

The Dialogue of the Comisión de la Verdad as an Educational Tool

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Applied Linguistics: Sociolinguistics

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Introduction

The following project consists of the analysis and reflection on the functionality of the dialogue in one of the pedagogical activities proposed by “La Comisión de la Verdad”, in the quest to create in collective the concepts of truth, diversity, and peace. The audience will be introduced to the report with a video made by the presenters about the generalities of the project such as the goals, the investigation, and the results of the study, as well as the decision of implementing this report in some schools as a pedagogical resource and the implications in the educational field in pro of connecting the community around those concepts. Then, before reading the lesson plan created by “La Comisión de la Verdad”, the presenters will ask what is the definition of truth, peace, and diversity for the audience, as well as their perception and position of using the report as an educational resource for future students. Then the presenters will pass one of the activities in the pedagogical guidance of the report called “La verdad se construye a muchas voces” made for students in grades Fourth and Fifth in company with the teachers, and their families. After reading the activity, the audience needs to reflect on the influence that this type of planning can have in the construction of a peaceful and respectful environment, and the inclusion of other people as teachers and the students' families.

Objectives

- To understand the importance of dialogue in the construction of truth and peace based on the activities proposed by the Comisión de la Verdad in their program “La escuela abraza la verdad”.
- To raise awareness of the general public on the “Informe de la Comisión de la Verdad” as well as its pedagogical application in schools and its relation to peace linguistics.

Theoretical Framework

In order to provide an overview of the concepts to work through this project on peace linguistics, it is necessary to make a description of each of these terms, as mentioned by Daros (2002) when it comes to describing, comprehending, elucidating, and interpreting a certain topic, a theoretical framework is what frames, confines, locates, and makes relevant the meaning of a concept. Therefore, each of the concepts that frame this work will be briefly described below, which will allow the reader to have a pertinent idea of the constructs that support this project.

Peace Linguistics

Although the discipline of peace linguistics has not received much attention, it has become more significant during the past ten years (Gomes de Matos, 2014). According to how Rojas (2019) envisioned it, peace linguistics views language from a variety of angles, taking into account both its structure and use as well as its function. Language can therefore be understood as more than just a communicative weapon of power that typically creates nonlinear interactions between people; rather, it can be formed as a connector of peace in society. This means that in the social contexts where language is used, it can also be used as a facilitator in the process of dismantling deeply ingrained notions (Rojas, 2019). Hence, language can be used as a peaceful mediator in the contact and communication processes that occur in the communities we live in. In light of the fact that language can convey a different vision of peace than other media, peace linguistics should be viewed more as a way to use language for humanity. Gomes de Matos (2014) even adds that it should be used in the service of human rights. In particular, if the verbal or nonverbal communication we engage in is able to reflect and transmit peace, then we will be engaging in peace linguistics, which is essentially the practice of peace via language. To re-humanize the language we use, to finally help create the ideal circumstances so that the people

around us also speak in peace, it is vital for us as language users to learn to speak in peace and to choose to speak in peace. become considerate speakers of the language they employ.

Peaceful Language

It is very important to highlight the transformative powers that the language of peace has in some qualities of the people that implement peaceful vocabulary in their language. Oxford (2014 as cited in Rojas, 2019) points out that using peaceful language creates a safe and harmonious environment with yourself and others, helping to address any situation that can escalate into a conflict, and try to find solutions in the way each part can feel good or happy with the result. Notably, this side effect of using peaceful language is amazing in the sense that it not only seeks to resolve conflict but also enhances other aspects of your life like communication or self-confidence, something that can be related to uncomfortable emotions, such as fear or bashfulness, that with the help of the peaceful vocabulary creates a look at how we talk to ourselves, and how we want to change that perspective.

Humanization

The idea of humanization is quite intriguing, as well as the connection between reflecting on our violent behavior and then reflecting again to bring about a change that can be seen in society. According to Friedrich and Gomes de Matos (2012), the word nonkilling linguistics, which is used to indicate the intention to use language to promote peace, is strongly related to this idea. Understanding how language might be used is highly interesting because it is frequently employed in violent environments. For instance, to separate people, exclude people, and harm anyone who speaks a language other than a determined language. As a result, nonkilling linguistics contextualizes how language might be used in a way that is nonviolent and moves in the opposite direction of violence, which peace linguistics actually does.

Dialogue

The use of dialogue, as a way of creating non-violent environments and enriching the respect and equality between people who are not only interacting but in general, is a way to reach the objectives proposed by “La Comisión de la Verdad”, not only to listen to the perceptions of each of those involved but to establish a space of equity in which everyone can participate and discuss over the conflict and most important the resolution and peace of those spaces. Freire (1972, as cited in Rojas, 2019) suggested the need for a truly, sincere and profound exchange of thoughts at the moment of achieving conversation. This action, in the classroom, works between the power play that the teacher has in being above the students, and the learners who are getting information and knowledge from the teacher. The relationship created may lead to misunderstandings around the message of truth and the teaching of an equitable and respectful environment. For this reason, the interest is in validating the students’ perspectives, interests, and opinions in the class discussion, as another source of knowledge and thus, changing the division between teachers and students. Especially, in the search of a non-killing environment, it is crucial to consider that there are various perspectives on peace, and the way each individual expresses or conveys a peaceful communication (Friedrich & Gomes de Matos, 2012).

The use of dialogue, as a way of non-killing environment creation. Freire (1972, as cited in Rojas, 2019) highlighted the need for a profound exchange of thoughts to achieve a true conversation. In this perception, it is not acceptable to misuse the power in which one person can try to subdue or manipulate the ideas of the other or listen to others’ reasons or arguments. In the classroom, the importance of dialogue can be seen when the students bring their perceptions to the class, and the teacher validates and expands their interest, recognizing the value of each background the students are attached to and can enrich the discussion in class. Freire (1972) is

clear about changing the division between teacher and students in the sense of knowledge and thinking more in this exchange of information that can be given from both sides. In fact, the vision is to stop thinking that the students are empty vessels that need to be filled by a teacher, and instead give the value that students have in their learning, changing the role of the teacher as guidance or mediator in their process.

Comisión de la Verdad

The comisión de la Verdad (2022) presented to the world a completed report of their investigation of the multiple stories of the internal conflict and the victims around the different types of violence that existed and remained in the country. This narrative was to clarify and recognize the violent events that transgressed the Colombian identity, in addition to the purpose that these types of situations will not be repeated in the new generations and the future of the country. From this report, a series of pedagogical guides emerged to implement the document's narratives and conclusions on conflict and peace issues in the institutions. Named "La escuela abraza la verdad", it is made up of four moments: first, reflection from the classroom, which includes both students and their families; second, with the educational community in general; third, the use of social networks for recreation; and finally, the fourth, which is mobilization beyond the school, reaching the communities with messages of respect, equality and the search for peace.

Thus, it is crucial to consider the differences between various perspectives on peace as well as how we must develop peaceful communication (Friedrich & Gomes de Matos, 2012). In this sense, agreements could be made when teaching and learning a language. Specifically, during the teaching process, integration could be established where the people involved in teaching could encourage different ways to use the language without putting up obstacles that

would hinder teaching or learning. To develop a mutually beneficial learning relationship between peace and society, we might specifically discuss the field of sociolinguistics within the application of peace.

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