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**INDEPENDENCE, DEMOCRACY, AND  
TRAINING IN BRAZILIAN ASSOCIATION  
OF EDUCATION DISCOURSE: 1927-1945**

Carlos Eduardo Vieira<sup>\*</sup>

**ABSTRACT**

We discuss the relations and semantic variations of a conceptual triad, namely independence, democracy, and the making of the Brazilian people. To achieve it, we analyze the Brazilian Association of Education (ABE) discourse, between 1927 and 1945. We show that discourse on the making of the Brazilian people was to consolidate nation-state, even though this making did not include fostering the people's political participation.

**Keywords:** Independence; Democracy; Making; Brazilian Education Association; Educational Discourse.

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## **INDEPENDÊNCIA, DEMOCRACIA E FORMAÇÃO NO DISCURSO DA ASSOCIAÇÃO BRASILEIRA DE EDUCAÇÃO: 1927-1945**

### **RESUMO**

Neste artigo nos propomos a discutir as relações e as variações semânticas da tríade conceitual independência, democracia e formação do povo brasileiro. Para isso, analisaremos o discurso enunciado pela Associação Brasileira de Educação (ABE), entre os anos de 1927 e 1945. Nas conclusões buscamos demonstrar que o discurso sobre a formação do povo brasileiro teve como um dos seus objetivos a consolidação do Estado-nação, todavia essa formulação não incluía a promoção da participação política da população.

**Palavras chaves:** Independência, Democracia, Formação, Associação Brasileira de Educação, Discurso Educacional.

## **INDEPENDENCIA, DEMOCRACIA Y FORMACIÓN EN EL DISCURSO DE LA ASOCIACIÓN BRASILEÑA DE EDUCACIÓN: 1927-1945**

### **RESUMEN**

En este artículo proponemos discutir las relaciones y las variaciones semánticas de la tríada conceptual independencia, democracia y formación del pueblo brasileño. Con este fin, analizaremos el discurso enunciado por la Asociación Brasileña de Educación (ABE), entre los años 1927 y 1945. En las conclusiones buscamos demostrar que el discurso sobre la formación del pueblo brasileño tenía como uno de sus objetivos la consolidación del Estado-nación, sin embargo, esta formulación no incluía la promoción de la participación política de la población.

**Palabras clave:** Independencia, Democracia, Formación, Asociación Brasileña de Educación, Discurso educativo.

## **INDÉPENDANCE, DÉMOCRATIE ET FORMATION DANS LE DISCOURS DE L'ASSOCIATION BRÉSILIENNE DE L'ÉDUCATION: 1927-1945**

### **RÉSUMÉ**

Dans cet article, nous proposons de discuter des relations et des variations sémantiques de la triade conceptuelle indépendance, démocratie et formation du peuple brésilien. À cette fin, nous analyserons le discours de l'Association brésilienne de l'éducation (ABE), entre les années 1927 et 1945. Dans les conclusions, nous cherchons à démontrer que le discours sur la formation du peuple brésilien avait pour objectif la consolidation de l'État-nation, mais cette formulation n'incluait pas la promotion de la participation politique de la population.

**Mots clés:** Indépendance, Démocratie, Formation, Association brésilienne de l'éducation, Discours éducatif.

## INTRODUCTION<sup>1</sup>

As time draws near for celebrating the Bicentenary of the Independence of Brazil, different academic communities have been mobilized to reflect about the legacy of the events of 1822, and above all, about its past and present impacts on the different spheres of social life.

This reflection has taken place in an especially complex international scenario, which has - on the one hand - put a strain on economic trends, multilateral political agreements and communication technologies that favor the globalization of markets, cultural interchanges, and consequently, giving new significance to the concept of the State-Nation, which originated at the end of the 18th Century. On the other hand, resurgence of the nationalist discourse and feeling has been observed in different regional and national contexts, thus making it feasible for the ascension of xenophobic political groups, defenders and promoters of stricter territorial, cultural and political control. In the name of this national interest, physical and symbolic barriers are raised, which surround the movement of populations with deleterious effects, notably towards refugees from wars and hunger.

In view of these broader questions, we intend to contribute to the debates that involve the Bicentenary of the Independence of Brazil, with the educational discourse as the aim. This is because the concept of formation of the population since the process of Independence, has been understood to be a fundamental factor of mediation to produce in the Brazilian population, the feeling of belonging to the project of construction of the National State. We understand formation - whether this is promoted by public or private agents, in school or non school environments - as the action of a social pedagogy that aimed to forge in the Brazilian population the civic-patriotic spirit.

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This manner of thinking, which articulates the consolidation of the State-Nation and formation of the population, remained present in the Brazilian intellectual and political scenario over the course of the 200 years of experience of the National State. Nevertheless, if the presence of these concepts and their connections were a constant in both the Imperial and Republican periods, their meanings changed substantially. These concept, arising from the political discourse and marked by long duration, are concise examples to highlight the historicity of language, its semantic variations, and above all, the appropriations and use of these terms in different spaces of public debate<sup>2</sup>.

