

Communicative practices in the school boosted by the school radio

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Abstract

This article presents the preliminary results of the research *Citizenships, participation and communication practices in the school*. A project funded by the sixth convocation of the UNIMINUTO 2016-2017 system. Here we try to present some reflections on the communicative practices that are stimulated by *school radio* in two District Educational Institutions in Bogota-Colombia. Through a qualitative method and an ethnographic methodology, the participation of students was promoted between the levels of sixth to tenth grade of the baccalaureate. In the first instance, the findings allow us to conclude that *school radio* becomes a cultural mediator that enables

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the prevalence of communicative practices of resistance or reconfiguration of power relations.

Keywords: Communication; Social development; Social change; Communicative Practices; School radio.

1. Introduction

At present, radio has become a frequent means of communication in school. This has led to proposals that encourage the use of this medium. This is the case of the C4 project, which offered training to teachers and young people in school media, including school radio. During the years 2014 and 2015, the Secretary of Education of the District and the Attic Center of the Pontificia Universidad Javeriana executed the project that resulted in the delivery of equipment to some participating educational institutions. In order to carry out the present research proposal, a tracing was done to the schools considered by the Secretary of Education of the District as a node in school radio and a participant of the proposal. The schools were I.E.D Colegio Técnico Tomás Rueda Vargas and the Manuelita Sáenz School. Both located in San Cristóbal (fourth) south east of Bogotá-Colombia, who after an approach agreed to be part of this investigation.

Our research is based on the qualitative model with Historical Interpretive Hermeneutic approach, since it is intended to analyze the types of citizenships and forms of participation that are given through school radio, in order to understand the communicative practices that are given inside the school and that contribute to the recognition of actors in schools. Therefore, the intention is to describe the phenomenon to reconstruct and understand the reality of school actors. The methodology that has been developed is ethnographic, divided into three stages: a) discussion group, semi-structured interview and observation museum; b) nominal group and recognition of experiences; c) participant observation.

This text is expected to present the preliminary progress in the third specific objective: *identify how communication practices boosted by school radio contribute to the recognition of school actors the two schools of Bogotá*. This last stage focused on radio observation and training, more exactly on the construction of radio scripts, interviews and magazines. Also, the students had the opportunity to record several programs about the topics they worked for. To do this we place ourselves in the field of a communication that opens spaces for horizontal dialogues, since it allows us to recognize the different discourses and communicative practices that are carried out in the daily life of the school environment. In addition, it is expected that students, teachers, administrators and parents, through participation and dialogue, produce knowledge together that lead to reflection on the environment.

2. Theoretical approaches

2.1. Communication, development and social change

As first, in this theoretical account, it is important to note that this research is framed in the field of communication, development and social change. But to talk about this field it is important to take a tour of the theoretical advances that have developed around communication.

In the fifties in North America, some theorists questioned how to understand communication? among them Luis Ramiro Beltrán, who initially spoke of *communication for development*. Taking into account that a technological development model was being lived for the time, a linear communication is aimed at changing behaviors; that is, information is issued to be adopted by the receiver. However, Beltrán transcended the concept and proposed *the communication of development support*, which was questioning the way in which communication makes use of the media in order to generate awareness in the receiver, allowing institutions outside the community to manage projects for the development of it.

During the decade of the seventies in Latin America, there were living several events that changed the way of understanding communication, including the emergence of radio school that expanded rapidly in several countries. They highlight the *Radio Sutatenza* in Colombia and *School Radiofónica* in Bolivia, and the birth of social movements. This led Beltrán to think of another type of communication, which he calls *alternative communication for democratic development*.

The Argentine Máximo Simpson stipulated as characteristics of 'alternative communication' - also called 'dialogical', 'popular' and 'participatory' - the following: (1) broad access from social sectors to systems; (2) social ownership of the media; (3) contents favorable to social transformation; (4) horizontal and multidirectional communication flows; and (5) production craft of messages (Beltrán, 2005, p.20).

Undoubtedly, this new conception has characteristics that mark a before and after communication. First, the media is not only conceived as an instrument for the transmission of information, but also is understood as a favorable space for the participation of people. Second, it is expected that the contents contribute to the construction of critical thinking that leads to social change. Third, there is no longer any talk of a modernizing and technological development, but a development on a human scale, where the needs of the community prevail.

