
The dialogic relationships present in the teacher's narrative: the marks of the constitution of the teacher subject based on a dialog between Bakhtin and Freire¹

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Abstract

The aim of this article is to discuss, based on the analysis of the narrative interview of a teacher from the Federal Institute of Education, Science and Technology of São Paulo, how he has constituted himself as a teacher and how he has (re)signified the profession throughout his life trajectory. Based on the enunciative-discursive perspective and Paulo Freire's considerations, our analysis reveals the importance of language in the process of constituting alterity, permeated by dialogic relations and subjectivity ethically based on responsiveness. It also highlights the marks of the constitution of the subject, the importance of the other in this process and the responsive positioning of the teacher in the face of the dilemmas of education with a view to building a liberating teaching practice.

Keywords: Alterity; Dialogic Relations; Teacher Education; Narrative Interview; Responsiveness

As relações dialógicas presentes na narrativa docente: as marcas de constituição do sujeito professor a partir de um diálogo entre Bakhtin e Freire

Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo discutir, a partir da análise da entrevista narrativa de um professor do Instituto Federal de Educação, Ciência e Tecnologia de São Paulo, como este tem se constituído como professor e como tem (re)significado a profissão ao longo de sua trajetória de vida. Pautando-nos na perspectiva enunciativo-discursiva e nas considerações de Paulo Freire, nossas análises revelam a importância da linguagem no processo de constituição alteritária, permeada pelas relações dialógicas e pela subjetividade eticamente fundada no caráter responsivo. Ressalta também as marcas da constituição do sujeito, a importância do outro nesse processo e o posicionamento responsivo do professor diante dos dilemas da educação tendo em vista a construção de uma prática docente libertária.

Palavras-chave: Alteridade; Relações Dialógicas; Formação Docente; Entrevista Narrativa; Responsividade

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Introduction

Traditionally, throughout history, a substantial number of teachers have had their voices silenced by the official institutionalized and/or scientific media, delegating a small group to speak for them. In this process of silencing, sometimes abrupt, sometimes subtle, we realize the need to listen to teachers, evidencing aspects linked not only to their education but also linked to the marks of their teaching constitution.

With this in mind, we have considered investigative research using teacher narratives as a database, which has grown substantially in recent years. According to Bolívar and Domingo (2006), the biographical and narrative approach has acquired its own identity by adopting narrative methodology. Through this methodology, it is possible to understand how teachers are constituted in their educational process, both personally and professionally.

Being qualitative in nature, the focus on teachers' narratives shows, according to Bolívar (2014), to be a way of restoring the teacher's living and active speech. Therefore, in this article, we aim to discuss, based on the analysis of the narrative interview of a teacher from the Federal Institute of Education, Science, and Technology of São Paulo (IFSP, *Instituto Federal de São Paulo*), how he has constituted himself as a teacher and (re)signified the profession throughout his life trajectory.

For this investigation, we rely on the perspective of Bakhtin's Circle and the considerations of Paulo Freire, a Brazilian educator who has contributed so much to reflections on a less oppressive education. Bakhtin and Freire present the possibility of dialog as the foundation for a committed education between the I and the other, searching for a responsive education as a practice of freedom. For this reason, throughout the article, we highlight aspects of dialogic relations in both authors, emphasizing the interaction between the subjects of discourse in Bakhtin and the democratic conception in Freire, based on the concepts of alterity, dialogue, dialogism, responsibility, ethical action, lovingness, becoming, unfinishedness and exotopia. Bringing the authors together in the field of education leads us to conceive reflections that will help us understand the process of the teacher's constitution in their search for meanings, both in their personal and classroom practices; in other words, in their educational environment and for life.

To this end, we have organized this article as follows: firstly, we present a dialogue between Bakhtin and Freire, seeking to bring them closer together theoretically. Next, we present the methodological procedures we used to produce the data, in this case, the narrative interview. Finally, we present our analysis based on the narrative of a language teacher at the IFSP. We end this article with our final considerations.

A possible dialog between Bakhtin and Freire: sewing the philosophy of language into the fabric of education

Bakhtin and Freire argue that the *self* does not exist without the *other*, even in discordant situations. This concept justifies the idea that subjects are constituted through alterity. In an uninterrupted process, we identify that the subject constantly changes in this process of constitution, as it is reflected and refracted in the other. We consider that this entire process occurs through social relations, i.e., the subject is a sociohistorical construction. Furthermore, all this constituting interaction occurs throughout the world, which is an ideological sign by nature (Volóchinov, 2018).

