

Study of the language from a sociocultural perspective*

Estudo da linguagem a partir da perspectiva sociocultural

Estudio del lenguaje desde una perspectiva sociocultural

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Abstract

Objetive: this paper aims to determine the contributions of recent research on language from a sociocultural perspective. **Methodology:** a thematic content analysis was performed based on pre-established categories: internal language, teaching types, bilingualism, and other emerging categories: games and practical participation. **Psych Info, EBSCO, JSTOR and RedALyC** were the sources of information and 38 published research articles were selected from indexed journals since 2010. **Results:** from the sociocultural perspective, it was evident that, these studies contribute to a diversity of issues related to language, such as: practical participation, the process of change from a guided to an internal language, the

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importance of games in development, the benefits of explicit teaching, and the impact of learning a second language. **Conclusions:** it is concluded that some topics will seem to be studied in abundance but not from a Sociocultural Theory perspective. The human being is a product of different social, cultural and individual contexts; thus, there will always be different approaches to address issues related to language.

Keywords: Language; Sociocultural approach; Effects

Resumo

Objetivo: determinar as contribuições de pesquisas recentes sobre a linguagem a partir da perspectiva sociocultural. **Metodologia:** uma análise de conteúdo temática foi realizada com base em categorias pré-estabelecidas: linguagem interna, tipos de educação, bilinguismo, e outras de caráter emergente: jogo e participação na prática. As bases de dados que foram utilizadas para a busca foram Psych Info, EBSCO, JSTOR e RedALyC. Foram selecionadas 38 pesquisas publicadas em revistas indexadas desde 2010. **Resultados:** evidenciou-se que, desde a perspectiva sociocultural, os estudos fornecem uma variedade de temas relacionados à linguagem, como a participação na prática, o processo de mudança de uma linguagem dirigida a uma interna, a importância do jogo no desenvolvimento, benefícios do ensino explícito e o impacto da aprendizagem de uma segunda língua. **Conclusões:** conclui-se que algumas questões parecem saturadas, mas uma teoria sociocultural apostaria a que na realidade isso é inverossímil. O ser humano é o resultado de diferentes contextos sociais, culturais e individuais, de modo que sempre existirão diferentes perspectivas para abordar questões relacionadas à linguagem.

Palavras-chave: Linguagem; Abordagem Sociocultural; Efeitos.

Resumen

Objetivo: determinar los aportes de investigaciones recientes sobre el lenguaje desde la perspectiva sociocultural. **Metodología:** se realizó un análisis de contenido temático con base en categorías preestablecidas: lenguaje interno, tipos de enseñanza, bilingüismo, y otras de carácter emergente: juego y participación en práctica. Las bases de datos que se utilizaron para la búsqueda fueron Psych Info, EBSCO, JSTOR y RedALyC. Se seleccionaron 38 investigaciones publicadas en revistas indexadas desde 2010. **Resultados:** se evidenció que, desde la perspectiva sociocultural, los estudios aportan una diversidad de temas relacionados con el lenguaje como la participación en práctica, el proceso de cambio de un lenguaje dirigido a uno interno, la importancia del juego en el desarrollo, los beneficios de la enseñanza explícita y el impacto del aprendizaje de un

segundo idioma. **Conclusiones:** se concluye que unos temas parecerán saturados, pero una teoría sociocultural apostaría a que en realidad esto es inverosímil. El ser humano es producto de distintos contextos sociales, culturales e individuales, por lo que siempre existirán miradas distintas para abordar los temas relacionados con el lenguaje.

Palabras clave: Lenguaje; Enfoque sociocultural; Efectos.

Introduction

The language from a sociocultural perspective is being studied from different approaches. On one hand, Rodríguez (2009) focused on internal or biological issues related to the subject and about social and cultural aspects as the external ones and studied the relationship between both these aspects. Other authors focused on the practices that occur in academic environments and within the academia context, even in virtual contexts (Ferreira, 2014, Peterson, 2012). In the same way, Halle et al. (2014) and Valdez (2012) focused on a person's principal language and observed the differences in those who learn a second language. Therefore, this research aims to know what has been contributing to the knowledge of language from a sociocultural perspective.

Why focus on studying the language from a sociocultural perspective? To answer this question, it is necessary to know previous studies, or to review, the most important contributions of classical authors from this approach.

