BASIL BERNSTEIN'S ANALYSIS OF REMOTE LEARNING PRACTICES AS PEDAGOGICAL DEVICES

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Abstract

The article is philosophical in nature, arguing that the praxis of RLP as a pedagogical method is consistent with Basil Bernstein's philosophy. It departs from the premise that the RLP and pedagogical practice (visible and invisible) are inseparable. The RLP is philosophically supported by types of symbolic control as regulators of cultural reproduction and change. COVID-19 has had an extraordinary influence on educational institutions, and for teaching and learning to continue, schools have had to implement Remote Learning Practices (RLPs). RLPs at the pre-primary level are heavily impacted by the milieu in which the school is located. The implementation of RLPs had its obstacles; it introduced a whole new educational framework, which revealed new problems. These difficulties must be unpacked and analysed to be comprehended. The basic assumption of this article is that the idea of RLP may be unpacked, analysed, and recreated via the lens of Basil Bernstein's categorization and framing framework. The concepts of categorization and framing are relevant for analysing transmitting agencies.

Keywords: Remote Learning Practices, Basil Bernstein, Classification, Framing, pre-primary

1.   INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The COVID-19 epidemic has abruptly and possibly permanently altered the world, calling into question our conventional understanding of education. Larsen and Liljedahl (2022) remind us that when the pandemic forced us to switch to an online-only classroom, we had to figure out how to make our tried-and-true methods of teaching and learning in traditional classroom settings work in a medium neither we nor our students had ever experienced before. Even though the COVID-19 crisis disproportionately impacted vulnerable populations, Shin (2021) notes that students of colour and those from resource-poor communities have also been impacted by a lack of access to technology, increased levels of loss, unstable residential status, food insecurity, increased rates of psychological and emotional distress, and negative health effects. It also claimed that COVID-19 made remote instruction difficult in several instances. Many students did not have access to the Internet or technology at the start, and many are forced to share places or devices with siblings due to connectivity issues and unexpected service terminations. Conclusions about how the COVID-19 pandemic perpetuates inequities and dehumanises policies that keep students (from disadvantaged backgrounds) out of the general education system can be drawn (Kertamukti & Ummah, 2022).

According to Boltz, et al. (2021), in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, educational professionals hurried to switch abruptly and unpredictably to remote instruction. Many schools have adopted remote learning practices in response to the global development of COVID-19 (RLP). The RLP is not immune to difficulties, either; it introduced a whole new educational framework, which disclosed fresh issues (Mavengere in press). For instance, Morgan (2020) notes that schools are unable to offer computers for students, and high-poverty schools often have fewer resources than low-poverty schools. As a result, many students will not be able to participate in online education due to these conditions. In a similar vein, Becker, et al. (2020) noted that top achievers often have no negative impact from online learning; students who perform well anyplace typically perform well online. Online punishment, however, is harsher for weak students and suffering.

For RLP to be able to produce a text or practice that is relevant to the context in which it is being used, it is necessary for it to have access, in addition to the corresponding recognition rules, to specific realisation rules. Bernstein (1996:32) reminds us that the realisation norms define how we put together meanings and make them public; these rules are required to generate genuine writing. This article is broken down into six different sections. In the first section, we shall explore the challenges, opportunities, and emerging trends of remote learning practices in the Covid-19 context. The second section explores the theorisation of classification and framing. The third section reflects on Remote Learning Practices as a tool to transmit power and control. The fourth section presents Remote Learning Practices as pedagogic discourse. The fifth section argues reflects on RLP as the instructional discourse (ID) and the regulative discourse (RD). The last section proposes a rethinking of RLP through classification and framing.

2.   CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND EMERGING TRENDS OF RLPS IN THE COVID-19 CONTEXT

Since the beginning of the Covid-19 epoch, educational systems all over the world have been forced to take action in order to address the issue at hand by putting into place a few strategies designed to guarantee that teaching and learning will proceed normally at all grade levels. Governments passed laws requiring the closure of educational facilities in favour of online teaching and learning, and these laws were enforced by school rules. According to UNICEF (2020), while 90% of countries implemented online and broadcast remote learning strategies, only 60% of countries established facilities for pre-primary students. According to OEC (2020), remote learning practises are learning opportunities that help students and educators connect when they are not in the same physical classroom together. This is the only way to ensure that learning continues in the absence of traditional classroom contact. During the early years of life and in primary school, these learning opportunities can be satisfied either asynchronously or synchronously. To achieve this objective, one of the strategies that is utilised to spread awareness about Remote Learning Practices (RLPs) is the use of video presentations delivered through chats or recorded programming. Take, for instance:

   i.   Communication apps such as Seesaw, Dojo, etc,
   ii.   Resources online accessible by families,
   iii.   Take-home materials for activities at home, and
   iv.   Phone conferencing through zoom or google Meetings facilities.

