

## The Ecological teacher: Spanick teacher education as an act of resistance / *Professor Ecológico: a formação de professores de espanhol como um ato de resistência*

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**Received:** november 22<sup>th</sup>, 2019. **Approved:** december 24<sup>th</sup>, 2019

### How to cite this article:

MOURA, Jane Neves; IFA, Sérgio. The Ecological teacher: Spanick teacher education as na act of resistance. *Revista Letras Raras*. Campina Grande, v. 8, n. 4, p. Port. 118-137 / Eng. 107-125, dez. 2019. ISSN 2317-2347.

### ABSTRACT

For this article, we bring a part of a master's thesis. The context investigated was a teacher education course with the participants who are the teachers in initial teacher education of an outreach Project called Casas de Cultura no Campus at Federal University of Alagoas and are also Spanish language undergraduate students. We interconnected theoretically the ecology of knowledges (SOUSA SANTOS, 2009, 2010) and the critical literacy perspective (BISHOP, 2014; JANKS, 2013, 2014) and related them to teacher education (NÓVOA, 1992; PIMENTA 2002) to be able to see it as a continuous and permanent process which demands from us, teachers and teacher educators, a constant exercise of autoanalyses and reflections of our own perceptions, our thoughts and, mainly, of four actions in and outside of the classroom. We aim, therefore, to provoke reflections on teacher education as a local for (de)(re)construction of knowledge.

**KEY-WORDS:** Spanish teaching; Teacher education; Ecology of knowledges, Critical literacy.

### RESUMO

Trazemos, para este artigo, um recorte de uma pesquisa de mestrado. O contexto investigado foi um curso de formação de professores com os participantes - os professores em formação inicial do projeto de extensão Casas de Cultura no Campus, da Universidade Federal de Alagoas, e que são também graduandos do curso de Letras – espanhol. Realizamos um diálogo entre a ecologia de saberes (SOUSA SANTOS, 2009, 2010) e a perspectiva do letramento crítico (BISHOP, 2014; JANKS, 2013, 2014), relacionando-os à formação de professores (NÓVOA, 1992; PIMENTA 2002) para compreendê-la como um processo contínuo e permanente, que exige de nós, professores e formadores em formação, um exercício constante de autoanálise e reflexão das nossas percepções, dos nossos

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<http://dx.doi.org/10.35572/rlr.v8i4.1509>

*pensamentos e, principalmente, das nossas ações, dentro e fora da sala de aula. Objetivamos, portanto, provocar reflexões sobre a formação como um espaço de (des)(re)construção de conhecimentos.*

*PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Ensino de espanhol; Formação de professores; Ecologia de saberes; Letramento crítico.*

## 1 Introduction

We have been living undoubtedly in a globalized, complex, confusing and fast world in which a multiplicity of cultural artefacts proliferate: from electronic gadgets, cable TV channels, cell phones, vídeo games to ideas, perceptions of how we conceive the world, education, politics, additional languages, etc. However, in this same world, when we refer to classroom or to teacher education, it seems we live under a logic full of certainties of the correct way to teach by using, preferably, coursebooks and/or methodologies which offer recipes for success, which reveals to us a structured, linear, sequenced view of teaching and learning process. Living in these two apparently opposing worlds, we question what can we do in the classroom when teaching an additional language? How to prepare teachers to teach in various contexts?

The focus of this article is exactly on this hybrid, confused and uncertain locus in which quality of learning is demanded but teaching cannot apparently respond to it satisfactorily because it does not seem to provide for meaningful learning.

How to offer teacher education for future teachers to be able to, after they finish undegraduation and hold their certificates, practise teaching so as to contribute meaningfully to a students' critical and citizenship education when teaching Spanish as an additional language?

We open a bracket here to justify the use of “additional language” and not foreign language in this article. We believe that when we learn another language, it becomes no longer foreign to us. According to Moreira Júnior (2016, p. 65), this term provides “the idea of a close language, not strange, but accessible, the language which was added to the subject’s linguistic-discursive repertoire for a real need”. In our view the use of the term stem from the bakhtinian understanding of language and that this “real need” would be the need for us to position ourselves in a critical stance in the different social contexts in which we find ourselves, problematizing it, questioning it and transforming our reality in/from the interaction with the other.

