Educating children in additional languages for diversity and social justice: socio-interactional contributions of the children's story genre

Educar crianças em línguas adicionais para a diversidade e justiça social: contribuições socio-interacionais do gênero história infantil

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ABSTRACT
This article, inserted in the context of applied linguistics and within the theoretical-methodological framework of Sociodiscursive Interactionism, aims to share the results presented in the learning of additional language (AL) with young children from the systematization of the relationship between the genre children's story (CS) (TONELLI, 2005), the incorporation of the narrative-character system (NCS) (CORDEIRO; DAGHÉ, 2020) and the choice of thematic content linked to the precepts of social justice education (SJE) (ADAMS; BELL; GRIFFIN, 2007). For this purpose, a didactic sequence (DS) (DOLZ; NOVERRAZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004) was developed and applied in a regular classroom with children from the first grade of elementary school in a public context. Therefore, in this excerpt, we present the collected productions demonstrating how the CS textual genre was used by the students as a space for their identity construction at the same time as the English language was used in social practices relevant to the context in question. The focus of the analyzes fell on the thematic content mobilized and the agency of the SC character in the textual domain based on the students' productions. The results reveal that the English language was used as an instrument of social interaction, since the evidence of linguistic development in the AL was more substantial to the aspects of the thematic content and the SNP. In addition, it

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was possible to verify that by focusing students' attention on the intentions, feelings and actions of the characters, the thematic content related to SJE and empathy in the face of diversity gained prominence in the application of the DS.

KEYWORDS: Social Justice Education; Teaching through textual genres; Narrative-character system; Emancipatory literature; Didactic sequence.

RESUMO

Este artigo, inserido no bojo da linguística aplicada e no âmbito quadro teórico-metodológico do Interacionismo Sociodiscursivo, tem por objetivo compartilhar os resultados apresentados na aprendizagem de língua adicional (LA) com crianças pequenas a partir de sistematizações de relação entre o gênero história infantil (HI) (TONELLI, 2005), a incorporação do sistema narrativa personagem (SNP) (CORDEIRO; DAGHÉ, 2020) e a escolha do conteúdo temático ligado a preceitos da educação para a justiça social (EJS) (ADAMS; BELL; GRIFFIN, 2007). Com este propósito, uma sequência didática (SD) (DOLZ; NOVERRAZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004) foi elaborada e aplicada em uma sala de ensino regular com crianças do primeiro ano do ensino fundamental em um contexto público. Sendo assim, neste recorte, apresentamos as produções coletadas demonstrando como o gênero textual HI foi utilizado pelos alunos enquanto espaço de suas construções identitárias ao mesmo passo em que a língua inglesa foi utilizada em práticas sociais pertinentes ao contexto em tela. O foco das análises recaiu sobre o conteúdo temático mobilizado e a agentividade do personagem da HI no plano textual a partir das produções dos alunos. Os resultados revelam que a língua inglesa foi utilizada como instrumento de interação social, uma vez que os indícios de desenvolvimento linguístico na LA foram mais substanciais aos aspectos do conteúdo temático e do SNP. Além disso, foi possível constatar que ao focar a atenção dos alunos nas intenções, sentimentos e ações dos personagens, o conteúdo temático relacionado à EJS e empatia frente à diversidade ganhou destaque na aplicação da SD.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Educação para justiça social; Ensino por meio de gêneros textuais; Sistema narrativa-personagens; literatura emancipatória; Sequência didática.

1 Introduction

For some time now, works in the field of applied linguistics, more specifically in the area of teaching and learning additional languages (AL) in childhood, have adopted the term language education in childhood (LEC) for different reasons (MALTA, 2019; KAWACHI-FURLAN; TONELLI, 2021). One of them, which serves us better at this moment, is because it discursively represents the position we take as educators who emphasize language teaching focused on the 'now' and on the student-child as a subject constructed socio- and historically within their interactions, that is, by adopting this term, we reject the marketing justifications that can be attached to the offer of this teaching modality. Using it, therefore, means believing that AL classes do not have the sole purpose of leading the student to its mastery, but also of understanding that, through it, social practices take place in diverse contexts.

Based on this recognition, we present an excerpt of the first author's Master's thesis, under the supervision of the second author[1], which aimed at investigating the possible contributions that the children's story (CS) genre (TONELLI, 2005) didacticized in the didactic sequence (DS) procedure (DOLZ; NOVERRAZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004) can offer to the linguistic education in childhood (LEC) and to the promotion of social justice education (SJE) (ADAMS; BELL; GRIFFIN, 2007). To this end, a proposal for English language teaching was developed based on the genre CS organized around a DS. It was based on the principle of awareness to languages (TONELLI; CORDEIRO, 2015), the concept of emancipatory literature (ZILBERMAN, 2003; ZILBERMAN; MAGALHÃES, 1982), and the narrative-character system (NCS) (CORDEIRO; DAGHÉ, 2020).

First, to contextualize the DS procedure[2], it is necessary to explain that this research is based on the theoretical framework of the school of Geneva Socio-discursive Interactionism (SDI).. Therefore, when we use the nomenclature DS, we are not referring to a set of sequenced activities, but to the procedure idealized and defined by Dolz, Noverraz, and Scheneuwly (2004, p. 82) as "a set of school activities organized systematically around an oral or written textual genre"; since "communicating orally or in writing can and should be taught systematically" (DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004, p. 51). Thus, the DS, compulsorily, must contemplate the following stages: 1) presentation of the communication situation and the class project; 2) initial production; 3) modules; 4) final production. The latter is the object we bring to the analysis in this article.

In the research developed, we propose two analysis entries and for each one we developed different criteria and descriptors, but we highlight the one that interests us in this article, namely, the analysis of the thematic content and the character's agency at the textual level. That is, we aim to investigate the relationship between the CS genre, the incorporation of the NCS, the choice of thematic content, and the results presented in English language learning.

Thus, in this excerpt, we present the productions made by the students, demonstrating how the textual genre was used by the children as a space for identity construction just as the AL was used

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[1] Considering the ethical issues about co-authorship, we emphasize that, since it is the result of the first author's Master's level research, this article was co-constructed by the two authors based on their reflections during and after the orientation process.

