



A decolonial perspective on digital literacy

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Abstract. A research proposal at the master's level is presented here, linked to the research line “Language and New Contexts”, of the Graduate Program in Letters, School of Philosophy, Letters and Human Sciences, Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP). This is research in the field of applied linguistics, based on implications of digital literacy. The main objective of the research is to investigate how the conditions of access, or not, to the internet left the students of a 6th grade class, of elementary school II, from the state school Rotary, located in Guarulhos-São Paulo, on the sidelines. Therefore, this text focuses on "A decolonial perspective of digital literacy", in dialogue with the abyssal lines, considering "this side", in this case, the socioeconomic reality of millions of students in Brazilian public schools, who are at a disadvantage, had their studies interrupted and their learning compromised by COVID-19, so that students were left without support due to the lack of both internet and technological devices in their homes. To carry out the investigation proposed here, we chose to use a qualitative and quantitative research at the same time. It is constituted as a corpus of the research, a questionnaire, with open and closed questions that will be applied to the students of the already mentioned class. As a research problem, we sought to ask how and in what way the socioeconomic impacts affected the continuity of the studies of these 6th grade students, considering the means of access to digital literacy.

Keywords. *Digital Literacy, Decolonial approach, COVID- 19, Pandemic.*

Introduction. 2020 was a very challenging year for me, as the COVID-19 pandemic imposed a new reality on me. The traditional pen and blackboard were replaced by the Google Meet platform, videos and messages in student groups on Whatsapp. I worked at home, like thousands of teachers, to avoid the spread of the virus, so I had to invent a completely different way of teaching than what I knew.

I tried to use every means at my disposal to invite students to participate in classes, but in each student's home, the benefits of technology, when they were present, were trampled by real-life structural problems. I believe that in those months I still did not envision the dimension of the difficulties that we would have to face, I was only concerned with the number of students present in my class, to consequently show to the direction/coordination that my classes were flowing.

I worked at a full-time school - Programa Escola Integral - PEI, in which there is an evaluation of teachers, the dreaded 3601 evaluation, at the end of each semester. However, I was

not satisfied with seeing only a few students present in online classes. Students argued that they had difficulties accessing the internet, limitations of adequate equipment, complained about having too many jobs on the Google Classroom platform, in addition to a large load of domestic work, imposed by the family. And these were several of the recurring obstacles.

In this way, this research arises from the questioning of the complexity of the current moment experienced by education, at a global level, but also in local contexts. I could see that the pandemic exposed, even more, the inequalities of education (of public and private school students), where the inequality of access to digital is clear and, at the same time, the importance of qualitative investment in education, in terms of refers to tools for digital access.

On that occasion, in order to reconnect with the university and academic life, I presented my pre-project at the Federal University of São Paulo (UNIFESP) and one of the questions of this research, according to PARDO (2018) refers to:

how theory is often still seen as dissociated from practice and, moreover, how the teacher in the classroom does not feel represented in the process of building educational public policies (PARDO, 2018, p. 7)

Another point to be problematized would be the determining bases for the production and validation of knowledge. According to Santos (2018):

in practice an exercise of cognitive justice in which all voices can express themselves on the same equal footing, through mutual knowledge, mediation and the celebration of collective alliances (SANTOS, 2018, p. 13)

That is, no knowledge is capable of understanding itself without making reference to other knowledge existing in the world, that is, Santos states that all forms of knowledge are partial and represent only one among many other possible perspectives.

Main text. Due to the aforementioned facts, we are led to believe that the use of digital literacies/technologies is providing a change in student learning and teaching approaches in the country and in all school modalities. I understand that there is still no way to talk about change in the Epistemologies of the South, but rather a proposal that has been in the orbit of education for some years now, Distance Learning (EAD) being one of the examples.

Such a change can only be perpetuated and prosper when there is equity in access and adequate tools for Digital Literacy. Due to the pandemic, this became more evident and had its process accelerated, in order to seek the feasibility of teaching in times of quarantine, as students



began to need to use tools such as cell phones, computers, tablets and other technological resources to have access to education and carry out various activities.

Bearing in mind that most public school students should access classes via cell phone, as this would be a more accessible resource used in everyday life and which migrated, in this context, to the academic field.

Digital Literacies, especially at this time when physical contact is not advisable due to the pandemic, contribute to the socialization of knowledge, as they promote interaction between teacher and students, as well as between students themselves. This proposal makes it possible to advance in constructivist learning, in which such practice is concerned with ensuring that there is mediation between people and their social practices, enabling students to share experiences and transform them into knowledge, thus contributing to the development of each one of the individuals and increasing the students' level of autonomy and responsibility towards their learning, which in this context will be mediated by informational networks.

In line with this context, Schlemmer et al (2019).

