

REVIEW

The child between spoken and written: acquisition of language and the use of language

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ABSTRACT

The roundtable reviewed here deals with children and the use of language, more specifically with speech, writing and their relations in language acquisition. Each of the three participants approaches this theme based on their own theoretical perspective: a linguistic-discursive approach (Lourenço Chacon), a linguistic-enunciative approach (Marlete Sandra Diedrich) and a linguistic-functionalist approach (Gabriela Maria de Oliveira-Codinhoto). Given the unique path that each participant takes to reflect on the subject, there is, in all researches, a theoretical and methodological commitment to the study of language acquisition. Such a commitment is proven at the time of data analysis and discussion, which configures each of the works presented as a relevant contribution to the studies on the use of language in the constitution of the child as a speaker and as a writer.



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RESUMO

A mesa redonda aqui resenhada trata da criança e do uso da língua, mais especificamente da fala, da escrita e de suas relações na aquisição da linguagem. Cada um dos três participantes aborda esse tema com base em uma perspectiva teórica própria: uma abordagem linguística-discursiva (Lourenço Chacon), uma abordagem linguístico-enunciativa (Marlete Sandra Diedrich) e uma abordagem linguístico-funcionalista (Gabriela Maria de Oliveira-Codinhoto). Dado o percurso singular que cada participante trilha para refletir acerca do assunto, constata-se, em todas as pesquisas, um compromisso teórico e metodológico com o estudo da aquisição da linguagem. Tal compromisso se comprova no momento da análise e da

discussão dos dados, o que configura cada um dos trabalhos apresentados como uma relevante contribuição para os estudos acerca do uso da língua na constituição da criança como falante e como escrevente.

KEYWORDS

Acquisicion. Speaking. Writing.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Aquisição. Fala. Escrita.

The roundtable entitled *The child and the use of language - speaking, writing and their relationship in language acquisition*, held on July 17th, 2020, is part of the program of the event Abralin Ao Vivo - Linguists Online, of the Brazilian Association of Linguistics (Abralin). Counting on a mediation done by Giovane Fernandes Oliveira (UFRGS), the participants on the table are the linguists Lourenço Chacon (Unesp), Marlete Sandra Diedrich (UPF) and Gabriela Maria de Oliveira-Codinhoto (UFAC). From different theoretical perspectives, the participants research speech, writing and their relations in language acquisition. The empirical materials and thematic clippings presented by each participant are different from each other; however, it is possible to perceive a convergent point: it is the investigative movement in order to understand the constitution of the child as a speaker and also as a writer in his mother tongue.

Lourenço Chacon's exhibition is entitled *The relation speech/writing in children's writing*. Initially, Chacon presents two points of view for speech and writing: the empirical - in which speech and writing are phenomena of human existence - and the scientific - in which speech and writing are objects of knowledge. As objects of knowledge, Chacon clarifies that speech and writing are concepts constructed from different perspectives of scientific observation. Thus, the perspective assumed by Chacon is that speaking and writing are two modes of production and attribution of meaning, which are constructed based on different semioses. Such production and attribution of meanings take place under different articulations between language and discursive practices; therefore, the approach that shapes all this reflection is characterized as linguistic-discursive. In this approach, speech is seen as the linguistic materiality resulting from a certain oral practice, as a discursive practice; writing is seen as the linguistic materiality resulting from a certain literacy practice, as a discursive practice as well. Although speech results from orality, they are not synonymous: orality is the diversity of discursive practices that regulate the production and circulation of linguistic aspects of speech, while speech is the linguistic product of an orality practice. In the same way, Chacon clarifies that writing and literacy are also not synonymous: literacy is the diversity of discursive practices that regulate the production and circulation of linguistic aspects of writing; writing is the linguistic product of a literacy practice. Therefore, the aspects of speech / orality, on the one

hand, and writing / literacy, on the other hand, although they are not synonymous, they are related plans of a linguistic organization in a determined semiosis and regulated by discursive practices.

From this, Chacon proposes to look methodologically at these relations between speech and writing through speech data - in the search for evidence of the circulation / crossing of the individual not only through oral practices, but also through literacy practices, based on Leda Tfouni; and also through writing data - in the search for evidence of the circulation / crossing of the individual not only through literacy practices, but also through oral practices, based on Manoel Corrêa. In view of this theoretical framework, Chacon analyzes the relations between speech and writing based on children's writing data that do not meet the conventions regarding punctuation, word segmentation and spelling. Among these data, the cut is made by Chacon with a focus on unconventional segmentation of words and also unconventional spelling. This non-compliance with the written convention, according to Chacon's analysis, can be seen as a transit through oral and literacy practices and as evidence shown by the writer, therefore they are marks of the writer's historicity and subjectivity. In summary, Chacon concludes that, in the acquisition of writing, the analyzed data point out characteristics of spoken utterances and characteristics of written utterances; therefore, there is a heterogeneous constitution of these characteristics in children's writing, since they result from adjustments, in writing, between transits through oral and child literacy practices.

