

THE CHILD AS AUTHOR: CHILDREN'S NARRATIVES AND CREATIVE WRITING IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A CRIANÇA AUTORA: NARRATIVAS INFANTIS E ESCRITA CRIATIVA NA ESCOLA PÚBLICA

EL NIÑO COMO AUTOR: NARRATIVAS INFANTILES Y ESCRITURA CREATIVA EN LAS ESCUELAS PÚBLICAS



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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes creative writing practices developed in public school contexts, understanding them as possibilities for the constitution of children as authors of their own experiences. The study adopts a theoretical-analytical approach grounded in the systematization of teaching experiences (Jara, 2006), articulated with pedagogical records and reflections from everyday school life. The theoretical framework draws on Freire's critical pedagogy, Bakhtin's dialogical perspective, Benjamin's reflections on childhood and experience, and Soares' literacy studies. The analysis highlights tensions between normative school practices and proposals that value children's lived experiences, indicating that writing, when connected to these experiences, fosters authorship, expression, and meaning-making. The study concludes that recognizing children as subjects of language requires shifting writing from an instrumental task to a space of creation, interpretation, and social participation.

Keywords: Creative Writing. Childhood. Literacy. Narrative. Public School.

RESUMO

Este artigo analisa práticas de escrita criativa desenvolvidas no contexto da escola pública, compreendendo-as como possibilidades de constituição da criança enquanto autora de suas experiências. O texto assume caráter teórico-analítico, ancorado na sistematização de experiências docentes, conforme perspectiva de Jara (2006), articulada a registros pedagógicos e reflexões produzidas no cotidiano escolar. O referencial teórico dialoga com a pedagogia crítica de Freire, a perspectiva dialógica de Bakhtin, as reflexões de Benjamin sobre infância e experiência e os estudos do letramento de Soares. A análise evidencia tensões entre práticas escolares normativas e propostas que valorizam a experiência infantil, indicando que a escrita, quando vinculada às vivências das crianças, favorece processos de autoria, expressão e produção de sentidos. Conclui-se que reconhecer a criança como

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sujeito de linguagem implica deslocar a escrita de um lugar instrumental para um espaço de criação, interpretação e participação social.

Palavras-chave: Escrita Criativa. Infância. Letramento. Narrativa. Escola Pública.

RESUMEN

Este artículo analiza las prácticas de escritura creativa desarrolladas en el contexto de las escuelas públicas, entendiéndolas como posibilidades para la constitución del niño como autor de sus propias experiencias. El texto adopta un carácter teórico-analítico, anclado en la sistematización de las experiencias docentes, según la perspectiva de Jara (2006), articulada con registros pedagógicos y reflexiones producidas en la vida cotidiana de la escuela. El marco teórico dialoga con la pedagogía crítica de Freire, la perspectiva dialógica de Bajtín, las reflexiones de Benjamin sobre la infancia y la experiencia, y los estudios de alfabetización de Soares. El análisis revela tensiones entre las prácticas escolares normativas y las propuestas que valoran la experiencia infantil, indicando que la escritura, cuando se vincula a las experiencias de los niños, favorece los procesos de autoría, expresión y construcción de significado. Concluye que reconocer al niño como sujeto del lenguaje implica trasladar la escritura de un lugar instrumental a un espacio de creación, interpretación y participación social.

Palabras clave: Escritura Creativa. Infancia. Alfabetización. Narrativa. Escuela Pública.

1 INTRODUCTION

Written production in public schools, especially in the classes of the early years of elementary school, has been configured, in pedagogical practice, as a field tensioned between school demands and the concrete experiences of children. From the systematization of teachers' experiences in a public school located in an urban context, it is observed the recurrence of situations in which writing is experienced by students as a normative task, often associated with the fulfillment of formal requirements, such as text extension, structural organization and linguistic correction.

The pedagogical records produced throughout the teaching practice show that, in the face of proposals for textual production, statements such as "how many lines do you need to have?", "does it have to be long?" or "can I write little?", are common, indicating a relationship with written language guided more by external demands than by the construction of meanings. Such manifestations, far from expressing simple disinterest, reveal ways of appropriating language mediated by school practices that do not always dialogue with children's experiences and repertoires.

At the same time, other situations present in the school daily life point to significant displacements when writing is proposed in articulation with students' daily experiences, memories, territories and interests. In these circumstances, greater engagement, expansion of participation and emergence of more authorial narratives are perceived, in which children mobilize elements of their social, cultural and affective life.

The systematized teaching experiences allow us to problematize the understanding of school writing as a homogeneous practice, indicating that its meaning depends, to a large extent, on the conditions of production and the pedagogical mediations that sustain it. From this perspective, resistance to writing can be interpreted not as an individual incapacity or demotivation, but as an effect of decontextualized practices that restrict language to an instrumental use.

In view of this scenario, this article proposes to analyze creative writing practices developed in the daily life of classes in the early years, understanding them as possibilities for the constitution of the child as the author of their own narratives. The study, based on the systematization of experiences and reflections produced in school practice, contributes to the pedagogical debate without intending statistical generalizations. From a theoretical-analytical approach, it seeks to show how proposals that value the children's experience can favor processes of authorship, expression and construction of meanings in the school space.

2 CHILDHOOD, LANGUAGE AND EXPERIENCE: THEORETICAL BASES

From pedagogical experiences recorded with classes of the early years in public schools, normative conceptions of writing are tensioned, valuing its power as a practice of meaning in the children's experience.

In this sense, Freire's (1987) contribution is fundamental in stating that the reading of the world precedes the reading of the word. Such a formulation allows us to understand that the act of writing does not begin in the domain of the code, but in the relationship that the subjects establish with their reality. Pedagogical records show that, when written language distances itself from children's experiences, it tends to be perceived as a mechanical activity; on the other hand, when it approaches their life contexts, its meaning expands.

