

Adam Jabłoński

ORCID: 0000-0003-2205-4379

Educational Institutions Complex in Nowy Targ

Violence-help as a pedagogical category. About the violent role of the teacher

Every pedagogical action (PA) constitutes objectively symbolic violence as an imposition of cultural arbitrariness by an arbitrary authority (Bourdieu, Passeron 2012: 75).

[...] power produces knowledge, [...] power and knowledge are directly related; there is no power relation without a correlated field of knowledge, nor knowledge that does not presuppose and produce a power relation (Foucault 1993: 29).

A certain understanding of the mechanisms of power, can [...] be obtained [...] by beginning with analysing the detailed practices of everyday life and tracing their consumption by more general mechanisms of domination (Szkudlarek 2009: 50).

Introduction

This text constitutes an attempt to understand the role of the teacher in the context of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of cultural reproduction and, in particular, the violent role that this theory would indicate. The question has to be asked: to what extent does the teacher's role boil down to being a "sower of violence" and to what extent is it about helping the student to develop, to acquire competences, skills or knowledge. Reading Pierre Bourdieu's *Reproductions* from the perspective of a pupil, then a student, it is easy to see how much the school system, through the symbolic violence at work, influences our decisions, our academic performance – our entire school trajectory. We can then identify with the role of a "victim of the system". The reception of *Reproduction* is completely different, when being a teacher. To what

extent, being a teacher, do I help students and to what extent am I a mere functionary of a system of symbolic violence? On the one hand, as a special educator, I have a considerable range of support at my disposal (e.g. remedial classes), and on the other hand I have a repertoire of violence up my sleeve (sending a pupil for a diagnosis to the Psychological-Pedagogical Counselling Centre, or “insight into the child’s family situation”).

A certain attempt to handle this theory and my own experience of being a teacher is precisely my introduction of the category of violence-assistance. This category would include both that which is violent in a teacher’s work and what is a form of assistance. Hence the questions: is it possible to imagine methodologies for working with students that are less violent and more supportive? How to work with a student to minimise the violent in favour of the helpful?

The topics addressed in the following text are fully in line with what Tomasz Szkudlarek described as thinking within critical pedagogy: “[...] unmasking, demystifying the power of theories from this circle of thinking, revealing hidden dimensions of educational processes, explaining hidden dimensions of educational processes [...] and, more importantly, interpreting that side of school life with which anyone who has been a pupil is familiar: coercion, violence, the promotion of mindless submission, the killing of individuality and independence (Tomasz Szkudlarek 2010: 11).

About the category of violence-help

The phenomenon of violence-help is present in many human activities. It is also similar to Foucault’s category of power-knowledge in that every helping action seems to be correlated with a violent action. This can easily be seen in medical interventions (antibiotics, chemotherapy in the case of cancer detection, anaesthesia in the case of necessary surgery, or even a visit to the dentist with a two-year-old); care (forcing younger children to brush their teeth, handling a runny nose with a nasal aspirator in a young child who cannot yet sneeze on its own, cleanliness training, periods of adaptation in the nursery, kindergarten, school); educational interventions, e.g. educational, e.g. independence training for intellectually disabled people with moderate or severe disabilities (cleanliness training, when physiological needs are taught to be taken care of in the toilet and not in trousers); safety (intervention in the case of pupils with suicide attempts, especially those discovered on school premises (call for an ambulance, sometimes a straitjacket and usually a longer stay in a psychiatric ward).

In this text I will try to present, using material from my own research, how the category of violence-help is revealed in pedagogical action. This category indicates that most pedagogical activities are twofold in nature. On the one hand, they contain a dose of violence: coercion, being forced to do some work, some behaviour

against our will (e.g. discipline in the school classroom). On the other hand, a dose of wide-ranging assistance, support in development, in acquiring some competences, skills, information, knowledge.

It is also interesting to look at the phenomenon of violence-help from the linguistic side. What is significant here is the identical morpheme (stem) MOC (power – translator’s note) in both words: *przeMOC-poMOC* (violence-help – translator’s note), although the phenomena described by these words are opposite, the morphology of the language itself would indicate a common element, although perhaps of opposite sign. This begs the question: is it the case that violence takes away power and help adds to it? We also have a similar core in the term *emPOWERment*, translated as “giving POWER”.

