

Pedagogical mediation in youth and adult education: existential needs and the dialogue as a foundation of education practice*

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ABSTRACT

This research is an investigation on the circumstances and conditions needed for mediations in teaching situations and for the students increasing learning of the subjects that respond more adequately to the complexity of the youth and adult education (EJA), and how such mediations create conditions to develop critical thinking on students and the educational practice in this type of education. The scope of this writing is the mediating dimension of dialogue as the foundation of pedagogical praxis in adult education. This is an excerpt of the doctoral research of qualitative approach, in which a theoretical review is developed and that was possible through empirical observations in an adult education elementary school, in Santa Catarina, Brazil. These data analysis and interpretation retrieve the hermeneutic-dialectic perspective. Results show that EJA is a complex modality and, in that sense, it needs a mediation that is coated with intentionality. So this is not any ordinary pedagogical action, but a critical pedagogical action instead, substantiated, planned, intentional, in which both teacher and student are the subjects of learning.

KEYWORDS

mediation; dialogue; youth and adult education; pedagogical practice.

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MEDIAÇÃO PEDAGÓGICA NA EDUCAÇÃO DE JOVENS E ADULTOS: EXIGÊNCIA EXISTENCIAL E POLÍTICA DO DIÁLOGO COMO FUNDAMENTO DA PRÁTICA

RESUMO

O presente trabalho se constituiu na investigação das circunstâncias e condições necessárias para que se processem mediações em situações de ensino e potencializem para o educando a aprendizagem do conteúdo que responda mais adequadamente à complexidade da educação de jovens e adultos (EJA), além de analisar como tais mediações criam condições de desenvolver o pensamento crítico dos estudantes e a práxis educativa nessa modalidade de ensino. O escopo deste escrito trata da dimensão mediadora do diálogo como fundamento da prática pedagógica na EJA. Trata-se de um recorte de pesquisa de doutorado, de abordagem qualitativa, no qual se desenvolve uma revisão teórica, contingenciada por observações empíricas em escola de EJA do ensino fundamental, em Santa Catarina, Brasil. A análise e a interpretação dos dados recuperam a perspectiva hermenêutico-dialética. Resultados apontam que a EJA é uma modalidade complexa e, nesse sentido, necessita de uma mediação que seja revestida de intencionalidade. Então não é qualquer ação pedagógica, é uma ação pedagógica crítica, fundamentada, planejada, intencional, na qual professor(a) e aluno(a) são sujeitos de aprendizagem.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

mediação pedagógica; diálogo; educação de jovens e adultos.

MEDIACIÓN PEDAGÓGICA EN LA EDUCACIÓN DE JÓVENES Y ADULTOS: NECESIDAD EXISTENCIAL Y POLÍTICA DEL DIÁLOGO COMO FUNDAMENTO DE LA PRÁCTICA

RESUMEN

El presente trabajo se constituye en la investigación de las circunstancias y condiciones necesarias para que se procesen mediaciones en situaciones de enseñanza y se potencie para el estudiante el aprendizaje del contenido que responda de la forma más adecuada a la complejidad de la educación de jóvenes y adultos (EJA), además de analizar cómo tales mediaciones crean condiciones para que se desarrolle el pensamiento crítico de los estudiantes y la praxis educativa en esta modalidad de enseñanza. Se trata de un recorte de investigación de doctorado, de abordaje cualitativo, en el que se desarrolla una revisión teórica, articulada por observaciones empíricas en una escuela de EJA de enseñanza primaria, en Santa Catarina, Brasil. Análisis e interpretación de los datos se recuperan perspectiva hermenéutico-dialéctico. Los resultados muestran que la EJA es un modo complejo y, en consecuencia, necesita una mediación que está recubierto con la intencionalidad. Así que no es una acción pedagógica, es una acción pedagógica crítica, razonada, planificada, intencional, en la que el maestro(a) y alumno(a) son objeto de aprendizaje.

PALABRAS CLAVE

mediación pedagógica; diálogo; educación de jóvenes y adultos.

INTRODUCTION

Youth and Adult Education (YAE) has sought support in new theoretical and pedagogical paradigms to respond to several dilemmas and questionings about the function of teaching the teachers in this educational field. There is a large and significant number of educational studies and proposals that indicate the need for a redefinition of the practices undertaken in educational institutions.

But the process is a bit different than how it is presented by some theorists and technicians; it is not enough to develop well-founded proposals to change the current educational paradigms. An entire teaching culture has been built to handle the situations that daily life raises, and that should be considered. This is confirmed by current research on the education and performance of teachers, which emphasize that the role and participation of teachers is of fundamental importance.

Among these studies, the proposals that stand out are those based on a didactic process in which shared activities are emphasized and evaluation is no longer considered as verification and classification, but as a possibility for constant redimensioning of teaching and learning. And the teacher's role is not reduced to that of a mere transmitter of knowledge, but to that of a mediator, instigator and problematizer.

The characterization of the conceptual multiplicity of mediator and mediation is symbolically, culturally, socially, epistemologically and pedagogically complex. The mediating typologies constitute a heterogeneous field, given that human culture is multifaceted. It involves the transmission of cultural codes, values and norms, and also constitutes an educational dimension because it acts on the cognitive skills of individuals.

