

ORAL NARRATIVES AND SYMBOLIC EDUCATION:
PEDAGOGICAL LESSONS FROM THE NON-HUMAN AMAZONIAN UNIVERSE

NARRATIVAS ORAIS E EDUCAÇÃO SIMBÓLICA:
LIÇÕES PEDAGÓGICAS A PARTIR DO UNIVERSO NÃO-HUMANO
AMAZÔNICO

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Abstract: The aim of this paper is to understand how oral narratives related to the Boto teach and what they teach, considering the symbolic cultural and linguistic aspects. This is a qualitative study aimed at deepening our understanding of symbolic education in socio-communicative practices manifested in oral narratives related to the non-human entities that populate the Amazonian cosmological universe. The research questions are: Is there symbolic education through oral narratives? If so, in what way is this education presented or personified through the Boto? The study points out that the relationship between Symbolic Education and its students depends not just on the passage of the symbol, but on a whole cultural set that is built up daily, spontaneously, collectively, and sensitively in the various socio-communicative interactions. It is thus a collective education, built by everyone in the community who shares the same cultural and symbolic context.

Keywords: Oral narrative; Boto; Amazonian imaginary; Symbolic Education.

Resumo: O artigo tem como objetivo geral compreender como as narrativas orais ligadas ao boto ensinam e o que ensinam, considerando os aspectos simbólicos culturais e linguísticos. Este estudo é qualitativo, visando aprofundar a compreensão sobre a educação simbólica em práticas sociocomunicativas manifestada em narrativas orais, relacionada às entidades não-humanas que povoam o universo cosmológico amazônico. Temos como perguntas de pesquisa: Há educação simbólica por meio de narrativas orais? Se há, de que maneira esta educação se apresenta ou se personifica através do boto? O estudo aponta que a relação da Educação Simbólica com seu educando depende não apenas da passagem do símbolo, mas sim de todo um conjunto cultural que se constrói no dia a dia, de forma espontânea, coletiva e sensível nas diversas interações sociocomunicativas. Tem-se, assim, uma educação coletiva, construída por todos da comunidade que compartilham do mesmo contexto cultural e simbólico.

Palavras-chave: Narrativa oral; Boto; Imaginário Amazônico; Educação simbólica.

INTRODUCTION

The Amazon region is crisscrossed by rivers, with their tributaries and streams that cut through and irrigate the forest. The Tocantins and Tapajós rivers are local symbols of great

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importance to the imagery that has water as its main element. Rivers in which non-human entities are part of daily life and make us live a metaphysics between languages, of the immense ecosystem that feeds the Amazonian cosmovision. Cametá and Santarém, the locus of this research, are historic riverside towns in Pará that share strong cultural and linguistic traits. These aspects are manifested in the oral narratives told by their residents and have aroused the interest of academia as a legitimate object of study, with research already carried out and books published by research and teaching institutions in the region.

Bearing in mind that our potential reader may not be familiar with the towns mentioned in this study, we will give a brief historical-geographical context. The military expeditions of the Portuguese conquerors in the 17th century brought religious missions and colonizers to the Amazon. Cametá and Santarém are among the cities that are the fruit of contact between colonizers and indigenous peoples.

Cametá is known by the periphrases “Pérola do Tocantins”, “Terra dos Romualdos” or “País dos Maparás”, with more than 134,184 residents and a territorial area of 3,081.367 km² (IBGE, 2022). The city was founded in 1613, 411 years ago, and 388 years after its emancipation in 1635. It was recognized as a National Historic Site by Law No. 7537 of 16 September 1986 for its remarkable historical tradition in relation to the Cabano people and the indigenous Camutás, the second town founded in Pará. The first contact between the indigenous people and the settlers in the region that would establish the municipality of Cametá took place in the Camutás Village, possibly an indigenous people belonging to the great Tupinambá nation, as they used Tupi as their language, according to the records of the Brazilian Index of Geography and Statistics - IBGE (2022). As this government institution points out, Cametá has had a strong waterway tradition since its foundation. In this context, the Carnaval das Águas (Carnival of the Waters), which brings together river dwellers in canoes, boats and motorboats, dressed in costumes that represent the forest, animals and Amazonian charms, to travel through the riverine hinterland to the city of Cametá, stands out on social media. The link between man and nature, represented by the residents, and the river that it bathes are elements of an intimate biosocial relationship.

