

**INTERCULTURALITY AND DECOLONIALITY:
building a school for/by/with the Avá-Canoeiro from Goiás (Brazil)¹**

Mônica Veloso Borges 
Federal University of Goiás (UFG)
Goiânia, GO, Brasil

Rosani Moreira Leitão 
Federal University of Goiás (UFG)
Goiânia, GO, Brasil

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.22409/mov.v7i13.41286>

ABSTRACT

The aim of this work is to analyse the process of buiding a school for/by (with) the Avá-Canoeiro, through a partnership between the Federal University of Goiás.² And the SEDUC (State Department of Education, Sport and Culture of Goiás). The theoretical-methodological path includes: 1) collaborative and shared ethnographic research in which through workshops and among other experiences allow the systematization of the written practices along with Avá-Canoeiro cultural references; 2) the analysis and use of this written production as significant knowledge for the construction of a curriculum matrix and for the organization of classes. This experience has shown that it is possible to build new teacher training strategies with reference to the culture and protagonism of the original peoples.

Keywords: Intercultural Education. Avá-Canoeiro. Decoloniality.

**INTERCULTURALIDAD y DECOLONIALIDAD:
construyendo una escuela para/com losAvá-Canoeiro de Goiás (Brasil)**

RESUMEN

El trabajo analiza el proceso de construcción de una escuela para los Avá-Canoeiro en Brasil, organizado en colaboración entre la Universidad Federal de Goiás y la Seduc (Secretaría de Estado de Educación de Estado de Goiás). La

¹ A preliminary version of this article was presented at the 56th International Congress of Americanists, held in Salamanca, Spain, from 15 to 20 July 2018, at the Symposium on Educational Processes and Pueblos Indígenas: Meanings, Practices and Ethnopolitical Disputes in the Contemporary.

orientación teórico-metodológica del trabajo incluye: 1) la investigación etnográfica colaborativa y compartida, que a través de talleres vivenciales permite la sistematización escrita de sus prácticas culturales; 2) el análisis y el uso de las mismas como conocimientos significativos para la construcción de la matriz curricular y organización de las clases. Esta experiencia ha mostrado que es posible construir nuevas estrategias de formación docente que ponen en el centro a la cultura y al protagonismo de los pueblos originarios.

Palavras Claves: Educación Intercultural. Avá-Canoeiro. Decolonialidad.

INTERCULTURALIDADE E DECOLONIALIDADE:

construindo uma escola para/com os Avá-Canoeiro de Goiás (Brasil)

RESUMO

O trabalho analisa o processo de construção de uma escola para/com os Avá-Canoeiro, no Brasil, por meio de parceria entre a Universidade Federal de Goiás (UFG) e a Seduc (Secretaria de Estado de Educação do Estado de Goiás). A orientação teórico-metodológica do trabalho inclui: 1) pesquisa etnográfica colaborativa e compartilhada, que, por meio de oficinas e outras experiências, permite a sistematização escrita de práticas e referências culturais Avá-Canoeiro; 2) a análise e o uso dessa produção escrita como conhecimento significativo para a construção de uma matriz curricular e para a organização das aulas. Essa experiência mostrou que é possível construir novas estratégias de formação de professores tendo como referência a cultura e o protagonismo dos povos originários.

Palavras chave: Educação Intercultural. Avá-Canoeiro. Decolonialidade.

Introduction

This following paper aims to present some reflections on the experience of building a pedagogical proposal and a school for/by/ with the Avá-Canoeiro people of the State of Goiás, having as reference the role of the authors in two specific moments of the relations of this people with the writing and school education. The first moment occurred between 1999 and 2001 with the development of activities conducted by the *Fundação Nacional do Índio* (FUNAI- National Foundation of Indigenous) and financed by FURNAS Electric Central, as a compensatory measure for the commitment of part of the Avá-Canoeiro territory. It was in this context that, through a partnership between FUNAI and the Federal University of Goiás, we collaborated with some actions that aimed to

develop an education project for the Avá-Canoeiro, which was never actually implemented.³

The other one is to support the Avá-Canoeiro in the construction of their school, through agreements between FUNAI and the State Department of Education, Sport and Culture of Goiás (SEDUC), based on the principles of interculturality and the specific legislation that provides for the right indigenous peoples to have their own education processes. This second experiment started in 2014 and is ongoing.

The Avá-Canoeiro were reduced to a single family due to the persecutions suffered during the colonial period and massacres, resulting from the process of land occupation in the northern region of the State of Goiás and southern Tocantins, which resulted in constant escapes to difficult to access places, until the early 1980s, when their hiding places were hit by the construction of the *Serra da Mesa* hydroelectric plant and they were installed in an indigenous post under the administration of FUNAI.⁴

Classified as isolated Indigenous and submitted to a strict tutelary regime, they did not have an active voice in the policies developed by FUNAI and FURNAS, the latter responsible for the hydroelectric enterprise that compromised part of their territory (SILVA, 2005 e 2010). Living in an isolated territory by FUNAI and controlled by FURNAS, the Avá-Canoeiro did not have access to educational policies aimed at other Brazilian citizens, even after the creation of a public education policy aimed at indigenous peoples, starting in the 1990⁵.

³ Some reflections on this first experience were addressed in the text "Report and reflections on research with the Avá-Canoeiro (Tupi-Guarani): educational subsidies", of our authorship. Cf. Borges; Leitão (2003).

