

FOR A DISCURSIVE PRACTICE OF LITERACY: MAKING ARGUMENTS
EXPLICIT

*POR UMA PRÁTICA DISCURSIVA DE ALFABETIZAÇÃO: EXPLICITANDO
ARGUMENTOS*

*POR UNA PRÁCTICA DISCURSIVA DE LA ALFABETIZACIÓN: ARGUMENTOS
EXPLICATIVOS*



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ABSTRACT: The objective of this paper is to contribute to the explicitness of arguments that sustain a discursive practice of literacy. Taking the speeches of literacy teachers in meetings of a study group as material for analysis, we highlight some of the observations, questions and considerations shared by them, related to the work performed in the daily routine of the school. Faced with the need to find and give visibility to arguments that justify and anchor their ways of acting, we examine together the principles and assumptions that become evident in their teaching methods. In dialog with contributions from authors as Vygotsky, Bakhtin and Freinet, in the fields of human development, language, and education, we seek to evidence, in the experiences of these teachers, conceptions, implications, and repercussions of an incorporated theory.

KEYWORDS: Literacy. Discourse practice. Teaching relationships. Cultural historical perspective.

RESUMO: *O objetivo do presente texto é contribuir para a explicitação de argumentos que sustentam uma prática discursiva de alfabetização. Tomando como material de análise as falas de professoras alfabetizadoras em reuniões de um grupo de estudos, destacamos algumas das observações, indagações e ponderações por elas compartilhadas, relacionadas ao trabalho realizado no cotidiano da escola. Diante da necessidade de encontrar e dar visibilidade a argumentos que justificam e ancoram seus modos de atuação, vamos examinando em conjunto princípios e pressupostos que se evidenciam nos gestos de ensinar. Em diálogo com contribuições de autores como Vygotsky, Bakhtin e Freinet, nos campos do desenvolvimento humano, da linguagem e da educação, buscamos evidenciar, na vivência dessas professoras, concepções, implicações e repercussões de uma teoria incorporada.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Alfabetização. Prática discursiva. Relações de ensino. Perspectiva histórico-cultural.*

RESUMEN: *El objetivo del presente texto es contribuir a la explicitación de los argumentos que sustentan una práctica discursiva de la alfabetización. Tomando como material de análisis los discursos de los alfabetizadores en las reuniones de un grupo de estudio, destacamos algunas de las observaciones, preguntas y consideraciones compartidas por ellos, relacionadas con el trabajo realizado en el día a día de la escuela. Ante la necesidad de encontrar y dar visibilidad a los argumentos que justifican y anclan sus modos de actuación, examinamos juntos los principios y supuestos que se ponen de manifiesto en los gestos de la enseñanza. En diálogo con las aportaciones de autores como Vygotsky, Bakhtin e Freinet, en el ámbito del desarrollo humano, del lenguaje y de la educación, pretendemos poner de manifiesto, en la experiencia de estos profesores, las concepciones, implicaciones y repercusiones de una teoría incorporada.*

PALABRAS CLAVE: *Alfabetización. Práctica discursiva. Relaciones docentes. Perspectiva histórico-cultural.*

Introduction

Since the beginning of 2020, we have been participating in a study group with literacy teachers from public schools, which was set up to discuss pedagogical practices in the context of the pandemic and post-pandemic. This group, which has been meeting systematically for almost three years, includes professionals from various municipal networks in the metropolitan region of Campinas and research professors linked to universities in the state of São Paulo.⁴ From what is problematized in the meetings, themes for study and theoretical deepening are defined, covering questions about language and children's development, the possibilities of organizing teaching work, special and inclusive education, technologies and remote teaching, among others. One of the characteristics of the group is the search for theoretical and methodological anchoring for work in the classroom, in person or remotely, based on the contributions of Lev Vygotsky and Mikhail Bakhtin, as well as the approximations with Célestin Freinet's pedagogy.

