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Fidel Castro's oratory: an indispensable tool for the teaching of history (Review).
La oratoria de Fidel Castro: instrumento indispensable para la enseñanza de la historia (Revisión).

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Abstract

Fidel Castro represents without a doubt a continental and global paradigm in the struggle to achieve social justice, his way of thinking was formed in the midst of Cuba dominated by the oligarchic government of the United States and then, after the revolutionary triumph, it was forged in the battle for the vindication of human rights. Fidel Castro's speeches have been used by the professors who teach History of Cuba at the time of doing the preparation of the subject, although there are still insufficiencies in its use. The present research aims to argue that the oratory of Fidel Castro Ruz constitutes an indispensable instrument for the teaching of history. In order to carry out this investigation theoretical methods such as analysis and synthesis, and empirical ones such as analysis of documents were used. It was very useful at the time it favored the teaching – learning process of this subject.

Keywords: oratory; teaching of history; fidel castro ruz; speech; orator



Resumen

Paradigma continental y mundial en la lucha por alcanzar plena justicia social, es sin lugar a dudas Fidel Castro, cuyo pensamiento se formó en medio de la Cuba dominada por el gobierno oligárquico de Estados Unidos y luego del triunfo revolucionario, se forjó en el batallar por la reivindicación de los derechos del hombre. Los discursos de Fidel Castro han sido utilizados por los profesores que imparten Historia de Cuba a la hora de realizar la preparación de la asignatura, aunque todavía existen insuficiencias en su uso. El presente artículo tiene como objetivo argumentar que la oratoria de Fidel Castro constituye instrumento indispensable para la enseñanza de la historia. Para esta investigación se utilizaron métodos del nivel teórico como el analítico- sintético y del nivel empírico el análisis de documentos. El mismo fue de gran utilidad pues favoreció el proceso de enseñanza – aprendizaje de esta asignatura.

Palabras clave: oratoria; enseñanza de la historia; fidel castro; discurso; orador

Introduction

Nowadays, it is of a great importance to strengthen the study and teaching of the History of Cuba. It is necessary to address the ideas, judgments, assessments, points of view and concepts of Fidel Castro about history, his figures, the traditions of an entire people who faced with difficulties and threats, rise up every day with the certainty of defending the Revolution and his conquests.

Particular attention is paid to the presence of political figures who in their works, speeches and correspondence address different themes, which constitute points of view and sustained reflections that offer deep ideas of a personal nature about any facet of reality.

In this situation is the figure of Fidel Castro who, in his capacity as a political leader, can be considered a thinker in the field of Pedagogy. When delving into the conceptions of the Commander in Chief, nothing can be said or written about education in Cuba, without



mentioning the contributions made by the historical leader, emphasizing his exemplary nature, his insatiable search for equity and justice for all, equality of opportunities and the constant stimulus for knowledge.

The objective of this article is to argue that Fidel Castro's oratory is an indispensable tool for teaching history. His motivation lies in the importance of the historical legacy of this figure for Cuban youth, especially university students.

Development

Fidel Castro Ruz recognized the Apostle as the intellectual author of the Cuban Revolution and consequently, since January 1959, the recovery of his patriotic and revolutionary legacy began, as well as the brilliant oratory that he practiced, although now adjusted to the new times and conditions in the word of the revolutionary leaders. Even when he was helped in his efforts by other important revolutionaries, such as the Heroic Guerrilla, Armando Hart, and Vilma Espín, who together with him helped to unite the people in favor of the Revolution.

Commander in Chief Fidel Castro Ruz was one of those who used Martí's oratory to endow the people with a higher consciousness, in order to achieve the profound transformations in the political, economic and social spheres undertaken in the country, as a result of the triumph of the armed insurrection in January 1959.

Fidel Castro Ruz's oratory is considered a unique program because it integrates the truths of a people that fight to keep its conquests. It means the values of socialism from a constant improvement, in order to advance in the construction of a new society. Víctor Manuel Cruz (quoted in Ojeda, 2018, p. 1) refers that Fidel was one of the great orators in history, not only of Cuba, but of humanity. He was capable of speaking for continuous hours with sufficient clarity, vigor, presence, coherence and with that message that characterized him. He possessed those elements of oratory that make it an expression in order to dissuade, to convince multitudes.



Oratory used for good possesses these attributes. From the first moments of the revolutionary triumph, Fidel knew how to keep the people informed of how much was being done in the country with a view to building the new society, for which he relied on his brilliant oratory, capable of keeping the audience attentive for several hours.

On this, Guevara pointed out:

A master at it is Fidel, whose particular way of integrating with the people can only be appreciated by watching him acting. In large public gatherings something like a dialogue between two tuning forks whose vibrations provoke new ones in the interlocutor is observed. Fidel and the people begin to vibrate in a dialogue of increasing intensity until reaching the climax in an abrupt end, crowned by our struggle and victory. Guevara (1970, p. 370)

Among the most important characteristics of Fidel's oratory are:

✓ Use of clear and precise language in each stage of action for ideological political work; exhibits great power of synthesis, while demonstrating his discursive genius. This unique art of asking questions favors the attention of the public and enriches the political culture of the interlocutors.

