

Ethnic-Racial Education and Early Teacher Training: reception of the Law 10639/2003

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ABSTRACT – Ethnic-Racial Education and Early Teacher Training: reception of the Law 10639/2003. After thirteen years of the enactment of the Law 10639/2003 establishing the study of African peoples' and afro-descendants' diaspora contributions to the Brazilian history, art and culture, we intended to map, in this paper, the impacts of this legal regulation aiming at building meanings on the law effectiveness and efficiency (Santos, 1985). Our *corpus* discusses the reception during a thematic seminar which took place at a Portuguese teaching education course. Understanding *discourse* as an ideological practice which constitutes, naturalizes, supports and modifies meanings about the world and in the world (Rogers, 2004), we point out processes of the double referencing around African Culture, History and Literature teaching legal enforcement in moments when the interlocutors engage in *discursive traps*.

Keywords: Ethnic-Racial Education in Brazil. Early Teacher Training. Critical Discourse Analysis.

RESUMO – Educação Étnico-Racial e Formação Inicial de Professores: a recepção da Lei 10.639/03. Passados treze anos da promulgação da Lei 10.639/03 que estabelece o estudo das contribuições dos povos do continente africano e da diáspora afrodescendente para a história, arte e cultura brasileiras, propomos, neste artigo, mapear seus impactos, tendo em vista a construção de sentidos em torno da efetividade e eficácia (Santos, 1985) da lei. Nosso corpus discute a recepção durante seminário temático em turma de licenciatura em língua portuguesa. Entendendo *discurso* como prática ideológica que constitui, naturaliza, sustenta e modifica significados no/ sobre o mundo (Rogers, 2004), apontamos a dupla referência em torno do que seja a obrigatoriedade da lei nos momentos em que os interlocutores se envolvem em *armadilhas discursivas*.

Palavras-chave: Educação Étnico-Racial no Brasil. Formação Inicial de Professores. Análise Crítica do Discurso.

*Innocents, definitely innocents,
they ignore everything,
but the sand is hot, and there is some soft tanning oil
that they put on their back, and they forget.
Leblon's innocents.*

Carlos Drummond de Andrade

Introduction

In this article, we analyze the impacts of the Law 10639/2003, which determine the study of African and afro-descendants' contribution on literature, arts and culture to Brazilian history. For that, we considered studies on Critical Discourse Analysis (Van Dijk, 2008; Silva, 2012) in their relation with education studies (Rogers, 2004; Gomes, 2012; Oliveira, 2000; 2005). Our goal is to investigate the construction of meanings on the mentioned law effectiveness and efficiency (Santos, 1985) in ethnic-racial education of teachers in early training, during one of the eight thematic research seminars in a Portuguese teaching education course in a Brazilian Public Federal University.

Understanding discourse as an ideological practice that constitutes, naturalizes, supports and modifies meanings about the world and in the world, taking into consideration power relations (Rogers, 2004, p. 6), we indicate a double referencing on what is the law enforcement in moments when the interlocutors engage in *discursive traps* which are crucial to the process of resignification, letting us know the conflicts and tensions in key words/expressions/statements that emerge in the law reception.

The *corpus* presented here was selected among eight seminars which took place in two classes of the evening course on Pedagogical Practice Analysis (*Análise da Prática Pedagógica* – APP) of Portuguese Language, in two APP evening classes on English Language, two evening classes on Spanish Language, one on History and one on Music Teacher Education Program Seminar in the first term of 2013. Most of those disciplines are taken from the 7th to the 8th term. This research was possible due to the collaboration of professors who opened the door of their classrooms four lesson hours for each seminar. We selected parts in which the debate on the study of ethnic-racial issues indicates conflicting discourses.

Effectiveness and Efficiency of the Law 10639/2003 and its Implications on the Professors' Ethnic-Racial Education

The effectiveness of a law reveals itself in the fact that the legal instrument imposes itself over anybody. In other words, a legal rule will be effective if it is observed both by the Law enforcers and by the receivers of those rules, that is, from the moment when it was sanctioned, all Brazilian citizens are subject to its imposition.