Vygotsky (1929) stated that human knowledge is produced from an interpersonal to an intrapersonal field due to the subject being born within a pre-existing sociocultural context and, therefore, the subject gradually internalizes the cultural activities, which manifest into mental ones. On the other hand, Luria (1984) proposed that the analysis and classification of objects by the language make human thought possible; this, alongside its use as a means of communication allow for the transmission of sensorial and rational representations throughout social history (Luria, 1984).

Thus, Vygotski (1994), Luria (1987) and Orrú (2012) argue that mediation of language establishes a qualitative distinction between the superior mental functions of human beings and the inferior mental functions of other species. It means that the planning of voluntary action mediated by the language is a quality that is not exclusive in human beings (Vygotski, 1930). Therefore, it is important to emphasize that the large body of knowledge that includes the sociocultural perspective is permeated or traversed through the main role of the language. The sociocultural perspective stated by Vygotski and Luria about the language is still valid. In this sense, Daniels (2008) has compiled the topics of most recent research from this perspective as theoretical framework. However, these researches conceptualize cognitive processes in general and use the language in an indirect way. In particular, these studies focused on how learning and cognition are generally positioned and distributed within the subjects and in which subjects they are used. In other words, cognitive processes as language must be studied out of a reductionist approach that focuses on the brain and physical objects. It is necessary to understand these processes in a comprehensive

way, it means considering the individual issues and interactions between people, resources and, materials within specific contexts (Daniels, 2008).

Therefore, the language in the sociocultural theory seems to be overwhelming for many researchers, since this theory considers a variety of possible interactions among people, resources and materials. That is why research is needed in this direction in order to guide the path that seems too fuzzy and complex, despite, having no reason to be. Vygotsky (1934) exposed the need to continue studying the language and culture as frames of reference which guide the human being in the process of experiencing, communicating and understanding reality.

Therefore, the knowledge about the contributions of recent research to language from a sociocultural perspective allows giving a voice to experiences in different types of societies and cultures. The knowledge from the studies conducted from this perspective will allow the possibility to know what to focus on, how much more complex the research on language should be, what is lacking according to their studies' limitations, what topics are highlighted as further researches, and whether all these topics correspond to the diversity of contexts.

In addition, a constant study on the concept of "language" is necessary because it embraces many of the topics of sociocultural theory (Luria, sf). These issues encompass everything that distinguishes human beings, how they learn, how they develop, and how the language influences their consciousness, among others. In fact, language is a complex matter because people are a product of a diversity of contexts, circumstances and individual issues related to language. It is essential to continue researching on this topic, having in mind that the language influences the individual training and continuing contribution to the knowledge about the role of the socio-cultural development of the mind.

Methodology

A list of terms review was created in order to facilitate the literature review. The terms were based on previous and unpublished researches about the topic. The search terms included words or phrases and their combinations related to the following categories: sociocultural approach, language, inner language, English as a second language, among others. Psych Info, EBSCO, JSTOR and RedALyC were the databases used for the search.

The references were divided into theoretical and empirical sources. The theoretical sources were used to build the theoretical framework, specifically, the primary sources of the sociocultural theory such as Vygotski statements, among others. The empirical sources were gathered with other criterion: to be

published in indexed magazines from 2010 onwards. This time cut criterion was used as evidence to support the sociocultural perspective influence and current validity. The criterion of “recent study” had been established as a period of five years from the beginning of the research. Finally, it was essential that the researches dealt directly with the impact of language on human development or, at least, that the topic was implicitly related to the research.

The terms and their combinations: language, inner language, second language, types of teaching, Vygotski, among others, were searched in pre-selected databases to find out literature on language in human development with influence of the sociocultural perspective. The search revealed 38 empirical studies in English and Spanish which were organized into the table designed by Columbus (2016). This tool allowed the identification of: approaches; scopes; designs; population; techniques for gathering information and analysis; main findings; limitations; and recommendations. The table also includes disciplines and countries from which each research was conducted. The purpose of the instrument was to facilitate the summary of the studies in order to share and compare the authors' proposals of the current study.

The information was analyzed thanks to a thematic content analysis, in which, analytical constructs or rules of inference were used to comprehend the answers to the research questions (White and Marsh, 2006). Such analytic constructs may depart from existing theories or practices, the experience, knowledge of an expert in this field and/or previous research. In this research, the constructs arise from the authors' understanding of the sociocultural perspective. It was not intended to inform that the "content" of this analysis is explicit.