In dialogue with this understanding, Bakhtin (1997) understands language as an essentially dialogical phenomenon, constituted in the interaction between subjects and crossed by multiple social voices. The practices observed in the school daily life show that children's writing cannot be understood as an isolated production, but as a situated enunciation.

Benjamin's (2002) reflections on childhood contribute by evidencing the inventive and creative character of children. When observing pedagogical practices in which writing is articulated with playfulness and imagination, it is perceived that they mobilize expressive resources that escape traditional school models.

In the field of literacy studies, Soares (1998), in dialogue with Kleiman (1995) and Street (1984), highlights that writing should be understood as a social practice, which implies considering not only its technical dimension, but also its uses, functions and meanings. From this perspective, literacies are multiple and crossed by power and cultural relations.

The pedagogical experiences examined indicate that, when inserted in significant literacy practices, children become more actively engaged, appropriating writing as a form of expression and social participation, as Barton and Hamilton (1998) also point out when discussing everyday literacies.

Articulating these references, it is understood that creative writing can constitute a space of mediation between experience, language and identity.

3 METHODOLOGICAL PATHS

The present study is part of the field of qualitative approaches and is configured as a theoretical-analytical essay, based on the systematization of teaching experiences, as proposed by Jara (2006).

It is based on the understanding that the school daily life constitutes a legitimate space for the production of knowledge, and it is possible, from its critical analysis, to construct interpretations of educational processes.

The analytical corpus is composed of pedagogical records, reflective notes and textual productions developed in creative writing practices, taken as materialities that allow problematizing the relationship of children with written language.

The study is guided by an interpretative perspective of thematic inspiration, seeking to identify recurrences, tensions and meanings produced in the observed practices, in dialogue with the theoretical framework.

4 BETWEEN RESISTANCE AND POSSIBILITY: MEANINGS OF WRITING

The records produced in the school daily life show that the children's relationship with writing is marked by ambivalence, expressed in different situations experienced at school. In more traditional proposals, centered on the reproduction of models or the fulfillment of formal criteria, recurrent manifestations of resistance emerge, often associated with fatigue, difficulty and little identification with the activity.

Such statements, when analyzed in the light of Bakhtin (1997), can be understood as social voices that express not only individual perceptions, but shared experiences within historically constituted school practices. As Possenti (2012) argues, the learning of writing is not effective through decontextualized exercises, but in significant practices of language use, which helps to explain the resistances observed when writing is proposed in a mechanical way and disconnected from experience. In this way, resistance to writing reveals tensions between different conceptions of language: on the one hand, a normative and instrumental perspective; on the other, the possibility of writing as a practice of expression and production of meanings.

On the other hand, different episodes observed indicate that, when writing is proposed based on significant experiences — such as memories, daily experiences or topics of interest to students — there is a shift in the way students relate to the activity. In these circumstances, there is greater involvement, increased dedication time, and greater complexity in productions.

This change can be understood, in the light of Freire (1987), as a result of the approximation between language and experience, to the extent that subjects begin to write from their reading of the world. Thus, writing is no longer perceived as an imposed task and becomes a significant practice.

5 CREATIVE WRITING AND NARRATIVE PRODUCTION

The systematization of pedagogical experiences indicates that creative writing, when incorporated into school practices, can favor processes of authorship and student engagement.

The records analyzed reveal that the textual productions present elements such as repetition, rhythm, rhyme and a strong presence of orality, which evidences a process of appropriation of written language still under construction, but deeply significant. Instead of being interpreted as flaws, such characteristics can be understood, according to Soares (1998), Kleiman (1995) and Tfouni (1995), as a constitutive part of literacy practices.

In this context, creative writing is configured as a practice that expands the possibilities of expression, allowing children to experiment with different ways of saying the world. The thematic diversity present in the productions reinforces the idea that the text gains meaning when linked to experience.

In addition, the incorporation of playful practices in the writing process contributes to displacing the activity from a strictly normative place to a space of creation. In dialogue with Benjamin (2002), it is possible to understand this movement as an expression of the inventive character of childhood.

6 WRITING, IDENTITY AND SOCIAL CRITICISM

The productions examined indicate that children's writing can be constituted as a space for identity construction and critical elaboration of reality. The narratives produced by the children reveal perceptions about everyday life, social relationships and life experiences, indicating that the text operates as a form of interpretation of the world.

In dialogue with Freire (1987), it can be stated that such productions are configured as expressions of the reading of the world carried out by the subjects, showing that writing is not restricted to linguistic codification, but involves processes of signification and positioning.

The monitored practices indicate that, when inserted in pedagogical proposals that value their experiences, children begin to recognize themselves as authors, assuming a more active position in the production of knowledge. This movement contributes to the strengthening of self-esteem, belonging, and participation.

In addition, the presence of themes related to inequalities, daily challenges and social relations points to the critical dimension of children's writing. Although expressed in an initial way, such narratives reveal the children's ability to reflect on the world in which they live, articulating language and experience.

7 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The present study showed that creative writing practices, when articulated with children's experiences, can favor significant processes of authorship, expression and production of meanings in the school context.

The pedagogical records allowed us to understand that resistance to writing should not be interpreted as an individual disability, but as an effect of decontextualized practices that limit language to an instrumental use.

On the contrary, when writing approaches the students' experiences, a shift in its meaning is observed, becoming a space for creation, interpretation and social participation.

As a limitation, it is highlighted that the analysis is anchored in experiences situated in the school routine, not having as its objective the generalization of the results, but the problematization of practices and meanings.

Even so, the study contributes to the educational field by reinforcing the importance of pedagogical practices that recognize children as subjects of language, capable of narrating, interpreting and transforming the world in which they live.

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