Furthermore, we included a third aspect in the design of problematization that we proposed: the concept of democracy. The following question motivated us to include this concept: what type of relationship was established, within the scope of discourse about the formation of the population, between the construction of a sovereign state and political participation of the population in the process of affirmation of the National State? In other terms, we asked: in which manner did the so-called and alleged civic and patriotic education linked to formation of the so-called national conscience, include or exclude the relations between the State and civil society, government and governed and/or ruling elite and the Brazilian population?

Briefly, we proposed to discuss the relations and semantic variations of the conceptual triad of independence, democracy and formation. In methodological terms, we adopted analysis of the language practiced within the scope of educational discourse, and in this exam we mobilized concepts such as the language game, normative, antithetical-asymmetrical concepts arising from the contributions of linguistic contextualism and history of the concepts.

The analysis of language, especially the normative concepts of which it

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<sup>2</sup> Daniel Tröhler, in the *Curriculum history or the educational construction of Europe in the long nineteenth century* (2016), reaffirmed the relations between the process of “mass schooling”, between the end of the 18th and the first half of the 19th Century, and the formation and consolidation of the national states in Europe. All of the texts mentioned in this space of footnotes will be referenced at the end of this article.

is composed, is justified as we understand that the historical experience, to a large extent, presents itself for interpretation, based on the concepts in circulation in distinct periods of time, languages and intellectual traditions. In this sense, it is imperative for us to affirm that - inspired by Koselleck - we understand that every concept is a word, but not every word is a concept. Concepts “are therefore, vocabularies in which a multiplicity of meanings are concentrated [...] A word contains possibilities of meanings, a concept assembles different totalities of meaning. A concept may be clear, but it must be polysemic” (KOSELLECK, 2006, p. 109).

In empirical terms, we elected the discourse stated by the Brazilian Association of Education (ABE), between the years 1927 and 1945. This concerns a period that is over 100 years away from the events directly related to the process of Independence. This temporal distancing is, however, justified since the language and its linguistic structures are more lasting than the events. This is why, “in addition to their singular application, concepts have varied possibilities of repetitive application” (KOSELLECK, 2009, s/p). Therefore, we could analyze the debates associated with the questions of sovereignty and formation of the National State in different time intervals of history, relating the semantic variations and uses of these concepts to changes in the ways of thinking, feeling and living in the social world.

In the time frame of this reflection - between the years 1920 and 1940 - we will examine sources from two national events organized by ABE: the First National Conference on Education (ICNE), of 1927; and the IX (9th) Brazilian Congress on Education, of 1945 (IX CBE). We opted for studying these events, held in Curitiba and Rio de Janeiro, respectively, because they represented two time intervals in which we could clearly highlight the problems with which we are dealing in this article. The sources used are documents of different type, that bear witness to the positions assumed by ABE and the debates held in their national events.

## **BRAZILIAN ASSOCIATION OF EDUCATION: AUTHORIZED PLACE FOR MAKING STATEMENTS**

Various researchers have investigated the ABE and the meeting promoted by the entity. The ICNE, of 1927, was the conference that has been most studied, with the following being examples of the studies conducted: Ferreira (1988), Schmidt (1997), Galter (2002), Vieira (2007), Vieira and Bona Jr. (2007) and Vieira and Faria (2019). Among the texts that invested in other conferences and/or in the work of the ABE, we may point out the following: Carvalho (1998), who approached the first eight years of existence of the ABE, based on problematization of the notions of hygiene, morals and work conveyed in the discourse of ABE; Linhares (2006), who reflected on spots and Physical Education at the ABE meetings, between 1925-1935; Strang (2008), who discussed the behavior of Catholic intellectuals, between the creation of ABE and their rupture with the association in the 1930s; Marques (2008), who analyzed the patriotic discourse of ABE during World War II; Valério (2013), who problematized the question of secondary education between 1928 and 1942; Vieira (2017), who invested in analysis of the educational discourse conveyed in the 13 conferences of the ABE, between 1927 and 1967; and Vieira (2019), who analyzed the IX CBE, held in 1945, when the concept of democratic education was discussed.

In the same way as the cited authors, we considered the national events of the ABE as privileged times for analyzing the educational discourse, since these spaces assembled both recognized actors and personalities without notoriety in the public scene. Nevertheless, although in different position, these linguistic authors interacted in the process of elaborating a language game - understood as being a peculiar manner of speaking, who had a tacitly accepted vocabulary and rules of pronunciation available to them - which characterized and defined the main questions being disputed in the process of formation of



the educational field in Brazil<sup>3</sup>.

The intellectuals assembled at the ABE, created in 1924, in the city of Rio de Janeiro, reaffirmed the understanding, current in the Brazilian intellectual scenario since the second quarter of the 19th Century, of the mission of educated elites in the formation of the National Consciousness. In school, this civic consciousness would - at all its levels, have its privileged place of formation, disseminating expensive behaviors and feeling to the ruling elites.

The foundation of ABE was the result of approximation of the intellectuals to a manifested objective: to make the nation aware of the educational question, which according to the understanding of this group, was relegated to the banished by the Brazilian State, both in the Imperial and Republican period. The ABE, in their statute, in the 1st article, declared:

The purpose of the Brazilian Education Association is to promote the dissemination and improvement of education in Brazil, in all of its branches, by encouraging the initiatives that could more efficiently attain these objectives (Statute of ABE, 1925).