In order to reflect upon these questionings and answer them above, we reread and reinterpreted the data collected in a Spanish teacher education course. The participants were teachers in initial teacher education (TITE) of an outreach Project named Casas de Cultura no Campus (CCC).

To contextualize it, we should say that there are some pre-requisites for a student to become a TITE. It is compulsory that the candidate be a Spanish Language undergraduate student. It is also necessary to be approved of a recruitment which is composed of two tests: a written one testing linguistic knowledge and a didactic one. Nowadays, there are 11 TITE in the Spanish sector.

The CCC Extension Project is a partnership between Language College (Faculdade de Letras – FALE) and Extension Dean (Pró-reitoria de Extensão – ProEX). The Project offers language courses (English, Portuguese for Specific Purposes, Spanish, French and Libras) free of charge for all Federal University of Alagoas students. One of the main aims is to foster a distinctive teacher education to FALE undergraduate students for them to have the opportunity to be in a real classroom teaching up to 30 UFAL students. The second aim is to promote Spanish learning as well as a critical education to all participants.

The course investigated lasted for 10 months and 10 CCC Spanish TITE participated during all the process. The proposal of the course started from the need to work with Spanish TITE in this present and critical moment we live in – a “French leaving” from the school curricula, we could describe it, using purposefully and ironically the term in inverted commas, referring to the withdrawal of French language from the curricula many years ago and nowadays the withdrawal of Spanish language in Brazil.

And we explain, here, the reason of our position. The year of 2017 was really turbulent for us, teachers of Spanish. The 11.161 law, known as “the Spanish law” demanded the Spanish language as a compulsory component of the curricula but it was revoked on February 16, 2017 through 13.415 law. The decree was clear: it is revoked the 11.161 law of August 5th, 2005.

Due to the deletion of Spanish learning the government tries to impose, we feel the need to research Spanish teaching, opening room for reflections on the importance of this language at schools, in prep schools and at universities. In spite of living presently a scenario of discouragement to and hopelessness about the future, we aim exactly to make it visible and to value the teaching of Spanish language as well as to create opportunities to open spaces for teacher education for future teachers.

Therefore, the aim of this article is to showcase that, despite the cancellation of 11.161 law, we are persistent and we resist and will resist. One of the aims can be materialized with the publication of this article: actions that give visibility to the products and events related to maintenance and strengthening of additional language teaching in spaces of teacher education

we have been offering in the State. The offer of a Spanish Teacher education in a very serious moment of Spanish language was, for us, a way of taking a stand to show we will not keep silence before the setbacks which have put at stake the teaching of Spanish in our State.

## 2 Some initial reflections

Teacher education is much talked about nowadays. The them has been brought by the new education programs to try to “equalize” the Brazilian education. Many are the views on what this teacher education is like, what its duration and who the teacher educators would be. To offer a better understanding of our point of view, we decided to reflect on our role as teacher educators in course – a terminology we adopted to name ourselves.

In our view, teacher education should be a continuous process. A permanent state of reflection a teacher should have on your practice, on what they know and what they do not know either. Nóvoa affirms that:

A formação não se constrói por acumulação (de cursos, de conhecimentos ou de técnicas), mas sim através de um trabalho de reflexividade crítica sobre as práticas e de (re)construção permanente de uma identidade pessoal. Estar em formação implica um investimento pessoal, um trabalho livre e criativo sobre os percursos e os projetos próprios, com vistas à construção de uma identidade, que é também uma identidade profissional (NÓVOA, 1992, p.13).<sup>1</sup>

What we mean is that it is by continuous dialogue between actions and planning and by reflection that we understand that the teacher can be deconstructed and reconstructed, not only as a professional but also as a human being.

We understand that reflective dialogue between action and practice can be summed up by Pimenta (2002) when she comments on who should exert the reflective work of teaching:

Realizar o trabalho de análise crítica da informação relacionada à constituição da sociedade e seus valores, é trabalho para professor e não para monitor. Ou seja, para um profissional preparado científica, técnica, tecnológica, pedagógica, cultural e humanamente. Um profissional que reflete sobre o seu fazer, pesquisando-o nos contextos nos quais ocorre (PIMENTA, 2002, p.39)<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> translation: The (teacher) education does not build by accumulation (of courses, of knowledges or of techniques), but yes, by a work of critical reflexivity on practices and of permanent (re)construction of an identity. To be in (teacher) education implies a personal investment, a free and creative work over one own's trajectories and projects so as to construct an identity which is also a professional one.

