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NEW IDEAS IN CHILD AND EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

Vygotsky's Cultural-Historical Position Is Not Constructivist[¤]

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ABSTRACT

Background. Cultural-historical psychology is analyzed from a theoretical and methodological point of view in order to identify its differences from constructivism. In addition, the question of the sources of mental development and the content of the terms "cultural" and "social" are analyzed.

Objective. This article describes the cultural-historical research method and the possibilities for using it to organize teaching and learning processes.

Conclusion. The authors conclude that it is necessary to differentiate Vygotsky's cultural-historical approach from postmodern constructivism on conceptual, methodological and epistemological grounds.

Keywords: Cultural-historical psychology, psychological theories, constructivism, nature of development, methods of analysis in psychology

Highlights:

- The Cultural-historical approach in psychology cannot be considered a variant of constructivism
- According to Vygotsky, a child's mental development comes from his/her culture and social and biological circumstances, which only set the conditions for such development.
- Researchers and teachers who hold Vygotsky's view do not believe in spontaneously occurring developmental processes, but are engaged in developing teaching methods that contribute to more optimal development.

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АННОТАЦИЯ

Актуальность. В работе с теоретической и методологической точки зрения проводится анализ культурно-исторической психологии с целью выявить ее отличия от конструктивизма. Также обсуждается проблема источников психического развития и использования терминов «натуральное» и «культурное».

Цель. В статье рассматривается методология культурно-исторического психологического подхода и его значение для организации процессов учения и обучения.

Выводы. Авторы приходят к выводу о необходимости разграничения подхода Л.С. Выготского и постмодернистского конструктивизма по концептуальному, методологическому и эпистемологическому основаниям.

Ключевые слова: Культурно-историческая психология, психологические теории, конструктивизм, сущность развития, метод анализа в психологии

Ключевые положения:

- культурно-исторический подход в психологии нельзя считать разновидностью конструктивизма
- источником психического развития ребенка по Л.С.Выготскому является культура, социальные и биологические особенности - лишь условия такого развития
- исследователи и педагоги, стоящие на позициях Л.С. Выготского, верят не в спонтанно происходящие процессы развития, а занимаются разработкой методов обучения, способствующих более оптимальному развитию

RESUMEN

Relevancia. En el trabajo se analiza desde el punto de vista teórico y metodológico la psicología histórico-cultural para identificar sus diferencias con el constructivismo. También se discute el tema de las fuentes de desarrollo psíquico y del uso de los términos «natural» y «cultural».

Objetivo. El artículo aborda la metodología del enfoque histórico-cultural en psicología y su relevancia hacia la organización de los procesos del estudio y aprendizaje.

Conclusiones. Los autores llegan a la conclusión de que es necesario distinguir el enfoque de Vygotsky y el constructivismo posmoderno por razones conceptuales, metodológicas y epistemológicas.

Palabras clave: Psicología histórico-cultural, teorías psicológicas, constructivismo, origen del desarrollo, métodos de análisis en psicología

Destacados:

- El enfoque histórico-cultural en psicología no puede considerarse una variante del constructivismo.
- La fuente de desarrollo psíquico del niño según Vygotsky es la cultura, las características sociales y biológicas son solamente las condiciones de tal desarrollo.
- Los investigadores y educadores que están en la posición de Vygotsky no creen en los procesos de desarrollo que se llevan a cabo espontáneamente, pero están elaborando métodos de enseñanza que contribuyen a un óptimo desarrollo.

RESUME

Origines. Ce travail implique une analyse de la psychologie historico-culturelle sur le plan théorique et méthodique afin de relever des traits de differenciation par lesquelle elle se distingue du constructivisme. Cet article aborde aussi la discussion du probleme des sources du développement psychique et de l`usage des termes « naturel » et « culturel ».

Objectif. L'article porte sur la méthodologie de l'approche historico-culturelle et psychologique et de son importance pour l'organisation des processus d'apprentissage et d'enseignement.

Conclusion. Les auteurs arrivent à la conclusion qu`il faut distinguer l'approche de Lev Vygotski de l'approche postmoderne et constructiviste sur la base conceptuelle, méthodologique et épistémologique.

