

Pedagogical Praxis and Educational Practices in Post-Critical Theory: Rethinking Concepts and Methods

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Abstract

The changes that occur in the educational field are nourished by the rationality of different paradigms, with post-structuralism and post-modern thinking determining in the (re)configuration of educational practices in contemporary times. This article aims to reflect on the contributions of Post-Critical Theory in the formulation, understanding and development of pedagogical *praxis* and educational practice in terms of conceptualization and methodology. The proposal comes from the epistemological, social and educational changes brought about by the reflections of the Post-Critical Theory, instigating us to raise elements to promote a dialogue that can collaborate to meet the theoretical-practical demands brought by the referred scientific approach. The ideas are based both on authors who analyze the concept of *praxis* and educational practices (SOUZA, 2012), as well as on those who validate the influence of the post-structuralist paradigm and post-modern thinking such as Jean-François Lyotard (1984), Gadamer (1997) and Habermas (1987a, 1987b), who approach hermeneutics and dialectics as possibilities of methodological composition for data analysis. And, in this aspect, we anchored, too, with Heidegger (2005a, 2005b) who helps in the intelligibility of the hermeneutic circle. The intention is to promote reflection on the concept of educational practices and their epistemological implications from the perspective of Post-Critical Theory so that it is possible to understand current social phenomena and, thus, strengthen the methodological proposals that are in line with the problems undertaken by this current theoretical. Our considerations, therefore, provide subsidies that broaden the debate about educational *praxis* and pedagogical *praxis* as *sine qua non* categories in the educational field.

Keywords: Educational practices; Post-Critical Theory; Hermeneutic Circle.

1. Introduction

Since the second half of the twentieth century, social theory and postmodern society have characteristics that have been putting into question issues that are influencing educational practices. Although there is no unified postmodern social theory, some aspects permeate the discussions, among which can be mentioned: the rejection of the search for a great synthetic theory; the acceptance of a range of short-range synthetic efforts; the destruction of disciplinary boundaries; the idea that new syntheses can be inspired by ideas from several different disciplines and the demystification of theoretical rhetoric (RITZER, 1993).

Concomitant to the development of postmodern thinking, the post-structuralist paradigm brought contributions to the Post-Critical Theory to gain consistency. In this understanding, there are two aspects that make up this context of formation of Post-Structuralism, they are: the approximation of subjective perspectives and the analyzes of postmodern society. To understand more effectively the influence of Post-Structuralism it is necessary to understand that this paradigmatic school perceives the social world as a text (GIDDENS, 1996; LYOTARD, 1984). This statement leads us to a question: what social meaning permeates the conception of the world as a textual chain?

When analyzing the above question from the perspective of post-structuralist thinking, in an attempt to understand, we highlight four elements that are evident. The first element implies the assertion that the theory conceives a form of discourse that results in texts. The second argues that the empirical scope that investigates the theory, also, is part of the texts produced. The third is the admission that the meaning of empirical texts is subject to interpretations of the positions contained in theoretical texts. The fourth is configured by the recognition that the analysis of empirical texts leads to a deeper understanding of diversified empirical analyzes (LEMERT, 1990).

Other central aspects of analytical concern of post-structuralism and post-modernism are the lack of interest in the idea of social totality and the decentralization of the subject. The first led the post-structuralists to stick to the studies of minority groups and the second enabled the focus of analysis to “leave the subject” for an internal understanding of the meanings of the texts, placing the structure of society as the focus and not the function undertaken by agents in the social composition (GIDDENS, 1996).

It is relevant to highlight here the post-structuralist thinking of Michael Foucault, which brings relevant contributions to the analysis, among which we can mention the study about the fields of knowledge, ideas and modes of discourse about the production of knowledge permeated by power relations, as well as as reflections about the “domestication of bodies” and the institutions of social controls (FOUCAULT, 2008). Among the main influences that composed the ideas of Foucault (1979, 1996, 2008) we can mention: the Marxist ideas, the hermeneutics applied to the understanding of social phenomena, phenomenology, disconnected from the autonomous subject, structuralism without a normative model and the productions Friedrich Nietzsche (1989; 2000; 2002; 2004; 2006; 2008) about power and knowledge.