Our work is thus part of the scope of studies that have been discussing, in recent decades, the discursive processes in children's literacy, based on the historical-cultural perspective of human development (CORAI, 2018; GERALDI, 1997; LUCIO; OLIVEIRA, 2019; GONTIJO, 2014; GOULART; GONÇALVES, 2013; GOULART; GONTIJO; FERREIRA, 2017; GOULART; GARCIA; CORAI, 2019; MORTATTI; FRADE, 2014; SMOLKA, 1988; among others). Our participation in the group, as teachers who have been working with the training of teachers for several years, provides, on the one hand, a certain “surplus vision” (BAKHTIN, 2003, p. 21) in the objectification and analysis of situations experienced. On the other hand, our action and reflection are sustained and nourished by the tireless observations and inquiries about teaching practices, which are shown in the endless forms of systematic investigation, collectively shared.

In this text, our focus will be on the speeches of two teachers, Jade and Rubi⁵, members of the study group, who took over 1st and 2nd grade classes of elementary school during the pandemic and post-pandemic period. The two teachers are pedagogues and masters in education, graduated from a public university, have approximately six years of experience as literacy teachers and have been working in a municipal education network for five years, in schools that receive children in situations of social vulnerability.

⁴ These activities became the object of investigation and became part of ongoing research projects, with the support of development agencies (FAPESP and CNPq).

⁵ Fictitious names.

The speeches of these practicing teachers in the study meetings reiterate several controversies that have crossed literacy practices for several decades. And it was their doubts, questions, hesitations, demands and convictions about the importance of a clearer and more consistent position in relation to children's literacy that led us to consider the need to explain nuances and differences between assumptions and theoretical references that anchor the pedagogical work. We chose, therefore, these speeches as the locus of problematization of the controversies with the objective of, once again, stimulating the discussion of principles and arguments that permeate the practices and questions of the teachers in the daily life of the school. In the dialogue with the professors, we sought to consider the tensions and relationships between theories and empirical evidence. What do they say about literacy work with children? What do you observe? What are you inquiring about? How have they experienced teaching relationships? Where do they find theoretical support for carrying out the pedagogical work? These questions guided the text presented here.

The pertinent inquiries of the teachers became an object of investigation in the group. Thus, in the ongoing research, we revisited the video recordings of the monthly meetings held online (Google Meet platform), with the aim of transcribing and analyzing in more detail the issues raised by them. Consistent with the theoretical framework under study, we selected some of the teachers' utterances as triggers for our analyses, taking into account the relationship of alterity and the principles of dialogy, polyphony and polysemy proposed by Bakhtin (2003).

On the discursive dimension of literacy: children's activity in focus

With the aim of pointing out some of the persistent issues that are shown in the reports and comments of the teachers, based on what has been observed in their relationships with the children, we present Rubi's speech:

Rubi: Just to give you a replica of what the children bring... This week a student of mine, she's called Katia. "Professor! Katia... Q... But my name doesn't start with Q." [...] It was out of nowhere, right? for me, out of nowhere, we weren't talking about that ... But to see this movement, that there in the class, the child is thinking about the issue of writing, about their own name, you realize that they are thinking about it... And then this association, the sound and how it is recorded, anyway... just to share that they are in this movement (...) (Research in progress, Meeting of 06-21-2022, our translation).

The teacher's comments highlight her observations about the details of the writing development and elaboration process by her students. The student's statement – who knows that her name is spelled with the letter K and claims that, despite the sound being the same, she does not use the letter Q – is taken by the teacher as an indication (GINZBURG, 1990; ABAURRE *et al.*, 1995) of the child's reflections on the writing of words while writing, on the estrangement and the discovery that, in the case of the name itself, the same sound could be spelled with different letters. We agree with Goulart when he says that

[...] the clues can reveal what we want to know about the discursive relationships that take place in classrooms for the teaching-learning of writing. This means betting on the possibility of reaching valuable insights from the flagrant uniqueness of a given evidence, rich moments of abductive inferences triggered by it (GOULART, 2019, p. 31, our translation).

This comment by the teacher, about the child's elaboration about the phoneme-grapheme relationship in writing his own name, explains the *epilinguistic activity* - that is, the movement that the child performs in relation to the language in use, which becomes an object of knowledge - and which focuses on structural aspects of written language:

We call epilinguistic activity this practice that operates on language itself, compares expressions, transforms them, experiments with new modes of construction, canonical or not, plays with language, invests linguistic forms with new meanings (FRANCHI, 1991, p. 36, our translation).