⁴ On the occupation and re-signification of the territory, escape processes and routes of wandering, see Lorraine Gomes da Silva's doctoral thesis "Singing rivers, living in caves and drilling jatóka: cultural, socio-spatial resignifications and learning spaces of the Avá-Canoeiro family Tocantins River" (SILVA, 2017).

⁵ Stephen Baines, when analyzing a similar situation with the Waimiri-Atroari, also affected by a hydroelectric enterprise, speaks of a protection reinforced by a double indigenism, in which state indigenism is strengthened in a partnership with a corporate indigenism, which often overlaps, since it provides resources for assistance projects (BAINES, 1990, 1993, 1996).

Therefore, a generation born in these conditions became an adult without having access to school, having lived only brief experiences with writing, followed by eventual attempts at agreements between FUNAI and Education Departments, which were unsuccessful. Fifteen years later, this second experiment with which we are collaborating begins. It stems from a request by Avá-Canoeiro themselves to SEDUC (State Department of Education, Sport and Culture of Goiás), still intermediated by FUNAI, and consists of an attempt to build a pedagogical proposal and create a school, considering national legislation and the provision of indigenous rights to their own school education. designed from your needs and desires.

Next, after describing the two experiences, we analyzed them, in the light of decolonial theories and understanding indigenism as a form of colonialism, as the Avá-Canoeiro are positioning themselves against these processes (SANTOS; MENESES, 2010; QUIJANO, 2002).

1. The Avá-Canoeiro

Avá-Canoeiro are speakers of the Avá-Canoeiro language, belonging to the Tupi-Guarani linguistic family, of Tronco Tupi (Rodrigues, 1984/1985; 1986), which, together with Tapirapé, Asurini do Tocantins, Suruí do Tocantins (Mujetire), Parakanã, Guajajara, Tembé and Turiwára (extinct), make up Branch IV of that family. There are currently two small groups that form a population of about 30 people, the oldest surviving from persecution and massacres that marked their entire contact with regional and national society, and the youngest born from the 1970s., fruits of interethnic marriages. A group is living in the region of the Araguaia River, on the *Bananal* Island, in the Javaé Indigenous Land.

The other one is installed in the Avá-Canoeiro Indigenous Land, located in the municipality of Minaçu, in the state of Goiás. In the colonial period they resisted settlements and were fought by official forces. According to bibliographic sources, it is the only indigenous people, inhabitant of the region, who was not subjected to the settlements, species of colonial villages administered by Jesuit

missionaries (CHAIM, 1974; KARASCH, 1992). For their resistance to colonial actions, they were persecuted and fought, living in constant displacement (PEDROSO, 1994).

Also according to historical sources and the existing bibliography on the subject, they lived in villages in the north of the old state of Goiás, close to the Araguaia and Tocantins rivers, in the first decades of the 20th century. But their villages have been invaded and destroyed several times and, since 1940, they have suffered the last massacres, caused by the process of land occupation and formation of farms in the region.

Until the late 1960s, it was believed that they had disappeared as a people. However, there were survivors of the aforementioned massacres wandering in the woods and hiding in areas of difficult access. A group took refuge in closed forest regions, close to the Araguaia river. The other took refuge in areas of the *cerrado* (a typical bioma), close to the Tocantins River. After conflicts caused by land occupation by farmers and development projects, these survivors were contacted and taken to areas set aside as indigenous lands.

Those from Araguaia were forcibly taken by the FUNAI to *Banana* Island (*Formoso do Araguaia* and *Lagoa da Confusão* region) in the State of Tocantins, to live in Javaé villages, under subordinate conditions, due to their condition as a foreigner and minority ethnic and linguistic. There are currently approximately twenty people, the youngest generation being the result of marriages with Javaé individuals or other ethnic groups or with non-indigenous people⁶.

The Avá-Canoeiro from Goiás live today in the municipality of Minaçu, in the State of Goiás, in an area that was demarcated by FUNAI, after the construction of the *Serra da Mesa* Hydroelectric Power Plant, which affected its entire region

⁶ For more information on the subject, we recommend reading articles and other bibliographic productions by Patrícia de Mendonça Rodrigues, who has been accompanying the Avá-Canoeiro, especially those from Araguaia, in the process of retaking their territory (RODRIGUES, 2011; 2013; 2015; 2020).

of refuge and wandering, in addition to put them in a greater state of vulnerability due to contact with the work, its machines and hundreds of workers.

The demarcation of the area resulted from a negotiation process between Furnas and FUNAI and from resources resulting from that negotiation at the time. It is 38,000 hectares reserved in a preserved savannah area, where they have since lived.

Due to the conditions already mentioned, the Avá-Canoeiro's language is currently used by a small number of people, which makes it considered to be a "language strongly threatened with extinction". According to the typology presented in Crystal (2000, p. 21), an endangered language can be considered one that few or no children are learning as first language and its most fluent young speakers are young adults. This is what Avá-Canoeiro's situation indicates.

For the most part of them, they do not speak Avá-Canoeiro or use it very little in their day-to-day activities. Therefore, there are different degrees of knowledge and use of this language. As for those who live in the villages of *Canoanã* and *Boto Velho*, of the Javaé people who speak the *Inyrybè* (*Inyrybè* / *Karajá* language), their ethnic and linguistic minority status does not favor the use of the native language, which is becoming increasingly vulnerable. The remaining Avá-Canoeiro inhabiting the Avá-Canoeiro Indigenous Territory, located in the municipality of Minaçu, in Goiás (Borges, 2006), in smaller numbers live in direct contact with the Tapirapé language and Portuguese, which is necessary due to the interaction with public institution employees and other on-site service providers.