Mots-clés: Psychologie historico-culturelle, théories psychologiques, constructivisme, sources du développement, méthodes d'analyse de psychique

Points principaux:

- L'approche historico-culturelle en psychologie ne peut pas être considérée comme une sorte de constructivisme ;
- D'après Lev Vygotski le source du développement psychique de l'enfant est la culture, les traits sociaux et biologiques ne sont que des conditions d`un tel développement;
- Les chercheurs et enseignants qui soutiennent la position de Vygotski ne croient pas aux processus de développement spontanés mais s'engagent dans l`élaboration des méthodes d'enseignement qui contribuent au développement encore plus optimisé.

Introduction

The school of "constructivism" (a derivative of the noun "construct") arose in art (architecture, theater, painting) in Russia at the beginning of the 20th century as a movement that valued technological progress and opposed traditional values. With the advent of Jean Piaget's work, constructivism came to be seen as a variant of epistemology, and established itself in clinical psychology and social sciences and in pedagogical theories throughout the twentieth century up until today. Piaget developed the idea of constructivism in the twentieth century as a metaphor to discuss issues raised by traditional epistemological thinking and theories of knowledge.

At its core, his metaphor relied on sensorimotor operations as the basis for a child understanding future concrete and formal operations of logic, including mathematics: "[….] to understand logic […] it was necessary to consider, first of all, manipulation and experiments on an object […]" (Piaget, 1979, p. 20). According to his theory, these operations are a part of an evolutionary biological process that goes through the same stages in all people, in all cultures, and in different historical periods. The child always "accumulates his/her knowledge," as if it were a process inherent in his/her own nature, in any context and in any environment.

This metaphor fell apart when Piaget moved from the concept of achieving knowledge (an expression that does not imply an intentional subject or causal agent), which emphasized process, to the construction concept, which implies the agent's intentionality. The architectural metaphor's backbone now is not only what is built through actions, but also what is planned, foreseen, and designed. It's not just doing something, but, above all, planning and doing. Piaget knew that and discussed biological foresight: "The most general functions of the organism — organization, adaptation and assimilation, conservation, anticipation, regulation, and balance — all again find themselves in the field of knowledge and play the same essential role

[…] as soon as atomism is rejected in favor of dialectical constructivism" (Piaget, 1969, p. 195).

Piaget went from the concept of "representation" (1981), to "origin" (1952), to "formation" (1961), and finally ended up with "construction" (1954), which he reduced to simple action. By the 1960s he was already considered a "dialectical constructivist" (1969; 1972). From this point of view, an action, pre-planned (according to the constructivist idea) as something given a priori, is devoid of subjective planning in the psychological sense: the subject's every action, be it social or individual, is determined biologically (evolutionarily).

As the "constructivism" concept spread into the social sciences, clinical psychology, and education, influencing their qualitative methodology, the process went into reverse. What Piaget called intellectual operations dependent on biologically determined stages have become operations with omnipresent intentionality, reviving an extreme subjectivism that claims that reality does not exist but is a construction, an invention of each subject (Watzlawick, 2000). It does not matter that this contradicts the possibility of objectively studying the process of psychological development under favorable and unfavorable conditions, both social and natural.

In this context, this article's purpose is to analyze the epistemological, conceptual, and methodological misconceptions that underlie the widespread belief that L. Vygotsky is epistemologically a constructivist, and that the educational derivatives of his theory are among the constructivist variants applied to education (Hernandez, 2019).

1. Epistemological criteria

In every epistemological problem, four fundamental questions must be answered. The first two are: 1) Does objective reality exist outside the subject, his/her consciousness, and his/her perception; and 2) What role does the subject, his/her thoughts, and his/her practical activities play in the process of getting to know phenomena? From these two questions follows the next: Does cognition of the phenomena of reality, objects, and the world occur simply as a result of their prior perception or as a transformation of the world?

The answers can be grouped based on the opposing views on the existence or non-existence of the objective world, regardless of what the subject thinks about it. Some epistemological movements, including dialectical materialism, argue that objective reality exists separately and independently of the subject. Together with Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 2018), the authors of this article are of the opinion that each subject perceives or learns about the world, which at the same time cannot be known once and for all, simply by perceiving it, but perception is the beginning of all knowledge. There is no prior knowledge before an organism develops and begins to interact with the world or environment. Knowledge of everything that exists does not occur automatically or spontaneously, since it certainly requires the subject's active theoretical and practical actions.

Knowledge is not an individual characteristic determined by evaluation; it depends on the achievements of each historical, cultural, and scientific moment in each

person's life in a particular society. This position underlies the tradition of historical-dialectical materialism, a striking example of which are the works by Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 2018). Piaget, unlike Vygotsky, analyzes individual knowledge based on the biological prerequisites that ensure cognition (Piaget, 1969).

