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English Teacher Education: Questions and Reflections on Methodological Aspects

Paulo Rogério Stella [α] & Daniel Adelino Costa Oliveira Da Cruz [σ]

Abstract- This article reflects upon teacher education as a possibility of collective construction of knowledge to counteract the incoming attempts of imposing unilateral perspectives at public university work in Brazil. We propose that teacher education should be localized and meaningful, going over teaching techniques and class procedures and touching individual reflections upon teaching and local identities. The implementation of this proposal is only possible by offering teachers ampler perspectives on teaching, valuing local identities, traditions, and cultural expressions. We argue in favor of a perspective of education based on three aspects about knowledge: 1. Local production; 2. Unpredictability and instability; 3. Essentiality and dispersion. The expected result is the humanization of the classroom, aspiring to awareness development regarding obligations and rights about citizenship.

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> As for myself, I shall speak of the paradigm of prudent knowledge for a decent life. By this phrasing I wish to signify that the scientific revolution we are undergoing today is structurally different from the sixteenth-century revolution. Because it is a scientific revolution occurring in a society that has already undergone a scientific revolution, its emergent paradigm cannot be merely a scientific paradigm (the paradigm of prudent knowledge), but must also be a social paradigm (the paradigm of a decent life). (SANTOS, 1992, pp. 30-1)
>
> In linguistics, as in any other discipline, there are two basic devices for avoiding the obligation and the trouble of thinking responsible, theoretical, and, consequently, philosophical terms. The first way is to accept all theoretical views wholesale (academic eclecticism), and the second is not to accept a single point of view of a theoretical nature and to proclaim "fact" as the ultimate basis and criterion for any kind of knowledge (academic positivism). (VOLOSINOV, 1973, pp. 62)

I. Introduction

These excerpts have never been more relevant than it is today in Brazilian grounds. We have witnessed several attempts, often successful, to erase other possibilities of knowledge production due to the valorization of unilateral, homogenizing, and most frequently repressive world views coming from official Brazilian government institutions. An instance of this is the Ministry of Education, that is in charge of the organization of public education in general and undergraduate education in particular. With a view to seek alternatives for better quality work for English-speaking teachers in public schools in Alagoas, one of the poorest states in Brazil, this article presents reflections aiming at localized and meaningful teacher education. These reflections come from nine years of work not only in the Licensure Course in English Language at the College of Letters of the Federal University of Alagoas, but also with public school teachers in the state, many of them, the institution's former students.

The reflections in this article aim to point out possible ways of working beyond offering classroom techniques and procedures, as commonly done in teacher training. We emphasize that those techniques and procedures are not without their importance since they meet the expectations of the majority of many teachers participating in training courses and even of the undergraduate students with whom we work. However, this perspective of work becomes insufficient in the face of the growing demands arising from public education. Individual reflection on one's practices as a teacher and a broader view of teaching and learning processes become relevant. Knowledge should be no longer abstractly constructed in such a way that it is distant from teachers and, therefore, accessible only through the reproduction of homogenizing concepts and values, often inadequate in the context of individual practical classroom face to face work. That is why we propose teacher education instead of teacher training. The process must be transformative for all participants, including teacher educators themselves. It can only happen if there is an appreciation of individual and collective identities, which allows educational institutions to prepare future teachers to be aware of their duties and rights not only as local citizens but also as citizens of the world.

Considering all this, the purpose of this article is to reflect on the possibility of interaction as determinant for the construction of collective knowledge in educational processes. By interaction, we mean that participants engaged in dialogs are positioned in the world, having, therefore, values that help build distinct

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identities. By dialog, we mean an ampler scope of possibilities ranging from simpler forms of interaction, such as face to face dialog, to more complex forms of interactions, such as dialogs between epochs, social groups, and ideological social aspects.

> Dialog, in the narrow sense of the word, is, of course, one of the forms – a very import form, to be sure – of verbal interaction. But dialogue can also be understood in a broader sense, meaning not only direct, face-to-face vocalized verbal communication between persons, but also verbal communication of any type whatsoever. (VOLOSINOV, 1973, pp. 95)

This point of view on verbal communication leads us to the question of the result of any type of interaction: meaning production. This result is not a synthesis of the encounter of two consciousnesses. On the contrary, it is not controllable because two consciousnesses in interaction have their histories, experiences, and values, which entails that the result of meaning production in any interaction is different for each participant as perceptions of the world differ.

