

# Equiling

**Theoretical and  
Methodological Proposals:  
Epistemic and  
Conscientization  
Communities**

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# 1. Introduction: Language mediated injustices

- Language is one of the many variables that has a role shaping social inequality, together with the “other usual suspects”: gender, race, age, social class, ethnicity...
- This is not always shared by other disciplines that also want to understand how social inequalities operate in our society and with what consequences for individuals and communities.
- In general, society at large is unaware of how language plays this role, what form it takes and through what mechanisms it operates.
- The four contexts of our research are: Galicia, Euskadi, Madrid and Catalonia all of which are environments where diversity is present due to the mobility that comes with globalization, but also in three of them minority languages are spoken together with Spanish and the languages of migration. (Rojo, Pujolar & Amorrortu, 2025).

## 2. Social injustices and language injustice

- Nancy Fraser “Rethinking recognition” (2000) and Fraser & Honneth. (2003). “Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange”.
- Fraser’s model is based on three axes:
  - economic distribution,
  - cultural recognition
  - and political participation.
- Raising awareness of the **unequal distribution of linguistic resources** and the ways in which some people are denied a voice and the status of legitimate speakers, thus **limiting their full participation in society**. These inequalities also comprise the exclusion of immigrant languages, non-standardized language varieties, and minoritized languages such as Basque, Galician, and Catalan, as well as the misrecognition of their speakers, resulting in their limited participation in social institutions.





### 3. Sociolinguistic justice

“[S]elf-determination for linguistically subordinated individuals and groups in sociopolitical struggles over language.

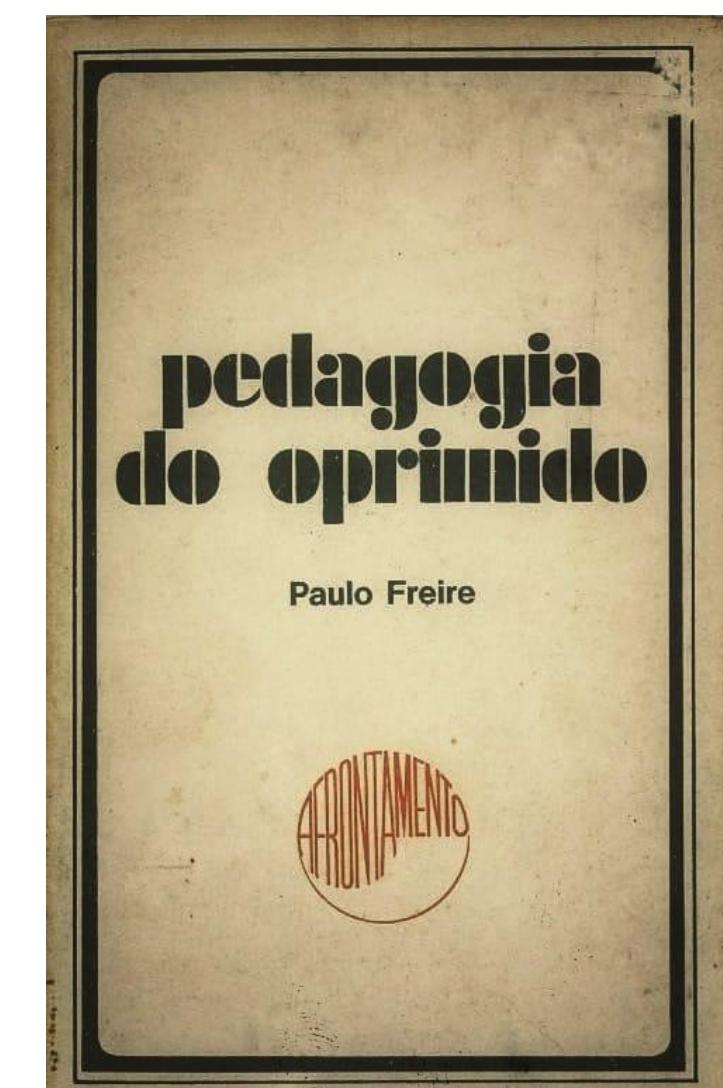
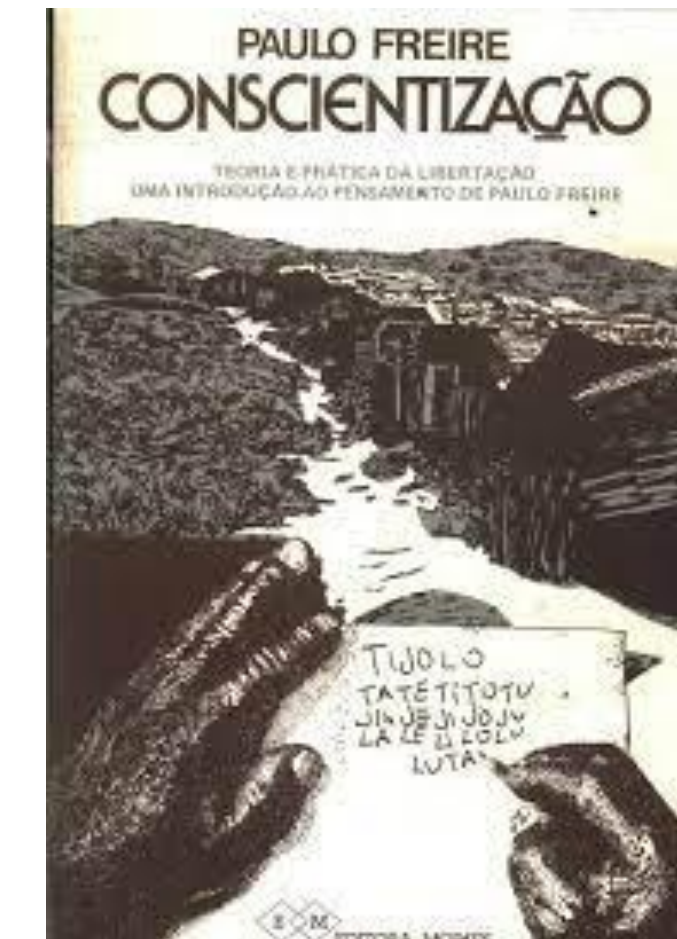
As an idealized goal, what counts as sociolinguistic justice is, in itself, a site of struggle, but, in general, we can see that linguistically marginalized individuals and communities achieve some measure of sociolinguistic justice when they claim the right to define the social, cultural, and political roles of their own language varieties.” (Bucholtz et al. 2014)

