

TRAINING POLICIES FOR FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHERS IN THE STATE OF CEARÁ: A FOCUS ON CENTRO CEARENSE DE IDIOMAS

POLÍTICAS DE FORMAÇÃO PARA PROFESSORES DE LÍNGUA ESTRANGEIRA NO ESTADO DO CEARÁ: O CENTRO CEARENSE DE IDIOMAS EM FOCO

POLÍTICAS DE FORMACIÓN PARA PROFESORES DE LENGUAS EXTRANJERAS EN EL ESTADO DE CEARÁ: EL CENTRO CEARENSE DE IDIOMAS EN FOCO

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ABSTRACT: This work aims to discuss public policies that involve the process of training for foreign language teachers in the State of Ceará, Brazil. Guided by a qualitative approach, settled in the research-training method, aimed to understand the conflicts and interactions present in the development of continuing training of foreign language teachers of the Centro Cearense de Idiomas (CCI). For this study, the characteristics, plans, and actions developed by the Education Department of Ceará (SEDUC-EC) and the CCI itself were analyzed as to the continuing training of its teachers. The results reveal that reflecting the training with peers is a good perspective considering the reality; teachers need public training policies that help them resign their formative route and non-obstacles that already surround the teaching profession in such negative and often almost insurmountable way; collective work has presented itself as a possibility for overcoming challenges.

KEYWORDS: Teacher training. Praxis in teaching. Centro Cearense de Idiomas. Foreign language.

RESUMO: *Este trabalho discute as políticas públicas que envolvem o processo de formação para os docentes de língua estrangeira no estado do Ceará, Brasil. De abordagem qualitativa, assentado no método da pesquisa-formação, teve como objetivo compreender os conflitos e as interações presentes no desenvolvimento da formação continuada de professores de língua estrangeira do Centro Cearense de Idiomas (CCI). Para tal estudo foram analisadas as características, os planos e as ações desenvolvidas pela Secretaria da Educação do Ceará (SEDUC-CE) e pelo próprio CCI no que toca à formação continuada de seus docentes. Os resultados revelam que refletir a formação com os pares é uma boa perspectiva de encontro com a realidade; os docentes precisam de políticas públicas de formação que os ajudem a ressignificar seu percurso formativo e não obstáculos que já cercam a profissão docente de*

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forma tão negativa e muitas vezes quase intransponíveis; o trabalho coletivo se apresentou como uma possibilidade para a superação dos desafios.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Formação docente. Políticas públicas. Práxis docente. Centro Cearense de Idiomas. Língua estrangeira.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo discute las políticas públicas que involucran el proceso de formación de profesores de lenguas extranjeras en el estado de Ceará, Brasil. Con un enfoque cualitativo, basado en el método de investigación-formación, tuvo como objetivo comprender los conflictos e interacciones presentes en el desarrollo de la formación permanente de profesores de lenguas extranjeras en el Centro Cearense de Idiomas (CCI). Para este estudio, se analizaron las características, planes y acciones desarrollados por la Secretaría de Educación de Ceará (SEDUC-CE) y por la propia CCI en relación con la formación continua de sus profesores. Los resultados revelan que reflexionar sobre la formación con los pares es una buena perspectiva de encuentro con la realidad; los docentes necesitan políticas públicas de formación que les ayuden a dar nuevos significados a su camino formativo y no obstáculos que ya rodean a la profesión docente de manera tan negativa y muchas veces casi insuperable; el trabajo colectivo se presentó como una posibilidad de superación de desafíos.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Formación docente. Políticas públicas. Praxis docente. Centro Cearense de Idiomas. Lengua extranjera.*

Introduction

Reflecting on public policies that involve the training process for foreign language (LE) teachers today guides us to a reflection on the role of these teachers beyond the school environment. This environment has become an increasingly complicated space to work with. Much of this guilt can be attributed to the neoliberal project for education.

Considering that the school is situated in a certain historical, social, political and economic context, it must be agreed that any public policy of teacher education is also somehow pierced by the contexts mentioned. It will be up to researchers and teachers to work on a detailed analysis in order to find out if these policies, through the way they are achieved by the four contexts mentioned above, favor or not the teaching work and why this occurs.

