

Meetings with the teaching work: dimensions of the professional development in the Pedagogical Residence Program/UFPB /
Encontros com o trabalho docente: dimensões do desenvolvimento profissional no Programa Residência Pedagógica/UFPB

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ABSTRACT

This discussion is based on my experience as an advisor professor of the Pedagogical Residence Program of Universidade Federal da Paraíba, inserted in the group of Letters- Spanish and English languages. This context of teachers education allows us to see the process of building one's teacher identity and the professional development of the Letters students, pre-service teachers, through their relationship with the collectives and in the discovery of their singularities. My analytical reflection is the result of reading reflective reports written along the years 2018 and 2019 and seeks to highlight some dimensions of this process. Based on the basic principles that make up the framework of Socio-discursive Interactionism such as the definitions of significant action and the capacity to act (BRONCKART, 1999/2006) and, in particular, the understanding that language has a fundamental role in human development, I describe the path covered by the residents of the group, making evident their development as teachers and emphasize, based on the notion of discursive worlds or action coordinates (HABERMAS, 1987) the social and subjective aspects that underlie this development. Reading the residents' texts resulted in the finding that the collective dimension, through

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encounters and mismatches, strengthens their work and ends up making them develop a particular and more mature relation with teaching.

KEYWORDS: ISD; Pedagogical residence; Professional development.

RESUMO

Esta discussão parte da minha experiência como professora orientadora do Programa Residência Pedagógica na Universidade Federal da Paraíba, inserida no núcleo de Letras-Língua Espanhola e Língua Inglesa. Esse contexto de formação docente permite que enxerguemos o processo de construção da identidade docente e o desenvolvimento profissional dos discentes de Letras, professores em formação inicial, mediante sua relação com os coletivos e na descoberta de suas singularidades. Minha reflexão analítica é resultado da leitura de relatos reflexivos construídos ao longo dos anos de 2018 e 2019 e busca evidenciar algumas dimensões desse processo. A partir de princípios basilares que compõem o quadro do Interacionismo Sociodiscursivo como as definições de ação significativa e capacidades de agir (BRONCKART, 1999/2006a/2006b) e, em especial, a compreensão de que a linguagem possui papel fundamental no desenvolvimento humano, descrevo o caminho percorrido pelos residentes do núcleo evidenciando seu desenvolvimento enquanto docentes e ressalto, a partir da noção de mundos discursivos ou coordenadas de ação (HABERMAS, 1987), os aspectos sociais e subjetivos que subjazem a esse desenvolvimento. A leitura dos textos dos residentes resultou na constatação de que a dimensão coletiva, mediante encontros e desencontros, fortalece seu trabalho e termina por fazê-los desenvolver uma relação particular e mais madura com a docência.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: ISD; Residência pedagógica; Desenvolvimento profissional.

1 Introduction

This text aims to contribute to an understanding of how the teacher education process is presented in the Pedagogical Residence/UFPB, demonstrating the imbrication between the language actions, as worked out by Bronckart (1999/2006b) and the way in which the residents construct their relationship with teaching.

What I considerer to be one of the major features of the Program, its collective dimension, is my starting point, and the discussions revolves around the question of the development of teaching, starting from the social dimensions to a more individual awareness which, intertwined, culminate in greater autonomy on the part of the residentes, a kind of “awareness of teaching”. I have adopted Sociodiscursive Interactionism (ISD) as my theoretical framework, as I believe that this line of thought proposes an understanding of human development based on language, which is constitutive of it, and this is precisely a path that can contribute to understanding the development of teachers in initial education. In addition, the Habermasian conception of represented worlds or formal coordinates of action and the link with Vygotsky's theories on development, based on the relationship between language and thought, which are so important to ISD, are also present in my observations.

I am therefore presenting a reflection on the reflective reports produced within the Spanish and English Language Group of the Pedagogical Residence Program at UFPB. Specifically, these are texts written by teachers in initial education, reflections on their activities in the field school, including their lesson observations and teaching activities. The question that led to the analysis consisted of the following: what elements can be recovered from reading the residents' reports that show their teaching construction process?

