Use of dialogic language in the shared reading of children's literature and the creation of joint histories: Contributions of historical-cultural educational psychology to children's narrative awareness

Uso del lenguaje dialógico en la lectura compartida de literatura infantil y en la creación de historias conjuntas: Aportes de la psicología educativa histórico-cultural al desarrollo de la conciencia narrativa infantil

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Abstract

Dialogic language in the shared reading of children's literature and in the creation of joint stories is a means of essential communicative interaction to promote the development of children's narrative and learning. The aim of this research is to analyze how the use of dialogic language influences the shared reading of children's literature and the creation of joint stories between an adult and a preschool child of 4 years. A single case study was conducted under a qualitative methodology of a longitudinal nature. We used the formative method proposed by Vygotsky in which we analyzed the genesis of the narrative awareness and how the child uses it in his actions. In addition, it was analyzed how the adult creates the necessary conditions for the development of the zone of potential development of the narrative in the child. The results show that the use of dialogic language allows learning about the other, their intentions and some aspects of human relationships such as courage or the need for protection. Finally, the article presents a reflection on the importance of the creation of joint stories in early childhood.

Keywords: language, story creation, narrative, imagination, early literacy

Resumen

El lenguaje dialógico en la lectura compartida de literatura infantil y en la creación de historias conjuntas se constituye en un medio de interacción comunicativa esencial para promover el desarrollo de la narrativa y el aprendizaje infantil. El objetivo de esta investigación es analizar cómo el uso del lenguaje dialógico influye en la lectura compartida de literatura infantil y en la creación de historias conjuntas entre un adulto y un niño en edad preescolar de 4 años. Se realizó un estudio de caso único, bajo una metodología cualitativa con carácter longitudinal. Se usó el método formativo propuesto por Vigotsky en el que se analizó la génesis de la conciencia narrativa y cómo el niño la utiliza en sus acciones. Además, se analizó cómo el adulto crea las condiciones necesarias para el desarrollo de la zona de desarrollo potencial de la narrativa en el niño. Los resultados muestran que el uso del lenguaje dialógico permite aprender acerca del otro, sus intenciones y algunos aspectos de las relaciones humanas como la valentía o la necesidad de protección. Finalmente, se presenta una reflexión respecto a la importancia de la creación de historias conjuntas en la primera infancia.

Palabras clave: lenguaje, creación de historias, narrativa, imaginación, alfabetización inicial

Recent studies are emerging which show the effects of narrative awareness on child learning. In this context, this article establishes links between narrative and education. First, it presents conceptual and empirical findings regarding narrative in preschoolers. Then, it addresses the experience of using dialogic language in short story reading and in narrative creation with a child transitioning from the preschool to the school stage. Reading short stories together entails a convergence of gazes toward the page that allow emotions to flow freely; therefore, it constitutes an essential aspect of early childhood (Turin, 2014). The discussion addresses the implications of narrative for the transition between the preschool and the school stages. Therefore, at this point, the study makes it possible to understand narrative in educational settings, within the context of early literacy learning.

Background

Children begin their contact with narrations when they start engaging in conversation and joint reading activities with adults (Abraham & Brenca, 2016). In these interactions, books are used as noted by Reyes (2016, p. 68): "like mirrors to watch and be watched, to touch; to explore a world that is expanding more and more every day. The conversation taking place within the love triangle –child, book, adult– extends beyond the pages. These are two people who meet in that *other* space; it is two people looking at a third person. That story, told by the adult's voice, links one image with another: before with after, time with space, words with illustrations, book with life".

The activity of listening to a story and improving one's narrative knowledge is essential, because it enables children to imagine situations, acquire more knowledge about the social and cultural world, learn to listen attentively, and generate affect toward positive and kind characters and displeasure toward those who act negatively around others, which enables them to find their own moral position (Solovieva & Quintanar, 2005). Narrative learning focuses on the interpretation and understanding of human actions. In the historical-cultural approach, action constitutes the conscious unit of activity and can be detected through the presence of an objective, initially set by the adult, who directs the child's activity, and later on by the child, who gains the ability to set goals (Solovieva & Quintanar, 2012).

