

RESEARCH IN FREIREAN POPULAR EDUCATION AT A LATIN AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

This study gives new meaning to the theoretical-methodological field of scientific research in Human, Social Sciences and Education educational and pedagogical elements developed by Freire with popular education. Thus, it aims to analyze the contribution of Freire's popular education to research in higher education, based on Freire's categories present in three studies linked to a popular education research group at a university in the Amazon of Pará. This is a bibliographic-documentary research that has as its reference works by Freire (2015, 2013a, 2013b) and popular education researchers (Brandão, 2006; Streck; Redin; Zitkoski, 2019; Saul; Saul, 2022), based on reports of three studies that appropriated Freire as a theoretical-methodological foundation. Among the results, it stands out that Freire's thinking points to the carrying out of collaborative, critical and dialogical research that allows educational actors to be participants in the research process.

Keywords: Research; Popular Education; Paulo Freire.

RESUMO

A PESQUISA NA EDUCAÇÃO POPULAR FREIREANA EM UMA UNIVERSIDADE LATINO-AMERICANA

Este estudo ressignifica para o campo teórico-metodológico da pesquisa científica em Ciências Humanas, Sociais e Educação elementos educacionais e

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pedagógicos desenvolvidos por Freire com a educação popular. Assim, objetiva analisar a contribuição da educação popular de Freire às pesquisas no ensino superior, tendo por base categorias Freireanas presentes em três estudos vinculados a um grupo de pesquisa de educação popular de uma universidade na Amazônia Paraense. Trata-se de uma pesquisa bibliográfico-documental que tem como referência obras de Freire (2015, 2013a, 2013b) e de pesquisadores/as da educação popular (Brandão, 2006; Streck; Redin; Zitkoski, 2019; Saul; Saul, 2022), tendo por base os relatórios de três pesquisas que se apropriaram de Freire como fundamentação teórico-metodológica. Entre os resultados destaca-se que o pensamento de Freire aponta para a realização de pesquisas colaborativas, críticas e dialógicas que permitem aos atores da educação serem partícipes do processo de investigação.

Palavras-chave: Pesquisa; Educação Popular; Paulo Freire.

RESUMEN

INVESTIGACIÓN EN EDUCACIÓN POPULAR FREIRENA EN UNA UNIVERSIDAD LATINOAMERICANA

Este estudio resignifica el campo teórico-metodológico de la investigación científica en Ciencias Humanas, Sociales y de la Educación con elementos educativos y pedagógicos desarrollados por Freire con la educación popular. Así, se pretende analizar la contribución de la educación popular de Freire a la investigación en educación superior, a partir de las categorías de Freire presentes en tres estudios vinculados a un grupo de investigación en educación popular de una universidad de la Amazonia de Pará. Se trata de una investigación bibliográfica-documental que tiene como referencia trabajos de Freire (2015, 2013a, 2013b) e investigadores de educación popular (Brandão, 2006; Streck; Redin; Zitkoski, 2019; Saul; Saul, 2022), a partir de informes de tres estudios que se apropiaron de Freire como una fundamentación teórico-metodológica. Entre los resultados se destaca que el pensamiento de Freire apunta a la realización de investigaciones colaborativas, críticas y dialógicas que permitan a los actores educativos ser partícipes del proceso de investigación.

Palabras clave: Investigación; Educación Popular; Paulo Freire.

Introduction¹

Paulo Freire, through popular education, has contributed to higher education, both in terms of teaching practice and in conducting research that is ethically and politically committed to the working classes. This contribution, in the field of university research, is presented in two ways: (1) through categories inherent to his

educational thinking and that present a methodological dimension and (2) through research that his studies point to: dialogic research and action research as types of participatory and militant research, which present an educational, formative and critical dimension.

The aim of this article is to analyze the contribution of Paulo Freire's popular education to research in higher education, based on Freirean categories in three studies linked to a popular

¹ Translation of the article into English by English teacher Thais Quaresma de Sousa, a graduate of the Federal University of Pará, with proficiency attested by the TOEFL iTP proficiency test.

education research group at a university in the Amazon of Pará.

This is a bibliographic-documentary research, whose reference consists of works by Paulo Freire and popular education researchers, based on the reports of three studies that used Paulo Freire as a methodological basis (two theses and a book), which are linked to a Latin American university located in the Pará Amazon.

The article is organized into five sections, namely: a) the introduction, in which the objective and methodology of the study are presented; b) Freirean categories that point to methodological dimensions; c) Freirean research: dialogic, militant, formative and participatory; d) Freirean methodological strategies used in three educational research projects; e) finally, considerations with reflections on the contribution of research in higher education.

Freirean categories with a methodological dimension

We consider that seven categories present in Paulo Freire's educational thought have a methodological dimension and can be used in research: the act of asking; the dialogue; the cultural circle, the participation, the praxis, the denunciation and, the announcement.

The **act of asking** has a methodological character to the extent that as asking becomes a procedure for investigating knowledge, questioning social reality.

In dialogue with Freire, Faundez understands that asking questions is the beginning of knowledge, and every research process starts from problem-questions that guide the investigation work.

The start of knowledge, I repeat, is to ask. Only from the questions should one go in search of answers, and not the other way around: establishing the answers, with which all knowledge remains precisely in that, it is already given, it is an absolute, it does not give way to curiosity or to elements for discovering [...] every thesis

work, like every research work, must begin by finding the key questions that need to be resolved (Freire; Faundez, 1985, p. 46; 50).

For Freire (Freire; Faundez, 1985), what is fundamental in the process of scientific investigation is learning to ask questions, stimulating curiosity and the act of asking. This instigates curiosity to seek knowledge, as well as to raise problem-questions, necessary for scientific investigation.

In this sense, the question composes the construction of the research. However, the act of asking needs to be configured in a problem linked to the internal contradictions of the sociocultural reality in which the subject is situated. Hence the importance of a well-defined, well-stated research problem, through the question, as well as the need for the researcher to learn to problematize and elaborate the problem-question of their research.

