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READING AND WRITING: READING THE (IN)VISIBLE AND WRITING CITIZENSHIP

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Abstract: Currently, learning to read and write is considered fundamental for the integration of the individual into society. The present study aims to relate the conceptions of teachers and students, about the importance of reading and writing, for the exercise of citizenship, with the implementation of teaching and learning activities that value the social function of language, in the classroom, in Elementary School II, in the municipality of Pedras de Fogo-PB. Using a qualitative approach, the teachers were consulted through a structured interview, in order to investigate the teachers' conceptions about the teaching/learning of reading and writing, from a perspective of education for citizenship. In turn, a questionnaire survey was also applied to students of Elementary School ll phase, enabling the crossing with the teachers' opinions, as well as a comparative analysis of the results obtained, in both data collection instruments the results show that students and teachers converge on the same understanding. The importance given to motivation is visible, both in the classroom and in the family environment, as it influences reading and writing activities. In addition, teachers reinforce the collaborative work between teachers from all subjects and curricular areas, with regard to the improvement of communicative skills. A last aspect, previously mentioned, has to do with the collaboration between the school and the family, as both are institutions perceived as responsible for the promotion of these communicative skills, fundamental for improving citizenship, transforming students into informed and active citizens.

Keywords: Reading.Writing. Learning. School.Citizenship.

INTRODUCTION

Reading and writing are fundamental factors for the insertion of human beings in today's society. The act of reading can provide the reader with access to information, the expansion of vocabulary and the development of criticality. In addition, it motivates interest in knowledge about various subjects and boosts social relationships in the community. In line with Freire (2008), we believe that reading must be a critical and reflective act, and cannot be identified simply as the decoding of the written word. We understand that the understanding and meaning of every text will only happen if there is a reading intertwined with the perception of the context, to which the subject belongs, as a member of a community.

In the history of education, we realize that, at all times, the school was selective, configuring itself as a privilege of the few (Saviani, 2008). Societies have always excluded those they consider "inferior". For a long time, the poor, women, slaves, immigrants, the disabled, and other minority groups were denied access to formal education, as they were considered unfit or undeserving to be part of society. Also excluded were those who left school early, because they had difficulties in following the school model implemented, because they were undisciplined, or because they needed to work to help support the family. This way, the primacy of an anti-democratic and excluding school was verified.

Only recently has there been a greater effort to universalize education, in order to make it accessible and inclusive of all students, despite the social and cultural heterogeneity, in an inclusive school perspective (Alarcão, 2007; 2001). In this context, reading and writing skills emerge, procedurally, as a condition for success and educational quality, as they are transversal to the entire curriculum, crossing different areas of knowledge. (KLEIMAN, 2008).

The research proposed is based on

a problem situation. In agreement, we enunciate the starting question, which will direct the study: To what extent do the conceptions of teachers and students, about the importance of reading and writing, for the exercise of citizenship, influence teaching and learning practices in Elementary School II, in the municipality of Pedras de Fogo? In order to answer the starting question, we defined our study to relate the conceptions of teachers and students, about the importance of reading and writing, for the exercise of citizenship, with the implementation of teaching and learning activities that value the social function of language, in the classroom, in Elementary School II, in the municipality of Pedras de Fogo.

METHODOLOGY

According to the starting question and the objectives outlined, it was decided to develop a predominantly qualitative research. This approach can provide an in-depth analysis of conceptions and practices in the educational area, providing a broader and more detailed view of school daily life. This way, the subjective perceptions of the research subjects can be revealed to us, to be observed and analyzed, based on the researcher's theoretical knowledge, systematized in the literature review. According to Richardson (1999, p. 26): "The scientific method is based on the observation of the world around us. (…) we must learn to observe as openly as possible, so that we can ask ourselves what, why and how phenomena are".

SUBJECTS OF THE RESEARCH

A total of 1,047 students are enrolled in the school. As for the teaching staff, it comprises 25 teachers of Elementary School II Phase, 6 teachers of Elementary School I Phase, 3 monitors of special students and 5 teachers of EJA (Education of Youth and Adults) of the 1st segment.

The participating subjects total 8 teachers from Elementary School II Phase (6th to 9th grade) and 60 students from those years, randomly selected.