Narrative learning makes it possible to solve life problems (Hakkarainen, 2006); also, it involves dialogic interactions with others and is connected with the processes of verbal and nonverbal communication. Narrating using language requires selecting and arranging events, two activities that constitute the fundamental mode of the mind in communication with others (Bruner, 1986). Narrative understanding and expression involve the ability to ascribe meaning and intentionality when interpreting verbal and nonverbal actions.

Narrative language emerges as a means for restructuring thought that makes it possible to employ imagination, which plays a key role in the acquisition of new knowledge and the interpretation of reality (Aguirre, 2012). Narrative language is a semiotic skill that can be used as a means or vehicle of expression in communication (Reyes Trigos, 2003). Narrative language requires complex reflexive cognitive skills. "A narration is an account of experiences or events that are temporally sequenced and convey meaning. It is through storytelling that children develop a personal voice, a way of communicating their unique experience and their world view" (Engel, in Bredikyte, 2011, p. 19). For Bredikyte (2011), narrative must not necessarily be expressed verbally; therefore, children's play and drawings can be regarded as narratives that express their opinion and personal meanings. Thus, narration is a result of a developmental process as well as a means for development (Bredikyte, 2011). In narrative, children acquire the basic psychological tools to think and develop their own identity (Hakkarainen & Bredikyte, 2015). In order to do this, it is relevant to encourage the development of narrative awareness in order to reflect about the use of language and actions.

The term *narrative awareness* refers to the child's progress in the learning of the formal characteristics of a story: the acquisition of the narrative scheme and the development of expectations regarding the characters (Colomer, 1997), which enables him/her to establish causal links between actions and be better prepared to analyze what is taking place in a book's illustrations (Colomer, 2005, 2009). The narrative structures that reflect how the child's narrative awareness progresses are characterized by the ability to 1) link ideas by establishing connections between them, 2) identify the characters' actions and adventures in an organized manner, and 3) propose an ending connected to the conflict presented at the beginning (Applebee, 1978).

Narrative language and early literacy learning

Several studies have shown evidence in support of the importance of narrative language in childhood (Bredikyte, 2010; Hakkarainen & Bredikyte, 2014, 2015). Narrative language is believed to have an influence on early literacy learning (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Dickinson & Tabors, 2001; Dickinson et al., 2003; Bowyer-Crane et al., 2008; Strasser et al., 2010; Weisberg, Zosh, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2013). Research has revealed connections between narrative language and the learning of comprehensive and expressive vocabulary (Dickinson et al., 2003), the learning of grammatical and linguistic structures (Weisberg, Zosh, Hirsh-Pasek, & Golinkoff, 2013), the successful acquisition of reading and writing skills and academic achievement in general (Snow, 2017), the ability to use language to generate a cultural representation of oneself and one's reality (Petit, 2001; Colomer, 2005), and the development of imaginative skills (Colomer, 2009).

Early literacy learning is a conscious process that requires the use of a system of signs and makes it possible to communicate and exchange ideas, thus enabling people to play an active role in the social and cultural world. "Literacy is the ability to read the world, the ability to continue learning, and the key to the door of knowledge. Literacy is a creative experience" (Freire, 1990, p. 19).

Early literacy makes it possible to develop specific imaginative-creative skills through the use of language, while also enabling individuals to generate and strengthen affective and social bonds. In consequence, literacy depends on the development of complex communicative, cognitive, and linguistic skills, which means that literacy learning requires specific and intentional training. This training must take into account the zone of proximal development, a concept that refers to the generation of skills that are still maturing (Vygotsky, 1995). "The zone of proximal development is the distance between the current level of development (determined through tasks that are solved independently) and the level of probable development, which is established using tasks solved with adult guidance" (Vygotsky, in Solovieva, 2014, p. 147). This concept involves the use of various types of support (encouragement, conversation-dialogic language, examples) to promote and facilitate children's participation in joint activities. In this specific case, two activities will be considered: shared reading and story creation.

The most important element for children to develop early literacy skills is to provide a language-rich environment; that is, teachers and caregivers must ensure that children engage in conversations about things that interest them, apart from providing them with chances to take part in ludic activities (Yoshikawa et al.,

2015). Also, before initiating the formal teaching of reading and writing, it is necessary to make sure that the child is personally interested in these activities; therefore, guaranteeing this motivation is one of the main goals of preschool (Solovieva & Quintanar, 2012).