Transforming and resignifying the teaching practice in the face of a scenario of so many changes: pandemic, technological transformation, threats to the democratic process, rise of the extreme right and the neoliberal greed that destroy the formal work of the teacher should be the main goal of a public policy for effective teacher education.

It is complicated and painful to note that these public policies on the development of teacher education, in favor of the education professional, give in to the desires of the capital, for what it plans for teaching: precariousness, deprofessionalization and dismantling of the

public sphere for education. Education is now seen through spreadsheets that display high-value figures that appeal only to the rentier who is keeping an eye on the profit that will be obtained. The educator remains a work stigmatized by a fight against capital that seems impossible to overcome.

With a qualitative approach, based on the training research method, the study aimed to understand the conflicts and interactions present in the development of continuing education of foreign language teachers of the Centro Cearense de Idiomas (CCI).

The researcher, when looking at a qualitative study, cannot become a mere passive rapporteur, he must, yes, perform an immersion in the studied universe, in order to, on the basis, be able to construct the meanings that the research subjects attributed to the phenomenon (CHIZZOTTI, 2006; FLICK, 2009).

In order to be effective in its interactive, collective and community concept, we understand training research as "the construction of consensus, in which the permanent circulation of information is characterized by the creation of conditions, so that all participants have equal possibilities to communicate" (ALVARADO PRADA, 2005, p. 631, our translation).

To this end, the characteristics, plans and actions developed by the Department of Education of Ceará (SEDUC-CE) and the CCI itself in the continuing education of its teachers were analyzed. The study had the participation of seven CCI teachers who were linked to the formative and investigative process.

The paths that involved the research-training were trodden simultaneously, as well as the use of the two terms "research" and "training" could not be separated when the purpose of the research was to maintain dialogue with the investigated subjects and not only about them.

The relationship between the historical context and public policies of teacher education

By walking the path of teacher education in recent decades to the present moment, our gaze manages to capture a type of training characterized basically by technicality, the bureaucratization of processes and verticalization of the transmission of ideas.

Many of these words that are still in use by trainers and teachers, such as training and recycling, probably due to the lack of awareness of teachers about their own training, are terms that only do not become outdated due to the high degree of use in teaching discourse and that give us an idea that there is a conflict between what was previously known and what is expected of training in the 21st century.

The dichotomy between these two moments is necessary both in discourse and in practice, so that we can finally leave aside a traditional formative model that is characterized by the distancing of what occurs in the teacher's professional trajectory.

Candau (1997) makes a severe criticism of the "recycling process", because this model would bring us back to university (initial training) to restart the initial cycle of training. Marin (1995) draws our attention to the sense of training, which can be understood as a process of convincing or persuasion, which would generate a training without a critical and reflective approach.

The researchers who study the teacher education nowadays (from the beginning of this new century) and that we will detail below, show us the value of the search for a formative process that occurs connected to the work performed by the teacher and that leads him to think about all the issues that involve this work activity. However, we still observe, to a large extent, strong linkage to the formative models of the last thirty years of the twentieth century.

We can prove this through the writings of some authors who mention that the training of the new century still brings characteristics of the formative process that precedes it. Oliveira (2011), says that the formative process of teachers does not seem to be connected to the changes of the 21st century, "prevailing encyclopedic teaching and continuously focused on problem solving through the application of theories, methods and techniques" (OLIVEIRA, 2011, p. 288, our translation).

The Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education - LDB (9394/96), superficially, cites the term "continuing education" only four times and treats it as something to be promoted by the public authorities in all educational instances (BRASIL, 1996). It also mentions that for the implementation of these trainings technological resources can be used. On the other hand, the cited document does not go into the primordial characteristics that should govern a teacher's education that approaches what the scholars have advocated.

Consequently, trainers and teachers who are distanced from what researchers talk about will be more easily encompassed by the mercantilist and neoliberal concepts of a technicist training. Concepts that at a given time can be taken as ideals, either by lack of knowledge or simply by comodism.

