Beyond *perezhivanie*, sense, and language: An empirical study of early childhood teachers' subjective senses

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Abstract

Based on the Theory of Subjectivity in a cultural-historical perspective, this paper presents an empirical study of two infant teachers and their subjective dynamics of being *enchanted* with singular aspects of their professional lives. Through the constructive-interpretative principle driven from the Qualitative Epistemology, the study aims to understand the relationship between the subjects and the specific manner in which they express ways of being and feeling as early childhood teachers. The way teachers express themselves indicates the way they experience their working lives in a symbolic and emotional amalgam which cannot otherwise be captured from a formal linguistic perspective and in isolation from the subject's integral expression. A review of Vygotsky's concepts of *perezhivanie* and sense highlights the value of two common characteristics widely considered in the current development of our theoretical approach. Both concepts (1) compose an integrated theoretical model of psychic functioning, and (2) are oriented towards the quality of the subject's participation in his/her everyday life's processes. The study challenges cognitive-linguistic reductionist bias and demonstrates the value of the concept of subjective senses as a theoretical alternative. Consequently, it enhances our understanding of the symbolic-emotional nature in which individuals shape their life stories through their current experiences.

Keywords

Introduction

During the 20th century, concepts in Vygotsky's work suffered from censorship and mistranslations (Elhammoumi, 2001; Madeira-Coelho, 2004; Prestes & Tunes, 2012; González Rey, 2013). It is, therefore, remarkable that his work has maintained its relevance in contemporary studies of human processes. In a theoretical historical perspective, this paper attempts to articulate the concepts of *perezhivanie* and sense from the Soviet author with the contemporary work of González Rey, highlighting the concept of subjective sense.

For this study, the subject-language relationship constitutes a central focus to emphasize the value of this theoretical development. The argumentative framework seeks to demonstrate that this theoretical development allows us to confront impasses caused by dominant theoretical influence of linguistics in Social-Human Sciences, at the end of the 20th century.

The empirical study supports the theoretical discussion by addressing some of these aspects. It also demonstrates the theoretical value of the development of the Theory of Subjectivity, which generates new zones of understanding that characterize the way teachers express themselves in relation to their professional work as early childhood teachers.

Perezhivanie first appeared in Vygotsky's early works and tried to capture the quality of subjects' involvement with their contextualized experiences. By contrast, the category of sense appears in his later writings with a clear definition borrowed from the French linguist Paulhan.

González Rey (2013) indicates that both *perezhivanie* and sense categories derive from Vygotsky's effort to integrate the complexity of human psychic functioning in an integrated system. Both concepts are compatible with González Rey's approach to subjectivity. However, "the integrated unit of cognition and affection" was a key piece to the emergence of subjectivity as a dynamic configuration of subjective senses in which symbolic and emotional processes are articulated in a complex and inseparable unit (González Rey, 2002, 2011, 2013).

After a theoretical analysis seeking to relate the concepts of *perezhivanie,* sense, and subjectivity from a cultural-historical perspective, this article presents an empirical study, developed from the three principles of Qualitative Epistemology: first, the constructive-interpretative method; second, singularity as a legitimate instance for research production; and third, the dialogical process in research. The empirical study has two main aims. The first is to demonstrate the value of the concept of subjective senses to overcome the cognitive-linguistic bias (Madeira-Coelho, 2004) that dominated the study of Social and Human Sciences at the end of the 20th century. The second is to reaffirm the value that the category of subjective senses has in generating theoretical alternatives that advance our understanding of the symbolic-emotional character of the processes in which early childhood teachers shape their professional lives through their current life emotional experiences.

Perezhivanie: one concept, different possibilities

To understand Vygotsky's work, Arocho (2014) points to the different historical moments when Vygotsky produced his work and to the moment when it was rediscovered. In Arocho's (2014) chapter about the concept of Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), she synthesizes:

> It is worth noting that the process of rediscovering Vygotsky's work on the one hand, and its elaboration on the other, are framed in sociocultural dynamics of a different period from those that conditioned his life and work. Without this knowledge, it is impossible to completely understand the dominant interpretation of the ZPD. (p. 121; my own translation from Spanish)

According to Veresov (2014), the concept of *perezhivanie* is a theoretical concept only understood in relation to other concepts, principles, and laws of cultural-historical psychological theory.

González Rey (2013) advises that the concept of *perezhivanie* was a concept in transition at different moments in Vygotsky's work. Notably, from a more instrumental moment in his work, between 1928 and 1930, when operational aspects of the functioning of higher mental functions become the core of his concerns, to the last moments of his life, when he was concerned with a new understanding of consciousness as a psychic system (González Rey, 2013).

