

“It Is an Affective Memory”: Proverbs as a Cultural Practice of Self-Care and Care for Others / “É uma memória afetiva”: provérbios como prática cultural de cuidado de si e do outro

*Rejane Brandão Siqueira**

*Edson Cordeiro dos Santos***

*Jennifer Pena Vasconcellos da Silva****

ABSTRACT

This article explores childhood memories with a focus on the transmission of proverbs, following the common thread of culture and the spheres of human activity that make use of language. It aims to investigate the imprints of giving and receiving care found in memories pertaining to the use of proverbs. The chosen methodology involved collective interviews in discussion groups with a group of professionals from a Specialization Course in Education and a group of High School students in a regular evening class, analyzing their recollections of childhood proverbs. The text is structured in two parts: a conceptual analysis of proverbs, and a description of the discussion groups and categories of analysis (Context; Intergenerational Experience; Metaphors and Polyphony; and Care). The closing thoughts suggest that the recollection and narration of proverbs constitute an act of care, fostering a human connection that reveals and touches others.

KEYWORDS: Care; Culture; Recollection; Proverbs

RESUMO

O artigo aborda as memórias de infância com o foco na transmissão de provérbios, tendo como fio condutor a cultura e as esferas da atividade humana com a utilização da língua. O objetivo é investigar as marcas de cuidar e ser cuidado nos relatos de memórias de uso de provérbios. Como metodologia, foram realizadas entrevistas coletivas em rodas de conversa com um grupo de profissionais de um curso de Especialização em Educação e com um grupo de estudantes de uma turma de Ensino Médio regular noturno para a análise da rememoração dos provérbios na infância. O texto está estruturado em duas partes: análise conceitual dos provérbios e descrição das rodas de conversa e categorias de análise (contextos; experiência intergeracional; metáforas e polifonia; e cuidado). As considerações finais apontam que a rememoração e narração de provérbios configuram um ato de cuidado, promovendo uma conexão humana que revela e toca o outro.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Cuidado; Cultura; Rememoração; Provérbios

* Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro – PUC/Rio, Faculdade de Educação, Departamento de Educação, *Campus Gávea*, Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Faperj Proc. E-26/200.844/2021; <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9927-3396>; rejsiqueira@gmail.com

** Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro – PUC/Rio, Faculdade de Educação, Departamento de Educação, *Campus Gávea*, Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Faperj Proc. E-26/200.844/2021; <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-4275-3089>; edsoncordeiro.nig@gmail.com

*** Pontifícia Universidade Católica do Rio de Janeiro – PUC/Rio, Faculdade de Educação, Departamento de Educação, *Campus Gávea*, Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; Faperj Proc. E-26/200.844/2021; <http://orcid.org/0009-0008-3518-8564>; jennifer.vascc@gmail.com

Introduction

This article aims to identify how the cultural practices and imprints found in stories, songs, games and proverbs told by children and adults can constitute acts of care, and the data collected for this research will be presented as a step towards the specific goal of listening to adults and youngsters share childhood memories that pertain to the transmission of proverbs. Culture will be the common thread encompassing this movement of “listening-telling-recollecting.” Mikhail Bakhtin (1986)¹ states that individuals enter their culture when they are born and that, throughout their lives, they contribute to the development and reestablishment of that culture’s array of meanings. In his philosophy of language, the author connects the spheres of human activity with the use of language, which “deals with concrete utterances (written and oral) belonging to various spheres of human activity” (Bakhtin, 1986, p.62).² Children’s and adults’ narratives reformat care into something that is built through relationships. Based on Bakhtin’s (1986)³ and Martin Buber’s (1958,⁴ 1964,⁵ 1966,⁶ 2002)⁷ studies, care is sustained by dialogical relations as the premise for an existence that is, above all, a responsible reply to the time and place in which we live.

Whether told or recollected, proverbs are integral to the historicity of a language, which in turn reflects a culture, a way of thinking and acting, in other words, an ideology that undergirds this past linguistic pattern, which may or may not be repeated in the present. When discussing ideology, Antonio Gramsci (1986)⁸ seeks to understand what the people’s idea of philosophy is, emphasizing that the answer to this inquiry may come from everyday language and, thus, may be analyzed through it. To the author, the distinction between philosophy, which would be reasonableness itself, and common sense is that the former presents individual characteristics in its thought process, while the latter

¹ BAKHTIN, Mikhail. The Problem of Speech Genres. In: BAKHTIN, M. *Speech Genres & Other Late Essays*. Translated by Vern W. McGee and Edited by Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986. pp. 60-102.

² For reference, see footnote 1.

³ For reference, see footnote 1.

⁴ BUBER, Martin. *I and Thou*. Translated by Ronald Gregor Smith, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark. 2nd Edition New York: Scribners, 1958. 1st Scribner Classics ed. New York, NY: Scribner, 2000, c1986.

⁵ BUBER, Martin. *Daniel: Dialogues on Realization*, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1964.

⁶ BUBER, Martin. *The Way of Response: Martin Buber; Selections from his Writings*, edited by N. N. Glatzer. New York: Schocken Books, 1966.

⁷ BUBER, Martin. *The Way of Man: According to the Teaching of Hasidim*, London: Routledge, 2002.

⁸ The English edition for this work could not be found.

presents the characteristics of a given time and context. Common sense is integrated into a given world view either from a disaggregated body of ideas and opinions – as is the case with religion and folklore, which reflect a kind of conformity imposed by an exterior environment (the dominant ideology) –, or in a coherent and homogenous manner.

For Walter Benjamin (1999b),⁹ the challenge of narrating the past lies in understanding that all events matter. Listening to children's and adults' narratives about the small details of day-to-day affairs and of their cultural repertoires means breaking with the official version of history. In order to know the oral histories' narratives, interwoven by the recollection of proverbs, and to bring with them the stories told by children, teachers, and families, the chosen methodology for this study consisted of holding conversation circles and conducting collective interviews with the participants. These circles were divided by cultural repertoire: i) proverbs; ii) music; and iii) stories. For the purposes of this article, we focused on the proverbs circle. By listening intently to the childhood memories of the participants of two proverbs circles, we sought to identify what these stories – all recollected, told and retold – can contribute to a deeper understanding of care as a social and cultural practice. Both listener and narrator share a common human experience, as well as an interest in preserving what was narrated, so as to prevent the degradation of said experience (Benjamin, 1999b).¹⁰

Like conversation, care as recollection is an integral part of being human, and it seeks to retrieve what was (nearly) destroyed or forgotten, an act of resistance. According to Márcio Seligmann-Silva (2008), memory is contradictory to the danger of forgetting, of masking narratives that present the triumph of the victors. We may ask: what acts of resistance are taught in the long learning process administered by our various educational institutions? What acts of resistance can we observe throughout individual and collective history in the narratives heard? This article is structured in two parts: the first analyzes the concept of proverbs, while the second highlights the conversation circles held and the categories of analysis. Lastly, the article will present a few final thoughts.

⁹ BENJAMIN, Walter. *Selected Writings*. Volume 2, Part 2, 1931-1934. Translated by Rodney Livingstone and Others. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1999b.

¹⁰ For reference, see footnote 9.

1 Proverbs as Sociocultural Praxis

The word ‘proverb,’ from the Latin *proverbium*, results from the agglutination of the adverb *pro*, meaning ‘in favor of,’ with the noun *verbum*, meaning ‘verb,’ or ‘word.’ Thus, its original meaning can be construed as ‘favorable to the verb/word.’¹¹ It is worth noting that, as this study views proverbs as a cultural repertoire, it will consider terms such as ‘popular phrase,’ ‘saying,’ ‘maxim,’ ‘saw,’ ‘aphorism,’ ‘adage,’ ‘motto,’ and all others alike, to be synonyms. Rosemeire Selma Monteiro-Plantin (2012) asserts that phraseology is the field that studies phraseological units, which include proverbial phrases, idioms, pragmathemes and situational formulae, insertions, fixed locutions, buzz phrases, clichés, and platitudes. In the author’s view, “as a collection of phraseological phenomena common to all natural languages, Phraseology is a superb linguistic resource, one that speakers employ in their everyday lives, in specific contexts and with defined goals” (Monteiro-Plantin, 2012, p. 21; our translation).¹²

We could argue that such expressions are part of the subset called *buzz phrases*, generally found in spoken language and often incorporated into popular thought. Carla Regina Corrêa (2000) ponders that it is proverbial discourse that is at stake, namely, “the utterances that bear the characteristics of a proverb, utterances that denote a moral principle, the people’s wisdom conveyed through simple, familiar, short, concise, direct, compelling and well-defined language” (p. 22; our translation).¹³ The author draws on Grésillon and Maingueneau’s studies (1984), asserting that proverbs are a form of recounted discourse *par excellence*, appropriating “the intentions of other speakers, blending the speaker’s voice with those of all who have once quoted the same proverb: an example, therefore, of polyphony” (Corrêa, 2000, pp. 60-61; our translation).¹⁴ It is important to note that matters of linguistics are not within the scope of this study, seeing

¹¹ Taken from: <https://edtl.fcsh.unl.pt/encyclopedia/proverbio>. Last accessed on: May 31st, 2023.

¹² In Portuguese: “enquanto conjunto de fenômenos fraseológicos comum a todas as línguas naturais, a Fraseologia constitui um estupendo recurso linguístico, do qual os falantes fazem uso em seu cotidiano, em contextos precisos e com objetivos específicos.”

¹³ In Portuguese: “os enunciados que contenham as características de um provérbio, enunciados que designam um princípio de regra moral, o saber do povo através de uma linguagem simples, familiar, breve, concisa, direta, convincente e com um encerramento definicional.”

¹⁴ In Portuguese: “as intenções de outros locutores, misturando a voz do locutor com todas as vozes que já proferiram o mesmo provérbio; um caso, portanto, de polifonia.”

as our goal is to investigate the imprints of giving and receiving care found in the telling of memories related to proverbs.

Oftentimes, proverbs are used to legitimize authority, because, as they are repeated over time, they function as incontrovertible *truth*: the words being said are not the speaker's, it is the *proverb* that is saying them... "The person uttering a proverb fades away behind a different speaker, one who underwrites the truth of what is being said" (Corrêa, 2000, p. 61; our translation).¹⁵ To Priscila Piquera Azevedo and Luiz Carlos Fernandes (2009), proverbs are fixed expressions, crystalized and hallowed by their usage, originating from folk wisdom and receiving widespread social circulation, "the meanings conveyed in this genre are often entrenched in the collective memory and generally elicit moralistic interpretations of the world and of human beings" (p. 1.965, our translation).¹⁶

Though nowadays they also circulate through written language, proverbs belong to the oral tradition and, to Araceli Strassacapa (2015, p. 12; our translation), "they serve communicational purposes due to the interactive situations in which they are used, incorporate social values, which are subjective, and tackle various subjects in a given social relationship within the discursive community."¹⁷ The author highlights how they are used in various settings (marketing campaigns, media, advertising, etc.) and argues that, "in certain situations, we can see proverbs as popular sayings that serve to provide guidance, to demonstrate how people tackle life's challenges and perform their duties" (Strassacapa, 2015, p. 44; our translation).¹⁸

In turn, recollection is a dialogical movement through which, upon meeting others, the self turns back towards itself, becoming aware of itself and the others, opening up to them so as to deviate, subvert and break stereotypes (the cornerstone of prejudice), and to dismantle prejudices. Care is an act of inclusive education, as proposed by Martin

¹⁵ In Portuguese: "O enunciador de um provérbio apaga-se atrás de um outro enunciador que é quem garante a verdade do que está sendo dito."

