

Paulo Freire's Alternative Education Model

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ABSTRACT Paulo Freire, a Brazilian philosopher, aims to liberate people. In order to achieve this aim, he offers problem-posing education. According to this method, designed as an alternative to traditional education models, education should not be provided through one-sided imposition by teachers. This study provides information about problem-posing education model while it also compares this model with the most common traditional education method, which is called banking education by Freire. Furthermore, the study also includes information on the term "dialog, one of the most frequently used techniques in Freire's education model. However, as Freire emphasizes, dialog is not only an education technique, but also a tool that must be used by all people to encounter others. Therefore, dialog is examined in the context of both meanings of the term in the last part of the study. In addition, the study reveals that the method offered by Freire is similar to some of the popular methods that are used nowadays, but they have some differences in terms of how they came out and what they aim in general.

INTRODUCTION

The age of enlightenment is described as a period when concepts of democracy, equality and liberty were commonly discussed and many philosophers came out to question such concepts. Bacon, Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu and Diderot are among the philosophers taking part in such discussions. The ideas suggested by these philosophers, who took freedom as the basis, led to the start of a period in which social and individual life underwent a radical change. Rousseau, one of these intellectuals, was different from the others as he attempted to bring a more liberal conception into education. Also known as a contrarian philosopher of the age of enlightenment, Rousseau had a unique pedagogical approach thanks to his criticisms.

According to Rousseau (2008), who criticized the traditional education system, the best way to educate children is to adhere to the principles of natural development. Therefore, education should be compliant with the temperament and natural inclination of humans. In other words,

education should be regulated in such a way to bring freedom, personality and life to the basis. So, the children should be allowed to act freely in the process of education for the purposes of the creation of personality and emergence of personal talents.

Paulo Freire, one of the leading representatives of critical pedagogy, is known for his liberal thoughts. A great part of his thoughts is focused on the criticism of traditional education methods in a broad perspective (Mayo 2011). The approach of Freire is similar to that of Rousseau in terms of his criticism of the traditional pedagogy. Both philosophers had a reformist pedagogical conception as a product of their critical thinking. Rousseau and Freire can be also associated with each other in terms of how their ideas about pedagogy emerged. The pedagogical approach of Rousseau is more of a product of his political and philosophical conception. Rousseau alleged that the civilization caused the freedoms to be lost and the equality among people to be disturbed, and his ideal was the humanity situation preceding the society. According to him, it is impossible to abandon the civilization. However, liberation can be achieved in the civilization, too. And this is only possible through a pedagogical approach that brings liberty to the basis (Aydin 2000).

It is clear that Freire had a new conception of pedagogy within the framework of his ideas on the human existence, just like the conception of

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Rousseau. However, when his ideas are closely examined, it can be understood that the pedagogy suggested by Freire was more radical than that of Rousseau. Considering this fact, the study includes more information on Freire's criticisms. It is believed that this information will provide better understanding of the objectives of the methods suggested by Freire (Rousseau 2008; Freire 2011).

The aim of the study is to determine the philosophical bases and features of the problem posing education method suggested by Freire and to reveal the differences of this method from the traditional methods. The main problem of the study is constituted by the question "What is the Freire's pedagogy, named problem posing model?" The secondary problems of the study are constituted by the questions "What are the opinions of Freire about the banking education model?" "What is dialog for Freire?" and "What are the differences between the method suggested by Freire and the education methods of today?"

METHODOLOGY

This study, in which screening method was used, aimed to determine the philosophical bases and features of the problem posing education model suggested by Freire and to compare this model to the traditional approaches. Document review was used as the data collection tool. Document review is defined as the analysis of the documents that include written information about the fact or facts aimed to be researched (Yildirim and Simsek 2006). Data for the solution of the research problem were acquired from domestic and foreign literatures. The greatest part of the data was collected from the limited number of direct Turkish translations of the articles and books on Freire's pedagogy and from the Italian works written on Freire's pedagogy by Italian researchers in Italy, where there is a big interest in Freire's pedagogy. In the process of data analysis, the data collected from the documents were firstly noted; then each note was read and classified by subject, and attention was paid to cover all the aspects of the subjects to be researched. The data, which were analyzed and interpreted in line with the aims of the research, were synthesized so as to suggest a solution for the research problem.