Based on this understanding of what is social, the concept of network is understood as something alive, changeable - flows, circulations, alliances and movements of a series of animate and inanimate, physical and ethereal elements - and not as a fixed entity, reduced to a set of actors. It refers to transformations, translations, displacements, therefore, quite different from the traditional understanding of the network, as a form or structure (SCHLEMMER, MORGADO; MOREIRA, 2019, p.12).

The progressive process of network expansion concerns the various forms and alternatives available in proposing new technologies, namely: computers, media and social networks, communication systems, data and data reading.

The process highlighted by Schlemmer; Morgado; Moreira (2019), refers to the transformation of data and network into a commodity, structuring a data representation system that validates digital formats for market purposes. In addition, the authors highlight the process of transfiguration of the world and relate it to the process of changes in the perspectives of communication alternatives.

Therefore, I agree with the authors when they state that:

a progressive network expansion process: (computer, people, things, data); [...] an expansion and increase in forms of connectivity that connected us to other people, things, biodiversity and everything that exists, which refers to the connective nature of the human. (SCHLEMMER; MORGADO; MOREIRA 2019, p. 06).

There is, then, a generalized process of datatization, of transforming everything that exists into data. With the IoT, an object/commodity is connected to the network and, in addition to transmitting data, its status changes while being represented by this data. This is valid for all things, since everything can be converted into data, in digital formats and, therefore, everything becomes a transformation process that changes the status of reality. [...] a process of transfiguration of the world. One cannot think of the Internet, digitization, only from the perspective of computing or communication. The transformation process refers to the nature of matter – from atom to bit, to ecologies and also to the human.

Based on the concepts presented, it is possible to consider the design of an integrated and interdisciplinary teaching process, which promotes a teaching network that is related to the inherent changes in society, questioning and questioning its principles and developing a more critical education system in relation to digital literacies and the digital colonization of the Global South. As well as, says Santos (2019).

We live in a period in which the most abhorrent forms of social inequality and discrimination are becoming increasingly politically acceptable. The social and political forces that used to challenge this state of affairs in the name of political and social alternatives are apparently losing steam and, generally speaking, appear to be on the defensive everywhere. (SANTOS, 2019, p.17).

According to the citation, the author shows us that his concept of Epistemologies of the South seeks to delineate a theoretical, methodological and pedagogical universe that challenges the domain of Eurocentric thought. As a collection of knowledge arising from the experiences of marginalized peoples who actively resist capitalism, colonialism and patriarchy, Southern Epistemologies thus represent forms of knowledge that are generally discredited, erased and ignored by the dominant cultures of the global North.

Noting the decline in the effectiveness of established social and political solutions to combat inequality and discrimination, the author suggests that global justice can only exist through an epistemological shift that guarantees cognitive justice. This shift creates alternative strategies of political mobilization and activism, providing oppressed social groups with the means by which to represent the world on their own terms.



Conclusion. We can say that the guiding axis of students interacting on a daily basis and the analysis of the decolonial aspect, corroborates the constitution of meanings in interpersonal relationships in the perspective of multiple possibilities of reading about the same object. In this case, learning.

Thus, it was possible to build a narrative that justified inequality not because of the slavery and oppression they experienced, but because of the simple fact that they were not Europeans and, therefore, inferior.

When the term subject is used, the perspective of a being who positions himself in front of a discursive potentiality is put into play, that is, that which supports and is supported by the possibility of multiple meanings arising from his historical formation, there is the autonomy. Students show that, typical of their age, they are in the process of heteronomy, but they show positions in relation to the learning process that had been developed in this pandemic period.

It is also important to clarify heteronomy as the presence of the other within our discourse so that our text/discourse is validated.

According to what has been exposed, it is possible to begin to outline the final considerations, since this proposal does not end in itself, but allows new perspectives of analysis and, for that, an attempt was made to draw the articulation between the student learning in this pandemic period and the need for the teacher to be responsible for mediating between the object of knowledge and learning.

To conclude, but without closing the subject, we point out that it is necessary for the student not only to have the resources, but also the necessary devices to access the learning resources. The didactic-methodological resources from the perspective of the relationship between subjects is important, but the focus must continue to be the need to look at the student.

Based on the above, it is necessary to develop a practice focused on the student's socio-cognitive so that he is aware that learning, in its theoretical and practical aspects, builds relationships between subjects and constitutes the world.

Therefore, in order to guarantee the right of children and young people from the lower classes to know their own stories and rights, the right to manifest their traditions, to value their culture, to decolonize themselves and, therefore, to free themselves, it is necessary that they know and not accept the place of subordination assigned to them, occupying public spaces, building another narrative: liberating, emancipatory and decolonial.

Going back to school is still an arduous and challenging task. Since, trying to recover the skills and competences that were not reached by all students in the pandemic, maintaining remodeled teacher training, while they continue classes, and managing not to lose the essence of educating to form social subjects and critics, thus being able to transform society.

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