In fact, *perezhivanie* first appeared in *The Psychology of Art* (Vigotski, 1999), one of the first works of the Soviet author, as part of a "foundational agenda" with emphasis on formative, emotional, and creative processes in human achievements (González Rey, 2013). However, as cited before, in the period following this work, from 1928 to 1930, Vygotsky took a more instrumental perspective. He seemed to have put aside some of his ideas and emphasized the centrality of the semiotic component on cognitive bias to understand human development, continuing with the objective character of psychology.

Nevertheless, the cognitive aspects of Vygotsky's theoretical ideas from this period of his work were those that had greatest impact in the West since studies in the Social-Human Sciences were dominated by cognitive-linguistic bias in the late 20th century, such as social constructionism and discourse analysis. Therefore, at that time, emotions, affectivity, and *perezhivanie* disappeared from his theoretical works.

W. C. R. Arocho (2015) points out:

> Since the discovery of the cultural-historical approach in the West, there have been problems in the interpretation of its original formulation, in particular the cognitive bias in the analysis of Vygotsky's work that either left out or omitted to highlight essentials aspects for a full understanding of his thoughts. (personal communication, July 14, 2015; my own translation from Spanish).

The historical analysis of different periods in Vygotsky, as stated by González Rey, (2013) may lead us to think of *perezhivanie* as a work-in-progress in Vygotsky's thoughts. Nevertheless, even in his final works, Vygotsky did not fully define the concept. Therefore, *perezhivanie* remains ambiguous, as well as others aspects of the author's work (González Rey, 2013). Despite the dimension of uncertainty and contradictions present in the final works of Vygotsky, it is important to recognize that, with the concept of *perezhivanie,* Vygotsky attempted to express the quality of the subject's participation in the current state of his or her life experience. Thus, the concept of *perezhivanie* assumes value for the theoretical discussion we seek to do in the later-presented empirical study because, in reference to their everyday professional experience, early childhood teachers use the word "enchantment" which can be considered as a subjectivity marker, whereby someone is or feels enchanted by someone or something.

In Vygotsky's words: "the emotional experience [*perezhivanie*] arising from any situation or from any aspect of the child's environment, determines what kind of influence this situation or this environment will have on the child" (Vygotsky, 1994, p. 3). As already stated in the openings paragraphs, González Rey (2013) proposes that in the final period of Vygotsky's life, there had been a shift in his proposal. This change allowed the emergence of a more complex understanding of human development, because it consisted of the author's attempt to "retrieve the theme of cognitive and affective unity, and the significance and irreducibility of emotions in human activities" (González Rey, 2013, p. 104; my own translation from Portuguese). The need for a "full understanding of mental life" returned to his theoretical concerns, and from these new possibilities, the difference between *meaning* and *sense* arises.

The historical analysis organizes the theoretical scenario as an imaginative basis which supports González Rey's category of subjective sense as the unity of subjective configurations in his Theory of Subjectivity from a cultural-historical perspective.

Meaning, sense, and subjective senses: constructing concepts

Meaning
Language is both a classification system and a communication system that functions and may be characterized as an integrated duality. This duality integrates structural aspects of a complex set of abstract rules of semiotic representation, with a set of functional aspects of language such as events, use, and communicative-relational activity of speaking subjects (Madeira-Coelho, 2009). Thus, for us speakers, the use of language suggests a constant need to make choices about the most appropriate way to convey what we think. This explains the value words have by the choices a speaker has to make.

The last four decades of the 20th century witnessed a great development of linguistic studies that have become hegemonic to theoretical approaches in the Social-Human Sciences. From a strictly Saussurean's structuralistic approach, starting in 1916, linguistics had gradually incorporated language processes used in different contexts of our lives, that is, perspectives of the contextual use of language. The structuralistic influence of Saussure covered different perspectives of studies in linguistics and it maintained the strength of a long tradition in language studies: the mentalist paradigm that guides the study of an abstract and universal system. This group of linguistic approaches developed descriptive studies of highly complex and abstract structures, in which the understanding of language is restricted to its structural and semiotic aspects.

An exclusion statement opened the scientific status of linguistics and it imposed subject and subjectivity to the unbearable domain of speech. In answering to the question "what is '*la langue*'?"[1] he says:

> for us it is not confused with "*le langage*"; is only a specific and essential part of it. It is both a social product of the faculty of language and a set of necessary conventions adopted in social to allow the exercise of that faculty in individuals. Taken as a whole, the language is multiform, at the same time physical, physiological and psychological, it belongs also to the individual domain and social domain. It cannot be classified in any category of human fact and it is not known how to infer its unity ... The study of language, includes therefore two parts: one essential is engaged in the language, which is social in nature and independent of

> the individual; the other one is secondary, the individual part of the language, i.e. the speech, including phonation, and is psychophysics, an individual act of will and intelligence. (Saussure, n.d., p. 10; my own translation from Portuguese)

Over time, however, language issues that were not relevant in the structuralist approach were piling up and demanded elasticity to the border originally established. Consequently, subjectivity markers such as *deixis*, *performativity*, *polysemy*, and other linguistic phenomena [2] began to shift the dichotomous distinction between language and speech because they represented an inclusion of the subject in language-discursive organization. By the late 1960s, under the philosophy of language, the functional aspects of context and discursive production had revived the topic of the subject-language relation.