¹⁶ In Portuguese: "os sentidos veiculados em tal gênero costumam ser aqueles que estão consolidados na memória coletiva e que, em geral, mobilizam interpretações moralistas sobre o mundo e os seres humanos."

¹⁷ In Portuguese: "eles apresentam propósitos comunicativos pelas situações de interação em que são usados, incorporam valores sociais, subjetivos, abordam diversos assuntos de uma determinada relação social na comunidade discursiva."

¹⁸ In Portuguese: "podemos considerar os provérbios como um ditado popular em determinadas situações, com a finalidade de aconselhar, demonstrar as maneiras pelas quais as pessoas enfrentam a realidade e realizam as suas tarefas."

Buber (1966)¹⁹: it is manifested through ethical conduct, going against the grain, searching for what was destroyed, forgotten.

It is worth noting that proverbs are not born spontaneously from the people. There are individual creators who come up with them and their specific wording but, once this authorship has been appropriated, they are gradually incorporated into popular usage and gain several new voices, no longer having one single origin point, and are thus transformed. Even though they originate from the mouth of someone with a name, proverbs become untethered from them and have meaning on their own. Thus, “the people become the true authors and owners of any and all proverbs, which are no longer trademarked” (Corrêa, 2000, p. 12; our translation).²⁰

These conceptual and structural considerations from the theoretical framework reinforce the dialogical movement that grounds the approach chosen by this research, which can be found in exercises of recollecting, resisting, building communities, giving care, teaching, educating, and playing as a cultural experience. These exercises are understood as acts and movements that (need to) become central to the continuation of life, of health, of children’s and adults’ educational processes in a convergence of knowledge, aesthetic sensibilities and ethical conduct: care. As Buber (2002, p. 24)²¹ states:

By no means, however, can it be our true task in the world into which we have been set, to turn away from the things and beings that we meet on our way and that attract our hearts; our task is precisely to get in touch, by hallowing our relationship with them, with what manifests in them as beauty, pleasure, enjoyment.

Recollecting is, therefore, a dialogical act, in which both narrator and listener undertake the endeavor of getting in touch with what manifests in them as beauty, pleasure, enjoyment. The analysis of the subjects’ recollections brings to the surface the events during which the proverbs were used, which materializes aspects that are not related to word games but rather to the imprints of care created through dialogue, which is action, resistance.

¹⁹ For reference, see footnote 6.

²⁰ In Portuguese: “o povo passa, em verdade, a ser autor e dono do provérbio, que outrora tivera sua marca registrada.”

²¹ For reference, see footnote 7.

2 Proverbs Circles: Care in Conversation

This study's subject matter will be further explored by analyzing empirical data produced in two proverbs circles held with groups of teenaged and adult students in basic and higher education, taking into account the particularities and specificities of the subjects and groups heard. The first circle comprised a diverse group of professionals and was held during one of the last classes of a specialization course (Circle A). Most participants were female (27 women and one man) with a background in Education (17), aged between 22 and 49 years old. The second circle was conducted with a group of high school students attending regular night classes in a state public school (Circle E), comprised of nine people, most of them female (three men and six women), aged between 15 and 70 years old. Both circles were given twenty proverbs to read, distributed and organized as follows: a) Circle A had the proverbs sent via WhatsApp beforehand; and b) Circle E received the proverbs during the meeting.

The subjects were directed to read the proverbs, say whether they already knew them, and present their impressions. After the reading and interpretation stage, we asked the subjects in what context had they heard these proverbs, from whom they had heard them, and whether they could recollect other proverbs after reading the ones provided by us. It was made clear that proverbs are a part of oral history and do not have one single explanation or even one single wording, thus being able to take on different formats.

In order to identify how the cultural practices and imprints found in the recollection of the proverbs, as told by teenagers and adults, can constitute acts of care – viewed here as an integral part of being human, as well as social and cultural praxis –, by systematizing the conversations, the proverbs recollected in the circles were organized in the form of quotations, taken from the meetings' transcripts, seeing as “quotations [...] are like wayside robbers who leap out, armed, and relieve the idle stroller of his conviction” (Benjamin, 1996, p. 481).²²

²² BENJAMIN, Walter. *Selected Writings*. Volume 1, 1913-1926. Edited by Marcus Bullock and Michael W. Jennings. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1996.

This disruption allows the object of analysis to be taken out of its context, so that it may speak for itself. At first, we created a collection (in Benjaminian terms), in which “[the] true method of making things present is: to represent them in our space” (Benjamin, 1999c, p. 846).²³ With that in mind, the participants’ narratives were divided by the events they described, following the order of events for each proverbs circle. Then, our compilation was divided into categories of analysis, organized by the similarities between the events. This stage required that “the object [be] detached from all its original functions in order to enter into the closest conceivable relation to things of the same kind” (Benjamin, 1999c, p. 204).²⁴

In Circle E, in order to get the conversation started, one of the researchers asked a subjective question:

Researcher: Does anyone here use proverbs? Do you know any?
Irene²⁵ (49 years old): In my home, I’m the only one who does.
Researcher: And do you remember any of them, Irene?
Irene: “If you’re looking *for* work, that means you’re looking *to* work.”²⁶

Irene’s answer distinguishes her from the rest of the participants, seeing as most of them, when asked whether they used or even knew any proverbs, promptly replied “no.” However, just hearing someone else quote a proverb would often jolt their memory and they would start remembering some of their own. As an example, Irene’s contribution functioned as one such trigger for José, Jennifer and Marcos, which then began a proverbs competition:

José (69 years old): Constant dripping wears away a stone.
Jennifer (32 years old): If you snooze, you lose.
Marcos (40 years old): If you lie down with dogs, you get up with fleas.
Jennifer: Those who don’t heed warnings will soon be called ‘poor things.’
Irene: If you walk with pigs, you’ll be eating swill.

²³ BENJAMIN, Walter. *The Arcades Project*, translated by Howard Eiland & Kevin McLaughlin, Cambridge, MA. & London: Belknap Press, 1999c.

²⁴ For reference, see footnote 23.

²⁵ The real names of all participants in this study have been withheld in order to safeguard their identities.

²⁶ [Translator’s Note] On the translation of the proverbs quoted throughout the article: for every proverb that has an equivalent or counterpart in the English canon, that respective equivalent/counterpart was used; for all others, a more literal translation was created, preserving the original wording and meaning from the Brazilian Portuguese as best as possible.

Jennifer: A chicken that has flown the coop will always come back. (Circle E).²⁷

These proverbs, which were brought up detached from the context of memory production, point to Strassacapa's (2015) remarks about the oral character and communicational purpose of proverbs, due to the interactive situations in which they are used, and in which, in a movement of competition and despite them being quoted at random, their metaphorical meanings incorporate social and subjective values.

In *Experience and Poverty*, Benjamin (1999b, p. 731)²⁸ recounts the memory of a fable he read as a child and quotes a proverb to define the last lesson imparted by the father in the tale: "the blessing lies in hard work and not in gold." With that in mind, the philosopher analyzes proverbs as a way to pass on experience.

Such lessons in experience were passed on to us, either as threats or as kindly pieces of advice, all the while we were growing up: "Still wet behind the ears, and he wants to tell us what's what!" "You'll find out [*erfahren*] soon enough!" Moreover, everyone knew precisely what experience was: older people had always passed it on to younger ones (Benjamin, 1999b, p. 731).²⁹

When understood as a movement that involves both narrator and listener, content and form, the recollection and telling of proverbs can constitute an act of care, which in turn consists of touching and revealing others, manifesting what lies within them so as to connect with them, thereby performing an act of mutual, historical and social self-humanization.

The compilation of events we collected was sorted by the similarities of the data prospected in both proverbs circles, and the categories into which they were divided are as follows: context; intergenerational experience; metaphors and polyphony; and care.

²⁷ In Portuguese: José (69 anos): Água mole em pedra dura tanto bate até que fura.

Jennifer (32 anos): Camarão que dorme a onda leva.

Marcos (40 anos): Galinha que acompanha pato morre afogada.

Jennifer: Quem não escuta, cuidado, escuta coitado.

Irene: Quem se junta com os porcos farelo come.

Jennifer: Galinha de casa não se corre atrás."

²⁸ For reference, see footnote 9.

²⁹ For reference, see footnote 9.

2.1 Proverbs and Their Context

Context plays a crucial role in discursive practice. For Bakhtin (1986),³⁰ a text lives in contact with its context (which is to say, with another text), and this point of contact shines a light both forwards and backwards, allowing the text to interact with others through the different stages of the dialogical progression of comprehension, leaving its starting position (the text given, facing backwards), going by past texts (facing forwards), and arriving at the presumption (and the beginning) of a future context. Behind this contact there is contact between people, not things.

In our analysis of the proverb circles, the ‘Context’ category springs from the recounting of memories, as underscored by Eliana (39 years old, Circle A): “To come up with a proverb [...], it only comes to us when we are facing a problem. Almost as if to justify whatever’s going on, or to help us say something, the proverb comes [...].”³¹ In other words, proverbs emerge within a given context. Regarding this question, Jussara de Souza Mendes de Brito and Katiana Kruschewsky Coutinho Santos (2016) emphasize that proverbs are employed in varying situations, with the message they impart being adapted to a given moment or to certain people.

We have identified that proverbs function as a memory-triggering device for both the speakers themselves and their interlocutors. In other words, once we hear a proverb, others will come to our mind. This could be observed in Fátima’s (24 years old, Circle A) account: “[...] when they started talking [...], I immediately thought I didn’t know any proverbs, but then, when they started quoting a few, several others came to my mind. I even wrote down many proverbs that I had heard before and didn’t even realize [...].”³²

Building on the postulates presented by Cascudo’s (1997), as well as by Xatara and Succi’s (2008), Brito and Santos (2016) highlight that proverbs are transmitted over generations, especially via oral traditions, and that they “originate from an individual’s experience, never appearing out of context, requiring both speaker and listener to have

³⁰ For reference, see footnote 1.

³¹ In Portuguese: “Pensar num provérbio [...], só vem quando a gente está diante de uma problemática. Parece que para justificar aquilo que está acontecendo ou para ajudar na nossa fala, o provérbio vem [...].”