Figure 1 shows the association between preschoolers' use of dialogic language when reading and creating stories and early literacy learning at the school stage. Dialogic language is a means whereby children are able to restructure their understanding and creation of new narrations. It also allows them to reorganize their ideas to talk about language by understanding and constructing new connections between words. In addition, dialogic language enables children to regulate their actions. By reading and creating stories, children can develop cognitive reasons that encourage them to learn to read and write. As soon as a concrete reason emerges as the aim of the activity, the activity itself emerges (Solovieva & Quintanar, 2012): the activity of reading and writing.
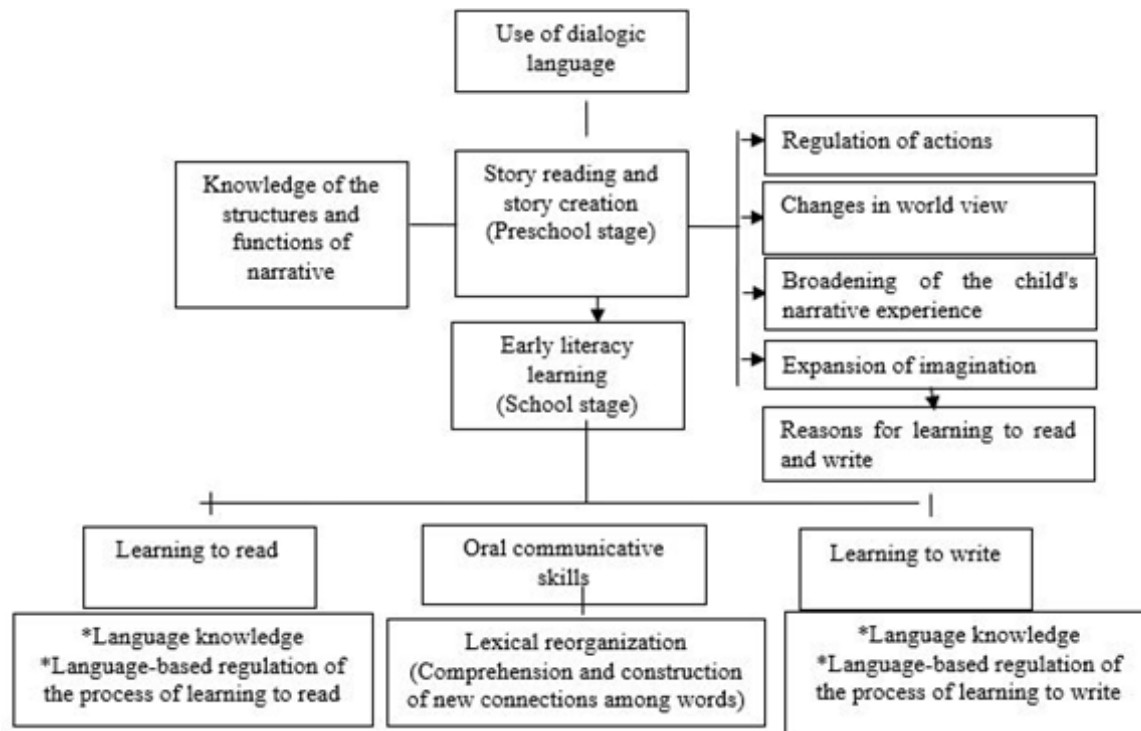

Figure 1. *Effects of story reading and story creation during the preschool stage on early literacy learning during the school stage*
*Source: Prepared by the authors.

Dialogic language and story creation

Dialogic language is a way of interpreting and regulating culture (Bruner, 2000). Meanings can be negotiated when using dialogic language, which requires adult participation in interactive conversation. Thus, children begin to express their interpretation of the world using language, while adults respond to their communicative needs. This process generates an interactive dynamic in the use of language, in which words have a symbolic power that makes it possible to share joint experiences of reality and fantasy with children through narrative.