Santarém also has a strong connection with water, known as the "Pearl of the Tapajós", with a resident population of 331,942 people, a territorial area of 17,898.389 km² (IBGE, 2022), 362 years since it was founded (1661) and 265 years since it was emancipated (1758). According to Vaz Filho and Carvalho (2023), the city is a region of ancient

colonization, where missions of evangelization and catechesis operated by the Jesuits settled in 1662 at the mouth of the Tapajós River, this activity is known as the Tapajós Mission. The connection with the waters is not limited to the Tapajós River, and the oral narratives linked to the river dolphin, the son of the waters, are a cultural and social element of immense importance for the northern region of Brazil. We're talking about the Sairé Festival that takes place in the district of Alter do Chão, "the biggest festive and tourist event in the Lower Amazon of Pará, a festival starring two groups of dolphins who perform in a kind of show arena, in the style of the Parintins bois-bumbás" (CARVALHO, 2016). The festivities of this event integrate religion (Catholic faith) and Amazonian imagery (dolphins - tucuxi and pink), creating a syncretism with great links to water enchantments.

Considering the above, we started from factors that motivated this investigation. The first stems from the local connection that the authors of this work have with the cities of Cametá and Santarém, and they are currently carrying out research at the Faculty of Education at the University of São Paulo (Brazil) and at the University of Warsaw (Poland). The second reason stems from the defense of oral narratives as sociocommunicative practices that are constitutive of riverside speech, in which it is possible to learn from understanding the relationship between humans and non-humans belonging to the same universe, constructed and refracted in these narratives.

The general aim of this work is to understand how oral narratives linked to the dolphin teach and what they teach, considering the symbolic cultural and linguistic aspects. To achieve this goal, we have outlined the following specific objectives: to describe the constitutive aspects of symbolic education in oral narratives and to analyze these aspects based on pedagogical lessons and the theory of the imaginary.

In this work, we have the following research questions: Is there symbolic education through oral narratives? If so, in what way is this education presented or personified through the dolphin? We started from the hypothesis that there would be a symbolic education through the oral narratives of the dolphin, considering the themes of human care, protection, and sexuality reinforced by the non-human element (enchanted), questioning whether this non-human element would be the representation, personification of danger, of the evil that the unknown can provoke in women.

For the purposes of writing organization, the article is divided into Introduction, which comprises this section; Methodology, in which we start from a position anchored in the

thoughts of Durand (1988), who advocates an establishing hermeneutics in scientific work, integrating theoretical assumptions from linguistic studies, discourse, and the knowledge of the original and traditional peoples of the Pará Amazon; Results and Discussions, in which the data analysis is presented, which addresses a theoretical-analytical process, based on the principles of the Theory of the Imaginary (DURAND, 1988) and assumptions of sociocognitive and interactionist linguistics (KOCH, 2021, FIGUEIRA-CARDOSO, DUBIN, 2022; BORGES, FIGUEIRA-CARDOSO, 2022), to answer the research questions that motivate this study; and, Final considerations, in which it is shown that there is evidence of symbolic education through symbols and expressions in the text around the referent BOTO.

METHOD

This study is qualitative in nature (PAIVA, 2019), aiming to deepen our understanding of symbolic education in socio-communicative practices manifested in oral narratives, related to the non-human entities that populate the Amazonian cosmological universe. Starting from the observation of the phenomenon and anchored in the theories defended in this work, we aim to build interpretations from the data, thus characterizing it as an inductive method. This method, as highlighted by Prodanov and Freitas (2013), is appropriate when observing specific cases to reach more comprehensive theoretical formulations, in our study the integration between theoretical assumptions that can establish new readings of the references linked to non-human entities in the Amazon. Considering the areas of research and interest of the authors of this text, we also align ourselves with the assumption based on the instaurating hermeneutics proposed by Gilbert Durand (1988, 2012), which emphasizes symbolic interpretation and the role of the imaginary in understanding phenomena, advocating "for a transdisciplinary approach to analyze the mythic and symbolic traces that emerge from socio-communicative practices" materialized in texts in contemporary situations and environments of interaction, as advocated by Borges and Figueira-Cardoso (2022, p. 118).