This question is justified by the fact that the Program is, under the terms of CAPES Notice 6/2018, a teachers' education activity. It seeks to immerse undergraduate students in the school context, allowing them to experience teaching practice, while still in the process of initial education, in a more profound way, since these students must compose 440 hours of effective work. The reflective report, in turn, is one of the tools used in the group in question as a way of sharing activities, the challenges faced and the successes achieved and so many other elements that make up the initial education process. The reports are representative of the path taken by each student in initial education, who often joins projects of this nature without yet seeing themselves as teachers or future teachers.

In the case of the Pedagogical Residence, it has to be said that although these reports are truly formative texts, as is the case with the Supervised Internships, the longitudinal nature of the Program gives these texts a different character, as they accompany a longer process, as explained in the following section.

2 Research paths

The discussion I present in this text is part of a research project being carried out at doctoral level. The project is entitled "Teaching practice and identity construction of foreign language teachers in initial education in the Pedagogical Residence Program/UFPB" and was approved by the Ethics and Research Council of the Federal University of Paraíba in December 2019. I would like to point out that the research is also the result of my involvement as a teacher-supervisor in the Pedagogical Residence Program/UFPB in its pioneer version, since the institutional project began in 2018. Currently, there is a third group going through the education process within the Program.

The excerpts presented in this text are clippings from reflective reports produced by residents made available on a google drive, to which I have access because I am a supervisor and work on the project and because the authors have authorized their use for research purposes, through a Free and Informed Consent Form.

At the Spanish and English Language group, where this discussion was sampled, we had a total of 27 residents, students who were in the second half of their degree. The reports were usually produced after each visit to the school, including the initial moments of the Program in which the residents had to complete a 60-hour workload to get acclimatized and observe classes. In this way, the reports follow the trajectory of the residents throughout the education process built up within the scope of the Pedagogical Residence in 2018 and 2019. The schools referred to are public full-time schools where the residents were accompanied by teacher-preceptors.

The universe of texts produced is very broad and for this reason I have used excerpts from nine reports written by seven residents for the purposes of analysis in this article. The choice was made in order to reveal different moments (chronologically speaking) of work in public schools (a total of three schools) and it should also be noted that there was no guidance from the members of the group in terms of how to organize these texts. The reports were written freely by the residents individually, although they were later read/commented on by a UFPB teacher-supervisor who was a member of the group and could also be accessed by the other residents. In this case, I did not attempt to explain any more structural aspects regarding the production of the genre in question. However, it is important to point out that, as situated and reflective writing, the reports prove that the teacher in initial education has something to say about this process, as he is an actor in his work (MACHADO, 2007) and, in this sense, I agree with Reichmann (2015) who sees teachers as agents of literacy. I realize that the reports are one of the many social writing practices in which it is possible to recover evidence of teacher development.

As to the excerpts used in this text, the names of the residents, the preceptor and the school have been assigned by me and do not correspond to their real names. In turn, as I explain below, the aspects addressed concern issues related to the formal coordinates of action and the relationship between language and development.

3 Language and the formal coordinates of action

Within the theoretical-methodological framework of Sociodiscursive Interactionism, it is understood that language plays an essential role in human development and that language actions give access to people's capacities to act and their identity. Thus, language manifests itself through the appropriation of signs in the form of an action that is an organized set of behaviors attributed to an individual, a set that is full of motive and intention (BRONCKART, 2006a).

Furthermore, language actions are always signifying actions and this means that, although they are human and social actions, they also go beyond the agent and develop "consequences of their own, not entirely controllable by that agent" (BRONCKART, 2006a, p. 69) and go beyond the sphere of semiotization, producing cognitive development. Human language has communicative and pragmatic functions, but it also mediates psychic processes and is part of the development of human cognitive faculties.

By understanding these first principles, it becomes easier to understand that language action is characterized by being socially oriented and regulated, but it also shows a mechanism by which the agent allows himself to be seen. Within the framework of ISD, this aspect can be studied by taking the Habermasian notion of worlds or formal coordinates of action, which are particularly significant.

For Habermas (1987), there are three worlds: the physical world, the social world and the subjective world. The physical world is constructed through pretensions to the truth of knowledge. The social world allows us to see the need to conform to social norms and, finally, the subjective world shows that the agent has the ability to make us see part of his world. As such, there is an intimate part of his subjectivity that only he has access to (BRONCKART, 1999).