<sup>2</sup> Translation: To analyse the critical work of information related to the society constitution and its values is teacher's job and not of a monitor's. Or rather, it is for a professional who is prepared científically, technically, technologically,

Dealing with teacher education, therefore, is to talk about our own process of language teacher educators in course. In the trajectory we walk over the teaching of an additional language, we face challenges, discoveries and disagreements.

Thinking over disagreements reminds us of a song by Milton Nascimento named *Encontros e despedidas* (encounters and goodbyes) as it goes:

São só dois lados  
Da mesma viagem  
O trem que chega  
É o mesmo trem da partida  
A hora do encontro  
É também despedida  
A plataforma dessa estação  
É a vida desse meu lugar  
É a vida desse meu lugar  
É a vida...  
(NASCIMENTO, 1985)<sup>3</sup>

Drawing an analogy with Nascimento's song, we consider teacher education as a long journey in which teachers keep find themselves over and over again. There are moments of disagreements in concepts, perspectives, understandings and truths. There are also moments of questions and reflections on their teaching classroom practices and on beliefs they carry because they often guide their pedagogical practice.

We stress that this process is necessary so that unquestionable truths can be questioned and problematized and that reflected knowledge can guide our actions because the world in which we live demands from us a more prudent and informed position. It is our understanding that this is our contribution to the education of (more) critical, questioning, conscious citizens of their role in society.

This way, we believe it is our task to provide for, in our classes, spaces for dialogue, questionings, constructions and reconstructions of knowledge because we, teachers and students, carry our historical, social, cultural and political background which reveals our pre-established thoughts and truths. We are all placed in diverse social contexts and we are all the time invited to position ourselves in favor of maintenance or change of patters, norms, laws and social impositions.

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pedagogically, culturally and humanly. A professional who reflects upon one's doing, investigating it within the contexts in which it occurs.

<sup>3</sup> Translation: They are just two sides/ of the same trip/ the train that arrives/ is the same train of departure/ the hour of encounter/ is also farewell/ the station platform/ is the life of my place/ is the life of my place/ it is life.

We understand that the critical literacy perspective could prioritize the outcomes of moments described above, since it is dealing with an educational practice which aims at reflection, problematization and transformation of the world we live in (JANKS, 2013). That is so because it proposes that teachers and students can see *different images of the same thing*, to question if what they think they see is in fact what they see. We stem from the understanding that each one will have a different reading from the same image/text/situation/theme.

We make here a parallel with ecology of knowledges which, according to Sousa Santos (2009, p. 57), “enables us to a more comprehensive view than the one we know, as well as the one we do not know, and also, warns us that what we do not know is our ignorance, not general ignorance”. That is to say, it comprises the necessity of permanent practices to (de)(re)construct our truths and exercise modes of interpreting a given topic under varied and/or different looks.

Sousa Santos (2009) says that “we have to change our way of thinking. Our thoughts, which have brought us here, today, are not going to take us from here”. This is what is the great challenge, as we could call it, a teacher who fathoms one’s own teacher education as a continuous process: detachment. That is, if we keep repeating old patterns, thoughts and positions and put them into practice exhaustively and mechanically we will not get the solutions to the challenging situations. Therefore, we would like to say that they have to be confronted with old knowledges but, mainly, with new ones.

Recognizing the multiplicity of knowledges and the possibility of a dialogue between them and considering that the your truths can (and should!) be questioned, negating them or confirming them, is what the ecology of knowledges means. These are the attitudes that we consider necessary to be exercised daily by the teachers who incorporate their teacher education as continuous. It is by exercising that they can, who knows, *find themselves* (or *disagree with themselves*).