Our object of analysis is two (n=2) oral narratives, collected in Santarém and Cametá, Brazil. To protect the privacy of the participants and maintain their anonymity, the narrators have been identified by fictitious names such as "Subject A" (narrative 1 = n-1) and "Subject B" (narrative 2 = n-2). The subjects narrating are, in the first narrative, a 67-year-old man who says he heard about the *encantado* from third parties. In the second, a 37-year-old woman recounts the enchantment she suffered a few years before the interview. So we have two

subjects who experience storytelling, one as a third-person narrator-subject, and the other as a character who confirms that she herself was enchanted by the dolphin. It is worth noting that considering the specificities of the spoken text, we decided to insert the transcribed excerpts in this article with a 4 cm indentation, font 10 and italics to differentiate them from direct quotes from theorists. We now move on to the analysis to answer the questions posed in this paper.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the Theory of the Imaginary (DURAND, 1988) and the assumptions of text studies, discourse genres, textual-discursive strategies for constructing meaning (KOCH, 2021, FIGUEIRA-CARDOSO, DUBIN, 2022; BORGES, FIGUEIRA-CARDOSO, 2022), when analyzing the narratives that are the subject of this research, we began to consider two configurations of the mythological character Boto, namely: Boto Don Juan das Águas Amazônicas and Boto Malino, as these are the two images highlighted in the texts. It is worth noting that there is a third configuration of the character, the non-human entity Bôta, an emblematic figure that will be the subject of a forthcoming study, in which, in the form of an irresistible, fatal woman, she refers to "mermaids, whose apparitions are somewhat confused with the apparitions of female Botos [...]. The Boto-fêmea takes the form of a woman to seduce men and lead them into enchantment" (VAZ FILHO; CARVALHO, 2023, p. 48). Wanzeler (2013; 2014) presents these recurring configurations of the boto and mentions: boto woman; boto avenger; bota (wife of the boto/parturient); bisexual boto (different boto); boto man; boto seducer; boto animal; boto audacious, brave; and boto sucker. The image that appears most often is that of the male dolphin, similar to the Don Juan of the Amazon, as described by Fares (1996, p. 50).

[The Boto, Don Juan of the Amazonian waters] is a dolphin, a cetacean very common in the immensity of the rivers that meander through the northern region of Brazil. In a process of metamorphosis, he becomes a handsome white boy, usually blond, who, wearing white clothes and always keeping a hat on his head, appears at festivals and seduces the riverine girls. As a result, he becomes the father of all the children of unknown responsibility (FARES, 1996, p. 50).

However, this general representation distances us from the notion we have adopted in this work. This is because we argue that oral narratives are sociocommunicative practices of real language use which, although there is a recurring semantic content (white, blond,

seductive man), as described in the quote by Fares (1996), such practices are reconstructed and co-constructed in the different interactions of local daily life. In this sense, our focus is on observing how these practices expose possible pedagogical lessons through the imaginary symbol that is the dolphin itself.

SYMBOLIC EDUCATION IN THE AMAZON THROUGH ORAL NARRATIVES

For Durand (1988), the imaginary is a constitutive and establishing element of the specific behavior of Homo sapiens, since it is through the imaginary that we recognize ourselves as human, know the other and apprehend the multiple reality of the world. The human universe is symbolic and is only “human” as long as man attributes meaning to things and the world. Teixeira (2022) says that Durand uses the expression “pedagogical pressure” to show the educational character of myths (oral narratives) and in pedagogical discourse the pedagogical voices of myths are heard, being fundamental values of a society preserved and transmitted in the form of myths, fairy tales, fables, legends, literature, art, which convey archetypal images, creating a “sociocultural typicality”.