[2] The focus of this section is not the DS procedure, but it is important to highlight the theoretical and methodological affiliation that guided the study.

within a social practice pertinent to the research context. To do so, the article is organized as follows: the first topic is the theoretical framework of SJE; next, we bring a brief theoretical reference about the narrative-character system and emancipatory literature to contextualize the reader on the content of our analyses, explaining and justifying the intertwining of the theories used; after that, we explain the methodological path followed; and, finally, we present two productions of the students followed by our analyses. The last section brings, therefore, our final considerations.

2 Additional languages teaching and social justice

As a concept, Social Justice (SJ) assumes that all individuals in a society have equal rights and duties in all aspects of social life. This means that all basic rights, such as health, education, justice, work, and cultural manifestation, should be guaranteed to all since it is not possible to talk about development in a society considering only economic growth (RAWLS, 2000). Given that the concept of SJ is related to social inequalities and the actions aimed at solving this problem, a SJEprovides a basis while creating conditions to raise discussions and plan actions to combat the reproduction of hegemonies and power operations.

According to Adams, Bell, and Griffin (2007), the SJE goal is to enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and its socialization within oppressive systems and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and the world.

We also believe that LEC is a matter of social justice because language is an asset, a social capital to which everyone should have equal access (BOURDIEU; PASSERON, 2009). BNCC (BRASIL, 2018), as a guiding document for education in the country, has already recognized that the English learning, from a linguisticeducation perspective, assumes a formative character that can "expand the possibilities of interaction and mobility, opening new paths of knowledge construction."

We understand that a welcoming view towards differences drives us to think about SJ within the school which, in turn, has been a space for the reproduction of hegemonies, for, as Bourdieu and Passeron (1970) state, the school may serve as an instrument for the maintenance of the *status quo* when it reproduces the social system and the prevailing structures of oppression. Trevisan Ferreira

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(2020) uses the repression of cultural manifestations such as rap within the school environment to exemplify this scenario since such non-hegemonic representations characterize the voices of subjects marginalized by the system. For the author, "English enters this relationship as a catalyzer for the reach of these voices, to enable social participation on a broader or global scale" (TREVISAN FERREIRA, 2020, p. 54).

In what concerns the teaching of English to children, Rocha (2007) warns us that the exclusion is set by the non-mandatory offer of AL in the early years. For us, besides pursuing SJ by seeking equality and equity in the offer of AL to all children in the country, it is also important to think about the type of teaching that we intend to provide to public schools, specifically, in order not to reinforce the hegemony of the English language as the language of prestige, for instance (MAGIOLO, 2021). It is, therefore, that we turn to another theoretical stream, the SJE, as we observe that the concept of SJ, even if applied to the situation of providing LEC, is not enough to provide a liberating education (FREIRE, 1987). What we aim for when it comes to educating children, both generally and linguistically, is a long-term result, not something immediate and remediable. Thus, for the teaching work, we also use the theories of oppression to reach SJE.

We believe that the subject's awareness of their situation in society and the world, as well as the exercise of empathy towards differences, and the emancipation of the subject to act consciously, is the way to break down the barriers that eventually trigger differences.

2.1 Educating children for social justice

As we've seen, it is understood that the concept of SJ is related to social inequalities and actions aimed at solving the problems resulting from them. In this sense, SJEprovides foundations while creating conditions to raise discussions and plan actions to not only remedy a situation of inequality but to combat the reproduction of hegemonies and power operations that create the obstacles faced by those considered 'different'.

The book "Teaching for diversity and social justice" by Adams, Bell, and Griffin (2007) is a compilation of practical experiences that aims to collaborate with teacher training as SJ educators. Thus, the authors understand SJE as:

> […] an interdisciplinary conceptual framework for analyzing multiple forms of oppression and a set of interactive, experiential pedagogical principles to help learners understand the meaning of social difference and oppression both in the social system and in their personal lives. The goal of social justice education is to enable people to develop the critical analytical tools necessary to understand oppression and their own socialization within oppressive systems, and to develop a sense of agency and capacity to interrupt and change oppressive patterns and behaviors in themselves and in the institutions and communities of which they are a part. (BELL, 2007, p. 2)

Teaching for SJ, therefore, implies both awareness and practice. Just like Bell, Adams, and Griffin (2007), Freire (1987) conceives that emancipation happens from awareness and consequent action/practice. Educational activities/actions can play an important role in the construction of conscious thought. Thus, in a SJE, the theory of oppression is necessary so that, through the process of becoming aware of one's place in society and the power relations therein, human agency and capacities can work collaboratively to create change; the results of which can disrupt a paradigm of 'power over' by transforming it into 'power with' meeting the SJ goals (BELL, 2007).

To transform the *status quo* is necessary to understand how oppression operates and challenges prevailing power relations for liberating education to occur (FREIRE, 1987; BELL; ADAMS; GRIFFIN, 2007). Oppression here is understood, in agreement with Bell (2007), as a hierarchical relationship in which dominant/privileged groups have advantages from the disempowerment of groups that are targeted, consciously or unconsciously, since oppressive beliefs are internalized by both victims and perpetrators. The idea, for example, that the poor somehow deserve and are responsible for their poverty, rather than the economic system, the socio-history of the subject, and their situation of vulnerability, is apprehended by both the poor and the rich. Thus, oppression ultimately restricts both self-development and self-determination.

Another important assumption for SJE is that of hegemony, which, according to Bell (2007), is the projection of a way of seeing the social reality that is accepted as common sense – even by oppressed groups – that becomes part of a natural order, an absolute truth that is not questioned. The reproduction of hegemonies, that is, transmitting this truth without questioning it, organizes power relations. Thus, "hegemony helps us understand power as relational and dynamic, something that circulates within a web of relations in which we all participate, rather than as something imposed from top down" (FOUCAULT, 1980 apud BELL, 2007, p. 10).

Due to its characteristic of being internalized, most of the time, oppression and, consequently, the reproduction of hegemonies and the maintenance of power relations operate in a non-obvious way. Discourse and language are ways for us to internalize attitudes and behaviors that reinforce systems of domination and oppression.

