

In a broad sense, and in an understanding shared by many, language is a socially agreed upon system of signs for representing reality. We know, however, that it is also through sensations, gestures, emotions and other forms of language that humans communicate with each other and describe and understand the world. Moreover, it is through language and with language that we construct, deconstruct and reconstruct the world in different manners. Umberto Eco, in his celebrated novel *O nome da Rosa*¹ [The Name of the Rose], understands that although all things disappear, of them, we conserve their purest names. The very title of the novel, according to Eco, refers to the saying *nulla rosa est* (there is no rose), which demonstrates how language can speak both of existing things as well as things that have been suppressed or do not exist.

Language is a philosophical concept and a research problem to the degree that, based on modern thinking, it is an element that organizes humans relationship with the world, with knowledge and through the construction of subjectivities. Thus, language is also a field for investigation in the educational field. In this sense, language is no longer only an instrument of communication, but something intrinsic and constituent of humans, something that speaks about possible conceptions and about the relationship with the world, with knowledge, with others and with ourselves. In complex societies, it is common to consider, not without disagreement, that forms of speaking, writing and relating to different languages can determine or identify social classes and cultural identities. Thus, language defines, identifies and modifies us, for example in the relations that we establish with genders, sexualities, ethnicities, religions, capacities, generations, geographic belongings, and other possible identities. Language constructs identities and subjectivities not only because it influences how subjects think, but particularly how subjects think of the other, the different.

The twelve texts presented in this issue of RBE address the tension between languages, identities and differences. This debate has been essential to the understanding of difficulties we have faced in contemporary Brazil, in defense of respect for diversity in public education policies. For example, it is important to remember the persistence of the discipline of religious education in various Brazilian states and municipalities; the cases of students who refuse to conduct work about African religions; the rejection of Programa Escola Sem Homofobia

1 Eco, U. *O nome da rosa*. Rio de Janeiro: Record, 2009.

[The School without Homophobia Program]; the exclusion of the promotion of equality of gender and of sexual orientation from the Plano Nacional de Educação [National Education Plan] and more recently, the extinction of the Secretaria de Educação Continuada, Alfabetização, Diversidade e Inclusão (SECADI/MEC) [Secretariat for Continuing Education; Literacy, Diversity and Inclusion] and the presentation of proposed laws, in the Chamber of Deputies and in the Senate, that support the Escola Sem Partido [School without a (Political) Party] movement. Thus, we are seeing an advance of neoconservative ideas in different social spheres and mainly in the educational field, with serious consequences for policies concerning identities and differences. This neoconservative movement is striving to change the purpose of education, abandoning inclusionary proposals, even if limited, and defending a supposedly neutral and non-ideological education. This neoconservatism is understood to be a challenge for the educational field. In this sense, the studies presented here also contribute to a better grounded debate about our current challenges in the field of policy and pedagogical practices.

The article by Rosana Medeiros de Oliveira opens the journal with a clear challenge: decolonize knowledge. According to Oliveira, “the decolonization of enunciations and visualities is a movement essential to a true recognition of differences”. In this sense, decolonization signifies an epistemological and political movement, which seeks to overcome a colonizing vision of socially subaltern identities, or that is, of “blacks, women, non-heterosexuals, Amazon residents, natives of Brazil’s Northeast, peasants, farm workers and others”. In a study about didactic books for rural education, the author demonstrates two central ways in which race and gender perform – they are identified by languages – in these books: the coloniality of knowledge and the politically correct style. After all, how do we announce those who are different in didactic books, in public education policies and in pedagogical practices? The article by Pedro Angelo Pagni, presented in the section Open Space, focuses on the debate about how discourses about disabilities and school inclusion are established, that is, about the language and the construction of the different as subaltern and stigmatized. Also in this perspective, the article by Juliana Reichert Assunção Tonelli refutes traditional concepts that recognize dyslexia as a learning disorder related to written language that is located in a person who is learning the uses of language. In this sense, these three articles highlight the urgent need for discourses that are more just and inclusionary, less colonized in the school context, whether in didactic books, as emphasized by Rosana Medeiros de Oliveira, or in public policies, as defended by Pedro Angelo Pagni, or in pedagogical practices as Juliana Reichert Assunção Tonelli emphasizes.

Rita de Cássia Marchi and Tiago Ribeiro Santos return to issues of gender and sexuality, addressing an issue that is still little explored in educational research: the construction of masculinities. The disciplinary experiences and the school rituals are analyzed as elements that produce and conserve male identities. To produce and conserve are key themes of reading this article, which analyzes the novel *O Ateneu*, by Raul Pompeia, from a Bourdieusian perspective. The notion, “Be strong; be a man” does not only correspond to disciplinary rituals from the mid nineteenth century,

but to a discourse that is urgent and essential today for those who want to assume the challenge of educating for the construction of new masculinities.