This brief statement highlights two philosophical trends that, until today, influence linguistics. In the first perspective, language is under the aegis of the Kantian conception of an epistemological subject with properties of universal reasoning (Madeira-Coelho, 2004, 2009). This perspective prevents the understanding of linguistic phenomena related to the subjects who use them (Madeira-Coelho, 2004). In other perspectives, linguistics incorporates issues arising from later-Wittgenstein (1999), in his philosophy of language [3]. In this approach, language becomes a structuring element of man's relationship with reality. Thus, linguistic studies could incorporate instances of linguistic uses, contexts of life to which interlocutors belong, and the contexts in which communication occurs.

Therefore, these two perspectives compose a paradigm shift process corresponding to two main views of language studies: (1) approaches in which language has an immanent instance, restricted to intern issues of language; (2) approaches that bring, into the system, the articulation of the language uses, the social, and the individual.

Considering this paradigm shift, there is no doubt that it improved our understanding of language as a system of meaning in relation with the users of that system. However, different developments of this second approach, such as discourse analysis [4], consider language as the only constitutive instance of human processes, disregarding the complexity of subjects (Morin, 1999).

In both approaches, studies where language is restricted to its internal issues and studies where language is the only constitutive instance of human processes, the dynamics established between subjects-contexts-language are lost. Also, the possibility to interconnect historical, economic, institutional, social, and individual processes is lost, as is the subjective dimension of all these processes.

By reifying different linguistic processes, such groups of theories lost the subject, the user of language/communication. Both mentalist and discursive approaches result in the disappearance of the subject, either because he/she is lost as an ideal subject, or because he/she is "de-subjectivated" with respect to his/her language. Both theoretical groups fail to realize how subjects in everyday life situations, with their emotional characteristics, desires, motivations, and affections, communicate and understand each other. Until now, the argumentative construction has shown that the historical paradigm shift in linguistic theories in the 20th century was unable to solve impasses on the subject-language relation.

Since the beginning of social and human scientific tradition, the relationship between human

thought and language is a point of intersection between different disciplines as psychology and linguistics. Thus, a third theoretical perspective developed from within cultural-historical psychology and, due to its basis in Marxist philosophy, attempts to overcome deterministic and essentialist thought in psychology and its partial and excluding approaches.

A quote from Vygotsky on meaning, in his last work, refers to a stable relation between thought and speech/language. Vygotsky (Vigotski, 2012) tries to elucidate this complex issue when he affirms: "the meaning of a word represents such a close amalgam of processes of thought and speech that it is hard to tell whether it is a phenomenon of speech or a phenomenon of thought" (p. 426; my own translation from Spanish). At this point, Vygotsky recognizes that language is not a nomenclature that applies to a pre-existing reality, but a semiotic instance of the way to categorize, organize, and interpret the world.

This understanding is highly supported by Vygotsky in the period from 1928 to 1931 in works that discuss the semiotic nature of psychological operations through the concept of semiotic mediation in which the sign serves first as a principle for social relations, and later throughout a child's development, becomes a means of influence on the child him or herself as a thought organizer. Beyond the understanding of the semiotic nature of psychological operations, Vygotsky's concept of semiotic mediation (Vygotsky, 1991) serves as a device for behavioral regulation, assigning two functions to the sign: first, an external one, that is, a principle for social relations immediately followed by the second, which is an internal function, that is, the sign as a mental organizer. The next item will bring a new, non-operational, and non-reductionist category to comprehend the relationship between language, speech, and subject.

Sense

In the last pages of his final work, Vygotsky (Vigotski, 2012) defined the concept of sense, borrowed from the little-known French linguist Paulhan: "the sense of a word is the sum of all the psychological events aroused in a person's consciousness by the word" (p. 493; my own translation from Spanish). Moreover, the author continues, "the sense of a word…is a complex and mobile phenomenon that, to some extent, constantly changes between the different individual consciousnesses, as well as in the same consciousness in different circumstances" (p. 494; my own translation from Spanish).

The concept of sense brought new possibilities to solve the problem of the subject/language/speech relationship and, consequently, to the understanding of the relationship between the psychic functions and the external world. As González Rey (2013) affirms, "sense would integrate the cognitive-affect unit, not as a different process but as a new kind of psychological unit which would provide a qualitative different alternative to the study of psychic processes" (p. 95; my own translation from Portuguese).

Both concepts—*perezhivanie* and sense in Vygotsky's theoretical works—seek to respond two main concerns that appeared with different shades of meaning throughout his theoretical production. First, an integrated model of psychological functioning, in a dynamic and continuous developmental system. Second, the quality of the subject's participation in the current state of his or her life experience, opening new possibilities for the understanding of the subject's role as someone who continually generates processes rather than being subjugated to them.

