

HISTORICAL-CULTURAL THEORY AND SCHOOL EDUCATION FROM A HUMANIZING PERSPECTIVE

A TEORIA HISTÓRICO-CULTURAL E A EDUCAÇÃO ESCOLAR NUMA PERSPECTIVA HUMANIZADORA

LA TEORÍA HISTÓRICO-CULTURAL Y LA EDUCACIÓN ESCOLAR EN UNA PERSPECTIVA HUMANIZADORA

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ABSTRACT: This article aims to understand how the development and learning process of written language by the child takes place based on the Historical-Cultural Theory. In order to achieve the objective, a bibliographical research with a qualitative approach was developed. Studies by Vygotsky (1995, 2001), Leontiev (1978, 2004), Luria (1998) served as a theoretical basis. From the analysis, it was possible to verify that the child forms all the higher psychic and symbolic functions necessary for learning to write through interaction with others, in the external and internal activities, to make this knowledge their own. It is concluded that it is through school education, especially due to its intentional systemic form that enables the evolution of man, as a result of the mastery over knowledge and, on the other hand, its reflection in the material world characterized by the collectivity, since, in addition to generating the evolution of man individually, education allows the restructuring of behavior in society.

KEYWORDS: Education. Historical-cultural theory. Written language. Humanization. Development.

RESUMO: *Este artigo objetiva compreender como ocorre o processo de desenvolvimento e aprendizagem da linguagem escrita pela criança a partir da Teoria Histórico-Cultural. Para atingir o objetivo, desenvolveu-se uma pesquisa bibliográfica com abordagem qualitativa. Serviram de base teórica, principalmente, estudos de Vygotsky (1984, 1995, 2001), Leontiev (1978, 2004), Luria (1998a, 1998b, 1998c) etc. A partir da análise foi possível verificar que a criança forma todas as funções psíquicas superiores e a simbólica, necessárias à aprendizagem da escrita através da interação com o outro, na atividade externa e na atividade interna, para tornar seus esses conhecimentos. Conclui-se que é pela educação escolar, especialmente devido a sua forma sistêmica intencional que propicia a evolução do homem, em decorrência do domínio sobre os saberes e, em contrapartida, o seu reflexo no mundo material caracterizado pela coletividade, pois, além de gerar a evolução do homem de forma individual, a educação permite a reestrutura do comportamento em sociedade.*

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Educação. Teoria histórico-cultural. Linguagem escrita. Humanização. Desenvolvimento.*

RESUMEN: *Este artículo tiene como objetivo comprender como ocurre el proceso de desenvolvimiento y aprendizaje del lenguaje escrito por el niño a partir de la Teoría Histórico-Cultural. Para alcanzar el objetivo, se desarrolló una encuesta bibliográfica con abordaje cualitativo. Sirvieron de base teórica, principalmente, estudios de Vygotsky (1995, 2001), Leontiev (1978, 2004), Luria (1998a, 1998b, 1998c) etc. A partir del análisis fue posible verificar que el niño forma todas las funciones psíquicas superiores y la simbólica, necesarias para el aprendizaje de la escritura a través de interacción con el otro, en la actividad externa y en la actividad interna, para hacer suyos esos conocimientos. Se concluye que es por la educación escolar, especialmente debido a su forma sistémica intencional que propicia la evolución del hombre, en consecuencia, del dominio sobre los saberes y, en cambio, su reflejo en el mundo material caracterizado por la colectividad, pues, además de generar la evolución del hombre de forma individual, la educación permite la reestructura del comportamiento en sociedad.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Educación. Teoría histórico-cultural. Lenguaje escrito. Humanización. Desarrollo.*

Introduction

This article seeks to understand how the process of development and learning of written language by the child occurs from the Historical – Cultural theory. It is considered that the theoretical assumptions of this theory contribute to the understanding of the appropriation of the written culture as a process of meaning by children.

Initially, it is important to highlight that in the course of his cultural development, the child forms all the higher psychic functions, as well as the symbolic function, so necessary for the learning of writing. Thus, as a guiding principle of this study, we chose to explain the relationship between the child's development in interaction with others in external activity and intra-action, that is, his internal activity, through which he makes his knowledge of writing.

The Historical Cultural Theory, developed by Vygotsky (2001), takes into account aspects related to interaction, language, the individual's historical context, individual particularities, experiences, biological aspects, and material conditions. This theorist states that man is born with typically human aptitudes and abilities to learn how to build culture and transmit it to future generations, since he is a cultural-historical being.