Thus, what is termed as the "content" of the analysis is a consensual interpretation among the authors (Harwood and Garry, 2003). This content will be "thematic" in general patterns identified in the information - the "themes" - will be identified, but there will not be any in-depth examination of their specific details, once identified as patterns. This is due to the choice of a more subjective interpretation of the content rather than that other methods such as discourse analysis, semiotic analysis, among others.

The categories or topics chosen by the authors corresponded to the research object analyzed and shared several approaches: sociocultural perspective, language, direct speech, internal language, explicit teaching and learning of a second language. The categories and topics can be understood as basic psychological and social processes (Corbin and Strauss, 2008, Piñuel, 2002, White and Marsh, 2006). The categories may emerge unexpected, but, they are essential for this research. To this end, they allowed the research to examine categories or subjects which were not considered; to the extent that issues related to participation in practice and game came to fruition.

Results

Quantitative and qualitative results will be presented. The quantitative data was extracted and organized into the table proposed by Columbus (2016). These types of results have theoretical implications and they are the intended topic of this research. These implications go beyond the analysis of thematic content, but they also contribute to the knowledge of recent researches on language from a sociocultural perspective.

The quantitative data will be followed by the qualitative findings from a thematic content analysis method. The quantitative data describes aspects focused on the language and socio-cultural theoretical framework; the qualitative data presents specific topics of these researches. A deductive approach was chosen to present the results.

The results will expose the general topics applied to human development and complete cognitive processes: participation in practice and the transition from guided language to the inner language. Sometimes, these issues indirectly impact the development of language, and other times, the subject is directly influenced, through specific topics which can be seen as factors that influence the development of language: game, explicit teaching and the impact of second language learning. Thus, some subjects focused on the topic of language in an indirect way while others are much more direct. However, all aspects consider a socio-cultural perspective, thus they reveal the current state of how the subject of language and its contributions in particular contexts are studied from this perspective.

Research design

In terms of this approach, (20 studies) 53% of the 38 researches show qualitative approach, (11 studies) 29% researches show a quantitative approach, and (7 studies) 18% show a mixed approach. This is extremely important because qualitative research facilitates the deepening of the social phenomena. For instance, many researchers analyzed information through case studies, semi-structured interviews, ethnographic studies, among others. Therefore, the data does not belong to an extensive number of cases, but the few which were analyzed in this research are very complete and deep.

On the other hand, (23 researches) 61% of the research followed a longitudinal design, the data was gathered on several occasions, and the remainder, the data was collected on one occasion using a cross-sectional method. The prevalence of longitudinal designs supports the relevance of in-depth analysis. This type of

design allows gathering information of change and this is very important when contextualizing data and promoting a sociocultural perspective.

Regarding the populations under study, 19 researches out of 38 (50%) correspond to study the of children, 5 researches (13%) to young people, 12 researches (32%) to adults and only 2 researches (5%) studied the combination of children and adults. Psychology and Pedagogy prefer to study younger population due to the interest in human development and cognitive processes during the early years which shows the change on these aspects. Likewise, much of that content is repeated in later ages.

The reviewed researches were conducted in different countries. 33% were carried out in the United States, 11% in England and Iran (respectively), and 7% in Russia and Africa. The researches were from Australia, Argentina, Colombia, Spain, Netherlands, Canada, South Korea and Japan. This information is considered in order to know the geographical scope of the sociocultural theory and the geographical boundaries of the search, which were closely related to the language of the researches. Although, there is a whole revisionist approach to Vygotsky's statements, this sociocultural theory and its translations are still used (Yasnitsky and van der Veer, 2016). In fact, its global impact is undeniable.

84% of the research was published in English and the rest in Spanish. On the other hand, 12 of the researches were related to a second language, mainly English. Finally, and as mentioned above, most of the research was published in the United States 33%, followed by England (11%). All of the above presents a bias within the international scientific community towards English as a type of universal language in academia. In fact, and for further research, many recommendations delimit as object of study to consider the research design as well as knowing why the results are published in certain languages, why they focus on certain populations, among other issues.