Mediation involves more than a simple interaction because it is a movement that transforms, modifies and constructs individuals. It therefore, has a generic and specific scope. That said, mediation is characterized as having both an axiology and an emotional dimension. The concept of mediation comprises both the appropriations and intersections between culture, politics and educational phenomenon, as well as appropriations, recordings and resignifications particular to the receptors. However, there are those who define it as everything that interferes in the way that we perceive and understand the world. The lens through which I direct the focus of attention in this study is that mediation articulated with the educational field of adult and youth education, as a specifically human activity, constituted in the complexity of social relations. The central argument is based on the understanding that pedagogic mediation is not any activity, but a practice undertaken with a purpose – a stance in relation to the world.

The questions that can permeate the proposals that legitimize a didactics for adult education, considering an educational praxis as a political praxis (Freire, 1987), and that at a given time and space establish the necessary links within a cultural framework of problematization of this culture – become stronger because this problematization is not neutral. It involves all men and women who produce culture and, dialectically, have internalized it.

That is why in this study these questions investigate the circumstances and conditions needed to process the mediations in teaching situations that enhance the student's learning of the subjects that are taught, to problematize the meaning of mediation that most suitably responds to the complexity of adult education, and how these mediations create conditions to develop critical thinking among students and the educational praxis in this type of education.

Therefore, the form I use to introduce the issues and problematize the meanings of mediation, in adult education, seeks to reaffirm what Melucci (2005, p. 33) characterizes as "the epistemological turn" – the centrality of language, which is "culturalized, gendered, ethnic, always linked to specific times and places". It is thus a reality that cannot be explained by itself, but in an interconnected system of mediations, whose meanings emerge from processes in which knowledge is produced by dialogic exchanges that are constituent of and constituted by culture.

For the purpose of this research, I will make an introductory presentation of one of the categories of analysis investigated here. When it comes to teaching methods of adult education and the mediating meanings that emanate from it, I will reflect upon one of the dimensions that arise from the school context of students, professors and teachers of youth and adults who participate in the daily routine of public schools. This is a trajectory shared with teachers from various fields of knowledge and with students of the four-years of the third segment of adult education in a public school in Santa Catarina state. The place from which I speak, the "ground" where I find myself combined with the time that I have been involved as an education professional, is the "ground" of the youth and adult education school. I am a pedagogue, educator and preparer of teachers. I am speaking about didactics, teaching practice and pedagogical mediations in youth and adult education.

One of the dimensions that I present is based on recordings, classroom observations, the exhaustive reading of these recordings and observations of these dialogs and interviews. This is the mediating dimension of "dialog." Containing a theoretical background, but also a history, this dimension emerges from a school context, from the perspective of teachers and students. For this reason it is an exercise in sharing. The study does not involve discussing youth and adult education based on public policies, or understanding the historical context of adult education in the country from a philosophical angle. All of these dimensions are fundamental but it is based on what teachers and students who are inserted in school say that we must consider the mediating pedagogical practices of teaching and learning in adult education.

The research was permeated by objectives that are considered interdependent and essential for understanding the formation of a didactic that fulfills the specific needs of youth and adult education. This includes: how do teachers conduct their practice in adult education? What are the possibilities for greater coordination between the theoretical assumptions and the educational practices in adult education?

The teaching practice, which is characterized by pedagogical mediations in youth and adult education, and conducted by teachers to deal with the everyday needs and emergencies are the focus of this study. It will address the mediating

dimension in which dialogue is the basis of the pedagogical practice of adult education, which is the specific objective of the reflections.

MEDIATION: DIALOGUE AS FOUNDATION

To speak about mediation and dialogism is to speak of the presence of the "other" and of the dynamics of the sign. It is to talk about tension, reversibility, the impregnation of the "word." [...] Thus, the individual verbal experience emerges and takes shape amid the ceaseless interaction of enunciation of others, in a process, that simultaneously involves the incorporation/reaction to the word of others.

SMOLKA, 1991, p. 17

The word, as a sign, is revealed in all educational activity – it is through command of the word that an individual becomes a teacher, that a student develops. It is through the word, that both teachers and students identify themselves. It is through the word, through its legitimate meaning, that these subjects of pedagogical activity communicate the actual reality in real conditions of verbal communication. Words allow the constitution of the subject *in and through* language. We are not considering the word as a unit of language, nor the meaning of the word, but with the finished statement and with a concrete meaning; that is, its content.

In the words of Freire in, *Education, the Practice of Freedom* (1975,p.150): “[...] the word should be understood by man in its proper meaning: as a force for transformation of the world “. This social transformation, according to Gadotti, is mediated by dialogue. According to Gadotti, for Freire, “[...] humans construct themselves through dialogue, because they are essentially communicative. There is no progress without dialogue. For him, the moment of dialogue is the time to change reality and progress”(Gadotti, 1989, p. 46).

This is why, to establish dialogue as the foundation and means for the pedagogical practice in adult education it is necessary for teachers to introduce a culture of dialogue in the classroom. It is the learning experiences mediated by dialogue that allow students to prepare to capture the world, so that they can understand reality that surrounds them and can intervene in it, thus overcoming the situation of mere spectators.

Through the dialogical mediation that takes place in classroom interactions, the students produce intellectual strategies that will enable them to produce or appropriate knowledge. This dialogical movement will empower their own mediation (internalization), allowing the individuals to break free from their naive consciousness and attain levels of significance that simple exposure to stimuli or physical and cognitive experiences with objects of knowledge would not provide them.