> When members of targeted groups accept and incorporate negative images of themselves fostered by the dominant society, they wittingly or not support the system of oppression (Fanon, 1968; Freire, 1970; Lipsky, 1977; Memmi, 1967/1991; Miller, 1976; Sennett & Cobb, 1972). Members of targeted groups collude in maintaining systems of oppression both because they internalize the false belief that the system is correct or inevitable, and as a means of survival. Internalized subordination includes such feelings as inferiority and self-hatred and often results in self-concealment, resignation, isolation, powerlessness, and gratitude for being allowed to survive (Pheterson, 1990). (BELL, 2007, p. 11)

The acceptance of 'the way things are' by the oppressed and the maintenance of this commonplace by the oppressor (whether through language or material practices) also guarantee the maintenance of a *status quo* that can only be reorganized from the moment that each one understands the power relations – theoretically innocent – in which they are imbricated in their daily lives and act to interrupt these patterns once again, whether through language or material practices.

In this sense, a SJE is necessary for all: oppressors and oppressed, in which both become aware of their places within these systems and, thus, the oppressed can become aware and leave this place of oppression through critical and liberating dialogue (FREIRE, 1987, p. 33); and for the oppressor to become an ally in this struggle (HARDIMAN; JACKSON, 2007). Therefore, "allies are members of the advantaged group who act against the oppression(s) from which they derive power, privilege, and acceptance." (HARDIMAN; JACKSON, 2007, p. 37)

As noted, understanding the multiple dimensions in which oppression operates is essential to building a SJE project. Hardiman and Jackson (2007) ground this discussion in the realization that the dynamics of oppression is an all-encompassing phenomenon with many different manifestations and develop a conceptual framework upon which to base their efforts to help students understand how systems of oppression are constructed and maintained. Figure 1 below illustrates these dimensions.

Figure 1: Multiple dimensions in which oppression operates
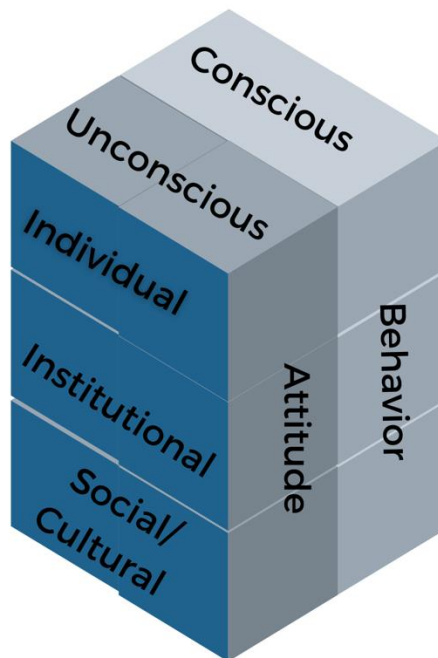
Source: Magiolo (2021, p. 83) based on Hardiman and Jackson (2007).

As can be apprehended from figure 1, an unconscious racist attitude, for example, can happen on two levels of the contextual dimension at the same time, as when someone protects his belongings because they saw a person with black skin approaching. This attitude was not conscious, but it was racist and contributes to the maintenance of this power relation in which the black person is the suspect and guilty of the crime. The oppressive attitude happened at the individual level – because it was the attitude of an individual – and at the social level – since it manifests the belief of the 'poor black thug'. From this same example, we use the applied dimension to explain how the oppression occurred, namely: the individual attitude was unconscious, as a reflection of the cultural beliefs that this person carries with them.

Understanding the image of the cube as the representation of the operations of oppression, we can observe that its dimensions will never be unique, they are always imbricated on several levels, that is, they are extremely complex operations. How, then, to bring such complexity into the classroom in this project of a SJE, specifically for the children's context?

Given the non-mandatory nature of this teaching modality, we do not have guidelines or official documents to guide its offer, causing a gap in both initial and continuing teacher training (TANACA, 2017; AVILA, 2019). Such a gap can culminate in decontextualized practices, outdated teaching approaches, and, therefore, inferior quality of education, especially when it comes to the public context. By proposing an LEC, we understand that teaching LA to/with children demands quitting vocabulary lists to integrate an approach that is in line with new concepts derived from more recent research according to the current needsof the current education system.

In light of the above, we emphasize our understanding of the holistic formation of the learner and our search for theories that will bring, to some extent, completeness to the LEC we intend. Having said that, to support our vision about the need to educate for a more just society, with equity and equal opportunities, we bring the SJEas a means to reach our goals.

We believe that, especially in the context of this research, the clear notion and awareness of oppression and power relations should be clear to the teacher, since the child – 6/7 years old in our case – may not have the cognitive conditions to establish such abstract reasoning. Therefore, we highlight two central principles of a SJE, which were transposed to the developed and applied DS: awareness and agency, since "Social justice education begins with people's lived experience as the ground for developing a critical perspective and actions directed toward social change." (BELL, 2007, p. 15)

So far, we have organized the theory at our disposal to understand how SJE can contribute to the holistic formation of the student-child as a social being immersed in complex relationships that require practice to understand and reorganize them. In the next section, we have other concepts that are important and complementary to our understanding of SJEin the context of AL in LEC and specific to the CS genre, whose production was the objective of the DS.

3 Complementary concepts to the proposed LEC and SJE

Besides the purpose of developing the concepts of awareness and agency of SJE with children, as AL teachers our goal was also to teach language, as assumed by what we call LED. For this, the elaboration of the DS counted on the imbrication of other theories that, in our view,

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complemented each other in these purposes, namely, the principle of openness/awareness to languages (TONELLI; CORDEIRO, 2015), the concept of emancipatory literature (ZILBERMAN, 2003; ZILBERMAN; MAGALHÃES, 1982) and the narrative-character system (CORDEIRO; DAGHÉ, 2020). For this cut, we highlight the last two which we will briefly address in this topic, because they are complementary to the theory related to the SJE and, therefore, dear to the analyses we bring in this article.

As for the NPS, it is a conceptual tool that helped us didacticize some teachable elements restricted to the textual genre CS and, in a fruitful way, also elaborate relationships with the fundamental principles of SJE, as described in section 3.2.

In the case of emancipatory literature, we justify its adoption by the need for criteria to choose the reference text to be used in the DS, since the textual genre selected for production was CS. The relevance of this theoretical reference is also applied to the direct relationship it establishes with the theories of SJ and SJE. This concept was fundamental for us to analyze and interpret the data resulting from our research since the view on emancipatory literature brings to the cognitive level of the child and exemplifies the principles of consciousness and agency, as we will see in the next section.