The constituent elements of the changes in perspectives arising from the post-structuralist paradigm and from postmodern society therefore require new ways of interpreting reality; a rationality that goes beyond monological, subjective, deterministic and simplified reason, inducing us to question how they affect educational practices and what are their implications in modeling and understanding the educational

phenomenon. However, before entering this sphere of analysis, albeit slightly, it is necessary to remember the emergence of science and its progress over the centuries and we do so in the words of Ghedin and Franco (2011, p. 37)

A construção da ciência talvez tenha sido a maior aventura do homem no que diz respeito à sua realidade existencial. O conhecimento científico foi, aos poucos, permitindo-lhe descobrir as estruturas e o funcionamento do universo em suas diferentes manifestações de vida, propiciando enormes progressos nas formas de medir, avaliar e controlar a existência humana. É sabido que a ciência, ao mesmo tempo que proporcionou ao homem esclarecimento, libertação de antigos mitos, alargamento dos saberes e domínio sobre o ambiente, produziu condições de aniquilamento e de opressão da humanidade.

It is based on this understanding that the reflection on the specificities of scientific research in education and its social practices is focused. And in this aspect, according to the authors themselves, when studying the educational phenomenon, science has already found that education consists of a human social practice and being a historical social practice, it is transformed by human action, thus producing changes in those who participate in it. As an object of study, education has the ability to partially change when trying to get to know it, as well as, throughout its understanding, to bring about changes in those who appropriate it. The process of understanding this object, although there is no direct relationship between the observable signifier and the meaning, education is able to foster it, reinforcing its intentional dimension and its axiological and evaluative character (GHEDIN; FRANCO, 2011).

In view of these scientific findings, it is clear that education is an object of study outlined by its dynamism and complexity and, therefore, it cannot suffer reductions or scientific fragmentation so as not to be mischaracterized. This is the reason why criteria adopted by traditional paradigms, such as, for example, conservative paradigms, among which we can mention the Traditional Approach, the Escolanovista Approach and the Technicist Approach (BEHRENS, 2010), fail to meet the demands of complexity of the educational phenomenon. Thus, as advocated by Ghedin and Franco (2011) as it is an object dimensioned by axiology, it requires in the scientific attitude a method capable of entering the sphere of implicit and explicit values, because educational situations are always subject to unforeseen and intentionalities. It therefore requires a multi-referential perspective.

In this respect, to overcome scientific obstacles, the new rationality brought by post-structuralist thinking, according to Ghedin and Franco (2011), must strive to reconstruct and redefine the assumptions that provide the basis for classical science, among which we can mention: overcoming the principle of the exteriority of reality and the incorporation of subjectivity as a constructor of reality; the inclusion of a dialectical complexity of social reality; the recomposition of scientific reason based on the search for causal relations between the facts considering the multi-referentiality of the compositions that systematize the human phenomenon; overcoming scientific neutrality; the incorporation of qualitative aspects in the analysis; the abandonment of the mechanistic view, as well as the search for general laws; the fragmentation and specification of social phenomena for their understanding; the revision of the claim of only two valid forms of knowledge: the empirical and the logical; scientific rigor and understanding of the ideological

dimension of society if it becomes a technique.

This way of seeing the phenomena installs the need to rethink the scientific construction of research in human and social sciences, among them the science of education, with an epistemological apparatus capable of covering most of the complexity, both of the social phenomenon and of the human aspects that permeate education. But, what field of knowledge does education study, if it has as many other fields? Libanêo (2005) answers: it is Pedagogy, being understood as a field of knowledge that assumes the social phenomenon of human formation of the human subject as an object of study. His view focuses on the educational practices carried out within society as basic processes of humanity, loaded with intentionalities. Pedagogy, therefore, studies the pedagogical of educational action with the intention of highlighting socio-political objectives, reverberating and predicting forms of pedagogical intervention for education.