✓ Adequate use of the method of exciting the public allows motivation towards the objectives proposed by him; refers the essential values of the speaker, from his personal example, to persuade and suggest the public, while making use of literary resources such as: symbols, images, creative repetition, which allow the beauty and elegance of the literary composition.

✓ Use of text development methods: definition, detail, exemplification, comparison, dialogue, demonstration, argumentation, explanation and persuasion, which contribute to the understanding of their speeches, as well as the use of the vocative and rhetorical questions to invoke those present and reaffirm basic ideas.



✓ Correct combination of gestural and verbal language, which constitutes an essential rule for effective political communication, since communication flows through two different but complementary channels.

✓ Use of a reflective critical conversational style, as a combination that harmonizes the speaker's literary style towards a specific audience, in correspondence with the problems and motivations of the context. Always attached to the truth as a principle, the highest leader of the Cuban Revolution deals with the most varied topics of objective reality in his speeches.

It can be said that "Fidel Castro Ruz's oratory constitutes an expression of unity between word and action; his texts are a message of hope, love and passion for the future of the people." Marrero, Pérez y López (s/ f, p.3)

According to Rodríguez (2020), each speech recreates a clear, precise and forceful language, endowed with literary resources to signify the value of the articulated word and its extra-verbal nuances that express a great combination between their thoughts and their feelings. Fidel knew how to deliver his speeches with total harmony between verbal and non-verbal language, which made it possible for the audience to fully understand the subject matter, since he received the messages through two channels, an important factor in the communication processes that take place between the men.

For Rodríguez (2017), in the public appearances of Fidel Castro Ruz, it was a constant to refer to the people as the protagonist of their history, which elevates the self-esteem of Cubans to higher planes. He masterfully argued each of the events that made the independence possible, from the revolutionary processes of the struggle, to the subsequent processes in the political leadership.



The study of his history as an intellectual and revolutionary leader evidences the basic principles for the improvement of political communication and a special way to transmit knowledge, especially to teach the History of Cuba systematized in each of the historical stages, led by the people, who with their leadership harmonize a unique truth, the Cuban Revolution as an example of the peoples who fight for freedom.

Fidel Castro's oratory was characterized mainly by his broad and deep knowledge of the subject he dealt with, which allowed him to be very broad and profuse in his exposition. He presented even the smallest of details to demonstrate what he wanted, and to analyze the problem that was the object of his attention from different angles to reach partial or final conclusions on the subject. In them, he skillfully used rhetorical questions that contributed to the logical development of his ideas and to communication with those who listened to him, in such a way that a dialogue took place with himself and with the audience that mentally followed him, a very peculiar way of communicating with large crowd of people.

Fidel Castro sought to persuade the audience, to convince them of the correctness of his points of view, and he used the largest possible number of arguments for this, in such a way that the listeners were attracted by the quantity and quality of these, leaving them with the certainty of his words.

Another feature of Fidel Castro's oratory was the reiteration of those ideas that he considered basic, within the same speech or in several of them. This aspect was closely related to his status as a politician, an element that qualified his analysis and the characteristic of ideological work.

Another characteristic of his oratory was the appropriate use of adjectives and epithets, especially when referring to the heroes and martyrs of the Homeland, each one of them argued



which implied an educational message, admiration, respect for dedication, integrity and the example achieved.

He managed through his address to create a vivid image of the heroes and martyrs he spoke about, using different tones of voice and exact vocabulary. Also with his word he described the events, recreated the circumstances in which they occurred, the natural environments such as landscapes, climate, characteristics of the terrain or territory where they took place, in such a way that those who listened or read it could feel transported to those places and situations.

This creation of images with which he described personalities and environments gave color to the exhibition, attracted and made the reception of the message more pleasant, due to the high emotional charge they had.

The use of comparison is a very common element in the oratory of this thinker, particularly when he wanted to signify what the revolutionary triumph represented and the transformations that took place in the country with respect to how people lived in Cuba before 1959. These comparisons, although they had a political purpose, they were made on the basis of a historical reality. He masterfully characterized the previous Republic and from this he highlighted the revolutionary work and its meaning for the people.

The authors of this work consider that this should be taken advantage of by teachers not only of history, but also of other disciplines and subjects to use in classes without forcing in any way the thought of this figure, his reflections, speeches and oratory since they are an inexhaustible source of knowledge.

Regarding the features of Fidel Castro's oratory, Ernesto Guevara affirmed:

In large public gatherings something like a dialogue of two tuning forks whose vibrations provoke new ones in the interlocutor is observed. Fidel and the people begin to vibrate in a



dialogue of increasing intensity until it reaches its climax in an abrupt ending, crowned by our cry of struggle and victory. (Guevara, 1970, p. 370)

García also refers to these qualities of Fidel's oratory emphasizing:

He always begins with an almost inaudible voice, really broken, advancing through the fog with an uncertain course, but he takes advantage of any flash to gain ground inch by inch, until he gives a kind of great claw and seizes the audience. Then a back and forth current is established between him and his audience that exalts them both and a kind of dialectical complicity is created between them, and in that unbearable tension is the essence of his intoxication. It is inspiration: the irresistible and dazzling state of grace that only those who have not had the glory of living it deny (García, 1987, p. 5-7).