The constant and attentive observation of the children's gestures in their efforts to elaborate the written form of language, in different moments of the school routine, evidences, for the teachers, the multiplicity of paths and relationships that are realized and established in the day to day from the classroom. Constant attention to children's efforts is in line with what has been emphasized in studies by Goulart (2017), reiterating the conception of language as a constitutive activity (FRANCHI, 1992; BAKHTIN, 2003; VYGOTSKY, 2001): “the alphabetic system is learned in an enunciative context; linguistic “awareness” is not a precondition for reading and writing, but develops in the midst of meaningful activities” (GOULART, 2017, p. 33). Learning the written form of language through movements of appropriation and production of texts takes place, therefore, in an intense and laborious symbolic work, as perceived by the teacher:

Rubi: He started writing “Once upon a time” (EUMA). On the “time” he asked me how I wrote [...] What caught my attention is the time it takes the

child to write a sentence... “Once upon a time there was a guy”. He stayed there, I think it was about 15 minutes, I have to resume the recording. And when he says: " Professor, I'll continue later", it seemed like that, he was tired too, it demanded a lot from him (Research in progress, Meeting on 06-21-2022, our translation).

It is worth mentioning here the observation, listening, attentive waiting and support of the teacher in the production of the student in the initial literacy process in the free text notebook, introduced to children at the beginning of the school year, as we can see below:

Rubi: I'm producing a collective story... So, there's space for them to produce alone, in the free text notebook, and then the story proposal came up for them to create together. First, I made the skeleton with them, choosing the characters where the story took place, and now we are in the writing part [...]. Then one of the students asked: “ Teacher, can our story rhyme?” I said: “Look, it could be! It's a challenge! So, let's go!” [...] At the time of production, the dog, which was one of the characters, was covered in mud, we wanted to say that he was on the street, and we were looking for a rhyme for the word mud... And I: “Wow, guys, let's think, what rhymes with mud?” Then one of the students said: “ Teacher, Google words that rhyme with mud”. I thought it was such a gem, this, like... this strategy that she (suggested). Then, that's what I did: “Ah! good idea!” [...] The story is about Cinderella the cat, Caramelo the dog and the yellow butterfly... Then I read it to them, and the street where the dog lives is Pindorama street. (Research in progress, Meeting of 21-06-2022, our translation).

It is interesting to think about how working with rhymes and alliteration, which has been proposed as a didactic resource in all literacy programs (PROFA, LER E ESCREVER, PNAIC, etc.), with the aim of leading children to recognize the sound chain of words, it gains a new dimension, made possible by the availability of technological instruments in the classroom and by the suggestion, embraced by the teacher, of one of the children in the class.

From a precondition for literacy, rhymes become an object of investigation, in a process shared visually and aurally by the use of the digital whiteboard, as an aid in the composition of collective history. In the dynamics of text production, then, what can be highlighted? The concern with the creation of the story, with the consistency of the text being produced, with the sound and the search for rhyming words, the attention to the words being written by the teacher on the blackboard, the technological resource in use, the activity that condenses a plurality of movements and processes, all at the same time, implied in the primacy of meaning, the meaning of the activity and the meaning of the text.

However, if we can follow and appreciate the movements involved in the teacher's teaching gestures in the production of the text with the children, the questioning of the issues

does not stop there. In academic production and in dialogues on literacy, polemics and controversies are relocated and persist. And this is how the doubts emerge again:

Ruby : I watched a live show about approximations and distances between Vygotsky and Freinet and there I was talking about Freinet's techniques, *Texto Livre*, *Livro da Vida*, about this writing with meaning. And in the chat the question of syllables came up... and the [speaker] was very categorical, saying no, you don't need to talk about syllables, you don't need to, it won't be missed. That's when I asked myself some questions...

Even in the collective writing of a text with meaning, there, in the *Book of Life*, in the writing of the word, we go by the syllable, and I realize when we are there in the free text, the child, when he is going to write, he will be speaking the syllables aloud, to register. [...] I notice this movement of the children, of oralizing out loud and even though I haven't talked about syllables with them yet [...] the children too, to write, they oralize and register, I perceive this movement of them (Research in progress, Meeting of 06-21-2022, our translation).