And, in this education it can be understood as a theorization of the socio-educational problems, their limits and possibilities, as well as, of the demands to be faced in the educational practice, or more intrinsically, in the Pedagogical *Praxis* (SOUZA, 2012). However, these two terms, that is, the concept of pedagogical *praxis* and teaching practice over the last decades of the twentieth century, had some conceptual divergences and, in many productions, were treated as being the same object.

The educational practice conceived and intentionally carried out by its subjects, allows us the possibility to conceptualize the pedagogical praxis, in the confluence of the thought of Carr (1999) that defines praxis as a reflective action (practice) that is directed to the realization of an end and the its end is always a morally valuable asset. That is why it is not neutral and, also, it is not material because this 'asset produced' can only materialize through action. Carvalho (2007) adds that praxis is the intention of a practice that is configured by an action permeated by knowledge, values, principles. In the author's perspective, praxis emanates from knowledge, from a way of seeing the world, from beliefs, from a cultural tradition that are shaped by people in a given reality, from a paradigm. Souza (2012) concludes these ideas by conceptualizing educational praxis as an educational process in constant construction, historically situated within a culture, intentionally organized by institutions designated as an end with practical implications for everyone and individually in the construction of the knowledge indispensable to social, technical and technological performance. This concept is ingrained in his thinking and that the scientific investigations of the educational and social phenomenon are thus characterized

[...] por sua provisoriedade, por sua construção e reconstrução permanentes na medida em que seu objeto constitui um desafio pelo caráter de prática social permeada pelas disputas ideológicas, políticas e, portanto, de intencionalidade diversas e divergentes, enfim de valores. Esta, com finalidade e objetivos conflitantes, polêmicos e alvo de disputas no interior de grupos culturais e entre esses grupos culturais numa determinada sociedade. (SOUZA, 2012, p. 27)

When establishing this concept, the pedagogical *praxis* assumes a *tempus* and a *locus* of intentional and elaborated effectuation of education, where, according to Souza (2012) a *locus* of conflicts in which education is carried out collectively, intentionally organized in an explicit way in a school or not and a *tempus* of emotional, efficient and rational maturation in the search for a cultural position and a social status.

For this reason, we understand pedagogical practice as a praxis developed in specialized institutions to

foster education, this concept being linked to transformation. It is, therefore, a specific collective action, inserted in a more extensive social phenomenon, which is education, whose character is systematized, with explicit objectives and purpose, being carried out in partnership with social institutions. Pedagogical praxis, therefore, when expressing a paradigm and assuming a social theory, (re) dynamically constitutes and continues society itself. And, it is with this reasoning that we now analyze educational practices within the scope of post-critical theories.

2. Post-Critical Theory and educational practices: dialogues and possibilities

Based on the characteristics of the post-structuralist paradigm and post-modern society, the constitution of the scientificity of the educational phenomenon and its movement determined by pedagogical praxis, it is possible, at this moment, to analyze the characteristics of the post-critical theory and how these can directly influence the composition of new perspectives for educational practices.

The reformulations brought about by the post-critical theory favored the reduction of obstacles between academic and school knowledge and the knowledge of mass culture (SILVA, 2002), where, according to Corazza (2001), the changes brought by language modify the composition of educational problems, as well as the analyzes that will be undertaken and the consequent resolutions.

In the field of education, post-critical theorists favor the apprehension that in today's society new cultural dispositions are happening at school due to the privilege over people's education, as confirmed by Maknamara and Paraíso (2013, p. 42)

No âmbito das teorizações pós-críticas é ressaltado que muitas das representações disponibilizadas pelos discursos veiculados por diferentes artefatos culturais não apenas chegam às escolas, mas também entram em conflito com o que nelas se ensina. Artefatos como a televisão, o cinema, os jornais, a literatura, o rádio, as revistas, os brinquedos, a música etc., passam a ser vistos, nas palavras de Giroux (2001), como máquinas de ensinar.

In this understanding, the authors' statements allow us to perceive the influence on the ways of thinking and acting that these "machines" have, reaching a direct interference in the school curricula, as well as in the subjects' knowledge, their alterity and existential relationships (MOITA, 2006). For believing in the content and strength of the investments of these teaching machines that post-critical theories in education believe it is legitimate to recognize and investigate the existence and functioning of cultural pedagogies.

