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3 Revolutionary Love and Peace in the Construction of an English Teacher's Professional Identity

Ana Maria F. Barcelos

> Love is a legacy that lasts.
> Wink and Wink (2004: 8)

Love is an essential human emotion. We all need to feel accepted and understood, to give and receive love. According to Maslow (1943, summarized in Newton, 2011), love is one of our five main psychological needs, after our physical survival and safety needs are regularly met. We all hunger for meaningful relationships and for a sense of belonging in our communities. These statements are as true in the classroom context as they are elsewhere. As mentioned by Murphey *et al.*, (2010), students need to feel they emotionally belong in the language classroom. Gidley (2016: 7) also emphasizes the importance of love and the role of the heart in educational settings: 'if young people are to thrive in educational settings, new spaces need to be opened up for softer terms, such as love, nurture, respect, reverence, awe, wonder, wellbeing, vulnerability, care, tenderness, openness, and trust'.

Love Is Rarely Researched in Applied Linguistics. Yet, It Could Be

Despite this fact, one wonders why love as an emotion or from other viewpoints is still not commonly researched in applied linguistics (AL), with a few exceptions (Barcelos & Coelho, 2016; Culham *et al*., 2018; Johnson *et al.*, 2017; Pavelescu & Petric, 2018). This may have to do with the view of love as a feminized and soft topic concerning private spaces and personal feelings, thus usually evoking embarrassment, sentimentality, or religiosity (Zembylas, 2017: 25). Clingan (2015: 3) frames the absence of the study of love in the social sciences in the following manner:

> Overall love as a topic of scholarly discourse continues to be evasive. Or is it? Is love in fact present throughout the writing and thinking that people do related to positive change and growth? Is it simply time to call it love and prioritize it as a motivating value and methodological approach? Why then, given that philosophers and leaders have been examining the meaning of

> love since the beginning of recorded human thought, is the inclusion of love in scholarly work still evasive? And if my premise is true that love is embedded in every text, every idea, why do we not simply call it love? Why do we offer degrees in peace studies and justice studies, even happiness studies, and not have academic programs in love studies?

Barcelos and Coelho (2016) cite two myths for the absence of academic research on this topic: (a) affect excludes academic knowledge, rigor and serious learning (Freire, 1996), when in fact, affect and joy are necessary in a system where disrespect to students is so common; (b) emotions will impair professionalism (Noddings, 1992), when in fact, caring relations are the foundation for successful pedagogical activity. I contend that researching love is necessary because it can help rehumanize education, create more caring relationships in schools, help in our well-being, and create social change.

In this chapter, I describe the importance of love as an emotion based on the narrative of a Brazilian EFL student-teacher, according to the perspectives of love as defined by Lanas and Zembylas (2015). In the first section, I discuss the concept of love in education and its relationship to peace and identity. In the second part, I explain the methodology and the context of the study. Next, I discuss the results and then conclude with implications for language teacher education and language learning, and for research on the emotion of love in AL.

Theoretical Framework

In this section, I base my definitions of love on two complementary concepts.[i] The first is the concept of revolutionary love inspired by the works of Chabot (2008) and Lanas and Zembylas (2015). The second, related to revolutionary love, is Paulo Freire's (1996) concept of love as *amorosidade* (amorosity). I then discuss the concepts of peace and identity and how they are related to love.

Revolutionary love

Chabot (2008: 808) sees love as revolutionary, going beyond the conventional view of love as personal, exclusive and everlasting. For Chabot, love is a social disposition that emerges, grows and survives within communication and interaction in human relationships. This view of love focuses on social connections, on people working together for the common good. For Chabot (2008: 810), educators rely on love when they dialogue and collaborate with students, treat them as equals and engage with them in projects to change oppressive conditions in the world. This revolutionary love is

learned (Chabot, 2008) – all of us can learn to be more loving, giving, responsible and respectful in our collaboration with others.