The **dialogue** is another category in Freire (Freire; Schör, 1986) that presents a methodological dimension by enabling subjects to acquire knowledge. He considers that the dialogue composes the historical nature of human beings. Therefore, the dialogical experience is seen by Freire as fundamental for the construction of epistemological curiosity, being constitutive of it: "the critical stance that dialogue implies; its concern in learning the reason for being of the object that mediates the dialogical subjects" (Freire, 2001, p.81).

In this way, doing research is dialogical practice. The dialogical method, from a Freirean perspective, is the intercommunication method between people mediated by the world and presents itself as an active and critical procedure (Oliveira, 2017).

The dialogue between the researcher and the research participants presents the epistemological and political intentionality of the search for knowledge of facts, to be able to transform them. The participants, then, meet to know and transform the world in collaboration, being dialogue the mediator of this collaborative action between the subjects.

The **participation** is another Freirean category that is fundamental to the research process, because it involves popular segments in the act of investigation. The research is **with** its participants and **not for** them.

[...] I cannot reduce popular groups to mere objects of my research. I simply cannot know the reality in which they participate except with them as subjects of this knowledge which, being for them a knowledge of previous knowledge (which occurs at the level of their daily experience) becomes a new knowledge (Freire, 1988, p. 35).

In this perspective, it is as human beings that research participants are seen by Freire. In the research process, they cannot be objectified or minimized in their way of thinking, understanding, and expressing the world.

Another category that presents a methodological dimension is the **praxis**. In Paulo Freire, reflection on action does not only have an educational and pedagogical dimension; it is fundamental in politically engaged research with the popular classes.

According to Streck, Redin and Zitzoski (2019, p. 380), praxis is a category that permeates the entire Freirean political-epistemological project and is intricately linked to the concepts of dialogicity, action-reflection, autonomy, liberating education, teaching, and research. "Praxis can be understood as the close relationship that is established between a way of interpreting reality and life and the consequent practice that results from this understanding, leading to transformative action." Then,

Praxis implies theory as a set of ideas capable of interpreting a given phenomenon or historical moment, which, in a second moment, leads to a new statement, in which the subject says their word about the world and begins to act to transform this same reality. It is a synthesis between theory-word and action. The word as an understanding requires transformation and becomes inseparable from the need for action: it therefore becomes a word, according to Paulo Freire's neologism. From the moment someone understands and becomes aware of their role in the world, their transformation becomes

inevitable and therefore generates an action to achieve this end. (Streck; Redin; Zitzoski, 2019, p. 380).

In dialogical and critical research, the process of reflection-action-reflection enables subjects not to be mere descriptors of facts, but to think and reflect critically with a view to their transformation. For Freire (2013a, p. 68),

Authentic liberation, which is humanization in process, is not something that is deposited in men [human beings]. It is not just another empty, mythifying word. It is praxis, which implies the action and reflection of men [human beings] on the world in order to transform it.

Finally, the **denunciation** and the **announcement** are fundamental categories in the process of engaged research that aims at social transformation. Denunciation and announcement as a dialectical movement of praxis, in which the denunciation mobilizes the social body that made it, the hopeful movement of the announcement. This means that research cannot be restricted to denunciation; it must announce perspectives of change in a libertarian vision.

We communicate this because we understand that denunciation in itself has the necrophilic power to bring to the surface cathartic contexts of pain, which cause suffering and disturb people and groups. Thus, denunciation detached from the announcement ratifies deterministic and fatalistic social scenes, which gives suffering bodies blurred and/or distorted and/or restricted understandings of life, accentuating death drives through the immobility that denunciation in itself evokes.

In turn, the dialectical movement, of praxis, denunciation-announcement, allows the collective participant in the research to experience the cathartic experience that evokes pain while simultaneously bringing with it healing, the pulse of life, the search for alternatives and possible paths. Denunciation, hand in hand with announcement, carries within itself the possibility of transformation, together, denunciation-announcement; another world is

possible, another reality is possible. This is liberating for human beings.

To produce advertisements/denunciations, Paulo Freire immersed himself in the mixed, plural and hybrid cultures of the oppressed and the oppressors, seeking to break with isolation and dichotomies to invest in hopes that live in places that have been little investigated. (Streck; Redin; Zitkoski, 2019, p. 49).

According to Freire, the researcher who is ethically committed to the people, to the excluded, understands that “changing the world implies the dialectic between denouncing the dehumanizing situation and announcing its overcoming, which is ultimately our dream.” (Freire, 2019, p. 77). In other words:

Whatodo, having in them one of its subjects, places a fundamental demand on them: that they ask themselves if they really believe in the people, in simple men [human beings], in peasants. If they are really capable of communing with them and with them ‘pronouncing’ the world (Freire, 2017, p. 127).

In this way, in these categories, there is a political commitment to the popular groups whose economic, cultural, and historical situation we want to know, because we want to act. This means that the research has a political character. “Who do I serve with my science? This should be a constant question for all of us. And we must be consistent with our choice, expressing our coherence in our practice.” (Freire, 1988, p.36).

Freirean research: dialogical, militant, forming and participating

In positivist-based research, according to Freire (2013a, p.100):

The researcher of significant themes who, in the name of scientific objectivity, transforms the organic into the inorganic, what is being into what is, the living into the dead, fears change. They fear transformation. They see in this transformation, which they do not deny but do

not want, not an announcement of life, but an announcement of death, of deterioration. They want to know about change, not to stimulate it, to deepen it, but to slow it down.

In this way, many researchers enter people’s daily lives in order to understand the experiences of knowledge, only through the bias of scientific objectivity, reducing everyday life to rigid schemes and making people passive objects of research action, using methodologies from the global north (Freire, 2013a). As a result, researches are conducted that suggest technological innovations without, in fact, worrying about communities and, mainly, about populations that have historically suffered processes of oppression.

