

The teaching of written language in Brazil: Between the limits of precariousness and emancipation challenges

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Abstract

This text analyzes, within the framework of Historical-Cultural Psychology, the issue of the formation of alienated consciousness in the literacy policy proposed by the Brazilian government (2018-2022). Emphasized in the mechanistic relationship of the methodological procedures offered for teacher training and, for the student, the emptying of meaning in learning written language. To do this, we refer to the concept of written language in Historical Cultural Theory and the need for developmental teaching, in order to criticize the current educational model. In proposing to overcome the model proposed in Brazil, we understand that the concept of humanization through the appropriation of written language as a complex symbolic system originating from the most elaborate forms of human activity is necessary. To this end, we will revisit the authors involved in the constitution of the relationships between teaching activity (Vygotsky, Leontiev and Davidov) and learning activity (Vygotsky, Leontiev, Luria and Davidov) in order to analyze the documents produced by the neoliberal bias of the current proposal for teaching writing in public education. We point out the limitations and regressions of the proposed model and indicate the need for teaching (human action) that qualifies omnilateral educational practice.

Keywords

Teaching, written language, cultural history psychology

She also discovered that knowing how to read and sign her name was not enough. Another wisdom had to be learned from reading. She had to authorize the text of her life, just as she had to help build her origin's story (...). And realize that beneath the signature of her very fist, there were other letters and marks. (Evaristo, 2021, p. 110)

In Brazil, 2022 was the year in which we experienced the COVID-19 hangover, expressed in more than 660,000 deaths, accompanied by growing food insecurity and hunger risk, which affected about 36% of Brazilian families, according to research data by the Getúlio Vargas Foundation¹. The wave of destruction has advanced on the rights historically won by the working class, including labor and pension reforms, deepening the abyss of social inequality. In this scenario of death and destruction, the attacks on public, free, secular and quality education have intensified. Education, as we have been following, is one of the fields most attacked by the current government. Since 2018, the Ministry of Education (MEC) has undergone the passage of four (4) ministers, namely, Ricardo Vélez Rodrigues, Abram Weintraub, Carlos Alberto Decotelli and Milton Ribeiro. All of them were involved in polemics that touch on everything from technical capacity, close relations with religious groups, and allegations of embezzlement (Zimmermann & Cruz, 2022). The attacks can be noted at all educational levels, emphasizing cuts in resources and scholarships, university autonomy, high school reform, education militarization, and the National Book and Teaching Material Program (including early childhood education), among others. As if these events were not enough, the Chamber of Deputies intends to amend articles of educational laws to facilitate homeschooling outside the State's responsibility.

All this, led by the advance of extreme right-wing forces, neoliberal ideology, and obscurantism (named by Duarte (2018) 'bellicose obscurantism'), which concerns the "spread of an attitude of attack on knowledge and reason, of cultivating strongly aggressive attitudes against everything that might be considered threatening to conservative and prejudiced ideological positions" (Duarte 2018, p. 139). Duarte points out that the phenomenon is not new in the Brazilian scenario. Still, with the expansion of the virtual world, it presents some peculiarities, benefiting primarily from "fake news."

Regarding neoliberal ideals, we highlight the commodification of education and its transformation into a promising market niche. Considering the above, we wonder how psychology's contributions can help us understand today's scenario and assist in constructing a new project in the country. Specifically, what can the teaching of writing contribute to the foundations of historical-cultural psychology and historical-critical pedagogy in this process?

It is known that theories alone do not immediately interfere with concrete reality. However, the greater the degree of reliability with which they reflect said reality in the individuals' consciousness, the greater the possibility that they operate as essential mediators for effectively conscious actions, that is, for science-based actions on causal and teleological dimensions of typically human activity, which means to say: work. In our opinion, both historical-cultural

¹ For further information, please read FGV Social (2022).

psychology - in the realm of psychological sciences - and historical-critical pedagogy - in the sphere of pedagogical sciences - have managed to capture the movement of the real and represent it in the form of ideas, concepts and judgments, expanding, each in its field of interference, the possibilities for the fundamental intelligibility. Therein lie their most outstanding contributions.

