

The Gluttonous Queen: dialogism and memory in elementary school writing / *A Rainha Comilona: dialogismo e memória na escritura escolar*

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ABSTRACT

This article discusses the relationship between dialogism and memory, considering the act of the writing process as the object of investigation. Characterized as a study of an ethnolinguistic nature, we propose a link between the notions of “semantic memory” and “object memory”. The proposed link uses Textual Genetics and Enunciation Linguistics as reference, espousing the hypothesis that the writer’s dialogic and intersubjective condition generates the activated content during the begetting and formulation of an idea. To this end, we analyze the initial minutes of the process of writing a fictional story, performed (and filmed) in an elementary school context, in which the participants are two newly literate students (6-year-olds). The recollection of this dynamic reveals not only how the title was conceived and the importance of the context of literacy, but also and especially the role of fortuity and unpredictability for an understanding of how it works.

KEYWORDS: Dialogism, Memory; Writing process; Enunciation; Classroom

RESUMO

Este artigo tem por objetivo discutir a relação entre dialogismo e memória, considerando como objeto de investigação o processo de escritura em ato. Caracterizado enquanto um estudo de caráter etnolinguístico, propomos uma articulação entre as noções de “memória semântica” e “memória do objeto”. A articulação proposta tem como referência teórica a Genética de Textos e a Linguística da Enunciação, defendendo a hipótese de que a condição dialógica e intersubjetiva do escrevente perfaz o conteúdo ativado durante a geração e formulação de uma ideia. Para tal, analisamos os minutos iniciais de um processo de escritura de uma história inventada, efetivado (e filmado) em contexto escolar, do qual participam duas alunas recém-alfabetizadas (6 anos). O resgate desta dinâmica revelou não apenas o modo como o título foi gerado e a importância do contexto letrado, mas principalmente, o papel do acaso e do imprevisível para a compreensão de seu funcionamento.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Dialogismo; Memória; Processo de escritura; Enunciação; Sala de aula

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We are aware that neuroscience today has achieved extraordinary results with respect to the location and mapping of memory activities in the brain. However, object memory is not to be found in the neurons [...] because it is not individual but intersubjective, i.e., it is that which is transmitted between subjects.

Marilia Amorim

Introduction

Bakhtin's presence in Brazilian education is indisputable. Official curriculum documents and a significant number of academic works subscribe to his socio-historically based proposal, considering language as verbal interaction, and reading and writing foremost as favored fields of investigation. Between these two fields, a multitude of Bakhtinian terms (culture, dialogism, genre, authorship, foreign words, other, memory, polyphony, voice, multivocality, intonation... the list is endless) are evoked, manipulated, utilized, reinterpreted. Keeping in mind that these terms are part of the same theoretical spectrum and are therefore interrelated, we will focus our study on dialogism and memory, with text produced in the classroom as our object of investigation.

From the phenomenological standpoint, our object¹ is not actually situated in the produced text, already written, completed and handed over to the teacher, but in the process of writing it and the act of creating it (CALIL, 2008a, 2009a). Among other aspects, it involves the components of planning, formulation and revision, which, upon being activated and articulated, presuppose the relationship between what will be written, what is written, and what is read from that which is written. Reading performed during or after the text has been written is a recursive procedure involving metalinguistic and metacognitive reflection, in which orthographic, lexical and grammar mistakes are reformulated, modified, altered and corrected, and attempts are made to solve problems of coherence and cohesion, as shown in important works about text revision (FITZGERALD, 1987; CHANQUOY, 2001). However, in this article we will

¹ The object of our study is part of the collection of the School Writing Laboratory (L'ÂME), which is dedicated to document, archive, and preserve textualization practices used in different school contexts.

consider the reading “of that which comes from without,” *i.e.*, the reading of texts² that circulate socially, those that compose the literate context, which may be reflected in the writing process, interfering with and simultaneously fueling the writer’s creative process.

