

Mapuche Socioeducational Knowledge: An Ambivalent Relation with School Learning¹

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Abstract: This manuscript discusses the impact of colonialism on indigenous peoples' education, specifically focusing on the Mapuche people. Highlights how the Chilean State's actions, such as the occupation of Mapuche territories and the imposition of its education system, have led to socioeducational and cultural ambivalence within schools. This ambivalence arises from the disconnect between Mapuche students' family-based education and the ignorance of teachers regarding their cultural background. The text explores the tension between different types of knowledge and emphasizes the need for intercultural dialogue and recognition of indigenous epistemes within the education system searching for a more inclusive and intercultural approach to education.

Keywords: Mapuche, Knowledge, Ambivalent, School, Learning.

1. INTRODUCTION

School education, understood as colonialism and coloniality of the socioeducational knowledge of indigenous peoples by the State, is one of the principal elements that has functioned as a mechanism of oppression. In the case of the Mapuche people, consolidation of this process developed with: 1) the creation of the Chilean State in 1810; 2) the total occupation of Mapuche territories as a result of the war known as the "Pacification of La Araucanía", which ended in 1883; and 3) the re-settling of the Mapuche people in indigenous "reductions" between 1883 and 1929. From the latter date, the State's colonisation policy left the Mapuche without economic resources (territories) [1], obliging them to undergo a process of "Chilenisation". As part of this process, State education institutions denied them the right to apply their own socioeducational practices. These events generated the conditions for what today we propose to understand as experiences of socioeducational and cultural ambivalence in school education, involving teachers on the one hand and Mapuche parents on the other [2].

Education as a mechanism of oppression can be understood from the distinction between colonialism and coloniality made by Mignolo under the lens of the paradigm Modernity/Coloniality [3]. Colonialism refers to specific historical periods of imperial domination, while coloniality refers to the logic structure of colonial thought, one expression of which may be called the coloniality of knowledge [3].

Socioeducational and cultural ambivalence are observed in the fact that in school, pupils of indigenous origin come into contact with teachers who are ignorant of the family education in which they were brought up; this situation is reflected as social and cultural domination [4; 2]. Furthermore, because the teacher does not have the social and cultural knowledge needed to establish a socioeducational relationship based on indigenous as well as

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school knowledge, he/she develops an ambivalence which hinders relations with pupils and parents from Mapuche families [5;6]). In order to analyse the elements that create tension in the dialogue between Mapuche educational knowledge and the school knowledge reproduced by the teacher, we ask the question: Why, in the context of the educational school needs of Mapuche pupils, is tension created in the sociocultural, intrafamily and community interaction through ignorance of the ambivalence affecting the actors involved, in terms of the dialogue between different kinds of knowledge?

This work is based on three sources of information: 1) reports of missionaries, essayists and historians who described the Spanish conquest and the war against the Mapuche known as the “Pacification of La Araucanía” [7; 8; 9; 1]; 2) social intrafamily-community memory of family-territorial descent, the basis on which this descent is defined as social construction of knowledge with own thought [10;11]; and 3) publications resulting from investigations into Mapuche educational knowledge and learning [12; 2; 13].

The method of analysis is to include the types of knowledge that characterise the Mapuche socioeducational upbringing, based on its analytical-descriptive nature from a phenomenological-hermeneutical epistemology [14;15; 16]. This approach allows us to clarify understanding of the study object from an experiential perspective which includes the expressive and pragmatic dimension of the conditions of discursive-textual production found in the actors. Thus, the analysis includes the results of investigations into socioeducational knowledge and the ambivalence that this knowledge produces among actors in the school environment.

2. MAPUCHE SOCIOEDUCATIONAL KNOWLEDGE

In the last decade, one of the main scenarios of the struggle to reverse the oppression of indigenous peoples has been the epistemic field. Smith [17] invites us to think in this way through the concept of Kaupapa Maori Investigation, which represents the attempt of the Maori people to take part in a dialogue on the generation of knowledge about and from their communities. Kaupapa Maori, says the author, is a conceptualisation of Maori knowledge, a way of abstracting knowledge, of thinking about it, participating in it, assuming its reality, making suppositions based on this knowledge, and becoming critically involved in how it has been and is being constructed. Similarly, from the Maya perspective, Llanes-Ortiz [18] criticises the western conception of epistemology as a simple transfer of information, and recovers the social practices involved in the reproduction of knowledge based on “doing”. This includes the formulation of ideas, concepts and/or representations, organised culturally from specific social identities and representations. Thus, systems of authority exist, since every community contains authorised or recognised individuals who are responsible for imparting certain socioeducational knowledge.

