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NATIONAL LITERACY POLICY: AN ANALYSIS IN FOUCAULDIAN PERSPECTIVE OF DISCOURSE

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Abstract: This text is part of a research that, inspired by Foucauldian Studies in Education, sought to analyze the truths that support the discourses in the National Literacy Policy (PNA). For this undertaking, we took as a reference the notion of discourse, presented by Michel Foucault, especially in the class on December 2, 1970, entitled "The Order of Discourse" (FOUCAULT, 2014). From the exercise of analyzing some materials that make up the PNA, operating with the external procedures of discourse, it was possible to perceive that truths are established at a certain time through the process that prohibits some discourses, values and highlights others.

Keywords: National Literacy Policy; Discourse Analysis; Foucauldian Studies in Education; Methodological and Investigative Exercise.

INTRODUCTION

For the analyzes we developed, it was important to make use of the complex notion of discourse, presented by Michel Foucault, especially in the class on December 2, 1970, entitled "The Order of Discourse" (FOUCAULT, 2014). To do this, we do not focus "on the analysis of the theoretical bases of the discourse. We sought the productivity that this Foucauldian concept could offer me when operating it" (FERREIRA, 2009, p. 61).

Thus, when we look at the materials from the National Literacy Policy (PNA) that were selected, we seek to see the function that can be attributed to what is said, how it is said and when it is said and which ends up enabling particular understandings.

THEORETICAL FOUNDATION

> [...] in every society the production of discourse is at the same time controlled, selected, organized and redistributed by a certain number of procedures whose function is to conjure its powers and dangers, to dominate its random event, to avoid its heavy and fearful materiality [...]

(FOUCAULT, 2014, p. 8-9).

The external procedures of Foucault's notion have the function of controlling the powers and dangers of discursive events in producing conditions of possibility for a given discourse to be valued as truth or excluded. Among the external procedures, we selected exclusion systems, which operate in three ways: interdiction; separation and rejection; and true will.

The interdiction happens when you have control over what can be said (object taboo), who can say it (privileged and exclusive right of the speaker) and at what time (ritual of the circumstance). Exclusion is also exercised by separation and rejection, which are exemplified by the binomial reason and madness. Foucault (2014) says that it is through words that one knows the madman. The madman's speech, which was previously ignored, starts to be heard by several professionals who allow him to express himself, but this does not prevent the separation: "on the one hand, the patient is given the opportunity to express himself; on the other, the subject who occupies the position of authority in the discourse" (FERREIRA; TRAVERSINI, 2013).

The will to truth is the third exclusion procedure that is not restricted to the opposition between true and false. It relies on institutional support and is related to "the way in which knowledge is applied in a society, how it is valued, distributed, shared and in a certain way attributed" (FOUCAULT, 2014, p. 17).

The study and understanding of these external procedures served as an exercise to "make Foucauldian concept of discourse work" (FERREIRA, 2009, p. 70) based on an analytical movement in which PNA discourses are produced in order to meet an order discursive. Using an image as a teaching resource, we summarize the presentation of exclusion systems.

METHODOLOGY

We used Foucault's notion of discourse to build a methodological path that would allow us to analyze and problematize the PNA's discourses as truths of this time. The choice for external procedures emerged from contact with the materials as discourse analysis highlighted what was prohibited in child literacy discourses by the PNA. Thus, after carrying out a careful reading of the PNA documents, we sought inspiration in Ferreira (2009) to classify the excerpts taken, organizing them in a table with four columns in which we distributed the excerpts taken from the materials, adding the reference, the classification by external exclusion procedures and some comments about what we noticed from this analysis movement. Below is a sample of the final version of the table.

FOUCAULT'S CONCEPT OF DISCOURSE AT WORK IN PNA SPEECHES

Using the Foucauldian notion of discourse, it was possible to analyze that the erasure of literacy in PNA discourses can be understood as a form of interdiction, based on the taboo of the object. The order that prohibits the term literacy "marks a clear political and authoritarian position to reduce sociological, anthropological, linguistic and discursive discussions". (BUNZEN, 2019, p. 48) in this field. In this sense, the legitimization of the term literacy by the PNA cannot be understood only as something pacified by the advancement of scientific research. This legitimation resulted from a complex plot "which has its rules of appearance and also its conditions of appropriation and use: [...] which is, by nature, the object of a struggle, and of a political struggle" (FOUCAULT, 2020, p. 148).