This is the central point to be discussed: a reflection about the precepts of dialogism and the role of memory, comprised by culture on the one hand, and by the subject who writes and makes up a fictional narrative in a school setting on the other. We will propose an interpretation of these ideas, approximating³ them to discursive and cognitive contributions. This approximation is justified by the fact that, upon reflecting about memory, one must consider two essential conditions of the relationship between culture and the speaking subject:

- a) Memory of culture as a structuring condition of verbal interaction, in that a statement is made up of its relation (dialogic and intersubjective) with other statements, through its transmission, repetition and circulation, resulting in what the Bakhtin-inspired literature refers to as “object memory” (AMORIM, 2009);
- b) Memory of the individual⁴ as the foundational component of his cognitive activity, without which he would be unable to remain and recognize himself in the culture. In other words, this memory not only

² It should be noted, as mentioned above, that “reading” and “text” are understood here in the sense of “language as verbal interaction.” That is, they are to be interpreted in a broad sense, involving the entire oral, visual and/or written semiotic system sociohistorically consisting, for instance, of parents’ and teachers’ speech, TV advertising, movies, music, comic books, fairy tales, etc. These pieces, formed intersubjectively through interaction, will constitute the subject’s “memory,” inserting him in the culture of his day.

³ The need for an interdisciplinary reflection about “memory” and how it works has recently been defended by authors involved in different disciplines, discussing distinct objects (WERTSCH, 2010; ADAM, FENOGLIO, 2009; FENOGLIO, CHANQUOY, 2007; PLANE, OLIVE, ALAMARGOT, 2010). From the specific standpoint of writing, there is a consensus among researchers in understanding it as a complex activity, recognized since the works of Hayes and Flower (HAYES, FLOWER, 1980; FLOWER, HAYES, 1980), constituted by the writer through years of experience and practice (KELLOGG, 2008), involving above all the development of long-term memory, semantic memory, working memory and learning, the articulation and automation of several cognitive and linguistic subsystems (graphomotor, visuospatial, syntactic, orthographic, morphological), as well as pragmatic and communication factors in which the task of writing is inserted. This consensus, in itself, could be a strong argument in favor of an interdisciplinary reading of the relationships between the “memory” given by culture and the “memory” operated in and by the writing subject.

⁴ The use of this term is justified by the need to preserve, in this article, the terms recognized by Cognitive Psychology. Even authors involved in this field of knowledge do not assume that the “individual” is an autonomous and homogeneous writing and speaking machine, with full command of his knowledge and will. Doing so would undoubtedly amount to a hasty and unfair criticism of their works.

inserts him in the culture, history, discourse, text, but also provides syntactic, phonological, orthographic, semantic, textual, spatial, graphic stability...

After circumscribing the two aforementioned conditions, we will discuss how these memories interact in a real writing situation in the classroom, whose subjects are newly literate students writing their first narrative texts on their own. Lastly, we will present a few reflections about the establishment of didactic guidelines for text production in the early years of Elementary Education.

1 Culture, dialogism, comic book and writing

1.1 Memory in culture and dialogism

From a dialogic perspective, we may suppose that culture and dialogism are terms interconnected by memory. Among the numerous different interpretations of these terms, we will highlight two. In the first, culture can be understood in its “distributed” sense (WERTSCH, 2010, p.123), as the representation of the past “shared by the members of the group.” Or, to highlight a more precise formulation, culture may be related to that which Amorim called “object memory”: “a memory that is in the culture and in its objects [that] touches intersubjective relationships and is part of them and at the same time updated by them.” (AMORIM, 2009, p.10). In this second definition, if one extends it to an enunciative standpoint, dialogism refers discursively to the “memory” that a statement brings from the other’s statement, as shown in the works of Authier-Revuz (1995) and Brès (2005), when they differentiate three forms of manifestation: interlocutory dialogism, interdiscursive dialogism, and autologism (or intradiscursive).

The memory that links culture and dialogism presupposes the social condition of every “speaking” subject, whose subjective insertion occurs through the triadic device (I-you-he) of the language (DUFOUR, 2000, 2005). According to Dufour, “the triad represents, in short, the essence of the social bond since, without it, there would be no interlocutory relationship, there would be no human culture” (DUFOUR, 2000, p.56). To be a subject there must be the other, but the intersubjective other (the “I” and the

“you” in its indisputable and irreversible condition) is always a reflection of the Other (interpreted here as “Culture,” although its unconscious dimension is assumed).

It is in this sense that we can refer the reader to what Amorim states: “every object of discourse and knowledge contains memory because, when it is uttered, it has, above all, *already been spoken* by others who came before me. Upon touching it and presenting it as an object, I immediately call into action a discursive universe that I update, relive, and retransmit to those who hear me,” (AMORIM, 2009, p.12). It is this collective memory, a condition as much of culture as of dialogism, that will enable us to indicate the pathway that triggers the semantic memory of writers during the process of creation and writing of a fictional story. However, before we advance in this direction, we should indicate the boundaries of the object that will make up the collective memory of the students involved.

