

# Decolonial pedagogy: towards the configuration of decolonizing pedagogical biopraxis

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**Abstract:** The decolonial turn is more concerned about issue of ideopolitics, epistemics, and epistemology than problems by discipline (pedagogical, curricular and didactic), and its preoccupation with the evaluation of learning outcomes is almost non-existent. We have not worked with the breadth and depth of decoloniality in education. It is necessary to decolonize the categorical system of pedagogy, curriculum, and didactics. It is urgent to make a decolonial reading of the genealogy of educational sciences. Looking at pedagogy, curriculum, and didactics from a decolonial viewpoint will allow us to uncover the Eurocentric nature of the categorical system of these theories of education and teaching. We must de-link Educational Sciences from Eurocentricity and reveal the doctrinality of education and training, the process that pedagogy hides in its proposal for the notion of training as well as the contradiction between training and emancipation. Doctrinality is the hidden side of the training.

**Key words:** decolonial turn; decoloniality of education; pedagogy; curriculum; didactics; educational sciences

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## 1 Introduction

The formative process, as it has been posited since the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in the voices of Comenius (2012) and Herbart (1806), is indoctrinating. That is why the antidote against integral formation is the holistic decoloniality of the human mind. We must move towards the decoloniality of education, which implies learning to walk on the edges, not being afraid to move on the frontier. If we immerse ourselves in the Eurocentric theories, approaches and proposals of education, we could end up drowning in a sea of epistemic-disciplinary coloniality. On the other hand, if we dance on the frontier with the decolonial option, our dance will be shaped by decolonizing actions, shaped by enough oxygen to guarantee a healthy breathing and a full life, free of colonial impurities that lacerate our central nervous system, our brain, our whole body, but, above all, our mind, our consciousness, our thinking, our doing, our feeling and our living.

In order to redirect and reposition the practices that emerge from an emancipatory character, it is urgent to decentralize traditional theories and make visible other perspectives of knowledge in what is taught, the methodologies and the implementation of didactics. It is evident that a decolonial pedagogy, curriculum and didactics will emerge, thus, the educational act will gain importance for the configuration of knowledge, through the inclusion of all social actors. Therefore, we can affirm that a configurative decolonial pedagogy, promoter of a decolonial/border thinking, which gestated a configurative decolonial thinking, is on the horizon. Precisely, this article is aimed at thinking a decolonial pedagogy, which is part of the movement of "other" pedagogies, based on decolonial pedagogical biopraxis.

## 2 "Other" pedagogies

Nowadays it is not possible to reflect on pedagogy without referring to educational or formative practices, that is the interpersonal relationships established inside and outside the classroom between teachers and students, in which curricular content is of extraordinary importance. It is useless for a teacher to deploy an excellent discourse on inclusion if he/she relates to his/her students based on their ethnicity, economic status, sexual orientation, religious affiliation or political ideology. Sometimes, we see teachers developing a discourse on pedagogical constructivism and on the historical-cultural approach, making eloquence of the Piagetian theory and the invaluable contributions of Vigotsky; however, these teachers do not allow their students to ask questions and only they speak, developing a master class, expository, based on traditional pedagogical models and behaviorist approaches. It is also possible to see teachers developing classes on democracy and imposing their criteria on the thinking/feeling of their students. It is necessary for teachers to recognize the plurality and diversity of ways of living, being, thinking of our students, in order to avoid taking these exclusive actions on which colonialism is based in some of its dimensions:

Education is the strategy of coloniality par antonomasia, in such a way that it is with it that they continue to consolidate -and sometimes with the best intentions such as intensive literacy campaigns- the functioning of the colonial matrix in the formation of imaginaries, understanding by these the ways of perceiving and understanding the world proper to each culture, (Palermo, 2014, p. 45).

The pedagogy par excellence, to mitigate the above, is the daily example of teachers, their ethical, humble, supportive and respectful behavior. A teacher who in his pedagogical discourse expresses dislike for the diversity of his students or treats them with contempt does not deserve to exercise this noble and dignified profession. On occasions, we hear expressions that mistreat and repress human plurality in the classroom. It is unbelievable that in the 21st century there are still teachers who constrain, devalue and intimidate the student activist of a youth movement, the non-white, the one who professes a religion, the one who practices non-normative forms of sexuality, the indigenous person, the woman or the Afro-descendant.

In all these pointed out cases, the value of human diversity has not been recognized by teachers. Therefore, we cannot discuss cross-cultural education here. If a country or government imposes curriculum content without allowing teachers to adjust and contextualize it, while considering the uniqueness and individuality of students, and there is no cross-cultural education:

True cross-cultural education is the education in which a country positions itself as another interlocutor through schools and universities, and acknowledges the impact of this established communication relationship, reviewing its European centric principles: without active decolonization in educational practice, there can be no cross-cultural identity. (Palermo, 2015, p. 139)

Decolonizing education means, among other arguments, recognizing that indigenous, peasant, Afro-descendant or non-hearing people come to the university not only to learn and transform themselves, but also to teach. The decolonization of education is achieved to the same extent that the validity and importance of "other" knowledge not officialized by the colonial matrix is recognized:

This implies modifying topics, contents, approaches and transmission styles, that is, a series of dimensions of education that we naturalize and, therefore, consider inescapable; dimensions that, however, are unbearable for a number of people who come to the institution from other worlds, from other histories, with divergent subjectivities forged along other trajectories that have never been duly welcomed or represented by the state discourse. (Palermo, 2015, p. 141).