Other epistemological theories postulate that objective reality does not exist outside the subject, and that it exists only if it is known, perceived, or constructed by the individual. They do not deny that perception is necessary for cognition, but they argue that it is the subject or his/her brain that processes and constructs what is perceived. This point of view fits into the idealistic tradition of Berkeley and Kant that characterizes modern postmodern constructivism, in which logical contradictions are insurmountable (Escotto-Cordova, 2012; 2001). This position is hegemonic in many of the "constructivisms" that dominate the qualitative methodology of the social sciences, pedagogies, and clinical psychology. These schools of thought always highlight that knowledge is given a priori.

Vygotsky epistemologically belongs to the first group: he is a materialist and dialectician. That is, he follows Marxist philosophy, but can he be characterized as an epistemological and pedagogical constructivist? In the opinion of the authors of this article, the answer to this question is negative; Vygotsky's approach has no general similarity with the epistemology of post-modern Berkeley constructivism (known as radical or social), as Hernandez seems to believe (Hernandez, 2019, p. 27). The fact that two theoretical concepts use similar vocabulary or address the same topic does not necessarily mean that they are closely related.

2. Constructivism

Constructivism is not a word that Vygotsky or his followers used to refer to their epistemological or psychological theory, although it is a term from the Russian art movement that was known to Vygotsky; he did find the literary and theatrical avant-garde of the 1920s very attractive and enjoyable in his youth (Vygotsky, 2018).

Despite his knowledge of the term constructivism, Vygotsky only used it once. That was when, in his "Thinking and Speech" article, he criticized Piaget, with whose works he was thoroughly familiar. In this article, which put forward a new theoretical concept of the interrelationship between the processes of development and learning, Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1982) wrote that for Piaget, learning is built on the basis of previous development inherent in the nature of the child, while for him the process of learning leads to development..

Vygotsky's idea is revealed through the example of how a child assimilates concepts: "The formation of scientific concepts, to the same extent as of spontaneous ones, does not end, but only begins at the moment when the child first learns a new meaning or term that is the bearer of a scientific concept. This is the general law of the development of words' meanings, to which spontaneous and scientific concepts are equally subject in their development" (Vygotsky, 1982, p. 221). Of course, Vygotsky does not agree with Piaget's approach.

The use of constructivism as an epistemological base is associated with child development studies, especially those of Piaget, who used the word "construct" in

his psychogenetic theory from the 1920s on. Studies devoted to the psychogenesis of cognition (aka as genetic epistemology or cognition genesis) were proposed by Piaget as a branch of scientific child psychology in traditional epistemology, which he divided into empiricists vs. spiritualists, realists vs. materialists, and mechanists vs. idealists: "[…] as the process of close interdependence between subject and object.. Consequently, depending on whether it is at one pole or the other, science speaks in a more idealistic or more realistic language. Which of the two languages is true?… only psychologists will understand!" (Piaget, 1972, p. 112).

Thanks to Piaget, what some consider to be a constructivist consensus emerged, which lasted until the 1980s. Beginning in the 1990s, the consensus split into different variants of constructivism that converge on critiques of objectivist and realist empiricism (Hernandez, 2019). In learning, constructivists consider "[…] the active learner as a creator of himself/herself and at the same time as a reconstructor and co-constructor of the knowledge that society and culture bring to him/her" (Hernandez, 2019, p. 10), and "[…] he/she can do this together with others […]" (Hernandez, 2019, pp. 14–15). This perspective quite strongly diverges from the ideas expressed in the works of Vygotsky and his followers, and requires thoughtful explanation.

Piaget's constructivism is an epistemological theory based on the psychology of ontogenetic development, hence its name: genetic epistemology. It is not an educational or pedagogical theory, although Piaget played a seminal role in popularizing the word "constructivism" in epistemology (Piaget, 1952; 1954; 1961; 1969; 1972; 1975; 1980; 1981).

Constructivism as an epistemological alternative is usually justified by the rejection of empiricism, positivism, and the theory of cognition, which uses the metaphor of "reality reflection."