1.2 Comic books: a form of literature present in the family and the school

The advocacy of the use of comic books in Brazilian education is relatively recent (CALAZANS, 2004; RAMA, 2004; MENDONÇA, 2008; VERGUEIRO, RAMOS, 2009) and is aimed at instrumentalizing the action of teachers in different areas of the curriculum (History, Geography, Science, Art, Portuguese Language). A validation of this advocacy is clearly expressed in curriculum documents for teacher training and in official paradidactic materials⁵, as well as in current didactic books, and the genre is ensured especially in books meant for the initial years of Elementary Education.

The multimodal dimension of this genre – characterized by the combination of outlines, drawings, texts, colors, balloons, visual metaphors, onomatopoeias, dialogues, facial expressions, gestures, outlooks, movements, volume and intensity of voices represented graphically – is one of the most significant arguments to justify its importance.

⁵ Check the Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais (National Curricular Parameters, BRASIL, 1998) and the site www.fnde.gov.br/index.php/be-apresentacao, which contains the list of books distributed to Brazilian schools. This list includes a significant number of “comic strips.” For an overview of the recent history of these public policies, recognizing the value of comic strips, consult the article “Os quadrinhos (oficialmente) na escola: dos PCN ao PNBE” (“Comic strips (officially) in schools, from PCN to PNBE,” VERGUEIRO, RAMOS, 2009).

However, long time before ⁶ this didactic valuation, comic strips, or better, the Turma da Mônica⁷ comics, were already a part of the didactic context of the private school where our data were collected, as well as of the daily family life of the students who participated in this study. As we have analyzed previously (CALIL, 2008b; 2009b; 2010; 2012; CALIL, FELIPETO, 2008; CALIL, DEL RE, 2009), some of the characteristics of these comic books can interfere significantly in manuscripts and writing processes of “fictional stories” by newly literate students.

At this point, we will consider semantic interferences as we describe and analyze the creation of a title that will appear in the school manuscript. Based on this analysis, we will show how long-term memory and semantic memory intermingle in dialogism during the writing process.

2 The individual’s memory and writing

2.1 Delimitation of studies about memory

Long-term memory, short-term memory, working memory, phonological memory, visual memory, motor memory, declarative memory, explicit memory, semantic memory, episodic memory, procedural memory, priming, emotional memory, collective memory, operating memory, flashbulb memory... literature is fertile, vast, complex, and diverse. Even if we restrict ourselves to the object of our study, i.e., the writing process in real time, we will still find abundant and heterogeneous literature about the role of memory, from the theoretical, methodological and experimental standpoints.

The reviews published by Alamargot and Chanquoy (CHANQUOY, ALAMARGOT, 2002; 2003) indicate that the memory system plays an essential role in

⁶ I refer to the 1990s: The National Curricular Parameters are from 1997, when the notion of “discursive genre” found its first signs of acceptance in Brazilian education. Unlike what can be found in Portuguese didactic books in circulation today, at that time there was very little discussion of an instrumental or didactic nature about the use of this genre in the classroom, emphasizing its compositional or thematic elements. Lastly, it should be kept in mind that the students in this study were in their last year of preschool, which today is incorporated into Brazil’s 9-year Elementary Education system.

⁷ Maurício de Souza and his most important characters (Mônica, Cebolinha, Cascão, Magali, Chico Bento...) can be considered a “classic” reference of popular Brazilian children’s literature, similar to what Tintin (Hergé) is for the young French public or Uncle Scrooge (Walt Disney) for the North American one.

the text writing process, since it is necessary to retrieve, generate, handle, and control multiple levels of knowledge and information. Despite the complexity of this system activated during the writing process and of the different theoretical models proposed⁸, we can state that it is roughly subdivided into “long-term memory,” which is responsible for storing different types of knowledge, and “working memory” – the temporary storage capacity, initially described as “short-term memory” (VAN DIJK, KINSTCH, 1983) –, both of which are activated during the writing of a text.