It is this plot, with its rules, conditions and struggles, that allowed, at this moment,

the option to use the term literacy to the detriment of literacy in PNA speeches. This, however, does not happen smoothly. It brings into the "[educational] arena disputes, impositions, over what is valid or not. Therefore, the speeches that circulate or are banned find their conditions of existence in power" (FERREIRA; TRAVERSINI, 2013, p. 209-210).

This position became even more evident, based on the composition of the team of researchers and collaborators that determines the right of those who can talk about literacy – its concepts, definitions, methodologies, subjects, practices.

> Art. 5º A panel of experts will be formed to prepare the National Evidence-Based Literacy Report - Renabe [...] § 1º the panel of experts will be composed of twelve researchers with renowned knowledge in the areas of literacy, literacy or numeracy, in scope of cognitive sciences, who must have a doctorate and scientific production in one of these areas. § 2 The members of the expert panel will be nominated by the Secretary of Literacy and appointed by the Minister of State for Education by means of a decree (BRASIL, 2019c, s/p).

In the PNA, the privileged right to speak was restricted to a small group of politicians, researchers, businesspeople and collaborators who share only one type of cognitive science of reading as the only scientific foundation of literacy practices in Brazil. They also take as a principle an authoritarian and market-based facet of these practices, based on a proposal for total standardization of teaching and learning (MORAIS, 2019) which, among other things, defended several Government projects and programs that were in progress: "the non-party school, home education, civic-military schools, the crude and belligerent attacks on public universities and the imposition of pension reform and labor reform" (MORTATTI, 2019a, p. 29).
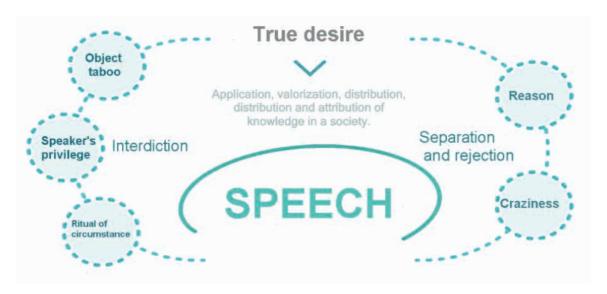
Figure 1 – Exclusion Systems – Procedures External to Speech

Source: Prepared by the authors (2022).

Excerpt	Reference	External Procedure	Comments
The National Literacy Policy[...] is a consequence of an educational reality that reveals the urgency of changing the conception of policies aimed at literacy, literacy and numeracy.	Caderno daPNA (BRASIL, 2019a, p. 10)	Interdiction	What appears to be the conceptual updating capacity of terms eliminates the need to think about what is not named (literacy).
(17:17) [...] marking an important event which is Conabe, which is where we are trying to make a turning point in Brazilian education by bringing what? A scientific approach to education in Brazil. What is a scientific approach? Scientific thinking is based on Aristotelian thinking, rescued by Saint Thomas Aquinas, consolidated by René Descarte. It is Cartesian thinking itself, the basis of this thinking. The basis of this thinking is empirical evidence. No matter how beautiful the theory is that we can't learn to read and write because there is an evil entity that comes from outside and stops us. There are no arguments against facts, as the people would say.	Vídeo: Conabe - Aberturaministro Abraham Weintraub esecretário deAlfabetização, Carlos Nadalim (WEINTRAUB, 2020a)	The will of truth	Erasure of the invention nature of the foundations. Control over the division between good and bad; between right and wrong; between the true and the false. Production of an enemy.
Following the creation of the PNA, the Ministry of Education (MEC) appointed a group of twelve literacy experts to form the National Panel of Experts in Literacy, Literacy and Numeracy. Composed of researchers from different areas with doctorates and scientific production proven by bibliometric and scientometric indexes in the areas of literacy, literacy and numeracy.	Renabe (BRASIL, 2020, p. 25)	Interdiction	Exclusion of the construction of different approaches and points of view; blind belief in the words and actions of a particular group.