In Freire’s view, the transformation of people into the object of the researcher’s exclusive action leads to the maintenance of the status quo, hindering any possibility of change. He believes that the new is introduced in order to maintain old oppressive structures. Innovation does not announce life. It is a type of research that “kills life and cannot hide its necrophilic mark.” (Freire, 2013a, p. 100).

In contrast, the Freirean political epistemological project innovates by proposing research as an immersive process that takes place in dialogue with the social segments of the population, a process that involves the “investigation of the people’s own thinking. Thinking that does not occur outside of men [human beings], nor in a man [human beings] alone, nor in a void, but in men [human beings] and among men [human beings], and always referring to reality” (Freire, 2013a, p. 100). Thus, “scientific and popular knowledge are critically articulated in another knowledge that is shared in solidarity, culturally innovative and socially transformative” (Streck; Redin; Zitkoski, 2019, p. 370).

Streck, Redin and Zitkoski (2019, p. 367) state that Paulo Freire goes beyond the positivist type of research, because he thinks of research as part of teaching, with dialogue and problematization as “structuring themes of

what educator-student and student-educator do". Freire (2013a, p.101) does not dichotomize research from teaching, pointing to its educational character: "the more I investigate people's thinking with them, the more we educate ourselves together. The more we educate ourselves, the more we continue to investigate." By starting from a teaching intertwined with research, Freire (2013a, p.101) communicates "that all thematic investigation of a conscientious nature is pedagogical, and all authentic education is an investigation of thinking".

With Freire, the question of education arises as a participant in a process of social transformation, based on dialogic and problematizing research, enabling people's awareness and, therefore, capable of affirming the nation, but not as the only bias for change, because, by improving the passion for knowledge, it improves culture, science, research, technology and teaching. "And all of this begins with preschool, which, in turn, needs the university" (Freire, 2015, p. 108). From a Freirean perspective, teaching requires research:

There is no teaching without research and no research without teaching. These tasks are intertwined. As I teach, I keep searching, re-searching. I teach because I search, because I have inquired, because I inquire, and I inquire myself. I research to confirm, by confirming, I intervene, by intervening I educate and educate myself. I research to know what I do not yet know and to communicate or announce the news. (Freire, 2019, p.30-31).

Freire has an ethical concern with research and teaching, which can follow an authoritarian path, soaked in ideological discourses capable of "anesthetizing the mind, confusing curiosity, distorting the perception of facts, things, events" (Freire, 2019, p.129).

In Freire's view, research concerns the defense of human interests and, in view of this, permanent ethical vigilance is necessary to assume democratic world projects, from which intercultural coexistence will make it possible to "know who you can count on and against whom you must fight. To the extent that you

know this, more or less, you can begin to be with and not be alone. The feeling of not being alone diminishes fear" (Freire, 2013b, p. 77).

Freire (2019, p. 98) affirms the need for ethical attitudes in our educational and research actions:

By recognizing that, precisely because we have become beings capable of observing, comparing, evaluating, choosing, deciding, intervening, breaking, opting, we have become ethical beings and the probability of transgressing ethics has opened up to us, I could never accept transgression as a right, but rather as a possibility. A possibility that we must fight against, not one that we should stand idly by. Hence my rigorous rejection of the quietist fatalisms that end up absorbing ethical transgressions instead of condemning them. I cannot become an accomplice to a perverse order, holding it irresponsible for its evil, by attributing the harm it causes to human beings to 'blind' and imponderable forces.

In addition to ethical and political engagement, Freire's research has as an essential condition the "dialogical-problematizing interaction" (Streck; Redin; Zitkoski, 2019, p. 367). Freirean dialogical research is a humanistic and free practice, as it has dialogicity as the means in which researchers and the people assume themselves as subjects in the investigative process, subjects capable of actively acting in thematic investigation, deepening their awareness around reality and collectively building new knowledge, capable of operating social transformations, as long as the conditions are enabling change. (Streck; Redin; Zitkoski, 2019).

Therefore, research needs to be characterized as sympathetic interaction, constituting communication between subjects in permanent becoming, interacting dialogically around the set of contradictions apprehended procedurally (Streck; Redin; Zitkoski, 2019, p. 368).

In this Freirean perspective, it is necessary to understand that in the word there is a look, a syntax, a reading of the world, from which knowledge arises from experiences. Listening to these voices and dialoguing with them is to understand that no one reads the world in

isolation. Above all, dialogical research is communion, collaboration, tolerance, lovingness, and solidarity. In it, the question cannot be verticalized, from the researcher to the people; the question arises from the dialogue that takes place in ethical alterity. Researchers and people, “from the place where they are, have a unique reading, analogous to those who, situated in the suburbs, also see the city center; residents of the center hardly see the suburbs” (Streck; Redin; Zitkoski, 2019, p. 286).

In Freire, the research has a formative and political role, because “no liberation that is given is benevolent, we need to be born from us, by us” (Streck; Redin; Zitkoski, 2019, p. 286). In this way, Freirean dialogic research affirms the dignity, freedom, and autonomy of the human being – and therefore, it affirms life.

Paulo Freire highlights the **action research** among the types of research and considers it as participatory, that is, it involves the popular segments as subjects and as activists, by presenting itself as a process of denouncing problems and oppressions and announcing solutions, with a view to social change. In Paulo Freire’s view, participatory action research aims to know what concrete reality consists of, which presupposes objectivity (set of material facts) and subjectivity (perception of facts by the population involved in them). Furthermore, the popular segments must participate in the

research as researchers and scholars and not as objects.