“We understand sociolinguistic justice as a fundamentally bottom-up collaborative effort of linguistically subordinate communities and individuals that inevitably involves negotiation and debate; therefore, sociolinguistic justice also includes accompaniment between members of local communities as well as potentially between these communities and outsiders, including academic researchers. (Bucholtz et al. 2014)



### 3. “Conscientização”

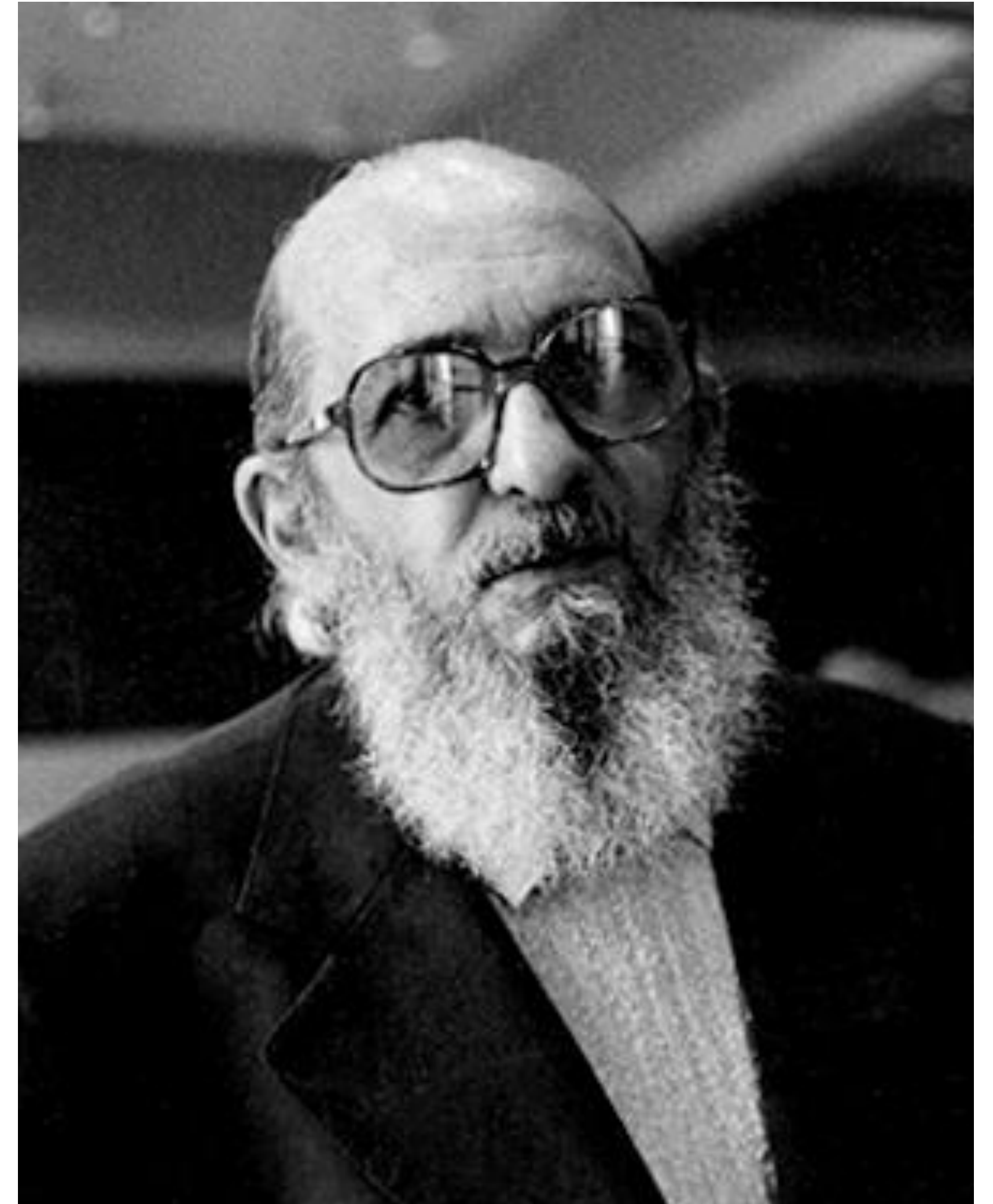
- Paulo Freire's theory of pedagogical consciousness is a radical socio-political approach that was born in the 1970s by the liberation of the poor and oppressed (illiterate countries in Brazil), but that has spread throughout the world and in other fields of study (formal education, community development, etc.).
- Consciousness is a process of becoming critical through **dialogue, reflection and action**.
- It is based on the study of the different phases through which the oppressed goes in their process of becoming aware of the difficulties they experience in coming out of what he calls the “culture of silence”.
- The “culture of silence” occurs when socially subordinate subjects internalize negative images of themselves and remain silent in oppressive situations (Freire 1975: 30).





# The Stages of Change by Paulo Freire

1. Magic/recognition phase: the person is aware that they have a problem. There's something that doesn't work.
2. The Critical Phase: Think about the causes.
3. Action phase: in this phase the desire to act for change is unleashed.