3.1 Emancipatory literature

In the specialized literature, several authors express the importance of understanding that the interactions between adult-child, teacher-student, and master-learner have been modified in the historical process of society's evolution and still denounce how childhood and its attributions were (un)valued at times (LAJOLO; ZILBERMAN, 1999; POSTMAN, 1999; ROSEMBERG, 1984; TONELLI; CHAGURI, 2014; ZILBERMAN; MAGALHÃES, 1982; ZILBERMAN, 2003; among others). The evolution of the production of books for children's audiences also exemplifies this scenario.

Lajolo and Zilberman (1999), as well as the other authors consulted (ROSEMBERG, 1984; ZILBERMAN; MAGALHÃES, 1982; ZILBERMAN, 2003), observe the influence of the History of society

in the stories written for children[3], since the first books *for*[4] children appear at the end of the 17th century[5], intending to educate according to conservative, authoritarian and moralist rules (LAJOLO; ZILBERMAN, 1999; ROSEMBERG, 1984; ZILBERMAN; MAGALHÃES, 1982; ZILBERMAN, 2003). It was a time of valorization of childhood, but the child was still seen as an empty jar whose knowledge should be poured therein to fill it, that is, there was no space for the student's agentivity and the school system had the teacher/adult as the central point. In this context, the children's book industry increased significantly in the number of works published in the country to meet the demands of a comprehensive school system. This rise happened in association with pedagogy, which used stories, fables, and tales to implant a moral and ethical value, whose system described the child as a simple observer, capable only of assimilating rules as presented to them. The book, therefore, "became one of the instruments through which pedagogy aimed to achieve its goals" (ZILBERMAN; MAGALHÃES, 1982, p. 12).

This kind of objective for which children's books were produced - and are still produced - can be denoted by the oral propagation of the classic tales such asLittle Red Riding Hood, The Three Little Pigs, The Little Red Hen, and so many others that help parents and teachers to 'dominate' the child through the story. Fairy tales, on the other hand, attribute to the magic element the function of solving the conflict of the narrative. It is only in the middle of the 19th century that the stories began to have children as main characters who manage, by themselves, without the help of magic or an adult figure, to solve their internal or external conflicts[6]. It is important to note that the fantastic and magic are still present in the narratives; however, agency and consciousness bring reader and character, reality and fantasy closer together (LAJOLO; ZILBERMAN, 1999; ROSEMBERG, 1984; ZILBERMAN; MAGALHÃES, 1982; ZILBERMAN 2003).

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[3] There is an intentional repetition of the term "History" in the Portuguese version. The quoted authors highlight the gist of the word História which capitalized means the subject or disciplinary field or as correspondent to stories.

[4] Rosemberg (1984, p. 29) discusses how children's literature legitimizes the asymmetrical adult-child relationship, in which adults are the "possessors of access to the creation" of the message and children are "dispossessed recipients," thus it is a communication from an adult to children rather than between adult and children.

[5] In this case, we can mention the first writers: Charles Perrault, and, later, in the 19th century, the Grimm brothers, who impose, as the only tool available to the fairy tale characters, fantasy, magic, or a supernatural force for the resolution of conflicts in the narratives.

[6] We can mention, in this context, Alice in wonderland, Dorothy, from The Wizard of OZ, Peter Pan, and in Brazil, the *Turma do Sítio do Pica-pau Amarelo* (LAJOLO; ZILBERMAN, 1999, p. 73 and p. 132).

Zilberman (2003, p. 215) presents the term "emancipatory model of literature" citing Monteiro Lobato as, perhaps, the first example of an author in Brazil who refused "the intermediation of the parents in the relationship between the child and reality, places his heroes in a position of autonomy concerning a superior and dominating instance". What this means is that children's books, which until then were based on an authoritarian pedagogy (LAJOLO; ZILBERMAN, 1999) – that lays down principles and laws for children and leaves no room for reflection, awareness, and agency of the individual – began, timidly, to value the aesthetics defended today as emancipatory literature.

Thus, what determines the emancipatory character of a literary work is the autonomy and freedom of thought expressed discursively in the figure(s) of the character(s), that is, the farther the text is from the commitment to transmit absolute and unquestionable truths, the more chances of emancipation and autonomy it will present to the reader; there are no stereotypical and generalized representations of reality and society as intrinsic characteristics of the narrative.

We consider it essential that the teacher devotes time and attention to choosing the works that will be used in the classroom because it is from the work with children's literature, emancipatory and not authoritarian, that truly liberating education finds fertile ground to develop. Therefore, the thematic content of the chosen CS was determined by the possibility of emancipation of the reader, that is, the autonomy of the character in resolving the conflict of the narrative was fundamental both to the choice of reference texts of the DS and to our analyses.

3.2 Narrative-character system

Like emancipatory literature, NCS was a methodological choice that, alongside DS, worked as a mediator to achieve students' reflection on diversity and how theyreact to it.

The NCS emerged in a project of the *Maison des Petits*[7] *Network* , a partnership between the Department of Public Education of the Canton of Geneva and the Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences of the University of Geneva. The group of teachers and researchers of the Network designed a flexible system, a minimal circuit of activities that fit easily into the daily planning,

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[7] Founded in 1913, the *Maison des Petits* was first and foremost a school for the observation and application of scientific discoveries in education and child development. Today it is a network of schools where research and training are developed through collaboration between teachers and researchers.

due to their request to improve the reading comprehension of children in the literacy process (AEBY DAGHÉ et al, 2019).

This is a conceptual tool based on the fact that the characters in an CS have characteristics that are responsible for the unfolding of the narrative plot. This tool was created from the understanding of the importance of the character within the narrative that, for Reuter (1988, p. 3, our translation[8]), "could be measured by the effects of his absence. Without it, how can we tell stories, summarize them, judge them, talk about them, and remember them?" For the author, it is the instance of the character that distinguishes the narrative text from other types (explanatory, argumentative, etc.).

According to Cordeiro (2015, p. 451-452, our translation[9]),

> The character is an essential element that contributes to the construction of meanings related to the story and, consequently, to the systematized teaching of reading comprehension. [...] Through their actions, their feelings, their appearance, and the way they are designated by the narrator, the characters shape the text in an intrinsic relationship with the dimensions that define the genre to which they belong.