> In essence, meaning belongs to a word in its position between speaker; that is, meaning is realized only in the process of active, responsive understanding. Meaning is the *effect of interaction between speaker and listener produced via the material of a particular sound complex*. It is like an electric spark that occurs only when different terminals are hooked together. (VOLOSINOV, 1973, pp. 102-3)

With this, the humanization of the classroom space is sought as a space for listening to the other through the exchange of experiences among participants of the teaching and learning processes, because "knowing and thinking do not mean to reach an absolutely certain truth, but to dialogue with uncertainty"[1] (MORIN, 1999, pp. 58).

To address this issue, we have divided this article into three sections. In the first one, we will reflect on the importance of turning our eye to localized production of knowledge, which allows changes in the teaching and learning process. In the following section, we will bring circulating discourses in the public school classroom space, understood as commonsense truths that aim to dismantle the public space. Lastly, we will deal with our education proposal, establishing three pillars that dimension our educational perspective.

II. Positioning the Eye

When it comes to teacher education, it is necessary to keep in mind that it entails a political position. It must be an act of positioning oneself locally so that participants in the educational process can act together through the search for values beyond those traditional, homogenizing, and naturalized ones (DOLPHIJN; TUIN, 2012). Freire (1995) teaches us that education depends on the position of all participants not only in the most concrete context corresponding, for instance, to the classroom space itself, but also in the broader and more abstract context of values that circulate as ideologies, histories and social perspectives. That helps to produce the meaning of local actions for the people involved.

Teacher education needs to consider three main aspects concerning its conception. The first aspect concerns the specificities related to the local contexts where teachers work. A positioned eye can allow the search for alternatives and more precise solutions to the problems faced. The second aspect renders relevant the discussion and reflection on broader socio-historical issues, which, although apparently not directly linked to teaching work, deeply interfere in actions within school space. The third aspect relates to the possibility of opening a horizon of change that includes all participants in the educational process. Thus, for a teacher education that focuses on the construction of localized meanings with a view to transformations and changes, it should be considered that the most suitable subjects to promote these changes are those that are part of their school contexts. They are the ones experiencing the pressures, the problems of each environment, and, consequently, building knowledge and seeking local solutions via their community.

Teacher education should offer the possibility to open horizons made of other values than those circulating in the common sense. It should aim at the construction of alternative views by participants so that they can cope with concrete and arduous contexts of public schools. That will possibly promote the resignification of the identities of teachers and students, turning their eyes to their localities so they start viewing education as a never-ending process of local meaning-making.

Volosinov (1973) understands the concept of context in a non-deterministic, fluid way, bringing the possibility of the existence of several contexts together that will guide and make meanings for individual actions at the same time. On the one hand, there are more concrete and immediate contexts that can be seen and touched. In our case, it is the classroom in which the teacher works and where objects produce meanings in relation to the actions and to the interactions of both the teacher and students. On the other hand, there are broader and more abstract contexts, related to historical and social issues, which, despite not being physically present in the classroom, interfere in the interactions that occur therein. That is, they are structural. All contexts interact at the same time anchored in the values that circulate when teachers and students are in the classroom.

The report of an English teacher hired to substitute for a regular English language teacher in a

[1] Translated by the authors from the text in the Portuguese language.

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public school in the city of Maceió in a grade school[2] class can be a suitable example of the functioning and the interrelations built through the interaction of these contexts. The teacher says it was no use trying to do it differently if the school structure did not allow it. According to this substituting teacher, classrooms had their desks attached to the floor in the traditional alignment, making it impossible for this teacher to try to work with distinct classroom shapes and for students to move their desks around freely. Also, there was the problem of lack of equipment for classes, that is, classrooms were composed of desks, chairs, and board, having no other resource available, which provoked a general lack of motivation on the part of all teachers in the school. Besides that, students were not willing to try other forms of learning than copying the material from the board simply because this was how it had always been done. If there was no copy, students understood they were not learning the subject. The teacher concluded that it was impossible to try new things because there was no room for change.