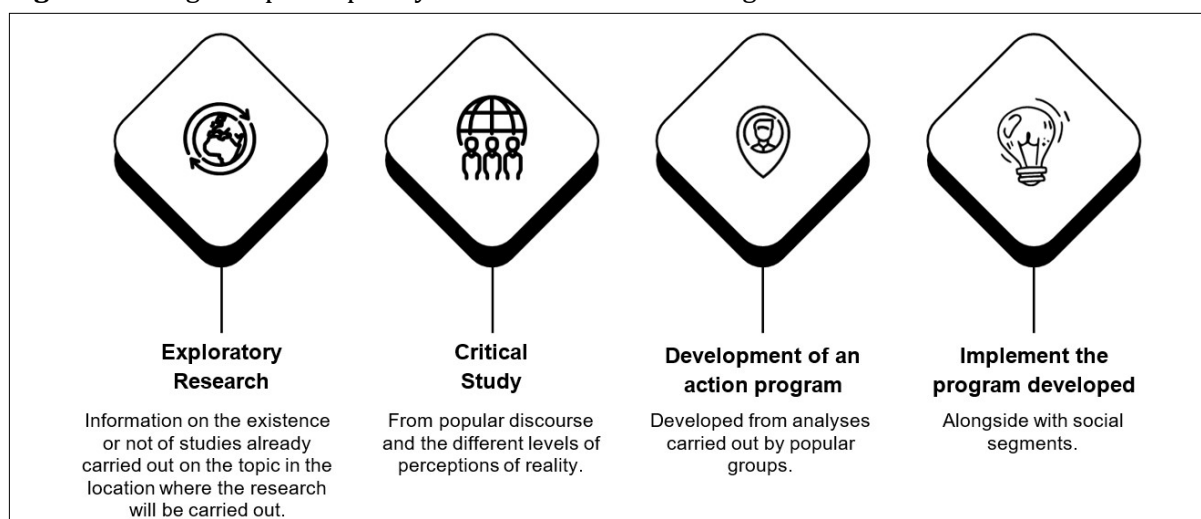
Another dimension highlighted by Freire (1983, p. 120) of action research is the educational dimension:

The more I investigate people’s thinking with them, the more we educate ourselves together. The more we educate ourselves, the more we continue to investigate. Education and thematic investigation, in the problematizing conception of education, become moments of the same process.

In this sense, by investigating in dialogue with the subjects we learn and educate ourselves. Thus, participatory action research, according to Freire (1988), has the following stages:

- **Exploratory Research** - Information on the existence or not of studies already conducted on the topic in the location where the research will be conducted. It also consists of delimiting the study area through visits, conversations, and debates with the group.
- **Critical study** of popular discourse and the diverse levels of perceptions of reality.
- **Development of an action program** based on analysis conducted by popular groups.
- **Implement the program developed** in conjunction with social segments.

Figure 1 – Stages of participatory action research according to Paulo Freire



Source: Created by the author based on Freire (1988).

In this way, it is an investigation that involves social segments in all research processes; it diagnoses and critically problematizes problems; and collectively creates action strategies to modify the reality found.

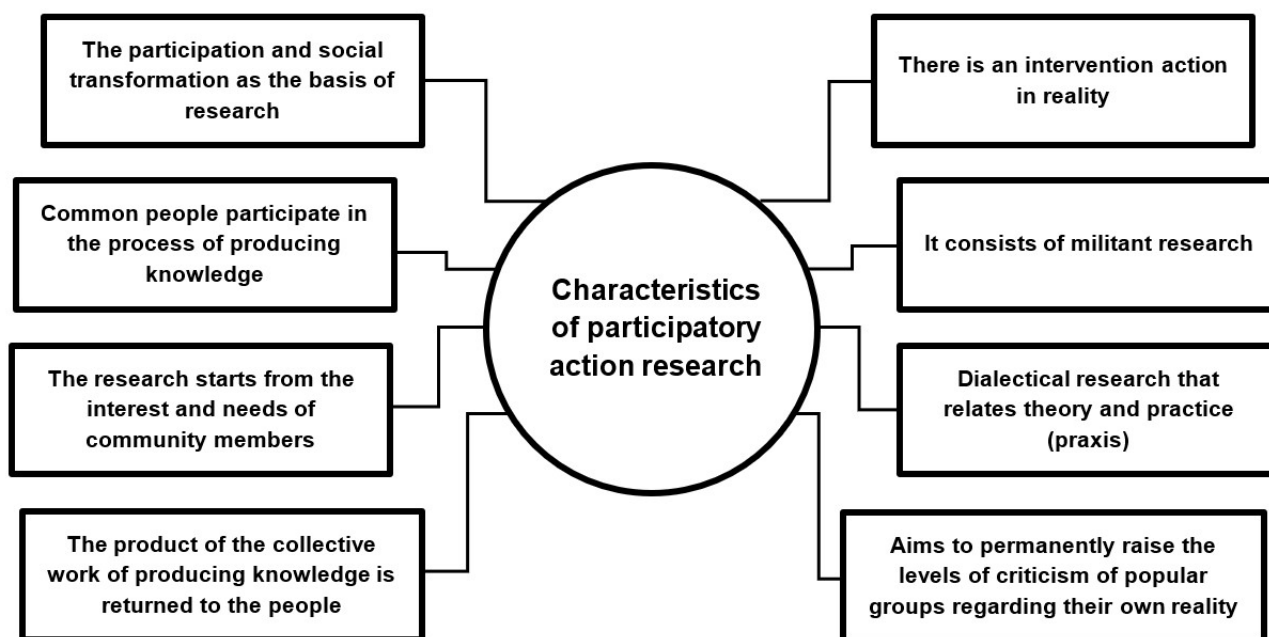
The characteristics of participatory action research are:

- the participation and social transformation as the basis of research.
- common people participate in the process of producing scientifically articulated knowledge about their own social reality and living conditions.
- the research starts from the interest and needs of community members.
- the product of the collective work of

producing knowledge is returned to the people.

- there is an action of intervention in reality.
- consists of militant research that starts from the need to explain reality based on the political insertion of the researcher in reality, in events (Gohn, 1987).
- dialectical research that relates theory and practice (praxis) and that produces changes in the context investigated (social transformation).
- aims to permanently raise the levels of criticism of popular groups regarding their own reality (educational dimension).