³² In Portuguese: “[...] quando começaram a falar [...], eu pensei imediatamente que eu não conheço provérbio nenhum, e aí quando as pessoas começaram a falar foram vindos vários na minha cabeça. Eu até anotei aqui um monte que eu ouvia e nem estava me dando conta [...].”

previously knowledge of the world or, put simply, to have life experience” (p. 272; our translation).³³

One recurring situation observed in the proverbs circles was that, once they heard the others telling their stories, even those who initially said they did not know any proverbs started remembering not one but several of them, as well as the context in which they heard them. “I don’t know many proverbs. But now [...] with the talk, I could remember a bunch that people usually hear throughout life [...]” (Tereza, 28 years old, Circle A).³⁴ Ana Maria de Moraes Sarmiento Vellasco (2000) asserts that we are all able to quote several proverbs, “and if someone were to ask us where we learned them, unless we often heard them from the same person, we would be hard-pressed to provide an answer. However, we all know in what situations to use them and how they can benefit us” (p. 126, our translation).³⁵ In the proverbs circles, with the research goals in mind, the participants sought to recollect in what situations (dialogical or otherwise) they had heard the proverbs and, through this process, various central figures such as mothers, aunts, and grandmothers, among others, started to emerge.

2.2 Proverbs as Intergenerational Experience

In our structuring of the proverb circles’ analysis, the ‘Intergenerational Experience’ category refers to the notion of proverbs as artifacts from a different time, belonging to another generation, something for older people. In other words, for some participants, proverbs are a thing of the past and remind us of a distant time, as Beatriz (48 years old, Circle A) put it: “Proverbs were a big part of my childhood, it seemed to be a common thing in society. Historically, back then, people used proverbs a lot. [...] I don’t use them anymore. Nowadays, I see that few people use them, too [...].”³⁶

³³ In Portuguese: “São provenientes da experiência do indivíduo e nunca surgem fora do contexto, exigindo de seu emissor e interlocutor conhecimento prévio do mundo, ou, de forma simplificada, experiência de vida.”

³⁴ In Portuguese: “Não tenho muito repertório de provérbio. Agora [...] falando, eu fui lembrando de um monte que a gente vai escutando durante a vida [...]”

³⁵ In Portuguese: “e se nos perguntarem onde os aprendemos, a não ser que os tenhamos ouvido amiúde de alguém, dificilmente seremos capazes de responder. Mas todos sabemos em que ocasião empregá-los e como nos podem favorecer.”

³⁶ In Portuguese: “Os provérbios fizeram bastante parte da minha infância, parecia que era algo comum na sociedade. Historicamente, naquela época, as pessoas usavam muito provérbio. [...] Não uso mais. Hoje em dia também vejo poucas pessoas usando [...]”

For Brito and Santos (2016), proverbs “represent, in addition to popular wisdom, the wisdom accumulated throughout life and, through them, experience is shared and transmitted over the years and across generations, like some kind of ‘grandma’s recipe’ for everyday life and difficult situations” (p. 275; our translation).³⁷ Vellasco (2000) expands on this, observing that the interlocutor knows they are using the voice of intergenerational experience, because, “before quoting a proverb, the speaker will usually introduce it into the conversation with phrases such as: ‘as the saying goes...,’ ‘as my grandmother used to say...,’ ‘there is a proverb which says...,’ ‘as we all know...,’ ‘there is a saying that goes...,’ and so on and so forth” (p. 139; our translation).³⁸ She calls these expressions ‘proverbial introductions,’ explaining that they are used to draw attention to the *truth* that is about to be imparted.

During our collective discussions in the proverb circles, we observed that, in addition to being a representation of the past, proverbs keep cropping up, be they new proverbs or adaptations of old ones. For example, in the specialization course class (Circle A), the expression “*Quem vê close, não vê corre*”³⁹ came up. At first, we were not aware of this saying but, after looking it up, we identified it as a song lyric.⁴⁰ In light of our findings, we determined that, due to their dynamic nature, even though proverbs do come from specific authors, they become popular over time and are then incorporated into human relations, often circulating through spoken language and, by taking on an interactive character, the initial source is gradually lost. Through research, it is possible to identify their authors, or at least how they were created, but some proverbs may lose their original format definitively. The song lyric quoted in the conversation was presented as though it were a proverb, demonstrating how these sayings are updated by their speakers, and that they usually have a rhythm and a sound of their own.

³⁷ In Portuguese: “representam, além da sabedoria popular, a sabedoria acumulada ao longo da vida, onde a experiência é compartilhada e transmitida ao longo dos anos e através das gerações, como uma espécie de ‘receita da vovó’ para a vida cotidiana e situações difíceis.”

³⁸ In Portuguese: “ao usar provérbios, os falantes geralmente introduzem-nos no contexto, por meio de expressões tais como: como diz o ditado...; como dizia a minha avó...; tem um provérbio que diz...; como todo mundo sabe...; há um dito que diz que..., e assim por diante.”

³⁹ This expression originated in Brazilian internet culture, often associated with digital influencers, and can be stylized as something like “See the bling, miss the hustle,” in the sense that we often revel in, or even envy, how glamorous these people’s lives are (the “bling”) but, because of how social media works, we never see the great effort they made to achieve that lifestyle (the “hustle”).

⁴⁰ Available at: <https://www.lettras.mus.br/enme/big-street/>. Last accessed on: December 12th, 2022.

Velasco (2000) highlights that there is a pattern of revitalizing proverbs, giving them new meanings – sometimes even opposite meanings –, and, to illustrate this point, she provides a series of proverbs: “After a storm comes a calm” and “Good things come to those who wait,” among others, which morphed into “After a storm there is a mire” and “Distress will come to those who wait.” Building on Grésillon and Maingueneau’s (1994) ideas, she asserts that this practice of revisiting proverbs is called *détournement*, which she translates as ‘repossession,’ in the sense that “it is a discursive precedent, which consists of producing an utterance with the same linguistic trappings of a proverb, but one that is not part of the canon of traditional proverbs” (Velasco, 2000, p. 149; our translation).⁴¹ It is necessary to think about the *fringes* of the words that compose a proverb. Bakhtin (1973)⁴² helps us understand that the context of discourse production plays a significant role and that it is the life stories of the people engaged in dialogue that tell us whether these sayings can be classified or not as metaphorical (or intraverbal), as interaction and response between the speakers.

2.3 Proverbs - Metaphor and Polyphony

Thinking about the concept of *metaphor* leads us to study Bakhtin and his concepts of authorship, heteroglossia and *polyphony*. Heteroglossia refers to the multiplicity of voices found in language. Discourse is not an isolated activity but an interactive and social process. In other words, it is polyphonic: in it, several voices coexist and interact in human communication, they reply to one another and adapt themselves, creating a complex dynamic of meaning and understanding. For one of the participants in Circle A, the use of metaphor makes it so that the meaning of the proverb she was given *is not provided*, which is to say, it required interpretation, it had to be appropriated by the listener, to be ‘brought to concrete reality.’ Ana Cristal (28 years old, Circle A), when provided with a proverb, reads it and reflects on it:

⁴¹ In Portuguese: “é um precedente discursivo, que consiste em produzir um enunciado com as mesmas marcas linguísticas de uma enunciação proverbial, mas que não faz parte do estoque de provérbios tradicionais conhecidos.”

⁴² VOLOŠINOV, Valentin N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Translated by Ladislav Matejka and R. Titunik. Translator’s Preface. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973.

My proverb was “Hope is the pillar that holds up the world.” [...] One thing that caught my attention was that, every time I think about the proverb, I try to interpret it in a concrete way. So, I think “what is a pillar?”, pillars are for support, they hold up the structure [...] Hope is this force that keeps things going and prevents them from coming to a halt. Seeing hope not as a passive activity but an active one, [...] This way, I can leave this comfort zone and put myself in an active position, so that I can act and have hope. It’s hope in its active form [...].⁴³

Her account points towards a search for produced meanings. She provides a context for her reflection, then takes a cultural artifact and makes it her own in a process of revealing her own self, so as to provoke a response that she defines as trading her comfort zone for an “active position, so that I can act and have hope. It’s hope in its active form.”

Hudinilson Urbano (2008) invites us to think about the origin of proverbs, which, upon their creation, refer to a concrete situation, “then are used in similar situations, still preserving a somewhat denotative meaning. Afterwards, they are used in occasions in which the original idea works but the situation and the referents have already drifted apart” (p. 38, our translation).⁴⁴ The author concludes: “effectively, as [proverbs] are created based on concrete popular experience, it is the people that broaden their meanings and use cases, and it is unlikely that their particular origins can be recovered” (Urbano, 2008, p. 39, our translation).⁴⁵ Participants Denise and Tamiris were given the same triggering proverb: “The wind does not break a tree that bends.”

When I got this proverb, I also hadn’t heard it before, and I’m not sure I actually understood it, but when I read it, it really resonated with me and with what I’m currently going through at my job. [...] It’s as if it was directed at me. [...] Sometimes we need to take a moment to breath and have a lot of patience, otherwise [...] you’re going to break, and

⁴³ In Portuguese: “O meu provérbio foi “A esperança é o pilar do mundo.” [...] Uma coisa que eu me atentei é que quando eu vou pensar sobre o provérbio, eu sempre tento ir para um pensamento tentando interpretar de uma forma concreta. Então eu penso “o que é pilar?”, pilar é aquilo que sustenta, que mantém a estrutura firme [...]. A esperança é essa força que faz com que as coisas continuem e que não parem. Entender a esperança também não como um lugar de espera passiva, mas um lugar de espera ativa, [...]. Então eu saio desse lugar cômodo e me coloco num ativo, para agir e esperar. É a esperança de uma forma ativa [...].”

⁴⁴ In Portuguese: “depois é usada em situações semelhantes e ainda com algum sentido mais ou menos denotativo. Em seguida, é empregada em eventos em que a ideia original funciona, mas a situação e os referentes já estão bastante distanciados.”

⁴⁵ In Portuguese: “com efeito, ideada em situação popular concreta, o próprio povo alarga seu sentido e situações de uso, dificilmente podendo-se recuperar sua origem particularizada.”

that won't do, just like the tree in the proverb. We're going to break and we won't be able to achieve our goals (Denise, 37 years old, Circle A).⁴⁶

Denise provides a reading of the proverb as an exercise in self-reflection, which leads to a warning, an act of self-care. She turns her reading of the proverb into a warning, an *awakening* to a new way of responding to something she has been going through. Tamiris says that reading the proverb also led her to a reflection on self-care.

