

Education in rights and citizenship instruction: epistemic elucidation as from Paulo Freire

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Abstract

Education is undoubtedly a factor that contributes decisively to human development. In this sense, the present study searches to evaluate, based on freirean assumptions, the contemporary scenario of education in Brazil and its reflexes in society. From a historical and structural analysis, the problems that are established as impasses to a contextualized, plural and accessible education are put in check, as we think new paths, from the epistemology of Paulo Freire, for the real performance of students in human rights and citizenship.

Keywords: Paulo Freire; Human Rights Education (HRE); citizenship; law.

1. Introduction

The debate surrounding the appliance of Human Rights Education (HRE), in Brazil, is propelled by the insertion of themes connected to citizenship, democracy and diversity on the different levels, formal and non-formal, of education. Beyond the existence of methodological questions, the mentioned subarea of knowledge contributes to reflect on the complex social issues that establish themselves, overall, from different processes and practices of power and exclusion. Therefore it contributes, decisively, to the placement of education as an instrument of social change (Silva, 2010).

This way, education, legally recognized as an entitlement of the population, must not end in itself. Such right chains the perception that it is necessary to qualify the formative process, in a way that human education happens in its emancipator character that prepares people to intervene upon social problems. Therefore, within the study of HRE, it is necessary the rupture with the banking education (Freire, 1987), meaning, with the acritical and apolitical educating method, mirror of the neoliberal teaching method.

In the face of the aforementioned, the present study aims to revisit some of the presuppositions presented by Paulo Freire. The contributions of the aforementioned author compose, by this perspective, a set of atemporal knowledge, explicitly and implicitly connected to the HRE, and that must be revisited. The tensioning presented by Freire about the observation and resignification of the world and surrounding the social relevance of education, particularly highlight the fundamentality of HRE in contemporaneity, and the permanent reconstruction of principles connected with the education on diversity and citizenship.

In this matter, the general objective of the following research is to reflect upon the intersections amongst social change and the education in human rights, based on epistemic presuppositions present in the Paulo

Freire pieces. Therefore, to reflect on HRE implicates in checking relevance and enlarging the premises previously formulated by Paulo Freire that might get signified nowadays as a way of thinking about the social issues with which educators deal.

Questions such as: is it possible to get over the common and acritical sense introduced by the the neoliberal educational model?; in which way, as an educator, is it possible to turn the transmission of knowledge aligned with the society and more inclusive?; and beyond that, in which way, as a politically conscious person, may we guarantee that other people can critically see the reality in which they're inserted in?; guide the research.

2. Materials and Methods

The method used in the development of the following research was the deductive (Gerhardt & Silveira, 2009). From this line of thought, it will be drawn an analysis of the HRE panorama in Brazil based on the theoretical wide fundamentals over its applicability and constitution, that might further on get singularized to context and particular situations.

As a qualitative approach (Zanella, 2013), in this research, it was of concern to problematize specific themes, subjects and institutions, dismissing the development of rigid speculations around the objective of the research. In that sense, the approach was used with the intention of understanding and interpreting, in a dialogic and opened to resignifications, the work of Paulo Freire under a philosophical point of view.

The types of research applied are from exploratory and descriptive character (Zanella, 2013), concerning the deepening of the bibliography. At the same time that the research implies the reflexive (re)discovery of the presuppositions of Paulo Freire - from the bibliographic review of its works and commentators - it is opportune the characterization and organization of some of the central theoretical plea.

Therefore, the technique of data collection is the bibliographic research (Gerhardt & Silveira, 2009), that will fundament the reflections upon the HRE in Brazil and its connections to the freirean thought. The bibliographic research was organized based on books and other academic publications mapped from Google Academic, Scielo and BDTD/CAPES.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 The education scenario in the contemporary Brazil

Currently, the main issues faced in the brazilian educational scenario refer to the tension and retrocess caused by the advance of conservatism and the recrudescence of the educational agenda, aspects that have reflected on the crescent social exclusion (Candau, 2007). It is worth it to highlight that this is not a result, exclusively, of the lack of public services, but as the intentional neoliberal project of power, that has disregarded the rendering of these services with each social reality of more vulnerable groups.