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY OF PAULO FREIRE

Establishing a strong relation between education and politics, Freire also puts forward a new education model. He creates a society perspective in line with his experiences in Latin America and criticizes the traditional education method, which he names as banking education. According to him, the privileged persons that make the social relations imperative and dominative belong to the class of oppressors. On the other side, the other members of the society constitute the oppressed. Furthermore, this imperative process is facilitated by many instruments. One of these instruments is the ordinary education, called as banking by Freire (Mayo 2011).

Banking Conception of Education

Banking education, which is the most important theme of Freire's critical pedagogy, is a process in which the information is directly conveyed to students, the teacher is the sole distributor of information, and the student is the passive receiver of the information. Under these conditions, learner is the object of the learning process rather than the subject. In this process, information is consumed without criticism, and the learners experience cultural alienation and become defenseless to cultural imperialism (Mayo 2011).

According to Freire, those being educated through banking education are ignored and transformed into empty containers to be fulfilled by educators at the first step. Freire named this education model as banking education because depositing knowledge into students is one of the most important aims in such education (Milan 2008). Freire explains this as follows:

The students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Instead of communicating, the teacher issues communiques and makes deposits which the students patiently receive, memorize, and repeat. This is the "banking" concept of education, in which the scope of action allowed to the students extends only as far as receiving, filing, and storing the deposits (Freire 2011: 51).

Freire named the banking conception of education as "educacao bancaria" in Portuguese, his mother tongue. The concept *bancaria* has such meanings as bank and related to bank

(Tagliavia 2008). However, in some resources translated into Turkish, this education model is named as cumulative education. One of these works is "A Primer of Libertarian Education" of Joel Spring, which was translated into Turkish in 2010.

The meanings connoted by the banking model of education and cumulative model of education are different from each other. As Freire emphasizes, the main meaning of the banking model of education is the consideration of humans as depositories, in other words objectivization and alienation of humans. On the other side, cumulative model of education is more likely to imply the transfer of information without questioning.

According to Freire (2004), the banking model of education has been shaped by the perspectives of the proponents of this model towards humans. This model ignores the fact that humans are historical beings. However, the human is an incomplete being with a consciousness of being incomplete, unlike animals. Therefore, the human is a being that designs the future. An educational model based on these qualifications of the human should be a continuous act. Problem posing education, which is an option for such education, is based on continuity.

In the banking model of education, which advocates the view of permanent knowledge, the educators know and those being educated do not. The educator dictates and the learner listens amenably. Thus the educator deposits the information mechanically into the memory bank of the learner (McLaren 2006; Tagliavia 2008). In this respect, it is not surprising that banking education regards the humans as beings to be influenced. As the students get busier with storing the information deposited into them, their critical conscious, which leads them to intervene with the world, becomes more passive (Freire 2000).

Joel Spring (2010), professor of pedagogy from the United Nations, suggests that the banking model of education is not libertarian and it causes the oppressed to become submissive and alienated. This model of education ignores the life and makes it more difficult to be conscious of the self, instead of approving the life of the learner and providing the learner with the instruments of developing a conception of life. The purpose of education provided through this method is not the understanding of the self but changing

the individual in line with external targets. Determined by the oppressors, this model dictates to the oppressed what they should be. Such model naturally tends to sustain the current social structure. It is clear that the content and moral imperatives of this model reflect the ideology of the ruling class, that is, the oppressors.

According to Freire (2011), the banking model of education, which is designed to serve the purpose of the oppressors, leads to a kind of dehumanizing. This model is covertly based on the assumption that there is a polarity between the human and the world. This assumption implies that the humans are just on the world, but they are not together with the world or the others. It is apparent that this assumption rejects the fact that the human is a conscious being, but it accepts that the human has consciousness. A model of education established on this assumption causes alienation rather than humanization. Considering that the human is not a complete being, Freire (2004) alleges that both the humanization and dehumanization of the human are possible. The humanization process of the persons is prevented by such instruments as injustice, exploitation and oppression.