With the category of sense, the relationship subject/language/speech does not have only a semiotic nature but is open to a complex and dynamic "unit of psychological consciousness formed in speech's processes, [maintaining] the capacity of being integrated into the living flux of human action, in this case, through speech" (González Rey, 2011, p. 33; my own translation from Portuguese).

Nevertheless, Vygotsky did not have time to develop this particular concept into a macro-theoretical perspective. He did not have time to integrate the concept of sense into a coherent theoretical system with other concepts such as *perezhivanie* and other macro-concepts, that is, the kind of concepts that are not mere elements of a whole but a new type of psychological unit, which could lead to a more detailed understanding of human psychological development (González Rey, 2013).

Subjective senses
The path opened by Vygotsky's work is articulated to the new theoretical proposal of González Rey to the study of the psychic system. His Theory of Subjectivity from a cultural-historical perspective "seeks to understand human reality, not in an object-oriented way, but as a living network of facts, relationships and effects that only become meaningful to people when these are related to their subjective productions" (González Rey, 2013, p. 123; my own translation from Portuguese).

Taking as its starting point the concept of sense, which combines aspects of language with psychological functioning in different events experienced, González Rey expands the conceptual scope beyond the sense of the word. The category of subjective sense is constructed as a new psychological unity expressing the gathering of symbolic and emotional aspects that the subject produces in his/her life experiences.

A central concept of his theoretical production, subjective sense is "the processual relationship between the symbolic and the emotional, which emerges from within the human experience, where one aspect evokes the other without being its cause" (González Rey, 2011, p. 31; my own translation from Portuguese).

Subjective sense is thus a complex category that opens up new possibilities for understanding how individuals express themselves subjectively and how they are organized in and with language-speech. The concept of subjective sense expresses the tension between an initial organization and the way this subjective organization develops in the situations, contexts, and experiences in which the subject is involved. Therefore, it allows us to understand the relationships of the subject with his or her current life story (Madeira-Coelho, 2014)

The concept has a strong interdisciplinary nature representing a dimension of all human processes in permanent production in any lived moment, without separating the external and internal processes. This aspect provides a solution for the impasse in Vygotsky's work, which was never fully explained: the internalization/externalization processes.

The empirical experience: "the enchantment" [5]

The empirical study outlined here aimed at understanding subjective dimensions that early childhood education teachers had regarding their process of continuing education and their teaching practice. The research process took place from 2013 to 2015. To understand the complex processes of subjectivity, González Rey (2005, 2014) proposes, through *Qualitative Epistemology* (QE), a set of epistemological principles based on a critical review of the principles of traditional scientific method that characterized scientific modernity.

Three main principles characterize QE, in short, they are: (1) the constructive-interpretative method of knowledge construction instead of the inductive-deductive traditional one. (2) Research as a continued dialogical process, which gives the researcher a central role in dialoging with both the subjects of the research and the contextual elements; the researcher no longer has a neutral role, but is a key element in the research who articulates his or her ideas to integrate them into the empirical process and the theoretical framework. (3) The recognition of singularity as a value to understand human and social processes, which had been neglected by traditional perspectives of research where generalization was considered the norm (González Rey, 2005).

González Rey brings up issues related to development of science and confirms that the changes are part of a process "where knowledge is no longer considered a representation of the world, but a construction capable of generating intelligibility in systems" (González Rey, 2005, p. 225; my own translation from Portuguese). The QE proposal is oriented strictly to an epistemology of construction rather than an epistemology of answers (González Rey, 2005). Therefore, research design is not based on hypotheses that must be confirmed, and theory is not considered as a mere set of concepts that serve to analyze data collected during fieldwork. Data is not merely collected because data is constructed. In QE, the theory is an intellectual tool, which will allow the researcher to construct a "working hypothesis" through the ongoing and creative researcher's work of constructing and interpreting. Conclusions will not appear directly from a linear and causal relation between the information and theoretical tools, but from within the amount of information, the researcher must deal with theoretical tools that will permit the emergence of indicators in the researcher's interpretative work (González Rey, 2014).

The study had two phases, although in this text only aspects of the second phase are addressed. Both phases occurred in the dependences of the University of Brasília where all the involved subjects had lessons. This coexistence was part of the construction of the scenario of the research, a preparatory moment in which participants need to engage in the research process and to familiarize with researchers and research contexts. At the end of these first moments, the participants signed an Informed Consent in which they agreed in participate and declared to be advised on procedures and outcomes of the research.