When I read this proverb I got lost in thought, because it reminded me of something I've been going through [...] and I think that a tree that doesn't break with the wind is a tree that has strong roots and is malleable at the same time. [...] So, it needs to have strong roots, it needs other people, different views so that it can go through all of that. [...] By persisting and moving forward, sticking to your principles, working on what you want for yourself [...]. One day you'll get there [...] (Tamiris, 26 years old, Circle A).⁴⁷

By taking ownership of the proverb she was given, Tamiris dives into her lived experience and places herself at the center of her reflection, even though her narrative is in the third person, and she makes positive affirmations as if she was practicing self-care. In this exercise, she recollects another proverb and emphasizes that persistence and malleability are the key to facing our day-to-day challenges.

In the participants' narratives, developed in conversation with the researcher, reading the proverb led to a new understanding, in the Bakhtinian sense (1986).⁴⁸ Also, though the proverb did not relate to their memories of giving and receiving care, they both made it their own and connected it to the act of caring for themselves and for their relationships, as seen in the conversation transcript.

⁴⁶ In Portuguese: Quando eu recebi, eu também não conhecia e eu não sei se entendi exatamente como ele é, mas quando li, bateu muito forte em mim pelo momento que eu estou passando no trabalho. [...] Parece que ele foi direcionado para mim. [...] Às vezes a gente precisa respirar e se segurar e ter muita paciência, porque senão [...] a gente vai quebrar, e não vai dar, assim como a árvore no provérbio. A gente vai quebrar e não vai conseguir atingir o nosso objetivo.”

⁴⁷ In Portuguese: “Quando eu li esse provérbio eu fiquei bem pensativa na realidade, porque me lembrou um momento que eu tenho passado [...] e eu penso que uma árvore que não se quebra com o vento é uma árvore que tem uma raiz forte e que é maleável ao mesmo tempo. [...] Então, assim, ela precisa ter uma raiz forte, precisa ter pessoas, diferentes visões para ela conseguir passar por aquilo dali. [...] Persistindo, indo adiante, continuando naquilo dali que você acredita, no que você quer para você [...]. Um dia você vai chegar lá [...].”

⁴⁸ For reference, see footnote 1.

Fátima and Elisa commented that proverbs are part of their personal history, and that now they are the ones passing them on:

Whenever something bad happened, my mom always used to say “Revenge is a dish best served cold,” those typical family sayings: “A bit of caution and chicken soup never hurt anybody,” “One hand washes the other,” “Too many cooks spoil the broth” – whenever there were too many people trying to have something their way –, “The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence” is something I heard all the time, because everything your friends had always seemed to be better than what you had, their house, their mom, whatever. “Let he who is without sin cast the first stone,” and another thing I heard a lot around the house was: “The greatest treasure I can leave to you is knowledge” (Fátima, 24 years old, Circle A).⁴⁹

The proverbs recollected by Fátima speak to how versatile they can be, demonstrating how their applications range from religious arguments to motivational instructions employed by adults who need to provide answers and guidance, who, anchored in their own experience, need to legitimize their source of authority. In other words, one is never speaking for oneself, but always as the mouthpiece of an older figure who imparts lessons in an enlightening and uplifting tone (Vygotsky, 1986).⁵⁰

These imprints of care are fixed and perpetuated, being reproduced either consciously or unconsciously:

I do this at work, at home, all the time, really. It reminds me of my childhood, seeing how [...] my mom also used proverbs to educate, to teach, and it is an affective memory with regards to this. Maybe that’s why I use them so much (Elisa, 49 years old, Circle A).⁵¹

To educate, to teach, affective memory... The word game employed by Elisa in her recollection is reminiscent of the reminder given by Sonia Kramer *et al.* (2005), which

⁴⁹ In Portuguese: “Quando acontecia alguma coisa, minha mãe falava “Vingança é um prato que se come frio”, aquelas coisas de família: “Caldo de galinha não faz mal a ninguém”, “Uma mão lava a outra”, “Muito cacique para pouco índio” – quando muita gente queria fazer prevalecer suas ideias –, “A grama do vizinho é sempre mais verde” eu também ouvia demais, porque tudo do amiguinho era melhor, a casa, a mãe, enfim. “Jogue a primeira pedra quem jamais pecou”, e uma coisa que eu ouvia muito em casa era: “O maior tesouro que eu posso deixar para você é o conhecimento.”

⁵⁰ VYGOTSKY, Lev Semionovitch. *Thought and Language*. Lev Vygotsky (A. Kozulin, rev. ed.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986.

⁵¹ In Portuguese: “Eu faço isso no meu trabalho, na minha casa, enfim, o tempo todo. Eu tenho uma lembrança de uma memória de infância, como a [...] minha mãe utilizava também para educar, para ensinar, e é uma memória afetiva sobre isso. Talvez seja por isso até que eu use tanto.”

says that it is not possible to educate without giving care, which in turn requires responsibility.

Talita's account, which builds on Eliana's quoting of the proverb "The shoemaker's son always goes barefoot," recalls a story about dirty glass told by her mother, who, by referring to her memories of a responsible reply, occupies a different locus, reflects and gives advice:

So, sometimes, I don't know, you talk about changing the world, you talk a lot about other people, but you don't look at yourself, you don't realize that change can start with you, that you're the one who's on a path that is not so good. I thought a bit about that and it brought me directly back to this story my mom used to tell. Sometimes we look too often at other people's lives but it's important to look at yours too, to see what change you can create in yourself (Talita, 27 years old, Circle A).⁵²

By taking on the role of narrators, the participants initially presented a narrative that did not seek to "convey the pure 'in itself' or gist of a thing, like information or a report" (Benjamin, 2002, p. 149).⁵³ However, during the telling of their stories, they started speaking from experience and giving away advice. On the other hand, Denise and Tamiris immersed the proverbs in their own lives only to remove them shortly after.

Understood as a social and cultural practice in their modes of transmission, as well as in their form, proverbs are subject to social transformations. In the conversations held between the high school students, we could observe the marks of our own present time in their discourse:

Marcos (40 years old): What's written here is that "One lie can ruin a thousand truths."

Paola (40 years old): Whoa! I'm going to put that in my bio.

Jennifer (32 years old): I'm going to take a picture.

Paola: I'm going to take a picture too.

⁵² In Portuguese: "Então, às vezes, sei lá, você fala de mudar o mundo, você fala muito do outro, mas não olha para si, não percebe que a mudança pode começar em você, que é você que não está seguindo um caminho tão legal. Pensei um pouco nisso e me lembrou diretamente dessa história que a minha mãe contava. Às vezes a gente tá olhando muito para a vida do outro, mas é importante olhar para a sua também, ver qual mudança você pode fazer em você."

⁵³ BENJAMIN, Walter. *Selected Writings*. Volume 3, 1935-1938. Translated by Edmund Jephcott, Howard Eiland and Others. Cambridge, Massachusetts, and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002.

José (69 years old): Lying helps with living.
They all laugh (Circle E).⁵⁴

Putting something in one's 'bio,' taking a picture, and posting are all ways of circulating discourse in today's society, which, as a result of technological changes, have created new forms of socializing: the digital media that have computerized human relations, which turn our interlocutors into just some faceless, unrelated (but connected) 'someone.' Are proverbs, then, endangered as a cultural and social practice? To Benjamin (2002, pp. 145-146),⁵⁵ in modernity, "the communicability of experience is decreasing. [...] The art of storytelling is nearing its end because the epic side of truth – wisdom – is dying out." By making proverbs their own, the younger generations have been updating and integrating them into their own discursive circles.

Proverbs, as narratives drawn from the popular imagination, as texts that move backwards and forwards towards a mutual understanding born of a dialogical exercise, appropriate the use of metaphors not just as figures of speech that add linguistic beauty to communication but as discourse that comes from the lips of others, in other contexts and at the behest of others (Bakhtin, 1986).⁵⁶ In other words, discourse carries a multiplicity of noises, voices, meanings, sounds and languages that blend together, which are (re)constructed, modified and transformed, encapsulating experiences and knowledge in concise and memorable ways, becoming useful tools, even if unconsciously, for taking care of (and during) the transmissions that keep this cultural repertoire alive. And, as a cultural artifact, the transmission of proverbs occupies a locus of care, a responsible reply against the erasure of experiences and narratives.

2.4 Care: To Give Care Is to Act

This study views *care* through the lens of Kramer *et al.* (2020) and Pena *et al.* (2024), the many aspects of which were developed by taking a closer look at Buber's

⁵⁴ In Portuguese: "Marcos (40 anos): O que está escrito aqui é que "Uma mentira estraga mil verdades". Paola (40 anos): Eita! Essa aí vou colocar no meu *status*. Jennifer (32 anos): Vou tirar uma foto. Paola: Vou tirar uma foto também. José (69 anos): A mentira ajuda a viver. Todos riem."

⁵⁵ For reference, see footnote 42.

⁵⁶ For reference, see footnote 1.

philosophy of dialogue, who posits that dialogue is constructed via our relationships with others and can be either authentic – when the other is present, reciprocating our attention and listening intently –, or technical – “which is prompted solely by the need of objective understanding” (Buber, 1964, p. 19).⁵⁷ In addition, there are also monologues disguised as dialogue, in which the other is not taken into consideration. In this sense, the notion of care as a social and cultural practice will be divided into four research categories: (i) authentic care; (ii) technical care; (iii) neglect; and (iv) neglect disguised as care.

Thus, we argue that examining the imprints of care found in the use of proverbs leads back to the search for the relations and interactions which, embedded in culture through language, structure the historical and social development of the subjects who, as individuals, create and recreate themselves in a dialogical exercise, which is care. Care is sustained by dialogical relations as the premise for an existence that is, above all, a responsible reply to the time and place in which we live.

The ‘Care’ category is central to this study and, due to the complexity of the dialogical interpersonal relations and interactions it covers, it is divided into three subcategories: ‘Care for the Transmission of Proverbs,’ which tackles the act of passing on proverbs, providing the listeners with the possibility of constructing their own experience; ‘Care during the Transmission of Proverbs,’ as a motion of letting reverberate the different voices and perspectives that constitute the authorship and polyphony of proverbs as social and cultural praxis; and ‘Transmission of Proverbs as Care,’ which is based on the view that giving care requires the other to be present, reciprocative and attentive. Analyzing this transmission is an exercise in dialogue comprehension, which, as seen in the transcripts, implies an act of understanding. As explained by Bakhtin (1986),⁵⁸ this entails comparisons with other texts and reflections on a new context, whether it is one’s own context, a present context, or a future context.

⁵⁷ For reference, see footnote 5.

⁵⁸ For reference, see footnote 1.

2.4.1 Care for the Transmission of Proverbs

Care is a response to what we are given to see (Buber, 1964),⁵⁹ it is historically constructed through inter-human relationships, therefore, it is a social practice. In the narratives analyzed, one can observe different contexts provided for the transmission and creation of proverbs. Proverbs carry the accumulated experience of generations, interweaving present, past and future; storytellers appropriate them and, through their narratives, different voices reverberate.