Given that children learn through "play and carefully controlled surroundings," as Muskin (2020) puts it, the use of these strategies to ensure that knowledge is retained has not been without its challenges. There are four conditions that must be met for a child to have a learning experience that is meaningful and will propel them toward their developmental milestones. As stated by Ontario's Ministry of Education (2014), the following conditions are essential for successful education:

   i.   Belonging – which involves connecting with others and forming relationships
   ii.   Well-being – which focuses on the physical and mental health of students
   iii.   Engagement – which involves creating opportunities for students to explore with their natural curiosity, and
   iv.   Expression – which focuses on providing opportunities for students to communicate in a variety of forms.

The usage of RLP has had a detrimental influence on healthy educational interactions, whereas these four crucial elements offer meaningful learning for pre-primary and early primary learning. The world has reached a stage where educators must reimagine how they think about great learning as viewed via RLP. A teacher is a professional who has been educated to engage students in an artistic approach to achieve educational goals and refine developmental abilities. The COVID-19 epidemic has changed the educational environment for young children to the point that parents at home are driving most of the learning. As partners in supporting children's learning requirements, parents must raise their "learning expectations for all activities" (Timmons, et al., 2021). Learning places for children to play and engage with peers have been reduced, which has a significant impact on their mental health.

When it comes to the requisite data to inform practice, the use of RLPs in early childhood education is a fairly recent occurrence. Through their personal experiences, practitioners have been the cornerstone of the necessary instruction on how to use various tactics. Due to their experiences, both teachers and students have presented difficult situations. Remote learning is intended to require high levels of internal desire and discipline, which are exceedingly challenging for children to maintain. Additionally, parents must be actively involved in their children's at-home education, which can be challenging given that they often have other demanding obligations like employment. The disparities between developed and developing nations have been made clear by COVID-19, as evidenced by other significant problems with RLPs. As clearly stated by UNICEF (2020),

"Due to school closings intended to stop the spread of Covid-19, more than 1 billion children are at risk of falling behind. Countries have been creating remote education programs to keep the world's children studying. However, many children throughout the world, especially those from lower-income families, lack access to the internet, personal computers, televisions, or even radios at home, which exacerbates the consequences of learning disparities".

The gap is caused by unequal access to technological devices like laptops and desktop computers, both of which require software to function. A significant number of people in less developed countries do not have access to technology, which is the primary factor that makes remote learning possible. In addition, a significant number of parents, who play an essential part in their children's educational experiences, do not possess the fundamental technological skills required for effective participation. The problem is made even more complicated by the limited internet access that is prevalent in developing countries. The teacher's ability to operate remotely adds layer of complexity to the process of planning educational activities for the students. The vast majority of the time, teachers concentrate on spending more time communicating with families, developing activities for families to utilise at home, leading classes online, singing songs, and reading books (Steed & Leech, 2021). During the process of planning these events and maintaining connections with family members, the significance of the importance of teaching and learning instruction is frequently neglected.

Because there were no other alternatives, education systems were forced to adopt RL, which made it difficult for administrative systems within schools to assist teachers during the transition to the new system. Despite the absence of a management strategy, the majority of nations were required to implement RL. Due to the sudden nature of the need for change, educational institutions had a constrained amount of time to provide comprehensive training for online learning and other alternative methods. The fact that most countries' RLP management practices are not standardised contributes to the difficulty of the Covid-19 situation. As a consequence of this, the RL lessons for children have been poorly organised, and it has been difficult for teachers to accurately evaluate the student's progress in developing their skills. When it comes to education, quality is always of the utmost importance, and the rapid shift to RLP has brought to light several deficiencies. The quality will unavoidably suffer as a result of these flaws, particularly when essential elements such as interaction time and socioeconomic disparity are taken into consideration. The recommended amount of time for students and teachers to interact each day is between 5 and 6 hours, but the average daily interaction time between the two groups is now only 30 to 60 minutes, a decrease of a factor of four. There is also no guarantee that the desired outcomes will be achieved by the learning contact because they do not have control over the learning environment or the learning process itself. Teachers create ideal learning environments with a particular learning goal in mind, which parents are unable to duplicate at home due to a lack that is caused by either a low economic position or restricted application of information.

