


INDIGENOUS INTERCULTURAL SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE AMAZON: CHALLENGES BETWEEN CONTINUITIES AND RUPTURES

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Genivaldo Frois Scaramuzza¹, Simone Alves Scaramuzza² and Jeferson Bevóhv Gavião³

ABSTRACT

The research was carried out with the Ikolen People, inhabitants of the Igarapé Lourdes Indigenous Land, in the municipality of Ji-Paraná. It sought to understand the development of education and its challenges in the constitution of interculturality in times of Covid-19 in education in the Igarapé Lourdes Indigenous Land, especially how school practices in their relationship with the State are articulated in indigenous identities/differences. From a qualitative perspective, using semi-structured interviews as a data production resource, the study showed the little action of the State to overcome the difficulties faced in indigenous schooling, transmitting at a very moment the idea of abandoning this education.

Keywords: Interculturality. Education. Indigenous Peoples. Pandemic.

¹ Doctor of Education (UCDB)

E-mail: genivaldo@unir.br

² PhD in Education (UCDB)

E-mail: simone.scaramuzza@unir.br

³ Undergraduate student in Intercultural Education (UNIR)

E-mail: jefersongaviao@gmail.com

INTRODUCTION

The theme in question, that is, knowing the development of school education in the Igarapé Lourdes Indigenous Land in times of COVID-19 articulated with the themes of indigenous identities and differences, are the main elements that the research in question seeks to investigate. The field of culture has been pointed out as preponderant with regard to the constitution of identities and differences. These elements form the main basis of post-critical theories in education, mainly because culture "[...] it is central to understanding the realities of education and curricula, as well as to understanding the processes of construction of identities/differences, always immersed in power relations" (BACKES, 2015, p. 111-112). By arguing in favor of culture, some studies, including those specifically developed by Hall (1997), have collaborated with the field of education to the extent that they enable reflections on how the school is a privileged place for the construction of identities/differences. It is in this context that the possibility of understanding the basis on which school practices aimed at indigenous schools suggest signs of interculturality is thought of, which sustain dialogical relations with the group in question.

We understand that the current moment requires looking at the forces that challenge the quality and continuity of school education, and for indigenous peoples, this education is much more challenging. Thus, surveying the current moment in order to expose its functioning in terms of school education seems to be important, mainly because there is a lack of studies that seek to map the intercultural school challenges of today.

OBJECTIVES

- Dialogue with teachers and indigenous communities of the Igarapé Lourdes Indigenous Land to understand the perceptions inherent to this historical moment crossed by indigenous education;
- To survey and problematize the main laws, ressentent regulations, and other official public guidelines that consider differentiated education, seeking to envision relationships with the confrontation of school education in this historical moment of COVID-19.

METHODOLOGY

The research in question is constituted from the qualitative perspective. The qualitative research "represents a permanent process, within the framework that constantly

defines all decisions and methodological options during the research process itself" (REY, 2005, p. 81). For this author, there is a human construction and, as production, it is not available to be discovered; knowledge is produced. In order to better understand the stages of the research, we will make a brief exposition about the steps and methodological conceptions, specifically the survey of existing studies, theoretical studies, interviews, and field observations.

Stage 01 – In the first moment, a survey of bibliographic references was carried out that addressed the issue of indigenous schooling and its weaknesses intensified by the Covid-19 Pandemic. In this aspect, we concentrated the studies on three texts that, after analysis, we understood to be pertinent to the issue. The first material we did the study was the text "The impact of the pandemic on indigenous school education in the Limão Verde Village in the municipality of Aquidauana, MS" from Fialho, Saints, and Nascimento (2021). The authors in question sought to investigate "the difficulties experienced in indigenous school education in the context of changes from face-to-face classes to remote classes and to verify how Information and Communication Technologies are being used by teachers and students in times of pandemic" (p. 33). Thus, knowing how the indigenous realities in the State of Mato Grosso do Sul resemble in some way the realities of Rondônia was important to analyze the breadth of the challenges of the indigenous school. Other material that was read refers to the text: "Indigenous School Education and the Covid-19 Pandemic: Perceptions of a Teacher from the 'Arara da Volta Grande do Xingu Indigenous Land' by Costa; Trinity; Bezerra (2022). The authors of this material express that:

The objective to analyze the perceptions of a teacher who works in Indigenous School Education (EEI) about the teaching-learning process in Emergency Remote Education (ERE) implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic. Teaching is taking place in a delicate and fragile way, mainly due to the lack of electricity, computers, and internet in indigenous communities, which prevents satisfactory communication and interaction between students and teachers, making it necessary to resort to the use of handouts with printed activities as a teaching methodology. (COSTA; TRINITY; BEZERRA, 2022, p. 2).