Freire states that one of the tools affecting the humanization of the person to the greatest extent is the banking model of education. This model makes the individual an object which is worked on, and the learner is considered as a tool for the achievement of the purpose of education. Thus, the target achieved by the banking model of education is the creation of a conscious that is alien to the learner (Spring 2010). However, Freire suggests that the original aim of education is to improve the social conscious and the critical thinking ability of the humans. Within this framework, Freire considers education as a process to assist becoming conscious. He believes that this aim can be achieved through problem posing model of education, and he considers this model as an alternative to the banking model of education (Ayhan 1995).

Problem Posing Education

Freire (2011) alleges that those advocating liberation should reject banking model of education and actualize the problem posing model of education instead because this kind of education corresponds to the core of consciousness and actualizes communication. Therefore prob-

lem posing model of education is a libertarian way of education.

Considering this purpose of the problem posing model of education, it becomes more important what Freire means by liberty. According to Freire (2004, 2011), liberty is the humans' thinking and taking action for transforming the world on which they exist. In one respect, the real liberation is humanization.

Emphasizing that the general aim of the problem posing education is liberation, Freire determined special aims for the implementation of this model. For him, the problem posing education aims to strengthen the students' critical thinking and their abilities of thinking on an information object and on the reasons of their existence. When this aim is achieved, the student will attempt to obtain knowledge thanks to an epistemological curiosity. Without curiosity, it is impossible to obtain knowledge. In this respect, curiosity is the tool of obtaining information (Vittoria 2010). Freire summarizes the knowledge obtaining process as follows: "Knowledge emerges only through invention and re-invention, through the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry human beings pursue in the world, with the world, and with each other." (Freire 2011: 51).

According to Freire, the implementation of problem posing model of education requires abandoning the idea that educators hold absolute knowledge. In this model, the educator must be ready for a dialog-based relation and thereby for listening. In addition, the educator must regard the educators as the subject of the knowledge (Vittoria 2010).

The banking education considers the knowledge as a gift given by those considering themselves as knower to those considered by them as knowing nothing while the knowledge in problem posing education is a real perception that is not only taught by the educators but also taught to the educators together with the students. Therefore, the problem posing education considers the teacher not as a person that transfers knowledge, but as a person that perceives together with the students. In this process, the students carry out critical research together with the teacher rather than being amenable listeners (Freire 2011).

The teacher does not interrupt the action of the student in problem posing education. The teacher also gets into the process of perceiving

together with the student. Therefore, he/she does not consider the objects of perception as his/her private property. In this way, people develop their strength of critically comprehending their ways of existing in the world in which they have found themselves and in the world of themselves (Yildirim 2011).

With the problem posing education, people start perceiving the world not as a stable reality but as a reality in the process of transformation. Thus, people think of the world and themselves, and they do not separate the act of thinking from action. The problem posing model defines people as beings that are in the process of being completed. Unlike other living beings, the humans are aware of the fact that they are not complete and competent. This incompleteness and awareness makes it compulsory for the education to be a continuous activity as a way of expression that is unique to the human. The people undergoing such education create an actual form of thinking and acting (Freire 2011).

The central concept in Freire's epistemology is praxis, which means conscious action. The act of knowing includes a dialectical movement from action to idea and from thinking on action to a new action (Ayhan 1995). However, according to Freire, the educator must act in such a way to enable action and thinking to be in interaction with each other as thinking and action constitute a simultaneous unity in the praxis concept. These two items are so connected to each other that even if one of them is sacrificed only partially, the other would be damaged (Freire 2011). It is apparent that Freire's educational theory is an initiative to concretize the epistemology that is based on praxis. Freire proposes dialog in this model of education, in which the teacher and the learner jointly undertake the act of knowing.

Dialog

Freire regards dialog as the basic item in the knowledge structure. So, the classrooms designed in accordance with this model of education will become the meeting places where information is researched (Ayhan 1995). Within this framework, it is apparent that Freire does not consider dialog as a simple education technique leading to the attainment of certain results. He considers dialog mainly as complementary to the human nature. We need others to know ourselves and we can affirm our identity only through

other people, that is, through dialog (Tolomelli 2012). Freire (2000) suggests that the human has a social and historical existence unlike other living beings. Besides, the human has the capacity to know himself/herself. In other words, the human beings are conscious of their incompleteness unlike other living beings. Thanks to this feature, they can educate themselves by encountering others.