Therefore, the character appears as an essential element in the construction of meaning in the reading of a story and, consequently, in a more systematic teaching of reading comprehension. Thus, it is possible to state that by becoming aware of the importance of the character in the narrative, the reader can expand their reading comprehension as they mentally organize three factors: intentions, feelings, and actions of the characters. Thus, the NCS starts from the triangulation of these factors of each character so as to understand how this is articulated to the other characters of a narrative, as shown in figure 2.

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[8] In the original: *L'importance du personnage (2) pourrait se mesurer aux effets de son absence. Sans lui, comment raconter des histoires, les résumer, les juger, en parler, s'en souvenir?*

[9] In the original: "*O personagem é um elemento essencial que contribui para a construção das significações relacionadas ao conto e, consequentemente, para um ensino sistematizado da compreensão em leitura. [...] Através de suas ações, de seus sentimentos, de seu aspecto e da maneira como são designados pelo narrador, os personagens dão forma ao texto numa relação intrínseca com as dimensões que definem o gênero ao qual pertence.*"

Figure 2: Narrative-character system (NCP)
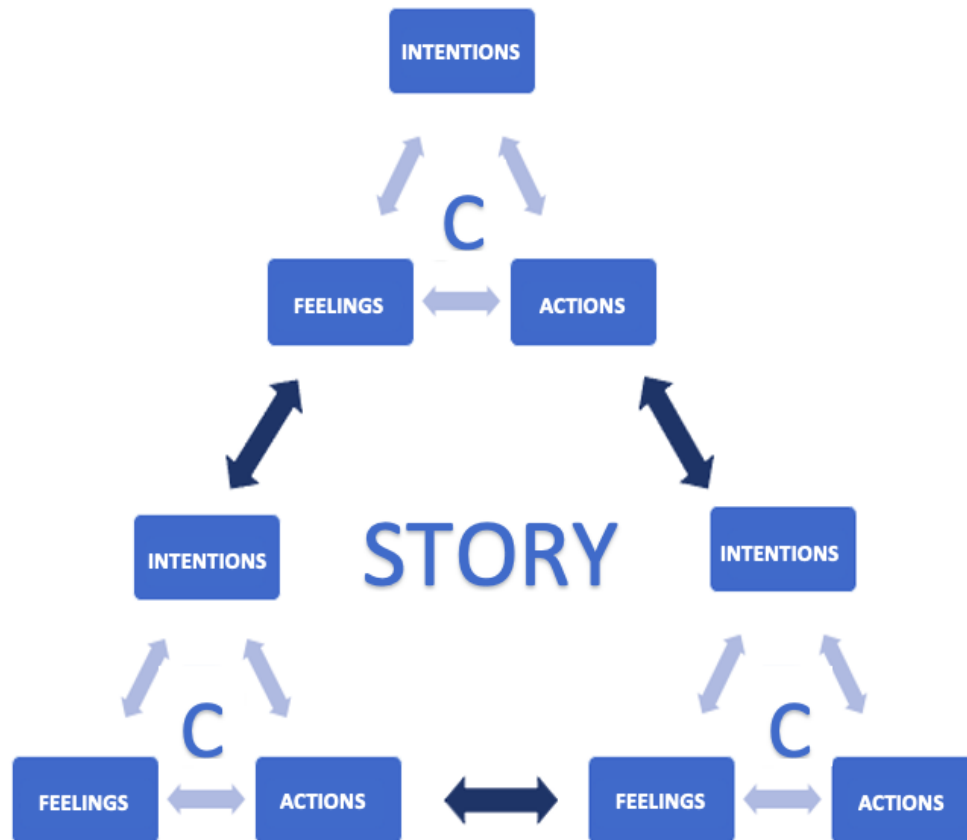
Source: Magiolo (2021) based on Cordeiro and Daghé (2020).

Figure 2 shows that the relationships between the characters are dynamic. Thus, from the identification of the characters' intentions, actions, and feelings, also from the interaction between the triangulations of each one within a narrative, the child understands such characteristics and how they operate in the text and in the story in addition to being able to understand the narrative at more elaborate levels.

In agreement with the proposal of Cordeiro and Daghé (2020), the NCS can be explored by teachers in the classroom within a minimum circuit of activities (MCA), as a flexible and modular tool that can be integrated into various pedagogical practices and consists of 4 phases: 1) discover the book by the teacher reading aloud; decoding is not the goal, the teacher performs the reading highlighting all phenomena through intonation; 2) individual questions after the first reading linked to the narrative-character system: who are the characters and what do they want (intentions)? What is

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the problem that each character will encounter? How is this problem solved? (conceptual tool: intentions, actions, and feelings); 3) character drawing: which characters did you draw? Why did you choose this character (check if they understood who the character is)? What does this character do in the story?; 4) reconstructing the narrative-character system with the children: construction of the frame with the character's identification, what he wants, what he does, and what he feels.

We believe that the NCS can work out really well for some reasons: 1) it deepens the understanding of the character and, consequently, of the textual genre CS; 2) it focuses the student's attention on the characters' intentions, feelings, and actions, coherently with our conception of SJE and empathy towards diversity; 3) it mobilizes the students' language abilities during the minimum circuit of activities; 4) it can be integrated into the DS without major difficulties; and 5) it uses the multisemiotic systems provided by literature.

In summary, we consider that the concepts presented in this section talk intimately with each other and with the other theories presented in the previous chapters. We then have a entanglement of theoretical systematizations that we put into practice by didacticizing the textual genre CS in a DS.

4 Methodological path

To contextualize the research, we describe how we achieved the results we present in this article. Our general goal was to understand the contributions that the DS procedure and the CS genre can offer to the teaching of AL and to the promotion of concepts related to SJ in childhood. Our first step was to delimit the term CS[10]. We established relationships between the textual characteristics of CS and the underlying theories of SJE, which configured another justification for its choice, besides the familiarity of the researchers with the genre. The problem/conflict situation to be solved by the narrative, for example, was an important textual element for the unfolding of this research.