2. The Avá-canoeiro from Goiás and their relations with writing

The Avá-Canoeiro who live in the municipality of Minaçu (state of Goiás) are survivors of this process of conflicts and extermination policies, sometimes officially promoted, sometimes as a result of the intolerance of the regional populations who wanted to take over the lands they occupied. After a long period of escapes and passing through various hiding places, in 1983, they were

installed in an Indigenous Post administered by FUNAI, located on the banks of the *Maranhão* River. At the time there were four people: Matxa, Nakwatxa, lawi and Tuia. Later, already institutionally monitored, two children, Trumak and Putdjawa, were born from lawi and Tuia, who are now in their 30s.

Matxa and Nakwatxa are the oldest in the group, and they should be around 80 and 75 years old. According to their reports, they were the only ones in a large family to escape alive from the last attack by farmers in the Minaçu region to the village where they lived (TOSTA, 1997).

lawi (who died in 2017 due to cancer), who was approaching sixty years old, after having lost his entire family, was adopted by the two women when he was between 8 and 10 years old. Tuia, now aged approximately 50 years, is Matxa's daughter, and she was born in an escape process, living until the age of 15, in complete isolation.

Putdjawa changed her name, according to the Avá-Canoeiro tradition, adopting Niwatxima as an adult name. Trumak preferred to remain with his child's name. She married a Tapirapé man and has three children, all under the age of 5: Paxeo, Wiro'i and Kaugu. Trumak did not get married and has no children.

After their installation in the Indigenous Land demarcated by FUNAI, the Avá-Canoeiro people started to have the assistance of this tutelary government department. Classified as isolated Indigenous, according to criteria that guide indigenous policy in the country, they also underwent strict control by the public agents linked to it. Over almost three decades, they had no autonomy to direct their lives, to build their citizenship and to present their demands for rights or public services that were intended for other Brazilians. Therefore, they were, for all that time, excluded from public education policies. On the other hand, the tutelage responsible for their protection was also not able to develop actions that would enable them, in an effective and continuous way, to access writing and school knowledge.

Their first experiences with writing occur as a compensatory policy resulting from the aforementioned agreement between FUNAI and FURNAS, the latter

responsible for the construction of the hydroelectric dam, which affected much of their territory. In return, the company made resources available to fund the homologation and demarcation processes of the Indigenous Territory and for the development of actions aimed at education and health, among others.

Therefore, school education actions would be developed within the scope of these compensatory policies and conducted by FUNAI, with resources from FURNAS. Our first experience with the Avá-Canoeiro occurred in this context, after a request for assistance from the Federal University of Goiás and by the mentioned institutions for the elaboration of the project and the actions to be done.

3. The development and implementation of an intercultural school education proposal

We had our first contacts with the Avá-Canoeiro from Goiás, in the years 1999 and 2000, when we assisted in the preparation of the aforementioned project. In this first moment, our work consisted of conducting linguistic and anthropological research (bibliographic, documentary and ethnographic), with the objective of gathering information about the Avá-Canoeiro people, about their history, language and relations with other segments of Brazilian society, about their worldview, their sociolinguistic situation and their way of life, that could offer subsidies for the elaboration of a specific school education project for them⁷.

Until that moment, the bibliographic sources about the Avá-Canoeiro were scarce. There were no in-depth studies on his language and there was no writing system for it.

⁷ The research was carried out in the Avá-Canoeiro Indigenous Territory, in Minaçu-GO, resulting in the project: Avá-Canoeiro Project An Education Proposal: vitalization of language and culture (developed between 1999 and 2001), which was prepared by a team from the Anthropological Museum and the Faculty of Letters of Federal University of Goiás (UFG). In addition to the authors of this article, anthropologist Marco Antônio Lazarin, then director of the Anthropological Museum and Silvia Lucia BigonjalBraggio, linguist, researcher at the Faculty of Letters and the Anthropological Museum, who served as Coordinator, and José Estevão Rocha Arantes, also participated in the same. The work had resources from the National Indigenous Foundation and from FURNAS.

The few existing researches were based on historical sources, but very little existed about the concrete experiences of the Avá-Canoeiro, their daily practices, their way of life, their memories of the past, their educational practices and conceptions about the present.

Therefore, guided by the principles of interculturality and cultural pluralism provided for in the Brazilian Federal Constitution, which recognizes indigenous languages as national languages, and provides for the right of Brazilian indigenous peoples to their cultural practices, we initiated an ethnographic, linguistic and anthropological research process, with the purpose of subsidizing the elaboration of an education project for the Avá-Canoeiro, taking into account their socio-historical experiences and cultural principles.

At the same time that we carried out our research activities, always having Avá-Canoeiro as co-participants, the team started a process of literacy for all people in the group at the time: lawi, Tuia, Matxa, Nakwatxa, Trumak and Putdjawa , the latter at the time, were almost teenagers. Our activities were focused on real speech situations, such as dialogues between them, and between them and us.

We also conducted interviews and recordings of reports of experiences, events and situations of discursive interaction experienced on a daily basis by them, in addition to the narration of stories, myths and songs, descriptions of the festival, rituals and crafts, whether they were current practices at that time or starting from memories of these practices in the past, always relying on the intermediation of the youngest, most fluent speakers of Portuguese, since they acquired this language simultaneously with their native language as well.