Efficiency, in its turn, means that the rule achieved the addressed purpose, since it was socially observed and accomplished, having solved the problem which gave origin to it. A law is efficient when it accomplishes its social role, and regulates unfairness, crimes, standards that affect ethnic relations. Regarding the Law 10639/2003, it regulates the Eurocentric knowledge supremacy which is socially appreciated by the secular Brazilian elite in school curricula.

However, this process is not linear or automatic. The Law 10639/2003 was updated by the Law 11645 in March 10, 2008, and it is effective when it establishes the enforcement of studies on black and indigenous people's contributions to Brazilian history as part of the K-12 education. Therefore, it sets legal bases for any educational institution that offers schooling from early childhood education to higher education for the removal of Eurocentric knowledge and institutional racism (Silvério, 2002), which are present in the Brazilian school curricula. The law effectiveness occurs in the change of discursive practices and in the decolonization of curricula from elementary to higher education considering Africa and Afro-Brazilian culture.

In this sense, the political and legal journeys take place in the discourse/action relation, emerging as social memory in social institutions that legitimate the racist discourses and social racist practices. According to Van Dijk (2008, p. 15), racism is not innate but it is learned, and discursively learned. We emphasize that it can be deconstructed, questioned and discursively invalidated the same way.

Therefore, we learn that legal support is crucial to bring senses, built in the contact between hegemonic and counter-hegemonic discourses. Conflicts emerge from this contact because the interaction is affected by distinct referencing processes. That is, the Law 10639/2003 enactment does not establish changes for itself, but among the educational *praxis* conflicts which the law proposes to regulate: school curricula democratization for ethnic-racial education.

In this game of interrelations, future teachers could take heterogeneous and contradictory positions. Noticing the dialectical unit of permanence and disruption concerning their opinions is important to better understand their attitudes and representations, facing the general establishments of a law committed to the construction of a society based on equal racial relationships.

In the case of the Law 10639/2003, we have a peculiarity: the legal support is an imposition and a re(signification) in itself as the law is the summary of a long negotiation process of senses among social movements and the Brazilian legal tradition, while determining the inclusion of subjects which were historically silenced by the curriculum shaped in the Eurocentric knowledge supremacy. This is better understood in the words of Gomes (2012, p. 100):

[...] an analysis that allows us to improve or understand more deeply this moment of the Brazilian education cannot abandon a close reading that articulates tough con-

crete living conditions experienced by social subjects regarding cultural, identity and political trends. In this context, we find curricular demand to be introduced obligatorily as the teaching of African History and of Afro-Brazilian culture in K-12 schools. It requires a change of practices and curricula decolonization from K-12 to higher education considering Africa and Afro-Brazilians. Representation and procedures modification. It demands questioning power positions. It asks about the relation between rights and privilege which is rooted in our political and educational culture, in our schools and in universities themselves.

The laws which were mentioned bring questioning and impose significant movements to the cultural core of the educational system from Early Childhood Education to Higher Education. The implementation of the law in pedagogical actions that include debates on race and ethnicity issues requires joint building of choices in the curriculum formulation. Unfortunately, the Brazilian educational system is still one of the main ideological tools for black people's inferiorization, as well as of distortion and hiding of their true story here and in Africa (Jornal do MNU, n. 12, p. 8 apud Souza, 2005).

When we take African and Afro-descendants' culture, art and literature teaching as a research subject in the context of early teacher training, we aim at contributing to resignify relevant identity aspects of the Brazilian peoples. We highlight, then, the sociopolitical element which justifies and supports this study, in its engagement in discovering pieces of evidence that help or stop the implementation of an inclusive and democratic society. We are concerned with noticing how ideologies, beliefs and social representations on ethnic-racial education constitute discourses of future K-12 Education teachers.

The achievement of education for ethnic-racial relations requires what Paulo Freire (1997) described as one of the knowledge that is necessary to the critical educational practice: the need to criticize the prevailing culture as a fundamental premise for the establishment of a new culture. In this sense, there is a set of representations that are part of the social imagination, markedly of Eurocentric origin, which must be reviewed regarding the constitution of a new ground for appreciation and inclusion, in a society marked by ethnic-racial diversity.

Therefore, two issues which connect teacher training in higher education to ethnic-racial education guided the study: How do future teachers see the legal determination? How do they evaluate the ethnic-racial formation experienced during their Undergraduate Course in order to proceed with the law efficiently?