Table 1 – Discursive Mapping

Source: Prepared by the author (2022).

The exclusive right of those who speak, in addition to leaving out a large number of Brazilian and foreign researchers – who in the last four decades have published a considerable volume of articles, books, annals, dissertations and theses – has banned both the literacy teacher and the child himself. who is being literate. By disregarding the everyday pedagogical evidence that emerges from teaching experiences, the PNA vetoed the teacher as "a thinking agent, who decides on how to teach his students to read and write, seeking to adjust to the needs and interests of each boy and girl" (MORAIS, 2019, p. 74). In relation to children, "the Policy failed to emphasize the motivations, interests, prior knowledge and desires of child learners" (MORAIS, 2022, p. 10) as was done in previous proposals.

The other interdiction procedure that we identified concerns the ritual of the circumstance, which, in this case, determines criteria for a research to be considered valid to support public literacy policies in Brazil: "HOW TO KNOW IF A RESEARCH PRESENTS SCIENTIFIC EVIDENCE VALID?" (BRASIL, 2019a, p. 20). As the Presentation Notebook points out, research that uses experimental design, which involves control groups in laboratories or in spaces whose variables are extremely controlled and isolated, are considered the only ones with scientific validity.

> For evidence to be considered valid and, therefore, to be able to support public educational policies, some minimum parameters must be observed, namely: **a) analysis of the methodology of the studies**: whether the research used an experimental design or other equally rigorous methodologies; whether the results of students subjected to the intervention were compared with those of similar students not subjected to it; **b) data quality analysis:** whether the researchers made sure to carefully collect, store and examine the data

and whether they methodically reported the procedures followed at each stage and the limitations of the study; **c) the support of the scientific community**: if the study was published in a scientific journal so that other researchers could evaluate the results, review the methods used in the research and be able to repeat it in other contexts; **d) the use of meta-analyses:** if the decision is made based on meta-analyses, that is, on studies (systematic reviews) that compile a set of evidence and determine the state of the art or the most current knowledge about an object (BRAZIL, 2019a, p. 20 – emphasis of the original).

The determination of these criteria not only affirmed that only one methodology is valid but also banned a series of national and international research from other theoretical-epistemological matrices that presented other evidence about the problems of literacy in Brazil, mainly those that claimed the relationship between these problems to the set of "educational, social, economic and political factors, responsible for social inequalities [...] and the lack of priority investments in public and free schools" (MORTATTI, 2019a, p. 27).

FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Discourses, when disseminated throughout the social fabric, organize and order meanings based on a set of external and internal rules and procedures. This led us to consider that child literacy discourses are controlled, selected, organized and distributed by the set of laws, policies, reports, manuals, videos, posts, publications, programs that act as a kind of delimiter of what can or cannot be said.

From this perspective, giving visibility to the discursive syntheses of the National Literacy Policy (PNA) that reach us and that are now accepted as natural, has become relevant as we cannot talk about anything anywhere. There are power/knowledge relations that impose limits and exclude certain discourses.

Among the dangers of interdiction

procedures in PNA speeches is the alleged "scientific impartiality and ideological neutrality [...], based on irrefutable results of foreign research" (MORTATTI, 2019b, p. 47) that claim to accompany scientific progress and methodological in the field of literacy, in order to position themselves as unquestionable; and the proliferation and circulation of a single approach based on the mass adhesion of states and municipalities, through budgetary allocation and technical assistance; financing of research and projects; standardization of teacher training curricula; encouraging the training of managers and promoting a certification mechanism; dissemination of educational resources, purchase of books and teaching materials (BRASIL, 2019b). These are some questions that Foucault's discourse analysis provoked us to denaturalize and put on hold.

To conclude, we highlight that the examination of PNA under the aegis of Foucauldian discourse analysis was a methodological and investigative exercise that we learned from professor and researcher Clarice Traversini and professor and researcher Maurício Ferreira and we wish to share with readers. Not "as a model to be followed, but as a way of using discourse as a research tool, allowing us to realize that there is a discursive order" (FERREIRA; TRAVERSINI, 2013, p. 223) in the present, which weakens the inclusive and democratic school and imposes new problematizations.

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