The regularity that emerges from these reflections on the need for an intercultural education that respects human

plurality and diversity is the scathing criticism of the Eurocentrism of Latin American education at all levels, from early childhood to university. The solution is not related to the design of new problematizing curricula nor to the application of playful didactic strategies as is sometimes promoted. The issue is much more complex. It is urgent to "dismantle the Eurocentric horizon that surrounds and permeates all aspects and all levels of educational work in our countries" (Palermo, 2015, p. 143).

Modern/Western pedagogy cannot recognize or make differences visible because its interest was focused on homogenizing, hence it is a colonizing pedagogy. In the face of diversity/difference/the other/the different/heterogeneous, the response was to make everything look like the colonial European model (Palermo, 2014). This is an obsolete pedagogy, whose epistemic postulates are in crisis, have expired, and that is why educators must assume the precepts of the decolonial turn, join the resistance and fight for the configuration of an "other" pedagogy. Now, in order to think of an "other" pedagogy - not another pedagogy - it is necessary to challenge, defy, confront, openly confront and resist the various colonialism that limit our daily existence: the colonialism of knowledge, of power, of being and of living.

Walsh (2012a, 2012b, 2012c) considers that when we confront the coloniality of knowledge we are creating the conditions to overcome monism in the definition of "science". In this way, it creates the foundations for an "other" educational system, from early childhood education to higher education, from school to university. This new educational conception can - and must - challenge the current dominant geopolitics of knowledge, challenging its Western and USA-euro-centric orientations and rationalities, trying to pluralize the epistemes configured, established and imposed from the modern/colonial world-system:

In Latin America, this geopolitics is evidenced above all in the maintenance of Eurocentrism as the only, or at least the dominant, perspective of knowledge. It is a perspective present in universities, colleges and schools, which exalts Euro-American intellectual production as universal science and knowledge, relegating in an oppositional way the thought of the South -be it Latin American, African or from the other "souths" of the planet- to the status of "localized knowledge", denying the fact that the knowledge produced in Europe and the United States is also local; its universalization to the rest of the world as something obligatory for all is, in effect, the central problem of the geopolitics of knowledge and its colonial and imperial legacy. (Walsh, 2009, p. 187).

In the field of education and pedagogical theory, this epistemic and epistemological coloniality has also operated silently and successfully, denying other ancestral, diverse, singular or emerging forms of knowledge configuration, simply because they are not European, North American, white, patriarchal or "scientific" (from Cartesian-Newtonian epistemology). This empiricist-positivist rationality separates knowledge from the world, assuming a fragmenting dualistic epistemology, in which the object of study exists "outside" the subject and, therefore, knowledge is internal and the world is external. In contrast to this idea, Walsh (2012a) assumes and exhorts us to live a holistic, integral life, in which knowing and living are closely related, configured. This logic, which we will call holistic-configurational, places knowing and the process of knowing on a different path from instrumental, individual thinking, which follows a means-end rationality. The holistic logic of knowing moves in/from/through/by/for a configurational thinking (Ortiz and Salcedo, 2014).

According to this configuration logic, the assumptions and hypotheses are not closed, rigid, or dogmatic, but open and flexible, involving all senses and skills of human beings in the process of cognition, without limitations in thinking or cognition. Through this approach, we can say that the "good life" is not only practical, social, and economic, but also cognitive (Walsh, 2012a).

From the perspective of configurational epistemology (Ortiz, 2013, 2015, 2016a, 2016b, 2016c, 2016d, 2016e, 2016f, 2016g, 2016h), regarding the universe, the world we live in, our own socio-cultural practices, and our experiences,

understandings, and meanings (biological practices), it is not a fragmented viewpoint, but a holistic, integrated, and relational viewpoint, in which various comprehensive configurations are integrated in a harmonious and coherent interweaving: biological-social, emotion-rationality, physical space-consciousness, genetic-cultural, internal-external, material-spiritual, mind-body, objective-subjective, human being-nature, subject-object, tangible-intangible, among other relationalities. This complex network can be analyzed from four fundamental principles: relationality, correspondence, complementarity and reciprocity (Walsh, 2009).

Human living or Kawsay configures these four principles. That is, in "the full experience of living, to the enjoyment of the deep meaning of life, product of the harmonious tension of polarities that emerge from the harmonious and respectful intercultural coexistence" (quoted by Walsh, 2012a). In this way, "it is rooted in balanced, harmonious, equitable and supportive relationships among humans and with nature, in the dignity of each human being and in the necessary interrelation between beings, knowledge, cultures, rationalities and logics of thinking, acting and living" (Walsh, 2012a, p. 71).

This leads to problems in our understanding of universal rationality, and we must question the concept of global truth to lay the foundation for shaping other rationales that challenge and face the ecological (environmental, spiritual, human, and social) chaos in our daily lives. This enables us to form new ways of coexisting in citizenship, diversity, and harmony, making the cosmology, epistemology, philosophy, practice, and ancestral way of life visible, based on different truths and reasons, "other" in thought, feeling, knowledge, behavior, and life:

The good way of living thus opens the possibilities of conceiving and acting on life in an "other" way, a different way conceived from the ancestral difference and its principles, but conceived for society as a whole. It thus raises the possibility of a new social contract and a new decolonial reason rooted in the relationship and ethical coexistence between humans and their environment, with the aim of challenging fragmentation, promoting articulation and interculturalization and weaving a new social, political and cultural identification of a country that accepts the historical-ancestral particularities while taking distance from the designs of global capitalism and its unique reason to retake -and rebuild- the centrality of Kawsay, that is, of life and living. (Walsh, 2012a, p. 72).