When commenting on the live broadcast, the teacher's questioning echoes the criticism of syllabic literacy methods. The issue of teaching syllables or not is highlighted, as she admits that, even without having spoken about it, she observes children syllables when writing. The problem that arises is about the need, pertinence or possibility of naming and working with (the concept of) the syllable in the literacy process.

Therefore, it is important to know and explain the arguments that can support the pedagogical practice. If the literacy teacher's experience indicates this *mark* in the children's activity – “and then this issue of the child speaking aloud, to mark it later, this is very present.”; “in almost all children I observe this movement” – where does she find theoretical support to guide her action? There are many researchers who address the subject. Some argue that this sensitivity to syllables seems to be universal, as pointed out by Magda Soares (2016). In fact, it is present in children's games from a very early age, in several languages.

What is the difference between naming and drawing children's attention to the elements of writing (letter, word, syllable, sentence) and alphabetizing using the phonic method or the syllabic method? Between the proposal of a “syllabic method”, the categorical statement that teaching syllables is not necessary or should not be carried out, and the teacher's observation of the children's gestures and her own experience in the elaboration of a collective text with the class, what to do? Where to anchor the literacy pedagogical work? What are the knowledge and arguments that find “empirical proof”, that is, that are “evidenced” in the teacher's didactic experience related to the children's experience of the language? As Friar warns us:

The way in which consciousness phonological is worked on is what will determine whether we are returning to an approach of methods phonics that focused on isolated sounds or if we are advancing in meta-analysis strategies on how writing works in the relationship between sounds and letters.

If work with phonological awareness has centered on the artificial “emission” of phonemes and its oral training has been considered a prerequisite for learning to read, surely this type of work can be a return to a limited phonic method. If phonological awareness has been thought of as a factor that helps in metalinguistic analysis – for reading and writing words – we are taking a step forward, basing the literacy process on reflective actions that favor learning how the writing system works (FRADE, 2022, p. 3, our translation).

Countless studies in the field of language studies on the initial process of appropriating writing with hearing and Portuguese-speaking children problematize the relationship between speech and writing (CAGLIARI, 1989, 1998; GOULART; GONÇALVES, 2013; COUDRY, 2021; MOUTINHO, 2021). In fact, there is no identity relationship between speech and writing. Although related, the two modalities of language use maintain specificities and differences linked to their functioning and use. Speaking and writing are equally complex, there are written texts that are closer to conversational speech and spoken texts closer to formal writing.

Among language studies, Abaurre (2001, our translation) proposes to discuss the nature of this relationship and states that:

Examining the first texts written by pre-school and first-year elementary school students allows us to identify a set of data that may prove to be important for discussing the relationship between the acquisition of the alphabetic system and phonological (meta-)awareness, particularly with regard to children's knowledge of the internal phonological structure of the syllable and the existing hierarchy between its constituents (ABAURRE, 2001, p. 63-64, emphasis in the original, our translation).

Thus, it is not a question of teaching letters, syllables and syllabic “families” decontextualized and isolated, assuming that the meaning of writing is something that is produced a posteriori and that only after mastering letters and syllables can the child build words and *texts* – as proposed by the syllabic and phonetic methods. The assumption of this linear logic, which goes from the apparently simplest to the most complex, assumes that the child's learning occurs through the association and repetition of elements and that the child's language activity may initially be *meaningless*. On the contrary, it is about drawing the child's attention to the rhythm, segmentation and prosody of speech, which can help him to recognize and compare alliterations, rhymes and regularities present in oral and written records.

According to several studies carried out in the Discursive Neurolinguistics approach (COUDRY, 2021), the child's entry into the “world of letters” takes place through speech, reading and writing. In a critical analysis of the pedagogical procedures proposed by the phonic method, based on a conception of writing as the recording of speech sounds through graphic signs, Moutinho (2021) problematizes the so-called “Boquinhas method”:

At the beginning of the literacy process, the child takes speech as a support to write. A child who tries to carry out this activity, supported by his own speech, may have several doubts: firstly, the image showing the mouth does not seem to correspond to what occurs with the phenomenon of vowel raising at the end of words in several varieties of Brazilian Portuguese, such as we see in “egg” and “elephant”. Children often write “ovu” for “ovo” or “elefanti” for “elefante”. If she follows the instruction given for positioning her mouth, she will reproduce artificial speech, probably non-existent in her variety (MOUTINHO, 2021, p. 260-261, our translation).