According to Costa (2005) the expression "cultural pedagogies" emphasizes that the coordination and regulation of people are not restricted, only, by the speeches that circulate in institutionalized pedagogical spaces. Thus, it is possible to point out in the same way as education, the other cultural dimensions are also pedagogical, they also have something to teach (SILVA, 2002).

These discussions lead us to the openness provided by the combined effects of the various theories that make up post-critical thinking in the Brazilian educational field. However, before entering the methodological instances of post-critical theory, an explanation of the contributions of dialectics and hermeneutics in the structuring of post-critical thinking is necessary.

Dialectical contributions in post-critical thinking are based on the influence suffered by Marxist ideas. In a broader analysis the dialectical approach implies an understanding of social totality, however, such an understanding is criticized by postmodern Marxists. Thus, considering that any partial aspect of social life and no other social phenomenon can be understood in isolation, such phenomena must be considered as participants in history and, consequently, in the social structure conceived as a global entity, thus demanding exclusion from isolated analyzes, specific to social life (RITZER, 1993). The author stresses that in the dialectical approach the relationships between social reality and its cultural and economic dimensions and individual consciousness are extremely intrinsic and, therefore, cannot be studied in isolation.

This means that it is possible to study this reality observing a synchronic and diachronic perspective, where, according to Bauman (1976) the first perspective is based on the interrelation between social phenomena as belonging to a contemporary totality and the diachronic perspective is permeated by the historical propensities of contemporary society, as well as its further development.

Another aspect that makes up the understanding of the influence of dialectics in post-critical theory is the authentication process (BAUMAN, 1976). According to Ritzer (1993), critical theorists focus on the analysis of the cultural superstructure, thus being committed to the analysis of the real world. This implies the assertion that these theorists are not satisfied with laboratory analyzes which are not applicable in practical life.

Therefore, based on the thinking of Ritzer (1993), we can say that critical theorists are concerned with establishing a relationship between theory and practice. However, this seems to be the biggest challenge of critical theory recognized by Ritzer (1993, p. 171)

A pesar de reconocer este objetivo, la mayor parte de la teoría crítica ha fracasado totalmente en su intento de integrar teoría y práctica. De hecho, una de las críticas más famosas que se dirigen a la teoría crítica es que adopta formas de expresión tan complejas que las masas no pueden acceder a ella. Además, comprometida con el estudio de la cultura y la superestructura, aborda una serie de cuestiones sumamente esotéricas y apenas se ocupa de las preocupaciones pragmáticas y cotidianas de la mayoría de las personas.

It is in this understanding that resides the contributions of Jurgen Habermas (1982) on the critical school and that, later, opens space for the emergence of post-critical thinking. This author builds an understanding that knowledge and human interest is an example of the directions of dialectics to establish a relationship between objective and subjective factors. Thus, for Habermas (1982), subjective and objective factors could not be analyzed in isolation, since knowledge systems exist at the objective level, while human interests are constituted as subjective phenomena.

We support on the ideas of Melo (2012) to affirm that the hermeneutic approach gained notoriety with the productions of Friedrich Schleiermacher, where, the author conceived interpretation and understanding as similar acts, which would be consequences of individual and diachronic actions. Also, according to Melo (2012, p. 11), hermeneutics is formed "in the understanding of mental products [...] and finds in Dilthey's work another way for his development of methodological hermeneutics". And, in this respect, the author

continues, the movement of the hermeneutic language is concerned with the understanding of texts through interpretation.