The beautiful life is incompatible with modern/colonial epistemology, from which we are told and imposed knowledge that enables us to engage with the world. The beautiful life encourages us to adopt another epistemological viewpoint that is meaningful to the vast majority of people: the world allows us to acquire knowledge, so I do not think, and then I exist; I prefer to think based on where I live. Life determines thinking, not the opposite as European centric epistemology suggests. This indicates a non colonial epistemology, pedagogy, and rationality (Walsh, 2006a, 2006b; 2008a, 2008b).

From the above, we can affirm that what we need in Latin American education is not only to restructure (González, 1998; Castro-Gómez, 2000), to be interdisciplinary (Walsh, Schiwy and Castro-Gómez, 2002), to reinvent/renew (Santos, 2006a, 2006b), to rethink/open (Wallerstein, 2010a, 2010b, 2011) or to reconfigure (Ortiz, 2016c) the social sciences; What we need is to decolonize them, that is, to configure "other" social sciences, to decolonize the euroscience and europeagogy that has colonized us for more than four hundred years, starting from the Cartesian cogito ergo sum, the "magna" didactics of Comenius (2012), the "general" pedagogy of Herbart (1806), as well as the instrumental concept of curriculum proposed by Bobbitt (1924, 1941) and endorsed in Tyler (1986). This commendable and urgent task of decolonizing education, social and educational sciences, pedagogy, curriculum and didactics is not possible only from critical theory and pedagogy. Critical theory (Horkheimer, 1998), in its classic formulation of the Frankfurt School, and critical pedagogy, in its original epistemic postulates, as well as in the repercussions of what McLaren (1997a, 1997b, 1998)

calls "revolutionary" critical pedagogy, are Marxist and anthropocentric proposals, Western efforts that start from a modern/colonial project, thought and paradigmatic assumptions, through which they make Eurocentric criticism of Eurocentrism.

On the other hand, Grande (2008) stated in his work on "Red Pedagogy" that revolutionary critical pedagogy remains rooted in Western paradigms and therefore maintains a tense relationship with indigenous knowledge and practice (Walsh, 2014a, 2014b, 2014c, 2014d, 2014e, 2014f). Therefore, understanding the conceptual configuration of democratization, ownership, and subjectivity is defined by the Eurocentric configuration, which views humanity as the primary object of "rights" and social status (Grande, 2008). Similarly, in the Andes Mountains, Walsh (2014c) began:

"To see the radical difference of a project conceived by and from indigenous peoples in which culture, cosmology, spirituality, wisdom, knowledge, land, and nature and/or life are interwoven with self-determination, decolonization, mobilization and transformation." (p. 21)

In this way, colonialism and colonial differences must be addressed by "other" education.

These "other" pedagogies have not been addressed in an open, direct and profound way by modernity or by critical theory, and are not even explicitly present in Freire's works (1987, 2011, 2012a, 2012b, 2013a, 2013b, 2014) or in any of the works of our immense Martí (1961, 1975, 2007). Precisely, Walsh (2014c) has been deploying a distancing from critical pedagogy, Western critical thought and Freire, seeking and making new paths, different paths and shortcuts, asking and walking. In the same vein, Mignolo (2007a, 2007b, 2007c, 2008a, 2008b), from decolonial thought, invites us to assume a decolonial option that brings us closer to epistemological detachment and openness. To detach ourselves from the educational sciences and open pedagogy implies to stop walking through the epistemes rooted in modern/colonial epistemology and to start configuring new epistemic and epistemological paths on the edges of these epistemes, namely the boundary trajectory of decolonization transition. Hence we would say like Walsh (2014c): our paths have made us wary of Western critical theory and led us suspect "its blindness to coloniality as the dark side of modernity" (p. 23). We have the impression that those who criticize traditional pedagogy are still connected to it. We ourselves are not exempt from sometimes assuming its colonizing Eurocentric postulates. This confirms how deeply rooted in us are the epistemic assumptions that are promulgated and the urgency of unthinking pedagogy and the educational sciences.

From the viewpoint outlined above, we consider that pedagogy is a "verbality" (Vázquez, 2012), it is not a simple noun, but a verb, and it is not a being (ontology), but a doing (praxeology). Pedagogy is not a simple discipline or pedagogical knowledge, as Zuluaga (1987, 2001, 2003, 2005) considered it. Nor is Walsh (2014c) interested in pedagogy as a discipline; on the contrary, she appreciates its sense and meaning "in the actions, practices, methodologies, strategies and ways of doing that are interwoven with - and constructed in - resistance and opposition, as well as in insurgency, affirmation and re-existence, in imagining and constructing a different world" (p. 22). This author postulates a different conception of pedagogy, commits herself to a more profound search, which incites to pedagogize the decolonial, and assumes the pedagogical from a praxeological point of view, pedagogy as praxis, following the paths of Freire (2011, 2012a, 2013b, 2014).

According to Walsh (2014a), "it is necessary today to contemplate and imply a perspective on teaching or pedagogy that is linked to critical cross-cultural and non colonial projects and viewpoints" (p. 15). We believe that considering the changes experienced by Latin America at the beginning of the 21st century, it is now time to take non colonial actions and reflect: the increasingly strong and dynamic emergency situation based on non colonialism and aimed at non colonialism intentions, projects, and processes; rebellion, resistance, and (re) epistemological, epistemological, political, and social existence; the spread of African, indigenous, farmer, women, and LGTBI movements and communities.