The development of phonological (meta)awareness, pointed out by Abaurre, encompasses reflection and the possibility of manipulating speech sounds, in real situations of oral and written language use, and does not need to be reduced to teaching the systematic relationship between graphemes and phonemes, the coding and decoding of phonemes, the segmentation of words and the exaggerated emphasis on the highlighted phoneme, as described by Moutinho:

the activities involve the memorization of biunivocal pairs of letters and phonemes from the sound values that appear in the phonological framework of Brazilian Portuguese and, generally, involve texts written for this purpose or phrases and words decontextualized [...] the tasks of this method involve a series of precarious sonorizations, separated from any significant language situation (MOUTINHO, 2021, p. 260-278, our translation).

The development of phonological awareness is, therefore, just one of the dimensions that integrate the set of linguistic, epilinguistic and metalinguistic activities, remembering that all “occur in any type of actions (with language, about language and language), but represent different levels of reflection” (GERALDI, 1997, p. 20, our translation). Thus, when we assume a historical-cultural perspective, we can see how these dimensions of activity with language, of language and about language are part of the enunciative-discursive dynamics (BAKHTIN, 2003; GOULART, 2019) and prove to be constitutive both of the subjects in interaction and language itself as a human production.

The teachers' observations reiterate that at the beginning of literacy, children use speech as a support for writing, through spelling, adjusting speech to reading. However, as Abaurre argues, children in the initial literacy phase “do not write as they speak”, “it is possible to identify from an early age the incorporation of conventional aspects, which can only be explained by the strong social appeal of reading and writing activities” (ABAURRE, 1988, p. 137, our translation).

The complexity, specificities and contributions of linguistic studies are evident here. Thinking about these activities – linguistics, epilinguistics, metalinguistics – through the prism of language *experience* (VYGOTSKY, 1997, 2018) and pedagogical work implies considering them in an interconstitutive dimension, in a way that the word “syllable”, or the word “word”, or the word “letter”, already become and act as historical and cultural elements/instruments/signs that mediate the modes of appropriation and elaboration of the written form of language itself in significant discursive practices.

In terms of the development process, it is also worth highlighting how the exercise of these linguistic, epilinguistic and metalinguistic activities, mediated by intentional pedagogical practices, can lead the child to pay greater attention to speech characteristics that gain relevance with the explanation of speech characteristics. writing, as follows:

Jade: There are different motives in each activity. For example, when I propose free text there, it is not my goal that the child write conventionally. My goal is for her to write, for her to organize her thoughts, for her to lose this fear of writing, right? [...] I'm doing the news moment, every Monday we draw a colleague and if he wants to, he has something to tell, he does and we record it on the blackboard. [...] The objective is to register, put the date first, then sort of organize the colleague's speech. [...] There are moments within the planning that you choose to give this information to the children. It's how I see it today, how I've been able to work today (Research in progress, Meeting on 05-24-2022, our translation).

Meaningful writing appears as a hallmark of the pedagogical work of the two literacy teachers. Whether in the Collective Text, the Book of Life, or the Free Text, instruments proposed by Freinet Pedagogy (FREINET, 1975), priority is given to the social function of writing, as also defended by Vygotsky (1995, 2001).

We can thus see how the ontogenetic dimension is affected, impregnated by history and culture. In this perspective, it is understood that the process of appropriation of writing integrates cultural development as a whole and is not reduced to cerebral, neural, organic processes (so emphasized by contemporary neuroscience studies); but it takes place in

sociogenesis, in the historical-cultural process of humanity (VYGOTSKY, 1995). Vygotsky's hypothesis, supported by studies by Luria (1979) on brain plasticity and the complex dynamics of higher functions, assumes that the *sign*, a psychological instrument produced in interpersonal relationships, constitutes and transforms mental activity, generating new psychic formations, specifically human. In this sense, the appropriation of writing (human production, new formation in history) by the child enhances and resizes their psychic functioning. This historical, relational, constitutive dimension of language is a mark in the discursive perspective of literacy (SMOLKA, 1988).