But what would our final destination be? Where do we want to get at? In truth, we will never get at a final destination for it has no end. This way of thinking is extremely healthy because by changing the arrival spot, we amplify that view that the old ‘final destination’ becomes a mere stop, or rather, one among many. According to Nascimento (1985), in his song, ‘the hour of encounter is also farewell’. By adopting that attitude and action, we expanded our capacity of enjoying the moments each encounter, each meeting, each dialogue with the TITE offer. If, on the other hand, we judge that we have already reached where we would like to be, that would mean that, at that moment, we have become ready, complete and integral.

When dealing with ecology of knowledges, Sousa Santos (2009, p. 44-45) supposes it is necessary *to know the unknown*. We understand that we could allow ourselves to learn something we have not still learnt it. We also understand it is beneficial for us to reflect on, to question about and to rethink what we know and what we conceive something to be *true*. Such questionings, in our view, set up as a continuous and constant process of understanding, reflection and reconstruction. It is this ongoing exercise that we will grasp “the death of a given paradigm carries in itself what it will take its place” (SOUSA SANTOS, 2002, p. 15). That is, each questioned or rethought truth generates a new truth or new knowledge and, in contact with other knowledge, it will be expanded, changed, (re)constructed.

We understand teacher education as an ongoing process that takes into consideration the non existence of a unique knowledge or an exclusive truth, but one that allows multiple knowledge and truths circulating so as to favor the TITE to rethink, question and (de)(re)construct one’s professional identity, as Nóvoa (1992) and Ifa (2006) propose in spaces for critical-reflective teacher education.

According to Ghedin,

Human being is created in this continuous, permanent and lasting movement of thinking by constructing oneself and by self constructing as thinker settles historically in one’s time and this historicity allows and conditions all emergence of what one will become. That way, the work is a continuous and permant process of self-construction that can be done by abstraction and materialization. They established a dialectic of self-constructing and of becoming (GHEDIN, 2002, p. 130).

In our opinion, that underlines the need to have a habit of self-observing, of reflecting continuously upon beliefs and of being open to questionings and dialogues in order to be in contact with other viewpoints, insights and truths. It is via this search for that we strenghten our intention to go further and beyond our limiting beliefs to break already established paradigm and become human beings aware of our temporary nature.

We understand when we are *looking for* something we are in an ongoing process of search (IFA, 2006), of reflection and of uneasiness. In this process we do not fulfil with what we find on the journey. We think there will always be something to come. However, when we believe we have found the object (be it an object, or knowledge or something we hold it as truth) we stop searching. We stopped thinking there could be something to come. We stagnate. We then believe what we have is enough. When we we think we found the truth, we discard the possibility of having other knowledge or truths.



### 3 (Re)constructing knowledge

The aim of the ecology of knowledges is to better understand that there is a multiplicity of knowledges and that there should be a horizontal dialogue among the various knowledges. Sousa Santos (2009, p. 44-45) coins this process as *knowing the unknow*. Or rather, allowing oneself to get to know different views of what they believe they know and reflect/question/rethink the truths. According to the author (SOUSA SANTOS, 2010, p. 154), ‘there is no knowledge or complete knowledge; there are constellations of knowledge’. The knowledge we learn at school, at high school, and at university, the one taught by teachers, the one we learn with our parents, uncles, aunts, grandparents is all valid.

The broader aim of this ecology of knowledges is to break up the knowledge colonization, which, for many years, has been suppressing other forms of knowledge, for example, the one colonized people produced. Colonization of knowledge happens at times, through violent impositions; at other times, subtle forms are used and maybe with our own contribution when we stand irreflectively, repeating old patterns and raising false truths.

Dealing with ecology of knowledge is to recognize the importance of knowledge we acquire with our ancestors. Recognizing that knowledge does not depend on a physical space, it is to figure out it is not limited to some people. It is to value as knowledge that one which is not acknowledged by the academy. However, it is important to add that “non scientific knowledge credibility does not entail the discredibility of scientific knowledge” (SOUSA SANTOS, 2010, p. 158). The aim of ecology of knowledge is to bring forth the plurality of knowledge, whether scientific or not, always in dialogue and in process of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction of knowledge.

This process complements, in our view, the critical literacy perspective proposed by Janks (2010), based on four pillars which are “crucially interdependent” (p. 23): power, access, diversity and design. The author proposes there is a cycle of construction-deconstruction-reconstruction of practices, thoughts, doings and knowledge.