Examining the transmission of proverbs as a cultural practice evinces the importance of caring for said transmission. The channel through which proverbs are passed on must not be compromised by one single interpretation or unilateral view, but it is necessary for both listener and narrator to get involved and open themselves in the co-creation, transmission and re-signification of meanings that are contextual and contextualized.

Bakhtin's (1986)⁶⁰ view of authorship contrasts with the more traditional understanding, as it does not refer to an isolated individual but to a collective and interactive process in which each piece of discourse is replying to a previous piece of discourse and anticipating possible future replies. The narrative provided by Joana (41 years old, Circle A) after presenting the proverb she was given demonstrates an act of care for the transmission itself:

Mine was: "Do not call the forest that shelters you a jungle." I didn't know this one beforehand [...] but, once I read it, I immediately thought about a different saying, "Don't bite the hand that feeds you," which I think is about being grateful, about honoring, about appreciating. My grandmother is from the Northeast of Brazil, so she used a lot of proverbs at home. I have this impression that they are a big part of the culture in the Northeast [...].⁶¹

⁵⁹ For reference, see footnote 5.

⁶⁰ For reference, see footnote 1.

⁶¹ In Portuguese: "O meu foi: "Não chame a floresta que o abriga de selva". Eu não conhecia [...], mas imediatamente, quando eu li, me veio à cabeça outro ditado, que é "Não cuspa no prato que comeu", que eu acho que fala sobre gratidão, sobre honra, sobre dar valor. Em relação aos ditados, a minha avó é nordestina, então ela falava bastante dentro de casa. Tenho essa percepção de que é uma cultura forte do Nordeste [...]."

Joana performs a circular movement and, by using the memory-triggering proverb, she activates another proverb, taken from her own repertoire and experience, accompanied by the memory of the other half of the relationship that introduced her to proverbs: her grandmother.

On the other hand, Marcela (24 years old, Circle A) brings up the conflict and the interpretative dimension of proverbs, and deems that, in this moment, the proverb she was given *does not fit*.

The proverb I got was “Only a fool tests the depth of a river with two feet.” As soon as I read it I froze, because I understood what it meant but I didn’t feel it was a good proverb [...], because it gives us pause. [...] What I mean is that right now I’ve got a lot on my mind and I’m moving fast, so it didn’t click [...] for me. Here, we’re always debating, talking, reading, and we always want to go and hustle, let’s do it this way, let’s do it that way, [...] then I read this proverb and it made me think it doesn’t fit [...].⁶²

Discourse is always predicated on context. Therefore, the transmission of proverbs is a deeply contextualized activity, in which meaning is molded by the specific social and cultural experiences of those transmitting and receiving them. This notion is exemplified by Marcela’s interpretation, which pointed to a contradiction that caused discomfort.

Proverbs originate from oral culture and are based on traditional knowledge. Vellasco (2000) remarks that this wisdom must not be confused with absolute, transcendental truth, one that has a singular meaning. On the contrary, many proverbs can be inverted, such as: “Without familiarity there can be no friendship,” which has a variation that says “Familiarity breeds contempt.” “Thus, in this discussion, we can understand that proverbs are strategies through which individuals try to pursue a line of argument” (Vellasco, 2000, p. 145; our translation).⁶³ The author asserts that facts must be contextualized, seeing as a proverb’s function cannot be understood simply by translating its wording literally. Marcela considered her own context and gave her initial

⁶² In Portuguese: “O provérbio que eu fiquei foi “Ninguém testa a profundidade de um rio com ambos os pés”. Assim que eu li, eu dei uma travada, porque eu entendi, mas não senti que era um provérbio bom [...], porque ele para a gente. [...] Quer dizer que eu estou acelerada demais e estou indo muito rápido, então não bateu [...] para mim. Aqui a gente vai discutindo, falando, lendo e está sempre com vontade de ir, lutar, vamos fazer assim, vamos fazer assado, [...] e aí eu ler esse provérbio me fez pensar que não combina [...]”

⁶³ In Portuguese: “Assim sendo, compreende-se que, na discussão, os provérbios são estratégias pelas quais os indivíduos tentam perseguir uma direção de argumento.”

interpretation, stating that, during the interaction, she realized how much she felt instigated to look back on herself.

But then I started taking it in, understanding it, trying to extract a bit more from it. I both agree and disagree with it, and I'll try to explain it a little better. [...] So, I think this proverb needs to be used with care. I think it's a proverb we can use in our lives but not for every situation [...] (Marcela, 24 years old, Circle A).⁶⁴

As a social practice, a proverb can have positive or negative aspects in relation to a personal issue, seeing as it “personifies a social message, often with more than one meaning. By naming a recurring problem, a proverb proposes negotiated solutions” (Velasco, 2000, p. 146; our translation).⁶⁵ *Social voices* are always present and they exert social, cultural and ideological influences that mold a person's discourse. By speaking, an individual incorporates these social voices, always turning discourse into a dialogue with other voices present in society.

It is worth noting that women formed the majority of the participants in Circle A, and their recollected experiences also point, for the most part, to the role other women played in their social and cultural development. When providing the context for her interpretation, Andreia (44 years old), connects the proverb she was given to the importance women have and their social roles.

My proverb was “When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.” I made a connection with “There is strength in numbers,” “One swallow does not a summer make.” [...] This proverb makes me think about overcoming challenges [...], about the feminine, on account of the spider webs stopping the lion. [...] With regards to the role of women, this web that they have been weaving for years [...], our role in society and how we're seen, the burden we shoulder, are often what makes us want to give up on our goals and our aspirations. This idea of a connected web brings an image of holding hands to my mind, people holding tight to one another without letting go [...].⁶⁶

⁶⁴ In Portuguese: “Mas, aí, eu fui absorvendo, entendendo, tentando extrair um pouco mais. Eu concordo e discordo com ele e vou tentar explicar um pouco. [...] Então acho que esse provérbio tem que ser usado com cuidado. Acho que é um provérbio que vale para a vida, mas não para todas as situações [...]”

⁶⁵ In Portuguese: “personifica uma mensagem social, muitas vezes com mais de um significado. Ao nomear um problema recorrente, um provérbio sugere soluções sob negociação.”

⁶⁶ In Portuguese: “O meu provérbio foi “Se todas as teias de aranha se unem, elas podem amarrar um leão”. Eu fiz a associação com “A união faz a força”, “Uma andorinha só não faz verão” [...]. Esse provérbio me remete a vencer desafios [...], ao feminino por conta da teia da aranha frear o leão. [...] Sobre o papel que as mulheres têm, essa teia que elas vêm tecendo há anos [...], nosso papel na sociedade e como a gente é

Tânia (48 years old, Circle A) was given the same proverb and added to this reflection by referring to the other proverbs mentioned: “I just thought of the other ones [...] ‘There is strength in numbers’ and ‘One swallow does not a summer make.’ I think this proverb sums it up pretty well [...]” For Strassacapa (2015), “proverbs allow for reflection by way of their implied content, helping the reader to understand them better and to connect them to their historical context, as well as to everyday happenings” (p. 45, our translation).⁶⁷

The transmission of proverbs contributes to the preservation of culture and to socialization. In other words, there is a diversity of voices and experiences present in cultural transmission. In addition to receiving and transmitting proverbs, the younger generations can also contribute to the creation of new proverbs that will reflect their unique experiences and perspectives. Challenges can be surmounted, especially in contexts of significant change in social, economic or technological conditions, as seen in the example of the high school students who, in their attempt to understand the proverb they were given, demonstrated the dynamics of their received transmission with the phrase ‘post [it] in my bio.’

2.4.2 Care During the Transmission of Proverbs

The transmission of proverbs requires care as a dimension of social praxis, seeing as it constitutes a relationship and thus demands reciprocity and presence, taking into account matters of otherness and uniqueness. This praxis begins with the recognition of others as co-participants in conversation and in life, and springs from the capacity to read their signs and straddle the thin line of their subjectivity. In Vygotsky’s (1986)⁶⁸ view, cultural mediation holds great importance, and the role played by culture serves as a learning process. Thus, the dissemination of proverbs is an exercise in transmitting cultural signifiers, values, and traditions from one generation to another, and it involves

vista, tudo o que a gente carrega, muitas vezes é o que faz a gente desistir das nossas vontades e dos nossos desejos. Isso de uma teia unida me lembra muito das mãos dadas, ninguém larga a mão de ninguém [...].”

⁶⁷ In Portuguese: “os provérbios possibilitam uma reflexão por meio de conteúdos implícitos favorecendo o leitor a compreendê-los melhor e relacioná-los ao contexto histórico e fatos do cotidiano.”

⁶⁸ For reference, see footnote 41.

not only communicating words but also conveying signifiers, meaning, and cultural values.

Each proverb carries with it a trove of interpretations and implications that are passed from one generation to another. These reflections could be observed in some participants' contributions, such as that of Aline (32 years old, Circle A):

The closest connection I can make to this proverb is this, which was also one of the ones I heard most often from my mom, because I'm a bit of an impulsive person. [...] My mom used to say: "You're not going to be the savior of the nation." So, when it came to these questions of people being treated unfairly, of wanting to take a stand on these issues, sometimes it's not the right moment for you to speak out [...].⁶⁹

When reminiscing about her relationship with her mother, Elisa (49 years old, Circle A) described the quoting of proverbs as a mediating force in her personal development, and stresses how much it affected her in her mother-daughter relationship.

First, I'm going to talk a bit about my relationship with proverbs. I've been hearing people use proverbs since I was very little, because my mother used to quote them a lot. Even though she's passed away, I've carried them with me and use them all the time, and I have many friends who laugh their head off because of it [...] I'm always connecting things back to some proverb [...]. It reminds me of my childhood, [...] my mom also used proverbs to educate, to teach, and it is an affective memory in this sense. Maybe that's why I use them so much.⁷⁰

Her recollection places the proverb-spouting mother as the person with the authority to provide a lesson, a piece of advice, a word of caution, and points to the intergenerational issues between the young and the old. However, by recollecting the girlhood she left in her past, Elisa replicates the Benjaminian view of this adult-philistine, in which Benjamin (1996)⁷¹ comments that, in the blaze of his youth, he wove into one

⁶⁹ In Portuguese: "A relação mais próxima que eu faço desse provérbio é esse, que também era um dos que eu mais escutava a minha mãe falar, porque eu sou uma pessoa um pouco impulsiva. [...] Minha mãe falava: "Você não vai ser a salvadora da pátria", então essas coisas de injustiça, de sempre estar querendo me colocar, às vezes não é o momento certo para você colocar [...]."

⁷⁰ In Portuguese: "Eu escuto provérbios desde que eu me entendo por gente, porque a minha mãe sempre usou muito. Apesar dela já ser falecida, eu carrego isso comigo e uso o tempo todo e tenho muitas amigas que morrem de rir por causa disso, [...] estou sempre fazendo uma relação com algum provérbio [...]. Eu tenho uma lembrança de uma memória de infância [...], minha mãe utilizava também para educar, para ensinar, e é uma memória afetiva sobre isso. Talvez seja por isso até que eu use tanto."