Methodological note

The ethnographic material on which the analysis and interpretation of the violence-help category will be carried out is borrowed from the doctoral thesis, in which the ethnographic research model is extensively discussed. In this article, I will briefly discuss the method of data presentation as well as the method of data analysis and interpretation. The presentation of the collected material will be shown through the presentation method of CAP (*creative analytical practices*), ethnographic research while the stage of interpretation and analysis of the material will be carried out on the basis of methods of critical HDA (*historical discourse analysis*). The description of the daily life of the learner will be presented in the form of short narratives/pictures/stories written based on the data collected and recorded in the observation log during the ethnographic research. The material will be presented in interpretations, in language in the ways in which they are read and experienced by the researcher who, in the “helping teacher role”, has been involved in assessing, describing, and resolving the school situations of “problem students” from disadvantaged backgrounds in juxtaposition with the “teacher culture” (of the school).

CAP ethnographies emerge from creative analytical practices: “[...] the process of writing and its product intersect...”. (Richardson, Adams St. Pierre 2009: 462), very significantly they give: “[...] an accurate and desirable representation of the social. They create a space to discuss issues that we can’t quite grasp now” (Richardson, Adams St. Pierre 2009: 461). According to Laurel Richardson, CAP ethnographies are distinguished from classical ethnography by, among other things, the crystallisation of data: “In traditional research, great importance is given to triangulation [...]. The researcher takes advantage of various data collection techniques – interviews, analysis of available statistics, documents, etc. – to verify their relevance. Underlying these techniques, however, is the assumption that there is an object or a specific and known point that can be triangulated. In CAP, the researcher uses various genres: literary, artistic, scientific, often blurring the boundaries between

them. According to CAP, there are more perspectives to perceive and learn about the world. Therefore, we are not triangulating but crystallising – this is what I call the postmodern deconstruction of triangulation” (Richardson, Adams St. Pierre 2009: 462), which is expressed by the fact that “the relevance of a postmodern text would not be symbolised by a triangle – a rigid, permanent and two-dimensional object – but by a crystal that combines symmetry and matter with an infinite variety of crystals, a multiplicity of dimensions, and points of view. Crystals grow and change, but they are not amorphous. It is possible to look through a crystal as through a prism, it reflects what is on the other side, other colours, patterns are created. What we see depends on the angle at which we look, the angle of the light reflection. In the CAP texts we move from plane geometry to a theory of light in which light can be a wave and a particle” (Richardson, Adams St. Pierre 2009: 462). Four criteria help with evaluating CAP ethnography:

1. Substantive content. Does the article contribute to a better understanding of social reality? Does the author demonstrate a particular theoretical perspective? Does the article appear “true”, i.e. is it a plausible representation of the cultural, social, individual or collective meaning of “reality”?
2. Aesthetic value. Is the article satisfying in an aesthetic manner? Does the text have an artistic form or does it constitute a whole? Is it not boring?
3. Reflexivity. How did the author’s subjectivity affect both the creation of the text and the text itself? Does the author follow ethical standards of knowing and talking about the subjects?
4. Impact. Does the article affect me intellectually or emotionally? Does it result in creating new questions and a desire to write? Does it inspire me to use new research techniques or to take action? (Richardson, Adams St. Pierre 2009: 464–465).

According to Ruth Wodak, Historical Discourse Analysis remains faithful to the general assumptions of Critical Discourse Analysis, which places it within the framework of Critical Theory. It is characterised by theoretical triangulation, which, according to Wodak, in HDA research is implemented through the concept of a four-level context. In this case we have the following levels of context: “[...] the immediate linguistic, textual context (co-text); the inter-textual and inter-discursive relationships between utterances, texts, speech genres, discourses; the extra-linguistic social/sociological variables and institutional frameworks of particular situational contexts (Middle Range Theories); the broader social, political and historical context of discursive actions (Grand Theories)” (Wodak 2008: 193). Violetta Kopyńska describes the various stages of the analysis as follows. “The initial level of contextual analysis, the so-called ‘internal’ level, is most indicative of the interdisciplinarity of discourse analysis [...]. The second level of analysis provides a triangulation of researchers and/or methods, theories and/or data [...] at this stage the focus shifts from individual ‘texts’ or parts of texts (units of analysis) to a group of these ‘texts’ [...] it is [...] about the search for connections with other texts (intertextuality)”

(Kopińska 2017: 187). Intertextuality allows reconstructing discourse that enables the search for a relationship between other discourses – interdiscursivity. According to Kopińska, using triangulation of researchers, methods, theories or data makes it possible to “launch” new areas that may come from other scientific disciplines. The third and fourth level of context means interpreting the discourse in a socio-political-historical and theoretical context, which involves drawing on theories from various scientific disciplines.