Another material that was important for the research refers to the text "Impacts of the Pandemic on Indigenous School Education" authored by Lima and Santos (2022). For the authors in question, in the research carried out it was observed "the existence of restrictions in the resources available to schools; high reaction time aimed at the organization of remote teaching, compared to other schools; high average of days stopped;

and few changes in the available infrastructure" (LIMA; SANTOS, 2022, p. 212). Having made these observations, we will highlight the steps of the interviews.

Stage 02 – Field Research. Interviews One of the elements that made up the instrument of the research is the interview. As Gaskell (2013) shows, the practice of interviewing is widely useful in qualitative research. As such, numerous ways of perceiving and producing interviews emerge from the context and investigative practice: Episodic Interviews (FLICK, 2009; 2013), Focal Interviews (GASKELL, 2013), Semi-structured interviews, and others that show the diversity of interviews as a mechanism capable of producing data for certain researches. Studies produced by Gaskell (2013) regarding the use show that the interview provides the basic data for the development and detailed understanding between social actors and their situation. The goal is an understanding of attitudes, values and motivations about people's behavior in specific social contexts" (GASKELL, 2013, p. 64). Under the effect of this perspective, the interview can be understood as a technique that has the power to make the truth tell that, ingrained in the researched, jumps out through the researcher's wise questions. On the other hand, another effect of the supposed objectivity and neutrality of the researched universe impels to this perspective, a certain degree of fear and distrust regarding the interviewee's narrative. In this regard, the aforementioned author shares the idea that the researcher, when instituting the interview as a methodological practice, [...] must carefully probe more details than those that the interviewee can offer in a first answer to the question [...] the information obtained from a set of interviews that we can come to understand the worlds of life within a group.

For Silveira (2007) it is necessary [...] to look at the interviews as complex discursive events, forged not only by the interviewer/interviewee pair, but also by the images, expectations that circulate – from one side to the other – at the time and situation of their realization and, subsequently, of their listening and analysis (SILVEIRA, 2007, p. 118). This way of understanding the interview is linked to the fact that we are "[...] culturally constructed subjects, circumstantially situated either as interviewers or as interviewees". As part of the research, an interview was conducted with the indigenous professor, Roberto Gavião. It is important to highlight that the interview was conducted at the indigenous school in Aldeia Castanheira. It is also noteworthy that the development of the project was impacted by the lack of funding because, without resources for transportation and

detachment, it was not possible to carry out all the planned actions, leaving it for a second moment.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As highlighted, the research in question was carried out in a village of the Gavião indigenous people that enables the Igarapé Lourdes Indigenous Land in the municipality of Ji-Paraná – RO. As shown by Neves (2009), the Gavião

[...] identify themselves as Ikólóéhj, which means Hawk in the indigenous language. They constitute a society composed [...] of several villages: Ikólóéhj, Nova Esperança, Castanheira, Cacoal, Igarapé Lourdes, Ingazeira, among others, located in the Igarapé Lourdes Indigenous Land in the municipality of Ji-Paraná, State of Rondônia in the Brazilian Amazon (NEVES, 2009, p. 120-121).

In addition to these villages, many others are emerging according to indigenous needs. Considering the breadth of the spaces and recognizing that we would not have the resources to cover all the villages, we decided to focus on Castanheira village. It is worth noting that the Gavião are speakers of the Tupi Monde language, which is the mother tongue of all the residents of the communities, with the Portuguese language being the second language which the indigenous people learn. This people shares the same territory with the Arara indigenous people, who together add up to approximately 984 people, according to the record of the organization Indigenous Lands of Brazil (2020). The Igarapé Lourdes indigenous land was ratified by decree 88.609 – of August 11, 1983, it has an area of approximately 186 thousand hectares. The territory is constantly threatened by fishermen, hunters, ranchers and loggers who take products for the exclusive use of indigenous peoples from this environment. It is worth noting that the Gavião indigenous people have an economy based on extractivism, in the presence of residents who occupy the role of teachers, health agents, as well as forest managers who contribute to the survival of the group. It is worth noting that it was in this context that the research was carried out.