For our part, we observe that indigenous, and particularly Mapuche, socioeducational knowledge has been constructed on the basis of two principal elements: 1) a social relation supported by family memory of the historical-territorial community; and 2) its origin in the social construction of knowledge in a culture based on the relation person-territoriality-spirituality. Both elements – social relation and Mapuche socio-educative knowledge – are expressed in rules of co-existence, forms of work, relation with the territory, nature, language, spirituality and their own type of education [8; 19; 12; 20]. On the one hand, we take the principal definitions of Mapuche socioeducational and cultural knowledge from intrafamily-community life; on the other, we define the type of school education implemented among Mapuche communities in La Araucanía region.

Schooling for Mapuche children and adolescents began to be extended from the end of the war of Pacification of La Araucanía in 1883 until the 1940s. Schools followed the logic of boarding schools (with indigenous boarders) under the care of religious missions (Catholic and Anglican); in a second phase schools were State run [7; 22; 23; 12]. To this end, the State created boarding schools for primary education among the communities, as well as vocational schools, handicrafts schools, industrial schools, technical high schools and normal schools in urban centres, to which Mapuche adolescents also had access. These schools were and are characterised by a curriculum divorced from the context of the socioeducational nature of Mapuche education [24], as a means of colonisation under the ideological assumption of ‘civilizing savages’.

Despite this, the Mapuche maintained their own education in territorialities of the historical region of La

Araucanía. Knowledge was contained in social memory for the purpose of referring to the various Mapuche groups, and in the educational action called kimeltuwün [25; 13; 12]). We therefore consider the concept of historical territorial community to contextualise the educational action of kimeltuwün as the most representative definition of Mapuche educational knowledge [13; 12].

2.1. Kimeltuwün as a Mapuche educational practice

The methodological framework that we use to reveal forms of knowledge in order to understand kimeltuwün is based on three perspectives: 1) the epistemic basis of kimeltuwün; 2) the notion of relationship with knowledge; and 3) an epistemological critique of the monoculturality and unilingualism of the education system.

A.- Epistemic basis of kimeltuwün in social memory

The epistemic basis of Mapuche socioeducational knowledge [10; 12; 21] arises from the concept of kimeltuwün [13; 26; 13]. This concept brings together lines of thought which enable us to expound a theoretical methodological framework of Mapuche education, its strategies and principal pedagogic aspects, as the basis for the social construction of knowledge [28; 2]. In other words, specific didactic methods and strategies which organise teaching and learning – of the type of knowledge that they teach – according to the social context of territorial communities. Kimeltuwün includes knowledge of concepts, attitudes and procedures to understand and explain the sociocultural, natural, territorial and spiritual environments; it can also be understood as an inductive methodology, since it is based on a dialogue of knowledge between the pupil and the teacher [29; 30; 13;12].

The main characteristic of kimeltuwün as an educational action, expressed in the educational discourse of parents and kimches [sages], is that it is carried out through dialogue between two or more people [13; 31]. In other words, it is education imparted in a specific context, based on the principle that sustains the conception of life in the communities, and on thinking oriented towards explaining and understanding the socio-natural, natural-territorial and spiritual world [13; 32]. This is apparent in the empirical co-construction of knowledge with the kimches since it is made explicit in the social construction of knowledge: it relates the knowledge inferred from the current social-territorial memory both of the family and of its line of descent within the historical territorial community [25;13;12]). By involving Mapuche parents, kimches and pupils, the educational action of kimeltuwün constitutes a mechanism of indigenous resistance. In the Mapuche world it therefore represents one of the equivalents to communal work of the Maya K'iche', which according to Tzul Tzul [33] is a way to give life to community dynamics, and to recover family histories and the processes of collective deliberation against the domination of the capitalist education system, as well as against the coloniality of indigenous knowledge and domination of colonial thought.