The author did not delve into the decolonization process of education as a discipline and educational science, but focused more on the educational process of decolonization. We believe that from the perspective of configuration dialectics, both paths are necessary, urgent, and important: pedagogizing the decolonial and decolonizing pedagogy, especially because this discipline, as demonstrated by Spivak (2011, 2015) in Western philosophy, literature, history, and culture, is experiencing an unconquered colonial past and reconfiguring in our postmodern/colonial era. Then welcome Walsh's (2014a) proposal, he invited us to configure "de-colonial(s) pedagogy(ies)".

### **3 Towards non colonial pedagogy**

According to Palermo (2014), there is no such thing as "pedagogy" because "pedagogy without modifiers is an official pedagogy that serves to support, promote its political and economic systems, and places it in a more 'effective' profession" (p. 9). In addition, Esmeral and Gonzalez (2015) integrated education and intercultural perspectives, providing a dialogue standard for the socio educational reality in the Caribbean region of Colombia. However, when they mentioned returning to the curriculum, they attempted to combine liberation and non colonialism, but their analysis was insufficient, and they did not delve into the cognitive structure, epistemology, liberation, and potential of non colonialism. Therefore, we have expanded and deepened the discourse of educational non colonialism as epistemology and epistemological operation and action, in order to break away from the harmful Eurocentrism established by the capitalist/modern/colonial world system. Therefore, considering the non colonial nature of education has become an urgent situation/urgency in non colonial pedagogy.

Walsh (2014a) does not add decolonial pedagogy to critical pedagogy, nor does he suggest the decolonial as a contemporary manifestation of the critical. In fact, it states that: Non colonial education has its own lineage and does not necessarily need to be referred to as such. Its roots lie in the struggles and practices that have been ongoing in Africa and indigenous communities for many years, which have only recently surfaced and been rebuilt and revitalized as part of political positions and projects. (Page 16).

These thoughts, feelings, and behaviors integrate and shape education and cross-cultural perspectives from a non colonial perspective, from key angles, without the need for prior assumptions of critical theories.

#### 3.1 What - and how - are decolonial pedagogies?

Pedagogies promote insurgent practices of resisting, (re)existing and (re)living (Walsh, 2017).

Education engages in dialogue with key political backgrounds, while starting with non colonial struggles and practices.

Pedagogies confront the monologue of modern/Western/colonial reason and the racist myth of modernity/coloniality (Bautista, 2009).

Education reveals everything hidden and leaked by multiculturalism, including the identity existence teleology of colonial differences, the geopolitics of knowledge, and the topological structure of existence (Maldonado Torres, 2006a, 2006b).

Pedagogies shape questioning and critical analysis, transformative social action, insurgency and intervention in the fields of power, knowledge, being and living; and, finally encourage and assume an insurgent, i.e. decolonial attitude.

The education transcends, replaces, and influences ontology, epistemology, and cosmic spiritual denial has always been a strategy, purpose, and result of colonial forces.

Pedagogies open cracks, detachments and new hooks.

Pedagogies provoke learning, unlearning and relearning.

The education of clarifying and entangling paths is not about planting dogmas or doctrines, but about sowing seeds that enable them to sprout "other" knowledge that is equally effective as established knowledge.

Pedagogies configure "horizons of theorizing, thinking, doing, being, feeling, looking and listening - individually and collectively - towards the decolonial" (Walsh, 2013, p. 67).

Pedagogies thus thought of are not external to the lived realities, subjectivities and histories of the people, but as an integral part of their struggles and perseverances or persistences, of their struggles of conscientization, affirmation and disalienation, and of their struggles - in the face of the denial of their humanity - to be and become human. (Walsh, 2013, p. 31).

That is to say, "decolonial pedagogy or pedagogies would be constructed and to be constructed: in schools, colleges, universities, within organizations, in neighborhoods, communities, movements and in the street, among other places" (Walsh, 2014a, p. 15).

Decolonial pedagogies are not utopias (in the sense that we generally attribute to this notion as something unrealizable) but utopian (in the sense proposed by Wallerstein, 2003). This author considers utopianism as the serious, realistic and profound evaluation of the best alternatives, creative, original, novel and plausible proposals. He proposes it as a simultaneous exercise in the fields of science, politics and morality. It is precisely in this sphere that decolonial pedagogies are inscribed.

All human beings who are currently living in this convulsive world, in this unpredictable 21st century, right now, at this precise moment, are configured by the discourse of modernity/coloniality in all its dimensions: knowledge, power, being, living. Hence, it is necessary to think from an "other" place, it is imperative the need to reflect from the exteriority of the Eurocentric episteme (Palermo, 2014), in order to generate a decolonial pedagogy that faces the unique and universal thought, but how?

The great problem lies in how the oppressed, as dual, inauthentic beings, who "house" the oppressor in themselves, will be able to participate in the elaboration of the pedagogy for their liberation. Only to the extent that they discover themselves "housing" the oppressor will they be able to contribute to the construction of their liberating pedagogy (Freire, 2012a, p. 42).

From this point of view, decolonial pedagogies are dreams that are configured in the daily biopraxis of colonized human beings. They are never fully achieved, subalternized human beings will always be struggling to achieve it and we must never abandon our "social, cultural, political, epistemic-intellectual and educational insurgency" (Walsh, 2014a, p. 16).

Following this line of thought, Da silva (1999) lists various discourses or educational proposals that we have reformulated from a metacognitive stance in the form of questions. From this perspective, the configuration of multiple decolonizing pedagogical discourses is imposed.