In the following text, using one Irish primary school as an example, I will show what the daily standard work of teachers with so-called “problem pupils” from lower social groups looks like.

I will add that the collected research material will be confronted in the last part of the text with Antonina Gurycka’s theory of educational errors, Herbert Blumer’s concept of “nonsymbolic-symbolic” interactionism in order to show the “reproduction methodologies” and forms of the work of teachers as “sowers of violence” and students as “victims of the system”.

Disciplining “infants”

Let us take a look at what dominates the activities of 4–5 year olds at school. The first thing that catches the eye and ears are the teacher’s commands, spoken in a strongly raised voice: “Sit down! Everyone in their place. Move the chair to the desk. Feet together, flat on the floor. Place your hands evenly on the table. We work hard and in silence”. The class is divided into several 4-person desks, with various educational games being carried out at each desk. When desks are swapped we have a moment of chaos, student bodies can’t stand being seated. “Luckily” the teacher is there. She stops the running/playing children. She seats them firmly in place and loudly, with an angry face, asks the question: “What are the rules? What are the rules?”. The frightened children remain silent and only after a moment say, “No running”. In summary, it can be stated that the teacher spends most of the time disciplining pupils in various ways in order to correct their behaviour. Teaching constitutes a marginal issue here.

Working in the first grade class (5–6 year olds) differs little from the zero grades, with the children sitting in pairs at tables, between which they move after doing a task. The difference consists only in the amount of more material to absorb. In this case, the bodies are already after two years of training, fidgeting mercilessly, but will generally sit at the desks from task to task. The teacher’s interventions are directed more towards getting the student to work on tasks. The problem is that at this stage of education, sitting relatively still in the correct posture is not enough. You still have to not only actively participate in the classroom work, but also achieve concrete, i.e. satisfactory, results. Pupils under my care as a support teacher (included in the support programme) are often far from what you would expect. For this reason,

the teacher often shouts at them, with an indignant, disappointed, or simply angry face, that they have either done too little or wrong. I have stood up for them on several occasions, sometimes looking meaningfully or nodding with disbelief on my face, with the message: “What do you think you’re doing?”. Sometimes I would defend them verbally, asking for more time, or I would sit down and help with the tasks myself. The teacher was clearly annoyed by my comments and interjections. Eventually, she came up with the idea that I should regularly be in the corridor for most of the lesson, posting students’ work on the walls.

Distinguished lady from New Zealand

A lady playing the piano, a very elegant and neat teacher (straight as a ruler, serious, and relentlessly consistent). That year she taught a class of third graders (8–9 year olds). At this point I have to mention that in this school the teacher teaches one class all year round, teaching all subjects from 8.30 am to 1 pm for the younger classes, and until 2 pm for the fifth and sixth grades. After a year there is a rotation and the teacher gets a different class, e.g. the teacher teaches 4-year-old infants, then after a year he or she gets 12-year-old sixth graders – and so every year teaches a different class. Homework in the younger grades is always given at the beginning of class in all subjects, in a specially designated notebook. After the class and its completion, it must be signed by the parent and brought to the teacher for review the following day.

Basically, nothing out of the ordinary happened, just two students forgot to do their homework and that was it. The teacher is angry, and she does not hide it. She first makes the students stand up and publicly humiliates them in front of their peers (several epithets concerning their laziness and intellectual capacity in the context of coping with their homework): “You see, they haven’t done their homework again. What should I do with them?”. The question is by no means rhetorical. And we know that hitting is not allowed (a little haggling by the hair, by the ear, or tugging, a ruler or even tearing and throwing a notebook – this is not an option, as the pupil cannot be touched), so the question is very much on point. There must be punishment. After a while, the lady calls me out and reinforces the stigma and tension with the statement: “Well, Adam, they didn’t do their homework again”. And she waits for me to scold them. She then suggests that she will immediately send a pupil to ask the Principal into the classroom. The tension is rising. The children start to get scared, they have tears in their eyes. When the Principal enters the classroom – they start crying. Sadistic building of tension through the various stages of humiliation until the climax when the Principal comes in. A masterpiece – not a single blow, resulting in two battered kids.