About the conditions for carrying out the work and the arguments that support the practice

Jade: You talked about the training issue, what knowledge do we have of the language [...] We started to reflect: we need training to discuss literacy at this time (of the pandemic) many children with delay... The OP suggested that we go back to Emília Ferreiro's theory, because it is still a theory that allows us to understand how the child builds [...] that it was not to take the method out of this theory, but I think it goes beyond that, but I said that we need to move forward. There are teachers at the school who work with other perspectives... if we were to choose Emilia Ferreiro, we would already be choosing a path, but then I took one: "Look, the university's speech is beautiful, but we need to see in practice". I was quiet. [...] then she arranged training with a retired teacher from the network, and we saw that the perspective was very much along those lines. [...] Several of us were uncomfortable with her speech. [...] if that's not what it is then? We came to the conclusion that instead of calling an outside person... let's look at our work.

Rubi: I don't know if this [probe] is really prescribed or if it was set up automatically by the school... somewhere it says it has to be like this, to fill out the descriptive form, we carry out the survey, everyone knows how to do it, it's quick and easy...

Jade: I use the survey because [...] it's one more instrument for you to follow the child, but it shouldn't be the only one... The survey doesn't say about every child, I went to do the survey this May with a student of mine who was already writing a very nice text... already syllabic-alphabetical, and he went to do the survey and I looked at that survey and said this one is not the [student], this is not his production... so like, that's what's difficult... when [OP] said that, about the issue that the university has a lot of discourse... because she knows where I'm talking about, she knows me, she knows where I'm from I come... and I didn't know how to argue... (Research in progress, Meeting of 05-24-2022, our translation).

In this part of the conversation, the teachers refer to constructivism, a perspective that since the 1980s has been hegemonic in educational systems. Numerous works have critically analyzed this perspective and its modes of penetration in the Brazilian educational field (such as GONTIJO, 2014; MORTATTI; FRADE, 2014; DE OLIVEIRA; DELMONDES, 2019). At the same time, other perspectives with other theoretical references were also elaborated, but they did not gain the same strength or repercussions as constructivism. In the teaching network in which these teachers work, there is no officially assumed option – either through constructivism or through the phonic method, as proposed by the National Literacy Plan (PNA/2019). However, elementary school teachers survey and classify students according to the hypotheses described by Emília Ferreiro (pre-syllabic, syllabic, alphabetic).

The doubt about the prescription regarding the survey in the municipal education network leads to the consultation of the Curriculum Guidelines and to the realization that in the current document, prepared by a team of teachers from the same network and published in 2012, there is also no reference to the works of Emília Ferreiro or Piaget, not even mention of this type of survey.

[At] each beginning of the year, the teachers of each cycle define, collectively, a set of activities that function as evaluation instruments according to criteria and survey objectives, aiming at teaching planning. Such activities should make it possible to get to know real students, those with whom teachers meet on a daily basis (RMC Guidelines, 2012, p. 39, our translation).

But, even if it is not officially prescribed, there is an unofficial, unwritten prescription that says how professionals should act, which is assumed by most to be “natural” (CLOT, 2010). So much so that, when thinking about a training proposal for the collective of teachers, the pedagogical advisor of one of the teachers proposes precisely a training that is based on the constructivist proposal. When Jade reacts negatively to this suggestion, she listens to the old, but still current, clash between theory and practice.

It is interesting to note that it is precisely from the place of practice that the teachers seek theoretical support to support their position:

Jade: [...] in the face of all the difficulties, what path do we follow, what perspective do we take? So maybe help us to look at what we do and be able to argue... which I said is still a difficulty for me, right, to be able to argue within the collective work group at school, (about) another practice (Survey in progress, Meeting on 6/3/22, our translation).