Hans-Georg Gadamer is the author who will give us a basis for understanding the composition of hermeneutical thinking. In his work entitled "Truth and Method: fundamental features for a philosophical hermeneutics" there is a concern with the articulation between tradition and modernity with the notion of horizon. The author understands that "the whole experience implies the horizons of the anterior and the posterior and it merges, in the last analysis, with the *continuum* of the experiences present in the anterior and posterior in the unit of the experiential current". (GADAMER, 1997, p. 372). In this understanding, Gadamer (1997) creates a notion of horizon as a scope of vision that involves everything that is apparent from a given point. In his work, it is necessary to highlight that in the construction of understanding, the experience of historical tradition is relevant, as the discourse needs reflection, considering that the idea of the discourse does not manifest itself immediately, thus demanding an understanding from itself and its context. For this reason, the author urges us to accept the opinion of the other, so that the text presents itself in its otherness and, from that point on, allows the confrontation between the truths of the text and the previous truths of the subject (MELO, 2012).

Rereading the works of Hans George Gadamer, in the mid-1960s Jürgen Habermas appears. The theoretician receives influence from the Critical Theory, however, moving away from the Marxist nucleus for rejecting functionalist reduction and criticizing economicist / mechanistic Marxism. Habermas (1982) is influenced by Max Weber's productions (2004) regarding the rationalization of the modern western world. And, when realizing the limitations in the theorist's productions about rationality tending towards bureaucratization, he adopts rationalization as an argumentative process. These basic elements enable us to understand the dialectic constituted by Habermas to rethink hermeneutics under four basic elements, as reported by Melo (2012, p. 19):

1. A razão humana possui uma força transcendental que se exerce na crítica e consegue ultrapassar preconceitos. A mesma razão que compreende, esclarece e reúne, também contesta e dissocia.
2. A estrutura do "significado" presente na linguagem é apenas um factor na totalidade do mundo real, que para Habermas se compõe de trabalho, linguagem e poder. A linguagem também é vista como meio de dominação e de poder social.
3. Um trabalho crítico busca um método no qual a interpretação seja transformação e vice-versa, o que implica o reconhecimento de um engajamento em todo o processo de compreensão.
4. Ressalta o condicionamento histórico do pensamento, da reflexão e dos determinismos materiais da ideologia.

In the sense of Habermas (1982), hermeneutics has its relevance insofar as it establishes a critical reflection and is capable of understanding linguistically communicable thinking that may not be understood for different reasons. Thus, it is clear that the author does not reject hermeneutics. Paradoxically, it rescues some of its elements by suggesting a junction between hermeneutics and dialectics as a form of reflection that would not be disconnected from social *praxis*. The suggestion of complementarity between hermeneutics and the author's dialectic is due to the mixture between social sciences and philosophy,

seeming to be the most correct point of a methodological balance, especially when the investigative concern is an analysis of social *praxis*.

This means that hermeneutics, in favoring the critical analysis of thought, has the capacity to understand the rationality contained in communications and, in this aspect, it can serve as an input for research in the field of research as we will deal with below.

3. The reflection of hermeneutics as an epistemological paradigm of research

Hermeneutics as the science of interpretation, which focuses on researching the result of the interpretation given by the subjects of an observable and intelligible world through language, can be perceived as human activity, thus becoming a potential means of making this knowable world. The language, according to Gadamer (2002, p. 135), "is not just the fact, but universality of the principle, and that rests on that of Hermeneutics".

Bakhtin (1997, p 280) collaborates by remembering that language is a

“atividade da língua que efetua-se em forma de enunciados (orais e escritos), concretos e únicos [...]. O enunciado reflete as condições específicas e as finalidades de cada uma dessas esferas, não só por seu conteúdo (temático) e por seu estilo verbal [...], mas também, e sobretudo, por sua construção composicional”.

This means that the textual construction and its relationship with the context, represents a way of explaining the world. It is, therefore, a language that intends to interpret and signify things, a fact that is consistent with the whole of the statement, or the world of life, as Habermas (1982) categorized it well. In the sense of Guedin and Franco (2011) the statement, the specific conditions and the purposes constitute a totality that support the creation of the reality of the statement, a composition that makes it possible to translate the interpretation of reality through the text.

Thus, the authors cited above refer us to an understanding of meaning as being composed of a perception of the world, as well as a way of understanding the meanings that are perceived or not in the most differentiated relationships. This condition of meaning leads us to multiple looks from the same object or subject, highlighting the individual manifestations shown in the speech genres, because speech, in this context, reveals how the subject interprets and understands human history (GHEDIN; FRANCO, 2011).