In this sense, dialogue becomes the concretization of the exercise towards freedom, since, according to Freire (1981, p. 92, emphasis in the original),

[...] Existence, since it is human, can not be mute, silent, nor can it be nourished by false words, but by true words, with which men transform the world. Existing, humanly, *means to pronounce* the world, to change it. The pronounced world is problematized to the *pronouncers*, demanding from them a *new pronouncement*.

Eminently dialogical and a producer of meanings, the statements recorded in field diaries and in the interviews reveal the importance of this formative dimension of dialogue. The opportunity to conduct interviews thus favors not only gaining knowledge of the other, but the recognition of oneself. The conclusion of the interview became for me and for the teachers an opportunity for reflection. More than interviews, they were conversations, threads of dialogue, narratives, in which an educational dimension resides.

This is because individuals are dialogical, considering that humans will never find fullness by themselves (Bakhtin, 1992, p. 180). The dialogical constitution of the individual in Bakhtin emerges and is sustained on the enunciation, which is understood as a social process in which the I is established by mediating in the other and as the other of the other. It is through the inter-relationship between dialogism and alterity that we can and must understand the issue of the individual in Bakhtin's theory.

But how is the mediating and formative dialogue instituted and characterized in the pedagogical action oriented towards adult education teaching and learning? And how do students and teachers become the subjects of this dialogical action? The statements of the teachers and students' presented below trigger the exercise of dialogue as the foundation of the guided pedagogical action. This exercise is only possible due to mediation, which can be understood as something that happens between the teachers and students. Mediation allows contact and communication between subjects. More than that, as Vygotsky (1998) emphasized, mediation is what provides signification, because the meaning¹ is not equal to the word, and is not the same as thinking.

Seeking to understand the meanings of mediation in the dialogical movement of pedagogical practice of adult education, I will now analyze fragments from the interviews² with teachers and students.

When asked whether there are moments of interlocution, a confrontation of ideas, and raising of questions in their classes and how often, they say:

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- 1 The meanings are socially constructed through language and therefore make the dialogue a central element of a reflective practice (Vygotsky, 1987). For Bakhtin (1992), the word is the organizer of mental activity itself, which is situated in a social territory, that is, it is always outside, driven by social relations. It works as a sign that allows mediation, causing us to understand how the internalization process happens.
 - 2 In the description of the interviews, letters in form of abbreviations will be used to encode the respondents without identifying them literally. For teachers, the acronym will be IT – interviewed teacher –, followed by the identification number. For students, the acronym will be IS – interviewed student –, followed by the identification number.

Quite a bit, because when you create space for dialogue, you give opportunity to the confrontation of ideas, that sort of thing. In the exchange, in the conversation you can open up more. Of course, there are students who remain anonymous, just write, but I prefer the student that opens up to dialogue. (IT3)

Constantly. I cannot understand a lesson in which I am speaking alone while they are in front of me as if they were connected to a TV. (IT4)

Yes, students speak up, take positions, agree, disagree, build ideas. (IT2)

Another aspect highlighted in the interviews, from the perspective of the mediating dimension of the dialogue, is expressed considering the following question: “Based on your experience, how do students begin to learn the subjects you teach?”

When they become more communicative, more participative, they give opinions, question, make links, bridges, associations with the facts, raise contributions. (IT2)

First through orality and then by writing they will confirm what they have learned. (IT3)

Ah! When he makes me smile, when he realizes the things he has developed. Perceiving through their expression, especially orally and emotionally. For example: The cacophony.³ When I bring musical texts, they quickly understand and perceive and become more cacophonous. Even more than using slang. He questions, participates. (IT4).

When asked about the meaning of this participation, (IT4) replies: “Mostly dialogue, orality and then writing. Because orality is the main issue to get to writing.”

When the researcher asked students what represents a good lesson, they answer: “When the teacher arrives, presents the subject, we learn and discuss. Today I learn simple things I did not know before and I go home arguing about what I learned “(IS5.1).

This testimony approximates us to the idea of awareness of being in the world because:

The fact that I perceive myself in the world, with the world and with others places me in a position facing the world, which is not of someone who has nothing to do with it. After all, my presence in the world is not of someone who

3 Cacophony is the name given to unpleasant sounds, often formed by the combination of words that, when spoken, can cause them to have a pejorative, obscene or even funny meaning produced by joint of sounds.

fits in, but one who inserts himself into it. It is the position of those who fight against being only an object, but also the subject of history. (Freire, 1996, p. 60).

The statements of the students therefore, reveal a youth and adult education that has been challenging to conduct a dialogical practice that breaks away from decades of adjustment and accommodation, of inexperience with democracy, as Freire affirms (1975, p. 74):

The problem of adjustment and accommodation is linked to the silence to which we have already referred, as one of the immediate consequences of our democratic inexperience. In fact, through the adjustment, the man does not dialogue. Does not participate. Rather, he accommodates to determinations that are superimposed on him. The mental dispositions we create in these circumstances were thus rigidly authoritarian and uncritical mind-sets.

When the students are asked if the teacher is able to notice when they learn the content, they said: “Yes (smiles) because when everyone has learned, we discuss it; and if we haven’t learned, we keep quiet” (IS5.1).

When asked what is the best way for a teacher to teach, they affirm: “By explaining things well, not by using a text. By speaking” (IS5.2). Another student affirmed: “What I like the most is the way the history and geography teacher explains the subjects. They discuss, interact. There is dialogue between the teacher and the students. Or writing, I also love writing” (IS8.3).