We then proceeded to the elaboration of the piloted DS. Taking into account the application context[11], we prioritized some elements of the teachable dimension of the genre in terms of linguistic

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[10] We chose to use this term to designate the adventure narratives (according to SDI) that we will use in the DS. It is valid to clarify that not every story for children fits into what, here, we call a children's story. The works were carefully studied and selected, and this process will be detailed in the dissertation.

[11] The DS was piloted in a 1st grade class (6/7 years old) of a public school in Londrina. The students had a 45-minute English class per week. The class was composed of 25 students, 3 of whom had had previous formal contact with the

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content: actions and character description. The thematic content had a larger space in the piloting of the DS[12]. The initial and final production were individual: the students used an illustration made by themselves to help this step, which was recorded, therefore, in an oral format.

The piloting took place between September and December 2019[13]. All lessons were videotaped and transcribed for later analysis, setting up our primary data. We intended to reapply and generate new data after adapting the DS according to the results of our analyses. The final production was carried out between December 13 and 17, 2019. Because it took placein the last days of the school year, only 10 of the 25 students were still attending school. Among these, we elected two final productions to bring in the analysis section and justify our results.

In general, the research has two analysis entries, but, as shown in the table below, we bring only one of them in this article.

Table 1: Objectives, research questions, analytical lenses, and analysis procedures

Specific Objective	Investigate the relationship between the children's story genre, the incorporation of the narrative-characters system, the choice of thematic content, and the outcomes presented in English language learning.
Research question	1. How can the chosen genre and the conceptual tool narrative-character system, as well as the thematic content linked to principles of social justice education, contribute to children's English language learning?
Corpus of analysis	Student productions semiotized in the transcripts
Lenses of analysis	- Narrative-Character System (AEBY DAGHÉ et al, 2019). - Education for Social Justice (ADAMS; BELL; GRIFFIN, 2007; FREIRE, 1987). - Emancipatory literature (ZILBERMAN, 2003; ZILBERMAN; MAGALHÃES, 1982)
Analysis procedures	- Interpretation of the thematic content linked to education for social justice mobilized in the textual plan of the participants' final productions. - Analysis of the actions of the characters created by the students to identify how agency occurred in the textual plane.

Source: the authors based on Magiolo (2021).

As can be inferred from the table, we used as one of our lenses of analysis the theoretical framework of SJE and emancipatory literature to draw interpretations related to the thematic content mobilized by students in their productions. Therefore, we based ourselves on the work of Adams, Bell,

English language in early childhood education. The classes were offered through an extension project of the FELICE Research Group led by Professor Juliana Reichert Assunção Tonelli.

[12] The DS piloted is fully published in the appendices of the dissertation and can be accessed via the link: http://www.bibliotecadigital.uel.br/document/?code=vtls000234809.

[13] We emphasize that, in compliance with the ethical issues of research involving human beings, the research that gave rise to this article was approved by the Ethics Committee for Research with Human Beings under opinion number 3.565.527

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and Griffin (2007) as well as Freire (1987), to elaborate a framework of criteria for such interpretations, thus, seeking to understand if and how this thematic content is linked to SJ diversity (power relations and oppression) and if there was agentivity of the characters at the textual level. Table 2, below, presents our criteria:

Table 2: Criteria and analysis descriptors

It is possible to deduce from the thematic content mobilized	
1. Power relations	● Opressor x oppressed
2. The role in which the character is placed	● Opressor ● Oppressed ● Ally
3. Types of oppression	● "isms" (racism, machism, classicism) ● Reproductions of hegemony
If the character demonstrated agency, how did it come about?	
1. Who acted at the textual level?	● Main Character ● Secondary character ● Narrator
2. In what role is the agent?	● Oppressed ● Ally
3. In what way does the character employ the agency?	● Disjunctive ● Implied
4. In what context does the oppression to which the action is directed take place?	● Individual (attitudes and behaviors) ● Institutional (policies, practices, and norms) ● Social (values, customs, and beliefs)

Source: Magiolo (2021, p. 139)

As it can be observed, we articulated the theoretical framework to elaborate the criteria of analysis of the thematic content mobilized by the students in their productions. We understood this to be a pertinent process since both the presentation of the situation and the class project were very explicit in problematizing the position of the enunciator of the CS known by the children, who are usually adults who write for children. Therefore, our proposal was for the children to put themselves in the position of authors to convey their feelings, talk about problems (at school or out of school), and express something that would be bothering them, in other words, they should think about a problematic issue for them and try to convey their vision of that problem through their CS.

For this article, it was necessary to select two productions. As criteria for this selection, we looked for the productions that most presented vocabulary and structures in the studied AL since our goal is to demonstrate how thematic content is related to the development of students' language skills.

With such criteria in mind, in the subsequent section, we present the selected productions, students named S3 and S6, and their respective analyses.

5 Analysis and results

In this section, in which we present the final production of two students, S3 and S6, we chose to highlight some information about the research participant, because a common point between the productions is the expression of their socio-history and subjectivity in the narrative. We interpret this fact as an indication of appropriation of the textual genre because the participants understood and put into practice the relationship established between the text and the author's way of being, thinking, acting, and feeling. Moreover, the students could have expressed their subjectivities in another way, but they proposed to do it through a textual genre characterized by the narration element, lending then feelings and particular ways of seeing the world to the characters and narrators of their story.

In the same measure, we cannot deny that the stance we adopted by using the principles and strategies for SJE while conducting the classes also played an important role and cannot be disassociated from this process. It is important to emphasize, however, that the look we cast, having as analytical lenses the theoretical framework referring to SJE, has as a unit of analysis the narrative created by the participants in the production, which means that our interpretations are related to the discursive level and not to the real life and to the student's abilities, even though in some moments we mobilize contextual conjectures to interpret the data.

Because the textual genre elected is a literary genre, we brought into our theoretical referential the concept of emancipatory literature by Zilberman and Magalhães (1982), for we understand that it complements the notion of SJE agency in a more concrete way, which makes our analysis focused on the textual domain, a unit of analysis on which it is possible to construct hypotheses. Therefore, our intention with the class project was that students could express their point of view in the face of a problem (preferably involving thematic content related to differences) and evaluate if and how the character's agency occurred on the discursive domain of the narrative[14].