Entendo que da obra de Durand podemos derivar o que chamo de **“lições pedagógicas”**, visto que nos permite a compreensão, tanto da potência pedagógica das imagens, como da formação dos processos simbólicos no sujeito imaginante e do papel da imaginação no desenvolvimento das culturas, das ciências e da educação. Portanto, a sua grande contribuição **à educação é o valor que atribui ao homo symbolicus e aos processos de simbolização** (TEIXEIRA, 2022, p. 49 - grifo nosso).

Teixeira (2022) warns that, as a result of exacerbated rationalism, current pedagogy, affiliated with an extroverted positivism, disqualifies inner experiences, which are considered primitive and inferior, and attributes pedagogical privilege to thought, perception, and concept to the detriment of feeling and intuition, making it difficult for individuals to develop their functions in a balanced way. And he points out that there is a need for a pedagogy that integrates reason and imagination, that “reeducates the imagination”, like Durand’s Theory of the Imaginary.

We believe that the process of telling oral narratives, in the Amazon, especially in the riverside Amazon, enables distinct formative means, education between tellers and listeners through Symbolic Education that is anchored in the idea of pedagogical lessons of images,

which is beyond the categorization of formal, non-formal or informal education, as Borges (2022) argues about this education:

na perspectiva de uma Educação Simbólica, além do “imitar”, como numa educação familiar na primeira infância, a oralidade condutiva do simbolismo ancestral é educante, e ratifica ensinamentos que, neste caso, partem do mestre para seu grupo. Educação que ocorre em diferentes vias. Vias que comumente não temos contato no mundo acadêmico (BORGES, 2022, p. 128).

Considering what Borges (2022) has said, we emphasize the importance of orality in education through oral narratives. In this work, we understand orality as an interactive social practice for communicative purposes that is presented in various forms or textual genres based on sound reality, ranging from a more informal realization to the most varied contexts of use (MARCUSCHI, 2010), such as conversations between friends and family, fishermen, benedictors, laundresses, farmers, riverside subjects who, between one activity and another, relate their experiences with non-human entities (Curupira, Boto, Cobra Grande, Velha Porca and others).

In this sense, Borges (2022) points out the characteristics of effective symbolic education and how symbolism and ancestry are integrated into this formative process:

I - learning with and in collective leisure, such as at festivals or community gatherings.

II - learning by observing and practicing/imitating gestures.

III - learning from the perception of the senses we use in everyday life.

IV - is not the domain of informal education, as it is an action that leads to growth/evolution, whether in children, adults, or the elderly.

V - is fundamental to the continuity and maintenance of traditional cultural manifestations.

VI - it is sensitive and perennial in relationships between ordinary people, the simplest ones who, even without pretension, educate without ceasing.

Considering the author's ideas, we add a seventh aspect referring to communicative practice, that is, in oral narratives, experiences are reported in which symbolic aspects are co-constructed and updated, creating unique versions of the world and reaffirming values and beliefs, thus constituting a symbolic education in and through language.

In view of the reflections proposed by Durand (1988), Teixeira (2022) and Borges (2022), it is pertinent to emphasize the integration of the notion of pedagogical pressure with

the concept of symbolic education, both of which are fundamental for understanding and applying educational practices that consider oral narratives as a legitimate object of teaching.

The research in question also highlights the relevance of oral narratives in the Amazon as tools for symbolic education, which promote a fusion between the collective imagination and the educational process. This pedagogical approach, which considers both intrinsic and extrinsic aspects, is aimed at the integral development of the individual and the very social practices of this society. It should be emphasized that education, from this perspective, must transcend formal teaching, encompassing themes that concern human formation in its entirety, including respect for nature.