The severe violation of rights and the violence that have consolidated mainly during the dictatorship, though not only, have frailized the affirmation of rights, resulting from the fear and political apathy. On that matter, the brazilian population is marked by an educational process that established itself by the absence of elucidation in different axes connected to the HRE and the qualification of professionals that act on the promotion and protection of human rights (Silva & Tavares, 2011).

Not only globalization, the neoliberal politics and global security (Candau, 2007, p. 399) are also the main dimensions that install the social exclusion in its most varied extensions, especially the educational. For that reason it is needed for it to be given space to the discussions of pedagogical generator themes, because parting from them it is possible to evaluate the sociocultural, affective, experimental and structural dimensions of the educational process in the perspective of the critical pedagogy” (Candau, 2007, p. 408). It fits to evaluate critically the neoliberal education and its highly excludent character, impenetrable to the new pedagogic conceptions relating to human rights. The HRE, in this sense, is presented as an antagonist to the intended neutral education that Paulo Freire had warned about previously. The HRE is the remnant ethical and the possibility of reflection on the violation and the marginalized groups, surrounding the restless rescue of the memory and mainly the recognition of the violence and injustice perpetuated by the State (Candau, 2007).

In such a way, the central question resides regarding the impasses of the efetivation of the didactic. Assuming that the lack of adequation of the curriculum to the guidelines in HRE, as well as the scarcity of supply, pedagogical practices and the fragile continuous education come as the main obstacles to the efetivation of an education with such characteristics. Considering the Law School courses in Brazil as an example, that have multiplied indiscriminately, it is shown a lack of preoccupation concerning the quality of the education of those future professionals whom will act, supposedly, defending social justice, since extremely dogmatic curriculum remain as the educational tonic (Carvalho, 2011).

Besides, the citizen education in human rights must be intensified in the instruction of those professionals and, beyond that, to be thought of in every context of the intervention. This way, it is necessary that there is a rupture with the hegemonic conception of the human rights, that vehement is present in teaching, contemplating insurgent knowledge that will add value to subjects frequently invisibilized by the knowledge hegemony (Lima & Lima, 2018).

It is fundamental that the subjects have, in the formal and non-formal educational environment, a truthful citizenship and humanist instruction, in order to be responsible to recognize themselves as holders of rights, assuming a real political and social conscience (Amaral & Amaral, 2018). Therefore, the neutralization of the critical thinking within education must not be taken as a political strategy.

From a conscient and critical instruction guided by HRE, it is inferred that the fight for equality by itself is not enough, due to specific contexts that agency singular realities and that, by itself, implicates in the offering of a different education. In that way, the active consciousness arises, sequentially, from the correct relation between citizenship, human rights and democracy (Silva & Tavares, 2011).

Considering the aforementioned, it is vital to evaluate the instruction of individuals in and to human rights, under the light of Paulo Freire’s presuppositions. Through continuous and contextualized education, the search for alternatives to the issues that need to be reflected upon in the distinct instruction spaces takes place, and specially through the education of individuals more vulnerable, so it is possible to be offered subsidies to the social practice of the rights defense.

3.2 Epistemic presuppositions on the human rights education: freirean contributions

In Brazil, Paulo Freire has contributed to a singular aspect of the development of HRE. His acting took place, especially, from *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (1987) work in which outlines his main ideas concerning

popular liberation and the confrontation to authoritarian practices. His contributions, as they will be presented further on, were and still are extremely opportune, guiding different groups and individuals to the practice of citizenship that, in that historical context, related to the democratic transition and that undoubtedly apply also at contemporary themes.

In such a way, Paulo Freire developed educational strategies based on interdisciplinarity and daily experiences as alternatives to the rescue of rights. His thesis articulate instructive practices and beyond that, political and epistemic notions to the reparation of violence and to the recognition of denied otherness (Carbonari, 2007). This way, the instruction by and to citizenship is disposed in agreement with the processes of affirmation of human rights. It is the continuous and shared reflection that, in these terms, reinforces the necessity of the permanent vindication of assurance to new ways of repair and surpass cases of vulnerability and exclusion.