Therefore, communication is central to Bakhtin and Freire, highlighting the importance of language in this process. Therefore, one reads the world before the words (Freire, 1989), i.e., words are permeated by the society, the community, the collective, and the world. Only through collective experience, that is, with others, is the subject constituted, always flanked by language.

In an attempt to prepare a dialogue with these propositions, which are specific and very well elaborated, it was necessary to organize a defiant synthesis since each contribution we selected assumes a philosophical condition that translates the being as an event. Therefore, we would like to emphasize that at no point did we intend to exhaust the possibilities of interpreting the theories by Bakhtin's Circle and Freire because both, being complex, were considered based on the objectives of our investigation, which is the life story of a teacher and the approaches of the philosophy of language to education. To this end, we acted responsibly in choosing and sampling of data, understanding that "every interpretation is the correlation of a given text with other texts" (Bakhtin, 2017, p. 66).

It is necessary to emphasize that Paulo Freire, in the field of education, is the most famous Brazilian educator, studied at the world's most outstanding universities, and has always

defended the school as a democratic space in which students can become critically aware so that, by reading the world, they can transform it.

In turn, Bakhtin left only one essay called “Questions of stylistics in language teaching” (Bakhtin, 2013b), the result of his experiences as a teacher in two schools in the Russian countryside, demonstrating a method of teaching the compound period by subordination without conjunction. However, according to Freitas (2013, p. 96), “I do not find anything specific in Bakhtin’s work concerning education, but at the same time, I find everything in the words written in his texts.”

With this, the theoretical contributions of Bakhtin and his Circle can be understood within the philosophical sphere of education. Therefore, it is fair to look for a bridge in this dialog between Bakhtin and Freire that will lead the philosophy of language to education and, to this end, focus on a synthesis between the theoretical convergences of the two. We will focus more on Bakhtinian ideas to articulate them so that they are linked to education and its problems. However, we must not forget:

The Circle’s proposal not to consider subjects only as biological, nor only as empirical beings, implies always having in mind the subject’s concrete social and historical situation, both in terms of non-discursive acts and in their discursive transfiguration, their construction in text/discourse (Sobral, 2005, p. 23).

Thus, the Bakhtinian subject is not limited to the formation of their subjective identity but also identity in a relational sense, i.e., as Sobral (2005, p. 22) called it, an “I for-myself” and an “I for-the-other.”

We will, therefore, begin our conceptual review with the principle of alterity. Throughout most of Paulo Freire’s work, we see that alterity is the condition for the constitution of the self. For this, it is through dialog that the development of identity is established. Therefore, without this encounter between different voices, the constitution of subjectivity would be impossible.

Thus, according to Freire (1987), alterity consolidates the place of the other, which is seen with respect and singularity. This principle is at the basis of the teacher’s ethical action because, perceiving education as a process that generates critical awareness, as well as engagement and action to transform the world, the teacher needs to see this student ethically, i.e., recognizing them as a subject seeking freedom.

In line with Freire, the principle of alterity in Bakhtinian architecture deals with the constitutive relationship between the self and the other, which is structured based on provisional completeness that the other delegates to the self. Thus, the other, not classified as a mere receiving object, is alive and speaking. That is the reason we agree with Geraldi (2013, p. 15): “there is no education outside the relationship between the self and the other”. Moreover, in this network of relationships, both learn together and are transformed. If the subject’s constitutive process is based on dialog, both are constituted in the interaction between teacher and student, for example, and both emerge transformed from this relationship.

According to Freitas (2013), there is no definition of learning in Bakhtin, but the researcher shows us an exciting way of understanding this principle. Henceforth, the teaching and learning process would be part of the same process that develops in the “dialectic of interlocutions between its different authors” (Freitas, 2013, p. 97). Thus, we can relate learning to understanding. For Volóchinov (2018), there are two forms of understanding: passive and active. The former nullifies any possibility of a response, as it is a mere reproduction of a context and does not allow for independence of meaning or forms of expression. The second, active comprehension, “has an embryo of response” (Volóchinov, 2018, p. 232), that is, “the response generates a dynamic interest that promotes comprehension.”

In the sphere of learning, we can draw on Bakhtin’s and Volóchinov’s thinking in the sense that understanding arises from dialogue, enhanced by the ability of subjects to develop responses, which are admittedly free to develop their anti-words.

Therefore, through dialog, i.e., the ability to speak and listen, meaningful learning is built within the framework of active comprehension, i.e., complete responses.