This text does not intend to exhaust the analysis of all issues involved in teaching problem writing, but rather to seek elements that guide us to reflect on the current state of Brazilian education and the purposes for which we want the educational process to be directed. Therefore, the challenge posed to teach written language demands technical competence and political commitment to the working class (Saviani, 2011). Only then will the language domain be at the service of the dominated, who, possessing humanizing cultural contents, will be able to instrumentalize themselves for liberating actions from the condition of domination (Saviani, 2018).

We highlight that school cannot be understood apart from its relationship with society. We recognize that school knowledge is intersected by the contradictions generated by the class and the ideological struggle that accompanies it. Finally, we know that this movement for learning socialization in school in a capitalist society does not revolutionize society. Still, it can transform alienated social relations (Duarte, 2016).

This text is organized into two sections to develop the topic at hand. First, we present the educational policy aimed at teaching writing in the early years of literacy - embodied in the National Literacy Policy (Política Nacional de Alfabetização [PNA]) and its alliance with the process of the commodification of education. Second, we talk about the counter-hegemonic approach posited by us as an alternative to educational barbarism, represented by historical-cultural psychology and historical-critical pedagogy precepts, and emphasizing the process of writing appropriation.

Literacy policy, obscurantism and education commodification

From the outset, we announce that attacks on education are not exclusive to the current government. The reforms that are being put into practice were already underway since the Fernando Henrique Cardoso – FHC era (1995-2003), including the offer of financing to the private education sector in Luís Inácio Lula da Silva's and Dilma Rousseff's governments. They culminated in Michel Temer political reforms (2016-2019), after the parliamentary, legal and media coup against President Dilma Rousseff, who took care to take some measures that would facilitate, even more, the future work of Bolsonaro and Paulo Guedes, Minister of Finance and was responsible for the current economic organization (Souza, 2022, p. 178). Montes (2018), in his article published in the newspaper 'El País', under the title "The bonds of Paulo Guedes with the 'Chicago Boys' of Pinochet's Chile" (Los lazos de Paulo Guedes con los 'Chicago boys' de Augusto Pinochet), highlights the link between the Brazilian economy minister and ultraliberal models of Milton Friedman with the Chilean dictatorship. The

strongman of the Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, Guedes - and the president himself - always flirts with right-wing authoritarian models.

It is necessary to clarify these affiliations to understand the impacts of multilateral agreements on the history of educational policies in force over the last few years in Brazil. In 1990, the country entered a process of democratic opening after 30 years of military dictatorship. The new Brazilian constitutional charter pointed to what we call the 'Citizen Constitution,' where, for the first time, guarantees of education, health, and social security had obtained victories in their legal foundations.

However, conservative bases in the Brazilian legislature imposed intense pressure on the executive to expand its economic ties with developed nations. In this context, neoliberal ideas were taking their roots in the State reform promoted by financial guidelines issued by the Washington Consensus, as mentioned by Vaz and Merlo (2020). In education, they were removing the primary conditions for a humanizing education. We emphasize that the current setback in the educational area is enormous. However, we do not disregard the expressions of the class struggle present in the implementation of public policies, since the present guidelines leave no doubt about the type of person they intend to form, which is a person adapted to the prevailing model of society and trained to meet the capital dictates.

This fact finds its foundations in official documents such as the National Curricular Guidelines for Basic Education Teacher Training (*Diretrizes Curriculares Nacionais para a Formação de Professores da Educação Básica* [Brazil, CNE/CP. Opinion (09/2001], which presents the concept of "competencies" to teachers, for example in the National Literacy Policy (*Política Nacional de Alfabetização* [PNA]), which proposes literacy through the phonetic method, the National Book and Teaching Material Program, and "homeschooling" (Ministry of Education, 2001). In our perspective, these normative instruments are not loose lines or antagonistic proposals. On the contrary, they are aligned with the same political and ideological project, all articulated to combat knowledge, in which neo-liberal prescription and a fragmented and simplified conception of human development predominate. This combat, in turn, makes the terrain more fertile for obscurantism, for the acceptance of phenomena appearance and the denial of reality in its multiple determinations. When criticizing this model of education, Antunes (2009) highlights: "education in the era of financialized and flexible accumulation of today's (destructive) world of capital must be agile, flexible and lean, as capitalist companies are today" (p. 31). This political-pedagogical context directly impacts the teaching and appropriation of writing and, consequently, the psychological development of the individual.