The selection of teachers is justified because they teach Elementary School and because they exercise a teaching practice focused on the development of reading and writing activities, in a perspective of education for citizenship, according to the curricular indications in force. These teachers are part of the school's professional staff, with the exception of one teacher who is hired.

Thus, the participating subjects, with regard to the teaching staff, are all licensed teachers of Elementary School II Phase, qualified to teach the subjects in which they work. To preserve the anonymity of teachers, they will be referred to as Teacher 1 to Teacher 8, in compliance with the rule of scientific anonymity.

DATA COLLECTION SOURCES AND INSTRUMENTS

Our study began with a focused bibliographic research, privileging the dialogue between the researcher and the text. This active work of reading, questioning and reflection enables the researcher to produce knowledge about a subject. In addition, the questioning deepens during the study, given the observation of an educational reality, which requires a detailed and grounded analysis, based on previous studies (Flick, 2005). Therefore, our data source began with bibliographic research, on theories and studies related to teaching and learning of reading and writing, in a perspective of education for citizenship. According to Minayo (2007), the researcher must start from the knowledge previously built by other scholars on the topic in question, given

that their research can and must serve as a starting point for further studies.

In the research, structured interviews were applied to teachers and a questionnaire survey to students, the latter mostly including open questions. This way, we investigated teachers and students, verifying their conceptions about the teaching and learning of reading and writing, in an education for citizenship.

THE SURVEY BY INTERVIEW

The interview is highlighted by Oliveira (2007, p. 86) as an "excellent research investment, as it allows interaction between researcher and interviewee and obtaining a detailed description of what is being researched". For Bogdan and Biklen (1994, p. 135), "most interviews begin with a banal conversation". In the case of structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews, care in conducting is very similar. Richardson (1999, p. 216) suggests that "the anonymity of the interviewer and the confidentiality of the answers be ensured". In general terms, care is about not influencing the answers, putting yourself in a listening posture and trying to maintain a good, friendly and stimulating environment. In the study, we used the structured interview as a collection technique. According to May (2004), its character is closed, that is, the interviewee answers the questions within his/her conception, but according to previously outlined questions, since the researcher must not lose sight of his/her focus. Gil (1999, p.120) explains that the interviewer poses some problematizing questions and, although it allows the interviewee to answer freely, he does not deviate from the original theme. It is noticed that, in this technique, the researcher, to carry out the interview, must have a deep knowledge of the subject.

In the interview, the researcher must follow a list of questions or topics to be answered, that is, a script, prepared in advance (Mattos, 2005).

After conducting the interviews, which must be fully recorded, in writing or audio-recorded, the transcription and content analysis phase follows (Laville & Dione, 2007. The content analysis of an interview can only be done if it has been previously For Gil (1999, p.125), "the only way to accurately reproduce responses is to record them during the interview, using notes or using a recorder.

The author reminds that the interviewee must be asked for the necessary authorization for recording. May (2004, p.164) also points out that the use of a recorder "allows the interviewee to focus on the conversation and record the interviewee's non-verbal gestures during the interview".

The analysis and interpretation of responses to an interview survey must be consolidated by content analysis (Bardin, 2006). This type of analysis is used to describe and interpret the content of all kinds of documents and texts. The analysis, leading to systematic descriptions, qualitative or quantitative, helps to reinterpret the messages and allows reaching an understanding of their meanings, at a level that goes beyond a common reading (Stake, 2009). According to Bardin (2006, p. 38), content analysis consists of a "set of analysis of communications, which uses systematic procedures for messages". Following the semantic assumptions of the interpretation of messages and statements, the content analysis must have, as a starting point, the structuring of the discourse itself. (FLICK, 2005).

The different phases of content analysis are organized around three poles, as explained by Bardin (2006):

1. Pre-analysis - phase in which the material to be analyzed is organized, with the objective of making it operational, systematizing the initial ideas. This is the organization itself, with four stages: 1st

fluent reading; 2nd choice of documents; 3rd formulation of reading hypotheses and objectives; and 4th referencing indexes and elaboration of indicators, involving the determination of indicators, through textual parts of the speech;

2. Exploration of the material - exploration with definition of categories, which will allow (or not) the richness of interpretations and inferences. This is the basis of analytical description, which concerns the corpus submitted to an in-depth study, guided by reading hypotheses and theoretical references. Thus, coding, classification and categorization are basic at this stage;

3. Treatment of results, inference and interpretation - this step is intended for the treatment of results. It occurs through the condensation and highlighting of information, culminating in inferential interpretations, underlying a reflective and critical analysis.

