

# **“LIFE STORIES AND SOCIAL REPRESENTATIONS: THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS REGARDING THE DIALOGICAL CONSTRUCTION OF GENDERS AND SEXUALITIES IN EDUCATION”**

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## **ABSTRACT**

This key lecture aims to develop an interdisciplinary framework for addressing issues related to gender and sexuality in learning processes. In the discursive practices that are developed in the daily life of “educationalization” contexts (Pievi, 2017), be these formal, non-formal and informal, diverse configurations are defined around gender and sexuality. In these practices, senses and meanings that are linked to the historical, cultural and institutional settings where subjects develop and have developed their communicative actions come into play. Along these lines, the dialogic perspective of Bakhtin (1981, 1986), the Social Representations Theory (Jodelet, 1989, 2002, 2006, 2008) and the contributions of studies on gender and sexuality (Butler, 2007; Crawford and Chaffin, 1997; Segato 2018), refer us to the identification and analysis of the voices present in the life stories of the subjects, thus enabling the understanding of the communicative actions according to the contexts that originate them. We consider that the complexity of the educational problem in the approach of psycho-social phenomena (Dorado Caballeros 2015; Garnique 2011; Kornblit, 2014; Morgade, 2006, 2011, 2015; Pievi 2017; Rolando and Seidmann, 2013; Tobón and Vásquez, 2017) requires interdisciplinary and pluri-methodological work (Abric 1994; Apostolidis 2003; Jodelet 1989, Markova 2016) in the understanding of socio-culturally constructed configurations around gender and sexuality.

**KEY WORDS:** learning, gender, sexuality, dialogicality

## **INTRODUCTION**

In general, when we refer to the process of elaboration, co-construction and dissemination of Social Representations (SR), we do not always emphasize the learning developed by the subjects involved in the process of learning, when I refer to learning, I do it in a broad sense, considering the informal, non-formal and formal educationalization contexts. (Pievi, 2017) These learnings are carried out through communicative actions thus making the construction of knowledge possible - Latin source sapere: “having knowledge of something” – about different social and cultural objects. Learning is a process that develops throughout our lives as a consequence of our relationships with one another.

An Other, and the others, who can be considered significant or not, in Mead's words (2010) however, but where their voices are always present. We are social subjects and as stated Bajtin it is not possible to talk about our identity without considering "otherness". We are born in a socio-cultural context where norms, rules, traditions, customs, beliefs, etc., are part of the set that we call "knowledge" that is being co-constructed from one generation to another or one culture to another Now, the beginning of our life is not the beginning of all the remaining ones and the same thing happens with finitude, the world continues - despite us -, and this allows us to consider a macro dimension, with a socio-cultural genesis, with a specific located spatio-temporal dimension This dimension accounts for a discursive plot, where a polyphony of voices that are part of social and cultural reality can be identified. This plot of meanings and co-constructed senses constitutes us at the same time that we constituted it, in socially situated learning processes during the different trajectories of our life. It is in this interaction between subject, culture and society mediated by language that learning takes place. According to Jodelet

*"Le monde de vie (...) est aussi un monde commun, intersubjectif, médiatisé par le langage" (2006: 237)*

. That is why I think it is necessary to reconsider the encounter with the subject in the Social Representations Theory, or rather, I would say "with the subject that learns". When we refer to this subject that learns we do it considering that it is not an isolated subject, it is a co-constructor of its reality, which develops psychosocially in different contexts of activity. It is according to Jodelet:

*"Un sujet qui intériorise, s'approprie les représentations tout en intervenant dans leur construction" (2006)*

## **SUBJECTS WHO LEARN**

Defining the specificity of the subjects who learn necessarily leads to their contextualization. This contextualization implies taking into account variables that stress and establish a dialogue in the different dimensions where social representations interact (Jodelet, 2008): subjective, intersubjective and trans-subjective. Following Jodelet's construction of "subject", we will here claim that, when we talk about subjects who learn, we do it by taking into account that we do not refer to subjects stuck in time, but to spatio-

temporarily located active subjects who develop their communicative actions in dynamic processes of co-construction of the socio-cultural reality. According to Jodelet:

*“Parler de sujet, dans le champ d'étude des social representations, c'est parler de pensée, c'est-à-dire référer à des processus qui impliquent des dimensions psychiques et cognitive, the reflexivity for questionnement et positionnement face à l'expérience, aux connaissances et au savoir, l'ouverture vers le monde et les autres. Processus qui prennent une forme concrète dans des contenus représentationnels express dans des actes et des mots, des forms de vécu, des discours, des échanges dialogiques, des affiliations et des conflits” (Jodelet, 2008: 44).*

It is in the process explained above where the same cultural object can have different senses and meanings for different social groups. Therefore, it is necessary to take into account the production of this knowledge according to the contexts where the subjects develop their communicative actions and, on the other hand, the uniqueness of the social space to which they belong. In our case, we will make special reference in this key lecture to the process of building knowledge about gender and sexuality in the formal educational context of secondary education in the City of Buenos Aires, in the Argentine Republic.