After a Mass to prepare the sixth grade for Confirmation, the teacher, horribly disgusted, reports on the outrageous behaviour of Craig, Dylan, and Tegan. The

entire staff room falls silent and listens. The teacher, with a lot of indignation and surprise in her voice, says: They were moving all the time, they couldn't sit still, they behaved like wild animals. She imitates these "wild movements", mocking the lack of control and composure. Constantly stating that she doesn't understand it. Well, how can that be. To my remark that it's simply a different body culture or boredom and over-saturation with the subject of the confirmation itself, she doesn't seem to understand what I'm saying. Interestingly, reinforcements were pulled for the rehearsal in the church: all possible teachers. An allocation of the most suspicious individuals was made. And this didn't help at all. The lads did not disappoint, they destroyed the Mass. And the lady walks around the room and doesn't understand why.

The situation I described above is a typical situation showing the distance/gap between the teacher (in our school mainly recruited from the well-educated and well-off middle class, from outside the neighbourhood where the school was located and on a "fat" full-time budget) and the pupils, who are typical residents of the neighbourhood, i.e. the children of unemployed or working class parents, often employed on junk contracts. Certain student behaviours did not fit into the class cognitive horizon of the teachers, brought up in completely different worlds. Sometimes I got the impression that the only contact with the student's world was when teachers drove their cars through the neighbourhoods they inhabited on their way to school.

Roisin's petrification

Roisin, whenever she was sent out of class to do maths exercises with me (along with a group of four other sixth graders), sat reasonably still. When I asked her if she would do some assignments with us, she replied every time for four months that she wouldn't, because what was the point. However, she always wanted to sit with us, as she preferred this to sitting in a classroom. I had a kind of *deal* with her: she doesn't bother us, and I don't send her back to class.

Why am I writing about her? Probably because there was something about her that I can't forget and probably also because she embodies the fruitlessness of my efforts. During the few months we have known each other, I have not been able to get through to her in any way. In fact, I basically didn't manage to talk to her at all. I failed to engage her in any form of cooperation or even conversation (apart from simply sitting next to us). I can't be sure, but I believe that over these few months of daily meetings she said maybe a total of 10–20 words.

More than once, I have wondered: What has happened here? Eight years of primary school and such a wall, such a concrete wall. An overwhelming feeling that it is too late – something has long since been done. Something I didn't take part in, but the likes of me did, the ones she doesn't trust. How did they lose her trust? What did they do to her? Why is she silent, constantly silent, distinctively silent,

sadly silent? Where does she wander with her unseeing eyes? There was nothing I could do but agree with her that she would be with us. Sit right next to us, although at the same time as if in another, distant world. Just waiting... It wasn't until later that I found out what kind of daily punishment she and John share.

John and Conor

John has always sought confrontation. Bashing and humiliating weaker colleagues was the standard. Disrupting lessons, regularly "beating" nerds listening to the teacher, or verbal taunts towards the teacher. If only the teachers had a disadvantage (e.g. obesity, being single), they stood no chance against John. Because I was gentle with the students (zero aggressive), as a guy John gave me the nickname "faggot". John's real challenge was a high-profile fight with a leader of another sixth grade named Craig, and of course provoking a teacher. I pacified the uninteresting clash between John and Craig after the first few blows, which saddened the audience (almost all the students were there). Far more interesting was the attack on me. John was an extremely intelligent beast and had planned everything. Due to the fact that I am much bigger than he is, he called for the help of two buddies and so they got to me. They started by trying to hit me with kicked basketballs. I replied to the attack, so they gave up. After a moment, they came up with the idea of "knocking me on the head" with backpacks. I think they had already reached my end, because I overpowered John quite violently, undercutting him, and once he was lying on his stomach, I twisted his arm and pinned him to the ground with my knee. His colleagues were gone before I knew it. John quickly calmed down, so I let him go. He threatened me a bit that I would be fired for this behaviour and went home.

Conor. He was probably the best example of how the body can fail to adapt to school training. Skinny, small and extremely offensive. Whenever something bad happened at school, the first thing they always did was to check where Conor was. Our paths have crossed twice. The first time I saw Conor jumping on the only black classmate in the school. He pinned him to the ground and began to beat him. Just for sport. I stood up, grabbed him by his sweatshirt and pulled him off his victim. He squirmed a little, calmed down after a while and with wild satisfaction showed a slight redness on his neck, allegedly caused by my intervention. He claimed that the zip of his sweatshirt scratched his neck, so he will tell the Principal that I hit him, and of course they will suspend me.