In this understanding, Ghedin and Franco (2011, p. 155) support us to perceive speech discourses, as “primary forms of expression of meaning, because any simultaneous expression of thought and speech rarely allows, at the very moment of action, conducting a reflection on what is being said”. For, these are speeches located at the primary level of meaning of life, thus not requiring more complex elaborations, only the particular meaning of everyday life.

Secondary discourse, on the other hand, requires reflection on speech, a fact that prevents this reflection from being made during speech. Thus, it can be said that this way of making the senses explicit implies a double movement of thought. This situation is valid as a phenomenal reality of the reality of the discourse, because, for a methodological issue, one must have the notion that a simple, primary, elementary, basic discourse is being analyzed (GHEDIN; FRANCO, 2011).

Thus, language and life are intrinsically linked, considering that the first enters the second through the concrete statements that make it effective. Thus, language comes to be seen as the expression of humanity, differentiating us from other animals, because for them there is language, but there is no parlance. However, due to the fact that in everyday relationships the act of meaning coincides with the way of living, it is necessary to go beyond the sphere of explanation for understanding and understanding, it is also necessary to have a second order discourse, because that is where, besides from the sense, meanings and their constructive processes are conceived (GHEDIN; FRANCO, 2011).

With regard to the construction of discourse as a potential for significant meaning for understanding in the investigative process, the development of understanding in differentiated acts translates into affective, real and concrete, where, according to Ghedin and Franco (2011), such acts they merge into a single process, summed up as the psychophysiological perception of the physical sign. This means that every sign leaves a visible way of being, because it is in this dimension that it is perceived and understood. Such recognition and understanding of its meaning is reproduced in the language, because it is in the conjugation of the meaning that the discourse is constructed and thus, it is intended to express and understand the world in its way of being. In addition, the understanding of meaning takes place in context. Therefore, every form of discourse is constituted by a mode of insertion in a given context.

To analyze the meaning of the discourse, hermeneutics appears as the unveiling of the interpretative. However, it is necessary to ask to what extent it is possible, or through what it can be done. Vygotsky (2000) reveals that it is the meaning of words, since word and thought have a close relationship, giving conditions for the human being and acting. Therefore, meaning can be analyzed equally as a phenomenon of language due to its nature and as a phenomenon in the field of thought. This perspective allows us to speak about the meaning of the word, as it carries a meaning permeated with meaning which reflects the subject's unique way of expressing his perception of the world and things and producing culture.

For this reason, the written language is permeated by the speech genres both primary, which are configured by the daily forms of expression of meaning in the act of speech, and secondary ones whose reflection is made after it, being more complex and usually mediated by writing. Although distinctly characterized, the essence of discursive genres is the same (BAKHTIN, 1997). Hence the importance of analyzing the genres in a dialogical way, since the secondary discourse is elaborated based on the primary.

Therefore, understanding hermeneutically presupposes critical reflection that considers what the text manifests, what truth it supposes in a respectful perspective and, simultaneously, dialectically confront them with the world of life, considering their objective, subjective and normative dimensions (Anonymous, 2008).

And it is in this context that the hermeneutic circle presents itself, bringing theoretical and methodological elements that can broaden the understanding of educational practices and their (re) construction in contemporary times.

4. The hermeneutic circle and methodological possibilities: building paths to rethinking

The proposal to look at educational practices as a collective action built socially from the relationships

established within social institutions, implies the adoption of an analytical model that interprets such relationships. With this done, as educational practices are part of social and cultural actions, where the transmission process of these aspects permeates the construction of society and the changes it contains, it encourages us to investigate an interpretation model linked to the consolidation of human and social sciences as a scientific field. In this perspective, according to Mantzavinos (2014), the hermeneutic circle serves as an argument to support the autonomy of the human and social sciences and, in this case, to analyze educational practices.