What do we want to educate for?

Educate to compensate, assimilate, reproduce or indoctrinate?

Educate to differentiate or biculturalize?

Educate to tolerate or prevent racism and exclusion?

Educate to transform (critical pedagogy)?

Educate to interact?

Educate to empower?

Educate to decolonize?

Educate to communalize?

Educate to alter?

How?

From these reflections, we take the leap towards a decolonial pedagogy, trying to have a critical look, but from a decolonial perspective, moving towards global decoloniality or the globalization of decoloniality. Every day we become more and more convinced of the need to decolonize our pedagogical knowledge, to configure a decolonial pedagogy and to move in our research on education towards epistemic decoloniality and epistemological disobedience. From this point of view, to bet on a decolonial pedagogy is to tend to dismantle the "pedagogy of cruelty" aimed at forming "subjects docile to the market and to capital" (Palermo, 2014, p. 136). It is evident that in the field of education the discourse on decoloniality is very relevant today. For example, at the Universidad del Magdalena, Santa Marta, Colombia, which is an accredited institution, we should not work for reaccreditation. That would be self-colonizing. Accreditation is not an end, it is a means to achieve other more transcendental ends. Accreditation is not a result, it is a process. And a result is never part of the process that generates it. If we look only at the result and concentrate on it, then we do not see the process, which is the most important thing. We should not work for reaccreditation, we should work for the decoloniality of education and, if we achieve it, we will certainly receive permanent accreditation. It is necessary to configure a culture of excellence, pertinence, meaning and decoloniality of living.

Illich (1974) proposes a de-schooled society, and somewhat ironically, but seriously in the first epigraph entitled "Why should we deprive schools of official support", he states the following:

Many students, especially those who are poor, know intuitively what schools do for them. They are trained to confuse process and substance. Once these two terms become indistinct, a new logic is adopted: the more treatment, the better the results. The student is thus "schooled" to confuse teaching with knowledge, confuse promotion to the next grade with education, confuse diploma with competence, and fluency with the ability to say something new. His imagination is "schooled" to accept service instead of value. Medical treatment is mistaken for health care, social work for improvement of community life, police protection for tranquility, military balance for national security, petty daily struggle for productive work. Health, knowledge, dignity, independence and creative work are defined as little more than the disengagement of the institutions that claim to serve these ends, and their improvement is made dependent on the allocation of greater resources to the administration of hospitals, schools and other corresponding bodies (p. 4).

These days in Colombia (year 2018), in almost all universities, a wide, strong and deep debate is taking place about the results of the saber-pro tests. Almost all Colombian universities today are engaged in the titanic and almost impossible task of designing and implementing strategies that allow them to obtain excellent results in such tests by students. Ortiz (2018) has made some reflections in the various methodological meetings held to analyze the results of the Saber Pro 2016 tests, at the Faculty of Education Sciences of the University of Magdalena (Santa Marta, Colombia). Below, we systematize what this author called Decalogue to achieve that our students have excellent results in the standardized tests, as we understand that this proposal is part of the decolonial perspective of education, pedagogy, curriculum and didactics, although we recognize that they do not necessarily have to be ten logos (decalogue), they could be seven or eleven, the most important thing is not the number or the amount of proposals, but the reflections that these can deploy.

a) We do not compare ourselves with other universities or between academic programs.

They are different human beings, therefore, incommensurable processes. University may come first, without progress. Another university may rank last and have made progress.

b) We ignore the tests, we do not think about them, we do not take them into account, let the tests not keep us awake at night.

The more we think about and analyze the results of the tests, the less chance we have of reversing those results.

Because we get lost in the results. We get lost in the numbers and we don't see the process.

c) We do not prepare students for testing but for living. Testing is not even part of that living. A university can have first place in the tests and not be forming good, loving, responsible, respectful and caring people. This is not measured by the test.

d) We do not think about the results, we concentrate only on the formation process.

A result is never part of the process that gave rise to it. If we focus on the result we never see the process. We focus on the process and the result is a consequence of it. The result is derived from the process, but is not part of it.

e) We recognize that the results of any evaluative process do not depend on the person being evaluated but on the evaluator and the evaluative instrument.

If the instrument changes, so do the results. What would happen if in the next test the MEN changes the style of the test questions?

f) We constantly and permanently develop, in each of the classes, four formative actions: reading, writing, reflecting and conversing.

There is no other more optimal and pertinent solution. Everything else we do will be palliative measures, "warm water pills".

We can perform with twenty-five students per program or with two hundred. That is not the essence. The essence is that in class we do not read, we do not write, we do not reflect, and we do not converse. And this is the ontology and the human condition: read, write, reflect and converse.

There is no authentic and deep learning without reading, writing, reflecting and conversing. How many books do our students read in each subject per academic semester, what writers' books do they read, how many pages do they write about what they read, do they reflect in class on what they read and on what they write, do they converse on a given problem, topic or issue related to the subject, and how many of them do we publish?

These four questions also apply to us teachers: how many books do we read per year; which writers' books do we read; how many pages do we write per year, and how many of them do we publish; how do we deploy our reflection in class; do we converse in class with our students; do we stimulate and promote reflection and conversation among them?

Reading and writing are shared processes, which are required for a specific purpose. In this sense, our students should know and evidence why they read and what they do with what they read, what they do with the readings suggested by the teacher training courses, why they read that and not something else. But, above all, the generalization: what they write from what they read, what reflection emerges from such reading and what they talk about from it. Now, the question about the number of books we read in a year does not indicate or suggest that learning depends on the number of books read, but the answer to this non-trivial question does reveal what we are doing, what we are not doing and what we should do in order to learn, mainly from decolonial configurations and nuances.

g) Not all teachers of the same subject develop the same vision of curricular content.