The ways of teaching a subject, promoting school practices, rituals, traditions and the compliance with the rules, among other variables, make up a set of communicative actions that affect the knowledge and the way that the subjects-who-learn (i.e. teachers and students) see and interpret the world. According to this proposal, one of the key points that emerges from teacher interviews is the origin of the voices that constitute their knowledge about gender and sexuality, considering that these voices respond to different configurations spatio-temporarily located that are visible in their statements, they are polyphonic

It is interesting to note that one of the problems in defining sexual and gender diversity (DSG) is people's tendency to classify entities according to certain categories to which valuations and properties are attributed (homosexuals, transvestites, bisexuals, lesbians, etc.). In this line, we can consider that, according to different investigations (Chi, 1992; Pozo, 1994), categorization is part of the process of (co) construction of knowledge. We can then infer that, in everyday life, genders and sexualities are considered as material

properties attributed to the subjects, differing from scientific knowledge, which requires other legitimation processes and the understanding of a system of relationships.

In his contributions on conceptual and representational change, Chi (1992) states that we have organized the world, we understand and interpret it, according to three ontological categories: matter, processes and mental states. Taking up his proposal and applying it as an interpretational framework for our field, we can consider that, on a first level, when subjects define the objects “genders” and “sexualities”, they do so by attributing an objective ontological nature: "materialization." Subjects are identified according to the presence of "visible", "materializable" attributes: hair, clothing, penis, vagina. This can be noticed when someone refers to sexual orientation with an emphasis on gender expression. It should be inferred that someone is homosexual by their gestures, by their clothes, by their haircut, by their way of expressing themselves, etc.: that is to say, by a set of attributes that do not correspond to a relational category.

To consider in these cases, genders and sexualities as a system of relationships would be to imply a greater degree of complexity, of depth. That is to say, to explore, to analyze dynamic processes that are carried out under certain conditions and situations that are spatially located through communicative actions where subjects intervene in social and cultural reality oriented by interests, struggles, goals, among others. In this line, understanding sexual and gender diversity (DSG) from a process analysis would imply introducing us to this set of interrelations. One of the examples presented by Chi is in relation to the color of the objects or the weight of the air (Pozo, 1999: 24). In general, people consider that weight or color are attributes of objects and cannot conceive of the fact that they arise from a set of relationships.

The current debates in school contexts regarding the issues of gender and sexuality lie, in many cases, in the tension that there exists between everyday commonsense knowledge and academic (scientific) knowledge.

The tendency in the construction of everyday commonsense knowledge is towards the interpretation of phenomena in the context of causal, binary, static, naturalized relationships. Only when the object of knowledge refers to the scientific field does the complex system of interrelations that define the different perspectives, approaches and theories about sexualities and genders make sense. At this point, the Social Representations Theory has been able to nourish the field of psychosocial studies with an understanding of phenomena that are related to the social construction of common sense

knowledge, or knowledge of everyday life. In this line, I would like to place special emphasis on the contributions of Denise Jodelet regarding the relationship between life experience, and as such the importance of experience in the process of building the SR.

In the teachers' stories, the importance of the voices that arise from the formal, informal and non-formal learning contexts as regards genders and sexualities is visible, building their knowledge of the subject based on their personal experiences, their family beliefs, popular customs, their actions in social movements, school experiences, socio-cultural activities; in other words, there is no academic training on these issues that has accompanied their "trajectories."

Following this line of inquiry, and as a second point to consider, it is interesting to mention the contribution of the Doing Gender Theory in the understanding of these phenomena. This theory emphasizes the process of constructing meanings between men and women and the social context in which this process is carried out (Crawford, 2006; West & Zimmerman, 1987).