Thus, it is desirable that there is sound reflection on knowledge we provide access for our students. Whom does it serve? Whom does it not suit? Do we take into account the real diversities in our classrooms (cultural, social, of thinking, of knowledge, of interests, and so on)? “What histories have we been teaching, what music, what art, what literature, what language,



what belief system?” (JANKS, 2014, p. 7). According to the author, these are not only ordinary and trivial questions, but they are questions which determine to what kind of access our students have been having (or not).

We could still ask ourselves: why have we allowed our students to have access to this knowledge and not to others? Wouldn't we be "favouring" one knowledge instead of other? Wouldn't we be enhancing that colonizing knowledge-power, ranking knowledge by establishing priorities and levels of importance?

This is our proposal to reflect more thoroughly upon our classroom practices and find out what we still do not know that. We also believe that if we bring about reflections in the additional language classes, we could break some invisible walls which disconnect the classroom from the world we, teachers and students, live.

It sounds utopian, as we know. However, we recall a television interview with Eduardo Galeano, a Uruguayan writer and journalist some years ago, when he recounted a question someone asked about the purpose of utopias to one of his friends, Fernando Birri, an Argentinian movie director. "They function to keep going", he answered. In our understanding, "If we don't have utopias, how will we keep living and going forward?", we ask ourselves.

In our view, *preparation* or "to be prepared", as Moura Filho (2011, p. 54) puts it would be our utopia. Many of us participate in extension or graduation courses to be better prepared to our classroom work. We aim to reach at the "top spot" of our education (to be fully prepared, ready, complete)so as to help us to walk.

However, we believe the utopia Fernando Birri and Eduardo Galeano understand is what move us to knowledge, change and reflection. We know we will not reach all forms of available knowledge, because new knowledge is created at every moment. This search motivates us to learn and construct knowledge even more.

We could relate this utopia concept to what Freire (2011) called epistemological curiosity, to what Rubem Alves (2011) named teaching of surprises and to what Sousa Santos (2009) considers ignorance. Dealing with utopia forces us to move forward, to go on, to seek to get to know, to get out from the common place so as to question old patterns to know other truths, to construct other truths, to deconstruct them to, in sequence, to reconstruct them again. In our understanding, it is to deal with not only with the theories we used to carry out this study but it is to deal with a permanent need of each citizen.

We believe that we will never be “ready”, apt or fully qualified. It is understanding that our incompleteness challenges us to go further, to position ourselves from a different perspective as we did before, to know what we yet do not know and to understand what yet we are not able to.

In reading Moura Filho (2011, p. 54), we, teachers, need to go towards a critical and reflective education by understanding that as the time goes by we need to tackle political, social and cultural issues in the classroom. The world in which we live demands a better informed and a conscious standing. And why not promote reflection with our students? Why not provide conditions to allow our classes to be spaces for knowledge and beliefs to be discussed, reflected upon and transformed?

#### 4 Some (possible) interpretations

Our aims were to promote a diversified work using the same topic (theme) in the classroom and to provide spaces for reflections and discussions on the topic related to TITE’s reality. , we invited them for a different task.

We have selected 30 texts (written, imagetic, for example) and put them on the table for the TITE to use the ones they liked to make a lesson plan. We stressed that they were free to add any other materials they liked as long as they were related to the topic. Our texts served as a starting point for the work they developed.

It seemed interesting to us what one of the TITE said before we get into the room. She mentioned about a course she had started taking on theatre of the oppressed and the interconnection she established with critical literacy. It called our attention the fact that she had linked and related it with the critical literacy perspective because she, unlike her fellows, was the only TITE who was not teaching that semester. She had just been selected but as we did not have enough Spanish language groups, her task during that semester was to observe other TITE’s classes. In the following semester she would have her own group.

Vygotsky, in his social cultural theory, asserts that “doing a task leads to learning when it becomes an activity” (MELLO, 2004, p. 147). As a concept of activity, Vygotsky grasps Leontiev’s concept, which defined as not related to “anything a person does, but only related to what makes sense for him/her” (MELLO, 2004, p. 147). In this perspective, we interpret that the conversations on critical literacy became activities for Lua because she understood them and

internalized them. Therefore, the TITE could relate them to the course she was taking and to the proposals they brought.