Bruner (1986) asserts that narrative is a universal mode of human language and thought. For Bruner (1988), the narrative form of the mind involves action-oriented sequences. Narrative language makes it possible to establish connections between thoughts and actions (Bruner, 2007). Here, thoughts adopt the form of stories. For this reason, Bruner (1984, 1988) asserts that narrative enables us to organize our own experiences in a meaningful way. Narrative is characterized by a sequence of actions that convey meaning, the adoption of a personal position, and intentionality when expressing attitudes (Bruner, 1986, 2008).

Dialogic language emerges as a psychological instrument that is required for the child and the adult to create joint stories during their communicative interaction. Through dialogic language, the child can organize, interpret, and attach meaning to his or her story creation experience. Dialogic language enables children to establish relationships with the world and understand it better. In addition, thanks to dialogic language, children gain the ability to express themselves and share what they think and feel.

Dialogic language involves the use of four fundamental components of words: meaning, which concerns the generalization of the object and its introduction into a certain category system (Luria, 1995), interpretative activity in a symbolic world (Reyes, 2016), the possibility of talking about language itself (Colomer, 2009), and the possibility of expanding one's social and cultural experience (Vygotsky, 1995). The use of dialogic language in story creation helps children realize that words are representations of the world of experience (Colomer, 2005).

When creating stories, dialogic language makes it possible to learn how to use many functions of narrative discourse (social, cultural, and aesthetic), which facilitates linguistic organization and intersubjectivity, that is, that which is shared with the other (emotional experiences) (Bruner, 1988). Narration makes it possible to imagine something based on words only or aided by illustrations, away from the contextual situation (Colomer, 2005).

During the dialectic and interactive communicative interactions between the adult and the child required by story creation, dialogic language is transformed. Luria (1995) notes that dialogic language is a tool of thought. Language furnishes thought with its verbal, conceptual, and mediatized nature (Vygotsky, 1995). Verbal expressions constitute the transformation of thoughts into words (Vygotsky, 1982). Thought is formed and formulated in language (Rubinshtein, 1998).

In story creation, by employing dialogic language, images and words help children venture into aesthetic experiences (Colomer, 2005). This means that "images and words play a key role in the development of children's sensitivity and have a major influence on their affective and intellectual life" (Da Coll, 1987, p. 3). In story creation, words introduce children to a new way of expressing reality (Colomer, 2005).

Being able to understand and produce a narrative represents one of the most advanced levels of dialogic language. Children engaging in these activities require an excellent command of complex linguistic and cognitive skills such as sequencing events, using precise vocabulary, conveying ideas, and understanding cause-effect relationships (Abraham & Brenca, 2016).

Given the above, the aim of this study is to analyze how narrative awareness emerges through the use of dialogic language during the shared reading of children's literature and the joint creation of stories by an adult and a 4-year-old preschooler. We take into account the strategies that the adult uses to identify the child's zone of proximal development when creating stories. In addition, we analyze the development of the child's imaginative skills during the shared reading of children's literature and the joint creation of stories. Lastly, we analyze how story creation during the preschool age influences school-age development.

Method

A longitudinal single case study was performed using a qualitative methodology. We used the formative model proposed by Vygotsky (1995), in which dialogic language is examined to analyze the emergence of narrative awareness and how the child uses it while also monitoring the development of imagination during story creation.

This methodology introduces and develops psychological elements (action and/or activity types) in the child (González-Moreno & Solovieva, 2014). In addition, the formative experiment requires making explicit the contents, structure, and desirable characteristics of the actions to be introduced or developed in the child (Galperin, 1986a, 1986b, 1995).

Participant

A boy with typical psychological and language development attending second grade. He was 4 years old at the start of the study and 6 when it ended. The boy participated alongside an adult (a speech and hearing therapist specialized in child psychological development) in a variety of communicative interactions. The boy

participated in the study for 3 years (second preschool level, third preschool level, and first grade of primary school).

Stages of the study

The study was conducted over three years. One stage was conducted per year (see table 1). In the first part of the study, the participants read children's literature (short stories) together. Two types of stories were read: traditional stories and picture books. These two types of books provided the child with a wealth of discoveries, surprises, and questions that mirrored his emotions and acted as a springboard that enabled him to put his imagination into practice as proposed by Turin (2014).