> Teacher: I started teaching English at a state school. But I thought I could teach a more dynamic class, to escape a little bit from the pattern according to which I was taught in my early years in high school.
>
> Except that is not how it happens. I teach students from the sixth to the eighth grade, but the students do not show much interest, so I must appeal to the written form anyway. I write the content on the board, they write it down, and they stay with it. I wanted to work with films, but there are many students, and there is no way I can work differently.[3] (STELLA; CRUZ, 2014, pp. 149)

We can observe not only the functioning of a concrete context in the report, such as the lack of equipment available for use or desks nailed to the floor, but also the functioning of broader contexts, of which values interfere in the classroom, such as students' expectations for traditional learning through copying. These contexts interact with each other, with the teacher and with students, producing distinct meanings for each one of them. On the one hand, there is a feeling of frustration on the part of the teacher, who ineffectively tried to introduce some other teaching procedures and techniques. On the other hand, there is a feeling of dissatisfaction on the part of the students, who believed they could only meet their learning expectations if there was material on the board for them to copy.

According to Bakhtin (1990), values circulate in all contexts that guide the production of individual and collective meanings, materializing these values in concrete actions and reactions. It turns out that this relationship between context and values does not work exactly mechanistically because, in addition to the contexts, there is always a horizon of values viewed by each and every one of the participates in interactive processes. This horizon of values refers to the vision respective to the position of each one in the context of interaction. The direction of one's eye to one's interlocutor implies a wide vision field that comprehends more than the sole figure of that interlocutor, both concretely and abstractly speaking. This exceeding vision contains values viewed by each one that participates in the interaction. One participant does not access the same horizon of viewed values as the other participant. We mean that the horizon at which one looks interferes directly in the meaning-making resulting from the interaction. We can say that contexts exert pressure on the processes of interaction, at the same time that the speaker's eye, directed to the interlocutor, implies the possibility of glimpsing other, unique, desired, and/or intended values.

The horizon of values is always unique for the moment of interaction and dependent on the relationship established between the speaker and the interlocutor. Meaning, in turn, is understood as the result of the tension between two individual and distinct life experiences, considering the contexts and horizons of the target values. Hence the impossibility of the existence of the same meaning for the speaker and the interlocutor since the directed eyes of each of them perceive different values. That makes the context more fluid and plastic because it allows nuances in the production of meanings among the participants in the interaction. The example brought by the teacher's report clearly demonstrates the difference between the horizons of values of the teacher and those of the students when it comes to learning the English language.

The elimination of the possibility of producing local knowledge is called epistemicide by Santos (2014). It implies the thoughtless replacement of local knowledge by values arising from homogenizing paradigms resulting from processes of globalization. The author considers that all globalization values were once localized values. Values that circulate in a given place are disseminated to other locations that will accept those values as true and sound. The inhabitants of a locality affected by globalization perceive the homogeneous values brought by it as natural values. Those alien values, once accepted into the community,

[2] The Brazilian educational system is organized in what we call Basic School and Higher Education. Basic School is divided in kindergarten, grade school, and high school. Grade School is divided in Grade School I (ages 6 to 10) and Grade School II (ages 11 to 14). As far as under-graduate courses that form teachers for Basic School is concerned, Kindergarten and Grade School I are covered by the Pedagogy Course at University. Grade School II and High School are covered by the Licensure Courses at University. Licensure courses will focus each area independently: Language, Geography, History, Chemistry and so on. This article discusses issues taking place in Grade School II.

[3] Translated by the authors from the text in the Portuguese language.

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start circulating in the new context. This movement causes the rejection of those values that circulated locally before the introduction of the ones coming from globalization. As a result, there is a general rejection of local values, which come to be identified as old fashioned and unimportant Everyone's eye will then be guided towards a horizon of commonsense homogeneous values, causing blindness in the population and consequent disregard for local realities. In terms of knowledge production, that prevents any possibility of localized production of knowledge due to the devaluation of the circulating values of a given social group.