To Chabot (2008), love is the way to contest contemporary forms of alienation, consumption and personal ambition. In order to resist oppression, exploitation and alienation, we need a cooperative effort. He suggests the following actions to avoid alienation: a) choose meaningful life projects and work that contribute positively to the world; b) manage our multiple selves to feel, think and act more authentically; and c) be self-confident when interacting with external challenges and with others. This revolutionary love involves generosity, care, responsibility, respect and knowledge. For revolutionary love to happen we must have discipline, concentration and patience. Chabot calls this the art of loving and explains it as a slow process that demands courage and commitment. A loving practice involves discipline, concentration, patience and concern. Love such as revolutionary love is incompatible with violence, just as peace is incompatible with violence (Oxford, 2013; 2014).

Lanas and Zembylas (2015) also talk about revolutionary love. They contend that love is a more powerful force than anger in promoting political change: '. . .[W]hen we build on anger, we get anger; when we build on love, love is what we get' (Lanas & Zembylas, 2015: 32). Love in critical education can encourage social transformation, justice, equality and solidarity, similar to Freire's (1996) theory of education as an act of love. Lanas and Zembylas write extensively about Freire's work on love, but argued, however, that Freire did not explain or explore what it means to teach with love. Thus, they developed a theory of 'revolutionary love' in practice, comprised of the following six interrelated perspectives:

(1) Love as an emotion refers to love as 'embodied' and 'performative', i.e. realized through actions. It entails a risk, an investment of the self in lovingly responding to others or doing loving acts, which may not be reciprocated, thus hurting us.
(2) Love as a choice we make implies that we are not obliged to love, yet we decide to do so. By choosing to love, love exists. This decision must be constantly reaffirmed.
(3) Love as a response refers to how we relate to the world, constrained by the contexts in which we live. Our moral responsibility is to respond in ethical ways that open up possibilities for others.
(4) Love as relational emphasizes love as something that happens in relationship to others in 'discursive practices, relational exchanges and social rules', 'within specific socio-political historical-cultural-spatial contexts' (Lanas & Zembylas, 2015: 37).
(5) Love as political refers to the practice of love within societal power relations, since emotions help 'the formation or maintenance of political and social identities and collective behavior' (Lanas & Zembylas, 2015 38).
(6) Love as praxis suggests that it is an action: 'love is as love does' (Lanas & Zembylas, 2015: 39). Some of these actions involve voluntary acts of care, responsibility, respect and knowledge (of ourselves, of others and of the socio-political-historical and cultural space).

Lanas and Zembylas (2015) conclude by first stating that a focus on love can help us emphasize equality and social justice, especially for contexts based on measurement and competition. Second, a

loving revolution can help us move away from anger and dominant anger discourses. Third, bringing love to formal education can help in the formation of loving members of a society and can enable us to learn how to love. We can do this by following Chabot's suggestions (discussed earlier) on discipline, concentration, patience and developing loving ties.

Love as *amorosidade* (amorosity)

For Freire (1996), education is an act of love because love is a practice that is specific of and inherent to the activity of dealing with human beings. This practice is based on dialogue and by learning through interacting with others. Freire describes teaching as being open to affect and not being afraid to express it, respecting students' curiosity, experiences and language and giving them freedom. Freire talks about amorosity and the amorous dimension of teaching that includes working with commitment, involvement, competence and seriousness. To him, amorosity is an essential condition for these effects to occur.[ii]

Amorosity is characterized by Freire (1996) as the intercommunication of two or more individuals that respect each other. This amorosity includes intelligence, reason, embodiment, politics as well as the role of emotions, desire, decision, resistance, choice, curiosity, creativity, intuition and the beauty of the world and of knowledge. Amorosity for Freire is a fundamental factor of human life and education, which manifests itself in the relationship teacher-student, and in the teacher's desire to educate people and in doing it in the best way possible.

Love and teacher identities

Several researchers (e.g. Barcelos, 2015; Lemke, 2008; Zembylas, 2003) have already stated that our emotions strongly influence our identities. Teaching is a profession in which emotions play a central role, both personally and professionally. In order to preserve their passion for teaching, teachers need to be aware and learn how to manage the emotional tensions of their job.