⁷¹ For reference, see footnote 22.

of his essays an argument against the word ‘experience.’ However, once he became an adult, the word became a central element underpinning his ideas. He also explains that he stayed faithful to his position, seeing as his youthful invective was not able to eradicate the word ‘experience.’

For both Benjamin and Elisa, the adult now takes the place of the sage, the one authorized to give advice. Roberta (47 years old, Circle A) reaffirms this locus of experience as the seat of an adult’s authority, and then presents a generational journey through the proverbs used in her family – grandmother-mother-daughter.

My grandmother lived in our house for many years before she passed away, and there were a lot of proverbs. My grandmother and my mother. I remember several. I remember one my grandmother liked saying: “People who live in glass houses should not throw rocks.” When we were talking about the camel proverb, it reminded me of this one. One proverb my mom always used to say, one that I say to my daughters to this day: “The tame calf can suckle on any cow,” meaning that, if we don’t make a fuss, we can go far.⁷²

Due to their simple and inclusive character, proverbs often foster discussions on various subjects. For Brito and Santos (2016), “their widespread use by the Brazilian people in various contexts represents an integral aspect of our cultural and regional identity, which speaks to the diversity that can be found throughout the country” (p. 272, our translation).⁷³ For another participant, proverbs can be employed in day-to-day strategies:

The proverb I got was “A bit of rain every day will fill the river until it overflows.” It made me think that [...], whenever I have to deal with something very big [...] I try to break it down into smaller goals until I reach my objective. [...] This idea that in order for the river to overflow it needs to rain a little bit every day is very beautiful, because it speaks to the power of our day-to-day actions, to this micropolitics, to this strength that we have in our everyday lives, in the little things, and that

⁷² In Portuguese: “A minha avó morou com a gente durante muitos anos, até falecer, e eram muitos provérbios. Minha avó e minha mãe. Eu lembro de vários. Lembro de um que a minha avó gostava de falar: “Macaco senta no próprio rabo para falar do rabo dos outros”. Quando falou do camelo, eu me lembrei desse. Um que a minha mãe sempre falava eu falo até hoje com minhas filhas: “Bezerro manso mama em toda teta”, então se a gente for no sapatinho, a gente vai longe.”

⁷³ In Portuguese: “sua ampla utilização nas diversidades de contexto do povo brasileiro representa elementos constitutivos da nossa identidade cultural e regional, apontando para a pluralidade que envolve o território nacional.”

these little things keep piling up until something more macro happens (Nathália, 27 years old, Circle A).⁷⁴

Strassacapa (2015, p. 34) explains that, in the interactionist view, language is historically oriented, molded by ideologies that intertwine dialogically, as Bakhtin (2003, our translation) puts it, it is a product “of the users’ creative process, turned concrete by the utterances made between speakers.”⁷⁵ “These utterances take the interlocutors, the intended goals, and the moment of production all into consideration, aiming to adapt the discursive operations to the listener/reader’s context” (Strassacapa, 2015, p. 37; our translation).⁷⁶

Language is a living thing and proverbs, as word exercises, originate in the figure of a woman, as indicated by the participants in this research. The memory of proverbs, whether they serve as exhortation, advice, guidance or care – which is a part of education –, is cultural, and is most often associated with mothers, grandmothers, aunts. Family relations and interactions play a role in a person’s subjective development pertaining to their communal life, structured by ethical and aesthetical principles. This includes the upbringing provided by the person’s family, constituting an educational relationship and a relationship that seeks to foster personal development (Buber, 1966),⁷⁷ which implies responsibility and currentness, working to meet others where they are, opening to them the possibility of finding themselves as well as others. In this relationship, education is understood as a responsibility one has with another, which can only happen when there is openness and trust (Pena, 2019).

⁷⁴ In Portuguese: ‘O meu provérbio é “Um pouco de chuva a cada dia encherá os rios até transbordarem”. O que eu fiquei refletindo [...], quando eu tenho que lidar com algo muito grande [...]. Eu tento dividir em pequenas metas até chegar ao objetivo. [...]. Isso da gente pensar que para o rio transbordar a gente vai ter que ver chover a cada dia é algo muito bonito, porque fala um pouco do poder da nossa ação no cotidiano, dessa micropolítica, dessa força que a gente tem no dia a dia, nas pequenas coisas, e que essas pequenas coisas vão acontecendo para um macro acontecer.”

⁷⁵ In Portuguese: “de um processo criativo dos usuários, materializado pelas enunciações efetivadas entre os falantes.”

⁷⁶ In Portuguese: “Nestas enunciações, consideram-se os interlocutores, os objetivos pretendidos e o momento da produção, buscando adequar as operações discursivas ao contexto e ao ouvinte/leitor.”

⁷⁷ For reference, see footnote 6.

2.4.3 Transmission of Proverbs as Care

Care is not restricted to the realm of physiological needs or physical and emotional safety. It is an act that touches and reveals the other, allowing what is within them to shine through. This distinctiveness is what makes it unique, to the extent that it connects us as humans, seeing as it is care that humanizes us (Boff, 1999). By sharing proverbs through discourse, different generations are connected, fostering a sense of continuity and belonging. As they continue appropriating this cultural repertoire, there may be changes in language and meaning, such as in the reinterpretation of old sayings or in the creation of new meanings, which can develop as a reflection of the evolution of language and culture. This aspect of currentness brings us back to authorship as a concept, which, in the Bakhtinian perspective, is not attributed to a single individual but distributed between the participants in the discourse. This requires a focus shift away from the specific quoting of proverbs, starting with the appropriation of social voices. For Bakhtin (1986),⁷⁸ authorship has the dynamic, collective and responsive nature of discourse.

My mom is always using proverbs, and I ask her where she got that from. My mom always told me, especially when she tried to motivate me in my education and in my academic life: “The early bird catches the worm.” So, she was always encouraging me to be driven, to work towards my goals, to not be lazy and never lose heart. One other proverb I like is: “Many a little makes a mickle.” (Francisca, 33 years old, Circle A).⁷⁹

The *transmission of proverbs as care* entails taking stock of the participants’ heteroglossia, polyphony and authorship, so as to avoid conducting a monologue disguised as dialogue, in which the other is not taken into account. Care and proverbs highlight responsivity as a key characteristic of discourse, and they emerge as answers to specific situations, challenges or issues, which speaks to the responsive nature of language. Accepting and understanding others can open up new questions or produce different answers. One must be open to the diversity of meanings and possible

⁷⁸ For reference, see footnote 1.

⁷⁹ In Portuguese: “A minha mãe tem muito costume de sempre falar e eu pergunto de onde ela tirou isso. Minha mãe sempre falou comigo, principalmente como estímulo para a minha formação e vida acadêmica: “Deus ajuda quem cedo madruga”. Então, sempre incentivando mesmo a ter garra, a buscar os meus objetivos, a não ter preguiça e não desanimar. Um provérbio que eu gosto também é: “De grão em grão a galinha enche o papo.”

interpretations, which reflect cultural and social voices that contributed to their development.

After listening to the others speak, Ana Liz (43 years old, Circle A) gives her own account: “My mom used them a lot. Many of the proverbs I heard tonight were new to me, but many I did know. I’m not one to use proverbs all the time, but they’re always on my mind.”⁸⁰ To reflect on the authorship of proverbs entails acknowledging that they are not individual products but complex manifestations of cultural dialogue and social interaction through time. Each proverb is a collective and cultural voice, echoing shared and collective experiences. When a proverb is narrated or quoted, what is at stake is the relationship between human beings searching for ways to preserve and reaffirm their identities. By interacting with others through dialogical practices, we induce a manifestation of authentic care, understood as being interested in – and not indifferent to – others, as the responsivity that goes beyond that lived moment.

In the following events, different realities were stitched together by conversation and the use of proverbs. The participants recollected situations that involved some form of care, all mediated by proverbs.

The proverb I got [...]: “If your mouth turns into a knife, it will cut off your lips.” I’d never heard this proverb before [...]. I’m always talking [...]. I think we talk and don’t even realize [...], it’s already so ingrained in our culture. But what I took from this one is that sometimes words can hurt, and sometimes when we say bad things, or when we want to use words to hurt someone, we end up hurting ourselves, [...] maybe we even suffer more than we make others hurt [...] I connected it to “He who lives by the sword shall die by the sword,” I think it has the same structure [...] (Cláudia, 37 years old, Circle A).⁸¹

Cláudia asserts that proverbs are part of her family’s culture. Tainá, in turn, says they are a custom her family never adopted. Denise defines them as a habit that also did not develop in her family.

⁸⁰ In Portuguese: “A minha mãe falava bastante. Vários dessa noite foram novidade para mim, mas vários outros eu conheço. Não sou muito de falar provérbio, mas eu sempre tenho na cabeça.”

⁸¹ In Portuguese: “O meu provérbio [...]: “Se sua língua transformar-se em faca cortará a sua boca”. Eu nunca tinha ouvido esse provérbio [...]. Eu costumo falar sempre [...]. Acho que a gente fala sem nem perceber [...], já está tão entranhado na nossa cultura. Mas o que eu entendi desse é que às vezes a palavra pode ferir, e às vezes quando a gente fala coisas ruins ou quer usar a palavra para ferir alguém, acaba se ferindo, [...] sofrendo mais até do que atingindo o outro [...]. Eu fiz a relação com o “Quem com ferro fere com ferro será ferido”, acho que tem a mesma estrutura ali [...].”

When I read this proverb, the first thing I thought – even though in my family we don’t normally use proverbs –, but I thought about the one that says: “Doubt is the origin of wisdom.” I even tried to remember who said it, because it’s a quote, not a proverb. (Tainá, 22 years old, Circle A).

In my family, we don’t have the habit of using proverbs, though I know a few, like “The shoemaker's son always goes barefoot.” (Denise, 37 years old, Circle A).⁸²

Denise (37 years old, Circle A) tells us that her father used proverbs with his coworkers, and concludes by alluding to the notion that proverbs enable people to think differently: “My dad used proverbs at work [...]. He liked flipping them on their head. [...]. He used to invert the proverbs and analyze them together with the other workers there [...]. Instead of ‘The shoemaker's son always goes barefoot,’ he used to say ‘The barefoot son goes on to be a shoemaker [...].’”⁸³

When we understand culture to be the historical product of different groups in their trajectories and experiences with languages, traditions, values, and customs, as well as the cultural expertise, repertoire and heritage of a given people, country or person, we are saying that it encompasses lifestyles that construct and are constructed by children, youngsters and adults. In addition, these productions are necessarily in the plural, which is to say, even when we talk about ‘culture,’ we are actually imagining cultures. By transmitting proverbs, we are building avenues for a society that reflects on itself through art, literature, oral traditions, and narratives in the interaction between human beings.