Our research and literacy activities that we carry out occurred mainly in informal situations, during meals, during walks in the forest, during rest times, during bathing or washing clothes and pots in the river; accompanying them in activities on the plantations, caring for animals, especially the many birds raised inside the home. We also leafed through books with content and images from other Tupi peoples, read stories, listened to their stories and listened to music

together. The linguistic and anthropological ethnographic material that we used in preparing the project and in the first reflections on the process was recorded in field diaries and notes and from recordings and other records of these situations and interactions.

We have accomplished activities such as the production of drawings based on the themes and subjects present in the conversations and other activities, such as games and games suggested by us or by them; we worked with clippings from newspapers and magazines, pictures of our families and theirs and with modeling clay, in the production of miniatures of animals existing in the region, we used books with pictures and prints, postcards of other indigenous peoples to stimulate conversations about rituals and other cultural practices, botany, zoology, human anatomy, among other subjects (Photography 1 to 5).



Photography 1 - Literacy activities. Mônica Veloso Borges and Putdjawa Avá-Canoeiro, modeling miniatures of animals from the cerrado with colored mass. Avá-Canoeiro Indigenous Land. Picture: Rosani Moreira Leitão, 2001.



Photography 2 - Rosani Moreira Leitão, lawiAvá-Canoeiro, TrumakAvá-Canoeiro and PudjawaAvá-Canoeiro, in literacy activities. Avá-Canoeiro indigenous land. Picture: Mônica Veloso Borges, 2001.



Photography 3 - Rosani Moreira Leitão, with Tuia Avá-Canoeiro and lawi Avá-Canoeiro, in literacy activities. Avá-Canoeiro indigenous land. Picture: Mônica Veloso Borges, 2001.



Photography 4 - Tuia Avá-Canoeiro and NakwatxaAvá-Canoeiro, participating in literacy activities. Avá-Canoeiro indigenous land. Picture: Rosani Moreira Leitão, 2001.



Photography 5 - Literacy activities. TrumakAvá-Canoeiro, writing in your language Avá-Canoeiro indigenous land. Picture: Rosani Moreira Leitão, 2001.

Unfortunately, this work did not continue, because, on the one hand, after the research was carried out, the agreement between FURNAS and FUNAI was

not renewed, not guaranteeing the resources to carry out the planned activities. On the other hand, there was no interest from FUNAI in renewing the agreement with UFG and guaranteeing the continuity of the actions we were developing.

Following a tutelary logic that advocates strict control over native indigenous⁸, under the allegation that they are vulnerable, incapable and unprepared for contact with the outside world, FUNAI agents often behaved in an authoritarian manner, not only as the Avá-Canoeiro, but also with the researchers (no matter the gender). They did not allow our direct contact with the indigenous people except in a supervised and monitored way. In addition, they showed concern whenever we were able to establish closer and more trusting relationships with them, a necessary condition for conducting an ethnographic research, with a population reduced effectively marked by conflicts and traumas of violence suffered in the past and whose language we did not speak (BORGES; LEITÃO, 2003).

In addition, there was, both in indigenous policies and in anthropology itself, which often guided them, a negative conception of school education, as something that could be harmful and destructive with regard to Avá-Canoeiro cultural practices, since they were an isolated indigenous people and that the school was conceived as an acculturating institution. However, the protective actions on the Avá-Canoeiro implied strong and supposedly necessary control over their lives, resulting in a deprivation of almost three decades of schooling and the citizenship and autonomy that written knowledge could provide.

Fifteen years passed and new demands arose. Again UFG and we were contacted, this time by the Department of Education of the State of Goiás and by the newly created Department of Education of the Countryside, Indigenous and Quilombola, due to the previous involvement of the authors of this article with the Avá-Canoeiro and UFG's experiences, mainly from the Anthropological Museum,

⁸ Other researchers, like us, who ventured to criticize aspects of the protection imposed on the indigenous people with whom they worked, had their research monitored, curtailed and prohibited, as happened with the anthropologist Stephen Grant Baines, from UnB, when working with the Waimiri-Atroari (Baines, 1990, 1993, 1996).

the Faculty of Letters and the Takinahaky Center for Higher Indigenous Education, with intercultural education. We then started, together with the Avá-Canoeiro and the technical team of this Department and other collaborating researchers⁹, the construction of an intercultural proposal for school education, considering their cultural specificities, their stories, memories, current situation and prospects for the future the construction of an intercultural proposal for school education, considering their cultural specificities, their stories, memories, current situation and future perspectives.

This work is in progress and aims to create a specific intercultural school for them. The pedagogical proposal and the school are under construction with the participation of all Avá-Canoeiro, who at the same time learn also teach. We will discuss this proposal further below.

4. The construction of an intercultural and transdisciplinary curriculum matrix

In 2015, after fifteen years without continuing the work we had started and without even being able to visit the Avá-Canoeiro de Minaçu due to institutional prohibitions, we started a new phase of working with them, after an invitation from SEDUC and the department already mentioned, who had been contacted by FUNAI to resume school education actions in their village, in view of their demands and recommendations from the Public Ministry.

The pedagogical proposal should contemplate the Avá-Canoeiro specificities, sociocultural and linguistic, considering their culture, their history, their memories and current experiences, also enabling the integration between the different generations. It should also contribute so that they could register the most diverse knowledge, as well as express themselves through oral and written languages in the three languages spoken among them: Avá-Canoeiro,

⁹ Beyond these researchers and the technical team of the two institutions involved, they also collaborated with the works Ariel Pheula do Couto e Silva, PhD student in linguistics at UnB, and Lorraine Gomes da Silva, PhD student in socio-environmental studies at UFG, at the time.