Affirmation of the country as an independent and sovereign nation, according to the widely shared interpretation by the intellectuality engaged at ABE, would not be fully accomplished without investments in education, which transformed formation of the population into a strategic question for the production of the cultural amalgam that would allow consolidation, not only of the State, but above all, of the State-Nation. This would represent the synthesis between the territory, laws, government, language and culture of the people.

In its first years, the ABE restricted its actions to the public space at the

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<sup>3</sup> Pierre Bourdieu's concept of field was not made up of a central Heuristic device in this analysis, however, when we use the expression, we are supported by Bourdieu's idea that defines the field as a social space of relationships, in which the criteria of denomination, classification and social distinction are established/imposed. Bourdieu emphasized the relations between the fields, but also supported the relative autonomy of these spaces. For an analysis of the main concepts of Bourdieu, see *The Symbolic Power* (1998).

Federal Capital. However, as from 1927, the entity sought to increase its intervention, when it began to organize events of national scope, which followed up to 1967, totaling 13 meetings<sup>4</sup>.

**Chart 1** - Events organized by ABE (1927-1967).

YEAR	PLACE	TOPIC:
1927	Curitiba	Primary School
1928	Belo Horizonte	Secondary Education
1929	São Paulo:	Secondary, primary and professional schooling; sanitary education.
1931	Rio de Janeiro	Popular Education
1933	Niterói	Elaboration of the ante-project of national organization of education
1934	Fortaleza	General organization of education in the country
1935	Rio de Janeiro	Physical
1942	Goiânia	Primary education, especially of the population that lives in the rural area
1945	Rio de Janeiro	Concept of democratic education
1950	Rio de Janeiro	Suggestions for the Law of Guidelines and Bases of National Education (LDB).
1954	Curitiba	Financing the public education systems
1956	Salvador	The process of democratic education in the different grades of teaching and extra-school life.
1967	Rio de Janeiro	Education for the development of science and technology.

**Source:** Annals of CNEs (1927-1967), elaborated by the author.

The national events of the entity delineated a space of political, theoretical and institutional disputes and became places of dissemination, without precedent in the history of education in Brazil, in the first half of the 20th Century, of interpretations about the reality of education in Brazil, and

<sup>4</sup> In the sources, we found variation in the denomination of the national events of the ABE between National Conferences on Education and Brazilian Congresses on Education, with the denomination Conference prevailing in the 13 meetings. Nevertheless, the change in name did not change the format and objectives of the events. The literature has demonstrated that holding conferences directed towards discussing educational topics dated back to the last quarter of the 19th Century. For an analysis of these events in the Imperial period, among others, see Maria Helena Camara Bastos (2003), *As conferências Pedagógicas dos professores públicos primários do município da Corte: Permuta das luzes e Idéias (1873-1886)*; and José Gonçalves Gondra (2005), *Política e arte de superar-se: um estudo acerca das Conferências Pedagógicas na Corte Imperial*.

above all, of projects with a view to qualifying and dynamizing the formative processes in progress. These meetings also served to project the authority of an intelligentsia authorized to speak about the problems, and particularly about the goals and priorities of national education (VIEIRA, 2017, p.32).

According to Carvalho (1998),

the ABE would have been one of the most efficient instruments in the dissemination of European and North American pedagogical thought, and one of the most important - if not the center of coordination and debate for the study and solutions of educational problems [...]. Especially the National Conferences promoted by the association, approximating educators of all the States and assembling them in different centers of the country (p. 31).

The discussion promoted by the ABE exceeded the limits of pedagogical interest and of specialists in education, to be constituted of a strategic agenda for the affirmation of Brazil as a country in tune with the process of modernization that impacted different countries in all of the continents. The national events of the entity occurred at a time of intense discussion about the educational reforms that were being implemented in different Brazilian states. Moreover, it affirmed the desire of the ABE to organize a national system of teaching, to overcome the fragmentation and disarticulation of policies, teaching methods, curriculum and formative processes under way in the different states and regions of the country.

The intellectuals that directed the ABE considered primary school to be a privileged place in formation of the people, whereas it would disseminate values we would consider important to these illustrated elites.

[illegible]

In Figure 1, we highlight the terms stated with greater frequency, indicating some interpretative key words of this discourse. Analysis of the frequency of use of certain words does not allow definitive conclusions to be drawn, although this procedure would be a point of departure and an important index. In the center of the figure, we found the words education, school, national, teaching, professor, and pupil. These do not allow us to characterize the specificity of this discourse, because they are not frequent vocabularies in the educational discourse in different specialties and temporal periods. Nevertheless, in the peripheral layers of this main nucleus, we found terms that allow the characterization of this discourse, among which we point out: nation, homeland, morals, order, progress, hygiene, race, people, work, modern and science. These largely concerns terms that constitute that which we denominate normative concepts, responsible for the structure of the main group of meanings in circulation and in dispute in this game of language<sup>6</sup>.