2.2 Long-term memory, working memory, and semantic memory

Since the publication of Hayes and Flower’s (1980) famous model, memory has become a central component of the writing process. Continued by Hayes (1996), this memory is considered individual and responsible for the convergence of different types of knowledge concerning the audience, task, subject matter, linguistic aspects, and genre. The working memory (BADDELEY, 1986) is subdivided into two dedicated systems: the phonological loop, which stores and maintains verbal material, and the visuospatial sketchpad, which stores and maintains visual and spatial material. These two subsystems are articulated by the executive center⁹, generating and retrieving information during cognitive activity. To Baddeley’s model Hayes (1996) adds semantic memory, which is needed to retrieve wordly knowledge: names of people, things, meanings, concepts. Unlike Cognitive Psychology studies, whose objective is to test and validate this (and other) memory model(s) in the writing process, we intend to discuss the role of semantic memory in a real writing situation. From our point of view, the choice of semantic memory is justified because it is the component that most closely approaches the relationship of the writer with culture, the central tenet of our investigation.

Extending these initial studies on writing models, the works of Swanson and Berninger (BERNINGER, SWANSON, 1994; SWANSON, BERNINGER, 1996) highlight the role of working memory in the component “formulation,” and its progressive and lengthy development in the formation of the writer. Identifying this component as the first to emerge in newly literate writers, the authors subdivide it into

⁸ Refer to the important “state of the art” established by Alamargot and Chanquoy, 2001.

⁹ The translation of these three notions was proposed by Yamamoto and Ades, 2002.

“transcription” and “text generation.” We are particularly interested in the second process, above all because it has to do with creation, with the emergence of ideas, their semantic value, and their subsequent writing on paper.

3 General conditions of the writing process

The focus of the analysis to be presented will be the articulation between the semantic memory of a newly literate writer, and the working memory triggered during the writing process, albeit seen from an ethnographic standpoint, considering its interactive, multimodal, qualitative and enunciative dimensions. The general context of a classroom is preserved, and the specific writing situation is characterized as “collaborative writing,” when pairs of students make up and write the same story together. Unlike the studies of Daiute and Dalton (1993) and Gaulmyn (1994), in which similar situations were recorded in audio format, we sought to capture the classroom ambiance using a camcorder placed in front of the pair.

Nara and Isabel, two six-year-old students, produced six fictional stories together in response to their teacher’s monthly requests during 1991. These filmed situations were transcribed with the help of the ELAN¹⁰ program retrieving and synchronizing their dual dimensions: visual (gestures, expressions, gaze directions, objects, positions of the pencil on the page, moments when erasures were made...) and sound (the students and teacher’s spoken exchanges, those of other classmates, a variety of sounds...). This methodological procedure made it possible to capture the writing process in action and to record how pragmatic, interactive, cognitive and communicational factors may interfere in the emergence of themes, titles, story lines, dialogues and the characterization of characters, as well as certain occurrences of erasures. This required the joint consideration of the multimodal aspects of these situations, an essential point in reflecting about the process of paired creation and writing in a school context.

To examine the problem proposed in this study, we selected the fourth writing process, which occurred on June 27, the end of the first semester, highlighting what

¹⁰ Computer program with a sophisticated system for synchronization of image and sound.

took place during the first 5 minutes of the film, which lasted for exactly 26:19 minutes¹¹. The title of the story¹² which was created in these initial minutes, would then determine and guide the entire process of creating the fictional narrative.

4 Dialogism and memory in reading and in the title

4.1 During the writing process, the discovery of the comic book

An interesting way to observe the writing process is to start at the end. First we will present the title that was written and kept at the top of the page, after which we will “rewind the film” to recapture the process that generated its idea and formulation.

4.1.1 Memories of readings in the title

As is usually the case in stories created by Nara and Isabel¹³, the title not only is one of the first elements to be invented and rarely altered throughout the writing process¹⁴, but it also names the main character. In the the excerpt of the story, below, the title appears written immediately after the two students’ names.

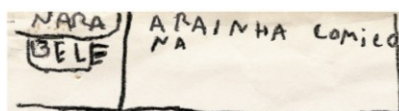


Figure 1: Title “The Gluttonous Queen”

Observing the film, timed by ELAN, these first words were written between 03:05 and 05:13, the time during which Isabel received paper and pen, the teacher asked

¹¹ Read: “twenty six minutes and nineteen seconds”.

¹² As we have argued elsewhere, the term “manuscript” qualified in the “school” sense is related to works in Textual Genetics and aims to characterize the dynamics of the process of creation. In this sense, the material to be discussed is part of the “genetic dossiê Vila”, belonging to L’ÂME, in which we have accumulated the largest possible number of documents (manuscripts, teacher reports, a variety of classroom activities, interviews with parents and teachers, etc.), gathered during the development of this investigation.