Epistemicide has the consequence of building abyssal spaces among people. The use of concepts and paradigms unrelated to the local context of production creates an abyss in which, on the one hand, there are global homogenizing values and, on the other, there are values that undergo a process of extinction. Knowledge coming from outside, globalized and homogenizing, implies the blindness of the local reality caused by the importation of predetermined categories alien to the local needs. Nancy (2000) brings a similar discussion about the relevance of observing local values when reflecting upon the opposition between essentiality and singularity. Disseminated as a value of modernity, human essentiality preaches a common and good origin to all human beings, which will result in the illusion of a future egalitarian society where everyone lives in perfect harmony. Nancy claims that what makes us human are our singularities resulting from experiences and histories built by dialogue with others locally. Only our awareness of each one's singularity allows us to attentively listen to the other (FREIRE, 1995) and to consider our differences. Only by doing this can we achieve a better society. In this regard, knowledge production is the result of a constant process of interrelations among singularities. As Volosinov (1973) states,

> [t]he "we-experience" is not by any means a nebulous herd experience; it is differentiated. Moreover, ideological differentiation, the growth of consciousness, is in direct proportion to the firmness and reliability of the social orientation. The stronger, the more organized, the more differentiated the collective in which an individual orients himself, the more vivid and complex his inner world will be. (VOLOSINOV, 1973, pp. 88)

III. Careless Discourses

This discussion about tension in both the dichotomies globalization-localization and essentiality-singularity in the production of knowledge is of particular interest to us in the treatment of the meanings constructed by students and teachers in and for public school. It can give us clues to work with teacher education. In a research carried out with in-service graduated teachers of English and pre-service teachers, undergraduates at an English language licensure course in Maceió during the years 2012 to 2014 (STELLA; TAVARES, 2012; STELLA, 2013; STELLA; CRUZ, 2014), we noticed the existence of four possibilities for building meaning for the discipline of English Language in public grade and high school: the nostalgia of better learning days, the lack of vocational teachers, the learning of grammar or not, and the asymmetry related to the term education.

The first detected discursive bias refers to nostalgia on the part of the teachers from a remote past in which teaching activity and public school would have been better. The teachers believed it was a time felt to be an idyllic period when classes were homogeneous, and students, regardless of their origins, were interested in learning what was offered by the teacher. These discourses are marked by a feeling of immense disappointment caused by the irreparable loss of that organized and controlled past compared to a confused and disorganized present.

The second discursive bias, however, concerns the question of the vocation to be a teacher, which circulates both in the discourses of public school teachers and in the discourses of undergraduate students in the university's pre-service English licensure course. The recurrence of the statements leads us to the difference in quality between those teachers who have the gift for teaching and those who do not, but who exercise the profession for lack of a more prestigious opportunity. According to our interpretation of the discourses we have analyzed, as a result of the fact that those true vocational teachers are in extinction, what is found in the job market today are the ungifted ones.

We see two consequences of this second bias. The first consequence of both the feeling of nostalgia and the sense of lack of vocational teachers dedicated to work is reflected in the discredit and demerit with regard to both the profession of teacher and basic public school. The second consequence of these two discursive biases is the projection of the failure on the other. Teachers transfer the learning problems responsibility to their students due to the lack of interest and demotivation of these students. Those teachers believe students are no longer as they used to be: these students are no longer interested in knowledge. Students, on the other hand, find teachers responsible for the lack of both their interest and the lack of motivation they feel for learning since teachers are seen as the ones who do not have the gift of teaching, resulting in poor lessons.

The third bias refers to the relationship between the use of English and English grammar in learning the English language. In this case, teachers and students alike refer to the importance of learning the English language in two different but complementary ways. Firstly, they perceive English as a language of contact between cultures, promoting integration in the processes of globalization. It is worth explaining that, in

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this case, globalization is confused with the possibility of consumption of goods and services and the ability to use English to communicate in virtual message exchange platforms. Second, they associate the use of the English language with professional success, referring to the discourses that deal with the need for a foreign language as a way of accessing better paid careers. Although there is this perception of the English language as an instrument of international communication, of access to more goods, and professional success, the discourses still point to the existence of great frustration due to the failure in reaching a positive concrete outcome in the classroom.