## 4. Epistemic communities

- An epistemic community is understood not just as a group of experts who share knowledge, but as **a collective that co-produces knowledge through shared practices, infrastructures, and political commitments**, particularly within contexts like ethnography, design, and STS (Science and Technology Studies). (Estalella and Sánchez Criado 2018)
- In their work—especially in pieces like “Ethnography Otherwise” or their writings on experiments in ethnographic collaboration—Estalella and Sánchez Criado approach epistemic communities as experimental collectives. These are not stable groups with pre-defined expertise but emergent, situated, and processual formations, where knowledge is collaboratively made through engagement and care. These communities are characterized by their co-production of knowledge, where traditional roles of researcher and subject are reconfigured into partnerships of mutual inquiry and learning.
- This approach emphasizes that knowledge is not merely discovered but actively constructed through engagement, experimentation, and shared problematization within the field.



## 4. Activities undertaken in the different Equiling sites

**Children and adolescent participants** (Galicia and Euskadi 2): linguistic biographies (drawn and narrated) and linguistic landscapes...

**Young adults** (university students) (Madrid and Euskadi 1) interactions in and out of class between members of the research team and students of the undergraduate degree allowing students to acquire critical tools of sociolinguistic introspection and analysis (sociolinguistic awareness) discuss sociolinguistic justice; critical language incidents revealing linguistic inequalities ...

**Adult participants** (Catalonia): reading, reflecting and talking about linguistic injustices, racism and language ...

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