In the first phase, 103 teachers of early childhood education from public education who were attending two-year postgraduate specialization course (resulting from the policy of teacher training for joint action between Ministry of Education of Brazil [MEC], the Secretariat for Education of the Federal District [SEDF], and the University of Brasilia [UnB]), answered two instruments: a written production and a completion of sentences, in two meetings of 40 minutes each. The analysis of these productions, along with the willingness to participate, provided criteria to select five participants for the second phase. It also permitted us the organization of the "enchantment" study because that word had high frequency of appearance in the written productions of the 103 participants. Therefore, according to QE, the first phase guided the second one. Although, from

the five participants selected only two could participate, the depth of the subjective dimension brought by the word subjectivity mark "enchantment" expanded the study.

The creation and use of research instruments followed González Rey's Qualitative Epistemology, that is, instruments were not defined *a priori;* they were created by the researchers both to contribute to research participants' expression and to emphasize the relationship between researcher and subjects of research.

As already explained, in the first phase of the investigation, the instruments included a "written production" and a "completion of sentences", instruments that are traditionally part of research based on the QE and in general seek to facilitate the expression of the participants. "Written productions" are instruments that allow the expression of the subject, and potentiate the position of the subject simply by facilitating the transit to other forms of induction of expression (González Rey, 2010). In this moment of research, the written production was an essay in which we asked the participants to describe some background of their careers as early childhood teachers and how they felt about their ways of being infants' teachers. The "completion of sentences" introduces participants to a set of short inductors requiring an intentional form of expression. According to González Rey, (2010) the research participant faces a different universe of proto-phrases and must complete them from his personal involvement with the instrument and research. This instrument, like others, is likely to develop in the course of research.

Between the first and second phase of the research there were moments of observation of the classroom dynamics of the specialization course attended by the participants. These observations were registered to a field notebook. In the second phase, a meeting arranged between the researcher and the two participants occurred during an afternoon in the month of May 2015 at the University of Brasília. By that time, there was a great familiarity between participants and researchers, as the specialization course was already in its final stage as was the research.

Three activities involving different instruments or forms of expression were proposed in this "conversation group". They were: a written essay; a panel production with photos, prints, and drawings; an oral presentation to the group on their productions; as well as the constant dialogue with these productions. The first and second participants' productions are collected in Figure 1 and Figure 2, respectively, with written elements translated to English from Portuguese.

Having diverse kinds of instruments allowed participants to express themselves in different ways despite the task, common to the participants, of explaining the enchantment referred to by them in the instruments used in 2013. We had intended to rescue the "enchantment" already mentioned in 2013, but seek to understand the uniqueness in which this "enchantment" was configured subjectively in each of these subjects. The meeting was audio-recorded with the permission of the participants.

The main aim of the final project was to understand the symbolic and emotional dynamics of the "enchantment" expressed by two early childhood education teachers of the SEDF. There were four specific objectives: (1) To identify how participants defined "enchantment"; (2) to identify what specific elements enchanted the participants; (3) to identify which senses and feelings were related to the expressed "enchantment"; and (4) to assess the impact of the expressed "enchantment" in their professional performance.

The word "enchantment" appeared in the oral and written expressions of the teachers at different moments during the investigation. Therefore, we reflected on all aspects expressed by the word and it became the central focus of the second study, appearing in the title and objectives. In fact, the word "enchantment" is part of a set of words that directly link the speaking subject to his form of expression. The word can be considered as a subjectivity marker, hence someone is or feels enchanted by something, someone else, a situation, a context, a history, a vision, and so on. "Enchantment" generalizes an emotional state of being and touches subjective dynamics in which contexts, situations, things, or people have a singular symbolic and emotional value to each of us.

In this article, I argue that the teachers' expressions with the word "enchantment" are related to three major aspects. (1) The meaning that they gave to the word. (2) The different senses that the word has had in their life experiences. (3) The symbolic and emotional uniqueness that configures subjectively what each one of the teachers of early childhood education singularly expressed on their enchantments whether it be about children or childhood, about teaching, development, the curriculum, or about their personal strategies to continue being teachers or even personal questions like pregnancy.

Participant 1[6]

Since she was a child, P1 dreamed of being a teacher. She is currently married and has a 12-year-old son. Since 2009, she has been teaching in public schools of the SEDF. During this period, she was assigned different coordination positions at the schools but she prefers teaching in the kindergarten classroom since *"it is difficult to work with adults, with teachers"*[7].
According to our constructive-interpretative analysis, three aspects organized the symbolic-emotional dynamics of "enchantment" for P1: (1) P1 is enchanted in her relationship with babies and children and their discovery processes; (2) P1 feels that enchantment motivates her to act and it delights her when she feels fulfilled; and (3) P1 is enchanted in her relationship with motherhood.

P1 never defined the concept of "enchantment" in isolation from her own experience to be enchanted. Even when she tried to define "enchantment" (see Fig. 1) she begins referring to herself. In others different ways and moments, she referred to the sense that "enchantment" has for her:

> I remember, especially when I see a baby smiling and laughing, how we get cheerfully silly. When he starts to laugh, we start laughing together. "Enchantment" to me is that ...[8] you laugh at anything, and feel good about anything (Conversation group).