*"Making gender" occurs in a situated way (Crawford & Chaffin, 1997; Crawford & Unger, 2000) and is considered "as a social performance [...] with oneself and having other people as an audience [...]" (Crawford, 2006).*

From this perspective, we can take into account gender "actions" that are developed according to three levels of analysis (Crawford, 1995):

1. The socio-cultural level, defined according to spatially and temporally contextualized configurations located as beliefs, values, traditions, gender stereotypes, etc., which function as a referential framework for the socio-cultural organization that governs the relations of inequality and power in the communicative actions either in the scientific, religious, political field, or through the media.

2. The interpersonal level, which is in a state of constant construction since it is established in the links that guide the actions of the subjects. It is defined by the attributes and behaviors that are assigned to men and women, according to the different social and cultural spaces where intersubjective relationships develop. According to Crawford and Chaffin

*"sexual categorization is not simply a way of seeing differences, but also a way of creating differences" (1997: 92).*

3. The individual level, which is defined according to the appropriation process whereby the subjects assume gender categories according to the guidelines, norms, traditions, etc of their community According to Crawford and Chaffin :

*"women and men come to accept the gender distinction that is visible at a structural level and represents it at interpersonal level as part of their self-concept."* (1997: 94)

We can note that the proposal of the Doing Gender Theory allows us to deepen different variables that are part of the process of knowledge building around gender and sexuality. On the other hand, this theory establishes a dialogue with the Social Representations Theory (Jodelet 2006, 2008) both in the definition of the subject and in the importance of language and the place of experience in the process of building SR.

A third point to take into account in the relationship between learning, gender and sexuality is the reference to "social actions," a concept that refers to the question raised by Keneth Burke. What is involved in human communicative actions? In his Grammar of the motives (1969), the author proposes a model where a synergy is established between five vectors: the Act, defined by concrete events that have taken place; the Scene (1997: 94) or the situation where the Act occurs; the Agent or person performing the act; the Agency constituted by the means that the agent has used to act; finally, the Purpose with which the agent has acted.

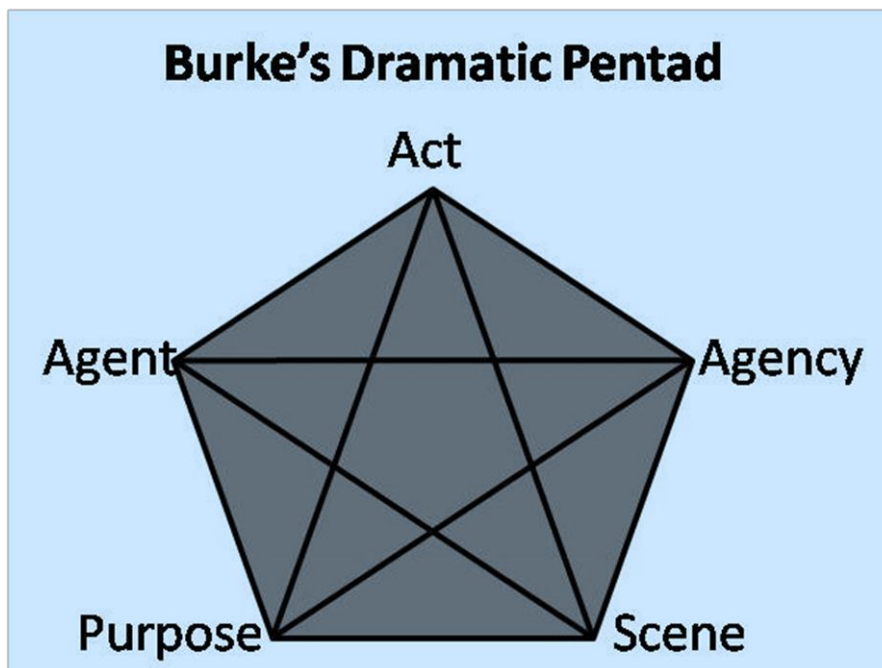


FIGURE 1

This model is based on the assumption that no human action is natural, but that takes place under specific, changing, historical conditions. In this line, the actions carried out by the subjects are not carried out in a vacuum, but rather they configure a system through which people operate in their socially-situated and mid-contexts, oriented towards certain objectives, developing their potential capacity for co-construction, reconstruction or reproduction of practices in the activities in which they participate.