On the other hand, Alfonso Gumucio (2010) bets on *the communication for social change*. In this approach the thinker raises the media as promoters of political participation in the community; that is, they seek to generate knowledge through spaces for debate and dialogue in order for a community to appropriate, manage and participate in the construction of projects in favor of its development (always taking into account and respecting the traditions of the community). This position has similarities with that of Rosa María Alfaro, who proposes

communication as a strategy to transform realities. This implies that there are communicative processes of deliberation among the community. Therefore, it assumes “[...] the deep interrelationship between the different dimensions of social life, that is, the economic, social, cultural processes and politics, where human subjects should decide and conduct the type of society who want to produce, with freedom” (Alfaro, 2015, p. 11). For this, the community must have a deep knowledge about the problem and its context, in this way it is possible that the strategies to be used are effective. Likewise, it is essential to use the information media to disseminate and promote solutions, giving way to social growth in terms of knowledge, this allows society to be increasingly critical and participatory.

Now, these conceptions include communication as a tool that allows communities to influence the public. In other words, communication has a political stake. In addition, this communication seeks the relationship and interrelation of people through horizontal dialogue. This type of communication bets on human scale development, and understands that it can be a means to social change.

However, it is precisely there where the positions of the three authors differ. Beltrán suggests that people outside the community should create transformative proposals. Gumucio (2010) supports this idea, but considers the importance and respect for the culture and values of the community; In other words, these aspects must be taken into account when promoting change. On the other hand, Alfaro (2015) bets on the construction of strategies in favor of transformation, but stresses that the community should be the one that manages and executes plans that solve their problems.

2.2. The communicative practices

At first, to define communicative practices, we identify ourselves by the proposal by Valencia & Magallanes who raises in his text *Communicative practices and social change: power, action and reaction* that:

[...] they are everyday expressions that are constructed and reconstructed through the relationship and interaction between the social actors and the territory. Without a doubt, communication plays an important role in the materialization of forms of society, facilitating the way of relating to nature; maintains ties and reaffirms or builds community (2015, p. 21).

The communicative practices proposed by these authors are framed in horizontal communicational processes that are constructed and deconstructed in the daily interaction with other actors and the environment. This allows us to think about the points raised by Juliao: “It is necessary to consider that the practice, as a socio-historical and intentional activity, is constantly redirecting” (2013, p. 137). In other words, the communicative practices are immersed in the context that indirectly affect their construction, therefore, it is necessary to understand the environment in which the actors are immersed.

Now, through language and the use that is given, we can make a reconstruction of different discourses and interpretations of social reality. Krystyna Pomerowska (quoted in Juliao) states

that: “The nature of the language we use determines how we can construct the meaning of our experiences, and the type of social action we choose to engage is the result of interpreting our experiences” (2013, p. 79). In this measure, when talking about communicative practices, it is essential to recognize the different discourses professed by the actors that are in a territory, since these same practices are what allow us to examine what kind of relationships are developed between the different participants every day in their environment, their hierarchies, power relations and intercultural competences.

Two classifications of communicative practices, centered on the daily discourses of the actors, allow us to understand their relevance. First, in relation to the political identities proposed by Jair Vega (2015) where they are located, the legitimating communicative practices of resistance and project. For our case, we are interested in communicative practices of resistance, since they involve the confrontation and resolution of a conflict from the production and critical reflection of the praxis itself:

The communicative practices of resistance are focused on subjects immersed in a dominant communication model, where the different social actors are not represented as subjects, if not as a mass, where they stereotype and stigmatize their territory, their imaginaries, their meanings and meanings’. Therefore, they seek to form critical subjects in a medium where they can position themselves against alternative discourses, from the empowerment of the local environment so that, in turn, they incite a critical position in the rest of the community that surrounds them, here the main thing is the medium, the discourse and the involvement of the subjects in the communicative process (Vega, 2015, p. 9).

The second classification of communicative practices has to do with its relationship with education, specifically, from the vision of *reflective pedagogy*. There, the practices in general have a character of learning and optimal reflection for personal and social transformation.

In turn, the term ‘intentional social practice’ is addressed, giving light of a dynamic practice from pedagogy, which offers conditions of emancipation, diffusion and medicalization of discourse, leading to a ‘self-transformation’, that is, that the practices have the power to transform the subjects and they are modifying themselves by adapting to the new conditions of social life that these changes imply (Juliao, 2013, p. 134).