Final Thoughts

We will conclude by going back to the beginning, observing that proverbs emerge from a given context, imparting wisdom and leading to new reflections. It is our view that

⁸² In Portuguese: “Quando eu li esse provérbio eu pensei logo também – apesar de na minha família a gente não ter o costume de usar provérbio – mas eu pensei naquele que é: “A dúvida é o princípio da sabedoria”. Eu até tentei lembrar quem falou isso, porque é uma fala e não um provérbio;” “Na minha família, a gente não tem o hábito de usar provérbios, apesar de eu conhecer alguns, como o “Casa de ferreiro, espeto de pau.”

⁸³ In Portuguese: “O meu pai usava provérbio no trabalho [...]. Ele gostava de inverter os provérbios. [...]. Ele invertia os provérbios e analisava junto com os outros trabalhadores de lá [...]. Em vez de ser ‘Casa de ferreiro, espeto de pau’, era ‘Casa de pau, espeto de ferreiro’ [...].”

discourse, as discussed in this article, is embedded into the culture in which it manifests, revealing a creative memory that carries the achievements and discoveries of humans as social and historical subjects. This study points to other dimensions that can be explored by approaching the transmission of proverbs as a dialogical movement of memory preservation, intergenerational dialogue, resistance, and preservation of cultural traditions.

The narratives about the proverbs heard during childhood revealed several different contexts, actions, customs, and re-significations from within the participants' family environments, in which the use of said narratives was commonplace, playing a key role in the individuals' subjective development towards community life. By recollecting proverbs within the conversation circles, it was possible to observe a movement of exhortation, mentoring, guidance, and care, all key elements in education and culture. Most of the time, these proverbs are associated with female figures, such as mothers, grandmothers and aunts.

Tackling the transmission of proverbs as a cultural practice highlights the importance of care during said transmission. Discourse is always contextual and contextualized and, therefore, the transmission of proverbs is an activity that has deep roots in the specific social and cultural experiences of those transmitting and receiving them. The *social voices* present in the participants' memories exerted influences that molded their discourse. The recollection of proverbs not only preserves tradition but also promotes a significant encounter between generations, in which education and culture are interwoven, underscoring the importance of open dialogue and mutual trust in the transmission of knowledge.

Throughout the narratives heard, the transmission of proverbs was understood as a learning process in which the young learn from the old and make use of proverbs in collective situations with their peers, taking on the responsibility of contributing to social cohesion and reinforcing the bonds that foster a sense of community. Care, viewed through the lens of ethics, seeks to recover what was destroyed. Recollecting proverbs preserves traditions and constitutes an act of resistance and care. Narrating this accumulated wisdom and transmitting it to new generations promotes cultural continuity and strengthens intergenerational bonds, valorizing the voice of experience and the importance of remembering the past.

The proposition of listening to proverbs and analyzing the context in which they were made, searching for the imprints of care, was crucial for this study, as we understand subjects to be active participants in their relationships, employing words to negotiate, to change and be changed by their social milieu. Listening to the participants in the conversation circles was part of a dialogical movement, in which metaphor emerged as a relevant category. This article sought to understand relations of care that are revealed when the listeners understand that these proverbs offer advice, postures, instructions, or invitations to reflect on a given subject. Each proverb holds within its structure a relationship between culture-producing human beings.

By analyzing proverbs and the relations of care they reveal, we acknowledge the importance of authentic and reciprocal dialogue that values the presence of others and listens intently to them. The transmission of proverbs is not only an act of communication but a social practice that reinforces social bonds and mutual understanding. The ‘Care’ category was central to this study, due to the complexity of the dialogical interpersonal relations and interactions it covers.

In addition, ‘Care during the transmission of proverbs’ refers to the act of passing on proverbs, enabling listeners to build their own experiences. In turn, ‘care during the transmission of proverbs’ entails the reverberation of the different voices and perspectives that constitute the authorship and polyphony of proverbs as social and cultural praxis. The transmission of proverbs requires care as a dimension of social praxis, seeing as relationships require reciprocity and presence. ‘Care during the transmission of proverbs’ also entailed taking stock of the participants’ heteroglossia, polyphony and authorship, which helped avoid the creation of a monologue disguised as dialogue, in which the other is not taken into account. Both caregiving and the use of proverbs highlight responsivity as a fundamental characteristic of discourse. While proverbs emerge as responses to specific situations, challenges or issues, which speaks to the responsive nature of language, the act of accepting and understanding others can open up new questions or produce different answers.

Thus, in terms of ethics, care is not restricted to physiological needs, nor to physical or emotional safety. It is an act that touches the other and reveals them, showing us what is within them. This distinctiveness is what makes care unique, at the same time that it connects us as humans. We posit that investigating the imprints of care found in

the use of proverbs leads back to the search for the relationships and interactions which, embedded in culture through language, structure the historical and social development of subjects. Care is sustained by dialogical relations, working as a premise for an existence that can reply responsibly to the time and place in which we live.

Recollecting is, therefore, a dialogical act in which both narrator and listener form a relationship, touching on the revealed points of contact between them, allowing for a break with stereotypes and prejudices. The analyses of the recollections presented led to many proverbs being quoted, revealing imprints of care established through dialogue, which is both action and resistance, and is key to facing scenarios of inequality, discrimination and violence. Like conversation, care as recollection seeks to retrieve what was (nearly) destroyed or forgotten – languages, stories, songs, games, sayings, or proverbs –, making these cultural repertoires present again, thus revitalizing both collective and individual memory.

REFERENCES

- AZEVEDO, Priscila Piquera; FERNANDES, Luiz Carlos. A dupla função do provérbio: reiteração do mesmo e a imposição da subjetividade em gêneros discursivos do cotidiano. *In: Colóquio de Estudos Linguísticos e Literários*. 2009. Maringá. *Anais [...]*. Maringá: [s.n.], 2009. pp. 1.965-1.973.
- BAKHTIN, Mikhail. Os gêneros do discurso. *In: BAKHTIN, Mikhail. Estética da criação verbal*. Tradução feita a partir do francês por Maria Ermantina Galvão G. Pereira; revisão da tradução Marina Appenzellerl. 2. ed. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 1997. pp. 277-288.
- BAKHTIN, Mikhail. Os gêneros do discurso. *In: BAKHTIN, Mikhail. Estética da criação verbal*. Tradução Paulo Bezerra. 4. ed. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2006. pp. 261-306.
- BAKHTIN, Mikhail. (VOLOCHINOV, V. N.). *Marxismo e filosofia da linguagem*. Problemas fundamentais do método sociológico na ciência da linguagem. 9. ed. Tradução Michel Lahud e Yara Frateschi Vieira com a colaboração de Lúcia Teixeira Wisnik e Carlos Henrique D. Chagas Cruz. Prefácio Roman Jakobson. Apresentação Marina Yaguello. São Paulo: Hucitec, 2002.
- BENJAMIN, Walter. *Documentos de cultura, documentos de barbárie*. Tradução Celeste Ribeiro de Sousa et al. São Paulo: Cultrix, 1986.
- BENJAMIN, Walter. *Magia e técnica, arte e política: obras escolhidas I*. Tradução Sergio Paulo Rouanet. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1987.
- BENJAMIN, Walter. *Rua de mão única: obras escolhidas II*. Tradução Rubens Rodrigues Torres Filho e José Carlos Martins Barbosa. São Paulo: Brasiliense, 2000.

- BENJAMIN, Walter. *Reflexões: sobre a criança, o brinquedo e o brincar, a educação*. Tradução Marcus Vinícius Mazzari. São Paulo: Duas Cidades, 2002.
- BENJAMIN, Walter. *Passagens*. Tradução Irene Aron e Cleonice Paes Barreto Mourão. Belo Horizonte: Editora da UFMG, 2007.
- BOFF, Leonardo. *Saber cuidar: ética do humano – compaixão pela terra*. Petrópolis: Vozes, 1999.
- BRITO, Jussara de Souza Mendes de; SANTOS, Katiana Kruschewsky Coutinho. Provérbios, da cultura popular à terapia comunitária. *RTES – Temas em Educação e Saúde*, v. 12, n. 2, pp. 266-276, jul./dez. 2016.
- BUBER, Martin. *Eu e tu*. Tradução e introdução de Newton Aquiles Von Zuben. São Paulo: Centauro, 2001.
- BUBER, Martin. *El camino del ser humano y otros escritos*. Tradución Carlos Díaz. Salamanca: Kadmós, 2004.
- BUBER, Martin. *Do diálogo e do dialógico*. Tradução Marta E. S. Queiroz e Regina Weinberg. São Paulo: Perspectiva, 2009.
- BUBER, Martin. *O caminho do homem segundo o ensinamento chassídico*. Tradução Claudia Abeling. São Paulo: Realizações, 2011.
- CORRÊA, Carla Regina. *Discurso proverbial: a reafirmação do preconceito contra a mulher?* 2000. Dissertação (Mestrado em Letras) – Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Sul, Porto Alegre, 2000.
- GRAMSCI, Antonio. *Concepção dialética da história*. Tradução Carlos Nelson Coutinho. Rio de Janeiro: Civilização Brasileira, 1986.
- KRAMER, Sonia; NUNES, Maria Fernanda Rezende; PENA, Alexandra. Crianças, ética do cuidado e direitos: a propósito do Estatuto da Criança e do Adolescente. *Educação e Pesquisa*, v. 46, e237202, 2020.
- KRAMER, Sonia et al. (org.). *Profissionais de educação infantil: gestão e formação*. São Paulo: Ática, 2005.
- MONTEIRO-PLANTIN, Rosemeire Selma. *Fraseologia: era uma vez um patinho feio no ensino de língua materna*. Fortaleza: Edições UFC, 2012. v. 1.
- PENA, Alexandra Coelho. Toda vida atual é encontro: contribuições de Martin Buber para a educação. *Revista Educação*, Porto Alegre, v. 42, pp. 506-513, 2019.
- PENA, Alexandra Coelho et al. “Perder a cabeça não faz parte do ofício”: concepções de cuidado nas narrativas de profissionais da educação. *Revista Interinstitucional Artes de Educar*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 10, n. 1, pp. 503-523, 2024.
- SELIGMANN-SILVA, Márcio. Walter Benjamin: para uma nova ética da memória. *Revista Educação: Biblioteca do professor – Benjamin pensa a educação*, São Paulo: Segmento, n. 7, pp. 48-59, mar. 2008.
- STRASSACAPA, Araceli. *Provérbios na escola e na vida: uma visão discursiva*. 2015. Dissertação (Mestrado em Estudos da Linguagem) – Universidade Estadual de Londrina, Londrina, 2015.