¹³ This characteristic may be found in Calil, 2009a.

¹⁴ The recognition of this interesting aspect refers to what Bereiter and Scardamalia (1987) called “knowledge telling strategy,” when the newly literate writer associatively retrieves contents from memory which are immediately written down, without pausing, along the writing process, to return to make (and reflect about) possible adjustments to the task, goals, and audience of the text.

them to write legibly, Isabel got up to fetch two other pens to replace the dry ones, then drew two rectangles inside which she would insert her name, Nara's name, and then the title.

Although it is not difficult to discover a strong dialogic influence in this title, evoking the discursive universe of both fairy tales and comic books, it is relevant to indicate how this influence is presumed and what its relationship with semantic memory is, before we determine what elicited the idea that generated it. On the one hand, we can consider classic children's literature, whose characters (kings, queens, stepmothers, witches, princes, princesses...) are present in books and films for the child audience in contemporary western society, as one of the elements responsible for the presence of the "queen." On the other hand, its adjectivation is not semantically related with this fictional universe: although one finds characters that are mean, envious, jealous, vindictive, ugly, scared, daring, courageous... the queens are never "gluttonous" in these fairy tales.

For the literate Brazilian reader, however, the identification [of this title] with the other discursive universe is almost immediate. As the title of this article suggests, the title of this fictional story undoubtedly contains a term deriving from the *Turma da Mônica* comic books, more specifically from the Magali character, whose main peculiarity, as we know, is that she "eats a lot." Were the students unfamiliar with these fairy tales and comic book stories it is unlikely that they would have proposed this title and created this character, the gluttonous queen!¹⁵ In this regard we uphold the hypothesis that semantic memory (individual and cognitive) and object memory (collective and social) cannot be dissociated.

However, the story or its excerpt is nothing but what remains from a process, like a photograph one brings back from a stroll in the park. It may indicate some elements, but it does not explain what actually took place in the real time of its writing: Who proposed the title? What took place before it was set down on paper? What factors and associative relationships were established that led to its enunciation? At what exact moment in the process did it emerge? How did the working memory retrieve the semantic memory that the title indicates? How are the dialogic elements described above and the memories of the writing subjects entwined?


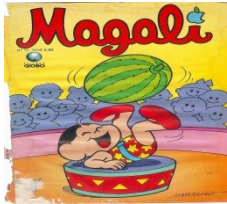
¹⁵ A brief commentary about this title may be found in Calil, 2009a, p.131-132.

4.1.2 From reading to the title, or how “The Gluttonous Queen” emerged

To answer these questions and understand a little more about how the process of textual creation works within pairs of newly literate students, it is necessary to temporarily set aside the story and turn our attention to the film record. We will work with the hypothesis that the creation of this title (as well as that of many other elements) is part of a complex interplay among the many factors that converge toward the writing process and, in particular, toward the formulation and linearization of the text on paper.

As was her custom, the teacher first presented the task at hand in a conversation with all the students sitting in a circle, and followed this by organizing the work in groups. After the presentation, the students sat down at their assigned tables and began to talk. Nara and Isabel, who have been friends since they entered school at age 3, had already worked together during the previous three films. While the researcher, with the camcorder on, was finishing framing the scene, Isabel unexpectedly found a Magali comic book under her desk (SOUSA, 1990) and placed it on the table. This moment is captured by the camcorder.



Dialogal text¹⁶ 1: Isabel finding the Magali comic book

RUBRIC		DIALOGUE		IMAGE
TC1 00:00 00:03	Isabel and Nara have just sat at their school desks. As soon as she sits down, Isabel looks under the desk, where the students usually leave the material for daily use, and finds a “Magali” comic. She picks it up, puts it on the desk and begins to turn the pages, telling the researcher that she has that same comic. Nara is looking at the comic book attentively.	ISABEL	00:00 00:03	I ha... I have this comic. I have this comic!
				 <p>Figure 2: Isabel beginning to turn the pages of the “Magali” comic book.</p>
				 <p>Figure 3: Cover of the “Magali” comic (Sousa, 1990).</p>



¹⁶ The use of all images was authorized by the subjects involved. Isabel is on the left, wearing the white t-shirt, and Nara is on the right, wearing black.