From this perspective and returning to Burke's pentacd I will take the liberty of expanding the said proposal to an octagon consisting of the following elements:

1. *subject*
2. *scenario or context*
3. *act or situation*
4. *motivations and interests*
5. *norms and values*
6. *alter*
7. *purposes*
8. *agency or resources*

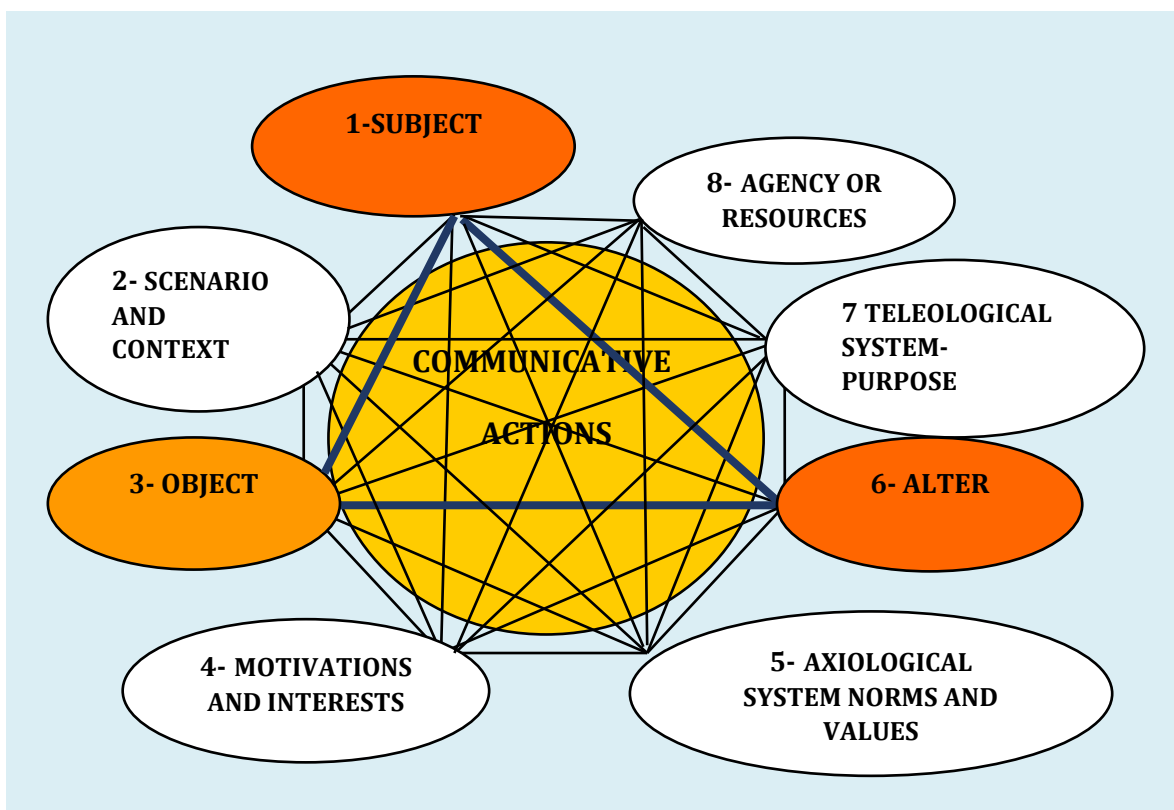


FIGURE 2

As can be noted, this octagon includes the OBJECT-SUBJECT-ALTER relationship (Markova, 2016) raised in the Social Representations Theory, thus linking all the elements in a dialogic process. For Markova, dialogic approaches presuppose some types of interdependencies between the Ego and Alter and a multiplicity of positions that they can take with respect to each other in concrete manifestations. In this respect, Hermans (2001) analyzes this phenomenon in terms of "collective voices in the self." (Marková, 2003) and presupposes that the dialogic relationship of the Ego-Alter is of an ontological nature. This means that in and through communication, the Ego-Alter is co-constituted intersubjectively: one does not exist without the other. Also for Benveniste (1971), the Ego-Alter interdependence in language occurs ontologically since their subjectivities are enriched in and through their interdependence. Since communication is never a "neutral" transmission of information, the understanding and recognition of Ego and Alter are critical and evaluative. His thoughts are communicable "in and through language" (to use Benveniste's expression (1971)). Besides, the dialogue is made up of the concepts and ideas of the participants.