Dialogue is the encounter between men, mediated by the world, in order to designate it. If, by saying their words, by calling out to the world, men transform it, dialog imposes itself as the path by which men find their meaning as men, dialog is therefore an existential necessity (Freire, 1980, p. 82).

Furthermore, in the relationship between teacher and student, as a dialogical relationship, we realize that both share their process of constitution. Therefore, this relationship develops in a “tense dialogical struggle between their own words and those of others” (Freitas, 2013, p. 98).

In addition, following Freitas' (2013) path on Bakhtin and education, the final process of teaching and learning takes place in the "internalization of the other's word, which is transformed into a personal word" (Freitas, 2013, p. 99). Thus, what at first belonged to the teacher will soon become part of the student in a constitutive process built with the other (this exchange of meanings takes place in both the teacher-student relationship and its opposite since we know, and want to emphasize, that the teacher also learns from the student). Hence, "the word of another as defining the basis of our ideological attitude towards the world and our behavior" (Freitas, 2013, p. 99) demonstrates the importance of education in the process of subject formation, as well as the "alibi-free" (Bakhtin, 2010) role of the teacher throughout this process.

Therefore, it is on responsiveness that the teaching and learning relationship is based, in line with an active understanding of the phenomena of knowledge. Within dialogism, the teacher is responsible for acting ethically, guaranteeing knowledge of the world and the other as a subject who is also responsible, leaving them free to engage in dialog. This teaching action requires an ethical commitment from the professional towards the other, whose bond goes beyond content training, as it represents a chance for emancipation and freedom from authoritarian and persuasive words.

For Bakhtin (1993), the authoritarian word is contrary to dialog because, "in a more remote area, it is organically linked to the hierarchical past" (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 143). Such a proposition takes up monological discourse, the idea of absolute truth, linked to just one voice that imposes meanings, preventing active understanding from functioning. These monological discourses can be found in different approaches, "religious, political, moral, the word of the father, adults, teachers, etc." (Bakhtin, 1993, p. 143). However, this word by the other that penetrates our consciousness, can acquire a new meaning, becoming an "internally persuasive word," i.e., linking itself to our word, going beyond a merely imposing character. In this way, inner speech, within the dialogic sphere, carries within part of our own word and part of the word of others, by the other, promoting the understanding of new meanings and enabling the generation of our autonomous word.

In addition, according to Paulo Freire (1987), the authoritarian word keeps subjects within a process of domination, preventing them from exercising the critical and authentic word, whose

purpose is to overcome the mutism celebrated by authoritarianism. Overcoming the authoritarian word leads human beings to dialog and, consequently, to transformative action.

For this reason, Freire's lovingness opens up the possibility that the teacher's authoritarian discourse does not happen, and understanding is an ethical commitment in a dialog whose exchange is responsive, promoting in the teaching and learning process what we establish as dialogic relationships, generating the possibility for these students (and teachers) to create their own words, freeing themselves from the authoritarian words of others.

Then, moving on to the category of becoming, Freire (1987) again mentions the presence of the other, establishing their importance not only in the pronunciation of the word but also in the strength that arises from constitutive interaction, which is based on the social. Faced with this collectivity, which makes it possible to pronounce the world, i.e., to say the word in collaboration with others, one begins to transform and be transformed. Thus, in this social dynamic, it is impossible to pre-determine the entire trajectory of the subject because, in the face of the movement that arises in their relationships, incompleteness becomes evident, tracing their affirmation as a historical subject, whose becoming presents itself as a possibility for the critical transformation of reality.

As a synthesis, the Freirean subject is consciously inserted into the social context, transforming the world and themselves, and being responsible for their actions. This liberated subject individualizes themselves based on the dialectical and dialogical relationships they establish with the social environment by supplanting austere forms of oppression. The "becoming" embodies incompleteness, as it results from a movement that is always under construction, both individually and collectively, in the process of historicization and humanization.

Therefore, it is through the critical awareness of the unfinished nature of being, as well as responsible action aimed at transforming reality, that human beings humanize themselves; i.e., they permanently seek to be more, freeing themselves from mechanistic and deterministic conceptions of reality, guiding an ethical-political capacity that allows them to interfere in the reality of the world.

I like being people because, unfinished, I know that I am a conditioned being but, aware of my unfinishedness, I know that I can go beyond it. This is the

profound difference between being conditioned and being determined. The difference between unfinishedness that does not know itself as such and unfinishedness that has historically and socially achieved the possibility of knowing itself to be unfinished (Freire, 1996, p. 59).