Dialog, which means encounter of people with each other, is also experienced through world to name the world. Thus, dialog is not possible between those who want to name the world and those who do not. As dialog is an existential reality, it should be applied to the pedagogy, too (Freire 2011). Freire, does not consider dialog only as a need of the human nature. Dialog is also a sign of the democratic stance of the educator. Therefore, a democratic educator is a dialogist by nature (Freire 2000).

According to Freire, who takes dialog as an element of pedagogical communication, education means sharing. Therefore, education must be based on dialog, through which relational opportunities are created. In such education, where authority-based reasons are not valid, no one teaches another person (Freire and Macedo 1998; Yildirim 2011). Therefore, educator learns from the student and the student learns from the educator in the process of dialog. So, the roles of the educator and the learner interchange. Thus, in the process of dialog, educators help the development of a process in which the educators and the learners can learn together (Mayo 2011). Freire believes that dialog has a number of preconditions. And one of these preconditions is love (Ayhan 1995).

Dialog requires a deep love of the world and the humans. Dialog is an act of naming the world, and it can be realized only by being blended with love. Therefore, love is the basis of dialog and also the dialog itself. Thus, one who does not love the world, the life and the people cannot enter into dialog. Another precondition for dialog is modesty (Freire 2011).

According to Freire, dialog in education is accompanied by modesty. In other words, dialog cannot be used without modesty. Therefore, dialog is an element that directly influences the establishment of a relation between the educator and the learner based on equality (Tagliavia 2008). Freire explains this as follows:

On the other hand, dialogue cannot exist without humility. The naming of the world, through which people constantly re-create that world, cannot be an act of arrogance. Dialogue, as the encounter of those addressed to the common task of learning and acting, is broken if the parties (or one of them) lack humility. How can I dialogue if I always project ignorance onto others and never perceive my own? (Freire 2011: 69).

Dialog also requires a strong belief, too. This is the human beings' belief in their strength to do and to create. Every human has this belief by nature. However, those who are exposed to a concrete alienation cannot use this strength (Freire 2011).

Another precondition for dialog is hope. Hope arises from the continuous search of humans due to their incompleteness. On the other side, hopelessness is a form of ignoring the world and escaping. However, hope does not mean crossing the arms and wait passively. The human can have hopes only if he/she struggles (Freire 2011).

Lastly, dialog requires courage. The parties of dialog should encourage thinking critically, in other words thinking without fearing the dangers of the action. The determinant for a critical thinker is the continuous transformation of the reality in favor of the continuous humanization of the humans. Such a dialog can create critical thinking (Freire 2011).

It can be seen that each precondition for dialog correspond to the qualities that are unique to the human beings. A dialog, performed with these qualities, further strengthens them. Freire believes that all of these qualities are inherent in human beings. If a person gets away from these qualities over time, it means that he/she is alienated. However, alienation of a person does not mean that his/her qualities are eradicated. They are only deactivated. If Freire believed that these qualities were eradicated in alienated people, he would not attempt to educate such people. In this respect, dialog, the most important element of problem posing education, is also a way of encounter that all the people including those alienated can enjoy. Therefore, hope, one of the preconditions for dialog, also constitutes the starting point of its pedagogy. In this context, Freire gives the hope that everybody can be educated.

DISCUSSION

Paulo Freire carries out research and practices on education throughout his life while he also criticizes the current approaches to education. The model of education targeted by his criticisms is the process of teaching in which the teacher directly gives information to the students as a conveyor. Freire rejects such model of education, which he calls banking education. According to him, this model of education cannot meet the needs of individuals.

The opinion that the traditional education cannot meet the needs of individuals has recently become more common. As the learning depends more on the lecturing of the teacher in the educational environments where traditional approach is applied, the teacher is considered as the source transferring the knowledge and the students are considered as passive receivers of knowledge. This model of education takes a lot of criticism (Ozturk 2012; Dogan 2013; Yuksel 2013). New education methods have been recently proposed as alternatives to this model. A review of all the education methods suggested today indicates us that the problem posing education, suggested by Freire, bears resemblance to constructivist approach.