The second situation was more serious. The teacher asked me to stay alone with the students in the classroom for two minutes and she went to the toilet. Conor, who has always been good at making the most of opportunities, came up with the idea of a little battle in the classroom. He used the hated Irish language dictionaries, little hand-held "bricks", as weapons. The teacher's return to the classroom has not cooled Conor's enthusiasm. Instead, it automatically made Conor the main perpetrator of

the event. I don't even know when the text messages were sent. After a while there was support from the neighbouring class, then the Counsellor joined in and shortly afterwards the Principal. The teacher shouted first, followed by the Counsellor's scream which was indescribable (such things have to be seen with your own eyes to be believed). I was shocked that a creature of 150 cm in height and a petite stature could scream like that. The Principal, on the other hand, did not shout. In a calm, emotionally washed out, straight forward voice, she informed the pupil about the possible consequences (it was usually sufficient to exercise her main prerogative of calling the parents to the school). During the break, I "caught" the Counsellor. She was eating her breakfast with stoic calm, less than a few minutes after the described incident. I had to comment that what they did to Conor was pure verbal violence. She looked at me like I was a moron, banged on for several minutes about how bad my approach to students was, accused me of trying to befriend them or treat them like colleagues. She then recalled a maxim that she follows in her work, and which ensures that she is successful: "No smile before Christmas" – Adam. That's it!

I came into physical contact with a student three times: separated John and Craig, overpowered John, and pulled Conor. Three interventions cost me three conversations with the Principal. During the first one it was interesting to hear a comment about physical contact, I heard that in school we do not recommend any touching of students. If they are fighting each other, we get in between them and that's it, (this was incidentally the reason I separated John and Craig, because two teachers were afraid to push in and separate the two bullies, you could get hit in the face). To make sure I got the message right, the Principal pointed to the two maintenance workers painting the fence, saying that sometimes they may curse, kick the fence, if they lose their temper and the job doesn't get done. Much higher standards are required of us, the teachers. If I can't live up to them, I can always paint fences where I can afford to be out of control. This very statement was quite significant to me, screaming at a student did not come across as a lack of self-control, it was simply a "didactic" measure. The second talk was also very informative. I was prohibited to have any contact with Conor. Conor was also banned from attending the extra-curricular activities I was running. I was told not to enter into any relation with him on the school grounds, and preferably to avoid him in general. The Principal said outright that Conor had parents reacting very harshly to any of their son's problems at school. Parents who give credence to their son's words, (a few months earlier this led to the parents forcing a two-week suspension of a P.E. teacher who allegedly offended Conor in class – later a student who witnessed the incident testified that Conor was lying). In terms of John, I was told that due to the "pathological" nature of the family we would wait (the suggestion was made that John's father drinks and likes to hit him) until the issue dies down. John won't say anything to his parents because he would get a hit by his father. That's all. After several reprimands from the Principal, a pattern began to emerge of the school's relationship with pupils depending on the type of parents. The amount of violence

towards a child that teachers allow themselves is recalibrated according to the “power” of the parents. Pupils from a “weak”, “vulnerable” family, with problems (alcohol, divorce, problems with the law), economically or culturally poor, get hit more. At school, almost no one is able to defend them, and at home they additionally get a “beating” from their parents. Parents getting involved or standing up for their child or being able to harm the school (teachers) in any way, or even having the competence to enter into an argument or dispute with the school, ensure that their children receive better/different treatment.

Allocation of undesirable entities – class cleansing

It is worth looking at how to clear the classroom of disruptive students. In this case we have several mechanisms that are working well. They constitute a part of the teaching process: whether in the form of activities to correct differences or as part of a system of penalties and rewards. Based on my own observations, I can detail the following punishments: removing one from the seat in the class to another seat, removing from the class to another class (very often sixth-graders were relegated to classes of four-year-olds because it was an extra dimension of punishment – uncomfortable chairs and always a comment that the intellectual level was more suited to groups of just those 4–5-year-olds), removing from school (suspension), transferring to another school. Didactic removal from the classroom has always taken the form of various extra-curricular activities, for example, sports, art (painting a mural in the school courtyard), anything related to outreach programmes (cookery club, yoga, maths classes, etc.). Once a class had been “cleansed” of suspicious elements, it appeared to be safe to work with.