The notion of hermeneutic circle receives a new approach in the reflections undertaken by Martin Heidegger and Hans George Gadamer, thus adding an existential dimension. In the production entitled *Ser e Tempo*, Heidegger (2009) attributes it an ontological character, emphasizing that every hermeneutic situation presupposes an interpretation based on the subject's previous views. The author's emphasis throws into the hermeneutic circle the constitutive character of existence as a being that exists from the perspective of understanding, of being in the world (*Dasein*). In this sense, Silva (2013, p. 56) states that

Mais precisamente, Heidegger alega que a nossa existência do mundo só é possível a partir do sentido que é projetado a partir da nossa rede de práticas e do nosso contexto histórico, permanecendo inelutavelmente condicionada pelo horizonte do intérprete.

The position of the theoretician mentioned above, according to Silva (2013), leads us to two epistemological situations. The first is associated with an inversion in the traditional relationship between interpretation and understanding, considering this as the culmination of a successful interpretive process. The second, connected with the first situation, refers to Heidegger's opposition to subjectivism and hermeneutic objectivism, since, for Heidegger, interpretation is projective, as it consists in elaborating or exploring possibilities.

In this understanding, Heidegger and Gadamer show similarities in their analysis of the hermeneutic circle. For these theorists there is a recognition that there is no interpretation without presuppositions exempt from the actions of our prejudices, actions that develop, naturally, in a critique of the principles of an objective sense. So much so that “a expressão círculo hermenêutico é utilizada no sentido de que, nossa compreensão da relação todo-parte, singular-plural, uno-múltiplo, sujeito-objeto não se fecha em um círculo vicioso, mas se processo em forma de círculos concêntricos.” (MATINAZZO, 2004 p.36). It is, therefore, a process, according to Nunes (2019, p. 22) “de construção e reconstrução da realidade de forma dialógica através de um vai e vem constante (dialética) entre as interpretações e reinterpretações sucessivas dos indivíduos para estudar e analisar um determinado fato, objeto, tema ou fenômeno da realidade”. Undeniably, the phenomena analyzed under the flashlight of the hermeneutic circle, as constant movement, present a critical-reflexive and dialectical character in the interpretation of the whole part, that is, favoring the understanding of the object of study.

Thus, the hermeneutic circle that can be analyzed under three dimensions: the ontological problem, the logical problem and the empirical problem (MANTZAVINOS, 2014). Considered as an ontological problem, the hermeneutic circle is based on the traditional view that ontology is about what exists and the ontological arguments presented usually defend that the world is bounded by assumptions. Heidegger (2009)

emphasizes that the circle of understanding belongs to the structure of meaning that has as a platform the constitution of the existence of the being itself, that is, in whom in the understanding it interprets.

In this sense in the hermeneutic circle, truth and understanding occur through the unveiling of being. However, there are questions about whether, in fact, it is formulated based on its ontological conception.

As a logical problem, Mantzavinos (2014, p. 58) asks whether “[...] a relação do todo significativo com os seus elementos e vice-versa poderia ser de natureza lógica. [...]”. In this case, two problems can be raised. The first is to perceive the hermeneutic circle as a case of circular argumentation based on deduction, because it appears in the process of proving something that presupposes statements that we should prove. And, the second understand that the hermeneutic circle could be a circular definition, because the concept in which it arises, and which is yet to be defined, has already been used instinctively. In any case, this problem weakens the principles of the human sciences, compromising its scientific character, points out the author.

Bearing in mind that sometimes the hermeneutic circle is problematized as an ontological problem and sometimes as a logical problem is it possible to admit that it is an empirical problem? Yes, says Gadamer (2009) because the exercise of reading and interpretation is directly related to the movement of empiricism, hermeneutics being a practical and also theoretical task that requires knowledge of the text as a whole, of critical reflection on it and of reading the parts and part for all in a circular and dialectical movement. It is, therefore, a mental procedure that can be analyzed with the instruments of empirical science, and, therefore, a *praxis*.

In this perspective, Mantzavinos (2014, p. 59) states that

[...] o círculo da compreensão não teria nenhum vínculo com a ontologia ou com a lógica, mas com a representação do conhecimento na mente do intérprete, apresentando o seguinte tipo de problema empírico: como o sistema cognitivo do intérprete percebe, classifica e compreende os sinais escritos? Essa operação mental está automatizada? Que tipo de mecanismo cognitivo é ativado para que o significado da parte de uma expressão escrita só seja acessível ao intérprete em relação ao todo e vice-versa?