Marlete Sandra Diedrich, in her presentation entitled *The acquisition of language: an experience of meaning*, contributes to the discussion of the table postulating a conception of language acquisition as an experience of meaning. This proposal has, at its base, three points that guide its exposure: the first point is that the child talks to others who speak; the second point is that the child constitutes himself as a speaker of a language; the third point is that the child apprehends the world through speech. The perspective in which Diedrich addresses all this reflection on language acquisition is the one about Émile Benveniste's enunciation theory, which unites man, language and culture, as well as the consciousness of the social environment. The principles of language, tongue, speech and enunciation are formulated by Diedrich in the following way: language is seen as the essence of man; tongue is seen as a system of significant forms that allows the exercise of language and is updated in the discourse; speech is considered the vocal accomplishment of the tongue; finally, the enunciation is to put the tongue into operation through an individual act of use.

The language data interrogated by Diedrich involves two clippings of a child between one and a half years old, clippings in which she dialogues with an older child, her five-year-old sister. Faced with the analyzes formulated from the data presented, Diedrich turns to the language facts of these clippings that reveal the child's relations with the use of language and what this implies in the child's constitution as a speaker. For this, the analytical reflection is conducted from the three points previously exposed, which makes it possible to think about the displacement experienced by the child in language. In summary, Diedrich's conclusion is that, in relation to the other, with a particular way of being in the language, the child apprehends the world and manifests itself in the realization of that language in speech. Therefore, for the researcher, language acquisition is an experience of meaning of the language

in use, in which the child experiences, according to Benveniste, the mediating function of the language that occurs between man and man, as well as between men and the world.

Gabriela Maria de Oliveira-Codinhoto, with her speech entitled *Relative clauses and the acquisition of writing: a functionalist analysis of children's texts*, directs her presentation to a functionalist approach in order to analyze children's texts, produced by two elementary school students, in a longitudinal way, that is, a study that analyzes texts by these two students over four years of elementary school. Their analytical path starts from the frequency of relative sentences in these texts to arrive at an analysis of the overall textual composition of the texts of the students. Therefore, it is necessary to define what are the relative clauses: morphosyntactically embedded sentences that act within the noun phrase, which is a layer of the morphosyntactic level. Thus, the relative clauses modify the nominal nucleus, which can be of two types: one type is that of the clauses that add information about the nominal nucleus and act at the interpersonal level; the other type is that of clauses that help to build the reference of the nominal nucleus and act at the representational level. Although this is the starting point, relative clauses are not the only aspect worked on in the presentation, which also includes other elements of analysis, such as the length of the texts, the types of sentences that appear in these texts, the types of connection between parts of the texts and other textual composition strategies that may be of interest to the analysis, such as a later comparison between the texts. The functionalist approach that Oliveira-Codinhoto assumes is based on Simon Dik, Kees Hengeveld and Lachlan Mackenzie. Thus, the research addresses the notion of language as an instrument of social interaction with communicative purposes, that is, linguistic structures are always observed from their real data, which is the use, and also from the immediate situational context of interaction. Language acquisition is seen as a development / learning of the language. In this sense, writing is understood as a place where language is used where its functioning is determined by linguistic and interactional motivations, while the acquisition of writing is understood as part of language acquisition.

Throughout the analysis made by Oliveira-Codinhoto, it is clear that, from the first grade to the fourth grade, the texts of the two students analyzed are significantly modified according to statements that become longer; clauses that are more developed; connectors that are introduced; in short, there is, in general, a visible textual progression. That said, Oliveira-Codinhoto concludes that, in the first productions, the relationship between the writer and the interaction is so immediate that the texts often do not try to situate for the reader neither the entities or characters involved in the productions nor the function of the text or its plot. In the final productions, however, there is a greater concern with the interactional context - which alters the informational status of these texts, as well as privileges the appearance of diverse and more complex linguistic structures. Finally, works such as Oliveira-Codinhoto's contribute, as the researcher points out, to the provision of a theoretical framework capable of establishing a parallel between the function and the use of language; for the study of linguistic constituents of larger domains and, finally, for the reinforcement of the transition from the status of acquisition data to language data, which reiterates the relevance and

configuration of this data as a place for testing functional theory, as well as of translinguistic change and variation.

After the resumption of the presentations, although this roundtable was made up of participants with different theoretical and methodological approaches, it is clear that the perspectives of Chacon, Diedrich and Oliveira-Codinhoto are aligned in some points, such as the following:

- The use of language: in the three exhibitions, although focused differently by each one, according to their theoretical observatory, all participants present, as a common point, the use of language.
- The investigative commitment to the field of language acquisition: there is an incessant search, visible in the unique presentation of each participant, for a greater understanding of the child's constitution as a speaker and as a writer in their mother tongue.
- Theoretical responsibility with data analysis: even though each participant is guided by different linguistic conceptions, all analyzes are anchored in in-depth studies, which configures each presentation as research of great theoretical and empirical interconnections common to all.
- Concern about the origin of the data: again, despite the differences between the investigations presented, the rigor regarding the origin of the data is a point that converges to all. This is because, both in corpora and in their analysis, in all exhibitions, the methodological and analytical seriousness is highlighted, as well as the ethical and thorough treatment of empirical materials.

Therefore, the participants of the roundtable reviewed here, from the lens of their respective theories and analyzes, offer a reflective outline of what they understand about language acquisition and, consequently, about speech and writing in childhood, establishing dialogues with different areas of linguistics, but strengthening, above all, the need for more research on a topic that has already marked or will mark part of each of our lives: acquiring the language through the use of it.

REFERENCES

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