The teacher, in no way, should be understood only as a receiving subject and mere repeater of proposals originated by other people who consider the reality of the classroom as unique and standardized. This model of vision annihilates the production of new knowledge that seeks to provide opportunities for what the distinct and singular realities of each teacher have to offer when diversifying the teaching and learning processes.

Combining theory and practice and deeply discussing how the authors characterize the teaching education process served as the basis for the development of this research. For this, we consider the critical-reflexive perspective as the purpose of the formative process and the way of execution of the teaching practice of each subject participating in the research.

Concepts and awareness about teacher education

It is necessary to seek the awareness that teacher education, whether for the teacher or for the trainer, goes through theoretical and epistemological studies on the theme, in view of the need to have them as a basis during any formative trajectory. We think that this should be the first step towards the removal of what seemed to fit a previous historical moment and to an approximation of what theorists say is the essential today.

Policies that keep the teacher away from the updated discussions on diversity, politics and economics, for example, are flawed policies that cause any intentions in the search for transformations to bump into the harsh reality of the classroom that is imposed on the teacher daily.

When we analyze some public policies of teacher training, we need to elaborate an integrated analysis that gives account of the processes of formulation, evaluation and finally implementation in the work of teachers (in the specific case of LE teachers).

We understand that a more in-depth and detailed study is important for the production and dissemination of knowledge among peers. Our challenge is to understand these relationships that exist between public policies and teacher training programs. Dale (2010, p. 1116) points out that the starting point of research in the area is educational (or discursive) practices and that the important issues to be addressed are: "Who is taught (or learns through processes explicitly designed to promote learning)? What? How? Why is that? When? Where? By/from whom? Under what immediate circumstances and broader conditions? With what results?" Finally, to instill the mode, those involved and the purpose of evaluating this route.

Still considering a higher level of educational policies, considering the socioeconomic, political and educational context, Dale (2010, p. 1116, our translation) proposes the following questions: "[...] with what standard of coordination of educational governance; by whom; and according to which sectoral and cultural path dependencies, are these things problematized, decided, managed, managed?".

Imbernón (2010, p. 11, our translation), also reflects on what this process involves, because " the training of teachers, rather than updating them, must be able to create spaces of

training, research, imagination, etc., teacher trainers must know how to create such spaces to move from teaching to learning".

The teacher is a professional who needs to be trained and have access to new forms of knowledge and it is in this space of training that he needs to discover material elements so that he can have the power to examine his praxis. Offer spaces for the development of processes that eliminate the existing dichotomy between theory and practice and that leads us to believe that "in practice, theory is different", without at least thinking that this theory can be outdated and then accept it as the only formative path possible within a context usually characterized by precariousness, besides being a vector of demotivation, can mean professional stagnation.

Costa, Santos and Martins (2020) explain the process of teacher education as something continuous, part of an educational process in which the teacher is the agent and at the same time the subject of his practice, besides being also responsible for the (re) construction of knowledge promoting his development and that of his students.

It is important to remember that the whole process that involves the role of teacher training involves not only the current generation, but entire generations that require time and dedication to build a path for those to come. García (1999, p. 22, our translation), points out that "training represents another dimension of teaching as an intentional activity, which develops to contribute to the professionalization of the subjects in charge of educating the new generations".

The training enables the development of a knowledge that is palpable, exciting, motivating and transformative. The formative process should mention the acquisition of new experiences, something totally antagonistic to the repetition of techniques that do not consider the peculiarity of the enormous amount of subjects involved in this process.

Macedo (2015, p. 740, our translation), observing the scenario of formative experiences defines this concept of training as "what happens from the world/consciousness of being by learning formatively, that is, transforming into significant experience events, information and knowledge that involve it".

The formative process when based on an idea of the teacher's protagonism will favor the teacher a profile of search for innovation in his praxis. Something that with each passage of time can give rise to an effective adaptation to the historical movements that inevitably interfere in the educational system. These movements should be distanced from lame experiences that appear to have some kind of success by the simple fact of being reproduced in school environments.

