

TERRITORIAL LITERACY IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS: POETIC PRODUCTION AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING ABOUT LIVED SPACE

LETRAMENTO TERRITORIAL NA ESCOLA PÚBLICA: PRODUÇÃO POÉTICA E CONSTRUÇÃO DE SENTIDOS SOBRE O ESPAÇO VIVIDO

ALFABETIZACIÓN TERRITORIAL EN LAS ESCUELAS PÚBLICAS: PRODUCCIÓN POÉTICA Y CONSTRUCCIÓN DE SIGNIFICADO SOBRE EL ESPACIO VIVIDO



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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the relationship between reading, territory, and the production of meaning about lived space, based on the pedagogical experience “Niterói in Verse,” developed with 4th-grade classes in a municipal public school. It is a qualitative research study, configured as an analytical experience report, with approaches to an interpretative case study. The corpus consists of students' poetic productions, pedagogical records, and observations of teaching practice. The theoretical framework articulates Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy, literacy studies, with emphasis on Magda Soares and Angela Kleiman, and critical geography, especially Milton Santos. The results indicate that poetic production favored the elaboration of meaning about the territory, highlighting different forms of relationship with space, such as sociability, daily practices, and perceptions of inequality. As a contribution, the study proposes the notion of territorial literacy, understood as the articulation between language, experience, and space in the production of socially situated meanings.

Keywords: Reading. Territory. Territorial Literacy. Identity. Public School.

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa a relação entre leitura, território e produção de sentidos sobre o espaço vivido, a partir da experiência pedagógica “Niterói em versos”, desenvolvida com turmas do 4º ano do ensino fundamental em uma escola pública municipal. Trata-se de uma pesquisa qualitativa, configurada como relato de experiência de caráter analítico, com aproximações a um estudo de caso interpretativo. O corpus é composto por produções poéticas dos estudantes, registros pedagógicos e observações da prática docente. O referencial teórico articula a pedagogia crítica de Paulo Freire, os estudos do letramento, com destaque para

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Magda Soares e Angela Kleiman, e a geografia crítica, especialmente Milton Santos. Os resultados indicam que a produção poética favoreceu a elaboração de sentidos sobre o território, evidenciando diferentes formas de relação com o espaço, como sociabilidade, práticas cotidianas e percepções de desigualdade. Como contribuição, o estudo propõe a noção de letramento territorial, entendida como articulação entre linguagem, experiência e espaço na produção de sentidos socialmente situados.

Palavras-chave: Leitura. Território. Letramento Territorial. Identidade. Escola Pública.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza la relación entre lectura, territorio y producción de sentidos sobre el espacio vivido, a partir de la experiencia pedagógica “Niterói en versos”, desarrollada con grupos del 4º año de la educación primaria en una escuela pública municipal. Se trata de una investigación cualitativa, configurada como un relato de experiencia de carácter analítico, con aproximaciones a un estudio de caso interpretativo. El corpus está compuesto por producciones poéticas de los estudiantes, registros pedagógicos y observaciones de la práctica docente. El marco teórico articula la pedagogía crítica de Paulo Freire, los estudios de alfabetización y letramiento, con énfasis en Magda Soares y Angela Kleiman, y la geografía crítica, especialmente Milton Santos. Los resultados indican que la producción poética favoreció la elaboración de sentidos sobre el territorio, evidenciando diferentes formas de relación con el espacio, como la sociabilidad, las prácticas cotidianas y las percepciones de desigualdad. Como contribución, el estudio propone la noción de letramiento territorial, entendida como una articulación entre lenguaje, experiencia y espacio en la producción de sentidos socialmente situados.

Palabras clave: Lectura. Territorio. Letramiento Territorial. Identidad. Escuela Pública.

1 INTRODUCTION

The articulation between reading, school and territory constitutes a strategic field for understanding the processes of formation of subjects in contexts marked by socio-spatial inequalities. In the daily life of public schools, the presence of students is recurrent who, although they experience the urban space intensely, have difficulties in recognizing, naming and signifying the territories in which they live.