The relation Lua established between critical literacy and theater of the oppressed<sup>4</sup>, proposed by the Brazilian playwright Augusto Boal, helped her to elaborate her first lesson plan<sup>5</sup> (see below), presented on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2017, and became the first step to undergo this research we present in this article.

Plan de classe		
Material	Actividad	Objetivo
¿Qué utilizaré?	¿Cómo lo haré?	¿Para qué lo haré?
*Letra	Lectura silenciosa	Para trabajar la <u>comprensión</u> y para hacer <u>una análisis lingüística-discursiva</u>
*Canción	Escuchar las <u>dos versiones</u>	Para trabajar la <u>comprensión</u> auditiva y analizar los <u>efectos de sentidos de las interpretaciones</u>
*Imagine	Mostrarla y usarla como apoyo de una de las encenas	Ayudarlos para la <u>construcción</u> de la encena <u>analizar la lenguaje verbal y no verbal.</u>
*Teatro del oprimido	Voy instruirlos para la producción de la actuación (mínimo dos personas) de 3 encenas y después ellos harán estrategias p/ <u>cambiar la situación de la Geni</u>	Trabajar la interacción con la lengua a través de la actuación; <u>Crear estrategias p/ acabar co la situación de violencia;</u> <u>Relacionar las estrategias con el contexto social</u>

(Plano de aula da PFI Lua, no dia 25 de abril de 2017)

Lua used a song ‘Geni and the Zepelin’ by Chico Buarque<sup>6</sup> as material for reflections and discussions in the class. Some interpretations of the song affirm that it is a criticism of colonialism and capitalism, and the captain is a representation of the oppressor and Geni, that of the oppressed, featured as non-voice and by curtailment of her speech.

We interpret four interesting aspects<sup>7</sup> in Lua’s lesson plan.

<sup>4</sup> Theatre method which links theatre and social action by improvisation techniques.

<sup>5</sup> We reproduced the exact lesson plan Lua sent us, without grammar corrections, once it is not our focus to test or analyse linguistic correctness in this article. It is our focus on the proposal instead.

<sup>6</sup> The lyrics can be reached at <https://www.letras.mus.br/chico-buarque/77259/>

<sup>7</sup> The aspects were initially selected by the TITE Lua and the interpretation was registered in Neves Moura (2018). These aspects, in this paper, were reinterpreted.

#### 4.1 Un análisis lingüístico-discursivo, Dos versiones e Los efectos de sentidos de las interpretaciones

It seemed very interesting to take two versions of the song *Geni and the Zepelin*, by Chico Buarque to the classroom. The first is a Spanish version sung by himself and the other, sung by Leticia Sabatella, in the *Alma Boa de Lugar Nenhum*<sup>8</sup> performance, in Porto Alegre, in 2011. Lua said that the original version is the author's interpretation and perhaps, he could represent the people's voice - if not Zepelin's lieutenant. The second version showcases Leticia Sabatella's intonation in parts of the song which makes us feel as if Geni speaks to us.

We highlight some suppositions on whom Geni, the story protagonist, would be. Would she really be a prostitute? A transvestite? A transgender woman? Possibilities are many. Offering students to listen to different Geni's voices would allow them to visualize other situations she could live and face. That is, bringing an exercise to "dislocate the place from which these paradigms are thought of" as proposed by Grosfoguel (2009, p. 390) when he refers to decoloniality of power:

European patriarchy and European notions of sexuality, epistemology and spirituality were exported to the rest of the world via colonial expansion, transformed therefore in the hegemonic criteria that would racialize, classify and pathologize the rest of the world population according to a hierarchy of superior and inferior races (GROSFOGUEL, 2009, p. 392).

Reflecting on Grosfoguel's words, we can identify that many patterns we have in today's society are notions which were imposed on us by European thoughts, establishing a hierarchical relationship, in which their patterns are superior than ours (South American patterns). A dangerous and sad aspect is that we internalize them as truths, as if they had been constructed by ourselves.

To our understanding, Lua's proposal to open space for different voices that would be "behind" Geni not only promote a pattern break but also get the students closer to the voices which were (and still are) silenced by these thought impositions. It would be a humanizing proposal for our relationships, make us closer and closer as a try to look at ourselves through other lenses.