In terms of which disciplines the articles investigated, 19 researches (50%) referred to the Education field and, 11 researches (29%) in Psychology. Researches of mathematics and biology, among other disciplines, were also analyzed. This demonstrates the scope of the sociocultural theory. Vygotsky's theory had a great impact on education due to the topic supported by this study finding. The close relationship between Psychology and Education is not an extraordinary revelation (Vygotski, 1986).

The descriptive data has been presented and it must be contrasted with the content of the researches. To this end, the common themes between the different researches to form the corpus of the present research. It is remarkable that they support the specific knowledge that is the product of the sociocultural perspective in relation to language.

Psychological and / or social processes

The researches being studied had common subjects related to psychological and / or social processes. In this section, the categories and / or themes that emerged from the studies are being explored: participation in practice, process of transit from a language to an inner one, the importance of game in development, benefits of explicit teaching and the impact of a second language. As previously mentioned, these categories emerged from the thematic content analysis with pre-established and emerging categories. The general processes involved in human development such as participation in practice and manifestation of inner language will be discussed, followed by, the more specific processes such as explicit teaching and issues related to second languages..

Participation in practice

The researches have explored how the process of any practice involves learning as part of the study of general social processes and it is based on theoretical aspects, stated by Vygotski (1934) and Wertsch (1998). The participation in practice within our communities revealed a type of database, from which people get general principles and construct models based on their worlds. Communities will value these practices allowing them to be repeated and reinforced. In other words, the interaction with other people within the context where practices occur plays a very important role in a person learning and development. Practices such as schooling generate specific products or learning which the literature review confirmed.

Townend and Brown (2016) studied the understanding of the self-concept in excellent students. These cases are very valid to the study of language from a sociocultural perspective. The students who are intellectually gifted and at the same time have a disability seem to have a large influence on teachers and the context in which they are educated. In this situation, a boy sees his achievements not as real achievements but concentrates on thinking due to his special abilities and that they do not deserve credit. This seems to have been learned from the daily discourse of their teachers and reproduces his self-concept. This is very important on the issue of language as it is affected by the individual's situation.

This topic has also been extrapolated to different disciplines and it highlights the specificities of the context in which people practice and learn. It has been studied in mathematics (Gómez and Mojica, 2014, Roth and Gardener, 2012), microbiology (Pérez, Martínez and Hoyos, 2014), education (Kucirkova, Messer and Sheehy, 2014), psychology of development (Monforte and Ceballes, 2014),

psycholinguistics (Gallego, Gómez and Ayllón, 2016), and even in adult poetry (Myhill and Wilson, 2013). All the fields generate different learning practices with specific language structures. Perez, Martinez and Hoyos (2014) stated: "the most important thing is not what we teach but what happens in the scenario of the didactic game because it is what we do within the class situation that allows learning" (p. 88).

Research seems to indicate that learning and its relation to different contexts in which individuals develop are inseparable. This is a social and general thesis that is applied to all human development. Thus, the context of the changes of cognitive processes becomes the learning of the language. This change of language process studied from different approaches will now be explored.

From the guided language to the inner language

The creation of meanings through the use of words is a core topic within the socio-cultural perspective and is an explicit language-focused issue. According to Miller (2014) the fact that humans are distinguished by the ability to create meanings through words is the core of the sociocultural psychology stated by Vygotski. In addition, associating words with social issues, culture and needs (hungry, heat, work, affection) will define how the individual repeats them, how he learns them and how he develops them.

This fact was found in some researches. For instance, Hills (2012) compared the structure of guided language to children and adults in their way of association or repetition as a method of learning words. It was also demonstrated that language is structured differently when addressed to learners of the same language level as to when it is addressed to speakers with a high knowledge of the language; specifically in learning forms that seem to be correlated with early language learning as associative structure, contextual diversity, repetition and use frequency of words.

The researches have also shown an interest, mainly on children's populations, in how guided language is represented eventually as inner language. From its sociocultural perspective, the inner language is considered an essential instrument for the mediation of thought and self-regulation (Vygotski, 1934). Different authors have taken up these ideas to study and adapt them to different contexts. Similarly, Day and Smith (2013) studied how private speech, which is usually related to cognitive skills, is associated with tasks that cause emotions. The children who participated in this study used private speech in tasks involving frustration and situations related to anger and sadness. The results suggest that

private speech is associated with specific emotions, influenced by the task, the cause of the emotion and what is associated with strategies of self-regulation.