When the teachers were asked how they perceive when the students learn, they generally make a statement similar to the declaration of IT4: “I see it through their expression, especially oral and in the emotions [...]. Mainly, the dialogue, the orality and then, writing.”

I also asked a teacher (IT3) about “silence”, inquiring: But what about the quiet or shy student, who does not express himself through dialogue? The teacher answered: “I think the silent student bothers me more than the talkative student” (IT3).

This concern of this teacher leads us to Vygotsky (1998, p. 169), when he says that human speech is, by far, the behavior that is the most important use of signs in its development. This is a field of mediations characterized by “symbolic mediation” which has, in language, the mediating element constituted by the symbolic universe of signs.

And in this sense, it also brings us to the reflections of Lukács, who maintains that the development of the self is unitary, although, it is realized in a contradictory manner. That is, as a result of the fact that man is, simultaneously a producer and product of society and the factor that enables man to achieve consciousness, during the process of humanization is speech:

[...] the genre – at this ontological level, at the level of developed social being – is no longer a generalization to which the various examples are “silently” connected, [...] to the contrary, they rise so far as to acquire an increasingly more clearly articulated voice, until they reach the ontological-social synthesis

of their uniqueness, converted into individuality, with mankind, converted into them, in turn, into something self-conscious “ (Lukács, 1978, p. 14).

I thus observe from an ontological point of view, the importance of speech in the production of the constitution of individuals, as revealed, in this regard, by teacher (IT2). At this point of the interview, the question was the same as the previous one, but with a complementary part: When it comes to the shy student, what is the best way to act? Is it to get him to stop being shy and express himself? Or do you think shyness should not be respected from the point of view of that limit?

The one who talks is easy to deal with, the one who does not speak is difficult. I think that the path, and here is the [importance] of cultural night.⁴ No, I think shyness covers you, diminishes you, shyness prevents you from having a social life, to develop yourself socially. [...] It castrates you as a person and the person is not happy. Do not tell me that the person is happy because I used to be very introverted, do you know what I mean? [...] I was very shy as a teenager and I could only manage to take a position; I used to study hard, to read, I was always dedicated to studying, but I sincerely only began to have joy in my life when I managed to make a friend who therefore had the generosity to share all his friends with me. [...]. He was extroverted, communicative, and I began to express myself through that friendship. We realize that when a person manifests himself socially they are able to interact more in class, they manage to capture more, they feel better, this is the gain from cultural night, this is the gain of that night in which people present themselves. (IT2)

This teacher's statement leads me to the pedagogy of autonomy, in the reflections made by Freire about the readiness for dialogue – a requirement for teaching, when he states that:

The closing to the world and to others becomes a transgression to the natural impulse of incompleteness. *The subject who is open* to the world and to others inaugurates with his gesture the dialogical relationship in which it is confirmed as restlessness and curiosity, as inconclusive in constant movement in history. (Freire, 1996, p. 153-154, emphasis added)

Freire's idea refers to what the teachers reveal when asked about how they realize when students have learned:

By his development in class, he becomes open. By the results of the work, the oral presentation, by the dialogue, on which I work hard. This is when you begin to realize, through his discussion. (IT3)

4 Referring to the project developed by teachers and classes of the adult any youth education institution, entitled “Cultural Night”.

I realize it through his excitement; he discusses the subject, orally shows interest in expressing his understanding. (IT1)

When he interacts, he asks questions, adds other issues, responds clearly, he makes questions from one content to another. (IT2)

These statements reveal an innovative pedagogical practice of dialogic educators committed to sensitively listen to the voice of the students. A dialogic practice that makes viable the democratic experience in which each person has the right to express themselves, to be heard and to intervene critically and consciously in the reality, because only in dialogue is critical praxis possible.

In this sense, when students are asked about the moment they realize when they begin to learn the subject taught by the teacher they, reveal:

When I feel secure to talk about things. For example, in theater, once, I even improvised because I had already understood. (IS8.3)

When I am happy, I see I've got it, I always want to know more, [have] more information. (IS6.2)

When I can pass it on to my classmate. (IS7.1)

The mediated learning experience in the pedagogical practice of these subjects is not explicit in these statements, with regard to the mediating didactic movement of establishing comparisons, relations, complements, analysis and synthesis between one knowledge and another. However, as could be seen, the result of this movement is expressly revealing of this process.

The statement from student (IS7.1) shows that the pedagogical practice guided by mediation is capable of developing the autonomy of the student so that from being a mediated subject he becomes a mediator, given that he is able to explain the constructed learning, in the case exemplified in which he says he can "pass it on to his classmate" (IS7.1). But also when he can solve the tasks proposed by mediating instruments such as proposed exercises, written texts, as well as interact with other subjects of the pedagogical activity.

Bakhtin and Freire understand language as a historical process of interaction between human beings. The human being is subjectivity, but its subjectivity is only constituted in the dialogic relationship with the other, that is, in intersubjectivity. The individual is only constituted by the recognition of the other, of alterity, of what is different. Thus, constituting the I through the recognition of the you is the principle of subjectivity, which in turn is conditioned by the principle of intersubjectivity, which potentializes the mediating dialogue of human communication and emancipation.