The discourse about difference, is, without a doubt, an ethical and political debate. Like the articles by Rosana Medeiros de Oliveira and Pedro Angelo Pagni, the work by Víctor Abella García, Fernando Lezcano Barbero e Raquel Casado Muñoz question the hierarchy of values that are socially enunciated and – as we are considering in this editorial – constructors of identities and subjectivities. In research with adolescents, the authors conclude that the hierarchy of values, a bit contradictorily, indicate, on one hand, a strong adhesion to hedonism, and on the other, to transcendence and a willingness to change. The study indicates the possibility for didactic proposals to better motivate students and reduce the number who fall behind. This perspective is pertinent to this issue of RBE, because it presents how the climate of prejudice, discrimination and intolerance at school can be more or less favorable to teaching and learning processes.

Another article about the relationship between languages, identities and differences, is that by Suzana Alves Escobar, Ana Maria de Oliveira Galvão and Ana Maria Rabelo Gomes. These authors analyze the social role and the added value that “the written” occupies in the daily life of Xakriabá communities, mainly in situations related to the preparation and development of social projects in associations specific to this indigenous group. Through an ethnographic study, the authors reveal uses and functions, customs and traditions, differences and inequalities, absences and silencings that involve written production for the Xakriabá, in their internal relations and with the projects supported by public policies.

This issue also includes a group of four articles that address the debate about teaching and learning the mother tongue, whether in teacher education (Micheline Madureira Lage) or in elementary education (Fabiane Puntel Basso), with studies about public policies (Juvenal Zanchetta Jr.), about large scale testing programs (Telma Ferraz Leal, Artur Gomes de Morais, Ana Cláudia Rodrigues Gonçalves Pessoa and Julliane Campelo do Nascimento) and about pedagogical practices (Fabiane Puntel Basso). The first of this group of articles is by Micheline Madureira Lage, who analyzes the directionings (or addressings) of teaching literature at schools of language and literature at seven federal universities in Minas Gerais state. The research concludes that in terms of the relationships between literature and teaching there is a common indicative: diversity. Thus, the perspective raised in this issue of RBE – the tensions between languages, identities and differences – can be understood through the voices of professors who teach language.

Meanwhile, Juvenal Zanchetta Junior analyzes the theoretical-methodological options used by the Pacto Nacional pela Alfabetização na Idade Certa (PNAIC) [National Pact for Literacy at the Right Age] related to the reading of fictional literacy texts, above all those in which the image is predominant. Through action-research, the author reports on the results of surveying the impressions of reading of image-based fiction by teachers participating in the PNAIC. The study concludes that the teaching of literature is only tangential to the program's didactic proposal. Meanwhile, the article by Telma Ferraz Leal, Artur Gomes de Morais, Ana Cláudia Rodrigues Gonçalves Pessoa and Julliane Campelo do Nascimento

looks at the childrens' reading performances as determined by the Provinha Brasil [Brazil Exam], and relates the results of children to the practices of their teachers. To do so, the authors conduct document analysis and observation of classes. The study can certify that the impacts on the results of the Brazil Exam are due to teaching the alphabetic base and that the level of reading expected of children does not require abilities to understand complex texts. The fourth article in this group is by Fabiane Puntel Basso, who seeks to identify and analyze the activities of teaching reading and writing in two first grade classes. The study was conducted in two schools in the metropolitan region of Grenoble, France, and concludes that for a better understanding of the complexity of the process of learning to read and write, the main characteristic of teaching should be heterogeneity, that is, the use of a variety of pedagogic practices. In a preliminary attempt at comparison between the four articles, we can conclude that perhaps the importance of difference that emerges from the experience in Grenoble can help us to better understand the Brazilian reality, including the National Pact for Literacy at the Right Age, the Brazil Exam or the education of Portuguese language teachers.

We should also highlight the article by Rodrigo Bastos Cunha about the concept of scientific literacy, its uses and its complex relations with the so-called scientific diffusion in journals. The author proposes a more qualified dialog between the field of teaching sciences and journalism, to explore the potential of the notion of literacy in the sciences. Andrisa Kemel Zanella and Lúcia Maria Vaz Peres present us another prism for considering the tensions between languages, identities and differences: the body. Through an articulation between art and education, the authors identify and conceptualize the "biographic body" and the "imaginary body". They analyze the interrelationships between art and the body as languages that can support human development. With this perspective, they affirm that the body bears the history of the human being, whose gestures carry repercussions of a singular and common trajectory.

Finally, in the review presented by Luciana Mesquita da Silva of the work by Isabel Alarcão and Bernado Canha, collaboration in learning is understood as a tool at the service of development, as a process of realization and at the same time, as an attitude that encourages openness. This perspective reinforces and complements the defense of the tension between languages and the construction of new identities in schools.

According to Gaston Bachelard, in *As terras e os devaneios da vontade*², language is at the highest posts in the command of imagination and knowledge. We believe that this issue of RBE, contributes to this "reverie of desire" to know and imagine the world, the other and oneself, in a rigorous, plural, singular and instigating manner.

Good reading!

2 Bachelard, G. *As terras e os devaneios da vontade*, São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2013.

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