Friedrich (2012) even expands on this issue, as she says that, for Vygotsky, we perceive parts of reality that are important to us, in other words, our senses give us access to the outside world, but we filter what to see and what to feel. So, based on what has been mentioned above, we filter what we see and, in our language practices, we filter what we let ourselves see.

As a collective, social phenomenon par excellence, language takes place in the context of a social formation, but the ISD considers both this nature of socialization and individualization (BRONCKART, 2006b). According to Bronckart (1999), language action is a part of the social activity operated by collective evaluations, but it is also a product of the appropriation that transforms individual into agent of the criteria of this evaluation.

Thus, we can conclude that language, if taken as an individual realization, leads us to a reductionist analysis of its character. The same happens if we only look at its essentially social constitutive feature.

There are various aspects of the ISD framework that are of interest to my reading of the residents' reports, but in this text I want to highlight precisely the understanding of worlds and the consequent inseparability of the social and the individual, perceived as inseparable faces of the same element - human language.

The way I have read the reports has also brought me closer to the Vygotsky concept of internalization, as explained by Abreu-Tardelli (2018), which is a process whereby the individual reconstructs external shared operations on an internal level, through interaction. This process takes place, therefore, because there is a dialogue established with the other and with other voices that end up acting on the way individuals' representations are constructed.

For the purposes of this my reading, the concept of text adopted in the ISD is also of interest, since language actions can only be effectively understood if texts are interpreted - actual verbal productions, articulated to their various communication situations (BRONCKART, 1999).

Even so, we must bear in mind what Medrado (2011, p. 29) says:

According to Machado and Bronckart (2009), we can access action through the discourses and voices of those who carry out the work. Thus, our actions in the world are always thematized and textualized, *but not as a direct representation of what we experience, but as a reconfiguration of the ordinary world* (my emphasis).

As the author points out, texts are generic entities in a relationship of interdependence with their contexts of production, but they are a reconfiguration of the ordinary world.

This is how I have read the reflective reports, as texts that are representative of a function linked to the communicative role for which they are constructed, involved in a relationship permeated by the social and individual that constitutes them, resulting in a reconfiguration of the world that can provide access to the teachers' education process of the residents. The clippings in the next section present some aspects of this reconfiguration and show the extent to which it impacts on teacher education.

4 In (non)meetings, professional development

In this section, I deal with a set of relationships that are established within the residents' reflective reports, which demonstrate a path they have traveled and emphasize the temporal and maturational nature of their teacher education.

Inspired by Habermas' theory of discursive worlds (coordinates of action), I propose that given the characteristics of the Program in which they are inserted, the residents' development as teachers took place through a notably social dimension, until marks of their individuality could be perceived as verbalized in their texts.

Obviously, I don't understand the issue of the worlds as if it were possible to completely separate them. In our linguistic actions, they are interwoven and are coordinates that enable us to evaluate them. However, the evaluation of the residents' actions, carried out by the residents themselves, uses the criterion of legitimizing their actions based on their interpersonal relationships, reflecting the strength that social regulations have with regard to teaching practices, but also highlighting a characteristic of this education context. I say this because I believe that in other contexts, the construction of teaching, even though it is filled with other voices, begins in a more solitary sphere.

Reading the reflective reports in question also brings to mind the best thing about human behavior: the property of having unique characteristics. The point here is that, starting from a collective and, in principle, more regulated dimension, the residents managed to imprint their own style of understanding and managing their teaching and, ultimately, built a different way of relating to the collective.

Based on this position, certainly one of the first aspects that draws attention in the reports is the presence of the other, which is a condition for the residents' own constitution as teachers.

The initial reflective reports show this aspect and constitute the first stage, as I understand it, of the education process: *the search for a teachers' identity*. In their reports, the residents don't express an understanding of teaching and their role; on the contrary, they look at others or the voices of others to provide validity for their actions and still show a certain insecurity.

In the excerpt, we see that resident André points out that the presence of his colleague Vítor is important for him to be able to manage the first class more calmly.

RESIDENT ANDRÉ: When I realized that the first class was about to take place, I was a little nervous, but *as soon as I entered the room with Vítor, the nervousness really went away* and I was freer to teach the class. Today's persona: Teacher André.