As a result of this theoretical reflection, we believe that the real challenge of *communication for development and social change* is to promote spaces in which communication practices assumed from pedagogy and humanization of being. To do this, it is essential to recognize the different speeches of the school actors; discourses that are daily in a particular space. In the same way, a constant process of reflection is demanded action on the praxis in the social interaction and in the public matters. Hence, the practice, recognized from the historical and social context, seeks that through participation there is a joint construction of new knowledge that leads to critical reflection on its social reality.

2.3. School Radio

The school radio is a niche little explored by the theoreticians, however, for the present research project we are based on what was posed by César Augusto Rocha Torres, who conceives of school radio as:

A communicative and educational space that allows thinking about the school and the educational processes involved. Through school radio, significant realities can be transformed inside and outside the school. It is a favorable space that has greater closeness to the students than to the professors themselves, making it possible to match forces in a still very banking education (2008, p. 41).

Directly connected with the bet of César Rocha, is the vision of José Ignacio López Vigil, on the need for school and community radio

We grew up in that influence of authoritarianism and we became infected. We neglect the culture of dialogue, the shared word, the voice of the community. How is this reflected? In discourses where free questions are not tolerated, much less contrary opinions. In radio programs where we do not risk to debate with those who think differently from us (López, 2015, p. 30).

These two theorists propose a very interesting idea and it is to understand the radio as a space for the discussion of issues that concern the communities. In this sense, we consider that the radio, in fact, must have a pedagogical means that generates knowledge as a whole, that is, where all the different actors have the opportunity to express their opinions.

Likewise, Rocha (2008) exposes two key points:

1. School radio can be didactic, but school radio for coexistence should be framed in a pedagogical project, in a community project for coexistence. A pedagogical project that is based on interaction, interrelation, interlocution [...].
2. School radio has a great challenge: it will contribute to the generation of close communication. That is, to make known the school realities, the discourses and languages of the different school actors, the perceptions and the different cultures. In the end, school radio could play a fundamental role in the constitution of the public culture from school (p. 181).

This is how school radio, for this project, is not the end but the means, it is not enough if this tool is not put at the service of the community, at the service of the public in its different spheres. It is necessary a radio view from the field of communication and development and social change, which generates communicative practices not only in the school reality but in the non-school. Analyzed from the pedagogy, the radio is approached from the praxeological pedagogy, since this favors the processes of socialization and autonomization of knowledge. Returning to Rocha (2008), interest is observed by a pedagogical experience centered *dialogue and reflections* *One Cultural transmission of content*. In a few words, the relevance of active and horizontal processes in education is reiterated.

In short, school radio addressed from humanism and pedagogy, allows the recognition of the individuality of people, since this means recognizing their right to be that leads to reflection, empowerment and appropriation of an individual and collective identity that allows above all the development of communicative practices. Radio and social change have been intertwined throughout history, achieving development alternatives that concern the community, as this is the medium in which they participate and with their different perspectives propose and promote new possibilities for social transformation.

3. Practices in practice: first interpretations

In the educational institutions in which we worked, a separation is made between education and social praxis; that is to say, although the students have spaces of relationship, these are limited to the mere movement of knowledge to be evaluated. The school has become the space of transmission, but not of reflection. Therefore, when trying to make a classification of communicative practices in the school, the findings allow identifying the following phenomena.

1. So far, the management of the media has allowed the students to generate legitimating communicative practices, despite the lack of insertion of students in the real problems of the community and the absence of recognition spaces for the student. Real exercise of citizenship. Communication actions tend to be directed towards technical management and occupation of free time (Vega, 2015, p. 227).

It is observed; however, as *school radio* has become an instrument to entertain the breaks, while students listen to music. This has not allowed that in the schools generate true communicative practices that invite to the reflection and the construction of knowledge of pedagogical way so that the students question their daily life.

2. In the absence of real spaces for reflection (with institutional recognition), the products and communication practices that are generated, in the daily interaction of the school, do not have a significant impact on the construction of citizenship; they fail to contribute to the construction of social actors based on recognition; do not build their political identities with firm foundations from an exercise of critical reflection. It is observed that these communicative practices, by the instrumentalisation of communicative spaces (in this case, the use of *school radio*), do not generate “[...] feelings of autonomy, competence and belonging, who are the mediators of self-determination” (Deci & Flaste, cited by Juliao, 2013, p. 93).

The experience in this project allows us to affirm that *reflects school radio*, if approached from the praxeological (reflexive) pedagogy, it would allow the construction of a participative scenario of political recognition, it would achieve the construction of a political identity criticism and make it possible to awaken interest in the public. Therefore, we consider that school waves can constitute a contest space in which the relationship between the different powers generates discussion and deliberation about public affairs. This would be achieved to the extent that *reflects school radio* as a communicative action and not as an instrumental

action. In this way, we consider it appropriate to assume it, from the critical point of view, as a space for the formulation of *communicative practices of resistance*.