The interview was conducted within the scope of the Maguvéhj indigenous school. After explaining the objectives of the study, as well as other procedures, we were received by Professor Roberto who works at the school and who has extensive experience in the field of indigenous school education. The Castanheira village is one of the largest villages of the Gavião people, a place where there is a significant concentration of indigenous

families. The village has a total of 200 indigenous residents. It is worth mentioning that the school is multigrade, serving children from the first to the fifth grade. Today a total of 40 children study at the school, many come from other villages because there is a bus that transports these children to the school in the village of Castanheira. It is worth mentioning that the school has two classrooms and works with two teachers, and both teachers collaborated with the research.

PROBLEMATIZATION OF THE RESULTS

As we have already highlighted, we will now expose the context of the indigenous school investigated in its relationship with the Covid-19 pandemic. We will seek to demonstrate the challenges faced during this period. To do this, we will have a dialogue with the materials read for the study.

When elaborating the research and interview field with Professor Roberto, we wanted to understand some aspects of teaching in the village during the height of the pandemic. An aspect highlighted by the professor is directly linked to the feelings at the beginning of the pandemic, as it was an unknown event that caused a lot of fear, because as the professor suggests:

it was a great impact of this disease, we heard that it was a disease that emerged there in China, we have heard that the disease arrived in Brazil, that the disease arrived in the indigenous community and it was thus a big problem even within the indigenous communities. The agent was guided by our capacity and even so we had some needs to go out to the city and we went to the city and ended up bringing it, having contact with and we brought the virus through this contact. It was a big problem even though it caught several relatives. Those who went to the city did not return and those who stayed in the village I think so, if he went to the city he would not vote anymore and those who went did not return. (Professor Roberto, interview, 2023).

It is important to highlight that Professor Isael, by understanding this process, exposes aspects very close to those highlighted by Professor Roberto. For this research collaborator, the issue of the pandemic was very harmful, because as the professor points out "classes during the pandemic were difficult because we were not able to work enough due to this virus that affected our country, our municipality and the community and this made the work difficult" (Professor Isael, interview, 2023).

The emergence of the information that arrived, much of it without a broad knowledge of what was happening, caused great fear in the community. Even in the face of fear, many residents had to leave their villages in search of some resource from the city, at which point

they were contaminated and ended up taking Covid to the villages. These episodes bring to mind terrible days for indigenous people, because as Santos et al (2021) notes,

Epidemics of infectious and parasitic diseases have been tragic recurrences throughout the five centuries of the history of the relationship between colonizers and indigenous peoples in what is currently Brazilian territory. And they are not events from the distant past. They persist in the individual and collective memory of many peoples who, not many decades ago, suffered the effects of diseases associated with contact (SANTOS et al, 2021, p. 02).

It is important to remember that the Gavião are a people who had a large part of their population decimated by diseases in the twentieth century (NEVES, 2009). Many of these diseases, such as flu, malaria and others, produced an irreparable loss, events that caused even more fear and anger in the Gavião when they saw inert in the face of the Covid-19 virus and without the support they expected to have. Regarding the impacts of COVID-19 on school, the teacher's reports show the following:

Regarding the work at the school, there were no classes, then the school was closed, there were no classes. We did not have contact with any children during the time of the pandemic, especially when it was very strong in the Villages. It was like this, the students were without contact with writing, I think that for almost a year or more it was paralyzed, that the school even closed and we also had no support from the secretariat, I think it is because we did not have the structure, I could teach, talk to the students through technology, as it did in the city's schools. (Professor Roberto, interview, 2023).

He stopped classes and was suspended, if I'm not mistaken for a year or two, I don't remember, but I think it was. Classes were suspended, it greatly harmed both our work as teachers and also the student. The student was stopped for a long time, the teacher too. It took a little loss, but for a moment we thought that this could not be so. (Professor Israel, interview, 2023).

The records and studies that are being developed on the impact of the pandemic on indigenous schools corroborate the teacher's statement, as there is a similarity in the way the indigenous school was abandoned to its fate.

The covid-19 pandemic has changed the way we see the world a lot and especially there has been a very big impact on education. In urban schools, there were strategies, even if fragile, to continue the school process, distance learning alternatives were activated and to minimize the impacts of school closures in this pandemic period, remote teaching was implemented and with remote teaching came a series of factors that hinder quality education teaching. Among these factors, we can highlight the execution of activities for the educators themselves, who were overloaded with the elaboration of remote activities and

also in the guidance of the use of digital instruments, but many students did not have contact with these instruments. There were printed activities that were sent weekly or parents could pick up at schools, but none of this happened in the indigenous school.