We will place in the foreground the analysis of the training of Basic Education teachers, considering that Brazil's professionals are the ones who suffer the most from impacts arising from the pedagogical lightening of neoliberal reforms. These teachers are mostly under the tutelage of 5,600 municipalities that make up the Brazilian State (IBGE, 2021) and, in the last ten years, according to data brought by technical notes of the last School Census

(Censo Escolar [Brazil, IBGE, 2021]), suffer a stagnation in their careers, without improvements in salary conditions. Many teachers work three shifts (mornings, afternoons and evenings), in several different schools, in order to get paid for 40 hours of work, with precarious working conditions, and unstable possibilities for career advancement. Additionally, approximately 30% of teachers working in basic education, in which literacy is a core element, do not have specific training in pedagogical activities to teach reading and writing. Mendonça (2017) underscores that most of them started their primary school education after 1987, a period of significant transformation of Brazilian educational models. The author warns that in this period, collective work and the appropriation of historically systematized knowledge overlapped with the centrality of ‘individual know-how competencies’ that are anchored in Delors’ thesis,

The Commission considers educational policies a permanent process of knowledge enrichment and know-how, but also, perhaps primarily, as a privilege to build the person himself and relationships among individuals, groups and nations (Delors, 1998, p. 12).

Thus, we identify a gloomy scenario for a teaching career nowadays.

Another critical aspect Mendonça (2017) considers is the meritocratic and marketing link attributed to teachers’ continuing education. A large “educational products industry” transforms human knowledge into a commodity, and teachers’ access to any form of continuing education has to come from his or her income. A perverse exploitation of teachers’ work is created, where their work activity is moved out of their reach.

Currently, access to quality and free public education at universities is assured to a reduced number of students, with low impact on teacher training. For the great majority, all that is left to do is to use distance learning of dubious quality, offered in a precarious and fee-based way, to access their continuous study needs to keep up with challenges imposed by the pedagogical work in the current conjunctures or even to achieve a meager career progression. As if that were not enough, basic teacher training curricula suffer from the impoverishment of conceptual knowledge that has been replaced by practical teaching activities emptied of their theoretical foundations. Thus, the teacher ends up acting in literacy classes deprived of conceptual and didactic elements to support them.

Another of the most recent expressions of neoliberal ideology in primary education is materialized in the guidance booklet for the PNA, which was established through Decree 9,765 of 11 April 2019, and decreed by President of the Republic, Jair Messias Bolsonaro and the Minister of Education, at the time, Abraham Bragança de Vasconcelos Weintraub, through the Literacy Secretariat (Secretaria de Alfabetização [SEALF]), whose secretary is Carlos Francisco de Paula Nadalim (MEC, 2019). The PNA allowed programs to be created, with the premise of implementing programs and actions of the Federal Government in collaboration with federated entities. In the same year, courses were implemented, through the Avamec platform, aimed at Basic Education teachers and civil society, based on the new literacy policy, namely: “Science-Based

Literacy” (Alfabetização Baseada na Ciência) - 180 hours (2019); “Text Production Practices” (Práticas de Produção de Textos)- 120 hours (2019); “Literacy Practices” (Práticas de Alfabetização) - 30 hours. All the courses mentioned are part of the “Time to Learn” (Tempo de Aprender) program, approved in 2019. Besides, there was another implementation in the same year with a family literacy program, “Tell me” (Conta Pra Mim) (2019), targeted at Brazilian families (Almeida & Piatti, 2021).

The PNA carries in its core a series of noteworthy elements, such as the concept of science and school education, highly compatible with neoliberal prescription; the conception of human development, pointing to its naturalization, fragmentation and simplification; an understanding of oral and written language taken by themselves and separated from their multiple determinations, explaining a reductionist view on them - all of this expressed through an ideological discourse disguised as scientific, to highlight the theoretical-methodological incongruence between the National Curricular Common Base (Base Nacional Comum Curricular) implemented since 201, with a constructivist bias, and the PNA, which is of a behavioral cognitivist nature. This fact reiterates the lack of a consistent and coherent theoretical-methodological ‘educational national system’ (Franco & Martins, 2021).