In turn, the Bakhtinian subject demonstrates their incompleteness through the idea of memory of the future since it is assumed that this subject is experiencing their history, i.e., they are constructing themselves based on their life journey. The memory of the past encompasses the entire history of which the subject was part of, as well as that of the community; they are the experiences, statements, and values that constitute each person belonging to that same linguistic community.

According to Bakhtin (2011), the memory of the past belongs to the layer of completion. On the other hand, the memory of the future is linked to the unfinished, that is, to the subject's becoming, singularity, and ethics. Both memories are always interconnected because memory is always of the past or the future, complementing each other. For example, when the subject enunciates, they are revolving already established values, but because of the intonation marks, desire, and expression, they modify the meanings, reinventing them.

For Bakhtin (2011), the notion of the future allows the subject to revoke the past and the present, as it demonstrates their incompleteness, pushing them towards completeness and future realization. In responding to their unfinishedness, responsive ethical action emerges, based on the isotopic relationship with the other, which gives them a provisional finish.

Both memories allow for the singularity of the subject, and in this provisionality that arises in each encounter with the other, there is a renewal that never ends. Thus, "the surplus of my vision contains in its germ the finished form of the other, whose unfolding requires me to complete its horizon without taking away its originality" (Bakhtin, 2011, p. 45). This exotopic vision shows that the other, from their place, completes the self. This concept means that the other has a more complete view of the self, characterized by their surplus of vision, that is, what the subject does not see of themselves but receives from the other. Thus, in this constant of completion and unfinishedness, we project ourselves from the other to consider ourselves – a mark of the memory of the future.

Thus, the category of exotopia makes it possible to create this proximity to the other, as it allows us to "axiologically see the world from within itself, just as one sees it, put myself in

one's place and, after having returned to my place, complete the horizon with the surplus of vision revealed from my place's outside" (Bakhtin, 2011, p. 23).

In this way, in the teacher-student relationship (and student-teacher, since they are mutually constituted), we presuppose different forms of dialogic articulation, given that the great universal symposium announced by Bakhtin (2011) is impregnated with tensions, not just harmony. Furthermore, in this infinity of interactional possibilities, refractions, deviations, instabilities, disagreements, and agreements.

There is, therefore, an ethic that makes no concessions. Even an authoritarian word like "be silent" would generate a response, even silence. In the meantime, we are irremediably together with the other in interactions that presuppose conditions of response, whether declared or internalized, because even in individual consciousness, there is the word of the other, which is a social voice, establishing our alterity. Since our own consciousness is a heteroglossic reality, i.e., plurivocal, it would be impossible to escape ethical responsibility since "there is no alibi for existence" (Bakhtin, 2010, p. 58) and "man never coincides with himself" (Bakhtin, 2013a, p. 59).

Now, teachers, aware of their responsibility towards others, cannot omit themselves in the face of the ethical condition that arises in their journey as educators. Thus, education from a Bakhtinian perspective is seen as a "responsible response," as suggested by Kramer (2013, p. 29). In fact, the researcher shows us what education might look like based on Bakhtin's architectonics:

- (1) Education is presented as a human experience in its epistemological, ethical, and aesthetic dimensions.
- (2) Education as a responsible response, taking the other as an absolute and unconditional priority.

If we focus our attention on the categories of Bakhtin and his Circle in an open and possible dialogue with Freire, we realize that it fits the reality of education, the problems of training, and the target of our interest in analysis because we will resume, from the narration of a teacher's life story, how his education was consolidated, highlighting the importance of school and the other in these unique contexts of life. In addition, we will analyze teaching action as an ethical and responsive action.

Thus, “education as a responsible response is committed to a certain project for society, it is situated in history, it moves between tradition and modernity” (Kramer, 2013, p. 38). Thus, Bakhtin and Freire consolidate a view of the subjects who are part of the school environment, characterizing them as ethically responsible for their practices, which are organized into rights and duties.

The narrative interview as a way of evoking the teacher’s voice

The concept of dialogism comes from the principle that language has no meaning as a mere system of forms but only as verbal interaction with evaluative and ideological marks. Thus, utterances are actual communication units and are not presented as isolated units. In this way, utterances are unrepeatable, as they are constituted in the act of interaction, in dialog with other utterances in the historical process of enunciation, such as narrative.