Therefore, content analysis aims to overcome uncertainties and enrich the reading, through the systematization and categorization of information (Stake, 2009), in order to enrich a critical reading, in this case, responses related to a survey by interview.

THE SURVEY BY QUESTIONNAIRE

In order to obtain more information regarding the students' perceptions, we also selected the questionnaire survey as a data collection instrument.

According to Rodrigues (2006), the questionnaire survey is a data collection instrument, consisting of a list of questions related to the research problem. Its advantages include the simultaneous application of the same questions to a large number of respondents, which facilitates the comparison and triangulation of the data obtained. In

the characterization of Tuckman (2000) and Gressler (1989), a questionnaire must be simple, with direct and correctly formulated questions. In advance, the researcher must assure respondents that the data collected will be preserved and will not be transferred to third parties.

When elaborating the questions, according to the objectives, unambiguous phrases must be proposed, leading to the intended answers, so as not to insinuate other statements. If the questionnaire is completed in the absence of the investigator, it must be accompanied by detailed and specific instructions (Tuckman, 2000).

Regarding the type of questions, they can be closed or open. As for the former, Andrade (1999, p. 131) states that "closed questions are those that indicate options for answers or are limited to the affirmative or negative answer and already have spaces destined to mark the choice". In other words, they favor an analysis objective and systematized data. In contrast, Cervo (2007) explains that open questions allow for free answers, collecting richer and more varied information. However, they are coded and analyzed with more difficulty, due to the complexity of the language.

The use of closed and open questions, in a type of mixed questionnaire, is relevant, because it combines the advantages of both types of questions, using, for example, closed questions, for the collection of identifying data, and open questions, for recording the participants' opinions, enriching the analysis. However, as Tuckman (2000) reinforces, everything depends on the research design and objectives, because what is suitable for one research may not be suitable for another.

Taking into account the specificities listed, we chose to carry out a questionnaire survey to students, using mostly open questions. Guiding questions on the acquisition and deepening of reading and writing skills, in

relation to the construction of citizenship, were privileged. This was our option in the questionnaire survey, with the intention of inquiring the perceptions of a group of students from Elementary School. The use of this data collection instrument enhanced the crossing with the opinions of the teachers, collected in the survey by interview, making it possible to compare the perceptions of students and teachers.

CHARACTERIZATION OF INTERVIEWEE

With regard to the characterization of the interviewees, the results are presented in the table below.

After transcribing the interviews, the semantic clipping of the speech was made, following the respective analysis. Regarding the first category of analysis, we observed that most of the teachers interviewed recognize that, in Elementary School, there is still a traditionalist (4 occurrences) and normative (3) vision, which translates into a passive reading, without critical analysis. (3) in the classroom. However, in the subcategories, they refer to the change that has been gradually taking place in teaching and learning, aiming at a meaningful reading, by the student, of diversified texts (2), in a continuous process

of understanding meanings (2), which stems from the student's involvement in the act of reading.

As it was stated by the teachers, in the interview:

Teacher 1: "The conception of reading that predominates in Elementary School has always brought a traditionalist view that is based on the pronunciation of words, that is, on the simple reproduction of the sound according to what the norm considers "right". In this conception, the semantic field has always been discarded and the traditionalist view compromises the capacity for reflection and action that we expect from students in relation to the text".

Teacher 3: "As I see it, reading in Elementary School is used in a very traditional way. Gradually the way of reading in the classroom is evolving. I believe that continuing education for teachers must help for a more meaningful reading".

Teacher 5: "Nowadays, we can describe that the conception of reading in Elementary School II Phase is focused on a continuous process of using reading in all Curricular Components and is tirelessly seeking the improvement and growth of "reading" as

Category 1	Subcategories	Occurrences
Conception of reading in elementary school	Traditionalist view	4
	Normative view	3
	Passive reading without critical analysis	3
	Significant reading of diverse texts	2
	Continuous process of understanding meanings	2
	Total occurrences	14

Predominant reading conception in Elementary School.

a diversified interpretation in a production with Meanings".

Teacher 6: "All types of reading, as reading is one of the most effective ways of developing individuals. The act of reading must provide the reader with an understanding of what he is reading.