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[14] By inferring that a particular student did or did not exhibit such agency in his or her production, we are not asserting that, in fact, this occurred in his or her real life and that it was due to the DS lessons and activities. To state such assumptions

Thus, in the sequence, we proceeded to analyze the two productions over which we elaborate our interpretations seeking to identify the student's worldviews expressed through the textual genre CS concerning power relations and the characters' form of action, according to Table 2 (section 4).

Table 3: S3 final production[15]

S3	- Gender: male - Age: 7 years old - Has a diagnosis of ADHD - Goes from extreme engagement tototal lack of interest
1 2	S3: Once upon a time, *era uma vez uma floresta* very dangerous. *Todo mundo que entrava lá escutava*: Uhh::: *Um dia*, one day, *o* crocodile is [gestures as if he is walking]
3	T: walking
4	S3: Yes! *E caiu na armadilha do caçador.*
5	T: Oh no!
6	S3: Yes! *Caiu lá no fundo, e não conseguia sair de lá. Foi ficando nervoso, nervoso, nervoso...*
7	T: How do you say?
8	S3: *é:::* Angry?
9	T: very good, angry... nervous
10	S3: *Só deu certo quando apareceu o:::... esqueci*
11	T: Warthog?
12 13	S3: Yes! *E disse assim:* "calma meu friend, *vai dar tudo certo, segura minha* hand". *Ele foi lá e saiu do buraco e o caçador ficou sem graça e foi embora porque os amigos eram muito* friends.
14	T: Beautiful story! I loved it.

Source: the authors based on Magiolo (2021, p. 149).

The students' productions were collected individually, however, this moment occurred during a circle seating arrangement dynamic composed of all students who, one at a time, were invited to tell their CS. Even though the initial production of the students is not an object of analysis in this article, it is important that the student was not willing to perform his initial production, unlike the final product that, as we notice in Table 3, advanced in terms of the student's effort both in the story telling itself – using onomatopoeia in line 1, for example, when referring to the noise of the forest – and in the use of the CS.

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with certainty would require a longitudinal research process. In this sense, we will be redundant in reaffirming that this is one - among many - possible interpretations from the theoretical lens we have mobilized, namely, the SJE.

[15] S3: Once upon a time, once upon a time there was a very dangerous forest. Everyone who entered there heard: Uhh/One day, one day, the crocodile is [gestures as if he is walking]/T: walking/S3: Yes! and fell into the trap of the hunter./T: Oh no!/S3: Yes! It fell into the deep end, and couldn't get out of there. He was getting nervous, nervous, nervous.../T: How do you say?/S3: is::: Angry?/T: very good, angry... nervous/S3: it only worked when the:::... I forget/T: Warthog?/S3: Yes, and I said: "calm down my friend, everything will be alright, hold my hand". He went there and came out of the hole and the hunter was not happy and left because his friends were very friendly./T: Beautiful story! I loved it.

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In this respect, we highlight the use of time markers in lines 1 (once upon a time) and 2 (one day). The student also used the appropriate verb tense for textual genre CS during most of his production (even though it is in the first language), besides undertaking the lexicon learned in the DS modules to refer to the main character: crocodile (line 2). Another example happens in line 10 when the student recognizes that he knows the lexicon in AL and asks for help from the teacher who gives him the word he is looking for (warthog). This can be understood as a demonstration of effort on S3's part to fulfill the agreed-upon class project.

It should be noted that the adverb and adjective used by the student (very dangerous, in line 1) describe only the place of the narrative (the forest) and not the character as we expected.

The overall plan of S3's text follows the narrative discourse type presenting the initial situation (a crocodile enters a dangerous forest) followed by a conflict (the character falls into the trap of the hunter and cannot get out of it) and the subsequent resolution (a friend appears and saves him). However, the narrative brings less information about the characters; they lack characterization: what made the crocodile fall into the trap? Was he distracted? Why did he enter the forest if it was dangerous? What were his intentions when he entered the place? Given this, we realize the importance of the appropriation of the NCS (CORDEIRO; DAGHÉ, 2020) by students not only in the understanding of an CS, as our theoretical framework showed us, but also in the production of the textual genre.

We also believe that, although we observed a necessary message about the value of friendship at the end of the text, the thematic content (awareness of differences) was different from the others, since there was no depiction of the characters; it seems to us that there was, therefore, a timid expression about the power relations between the characters (hunter *versus* crocodile), due to the fact that there were no further explanation about them and their characteristics. These power relations are overcome – so to speak – at the discursive level of the text by the friendly relationship between the crocodile and the boar, as we can see in line 13 ("the hunter got bored and left because his friends were very friendly").

As for the agency, we can interpret that it occurred on the part of the secondary character, the boar, when he helps his friend to get out of the trap, denoting the absence of the magical element as a solution to the conflict. The agent, therefore, is in the role of an ally who performs implicitly in the

situation, which we could not define as a single context of oppression due to the lack of information in the text.

Table 4: S6 final production[16]

S6	● Gender: male ● Age: 7 years old ● Reported anxiety about learning to read and write ● Very organized and dedicated ● Difficulty with literacy
1 2	S6: Once upon a time, there was jungle. *Tinha uma* school *na* jungle. *Todos os animals iam pra* school *de manhã bem cedinho* in the morning. *Bem, acontece que era o dia da leitura e o João tava* very afraid *de ler na frente da sala*.
3	T: Who is João? João? *Quem é*? The lion?
4	S6: Yes, lion, João. [pointing at his draw]
5	T: His name is João.
6	S6: Yes.
7	T: OK, go on.
8 9	S6: *Bem*, João [points], very afraid. *Mas então... daí... daí né... eh::: esqueci. Não, pera, lembrei. Daí ele foi lá na frente e fez, bem, aquilo lá que... o que a Tia Gabi falou pra ele fazer.*
10	T: *Tia* Gabi? Me? Teacher Gabi?
11	S6: Yes, yes, yes, teacher.
12	T: What?
13	S6: *Respirou bem fundo, e começou a ler.*
14	T: Wow!
15	S6: *Antes ele começou a gaguejar, mas daí... daí... bem, ele foi indo, foi indo e aí foi. Leu tudinho. Ficou muito* happy.

Source: the authors based on Magiolo (2021, p. 157).