However, the adoption of the problem of the hermeneutic circle as being of an empirical nature does not imply considering hermeneutics as a neutral method, purely instrumental in which the researcher has no relationship. Although it consists of a systematic method of organizing interpretation, as stated by Stein (1988), it is not mechanical because of the peculiar characteristics of text interpretation (linguistic repertoire) as the mental phenomenon that moves towards meaning, dynamically. Therefore, it can be used as a qualitative analysis tool by the human and social sciences.

In fact, Martinazzo (2004), analyzing contemporary Pedagogy under the paradigm of modern subjectivity and the paradigm of communicative action by Jürgen Habermas, proposed a Pedagogy of Subjective Understanding, in the light of philosophical hermeneutics, that is, as a lantern, as content and methodological path. The author understands that Pedagogy

Como teoria da e para a prática pedagógica, que mantém um vínculo orgânico e

dialético com o todo da sociedade, a Pedagogia necessita de uma racionalidade ampla, sem menosprezar ou hopostasiar nenhum de suas tríplices dimensões: a hermenêutica, acrítico-emancipatória e a instrumental, sob s apenas de se tornar redutível e estéril. (p. 27).

It is important to highlight the recent investigation by Nunes (2019) who, using the hermeneutic circle, analyzed the pedagogical practice of teaching reading and writing of the “Se Liga” Program of the Municipal Education Department of the city of Teresina-PI. Interpretations have shown that pedagogical practices in that context, on the one hand, move in overcoming difficulties, social and educational prejudices. On the other hand, they allow the teacher to recognize the importance of the mastery of linguistics in the students' development process, carrying out educational *praxis*.

Therefore, the reflections made about the hermeneutics and empirical perspective evidenced in these studies lead us to understand that Pedagogy, when studying educational practices in general, can use hermeneutics as a guide for understanding the educational phenomenon, relationship with culture and transformations social. And, in a specific way, to understand what their subjects do, how they do it and why they do it, in their eagerness to understand the impact of these practices on the construction of society and how to (re) configure them, having the text as a mediator, since language is its principle.

5. Conclusion

When reflecting on the concepts of education and educational practices, we built the idea that the educational practice is intentionally conceived and executed by its subjects and, in this aspect, the pedagogical praxis can be conceptualized as an educational process in constant construction, situated in a historical context inserted a culture, intentionally organized by designated institutions. This position, combined with the perception of education as an act of transmitting cultural aspects to the subjects, shows us that educational practices are collective actions developed in a social context permeated by power relations.

When carrying out the analyzes on the Post-Critical Theory, we intended to demonstrate how it can bring, in contemporary times, new perspectives to understand the social phenomenon, being the reflection on educational practices that will collaborate in the understanding of the different socio-cultural contexts. Notably, these contributions affect the way of interpreting the social phenomenon considering its context, its subjects, the researcher himself and his existence and awareness. This means that their concepts, previous visions and conceptions, their truths are not abandoned a priori, but are confronted with reality among the truths of the text. In this reasoning, it is the objective and subjective views that allow us to understand, in the most exact possible way, the observed phenomenon. This means that the construction of knowledge rests on the objectivity of the text subjectified by the researcher, that is, on the intersubjectivity.

The discussions brought about by hermeneutics and dialectics allowed us to perceive how they can influence the formulation of analysis methods to understand the social phenomenon and, thus, to conceive educational practices in a way closer to contemporary social reality. In this understanding, the hermeneutic circle was briefly explained in its epistemological and methodological conception, to demonstrate its interpretative potential of social reality and the consequent contribution to the conception of free, authentic,

emancipatory, critical and encouraging educational practices. Therefore, we can conclude by stating that hermeneutics and dialectics as a methodological contribution collaborate in the resignification of the pedagogical dimension of educational practices, because it emphasizes the reasons why it, the practices are determined.

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