One of the streams of constructivism specialized in pedagogy. In this article we will refer to it as pedagogical constructivism, as it focuses on teaching strategies or didactics, and ensures that specific students acquire specific knowledge called competencies (Zambrano, 2016). The goal is to integrate concepts that are designated by different forms of constructivism (psychogenic, sociocultural, and cognitive) into what is called: "a constructivist concept of teaching and learning" (Hernandez, 2019, p. 33). Given this, it is unclear whether these competencies are a product of psychological or biological development, and whether they are synonyms or areas of specific professions taught in educational institutions.

Neither Vygotsky nor Piaget adhered to Berkeley's epistemological position, although both used a qualitative approach in their research. Both authors advocated for formation and created methods of "genetic" or "historical-genetic analysis" in the sense of knowledge genesis or psychology (Piaget, 1972, p. 94), or, according to Vygotsky, the "historical-genetic" method for understanding psychological development (Leontyev, 1997: p. 437); or "instrumental" (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 67); or "synthetic-genetic" (Vygotsky, 1993, p. 120); or "genetic-modeling" (Vygotsky, 1997, p. 120, 319); or the "method of genetic sections" (Vygotsky, 1996, p. 61).

A notable difference between the approaches of Piaget and Vygotsky is that for the latter, the historical is inseparable from the cultural; therefore culture is the determining developmental factor. This implies that in each era, cultural production

can be different and influence the child's mental development differently. Moreover, all eras are united precisely by the presence of human culture, the meanings of which the child must learn in the course of individual development.

By contrast, for Piaget, the "historical" is understood as a background or scene for constant changes and transformations expressed in the fixed stages of all individuals, cultures, and periods: education and society are merely responsible for accelerating or retarding these steps. They are independent of any particular culture and have their origin in biological evolution. In fact, Piaget's preferred analogy is that psychogenetic research is related to epistemology in the same way that embryology is related to anatomy (Piaget, 1972).

On the other hand, for Vygotsky, culture is a source of development, determining and modifying it depending on historical periods. Also, for him, cultural development cannot be reduced to the mechanisms of biological evolution; therefore this process is not subject to biological determinism (Obukhova, 2019).

One of Vygotsky's theory's most powerful features is his assertion that learning changes the child, and that his/her development depends on the methods used in education (Vygotsky, 1993). Based on the above, the need to conduct research on the development and creation of innovative teaching methods that allow the optimization of the developmental process becomes clear (Solovieva, & Quintanar, 2019).

Theoretical and methodological clarity has always been a distinctive feature of the theory of Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1993) and his followers, not only when they addressed the problem of developing speech and thinking in response to Piaget's concept (Piaget, 1976), but also long before that. For example, in his work "The Historical Meaning of the Psychological Crisis," Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1991) wrote that psychology must define its object of study and indicate the method used in this science.

It seems appropriate to establish the differences between Vygotsky's theoretical works regarding the process of development, teaching, and learning, and the constructivist position. The disputed issues to be analyzed are: 1) the origin of psychological development; 2) the use of cultural and social terms; 3) the adult's role in the developmental process; and 4) the difference between the concepts of the "zone of proximal development" (ZPD) and "scaffolding," a method dominant today: *i.e.,* the assessment and statement versus the formative or genetic-experimental and theoretical-methodological significance for arranging the learning process. Below we address each of these points.

3. Psychological development

In Vygotsky's paradigm, psychological development is historical and cultural, and presupposes two conditions: social relationships and the adequacy of a child's central nervous system. Psychological development consists of the child acquiring historical and cultural experience within the framework of the activities he/she carries out (Obukhova, 2006).

Vygotsky's followers oppose this position to Piaget's views, for whom development is considered a biological or evolutionary process (Solovieva, & Quintanar, 2019) and

lies in organic growth movement with universal phases (sensorimotor, concrete, and formal), identical for all children in all periods and under all sociocultural conditions (Baltazar Ramos, 2019). Development itself in Piaget's genetic epistemology is understood as a spontaneous process of a biological nature, following its own, already established course. Social conditions can only accelerate or delay going through the pre-set stages, depending on the environment in which the child lives.

Piaget, who considered himself a "dialectical constructivist" (Piaget, 1969), recognized that cognitive development has a biological basis. In this regard, his favorite analogy for understanding the psychological development significance from an epistemological point of view was to equate the significance of the stages of embryology in anatomy with the biological evolution stages for psychology. In his view, all stages of acquisition of intelligence depend on the evolutionary specifics of the species, *i.e.,* they are "built into the human species" (Piaget, 1972, pp. 30–31).