To reach the objective of this paper, a bibliographical, qualitative research was developed. Articles published in periodicals, books, dissertations, and theses that deal with

conceptions brought by the Historical - Cultural Theory were selected to support the analysis. The works of Vygotsky (2001), Luria (1998a, 1998b, 1998c), Leontiev (1978, 2004), Mello (2004, 2007), among others, were researched.

This work, by dealing with the process of acquisition of writing and reading by the child in a way that considers him/her as a social and historical being, can contribute to the development of teaching and learning methodologies. Therefore, it was sought, throughout this research, to theoretically affirm the importance and the possibility of implementing this study, which is based on the Historical - Cultural Theory, in regular education, so that teachers can understand the paths taken by the child from birth to around 6 years of age and, thus, propose activities appropriate to the approximate age group.

The following sections present: a) the Historical - Cultural Theory and the role of language; development, main activity, and learning; b) humanizing literacy: the child as a subject that reads, writes, and humanizes himself; and c) final considerations.

The Historical – Cultural Theory

The Historical - Cultural Theory was created through studies and research developed by Lev Semionovich Vygotsky (1896-1934), "[...] one of the most important Soviet thinkers in the field of education and psychology of the twentieth century [...]", along with his collaborators Leontiev (1903-1979) and Luria (1902-1977), who formed a group called Troika. This theory brought subsidies to understand education as synonymous with humanization (PRESTES; TUNES; NASCIMENTO, 2013, p. 58).

For Vygotsky (1984), human culture is vital for the development of the individual, who constitutes his humanity through it. The author researched human development always in its relationship with the environment, highlighting the dynamics and dialecticity of this relationship between the individual and the environment mediated by signs, particularly by oral and written language.

The influence of the environment in the formation of the individual, seen by Vygotsky in his research, required him and his collaborators to restructure the "[...] foundations of psychology as a science, in a creative process of application of the ideas of Marxism-Leninism, in order to contribute to the construction of an education concerned with the new man" (LONGAREZI; PUENTES, 2013, p. 291).

In this context, the Historical - Cultural Theory of Marxist matrix was created, although there are other influences in its constitution according to Longarezi and Puentes (2013). Thus,

Vygotsky seeks Marx (1818-1883), the first to understand the social and historical nature of the human being, performing a theoretical analysis in relation to this nature. From his point of view, the human being takes care of human qualities by appropriating the objects of the historically and socially created culture. This was one of the principles of the Vygotskian theory.

Mello (2004, p. 126) also reiterates the assumptions formulated by Marx (1962), when he conceptualizes the process of appropriation of reality, by stating:

All his [the individual's] relations with the world - seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, thinking, observing, feeling, desiring, acting, loving - in short, all the organs of his individuality, as organs that are in a directly communal way, are, in his objective action (his action with respect to the object) the appropriation of that object, the appropriation of human reality.

It should be noted that human acquisitions materialize in the form of objects of material and intellectual culture, because the genetic heritage received is important, but not enough for the human being to develop (MELLO, 2004).

Each new generation comes into the world and sees objects created by the generations that preceded it. The human qualities socially created by humanity are historically accumulated, crystallized in the material and immaterial objects of objective reality, but not given. Therefore, the individual needs to appropriate these human qualities through the mediation of auxiliary means - the verbal and nonverbal signs (MELLO, 2004).

The child is born and is constituted as a human being in relations with the other - people and objects - and his genetic heritage guarantees him the natural possibilities, the elementary functions so that he can develop as a cultural being.

For the Historical - Cultural Theory, the child is born with a single potentiality, the potentiality to learn potentialities; with a single aptitude, the aptitude to learn aptitudes; with a single capacity, the unlimited capacity to learn and, in this process, develop his intelligence (MELLO, 2004, p. 136).

That said, it is understood, in the cultural-historical perspective, that each child learns from the other through a practical activity and thus forms his human capabilities and skills. This shows the need for mediation by a more experienced partner, who shows the child the social function of material and immaterial objects, in order to transmit the meanings of the objects of the cultural world. Human history is built on this perspective, with the transmission of the acquisitions of human culture to succeeding generations.

Leontiev (2004, p. 279) states that "[...] man is a being of social nature, that all that is human in him comes from his life in society, within the culture created by humanity. Although

he is of animal origin, he differentiates himself from all species of animals by forming his consciousness, intelligence, and personality.