I then asked teacher IT4 how he perceives how shy students are learning, those who do not express themselves orally. He answered:

I do not accept shyness, I go beyond it, because I believe that all shyness is a form of low self-esteem. In practice I am able to *bring him into the dialogue*. I notice that he is shy in the large group, but among his peers, there is an indication of potential. I observe his wanderings in the classroom, what this shy student enjoys and I bring him to the large group. (IT4)

This teacher's statement relates to the reflection of Wells (1998, p. 130) who says:

Quite frequently, the sensibility of a teacher facing the need to build self-esteem in students can lead to a lack of willingness to challenge them intellectually. However, by maintaining high expectations about what can be achieved by the students when helping them to achieve this, teachers can help them to believe in their own abilities to learn.

The attitude of the teacher reveals the recognition and importance given to the emotional, affective, social aspects of the interactions of classroom life as an integral part of mediated learning. These aspects are a source of meaning, of belonging to the group and of the identity of the self.

And in that sense the importance of dialogue is evident in the structure of the pedagogical practices of the group studied as they promoted debates to try to stimulate the development of solidarity, participation and involvement of students in groups. For this reason I consider dialogue as a fundamental condition for good interaction between teachers and students.

This perception is also revealed in the interview with student IS7.1. When asked what being a good teacher means to him, he explains: "For me, a good teacher is a teacher who is intelligent in every way, intelligence is not only about knowledge, but also knowing how to recognize the student." (IS7.1). When asked what makes a bad teacher, he said: "It is a teacher who has no dialogue, no respect" (IS7.1).

This statement leads to the encounter with Freire (1981) when he says that even before the occurrence of dialogue, a deep faith in men is necessary, in which the supportive base is love. Freire attaches special importance to love in defense of dialogue: "There is no dialogue [...] if there is not a deep love for the world and mankind [...] Since it is the basis of dialogue, love is also dialogue" (Freire, 1981, p. 93-94). The practice of dialogue is thus an action committed to mankind.

I then asked student IS7.1 to explain his answer when he responded that: "A good teacher is a teacher who is intelligent in every way, intelligence is not only about knowledge, but also knowing how to recognize the student." He responded by affirming:

Because knowledge, its as if I'm a teacher of mathematics, Portuguese or any other subject., Of course, I'll understand my subject, I will be able to explain it, but that is not enough, there has to be something else. (IS7.1)

Continuing the reflection of the interviewee, we observe the need of the link between dialogue and the emotional factor, that counter-cultural perspective

will guide the primordial virtue of dialogue and the respect for students not only as receivers but as individuals. After all, Freire asks: “What is dialogue?”. And he answers, supported by Jaspers: “a horizontal relationship between A and B. It is born from a critical matrix and generates criticality. Nourished by love, humbleness, hope, faith and trust” (Freire, 1975, p. 107). And even more,

[...] If dialogue is the meeting of men to Be More, it cannot be conducted in despair. If the individuals in the dialogue expect nothing from their “what should I do?” there can be no dialogue. Their meeting is empty and sterile. It is bureaucratic and fastidious. (Freire, 1981, p. 97).

Dialogue in the pedagogical relationship helps students to reflexively organize their thoughts by inserting them into the historical process, so that they renounce their role as simple objects and demand their action as subjects. Therefore, for real education to take place, the main form of communication is dialogue. “Without dialogue there is no communication, and without this there is no real education.” (Freire, 1987, p. 83).

The statement of the next teacher reveals the “guiding principle of oriented pedagogical practice in youth and adult education”, the permanent dialogue in the educational movement in the classroom. The teacher expresses this understanding based on his experience in class, and in the scenario that enunciates the answer to the question about what is a good lesson:

It is a class in which the student dialogs, the student asks, the student participates, you feel that the student, for example, understood, and he also feels happy when he helps [the others] right? When he can make his contribution, when he interacts with you. When he asks questions, you realize that this is a good lesson, when it gives satisfaction. (IT2)

In this scenario of utterances,, in which the word, the orality and the participation are the constituent mediation tools of the dialogue as the propulsive movement of the mediated cognitive development, learning is a deeply social process. A process that is also featured in the statements of teacher IT4, when asked who “performs” the mediations, the teacher or the student, he explains:

Both. Sometimes I propose a theme and they perform mediations, placing me in their proposal. They bring subsidies. Adolescents in regular education are kind of perverse, they exclude people through their dialects while in youth and adult Education they are always searching, they have composure, they dialogue with the teacher, they have their own themes of interest. (IT4)

These statements witness a pedagogical practice of adult education that reveals the heuristic potential of pedagogical mediation, whose potential emanates from the reflection that the mediations themselves elucidate, mainly regarding the effective education of human beings. Thus, I understand that to operate with non-significant knowledge reproduces a meaningless education and the role

of pedagogical mediation would then be to recover the meaning of the school institution, the sense of educational space in/for youth and adult education.

The critical awareness of the social structures that create inequality, the role of education in sustaining or modifying structures, the enhancement of dialogue as an educational principle, combined with the notion of reciprocity in the relationship between teachers and students are an important pillar to the formation of youth and adult educators.

Hence, one must consider Freire's teaching: that dialogue is the means of liberation, it is not just a method but a strategy for the teacher to respect the knowledge of the students who come to school, because they contain within themselves what is most specific to human beings: the word, which is materialized in dialogue. Therefore, in Freire's liberating vision, without the words of men and women there can be no liberation. Thus, the pedagogical foundation defended by Freire (1981) expresses a radical criticism of banking education, which is characterized as an anti-dialogical pedagogy in which the unilateral relationship between the teacher and student reflects situations of domination, hierarchy and silence.