The constructivist approach, which advocates the structuring of the knowledge by the student, is an educational model that is getting increasingly popular. According to this model of education, knowledge is not received passively through senses or diverse communication channels and it does not exist in the external world. On the contrary, the knowledge is structured by the one that knows. Therefore, constructivism rejects the ideas that the reality exists in the external world and is separate from the knower and that the true knowledge must be compliant with the reality and reflect the reality. Instead, it advocates the idea that the knower must create the reality based on his/her own life and on his interaction with the environment (Acikgoz 2007; Baytak and Hirca 2013). In the constructivist approach, which regards learning as an active process, the students attribute meanings from their own minds to the knowledge they acquire from the environment. Giving knowledge is not the role of the teacher in this process. Instead, they try to understand the thoughts of the students in a specific subject (Ozden 2005; Bartholomew et al. 2012; Oren and Ormanci 2012; Dede 2013).

In addition to constructivist approach, there are other approaches that resemble Freire's approach. One of them is critical thinking.

Critical thinking means methodical, logical, rational, problem-solving and creative thinking that uses multiple intelligences and is based on active learning. Such a comprehensive thinking cannot be reduced to just one of them. In order to find the roots of critical thinking, one should firstly consider John Dewey because the roots of this approach lie in the "reflective thinking" concept of Dewey, who is considered as the architect of the modern critical thinking tradition (Fisher 2001; Gundogdu 2009).

Another approach that bears resemblance to the problem posing education approach is problem-based learning. In this approach, which is constructed on the solution of daily problems, the students firstly define the problem actively and detect what they know, and then they detect what they need to know, based on their previous experience of knowledge. In this process, the students are encouraged to determine the learning subjects and the knowledge to be comprehended in order to solve the problem. Then the students discuss and determine the strategies and works to solve the problem. As this method of education is also considered as the core of the constructivism, its roots lie in Dewey's philosophy of learning (Kocakoglu 2010).

The similarities between the popular educational approaches of today and the approach suggested by Freire raise a question: What are the differences between Freire's approach and the mentioned approaches? This question can be answered through the findings of the study.

The emergence of Freire's approach is different from that of other approaches. Constructivist approach, one of these approaches, is a philosophy of learning above all. The root of this philosophy can be attributed to the studies of Giambattista Vico, a philosopher from the 18th century who believed that people could understand what they themselves constructed. Although many educationists and philosophers studied on this idea, Jean Piaget and John Dewey were the first outstanding philosophers to develop ideas explaining what constructivism was (Arslan 2007). These philosophers also put forward ideas contrary to the traditional approaches within the framework of a philosophy of learning. Similarly, Dewey suggested his approaches towards critical thinking and problem solving within the framework of a philosophy of learning.

Unlike these philosophers, Freire bases his pedagogy on a human philosophy aiming to determine the difference of humans from animals. In Freire's conception, the human is a conscious being unlike animals. Therefore, humans not only live, but also act towards the targets they set for themselves. Unlike other philosophers, Freire suggests his educational method by considering the human characteristics that are unique to humans.

Another difference of the model of education offered by Freire from other educational approaches is the fact that Freire's model is a product of a project aiming to save the people that are oppressed due to social inequalities. In this respect, the problem posing education approach is designed so as to meet social targets. On the other side, the popular educational approaches of today give priority to meeting individual targets. One of the most important common aims of these approaches is to let people gain personal abilities and thereby contribute to their cognitive development.

CONCLUSION

In general terms, it is apparent that the main concept of the method suggested by Paulo Freire is "dialog". According to Freire, we need others to know ourselves and we can affirm our own identity only by dialoging with other people. In this respect, Freire suggests that dialog, the encounter between people, is performed through the world in order to name the world. As dialog is an existential reality, it must be applied to the pedagogy, too. Education means sharing according to Freire, who considers dialog as an element of the pedagogical communication. Therefore, education must be based on dialog, through which relational opportunities are created. In such education, where authority-based reasons are not valid, no one gives lesson to anyone. For Freire, the conception of education that rejects dialog is banking education, and such education considers the student as an empty container to be fulfilled. Advocators of such education believe that only the educators know and those being educated know nothing. In this respect, it is clear that Freire designed the problem posing education method as an alternative to the method of education that he calls banking education.

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