All this was possible due to the great mastery he had of oral expression, use of voice, intonation and even the precise gesture for each moment. The words selected for the preamble to these speeches had a significant place, in general beautifully expressed images about the facts that were the object of analysis.

Fidel Castro's oratory constitutes a model of how a History teacher can use oral presentation for the development of his work. In his speeches on History topics, the didactic ideas of this specialty are present, which can be presented in the following way:

- ✓ Relate facts and events.
- ✓ Describe objects and phenomena.
- ✓ Memorize facts, dates, processes and personalities.
- ✓ Sort and locate them.
- ✓ To exemplify manifestations of the struggle and role of the masses.
- ✓ Explain causes, temporal and spatial relationships.
- ✓ Argue ideas and theses related to the content.



- ✓ Use historical knowledge to explain contemporary processes and phenomena.

In his speeches, Fidel Castro masterfully combined the account of facts and events with the most complicated explanations about the evolution of history. His exposition fulfills both the descriptive and logical function. Through his words, he favors the creation of images of personalities and diverse historical events, while leading from them to the analysis of the facts, to the elaboration of conclusions and the understanding of the regularities of the historical process, reason appears strongly intertwined and feelings, with the entire educational load that it entails.

Riverón (2014) refers that in the development of his speeches on historical topics, Fidel Castro used the different procedures of the oral exposition of this matter: narration, description, characterization and explanation.

In the development of his speeches on History topics, Fidel Castro uses the different procedures of oral exposition such as narration, description, characterization and explanation. They will all appear in a combined way in their different interventions and this will favor the attraction and understanding of the subject analyzed. If the speech delivered by him on the occasion of the Centenary of the beginning of the struggles for independence in Cuba on October 10, 1968 is taken as a reference, it will be possible to verify how the speaker starts from the simplest and goes on to the most complex issues. .

An example of this is the resource used in the preamble to begin to address the issue. At that time he points out: "(...) after the proclamation of the independence of Cuba, when the first mambises were heading towards the town of Yara (...) a copious downpour made with them - symbolically- the first coming from sacrifice (...)" .(Castro, 1978, p 82).

This apparently unimportant detail is capable of attracting the audience's attention and is undoubtedly an indelible image of this remarkable date. This type of description will be repeated at different times, it uses similar methods to refer to other situations.



It also makes use of analytical description. An example is in the description of the Cuban social cadre of the first half of the 19th century, on the eve of the 1868 Revolution. This resource is also found in the one dedicated to the centenary of the fall in combat of Ignacio Agramonte y Loynaz, whose description is likewise, an example of how to capture the essence of a historical moment and express it briefly and with the use of the minimum of statistical data that proves what has been said.

Another resource used by Fidel repeatedly was the narration of outstanding events in the history of the country, such as the case of the rescue of General Julio Sanguily, which occurred on October 8, 1871. Of this he says:

(...) an insurmountable feat that with 35 men, in front of a column made up of forces three times greater, Ignacio Agramonte, as soon as he has the news of the capture of Sanguily, gathers the few men who are nearby, begins the pursuit of the enemy, I instantly rescued him and from Spanish hands, that is, from certain death to General Julio Sanguily. (Castro, 1979, p 63)

Dramatic fact that speaks not only of the courage of the mambí chief, but of all those who followed him and highlights one of the most outstanding traits of Cuban combatants, their courage, having superior forces, a patriotic tradition that expressed in this way is, without a doubt, a path for patriotic, military and anti-imperialist education.

However, it is not limited to the fact that the leader of the Cuban Revolution was a brilliant speaker, but rather how he combined the different procedures of the oral presentation to transmit historical knowledge; the narrations and descriptions in combination with the explanations, revealing the causal relationships between the different facts, events and phenomena of national and universal history.

Although Fidel Castro was not a historian, he was a man who knew history and this allowed him to dedicate entire speeches to the meticulous analysis of a subject or to the allusion



to it to explain the evolution of certain facts, events and phenomena of national life. This circumstance led to the fact that his speeches and public interventions on the subject could be used as a source for historical knowledge, especially for popular education. Such is the case of descriptions combined with narrative elements, narratives combined with explanations, evaluations and arguments, all of them as the highest expression of the development of a historical thought achieved in intellectual and revolutionary work.

Conclusions

1. In his speeches with historical content, Fidel Castro offered information both at the factual level and at the rational logical level, to present it in a series of resources in his oratory that can be used for teaching History.
2. It is necessary that the professors who teach the subject incorporate in their individual preparation the study of Fidel Castro's speeches so that from the preparation of the subject and the scientific-methodological analysis of it, contribute to raising the quality of the teaching-learning process.

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