Figure 2 – Characteristics of participatory action research



Source: Prepared by the authors based on bibliographic research.

Participatory action research, therefore, due to its militant nature, has a different purpose from traditional research:

[...] Instead of being concerned only with explaining social phenomena after they have occurred, the purpose of research/action is to encourage the acquisition of knowledge and critical awareness of the transformation process by the group that is experiencing this process, so that it can assume, in an increasingly lucid

and autonomous way, its role as protagonist and social actor. (Oliveira; Oliveira, 1988, p. 27).

In Brandão’s view (2006), this type of research constitutes, in the field of knowledge production, a political, supportive alternative for knowledge creation and, also, a transformative and emancipatory social action.

In this type of research, several techniques are used: bibliographic and documentary sur-

vey; life stories; oral narratives; case study; participant observation, interviews, among others.

Educational research: Freirean Methodological Strategies

In this topic, we discuss strategies developed by educator Paulo Freire in the contexts of education and literacy with young people, adults and the elderly that were reinterpreted for the context of research in human and social sciences. These strategies comprised the theoretical-methodological scope of: two theses, one that denounces the pedagogy of suffering in medical residencies and announces the pedagogy of lovingness as an alternative in the training of more humanized doctors committed to transforming the world, called Thesis A, and another that deals with inclusive processes of special education in two research territories (Public Basic Education Network and Higher Education Research Group), called Thesis B; and the production of a bibliographic research on Freirean education using conceptual frameworks, which involved a group of education professionals and academics. (Oliveira; Santos, 2022).

In this article, we highlight the following Freirean methodological strategies: a) socio-anthropological research; b) the dialogued interview; c) the culture or dialogic circle; and d) the conceptual plot.

a) socio-anthropological research

Freire, in the popular education movement, thought of a strategy that could better understand the literacy students who would make up the literacy classes for young people and adults, naming it socio-anthropological research, which would make it possible to learn more about the vocabulary universe of his students, their tastes, what they know, their socioeconomic and cultural realities.

In this context, “socio-anthropological research” would be, for Fiore (*apud* Freire, 2005,

p. 9-10), a prior research, explained in the preface to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*:

[...] Previous research investigates the universe of spoken words in the cultural environment of the literacy student. From there, the words with the richest phonemic possibilities and the greatest semantic load are extracted — those that not only allow rapid mastery of the universe of the written word but also the most effective engagement of those who pronounce it, with the pragmatic force that establishes and transforms the human world.

In this way, Freire uses socio-anthropological research as a means by which he could guide the educational and teaching-learning processes conducted with his students in adult literacy classes.

In Freirean literacy research, socio-anthropological research was used at the time of exploratory research, with the intention of raising problems and knowing who the study participants are, their socioeconomic conditions, their family contexts, their first desires, the feelings that cross them in the scenarios of their work activities, the knowledge they carry, and the pains most intimately felt in the territory of their work. This investigation was fundamental for conducting a Freirean qualitative study, as it made it possible to raise questions about both the social and cultural context, as well as the professional know-how of each research participant.

Brandão (2003, p. 141) states that socio-anthropological research “aims to understand another person conceived as the holder of their own knowledge, the holder of ‘know-how’, a true survivor”. Thus, this preliminary data collection research already announces the type of study to which the research carried out in the areas of Human and Social Sciences is dedicated: qualitative study, guided by a critical scientific epistemology that adds values of dialogue, human ethics, approximation of the researcher with the field in which he/she carries out the study and with the recognition of its participants as beings of knowledge.

The socio-anthropological research contributed both to the writing of the thesis report and to the proposal for the collective construction of permanent training projects and interventions, seeking to overcome problems identified in the community. In addition, it allowed connections between the challenges and desires expressed by the study participants, even though this initial survey was conducted individually.

One way to systematize the information gathered in socio-anthropological research is through tables, including the economic, social, educational, and cultural profiles of the study participants.

Thus, socio-anthropological research makes it possible to identify the challenges, fears, desires, and dreams that the study participants experience on an individual level, but with collective connections, thus measuring phenomena that affect them in their educational practices developed with their communities.

b) the dialogued interview

The dialogued interview, from the Freirean perspective, presents three dimensions: an **existential** one, understanding that the research participants are subjects of knowledge and curiosity, who have knowledge, life and cultural experiences; **democratic**, with the participants seen as subjects of citizens and rights, people, whose knowledge is recognized and legitimized in the epistemological and **critical**, by enabling the research participants to problematize and critically reflect on the topic discussed in the research.

In this way, it is not presented as a relational action between the interviewer and the interviewee directed by the former, merely descriptive and with content-based questions, without allowing the interviewees to position themselves in relation to the topic of study.

Freire (Freire; Faundez, 1985, p. 36) considers that “dialogue only exists when we accept that the other is different and can tell us something we do not know”.

The dialogued interview establishes another relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, breaking with the bureaucratization and unilateralism present in the question-answer process of traditional research, centered on the figure of the interviewer.

The Freirean interview is configured as a dialogical practice between the interviewer and the interviewee, with the interviewer’s role being to listen sensitively to the interviewee, which implies becoming sensitive and trying to understand the other person’s thinking, as well as treating the interviewee as a subject of the research.

The interview, when understood as a dialogical, interactive and participatory methodological strategy, makes it possible to obtain social and subjective data, such as imaginaries, representations, feelings, values and emotions, and constitutes an important resource for qualitative research in education, when considering that it has a social, historical and cultural dimension and is a process of identity construction.