The teacher-student relationship must be based on dialogue, with both positioning themselves as individuals in the learning process, in a horizontal relationship. The authoritarianism that permeated the relationship of traditional education must be banished to give way to the pedagogy of dialogue. However, this horizontal relationship does not happen in an imposed form, it occurs naturally when the student and the teacher can be placed in each other's position, with the awareness that they are simultaneously learners and educators.

In this sense, Freire and Shor (1986, p. 18) see two moments in the "gnoseological cycle" that relate dialectically: one is the moment of the knowledge of what is already known and the other is the production of what is new, which for him means stimulating the students' creative potential.

What these statements have shown us is that dialogic education is a moment that is more than cognitive and rational, because it comprises other dimensions, such as affection, sensitivity, intuitiveness and intentions. We agree with Freire (1981), that the fundamental element in the relation of everything in the world is dialogue.

Dialogue is the feeling of love turned into action; it involves loving dialogue, which is the encounter of human beings who love each other and who want to change the world. According to Freire (*idem*), dialogue is not only a quality of the human way of being and acting. Dialogue is the condition of this way of being, it is what makes men and women human.

The statements below also point to this dialogic scenario as a human possibility of "Being More"⁵, when teachers are asked about how they verify the

5 *Being more* is a category that is found in the work of Freire as a key conception of human being. Zitkoski (2010, p. 369, my highlighting) explains that: "*The vocation to humanization*, according to the proposal of Freire, is a characteristic that is expressed in a search for self-being, in which the human being is in a constant seek, adventuring curiously in knowing themselves and the world, besides fighting for affirmation/conquer of their own freedom."

intellectual progress of students and the development of their capabilities, how they realize that the students assimilate the subject consciously and actively and mobilize their mental abilities and skills:

Through the dialogues in class, you can see they link things, the facts from previous classes. You realize that the student got it, that your class was not in vain. But the silent student is problematic. [...] (IT3)

The interested students can talk about the topic because they are things from daily life. (IT1)

In speech, through the way they speak, question, which become more intelligent, better prepared. The way they state their opinions, how they evolve from the first to the last written text. (IT4)

The statements of the teachers and the students confirm what Assmann (1998, p. 29) maintains that the pedagogical environment should be: above all, a place of fascination and interactivity, and that all morphogenesis of knowledge must be understood in the light of human experience of life enjoyment, of the pleasure of living, of feeling good in a certain place and when socializing with people. In this sense, mediation in pedagogical practice of youth and adult education may become a process of re-enchantment for educational action, which is realized through the passion for communication, self-discovery of the human potential for self-fulfillment, embodied by the interactions and experiences for the construction of new knowledge.

The pedagogical space of youth and adult education is full of possibilities for articulation of other cultural realities, different knowledge, just like life: it is a network of dialogic relations that are endlessly articulated with complex knowledge, an encounter of men and women in which knowledge only makes sense when it is focused on the construction of permanent dialogue. This is because it is through dialogue that human beings become agents of their actions, and it is with the knowledge of these actions that they come to acquire respectability, as they begin to develop attitudes committed to knowledge.

From this perspective, this research indicates that the mediation of the action oriented in adult education should not just focus on improving the act of teaching and learning, but it should substantiate a humanizing action, in which joy, pleasure and hope are the elements that promote interest among the learners.

I perceive that the statements, arguments, expressions, gestures and actions of the teachers and students' defend opening up to the other, the encounter between individuals and cultures, a defense of dialogue as a foundation for educational practice and the construction of identities – teachers and students learning to “Be More” to express their reading of the world, their symbolic universe, their daily practices. When I asked teacher IT1 about his understanding of mediation he replied:

It is the exchange. I listen to the students a lot, I think it's very important to listen to what students have to say, both about your subject and about the way you are teaching, what they think about the way you are teaching, what they think of how you are treating them, because you may think you're treating them very well, but actually you are not. So I like very much to talk with them. I open a lot of space for this. (IT1)

When I asked the same teacher about the characteristics of students' knowledge, if he identifies some knowledge that they bring from their lives and use during the lessons, if he can apply this knowledge, if he would point to something that is built with them, he said:

Oh yeah, sure, sure, many things. Only by having a little bit of good will, we learn a lot from them, the different ways. I ask them a lot of things. [...] Despite some flaws, because nothing is perfect in this systematic progress, a lot happens, since the 5th grade, from its beginning, when they have just started, and look at them now, I think the main example is, if I ask them to discuss, talking to them is [...] it improved a thousand percent. Then, in the 6th grade, they improve more, to the 7th grade they continue to improve, to the 8th grade they improve even more. (IT1)

I asked if the example he gave is what he calls the progression of the youth and adult education grades, because he accompanies all the classes and grades, and if he sees this progression in student's speech or writing. He replied:

In writing, in speech, through their lack of shame, through their lack of shame when communicating, if you give them the opportunity, they lose the shame, you have to create conditions and do not allow those jokes at the beginning of class. [...] They are, certainly, the 5th grade itself, from the beginning until now, it improved a thousand percent. [...] During this year, the 5th grade has improved so much, so much in writing. A student who could not write, who did not write at all, so I said: This can't be. Come on. (IT1)

When asked if he identifies this progression, particularly in the 5th grade, because they are usually students who come from outside this school with some difficulty, he explains:

Difficulties, fear, [...] and I say: "Hey everyone, we have to work hard, it has to be like this, this way, and we have to make a little effort, you do your part, I do mine." Because I'm not one to laugh a lot in the very first class, I open up slowly. (IT1).