According to Day (2009: 6), to behave like and remain a passionate teacher, a teacher needs to develop good relationships with students and show moral purposes such as care and courage. To do that, teachers need to know who they are and what their strengths and limitations are. In addition, they must 'connect emotionally with each student', to 'praise and demonstrate always their deep love for their work as teachers' (Day, 2009: 6). Teachers need to be hopeful about how they make a difference in students' lives and in their own work. This requires sensitivity to the obstacles students face in their

daily lives, which can impact their motivation, commitment and well-being. Having hope, according to Day, will help us to prevent anxiety and lessen emotional distress.

Love and peace

Kruger (2012: 19) defines violence as 'direct or indirect action that causes unequal life chances.' Friedrich (2007 as cited in Kruger 2012: 19) defines linguistic violence as 'language-related act that violates the four basic human needs – survival, well-being, identity, and freedom'. As mentioned earlier and posited by Oxford (2013; 2014), love and peace are incompatible with violence. Based on Kruger (2012), I assert that a central purpose for considering love in AL is related to our desire for a more just and peaceful world, promoting greater equality and fairness. By integrating love into our classrooms, and focusing on care, ethics, responsibility and respect, we are contributing to wider societal peace through the promotion of individual and group well-being. In investing in more loving classrooms, situational ethics, and relationships in classrooms and in schools, we are creating a culture of peace (Boulding, 2000; Oxford 2014) whose effects will reach beyond any given class.

Contemplative learning is a model Olivero and Oxford (2018) discuss for enhancing qualities such as love, social justice, peace, wisdom, compassion, forgiveness and social justice (see Lin *et al*., 2019; Zajonc, 2006). These qualities resonate with Chabot's (2008: 811-812) statement that in order to 'eradicate oppression and alienation and contribute to a more just and peaceful world that benefits all of us in the long run', we need to practice revolutionary love in our personal and social lives.

Revolutionary love can extend to various kinds of peace. Oxford (2013) writes about peace as a multidimensional concept that includes levels of peace such as inner (peace within the person), interpersonal (peace between people or groups of people), intergroup (peace among larger groups based on race, religion, ages, and so on), international (peace among nations), intercultural (peace among different cultures) and ecological peace (peace between humans and the environment). In my view, these dimensions are related to the perspectives of love presented here. For the purposes of this chapter, the concepts of inner, interpersonal and intergroup peace are more directly useful.

Methodology

Having discussed theoretical issues, I now turn to the study's methodology, which is followed by results and discussion. The context of this particular study is a specific course requirement for the English teaching practicum class I teach every year as Professor of English at the Federal University

of Viçosa. In this course, I ask student-teachers to write a narrative about their language learning and teaching trajectories from the time they started learning English. I have collected over 100 narratives in the last 15 years. In this chapter, however, I report on the analysis of one narrative from that corpus.

This narrative was written by Paula (a pseudonym), who at the time was 23 years old and was in her last year of her language teaching major (English/Portuguese). This program of 4.5 years prepares students to teach Portuguese, English and its literatures. The Language Teaching Practicum (I and II) is offered in the last year of the program and requires student-teachers to observe classes in public schools and practice their teaching in schools. This specific narrative was written in 2016, after Paula had completed the teaching component.

The analysis of this narrative followed the parameters of qualitative research (Patton, 2002), with an inductive perspective beginning with data reduction: reading the narrative several times and finding the units of meaning, which is a heuristic, or the 'smallest piece of information about something that can stand by itself' and that is interpretable in the broader context of inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985: 345). Units are then grouped as categories of relatively similar content and then reviewed several times for overlapping and for possible relationships among them. The categories are prioritized according to their salience, credibility, uniqueness, heuristics, and content (Patton, 2002). The results have suggested that the categories found in Paula's narrative were related to the following perspectives of love, as discussed in this chapter: love as relational, as an emotion, as a response and as praxis. Each of these is discussed in the next section, accompanied by relevant excerpts taken from the data.