B.- Notion of relationship with knowledge in kimeltuwün

The notion of relationship with knowledge organises research questions referring to Mapuche education [34; 35; 13]; it also allows educational knowledge about social and cultural organisation to be understood and explained through the idea that every individual belongs to a determined territory [36]. Thus the principal characteristic of this notion is the social construction of knowledge with an argument that takes account of educational knowledge revealed through the concept of konünpazugu.

Konünpazugu is defined as a way of contextualising knowledge socially, both in the family social memory and in the historical territorial community to which the family belongs [13; 31]. Nevertheless, in the experience of Mapuche pupils, the knowledge inferred from social memory by their parents competes with what they are taught at school [12]. An intrinsic part of the mission of school knowledge, inherited from the Enlightenment, is the epistemicide of the family-territorial and collective past [37]; this brings it into direct collision with kimeltuwün, which introduces family and community history into the educational scene [38; 36]. Konünpazugu, in contrast, represents the set of experiences acquired from family and territory in the form of skills and preparation to act, feel and think as a permanent condition of life; these are incorporated in social memory and affect feeling and thinking as an inheritance from the family or society, or as the sense of belonging defined as küpan [12].

Thus from the perspective of the social construction of knowledge among indigenous peoples, there is a knowledge which pre-exists each subject [39; 2]. This knowledge, in the case of the Mapuche, is shared by the parents because they create a relation with knowledge, depending whether it is knowledge for the upbringing of a person or specific content for learning a task [8; 10; 26]. In the school system, however, Mapuche educational knowledge is excluded through a racist, colonial, Eurocentric epistemology that denies the epistemes of indigenous educational knowledge [40; 41; 12].

2.2. Epistemological Critique of the Monoculturality and Unilingualism of the Education System

The epistemological critique that we propose here questions the control mechanisms of monocultural-unilingual school education in Spanish. Here, as an alternative, the epistemological challenge is constituted by inter-epistemic dialogue, since it allows, for example, the investigation method known as *inatuzugu* to be incorporated into school teaching from the perspective of *kimeltuwün*. This method is defined as retrospective investigation into the family-territorial memory, to enquire into the forms of knowledge necessary for the social construction of knowledge with the participation of the family and of community sages; in other words, the teaching strategy of the community, which currently includes both Mapuche education and school education [13]. The search implies *güxam*, or dialogue, about a specific content, between the person asking the question and the person answering.

Educational contents are considered from socio-historical and geo-historical perspectives, and the emerging themes acquire meaning through consideration of family educational experiences in specific territories [13]. There is thus an explicit social and cultural organisation of the families, which generates shared explanations between the subject who teaches and the subject who learns, starting from the articulation of social, cultural and family knowledge [32]. This is equivalent to the social constructionist concept of 'background as a form of life', which conceives the production of meaning from its material, active and social basis, and its symbolic character, such that understanding of how knowledge is generated refers back to practices, agreements, institutions and hierarchies which are historically and territorially situated [42]. For Mapuche pupils, symbolism is understood from a Mapuche double educational rationale or double educational thought, i.e. from the intersubjectivity of their parents, *kimches* and all Mapuche people who have been educated through the *kimeltuwün* approach [13; 36]. This is expressed on a material, territorial and symbolic basis that highlights the contradictions between family-community histories and those of the education system.

To sum up, some teaching strategies and educational methods are implicit in Mapuche teaching, creating ambivalence in how pupils relate to their teachers [28; 12]. Strategies based on Mapuche educational thought create tensions in how they deal with school educational logic. To put it in another way, Mapuche pupils develop a double educational way of thinking and – in some cases – a double educational rationale [43]. The concept of 'double educational rationale' is related with their double immersion: in their family-community and in their schooling. The concept of 'double thinking' refers to the aspects of Andean philosophical thinking shown by Kusch [44], through concepts that – in the case of the Mapuche today – guide their essential being and their everyday lives. Both concepts are based on the conception of historical-territorial community and on the relation person-territoriality-spirituality.

Consequently, due to his/her the ignorance of Mapuche essential being and everyday life, the teacher presents socioeducational and cultural ambivalence in school, creating tension between Mapuche educational thought and school knowledge in the pupils' social relations with their families and with non-Mapuche contacts. These relations are illustrated in Figure 1.