Thus, the inner or private speech in children could be particularly different if it arises from diverse contexts, and Vygotski agreed with this fact. In the previous research, the authors worked on the interaction between mother and child. From another point of view, Sawyer (2016) demonstrates the impact on the private speech of children and the influence of motivation in game environments. Escotto (2011) demonstrates how this inner speech, shaped by different contexts and enriched by social interactions, can involve an otherness in a dialogical way. Meanwhile, Sawyer found that the game and game-based pedagogy during early childhood promotes private speech. Escotto (2011) refers to the process by which children reproduce dialogues with others and represent them through their toys until they internalized the words. These studies referred to what Vygotski (1934) stated about an egocentric speech that becomes an internal instrument of thought.

The submergence of egocentric speech is, then, a thesis that seems to be specifically applied to human beings in general and in developing cognitive processes. Once more, this result has been studied by researches and is explicitly related to the language and its sociocultural perspective. The factors involved in the transition of speech could be very diverse. Two main aspects are the game and the explicit teaching. The former has been previously touched on. Both aspects were studied consistently by the researches in this study. The following paragraphs will summarize the findings.

Game

According to Sawyer (2016) the game promotes speech in children. This gradual internalization of language also structures a person's world. It is an important subject to study from a sociocultural perspective. Vygotsky (1934) had the idea that language becomes the dominant symbolic system between four and five years of age in structuring and mediatizing the development of skills, such as those in symbolic game. Kirkham, Stewart and Kidd (2013), Goncalves (2014) and Nicolopoulou et al. (2015) agreed about this statement.

However, authors have stated that it is necessary to take into account that the boy or the girl must reach a defined brain structure before being able to perceive the real cultural instruments or those created by the game. Thus, the game is seen by recent research as a construction. The child does not come with an instrument capable of interpreting or translating cultural materials, as Vygotsky (1934) also mentioned. The language or social meanings come to regulate the behavior. Therefore, language activity is a precondition for the game

and the game is an organized system of cultural rules, and it is progressively integrated into the consciousness of the individual. These ideas are stated by the aforementioned authors and they should be considered when analyzing the importance and limitations of the game, as they are perceived in this study.

Explicit teaching

The reviewed research has also highlighted the importance of certain contexts as a way to enrich the development of language, and therefore the human consciousness. As previously stated, the game in children is one of the settings. This set seems to provide social and practical tools that qualitatively mean different changes within individual cognitive processes, including the structure of language. Vygotsky (1930/1934) also insisted on other types of contexts with similar consequences. A good example of this context is the explicit teaching, another topic which emerged from the research review.

Ferreira (2014) observed an increase in the efficiency of different tasks according to the increase in schooling. Thus, explicit teaching styles also involve cognitive contexts or mental constructs that arise in interaction with others. e.i Borzone and Manrique (2010). Ferreira (2014) analyzes how the degree of schooling influences the mastery of certain concepts and behavior. Borzone and Manrique focus on the contribution of a text and the interaction of the teacher and the children around the text in the configuration of a cognitive context. It was noted that "... the teacher and the children, by the use of the language, are able to construct an expanded and shared space of cognition that favors the cognitive operations essential for the comprehension of the texts" (Borzone and Manrique, 2010, p.81). This statement agrees with other recent research and which are related to Vygotski (Daniels, 2008).

This socially shared and mediated change of cognitive context by language means promoting a change in the consciousness in different populations, for example, as in childhood. Similarly, Alzate and Peña (2010) demonstrated that it is also possible to achieve this change through peer education, even on late schooling level. It is highlighted in their study, the importance in the presence of peers during education, but especially if they showed empathy for the students, have an attentive listening attitude, and use question to stimulate reflection.

In addition to internal issues in the context of explicit education, researchers also reported other factors that could affect language mediation and development in general. Prevoo et al. (2012) showed that socioeconomic status has a noteworthy relationship with the extent of reading children receive from their parents and the availability of books at home. In addition, Castellaro and Roselli

(2015) argued in favor of how a favorable economic status provides a more efficient linguistic context which generates improvements in the completion of tasks during their schooling years.

Borzzone and Manrique (2010) asked about how children come up with good texts if they belong to families with limited economic status to afford them. This way of thinking refers to the Marxist influence in Vygotsky's (Vieriesov, 2005). It means that those who engage in studying the language need to look towards external aspects such as economic context and others.