Driven by the instinct to preserve life, man formed the faculties and properties of human life, produced new knowledge and objects that accumulated and passed from generation to generation, perfecting themselves. This process made possible the history of humanity as a process of accumulation of human experiences through its productive activity: work. Gonzalez (2012, p. 81) points out that man is a being who works, produces and transforms material reality in such a way "[...] that his work is a social product, a product for everyone".

In the production of material and immaterial goods, man leaves his marks, they are the signs of the movement he performs in his work process and they crystallize as "a property at rest, an objective being." Leontiev (2004, p. 176) explains that this consists of a "[...] process of embodiment, or objectification in the products of men's activity, of their intellectual forces and faculties."

For the Historical - Cultural Theory, the social being develops in the historical moment in which he lives, based on the culture to which he has access, being, therefore, a historical and cultural being. Thus, man needs to learn the skills he will be able to develop. Differentiating from the animal, which, in turn, brings the skills with it at birth, developing them in the future; however, it will not develop beyond its biological data, not accumulating knowledge from generation to generation, not being, therefore, a historical being. Man, on the other hand, because he has the ability to learn, has not stopped changing since prehistoric times.

However, the existence of a more experienced mediating partner is necessary for the transmission of culture, because children are not able to understand the achievements of human culture on their own. Even if the skills are external to the individuals, according to the Cultural-Historical Theory, there is the possibility that they can learn them, because the innate characteristics of the individual are considered essential to their development, but not sufficient.

According to Vygotsky (1984), the learning process comprises two relevant indicators for the child's development: the actual development, which reflects what the child can do alone, and the proximal development, which means what the child is not able to do alone, but can do with the help of a more experienced partner.

What is not in the child's proximate development (what it is possible for the child to do with the cooperation of a more experienced partner) is not worth sharing with the educator. Although the teacher must intentionally interfere in learning, the particularities of each child must be considered. In other words, the educational work raises the development to stages not yet reached by the child, pushing new knowledge from external facts, such as observation,

orientation of his behavior, memory, language, etc., to then become internal functions to his consciousness/thought.

The appropriation of the culture built by humanity is the result of human development, and to achieve development, the individual goes through several processes, among them, language, which plays an essential role and can be considered an instrument that man uses to appropriate the culture.

Language is an essential element for man's individual and social development, which, in turn, creates signs that help in the psychological processes.

For a child to appropriate human culture and develop his individuality, the development of language is essential, considering that, by appropriating language, he becomes a social being, because it is through language that man has access to the culture that has already been established in society and, consequently, develops his higher psychic functions. Based on this premise, it can be said that language helps the humanization process.

For Vygotsky (2001), there is a relationship between thought and word. The study of these two processes cannot be independent, they are parts of a whole, in such a way that they complement each other.

The word is not necessarily linked to thought, just as thought is not necessarily linked to language. Meaning is a phenomenon of thought only when it materializes in the word. Language is not a photographic expression of thought, since it cannot encompass the infinite possibilities of thought.

In Vygotsky's (2001) conception, language does not express pure thought. Thought restructures itself when transformed into language, which, in turn, is the external aspect of the whole process.

According to Leontiev (2004), spoken language is the process of appropriation of the operations of words historically fixed in their meanings and, therefore, contribute to the formation of listening functions as a form of brain activity. On the other hand, written language is a tool for the development of the individual, but it is necessary to understand the social function of written language, so that it can facilitate the appropriation of culture by man.

Language teaching needs the role of a mediator to, through activities that make sense to the child, promote the internalization of writing and its functions, so that the child can realize that it is something essential for life in society. In other words, it means to say that the activity that gives rise to the appropriation of writing should have a personal character and not just mere reproductive activities that do not carry a contextualized meaning for the child.

According to Vygotsky (1984), the teacher assumes the role of mediator for the child, that is, the most experienced being who has already appropriated the culture and has the aptitude to pass it on to a less experienced generation.

Development, main activity and learning

Vygotsky carried out many studies that contributed to education in relation to teaching and learning, including the mediation system of teacher versus student.

Among the several issues he dealt with are the human psychological processes, taking into account the historical and cultural context of the child.

From this premise, Vygotsky developed the study of psychological ages. In his analyses, he emphasized the understanding of the interaction of the psychological with the individual's social context, also considering the internal logic of the psyche from each unit.