We also believe it is essential to mention that -although it mainly focuses on school education- the PNA does not cite any pedagogical theory that guides the teaching and learning process and does not seem to consider that pedagogy is the science of educational methods (Franco & Martins, 2021). On the other hand, it reaffirms the centrality of psychology in teaching and learning processes, presenting cognitive science and neuroscience as theoretical contributions to support these processes. With that, the document carries out a direct transposition from psychology to education, subordinating the second to the first. In line with this, the PNA highlights brain functioning as the core of the development of understanding and learning, as if the brain were its only determination. It should be noted that we do not disregard the role of biological processes for literacy acquisition. However, we are contrary to biologizing reductionism, when natural (organic) bases are placed at the center of the formation and development of a being, whose nature is social. By displacing the acquisition of reading and writing from educational and activity plans intentionally organized by the teacher to the child’s brain functioning, the document reiterates the naturalization of learning and, thus, may favor its pathologization and relegate the teaching process to a secondary position.

Another essential aspect of the PNA document concerns the reduction of literacy problems in the country to questions of literacy methodology. This debate and its limits are not new in our country and have already been addressed by Mortatti (2006, 2009). In this direction, the PNA document wants us to think that an innovative and supposedly neutral alternative to solve all literacy difficulties in the country would be the phonics method.

Although it is essential to consider the need for a language teaching method -since a child does not learn writing spontaneously-, in our perspective, the phonics method presents a superficial understanding of writing and reading,

approaching them as a technique or conditioning limited to associations between sounds, letters and syllables. The document omits that this type of teaching presents only rudiments of literacy, corroborating a lightened school education addressed at working-class children, which directs them from early childhood to training for, at best, the reproduction of the workforce. In Franco and Martins (2021) words,

By prioritizing the phonetic side and seconding the semantic aspect of the word, they limit the possibilities of this human objectification to operate as an instrument for understanding the world beyond its appearance and/or beyond the simple codification and decoding of graphic signs. (p. 85)

In our opinion, the core of this discussion is in the conception of language anchored in formal logic, which does not go beyond an analysis by elements. Science concepts, development, and language in the PNA pave the way for the insertion of schoolbook programs starting in early childhood education and for “homeschooling.”

The discussion about the Early Childhood Education textbook is not recent and dates to the 1980s. Authors like Nosella (1979) and Faria (1994) have already discussed its ideological function. Since its origin, the textbook has been in the service of directing teaching practice, but it has contributed little to the mediation of knowledge, especially at this educational level.

One last aspect of being considered that fits so well with the neo-liberal package for school education concerns homeschooling as it is under discussion in Congress. It seems to be no coincidence that the PNA does not include a specific item aimed at teacher training, but the document presents a sub-item directed to families concerning the education of children aged 0 to 6 years, called ‘Family Literacy (Literácia Familiar).’ It highlights the role of the family, pointing out that literacy success is strongly linked to the family environment, affirming the need to value early childhood, and stressing the family’s role in developing numerous skills.

Considering that only a trained person can deal with pedagogical issues, the document disregards the need for solid training for those teaching young children and, implicitly, paves the way for homeschooling. This time, it ends up transferring to individuals the educational responsibility that was once institutional and, at the same time, makes the school role secondary; these data meet the reduction of investments in Education in general and in Early Childhood Education in particular (Franco & Martins, 2021). It draws our attention that homeschooling, even in the legislation process, provokes demand from publishing companies that organize themselves to sell material kits for this purpose².

In our opinion, the issues we illustrate through the explanations about the PNA are representative of the political-ideological project that seeks to transform education (anti-commodity) into a service and commercial product (commodity) to fulfill the interests of different fractions of the business class, that is, to

² This news can be read in full at Bimbatti (2022).

radically commodify education (Martins & Pina, 2020). Against the grain of these economic-ideological aspirations and policies, we understand School Education as an institution (the school and pedagogical system) and as a practice (the act of educating), as a specifically human and historical-cultural practice implied in each vision of person, society and knowledge. Thus, we consider the need to go beyond the provisions of current policies, calling for constructing a public policy to transform education such that it makes human achievements available to all and contributes to building a free and universal human being. The alliance between historical-cultural psychology and historical-critical pedagogy is placed in service of this ideal.