Portuguese and Tapirapé, in view of interethnic marriage and the children of Niwatxima.

Recovering aspects of our experience, accumulated over more than twenty years in various actions related to indigenous education and the work previously started with the Avá-Canoeiro, we started the shared construction of a pedagogical proposal guided by the principles of interculturality and transdisciplinarity, and of a curricular matrix formed from themes meaningful to them, which we call 'contextual themes', around which their knowledge and experiences, as well as any knowledge they consider necessary, could be organized and systematized through writing.

Thinking about a curricular matrix formed by 'contextual themes' expresses the understanding that knowledge, in reality, isn't seen fragmented, in the way that disciplines are organized in the curricula of conventional schools¹⁰. The notion of 'contextual themes' is instituted from the construction of the degree course in intercultural education at UFG, an experience started in 2007, whose objective is the training at higher level of indigenous teachers from central Brazil (PIMENTEL da SILVA, 2012).

Therefore, in the construction of the pedagogical proposal and in the curricular matrix for the Avá-Canoeiro's school, the team's work ranges from questions about infrastructure, according to the different learning spaces and contexts, through the project's adaptations to the legal-bureaucratic structures of the system. of the state and country, until the construction of the curriculum matrix and didactic materials and teaching and learning methodologies, seeking, in the process itself, to identify and incorporate in an intercultural relationship the principles of an Avá-Canoeiro's pedagogy, also considering Tapirapé and the situation of children born from interethnic marriage.

¹⁰ On interculturality in the perspective adopted here see Gunther Dietz, in *Multiculturalismo a La Interculturalidad: a social movement between disident discourse and institutional praxis* (DIETZ, 2001) and about the principles of transdisciplinary intercultural education see *Intercultural Education, Traditional Knowledge and indigenous cosmologies* (LEITÃO, 2013).

In the elaboration of an experimental curriculum matrix, the first step was to carry out pedagogical workshops, with the Avá-Canoeiro and with the technical team of SEDUC. In these workshops, the guiding principles of the school's pedagogical project were discussed, the relevant legislation was analyzed and the technical-bureaucratic procedures involved in the process were discussed. A survey was also carried out of contextual themes that could be worked on, considering the Avá-Canoeiro's cultural tradition, their memories, their history, experiences lived in the present context and their prospects for the future.

Each theme was approached horizontally, considering its possibilities of exploring different knowledge linked to different fields of knowledge and generating a variety of specific themes and subjects to be worked on in each class, after exploratory research and written organization of the knowledge and information gathered about them.

Dozens of themes were identified and mapped including “the history of the Avá-Canoeiro people”, “the life cycle of the Avá-Canoeiro person”, “the Avá-Canoeiro territory”, “the traditional medicine of Avá-Canoeiro and their healing processes”, “Avá-Canoeiro songs”, “rituals of the Avá-Canoeiro people”, “the waters of the Avá-Canoeiro territory”, “the animals that live in the Avá-Canoeiro territory”, “the traditional foods of the Avá-Canoeiro people and food purchased on the market”, “calendars of the Avá-Canoeiro people”, among others.

Taking as an example the last contextual theme mentioned, “calendars of the Avá-Canoeiro people”, it is possible to deepen various knowledge, exploring several other themes related to it, such as: events that mark the time for the Avá-Canoeiro; the flowers and the songs of the insects as transmitters of messages of timing; dry season and rainy season and their characteristics; day and night and their markers; observation of stars to measure and forecast the weather; breeding seasons of animals according to their species; hunting and fishing seasons in the past and today; flowering times of plants and their markers; fruit season and its markers; flowering as a marker of the beginning of the farm's activities; the time measures used in making the gardens; times of felling,

burning, planting and harvesting; ritual cycles and seasons etc. The set of themes mapped and discussed in the workshops was organized in a curricular matrix of an experimental character, which was put into practice since 2015.

To conclude this session, we emphasize the importance of the transdisciplinary perspective in the pedagogical conception of this proposal, based on contextual themes, since it, in addition to not addressing knowledge in a fragmented way, allows for a closer approximation of the ways of classifying, understanding and explaining the world according to the cultural tradition of the Avá-Canoeiro people. It also allows the recovery from their memories, especially of the older ones, of the disregarded knowledge and made invisible by the history of oppression that they lived until then. It can also contribute to the recovery and resumption, in the medium and long terms, of its ways of building, organizing and transmitting knowledge, of forming generations young people, to teach and learn, to conceive and to practice their pedagogies.

5. The educational process and its protagonists: breaking with tutelage and building autonomy

In view of the small number of people of different ages and with different degrees of mastery of reading and writing, everyone becomes part of the teaching and learning community and the ways of working are being built and tested based on experiences, already that due to the characteristics already mentioned, this experimental school practice could not be organized in a conventional way (Photography 6 and 7).

Therefore, having contextual themes as guiding axes, activities were suggested considering the degree of familiarity of each participant with writing, their age groups, experiences of each, degree of maturity of each participant and knowledge of the proposed themes.



Photography 6 - NiwatximaAvá-Canoeiro, PaxeoAvá-Canoeiro and Wiro'iAvá-Canoeiro, in literacy activities with Mônica Veloso Borges. Avá-Canoeiro Indigenous Land. Picture: Rosani Moreira Leitão, 2017.