In this sense, the research data was produced using narrative interviews with teachers working at the IFSP (Brazil). Interviews are empowering tools whose assumption is to produce information through interaction between the interviewer (researcher) and the interviewee. In these narratives, dialogic relationships, and the meanings that the subjects attribute to events are present. In the interview, statements – that materialize in a discursive genre – emerge. In them, meanings, and significance – that the subjects attribute to what they have experienced – emerge as they narrate their life trajectory (both personal and formative, as they are intertwined).

In this article, we will conduct a dialogical discourse analysis of the test interview conducted during the production of data. To do this, we base ourselves on the enunciative theory of Bakhtin’s Circle, as well as Paulo Freire’s pedagogical proposals, which allow us to develop a methodology based on a socio-historical perspective, articulating the interviewee’s experiences with the different situational contexts in which they are inserted, bringing to light the complexity of this subject’s reality and their personal and formative journey to becoming a teacher.

We justify our choice of the teacher we interviewed because he has added values that are very representative of our choice of theoretical contribution, i.e., he is a teacher who is committed to his practice because he is ethically concerned and responsible in his profession, as

well as showing affection for his students and colleagues. In the context in which he works, he is highly valued by his students, his colleagues, and the community.

Before the interview took place, the “Informed Consent Form”⁵ was signed. The interview was recorded at the Federal Institute of São Paulo⁶, Brazil (IFSP). Professor João⁷, who works in the areas of Portuguese Language and Law, teaches subjects in Integrated Secondary Education, Technical Education, Higher Education, and Postgraduate Studies. The interview, recorded using a smartphone app, lasted 1 hour, 2 minutes, and 2 seconds and took place on February 2, 2019.

The interview began with a broad question, which served as a motto for the beginning of the narrative construction: “Tell me about your school career from your initial studies on.” Afterward, the interview was carefully transcribed, respecting linguistic markings and intonations, as a way of valuing and re-signifying the words, making them authentic and erected in an unrepeatable enunciative chain, bringing legitimacy and security as qualitative research data.

The transcript was sent to the teacher by e-mail in a digital file so that he could read it and suggest possible changes, which could be of any order, from deleting a statement to adding information. We would like to inform the reader that no changes were made, and he fully agreed to its use for academic purposes.

As a result, we believe that narrative analysis is a way of identifying traits for understanding the life history of teachers in their personal and formative aspects, revealing both their singularity and the collective.

Analysis of the narrative of the subject who becomes a teacher: teaching as a revealing ethical act

All of us, as part of our unfinished process, redefine ourselves based on our choices, listing knowledge that is elaborated and valued in the course of diverse experiences and that is formed throughout life based on interaction with other subjects, counterbalanced by a responsive understanding that takes place in dialogical relationships. Therefore, this formation is based on the relationship with others, oneself, and the world. We reiterate that when we elucidate the

⁵ Number of the proceeding: CAAE 90778118.8.0000.5514 at Plataforma Brasil

⁶ The Campus where the teacher worked was omitted to preserve his identity.

⁷ In order to preserve the interviewee identity, we used a pseudonym, “João,” in honor of João Franklin da Silveira Távora who was a Brazilian lawyer, journalist, politician, novelist, and playwright.

term “formation,” it is in the “sense of a progressive construction that manifests itself in a life story” (Dominicé, 2010, p. 87).

We would like to emphasize that it is difficult to compile the entire narrative journey of a teacher into a single analysis, even if it is just one interviewee. Therefore, by discussing the teacher’s voice, in line with the theoretical contributions of Bakhtin and Freire, we will try to demonstrate the convergences between these voices, highlighting the dialogic relationships during the investigation into the mishaps of this subject – who was becoming a teacher.

João was born in the rural area of the small town of Machado, in Minas Gerais. From a family of farmers, he shared the farm space with his relatives, as his grandfather, by way of inheritance, left each of his children a piece of land, creating small farms and forming a kind of family neighborhood. The neighborhood had no electricity. The only distraction was a battery-operated radio. The only light came from a lamp and a gas lamp, which helped him do his homework.

In 1987, at the age of seven, he started school at a small school in the countryside. The neighborhood school was housed in a church, and the first four grades of elementary school were held together in the same room. Studying with people from different grades aroused curiosity in the boy, who tried to understand what the others were studying and why he could not learn the other content.