The unit of analysis constituted by Vygotsky for the study of human development characterized by speech, action and perception is an integrated psychological structure, which allows the integration of contradictory elements. A unit that retains all the properties of the whole to be analyzed, therefore, must be holistic, since the elements acquire new meanings when, in the historical process, they are placed in relation to the whole in which they are integrated (MARTINS, 1994, p. 288).

According to Vygotsky (2001), understanding the stages of human development is extremely important to understand its own development as a whole, and such stages are each a step to reach the final goal, going through each stage or period.

In the first six, seven years of life, the child lives countless experiences and experiences intense experiences for the formation of its higher psychic functions, being that "[...] the activity that makes sense to the child is the key through which it gets in touch with the world, learns to use the culture and appropriates the aptitudes, capacities, and human abilities" (MELLO, 2004, p. 148). In this sense, it is reaffirmed that the significant activity for the child is the one that makes sense and through which she constitutes herself as a human being: personality, intelligence, and consciousness.

For Leontiev (2004), the development of the child's psychic functions is its own life, that is, a process that dialectically materializes in the movement of external activity and internal activity, and in it, verbal language plays a fundamental role by mediating the meanings of both the external and internal activity of the child. Through verbal language - speech, inner language and written language - the child signifies the world, the other and itself.

According to Oliveira, Santana, Silva, and Rodrigues (2018), the stages are periods

through which the child passes and which have their own peculiarities and psychological structure, with each one determining changes in the child's personality. For Vygotsky (apud OLIVEIRA; SANTANA; SILVA; RODRIGUES, 2018), there are stable periods, longer, and crisis periods, shorter. Crisis periods represent the passage from one stage to another, replacing each other, and present significant behavioral changes.

The transformations in the child's development are related to the environment and the people with whom the child lives. The child's social situation directly influences his human development as a whole. "The child at the same time that is a product [...]", in the sense that it is produced in the world of culture, "is also a producer of life in society" (OLIVEIRA; SANTANA; SILVA; RODRIGUES, 2018, p. 60).

The structure of the relationships that the child establishes with the people around him, as well as the transposition of the new levels of activity, therefore, allow the creation of new levels of understanding of reality, generating transformations of the personality. Such transformations are directly linked to the main activity of each age.

In the first months of life, the child communicates non-verbally, but emotionally. Initially, it develops thought and later becomes verbal. At around 3 years of age, the child imitates adults in the world of culture. At age 6, the main activity the child performs is playing and, correlatively, developing memory, attention, and moral feelings; then, living in a group will allow him/her to learn to control his/her behavior.

Finally, school age will be the age that broadens his knowledge of the world the most, enabling him to reorganize his way of thinking.

It is worth mentioning that the activities that have the greatest effect on the child's development are those in which he/she is intensely involved, not just mechanically, and those that require a certain degree of concentration. The task that leads to the activity has to make sense to the child, that is, have a goal and a reason to perform it.

Thus, the activity is not merely an execution of meaningless tasks, but the knowledge about the purpose and the need to reproduce that task, configuring the activity. Thus, the activity that allows the apprehension of culture and appropriation of human abilities and skills is the one that makes sense to the child, arousing his interest, so that he can dispense concentration and, consequently, evolve in the development of his psychic functions.

The respect that adults give to the typical activities of the child supports the evolutionary process of the child's activity, with a global and significant character, so that the appropriation of human qualities by the child does not result from a simplifying teaching, artificially distributed by the teacher, but from an education with a more comprehensive character, which

allows significant changes in the position that the child exercises in the relationships he/she participates in, by giving rise to the creation of new motives.

Therefore,

[...] when we look at the typical educational practices of the school of childhood, we notice, in general, the concern with the formation of isolated and punctual concepts, characterized, for example, by learning shapes, colors and sizes isolated from concrete situations, in which these characteristics of objects make sense. For the Cultural-Historical Theory, the absence of a systemic approach to the development of the psychic properties of human personality in childhood is responsible for this misunderstanding (MELLO, 2007, p. 94).

It is important to highlight, at this point, the importance of intentional education, whose pedagogical work is based on the learning diagnosis of the learning subjects, on what they have already mastered and what they still need to learn. The educator's intervention should cause advances that would not occur naturally. However, despite the fact that intentional education plays a significant role in the learning process, the particularities of each child cannot be ignored, and it is essential to know them.