<sup>6</sup> Games of language, according to the appropriation of linguistic contextualism of the so called theory, according to Wittgenstein, are situations of contextualized communication in time and space, and recorded in empirical sources, capable of being dealt with historically. The work of

The normative concepts, in contrast with ordinary terms, conform a group of words shared and valued as being imperative for expressing the way of thinking and speaking about a certain social, professional, political or religious group. These concepts, on the one hand, allow the perception and interpretation of the space of experience, and on the other hand, the elaboration of projects and horizons of expectation of those who say these words<sup>7</sup>.

## INTELLECTUALS, STATE AND FORMATION POLICIES

According to Miceli (2001) and Alonso (2002), between the end of the 19th Century and the years 1930, we found the gradual affirmation of the intellectual as a political agent in the Brazilian Public scene. Recognition of this protagonism demanded the production of an identity, mirrored in the image of the elites who were distinguished from those who traditionally were elites by birth and economic condition. Although elitism was associated with feelings of pride and distinction, it also generated the feeling of social mission in this group. Oliveira (1990, p.187), discussing the political behavior of intellectuals in Brazil, affirmed that:

irrespective of their class of origin, bachelor's or specialized degrees [the intellectuals] kept themselves occupied with thinking about Brazil and proposing means to obtaining national salvation. While working on the construction of collective consciences, the intellectuals, considered themselves imbued with a mission and sought to disseminate their proposals by mediating national aspirations and government policies.

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Wittgenstein, who inspired these formulations, is entitled *Philosophical Investigations* (1985).

<sup>7</sup> About the concepts of space of experience and horizon of expectations, see Reinhard Koselleck, *Futuro passado: contribuições à semântica dos tempos históricos* (2006), especially chapter: *Espaço de experiência e horizonte e de expectativa: duas categorias históricas*, p.305-329.

This feeling of having a mission led to the intellectuals becoming engaged in politics, by occupying several, valued institutional posts for making statements, among which we point out the following: the press, State (legislative, executive and judicial power), secondary and normal schools, universities, and cultural and scientific associations. In this sense, the creation of ABE is an example of these new pulpits created for echoing the voice of intellectuality which, based on a reformist rhetoric, engendered the discourse of modernity and modernization of the country that it had on the topic of formation of the people, making this one of its Archimedean points.

The topics discussed in the ABE and at its events, largely reflected the intention of the ABE intellectuals of interfering in the public education policies. Lourenço Filho, in a statement to the press, showed evidence of this view:

The national conferences on education must not and cannot be congresses of a technical or scientific nature. They must indeed be centers of study concerning a national policy on educational matters. They must be imbued with a deep social intention because this intention alone will explain and recommend them to governments and lead to gaining their support and confidence (ABE, News of IICNE, 1929).

From the pulpit of the ABE, the intellectuals criticized the lack of a national policy for education capable of standardizing the processes of formation, thus claiming intervention by the public power to resolve this lack. In this context, the State and especially the executive power, became the privileged interlocutors of the intellectuals, as they shared the belief in the civilizing role of the State as political and administrative agent, which was considered the only instrument capable of producing the intended intellectual and moral reform of the Brazilian population, at national level and in a short space of time. Vieira (2011), when analyzing the public behavior of the intellectuality linked to the field of Brazilian education, pointed out this belief in the “centrality of the State as political agent for effectuating the modern project

of social reform” (p.29).

In accordance with this appeal of the intellectuals in relation to the state power, we also observed the permanent action of the State and its governing groups in backing and financing the ABE, and thus, keeping it protected within the bounds of their political projects. In this relationship, we found moves by the federal government at different times, urging the ABE to draw up proposals for public policies, as may be verified on the occasion of IV CNE, in 1931; when Getúlio Vargas and Francisco Campos, President of the Republic and Minister of Education, respectively, in their manifestations at the opening of the event, asked the speakers to provide the government with the “happy formula”, the “Concept of education” of the new educational policy” (CARVALHO, 1998, p.380).

## THE CONCEPT OF INDEPENDENCE IN THE LANGUAGE GAME PRACTICED AT ICNE

The main objective of the ABE, as previously mentioned, was to discuss and propose alternatives for the national problems, based on investments in the area of education. This concerned the phenomenon of *educacionalization* which, as defined by Smeyers and Depaepe (2008), was characterized by the belief in education as the solution to different social problems. Mário Pinto Serva, active militant of the ABE, in an exemplary manner, manifested his view within the context of the 1920s:

The problem of education of the Brazilian people is the most national of all the problems. It is the major problem of national history. It is almost the only national problem, because generalized and broad education, of itself would naturally resolve all the other problems. It is the infrastructure of the collective organization (Annals, 1 CNE, 1927).

Among the most burning problems for the ABE leadership group,



resulting from the lack of investments in education, was the lack of national identity and consciousness of the people. For these intellectuals, there was a national State, but there was no nation. There were inhabitants of the territory, but there was no existence of a people with defined consciousness and identity.

The demographic dispersion, diversity of races, cultures, customs and new European migratory flow were factors mentioned as causes of this state of cultural and political fragmentation in the 1920s. The theses of the ABE Board of Directors, forwarded to guide the debate at ICNE, pointed out this intention of the governing group of the association to combat the breakdown of the country, based on a project of national scope, with a view to qualification and homogenization of the formative processes.