Results and Discussion

In Paula's narrative, love played a clear part of her identity as a future English teacher in Brazil and was a fundamental aspect of the dimensions of inner and interpersonal peace she claimed for herself and her students. Below, I comment on each perspective of love, based on Lanas and Zembylas (2015), found in her narrative.

Love as relational

Relational love refers to the relationships we have with other people and relational exchanges, as we can see in this excerpt:

> Fortunately, my cousin, who had graduated in English, talked to me and told me that she could help me. She knew that I was interested in English but that I had a psychological

> barrier. So, she talked with a teacher she had at university and asked that teacher to help me the way she could. [This] teacher suggested me to keep a diary or a notebook where I should write in English about things that I liked or attach some comic strips, pictures. After a period of fifteen days she took the notebook to read.

Paula explains how she was aided by a professor and her cousin in a difficult moment of her English learning trajectory: she almost quit the language course believing she could not speak English. Her professor's loving attitude was influential in Paula's choice to continue her program of studies and believe in herself. Based on her professor's advice, Paula's action seemed to have brought her some inner peace after her previous despair in learning English. She felt 'desperate and uncomfortable because most of [her] classmates were very good on speaking English'; thus, she 'did not like to talk in class'; she 'felt less than them' and 'wanted to give up'. This relational aspect was also present when Paula had a chance to study abroad:

> I liked a lot to study there because my classmates were all from different countries and it was necessary to speak English to make friends and get along with them. […] the teacher was very good. He did not allow us to talk with people from the same country as ours. In the classroom I never talked with Brazilian speakers. […] Living there was also so gratifying because I worked in a shoe repair store and I dealt with different people using the L2. I also learned a lot about life, dedication and commitment. I am conscious that I learned a lot during those four months but I know that I still have a lot to learn. It was that teacher who helped me start to break my psychological barriers with English. Since she started to help me I have been giving all my effort to learn English.

Obviously, Paula carried the love given by her teacher into her general interactions. She understood that to communicate she needed to go further and talk to people from different countries. Once again, the concept of love in learning languages is shown to be centered in relationships, discursive practices and relational exchanges with others, as well as social rules language teachers can create in class to kindly nudge students to interact beyond the scope of their nationality and experience. We could infer that Paula's teacher was trying to foster interpersonal and intergroup peace (Oxford, 2013). It is this kind of love-centered practice in the language classroom that was helpful to Paula.

Love as a response

Love as a response refers to ethical agency towards others and particularly how we choose to respond to critical events. This perspective is also related to love as a choice, i.e. voluntarily choosing and re-choosing love as a response to situational stimuli. Love as a response is shown when Paula chooses English as her major, despite believing she was not good at it. This choice was part of her identity construction as a learner and future English teacher. She knew that if she wanted to become a good English teacher, she would have to take actions toward her goals and dreams. A loving response

is to act according to the dreams we have, which also increases inner peace. Such a loving process is described below:

> The first thing I did was to enroll at the English course (EC) at the university. I did the placement test and I started in the second level. At EC I did the second and third levels while I kept doing my English subjects at university. I also decided to save some money to travel abroad. I worked two years to save money; my father also helped me. In 2014 I went to the US to study. I lived in NY for four months and I studied at PLU [an English Institute in the U. S.].

As illustrated in this quote, Paula's choice to study English was influenced by love. The love for learning English involves her choice to develop as a student by improving her English competence, studying abroad and deciding to teach English, as illustrated below:

> Since I started to study Languages I've had a dream to teach at EC because I saw my classmates there and it seemed to be an amazing opportunity. So, when I came back to Brazil I was more comfortable with my language proficiency and I decided to do the training course (TC) they offer. I liked the course and the teacher so much; it was very helpful to see myself as a teacher. I started to think about methodology and the best ways to teach different content. During the TC I taught some mini classes and got feedback from the teacher. This was the best thing to me, because I could know how had done and how and if I was prepared to be a teacher.

As previously mentioned, love as a response involves having agency and coming into being as a subject. Paula acted with agency when she chose to take specific actions to fulfill her dreams.