This dissociation between lived experience and understanding of space can be understood as an expression of broader processes of inequality, which cross both access to cultural goods and the possibilities of reading the world. In this sense, thinking about reading beyond decoding implies considering it as a situated social practice, crossed by relations of power, language and territory.

It is in this context that the experience "Niterói in verses" emerges, developed with classes of the 4th year of elementary school in a public school in the region of the Beaches of Niterói Bay, RJ. The students, mostly from communities such as Preventório, Grota and Cavalão, presented weaknesses in the construction of territorial references, evidencing limits in the constitution of initial forms of spatial identity.

In view of this, the study proposes to analyze how reading practices mediated by poetic language contribute to the production of meanings about the territory, in the context of the public school, proposing, from this analysis, the notion of territorial literacy.

2 READING, LITERACY AND TERRITORY: EXPANDED THEORETICAL BASES

The understanding of reading as a social practice finds in Paulo Freire one of its main foundations. By stating that the reading of the world precedes the reading of the word, the author shifts the centrality of written language to the concrete experience of the subjects, situating reading as a practice of interpreting reality. From this perspective, reading implies not only decoding texts, but producing meanings from the relationships established with the social, historical and cultural context.

Such understanding is deepened in the field of literacy studies, especially in the contributions of Magda Soares and Angela Kleiman, who conceive reading and writing as situated social practices, crossed by uses, purposes and power relations. In the same direction, Brian Street proposes the distinction between autonomous and ideological models of literacy, emphasizing that reading and writing practices are socially and culturally constructed. By articulating this understanding with the field of geography, it becomes possible to expand the notion of reading beyond the written text, incorporating space as a constitutive dimension of the production of meanings. In this sense, Milton Santos conceives

space as an inseparable set of systems of objects and actions, showing that territory is produced by historically situated social relations. Space, therefore, is neither neutral nor homogeneous, but crossed by inequalities that condition the forms of access, use and appropriation.

In addition, David Harvey highlights that the urban space is constituted by dynamics of production and reproduction of inequalities, being crossed by economic and social processes that directly impact the living conditions of the subjects. Such a perspective allows us to understand that the urban experience of students is not only spatial, but also socially marked, influencing the ways in which they perceive and signify their territories.

In the context of contemporary school geography, the contributions of Maria Encarnação Beltrão Sposito make it possible to understand territorialities as social constructions produced in everyday interactions, especially in the urban context. By considering the experiences of the subjects, the author expands the analysis of the territory beyond its physical dimension, incorporating symbolic, cultural and relational aspects.

In dialogue with the National Common Curricular Base, which proposes the development of spatial thinking and reading of the territory as school competences, the importance of pedagogical practices that articulate school knowledge and lived experience is reinforced. Such articulation allows students not only to recognize space, but to develop ways of interpreting and signifying it.

In this context, language assumes a central role as a mediation between experience and knowledge. By enabling the naming, description and interpretation of the world, language contributes to the production of meanings about the lived space. In particular, poetic language presents itself as a specific form of mediation, insofar as it allows the expression of affective, symbolic and imaginative dimensions of experience.

Thus, by articulating reading, literacy and territory, this study is based on the assumption that the formation of subjects involves the ability to produce meanings about the space in which they live. Such articulation underpins the proposition of the notion of territorial literacy, understood as the process by which subjects mobilize language practices to interpret, signify and resignify the territory, based on their social experiences.

3 METHODOLOGICAL PATHS

The research is inserted in the field of qualitative approach, assuming as an investigative strategy the report of an analytical experience, with approximations to an interpretative case study. Such methodological choice is justified by the nature of the object

investigated, which involves the understanding of processes of production of meanings in a school context, demanding a situated and contextualized analysis of pedagogical practices.

The study was developed in a municipal public school located in the city of Niterói (RJ), involving two classes of the 4th year of elementary school, composed of approximately 50 students, aged between 9 and 11 years, living in communities in the Praias da Baía region of the city of Niterói, RJ. The selection of the empirical field is directly related to the insertion of the researchers in the investigated context, which enabled the continuous monitoring of the practices and the production of records throughout the development of the proposal.