Four theses were presented by the Board of Directors, entitled: 1) National Unity: by literary culture, civic culture; moral culture; 2) Standardization of primary schooling, in its capital ideas; 3) The creation of normal high schools in different points of the country for pedagogical preparation; 4) The organization of national boards into corporations of technical, scientific and literary improvement (Annals, ICNE, 1927).

The theses indicated a project of formation imbued with the construction of national unity and regeneration of the people, by intermediary of standardizing school culture, legislation and the processes of teacher training. In this sense, the terms, uniformization, homogenization, standardization, focused different lines of argumentation, both in the theses of the Board of Directors and in those presented by the congress participants registered with ICNE<sup>8</sup>.

The topics of the nation, sovereignty, formation of national consciousness, which accompanied the reflections and formulations of Brazilian intellectuality throughout the 19th Century, assumed new political sense in the

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<sup>8</sup> At the ICNE of 1927, 113 theses were approved, and these comprised the documentation of the event, which are referenced as source of this study at the end of this text.



decade of the 1920s. Formation of the Republican citizen's consciousness, according to the leadership of ABE, depended on a program based on teaching of the homeland language, national history and geography, notions of hygiene and civic and patriotic education (CARVALHO, 1998, p. 225).

The lack of instruction of the people was pointed out as being one of the causes of the country being out of step in relation to the concert of modern nations. Therefore, education was not characterized as a right, but rather as an obligation of families, which the State would monitor, and if necessary, punish the infractors. The positivity inherent to the idea of universal primary education, defended by ABE, does not hide the authoritarian tone of the ABE discourse and the disqualifying representations attributed to the classes of the population. The intellectual elite working in the ABE was shown to make prodigious use of the verb *oblige*, adjective *mandatory* and noun *obligation*.

The rhetoric of action against ignorance of the people found no declared enemies, and thus justified all types of impositional postures in relation to the population. Therefore, the right to education was transfigures in the rhetoric of compulsory education, which, far from producing rapid and lasting effects in terms of expanding access to public schools, reaffirmed the images of the people's vice and the virtue of the intellectual elites. From the perspective of this elite illustrated, the people's ignorance of command of letters and numbers was added to the belief in the moral decadence of the population.

The catastrophic tone of this discourse signaled the imminence of national disintegration and dissolution of ties of social coexistence, and thus imposed a sense of urgency on establishing measures capable of moralizing the population. In this context the concept of national independence was not frequently stated, however, the language practiced mobilized a set of concepts; that is to say, different words but with common meanings were repeatedly spoken and mutually reinforced their messages. Among these correlate terms, we point out: Brazilian people, race, sovereignty, national unity, national integration, national character, national consciousness, national

territory, homeland, patriotism, nation, nationalism and national State<sup>9</sup>.

**Figure 2** – Vocabulary present in the debates of ICNE (1927) relative to the concept of independence and its semantic correlates.



**Source:** Annals of CNEs (1927-1967), elaborated by the author, by means of IRaMuTeQ software.

The governing group of ABE made use of different rhetorical strategies, among which we emphasize the use of pairs of antithetical-asymmetrical concepts. The feature that characterizes these conceptual pairs, according to Koselleck, “is that they determine a position according to criteria, so that the position of the opponent resulting from these criteria, can only be refused. Herein resides their political efficacy” (2006, p. 195).

For better understanding of these conceptual pairs in the discourse about formation conveyed by ABE, there are two key examples: *unity-breakdown*, mobilizing the arguments about national independence, formation of the nation, consciousness and national identity; and the pair *instruction-ignorance*, present in the debates about expansion of schooling, indicating the centrality of formation of the people as the only means of affirming Brazil as a

<sup>9</sup> In this case, it concerns an onomasiological analysis of the language, based on a certain meaning, which examines how this found expression in different words.

prosperous and modern nation.

The use of these binary concept in public conversation is typical of the political rhetoric, which The use of these binary concepts in public conversation is typical of political rhetoric which, rather than catching a glimpse of the truth, aims disqualify the interlocutor. To this aim, represented in the second term of the pair, a position that was impossible to assume was attributed; because defending the dependence, subordination and disintegration of the country, or the people's ignorance, which had to be assumed, did not represent a defensible position in the disputes that were going on in the period<sup>10</sup>.

**Chart 2** - Anti-ethical-asymmetrical concepts present in the language game practiced in the debates of IX ICNE.

GROUP OF CONCEPT CORRELATES	GROUP OF ANTI-ETHICAL - ASYMMETRICAL CONCEPT CORRELATES
National Independence Sovereignty National Unity National Integration National Nature National Conscience Homeland Patriotism Nation National State	Dependence Subordination Disaggregation Separatism Anarchism Division Fragmentation Dissolution Ruin

**Source:** Annals of CNEs (1927-1967), elaborated by the author, by means of IRaMuTeQ software.

From the perspective of ABE intellectuality, the formation of the nation and national identity after the passage of 100 years of independence, followed as unfinished work, subject to setbacks if the problem of formation of the people were to remain outside of the State's initiatives. The climate of dissatisfaction with the direction the Republic was taking strongly permeated the language

<sup>10</sup> For an analysis of the use of antithetical-asymmetric concepts in the educational discourse at ICNE, Vieira e Faria (2019), see *Formação de Professores nos debates da I Conferência Nacional de Educação (ICNE - 1927)*.

used, so that it emphasized that formal and legal independence of the country did not guarantee the formation of the State-Nation. From this perspective, if the nations of the State and government were relatively consolidated, representation of the nation characterized by the shared feeling of belong to the Brazilian race and culture was far from being reached.