The above statements are oriented towards the multifaceted nature of human thought and dialogue. In these lines, Serge Moscovici (1961), in his reference to different ways of thinking in a social encounter, uses the term "polyphasic thinking." In his discussion of the multifaceted nature of dialogue, Mijaíl Bajtin (1979, 1986, 1984), introduces the term "heteroglossia". The nature of the dialogue is expressed in multiple ways. Focusing specifically on the multiplicity of relationships in which the self can develop, Hermans (2001) proposes a theory of personal and cultural positioning of the dialogic self. In any dialogic situation, the self naturally changes its positions. In addition, the self also speaks from various cultural positions, expressing different "collective voices" and using different "social languages." Hermans' theory assumes that dialogic relationships are "embodied, spatialized and temporalized processes" and illustrates "*how individual voices coexist and intertwine with collective voices*" (Hermans, 2001: 266). Ego-Alter is interdependent with social, historical and cultural environments and that conceptual thinking is communicable "in and through language." If we returning to the octagon, we can note that, in the interrelation between the different variables (edges), a joint or social construction of knowledge is carried out. Knowledge is communicatively generated in the Ego-Alter-object relationship. The dialogue takes place in specific contexts temporarily-located spaces, in which the speakers carry out different and multiple communicative activities. The subjects are centers of action that have interests,



motivations, desires, purposes, The unwavering unity that underlies the epistemology of the RS includes the self (self) and the Other(s) (or the Ego-Alter) in relation to objects of social knowledge. The "Others" can be other humans or human creations, such as institutions, historically and culturally established traditions, moral stances and customs. Moscovici has very often resorted to the notion of intersubjectivity to refer to the interaction and interdependencies between "I" and "You." He even said that the world of intersubjectivity is a world of social representations: "Every relationship between me and you presupposes that one represents the other ..."

According to Jodelet (1989), SR is the reconstruction of a social object by presenting features of creativity and involving both an interpretation of situations and an expression of the subject. For the author, social representations can be defined as

*"A form of socially elaborated and shared knowledge, oriented towards practice which concurs with the construction of a reality common to a social group"*  
(Jodelet, 1984: 364).

From this perspective, the social can be interpreted in several ways:

1. for the context where people and groups are located
2. for the communication established between them
3. for the ways of apprehension of reality that give them their cultural background
4. for codes, values and ideologies linked to specific social positions or belongings

In this line, we can note that, in the previously proposed system, the change of one of the variables implies the relocation of the remaining ones. Focusing on the tension between the subject and mediation processes, Wertsch (1999) defines mediated and situated action as a priority element when analyzing the processes of knowledge construction in everyday life. For the author "mediated action is characterized by an irreducible tension between the agent and the mediation modes" (Ibidem: 50). In reference to the theory of the dialogic self (Hermans, 1996; 2001), Hermans implies a multiplicity of positions of the self in the development of communicative actions. The self moves in an imaginary space from one position to another, creating a dynamic between (self) negotiations and (self) contradictions, which is intimately intertwined as the plot of a story, spatially and -temporarily situated, thus giving rise to the creation and transformation of a diversity of meanings and senses in everyday life. In this case, it could be said that the voices that are part of the statements present in the communicative actions are making the representation of social reality possible. Voices that can be opposite, contradictory, or similar, but are constructed as a palette of colors and shapes, are intertwined, mixed, differentiated,

related. This way making different representations can originate around various social and cultural objects.

However, this allows us to take into account communicative actions as constituents of educational practices, and as such the construction of knowledge around certain social and cultural objects. It allows us to refer to the performative nature of these actions, thus establishing a dialogical relationship with the Social Representations Theory. When referring to this, we can do it by considering these pedagogical actions as “social actions”, and, at the same time, considering the performative quality of communicative actions from Butler's perspective (2007). According to the author, performativity is not the act of an isolated subject, but it is about the power of discourse when it is accustomed by a social collective to then produce the phenomena that regulate us and that are imposed on us in such a way that, in this dynamic, the construction of genders and sexualities does not constitute a single act or a process initiated by a subject: we are facing processes that are carried out in time of order to respond to socio-cultural singularities. As it is a process of co-construction, there are always spaces for divergence, more permeable and unstable areas of the hegemonic constitution that allows the access of other voices. In *Excitable Speech. A politics of the Performative* (1997), Butler analyzes the way in which language in its performative dimension (that is, an act that produces effects) plays a central role in the constitution of subjects and the production of identities, which can then be added to the elaboration and diffusion of SR Language and performativity are involved in reproduction as well as in the subversion of power relations. Butler points out that considering gender as a way of doing, a performed activity (in part involuntary) does not imply that it is automatic or mechanical; it is an improvisation practice where an alter is needed to do so. At this point, I would like to return to Denise Jodelet's idea in the analogy between SR and theatrical performance. In this regard, Jodelet emphasizes