Symbolic education is born within the community and is manifested in language practices. Therefore, oral narratives are not only ways of narrating, expressing fears, anxieties and beliefs, but they are also a pedagogical tool in the cognitive-cultural context populated by non-human entities, harmonizing reason and imagination, culture and school education, contributing significantly to the formation of critical, conscious subjects and active social actors.

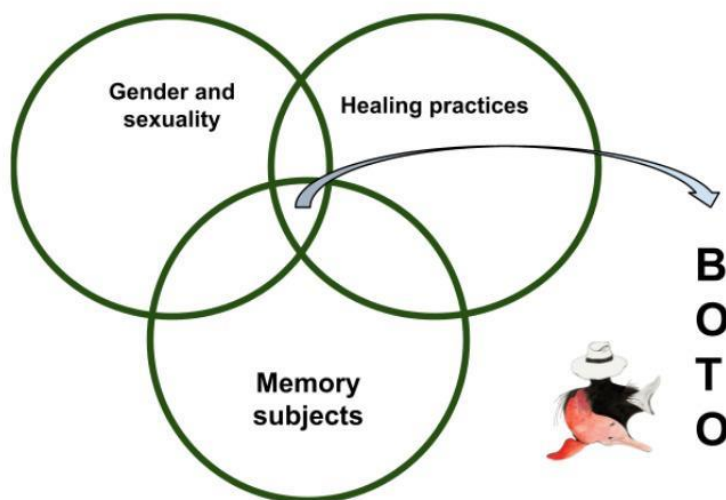
THE BOTO AS AN ELEMENT OF SYMBOLIC EDUCATION

In the best-known versions, the Boto is supernatural, traditionally conceived in the Amazon as a seductive figure who metamorphoses into a human to attract people to his world at the bottom of the rivers or in the mysterious submerged city - this is the recurring semantic content. The dolphin is part of a broader cosmological structure that involves the concept of the enchanted, referring to beings who have the ability to transform themselves into animals and humans. These beings, although not necessarily malevolent, are dangerous because of their ability to enchant.

Regarding the Amazon, Wawzyniak (2012) states that the riverside inhabitants believe that the 'animals', beings capable of changing their appearance both physically and behaviorally, are the agents that cause some types of illness and interfere in individual or collective daily life, as we will see later in our analysis. In the training/educational process, the symbolic elements emerging from the oral narratives of the dolphin studied here are related to three themes: gender and sexuality; healing practices; and subjects who reminisce (individual and collective memory).

What does the Boto teach us? Look at the organization chart to see the themes of the dolphin's symbolic education.

Figure 1 - Organization chart of the themes of symbolic education in the oral narratives of the dolphin.



Source: Research data (2024).

a) GENDER, WOMEN, AND SEXUALITY

In the narratives, the corpus of this work, the figure of the Amazonian dolphin embodies pedagogical lessons perceived as human behavior that predominantly indicate attention to female sexuality in adolescence and adulthood. We affirm this by the linguistic-symbolic indication, dealing with a universe marked by elements of female gynecological attributions such as menstruation, pregnancy and puberty.

*essa conversa só era de mulher, a mulherada antiga, de idade, né, e as moças que se queixavam, né, tinham se **emprenhado** de boto, né... agora homem assim, né, eu nunca ouvi comentar, né, nem veterano, nem ... ficavam só escutando, né... (Sujeito A - grifo nosso).*

We can see in subject A's narrative that the people involved in this enchantment of the dolphin are young women, not children. They are the young women in the puberty phase or those who are ready to become pregnant who go to the parties at night or are near the river, although it is the group of older women in the community, referred to in narrative 1 as "old women", who direct the conversation, the dialog, the storytelling about the dolphin and the

teachings implicit in it. In addition, the expression ‘women’ carries a predication that denotes the particularity of women, as the main passives of enchantment. In narrative 2, subject B himself, who narrates, is the one who "suffers" the dolphin's enchantment, who the dolphin seems to have ‘pleased’, liked or attracted.