## **THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY IN THE LANGUAGE GAME PRACTICED IN IX CBE**

At IX CBHE, held in June 1945, the political context had been substantially changed. The overthrow of nazifascism in Europe, imminent end of World War II and erosion of the bases of the “*Estado Novo*” in Brazil realigned both the space of experience and horizons of expectations. The dictatorships, formerly acclaimed, began to be stigmatized, while the nationalism of the previous decades gave way to the postures that called for tolerance and international cooperation. These changes were reflected in the educational discourse in Brazil, so that we found the rise of two concepts within the language game practiced in the educational field. Namely, the concepts of democracy and democratic education.

A word cloud of various Portuguese words and phrases. The words are arranged in a circular pattern, with some being significantly larger than others. The words include: 'nações', 'aspirações', 'professores', 'direito', 'leis', 'cooperação', 'igualdade', 'internacionais', 'cultura', 'liberdade', 'espírito', 'povo', 'democrático', 'magistério', 'autonomia', 'sentimento', 'desenvolver', 'fraternidade', 'público', 'democrática', 'estado', 'social', 'educação', 'internacional', 'poder', 'populações', 'trabalho', 'país', 'caráter', 'ciência', 'econômicas', 'flexibilidade', 'intelectual', 'cultural', 'moral', 'brasileira', 'brasileiro', and 'nações'. The words are in a dark blue-grey color on a white background.

The frequency of the use of concept of democracy and its variants during IX CBE showed evidence of the connection between the language practiced by the congress participants and the central theme of the meeting. In view of these data, the second question arises: were democracy and democratic education questions that were constantly debated in the previous events of IX CBE? In an endeavor to answer this question, we analyzed the annals of I CNE - the conference at which the question of affirmation of the national unity and identity were highlighted, and the annals of IX CBE, at which the concept of democratic education was the theme, from a comparative perspective.

**Table 1** – Frequency of statements of concept of democracy and its semantic correlates in the language game practiced in the debates of ICNE and IX CBE.

Concept	I CNE (1927)	IX CBE (1945)
Democratic	4	216
Democracy	17	82
Democratization	3	5
Democrat/s	2	14
Democratically	---	11
Re-democratization	---	4
<b>Total No.of Statements</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>332</b>

**Source:** Annals of CNEs (1927-1967), elaborated by the author, by means of IRaMuTeQ software.

The low number of utterances of the term democracy and democratic education at I CNE indicated that this question was not among the issues of interest to the ABE at this meeting, since the absence of the word is evidence of the omission of the concept and, by extension, of its discussion. In addition to the ICNE, if we examine the themes of the seven national meetings of ABE that preceded the IX CBE, shown in Table 1, we infer that the reflection concerning the relationship between education and democracy was not a priority of the ABE. Therefore, we believe that the decline of the “*Estado Novo*” and the international scenario of the defeat of nazifascism imposed this question on the association and its members. In other terms, discussions involving the question of democracy and democratic education were not initiatives that arose from motivations specifically related to the educational field, but were reactions to the new political reality that forced the ABE to adopt its position.

Another aspect to emphasize is that the definition of the meaning of democratic education implied the need to provide more detailed explanation of its antithetical-asymmetric concept, that is: totalitarian education. In this discursive construction, the fact that drew attention was that ABE and its main leaders defined totalitarian education, without explicit mention of the political and educational practices promoted by the “*Estado Novo*” and the Vargas government. The main historical reference, to a large extent, was the Italian and

German nazifascism with the consequence of preserving the dictatorship of the “*Estado Novo*”. The opening and closing conferences presided over by Raul Bittencourt (President of ABE) and Carneiro Leão, respectively, and the thesis presented by Fernando de Azevedo, president of the main working group of CBE, are important examples of this attitude of omission in relation to the associations between the “*Estado Novo*”, Vargas government and totalitarian education.

In the debates at IX CBE, fascism appeared as a European phenomenon and discussion about the concept of democracy favors reflection about the formation of the concept in the old world, especially in Greece, taking the notions of liberty, equality and respect for differences of opinion and belief, as abstract references. A single exception to this line of argumentation could be verified in the thesis entitled “Educational Process and Facism”, submitted by Antonio Franca. This congress participant, who was not included in the composition of the governing nucleus of ABE, and did not enjoy notoriety in the educational field in the period, clearly situated the relations between the “*Estado Novo*”, fascism and totalitarian education in Brazil. However, the thesis of Franca represented a discordant voice, and was not incorporated into the “Brazilian Letter of Democratic Education” - the document that summarized the results of the event.