The Law 10639/2003 indicates this conflicts by means of its Article 26-A – 2nd paragraph when establishing that:

Subjects concerned with Afro-Brazilian and Brazilian indigenous peoples' history and culture will be taught in the whole school curriculum, particularly in the fields of Brazilian art education, literature and history.

The paragraph clearly refers to the law purpose and what it regulates: it enforces the teaching of subjects concerned with Afro-Brazilian and Brazilian indigenous peoples' history and culture. It regulates the educational curricula hegemony because they were built from European models and educational subjects

However, as proved in Oliveira (2000; 2005; 2008), legal requirements need to follow a long way of incorporated conceptions (re)signification regarding the act of teaching to produce any impact in classrooms. That is, the law effectiveness occurs in the contact, in the interaction among conflicting discourses, when symbolic processes may be disrupted and may present racist practices naturalized in the education field.

In this paper, we take discourse as an ideological practice that constitutes, naturalizes, supports and modifies meanings in/about the world, from power relations (Rogers, 2004, p. 6), indicating a double referencing on what is the law enforcement, to which we call *discursive traps*: moments of contact between conflicting discourses in which interlocutors perform the double referencing of key words/expressions/statements that emerge from the law reception.

Facing discourses and actions that question power relations in the Brazilian sociohistorical context, we searched for a basis in the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) for the study of our *corpus*, taking its engagement in questioning structures and superstructures which support social unfairness.

Teacher Training and CDA: an imperative dialogue

A relevant question when we consider CDA as a theoretical methodological reference for studies on education is the analysis of a certain research *corpus* in its time and space. It is based on the philosophy of language (Bakhtin, 1992; Wittgenstein, 1953; Austin, 1975; Searle, 1983), French discourse experts (Pecheux, 1983), philosophers and sociologists (Marx; Engels, 1998; Foucault, 2012; Bourdieu, 1982), and predecessors of the Frankfurt school. Distinctively, in the field of education, studies on sociolinguistics and narrative studies (Labov, 1972; Gumperz, 1982; Heath, 1986; Bruner, 1990, among others) are pioneer works which disrupt the prescriptive vision of educational theories and are dedicated to the social reality of educational procedures, with the goal of changing them.

CDA provides instruments which make possible for us to deal with the complexity of educational contexts and to analyze pedagogical procedures in such contexts in an unequally globalized world, because it questions:

1. Means of power which legitimate asymmetrical power relations;
2. Means of power which can be found behind asymmetrical power relations, and;
3. Means of power which mediate social relations directly.

Those questions match our research, as the effectiveness and efficiency of the Law 10639/2003 are, in themselves, a way of questioning the Eurocentric supremacy on curricula from teacher training courses in Brazil. CDA investigates the means of power which underlie asymmetrical relations and it also brings the language role, since those relations produce and/or reproduce senses (racist ones, in this case) that are translated into exclusion actions towards the black population in places of social and economic status in Brazil. In addition to criticizing, CDA searches for ways of action and reaction to the control on everyday life material dialectic. It aims at designing and forging alternatives of being, acting, representing and interacting in the world, with the goal of suppressing ways of social control and oppression (Rogers, 2004, p. 3).

Discourses represent a social practice that conveys means of action related to others in the world, constituting and building senses and actions, in a two-way road: social representations are always fighting against political and ideological procedures. This is an analysis of what is said, as well as of what is not said in oral or written texts. Accordingly, we intend to show how means and patterns of semiotic signs build identities from concrete social practices.

This movement can be better understood through the *retention metaphor*: the human ability of recontextualizing what is learned considering acting in the material world: recontextualizing a discourse is noticing its ideological effects and, at the same time, questioning it, in the specific ways of the studied context. Actually, we forge a distinct relation with another current discourse, and it is also a way of discursive appropriation of other speeches (Fairclough, 2008, p. 124).

The debate expansion from the law enactment contributes to dialogic ways of recontextualizing racist discourses, as they convey to act in the world in decision moments by teachers when selecting texts, teaching approaches and assuming ideological positions. The contact between opposing discourses produces interdiscursivity, understood as the presence or features of a discourse in another one, and it can lead to hegemonic or stable discourses perturbation. When they interact, the subjects are in an area of negotiation and conflict in which new knowledge is produced and identities are shaped.