Photography 7 - Iawi and Tuia participating in literacy activities. Avá-Canoeiro Indigenous Land. Picture: Mônica Veloso Borges, 2017.

In order to contemplate all the languages spoken by the group in the school education process, it would be necessary to have a writing system already prepared for them. However, if the Portuguese language has had standardized

and consolidated writing for centuries, and Tapirapé has a writing system that has completed some decades, but it is still in the process of improvement and normalization, by its schooled speakers, the creation of Avá- Canoeiro is still in the initial phase, not counting on speakers with a schooling degree that favors this process. A first draft of the spelling of that language was prepared by Mônica Veloso Borges, in her doctoral thesis in 2006.

Thus, at the same time that the writing of Avá-Canoeiro is being built and improved, Ava-Canoeiro's speakers are becoming literate and collaborating with the improvement of writing and the literacy of others, in the same¹¹. To contemplate all three languages used in the context in which the Avá-Canoeiro live and enable the construction of an education project intercultural and trilingual school, it was recommended to hire native-speaking teachers from each of them, who should work together (Photography 6).

After that, a Tapirapé teacher was hired, with higher education in intercultural education and teaching experience with his people and who came to live in the Indigenous Land of Avá-Canoeiro; a non-indigenous teacher with previous teaching experience, including the Avá-Canoeiro themselves, to work with Portuguese language writing and the young Avá-Canoeiro, still with little schooling and little command of reading and writing, to work with the language Avá-Canoeiro. Here in this last case, we have a situation in which the teacher literally forms and is trained in the process, which in some way also occurs with the other two teachers (Photography 8 to 11).

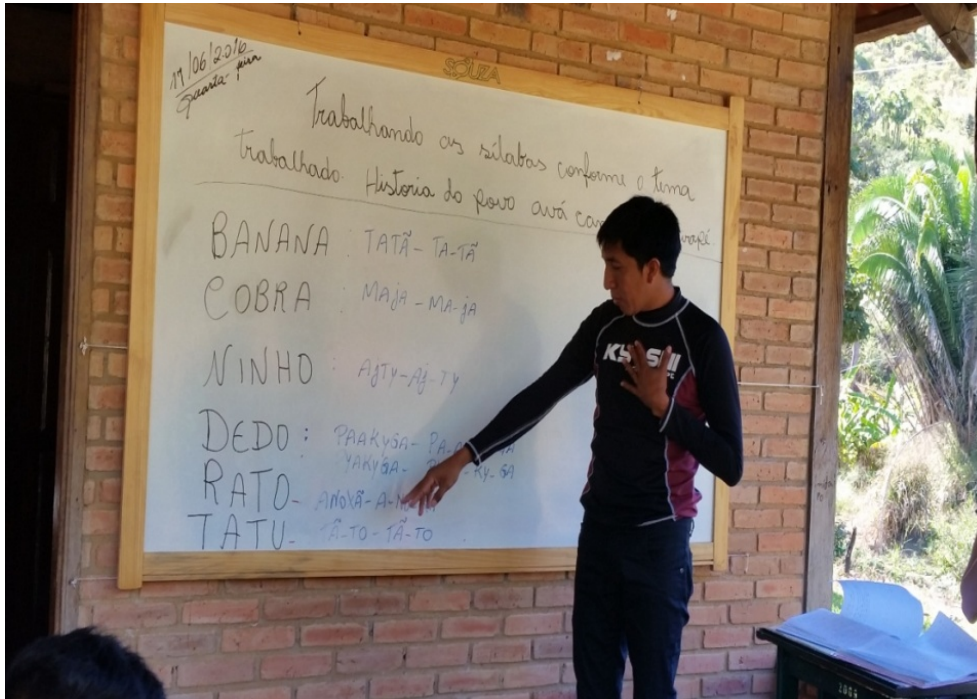
¹¹ The first in-depth studies on the Avá-Canoeiro language are by Mônica Veloso Borges, especially in her doctoral thesis (BORGES, 2006). Subsequently, both Borges and Ariel Pheula do Couto e Silva, a doctoral student in Linguistics at the University of Brasília, have dedicated themselves to studying this language, which is the subject of Couto e Silva's doctoral thesis.



Photography 8 - Professor Guiomar Silva, Professor Iranildo Tapirapé and Professor NiwatximaAvá-Canoeiro, in a planning meeting. Avá-Canoeiro Indigenous Land. Picture: Mônica Veloso Borges, 2017.



Photography 9 - Professor NiwatximaAvá-Canoeiro, teaching her native language. Avá-Canoeiro Indigenous Land. Picture: Mônica Veloso Borges, 2017.



Photography 10 - Professor Iranildo Tapirapé, teaching the Apyãwa / Tapirapé language. Avá-Canoeiro Indigenous Land. Picture: Mônica Veloso Borges, 2017.



Figure 11: Professor Guiomar Silva, working with content in the Portuguese language. Avá-Canoeiro Indigenous Land. Picture: Rosani Moreira Leitão, 2017.

Conclusion. Decolonizing relations, knowledge and educational practices: intercultural education and the construction of Avá-Canoeiro citizenship

The Avá-Canoeiro's school is still under construction, but its pedagogical proposal is already in progress on an experimental basis. Despite having as a physical place for carrying out pedagogical activities all spaces in the village and the Indigenous Land, at first, it formally functioned as a classroom attached to a regular school linked to the state and municipal education networks, located in the city of Minaçu. This was the alternative found by the Department of Education of the Field, Indigenous and Quilombola of the State Department of Education of the State of Goiás, so that the experience could officially appear in the statistics and educational policies of the State of Goiás, allowing the official certification of the learning processes of the participants.