The stories were read many times (3 or 4 times) at the boy's request. In the second part, stories were created jointly with the child using images from the picture books and the questions What would happen if...? This means that there was perceptive and verbal support to help activate cognitive and linguistic schemas in the child. In the third part, the impact of narrative creation during the preschool age on school-age development was identified.

Table 1.

Stages of the study

Stages	Description
1. Joint reading of traditional stories and picture books (60 sessions)	Together, the adult and the child shared children's literature: regular stories and picture books. Several strategies were considered. Either the adult allowed the child to choose a book or the adult chose the book. Before the adult chose a book, she played with the child using games and toys to identify his interests and motivations. Reading took place on the floor, among colored cushions and toys connected with the story being told. The child was able to see the book and the pictures in it. He was also allowed to ask about anything he wished before the activity started. The adult used different voices depending on the characters that participated, while also mimicking their actions through gestures and objects. When an unknown word was identified, a picture dictionary was used and the child received an explanation of its meaning. During dialogic interactions, the participants talked and thought about the contents of the books and the books themselves: their characteristics, illustrations, and authors, as well as the situations and feelings experienced by the characters.
2. Joint creation of stories (50 sessions)	The adult and the child created stories together. At the beginning, the adult proposed starting points for the stories, along with characters, situations, and problems. To do this, the adult used objects and images while also selecting characters and situations taken from stories read previously. This helped the child take part in story creation and contribute according to his personal interests. Before creating the stories, some games were proposed; then, some situations included in the games and in previous stories were selected. Afterward, the new story began. The adult observed the child and listened attentively to identify what captivated him while also helping him to take turns by making comments or asking questions.
3. Identification of the impact of narrative creation during the preschool age on school-age development (50 sessions)	The characteristic of the narrative conversation, story reading, and narrative writing of the child were recorded in a document similar to a field diary. Observations were made in the classroom and some activities were shared with the child. In addition, his drawing and story creation notebook was observed.

*Source: Prepared by the authors.

Materials

The traditional stories read belong to the canon of the Brothers Grimm: "Hansel and Gretel", "The Frog King", "The Brave Little Tailor", "Rapunzel", "Mother Holle", "Rumpelstiltskin", "The Golden Goose", "Puss in Boots", "Little Red Riding Hood", and "Thumbling".

The picture books read with the child were created by Oliver Jeffers ("How to Catch a Star?", "Stuck", "The Great Paper Caper", "The Incredible Book Eating Boy", "The Way Back Home", "The Day the Crayons Quit", "This Moose Belongs to Me", "Lost and Found"), William Steig ("Sylvester and the Magic Pebble"), and Claudia Rueda ("Ozu's Luck", "What a Hungry Little Fox", "Two Mice, a Rat, and a Piece of Cheese", "Wildlife: Diary of an Adventure", "A Rainy Day", "Shapes", "PUM", "Is It Big or Is It Little", "You Were There", "While the Cake Cools Down"). In this study, pictures operated as signals to activate cognitive schemas, proposing a variety of codes for the child to interpret according to his experience.

Analysis categories

The analysis categories used in this study are presented in table 2. These categories emerged throughout the research process.

Table 2.

Analysis categories

Analysis categories	Description
Dialogic language in story reading and story creation	
Clarifying thoughts	Refers to the possibility of explaining one's ideas using words.
Clarifying feelings	Using words to express feelings.
Clarifying one's actions	Concerns the use of words to explain the actions of the characters of the stories read or created.
Talking about language	Using words to transform ideas in a creative way.
Action sequencing	Referring to the arrangement of actions in the stories.
Adopting a personal point of view	Giving meaning to the situation and making a choice.
Identification of generalizing words for organizing and hierarchizing information	Using language to organize and hierarchize information.
Narrative skills developed through story reading and creation	
Meaning-making	Using language to explain a variety of situations and actions present in the stories.
Meaning negotiation	Using language to reach an agreement about the meaning of situations and the characters' actions.
Sharing one's mental world	Considering the other's position and ideas to ensure that what one says is understood.
Changes in one's way of seeing one's experience	Language makes it possible to establish relationships with the world to understand it better.
Action planning	Bearing in mind the aim of the action performed when creating the stories and the characters' actions.
Imaginative skills in story reading and story creation	
Adopting a variety of perspectives, which makes it possible to feel in many different ways	Being able to identify various perspectives, which makes it possible to feel in several ways what the characters experience.
Imagining multiple strategies to solve problems through language	Devising several options to solve a problem and choosing the most suitable one.