This type of interview is ethically and politically committed to the research participants, respecting their knowledge, and assuming, with them, the possibilities of social change. Additionally, sensitive listening is also present, establishing relationships of affection, love, and beauty. According to Streck, Redin and Zitzoski (2019, p. 23):

This humanist vision, committed to the struggle for transformation, raises an emerging issue regarding the formation of a new educator: a frontier intellectual, social activist, critical researcher, ethical being, radical philosopher, and political and cultural revolutionary. In *Pedagogy of Autonomy*, Freire revisits his work and his history of struggle for the humanization of the world and places, with great emphasis, the theme of ethics as central in times of neoliberal globalization and ‘exacerbated relativism,’ in which everything is naturalized. In defense of greater ethics, Freire challenges us to denounce an increasingly dehumanized world and the need to educate hope in a more beautiful, just, and dignified world in which to live. The

emergence of ethics in a global context of dehumanization. This is a strong appeal from the educator of hope.

In the liberating Freirean context, the dialogued interview is as necessary for research as dialogue is for teaching, which aims to be a practice of freedom, because “the diversity of discourses and presences can be highly valued as a resource that intensifies any learning experience” (Hooks, 2021, p. 94).

The dialogued interview, anchored in Freirean assumptions, allows us to do what Hooks (2019, p. 38-39; 53) highlights: “the transition from silence to speech is, for the oppressed, the colonized, the exploited, and for those who stand up and fight side by side, a gesture of challenge that heals, that makes a new life and new growth possible”. The raised and radically liberated voices necessarily confront, disturb and demand that “listeners change their ways of listening and being.” The dialogued interview seeks to break oppressive mechanisms of silencing, submission, and censorship.

In order to openly break with hegemonic research patterns, researchers, by adopting Freirean dialogic research, commit themselves to the human, to the people, and assume a permanent attitude of ethical vigilance against any and all forms of domination. Therefore, the dialogic interview encourages silenced and oppressed voices to speak, confined in a hostile place on the margins of the world. From it, emerges what “it means to live in a culture where, to speak, one runs the risk of brutal punishment – imprisonment, torture and death” (Hooks, 2019, p. 54).

c) the culture circle

The culture circle is presented by Freire as a pedagogical and methodological strategy. Freire (1980a and 1980b) proposes an active, dialogic-problematizing and awareness-raising methodology in the culture circle. He states: “we thought of an active method that would be capable of criticizing man [human being] through the debate of challenging situations,

presented to the group; these situations would have to be existential for the groups” (Freire, 1980a, p.106).

Fiore (*apud* Freire, 2005, p. 12), in the preface to *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, points out that

The experience of culture circles shows that literacy students, when they begin to write freely, do not copy words, but express judgments. These, in a certain way, try to reproduce the movement of his own experience; the literacy student, by giving them written form, gradually assumes the consciousness of being a witness to a story of which he knows himself as the author. As he becomes aware of himself as a witness to his story, his consciousness becomes reflexively more responsible for that story.

In this way, Freire designs a classroom aesthetic through which students can meet and see, feel, touch, listen and intuit. An aesthetic of circularity, of the circle. An aesthetic through which people accommodate their bodies with the disposition to pronounce their words horizontally, since, in the encounter with others, they weave together a better understanding of the world in which they live.

Among the Freirean categories presented in the aesthetics of the Culture Circles, we highlight dialogue, listening, creativity, problematization, critical awareness, human ethics, and beauty. These categories are being apprehended and learned, as the learning of the word, which emerges from its realities, becomes the word-world, as well as the students.

According to Streck, Redin and Zitkoski (2019, p. 81-82), the fundamentals of culture circles are shown in Figure 3, below.

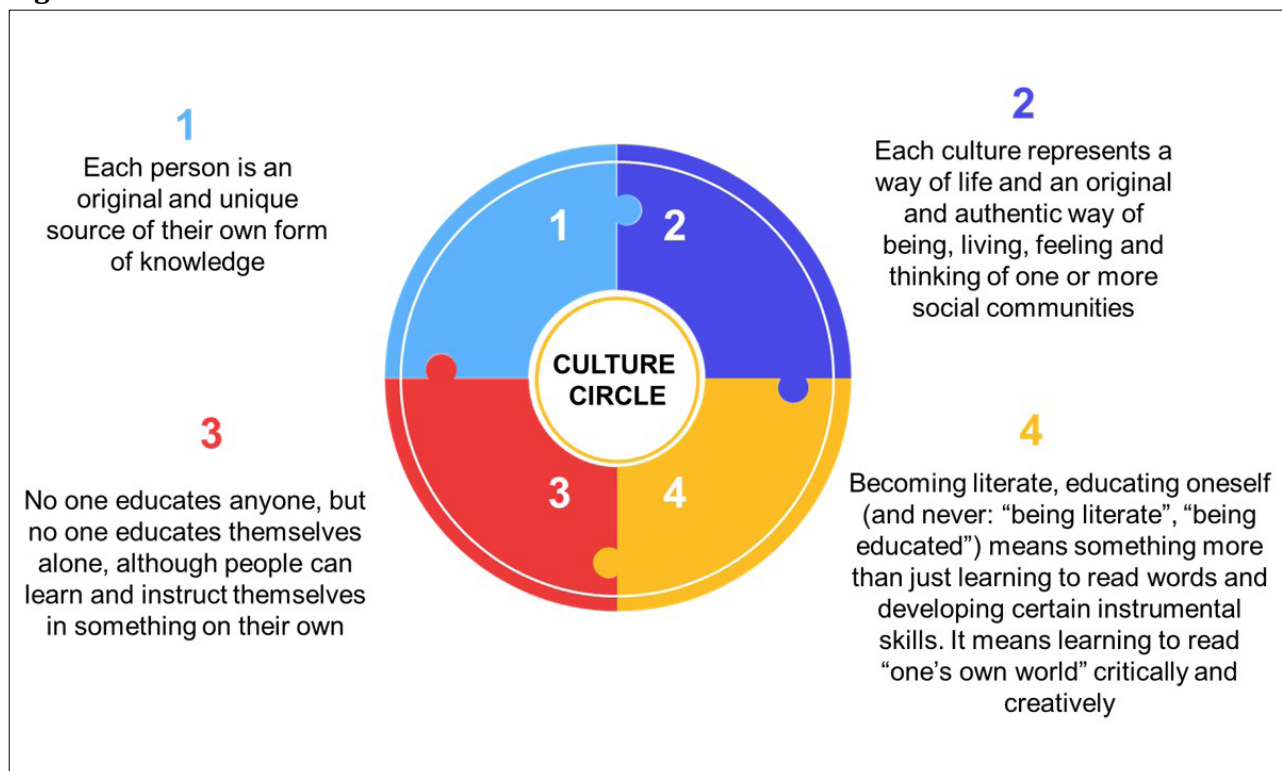
1. Each person is an original and unique source of their own form of knowledge, and whatever the quality of this knowledge, it has a value in itself because it represents the representation of an individual experience of life and sharing in social life.
2. Likewise, each culture represents a way of life and an original and authentic way of being, living, feeling, and thinking of one or more social communities. Each