Social constructivism places greater emphasis on the social conditions for development, which are beginning to be used as a synonym for cultural ones (Berger & Luckmann, 2011). The concepts' specificity is blurred, and it seems that all definitions from the social sciences are justified and suitable for psychological research. Vygotsky and his followers always advocated for specific methods and precise objects of scientific research. Vygotsky notes: "The method must correspond to the object being studied" (Vygotsky, 1983a: 41).

4. Use of the terms "cultural" and "social"

Various studies note that a feature of Vygotsky's theory is that the individual is viewed as part of human society (Wertsch, 1988; Rogoff, 1993; Daniels, Cole & Wertsch, 2007); however, neither Vygotsky nor his followers called his theory social. It is known that Vygotsky initially called his approach instrumental psychology, and his followers called it cultural-historical psychology. Vygotsky thought it was essential to point out the differences between the psyche of animals and humans; therefore, the word "social" was inappropriate (Yaroshevsky, 2007). In discussing animal life, we can talk about social relations and communications, but not about the historical or cultural, unless, as in Piaget, the historical is equated with the evolutionary in a biological sense. In animal "communities" there is neither history nor culture, since there are no changes in their lives' arrangements determined by historical events. "Cultural methods of behavior do not arise simply as an external skill; they become an integral part of the personality itself, introducing new relationships into it and creating a completely new system of them" (Vygotsky, 1984, p. 128).

Based on this idea, we can say that the term "cultural" is closely related to the term "instrumental," to the mediation process which involves the use of signs and symbols as transformative psychological tools (Solovieva, & Quintanar, 2019). "[…] the basis of the structure of cultural forms of behavior is mediated activity, the use of external signs as a means of further behavioral development" (Vygotsky, 1984, p. 148). Thus, the use of a sign assumes paramount importance in overall cultural development.

Social phenomena are studied in sociology or social anthropology, but psychology must have its own object of study. Undoubtedly, everything cultural is necessarily social and cannot be otherwise. All cultural achievements are social and historical; however, the levels of analysis are different. The cultural level helps to bring to life and clarify what is intended to be studied in psychology, but it is impossible to dissolve the psychological and cultural into the sociological; this would be unacceptable reductionism according to Vygotsky and his followers, for whom the social and cultural cannot be understood as synonyms, as many authors often do (Hernandez, 2019). Vygotsky (1982) was interested in defining specific research objects in psychology and rejected any idea of reductionism, so as not to dissolve the psychological into the sociological, which was unacceptable for his dialectical-materialist position (Yaroshevsky, 2007). In his classic work "Thinking and Speech," Vygotsky does not clearly distinguish aspects of "cultural" development from "social" ones (Vygotsky, 1984). We see that Vygotsky was not so much concerned with the external social processes as with the path of individual and personal development through the internalization of culture, mediated by speech. Failure to understand this fact leads to the serious mistake of declaring that Vygotsky denies the individual, mental, and internal nature of cognition, and both classifying him as a constructivist, by some authors (Hernandez, 2019) and comparing him with ;.

It is important to give credit to Vygotsky himself (Vygotsky 1984, p. 145), who (although he does not explain it in detail) prefers to use the term "cultural" to characterize the developmental process.

The term "social" in relation to our object is of great significance. First of all, this means, in the broadest sense, that everything cultural is social. Culture is a product of social life and human social activity, and posing the cultural development problem immediately brings us to the social level of development.

It is argued here that culture is a product of social activity and can be studied as a system of signs and symbols, that is, as psychological tools that transform human life itself. Everything cultural is social, but not everything social is cultural, since this would require "external" cultural mechanisms of transformation, preservation, and generation of experience," *i.e.,* beyond human capabilities.

It is understood that social form is the first stage of psychological development and only opens up possibilities for the conscious and voluntary use of cultural means. These means can subsequently be assimilated. Vygotsky's psychological theory cannot be a "social" or "historical" theory, since it studies the transformation of the individual's psyche in culture. "Culture" is the possibility of preserving the means of labor in external semiotic systems, such as language codes, non-verbal communication, objects of art, utensils, etc. "Everything that was created by human intention and stored in sign information, accepted, received and assimilated by others as a result of intellectual activity is called semantic information" (Lobodanov, 2013, p. 24).

In Vygotsky's theory (Vygotsky, 1991), the elements of this semantic information system become psychological signs, provided that the subject initially uses them on a social and collective level, so that they become elements of individual consciousness containing internal meanings. This is not about social life as such and not about signs

themselves, but about the motivated use of signs that carry culture as psychological tools for joint activity.