This recurs in the texts analyzed. The theme of teaching and coping with the first teaching sessions is linked to the perception that the presence of others is important and reduces the characteristic tension. In the excerpt, even though it is his first time teaching, resident André ends up giving himself the status of "Today's Persona" and also positions himself as "Teacher André".

Certainly, the residents' relationship with the physical world and the classroom context causes them a certain amount of discomfort, which is common for teachers in their initial education. However, it is very clear from the reports that the residents see themselves as teachers based on an interaction with the other, be it a student, a preceptor or another resident, as this excerpt shows:

RESIDENT ANDRÉ: The experience of being there at the front as a teacher and having students looking at you *and calling you teacher was incredible*.

Maria's report is also very revealing. The resident attributes her status as a teacher to the arrival of a new preceptor and once again I see an occurrence of this socially-oriented action.

RESIDENT MARIA: *Everything changed when we received the new preceptor (...)*. At school I no longer feel like just a trainee, but a teacher.

Although it is essential to understand that the Residence is built precisely for the benefit of a community, it seems to me that the fact that the residents' evaluations of themselves and the activities they carry out in the classroom, all of which are imprinted in their language actions, begin with an external gaze and only later do they begin to allow themselves to act more independently, is maximized. So, although it may seem simple to identify this path to becoming a teacher, everything is much more complex.

In the texts analyzed, the construction of a teacher's identity begins with the voice of others giving value to the residents' work. There are several excerpts in which the residents show and

textually highlight that "the preceptors praised them", that "the students paid attention", that "their colleague liked" their class, and so on.

RESIDENT CARLA: At the end of the class, *Professor Paula* congratulated us on conducting the two classes well and on time.

It is also clear that most of the time the successes or failures reported in the residents' texts are put down to the other person's satisfaction. This means that they are more attentive to the reaction of the students, preceptors and other residents, at first, than to the development of the elements of the class, the organization and the planning. It's as if "doing well" is measured in proportion to the enthusiasm and good reception from others. Let's look at an example:

RESIDENT CARLA: This lesson was a lot of fun with this class *because they seemed to be in a better mood today*.

As I mentioned at the beginning, I realize that there is a maturing process taking place with the residents. Therefore, their texts, especially those written after they have been through a period of teaching, begin to indicate a development that seems to call into question the first relationships with this other. Although this is not a linear and organized process, it leaves marks through which it is possible to see the transformations that have taken place.

Thus, one issue I want to highlight here is what I see as another significant moment in the residents' development process: the discovery of *non-teaching*.

The residents' activities, as human behavior, have a meaning and this meaning is oriented in relation to the other, and this doesn't mean that this orientation is entirely concordant. There is a moment when the teachers, previously euphoric thanks to this encounter with the school environment, begin to see issues that had gone unnoticed. They begin, for example, to question their place in the school and their accommodation to the prescriptions of their preceptors.

RESIDENT DANIEL: This week, a group of residents, including me, had a *communication problem* with our preceptor, which *caused tension* in the ECIT Brasil Pedagogical Residence team.

The implicit contract of coexistence and acceptance is broken and part of this is the result of a reconfiguration of the residents' experience and their growth as teachers. After all, are they teachers? Are they intruders? What is their role in the school?

RESIDENT DANIEL: Since we don't have our own space, it's inevitable that we'll be seen as OKUPAS, that *we'll be a nuisance with our presence and that we ourselves will feel out of place.*

In addition, the texts of the reports show that questions arise about the work done by the preceptors, which may not correspond to what the residents consider to be appropriate (due to their personal perception or as a result of their education at university). At this point, it can be seen that there are ways of acting that the residents do not accept as teaching, in other words, they are able to move away from total accommodation to the regulations of the environment and begin to make sense of the practices.

RESIDENT ELENA: In this class, the preceptor proposed a somewhat structuralist lesson, asking the students to open the book and copy what was already written in the notebook. *I began to reflect on the reasons that would lead me to give a lesson with this bias*, and I think that being "taken by surprise" to replace a lesson would be one of the reasons that would lead to this type of class, but I saw that the students were upset by this activity because it didn't make sense to them.

As a Pedagogical Residence advisor, I understand that this is a crucial and particularly relevant moment because it is from this moment that the residents recompose, through language, their relationship with teaching. To the extent that they question and put into their reports what they don't consider to be appropriate, what for them *is not teaching*, the residents show many signs of professional development.