Isabel’s familiarity with comic books became evident from the first seconds when the camera began to capture images and sounds. Furthermore, her memory is precise and she enunciates emphatically: “I have this comic!”¹⁷. We have here a first object that will direct the attention and interaction of these two students up to the formulation of the fictional story. We call attention to the importance of this encounter between Isabel and the “Magali” comic. In Calil (2012) we affirm that, notwithstanding the fact that fortuity is not a component of any of the various writing models currently proposed, it interferes in the process of textual creation. We will demonstrate how the unexpected finding of this comic book was transformed enunciatively into the title of the story in question. Right after the researcher comments about the microphone placed under the desk and moves out of the students’ field of vision, Isabel turns to Nara and begins to read the first story in the comic book.

Dialogal text 2: Isabel reading the story “Magali in Rapunzel”



RUBRIC		DIALOGUE			IMAGE
TC1 00:15 00:19	Nara tries to pull the comic book away from Isabel. Isabel does not let her and asks if she wants her to read it. Nara nods in agreement. Isabel then opens the cover and begins to read the comic.	ISABEL	00:16 00:17	Do you want me to read it to you?	
Figure 5: Isabel folding back the cover to begin reading the story.					
TC2 00:19 00:22	Isabel, facing Nara, holding the comic book with both hands, reading the title. At this moment, Nara tries to lower the comic to look at the images, but Isabel pulls it away, keeping it in her own hands.	ISABEL	00:19 00:21	Magali Rapunzel.	

¹⁷ We point out that memory is made up of elements that circulate in the cultural universe of these students. The coincidence of the comic book – published in January 1990 – being under the desk and Isabel having the same edition at home – when filming was done in June 1991 – is a strong indicator of the proximity between the cultural universes of the school and the family.

					 <p>Figure 7: Nara trying to lower the comic to look at the drawings.</p>
					 <p>Figure 8: Title and the 1st frame¹⁸.</p>
TC3 00:22 00:45	Isabel beginning to read the story. She reads the 2nd frame on the 1st page in which there is a reconstruction with the narrator's voice describing the scene. During the reading Nara looks at the images on the comic book held by Isabel.	ISABEL	00:23 00:30	...and left them for still making problems (sic) with their insa ... san... taneous hunger...	 <p>Figure 9: 2nd frame of the 1st page¹⁹.</p>
		ISABEL	00:30 00:45	... to ma... make...ever... everything... worse... a wi... witch... lived by... there... prevented... grow any plant... except on her land.	 <p>Figure 10: Isabel reading the 3rd and 4th frames of the 1st page. Nara looking at the figures.</p>

¹⁸ Text of the reconstruction: “There once was a very poor peasant couple whose wealth was their little daughter named Magali Rapunzel...” (SOUSA, 1990, p.3).

¹⁹ Text of the reconstruction: “...who made them even poorer with her insatiable hunger!” (SOUSA, 1990, p.3). Transcribing Isabel’s lines we observed a faulty reading, altering what is in fact written in the reconstruction. We opted for transcribing the lines exactly as she spoke.

					 <p>Figure 11: 3rd frame of the 1st page²⁰.</p>
					 <p>Figure 12: 4th frame of the 1st page²¹.</p>

The comic book presents the story “Magali in Rapunzel,” a recurrent intertextuality in this type of publication. Isabel reads skillfully, despite some hesitation and deviations from the original text. Nara follows her, trying to see the figures as well. The relationship between what is said in this moment, and the captured images revealing the synchronization of the students’ gestures, looks and expressions, with the images in the comic book, constitute the multimodal scene that leads to the agreement about the fictitious story and, therefore, to the writing process in the classroom. The cultural, dialogic and, in this context, didactic elements are manifested as much in the immediate interactive action as in its sociohistorical condition: the year of 1991, a constructivist didactic practice, a classroom with a comic book under the table – a fact that attests to the constant presence of this genre in schools – 6-year-old students autonomously reading together a “Turma da Monica” comic book story that in turn recalls another story from classic children’s literature. The combination of these elements established a path for the process of creation and writing that their manuscript shows only partially.




Although we have already stated how dialogism and semantic memory will interfere in the title of the story, we still do not know when it was enunciated, how it was stated or by whom, and how the arrangement between these elements led to the establishment of the working memory. To answer this, we must follow the subsequent takes and the scenes unfolding in time with the enunciation. Isabel continued reading


²⁰ Text of the reconstruction: “To make everything worse, a witch who lived nearby prohibited any vegetation from growing...” (SOUSA, 1990, p.3).