Golden Principles¹

Here I would like to recall the Golden Principles of the school as a kind of essence of the school’s discourse. This is an extremely interesting form of persuasion (colonisation) towards/to the values distributed in the school. There are seven golden principles, and I will list them one by one: (1) Be Gentle, (2) Be Kind and Helpful, (3) Be Honest, (4) Be Friendly, (5) Work Hard (6) Listen to Others, (7) Look After Property. Children (pupils) following these principles and applying them without

¹ I am unfamiliar with the origins of the Positive Behaviour Code, which constitutes the school’s *Mission Statement*, with the Golden Principles at its heart. It is important that, when enrolling a child in school, the parent must sign an agreement/declaration that he/she is aware of the principles in force at the school, declares that he/she will help “implement them and agrees to accept the penalties that his/her child will suffer if the rules are not followed.

exception were rewarded with the award of two stars per day. For every twenty stars received, a small prize was awarded. When they reached a level of eighty stars, they were awarded a Bronze Certificate. A Silver one at 160, and Gold at 240 stars. Certificates and awards were regularly given during school assemblies. Children who struggled to follow the principles were given an initial warning and reminded about following the principles. If there was no improvement, they received a yellow card, then a red card, for which they consequently lost one star. Similarly, they could lose the other one. At each stage, students were reminded to make the right choices and were always given the chance to improve. If, on a given day, a pupil lost both stars and, at the same time, the behaviour did not improve, he or she was moved to a different desk in the class during the lesson. If this did not help, the pupil could be moved to another class and there was a need to inform the parents (only at this level). For regular non-compliance, a pupil could be suspended either in or out of school, with the obligation to complete work set by the teacher.

The Gentle Phantasm

I would like to briefly examine one of the principles. Classrooms, walls in corridors, and school staircases are full of pictures of a baby cuddling a fluffy puppy with a large title “Be Gentle” or a picture of a well-cared for, clean, gentle hand touching the palm of a newborn’s hand. Be sensitive, be gentle, be sterile clean. Each morning, the Principal additionally uses the megaphone to announce the main rule for that week. If we juxtapose this with the perpetually unwashed, tough, rough-edged neighbourhood boys, a kind of semiotic distance is created. All the more so when one additionally realises that being a tough guy in the neighbourhood from which the school’s students were recruited was an adaptively necessary way of behaving. In such an environment, sensitivity simply stands for weakness. Paradoxically, urging students to be “soft” may be socially dangerous for them. One can imagine such a gentle teenager being let out in the evening (to refer to the Gdańsk environment) in Nowy Port or Orunia Dolna. Thus, resistance constitutes not only a fight for one’s habitus dignity, but also for one’s health or life.

The case of John and Roisin

John was a terribly handsome “rascal”, one of those that breaks women’s hearts, tall, athletic, the best footballer in the school, in his class – the undisputed leader and of course also one of the “worst” students. Roisin was the opposite of John: obese, unattractive, kept to herself. Interestingly, they have always stuck together on one issue, and that is their stubborn resistance to everything the school required of them. Accordingly, of the pupils in the entire sixth grade, they received one common

punishment, which boiled down to the fact that every morning, as soon as classes started, they set off through the school corridors with a set of rubbish bags and, one by one, emptied all the rubbish bins throughout the school (in classrooms, toilets, corridors, etc.), then, passing through the school yard, where they were seen by all the pupils, they dumped the rubbish in the main rubbish bin. To this day, I can't forget a situation when one of the schoolteachers came to class as a substitute. John started disrupting the class as standard, and the teacher pacified him with a few questions along the lines of: "Tell the class what you do with the various pieces of rubbish you collect every day around the school? Do you need to segregate them and how?" John was no longer disrupting the class, he remained silent, with his head lowered. At the same time, two pupils selected from the same class as the "best" students, Grainne and Sinead, handled autistic children on a daily basis after several days of training. Two professional paths. Two life projects. Selected by teachers. Regular training, providing experience as well as acceptance of one's potential future profession. Interestingly, in the case of our "school waste collector" we have a manufactured "socially secure" Ericksonian sense of inferiority, secured by the trained legitimisation of their inferior lives, profession. The issue of taming a difficult (unpleasant) "job" is very interesting here. Both working with rubbish and working with an autistic child takes a fair amount of getting used to. Rubbish smells, it can stain, it generally arouses disgust and rather the shame associated with doing the job of a waste collector. But after a few days, weeks, people start to get used to it. Similarly, time is required to get used to working with children with autism spectrum disorders. A range of often psychotic, aggressive behaviours (scratching, pinching, hitting, biting, etc.), various stereotypes, non-standard play, lack of eye contact, inability to interact, etc. require both time and experience to accept, to be able to behave appropriately during such situations.