Something terrible happened in this second-grade. Little João ended up failing the school year. He does not immediately remember why, but he believes it was because of the coffee harvest, which forced him to miss several school days. However, reflecting on this period, he remembers that the local government did not send a teacher to the small school, so it ended up hiring a resident of the neighborhood, the daughter of a farmer, who was educated up to the 8th grade and one of his cousins. At the end of the school year, the teacher told one of João’s aunts that he was stupid. He remembers how sad it made him and his mother. He came to believe that he was actually stupid, even though he was only eight years old and had no contact with the world, which led him to internalize this deception.

The marks of the authoritarian word, even of the most subtle ones, or of the silencing demonstrate the importance that the other person’s word assumes in the process of understanding and constructing knowledge. According to Bakhtin (2011), the word of the other assumes an active and creative bias for understanding because even if we do not actually express

a verbalized response, every form of understanding, at whatever level it takes place, is already responsive since it redefines, re-elaborates, and repositions itself, while this other is enunciating.

In this narrative mishap, we also see the importance of communication between teacher and student. According to Freire (1987), communication must take place in a responsible environment, in which the educator recognizes the other and their dignity through dialogue, enabling what is conventionally called democracy. With this, we realize the social and political responsibility of the teacher, who must promote an autonomous and liberating education.

In third grade, a new teacher, this time sweet, kind, and loving to all the students, awakens an actual platonic passion. That same year, he passed the third grade with the second-highest mark out of the four in the small school. He overcame himself through tenderness and had a real awakening as he remembered the whole learning process. Let us look at João's words: "Then, in the third grade, another teacher came, an excellent one, Renata. In the third grade, in '89, it seems like that awakening happened. I even remember the assignments, I remember what we studied" (JOÃO, EN, 20/02/2019 - emphasis added).

The verb "awakening" is highlighted, which is linked to the idea of emancipation, which occurs from the interaction with the new teacher. The lovingness in the teacher-student relationship reveals that the beneficial space that the school provided for little João left its mark on his search for the meaning of life through education. His awakened curiosity and the stimuli that reinforced his awakening to learning, especially in the form of linguistic signs, reveal the emancipating character of the other's stance in the process of constituting memory, knowledge, desire, and identity. Thus, according to Freire: "we know that education cannot do everything, but it can do something. Its strength lies precisely in its weakness. It is up to us to put its strength at the service of our dreams" (Freire, 1991, p. 126).

In the 1990s, he moved to the outskirts of the city of Machado, the interior of Minas Gerais. He began studying at a central state school and having contact with a subject that would awaken his talent for the Bachelor of Letters:

[...] It was my first contact with English. I had to learn English in one bimester of the year, because my school didn't have English, in the other one, that I used to attend, so I took a test, I managed to do it, I managed to learn, *I fell in love with English, I remember it very well.* (JOÃO, EN, 02/20/2019 - emphasis added).

The emotional memory reveals the importance of a school whose leading role is to offer a welcoming environment and encourage the practice of knowledge and dialog, providing reciprocal means of exchanging experiences. At this significant moment, English teaching emerged and, as a resilient challenge, led him to create a new passion.

It is important to note that João had always worked as a farmer, even as a child. In Machado, he continued to take the rural bus and help his father with the coffee crops. However, when he was in the second year of high school, he took a computer course, which changed his chances of getting a job, thus weaving new plots for his destiny. The specialization, in this case, a computer course, made João aware that studying could help him change his life story. As a result, at the end of high school, he was already planning to go to university.

According to Bakhtin (2019, p. 40), “it is in the exterior that the eternal litigation in the process of self-consciousness between the ‘I’ and the ‘other’ is to be found,” so inner life is constructed through the exterior, that is, by another consciousness, on the threshold of inner life. With this, we realize the importance of the other, not only the other who is outside and in front of us but also internally, as a result of the ideologies that we have constituted through contact with the other, what we can call the alterity of the soul. “Self-awareness of my being in the world only comes about through the active and evaluative understanding of the other, who sees me as an external body that stands out from its surroundings” (Zoppi-Fontana, 1997, p. 118).

In this way, we can see that João was seeking answers about himself and others through his questions and, consequently, about the historical and social world that surrounded him since, by awakening to self-awareness, he inaugurates a specific point of view about the world and himself, bringing out his conscious and active voice within a life plan that demands action, that asks for answers.

Even when facing various financial difficulties and sharing his time between study and work, João managed to graduate as a teacher through the Bachelor of Letter. He was initially motivated by his passion for the subject of English, which gave him the impetus to feel “intelligent.”