When we take ethnic-racial education in early teacher training as an essential issue, we are referring to a theme that has been historically obscured by discursive operations of the Brazilian hegemonic elite, through the myth of racial democracy or *Racism à la Brazil* (Fernandes, 1964), preserved as a peculiarity of the country and contradictorily linked to socioeconomic structures conservation in which inequalities support themselves in unquestionable racial bases:

The nuances of Brazilian racism have been an obstacle to the black movement rise in a country in which blacks are majority in all areas and places which are socially discredited, and they are always seen as suspect ones. However, if they indicate the racist feature of prejudice in the

exploitation and competition processes at work and in educational chances, they are immediately denounced of practicing 'backward racism' (Souza, 2005, p. 49).

Nowadays, we observe in Brazil the fight between the refusal of discussing issues related to ethnic-racial questions and the popular culture prominence, gradually motivating students, and inciting members of base communities and universities to keep resistance stations. Even if facing a long way to be followed, the construction of diversity pedagogy and literature full of representations and stories that allow other significant discourses building, as well as different critical paradigms are already part of Brazilian Ethnic-Racial Education.

Analysis

Most of the people nowadays know how hard it is to evaluate life and the intentions of other cultures and traditions, without getting linked to prejudice from our perspectives. When we do not evaluate the others with impartiality, receiving impartial treatment becomes almost implausible. This kind of ethnocentrism, despite affecting us, does not surprise us anymore (Appiah, 1997, p. 22).

The selected excerpt presented in this article was recorded in Class I, from the discipline called Pedagogical Practice Analysis of the undergraduate course on Portuguese Language in the second term of 2013. During the first hour of interaction, the researcher was presented by the class teacher to the students. She contextualized the research, read the commitment term and the study questionnaire out loud with the students and then she waited for thirty minutes. After that, she proposed an open debate on the questionnaire that was answered. In that moment, the group was talking about question number 2: Write about the activities in which you took part and give your opinion on them¹.

S.1²
34:56'

1. A1: This discussion is very complicated, I think, because it stumbles upon some ethic issues, including the ones related to the structure of the Letters Course, I think. Because the Letters Course curriculum, since it is flexible in many aspects, it demands students' active participation somehow. Then, this way, indeed: Why is there flexibilization? [...] there are many things missing in this training we have, maybe because, for instance, of the fact that students build their own curricula.

2. P: Would you have other examples to give?

3. A1: I miss themes about Brazilian literary modernism. I miss themes on, well, literature from Minas Gerais, right?

4. P: Yes [...] it is, I think there are two questions actually [...] the curriculum is, unfortunately, even more today, in the information field, we will always have this feeling, right? [...] and it should move you to look for permanent training, but this is exactly what I am thinking, right? At this time, of being a law, right, and this law, it is justified [...] because in Brazil we, indeed, we have a bigger problem than/ this is what we call Brazilian

racism, of talking like this: “as we don’t have racism in Brazil... We have a racial democracy”. This is said frequently... So, we think we don’t need to discuss, you see? Then, suddenly, a prank happens in the Law undergraduate course [...] This way, it is very rightist, shall we say, so things seem to be like that, a little clear, right? Of how it is important to discuss and mainly thinking like that. If it is also a law [...]

5. A2: But the question is even if we want to claim it, there is nothing to do, right? And more, there is no possibility that I know I need to claim it, because nobody talks about it [...]

6. A1: I don’t know if “nobody talks”, I have friends who work, so this always comes up, this kind of discussion. The alterity question is offered, this is current in universities [...] but I go back to the question, to what extent the institutionalization of this debate is good or not, or in addition, if it is ethic [...] I don’t know very well how to say, but I don’t know to what extent that institutionalization is indeed ethic, in the sense of forcing students, forcing them to take part in it or not.

7. P: [...] if we think about the curriculum [...] Anything we put there is imposition [...] Now, I’d like to understand like this, if you are saying that proposing the specific ethnic-racial question, shall we say, as a specific question, that wouldn’t be so ethic, right? Would it be exactly because it should be like imposing to reflect about it to all?

