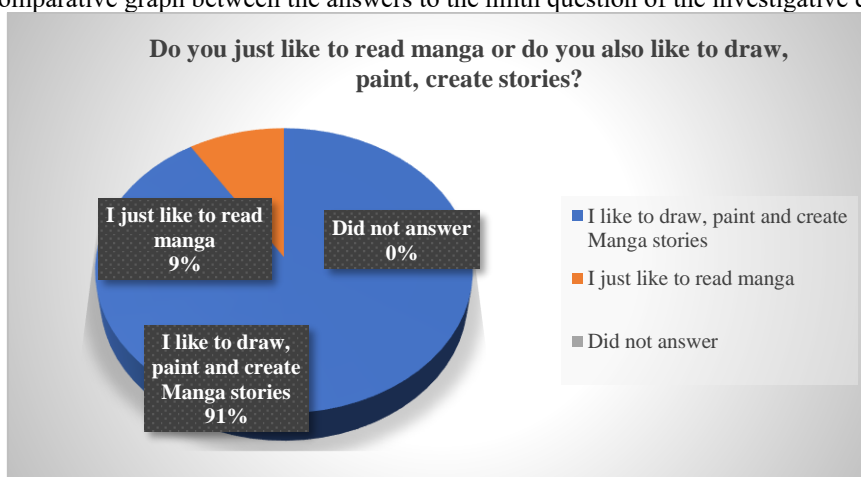


Source: Research data (2022)

In the ninth question, the students answered the question "Do you just like to read manga or do you also like to draw, paint, create stories?" In this question he sought to investigate the students who like to create their characters, stories and make illustrations. Of the answers recorded, 91% score that they like to draw, paint, create stories and only 9 score that they just like to read, thus showing an enabling environment for working with writing.

In the graph of Figure 8 we reveal a comparison between the answers of the ninth question of the investigative questionnaire.

Figure 7. Comparative graph between the answers to the ninth question of the investigative questionnaire:



Source: Research data (2022)

In the tenth and final question, the students answered the question "What draws your attention most in manga?" This question was linked to the previous question and seeks to investigate which type



of reading was most attracting students. Thus, it is possible to infer that the characteristics cited by the students are fundamental factors in the choice of manga that they will read.

Thus, due to the great diversity of answers, we were unable to categorize their analysis. However, we inferred that the physical characteristics of the manga characters were scored by the students as the biggest factor that draws attention. It is quite common these days to see groups of teenagers at events, related to Japanese pop culture, wearing clothes made by themselves or by experts, so that anime and manga aficionados can have fun, take pictures and even compete in events to see who looked more like or best represented the character. Therefore, these are fundamental conceptions that attract them in the choice of a manga for reading and the teacher can contribute in this process by knowing the characteristics of each student, bringing this factor in the elaboration of their didactic proposals.

4 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The development of the present study allowed us to analyze the use of manga as a methodological practice of teaching with students of the fifth year of elementary school. We highlight that manga can be seen as a teaching tool and can be adapted to various contents, enabling the student to be the protagonist of the process of encounter between the word and the subject who reads, establishing an experience that can modify the conception that both have of the world and their own existences.

Thus, with the research carried out, we observed that manga can indeed be used to arouse interest in students since the large audience of manga readers is young, stimulating them in learning, which teachers can bring as another teaching proposal for their class, thus making it fun, relaxed and introductory content.

With the result of the investigation presented here, it was possible to find elements that enable the use of manga as part of the teaching and learning process and also to realize the potential of such materials, more specifically manga, as didactic resources capable of contributing to the mediation in the teaching of contents and concepts of Portuguese Language and New Literatures. It is important to think of the different sources and didactic resources as possibilities for the production of knowledge that incorporates different realities and worldviews. Manga isn't the only one, but given its popularity among young audiences, it can be the catalyst for debates, themes, and analysis in the classroom.



REFERENCES

- AMARAL, A; CARLOS, G. S. Caracterizando o "estilo mangá" no contexto brasileiro: hibridização cultural na Turma da Mônica Jovem. In: MONT'ALVÃO JÚNIOR, A. P.; NOLASCO, E. C. (Org.). Das pinturas rupestres de Lascaux: uma viagem pelo universo dos quadrinhos. João Pessoa: Marca de Fantasia, p. 14-34, 2014.
- BARDIN, L. Análise de Conteúdo. Lisboa: Edições 70, 2011.
- BRAGA, G. V.; SPADETTI, M. G. OS Mangás como estratégia didática. XV NIC XI EPG VNIC Jn, p. 01-03, 2018.
- CRESWELL, J. W. Projeto de Pesquisa: métodos qualitativo, quantitativo e misto. 3. ed. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2010.
- FRANCO, M. L. P. B. Análise de conteúdo. 2. ed. Brasília: Liber livro, 2005
- LAKATOS, E. M.; MARCONI, M. A. Técnicas de pesquisa: planejamento e execução de pesquisas, amostragens e técnicas de pesquisas, elaboração, análise e interpretação de dados. 3. ed. São Paulo: Atlas, 1996.
- LINSIGEIN, L. Mangás e sua utilização pedagógica no ensino de ciências sob a perspectiva Cts. Ciência & Ensino, v. 1, p. 1-9, 2007.
- LUYTEN, S. M. B. Mangá: o poder dos quadrinhos japoneses. 2. ed. São Paulo: Hedra, 2012.
- MANCUSO, M. Mangá e História em Quadrinhos são a mesma coisa! On-line. Disponível em: <<http://tudibao.com.br/2010/09/manga-e-historia-em-quadrinhos.html>>. Acessado em 01 de dezembro de 2022.
- SANTOS, M. O.; GANZAROLLI, M. E. Histórias em quadrinhos: formando leitores. TransInformação, Campinas, v. 23, n. 1, p. 63-75, 2011.
- SCHODT, F. L. Dreamland Japan: writings on modern manga. Berkeley, California. Stone Bridge Press. 1996.
- VIGOTSKI, L. S. Psicologia Pedagógica. Porto Alegre: Artmed, 2003.
- NEMERSKI, J. B. N. Do Mangá ao Cosplay: Processos Criativos e Performáticos no Ensino das Artes. Revista Educação, Artes e Inclusão, Florianópolis, v. 12, n. 1, p. 97 - 122, 2016.
- VERGUEIRO, W. Uso das HQS no ensino. In: BARBOSA, A. et al. (Orgs.). Como usar as histórias em quadrinhos na sala de aula. 3. ed. São Paulo: Contexto, p. 07-29, 2009.