*ela vinha vindo aí era umas duas horas da tarde eu disse po/(r)que a senhora já vem esSA hora? ela disse já eu não fiquei **naqueles dias** ela fi(cou) **fiquei menstruada**... TÁ... ela subiu e eu baixei [...] o encanto dele onde passou **uma mulher que não podia**... passar e eu passei e foi atrás só que ele tinha **se agradado** de mim de verdade e dis(que) queria me levar com corpo e alma pro rio... (Sujeito B - grifo nosso).*

In this process of enchantment or attraction of the non-human entity by a human one, we have the symbol of menstruation. An isomorphism, according to Durand (1988, p. 104), which represents “a prototype of bloody and negatively valued femininity, the archetype of the fatal woman”. A kind of displacement of the menstrual phenomenon to considerations of sexual morality. An imaginary that seems to be linked to the image of the beautiful, attractive and fatal woman. The porpoise feels irresistibly attracted to the menstruating woman because he can see in her this desire to possess the ‘fatal woman’. There appears to be an inversion of attraction because while the riverside population recounts the belief in the power of the porpoise to seduce menstruating women in the most diverse parts of the riverside Amazon, what happens is that the porpoise is attracted to the ‘*enluada*’ woman. Furthermore, according to Durand (1988, p. 104), menstrual blood, and any blood for that matter, represents “a taboo in most people, considered impure and prescribing in detail the conduct that must be followed during the menstrual period”.

The pedagogical lessons that can be drawn from the two narratives is that menstruating women in the riverside Amazon should not bathe in the river, they should avoid looking at and approaching the water because the dolphin could make them pregnant. The river is, admittedly, the enchantment, the place where the dolphin makes its home and menstruating women are forbidden to go near it. When she breaks this ban, the porpoise feels strongly attracted to her, enamored of her. This aspect has been observed by Durand, who states that among the Eskimos, young menstruating virgins never look at the moon for fear of becoming pregnant and, in Great Britain, girls do the same for fear of falling victim to some kind of ‘*aluadas*’ enchantment.

*naquela época o pessoal tinha aquela crença de que a mulher **menstruada**, né, não podia tomar banho no rio, né, enfim, ficavam dentro de casa **durante aqueles dias**, mas eles diziam que lá uma hora aconteciam, né, que o boto, talvez, se aproveitasse desse momento para **fazer o trabalho na menina**, né ... E aí surgiu, disque, em muitos lugares aí por perto, **muitas mulheres que se engravidaram aí de boto**, né (Sujeito A - grifo nosso).*

This is the isomorphism of menstrual blood, which at the same time attracts the non-human entity and repels women from having contact with the waters of the Tapajós and Tocantins, according to subjects A and B.

*o boto **avezou**, né, com uma mulher lá, só que está mulher tinha marido e... numa certa noite, ela descobriu... ele vinha como se fosse o marido dela, né (Sujeito A - grifo nosso).*

So far, four interdicts have been broken: - the menstruating woman enters the water, the non-human falls in love with the human; - sex during menstruation and - pregnancy during menstruation. In addition to this, there are other transgressions in the narratives told by the subjects: the transgression of marriage (a married woman comes into contact with the dolphin) and having a child out of wedlock (a dolphin's child). Despite all the transgressions because it is a non-human, feared, sacred entity, society accepts the “betrayal” of the married woman, the pregnancy, and the child of the dolphin.

***moças daquela época**, eu acho, que por esse, é com essa, como é que se fala?, eh, eh ... suposições, né, que eles não sabiam o que era, tinham os seus namorados escondidos, né, e aí **acontecia escondido**, com medo dos pais da época, né, aí jogava **pras costas do boto** e aí pronto todo mundo concordava, né, que era boto mesmo, né (Sujeito A - grifo nosso).*

It's true that this narrative, marked by pedagogical lessons, also advises, albeit implicitly, teenagers not to dance with strangers at parties because there could be very terrifying consequences, and highlights the shyness of the river dwellers themselves, since the dolphin seems to take advantage of the male shyness of asking a girl to dance at parties, allowing her to just admire the people at the big balls, who are ready to dance with anyone who comes near.