Analysis and interpretation of the research in the context of the violence-help phenomenon

I will start by juxtaposing the results of my research with Gurycka's study concerning educational errors. Summarising her research, the author points to several issues worth citing. Firstly, the dominance of the errors of aggression, rigorism, as well as halting behaviour and indifference: "Indeed, it is worrying to find repeatedly in [...] studies, conducted after all on various populations, that in the course of their teaching and educational activities teachers mainly commit errors such as aggression, rigorism, and halting activity (a total of 75% of all errors!)." (Gurycka 1990: 183). Secondly, Gurycka suggests that the occurrence of acute errors is not accidental: "Sometimes the syndrome of the most common errors: aggression, rigorism, halting student activity is perhaps simply a "way" of making one's own actions effective. By attacking and controlling, external effects are achieved more

quickly: peace, order, subordination, etc.” (Gurycka 1990: 184). Therefore, in this case we are dealing with aggression and rigour not as a “work accident”, not as a situation in which the teacher has made an educational error (resulting from a difficult situation), but as an axis of the teacher’s methodology for working with more difficult young people and children. As a way of working, in the difficult task of disciplining the class, which provides, as Gurycka puts it, achieving calmness, order in the classroom with compliant students, enabling the planned lesson to be fulfilled. This is an extremely valuable insight from Gurycka, especially when we juxtapose it with my research findings, indicating a certain methodical approach of teachers to disciplining students: regurgitation used verbal aggression, shouting, rigorism.

According to Gurycka, an educational error constitutes “[...] such disruptive behaviour of the educator which has an adverse effect on the immediate functioning and/or development of the learner...”. (Gurycka 1990: 31). In contrast, the optimal form of interaction is the model of mutual functioning: “[...] the educator, guided by a specific intention (the educational goal), tries to include the educator in his or her line of activity, but, respecting the subjective properties of the educator, who also produces his or her own line of activity, strives for a common programme of action” (Gurycka 1990: 25). The author refers to this structure as joint action, adding that only when it is established, “[...] it is permissible to assume that both interaction partners can achieve control over the course of the interaction and thus feel responsible for it, which guarantees their joint activity, a sense of commitment to the tasks and a better, among other things due to this, level of their performance” (Gurycka 1990: 25). At such a view of appropriate interaction, the role of the educator is to prevent the interaction from being disrupted or ultimately broken. There are educational errors when a teacher (more broadly an educator) “provides experiences of faulty social functioning, takes away self-confidence, or teaches passivity” (Gurycka 1990: 8). If one were to apply what has been said above to the research material, what we have here is a situation where a teacher, in response to a pupil’s difficult behaviour (fighting, damaging school property) or as a punishment (e.g. for lack of homework) or for motivational-disciplinary purposes (lack of the required attention in class, lack of adequate results), deliberately, methodically breaks down the interaction between oneself and the pupil (by shouting, humiliating words, calling in the help of a counsellor or the principal in order to “pin the pupil harder”). These forms of restoring order, of disciplining, deliberately broke, disrupted the interaction in order to break up difficult behaviour, to call people to order, or to achieve set goals (e.g. meeting the core curriculum).

Educational errors are mainly located in the interaction between the educator and the learner. Whereas one of the main features of this interaction is the dominant position of the educator. That is because, on the one hand, we have the educator, who “is the author of his actions, solves the problems that arise, generally makes the decisions concerning the pupil. The educator selects the objectives and means

of action [...]” (Gurycka 1990: 12). In addition, the educator “strengthens, beyond the rules of the role, the conviction of own superiority over the pupil, which is prompted by representing oneself as the one who knows more than the pupil, who is more mature than the pupil, and who is called upon to exert impact and thus to draw the pupil into the orbit of own actions, intentions, and goals” (Gurycka 1990: 12). And on the other side of the interaction we have the learner who, in the name of an own sense of agency, also wishes to pursue “an own line of activity. [...] The coercive power generally wielded by the educator causes [...] the child to become passive, compliant, and his subjective orientation to be disrupted. [...] when the coercive power of the educator increases, there is a growing sense of enslavement in the child, which must arouse resistance and a desire for liberation (reactance). The stronger the subjective orientation of the educator formed through previous experience, the greater the resistance will be” (Gurycka 1990: 13). Hence, we are dealing with a situation of immanent conflict set in this interaction. And according to Gurycka, educational errors are born against this background.