We can interpret that P1 could not give a formal definition of enchantment because the word draws its meaning from her experience of life when feelings and emotions were brought together. Thus, the sum of experiences, feelings and emotionality allowed P1 to create her own and unique symbolic meaning that, in turn, is constituted not as a sense, but as a subjective sense:

> I am enchanted with the pleasure of their (referring to the children) discoveries, their way of learning from play and the social interactions that take place in these educational contexts (Written production).

Or:

> These children with faces of discovery, with curiosity in their faces… it is enchanting to always have a question to be answered, always a surprising answer to explain everything (Talking about her panel).

The enchantment regarding her profession is loaded with enchantment towards a generalized way of being a child, yet individualized in her experience: the child and his or her processes of discovery of the world, playing games and interactions.

Motherhood is also an important symbolic aspect for P1. When she presented her panel, she began to talk about it, pointing to the photo of a pregnant woman (see Figure 1). However, when talking about her own pregnancy, she refers to an exaggerated enchantment about the baby and the pregnancy itself. This excessive sense of wonder, the exorbitant guidance for her future baby, made other situations of her life stay in the background and ended up causing a crisis in her life, in her relationship with her husband, and also with her newborn baby. In her words "an enchantment that went beyond the enchantment". All these memories, the necessity of discussing this crisis, and the emotive way she referred to every single detail of it may indicate that, to her, enchantment also includes a contradictory subjective sense of an affective pathology.

Figure 1: P1's panel and written productions. Written production reads: "Enchantment: it comes to me as a magical moment where what is pleasing to the senses and soul conveys a sensation of joy and serenity. To be enchanted may come from a new discovery or from what one thought it was one way, but with a new look has become another. Finally, to be enchanted is to feel alive."

An interpretive synthesis
The different expressions of P1 (speech, texts, and panel) suggest that enchantment to her appears like magic with things that make her happy and serene but it also has the possibility of causing the opposite feelings of unhappiness and anguish.

These feelings are linked to her professional experience and to babies and children, and the way they make their discoveries, the assumptions they make and how they learn. However, contradictory feelings seem to be also involved, because as motherhood is also linked to her professional activity, her own experience of enchantment with her newborn baby was exaggerated and ended up causing her difficulties and challenges. P1 believes that to be enchanted motivates her to act, and this turn, fulfills her (Silva, 2015).

Participant 2
P2 also began her professional life at SEDF in 2009, in the same year when she became pregnant. She says that she has always been very responsible. Her family was very strict about her education, but she used to enjoy studying. Her first option was not an undergraduate degree in education, but when she began to teach, she liked it very much. When she became a teacher of the SEDF, P2 gained teaching experience in elementary school and early childhood education because a teacher who works in the public education system in Brasília is not exclusive to one or the other.

After being admitted to the SEDF, teachers can work either in early childhood education or in elementary education, depending on their preferences and on the existence of vacancies (Madeira-Coelho, Mitjáns Martínez, & Kelman, 2007). P2 has been working with early childhood education since 2011, and says this is her favorite context of being a teacher. During the research, the difference between early childhood education and elementary school is one argument she often uses to stress her preference.

For P2, the set of indicators created four aspects that organized her symbolic-emotional dynamics on enchantment. (a) Enchantment is related to feelings, which can also express itself as fear. (b) Enchantment relates both to children's personal discoveries through early childhood education and to challenges she sets herself as a teacher. (c) Enchantment as something that motivates her to act. (d) Feeling of enchantment connects motherhood and teaching.

When writing the meaning of enchantment, P2 brings together many words in a word cloud for "enchantment" (see Figure 2). When sharing opinions in the conversational group, this is what she says about it:

> I thought of writing a lot of things because I think along with enchantment there are also negative meanings, because when I like something a lot ... fear also comes.... because, "What am I doing?", "Am I forgetting something behind?", "Did I forget this or that?" (Conversation group).

P2's first free-verbal expression to explain about what enchantment meant to her referred to fear of making mistakes. Fear also appears in this next excerpt from her written production:

> When the teacher decides to enter early childhood education, initially, she needs a lot of courage. Before the enchantment, what drives us is actually a daily, constant struggle with fear. (Conversation group).

Fear is repeated in different forms of her expression: written, spoken, and figurative—for example, the figure that stands out in her panel is a climber scaling a rock with all his fears to overcome. Our interpretative construction on the set of these indicators permitted us to figure a singular symbolic-emotional aspect enchantment has to P2: enchantment is related to feelings, which can also express itself as fear.