Continuing the interview, I insisted on understanding the sense of progress that the teacher referred to. I asked whether this progression that the teacher sees in the students, in their communication and in their writing, in the way they express themselves, if it draws more attention when they arrive at the youth and

adult education program, for example, in the 5th grade, or if the progression is more significant in following grades,

It is very expressive in the 5th grade. When they start in the 6th grade, they begin getting to that level, they already..., continue to talk, to write, but from there on the progression begins to stabilize (IT1).

I also asked if he notes this progression in the young students, who have come recently from other schools with a history of being left back, or if he observes this phenomenon only among the older students, who have been out of school longer.. He gave an example of a statement of a student he remembered from a classroom situation:

The progression of young people is also great. [...] Very great. [...] There's a boy here in the 5th grade who is 15 years old. He talks to us wonderfully well, but he says he cannot write [...] I explained to him., do it" "do it, do it and then I said "do it, do it, do it", he tried, he tried and he ended up doing it. Now he is one of the best, he tried and tried, and now he got it. Then for these young students, their progression is great, because they know how to speak well. [...] "Teacher, I cannot put it on paper". "I will not do your exercise", I say "no, do it, think, think as if you you saw a movie, as if you were wondering around out with your girlfriend, as if you went to the beach, write it on the paper for me. Your handwriting doesn't matter to me. (IT1)

The directions of the pedagogical mediations in this investigative space have the exercise of dialogue as a pedagogical practice that approximates individuals to the objects that they need to know. "Dialogic education is based on the understanding that students have of their daily experiences" (Freire; Shor, 1987, p. 131). It is in this educational movement, which is based on dialogic mediation, that knowledge begins to be unveiled, it becomes qualified as they build this unveiling with the required rigor.

To understand how individuals are educated, we need to know the context, views and actions of other people, to display their voices, in their entirety. I believe it is necessary to share the knowledge built on experience, and agree with Santos (2005, p. 112) that "there is no democracy without popular education. There is no democratic practices without democracy of knowledge."

This highlights the difference in the position of teachers and students, both eager for learning: the teacher who wants to work with adult education, and the student who wants to study. Each one constructs their own identity, in which teaching and learning are related. The students have a desire to learn, but also a sense of inferiority, and of the difficulty that it seems they must overcome. Students who pass through adult education have this history, this identity.

Even if they have a very strong desire to learn, their social exclusion also instills in them a fear of being bold, a fear of expressing themselves. In this sense, teachers need to strive much harder. That is, they must operate within mediations in a much more intensified form, directly.

In this train of thought, Freitas (2010, p. 366) affirms what Freire has taught us: “learning to listen” is “a path for transforming the authoritarianism of the discourse of those who speak to the students in the horizontality of those who speak with the students. Knowing how to listen is an attitude of respect for the knowledge of the students’ experience.

”If the structure of my thought is the only right one, irreproachable, I cannot listen to those who think and prepare their discourse in a way differently from mine. Nor can I listen to those who speak or write outside the standards of the dominant grammar. So how can I be open to ways of being, thinking, values, from another culture that we consider too strange and exotic? We see how the respect for differences and obviously for those who are different requires from us the humility that warns us of the risks of going beyond the limits, beyond which our necessary self-worth becomes arrogance and disrespect for others. It is necessary to affirm that no one can be humble in a purely formal manner, as if they were complying with a mere bureaucratic obligation. Humility expresses, to the contrary, one of the few certainties that I am right: that no one can be better than anyone else. The lack of humility, expressed in arrogance and the false superiority of one person over another, of one race over another, of one gender over the other, of a class or a culture over the other, is the transgression of the human vocation to be greater. (Freire, 1996, p. 121)

Freire (1981) has always emphasized the importance of dialog, because the dialogue between teacher and student is the key aspect to the problematization of real situations that are experienced. In this movement begins the formation of new perceptions and new knowledge, which are related to what Freire calls “maximum possible consciousness” (*idem*, p. 126). Freire (*idem*) discusses the concepts real consciousness (effective) and maximum possible consciousness, using the ideas of Goldman⁶ as a reference. In real consciousness, people’s ability to see beyond the limit-situations is limited, and in maximum possible consciousness they identify themselves with the unperceived practical solutions (*idem, ibidem*). These concepts are equivalent, respectively, to the concepts of naive consciousness and critical consciousness, adopted by Freire. “The more we reflect on reality, on its concrete situation, the more it emerges, fully conscious, committed, ready to intervene in reality to change it” (Freire, 1980, p. 19). In this sense, dialogue is what unveils reality.

This is why problematizing is so important. In the Freiren sense, problematizing consists in broaching issues that emerge from situations that are part of students’ experience. It is the triggering of a critical analysis of the “problematic reality” (Freire, 1981, p. 97), so that students perceive the issue and recognize the need for change.

6 Lucien Goldman, author of the book *The Human Sciences and Philosophy*, published by The Chancer Press, in London, in 1969.