According to Gurycka, the consequences of educational errors are disturbed and/or broken interaction, a pejorative evaluation of the educational situation by the pupil, the generalisation of a pejorative evaluation, halting, disruption of development or giving it an unfavourable direction, undesirable changes, and disturbances in his personality.

As we remember, Michael Foucault begins his work *Discipline and Punish* with an interesting question: Why has the execution that was an indispensable part of punishment disappeared, and what has replaced it? My question is almost identical: Now that physical punishment has disappeared from schools, what came into its place? This question can be rephrased as follows: How do contemporary teachers deal with discipline and implementing the *curriculum* in the context of cultural difference? When I think of managing cultural difference, I am referring to the ways in which students from so-called disadvantaged backgrounds (economically and culturally), i.e. simply from lower social groups, are processed (“chipped stone”). In our context, one could ask how the first part of the violence-help category is implemented? The concept of non-symbolic interaction, which we borrow from Blumer, will be helpful in solving this problem. According to Blumer, we have two levels (two forms) of social interaction in human society, namely: “non-symbolic interaction” and “symbolic interaction.” Thus: (...) Non-symbolic interaction occurs when an individual directly responds to another person’s action without interpreting it. For example, reflex responses, as in the case of a boxer who automatically raises his hand to counter a punch, or when we immediately and unreflexively respond to each other’s messages expressed by body language or expression and tone of voice (...). Symbolic interaction involves the interpretation of the action of both parties. Typical reactions at the symbolic level take place when they seek to understand each other’s actions” (Blumer 2007: 10–12).

If, in difficult situations, symbolic interaction fails or is ineffective, the teacher uses non-symbolic interaction. Instead of persuasion, we have hurtful name-calling, reinforced by shouting, with no time to interpret, to think through an appropriate defence or resistance strategy. That is, an effect similar to a blow, after which the body froze, as if shrinking into itself. The child was terrified, scared, and crying. Let us add the fact that the child was beaten by the person who was a source of authority, defining what was right and wrong. All these behaviours are found today in a situation in which, for disciplinary purposes (“upbringing”), the teacher screams, shouts (often using a limited code) to the student. In this case, it is not just about the strength of the voice, but about the position the teacher takes, his face, his more aggressive facial expressions (an angry face, an angry look symbolising attack, aggression, normally always preceding a physical attack). It is interesting to note that the main source of this violence is women (feminisation of the school), and the victims are mainly boys.

Conclusion

The juxtaposition of the phenomenon of violence-help with Gurycka’s theory of educational errors, Blumer’s non-symbolic interactionism, and the material from own research, shows a certain tendency in the work of schools and teachers. Here we have the methodologies of reproduction, where the element of violence clearly comes to the fore, that are dominant at school. Teachers adopt children and adolescents to the discourse of the school (to society) “by force”, “violating” cultural difference, using violent (verbal, physical violence) and elaborate disciplinary methodologies.

I would like to conclude by asking the question: to what extent are the phenomena described in my research universal? The interpretive matrix described above was developed in Poland, the research was conducted in Ireland, while the logic of these tensions seems to be more universal and is probably appropriate to the construction of modern (Foucault) and capitalist societies (with strong stratification). Therefore, the school observed in one city in Ireland constitutes only a terrain for observing the mechanism of “non-symbolic” interactions securing the field for “symbolic” pedagogical actions, which may be a structural feature of public education in a situation of endemic social inequalities.

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Summary

Violence-help as a pedagogical category. About the violent role of the teacher.

The research described in the article was carried out in a primary school in one of the cities in Ireland. In this school, the author worked as a support teacher who was a representative of one of the educational support programmes. It shows how schoolteachers to deal with students from disadvantaged social environments (reproducing methodologies) in the context of the phenomenon of violence-help. The conclusion constitutes an attempt to evaluate these methodologies used when working with pupils.

Keywords

Violence-help, methods of reproduction, educational failures, the role of the teacher