P2 points out that early childhood education provides a context of greater teacher autonomy, since there is less pressure to what she calls "to teach contents". She symbolizes the difference between the stages of early childhood education and primary education by pointing to the institutional format of the teacher's work and the way elementary school children are shaped as opposed to freer educational work and the openness of preschool children:

> You cannot run away ... you have to cover the contents of math, you have to give, sometimes you want to do something different but you need to work with this or that ... In early childhood education no! You deal with the child's humanization process. Then you can do a lot, you have more time to talk, to play and see other dimensions of the human being. Then later, when they are bigger, it is harder because of the contents of knowledge.... We discover more, we learn more, we can test. The activity did not work? Then, I will do it in another way... (Conversation group).

In her written production, she reports that early childhood education deals with the child's humanization process, citing a guiding document (see SEDF, 2013) on educational activities in kindergarten:

> Child education is ... enchanting because it deals with small children, children not yet shaped by institutionalized school and the curriculum that invariably shape the students. Therefore, they are open and honest, and full of possibilities. These possibilities are alive and creative, thought-provoking and questioning. An encouraging environment, early childhood education keeps the teacher thinking and rethinking their practice every day. (Written production).

In the next topic, P2 uses the same comparative argument in relation to enchantment as a process of identifying what motivates her to act:

> Because I think enchantment moves you! You might even be good doing your work, but if you are on your own, if you are doing it mechanically, you are only doing what you should do. It is not something that comes along with all your feelings, with your will. (Conversation group).

In addition, she continues:

> It's an identification thing! You think, it's fine and your eye shines! I think 'enchantment' goes beyond this professional side, it blends in with your feelings then it really is something that moves you to always be better. It's different, I can even be an excellent early childhood education professional, but if my eyes don't shine... (Conversation group).

As she continues comparing her enchantment in early childhood education with primary education, P2 talks about enchantment as something motivating in kindergarten:

> You want to be completely in that! It's what I said before: that brings the other side, the fear to fail. Because you perceive you are leaving many things behind. (Conversation group).

This set of information regarding the P2 enchantment of her professional life shows that it goes beyond a mere professional relationship and completely blends symbolic aspects with her emotions. Thus, it reflects P2's singular subjective senses with respect to her being an early childhood education professional.

The following information points to another aspect that, for P2, can be interpreted as strongly associated with her teaching—her motherhood:

> Then my son was born and I was getting involved with him and I was becoming a mother. Then, came the fact that I am a teacher and I had to take a break from shyness and expose myself more. And it was very good! (Conversation group).

In her panel, P2 brought one of her son's drawings, and she explains:

> I also brought my son's drawing of me. Because there are people who do not need to have a child to like children ... For me it was a fundamental thing! Something linked to my feelings. My way of dealing with children. Sometimes I do something and I think: "Would I like it if my son's teacher did this to him?" Then I'll go and change! (Panel explanation).
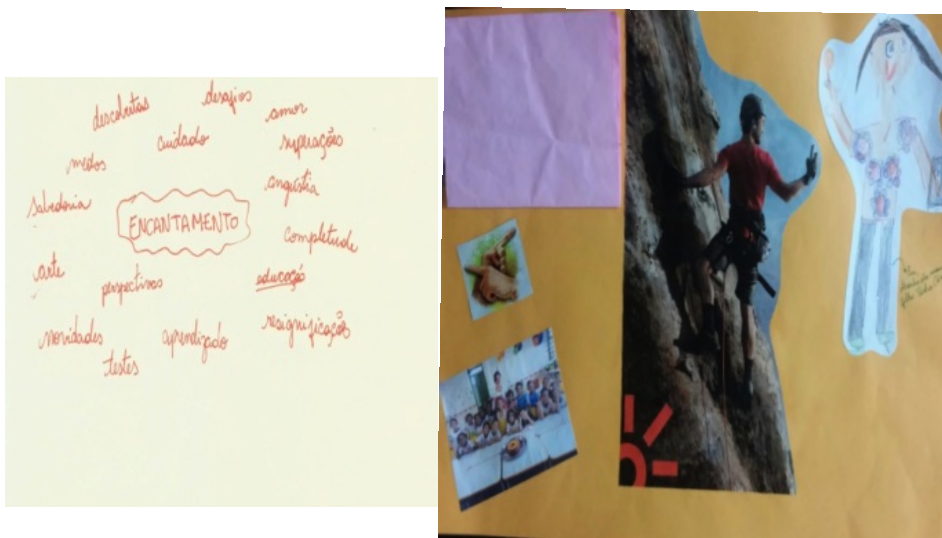
Figure 2: P2's "enchantment" word cloud related to others words (discoveries, fear, wisdom, art, new, perspectives, challenge, love, care, completeness, tests, learning, overcoming, anguish, education, significations) and panel production.