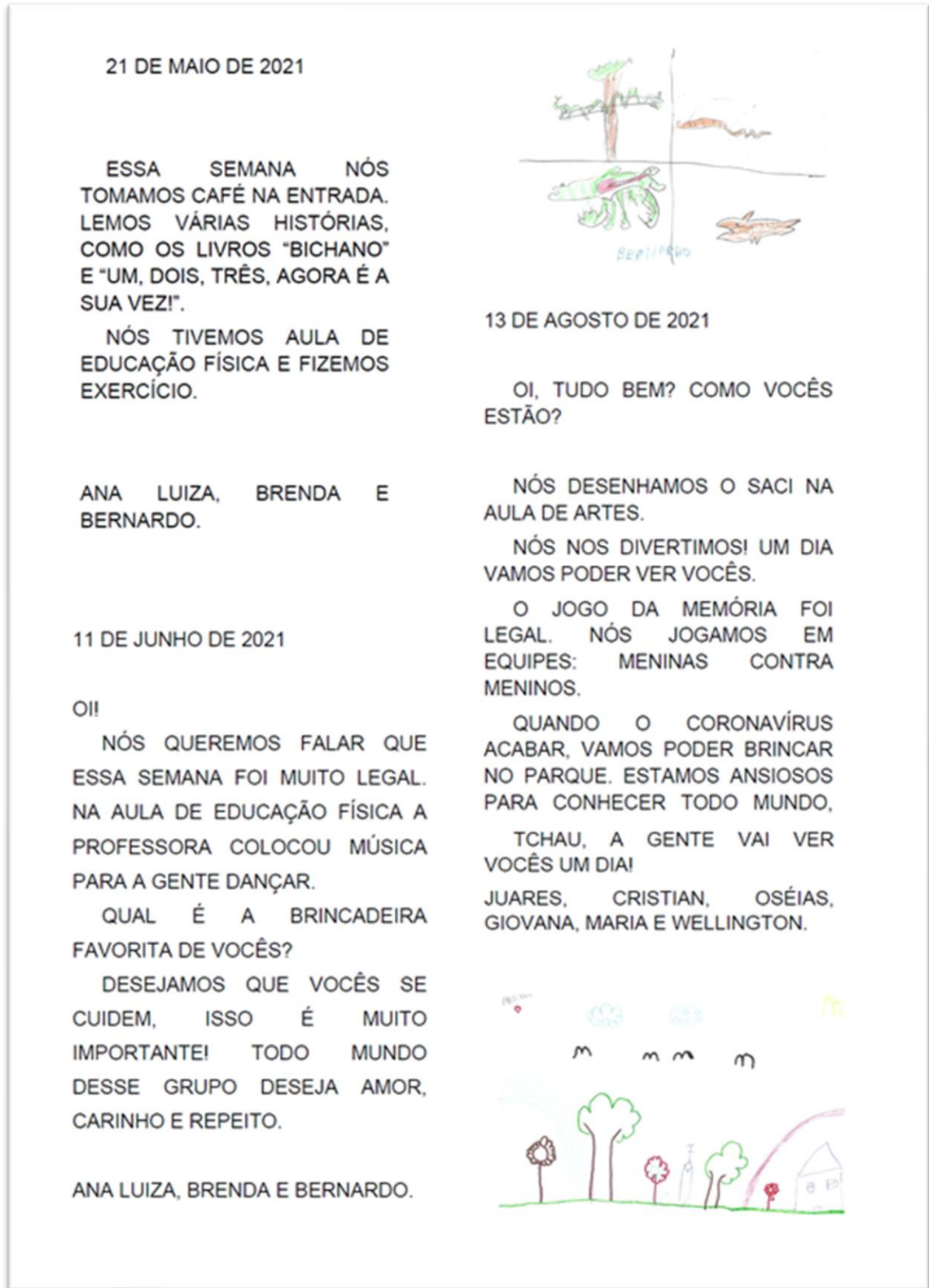
This question of the difficulty of argumentation came up several times in our meetings. On several occasions, the teachers reported that they felt they had no arguments to defend the work they do. However, we see that Jade criticizes Ferreiro's research methodology and indicates taking a different position from the one being proposed. His voice, however, is not accepted by the group and ends up being silenced. The question that emerges, then, seems to be: do the teachers have no arguments or do they not find space to argue?

If the teachers find in the children's first writing attempts, in the production of the free text, the hypotheses listed by Ferreiro, they are clear that they cannot transform such hypotheses into a teaching method and talk about the limits of the survey in relation to the production children's texts. They admit that since the beginning of the literacy process, children bring in writing the marks of prosody, of what they can perceive in orality, of the identifiable sounds in the language, of the spelling they already know, in the movement of language in operation and in the production of meaningful texts. The children look for the words available in the room, copy texts from books, ask how to write correctly... The close observation of the children made by the teachers shows *everything* that is involved in the literacy process, its regularities and its singularities. Why, then, the difficulty in arguing? With whom do you argue and what becomes the object of controversy?