The research dataset consists of different data sources produced during the pedagogical experience, including:

- poetic productions collectively prepared by the students;
- pedagogical records of the activity;
- reflective notes of the professors-researchers;
- observations of the interactions that occurred during the activities.

The diversity of sources allowed a more comprehensive analysis of the investigated phenomenon, favoring the triangulation of the data.

Considering the age group of the participants, the analysis favored the identification of signs and initial movements of production of meanings about the territory, avoiding inferences that extrapolated the forms of expression typical of childhood. Such methodological care is based on the understanding of children as subjects in the process of constructing meanings, whose productions demand contextualized and non-projective interpretations.

Data analysis was carried out through an interpretative procedure of thematic inspiration, guided by successive readings of the corpus and by the identification of regularities and variations in the students' productions. From this process, emerging analytical categories were constructed, namely:

- territory as a space of sociability;
- territory as a space for daily practices;
- territory as landscape;
- Evidence of an expanded reading of the territory.

In a complementary way, a survey of the recurrence of these categories in the productions was carried out, with the objective of identifying patterns in the forms of signification of space. This procedure was not statistical, but analytical, contributing to give greater consistency to the interpretation of the data.

The interpretation of the data was discussed with professors involved in the experiment, with the aim of strengthening the consistency of the analysis. In addition, the explanation of the procedures adopted contributes to the transparency of the investigative path.

4 THE EXPERIENCE: POETRY, TERRITORY AND PARTICIPATION

The proposal began with a survey of previous knowledge, in which students were invited to share perceptions, references and experiences related to the territories in which they live. This initial moment evidenced both the presence of repertoires linked to everyday life and gaps in the naming, location and meaning of spaces, indicating different levels of familiarity with the territory.

From this stage, the collective production of poetry was developed, organized in groups, with the objective of mobilizing memories, affections and experiences. The activity enabled students to resort to concrete experiences, articulating elements of everyday life to forms of written expression. In this process, poetic language operated as a resource for symbolic elaboration, allowing the expression of perceptions about space that did not always emerge in more descriptive activities.

In verses such as:

In Grota there is an uphill and an alley, but there are also friends at the window

The articulation between physical elements of the territory ("ascent", "alley") and relational dimensions ("friend") is observed, indicating initial forms of meaning of space. This combination suggests that students are not limited to the description of the environment, but incorporate experiences of coexistence and sociability in the construction of meanings about the territory.

5 WAYS OF READING THE TERRITORY IN THE STUDENTS' PRODUCTIONS

The analysis of the productions evidences different ways of reading the territory, which are manifested in an articulated way in the students' poems.

First, the territory stands out as a space of belonging:

There I have friends who are like my brothers

In this case, the meaning of space is centered on social relations, indicating that the territory is understood from the bonds established in everyday life. The emphasis on

friendship relationships suggests that the meaning attributed to place is directly associated with experiences of coexistence, rather than with physical or geographical elements.

Next, the territory is observed as a space for daily practices:

People go to the market, buy tasty vegetables and fruits

This type of enunciation indicates the perception of space based on its uses, revealing a reading of the territory linked to daily activities and the circulation of subjects. The reference to the fair, for example, highlights the presence of social practices that organize life in the neighborhood, contributing to the construction of meanings about the place.

The aesthetic dimension of the territory also emerges:

I see the sunset that is beautiful

In this case, the valorization of visual and sensory aspects of the space is observed, indicating that the relationship with the territory also involves sensitive perceptions. The presence of this type of enunciation suggests that students mobilize not only practical experiences, but also ways of appreciating the environment.

In addition, signs of an expanded reading of the territory are identified:

There is pollution, violence and prejudice

This excerpt suggests initial movements of recognition of problematic aspects of the urban reality. Although in a synthetic way, the students mobilize references that go beyond the immediate experience, indicating the presence of elements of a reading that incorporates broader social dimensions.

Finally, verses such as:

The grotto sprouts in my head

indicate symbolic and creative forms of appropriation of the territory. The linguistic construction evidences an expressive use of language, in which space is re-signified through sound games and imaginative associations, suggesting a relationship that is not only descriptive, but also inventive with the territory.