*Source: Prepared by the authors.

Procedure

All of the participants' conversational interactions were recorded, both during story reading and story creation. Each session lasted 40 minutes. The video recording was analyzed and transcribed permanently in a log-like document. Once the communicative interactions were transcribed, links were established between the stories read and the stories created.

In this study, both participants (child and adult) created joint stories and performed symbolic actions corresponding to the imaginary situations that emerged. Through these actions, the adult created the zone of proximal development by using dialogic language. The adult used nonverbal language (surprise, amazement) and suprasegmental aspects (intonation), which generated a fun environment.

Role of the adult

The adult participated by observing the child (his interests and motivations), orienting the activities (by using language with a narrative structure), and becoming a genuine partner to the child during story reading and creation. The adult used dialogic interaction strategies with the child. In this study, the adult required sensitivity when reading for the child; also, she had to pay attention to his gestures, looks, and communication via multiple cultural means (drawings and objects). In addition, the adult was sensitive to interpretations and imaginary situations that the child created in his mind and which he expressed through language to organize and give meaning to his experience. The adult always displayed enthusiasm when reading, became involved in the stories, and felt as excited as the child, being expressive and giving life to the book.

In shared reading, the adult helped the child link the stories to his own experience; also, she compared and described the people, places, and situations featured in the images. Thus, the adult helped the child observe and identify particular and specific details of the graphical representations. The adult also spoke about the characters' feelings and opinions and shared her views about the situations described in the stories. In addition, the adult imagined a different ending for each story, encouraged the child to propose another ending, and performed the story with the boy through a role-play (González-Moreno & Solovieva, 2014; González-Moreno, Solovieva, & Quintanar, 2014; González-Moreno, 2015; González-Moreno, 2016a, 2017b, 2016c).

<center>**Results**</center>

This study analyzed the emergence of narrative awareness through the use of dialogic language in story reading and in the creation of new stories. In addition, we examined how the child used narrative in his actions and how the adult created the conditions for the growth of the zone of proximal development in the child.

The emergence of narrative awareness was signaled by the use of dialogic language to establish communicative bonds in which the child expressed his personal feelings, opinions, and world view. The child used narrative in his actions through his own voice to convey meaning, which enabled him to develop narrative and imaginative skills.

Narrative skills (meaning generation, meaning negotiation, sharing one's mental world, personal narrative voice, changes in one's way of seeing experience, and action planning) emerged in the child thanks to the use of dialogic language, giving rise to imaginary situations that enabled him to substitute reality and represent the absent through the imaginary. Gradually, the use of dialogic language also allowed the child to do independently what he previously did with the adult's help (creating the environment portrayed in the story, the events, places, actions, characters, desires, and intentions that guide the sequence of a plan, and actions aimed at solving a goal). This change is reflected by the child's suggestion of situations, characters, and actions for the stories.

The use of dialogic language in the participants' exchanges during story reading and story creation made it possible to reformulate in detail a variety of imaginary situations (adopting multiple perspectives enabled them to feel in several ways, expand their imaginative experience, and devise a number of strategies for solving problems through language) that combined topics and characters in a narrative environment. Also, dialogic language enabled the participants to clarify thoughts, feelings, and actions, talk about language, adopt a

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position, and solve problems from a personal perspective. Table 3 presents the association of dialogic language with story reading and story creation.

Table 3.