VELLASCO, Ana Maria de Moraes Sarmiento. Padrões de uso de provérbios na sociedade brasileira. *Cadernos de Linguagem e Sociedade*, v. 4, pp. 122-160, 2010.

VIGOTSKI, Lev Semionovitch. *A construção do pensamento e da linguagem*. Tradução Paulo Bezerra. São Paulo: Martins Fontes, 2001.

URBANO, Hudinilson. Da fala para a escrita: o caso de provérbios e expressões populares. *Investigações: Linguística e Teoria Literária*, v. 21, n. 2, pp. 31-56, 2008.

Translated by Vicente Melo – vicentescmelo@hotmail.com

Received June 11, 2024

Accepted March 21, 2025

Statement of Author's Contribution

We declare that all three of this article's authors, Rejane Brandão Siqueira, Edson Cordeiro dos Santos and Jennifer Pena Vasconcellos da Silva, took active part in its writing, providing substantial contributions during: the project's inception; the analysis and interpretation of the data; the writing and revising process, including the relevant critical alterations; and the manuscript's final approval for publishing, being responsible for the text and all its aspects, ensuring their accuracy and integrity. The three authors equally share the credit for the process of drafting the article, actively writing it, revising it before and after receiving the Reviews, and, lastly, for the final version found here.

Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana*. Revista de Estudos do Discurso [*Bakhtiniana*. Journal of Discourse Studies] to Open Science, this journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

Review I

The article presents a research perspective that is relevant to the subject of proverbs, with a substantial contribution to the field of discourse studies. However, with regards to the theoretical framework employed in its approach to studying proverbs, I must say it is not

Bakhtiniana, São Paulo, 20 (2): e67118e, April/June 2025

sufficiently thorough and up-to-date, considering there is a proper scientific discipline that analyzes and describes proverbs, Paremiology, the object of which is to study paroemias, or proverbs. I would like to refer the author(s) to a few studies in this field that might enrich their work, should they choose to accept the suggestions made herein, especially those that pertain to terminological diversity, which is outdated in some cases, such as the definition of “Refrain” used:

CHACOTO, L. O Lugar dos provérbios na lusofonia. In.: DIMITROV, P. P. (Org.). *“Lugares da lusofonia” International Colloquy*. Lisbon: Edições Colibri, pp. 161-174, 2010.

CRUZ, T. J. *Os Provérbios, a categoria Mulher e o Protótipo: um estudo sobre Fraseologia, Categorização e Imagem Cognitiva*. Thesis (Master’s in LANGUAGE STUDIES) Federal University of Mato Grosso do Sul Foundation, Campo Grande, 2012.

MONTEIRO-PLANTIN, R. S. *Fraseologia: Era uma vez um Patinho Feio no Ensino de Língua Materna*. v. 1, Fortaleza: Edições UFC, 2012.

MUNIZ, Andrea Garcia; LALICATA, Maria; da CRUZ, Thyago José. (Eds). *Paremiologia: Enfoques Interdisciplinares*. Campo Grande: Ed. UFMS, 2023.

Regarding the general parameters, provided for in the journal’s guidelines, I suggest:

1. Revising the usage of punctuation in the abstract’s keywords;
2. Checking the journal’s guidelines to revise the instances in which an author is cited for the first time: “[...] an act of inclusive education, as proposed by Martin Buber (1966): it is manifested through ethical conduct, going against the grain, searching for what was destroyed, forgotten.”⁸⁴

3. Checking the journal’s guidelines to revise and standardize how the dates and pages in citations are presented:

“In *Experience and Poverty*, Benjamin (1999b, p. 731) recounts the memory of a fable he read as a child and quotes a proverb to define the last lesson imparted by the father in the tale: ‘the blessing lies in hard work and not in gold.’”⁸⁵

“For Bakhtin (1986), ‘a text lives in contact with its context (which is to say, with another text), and this point of contact shines a light both forwards and backwards, allowing the text to interact with others through the different stages of the dialogical progression of comprehension, leaving its starting position (the text given, facing backwards), going by past texts (facing forwards), and arriving at the presumption (and the beginning) of a future context.’”

4. Revising the use of the term “et al.” in italics in citations with more than three authors, such as in:

Kramer et.al. (2020)

5. Revising how the name of the authors are spelled in the references:

VALLASCO, Ana Maria de Moraes Sarmiento. Padrões de uso de provérbios na sociedade brasileira. *Cadernos de Linguagem e Sociedade*, 4, 2000.

⁸⁴ In Portuguese, as found in the original version of the manuscript: “Ato educativo inclusivo, como propõe Buber (2004), o cuidado se manifesta no agir ético, na direção contrária à esperada de busca ao que foi destruído, esquecido...”

⁸⁵ In Portuguese, as found in the original version of the manuscript: “Em *Experiência e pobreza*, Benjamin relata a memória de uma fábula que leu na infância e cita um provérbio para definir o desfecho que o pai havia deixado como legado: a bênção não se esconde no ouro, mas no trabalho.”

Recommendations:

With regards to its research goals, the article was well developed, however, taking into account the journal's reach, I suggest that the author(s) conduct an extensive linguistic revision of the whole text, observing the structure of the Portuguese language pertaining to:

- the use of commas: in various parts of the text, the absence of a comma has led to misapprehensions of the ideas developed;
- grammatical agreement between verb and subject: in various parts of the text, it is possible to see that a sentence's subject does not agree grammatically with verb;
- the indiscriminate use of run-on sentences when composing paragraphs, which often makes it harder to fully absorb what is being read, disorienting the reader. In this case, I suggest a restructuring of single-sentence paragraphs by breaking them down into shorter sentences, as well as by using commas and connectors.
- I recommend changing the male gender assigned to scholar Ana Maria de Moraes Sarmiento Vellasco, as seen in:

"[He] calls these expressions 'proverbial introductions,' explaining that they are used to draw attention to the truth that is about to be imparted."⁸⁶

"Vellasco (2000) highlights that there is a pattern of revitalizing proverbs, giving them new meanings - sometimes even opposite meanings - and, to illustrate, [he] provides a series of proverbs: 'After a storm comes a calm' and 'Good things come to those who wait,' among others, which morphed into: 'After a storm there is a mire' and 'Distress will come to those who wait.' Building on Grésillon and Maingueneau's (1994) premises, [he] asserts that this practice of revisiting proverbs is called *détournement*, which [he] translates as 'repossession,' in the sense that 'it is a discursive precedent, which consists of producing an utterance with the same linguistic markings of a proverbial utterance, but which is not part of the canon of traditional proverbs'⁸⁷ (Vellasco, 2000, p. 149)."

APPROVED WITH RESTRICTIONS [Revised]

Andrea Garcia Muniz – Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul – UFMS, Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6780-8309>; andreamuniz.ead@gmail.com

Reviewed on August 24, 2024.

Review II

1. On how well the paper follows its subject matter

The article explores how proverbs function as a cultural practice that promotes self-care and care for others, including an impact survey and the interpretation of proverbs among

⁸⁶ In Portuguese, as found in the original version of the manuscript: "Ele denomina essas expressões como "introitos proverbiais," explicando que seus usos têm a intenção de chamar à atenção a verdade que será dita."

⁸⁷ In Portuguese, as found in the original version of the manuscript: "Vellasco (2000) ressalta que há uma tendência de revitalização de provérbios, dando um novo significado, até mesmo em sentido contrário e, para exemplificar, ele cita um conjunto de provérbios: Depois da tempestade vem a bonança; Quem espera sempre alcança; entre outros, que foram metamorfoseados em: Depois da tempestade vem o lamaçal; Quem espera desespera. O autor assevera, nos pressupostos de Grésillon e Maingueneau (1994), que essa prática de revisitar provérbios é referida como *détournement*, traduzida por ele como retomada, que 'é um precedente discursivo, que consiste em produzir um enunciado com as mesmas marcas linguísticas de uma enunciação proverbial, mas que não faz parte do estoque de provérbios tradicionais conhecidos'" (Vellasco, 2000, p. 149)."

different groups of participants. This subject is relevant and fits well into the field of discourse studies, tackling cultural and linguistic aspects that are central to *Bakhtiniana*.

2. Explanation of the paper's goal and how coherently it was developed in the text

Objectives of the paper: The paper's goal is to explore the role of proverbs as a cultural practice of care, both at the individual and community levels. This goal is expressly presented in the article's introduction.

Coherence in the development: The development of the text is coherent with its stated goal. The article follows a logical structure, beginning with an introduction to the subject matter, followed by the theoretical basis, data analysis, and conclusion. Each section contributes to building up the central argument.

3. Conformity with the proposed theory, demonstrating up-to-date knowledge of the relevant bibliography

Conformity with theory: The article employs a theoretical approach based on cultural and linguistic studies to analyze proverbs. The theory is applied and integrated throughout the text competently.

Currentness of the literature used: The bibliography includes references that are both relevant and up-to-date, which speaks to a good knowledge of the state of the art in the field of studying proverbs and cultural practices. The citations presented are varied and include both classic works and more recent studies.

4. Originality of the reflections presented and contribution to the field of study:

Originality: The article presents an original reflection on the role played by proverbs, highlighting their cultural relevance and praxis. This approach of analyzing proverbs as a form of care is innovative and offers new perspectives for the field of discourse studies. Contribution to the field: The article's contribution is significant, seeing as it offers a new way of understanding the importance of proverbs in day-to-day life and in cultural practices. This kind of analysis can open new avenues for future research.

5. Language clarity, correctness and adequacy for a scientific paper

Clarity and correctness: The text is clear and well-written, with few grammatical errors or typos. The language used is precise and adequate for a scientific paper.

Language adequacy: The language used is technical and appropriate for the journal's target audience, and accessible for researchers and professionals of the field of discourse studies.

Conclusion

The article meets the evaluation criteria established by *Bakhtiniana. Revista de Estudos do Discurso*'s guidelines. I recommend that the manuscript be accepted, considering it meets the standards pertaining to the adequacy to its subject matter, the clarity of its goals, theoretical conformity (especially with regards to the dissemination of Paremiology), the originality of the reflections presented, and the adequacy of the language used. Overall, the article is ready for publication. APPROVED

Leonardo Lúcio Vieira-Machado – Universidade Federal do Espírito Santo – UFES, Vitória, Espírito Santo, Brazil; <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-4469-5927>; lucio.leo@gmail.com

Reviewed on August 18, 2024.

Review III

All suggestions have been accepted by the manuscript's author(s). APPROVED

Andrea Garcia Muniz – Universidade Federal de Mato Grosso do Sul – UFMS, Campo Grande, Mato Grosso do Sul, Brazil; <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6780-8309>; andreamuniz.ead@gmail.com

Reviewed on October 08, 2024.

Editors in Charge

Adriana Pucci Penteado de Faria e Silva

Beth Brait

Bruna Lopes

Maria Helena Cruz Pistori

Paulo Rogério Stella

Regina Godinho de Alcântara