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<sup>8</sup> A free translation would be: A good soul from no place.

Lua's procedure of having interpreted both versions reveals principles based on critical literacy perspective when it highlights the importance of knowing of various readings, viewpoints, thoughts and positions over a given theme and, if they want, they can (re)configure, (re)design their views. That kind of thought can be associated with ecology of knowledge (SOUSA SANTOS, 2009) which stresses that knowledge is always in construction, deconstruction and reconstruction.

Ecology of knowledge, to Sousa Santos (2009, p. 57), "enables us to a more comprehensive view of what we know, as well as of what we do not know and also prevents us from what we do not know is our ignorance, not ignorance in general". It means that, in our view, ecology of knowledge understands the necessity of a constant exercise of (de) (re) construction of our truths and the need of various readings, various looks over a same topic.

That is exactly what Sousa Santos (2009) names it as prudent knowledge. In other words, we would understand it as to know it as fully as it can be. Knowing a topic means to know what the opposite thoughts against it are too.

#### 4.2 Comprensión y Comprensión: : ¿descodificación o producción de sentidos?

Reading, in critical literacy, is an exercise which goes beyond decoding words and sentences. That is so because we start from the understanding that texts are never neutral, according to Janks (2014, p. 2). The author adds saying that "the initial point to learn how to read texts critically is to recognize that all texts are partial representations of the world". That is, they represent the writer's beliefs, values and truths. Knowing this makes us understand the need to pay attention to the message. Who wrote it? What was the reason for writing it? What is the place of utterance? Who does the message privilege? What knowledge is behind the message? What voices are highlighted? And which ones are silenced?

Language, in its different representations, "sets not only as a structure but as a human being processual construct to represent reality perceptions of those co-enunciators involved" (SILVA, 2014, p. 162). Reality can be represented differently from ours and can reveal positions carried with concepts which may not be the ones we believe, for example.

In this sense, Lua proposed to work the reading in classroom first and then she worked the linguistic-discourse analysis and the meaning making effects both versions of the songs caused. By doing that, she not only asked the students to decode the text but also demanded the

students to exercise their critical reading and critical literacy to identify the many discourses in the song: to what history(ies) it refers to; which viewpoints are being worked, defended or criticized by the author, whom does it benefit to/harm.

#### 4.3 Relacionar las estrategias con el contexto social

In her lesson plan, Lua tried to promote reflections and actions to end with the situation portrayed in the song. What she tried to do was to relate Geni's story to the real and social context of the students'. By inviting students to think of real and possible ways of interventions so as to give other perspectives to Geni, Lua wanted to consciously make them aware of the sad, despicable and unjustifiable gender violence we still have nowadays. In this sense, Bishop (2014, p. 52) states that

Critical literacy uses texts and print skills in ways that enable students to examine the politics of daily life within contemporary society with a view to understanding what it means to locate and actively seek out contradictions within modes of life, theories, and substantive intellectual positions (BISHOP, 2014, p. 52)

We can relate Bishop's words with Lua's procedures. It is essential to examine the politics of our contemporary life. Bringing important current issues in Brazilian reality to classroom such as machismo, femicide, homofobia, transfobia, racism, prejudices, minority rights and oppressive regimes, for example, can definitely contribute to citizen education and to the teaching of a foreign language.

Lua searched to provoke a change of scenario for Geni. She tackled issues which, in certain foreign language classes, could go unnoticed due to other theoretical-methodological aims and other interests as well. Dealing with gender violence cannot be silenced. To silence gender violence is to naturalize it as something normal and acceptable. It should never be. It is not. We agreed that in a foreign language class, such social issues should be questioned, reflected upon, problematized so as to construct other possibilities of a just society with rights for every citizen.

It is interesting to highlight that the relationship oppressor-oppressed; colonizer-colonized can be identified. We can perceive that the Eurocentric issue and/or a North-South relationship in which the geographical limitations/boundaries are erased and we become representatives of these North/European impositive and inquiring thoughts. We judge one another, establish

hierarchical relationships based on concepts which we internalized as truths and involve issues of race, ethnics, sexual orientation, education and social conditions and positions, among other issues.