*“des aspects fondamentaux de la représentation sociale: ses aspects signifiant, créatif, autonome. La représentation théâtrale donne à voir et à entendre à un public des actes et des mots qui rendent présent quelque chose de non-visible”*  
(1984: 476)

## **LIFE STORIES OF SUBJECTS WHO LEARN**

In this plot that develops in socio-culturally situated processes, we have pointed out that speech takes on a fundamental role in each of the previously developed points. The communicative acts are carried out through dynamic, synchronous and asynchronous

processes, where different variables defined in the Octagon come into play (See figure 2). Therefore, the choice of the narrative in the methodological proposal is a way to access to the different dimensions that constitute the statements of the subjects who learn, as a representation of the lived world. The narrative is a gateway through which the researcher can make contact with the life experiences of the interviewees and the voices that support those life experiences. In Riessman's words,

*"the stories are social artifacts that tell us as much about a society and a culture as they do about a person or a group"* (2008: 105).

On the other hand, the biographical account through the interview allows you to focus on certain moments of the subjects' trajectories without having to address the life story in its entirety. In this regard, Bertaux considers that

*«There is a life story from the moment a subject tells another person, researcher or not, any episode of his life experience».* (1997: 32)

From a situated perspective, biographical interviews enable retrospective reconstruction by rescuing the value of what has been lived, of the experience of life, of the experience, according to the different contexts located where the activities have taken place. According to Jodelet:

*"l'expérience est directement associée à la dimension du vécu par le sujet qui peut être envisagé à des niveaux plus ou moins abstraits (...) Elle réfère alors à la conscience que le sujet a du monde où il vit"* (2006:238)

In this line of thinking, the life story through the interview is a methodological instrument that allows the knowledge of the world of life of the interviewees. According to Kvale (2011), the biographical narrative through the interview "provides unique access to the world of subjects' lives, which describe in their own words their activities, experiences and opinions;" the interview in qualitative research allows for the construction of knowledge since it

*"gives access to the multiplicity of local narratives embodied in the storytelling and opens for a discourse and negotiation of the meaning of the lived world"* (2011: 46).

The biographical interview aims to understand the object of research according to the context where the communicative act occurs without intending to generalize the results. It allows not only to listen to the protagonists, but also to recognize the social, political,

economic and educational contexts in which they have been built. By the same token, the creative character of biographical stories is important since they re-create situations, links, moods, etc., just like actors when performing on stage. A world that is not visible is re-presented, where the relationship with the alter takes place in a plot where motivations, interests, ends, means, traditions, amongst others, come into play.

The analysis of the biographical interview leads to the Bajtian idea of the chronotope as an affective and spatio-temporal correlation (synchronous and diachronic): life as a trajectory, a path with its correlates at different times: childhood, youth, adulthood, customs, family traditions, beliefs in that biographical narrative appear to be demonstrations, reflections, conclusions (life as a knowledge about life). All lived experience is carried out in a specific time and space that form an interdependent unit. This also means that the meaning of what is said is specific to that chronotope. Each subject experiences different chronotopes as they encounter find new situations, that is, as they meet others in real life, be these organizations or government representatives, one of the central points to consider is the mutual involvement between narration and experience. According to Ricoeur, the biographical narrative allows shaping what is reported (Ricoeur, 1983: 141). people are at a crossroads between the time of the narrative, the time of life and the experience. In that intersection, the self acquires the form of a “we”, as of some others. Hence the importance attributed by Bajtin (1981, 1986) to the voices that populate the story. Along the same lines, both Lejeune and Ricoeur mark the importance of decentralization in biographical narrative discourse. In the plot of this speech, the subject establishes dialogues and stresses space-time. The discursive genre is immersed in a historicity that entails an assessment of the world. Hence, the inscription of the subject in its socio-historical and cultural context, both the current one and the one that is the subject of remembrance. There is plot between the individual and the collective, between the personal and the social. It is an incomplete, non-essential subject, open to multiple identifications, in tension towards the other, the different, with contingent positions that are called to be occupied. In that account the experience has a privileged place. These are different from the times that are intertwined in the autobiographical account:

- 1- Physical time: world time in terms of its evolution, its development as something uniform.
- 2- Psychic time: that of the subjects, which is in relation to their inner world, with their emotions

3- Social time: that of events

4- Linguistic time: that of the narrative, where the act of enunciation unfolds

On the other hand, life is conceived of as a process with obstacles and possibilities: crises, conflicts, disappointments, successes, achievements, etc. This allows the design of a plot that is defined by a combination of voices that account for positions, ambiguities, interpretive practices, etc. (Chase, 2015). The biographical interview deals, in the words of Arfuch, with a *"narrative, cross-cultural need for human experience"* (2000: 138).