If we homogenize the content, then we limit learning. The student must know that there are different perspectives, perceptions and conceptions about the same issue. Moreover, there is no holistic education and integral human development without conflicts. Cognitive diversity configures contradictions in students, which make them think and reflect. This guarantees authentic and deep learning.

h) We develop classes without talking.

The more the teacher talks in class, the less the students learn. The teacher in class does not offer answers but questions. Questions are more important than answers. The class is a heuristic and hermeneutic configuration, it is

developed through a system of problematizing questions. One does not learn by listening but by asking, questioning everything that is given, problematizing. Questioning, reflecting on what has been questioned and discussing what has been reflected on constitute the triadic configuration that guarantees holistic education and integral human development. There is no learning without cognitive conflict. Without dilemmas and intellectual tensions there is no learning. Contradiction engenders and generates integral human development.

i) We are not teaching from an ontological perspective, but from an epistemological perspective.

That is, we do not refer to curricular contents as if they existed independently of the speaker (ontological view). The locus of enunciation is very important in the definition of contents. All existing contents in the history of mankind have been said by someone (epistemological view).

j) We do not think about what we want to change in our students, but about what we must preserve.

No action outside the student determines his or her performance. Didactic strategies have limits and these are set by the student. When we conserve the essential and unchanging human configuration, all other processes change around the configurations we conserve.

Based on these reflections, we can affirm that educational organizations should not educate to pass an academic exam, but for life. Definitely, the paradigm of "good living" (Sumak Kawsay) or "living well" (Suma Qamaña) and the pedagogical configuration of happiness based on the pedagogy of love (Ortiz, 2014) guarantees an education for life, totally to the developmentalist conception imposed on us from modernity/coloniality. That is why Walsh (2009) elaborates the notion of decolonial pedagogy from the principles of good living, that is, not only from critical theoretical criteria, but from practical actions of educational insurgency, which translates into a process of creation, configuration and invention of new cultural and thinking conditions, new postulates and political and social practices. "Pedagogies, in this sense, are the practices, strategies and methodologies that are interwoven with and constructed both in resistance and opposition, as well as in insurgency, marooning, affirmation, re-existence and re-humanization" (p. 29).

To speak of an "order of knowledge" allows us to approach the educational problem from another perspective. It allows us to go beyond educational policies or curricular proposals and consider how the institution of education has contributed - and continues to contribute - to the colonization of minds, to the notions of "singularity", "objectivity" and "neutrality" of science, knowledge and epistemology, and that some people are more "apt" to think than others. (Walsh, 2009, p. 186)

Following these ideas, from the group CRECED: Community of Reflection on Coloniality and Decolonial Experiences, we have been deploying several proposals from a decolonial perspective:

- Autodecoloniality: Change the formation of ideas - not epistemology.
- The emergence of non colonial curriculum from the South: characteristics of curriculum practices that replicate colonial education in educational organizations.
- Alterative feminism: an "other" way of feeling, knowing, thinking, learning, being and living.
- Decolonial interculturality: urgency/emergence of "other" knowledge in social and educational processes.
- Decoloniality in the Afro-Colombian context and in the works of Gabriel García Márquez and José Martí Pérez.
- Thinking decoloniality in education, training and teaching: epistemic bases for a decolonial pedagogy, curriculum and didactics.
- Relations and intersections between decoloniality, otherness and communality.
- Three decades decolonizing: state of the art of decolonial research in/from the South (1988-2018).
- Validity/relevance of alterative thought in/from the South.

- Decolonial vocation from pedagogical biopraxis.

Since these non colonial proposals, we have conducted several reflections on the deployment of decolonial practice, liberation, and non colonial practices based on three actions/principles/standards: communal observing, alterative conversing and configurative reflecting. Here are some questions we have asked ourselves in order to think about a decolonial pedagogy:

How is teaching and learning done in educational organizations?

What didactic orientations predominate in the classroom space of educational organizations?

How do institutional conditioning factors and the geopolitics of knowledge affect teacher training?

What features characterize the dominant pedagogical practices?

How is the curriculum configured in educational organizations?

How do teachers select the contents they teach?

What contents are taught, who configured them, when, for what and for whom?

From what locus of enunciation have the contents taught been configured?

How could an "other" socio-human science and an "other" pedagogy be configured that do not reproduce the subalternization of subjectivities and knowledge, nor the Westernism, Eurocentrism, coloniality and "universal" rationalization of the hegemonic sciences; but that are oriented towards a greater decolonial epistemic and social projection and intervention?

The partial findings derived from the development of these proposals are directed towards a reconfiguration of the social sciences from the decoloniality of education. To rethink the social sciences, to open them up, to configure a new social science for the 21st century, this is what Wallerstein proposes (2007a, 2007b, 2010a, 2011), who unveils the limits of the nineteenth-century paradigms and unravels Eurocentrism by analyzing European universalism, the power of discourse through the discourse of power (Wallerstein, 2007a). This author presents us with a broad, fine and deep diagnosis of the world system, offering an accurate x-ray of modern/colonial capitalism (Wallerstein, 2010b). From this point of view, we are trying to configure a pedagogy, a curriculum and a didactics, from decolonial perspectives. From here, we propose the notion of decolonial interculturality. It is urgent to configure a thinking of decoloniality. Therefore, we propose to move from critical interculturality to configurative decolonial interculturality.