In spite of omission of the criticism of the “*Estado Novo*”, the IX CBE represented a unique and important time in the history of the ABE. For the first time, after 21 years of the entity’s activities, the discussion about the relations between education and democratic society was a priority on the agenda. In the final document, directed to the Brazilian society and the State, the ABE and congress participants gathered at the event, unequivocally stated the indissolubility between democratic education, compulsory and free education at all levels<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> The IX CBE, organized by ABE in 1945, had 158 registrations and 58 theses were presented. A

## THE RELATIONS BETWEEN THE CONCEPTS OF INDEPENDENCE, DEMOCRACY AND FORMATION

The first half of the 20th Century was a remarkable period for the organization of civil society in Brazil. There was an increase in the creation of unions, student unions, civic-patriotic leagues, academies of letters, cultural and scientific associations in this period, based on the organization of collective desires that sought to defend specific interests that had been unable to make their voices heard in a precise manner by the political party representation structure.

As part of this process, the ABE marked its trajectory by preparing an agenda of questions related to the educational area, demanding reforms in administration and public educational policies, stated at the entity's national events and with the State as its privileged interlocutor.

Carvalho (1998, p.54), pointed out that the ABE was founded 1924, after the project of creating a new political party had been discarded, however, in spite of this change in plans, the connection with the field of politics remained and characterized the public action of the entity. The origin of the concepts of independence and democracy in the political discourse, object of the problematization in this article, is an indication of this close relationship between politics and education, which focused on the topics under discussion at national events of the association, and consequently on the language game practiced.

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*Carta Brasileira da Educação Democrática* was re-published in 2003, in the book organized by Ana Magaldi and José Gondra (2003), *A reorganização do campo educacional no Brasil: manifestações, manifestos e manifestantes*. In this same book, there is the chapter, written by Libânia Nacif Xavier, *Manifestos, cartas, educação e democracia*, which among other documents, analyzes the mentioned letter. For a detailed examination of the IX CBE, see Carlos Eduardo Vieira, *Associação Brasileira de Educação: relações entre Estado e sociedade civil no contexto do IX Congresso Brasileiro de Educação (Rio de Janeiro - 1945)*. This is a chapter published in the book VIEIRA, Carlos Eduardo; OSINSKI, Dulce Regina Baggio; GONDRA, José. (Org.) (2019). *História Intelectual e Educação: Reformas Educacionais, Estado e Sociedade Civil*.



The ABE events of 1927 and 1945, took place at differentiated time intervals. In the 1920s, marked by growing dissatisfaction with the direction being taken by the First Republic, the debates emphasized the affirmation of a modern State-nation, in tune with the so called civilized world, based on the moral and civic-patriotic formation of the Brazilian population. Whereas, in the second half of the 1940s, with the new scenario created by World War II and by exhaustion of the *Estado Novo* in Brazil, the focus of reflection was concentrated on re-democratization of the country, on relativization of the nationalist spirit and affirmation of a multilateral view of international cooperation.

Important normative concepts, present at ICNE, were overlooked in the formulation of the arguments at IX CBE.

**Table 2** – Frequency of the concept of independence and its semantic correlates in the language game practiced in the debates of ICNE and IX CBE

CONCEPTS	ICNE - 1927	IX CBE - 1945
National Nature	190	19
National Conscience	107	20
National Identity	3	9
National Independence	29	2
Nation	88	46
Nationalism	57	8
Homeland	221	4
Patriotism	99	1
Sovereignty	4	3
<b>Total No. of Statements</b>	<b>798</b>	<b>112</b>

**Source:** Annals of CNEs (1927-1967), elaborated by the author, by means of IRaMuTeQ software.

Analogously, in 1945, the civic-patriotic vocabulary was shown to be in decline in the formation of the main arguments under discussion. The change in the lexicon indicate the change in the reality named and conveyed by the words, especially when this change could be perceived in the vocabularies that

performed the function of normative concepts. These, in contrast with the ordinary vocabulary, function as devices, simultaneously, for interpretation of the space of experience and production of expectational horizons. In this tension between to be and must be, between *öntico-ontological* and *telos*, the general meaning that characterizes a given discourse in time and space, is produced.

The comparison between these two time intervals (ICNE and IX CBE) allows us to return to the question that was presented in the introduction of this article, and that has served as a guide to the reflection. We asked about whether or not there were relations between the concept of democracy and the concepts of independence, sovereignty and other correlated terms.

**CHART 3** - Frequency of the concepts of democracy and independence, including their semantic correlates, in the language game practiced in the debates of ICNE and IX CBE.

EVENTS CONCEPTS	DEMOCRACY AND CORRELATES	INDEPENDENCE AND CORRELATES
I CNE (1927)	26	798
IX CBE (1945)	332	112

**Source:** Annals of CNEs (1927-1967), elaborated by the author, by means of IRaMuTeQ software.

When examining the frequency of utterance, we observe an inverse relationship; that is, when the question of independence, sovereignty or formation of the State-nation was in evidence, in the 1920s, little was said about democracy. On the other hand, when the concepts of democracy and democratic education gained visibility in the vocabulary of the ABE intellectuals, the problem of sovereignty no longer represented a central question. In addition to frequency of the use of the terms independence and democracy, meticulous and exhaustive analysis of the documentation revealed that these concepts kept a distance between them; or rather, they were not regularly found combined in the development of the educational discourse. Therefore, we can assert that

according to the perception of ABE intellectuality, the affirmation of sovereignty of the national State did not involve and did not depend on promoting the political participation of the population.