Likewise, this Department also used some mechanisms available in the state's education system to hire teachers, through temporary contracts, because, despite the prediction of competitions for hiring indigenous teachers under Brazilian law and the prediction of specific competitions for these teachers, the state of Goiás has never held it.

However, while the experience is consolidating, the bureaucratic procedures for regularization and official creation of a school of its own, which even already has a name, also move forward with prospects of soon functioning as an independent institution.

At the same time that they build and appropriate their school, the Avá-Canoeiro also form an awareness of the importance of it for the construction of their autonomy, reducing their dependence on indigenous actions and their tutelary practices, which affect them comfortably, as since they are classified as "recently contacted Indians" and need protection. In this way, the school's creation actions become formative processes of political action and construction of citizenship. They not only claimed the creation of their own school, whose process they are effectively participating in, as the main protagonists, but also

affirm that it should continue and that they will not allow their actions to be interrupted again.

Thus, unlike the most remote previous experiences, in which the welfare institutions acted clearly in a colonialist way and saw themselves in the right to decide for them, being officially authorized and legitimized for this, in the present experience they are the main protagonists and clearly express the desire to break with indigenous control and any other form of colonialism that still exists among them, taking concrete initiatives in this regard.

An example of this was the effort to learn numbers and calculations related to money and the claim of possession of the cards used to receive retirement aid (from elderly women) and other benefits from social programs of the federal government, previously administered by civil servants. from FUNAI, since theoretically the Avá-Canoeiro themselves did not have the mastery of the knowledge necessary to manage them properly.

In this way, we believe that the process of building the school and the pedagogical experiences in question, guided by the principles of interculturality and transdisciplinarity are contributing positively to the expansion and consolidation of this autonomy. The practices of registration and systematization and resumption of the Avá-Canoeiro's own knowledge, through writing and in their native language, have also been forming attitudes of valorization of this knowledge and of this language, giving them visibility and legitimacy, while promoting more symmetrical relationships in interactions with national institutions and other segments of Brazilian society.

To conclude this discussion, we emphasize that, in this context, interculturality is not just about a relationship between cultures, but an effort to understand each other, to learn together and to build equal relationships between those involved. It is understood, therefore, at the same time, as a guiding principle for these relationships and interactions and as an instrument that contributes to the knowledge of Avá-Canoeiro's cultural tradition to be resumed and incorporated with legitimacy into the space and school routines, as well as the

processes of written knowledge production, forming part of an ecology of knowledge and breaking with the processes of concealment to which they were subjected, throughout their history of relations with non-indigenous society.¹²

REFERENCES

BAINES, Stephen Grant. **É a FUNAI que sabe. A frente de Atração Waimiri-Atroari**. Coleção Eduardo Galvão. Belém: MPEG/CNPq/SCT/PR, 1990.

BAINES, Stephen Grant. **O território dos Waimiri-Atroari e o indigenismo empresarial**. *Ciências Sociais Hoje*. São Paulo: HUCITEC, 1993. 219-243pp.

BAINES, Stephen Grant. A resistência Waimiri-Atroari frente ao indigenismo de resistência. **Série Antropologia 211**. Brasília: UnB/DAN, 1996.

BORGES, Mônica Veloso. **Aspectos fonológicos e morfossintáticos do Avá-Canoeiro (Tupi-Guarani)**. (Tese de Doutorado). Campinas/SP: UNICAMP, 2006.

BORGES, Mônica Veloso. **O estudo do Avá: relato e reflexões sobre a análise de uma língua ameaçada de extinção**. In: Revista LIAMES (línguas indígenas americanas) 2: 85-104. Campinas: UNICAMP, 2002.

BORGES, Mônica Veloso; LEITÃO, Rosani Moreira. **Relato e reflexões sobre a pesquisa com os Avá-Canoeiro (Tupi-Guarani): subsídios educacionais**. Congresso de Leitura Campinas: Unicamp, 2003.

BORGES, Mônica Veloso; SILVA, Maria do Socorro Pimentel da. **Políticas Linguísticas e Pedagógicas em Práticas de Educação Bilíngue**. *RBPG*. Brasília. Supl. 1, v. 8, 2011. 249-273pp.

CHAIM, Marivone Matos. **Os aldeamentos indígenas na Capitania de Goiás**. Goiânia: Oriente, 1974.

CRYSTAL, D. **Language Death**. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

¹² Here the notion of knowledge ecology is a contribution of the epistemologies of the south developed by Boaventura de Sousa Santos, who consider the different types of knowledge produced from the many contributions of all the peoples of the world as meaningful and valid forms of interpretation, understanding and explanation of the world and resolution of problems and conflicts, with no form of hierarchy between the same knowledge being legitimate (SANTOS, 2010).

DIETZ, G. **Do Multiculturalismo a La Interculturalidad: um movimento social entre discurso disidente y praxis institucional.** In: PRADO RODRÍGUEZ, Javier de (Ed.). *Diversidad Cultural, Identidad Y Ciudadanía.*Córdoba: Instituto de Estudios Transnacionales, 2001, pp. 17-71.