The studies we read showed that one of the challenges encountered by indigenous teachers was distance communication, because the internet in the village is, when it has it, it is an internet via radio and not all of them. In some villages and indigenous lands, there were attempts to carry out the school via remote classes, this is what happened with the Terenas in Mato Grosso do Sul, where the authors Fialho; Saints; Nascimento (2021) say that one of the biggest difficulties was the remote classes because of the slow internet via radio and that not all students have this internet, so the remote method did not work very well in the village, the printed activities delivered at school to the students also did not work very well because many parents did not understand what was being requested in the activities and were unable to guide their children.

According to the authors, the pandemic changed the entire structure of daily life, whether in the city, the countryside or the village. Another issue revealed the real inequality of access to education services, mainly showing the vulnerabilities and enormous weaknesses of public education in Brazil, especially indigenous schools.

The state and municipalities proposed that schools and teachers develop remote activities, but they forgot the true reality of many schools, especially indigenous schools, where the internet offered to support the development of video classes is extremely slow and not all students and teachers have a computer or internet in their homes. (FIALHO; SAINTS; NASCIMENTO, 202, p. 48)

The pandemic has made evident the enormous inequalities that schools and teaching have, and this must be seen as learning to change this reality, especially the reality of indigenous education. Another aspect addressed by the teacher refers to the way in which the school did not receive support from the State at that dramatic moment.

We didn't have any of that, we didn't have meetings, we didn't have training, we didn't have guidance, I'm not going to lie, not even on the internet for anything we were isolated. We were out of touch with anything mostly. Who should guide us how to do it with the students didn't arrive, we stayed like that, very far away, very distant. But you are charged, you are charged, so, helping that is good is not helped as how to do with work, how to develop work within the community and we were so well lost because we did not understand the information guidance on how to do it with students and before the pandemic students studying every day doing their activities and when this disease is there when this pandemic stopped Right. (Interview 2023).

As you can see, one of the problems caused by the lack of support and strategies during the Pandemic was the setback in the training of students who were stuck in time. Many of these students, according to the report, were without contact with reading and writing for more than a year. There was no support from the State, which did not offer support or even teacher training to overcome or even mitigate the impacts of the lack of classes. This event showed that there is a great difference and distance in relation to educational and technological investments between indigenous and non-indigenous people, between cities and traditional populations. These facts are corroborated by the reports, because as it is possible to observe:

The students didn't advance in grade, so those who were in the third grade we couldn't do anything, we couldn't do it, we couldn't pass the student without him having classes and activities, but we talked to her with the secretariat team here in the Ji-Paraná sector, and we did some activity related to this virus, with the students, then we talked to think about how to do with these students like, when I work with my students I think I have the right to pass, we started with them then I think that if I'm not mistaken, at least here in Gavião of our students two years it's because they didn't have any contact with the school with reading.

The events showed the need to invest in technologies in indigenous schools as well as in urban schools. In addition, it demonstrated the need to offer a training course and expand the knowledge of indigenous teachers and also of students so that we can have a better quality school, but also, and through this research it can be noted how scrapped it is in indigenous education and it can also expose the lack of commitment of governments to the education of indigenous people when it comes to equalizing access with quality.

CONCLUSION

As explained, at first we read some materials that helped to think about the research. It was important to realize that the reality of indigenous schools in Brazil is similar, that is, the schools are mostly abandoned and there are few public policies aimed at this schooling.

In the case of Gavião indigenous schooling during the pandemic, it was possible to verify that little was done to overcome the inequalities to which indigenous children were subjected. At first there was a lot of fear on the part of the indigenous people of the little-known disease, followed by the total closure of the school for a very long period. This closure was not accompanied by the State Department of Education, which did not offer indigenous teachers support to continue working remotely.

The continuity of education was interrupted because there was no technological support, computers, cell phones and internet for students to continue their studies, even so, activities could have been printed with individual monitoring of students, but there was no support. As reported, children spent a long time without access to reading and writing, a situation that could harm future generations, as we know the importance of school for indigenous life.

Another issue that we sought to express refers to the objective we had, which was to map the legislation and legal aspects that sought to support education for indigenous peoples during the Pandemic. Regarding this objective, there was not enough time for further study, which will remain for the continuity of the study that is not exhausted with this report.

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