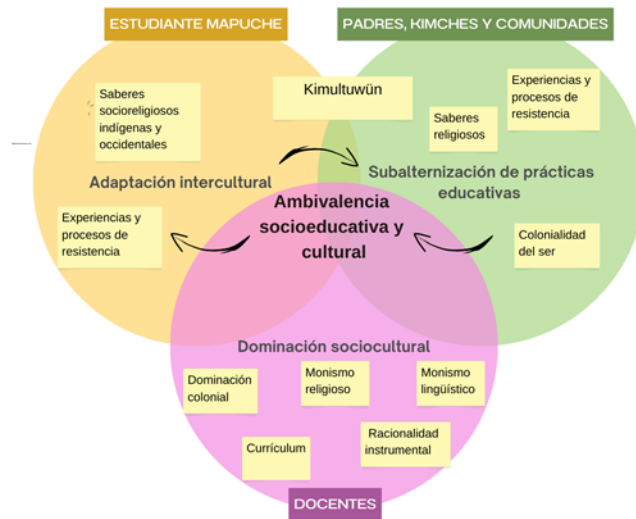


Figura 1. Ambivalencia socioeducativa y cultural en la relación estudiante mapuche, padres y docentes

Figure 1. Thematic diagram of the socioeducational and cultural ambivalence in school.

2.3. Socioeducational And Cultural Ambivalence

Socioeducational and cultural ambivalence among the Mapuche shows the effects of schooling on kimeltuwün. In this analysis we propose to understand contradictory feelings of pupils and their parents which explain their ambivalence in the intrafamily-community medium. We will also consider the hypothesis that pupils of Mapuche origin, as individuals and as a society, accept the sociocultural domination of the school imposed by the rules governing the curriculum and university study programmes, adapting to the sociocultural interculturality constructed in their families and communities.

Study of the ambivalence between school (dominant) knowledge and Mapuche (dominated) educational knowledge is of political, epistemic and ethical interest in the context of education, as a means of showing conceptual, procedural and attitudinal contents that complicate the implementation of intercultural education [6]. The aim of our analysis is therefore to discover and explain what happens in 'school life' as a result of the contradictory experiences occurring between pupils of Mapuche origin and the non-Mapuche teacher. On the one hand, we will approach the analysis from the idea of the reproduction of colonial domination of Chilean society in the routines of thought and the teacher's professional exercise, due to the monocultural-unilingual teaching of Spanish both in schooling and in professional teacher-training in universities [45; 46; 4; 28]. On the other, we will explain why it is necessary to recognise the episteme of Mapuche educational content which the pupil uses for the social construction of school, Mapuche, and intercultural educational knowledge, [28; 12].

In general, it is found that teachers are ignorant of the knowledge that exists in Mapuche social and cultural life, due to their own schooling influenced by the linear Eurocentric epistemology that is imposed as a hegemony through oppression and censure [47; 48; 5; 49]. Thus, having passed through a school education and a teacher-training course, both validated under the epistemological monism of an instrumental rationale [50]), teachers can hardly be expected to exercise their profession in a self-critical and transformative manner [51]. We also observe that the construction of knowledge from critical intercultural approaches produces epistemic tension among those who attempt it [52; 53; 54; 4; 27]: this is due first to the effects of political-economic and social relations of domination towards the descendants of historical Mapuche communities [25;13;5]; and second to the fact that domination is expressed in the subordination of indigenous educational practices and knowledge [55; 56].

Thus epistemic tension creates an obstacle to the articulation of theoretical-methodological proposals to change

education processes in contexts of indigenous social and cultural diversity [12]. For example, in intercultural education in Latin America, teachers do not recognise the modes of interculturality possessed by pupils of indigenous origin [28; 5; 57; 58; 59]. Yet the pupils bring to the classroom a practice of interculturality constructed in their families and communities, with their own teaching methods and the influence of school teaching [2: 6]. They also use western and indigenous socio-religious knowledge, which allows them to understand and explain school knowledge from their cultural, everyday knowledge [32; 49]. Thus in the construction of new knowledge, according to Macas (2005), it is important to dispute the construction of meanings not only of words, but also of the categories that serve as the basis for knowledge. We therefore propose that there is a fundamental need for analysis of the concepts of ambivalence and epistemological methodological monism, in the framework of the construction of Mapuche educational knowledge.