3. Through training in handling media such as *school radio* from *strategy ownership and empowerment of social and educational reality*, they began to generate intentional communicative practices formulated from the sharing, understanding that these have to do with “[...] the exchange of ideas, opinions and points of view that lead to a reflective creation process” (Juliao, 2013, p. 100) .

Therefore, one of the strongest needs found is to understand that school radio allows us to contrast the different points of view expressed by all social actors (teachers, students, administrators, parents, etc.). Given that power relations permeate communicative practices and that instrumental interactions were observed, it can be inferred that an atmosphere of trust and reciprocity in relationships among school children has not been created (ignorance of their individual experiences and knowledge). This shows that in the institutions there is a lack of horizontal dialogues that contribute to the different discourses of the student being of the same value as that of any other social actor.

4. By generating interaction and participative management of communication, students were able to take those intentional communicative practices to other dimensions of their daily life, that is, they not only questioned what was put into the public sphere to be treated, but also they themselves. They generated questions about their reality. As we have emphasized, with communicative practices, addressed from the praxeological pedagogy, spaces of knowledge are no longer limited to school activities. These practices are constantly transformed to adapt to the different dimensions and contexts of the subjects, where they are required.

Thus, *school radio* should be understood as a space that allows the construction of subjects critical of their environment and everyday life. A space that can be tackled more from the pedagogy than from the didactic, contrary to the way in which tends to work in educational institutions. For this it is to be noted that: “Pedagogy responds scientifically to the question It; how to educate? [...]. The didactic does it with the question It; How to teach?” (Lucio, 1989, p. 39).

5. If “[...] the intentionality of educational practices, both school and those carried out in other social spaces, is always collective and mediated by reflection, emancipation and criticism” (Juliao, 2013, p. 122) and the educational institutions are conceived in the relationship and processes of praxis, it seems that the educational institutions do not agree with the formulation of *communicative practices of resistance*. Apparently they are not prepared to generate other praxis processes that are not related to the transmission of information.

4. Conclusions

The communicative practices that are constructed daily allow subjects to reflect on themselves and their immediate surroundings, and jointly create new knowledge; this is

reflected when making decisions because they are more democratic and aware of their implications. In this way: "Cooperation, coexistence and trust are key for the construction of a social capital that is able to articulate citizens to face their problems and conflicts" (Aldana, 2012, p. 9).

From this perspective, by generating an accurate reflection on the school environment, through school radio mediation, students create bonds of understanding, solidarity and trust, which allows them not only a real encounter with their closest, but a meeting with the needs and purposes of the collective when leaving the sphere of the private. They approach new discourses and new argumentative fields that, at their own choice, they can transform continuously. A fact that converts the participation of the different actors into actions that allow the proper handling of the conflict.

The challenge of educational institutions is not only to provide opportunities for participation, where the student can recognize others and generate communicative practices, but ensure that before they recognize the other, they have the ability to recognize their individuality and, in this way, to understand its role as a political and autonomous actor of transformation of both the educational institution and its different dimensions and social contexts.

Without a doubt, school radio is a favorable space for students to have an impact on the public. From the school radio, students have the opportunity to exercise political control and transform the problems that arise in school. In addition, the radio must contribute to collective constructions, to daily reflections. For this we believe that all social actors (teachers, students, administrators, parents, etc.) should express their options and points of view based on trust, reciprocity and respect. Likewise, school radio allows generating communicative practices of reconfiguration of power relations.

In summary, the true challenge of educational institutions in the face of communicative practices framed in communication development and social change is to promote spaces such as *school radio* so that these are not only *practices of chance, causality and relationship*, but become a *practices of resistance* that enable individuals to manage their own transformations. Communicative practices that, through the recognition of social actors as living, reflective, participatory (legitimate) actors, believe (as recorded in the mediator work of *school radio* non-instrumentalised) shared spaces; in other words, they contribute to the construction of political identities through a reflexive praxeological pedagogy.

With this we are convinced that the educational community can create strategies to resolve conflict and change from the appropriation of the school. Likewise, we consider that school radio can open spaces for dialogue and deliberation among the different actors, which demarcate lines of action and enable the social and political transformation of the different actors in a public environment.

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