While some constructivists confuse and use the social and cultural as interchangeable concepts, the historical-cultural approach is based on a clear definition of the sphere of culture as the only sphere of existence for the child's psychological development.

5. The adult's role in the developmental process and the terms: "zone of proximal development" and "scaffolding"

The adult's role, according to constructivist theory, is to "facilitate" the child's interaction with the environment. This is how "social learning" is built. The child's process of gaining knowledge during the development process is seen as an evolution determined by the biological growing-up stages in which assimilation and adaptation occur as spontaneous, child-specific processes. In this light, it should be taken into account that the adult's role is to "facilitate" and "support" development, and not be the main initiator and conductor of this process. It is never specified how, when, and what aspects need to be "facilitated" (Rogoff, 1993).

Piaget himself did not address the topic of learning very much, since for him the topics of psychological and pedagogical research do not necessarily coincide nor are they of interest. "Child psychology studies the child as such, in his/her mental development" (Piaget, & Inhelder, 2015: 22). Piaget (1972) argued that the subject of genetic psychology research is the development of knowledge within the child, which can also be understood through his/her ontogeny. An adult can cooperate and help, but the path of development is already predetermined a priori.

A new approach was proposed in the work of J. Bruner (Bruner, 1984). This author attempted to reconcile Vygotsky's approach with Piaget's genetic psychology, noting that the child must also interact with peers and with adults. It is also necessary to emphasize Bruner's (1988; 2000) attention and interest in speech, storytelling, and interaction, topics that were not addressed by Piaget and his followers. Bruner proposed studying the social interaction and environment of the child as his/her development source. However, the historical and cultural principle noted in the works of Vygotsky and his followers cannot be reduced to the concept of environment.

Bruner and his colleagues proposed the concept of "scaffolding" (which has become very popular), a metaphor for building steps that fits perfectly with constructivism (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). The concept suggests that the child must go through many steps, but with the help of an adult. He/she does this not alone, but with support. However, this concept does not specify what kind of support is required , and this causes a lot of confusion. It seems that everything the adult does is a form of help or a set of aids, directions, and information that the child receives throughout his/her intellectual development, as if scaffolding and zone of proximal development were synonymous. We would like to highlight that what Bruner articulated with the concept of scaffolding is different from Vygotsky's concept of the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1984).

First, Vygotsky points out that the zone of proximal development refers to already completed processes that do not allow one to characterize the child's intellectual development. This is something he/she can do on his/her own, without outside help, because it is a process a child has already mastered. Second, the zone of proximal development is represented by the aspects that are "unripe fruits" that must ripen (Vygotsky, 1984, p. 262). For Vygotsky, the zone of proximal development is a metaphorical and methodological term that does not have an operational purpose. In his work, Vygotsky (Vygotsky, 1984) does not indicate anything that could lead to the idea of "steps" or "scaffolding," but speaks of the need to change the approach to the clinical assessment of child development to one which should be dynamic and qualitative. In another work, he writes: "The zone of proximal development (ZPD) is the distance between the child's actual level of development, determined by his/her independent problem solving, and the level of potential development, determined by his/her ability to solve problems under the guidance of a "more knowledgeable other." (Vygotsky, 2009, p. 133).

As the quote indicates, ZPD is a concept related to the child's development, something that is aimed at the future of the child; it is about introducing new knowledge that he/she was not previously aware of. On the contrary, all formal educational programs are based on the knowledge already acquired by the child. This aspect is not significant for Vygotsky, who says that "this is his/her yesterday" and that he/she needs to worry "about his/her tomorrow." Likewise, he emphasizes that learning determines development and leads to it through interaction in the zone of proximal development (Vygotsky, 1984, p. 262).

The term "scaffolding" reflects the adult's ability to provide involuntary and spontaneous support; in this case, both processes are involuntary and spontaneous: both the child's development and the adult's help. On the contrary, the zone of proximal development is a concept theoretically associated with the child's psychological development, influencing and changing his/her development in a cultural aspect. Both processes, both child development and the zone of proximal development, have a cultural, and therefore voluntary, beginning (Vygotsky, 1984). For Vygotsky and his followers, learning leads to development and always moves forward, which ensures the child's psychological development.