Vygotsky (apud LEONTIEV, 1978) shows that a main activity in each stage is responsible for these changes and ruptures, so that, to reach the next stage, the child must also change its main activity. It can be stated that the main activity and the psychological age are interrelated, influencing each other.

Another issue to be considered is that, at each approximate age, there is a new level of development that did not exist in the previous stage, becoming fixed as a result of all the experience built up during this period. The development process itself consists, essentially, in the emergence of new formations at each age (VYGOTSKY, 1996 apud MELLO, 2007).

For the Historical - Cultural Theory, "the development of the child - which is to say: human development - can only be understood as a synthesis of two distinct orders: organic maturation and cultural history, which merge into a single and complex process" (MELLO, 2007, p. 99).

Thus, we reiterate the importance of adopting collective activities that influence the child to collaborate with others and with adults, as well as with each other. It is necessary, then, to consider the needs and interests of the other with whom they relate, because understanding and respecting the emotions and difficulties of others contributes to the enrichment of the child's social experience, which is the fundamental foundation for more complex relationships that may occur throughout their development and learning.

In this sense, Leontiev (1978, p. 65) shows the role of activity in child development by stating that "[...] the main activity is, then, the activity whose development governs the most important changes in the psychic processes and psychological traits of the child's personality at a stage of his development. Here, in this quotation, one can once again verify the relationship between psychological age and main activity.

Hence the importance of the knowledge of these psychological structures for the development of teaching and learning methodologies that consider the main activity, since children develop through activity. Oliveira, Santana, Silva, and Rodrigues (2018, p. 65) emphasize that "[...] who does not enter into activity, does not learn [...]"

In this direction, Elkonin (1987) states that the child's development is not the result of naturally acquired skills and abilities, because, as a social being, it depends on the conditions of life and education to develop, and this implies the possibility of performing meaningful activities, as well as relationships mediated by people and objects in their surroundings.

It can be said, then, that the learning process takes place in an active way, requiring the use of the object from the social use for which it was created. And, in this process, the learner is the one who must perform the activity. The activity of handling objects is very important for the development of memory, attention and also language, because as the child gets to know the objects, it also creates the conditions to develop speech.

It is worth remembering, then, when recalling the need for intentional teacher action in this process, that the basic elements of activity indicated by Leontiev are: need, object, motive, actions, goal, and operations. This is because, by understanding the need and the reason for learning, the teacher is able to direct the concrete activity and its objective. The activity can be performed through a set of actions, but one action, in isolation, does not constitute an activity. Based on this premise, the individual who does not understand the need to learn does not learn.

Thus, we can see the indispensability of giving a meaning to the actions, which can be done through the educator, by means of the activities proposed with intentional awareness in the school environment. The activity is constituted by objectification and appropriation, configuring an action directed by a humanizing motive.

Thus, the activity proposes a qualitative advance in human development, allowing us to differentiate men from animals based on their humanizing capacities, since the activity takes place according to the periodization, directly linked to psychic transformations, giving rise to new types of activity.

Humanizing literacy: the child as a subject who reads, writes and humanizes himself

It is known that the process of humanization is seen by other theories as a product of genetic inheritance. However, humanization, in this study, is configured as a process of formation of human qualities. Thus, it is understood that the Cultural Historical Theory considers the human being and humanity as a whole, so that both are products of their own history built throughout their existence.

Only through social relations with more experienced partners does it become possible for new generations to internalize and appropriate the higher psychic functions that are intrinsically human: speech, thought, control over one's own will, imagination, and the symbolic function of consciousness, which form and develop human intelligence and personality. This process - called the humanization process - is, therefore, an educational process (LEONTIEV, 1978).

It can be said that the educational process plays an important role in the humanization process of the subjects and, intentionally, through the mediator teacher, who plans the most appropriate circumstances for human development, providing, through education, the appropriation of human qualities.

For children to learn to write, it must be a natural need for them, as much as speech, since, inserted in a graphic society, they also live with writing since the early years of life. The desire to write does not arise spontaneously in children, but can be created in them by the teacher, by bringing to school the relationships with the objects of writing and mediating them, inserting them in the written culture as a natural activity as speech, which circulates in society through statements. Writing is also a language in circulation in society.

It is, therefore, a complex process. Vygotsky (2000, p. 04)³ clarifies that:

The development of written language belongs to the first and most obvious line of cultural development, since it is related to the mastery of the external system of means elaborated and structured in the process of the cultural development of humanity. However, for the external system of means to become a psychic function of the child itself, a special form of its behavior, for the written language of humanity to become the written language of the child, developmental processes are necessary [...].