It is in the sense of considering the elaboration of possible arguments that can more clearly substantiate a discursive practice of literacy that we dialogue with the teachers, seeking, from our *exotopic place*, to explain the support and power of the work that they already carry out. We bring as an example the report of Jade, on returning to face-to-face classes:

Jade: Since we went back to face-to-face classes, as we divided the class (...) into two groups, (...) I wanted to think about how they could have contact with other colleagues who weren't going in the same week as them, and build, in some way, a bond. So, I started... I proposed to them, at the beginning, in May... That we make a record of what we did throughout the week for the next colleagues to read. So, we started to make this collective record, I on the blackboard, they would give ideas... and I always proposed that they... oh, do you want to make a drawing? So that other colleagues can see, get to know a little about you... and then we started to do this movement, each group that came in the week, we made a record, they made a drawing, it could be something that something happened that week, something they wanted to share, and then, the next week I read it to the other group, showed them the drawings... and it started to have... a conversation between the groups of the same class (Research in progress, June-2021 meeting).

Figure 1 – Record of correspondence between children



Source: Researchers' database

In the difficult conditions of returning to face-to-face classes, in 2021, which determined the division of the 1st grade class into two groups of children who took turns weekly in the classroom, the teacher created a real situation of communication between the groups, thinking in mobilizing interaction and knowledge between them. For that, writing was used as a record of history, of what was experienced, as a way of interacting and communicating with someone who was absent. This interlocution process enabled changes in the children's ways of saying, ways of appropriating resources and ideas from each other and ways of joint reflection; mobilization of memory, imagination, emotions, as well as the elaboration of projects for the future: “when the pandemic passes...”. The teacher intermediated, via writing, the relationships between the children, who, when they came to form a single group, already knew each other in some way through correspondence.

In the case of the two teachers in dialogue, what is evident and available to support the argument about the pedagogical practice being carried out? Proposals like these narrated by the teachers allow us to glimpse the marks of the theory incorporated in the work they already carry out. If the teachers already show the experience of theory in practice, they now see the importance and the need to deepen the foundation and demand from themselves the consistency and explanation of the arguments about this practice, about the principles and implications of the assumed conceptions (from human development, language development, pedagogical work, teaching relationships), on the *praxis* related to the discursive perspective of children's literacy. The reports thus show the strength of the *experience* (VYGOTSKY, 2018) in the practice of literacy, which becomes constitutive of the argument itself and which, dialectically and intrinsically, is also supported by it.

Final remarks

The teachers' speeches brought up for discussion issues and controversies that persist or are replaced in the face of prescriptions and numerous academic studies on the literacy process of children.

In the conflict of trends and debates, the need and urgency emerge to investigate the arguments that support a discursive practice of literacy, which has been criticized as unsystematic and ineffective, “without method” and lacking in “scientific evidence”.

However, the teachers' practice highlights the importance of attentive and systematic observation of each child, as well as the careful organization of the pedagogical work, supported by the fundamentals of the historical-cultural perspective of human development, which implies the sociogenesis of higher psychological functions. Knowing and assuming the theoretical perspective makes a difference in teaching relationships.

We also highlight the relevance of knowledge from language studies – for example, the characterization of linguistic, epilinguistic and metalinguistic activity – as well as the considerations of Discursive Neurolinguistics, which can contribute to the teacher's perspective in observing the child's activity and in the orientation of actions in the literacy process.

Teaching children to read and write in the (tra)dictions of contemporary times leads us to (re)put the social function of the school in perspective. Concrete changing conditions in human history – for example, the pandemic, technology – provoke *new formations* (VYGOTSKY, 1995, 2018) in the collective and individual dimensions, instigate the creation of the new, demand involvement and persistence in teaching work.

This work often involves confrontation between peers about different ways of acting. In the case of literacy teachers, participation in the study group, in which there is a sharing of everyday experiences, combined with a theoretical reflection on practice, has inspired the carrying out of the teaching activity and fostered professional development. Here we see the strength of the collective at work in the individual, increasing the power to act (CLOT, 2010). The production of this analysis is inserted in the context of this collective and is justified in order to strengthen it.

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