If for pedagogical constructivism the adult's role is to mediate and facilitate, then for the cultural-historical approach it is a guiding role, but that is only one of the possibilities. The role of mediator and facilitator is also possible, but it does not lead to psychological development and does not correspond to the zone of proximal development.

6. Method that predominates in the approach: evaluation and verification versus formative or genetic-experimental

The experimental-genetic method is one of the most original ones proposed by Vygotsky. He stated: "[…] The method we use can be called an experimental-genetic method in the sense that it artificially induces and creates the genetic process of psychological development" (Vygotsky, 1983. p. 95). In addition, this method analyzes a

process rather than a static object, and process analysis can be called dynamic analysis. According to Vygotsky, "[…] the task of such an analysis comes down to experimentally presenting any higher form of behavior not as a thing, but as a process, to take it in motion. To go not from a thing to its parts, but from the process to its individual moments" (Vygotsky, 1983, p. 95).

This idea was taken up by his followers, and used as a fundamental teaching method in general psychological research (Galperin, 2000), as well as in clinical (Solovieva, & Quintanar, 2018) and pedagogical research (Solovieva, & Quintanar, 2019; Baltazar Ramos, & Escotto Cordova, 2020).

The experimental-genetic method is currently called the formative method or experiment (Talyzina, 2019; Solovieva, & Quintanar, 2019). Its purpose is to analyze a process or activity as it is being formed, and it often starts from level zero. But how do you study something that does not yet exist? Indeed, at the beginning it does not yet exist, but in the end, it will exist as a result of the intervention of the psychologist.

This method allows us to study actions in the process of their formation under various conditions, both optimal ones and in the face of social and organic obstacles. This method was applied by Vygotsky's followers to deaf-mute and congenitally blind children in the city of Zagorsk (or Sergiev Posad), in a famous boarding school under the leadership of Professor Sokolyansky, where psychological research was carried out. The goal of the analysis was not to record and evaluate the path of children's spontaneous development, but to create transformative cultural conditions that would lead to the psychological development of children with severe hearing and visual impairments since birth. In this regard, the experiment was organized from the level of joint objective action to the introduction of symbolic play as an antecedent stage in the development of complex intellectual concepts (Liaudis, 1981; Il'enkov, 1979). By contrast, pedagogical constructivism does not use the experimental-genetic method, although Piaget spoke of "historical or genetic analysis as a method" (Piaget, 1972, p. 94).

Constructivism in education captures and evaluates spontaneous development, while the cultural-historical approach creates actions that do not yet exist under various developmental conditions (Solovieva, & Quintanar, 2019; Solovieva et al., 2020).

7. Contradictions between the teaching and learning processes

In line with the above, in pedagogical constructivism, facilitation or mediation should always be based on prior knowledge and should be a help, not a hindrance. In fact, it consists of simplifying the entire educational process, and is limited to the establishment of social coexistence, emotional experience, and meaningful learning. Facilitating learning always starts from a simple presentation of a piece of particular knowledge (from a fact, a definition, or an example) to another simple or slightly more complex piece of knowledge. In some cases, it is possible to reach some general theoretical position or premise. As a result, most students develop a systematic and organized understanding of the subject being studied (Davydov, 2000; 2008).

Pedagogical constructivism is based on processes specified as prerequisites for learning, which shows its close associations with Piaget's constructivist theory

(Obukhova, 2019). Its goals are related to the scope of established programs or to the competencies that a child must master at each educational level; to do this, various strategies are offered (Diaz, & Hernandez, 2002). As a precondition for the approach to competencies, one can recall one of constructivism's contributions to pedagogy: the learning taxonomy for each level (Bloom, 1973).

Another concept for organizing learning goals is called the meaningful learning theory (Ausubel, 1963, 1968), which is closely associated with the cognitive approach. In both cases, the question raised is not about the formation of scientific concepts, but about the creation of "scaffolding," since it is assumed that the child will, in any case, form the concept sooner or later; it's just about helping him/her. From the point of view of this article, constructivism does not explore what type of concept (theoretical, empirical, or magical) is formed and how it is formed: it merely states that the concept is created by the child, and various strategies can be used to achieve this. This position contradicts the theory of Vygotsky and his followers, since it uses scaffolding rather than the zone of proximal development. These two concepts, in our opinion, cannot be used as synonyms. The zone of proximal development always leads the child forward into the future of his/her development, while scaffolding has more of a flavor of a specific "strategy." This nuance is much closer to all constructivism.