Teaching writing with an approach of Historical-Cultural Psychology and Historical-Critical Pedagogy

In the previous section, we analyzed a general panorama of adversities imposed on school education by current political-ideological conditions that are expressed mainly in the national policy proposed for literacy. And it is precisely this scenario that has mobilized enlightened teachers and managers in search of alternatives, established resistance postures, and strengthened the call for a public school education of transition, able to resist the present and gestate another future. We must recognize that the class struggle is not cooling down, despite the mishaps that impose obstacles on it. In this scenario, historical-cultural psychology and historical-critical pedagogy, both based on historical-dialectical materialism and advocating a school education that promotes the omnilateral development of individuals, emerge as counter-hegemonic theoretical-methodological possibilities able to subsidize pedagogical practice.

Although significantly expanding their penetration spectrum in schools, such theories, for understandable reasons, have few expressions in teacher training, and when these expressions occur, their foundations are often subtracted. The gaps here are numerous; in this paper, we are particularly interested in those involved in teaching and learning reading and writing. According to Martins (2013), historical-cultural psychology provides psychological foundations for historical-critical pedagogical theory, considering that both approaches share the same conceptions of humans, society, knowledge formation and, notably, the role of appropriating signs in promoting psychological development. In his studies, Vygotsky (2003) stated that to educate is to transform; otherwise, education would be unnecessary. But for this to be effective, it is necessary to know what is required to change and into what. Therefore, not just any psychological and pedagogical theory allows us to advance, because it is not just any human being we intend to form.

Teaching and appropriation of writing analysis require clarity on pedagogical science that supports it; this will bring us an understanding of educational purposes, identification of school content, and didactic orientation of scholarly work. We agree with Abrantes (2015), when he asserts that assumptions of historical-critical pedagogy “are based on the perspective that

educational praxis fulfills the function of knowledge socialization and does not occur as an adaptive activity to capitalist production mode and alienated socialization forms” (p. 135).

Historical-critical pedagogy conceptualizes educational work as “the act of producing, directly and intentionally, in each singular individual, the humanity that is historically and collectively generated by men as a whole” (Saviani, 2011, p. 17). Still, according to Abrantes (2015), this concept of educational work represents a double orientation as it “offers direction to education workers in internal struggles in the educational field and points out principles that can only become effective with overcoming class society” (p. 136).

In this sense, Saviani (2004) defends teaching that places education in a revolutionary perspective, as an instrument of transformation for working-class children. In these terms, it is necessary to have an education that does not aim at conformation, but rather at transformation. This transformation necessarily passes through the educator’s philosophical training, given that education and teaching are central determinations for the formation of people’s consciences. We agree with Abrantes (2015) that it is necessary to “politicize the discussion on knowledge socialization and defend the position that disseminating the theoretical link with reality is an object of class struggle” (p. 130).

For success in constituting a child as a fully developed human being and, in this direction, for them to acquire reading and writing domains, the teacher needs solid training, since they are the bearer of the signs that mediate psychic development. The humanization process, being a cultural fact, requires the intervention of another human being who has appropriated the achievements produced by humanity (Martins, 2013).

With Mendonça (2017), we understand the professional teacher as a subject culturally created to ensure knowledge transmission produced by humanity. Consequently, the teacher must have a solid primary education to conduct their task. Their continuing education must guarantee the theoretical deepening of concepts and forms of teaching actions regarding socially produced knowledge that are relevant to collective life. In this way, teaching is dependent on the teacher’s actions. To perform this act with developmental intentionality, it is up to the teacher to scientifically appropriate the knowledge they will transmit and the means of conducting this transmission. After all, they must lead the new generations to access the most elaborate human conquests, which go beyond acquisitions limited to the social belonging of everyday life.