3. THEORIZATION OF CLASSIFICATION AND FRAMING

Basil Bernstein's (2000) theory of classification and framing was primarily motivated by this requirement to understand hybridisation within the context of educational practice and how pedagogical actions demonstrate power and control. Among other things, he saw education as a process in which schools structure learning and provide context for children. This is the result of early childhood socialisation training and employment as a socialising agent at home, school, and later in life. Starting with this assumption, the theory will be used to understand the learning processes in RLPs. The concepts of categorization and framing were used to model the techniques used and examine the extent to which they constitute pedagogical discourse through which instructional and regulative discourses are realised.

According to Bernstein (1990), educational discourse provides differentiated transmission and acquisition as a type of specialised communication. It functions as a conduit for authoritative or instructive discourse. Bernstein proposed that educational discourse be simplified through categorization and framing. Classification is viewed from both a broad and restricted perspective to identify relationships and the degree of maintenance between categories. The categories also call into question distinctions between actors, locations, and discourses. It identifies with groups of agents and discourses whose power is derived from the categories and insulations displayed in a larger context. In a limited sense, we can investigate categorization by focusing on the structural and organisational elements of instructional activity.

In his explanation of his classification and framing principles, Bernstein (1975) categorically positioned classification as being inextricably linked to power, which formed linkages between categories such as discourses, subjects, content, practices, and actors. The educational actors could be instructors and students, whose educational identities must be defined. The classification is either strong or weak depending on how isolated the categories are from one another. A strong classification implies that the insulation is thick enough to separate the

two categories based on their distinguishing features. When it is weak, it is understood that the boundaries between two groups become blurred, making it difficult to distinguish between them. It's critical to remember that power dynamics exist in both scenarios.

We investigate the connections between various topic areas in educational discourses, such as those between academic and general knowledge. It could also be used to grasp the nuances of RLPs and traditional classroom interaction, both of which are discussed in the text. Because there is a dialectical relationship between the two notions, identifying with classification is only a partial exercise unless paired with framing. Classification is a term qualified by framing because it specifies the shape of the borders in the case of subjects, discourses, or locations. Framing, according to theory, functions as a lens for examining the social relationships within the social division where certain behaviours are created or replicated. According to Hoadley (2015), it demonstrates how borders are related to classification and lays the groundwork for a shift in boundaries through power dynamics contestation.

Framing allows for the establishment, preservation, or modification of the borders of discourses, places, and subjects (control). It contributes to the creation or annihilation of classification (power). Using framing, one can determine the locus of control over communication rules. The degree of control that instructors and students have over the knowledge that is chosen, organised, delivered, and evaluated in the pedagogical relationship, according to Bernstein (1975), is referred to as framing. It also considers what is taken in during the learning process in the field of education. In summary, framing aids in the control of acceptable knowledge produced or made available to various categories or groups. It can describe how various participants communicate and engage in educational partnerships, such as parents, young students, instructors, or learners. By framing, we can exert control over relationships within contexts. Depending on who or what discourse is dominant, classification-related framing may be strong or weak. Covid-19 has influenced how pre-primary and early primary education is delivered through significant factors such as contact hours and content delivery.

4.   REFLECTIONS ON RLPS AS A TOOL TO TRANSMIT POWER AND CONTROL

Ideologically, the RLP is not neutral. Individuals who have the tool, according to Bernstein (1996:117), also have the means to maintain or strive to maintain, their ideological representations through discursive methods. It is critical to note that these three interconnected rules—Distributive, Recontextualization, and Evaluation—mediate this language. According to Bernstein (2000:114), distributive principles "distribute distinct types of knowledge to diverse social groupings." The "thinkable," "official knowledge," as well as the "what" and "how" of pedagogical discourse are all constructed by recontextualization norms. By defining the standards that must be communicated and learned, evaluation rules generate pedagogical practice.