The idea of ambivalence was proposed by the classic authors [61; 61]; it stresses the double orientation of most behaviours, between the defence of individual life and participation in collective life. This notion of ambivalence, although very general, provides us with a theoretical point of reference for the socioeducational and cultural ambivalence of Mapuche pupils and their schoolteachers. Tabboni [52] proposes that we are all normally ambivalent with respect to the demands of a social role, for example being a good professional, a scrupulous worker, a good parent. Thus by ambivalence we mean the coexistence – in the personality of the actor – of conflicting principles, demands, aspirations and feelings, which demand to be satisfied with the same intensity and which spring from the same origin.

The first idea is socioeducational ambivalence, in which the construction of knowledge among indigenous peoples is principally social and refers to the functional interculturality that is composed of knowledge of both Chilean and Mapuche society [4; 5]). In other words, we are simultaneously in part what our environment makes us, but also something more than our environment. For example, the teacher cannot reduce his/her function to his profession, his role; it is, in Simmel's words [62], 'something more besides', since the characteristics by which we are recognised socially are in constant tension with what we are for ourselves, with the changing demands of an ego or identity that continually seeks to recognise itself as unique and free [63; 64].

The second idea is cultural ambivalence, that mixture of conflicting feelings that regularly accompanies those who belong to different cultural groups. In other words, the ambivalence of intercultural relations, which acquires the characteristic form of the 'figure of the stranger' [65; 66; 46]. However, the stranger is the messenger of change, who provokes fear, resistance to change, the desire for continuity; but simultaneously curiosity, the pursuit of novelty, the desire for change, reflecting the urge to live and develop. Change is a fundamental activity, which enriches and provides new scenes of action, but at the same time is difficult and painful [67]. Thus Tabboni [52], talking about the school education of the children of immigrants in Europe, proposes that the cultural ambivalence of teachers in multicultural schools, faced with pupils of unequal academic performance, has led to actions inspired by the principle of equal opportunities and with initiatives intended to incorporate the culture of the immigrant children.

Knowing the elements of cultural ambivalence implies an awareness of the limits of all absolute conviction, since the culture of ambivalence places greater value on weakness than on strength, on partial than on absolute convictions [52; 4; 46]. While it is fundamental to trust in a personal or collective identity, seeing no further than this will lead to difficulties. In Latin America, Gasché [4] proposes that no educational innovation in an indigenous context becomes real if the teachers do not have a clear awareness of their sociocultural ambivalence between the dominant values of the education system, and the indigenous values subjected to coloniality, domination, censure and oppression. For this author, only with this awareness can teachers place themselves on the side of the dominators as civilising agents, or on the side of the dominated, the indigenous, affirming their values and including them in their teaching as the object of a proposed intercultural education.

Ambivalence in the school system is expressed in contradictory everyday personal behaviours, in the indigenous pupils or in the non-indigenous teachers [54, 2010; 46]. This is a consequence of the monocultural school based on educational policies established in the different countries since the end of the 19th century, which consolidated

relations of inequality on the one hand and indigenous resistance to school on the other [68; 36; 23]. In Chile, school became an instrument of power, with which the State constructed the other (for example converting the Mapuche into an 'Araucan') through the 'reasoning of civilisation and barbarism', thus repressing the differences and invisibilising indigenous peoples and their cultures that in fact pre-existed the nation state [69; 70; 12]). These ideas form part of a global context of coloniality of being, which from the time of the European conquests of the pre-Hispanic peoples led to their inferiorisation and subordination – and indeed doubts over how 'human' they were – and therefore to the need to civilise them [37; 71; 72; 28; 23].

In the epistemology that underlies the construction of school knowledge, the argument used in the training of teachers who work in the Mapuche context is based on the model of scientific rationality [73; 5]). Santos [74; 75] explains that the rise of modern science resulted in its being viewed as the only true knowledge. This left indigenous forms of knowledge in a position of inferiority, as they were considered illusory. Under this rationale, nature and humanity are treated as separate, and the study of nature from an anthropocentric perspective sees humanity as conquerors, instrumentalising knowledge for the purposes of domination [76]. In other words, the bases of the epistemological or hegemonic context, referring to the Mapuche, require critical analysis to examine the effects that it produces in society and in education [2]. As a result, the traditional concept of epistemology, the object of which is to study the principles of knowledge and its indispensable nature, is inadequate for the proposed analysis. In this essay, therefore, we refer to the concept of epistemology as the "discipline that makes a critical analysis of cognitive practices" [47, p. 25]. This approach broadens the epistemological monism which, by its nature, excludes forms of knowledge that do not comply with the validation criteria of the positivist rationale.