RESIDENT FRANCISCO: (...) something that *bothers me a lot* about the preceptor's classes is that they don't seem to have been planned.

In Bronckart (2006c, p. 49) we read:

According to Habermas, any collective activity objectively displays, as it unfolds, *claims to validity* in relation to the world. This means that the activity, by the very fact that it is produced, presupposes a network of common knowledge to which it is articulated, and which, at the same time, it contributes to creating and transforming (my emphasis).

This is exactly what happens with the residents. At this point, they evaluate and give meaning to their activity and that of others, and their reports reflect their search for what is valid, what is true about teaching. Questions and disagreements arise. Decisions arise that impact on each person's identity and the recognition of the teacher they intend to be.

RESIDENT MARIA: Also, *the teacher was the one I looked at and thought: "I don't want to be like that"*, and I think that this made me lose heart a lot when it came to PR.

A final aspect identified in the reports that are the subject of this analysis allows us to think about how the joint activities and language exchanges within the Pedagogical Residence end up producing a "thinking" and "conscious" resident.

In the reports produced during the final stages of the project, the statements took on a different appearance. I call this phase *meetings with teaching*.

The reference to a person revealed in the use of first names or third person singular pronouns, or even the use of designators such as "the teacher", "the preceptor", "the other resident", gave way to countless sentences beginning either in the first person singular or in the plural: I do, I believe, I think, I planned, and so on. The clippings show residents evaluating their actions without excessive recourse to the voice of the other, unlike earlier moments in the Program.

RESIDENT CARLA: *I believe* that this question of returning to what was seen in the last lesson is always a good option to make the student have a flashback on the subject and help with possible vocabulary and grammar fixation.

It is also possible to see that the texts reveal more autonomous planning.

RESIDENT CARLA: For our first lesson, which was with the 1st grade, *I thought I'd continue* with the subject covered in the first lesson.

Finally, I'd like to point out that this change in the reports doesn't mean that the collective dimension has ceased. On the contrary, it reveals a much greater sharing and leads to an appropriation of what is social, while at the same time letting the individual show through.

RESIDENT GUILHERME: *I believe* that moments like this are extremely important because it is through this interaction that we can improve our performance, where we *share* opinions and criticisms in order to develop our work as residents.

Thus, the residents' development process, as I have seen so far through reading their reports, their speeches at the meetings and the various dialogues established throughout the project, is consistent with a perspective that understands that, through language activities, we have the conditions to act in the world. It also shows that collective work provides the conditions for closer relationships and overcoming conflicts and, at the same time, strengthens the emergence of singularities. All of this can result in teachers who are better able to act in the various spaces of the school and who are willing to intervene effectively and humanely, as we can see from the transcribed excerpt:

RESIDENT CARLA: I really believe in my plan, in my desire to make a difference in the lives of these students and I think that's essential.

The Pedagogical Residence Program therefore provides residents with the opportunity to be part of various collectives, be they given or constructed, and allows individual characteristics linked to the ways of doing teaching to emerge and, in other words, allows for professional development, as I point out in the conclusions.

Conclusions

In this text, I searched the reflective reports produced by residents in the Pedagogical Residence Program for signs of their construction as teachers. My previous readings led me to

assume that the texts would reveal the prominence of the voice of the other, and that the teacher's (re)positioning would not be very strong. However, after studying Sociodiscursive Interactionism and, above all, understanding concepts such as language action and the concept of Habermasian coordinates, reading the reports took a different turn and also gave me a better chance of understanding the path taken by these teachers in their initial education.

The excerpts revealed that the residents develop their teaching and their understanding of it at the crossroads with the other in a consonant way, and sometimes through a disharmonious relationship. It was also found that the relationship between the social world and the subjective world, culminating in social acting and dramaturgical acting, are present in the reports.

Reading what has been produced so far has also highlighted a certain organization in this teaching journey within the Program, which has allowed me to establish three distinct moments, which I have called in this preliminary analysis the search for a teaching identity, the discovery of non-teaching and meetings with teaching. Each moment indicates stages of professional development towards conscious teaching and strengthens my desire to see future teachers who can distinguish themselves by what they are and also by what they allow themselves to learn from others - teachers who develop in exchange.

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