8. A1: Not reflecting, but imposing to all, it’s, that you should give your opinion, I don’t know... [...] Such as, I don’t think that... if evangelical students don’t want to listen to them, don’t want to watch them, because they believe in their faith [...]

9. A2: At last, I think if there is a law, then I don’t know, I don’t know the details of the law to talk about it, but if there is a law, we have to work with it...

10. P: It is legal! And the law says: you have to work with it [...]

11. A3: How could you give a Portuguese lesson, and work with it at school, if you have never seen it in college? This is like many other things, but for me, I think it should be enforced.

12. P: Yes, and also, if the curriculum is imposed, right? I ask the same question too, for instance, but why it has to be English, then, to study as foreign language at school? Or, why do we have to take it? I think this is great. We must question it. Now, is this the cause indeed, right? The insertion or exclusion of certain subjects, at least historically [...] Are precisely some social facts that are so intensive, that, because of a state power issue or of an issue from the society itself, movements from the civil society, as the case of the black movement in Brazil [...] This is really a question of power, curriculum is power, right? This related to ethics, there is no ethics in the curriculum we have. [...]

50:10’

We notice, at first, that in this moment of interaction, even if the theme of African and Afro-Brazilian art, culture and literature education is in the debate core, the arguments in favor of and against the Law 10639/2003 refer to different issues and there is a polarization of the discussion between P and A1. In fifteen minutes of debate, which were marked by interruptions and simultaneous speeches among fragmented arguments and negotiations of meanings, we observed the questioning of the law effectiveness by A1, when we noticed two meanings about what is the *enforcement* of the Law 10639/2003 and about what it regulates:

Meanings of the Law 10639/2003

A1 Meaning 1: it enforces the individual to know African and afro-descendants' art, culture and literature. This is not ethic because it is oppressive. The normative and effective character of the law is diminished.

This discussion is very complicated, I think, because it stumbles upon some ethic issues [...]; students build their own curricula; [...] to what extent that institutionalization is indeed ethic, in the sense of forcing students, forcing them to take part in it or not.

P Meaning 2: it enforces the disruption of the racial democracy discourse and the prevalence of knowledge based on the Eurocentric thought and to democratize the Brazilian K-12 Education curriculum, introducing African and afro-descendants' art, culture and literature. It enforces to discuss it, since it was silenced.

[...] this law, it is justified [...] because in Brazil we... talking like this: "as we don't have racism in Brazil... We have a racial democracy". This is often said... So, we think we don't need to discuss, you see? Even if we want to claim it, there is nothing to do, right? And yet, there is no possibility that I know that I need to claim it, because nobody talks about it [...].

The effectiveness that reveals itself in the act of the law which is imposed on anyone is questioned by A1 and it is against the point of view of P, letting one knows the *discursive trap* in the double referencing segment on the law purpose: for A1, the ethnic-racial theme enforcement stumbles over some ethic issues, including the ones that are structural. The enforcement violates the curricular flexibility, which was claimed and established – up to certain extent – during the 1990's in the Brazilian public universities³.

At turn 4, P notes that the curriculum will always produce the feeling that we did not learn what we should in times of much information and knowledge exchange. P points the need for teachers permanent training and, then, talks about the myth of racial democracy.

A2 remembers the need for production and dissemination of knowledge on the theme, since "nobody talks about it". In a sense, this statement shows the perverse silencing caused by the racial democracy myth that, ignoring racism, removes the conflicts and tensions of our social relations.

The "innocence" with which A1 seems to deal with the law determination is evident at turn 6, when he states that "I don't know if 'nobody talks', I have friends who work, so this always comes up, this kind of discussion. The alterity question is offered, this is current in the universities [...] but I go back to the question, to what extent the institutionalization of this debate is good or not, or in addition, if it is ethic [...]". This works as if general debates on alterity issues could include all themes, so it would not be necessary to discuss racial questions, or as if racial themes could be investigated by academic studies which deal

with the *others* who divide us. In his assertion, he also reinforces the Brazilian racism (Fernandes, 1964), as he cannot identify with the discussion and he says: “I have friends” who work with that issue.