This failure is pointed out as a result of students' distance from the world of the English language. There is a perception that students have an insurmountable cultural gap as a consequence of poor educational background and precarious economic and social conditions. The school, in turn, is unable to fill this gap because it also does not have adequate infrastructure or well-educated teachers. The solution found in trying to solve this problem is learning basic grammar before learning the language in use. Thus, the teaching of artificial grammatical structures that are displaced from reality is justified by teachers. The sole teaching of basic grammar reinforces the chasm between the worlds in which the English language concretely circulates and the classroom where it is taught as an abstract body. Teachers, working with grammatical abstractions, become an agent of this distance between students and the globalized world. The teachers we interviewed ultimately become the agent of the same exclusion processes that they perceive as harmful.

The fourth bias relates to the meaning given by teachers when they refer to the terms training and education. In this case, we perceive the existence of a marked asymmetry when teachers talk about themselves regarding teacher trainers and professors at licensure courses at university. That happens in two moments: the first moment is when those teachers mention their participation in teacher training programs offered by public or private institutions, while the second moment refers to their formal education at university. As related to teacher trainers, the teacher discourse points to a type of teacher trainer who is considered better prepared in terms of knowledge or life experience than the teachers themselves. Teachers expect teacher trainers to put them on the right path or in the correct mold required by the profession of a public school teacher. That means that there is a huge expectation on the part of teachers to always be presented with new techniques and recipes. The teachers regard these as the knowledge they need.

In the case of their formal education at university, there is a general perception about the distance between theory and practice. The teachers believe that what they learned during their university years was not of much help when they effectively took over their classrooms. They recognize both the importance of formal education as a means to be more successful in life and the quality of their professors as educators and researchers at university. However, the teachers also understand that formal education is not relevant as it may not enable them to deal with classroom problems.

They also feel that there is a great distance between themselves as basic public school teachers and their professors at university. They have learned about theory with university professors, but they feel they needed more practice. The issue here is that for the teachers practice means classroom techniques to be applied in their classrooms. Again, they are in search of recipes. By being able to employ new and attractive teaching procedures to teach English in local public schools, teachers believe they will add to their repertoire of activities so that they will be able to motivate students. They believe that by doing so, they will be able to make for a faulty infrastructure. The problem here is that pre-conceived activities that training programs offer tend to be homogenizing and generalizing since they are designed for an average audience. We have concluded that teachers are confusing the objectives of teacher training programs and teacher education at university.

In both situations, teachers represent themselves in an inferior position in relation to both their trainers and professors. Regarding their trainers, they believe that such trainers have more professional experience. Regarding their professors, they believe these professors are in a far better social and professional position. In between these two categories, namely teacher trainers and professors, teachers feel they have nothing to offer. They position themselves uncritically as the ones who can only learn passively, and who have no possibility of constructing knowledge. It turns out that this perception adds to the problem of the gap between English in the classroom and English as an instrument of access and communication among cultures. The result of this situation is a frustration in relation to both formal education and training. According to Santos (1992),

> [m] echanistic determinism provides a clear horizon for a form of knowledge that was meant to be utilitarian and functional, acknowledged less for its capacity to understand reality at its deepest level than for its capacity to control and transform it. (SANTOS, 1992, pp 31)

IV. Prudent Education

The question that arises at this moment refers to how teachers' identities can be influenced by those careless discourses that circulate. According to Nancy (2000), identities are relational and are in a constant process of construction and reconstruction. That is to

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say that identities are always oriented towards the other as one responds to demands put forward by such other. For this reason, identities should be fluid and dialogical not only in relation to the various identities within ourselves but also in relation to the possibility of constant changes and adaptions we have to go through in each one of our identities.

On the other hand, fixed identities that tend to be closed in themselves and monological are deprived of fluidity and of meaning-making. Those fixed identities resist the possibility of change that arises from the necessary adjustments within interactional processes. This resistance to change is associated with moments of circulation of totalitarian values in which there is a constant attempt to interdict, control, and paralyze the possibility of meaning-making since the only meaning possible is the one established by officiality. In these moments, circulating discourses aim at an idealistically homogeneous world deprived of otherness.

Ponzio (2010) understands these moments as moments of deafness to otherness. They happen when meanings coming from globalizing processes prevent local possibilities of meaning-making, directly interfering in the constitution of identities. In consumption societies, people are less prone to stop to listen to others, tending towards the expression of opinions about everything and everyone. According to the author, we live in speaking societies where everyone believes to have something important to say. The problem is that there is no one to listen to them: we are deaf to otherness. We are closing ourselves into few resisting identities as a consequence of not reflecting upon and with the other. Circulating commonsense discourses tend to stick more forcefully to certain social groups that not only keep on reproducing sameness but also believe their discourses are unquestioned truths.