As an interpretation endowed with meaning and capable of broadening our knowledge about the most varied aspects of the lives of men and women in the Amazon, the Boto and its symbolic repetitions (girls, parties, rivers, menstruation, pregnancy, attraction, etc.) can alert

us to issues such as the care girls should take when getting involved with strangers at parties and on rivers, common meeting points in the riverside Amazon.

sempre comentavam isso essa questão do boto, das meninas terem cuidado, né, porque ele se aproveitava. Outros lances que eles diziam também era que o boto ia nas festas, né, nas festas que tinham antigamente, né, na missa, nas entradas de irmandades de lá (Sujeito A - grifo nosso).

Therefore, there is evidence of symbolic education in these elements described, as we are considering the dolphin as a non-human element, a symbolic representation of the riverside Amazon, constructed as the personification of danger, evil, and the unknown. In this sense, the study of oral narratives is therefore a continuum of socio-communicative practices, with semantic content anchored in the cognitive-cultural context. In communicative interactions, other ways of telling the story emerge, with textual-discursive uses and strategies that lead to a kind of dismantling of this form of configuration that is considered ancestral or ancient: without losing the cognitive-cultural and discursive marks from which they originate, giving a particular meaning to the way in which these elements are structured.

b) HEALING PRACTICES

The healing practices developed in the traditional communities of the riverside Amazon involve ordinary people who have knowledge acquired from generation to generation: they are *benzedeiras, curandeiras, pajés, garrafeiras, remedieiras, rezadeiras, midwives, macumbeiras, puxadeiras*, among many other names given to those who practice the act of caring for physical, mental or spiritual illness. These names were found by Santos et al (2023) in a study of traditional medicine on the islands of Murutucum and Combu in Belen. For the authors, “the universe of cures, disease prevention and protection against various ailments are the result of human interactions with other cultures” (SANTOS et al, 2023, p. 2).

In the narratives studied here, the healing practice is carried out by a midwife, healer or curador, who teaches prayers, medicinal herbs, massages and touches, always considering the interactions built with the environment, religious traditions and enchantments.

Aí diziam que só a parteira que tinha direito de ver quando nascia, né... aí se era boto, se era cobra ... disque, ela benzia lá com água benta, sei lá, e ia jogar no rio, né, aí é por isso que dizem que tinha cobra encantado, né... esses, esses mitos aí [...] é utilizado essas pessoas, disque, para afastar... agora eu não sei a maneira como ... que eles faziam a bancada com ramo de/de/de árvores, com água benta ... (Sujeito A - grifo nosso).

*eu dormi naquilo que eu dormi ela disse que eu comecei a conversar eu comecei a conversar eu comecei a converSAR aí ela agarrou levantou pegou o **terço botou no punho da minha rede**[...] aí eu ia pra casa tinha medo tinha medo tinha medo tinha medo e a dor de cabeça não passava ela fazia remédio e não passava quando foi um dia tinha aquela **curadeira** [...] ela tava pra roça né a curadeira aí foram buscar ela... aí quando ela chegou de (lá) quando ela me viu lá na cozinha né ela disse ih:: menina... o que foi que aconteceu contigo?[...] ela começou a me **benzer** começou a me **benzer**. [...] tinha outro meu primo que também era **curador** a mamãe pediu pra ele me benzer aí ele benzeu aí ele disse que ele ia fazer né que ele ia... se me deixar de mim uns tempos aí ele **proibiu que eu não podia ir na beira** aí ele disse que de **noite** (Sujeito B - grifo nosso).*

According to both narratives, traditional healing agents use medicinal herbs and blessings, and prescribe cautionary behavior about not going near rivers at night. This knowledge is passed down through socio-communicative practices over generations and reinforced by the symbols present in the context of the oral narrative, demarcated in both texts by rosary in the hammock, midwife, blessing, bench with tree branches, holy water, healer, blessing, healer, forbidden, river and night. However, it is important to point out that the advance of deforestation in the Amazon rainforest, the invasion of rural producers' and fishermen's lands (including indigenous communities) and access to public goods and services and the internet have substantially changed the socio-communicative practices of traditional populations. In this respect, Marcuschi (2008) states that:

Typically, oral societies develop certain genres that are lost in others that are typically written and penetrated and penetrated by high technological development. Thus, in sophisticated urban centers, genres such as indigenous *war chants*, the *medicinal chants* of the shamans or *the blessings* of the prayers, the *lamentations* of the mourners are almost unknown (MARCUSCHI, 2008, p. 190-191 - emphasis added).