culture can only be explained from within, and its “lived and thought” components must be the foundation of any program of education or social transformation.

3. No one educates anyone, but no one educates themselves alone, although people can learn and instruct themselves in something on their own. People, as human beings, educate each other and mutually teach and learn from each other, through a dialogue mediated by worlds of experience and culture between different but never unequal human beings, groups, and communities.
4. Becoming literate, educating oneself (and never: “being literate”, “being educated”) means something more than just learning to read words and developing

certain instrumental skills. It means learning to read “one’s own world” critically and creatively. It means learning, through a dialogic process in which the shared and participatory process itself is more important than the content with which one works, to become aware of oneself (who am I really and truly? What is the value of being who I am?); becoming aware of the other (who are the others with whom I live and share my life? In what situations and positions do we relate? And what does this mean to the self?); and becoming aware of the world (what is the world in which I live? How was it and continues to be socially constructed to have become the way it is now? What can and should we do to transform it?).

Figure 3 – Fundamentals of culture circles



Source: Prepared by the authors based on Streck, Redin and Zitkoski (2019, p. 81-82).

The culture circle can be used as a methodological strategy in educational research, since it opens up topics of interest to the research

for debate, as well as allowing participants to express their readings of the world and life experiences.

Thus, in Freirean theory, Culture Circles carry with them the power to be a scientific strategy for collecting and producing data in implied qualitative studies, such as participatory research.

In the doctoral research (Thesis B), the dialogic culture circles were taken with the perspective explained by Brandão (2017, p. 30): “a creation with which Paulo Freire sought to transform the ‘square’, vertical and hierarchical geography of education, school and classroom, towards a dialogically circular, horizontal and egalitarian architecture”. In this sense, these circles were appropriated as a theoretical-methodological strategy for collecting and producing data in an implied qualitative study.

Theoretical-methodological strategy through which its participants, together, in collective reflective activity, were able to pronounce and signify their words based on the democratic exercise in which different awarenesses about certain social, cultural, political, ethical, and educational phenomena were possible.

The educator established, from his coexistence with the people, the bases of a pedagogy in which both the educator and the student, men [human beings] equally free and critical, learn in the common work of becoming aware of the situation they live in. A pedagogy that eliminates authoritarian relationships at the root, in which there is no ‘school’ or ‘teacher,’ but circles of culture and a coordinator whose essential task is dialogue. (Freire, 2006, p. 33-34).

Freire (2005) problematizes the school that instrumentalizes itself with the power of control over bodies, so that they live in a “necrophilic” condition – puppets manipulated by a given “authority”, named teacher, and socially validated as a source of unilateral knowledge. Thus, the research cannot reproduce this power relationship to the bodies participating in the study.

d) the conceptual plot

Saul and Saul (2022, p. 19) indicate **the con-**

ceptual plot as a methodological strategy in the development of research, considering that, for Freire, “life events compose plots that are historically situated and subject to multiple conditioning”. The authors explain that: “it is up to the human being to “pull the threads” of these plots to understand them and act in a counter-hegemonic direction, enabling a path towards liberation.”

For Freire (1992, p. 17), “we carry with us the memory of many plots, the wet body of our history, of our culture”. In this sense, when we dialogue with the research subjects, we draw relationships between the plots experienced, their stories and knowledge and sociocultural life experiences.

In this logic, the conceptual plot is used “to visualize how Freirean concepts can be articulated to analyze a phenomenon or a concrete situation, attempting a transformative action” (Saul; Saul, 2022, p. 20).