Love as an emotion

Ways by which the emotion of love is embodied in actions and performance are illustrated in Paula's description of her first experiences as a student-teacher:

> When I was a child I used to pretend that I was a teacher and I knew that it was what I liked most to do but it was only after did the TC I started to behave [as if I were a teacher] and to see myself as a teacher. I've had some experiences teaching Portuguese (almost two years) and I liked that but I did not feel like it was what I wanted to do in my life. I think one of the best experiences of my life is when I was selected to be a teacher at EC because more than fulfilling a dream, it meant to me a moment to believe that I am able to do everything I want, that I broke the barriers of learning a second language, that I've been doing what I like to do; the best thing I've done was to chase my dream and not to give up.

Although I have commented on each of these perspectives separately, many of them are interdependent. Thus, in enacting love – in acting towards her dreams – Paula is also constructing her identity of an English teacher. The way she responds to her dreams shows not only love as an emotion, but also as a choice, as a response, as relational and as praxis.

Love as praxis

Love as praxis is related to actions involving care, responsibility, respect and knowledge. Paula shows the importance of love as praxis when she explains what a teacher must do in the classroom:

> I think a teacher has to pay attention in everything that happens in the classroom; you have to know your students and to do your best, you have to be concerned about your behavior, your words and the responsibilities you have to students' learning processes. You are not the only and the mainly responsible for that but you are really important to them. Nothing better than realizing that you have been building a good environment in classroom and that your students are learning. Sometimes when I see how better my students are I feel really good and motivated to keep teaching.

As seen in this excerpt, Paula demonstrates care towards her students by seeking to know them better and assuming responsibility for their academic experience. In addition, she shows care and respect by trying to relate to them personally and supporting a good learning environment through the facilitation of a sense of community in the classroom. In turn, this helps her feel more motivated, more 'in love' with teaching. In other excerpts, Paula states how love as praxis is manifested in good teaching:

> I believe I am already a good teacher but I want to still keep learning and to help my students even more. To be a better teacher I am studying more and I participate of everything I can that is English related: courses, lectures, etc. I think only if I allow myself to be in touch with the language and to use it I am able to be even better.

> As a teacher, I have to provide opportunities in the classroom to make students use the language; I also have to show them that our time in classroom is very short and because of that it is important to develop their autonomy as learners to optimize this process. I am there as a teacher to guide them, but if they do not walk by themselves they won't learn.

Both excerpts suggest Paula's responsibility, i.e. her ability and willingness to respond to others' needs, in this case, her students'. This indicates Paula's knowledge about herself and others. As Palmer (1998:2) says, 'we teach who we are'. Love as praxis and love as relational involve developing loving relationships with others, which also correlates with interpersonal and intergroup peace (Oxford, 2013; Oxford *et al.*, 2018).

Relationship: Love, identity and peace

My analysis of this narrative ultimately shows that love, identity and peace are interrelated concepts. Such a relationship is illustrated in the following excerpt:

> I see myself as a good teacher, someone who is always concerned about what I can do better or different to motivate my students and make the learning process interesting and easy. […] when I do not know something, I try to look for it and to bring the answers. I feel that because of my story of overcoming my English learning difficulties, I can use that as an example to show them that they can learn, if they really want that, and that learning is not impossible or painful.

As an English teacher, Paula identifies herself with love-centered practices that bring peace not only to her classroom, which would help expand the experiences of interpersonal and also intergroup peace, but also to herself, i.e. inner peace. Her identity as a teacher has been formed around these

practices, which she explains by referring to her own identity as an English learner, reflected in the following excerpt:

> Now that I've been already teaching English I believe the best way to learn is trying, it is facing the situations and giving your best and it is also important to listen to suggestions and to watch yourself, your behavior and your feelings as a teacher. I think it helps a lot in the process of becoming a better teacher. You have to reflect about your classes, to see how and if it is working and sometimes why it is not working as we planned, to think about what we can do different and always try, because if you do not try you will never know if you are doing your best.