²¹ Text of the reconstruction: “...except on her land!!” (SOUSA, 1990, p.3).

the story up to the 5th frame of the 2nd page, when suddenly the teacher appeared and took the comic book away, asking them to create the story on their own. The following dialogal text details how this scene took place.

Dialogal text 3: Nara formulating the title

RUBRIC		DIALOGUE		IMAGE				
TC1 01:07 01:23	Teacher going to Isabel to pick up the comic book she is holding. Isabel looking at her and trying to keep the comic book away from her hands. After the teacher takes it, she repeats the instructions to the pair and repeats them to the students.	PROF.	01:12	(Speaking to Isabel and Nara) <i>You are supposed to invent the story... otherwise there is not enough time.</i> (Speaking to all the students. Off camera) <i>Kids, listen, now is the time to talk about making up a story. Not for anything else.</i>				
			01:22					
TC2 01:23 01:46	Teacher, already off camera, repeating the instructions for the activity. Nara says she can dictate, but Isabel says they can "make it up" together.	TEACHER	01:24	(Voice off camera) Talking to make up a story.				
			01:25			ISABEL	01:25	(Speaking to Nara) Then we are going to do it like this... watch...
			01:28		NARA		01:28	I will do the dictating!
			01:29			01:29	ISABEL	01:29

TC3 01:46 01:48	Nara looking at Isabel, laughing and proposing the title, emphatically.	NARA	01:46 01:48	The Gluttonous Queen!	 <p data-bbox="1098 434 1359 488">Figure 17: Nara proposing the title.</p>
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At the beginning of this analysis we stated that Isabel began to write the title only at 03:05. However, “winding the film back,” we noticed it was Nara who proposed it, formulating it verbally between 01:46 and 01:48 (TC2 of Dialogal Text 3). This means that from the beginning of filming, almost 2 minutes passed before it was formulated, and a little over a minute went by before it was written down on paper, characterizing the way in which working memory operates. Its formulation is directly related to the two active semantic fields shared by the collective memory that links these two students intersubjectively. The former event was triggered by the didactic proposal whereby, as the teacher stated emphatically, they should “*talk to make up a story,*” a fact that, in these well versed students, activates typical expressions from the discursive universe of fairytales. The second semantic field is activated as much by the presence of the comic book²² and its subsequent reading, by highlighting the Magali character, as by the negotiation proposed by Isabel to “make up” the story together.

The title given by Nara contains two answers. On the one hand, she responds interlocutorily to her teacher’s and friend’s demand. On the other, she responds interdiscursively by recalling from long-term memory her knowledge of fairytales, which usually have a “queen” as one of the characters, and her knowledge of comic books such as the Turma da Monica, which has a character, Magali, whose main trait is that of being gluttonous. However, we believe that the element of fortuity is not contained in the unpredictable encounter of Isabel and the comic book, but instead in the act of proffering the title.

This belief is justified in that any reference to the comic book in the story could simply have disappeared together with its removal by the teacher. According to Pétroff

²² The presence of the comic book and its effect on the story to be made up by the students relates to what Perroni (1992) called “reliance on the present.” According to the author, this phenomenon is manifested in the initial acquisition process of oral narrative and is defined as the entry into the narrative of objects present in the immediate context of the interaction.

(2004), fortuity is present in the entire semiotic system which, upon transmission, may undergo alterations related to the elements it inherits, thus creating new versions of the original system.

If we consider the writing process in action as a highly dynamic semiotic and multimodal microsystem whose working depends on the interactions between the parties that are composing it and on the associative relationships established by the writers, it is the choice of title that ascribes the status of fortuity to the comic book being found, read, and taken away. The moment the title is uttered, the comic book, a fortuitous event, becomes part of the text. The associative relationship established upon uttering the title synthesizes, recalls, and combines the activated memories, imparting a unique profile to the story which is yet to be written. From this point on, all the subsequent narrative elements will be arranged and rearranged, having the title as the main reference within the microsystem of the emerging story.

Thus we arrive at the union we advocate between “dialogism” and “memory,” which enables creation through repetition, according to Amorim citing Bakhtin:

In Bakhtin, collective memory plays a dual role in creation. From the standpoint of the reader or listener, in face of the object I created, because he inserts what I create into a discursive chain and thus give the object a meaning. And on the part of the creator himself who always creates within a dialogue with others. To hear my voice and have it heard in an object-statement, it is necessary to listen to the voices that speak within it and make them heard (AMORIM, 2009, p.12).