Despite the attempt to exterminate mythologies, extinguish ways of narrating and decimate entire populations, the colonization process did not manage to erase and forget the pedagogical semantic content of oral narratives, which in contemporary interactions educate us, resist the various challenges imposed by contact and conflict between cultures and teach us in healing practices. These acts of healing are directly linked to the respect that must be shown to the non-human beings of the rivers and forests, to the avoidance of circulating in spaces 'protected' by these entities so as not to suffer tragic consequences for breaking the interdict.

b) SUBJECTS WHO REMEMBER (INDIVIDUAL AND COLLECTIVE MEMORY)

In the community, everyone is a potential narrator of their knowledge and experiences. However, symbolic education through oral narratives is undeniably validated by life experience, individual memory, and the collective memory of the elders, who are the wise members of the community. The elders, including the healing agents described in the previous section, are the principal mnemonic devices of knowledge, along with the storytellers. These knowledgeable individuals, experienced men and women, are represented by words such as mother, midwife, healer, and the wise old women. With their individual memories of learning and experiences in the Amazon, they make prayers, teas, potions, liquids, and massages that heal their sick from ailments caused by the enchanted and also cure physical diseases such as headaches and malaise reported in the two narratives.

The knowledgeable subjects who narrate the oral stories are also responsible for teaching, transmitting, and perpetuating, even if unconsciously, the pedagogical lessons implicit in the oral narratives. They become true museums of all past and possible images, whether produced or yet to be produced, because "the imaginary feeds on personal images (memories, recollections), cultural images (language, history, etc.), and universal images (archetypes like fire and water)" (Durand, 1994, p. 3). Thus, although we have narrator-subjects in both first and third person, they both recall others' memories and their own, that is, the 'contact' with non-human entities that are part of the cognitive and cultural context in which such narratives are produced.

FINAL REMARKS

In this study, we aim to understand how oral narratives associated with the boto (Amazon River dolphin) impart symbolic, cultural, and linguistic aspects of the amazonian cosmological universe. Our data analysis suggests that oral narratives educate through symbols and cultural inheritances conveyed by the collective unconscious, the imaginary, and through sensitive, cultural, and human education. The educational transmission, through the symbolic elements that have shaped the problems of this research, occurs as individuals belong to a group, namely the community's storytelling group, and the group of riverine men and women of the Amazon.

The relationship of symbolic education with its learners depends not only on the transmission of symbols but on an entire cultural set that is built daily in a spontaneous,

collective, and sensitive manner through various socio-communicative interactions. Thus, there is a collective education constructed by all members of the community who share the same cultural and symbolic context.

It is important to note that, in this initial phase of the research, we focus on the possible pedagogical lessons that the non-human entity Boto teaches us, leaving for another article the in-depth exploration of linguistic, sociocognitive, and interactionist aspects, that is, the textual-discursive strategies of how the narrator constructs the text in the interaction between participants of the communicative situation.

We believe this initial work can contribute to demonstrating the relevance of symbolic education mediated by amazonian oral narratives and reinforce their importance as a legitimate object of education and culture, not only for the riverine communities in their social and everyday activities. Nourished by the imagination that emanates from the waters and forests, the riverine people of the Amazon establish themselves as legitimate successors of a *modus vivendi* rooted in indigenous practices. Thus, it is our responsibility to disseminate their knowledge and practices, both linguistic and cultural. This article contributes to this purpose by seeking to provoke new investigations and perspectives on the amazonian imaginary, addressing its habits, educational processes, memory, and modes of narration from an interdisciplinary focus.

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