In short, both the game and explicit teaching are good examples of factors that in general influence human development, and in particular, influence the language changes of individuals. However, the human beings are very complex individuals who can keep on learning and, therefore, changing their cognitive structures, whether in their childhood or in other ages.

An ongoing topic in the researches was the impact of learning a second language in an individual. The most interesting thing about this subject is that it is for people of all ages, but it focused on studying individuals who already speak a language. This requires populations of more advanced ages than the ones used in human development studies. For this reason, it is a topic that contributes to the study of the language from the sociocultural perspective with older populations.

Impact of a second language

Another factor which could affect the development and use of language is everything related to learning a second language. It seems to be common to study this subject from a socio-cultural theoretical framework and its link with the language is also explicit. In fact, Halle *et al.* (2014) reviewed literature in order to study the impact of a second language on a social-emotional development using categories based on a sociocultural framework. The authors propose that although there are contextual and individual variables that impact the development, more studies should be conducted systematically around social-emotional development, as well as, considering other theoretical and methodological perspectives.

Although there is not much literature on study populations who learn a first and a second language simultaneously, as mentioned by Halle *et al.* (2014) many studies have focused on people who learn a second language and already have a stronger foundation in their first language. For example, Korenev *et al.* (2016) studied teachers who used English as a second language in their classes, among other issues. They have noticed that a large number of teachers who have read a book and researched how to teach a language, have compared and commented

on papers written by students in the English language and provide feedback to their students after presentations, among other tasks.

The study of context assessment, social use and shared learning experiences have been determinants for measuring the level of the language, and it becomes a recurrent stance in scientific literature on the sociocultural perspective and a language topic (Yang and Kim, 2011, Wingyan, 2014). Learning a second language will affect academic contexts, as Korenev *et al.* (2016) stated but its impact is not limited. Ahn (2011) examined the interchange of language and interactions among second language learners outside their academic context. The author demonstrated that spaces of high learning are created during the dialogical interchange of the two languages, when comparing between peers, among other subjects. Therefore, further studies of face-to-face language effects and language by other means are suggested.

Simeon (2016) studied the diversity of writing strategies students use when performing group tasks in English as a Second Language. The author identified five categories of written strategies used by students: (A) brainstorming; (B) use of prior knowledge; (C) use of the mother tongue; (D) pair scaffolding; and (e) use of humor. Different researches from sociocultural theory already referred to the social implications of scaffolding, among other strategies, for the language to have an effect on learning and development processes (Simeon, 2015; McNeil, 2012; Gagné, 2013; Khalili, Tahriri and Gholami, 2013).

In addition, it should be mentioned that analysis of the strategies used by students of a second language tend to arise from spoken data, and it is also possible to take advantage of electronic sources. Arshavskaya and Whitney (2014) collected information from a dialogical blog between two people who regularly communicate. A sociocultural analysis of the interactions between the student and the supervisor demonstrates that the former moved from the mediation initiated by the other to a mediation process started by himself. Although more evidence was needed to confirm the internalization of pedagogical concepts, it is necessary to recognize this as a source of valuable and innovative knowledge for the sociocultural theory. Recent research from the sociocultural perspective has been supported on electronic sources (Sprow and Blouin, 2016, Peterson, 2012, Ryu, 2011, Juffs and Friedline, 2014).

Contrary to Simeon's (2016) statements, Arshavskaya and Whitney (2014), Valdez (2012) conducted a quantitative study to establish whether there are statistically significant differences in writing achievement among students who participated in a bilingual program ($M = 1.89$, $SD = .57$) and those of a whole program in English ($M = 2.0$, $SD = .49$). In fact, no significant differences were found between the writing scores of the students of both programs, $t(60) = -796$, $p = .43$. Likewise, Rassaei (2014) and Rahimi (2013) conducted

other quantitative researches related to the study of a second language from a sociocultural perspective.

Finally, these studies have established that it is also possible to approach the subject of learning a second language from a strictly theoretical approach. Jang and Jiménez (2011) criticized the traditional view of learning a second language stating that such perspective implies an encapsulated vision because it only focuses on the individual's traits.