The decolonial conversation has made us see that love and happiness are useful decolonial pedagogies for the development of configurational thinking in holistic formation. The transition to a decolonial pedagogy implies the reconfiguration of education in the South. We need a frontier epistemology: decolonialism or decoloniality as an "other" epistemological paradigm, that is, not another paradigm superior to the currently dominant one, but one that coexists with the current paradigm. It is urgent to move towards a decolonial epistemology and one of decolonizing research (Smith, 2013).

We must analyze epistemology and research in the 21st century, its challenges and decolonial challenges, make a critique of colonial reason and turn towards a decolonial rationality. For this, it is necessary to think pedagogy, curriculum and didactics from a decolonial perspective, which implies moving from intercultural education to decolonial education, renewing education, reinventing pedagogy, decolonizing education, reconfiguring the curriculum from a decolonial perspective, decolonizing teaching, reinventing didactics. We must educate to decolonize, configure a pedagogy of decoloniality. It is necessary to configure the curriculum and didactics in a decolonial key, to move towards a decolonial teaching.

Decolonial learning is an imperative in/from Abya-Yala. We must reconfigure the profile of the decolonial teacher,

delineate the characteristics of the transmodern classroom, characterize the decolonial competencies, propose a decolonizing pedagogical model that resignifies the role of the decolonized student, that of the decolonizing teacher and reconfigure the decoloniality of epistemology, research methodology, education, training, teaching, learning, pedagogy, curriculum, didactics. In short, it is an imperative to decolonize the human mind, thought, language, life.

The challenge of decolonizing pedagogy, curriculum and didactics, through decolonial science, implies decolonizing epistemology and research methodology. We must formulate a decolonial research method, which allows us to configure the decolonial curriculum, decolonial didactics, decolonizing learning, decolonial teaching, decolonial evaluation. Training in the 21st century must be decolonizing. Decoloniality today keeps us inert, and we have been perplexed by the impotence of seeing coloniality in all human events and situations, diluted like salt in the sea, and not being able to do anything to stop its overwhelming influx. Is it possible that border thinking, as decolonial configurative thinking, can contribute to self-decoloniality? What is the locus of coastal/Caribbean/Colombian enunciation that will allow us to achieve holistic decoloniality? Is it possible to configure a decolonial intelligence? How to stimulate the configuration of decolonial thinking in children? This is only possible in decolonial pedagogical biopraxis.

#### **4 Decolonial pedagogical biopraxes**

As we have already stated, Walsh (2009) conceives pedagogy neither as a science nor as an academic discipline, but as a sociocultural policy. Configuring this notion projects a pedagogical vision that goes far beyond the processes of teaching and learning, going beyond the Eurocentric conception that pedagogy is related to the transmission of knowledge, assuming it as "social and political practice of production and transformation, as a mode of critical, dialogical and collective struggle" (p. 16).

Walsh (2008a, 2013, 2014a, 2014c, 2014d) states that this pedagogical perspective is still in the process of configuration, not only from the theoretical point of view, but also from the practical one. When we analyze in depth this novel and original proposal, we unveil the basis of its inspiration and find the main referents for its formulation in the educational practices of Freire (2012b, 2013a) and in the theoretical configurations contributed by Fanón (1965, 2013, 2016), especially those related to the consciousness of the oppressed and the need for humanization of subalternized peoples. Walsh (2013) proposes the configuration between the pedagogical and the decolonial, from the reading of Freire, understanding and assuming that they are pedagogies, which delineate paths not only to read the world critically, but with the desire to intervene in the reinvention of society. Likewise, from Fanón, he assumes these pedagogies as concrete actions that "enliven the absolute disorder of decolonization, bringing a new humanity" (p. 31).

On occasions, national, regional and local governments, and even the directors of educational organizations, deploy processes of educational refoundation at the level of the country, region or institution, executing reformist actions from summative conceptions and algebraic actions, adding cultural diversity to the established structures, but without making deep structural changes aimed at recognizing and involving differences as constitutive elements of a decolonial pedagogy. In this way, differences are assumed as cultural diversity and the colonial character of these is not recognized; that is, colonial differences that have emerged and developed from hierarchical and naturalized configurations and since colonial times have assumed a status of immanence in the matrix of power, shaping what we know today as coloniality of power, are not considered. That is why Walsh (2013) assumes decolonial pedagogies as insurgent practices of resisting, (re)existing and (re)living, that is, pedagogies not as epistemes, theories or knowledge, but as emerging methodologies in the contexts of marginalization, subalternization, struggle, reexistence and resistance, "pedagogies as insurgent practices that crack modernity/coloniality and make possible, very other ways of being, thinking, knowing, feeling, existing and living-with" (p. 19). Pedagogies are decolonial pedagogical biopraxis.

These reflections constitute an attempt to show the positive reception that the narrative of decoloniality has had in Colombia and Latin America, not only as theory and discourse, but also as epistemology, action and practice in education. We have called these events, actions, and occurrences that underlie formative intentions "decolonial pedagogical biopraxis", which arise because there are also colonizing practices. However, "every colonial praxis, every attempt at domination and exploitation irremediably inaugurates a new cycle of conflicts where the simultaneous deployment of decolonial praxis can be observed" (Borsani and Quintero, 2014, p. 14).