The recontextualising principle is implemented in the context of RLP through the official recontextualising field (the State functions at a generative level to legitimise official pedagogic discourse) and the pedagogic recontextualising field (when the policy is interpreted and implemented by teachers). The central idea of Bernstein's (2000) theory is the reciprocity between the transformation of power relations into discourse and the transformation of discourse into power relations. For him, power still can establish, justify, and reproduce borders, and it provides enough leverage to advance change in a specific direction. According to Diehl et al. (2015), it serves as a control mechanism between various groups or categories to establish a respectable educational practice. Control, on the other hand, has to do with acceptable channels of communication between various parties. Power can limit what and who belongs in certain groups and categories, whereas control governs how groups interact with one another, reproduce, and evolve.

The reproduction or alteration of anything is based on classification and framing. With the majority of Ministries of Education adopting RLPs, Covid-19 has significantly altered the landscape of teaching and learning. These RLPs have caused significant changes in the classification and framing of educational information. The options available in education at the pre-primary and primary levels have changed the methods used, including internet learning, television, radio, and taking assignments assigned to parents. Remote learning has surpassed traditional classroom contact as the dominant teaching method at the primary and secondary levels of education. RLPs have constructed and legitimised the method by which information is passed from the instructor to the students, giving the parent acting as an intermediary additional influence.

Adopting RLPs as a tool for knowledge transmission has compelled educational systems to, among other things, leverage and contextualise early learning based on already available resources; rethink strategies for ensuring pedagogically sound learning because parents have increasingly taken an active role in their children's education; and, most importantly, change contact times and content organisation. These changes are unavoidable because they address the need to maintain learning, which may improve the educational prospects of very young children

in the future. As a result of the changes brought about by Covid-19 in the delivery of pre-primary and early primary instruction, RLPs are now viewed as an empowering tool within educational discourses.

5.   RLP AS PEDAGOGICAL DISCOURSE

The central premise of this article is that the concept of RLP can be dissected, analysed, and rethought through the lens of Basil Bernstein's classification and framing framework. According to Mukalula-Kalumbi, the concepts of classification and framing can help with the examination of transmitting agencies (2021). The philosophically oriented article argues that Basil Bernstein's framework can be used to explain RLP's praxis as a teaching tool. In this statement, the RLP and pedagogical practice (visible and invisible) are not assumed to be mutually reinforcing. The RLP is conceptually supported by symbolic control mechanisms that govern both cultural evolution and replication. Our premise is that RLP, both as a regulative and instructional discourse, establishes, justifies, and reproduces boundaries between different types of groups (such as gender, class, and race); and discourses and agents in such a way that power always acts to cause dislocations. According to Bernstein, the RLP provides the inherent grammar, or metaphorical grammar, of pedagogical discourse.

RLPs are increasingly being used in educational institutions all over the world in response to the unstable learning environment created by Covid-19. The traditional classroom has given way to a variety of learning modalities, including online courses, radio, television, and article take-home materials. As a method of delivering curricular information, RLP has evolved into a pedagogical discourse tool. Bernstein (1990) defines pedagogical discourse as an ensemble of rules or processes for the generation and circulation of information within pedagogic interactions, which is well-stated as a principle of recontextualization.

Both the regulative discourse, which includes the discourse of social order and the instructional discourse, which covers a range of abilities, represent a principle or rule embedded between two discourses. The instruments that can be used to apply RLPs determine the constraints and opportunities for teaching and learning to help children achieve the desired competency levels. When there isn't a classroom present, remote learning tools serve as leaders and establish the norms for how information is passed on to the children. Strategies implemented during the institutionalisation of RLPs have aided in meeting predetermined goals and demands, as well as determining which platforms are appropriate settings.

To conclude this section, the RLPs have provided the guidelines and practices for creating and disseminating the information described in the curriculum as a pedagogical discourse. Because web, television, radio, and take-home assignments are widely used in RLPs, their accessibility and availability govern the teaching and learning processes. RLPs are thus a type of instructional discourse with the potential to function as a recontextualization principle, transferring the complexities of the classroom to different settings with the help of technology. As a guiding principle for recontextualization, it could encapsulate the regulative and instructional discourses.

6.   REFLECTIONS ON RLPS AS THE INSTRUCTIONAL DISCOURSE (ID) AND THE REGULATIVE DISCOURSE (RD)

Bernstein (1996, p. 46) provides a useful definition of pedagogical discourse as a principle of recontextualization (a rule or technique) that enmeshes two discourses: a discourse of abilities (instructional discourse) and their relationships to one another, and a discourse of social order (regulative discourse). In this way, RLPs serve to preserve the knowledge and skills essential for functioning in the social order when viewed as a pedagogical discourse (rule and procedure). As such, there is a bridge between normative language and pedagogical content. Pedagogical discourse, the norm of the social order that provides instructions in content and abilities, is used to manage a curriculum's identity within the regulative discourse.