Teacher 7: "There is no denying that a traditional conception of reading still persists, marked almost exclusively by the study of texts contained in the textbook adopted in the classroom by the teacher. But this reality is already changing, as many teachers already work with diversified texts, from different sources, such as: newspapers, magazines, literature in general, comics".

INTERVIEW WITH TEACHERS (2014)

We observed that most of the teachers interviewed recognize that, in Elementary School, writing is linked to the traditional (5 occurrences), normative (4) conception of reading, following the standards of the cultured norm (3). Therefore, they refer to the changes that may occur with the production of diversified texts (3) in the classroom. As the interviewees say:

Teacher 1: "The conception of writing that dominates in Elementary School is also correlated with the teaching and learning method when referring to reading. For the teacher with a traditional tendency, writing is more important than the language, understanding, understanding and the intention come in second place in relation to their thinking. That is, the student has something to say and stops doing it for not finding or mastering what the standard norm requires".

Teacher 5: "Very related to the conception of reading, writing predominates in Fundamental II as a competence to make orality, a mechanism that describes possibilities for the student to gradually transform themselves into citizens who create new, critical and autonomous knowledge, appropriating writing to learn from various forms of textual production".

Teacher 7: "The writing that predominates in Elementary School is the writing marked by the concern to follow and respect the cultured norm of the language. When the student's writing is loaded with his own experience of life and social learning, the cult pattern of the language imposes itself as the one uniquely valid and accepted by the school".

Teacher 8: "Writing is linked to what you read, in this context the interaction between the author and the reader is important in the act of reading. So, it would be interesting to use other languages".

Category 2	Subcategories	Occurrences
Conception of writing in elementary school	Writing linked to the traditional reading concept	5
	Normative view	4
	Cultured norm of writing	3
	Production of various texts	3
	Total occurrences	15

Conception of writing predominant in Elementary School.

Among the teachers mentioned, we observed that Teacher 1, Teacher 7, and Teacher 8 are concerned with the development of writing, in connection with other aspects of language. Teacher 5 argues that reading and writing predominate as essential skills for children and young people to become "citizens who create new, critical and autonomous knowledge".

On the other hand, Teacher 2 works little on writing, believing that the student, before mastering writing, has to master speaking and reading comprehension. Teacher 3 and Teacher 4 believe that, in order to improve writing development, it is necessary to improve the pedagogical support given to teachers. Teacher 6 emphasizes that text production is the starting point for developing writing.

According to what was reported by the teachers interviewed, we observed a writing focused on standardized rules, legitimizing the official language, that is, the norm. We also found the perception that the development of writing, in a school context, is essential for the student to be able to communicate with others and understand the world. Thus, the child needs to develop, through training, specific skills and abilities, overcoming their difficulties and deepening their mastery of language. (MARCUSCHI, 2001)

CONCLUSION

Our investigation strengthened the certainty that the way to exercise citizenship involves reading and writing. Although, according to Freire (2008), no one teaches anyone to read and write, because learning is, ultimately, solitary, it is triggered and developed in coexistence with the other and with the world.

In this process, the teacher stands out as a professional committed to the reading and writing project, presenting strategies to guide his students, becoming an advisor and a mediator, opening spaces, launching challenges and developing skills, in the cognitive, emotional dimensions, sensory and cultural. Its functions, in the promotion of learning to read and write, for the exercise of citizenship, imply a social conception of education and, therefore, of its own social role. Only reflection and commitment to this role will be able to configure a social project, in which critical, participative and conscious citizens are inserted and interrelated. Generating meaningful learning is part of a conception of a liberating educational project, along the lines of Freire (2005), which alerts us to the commitment to a liberating education, conscious, intended for the world.

For this reason, "citizenship is not, however, an abstract conception, but an everyday practice. Being a citizen is not simply knowing, but living" (Pinsky, 2008, p. 96). As the research carried out shows, teachers persist in an incessant struggle for a reading and writing that prioritizes the student as a conscious, critical citizen, responsible for their duties, but seeking their rights, in the social environment in which they live.

We understand that many of the questions raised in this investigation can serve as a starting point for future investigations. Thus, we believe that the reflections aroused can serve to reinforce the scientific discussion in the area, contributing to the development of strategies that enable the formation of autonomous and critical readers and writers, in a perspective of formation for citizenship.

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