Ortiz (2017a, 2017b, 2017c) described the origin of the non colonial turn in educational science and emphasized the possibility of developing non colonial teaching biology practices. In this article, we refer to all criticism, disobedience, liberation, lack of discipline, disobedience to orders, rebellion, liberation, stubbornness, resistance, and transformative actions that occur in and outside the classroom as non colonial teaching biology practices, whether in academic spaces or extracurricular spaces, with the aim of diluting decoloniality, in order to configure future horizons of alternatives to the colonial matrix.

We refer to a critical, cross-cultural, and non colonial educational practice that aims not only to "think from" the struggles of historically disadvantaged peoples, but also from "different themes, knowledge, and ways of existence, being, and life, to shift towards the singularity and monoculture of educational enterprises and their founders of modern Western capitalist rationality, in order to give life a central position, thereby, the work of humanitarianism and decolonization is still incomplete. (Walsh, 2012c, p. 176).

However, our decolonization actions have two dimensions, one is theoretical epistemology and the other is practical theory. We attempt to colonize education as a knowledge, academic discipline, or science, but we also attempt to colonize it as a practice, classroom daily life, and our behavior. As Palermo (2014) clearly sees, unlike sociologists, anthropologists, ethnologists, psychologists, and other social scientists and humanities professionals, our fieldwork is conducted in the classroom, in the process of teaching, learning, and evaluation, "as experiences that generate knowledge, participate with different disciplines, carry different memories, have important experiences, and operate in heterogeneous production systems" (p. 63). That is to say, our decolonial pedagogical biopraxis are not deployed in/with/by/for indigenous populations nor in/with/by/for Afro-descendant communities, but in the classroom, in/with/by/for students of different age groups, different learning rhythms and styles, different instructional levels, heterogeneity in their development in terms of their competencies (knowledge, abilities, skills), diverse origins and, of course, diverse cultures, customs, aspirations, dreams, longings, fears and hopes.

Decolonial pedagogical biopraxis are made up of formative actions that are developed in a decolonial key, that is, from a decolonial perspective or with a decolonial approach. They are all those pedagogical, curricular, didactic or evaluative actions that take into account "the other", do not subalternize them, take them to the periphery, or abandon them at the border, but accept them in formative coexistence, in an act that is only possible in love. Decolonial pedagogical biopraxis are expressed, manifested and materialized in the configuration of the curriculum, that is, in the design, development or evaluation of the curriculum; and they come to life in didactics: in teaching, in learning and in evaluating.

On the contrary, the classroom is an inseparable place that can promote openness to accidental events and the institutionalization process of subjectivity expressed in a vague and chaotic manner. As far as we have successfully confirmed that our teaching task in this field is a very problematic task, we ourselves are the problem. This is not only because we choose to explore issues from the space and time they give us, but above all because we take a risk when we prefer not to legitimize our discourse in the supposed ownership and transmission of "unwavering truths". We choose to question ourselves and the world we represent. This is an important component of betting. (Agar, 2014, p. 110)

Aguer is urging us to problematize, question and decolonize our own pedagogical practice, but how is a pedagogical practice decolonized? How are decolonial pedagogical biopraxis deployed?

When we develop the decolonization with university teachers or educational institutions, in most cases we evidence in the narratives of their experiences, that they develop actions aimed at decolonizing their pedagogical practices, and do so from the following operations:

Explicitly disobeying the system, either by undisciplined dispersal of knowledge confined within disciplines, taking action to create symmetrical spaces for the participation of different people, or by incorporating communication technologies that bring the world closer to a completely marginalized center in a process known as a global project. This is a connection between the local and the global, where they provide feedback while defending the local as a political force and utilizing global technology for their own benefit. (Palermo, 2014, p. 108)

## **5 Conclusion**

We can affirm that the writing of this article is in itself a decolonizing practice, although it is not intended to be a recipe or offer guidance to other scholars. Decolonialization of education is an option we have taken, but we are aware that other teachers should not necessarily take it:

a. It forms a humanized discourse space/meeting, questioning, criticizing, and questioning authoritative discourse without ignoring it, and using it as an alternative way to provide collective knowledge for transformative dialogue and constructive reflection.

b. It questions and challenges the hierarchical system between us, leading to symmetrical, active, and dialogic participation in the formation of "other" cognition.

c. It criticizes and questions our own teaching practices, becoming an effective tool for the overall decolonization of the organization.

d. It combines our own non colonial thinking and boundary positioning criticism and self-criticism as the fundamental source of sustainability for far-reaching projects replicated in other academic spaces we participate in.

Finally, if we want to deploy non colonial educational biology practices, we must consider it as a personal choice, non transferable or generalizable in all circumstances. The non colonial nature of education is not an absolute truth, it is not a universal knowledge, it is just a choice aimed at shaping a non colonial ideology.

These non colonial teaching methods help teachers develop our ideas from the margins and boundaries, therefore, non colonial teaching biology practice is based on the development of boundary thinking and positioning on the basis of non colonial choices. Therefore, teaching, curriculum, and teaching structure cannot be universal, but must be diverse, pluralistic, and pluralistic.

These decolonial pedagogies encourage teachers to develop our thinking from the edges and the border, hence decolonial pedagogical biopraxis are deployed from the development of a border thinking and a positioning based on the decolonial option. Therefore, pedagogical, curricular and didactic configurations cannot be universal, but diverse, plural and pluriversal.

## **Acknowledgments**

The article derived from the research project funded by FONCIENCIAS, Universidad del Magdalena, Santa Marta, Colombia (Proyecto escenarios formativos mediadores de las biopraxis de niños y niñas en contexto de pobreza).

## **Conflicts of interest**

The author declares no conflicts of interest regarding the publication of this paper.

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