In contrast, other authors highlighted the importance of some sociocultural factors in learning a second language: (A) interracial tensions among students; (B) structures of participation and power relations; and (C) the influence of cultural backgrounds on learners' goals and their behaviors (Jang and Jiménez, 2011). In this way, each teacher who teaches a second language faces the challenge of constructing a teaching environment that facilitates the use of positive strategies that greatly enrich the teaching-learning process. Compennolle and Williams (2013) also tackled the issue from a strictly theoretical approach.

Conclusions

Some questions arise from the findings of this study. Are all these the options to the study of language from a sociocultural perspective? A reply should be that some issues might seem to be academically saturated, such as the topics related to the learning of a second language or the inner language. However, from a sociocultural theory perspective, it is argued that in fact this is implausible because human beings are the product of different social, cultural and individual contexts. For this reason, it must be understood that there will always be new perspectives on topics related to language.

Different approaches to address issues to the knowledge of the language do not detract their relevance to their contributions from a sociocultural perspective. On the one hand, the broader issues of human development that were addressed - such as participation in practice and the transition from guided language to inner language - make clear the catalytic effect in learning specific practices of each community. It means changes in the way individuals express and think about different situations. On the other hand, the more specific topics - game, explicit teaching and impact of learning a second language - are personalized means by the same practices of each community, thus there are processes that can be called universal.

The research seems to suggest from the sociocultural theory, a dialectic between specific human cognition development and specific practices of

communities. The topics presented will have been shared by different researches and show some consistency, but the topics were also impacted by community or local factors.

It remains to be seen what has been problematic within socio-cultural studies that studied the language to know how to avoid it or, at least, how to minimize its impact. A number of researches show that the number of people participating in the studies was limited (Escotto, 2011, Roth and Gardener, 2012, Goncalves Teixeira, 2014, Townend and Brown, 2016, among others). However, the research limitations on population discovered by the quality of deepening studies and their specific features. In spite of the above, it is possible to check again the researches that have been reviewed but using a greater number of cases. On the other hand, it is also feasible to use the same number of cases but study them in a different cultural context. The latter, would make it possible to compare if there are significant differences on the particular topic according to the context as several studies suggested (Castellaro and Roselli, 2015; Gallego, Gómez and Ayllón, 2016; Kurirkova, Messer and Sheehy, 2014; Monforte and Ceballos, 2014, among others).

Besides the general and specific language topics, the quantity of quantitative and qualitative research in relation to its main methodology is also very promising. It is possible to approach a language-related topic from a sociocultural perspective with a mixed methodology and this could be seen as a conclusion suggested by the way the studies were designed. Gagné and Parks, 2013; Juffs and Friedline, 2014; Korenev et al., 2016; Monforte and Ceballos, 2014; Myhill and Wilson, 2013; Prevoo et al., 2013 achieved this goal and their results show a more comprehensive and deep view. This is a key issue for future research, as mixed research would facilitate the design of longitudinal research, another of the shared suggestions, by allowing more options for gathering and analyzing information. In fact, the study of language from the sociocultural perspective would benefit from this type of design because of the quality of the data that would be analyzed.

The theoretical discontinuity of some studies also became interesting. Some of the researches mixed or tested different theories, although they gave priority to the sociocultural view. As an example, Kirkham, Stewart and Kidd (2013) compared theories influenced by Piaget's proposal on the representation of cognition in specific body domains with those influenced by Vygotsky, which emphasized on the social scaffolding of cognition. This type of contrast, only enriched the contributions of sociocultural theory and the research of language in general, as it has always suggested an approach that takes into account the fusion of theories that best suit each situation. This would justify the cultural diversity highlighted by the sociocultural perspective.

Based on the research analyzed in this study, it is possible to infer that factors related to the language analysis are in a constant social and cultural change and transformation. It must be reflected on how human beings internalize social and cultural ideas from the sociocultural perspective of the language while they amend to their own personal interests and purposes. This is consistent with the original ideas of Vygotsky (1934) since everyone agrees that the human being adapts to what it finds useful, rejects useless things, and adds what it needs to particular circumstances.

The current knowledge about the language from a sociocultural perspective has provided knowledge and practices that favor specific communities from which it was studied. These communities have acquired their own voice due to these practices and keep shared cognition processes as human beings. This is precisely the wealth of knowledge produced, by keeping a position so complex which takes into account particular social features and cultural diversity

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