For Freire, the production of knowledge involves an exercise of curiosity so that teachers and students are epistemologically curious. That is why it is crucial, at the time of problematisation, to stimulate the curiosity of the individual who “[...] makes me wonder, know, act, question more, recognize” (Freire, 1996, p. 87). At the moment of the problematisation the teacher must seek, through the mediating dimension of dialogue, to raise the “students’ knowledge of experience” (*idem*, p.18). Not as something to be disdained or ignored, but as a starting point for understanding the world in which they live. This does not mean to stick to this knowledge, but to seek new knowledge, to go beyond it, as Freire emphasizes (1992, p 70-71.):

[...] to begin from the knowledge the students have does not mean to keep revolving around this knowledge. To “begin with” means to put yourself on the path, to go, to move from one point to another and not stay, remain. I never said, as it is at times suggested or they say that I said, that we should revolve enraptured around the knowledge of the students, like a moth around a light. To start from the “knowledge of the experience “ to overcome it, is not to remain in it.

Freire (1996) draws attention to the presence of the teacher as a presence that is inherently political, and being political, cannot go unnoticed by students in class and in the school. He warns that teachers cannot be teachers if they do not believe they are qualified to teach correctly and well the content of their subject. Likewise, in contrast, they cannot reduce their teaching practice to solely teaching this content. He explains that teaching the subject is as important as their ethical witness when teaching it, the decency with which they do so. He speaks of the importance of scientific preparation presented without arrogance, with humility.

This is one of the aspects in which mediation is very present, although Freire (*idem*) does not use this category in his teaching and learning methodology. He speaks of the preparation of teachers, their discernment of the curiosity of students, who must work with the teachers’ help, aiming to produce their “intelligence of the object or content” (*idem*, p. 45) of what the teacher discusses. The role of the teacher, when teaching content a or b, is not only to strive to describe, with the maximum clarity, the substance of the content, so that students can memorize it, but fundamentally to speak clearly about the object, it is to initiate the students so that they use the materials offered to produce an, understanding of the object instead of receiving it in full.

Undoubtedly, from a Freirean perspective, the elements involved in learning – content and teacher – are not revoked, to the contrary, what he proposes is a teaching and content that promote more critical understanding of the situation of oppression and exclusion. But he also warns that this, in itself, does not change anything. By unveiling this exclusion, it will only be possible to overcome it through engagement in the political struggle for the transformation of the actual conditions in which oppression and exploitation occur. Therefore, the becoming aware of reality, must be articulated with praxis, that is with the process of action-reflection-

action. Dialogue is at the center of the pedagogical action, and it has in language a material role as mediator, through which the possibilities of interlocutory relations are extended to the infinite.

Thus, the meanings of mediation with which we work – our perspective on the researched context – are anchored in dialogue as a force that impels critical-problematizing thinking about the human condition in the world. Therefore, they are anchored in a teaching practice based on the perspective of “dialogic action” (Freire, 1981, p. 96) and on “the work of translation” (Santos, 2006, p. 802-814).

The work of translation, an expression used by Santos (*idem, ibidem*), “[...] involves interpretation between two or more cultures, [...] a procedure that allows creating reciprocal intelligibility among experiences of the world [...]. The aim of translation between knowledges is to create cognitive justice based on the epistemological imagination.”

The mediations therefore characterize the potential field of dialog in a broad manner, in various concepts, knowledges and languages. These range from negotiation processes that seek to understand a specific situation that intends to solve conceptual conflicts, to improving human intervention processes of various kinds, to constituting forms of conceptual representations and enhancing the identification of knowledge that propitiate new fields of interpretation.

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The analysis of this trajectory, which was conducted by entering into praxis, allowed me to construct the basic dimensions of this research, which reveals partially, within the limits of this article, one of the dimensions of analysis: the mediating dimension of “dialogue” as foundation. By accompanying the actors – teachers and students in adult education classes of the third segment of elementary school and focusing on issues of pedagogical mediation that create conditions that allow developing the reflective capacity of adult education students and praxis in this type of education, I delve into the theoretical qualification of this category, which is necessary to refer to it and to understand it and its consequences and be able to interpret it in this study.

In the praxis of this research I have qualified the mediating dimensions, through theoretical and practical references, through observations from other references grasped through the experience shared with teachers and students, and as the educational coordinator of youth and adult education and a professor in a teacher’s college, I realize that the meanings of the pedagogical mediations, in this investigative space, forge a pedagogy of dialogue in which no one knows everything and no one is entirely ignorant, in which the existential requirement and policy for dialogue become essential to thinking and generating a world with greater solidarity, based on reciprocity.

In the school where the study was conducted, dialogue has a fundamental value because it allows the critical pronouncement of the world, that is why in the education of teachers of youth and adults, it is important to emphasize the demystifying character of reality. “If our option is democratic, adult education

cannot coexist with a discourse of its neutrality, which is its discourse of its negation” (Freire, 2000, p. 100).

Youth and Adult Education is a complex modality and, for this reason, the research reveals one of the basic dimensions that result from this trajectory and serves as the scope for reflection in this article, namely: the exercise of dialogue as a foundation. This affirmation was used to analyze the meanings of mediations teachers and students use to construct and appropriate knowledge in the classroom. In this way they respond to the complexity of adult education, in which teachers and students take part in the learning process, in which dialogue “phenomenizes and historicizes” because it is the very constitutive movement of the mediations.

In this context, the mediating pedagogical practices are constituted by the exercise of dialogue as a basis on which teachers seek innovative educational strategies that aim to overcome educational banking practices and ethnocentric views; they seek peaceful coexistence with what is different, in which it is possible to envision the construction of a curriculum that responds to the complexity of adult education.

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