KARASCH, Mary. **Catequese e cativoiro: política indigenista em Goiás, 1780-1889.** In: CUNHA, Manuela Carneiro da (org.). *História dos índios no Brasil.* 397-412. São Paulo: Companhia das Letras, 1992.

LEITÃO, Rosani Moreira. **Educação Intercultural, Saberes Tradicionais e cosmologias indígenas.** Trabalho apresentado na X Reunião de Antropologia do Mercosul, em Córdoba, Argentina, em julho de 2013.

PEDROSO, Dulce Madalena Rios. **O povo invisível.** Goiânia: UCG, 1994.

PEDROSO, Dulce Madalena Rios. 2006. "Avá-Canoeiro". In: MOURA, Marlene Castro O. de (Orga.). **Índios de Goiás: uma perspectiva histórico-cultural.** 91-133. Goiânia: UCG.

PIMENTEL DA SILVA, Maria do Socorro. **Letramento Bilíngue em contextos de tradição oral.** Goiânia: Editora da UFG, 2012.

QUIJANO, Aníbal. Colonialidade, Poder, globalização e democracia. **Novos Rumos.** Vol. 17, nº 37, 2002.

RODRIGUES, Aryon. **Relações internas na família lingüística Tupi-Guarani.** *Revista Brasileira de Antropologia.* Volumes XXVII/XXVIII. São Paulo: USP, 1984/1985. 33-53pp.

RODRIGUES, Patrícia de Mendonça. **Avá-Canoeiro.** In: Povos Indígenas no Brasil. Disponível em <https://pib.socioambiental.org/pt/Povo:Av%C3%A1-Canoeiro>. Consultado em 20/03/2020.

RODRIGUES, Patrícia de Mendonça. 2010. **Relatório Circunstanciado de Identificação e Delimitação: Terra Indígena Javaé/Avá-Canoeiro.** Brasília: FUNAI/UNESCO.

RODRIGUES, Patrícia de Mendonça. **Os Avá-Canoeiro do Araguaia hoje: uma perspectiva de futuro.** In: Guenter Francisco Loebens; Lino João de Oliveira Neves (org.). *Povos indígenas isolados na Amazônia – A luta pela sobrevivência.* 148-168. Manaus: CIMI/UFAM, 2011.

RODRIGUES, Patrícia de Mendonça. Uma homenagem ao guerreiro Tutawa Æwa. **Porantim**. Ano XXXVI, N° 378. 10-11. Brasília: Mais Soluções Gráficas, 2015.

RODRIGUES, Patrícia de Mendonça. Taego Æwa – filme e terra. **Porantim**, N° 389. Brasília: Mais Soluções Gráficas 2016.

RODRIGUES, Patrícia de Mendonça. Os Avá-Canoeiro do Araguaia e o tempo do cativo. **Anuário Antropológico**/2012-I, 2013: 83-137.

SANTOS, Boaventura de Sousa; MENESES, Maria Paula. (Orgs.) **Epistemologias do Sul**. São Paulo: Editora Cortez, 2010.

SILVA, Christian Teófilo da. **Cativando Maíra – A sobrevivência dos índios avá-canoeiros no alto Rio Tocantins**. São Paulo: Annablume; Goiânia: PUC Goiás, 2010.

SILVA, Crísthian Teófilo. **Cativando Maíra: a sobrevivência Avá-Canoeiro no alto rio Tocantins**. (Tese de Doutorado). Brasília: DAN/UnB, 2005.

SILVA, Lorraine Gomes da. **Singrar rios, morar em cavernas e furar jatóka: ressignificações culturais, socioespaciais e espaços de aprendizagens da família Avá-Canoeiro do rio Tocantins**. (Tese de Doutorado). Goiânia: IESA/UFG, 2017.

TORAL, André Amaral de. **Situação e perspectivas de sobrevivência dos Avá-Canoeiro**. Processo FUNAI n° 253/83: 117-168. Brasília: FUNAI, 1984.

TORAL, André Amaral de. **O destino de um grupo caçador e coletor: os Avá-Canoeiro, hoje**. In: Lopes da Silva, Aracy & Grupioni, Luis D. Benzi (orgs.). A temática indígena na escola – novos subsídios para professores de 1° e 2° graus. 73-75. Brasília: MEC/MARI/UNESCO, 1995.

TOSTA, Lena Tatiana Dias. **Homi matou papai meu: uma situação histórica dos Avá-Canoeiro**. Monografia de Graduação em Antropologia. Brasília: UnB, 1997.

SOBRE AS AUTORAS

ROSANE MOREIRA LEITÃO holds a PhD in Anthropology from the University of Brasília (UnB), with a doctoral internship abroad, from the Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores em Social Antropolgia

(CIESAS), in Mexico, master in Education, professor of the Interdisciplinary Graduate Program in Human Rights (UFG) and collaborating professor of the Degree in Intercultural Education for the Training of Indigenous Teachers (UFG) and coordinator of the Karajá ceramic dolls project as a cultural heritage in Brazil: contributions to its safeguard.

E-mail: rmleitao@terra.com.br

MONICA VOLOSO BORGES holds a doctorate in Linguistics - Indigenous Languages - from University of Campinas (Unicamp), a master's degree in Linguistic Studies from the Federal University of Goiás (UFG), professor of the Postgraduate Program in Letters and Linguistics and of the Degree Course in Intercultural Education, from the Takinahaky Center for Higher Indigenous Education, at the Federal University of Goiás (UFG).

E-mail: mvborges8@hotmail.com

Received on: 02.04.2020

Accepted on: 22.06.2020