It should be mentioned, first, that in the transcription we chose to highlight the word "João" since the student used his name in the production; therefore, it was necessary to change this word to preserve the identity of the research participant-child. In the general plan of the text, we find a story about a student who was afraid to read in front of others, however, the semantic field used by the student resumes the thematic content worked in the DS: animals in the forest. Thus, the student imprinted his worldview by transposing it to a narrative text, that is, he transformed his experience into the textual genre CS, creating a character (João, a lion) and a scenario for his story (reading situation).

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[16] S6: Once upon a time, there was jungle. There was a school in the jungle. All the animals went to school very early in the morning. Well, it happened to be reading day and John was very afraid of reading in front of the class. / T: Who is John? John? Who is he? The lion?/ S6: Yes, lion, John. [pointing at his draw]./ T: His name is John./ S6: Yes./ T: OK, go on./ S6: Well, John [points], very afraid. But then... so... so... eh::: I forgot. No, wait, I remembered. Then he went to the front and did, well, what... what Aunt Gabi told him to do./ T: Aunt Gabi? Me? Teacher Gabi?/ S6: Yes, yes, yes, teacher./ T: What?/ S6: He took a deep breath, and started reading./ T: Wow!/ S6: Before he started stuttering, but then... then... well, he went on and on and on and on. He read everything. He was very happy.

The student also used the NCS to organize the thematic content as the conflict is triggered by the lion's feeling of fear towards the day of reading. His intention to read correctly is implicit throughout the text while his action of breathing and calming down to perform the reading is related to the resolution of the problem. The main character is a lion that, in our view, represents the student himself and his fears, since he gave his name to the animal. The teacher, realizing this issue, enquires the student to make sure that he is talking about the character and not himself (line 3), and the student confirms that it is the lion, pointing to his drawing (line 4).

We also see that the student used the semantic field and, consequently, vocabulary taught during the DS. Thus, we highlight that S6 mobilized the lexicon in the second language to name some elements of the story, such as "school" (line 1), "jungle" (line 1), "animals" (line 1), and "lion" (line 4); temporal markers such as "once upon a time" (line 1) and "in the morning" (line 2); adjective and adverb of intensity, as in "happy" (line 15) and "very afraid" (lines 2 and 8); verbal tense appropriate to the narrative sequence of the GT in LA (there was a jungle, line 1) and his first language (L1) (*tinha, iam, era*, i.e., had, went, was; lines 1 and 2).

It is significant to think that, in this production, the resolution of the problem points to the agency of the main character: the lion manages to overcome his fear, but this agency only happens through the teacher who teaches him to calm himself through breathing. We categorize this act as belonging to the main character in the role of the oppressed acting against social oppression because there is a collective pressure on children to learn to read in the first grade, but it is also visibly institutional because the student reports a common school practice experienced by him within the school institution. We can, therefore, attribute the role of an ally to the teacher in this scenario, helping him to deal with the pressure to which he is submitted.

We conclude this section seeking to answer our research question: in what way can the chosen genre and the conceptual tool NCS, as well as the thematic content linked to principles of SJE, collaborate on children's English language learning? We believe that the children's learning of the AL was more substantial when it comes to the thematic content and the use of the NCS, that is: 1) temporal marker – mobilized from a characteristic of the CS; 2) lexicon to name the animals – mobilized from the chosen reference text; 3) lexicon referring to the characters' feelings – mobilized by the incorporation of the NCS in the DS activities.

Even so, we emphasize that the exposure to the engaging thematic content related to the SJEand the genre CS pushed in a non-explicit way the appropriation of other elements which we did not systematize in the learning, as it was the case of the appropriate verb tense to the narrative sequence. In the same sense, we also noticed that, as the specialized literature had already announced, learning an AL might contribute to an increasing awareness about L1. All in all, through this analysis, it was possible to verify the following: 1) the NCS deepens the understanding of the character and, consequently, of the textual genre CS; and 2) by focusing the students' attention on the characters' intentions, feelings, and actions, the thematic content related to SJEand empathy towards diversity gained prominence in the DS application.

Final remarks

As demonstrated throughout this article, SJE has complex roots and a bold project of a conceived liberating education, according to Freire (1987). Understanding the multiple dimensions and levels in which oppression operates, as well as the power relations and the reproduction of hegemonies in everyday life is not an easy task for adults, let alone children (6 years old in our context).

With this, we recognize that SJE, as well as an LEC in English with children beginning the literacy process, is, according to our project, only a seed sown in the ground. However, let us not forget that every seed is a potential tree. If it is not planted, it cannot be harvested. Just as we advocate the teaching of textual genre early on to ensure its mastery over time (DOLZ; NOVERRAZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004), we also believe that the critical and liberating dialogue should happen from the beginning of life, in the first years of schooling, but with age-appropriate goals, in a perspective of what we are assuming as awareness to the social plurality in which they are immersed.

When we affiliate ourselves to the theoretical-methodological precepts exposed so far and adopt them as a stance in our praxis, it is not about a sequence of activities with an objective that ends as soon as the DS is over. It is about implementing such stance and becoming educators for Social Justice throughout our lives, without an endpoint. As Freire (1996, p. 26) states, "the unfinishedness of being or its incompleteness is part of life experience. Where there is life, there is unfinished work." The

human being is never finished. On the contrary, they are always in evolution, just like language, genres, etc.

We believe, as social interactionists, that the word development (understood from Vygotsky) is the key to the understanding that we do not expect complete emancipation from the participant child in our research, but the beginning of a process. We intend to act on theirZone of Proximal Development (ZPD) so that, starting from simpler concepts, they can appropriate more complex constructs that will give them the possibility of becoming aware of their place in this entanglement of social relations in which they find themselves.

The basic principles, therefore, of a SJE in childhood are consciousness and agency, since, as already elucidated in the previous section, it is vital that critical dialogue happens with the oppressed (FREIRE, 1996), notwithstanding that SJE is for everyone: oppressor, privileged, allies, etc.

Thus, we conclude this article with the lucidity that language is always associated with development and, therefore, it is through language that we intend to access this socio-historical form of development. Therefore, we understand that by proposing a DS centered on SJE, we aim to develop during the modules and activities its fundamental principles: awareness and agency under differences. We hope that, based on the questions raised, children will be able not only to better understand the world, and become aware of the differences, but also to take a stand and act towards them. In this sense, we understand that the space created for the production of CS is an excellent opportunity to put into practice the principles of consciousness and agency advocated by the theories of SJE.

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