Leading the teacher means enabling the teacher to know all the processes that involve teaching beyond the classroom. The teacher needs to understand historically why his salary is low, why the profession is devalued, why the teacher is passive to be assaulted by the security forces in periods of strike, and all this so that he can be historically beyond the present time and thus be able to envision future paths that make him realize that solving certain problems of the profession should be possible.

Thus, the actions of training based on recycling and training can be repeated hundreds of times in the education systems, however, if they do not encourage a process of protagonism of teachers, through the sharing of knowledge, exchange of knowledge, these trainings will not be functional, because they will be far from their initial proposal for ignoring an important fact: the historical context.

Teachers, regardless of their area, need to be encouraged to read, especially specialized readings so that they can, in formative debates, discuss with property, argue, defend and even value practical aspects of their life as an intellectual worker.

Fistarol, Fischer and Bailer (2019) point out that teaching practices (or literacy) should resignify the elaboration of pedagogical planning and the teacher's own action, to something beyond the simple decoding of the text of LE and to expand the meaning of learning this language according to the context.

They confirm the above thought Pacheco and Eyng (2020) when they affirm that the constant dialogue between researchers and interlocutors takes place in a construction without hierarchies and that allows a thinking about the teaching practice that considers its time and territoriality.

Teachers yearn for the continuous improvement of several aspects surrounding the profession, but we recognize that several perspectives, especially the current national political scenario, is a complicating factor for the development of some transformations. These changes are in addition to recognizing the importance of teachers for the construction of a democratic society, "[...] it is necessary to value it with a decent wage policy, with material conditions and appropriate infrastructure to the exercise of its pedagogical practice. It is not possible to dissociate teacher education from public policies focused on education" (MARTINS, 2014, p. 24, our translation).

We observed that in the current context, exhausted (or exploited!) teachers with high workloads and salaries far from the realities they live in, crowded classes, unhealthy physical structures – in some cases, it is urgent that, in addition to giving space for teachers' speech,

there is a search for understanding and adequacy of formative processes for each group of teachers.

Offering a place where the teacher can share with the trainer and with his peers is fundamental in this process of discovery of forms and reflection on the action in the classroom and application of knowledge elaborated and constructed in the formative process. Only in this way is the teacher the promoter of his own training beyond the physical spaces in which they occur. Borders and boundaries must be overcome: the space of training needs to change the place of praxis. Costa (2014, p. 163, our translation), clarifies on conjectures of reflection and action in/and on teaching practice, since "reflection on practice has the possibility of promoting an expansion in the teacher's understanding of his own work, leaving the idea related to the simple transmission of content to the possibility of building knowledge", contributing to human emancipation.

Only the construction of a collective and conscious environment that allows a space for reflection and adequacy of the contents can consider the uniqueness of each educational context that provides the teacher with a real transformation in his work activity.

Adorno (1996), within an educational perspective, points to the emancipatory process of being as "an ingrained process to an intellectual and behavioral fight against the alienating processes imposed by semi-training" (ADORNO, 1996, p. 389, our translation). Here we can characterize this training model with the technical and bureaucratic concepts of a previous format and create a counterpoint to the most current model that we proposed to the LE teachers participating in this investigative-formative work.

The teacher, when aware that his active participation in the production and execution of formative moments is necessary and due, will gain from there a greater mastery over the reflection of his praxis in a less limited, less individualistic and more collective way, and more importantly, in a less supporting and more protagonist, starting from a crucial point that allows, in addition to formative emancipation, personal and professional emancipation.

The relationship between the teacher and his/her education must escape from rigidity with all his traditional representations and distant from reality. Public policies should act as an intermediary so that it is possible to consolidate a stronger but not rigid relationship of the teacher with the perspectives that affect his/her professional trajectory.

The postmodern world follows its path of construction, deconstruction and reconstruction, which also happens with the foreign language that, within every historical and political moment, undergoes constant changes. For the formative emancipation of an education

professional to occur, the basic requirement is that he has the chance to also participate in this same process.