This excerpt shows that Paula's identity as a language teacher is inextricably grounded in her respect, care and knowledge of her profession. In the act of expressing what she identifies with and in her beliefs about giving the best to her students, she shows her emotional and practical concerns towards them. By revealing how much she cares and respects students, she enhances love, inner, interpersonal and intergroup peace.

Conclusion

In this chapter, I have discussed the importance of the concept of love as a topic of research and practice for the field of AL. The process of researching love is ultimately a political and ethical consideration embodying a caring approach to the many aspects of language learning teaching. I presented two major theoretical perspectives on love: the concept of love as a revolutionary transformative force, based on the studies by Lanas and Zembylas (2015) and Chabot (2008); and the concept of *amorosity* by Freire (1996). Based on these two theoretical perspectives on love, I analyzed a written narrative of Paula, a Brazilian EFL student-teacher in Brazil.

The results have shown four perspectives of love identified in Paula's narrative: love as an emotion, as relational, as a response and as praxis. These perspectives were related to her identities as an English teacher. Paula wanted to become the best teacher she could be, and her ideas were grounded in the principles of ethics, respect, knowledge and responsibility. Her choice of becoming a teacher had to be constantly reaffirmed and repeatedly chosen in the many actions and responses she took to develop. Her choices and actions illustrate how love is relational, because it involves not only the people who helped Paula, but also the way she envisions herself in relation to her students. All the perspectives of love are closely connected to her identity as a person and teacher. Once she started to act based on love-centered choices, she experienced increased inner, interpersonal and even intergroup peace, responding more lovingly not only towards herself (taking actions that would promote her self-esteem and development as a teacher), but also toward her students.

The implications of the results for language teaching include the following. First, love is a factor present in the trajectories of student-teachers, helping them make decisions to become better professionals while fostering their individual identities. Second, it is wise not only to critically examine love in education, but also to include it as content in language teaching courses to help student teachers gain awareness of the many perspectives on love and the impacts that love can have in their learning trajectories and future practices with their own students. Third, studying love in the classroom opens conversations about the close relationship between love and peace. The results here have shown how important love is for inner, interpersonal and intergroup peace in the life of a student-teacher. Fourth, by focusing on love in teacher education, we can help student-teachers, especially in Brazil, who are unsure of becoming teachers, either because of their low language proficiency or the low status of the English teaching profession. Fifth, adding love for teaching and possibly love of the language to be taught as topics in teacher education would also help us to take a more critical perspective on our profession so we can improve the parts that need change.

As explained earlier, there are very few studies on love in AL. Investigating love can add to the spectrum of salient emotions being explored in the field of AL while contributing to the studies of peace already in place in AL. Future studies could investigate love and its different perspectives, as presented by Lanas and Zembylas (2015), with in-service and pre-service language teachers and with learners. Other studies might propose validating and/or evaluating the impact of activities that (a) are potentially useful in class and (b) either employ the concept of love or include love as one of the dimensions. Such investigations would complement current studies on peace-centered activities in language classrooms and teacher education classrooms (such as Johnson & Murphey, 2018; Johnson *et al*., 2017; Olivero, 2017; Olivero & Oxford, 2018; Oxford, 2017). In this way, we transcend superficial understandings of the salience of love and treat love as an important critical concept worthy of consideration, thought and implementation within the field of AL.

Endnotes

[1] There are many other perspectives on love, but due to limitations of space and time, I have chosen only these two. Others would include: the pedagogy of care (Noddings, 1992), pedagogical love (Määttä & Uusiautti, 2011; Gidley, 2016), pedagogy of love (Clingan 2015; Culham *et al*., 2018), passion in teaching (Day, 2004), attentive love (Liston, 2008), and pedagogy of the soul (Palmer, 1998). For a review of some of these, see Barcelos and Coelho (2016) and Culham *et al*., (2018).

[1] *Amoroso or amorosidade* in Portuguese does not carry the sexual connotation as the word *amorous* does in English; much to the opposite. In Portuguese, the word means feeling love: being tender, caring, gentle, and loving. Thus, for Freire, *amorosidade* does *not* refer to any connotation of sexual feelings. Rather, as explained in this text, it means respect, reason, curiosity and knowledge

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