6 READING THE WORLD AND TERRITORIAL LITERACY

The analysis indicates that poetic language acted as a mediation between experience and the production of meanings, allowing students to elaborate, through writing, interpretations about the territory in which they live. By mobilizing elements of everyday life, the productions show that the relationship with space is not limited to description, but involves processes of signification crossed by social experiences.

In verses such as:

There are people who fight every day

Elements of interpretation of social reality are observed, to the extent that students incorporate, albeit synthetically, references to the living conditions present in their contexts. The presence of the idea of "struggle" suggests a reading of the territory marked by the perception of daily effort, indicating initial ways of understanding the social dynamics that cross the urban experience.

Considering that these are children aged 9 to 11 years, living in urban communities, such enunciations should not be interpreted as consolidated conceptual formulations, but as indications of processes under construction, in which lived experiences begin to be named and shared through language. In this sense, the poetic production evidences the children's ability to mobilize references from their social context in the elaboration of meanings about space.

These productions dialogue with Paulo Freire's notion of reading the world, by indicating that subjects, even in the initial process of schooling, are capable of interpreting reality based on their experiences. At the same time, they are close to Milton Santos' understanding of space as a social construction, insofar as they reveal a territory constituted by relationships, practices and inequalities.

In the context of public schools, especially in territories marked by socio-spatial inequalities, the possibility of expressing and sharing these experiences through language plays a relevant role. The proposed activity created conditions so that experiences that are often naturalized in everyday life could be enunciated, favoring the construction of meanings about the territory.

It is in this context that the notion of territorial literacy is proposed, understood as the process by which subjects mobilize language practices to interpret, signify and resignify the lived space, articulating experiences, social practices and cultural references. This notion allows us to show that the production of meanings about the territory is also a dimension of the reading and writing practices developed in school.

The poetic production also favored the strengthening of initial forms of belonging, by enabling students to recognize themselves in their territories and attribute meaning to their experiences. This movement indicates that language practices, when articulated to the lived context, can contribute to the construction of more meaningful relationships between the subjects, the school and the space in which they are inserted.

7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The analysis developed shows that the articulation between reading, poetic language and territory constitutes a relevant strategy for the formation of public school students, by enabling the production of meanings about the lived space. Throughout the experience, it was observed that the students' productions were not limited to the description of places, but incorporated relational dimensions, daily practices, sensitive perceptions and, in some cases, references to aspects of the broader social reality.

These results indicate that, even in the early stages of schooling, children are able to mobilize lived experiences in the elaboration of meanings about the territory. Such a movement reinforces the understanding that reading, when articulated with the social context of the subjects, goes beyond the technical domain of language, configuring itself as a practice of interpretation of reality.

Poetic language, in this context, proved to be a powerful mediation, by allowing the expression of dimensions that do not always emerge in more structured school activities. By mobilizing memories, affections and experiences, the students produced their own ways of signifying space, showing that the territory is understood not only as a physical dimension, but as a space lived and shared.

By proposing the notion of territorial literacy, the study contributes to the field of education by highlighting the importance of considering the spatial dimension as constitutive of reading and writing practices. This notion allows for the expansion of literacy studies, by showing that the production of meanings about the territory is also configured as a social practice of language, especially in contexts marked by socio-spatial inequalities.

In the context of public schools, particularly in popular territories, this articulation takes on even greater relevance, since it enables experiences that are often invisible in the school space to be recognized and elaborated through language. In this sense, pedagogical practices that articulate reading and territory can contribute to the strengthening of bonds of belonging and to the construction of more meaningful relationships between students, the school and the space in which they live.

At the same time, the results point to the need to understand such practices within structural conditions that cross the school routine. Socio-spatial inequalities, limitations on access to cultural goods and teaching working conditions are elements that directly impact the continuity and consolidation of proposals of this nature.

Finally, it is highlighted that the study has limitations related to its empirical approach, developed in a single school, which does not allow generalizations. However, by assuming an analytical character, the research offers elements that can contribute to the reflection on pedagogical practices in similar contexts. By articulating reading, language and territory, the study reaffirms the role of the public school as a space for the production of meanings about the world, showing that the formation of readers also implies the possibility of reading and signifying the space in which one lives.

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