One cannot expect the emancipatory process of a teacher to occur in a postmodern world if the knowledge that is worked in the trainings is something totally decontextualized from the teacher's perspective on the universe that surrounds him. The more public education policies give in to alienating and non-authorizing processes that start from the rhetoric of neoliberalism, the more the teacher moves away from contexts that could enable a social transformation.

It is necessary to enable teachers to allow spaces that allow the production of knowledge from their experiences relating them to the theoretical concepts that today seem to be distant from part of the teacher for various reasons including here the neoliberal logic of valuing practice only.

One situation is clear: teachers have a lot to share. The trainings cannot disregard the voices dammed from policies that leave aside such an important approach to the intended changes to education that is the perspective of teaching.

In order to explain a moment when teachers were able to verbalize their longings about training, the next section brings elements of the discussions of CCI teachers during the formative meetings conducted by the research based on the experience and awareness of each one about the importance of training in the trajectory of each participant.

Voices paving the way for an ideal training policy

When we gather the existing public training policies, it is noted that, somehow, the teacher may face some difficulty to find some space that considers the much he has to say about himself as a professional. Teachers perform their work in a place where various subjectivities converge, causing a range of so-called unspeakable experiences to emerge, but which, paradoxically, need to be evidenced so that they appropriate a greater meaning that aims at the construction of new knowledge.

Not having the opportunity to "tell the good stories" among your peers can serve as another reason that, among many others that is already known, can frustrate the teacher and make this group feel even more devalued if we consider what already happens.

Thus, the way teachers see the possibility of their voices being heard in trainings that favor the knowledge that arises from their experiences was described as follows by two of them and corroborated in the discourse of other teachers who participated in the formative meeting in question:

At what point will I actually be able to discuss a real situation in our practical life? Usually this is not considered, or is at the end of the day or is only given 3 minutes for you to talk to someone, in short, it is never the most important of the training or the one that has greater relevance. And when the authors cite about positioning the teacher as the protagonist there is a need to consider, so it may be a wrong reading that I am doing, but I feel that the vast majority of the trainings That I participated always disregard the teacher, considering it as inferior (The first teacher).

This feeling that when we go to the trainings we only receive, receive, receive and accept (laughs) and that's what it will be and as much as we try to pull a moment in the meeting so that we can talk about our challenges rarely we get. Nobody cares what we really have to say and they can work on it and make us feel part of the process (The second teacher).

From the above statements it is evident that the training policies may be incapable of considering the vast experience of teachers. These bring with them not only the practice, but important theoretical concepts acquired throughout the career, especially during the initial training. Thus, it is a fact that imposing a training policy that considers the teacher only as a receiver of ideas without allowing a space for them to be discussed and cut from the subjectivity of all subjects involved with the school community, makes these policies something incapable of guaranteeing the success of all other issues that involve this theme, starting with the diversity of the voices that compose it (SOUSA, 2021).

The essential condition for the success and sedimentation of training policies proposed by the neoliberal model is the silencing of the teacher by transmitting to him the idea that he does not need to bring to the debate what afflicts him, because the material proposed in the trainings and offered by the major publishers brings with him the "answers" to all questions. As the real and diverse environment of the school is far from being fully considered by these materials, it is certain that, for many conflicts that arise in the school environment, the most comfortable situation for these sectors is to leave certain important agendas apparently without any solution.

The example of a situation that fits this context that generates difficulty for teachers is the relationship of teachers with new technologies during the most critical period of the pandemic (2021-2022). If, on the one hand, the training policies could not predict the arrival of the disease, on the other hand, we were able to make sure that in several cases, the training sprees before that period did not prepare the teacher to deal with the technological equipment in a more in-depth way. These technologies that for some teachers were already used in daily life, but which on the other hand found difficulties to articulate them with the day-to-day of formative processes (PRETTO; BONILLA; SENNA, 2020). Indeed,

I felt a little lost when I had to face the new technologies in emergency remote education because at one point there seemed to be many alternatives, many tools, and at the same time there seemed to be no solution in any (The third teacher).