As can be seen, the process of appropriation of writing by the child is long. This process is built in their social relations, through different activities that they experience to reach symbolic writing. The child goes through its culturally constructed writing history in a complex

³ Translation by Suely Amaral Mello.

and functional way, which starts with the first gestures, in the first months of its life.

For Vygotsky (1995), the appropriation of writing is a dialectical process, whose path is marked by visual signs that the child perceives, internalizes, appropriates and objectifies. He shows that the child's first visual sign is the indicative gesture, comparing it to the writing drawn in the air by the moving hand.

This is visible when the child points with his index finger or moves his hand pointing to what he wants to communicate. The objects around her begin to be signified by her with the mediation of her mother or another responsible person. As if she were writing in the air, the child expresses herself through gesture and, simultaneously, this process makes sense to her, giving her the condition to form the symbolic function of meaning of things. The emergence of scribbles and drawings is the first step in the writing process.

To Vygotsky:

By its psychological function, children's drawing is a peculiar graphic language, a graphic account of something. [...], that is, a peculiar written language. [...], the child's drawing is much more a language than a representation. [...] the child does not aspire to represent: it is much more symbolic than realistic, it is not at all concerned with exact or complete resemblance, it only wants to highlight some elements about the represented object. He wants much more to identify and designate the drawing than to reproduce the object (VYGOTSKY, 1995, p. 192, our translation).

The child initially materializes its gestures through scribbles and drawings and, in the course of these stages with the primitive writing techniques it has gone through in its pre-history of writing development, the drawing becomes a sign. These are activities that prepare her to assimilate this semiotic instrument in all its complexity (VYGOTSKY, 2000).

Vygotsky (2000, p. 186) reveals that in the prehistory of written language development,

[...] there are two moments that genetically unite gesture with the written sign. The first is represented by the doodles that the child makes. As we have seen on several occasions during our experiments, when drawing, the child often moves on to representation, he marks with gesture what he wants to represent, and the mark left by the pencil is nothing more than the complement of what he represents with gesture.

Gradually, in this evolutionary process, drawings replace scribbles, which, in turn, become signs. Therefore, when drawing a complex object, it does not register its individual properties or its particularities, but its general properties. Vygotsky (2000, p. 187) explains this phase of the prehistory of writing as follows:

[...] children's first drawings, their doodles, are much more gestures than drawings in the true sense of the word. To this same phenomenon corresponds

the fact, experimentally proven, that the child, when drawing complex objects, does not represent their parts, but their general properties (impression of the spherical form, etc.).

The drawing progresses step by step, and through it the child already delineates the characteristics of the object. He then explains his drawing to the other by means of speech, verbally expressing his intention in the drawing he has made. The language of drawing is seen as an intellectual advance for the child, who continues to form the symbolic function so necessary for the mastery of writing. For Vygotsky (2000, p. 192), children's drawing, in its psychological function, is

[...] a peculiar graphic language, a graphic report about something. The technique of the child's drawing shows, without a doubt, that it is in fact a graphic report, that is, a peculiar written language. According to C. Bühler's apt expression, the child's drawing is much more a language than a representation.

There is also another point that genetically links gesture to written language: the playing. In it, the functional use of an object through representative gesture is fundamental, and play is therefore a stage in the development of the child's prehistory of written language.

As it can be seen:

The second point that forms the genetic link between gesture and written language brings us to children's play. As we know, during play, some objects very easily come to signify others, replace them, become signs of these objects. We also know that the important thing is not the similarity between the toy and the object it designates. The most important thing is its functional use, the possibility of performing, with its help, the representative gesture. We believe that only in this lies the key to explain the whole symbolic function of play (VYGOTSKY, 2000, p. 187).

Here again, gesture is contained in the activity of playing. The symbolic function intensifies, since the substitute object doesn't need to have similarity with the one it replaces. It is the function given to the substitute object that makes the substitution possible, again, the presence of the gesture, in play, is symbolic.

Vygotsky (1995, p. 188) points out that "[...] only on the basis of indicative gestures does play acquire meaning; like the drawing which, supported at first by the gesture, becomes an independent sign".

