Estratto per riassunto della tesi di dottorato

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Dottorato: **SCUOLA DI DOTTORATO IN SCIENZE DEL LINGUAGGIO, DELLA COGNIZIONE E DELLA FORMAZIONE** _____

Ciclo: **22° CICLO (Periodo Accademico 2006/2009)**

Thesis Title : ***Learning in Enlarged Cultural Contexts. Internationalisation and the construction of self-identity***

Abstract:

This research treats the problem of definition of learning contexts within liquid society. (Bauman, 2000). Considering the spread phenomenon of geographical and electronic nomadism, that in the particolar case of educational systems shapes practices that imply crossing / broking both simboli and real boundaries (Margiotta, 2006). The question that leads the research theoretical and empirical analysis is: *Which is the context in mobile learning processes*? In fact, the problem of socio-cultural context in lifelong/lifewide learning society, seems to be determined basically by processes of symbolic construction and deconstruction, according to positioning that individual reaches in his/her own trajectory of lifelong/lifewide learning.

For a theoretical frame of research problem, two research traditions have been considered. In first place, the assumptions and models of *cultural contextual approach*, taking into account M. Cole (1988, 1996) and his research group's review of Vygotskij's main concepts, from cultural psychology and cognitive anthropology. As emerged from this background, social contexts beyond school/academy as narrow/encapsulated context (Engestrom, 1991) has a crucial role in learning processes. Particularly, within this line, the developments of 3rd generation Activity Theory have taken into account (Engestrom, 1987; 2009, funding on Leont'ev, 1978); they introduce the perspective of expansion of socio-cultural contexts of human activity linked to the phenomenon of interconnections among local activity systems in the effort of reach *runaway objects,* typical of liquid society. Engestrom's theory is hence considered as to put bases for hypothesize a global context made of local contexts, which we could call "*Enlarged Cultural Context*".

In second place, the problem of contexts is hereby explored from the point of view of teaching processes. To this regard, the focus is the operation of *ricontextualization of knowledge*, from research to teaching, through the teacher's communication act (Margiotta, 1997, 2003, 2006, 2007). We can observe here the characterization of taught knowledge as entity more or less structured within curriculum –instrument of official planning-, highly contested from critical pedagogy (freire, 1971; McLaren, 1995). Instead of that, liquid society expose to a continuing boundary-crossing, at institutional and geographical level, making possible learning through access to knowledge. Consistently, we find again the need to draw on the concept of *enlarged cultural context* to understand teaching processes, as remodulation of teacher's discourse, towards a critical deconstruction of knowledge. Therefore, from the predominance of teacher discourse, within ECC, we move to *learning conversation* (Laurillard, 1993; Downes, 2009)

The empirical research design that follows the above mentioned theoretical exploration, considers hence a *case of internationalization* as example to discuss learning contexts; this refers clearly to the phenomenology of *boundaries-crossing* introduced above. Hence, the study of the European / Latinamerican teachers' training programme ALFA-MIFORCAL is presented, being the same structured in three levels: a) organizational-institutional level; b)

training model and instructional design processes level; c) discourse analysis of corpora composed by interactions of 4 virtual learning communities –hereby called "first scenery of educational innovation or *virtual mobility"-;* and of 16 travel diaries –hereby called "second scenery of educational innovation or *vital mobility"* - . For such a configuration, the research design could be introduced as "micro-case embedded"; in fact, the central thesis *"in liquid society, the learning context becomes semantic construction taken ahead by the learner in a process of negotiation of meaning in trajectories of mobility that he/she realizes through several material/symbolic spaces"*, have led to the definition of operational questions for fieldwork. Indeed, according to the Grounded Theory approach (Glaser&Strauss, 1967; Strauss&Corbin, 2008) implemented, research questions guide theoretical sampling operations, whereas an hypothesis could rigidly structure the researcher exploration of social/educational problem.

The more relevant results in this research are, in the first level, the visibility of negotiation efforts in order to structure a common international curriculum, that confirm the presence of a *mychorrizae* structure of several local activity system collaborating in an expanded one, as bases of an *enlargement of cultural context.*

At micro-level, the analysis of teaching sequences demonstrate the presence of negotiation of meaning within intercultural and interlinguistic groups that leads to enlargement; with regard to this, high interactivity wasn't a crucial operation, whereas reflection and metacognition, modulated by tutor, takes to overcome *cultural clash* –the cultural diversity that is in contrast with learners' personal cultural matrix). Both virtual and vital mobility, expose the individual to these kind of processes, generating, in negotiating and understand diversity, the process of *enlarging of cultural context.* In detail, at individual level, this can be explained as a process of expansion of own cultural matrix through *disembedding* (from local to global); *embedding* (the interaction among symbolic third space provided by the Web and international/intercultural learning community), *riembedding* (expansion of identity that results in an innovative local practice). These processes are further supported by content analysis made on the whole corpora (forum onlin/learning diary), showing consistently indicators of negotiation and enlargement of cultural context, such as: a) metaphors; b) intertextuality; c) referring to *virtual presence* as third (symbolic) space of representation of the self.

The above explored elements allow the researcher to conclude that the ECC as *pedagogical dispositive* can be formulated as a result of a) semantic construction based upon interactions of *embedded* human activity systems; b) combination of life timelines or *heterochrony* as phenomenon of personal storytelling combined into situational learning conversations; c) acceptation of multi-memberships; d) shaping of discourse that highlight meaning making processes, like heteroglosia, intertextuality, metaphor; e) crucial role of teacher as moderator of learning conversation.

Student's Signature

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