A policy of training consistent with the real educational purpose, that is, to point a new direction for a society in difficulties, from the listening of education professionals, will be able to obtain new ointments for open wounds that never seem to heal. This type of formative policy will be based on theories and practices that favor teachers from any perspective when this is the main agent in the construction of new knowledge.

The satisfaction of being heard in the trainings and knowing that they are able to act actively in the search for the transformations they desire, increases the teacher's self-esteem in relation to their profession. This situation can cause the desire to put into practice new ideas that bring into practice new characterization and a higher morale for the school community that has been severely tainted during the current president's administration (2019-2022).

Teachers are, in practice, the most determined and advanced group in wanting improvements to teacher training policies, and for this, providing favorable conditions for them to be protagonists of the debates should be the first task of those who are responsible for these policies. Let us look at the reactions of some of the teachers when they become aware that they are fully heard during the trainings they participate in:

I want to thank this moment here, the training with you, it was wonderful, because we said, we had a lot of space. Very different from the trainings that are proposed for us. The kind that we go and just listen to without participating (The fourth teacher).

I was very pleased with the process itself, as it was not tiring. It was proof that not everything that is done for the teacher should be tiring and time consuming. It was very thought provoking (The fifth teacher).

It is perceived from the statements that teachers are willing to participate in the necessary changes in a very active way. The propositions that come from teachers during the formative meetings will never be based on ideas pre-formulated or predetermined by standardized sectors and/or standardized logics (MACEDO, 2015), because such is the greatness of the experiences that can be shared by each of them. These experiences are diverse and that are the general expression of a group that is accustomed to use the power of its voice to reach and achieve, through positive experiences, all the sectors that make up the group of which each teacher is part.

Final considerations

This work aimed to understand the conflicts and interactions present in the development of continuing education of foreign language teachers of the Centro Cearense de Idiomas (CCI). For this purpose, teachers were invited to participate in a training group in which we sought to understand opinions, analyses and especially criticisms about the moments of training, also trying to understand how the relationship between the knowledge developed and the sharing of practice in the classroom is structured.

We believe that the differential of this work was to place in the research-training the longings in the search for formative meetings that had in their main characteristic an updated training, which associated theory and practice, but that was also centered on the paths of solidarity, welcoming, empathy, grace, lightness, desire and expectations provided and that the result reverberated in the participants' protagonism, in order to reach its target audience: students.

During the meetings many perspectives were exposed, but we know that, just as teacher education only ends for a teacher after the end of his career, questions about it will require other formative meetings during his/her professional career. Questions serve as a compass to give meaning to the subject and how he should continue with his professional life in the face of the dehumanizing acts of the postmodern world.

We found that, with regard to the training scans that had the participation of teachers, there is a certain interaction between the subjects from what they reflect on the teaching of languages, which generates convergences when it comes to the importance of having and participating in formative meetings, but which can be sublimated by conflicts between what is expected of an updated training and the meetings that teachers are accustomed to attend.

The distance that exists between the training we have and the training we wish to have is not small, but it is also not something that can be accurately calculated. Processes of listening and welcoming have been left aside and a technicality increasingly present in the training guidelines and that just do not favor the teacher seem to have the intention of silencing the teacher's speech and leaving him more away from successful experiences, exchange of knowledge and even new directions that transform his work, as something already sacralized and seen as immutable.

Teachers need to be offered trails that can help them resignify their formative journey and not obstacles that already surround the teaching profession in such a negative and often almost insurmountable way.

This work allowed us to understand that considering the new theories about teacher education is one of the paths we must take to achieve the adequacy of the formative context of CCI teachers. It is these theories that serve as a motivational factor for the teacher to perceive his/her training with the feeling of lack, loss and that to pave new paths he needs to share important experiences of his history as an educator with the colleagues.

The interaction between the teachers who composed our meetings was noticeable so that, in addition to all obstacles, the formative process would not be impaired by the novelty of the situation we have been experiencing since 2019. In the end, we were able to attest that all interactions, convergences and conflicts are the fruit of collective movements and it is precisely through the collectivity that we can solve the questions arising during this research.

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