

Chapter 13

Role–Playing Game as a Pedagogical Proposition for Story Co–Construction: A Brazilian Experience with Deaf Individuals in an Educational Context

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ABSTRACT

This chapter shows and discusses the development and implementation of a pedagogic proposition of story co-construction via Role-Playing Games (RPG), in the context of literacy with a bilingual approach for deaf individuals. The researcher, besides the experience of practicing RPG and developing a game adapted to the particularities of deaf adolescents, also analyses narrative co-construction during the multiparticipation dynamics of the game. The research was done in the Ambulatório de Surdez do Curso de Fonoaudiologia da Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro (Ambulatory for Deafness of the Phonoaudiology Course of the Federal University of Rio de Janeiro). In the RPG implementation phase, the participants were four deaf adolescents and a deaf teacher (as players), an RPG and education researcher (as master), the researcher (as assistant), and a LIBRAS interpreter. The results show that the game provided for interaction among the participants with relevant multiliteracy practices.

INTRODUCTION

In the book *Castle of Crossed Destinies*, Ítalo Calvino narrates a game played in a tavern where the characters sat around a table and told their stories. However, for some unknown reason, they were unable to speak, so they used tarot cards in order to narrate their adventures. The author places the characters inside a castle, in which this game is played by means of card combinations that form a magic “square.” Destinies were set, via this card game, which construed different interwoven tales.

The pedagogical proposition presented here follows Calvino’s idea, and at the same time involves game together with story construction. In this study, games are understood as a *locus* for the creation of multiple meanings, assuming that meaning spans our language use practices, and it is always linked to a context, due to the other’s presence, and because it is inserted in a given socio-historical process (Duranti, 1986).

Games, like story telling, are essential for gaining experience as well as achieving language and narrative structure development in children. It is through listening and sharing stories that children achieve narrative competence plus organize their world experiences (Klapproth, 2004; Bruner, 1992; Perroni, 1992). According to neo-Vygotskians, these activities are social and crucial during childhood, having an important role for children’s linguistic-cognitive development, since it is through them that meaning direct actions, i.e., thought and language in social interaction are developed in an interdependent way. Interactionist approach research done with hearing and deaf children show that games with and without rules used in teaching/learning contexts stimulate both language acquisition and socialization processes (Vygotsky, 1998; Leontiev, 2001; Kishimoto, 2002; Ochs, 2002; Scollon, 2002; Saliés & Starosky, 2008).

Considering that most children who are born deaf in Brazil and in the world have hearing parents, and for this reason have late access to sign language and to their parents’ oral/written language, studies involving socio-linguistic and educational processes among deaf children, youngsters and adults are a must. Accordingly, researchers who focus on deaf individuals education (Skliar, 2005, 1999; Skliar & Lunardi, 2000; Perlin, 2005; Klein, 2005; Kauchakje, 2003) are discussing the need to implement pedagogical practices that take into consideration deaf’s identity and culture in literacy processes.

From this point of view, in this study, we will present and discuss both construction and implementation processes of a pedagogical proposition for stories co-construction via Role-Playing Game (RPG) as part of a literacy process for deaf teenagers. RPG may be understood as a game and at the same time as a collective story telling that generates infinite possibilities of interwoven narrative creation, forming a texture of meanings, as in Calvino’s game.

The research had to be done in four different phases that dealt with specific issues and aims, taking into consideration the following points: 1) researcher learning of the game; 2) creation of a role-playing game for deaf teenagers who participate in the research; 3) RPG implementation created by deaf teenagers and other participants (researcher, RPG master, deaf teacher and Brazilian Sign Language interpreter); and 4) reflection and RPG approach as a pedagogical practice in the context of deafness.

In the following sections, we will discuss the basic concepts for the conception of the game proposition, involving some aspects of RPG as socialization practice, establishing its relation to multiliteracy concept. Afterwards, we will focus on this research context and motivation, participant profiles, and we will discuss the different phases mentioned before and their unfolding.

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