Regardless, to Freire (1987), it is of extreme importance to evaluate the daily appliance of instructive practices, in a way that didactic and teaching are implied with society and individuals, structuring dimension of HRE. On the matter, the awareness of the silencing of guarantees and the systematic exclusion are tonic of the experience of vulnerable groups and mobilize the political look and action, according to the author (Freire, 1967).

In which concerns the didactic strategies, in any educational level in which are mobilized, they assume the collective and participative work. In this logic, Freire (1987), reinforces political mechanisms to the dynamic social instruction and truthful citizenship, as conceived in the field of education of human rights (Silva & Cardoso, 2019). However, in order of an effectivation of a collective and participative work, it is fundamental the use of pedagogies that are compromised with the daily actions and consequently with other guidelines that allow, mainly to marginalized groups, the contextual consolidation of values, practices and attitudes that foment diversity (Tavares, 2009).

It is in such way that Silva and Tavares (2011, p. 20) allude to the conception of “active citizenship” aforementioned and that such idea “materializes in practice and in the social daily life, in knowledge of laws, dues and rights and in the way of demanding them and applying them in order to guarantee the access to social assets to all people”. In this perspective, in dialogue with the freirean premises, it is necessary to consider the permanent process of awareness and that such instruction is truly democratic (Freire, 1967). To Freire (1987), the education is conceived through the elaboration of programmatic content that are capable of recreating the dialogical bridge between educator and society. Then, in order to get over social issues, it is essential that new strategies are connected to respecting and valuing diversity are implemented based on the educational headquarters such as interculturality, interdisciplinarity, the value of sexual and gender diversity, the multiethnic knowledge and among others.

In these terms, Paulo Freire assigned bases to the HRE in the pacing he considered thematic universes that could adequate themselves to different social and humane contexts. It is encouraged that to these groups, the consciousness around themselves is fundamental to the process of mobilizing the knowledge. Such process values the ‘conscious bodies’ capable of overcoming what the author names as “limit-situations” (Freire, 1987).

To attribute importance to the freirean presuppositions overpowers the knowledge of rigid methodologies and apply them as a way of deconstructing limited notions of knowing. To conceive the application of those

presuppositions in the current context implies in deconstructing, daily, traditional narratives of the power-knowledge and translates itself in the assigned visibility to invisibilized groups, aiming to understand history and its repercussions in the current time. In this way, education is not a way of perpetrating segregation, but a constant practice of liberation (Freire, 1967).

Freire and Shor (1987), while discussing fear, articulated that the notion of active education means overall, to act critically and politically. It constitutes, in this sense, the comprehension of limits and the impasses that are imposed so that different individuals might act in a strategic manner, searching for ways to go forward and to consolidate the participation and the exercise of citizenship. This instructive process involves the valuation of narratives of time, space and social logic that need to be reflected upon.

If education is, in a way or another, a political strategy, it will assume, continuously, the liberation while fundamental principle of the educational action. In this sense, education is political: the individuals are, all the time, overcomers of their own fears (Freire & Shor, 1987). The fear, while silencing, is deconstructed and ressignified from the political standpoint.

The development of convictions and the certainty that they, truthfully, constitute the individual, forges the political process in education and vice versa. Freire narrated, as a metaphor to such an argument, his most fearful moments while politically captive during the dictatorship of 1964 and how each unknown threat caused him to paralyze (Freire & Shor, 1987). He affirms, equally, that he found balance in his 'ideological scale' in his feelings and wishes for social change and that such reflections came from his daily experiences of facing the fear of repression and with the continuous reflection of the reality.

The political instruction is, then, fundamented in an epistemic foundation that doesn't provide the individual elements of critical comprehension of reality. In such way, the critical and liberating education works as an antidote to plastered doctrines that present the fear as an instrument of social domination, since "the more you recognize that your fear is a consequence of the attempt of practicing your dream, the more you learn to put your dream in practice" (Freire & Shor, 1987, p 40).