It is unlikely that this statement would have been formulated and recognized as the title of a story if one of these universes had not been part of the object memory shared by these students, even though the teacher asked that a “fictitious story” be created or deliberately left the comic book within reach. That is why we can argue that the cognitive aspect assumed in the semantic (and individual) memory arises dialogically.

However, there is another important aspect related to the creation of this title and to these students’ memory. It is the relationship between the syntactic level and the phenomenon of repetition, which we have discussed in the analysis of other school stories (CALIL, 2010). Certainly one of the essential phenomena for establishing any

“memory” is repetition, whose semantic dimension we described above. However the syntactic structure of the title “The Gluttonous Queen” mirrors that found in other titles such as “A Gata Borracheira” (Cinderella), “A Bela Adormecida” (Sleeping Beauty), “A Moura Torta”, “O Pequeno Polegar” (Tom Thumb), “O Alfaiatezinho Valente” (The Valiant Little Tailor), stories which the students are very familiar with. Thus, we can see that there is a kind of “syntactic memory” that is related to knowledge of the genre and topic in question. In other words, for these students who are significantly inserted in the written culture of their times, writing “fictitious stories” reminds them of “fairy tales” which, among other characteristics, present certain forms of giving titles. This makes it difficult for them, for example, to call the new story to be written “The Girl Who Only Wore Yellow Dresses,” or “The Queen Who Ate A Lot,” or “A Day at School”.

Conclusions

The title of the story, “The Gluttonous Queen,” points to the combination of two distinct discursive universes representing object memory, and therefore, the title’s dialogic dimension. However, the first, second and third dialogal texts, while revealing the process by which the title was generated, provide other significant elements that help us understand the reasons behind its formulation for a fictitious story.

A point to be emphasized has to do with the ethnographic aspect of studies of the writing process that use a genetic and enunciative approach. Compared to the artificiality of experimental studies, especially those based on verbal protocols, the recording of the actual writing process in a school setting does not allow for the rigorous control of variables, but it presents a significant advantage by preserving the uniqueness and the unpredictability of the writing action. The presence of the comic book under the desk, allied to the fact that Isabel was already acquainted with it, and her stance as a reader – which resembles that of an adult reading to a child²¹ –, the sudden removal of the comic book from her hands, and lastly, the formulation of the title by Nara, are the essential elements for one to understand how the process of creating this story takes shape. The reinstatement of this dynamic, established in real time during the paired writing process in the classroom, shows how the idea (“what the title of the story

will be”) was generated, and points to the nonlinearity of the enunciative trajectory that led to its formulation, although it is recorded nonlinearly on paper.

Hence, despite “the extraordinary results [of neuroscience] regarding the pinpointing and mapping of memory-related activities in the brain,” we align ourselves with what Amorim stated (2009, p.13). We argue that the semantic (individual) memory residing in the subject’s cognitive system is influenced by the intersubjective working of the (collective) object memory, formed dialogically through its social transmission, and by the associative relationships that this subject may enunciate unpredictably.

From our point of view, this is what will justify the immersion of students of this age group into the written culture, particularly that of a narrative-fictional nature. Texts that are read, listened to, watched, and above all the didactic focus on the inventiveness and creative process of this genre in the written work of newly literate students, enable the writing student to place himself in the position of author of what he writes. This aspect leads to the need to question the current official didactic-curricular guidelines that advocate the institutionalization and instrumentalization of “genre diversity” (letters, recipes, news, notes...) that the student must learn to reproduce.

Despite Isabel’s leadership in conducting the entire initial part of this writing task, the climax of the process of title creation is contained in Nara’s subjective move between 01:46 and 01:48; and we should keep in mind that she had been practically silent until then. At this moment, when she unexpectedly formulates the title “The Gluttonous Queen,” she associates the two discursive domains (fairy tales and comic books), an intertextuality made intentionally by the story itself, “Magali in Rapunzel.” But more importantly, she sets a direction for the entire story, still to be written, anchoring a path for the inventiveness and uniqueness of this story. Now, how can one explain the association that generated this title, in this school setting, without taking into account the object memory transmitted socially, the individual memory that responds to this transmission, and the state of fortuity in the process of writing and textual creation?

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