Shortly after that, A1 questions the law effectiveness when he asks about being ethic in its institutionalization, because it enforces students to take part in the debate on ethnic-racial issues. A2 replied, at turn 9, who says: “I think if there is a law, then I don’t know, I don’t know the details of the law to talk about it, but if there is a law, we have to work with it [...]”.

P agrees with A2, reaffirming the relation between discourse and action/effectiveness and efficiency of the law when he says: “It is legal! And the law says: you have to work with it”.

A3 contributes to the efficiency dimension of the law when it is shown in the pedagogical work, so he asks: “[...] How could you give a Portuguese lesson, and work with it at school, if you have never seen it in college?”.

Finally, the curriculum definition is reinstated by P as an answer to the conception pointed by A1 at the beginning of the segment. Again, it is possible to observe opposing meanings:

Curriculum Meanings

Meaning 1

A1 The curriculum is flexible and the student chooses the subjects he wants for his training. Imposing what should be studied:

[...] since it is flexible in many aspects, it demands students’ active participation somehow. Then, this way, indeed: Why is there flexibilization? [...] there are many things missing in this training we have, maybe because, for instance, of the fact that students build their own curricula.

P Meaning 2

Anything we put there is imposition [...] [...] but if there is a law, we have to work with it [...] This is really a question of power, curriculum is power, right? This related to ethics, there is no ethics in the curriculum we have. [...].

Therefore, it comes and goes, the intermingling of discourses which bring us interaction, beliefs, arguments and information that produce a retextualization which is necessary to the law effectiveness. Actually, there will be curricular democracy only when undergraduate students really choose from a diversity of black writers and artists who were silenced by the elite that imposed the Eurocentric culture.

Final Remarks

The reception of the Law 10639/2003 by teachers during their early training, which was analyzed here, shows the development of the

undergoing fight between discourses in favor of Afro-Brazilian Literature, Art and History teaching effectiveness/enforcement and the ones against it, as well as between discourses in favor of curricular practices efficiency/decolonization in undergraduate courses on Education and others against it. Effectiveness, connected to the legal instrument, brings the ethnic-racial issue as a subject that is enforced in Brazilian K-12 Education system, which challenges the archaic curriculum based on Eurocentric knowledge in higher education. In this dimension, the law promotes the African and Afro-descendants' History, Art and Culture teaching, supporting them at the same time. On the other hand, the law efficiency, connected to the daily fight of the Brazilian black movement participants, challenges the curriculum as a field of struggle and questioning of power relations, putting the law into practice.

In this process, the contact among opposing discourses produces *discursive traps* when the arguments emerge from the interaction and they indicate the double referencing on what to democratize the curriculum of History, Art and Letters courses is: “[...] to what extent that institutionalization is indeed ethnic, in the sense of forcing students to take part in it or not” X “Anything we put there is imposition [...]”. In those moments, we notice tensions in the debate about ethnic-racial relations connected to the racial democracy discourse in Brazil.

Detecting these traps is a way of showing how some people perceive racial democracy in a naturalized way in Brazil, as well as it allows to observe the dominant epistemological baselines. In everyday life material dialectics, hegemonic meanings are challenged and possibilities of recontextualizing/resignifying racist discourses preserved in the Brazilian social imaginary world are brought.

Our study indicates that disciplines, outreach and research activities are present in different manners in the Letters courses in question. However, it is in our classroom, in the institutional forums, in the participation in Teachers Education courses, university boards and, ultimately, in daily interactions, that demands on ethnic-racial teaching in higher education are formed. In those moments, structural racism shapes the Brazilian institutions and it can be unveiled and resignified. The law, beyond its efficiency, gives rise to effective south/south dialogues, dialogues established in horizontal relations, from the point of view of Southern Epistemologies (Santos et al., 2010) – in which everyone can *learn with the South*, not only with *Northern* countries.

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Notes

- 1 Answers to this and other questions of the study *Ethnic-racial Education and Early Teacher Training: a critical analysis of the discourse on African and afro-descendants' art, history and literature teaching in Brazil*.

2 Key to audio transcription:
P = Pesquisador [Researcher]
A1 = ALUNO 1 [STUDENT 1]
A2 = ALUNO 2 [STUDENT 2]
A3 = ALUNO 3 [STUDENT 3]
[...] = corte [cut]

3 See Dutra (2003).

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