When analyzing the collective manifestations of intellectuality linked to the educational field, between the years 1920 and 1945, we found two documents that represented exceptions to this trend towards disconnection between the concepts of democracy and independence. The first is the *Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova*, de 1932. (“Manifesto of the Pioneers of the New Education, of 1932”) <sup>12</sup>. This prestigious document, which we did not analyze in detail in this space, had 26 signatories and all enjoyed great notoriety in the Brazilian public scene. They worked at the ABE, although the Manifesto was not a document produced and certified by the entity. At this and at different times, the question of democracy, participation of the population in public life has been connected with the problem of the formation of the Nation-State or, in terms of the Manifesto itself, with the reconstruction of the national State. Moreover, one of the items that are part of the structure of the Manifesto is entitled *A democracia, um programa de longos deveres* (“*Democracy, a program of long duties*”).

The second document is the previously mentioned, *Carta Brasileira da Educação Democrática*, (Brazilian Letter of Democratic Education”) that summarized the results of the IX CBE. In this letter, among the objective of democratic education, the following formulation is stated:

develop common faith in fundamental principles relative to national life and democratic rule, such as the unity and independence of the nation, freedom of thought, equality of the citizens before the law, in a representative manner that allows the people, by their elected

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<sup>12</sup> Most probably, the *Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Educação Nova*, is the most analyzed document in the context for research in the history of education in Brazil. There are many authors who have dedicated themselves to its analysis, among them Libânia Nacif Xavier (2002) is outstanding, *Para além do campo educacional: um estudo sobre o Manifesto dos Pioneiros da Escola Nova (1932)*.

representatives, to express their opinion on public issues and draft the laws, the government's responsibility to the people (for its actions?), constitutional guarantees to exercise civil and political rights and the right to health, education, work, assistance and recreation (Annals, IX CBE, 1945, the author's highlighting).

Both the Manifesto and the Brazilian Letter represent extremely important manifestations to demonstrate the presence of this perception, in the period studied, of the indissociability of education of the people and their political participation in the formation of the National State. However, we understand that this approximation between the concepts, and consequently, between the meanings associated with them represent an exception in the formulation of educational discourse; particularly if we consider the documents collectively produced, with those developed by the ABE at their national events.

## BY WAY OF CONCLUSIONS

This study of the language game practiced by intellectuals connected with the educational field, is not restricted to the discursive or semantic analysis, because access to the language mobilized in public conversation allows us to raise hypotheses about the lines of action in progress. Skinner (1999),

Emphasizing the relations between discourse and social practice, affirmed that: that which is possible to do in politics is generally limited by that which it is possible to legitimize. That which could be expected to be legitimized, however, depends on the course of action that could plausibly be achieved under the existent normative concepts (p.86).

The function of the concepts, by logical definition, is to describe and explain the natural and social world. However, in certain language games, they become acts, acts of speech, with a view to producing transformations in the

social world<sup>13</sup>. The political and educational discourses are concise examples of performative language, because as a rule, both have the intention to produce changes in the behavior of their audiences. Therefore, understanding the language game practiced, considering the vocabulary current in each context, and the terms that assume the contours of normative concepts within this game, represent a pathway of access to understanding the displacements of perception about the role of education and the school among the groups engaged in the production of the manners of speaking, and particularly to achieve education.

Inspired by this theoretical picture, we sought to analyze how the concepts of independence and democracy, of the political discourse itself, were appropriated by the language game practiced in the educational field. Thus, we concluded, with the exceptions we pointed out in the *Manifesto (Manifesto)* of 1932 and *Carta Brasileira* (“Brazilian Letter”) of 1945, which, in the discourse analyzed a dissociation prevails between the sovereignty of the nation and the form of government, between civic education and democratic education, between the intended and popular education of the people and their effective participation as citizens in national life.

In conclusion, we understood that, in the prelude to the celebrations of the bicentenary of Independence the Independence of Brazil, marked by an international scenario that stresses nationalism and multilateralism - it is crucial for us to reflect about the extent to which the dissociation between these concepts explains the formation of society and the State in Brazil. In addition, we could also speculate about the long duration of a political culture which, both in the past and present, favored the construction of a nationalist discourse, associated with clearly authoritarian and anti-democratic propositions. History

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<sup>13</sup>The expression of acts of speech were widely disseminated by J. Searle, in his book *Speech Acts Theory*, published in 1969. The idea about the performativity of language was assumed by historians tied to linguistic contextualism, Skinner and Pocock, based on their analyses of the ideas of L. Wittgenstein and particularly, of J. Austin. For this author, special attention was paid to the concepts of illocution and perlocution, present in the book *How to do things with words*, 1962.

does not give us lessons, however, it provides us with the necessary data to identify how ways of thinking, speaking and acting remain rooted in societies such as those in Brazil. The awareness of these enduring features certainly is a factor that contributes to our ability to overcome them.

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