João’s voice, this time emancipated, begins to manifest itself in the form of questioning inner discourse, thus showing his awareness of the social and existential tensions he had experienced in a clash that made him reconsider his past and present, in a dialogue that reveals

the dialogism of consciousnesses, i.e., the awareness of consciousness, as João gains autonomy and freedom in the face of his choices, developing from the basic scheme of alterity: one self opposes another self.

For Bakhtin (2010), we live a non-alibi of existence, which moves us to assume our singularity in the face of existence, and if we do not assume this position, we will not leave a space to be filled by the other. Thus, for the Russian philosopher, living means assuming oneself, both in terms of redemption and burden, since “it is only my non-alibi in Being that transforms an empty possibility into a responsible and real act or action” (Bakhtin, 2010, p. 60).

The act of existing, also evoked by Freire, is shown to be a constant exercise in awareness, a reflection on the action; i.e., “conscientization, therefore, implies that we go beyond the spontaneous sphere of apprehension of reality, to reach a critical sphere in which reality is given as a knowable object and in which man assumes an epistemological position” (Freire, 2006, p. 30).

From now on, we will follow how João became a teacher. The particularities of João’s life that we have observed so far when launched on his professional path reveal how his peculiarities are reflected and refracted in his teaching performance, his loving relationship with his students, his ethical stance as a teacher, and his search for new training. Thus, in dialogical relationships, we try to weave and understand how their experiences in the classroom develop, a movement that is part of life itself. Freire (1997, p. 22 – emphasis added) states that all the theory used here is “soaked with lived practice.”

However, we will make a chronological leap, starting with his career as an IFSP teacher. His first experience on campus was in 2015 when he worked with three 1st-year Integrated High School classes. He fell in love with the classes because he identified with the teaching proposal, which could bring changes to the lives of those young people. Coming from state schools, he realized the deficit they had on several fronts, giving all his time and didactics in an attempt to help them seek a significant change in their life stories through study. He tried to create a network of motivation, showing everyone the importance and rarity of studying at a federal high school. Such a feat would undoubtedly lead them to countless possibilities for social upliftment, just as it did for him.

[...] the class, *I fell in love with that class*, the three classes, you know... *as a teacher*. Because it was that thing of teaching, of *being able to change the lives of those children* who were there at the age of 14, 15; entering 1st grade. *Coming from state schools, with no prospects, no knowledge*, still scared. [...] And then I remember that I did, I talked to them, to the whole class, I gave a very motivating speech, talking about the importance of them being here. [...] *we had a magnificent year* (JOÃO, EN, 02/20/2019 - emphasis added).

In this narrative, we see the passion emerging again, coming from his positive experience with teacher Renata, still in the 3rd grade, when he finished the year as one of the best students. The re-signification on the concrete level of the experiences, in the transfer of the feeling of belonging to an institution, due to the Exclusive Dedication bond at the IFSP, in addition to the opportunity to realize that he could make changes in the lives of those young people, coming from a study without so many sources of content, as he felt so many times. The use of the verb "to seek" as a way of attaining knowledge, in other words, liberation, shows how his consciousness reached the apex of his condition as a subject-teacher, acting responsively to delegate to the students what made a difference to his existence: the search for knowledge, the search for "awakening."

In Bakhtinian exotopia, we can see how the mirroring process took place because he saw in his students the possibility of creating similar perspectives. After all, "I must identify with the other and see the world through his system of values, as he sees it; I must put myself in his place, and then, back in my place, complete his horizon with everything that is discovered from the place I occupy, outside of it" (Bakhtin, 2011, p. 45).

The ability to listen to the other, in this case, the student, shows how social tensions emerge at the moment of interaction in a dialogical process of constitution. In another passage, John tearfully declares:

It's... I get emotional, really... It's very exciting to see... I get emotional easily, because... This issue of education is very strong, you know? *It's an issue that has changed my story, changed the trajectory of where I could have been, where I was born...* And I see that *I can do this again for them...* right? If you feel that *we can change lives here, right? Change people's stories...* (JOÃO, EN, 02/20/2019 – emphasis added).

We can see João's responsive attitude because he was concerned about his ethical role as a teacher and sought the success of his students, just as he had experienced in his career,

given that he awakened awareness of the meaning of his existence in his students (and in himself, in a dialogical process), taking on a pedagogical commitment, seeking emotional and rational involvement with his audience. For this reason, Bakhtin and Freire allow us to understand that we can reorganize social relations, formed on the importance of the other and listening to the other as a form of social transformation. That is why “teaching requires the embodiment of words by example” (Freire, 1996, p. 38).