In the narrative construction of his biography, subjects "creates" a story of themselves, where the experience has a privileged place. The plot that builds the interview constituted by different micro-stories allows the world of the public (social, institutional) to be intertwined in a polyphony of voices with the private (domestic, intimate), where different dimensions of reality are interrelated and constantly modified. The self is present in the narrative through the remembrance of the experience, of the anecdote, of the events, amongst others. Polyphony, heterogeneity, integration and interaction provide the discursive plot of the autobiographical story with its constitutive qualities. For Jodelet, in research on HIV patients:

*"La notion d'expérience vécue a été définie (...) comme la façon dont les personnes ressentent, dans leur for intérieur, une situation et la façon dont elles élaborent, par un travail psychique et cognitif, les retentissements positifs ou négatifs de cette situation et des relations et actions qu'elles y développent"* (2006:239)

The story of life experiences through the autobiographical interview allows us to make visible, in Chase's words,

*"how our points of view, at particular stages of our lives, have a crucial influence on our professional performance"* (ibid.: 750).

Often, critical events or inflection points can be identified in the personal, professional and institutional life of the interviewees representing milestones that shape certain social styles and practices. According to the perspective adopted in this presentation, the biographical interview is carried out by taking into account different trajectories of the interviewed subjects, thus taking the idea of Bajtin's chronotope. According to Ferrarotti, the interviewed subject is

*"not a lonely individual (..) The concept of historical horizon must be taken into account, which means, in the first place, the non-timeless, unrooted nature of*

*extra-subjective material relationships, of autobiographical documents; and secondly, all structural relationships, be they formalized in institutions or expressed in behaviors and customs” (Inisesta and Feixa, 2006: 11)*

All this requires that we answer the following questions:

1. What voices are inscribed in the autobiographical account?
2. What is the genesis of these voices? What relationship can be established with the SR in reference to the object of study?
3. What are their positions?

### **OF THE VOICES IN THE LIVING STORIES**

Avelling (2014) proposes a three-step model in the analysis of the voices that populate the stories: the identification of the voices of the I-Positions through the conversation (interview) of the self; identifying the voices of others (Inner-Others) and examining the dialogue and relationships between different voices. As we have already stated, when addressing the problem of the voice, we face the question of who is talking?. A question that essentially leads us to question ourselves about the genesis and relationships of the different voices in the production of their statements in specific spaces of relationship. For Bajtin (1981), the “I” arises through social relationships with others; the Others are, in this sense, part of the Self (Bajtin, 1981; Wertsch, 1991). The “I” is always infused and responds to the voices of Others. People are worried about what other people think and say, and people often repeat or paraphrase the words of others (Marková, 2003). The self often thinks and speaks with the words of Others. According to Bajtin

*“any member of a community of speakers does not find neutral, “linguistic” words, free from the appreciations and orientations of others, but words inhabited by other voices. He receives them by the voice of others, full of the voice of others. Each word in its own context comes from another context, already marked by the interpretation of others. The subject’s thought finds only words already occupied” (1963-1970: 236).*

The main attempts to formalize a methodology to study the “I” with multiple experiences have emerged from the field of psychology. These approaches derive from the “Theory of the Dialogic I” (Hermans, 1999), in which the “I” is conceptualized as a multiplicity dynamics of “I positions” from which the “I” can speak and act. In the dialogic tradition, the Other is not in opposition to the Self, but is part of the Self (Bajtin, 1981; Wertsch, 1991). In addition, the Self is not simply what informs itself, but also how the self relates

to others (Marková, 2003). This emphasis on self-relationship with others implies three focuses for our method: Voices of the Self, voices of Others and their interactions. We can notice that different dimensions come into relation in this process of identity construction, at different moments in our life trajectory. Participation in social movements -belonging to a certain group- implies changes in our voices and in our positions. For Jodelet:

*“On le retrouve encore dans le cas des mouvements sociaux quand un ensemble de situations affecte pareillement, sur le plan émotionnel et identitaire, les membres d’un groupe, d’une classe ou d’une formation sociale comme un sort commun imposé par des conditions de vie, des rapports sociaux ou des contraintes matérielles et contre lequel ils s’élèvent”(2006.241)*

In the case of the voices of the teachers and their expression in relation to gender and sexuality, we can note the presence of the voices of the students in their struggles for the rights of the LGBTIQ community, the claims of NOT ONE LESS, the struggles regarding the abortion law, the proposals around the Gender Identity Law and those regarding same-sex marriage. In all these cases, we can notice that the construction of voices around genders and sexualities is carried out in a collective construction. Discourse allows the visibility of consciousness and, as a result, the voices and positions around different social and cultural objects. If we consider that consciousness has a dialogic, social genesis, we could say that, as stated by Jodelet:

*“l’expérience sociale est-elle marquée par les cadres de son énonciation et de sa communication”(206:242)*

## **CHALLENGES AND DIALOGUES**

Based on the aforementioned argumentation, we can consider that the understanding of learning about gender and sexuality refers us to the analysis of the processes of construction of knowledge in daily life in terms of binary, causal, naturalized relationships and the elaboration and dissemination of SR that can take this structure into account though with different dynamics. These processes allow for the co-construction of knowledge in different educational contexts, whether formal, non-formal and informal, at every moment of the life of the subjects involved. We could consider such contexts as communities of practice in which different activities take place. The pedagogical action is carried out through a series of procedures that regulate the joint activity (Coll et al., 1995). This help will be possible thanks to the negotiation of meanings and the



establishment of a discursive context that will make communication and understanding feasible (Cubero and Luque, 2001). Despite the consensual nature of the proposal, any negotiation is not exempt from disagreements, tensions, where the dialectic, in turn, allows for the construction of a framework where the difference is a variable to be taken into account. In each of these socio-cultural spaces where gender and sexuality are co-constructed, language as a semiotic system, as an instrument of mediation in learning processes, takes on a fundamental role. The convergence on this point is remarkable, whether from a socio-historical perspective (Vygotsky, 1986, 1988, Wertsch, 1999), the conception of dialogicality (Bajtin, 1989, Markova, 2016), the Social Representations Theory (Abric 1994; Apostolidis 2003; Jodelet 1989, 2002, 2006, 2008; Markova 2016; Pievi 2017; Seidmann et al., 2012), the Doing Gender Theory (Crawford, 2006; West & Zimmerman, 1987), or the perspective of Judith Butler (2007) among others. In this sense, the dialogues between different fields, perspectives and theories, from an interdisciplinary and multi-methodological perspective allow us to deepen the different edges of the objects of knowledge that have guided this presentation, enabling the opening of new paths in research on learning, genres and sexualities.

On the other hand, there is the importance of life stories, stories of life experiences, of vices, as a gateway to the voices that populate the plot and structure of the stories. The different positions of the self are present in the stories that, as stories constituted by different voices, shape the psycho-social reality of the subjects. Now, this reality is represented and narrated according to life experiences. It is not neutral. Each subject is occupying different positions in their social space, and they do so from evaluations, traditions and beliefs, where power, knowledge and sexuality are part of it. For Jodelet:

*“À côté de cette dimension vécue, l’expérience comporte une dimension cognitive dans la mesure où elle favorise une expérimentation du monde et sur le monde et concourt à la construction de la réalité selon des catégories ou des formes qui sont socialement données. Et c’est à ce niveau que peut aussi se penser la liaison avec les représentations sociales. Les termes dans lesquels on va formuler cette expérience et sa correspondance avec la situation où elle émerge vont emprunter à des pré-construits culturels et à un stock commun de savoirs qui vont donner sa forme et son contenu à cette expérience, elle-même constitutive du sens que le sujet donne aux événements, situations, objets et personnes meublant son environnement proche et son monde de vie. En ce sens, l’expérience est sociale et socialement construite.” (2006:241)*



To sum up, we can note that the stories of life stories allow us to make different dimensions of our subjective, intersubjective and trans-subjective reality visible, where the experiences are present by means of the voices that constitute these stories in the different statements (or utterances). These concepts rooted in the interdisciplinary tradition of dialogue enable us to understand the need for joint work in addressing the issue of knowledge building around gender and sexuality, and in order strengthen the dialogic perspective in the field of the Social Representations Theory.

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