We can also see that epistemological monism has impregnated school education with a constant search for objectivity, which is transferred to the pupils' perceptions [77] (see Figure 1). The current model of school education denies the complexity of society and forgets that the diversity of the classroom cannot be limited to responding only to standardised objective criteria [6]. What happens today facilitates the generation of mechanisms that result in the exclusion of a group of pupils who do not respond to the expectations defined when the object of learning is to become human capital at the disposal of society [50].

In this sense, the epistemological context may favour teaching practices that focus on valuing and recognising social and cultural plurality, or it may repress cognition, preferring a hegemonic epistemology that violates other forms of rationale [78]. By the same token, the 'absences' resulting from the teacher's epistemological monism are consequences of the crisis in the scientific rationale, as expounded by Santos [74]. If this crisis is irreversible, as described, then we can understand that progress in the construction of new forms of knowledge will make reality increasingly complex and plural, broadening our view to include the perspectives that are emerging constantly. This is what Santos proposes as the sociology and epistemology of absences, to facilitate the study of what is excluded. This in turn implies new forms of knowledge and new methodologies that reflect the epistemic plurality of society and culture, to overcome the restricted viewpoints from which the social world is understood [72; 79].

From the analysis of epistemological-methodological monism and epistemological-methodological pluralism, we observe on the one hand that the obstacles to school education, for example, are reflected in asymmetric social relations between members of indigenous peoples and people of European descent [80; 81; 82; 2]. In other words, good intentions are not enough to reverse the academic epistemicide of indigenous forms of knowledge [83; 84; 75; 13]. On the other hand, this analysis enables us to recognise the teacher's socioeducational ambivalence and to incorporate indigenous knowledge into a proposal for intercultural education, to obtain adults educated to be aware of differences and capable of working together to co-construct a plural and a fairer society [81; 82; 47; 85; 86; 87; 5]. It likewise enables us to see the social context and the coexistence of people with different cultures and ways of life [88], and offers criteria for the validity of indigenous forms of knowledge juxtaposed with scientific knowledge [47; 4].

CONCLUSION

The response to the study question, and the purpose of this essay, is to analyse socioeducational and cultural

ambivalence in the sociocultural context, which creates a tension in the how teachers relate professionally with Mapuche pupils and their parents. We conclude that it is necessary to elucidate and explain two situations present in school education: 1) the contradictions experienced between pupils and parents of Mapuche origin on the one hand and schoolteachers on the other; and 2) the Mapuche educational perspective which is rooted in both their own education and in school education.

In the contradictions created by this ambivalence, there is a need to show how the colonial domination of Chilean society continues to be reproduced, in the routines of thought and the teacher's professional exercise with his/her pupils. As a logical structure of colonial thought, from the colonality of knowledge a need is likewise observed to recognise the epistemes on which the intercultural dialogue of knowledge is based; this is the dialogue between Mapuche parents and school knowledge, for the social construction of intercultural educational knowledge in their children. Here it is essential to consider ethical, political and educational perspectives with investigators of different disciplines, based on epistemological pluralism, to obtain a conceptual resignification of the socioeducational perspective applied in schools.

From the perspective of Mapuche education described above, the incorporation of their epistemes into school education and the ways in which knowledge is constructed requires reference to the knowledge about people and society by which social relations are regulated. This in turn requires a sociocultural approach to the pupils' family, their historical Mapuche territorial community, and their current life contexts. This means that the education system must accept an epistemology that recognises that the principal source of conflict in humanity today is cultural (Jarauta, 2019); whereas in the case of indigenous peoples, it is principally social. There is therefore a need for the material and symbolic conditions to allow an interepistemic dialogue between the teaching approach implicit in kimeltuwün and indigenous teaching forms in general, on the one hand, and the universalist-western school curriculum on the other. In other words, the legitimisation of children educated in the framework of the Mapuche social-territorial memory, consisting of epistemes and logics of the relation with educational knowledge. To sum up, this dialogue would offer the chance to open up new perspectives in educational research and school education, from an intercultural approach through investigation of the Mapuche teaching method described in the concept of kimeltuwün.

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