According to Freire (1996, p. 72), “qualities or virtues are built by us in the effort we make to reduce the distance between what we say and what we do.” Thus, in João’s narrative, we can see his concern for his practice and coherence in both his formative and formative path.

Alterity leads us towards ethical acts. It leads us, reproducing its dimensionality in our actions and reactions, words, and counterwords, on a vast scale, always based on the social. Understanding the other involves an ethical commitment because, in front of the other, I perceive my own existence in its non-alibi character, i.e., the future is circumscribed in my actions, linking me to the other that constitutes me. That is why Bakhtin (2011) demonstrates that we are full of the words of others. When we construct our dialogues, we carry the voices of others, which we restructure and modify after appropriation. As a result, when we take on a responsive-active commitment as educators, we constitute ourselves as pedagogical beings who, based on an identity based on alterity, reproduce the words of those who have best embodied this peculiar identity of being a teacher on our path.

In this process of enrichment suggested by Bakhtin (2010), we can perceive the ethical action of teachers since they are equipped with an exchange of their own reality. The engaged teacher perceives the same difficulties they had in the student’s persona, helping them overcome these problems as a kind of projection because, through the gaze of the other, I identify my own vicissitudes.

Final remarks

The purpose of this text, based on the teaching narrative of an IFSP teacher, was to understand how this subject was constituted as a teacher. Using the enunciative perspective of Bakhtin and his Circle, in dialogue with Paulo Freire’s proposals, we demonstrate the importance of language in the process of alterity constitution, in the presence of the other as part of identity

and, also in the responsive character in the face of teaching performance, which is re-signified from the self-narrative.

To scrutinize life stories on a daily, personal, formative, and emotional level requires an acute perception of the details entangled in the meshes of discourse. Furthermore, as signs and clues are not immediately apparent, we believe that analyzing Professor João's voice allowed us to trigger new hypotheses and possibilities regarding this reflection on the subject in his formative process.

We know that every event is unique and situated and is therefore unrepeatable. This uniqueness of the Being, when perceived and motivated by the responsibility to act as a response to the world, is shown as the "emotive-volitional tone;" i.e., this evaluative accent is linked to the dialogical relationships that are established in life situations, when interconnected to some object in the concrete event, which reflects our apprehensions about it, our points of view that re-signify such eventfulness.

Therefore, by re-signifying these categories, whether Bakhtinian or Freirean, for the field of life story analysis, we have a vast possibility of interactions, in a plurality of voices scrutinizing several other voices, seeking to find the singular in the universal and vice versa. Life, examined here as a complex ethical act, aims to observe in the role of the teacher how important their participation is in the constitution of the other, demonstrating their responsibility and commitment to their bond as a teacher.

Therefore, it is necessary to perceive the unique place of the being-event as a counterpoint between the self and the other, thus demarcating the importance of this other as a constituent part of the self. Without the other, there would be no self. Thus, in João's account, we see the influence of this constituent other, for example, in the passage with the "cousin teacher," who takes him from a negative experience to a process of overcoming it through study, with the possibility of getting a grade being a form of recognition and self-realization.

Moreover, the teacher João, armed with his actions as a teacher, seeks to transfer his positive experiences to others (in this case, his students). Furthermore, we can see from the narrative that this is not a matter of vague sentimentality — it is instead an ethical commitment. The ethical act of a teacher manifests itself in the form of dialog. With no reason for arrogance or superiority, João responsively assumed his condition as a subject-teacher, articulating

knowledge as a way of delegating to others the possibility of changing their lives, as he obtained through education.

Through the use of narrative, which leads to a process of re-signifying experience, it is possible to make unnoticed aspects of one's own teaching conscious, leading to an understanding of how the process of searching for and organizing practices to intervene in reality (thinking about teaching action) came about. Through the narrative interview, it is possible to reconduct teaching practice, thinking about actions built on the experience that has been reframed, revised, and reflexively understood.

In this study, we can see the importance of a teacher in the constitution of subjectivity and of life itself. The interlocution between Bakhtin and Freire is pertinent, as both are philosophers of responsibility, freedom, response, and dialog. Both emphasize the importance of the other, who, far from being a mere object, becomes a being. Moreover, in the oneness of being, in the integrality between all, the importance of humanity, of communion, of the mutual construction of a fairer, more harmonious world that can give meaning to events, to the singular acts conducted by this being-event-plural is awakened.

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