According to the historical-cultural conception of development, children are not born with developed complex psychic functions; therefore, activities requiring such training will be necessary. As proposed by Leontiev (1978), man is a social and historical being, and apart from social relations, he would never develop qualities that resulted from the long cultural development of humanity. According to historical-cultural assumptions defended by both Leontiev and Vygotsky, human development occurs through educational processes to which an individual is subjected throughout life, even though there are qualitative differences due to the type of education to which he or she has access.

Concerning the appropriation of writing, the heart of the matter is in the conception of language. Vygotsky (2001) states, “thought and language are keys to understanding the human consciousness nature. [...] the word plays a central role in consciousness, not isolated functions. [...] The conscious word is the microcosm of human consciousness” (pp.485-486). This excerpt highlights the author’s analysis of the relation between thought and language; he points to words as the unit of consciousness analysis. Developmental teaching, which effectively transforms consciousness, must necessarily enable the understanding of conceptual links that insert the word’s meaning into a conceptual system.

The word, in turn, is always a generalization, as it never refers to an isolated object, but to a class. Therefore, the appropriation of a word cannot be watertight, mechanical, or static. However, generalization is an act of thought that, in turn, forms and develops. The thesis defended by Vigotski (2001) asserts that the word’s meaning develops and changes its structure throughout ontogenesis. In this direction, the conquest of written language enables a qualitative leap in the development of conceptual thinking, altering a child’s psychic functioning. And when it comes to methodological treatment for teaching writing, it must be considered that writing is not affected by isolated and independent elements such as in a perspective of a mere association between sound and graphic elements.

According to Martins (2013), success in writing acquisition is not something limited to the moment in which a child is ‘taught to write,’ but it depends profoundly on the history of his development, that is, to learn to read and write, a person must operate with symbolic instruments through logical operations of reasoning -namely, analysis and synthesis-, comparison, generalization and abstraction, inferring the means of graphic representation of sounds. Based on historical-cultural psychology and historical-critical pedagogy, we highlight that writing appropriation does not reproduce the path of the acquisition of spoken language. However, it will be through it – as a sign system - that the possibility of representation and, therefore, the formation of the ‘idea of something’ in other terms will arise. Writing will only be possible when a child can take an object for another, abstract, and elaborate on the word concept (Franco & Martins, 2021).

Vygotsky (2001), referring to this process, states: “[...] if external language appears in evolution before internal language, writing, in turn, appears after internal language, already assuming its existence” (p. 316). In other words, the internalization of language enables the duplication of the material world and the possibility of representing and relating ideas, expanding the person’s opportunities to reflect the world and himself subjectively. Objects acquire meaning due to the alliance between language and thought. What is at issue is teaching a child to abstract the essential traits of things.

In this sense, when a child begins to speak, naming objects, “[...] the possibility of representing something is created, and this moment marks the beginning of a long process that brings with it the possibility of developing writing. as a psychic tool” (Franco & Martins, 2021, p. 110). In this wake, Luria (1986) points out that the word, as an instrument of interpersonal relation and

knowledge, also emerges as a means of regulating higher psychic processes directly linked to voluntary act origins.

In summary, a child's development path culminates in achievements that allow him to take one thing for another and internally represent external reality through signs. These achievements will bring with them the possibility of making concept formation more complex and, consequently, elaborating the word idea/concept. This acquisition is supported by logical operations of thought, especially in generalization and abstraction (Franco & Martins, 2021).

Speech is, therefore, an essential tool for writing appropriation by organizing thought through concepts, making psychic functioning more complex, constituting, in the child, the possibility of forming uniquely human capacities, namely, social experience, accumulation appropriation, and behavior self-control.

Recognizing the intrinsic relations that exist between oral language and written language, without, however, taking the second as a direct transposition of the first, Franco and Martins (2021) emphasize that the methodological teaching path should consider the word as the linguistic unit of reference, especially in the early years of schooling, which should be subjected to analysis through teaching organized for this purpose intentionally. For that matter, school education needs to focus on the representation process and concept development possibilities, seeking to generate in the child, at the end of this procedure, the need to represent his idea graphically. Only then will the literacy process be successful, remembering that graphing ideas implies being able to abstract the sensory aspect of speech and advance in the construction of an "[...] abstract language, which does not use words but representations of words" (Vygotsky, 2001, p. 313).