Regulative discourse incorporates the social order for knowledge production, dissemination, and acquisition, while instructional norms establish the discursive order. Always keep in mind that "instructional discourse is constantly incorporated into the regulatory discourse" (Bernstein 1996, p. 28). Instructional discourse centres on issues related to the dissemination and cultivation of knowledge, skills, and capacities. Regarding the normative discourse, much of the focus is on pedagogy and how the competency objectives will be attained. The learning environment for children has been shaped by RLPs, which means that educational systems must take into account both the established boundaries and the opportunities that have arisen as a result.

Take-home tests, educational TV and radio, and online courses are all that can be found. Due to the limitations, issues of educational equity and access disparities were brought to the forefront. It has also compelled teachers to evaluate their own and their colleagues' effectiveness in teaching. Teachers have limited access to materials to support their students' ongoing education because not all learning takes place in the classroom and families play

an active role in achieving competence targets. As a result of these alterations in the contexts in which children acquire knowledge, the roles of both students and educators have shifted.

In contrast, RLPs have provided educators with an opportunity to engage students while making effective use of available resources and a framework for integrating multiple pedagogical modalities. In light of this newfound understanding of the instructional discourse, teachers are shifting their focus from learner-centered strategies to methods inspired by the RLPs at their disposal. Since many children are separated from their classmates because of the epidemic, families have played a crucial role in many of the most prominent ones. Educational systems should reflect and embrace the best RLPs that are appropriate to the context and can cater to the needs of students because achieving competence objectives is central to all teaching and learning activities. To do so, we must rethink the classification and definition of RLPs.

7   RETHINKING RLP THROUGH THE LENSES OF CLASSIFICATION AND FRAMING

Classification and concept framing allows for the realisation of pedagogical discourses. As a result of Covid-19, educators have been forced to reconsider traditional and unusual methods of teaching and learning. In many cases, hybrid learning is used, in which students attend class while their illness level is low and then transition to online learning via television, radio, and take-home assignments as their infection level rise. As a result, the organisation and structural elements of instructional practice have changed, which was unavoidable. Given that both groups retain their individuality and the insulation is obvious, there is significant categorization between them.

The Children are taught in a variety of ways, and classroom dynamics recognise that children need to play to learn. It is also simple to monitor and control the stages of development of young learners. RLPs, which allow for remote instruction and learning, temper the most important aspects of early learning, such as playing with peers and having space to watch children. When it comes to framing, the element of control over the learning process, and the influence of families is becoming increasingly apparent. The teacher's job is jeopardised because they are not present to supervise the children. Furthermore, family cooperation is not always possible. Because pre-primary experiences have a long-term impact on future academic endeavours, educational institutions must implement policies that help children as much as possible.

Teachers must be knowledgeable about the various RLPs to use them to meet students' learning needs. Furthermore, schools must be given the authority to develop assessment systems that track teacher actions and aid in the discovery and implementation of context-relevant methods. The curriculum's content must be organised in such a way that relevant material is taught during classroom engagement while what can be efficiently addressed through RLPs is left out. To achieve this, governments will inevitably undertake efforts to restructure how curriculum discourse is classified and framed in order to match it with the hybrid approach.

8   CONCLUSION

The article investigated the challenges, opportunities, and emerging trends in remote learning practices in the context of Covid-19. It also covered classification and framing theory, reflections on remote learning practices as a means of transmitting power and control, understanding remote learning practices as pedagogic discourse, reflections on RLP as instructional discourse (ID), and reflections on RLP as regulative discourse (RD). The final section of the article proposed a rethinking of remote learning practices using Bernstein's classification and framing. The way educational institutions have tried to navigate the terrain since the implementation of COVID-19 demonstrates how highly contextualised teaching and learning dynamics are at the pre-primary level. Education professionals must reconsider the procedures that will improve instructors' understanding of how to use hybrid approaches to meet student's educational needs. When COVID-19 is under control, an attempt will be made to classify the knowledge that should be taught through RLPs and what should be taught in a classroom.

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