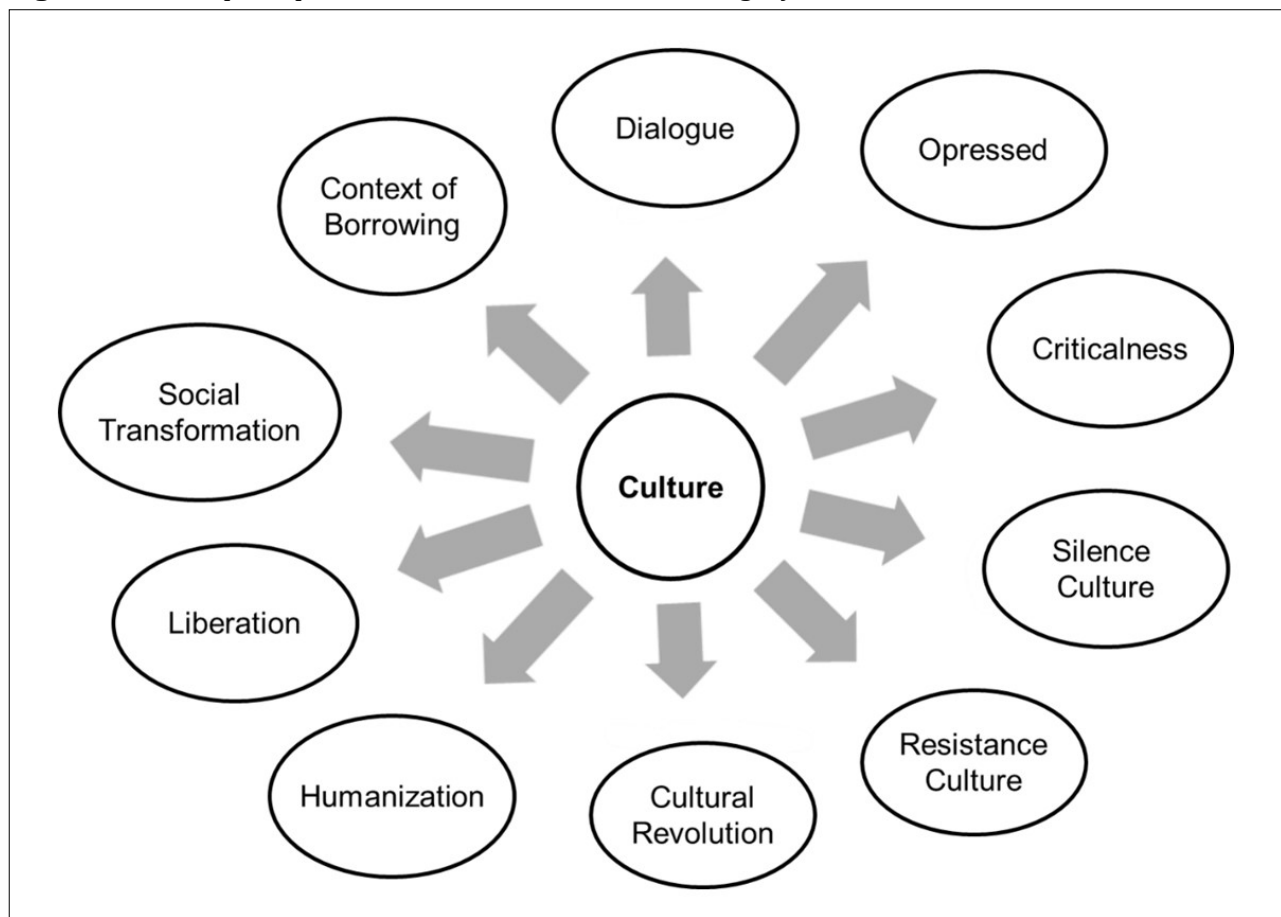
For this, according to the authors, graphic representation is used, with a view to establishing connections between Freirean concepts, without establishing a hierarchy. The plot is constructed based on a central concept, the focus of the research, related to others coming from the matrix of Paulo Freire’s thought and, therefore, presents connections with concrete social practice and aims at actions to transform reality (Saul; Saul, 2022).

Saul and Saul (2022, p. 22) explain that the Freirean conceptual plot:

is committed to the radicality of Paulo Freire’s thought and presents itself as a critical canvas that challenges its author to construct knowledge that contributes to the explanation of the nature, the conditions of viability, the limits and the intentionality of the central concept and the reality to be better understood.

Azevedo, Oliveira and Souza (2022, p. 45) created the following conceptual plot, using Paulo Freire’s culture category as its theme (Figure 4):

Figure 4 – Conceptual plot with Paulo Freire’s culture category as its theme



Source: Azevedo, Oliveira e Souza (2022, p. 45).

The authors found the following Freirean categories in connection with the concept of culture in Paulo Freire’s thought: dialogue, oppressed, criticalness, silence culture, context of borrowing, resistance culture, cultural revolution, humanization, liberation, and social transformation.

These connections were made as the reflection on a given category used to associate one with another. For example, the initial reflection on culture, involving Paulo Freire’s situation of exile, led to the category context of borrowing, as explained below:

Paulo Freire was an educator who traveled the world. During his wanderings he lived in numerous countries, such as: Switzerland, the United States, Bolivia, Chile, Guinea-Bissau, São Tomé and Príncipe, Angola, the Republic of Cabo Verde, among others. His experiences in exile in countries in Latin America, Oceania, Europe,

Africa, and Asia allowed him to interact with the most diverse cultures, with diverse ways of understanding the world and diverse ways of being in the world. Living with the cultural specificities of ‘borrowed contexts,’ as Freire himself called the locus of his wanderings during exile, imprinted in his works the need to problematize the relationships between cultural knowledge (Azevedo; Oliveira; Souza, 2022, p. 45-46).

Just like webs, the connections of the plots are elaborated, and the categories emerge, giving meaning and significance to the subject matter.

Thus, the methodological strategies presented in this article make it possible to study both Paulo Freire’s educational thought and other educational themes that have the author as their main theoretical reference, opening up new perspectives for the qualitative field of research in education.

Final considerations

Paulo Freire presents in his educational thought epistemological bases based on some categories, such as the act of asking, dialogue, participation, praxis, denunciation, and announcement, which contribute to research in education. In addition, he presents a research that distances itself from positivist research; in a qualitative approach, that is, for a dialogical, militant, formative and critical research, as well as highlighting the importance of participatory action research, for its dimension of political praxis of social transformation, as well as an ethical-political and humanizing character.

Paulo Freire's thinking, as a foundation for research in education, points to the implementation of participatory research that is ethically and politically committed to subjects who have been historically denied and made invisible in society and education. Collaborative, critical, and dialogical research that allows educational actors to participate in the research process. Research that not only diagnoses problem situations, but also enables changes in the social and educational practices of popular social segments. Research with different methodological strategies that are dialogical, allowing participants to be subjects and not objectified in the investigation process.

In this way, it is necessary that Paulo Freire's educational thought be the guide for educational practices and research, for the political and resistance dimension that his education represents, for the engagement of popular classes, and in the struggles for the process of democratization of education in the society which we live in.

The utopia of a possible dream emerges from the denunciation of the oppression and the announcement of the liberation.

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