In this sense, the written language, as a system of signs, symbolizes real objects and relations of concrete reality, although it apparently passes through speech, because the child relies on it. At the beginning of the process of appropriation of symbolic writing, the child gradually stops relying on speech to write. This implies realizing that the child's link between

written and oral language is something temporary, which is extinguished, and that writing directly symbolizes reality, with its objects and phenomena, situations and states contextualized in time and space. Without the mastery of written language, the child's development is compromised.

This clearly signals the responsibility of researchers and literacy teachers, given that writing is a cultural asset, i.e., through it the child adds knowledge and wisdom and evolves intellectually. The school, in this sense, plays an important and decisive role by placing the child in front of the play and reading of various texts, so that he/she can appropriate the writing, understanding what he/she sees, feels, elaborates, and does. Access to cultural goods helps in the reading of reality in its various aspects.

Thus, it is essential to intentionally organize the material conditions that allow the appropriation of human culture by the child, as well as to train teachers who understand the essential role of education in the humanization process.

Education should provoke in the learner the need for appropriation of the written culture, applying the main activity of each period of child development. The appropriation of written language requires the awareness of the social role it plays according to human needs. Besides providing the appropriation of culture, the written language enables communication, since it reworks thought, whose meaning is given even before the word.

Through this study and considering the reflections developed in this research based on the authors researched, we reiterate, based on what was exposed, the understanding of the reading and writing process and of the literacy process as a process of humanization of the subjects, therefore, a humanized/humanizing literacy process.

Final considerations

The objective of this research was to understand how the process of development and learning of written language by the child occurs from the Historical - Cultural Theory. To reach the proposed objective, a bibliographic research with a qualitative approach was developed. Regarding the data analysis that was built concomitantly with the theoretical considerations, it was possible to understand that during the process of creation and cultural development, the human being builds and expands the circle of his relationships, as well as the necessary propulsive environment capable of transmitting, through gestures, the way he can use writing as an instrument and cultural object. In producing human culture, man, by means of his intellectual functions, which are widely involved during the entire process of human

constitution, appropriates science, values, logic, customs, and previously pre-established habits.

Each individual humanizes himself, making use of language from social relations, under the influence of the social environment in which he lives. This whole process begins in childhood and is enhanced with the main activities according to the periodization in which the child is. These activities cause the psychological functions to be fully developed.

Speaking is learned spontaneously by the child, while writing needs to be taught to the child. In this sense, the activities through which the child appropriates the social function of language need to contemplate the living language, in movement, in its variety of texts, the discursive genres.

It is worth noting that the child attributes meaning to the object writing well before entering the early grades, in literacy. This is because it already means writing in its social experiences throughout the development of its pre-history of writing. It is known that meanings change between children and also change for each child at different psychological ages, as they construct new meanings for objects. One of the objects that change its meaning is writing itself. This depends on the way writing is presented to the child, so its teaching needs to be well planned, to make sense, with meaning as the driving force.

It is considered, therefore, that in the teaching of written language, that is, in the literacy process, the child needs to experience the gesture present in scribbles, in drawings, in games, to achieve symbolic writing. This demands creating in the child the need to read and write as something that makes sense in his daily life.

It should be noted, therefore, that it is the gestures of reading and writing, even before literacy itself, that intrinsically lead to the symbolic function, and it is the gestures of reading and writing that can enable the learning of writing. From this perspective, intentionally organized teaching aims to make writing in its social uses and functions a vital need of the child.

Thus, it is understood that the process of how the child reaches symbolic writing is complex, a cultural instrument historically built by humanity, which requires a long trajectory of appropriation by the child until it is consolidated in its functionality as a social practice.

Based on this conception and understanding that this process, when developed from these bases, can boost the development of more humanized individuals, it is important to think about the appropriation of written language since its initial phase.

The process of reading and writing appropriation in the development process of the child's higher psychic functions enables him/her to master complex ways of thinking and acting, a sine qua non condition for his/her insertion in society as a subject. At school, as the locus of the teaching of reading and writing, it is necessary to create an appropriate space for the child's

learning, which can boost his full development.

Thus, based on the premise that the development of the child's higher psychic functions is the result of their social and historical experience since birth, for teaching to contribute effectively to the appropriation of writing, it is necessary to understand how the child conceives and means the object of writing. Thus, the teacher will be able to execute an intentionally planned teaching to promote the child's development.

The contribution of the pedagogical concepts of the Historical - Cultural Theory to the process of appropriation of written language can transform both the thinking and the acting in the educational field, since it allows us to understand and explain a conception of an active human being, as well as contribute to understand how his development occurs.

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