We believe that dealing with students' reality and bringing issues close to them to problematize and to search for transforming realities can represent what Bishop (2014), Janks (2010) and McLaughlin e DeVoogd (2004) understand by critical literacy. That could not be different once we adopt the Bakhtinian concept of language as something we cannot detach it from the real context in which it is spoken, written and used.

#### 4.4 Cambiar la situación de Geni e Estrategias para acabar con la situación

TITE Lua used the theater of the oppressed and planned the lesson in which one of the procedure students had create strategies to change Geni's life situation. For that, they had to consider the reflections from the discussions in the class. The simple fact that students planned, interpreted a violence scene portraited in the song and thought of strategies to act before these scenes can surely relate to the critical literacy perspective.

According to Janks (2014, p. 6), "what makes critical literacy critical is its concern with the politics of meaning: the ways in which dominant meanings are maintained or challenged and changed". In this sense, we understand that there are, in Lua's proposal, an exercise of critical literacy when she first asks for the comprehension of the situation and the context presented by the author, and, then, she invited students to challenge, change and transform the scenario.

McLaughlin e DeVoogd (2004, p. 54) state that "critical literacy focuses on issues of power and promotes reflection, transformation and action". Such transformations and actions could be realized in or outbounds the school context, always aiming at connecting what it is being worked in the classroom with the students' realities. In doing so, we could transform or reconstruct a reality from a critical perspective.

Transforming reality is part of the learning process which does not occur without doing, acting, questioning and transforming. Freire (2015, p. 68) states that learning "is constructing, reconstructing, noting to change", which, in our view, can refer to the redesign cycle proposed by Janks (2010). This cycle brings the element of critique so as to promote deconstruction (look critically the text and/or past actions) and also reconstruction (remake or redo their vision and/or future actions).



We consider that traces of the redesign cycle can be perceived in Lua's proposal. First, when discussing possible meaning makings of both songs. In fact, critique is what she tried to make the students produce by interpreting the both songs. Second, after having deconstructed both songs, students could redesign new possibilities of meaning making when students were to perform or act a different situation for Geni.

### Considerations: some constructions

In our conception, teacher education is “a space in which experiences can be lived, information shared, questions made and knowledges constructed with the support of others (IFA, 2014, p. 102). Offering sharing moments to analyse, reflect (de) (re) construct knowledge is to live a process of meaningful changes in teacher practice. That process is fundamental because we face daily challenges when dealing with people who have different historical, social, cultural and political realities from ours.

So, we understand we are not “ready and complete” in these teacher education spaces, considered as continuous and on going, because under the theoretical perspective of ecology of knowledge, we know that there is a need of a horizontal dialogue among the many types of knowledge and we should emphasize the importance of reflection to (de) (re) construct our own dogmas and certain truths (IFA, 2006; NEVES DE MOURA, 2018).

In this process of (de) (re) construction under that perspective, “it is crucial the comparison between the knowledge to be learned and the one which is this process is forgotten and unlearned” (SOUSA SANTOS, 2009, p. 47), because, according to the author, learning occurs “in the recognition of the plurality of heterogeneous knowledge and in sustainable and dynamic interactions between them” (p. 57). That is, we learn from the moment we understand that there is not only the truth or the valid knowledge but there are many knowledges which are related to one another.

It is in the contact with the others in these spaces that we can name the teacher-participant as an ecological teacher. They are the ones who themselves in an ongoing process of teacher education. As an example, we bring TITE Lua's testimonial on her teaching that class.

Two years after Lua concluded her TITE period at CCC, she told us she taught that class. She changed her final procedure because she asked her students to write an autobiography of Geni. The aim of the activity was for the students to be on the character's shoes, exercising empathy to try to understanding what was behind the facts mentioned in the song. Her students, amazed by the experience, shared their papers and realized that there could co-exist diverse views over the same topic.

Having taken part in this teacher education space has transformed us in (more) informed and conscientious teachers because we can better understand our context in which we work. We hope this paper contributes to promote some reflection upon the pedagogical practice, the significant role of teachers in society and above all on the importance of facing the changes of thoughts and positions as an indispensable part of the political role of teachers. In special, we hope our experience can incentive teachers of Spanish language to continue resisting and facing the challenges.

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