An interpretive synthesis

Through the indicators, P2's set of expressions may suggest that, to her, enchantment relates to something proper to the person, in which all feelings are involved. It is expressed as identification with something. In her view, she expresses her enchantment with working in early childhood education because she feels identified with it. She also feels very involved with it and believes that working in this educational phase has provided her with a process of personal discovery through the challenges she sets herself. P2 believes that in early childhood education she has more working opportunities and sees it as a more humanizing context. In this moment of her professional life, she conceives enchantment as something motivating her work, but also something that goes beyond a merely professional relationship. It is also part of her subjective processes about being enchanted with her professional experience, her fear of making mistakes, especially when she addresses the enchantment experiences in relationship to early childhood education.

Conclusions

The centrality of the semiotic dimension, focused mainly on sign and language, in the theoretical and conceptual approach of Vygotsky's work is essentially congruent to the cognitive bias that characterizes much of the legacy of his work. In the former Soviet Union, the ostracism imposed on his work by the political regime of the time can explain the prevalence of this mechanistic and operational bias. In the West, one of the aspects that contributed to this reduced understanding has its origin in the mistranslation of "the thought-speech unit" into "the thought-language unit". Due to such mistranslation, for example, the integrated duality suggested through "the cognitive-affective unit" was lost. Moreover, the semiotic component was completely isolated from the conceptual system created by Vygotsky and its cognitive bias became known as the great contribution of his work. As a result, the complexity of human functioning, such as in learning processes or in language use's processes was reduced to its cognitive aspects and other important concepts of his work, such as *perezhivanie*, emotions, and social situation of development, had not been properly integrated into his theoretical framework.

Through the research process presented here, our interpretive constructions made it possible to understand the singular subjective dynamics of enchantment for both teacher-student participants. Together in the interpretative-constructive process, we realized that, beyond language organization, other aspects are involved in the word enchantment bringing together subject, language, and specific aspects of participants' everyday lives.

The semiotic component unites Saussure's (2002) "*signifiant*" and "*signifié*" to convey meaning. The sense reframes the word from within "the sum of psychological events that arouse in a person's consciousness" (Vigotski, 2012, p. 493; my own translation from Spanish). Through our research process, participants' emotional experiences, feelings, and symbolic experiences are produced and configured through each participant's singular subjective enchantment as dynamic living process as early childhood teachers. In fact, although they use the same word "enchantment", participants expressed different feelings and emotions when using it. In that moment of their lives, their life emotional experiences, as *perezhivanie*, allow them to configure subjective senses organized when

they express themselves through the word "enchantment" from within both professional and personal contexts. From these experiences, they were able to create their singular way to be enchanted with children, the children's processes of discovery, their teaching activities, aspects of the curriculum, and other aspects from which they subjectify their professions as teachers of early childhood education.

When using the expression "enchantment", the participants did not reduce it to the meaning of the word, as an aspect of language. When participants discussed or explained their enchantment, they expressed it through their emotional experiences in which the word has its signification beyond meaning. Namely, the word acquires new and individual senses within their experiences. However, this sense is not only derived from the word. The way in which participants organized themselves in and with language modifies and rearranges meanings and senses according to their emotional and symbolic life experiences, processes that are evidenced by the concept of subjective senses.

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[1] Keeping the French words "*la langue*" and "*le langage*" ensures the clarity of Saussure's argument.

[2] *Deixis* refers to expressions in that referent can only be determined in relation to the parties. *Performative* refers to statements that describe certain action of the speaker, through which the action is carried out. *Polysemy* occurs when relatively general laws allow moving from one meaning to another (Ducrot & Todorov, 1998).

[3] For example, in the following theoretical approaches: Ethnomethodology (e.g., Austin, Searle), Conversation Analysis (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, Jefferson), Pragmatics (e.g., Peirce, Grice, Benveniste). See, in this regard, Mussalim and Bentes, 2001.

[4] There are different tendencies of discourse analysis; however, they bring common features such as: (1) the analytical methods of traditional linguistics, (2) studies approach to language with the bias of social and political thought, and (3) specific object of the study is the discourse that is the explanation of how and why the text / subject say what they say. See, in this regard, Maingueneau (1997).

[5] The research reported here occurred within the specialization course in Teaching in Early Childhood Education, an agreement that brought together the Ministry of Education, MEC, the Secretariat for Education of the Federal District, SEDF, and the Faculty of Education of the University of Brasília. Throughout the period of the research, I played a dual role, simultaneously teacher-advisor in the research program and coordinator-professor of the specialization course. Therefore, this research maintained an institutional nature. The information here discussed appeared as part of the final undergraduate research report, entitled "The symbolic and emotional dynamics of 'enchantment' expressed by teachers of early childhood education in Brasília, Federal District" (2015), and I thank my student, Vanessa Dias da Silva, for giving me the opportunity to construct news theorizations on it.

[6] In respect of ethic issues, participants are named as P1 and P2.

[7] All the participants' utterances and written language are translated by the author.

[8] "…" is a transcription of long pauses in P1 and P2's speeches.

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