It is meaningful to relate in contemporaneity, the plea presented by Freire and reinterpret his conceptions of 'fear' and 'dream', since today, those notions are conceived in a different manner. The fear might constitute, for instance, in the practice of teachers who venture in the appliance of critical methodology, enlarge and attribute different meanings to the curriculum. The dream, on the other hand, is architected through a black, quilombo community resident that contemplates to offer continuous education to their community on ethnic-racial relations, for instance.

The HRE didactic, from the epistemic premises by Freire, is organized from the relation individual-world relationship, because it concerns the decodification of the existential situation that surrounds a person. It assumes the capacity of acquiring a new posture before the limit-situation, which are reinvented from the convictions constructed and reconstructed on a daily basis (Freire, 1987).

It is worth it to consider, for example, the symbolic violence attached to the courses of juridical instruction post dictatorship in Brazil that began to offer acritical disciplines, that instigate the common sense, providing the maladjustment socio professional of the graduate, among other problems. In this area of issues it is enough to understand 'in which consists the knowledge reproduced and which way it is used to reproduce it' (Costa, 1992, p. 214).

It is necessary to comprehend the dialogue as a founding and natural axe to such didactic-instructive dynamics (Freire, 1987). The processes of analysis and reflection, though essentially individual, manifest based on the dynamic of knowing and teaching the language and discourse. The continuous exchange of analysis and reflection forge the dialogue and offers mechanisms to the formulation of new epistemologies, such as the problematizing in relation to the education in human rights. Therefore, the dialogue does not edify as mere technique, but in the naturality of how life and subjects flow (Freire & Shor, 1987).

In this perspective, the dialogic freirean education surpasses the daily activity of schools and universities. It constitutes itself based on daily practices that take the social problems as spaces of mobilizing the action and the knowing. In a wide manner, such dynamic substantiates the idea of active citizenship that installs itself through epistemologies of the dialogue (Freire, 1987).

In this dialectic, the language confers connection with the concrete, with the daily. The university, by imposing technical distance with the world, for example, enlarges the risks of the education being co-opted by neoliberal methods of educational instruction. It is in this sense that, currently, the profiles of instruction on the University education are articulate in “cognitive conception associated with the neutrality, of dogmatic character, eurocentric and universalist” (Goés Júnior, 2010, p. 5250), that drive away the university from the society. This type of symbology reaffirms the banking logic that Paulo Freire has criticized. The instruction courses of university education have become massive, and overall, distant from the social complexities, which constitutes as a pressing question for the instruction and democracy and to the stimulus to the citizen elucidation (Freire, 1987).

In such way, one of the current biggest pedagogic issues, perpetrated by the acritical education, does not ramify, essentially, through the danger of awareness (Freire, 1987), since such danger usually presents itself in explicit situations of authoritarianism. The problem comes from the unecessarity of veiled awareness, provenient from the neoliberal educational strategy, extremely technicist.

The critical education, though, does not demonstrate itself convenient to the spheres of power and does not become comfortable to unprepared professionals. It is pertinent to understand that the quietness will never be emancipatory and therefore the reinterpretation of the freirean epistemologies makes itself necessary. It is essential to be alert to the anti dialogic and conservative strategies, since they conquer, divide and manipulate, each time more people. It is necessary then, to educate to generator themes and to the memory, in a way which the individuals politically reinvidicate (Ferreira, 2007).

5. Conclusion

The presented questions in this research constitute themselves, essentially, from the tensioning regarding the instruction to democracy, to the valuing of human rights and its right articulation with the processes of citizenship in HRE. Under this optic, the analysis of some central concepts presented by Paulo Freire in *Educação como Prática de Liberdade* (1967), *Pedagogia do Oprimido* (1987) and *Medo e Ousadia: cotidiano do professor* (1987) offer epistemic subsidy to the referred subarea of knowing.

To revisit arguments such as *banking education*, *limit-situations*, *danger of awareness*, *democratic awareness*, *the substitution of fear for dream*, *strategic education*, *dialogicity*, *education as a practice of freedom*, enables us to learn to resignify such dominating practices to possible strategies to overcome them.

From these notions, it is plausible to assign meaning to current issues, at the same pace it is possible to comprehend the importance of HRE as a permanent education dispute in favor of democracy and reaffirmation of rights.

7. References

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