In this regard, Vygotsky stated that a "gap" is necessary between the everyday concepts that a child develops when entering school, and the theoretical concepts which he/she needs to form. Science originated as a need for generalization, abstraction, and systematization of knowledge (Vygotsky, 1982), which become part of the complex cultural inheritance transmitted by cultural means (Il'enkov, 2009; Solovieva, 2014).

Theoretical concepts always shape systems, while empirical concepts can exist in isolation, without any relationship to other concepts. Activity theory offers ways of gradual concept formation until the mental action is completed (Galperin, 2000; Solovieva, & Quintanar, 2020a). In constructivist pedagogical theories, there are no differences between empirical and theoretical concepts, which are the starting point for learning based on the historical and cultural approach and activity theory (Solovieva, & Quintanar, 2019; Quintanar, & Solovieva, 2020; Solovieva, 2019). As Vygotsky (1982) noted, all researchers follow Piaget with the intention of studying empirical concepts, without considering that the acquisition of theoretical concepts guarantees awareness of one's own behavior.

For Vygotsky and his followers, theoretical concepts cannot be acquired by memorization, in isolation, through play, or by communication. It is necessary to develop an entire hierarchical conceptual system that involves directional educational work (Vygotsky, 1982; Davydov, 2000; Talyzina, 2019; Quintanar, & Solovieva, 2020). It is important to understand that concepts are not acquired through simple sensory interaction with objects, as constructivism postulates (Piaget, 1977; Piaget, & Inhelder, 2015), and they do not derive from everyday concepts, as constructivism in its "meaningful learning" version presumes (Diaz, & Hernandez, 2002).

If pedagogical constructivism sets the task of constructing knowledge based on previous cognitive and emotional experience, then Vygotsky and his followers set the need for bridging the gap between empirical concepts and the formation of the

theoretical concepts in intellectual actions as the main goal of learning (Solovieva, & Quintanar, 2020b).

Results and Discussion

The provisions analyzed in this article allow us to conclude that there is a need for a deep understanding of the foundations of the cultural-historical approach in psychology, which should not be confused with the constructivist position. The differences between these two approaches are significant. For Piaget's constructivism, the nature of development is biological, and social life is merely a condition, and for social constructivism, society is the creator of reality. But for Vygotsky's followers, the beginning of psychological development includes cognition, which is cultural-historical, along with two necessary preconditions: the human nervous system and life in human society.

In summarizing the constructivist position, we can say that development occurs spontaneously; social conditions are necessary; learning must be practice-oriented; the adult is a mediator; and the child constructs and determines his/her own learning, and puts into practice what he/she has learned. This approach suggests that little or no steps need to be taken to change the education system in terms of organization of its content, consideration of the students' age, and the development of learning orientation. In the view of constructivism, the child will accumulate his/her knowledge, going through evolutionary stages without much effort on the educational system's part. Vygotsky's cultural-historical theory points to the opposite approach: development has a cultural origin, and therefore social and organic conditions must be respected. In this sense, education must provide theoretical development, since theoretical concepts are used in intellectual activities, and the adult must be the guide.

To consider Vygotsky a constructivist means to lose sight of his close connection with the philosophy of dialectical materialism and his persistent desire for experimentation; his recognition of the existence of objective reality outside the subject; and his consistent search for objective truth through the practical and theoretical activity of a changing subject, involved with specific historical and cultural activity. A psychologist or teacher who takes Vygotsky's position will understand that the entire process of a child's psychological development and his/her personality formation, as well as the actions of this personality in the near and distant future, depend on his/her actions. A specialist who takes Vygotsky's position does not believe in spontaneous development, but is engaged in the development of methods that promote the students' optimal development at all educational levels.

While constructivism applies methods of analysis and observation to a greater extent in natural learning settings, the cultural-historical approach focuses on the development of radically new methods that ensure psychological development rather than the achievement of competencies. Based on the cultural-historical approach, learning should be understood as an intellectual activity by all its participants and lead to the formation of the child's personality and knowledge, which are formed as an intellectual, reflexive, and voluntary process. Intellectual action must become

the central core of educational theories, just as action has become the central core of activity theory.

Conclusion

A deep understanding of the cultural-historical approach continues to be a challenge for both public and private educational institutions. One cannot say that a theory is outdated without trying to apply it in practice. Up to today, constructivism has been and remains the predominant approach, but it is useful to know that the cultural-historical approach is capable of transforming all theory and practice into a system responsible for the development of education and future generations.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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