Our proposal is that teacher education must promote attentive listening to otherness (FREIRE, 1995; PONZIO, 2010), aiming to escape from those totalitarian discourses. On reconstructing local identities by strengthening local values, teachers may be more attentive in listening to theirs and their students' needs and perspectives involving learning a foreign language. Through the orientation to other discourses than those coming from globalization, we favor other meaning productions by actively responding to local demands in more concrete and focused ways. In other words, the education of English-speaking teachers should promote reflections about the teacher's work in the context of regular public school, aiming at the formation of a critical conscience on the part of teachers regarding homogenizing discourses that aspire to maintain the relations of power by controlling knowledge production. The production of knowledge must pay attention to local cultural, social, and political movements, of which protagonists are teachers and students themselves.

With a view to responsive and critical teacher education, we have established three discursive-methodological pillars with which we work inside and outside the university. The first pillar seeks subsidy in the reflections of Santos (1992) about the production of knowledge in the human sciences, shifting them to the context of teacher education work. The author considers that all knowledge is socially and historically situated, and there is no escaping from it. Knowledge arises from the participants' interpretation based on the interactions established within the reality to which the process participants belong. As a consequence, all knowledge and meaning making are local and total at the same time.

Knowledge is not only the result of the locally constituted interactions between the immediate participants in the process, serving the location where it was created, but it is also comprehensive because it is based on the vision and knowledge derived from the experience of all people involved. Besides that, teacher education must also help pre and in-service teachers produce meaning for themselves. Pre and in-service teachers must learn to listen to themselves in search of a constant repositioning of each one in relation to the others with whom they interact. Teacher education must also view the ability of pre and in-service teachers to access self-knowledge. The circulation of knowledge that takes place in teacher education courses, as the result of the process of interactions, constructions, and reconstructions of meanings, should serve not only for collective lives but should also promote constant repositioning of teaching identities involving meaning-making inside and outside classroom contexts.

The second pillar seeks to incorporate the acceptance of instability and unpredictability outcomes (FEYERABEND, 2004) in the formative processes. That results from the complexity of instances interacting at the same time during the formative meetings. The excessive control and constant search for stability leads to loss of meaning due to the deafness caused by the imposition of viewpoints and perspectives. Attempting to stop other possibilities of meaning-making than that brought about as the only truth prevent the capture of displacements and contextual changes inherent to the lived life. Bakhtin (2007) adds to this reflection by bringing about the notion of concrete utterance. Those are utterances produced in a given time and space by interlocutors historically positioned in specific contexts. These statements are unrepeatable due to time-space axes variation at each instant of the production of such statements. A teacher education methodology that turns its eyes to the possibility of building knowledge for and with the immediate participants must incorporate the uncertainty of present and future, the instability of relationships, and the impossibility of reproducing the same processes indefinitely. A teacher education course that places participants in the center of the process

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opening itself to listening to experiences, expectations, and interests can lead to robust localized reflections about movements related to language teaching and learning.

The third and last pillar deals with the tension between essentiality and dispersion (DELEUZE; GUATTARI, 1987). Considering teacher education, essentiality can be understood as educational and linguistic principles that give rise to reflections on teacher education and training. However, interaction with local contexts and participants in the educational and training processes lead to the dispersion of meanings. Other possibilities for context-oriented knowledge production are also built due to the dispersion. Original concepts and notions brought about by those educational and linguistic theories that give rise to reflections remain, though. What happens is that the essentiality is gradually displaced due to the adaptation to contexts where they are applied and reworked. In other words, linguistic and educational theories developed in a foreign location may be brought into a local context. But they have to be rethought locally. That is at the heart of the notion of essentiality and dispersion.

Bruner (2014) offers reflections that complement this issue of essentiality and dispersion when dealing with the importance of autobiographical narratives. The author considers it as a way of accessing reinterpretations and representations of the world. The ability to narrate the world and to narrate oneself is constitutive of human beings, becoming a relevant instrument for observing the (re)constructions of reality perceived by people. Unpredictability and instability are two characteristics of this narration process because what is sought is the cognitive re-elaborations of each one about a given experience and not the exact mirror of that given reality. Still, for Bruner and Weisser (1991), the autobiography is double-faced: on the one hand, it presents an individual point of view regarding a given experience. On the other hand, the set of individual lived experiences makes up a collective of meanings regarding the perceptions, representations, and perspectives of a given observed reality.