In the same direction, Dangiό and Martins (2015) posit that the movement between phonetic and semantic faces of the word appears, in teaching processes, in didactic actions and operations with reading and writing. If the objective is to learn the writing system, the emphasis is on phonetic and phonological tracts; if the aim is to interpret the textual supports of the word, the focus is on its meanings and senses (Franco & Martins, 2021). Supported by the ideas of Dangiό and Martins (2015), we consider that written language teaching represents for the child the possibility of mastering a complex symbolic system and his success is directly related to the development of higher psychic functions throughout child development. In this direction, the set of learning that involves writing and reading will allow the qualitative transformation of a child's relations with reality. He can think about the world beyond immediate reality through science, art and philosophy instruction, initiating incursions beyond the phenomena's appearance. Thus, providing conditions for teachers to organize their pedagogical practice is crucial for student learning. But for that, we must provide conditions for teachers that go beyond the apparent dimension of the teaching organization and, through a learning process, to be able to reframe their way of organizing their activities. For the teacher to achieve the conditions for organizing teaching, it is necessary to overcome existing training models that are based on technical instruments and little conceptual training. The current conditions offered in primary and continuing teacher training have promoted the emptying of the possibilities of working consciously with language. It is

necessary to form a teacher's conceptual thinking about the written word, and this is only possible with training activities committed to this objective. Only a theoretical-methodological understanding of the formation possibilities of a child's conscience allows for adequate planning of study activities, enhances didactic resources, and allows the student a significant appropriation of writing and reading.

Final considerations

The issues outlined here present challenges imposed on an emancipatory education. We understand that neoliberal models offered by the capitalist mode of production take education as a commodity, reduce the social right to it, and subject schooling to market demands. In this direction, educational policy reforms implemented in recent years in Brazil do not meet working-class interests.

Against these proposals, we argue that schools can contribute to unveiling the nature of social relations in capitalist society and their effects on the processes of exploitation and alienation. However, the fundamentals supporting this text indicate that critical knowledge is necessary for the class struggle and the construction of a socialist revolution. Based on Marx, Frigotto (2021) reminds us that theory constitutes a revolutionary material force. Still, its revolutionary character is not exhausted in the correct understanding of how human reality is produced under capitalism. Moreover, the scientificity of knowing makes explicit its potential revolutionary in practice.

Considering the above, we return to our introduction, where Evaristo (2021) points out, *"She also discovered that knowing how to read and sign her name was not enough. Another wisdom had to be learned from reading. She had to authorize the text of her life, just as she had to help build her origin's story (...)"* (p.110). This excerpt takes us back to foundations of historical-cultural psychology and historical-critical pedagogy, which we presented with an emancipatory education in mind. In dealing with literacy, we understand that it is not enough to understand writing as a motor act that limits teaching to tracing letters and the writing, often mechanical, of words, phrases and sentences. In Vygotsky's (1995) words, "[...] we need to teach the child the written language and not the writing of letters" (p. 203).

Literacy presupposes, above all, access to literate culture and allowing subjects' psyche to reach their broadest development possibilities, represented by rigorously abstract thinking. We consider that the alliance between these two acquisitions imposes itself as a condition for individuals to establish themselves as subjects of their history, equipping themselves for the struggles to be waged against objective and subjective conditions that stand as obstacles to this. However, we cannot lose sight of the fact that language is one of the most complex psychic functions; its functioning is related to other functions, mainly to thought (Dangiό & Martins, 2015). The transformation of thought contents and other higher psychic functions are subordinated to people's living and

educational conditions and deeply marked by socially determined cultural development. Therefore, the struggle for emancipatory education is identified with overcoming social-economic inequalities produced by private ownership of production modes.

“To become aware of something and to apprehend something is initially necessary to have that thing” (Vygotsky, 2001, p. 287). To authorize the text of one's life and help build one's history, there must be a teaching that is able to instrumentalize this ideal construction. As Carvalho and Martins (2016) state, a tireless battle must be fought towards training that culminates in adult individuals who are more subjected and less subjected to the alienating conditions of capitalist society.

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