That is in line with the reflections of Bakhtin (2007), for whom we only exist in the lived world through the texts that narrate us. These texts operate within the fields of human activity for which they were intended, through which social, historical, and ideological values circulate. These values get materialized in these texts through circulating social themes that not only reflect reality but also point to possible social changes that may happen as a result of the small displacements of meanings caused by space-time movements in which interactions occur. Thus, teacher education courses must be attentive to individual (re)elaborations of narratives that regard the very same reality offered by these elaborations. Memories can be an effective tool in the process of building collective experiences because they enable a holistic view based on singular perspectives on the same common contexts. Bakhtin (2007) says:

> The text (written or oral) is the primary given of all these disciplines and of all thought in the human sciences and philosophy in general (including theological and philosophical thought at their sources). The text is the unmediated reality (reality of thought and experience), the only one from which theses disciplines and this thought can emerge. Where there is no text, there is no object of study, and no object of thought either. (BAKHTIN, 2007, pp. 103)

V. Final Considerations

This article aimed to propose some reflections on the possibility of interaction as a way of building knowledge viewing at offering an alternative for meaning-making in teacher education processes. We have conceived that as a way to fight against pre-established and ready-made perspectives that have been continuously pressing the educational attempts towards critical thinking at public universities in Brazil. With that in mind, firstly, we established the perspective of teacher education in space and time. We argued that the success of teacher education work must go beyond the transmission of knowledge through teaching techniques and practices, as is the case with teacher training programs. Teacher education should position participants in history from a political and social perspective, thus opening spaces for a glimpse of other horizons of values beyond the arduous reality of public schools.

We proposed that teacher education based on interaction and reflection for a collective construction of knowledge must have the attentive listening to otherness as its principle. On opening oneself to otherness, one can better perceive the movements of local identities in such a way that identities may be in a constant state of fluidity. This fluidity does not mean weakness. On the contrary, it means the strengthening of self- consciousness and the ability to open oneself for collective co-construction of meanings and perspectives. For this reason, we emphasize our proposal that teacher education processes should focus on localized interactions with reflections about local teaching and learning spaces. On doing that, teachers are expected to derive their practices from the knowledge produced locally as a result of collective knowledge, therefore strengthening ties and values of a community. Otherwise, if teachers simply resort to pre-prepared ready-made formulas offered to them, they will position themselves as consumers of some merchandize offered in local supermarkets.

Secondly, teacher education courses must be open to instability and unpredictability with regard to the path that collective actions take during educational and training processes. That is only possible if eyes are

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positioned to see localized forms of knowledge production and circulation in such a way that meaning-making becomes a collective practice. Collective meaning-making production does not entail one meaning for everyone, but various meanings being shared among participants. This way, the group undergoing teacher education or teacher training will have ampler views on the same matter. In so doing they will also have ampler scopes of actions in times of difficulties. Careless and imprudent discourses about teaching and learning circulating in and about public schools can only be beaten if everyone involved learns to be open to changes.

Last but not least, teacher education and teacher training must be based on listening to otherness as a means to reworking identities. Through the introduction of self-narratives, participants learn to be more attentive to the problem of others, solutions, and perspectives. In such a way, participants become self-aware of their positions in the context where they work as teachers by reconstructing their actions through narratives. Also, they learn to interact with others productively as they listen to others' points of view on the same matter. The key to knowledge production is the possibility for each of the participants to self-narrate, which means that original knowledge can be shaped through the individual filter, promoting other views of reality. Our discussion comes to an end with the words of Morin[4] (1999):

> Well, focused knowledge is the one capable of situating any information in its context and, if possible, in the set of values in which it is inscribed. We venture to say that knowledge progresses not because of its sophistication, formalization, and abstraction, but mainly because of its contextualization and capability of embracing. (MORIN, 1999, pp. 14)

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[4] Translated by the authors from the text in the Portuguese language.

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