Relationship between dialogic language, story reading, and story creation

Dialogic language	Story reading	Story creation
Clarifying thoughts	The child asked questions to clarify certain points during shared reading activities. For instance, "What does 'golden quill' mean?"	Language enabled the child to share internal experiences by granting them new meanings. For instance, "I felt happy when the bear found his parents, because he was not alone anymore".
Clarifying feelings	The child labeled his feelings. For instance, he said "that ending surprised me, I didn't think that could happen, it was nice".	In his stories, the child made the characters speak to express their feelings, including happiness, sadness, anger, and surprise. For instance, he said "the little rabbit felt very happy when he celebrated his birthday and all his friends visited him".
Clarifying one's actions	The boy identified the characters' actions and drew parallels with everyday situations to understand what happened in the stories. For instance, he said "I remember I visited my grandma at the weekend, just like Little Red Riding Hood. I also took her some cakes that my mom baked with a lot of love".	The child used words to link situations in the stories, revealing unexpected actions in them. For instance, he said "First the turtle was walking slowly, very slowly, then a bit faster, and then she felt tired. So she had to stop and rest. The little turtle looked around and that's how she found a surprising treasure in the middle of the forest".
Talking about language	The child and the adult discussed several topics: What are the characters in the story? Where does this story occur? What happened when…? For instance, the adult said "Hansel and Gretel are the children. They lived in a little country house. When they got lost they felt very sad, but they came up with a plan, found a chocolate house, then they felt scared and ran away, and then they returned to their house with their parents".	The child used language to talk about new imaginary situations that he created for each character. For instance, he said "the Mouse Prince lived in a very small magic castle. Every time someone wanted to get in, he said some magic words and became small enough to enter".
Action sequencing	The child identified sequences of actions by remembering the stories, aided by the illustrations in the stories and picture books. For instance, he said "I remember Sylvester was a little donkey. *First* Sylvester asked a magic pebble to turn him to stone, *then* he felt scared because he wasn't with his parents anymore, *then* his parents looked for him and couldn't find him, *until* his parents left and found the stone, they wished to see their son and the stone turned into Sylvester".	The child used expressions to arrange the sequences of actions in the stories created. For example, the boy said "*First* my dragon, my really green dragon, hid in the branches of the trees in the forest, that's why nobody could see him. *Then* my dragon was shaking with cold, so he had to find a warm home. When he went out he found animals and asked them where he could shelter himself, but nobody helped him, *until* he found a family of piggies that helped and adopted him. *In the end*, my dragon started to spit fire and learned to warm the whole family in the winter".
Adopting a personal point of view	The child had the chance to negotiate the characters' needs and express his own individuality. For example, he said "I liked the fact that Hansel was a very intelligent boy who helped his little sister and his family too. He was brave, I'm brave too when I help my friends when they are in trouble".	The child identified respectful language to refer to the characters in the stories created and had fun with the situations that he devised. For instance, the boy said "the dog in my story is called Pluto, he always said please and thank you, even to those who made fun of him. The cat mocked this little dog all the time because he hadn't learned to bark. But then he realized that he had a bad throat ache and that's why he didn't bark. So he stopped mocking him and helped him. He also discovered that when he said thank you and please, something very good happened to him".

*Source: Prepared by the authors.

The child's story creation was characterized by descriptions of the characters' actions and the events that took place according to a specific topic through which causality was established. The child's favorite topics were bravery, the need for protection, and friendship. His topics were marked by the presence of heroes and magical situations. In most of his stories, the characters were animals with a special power.

Reading children's literature enabled the child to include situations or characters in the new stories. Table 4 presents the skills developed in the child during story reading and joint story creation.

Table 4.

Narrative skills developed through story reading and creation

Narrative skills	Story reading	Story creation
Meaning-making	Identification of characters, space, objects used, actions performed by the characters, time, intent. For instance, the boy said "the Puss in Boots was the character, he used boots that were magical, he was in a small place full of little houses. This cat wearing boots always wanted to help his master".	The child takes into account several aspects of a problem situation. In addition, the child uses new combinations of words, attitudes, ideas, and objects, imbuing them with life by referring to them in a novel way. For example, the child described a "doubtful" butterfly. "A doubtful butterfly never knows what to do or say, she is always full of doubt. She feels sad until she learns to trust in what she can do best. When she doesn't know anything her colors fade, but when she knows something she smiles with a happy face and then the colors in her little wings shine a lot".
Meaning negotiation	The participants transform each other through meaning negotiation. For example: **Adult:** Do you remember Sylvester's wish? **Child:** Yes, he wanted to be a stone. But that wasn't a good wish. **Adult:** Why do you think that wasn't a good wish? **Child:** Because his wish made him feel very sad. I didn't like it when he felt sad and became a stone because he was very lonely and nobody could see him. **Adult:** What would you wish for if you were Sylvester? **Child:** I'd wish for something that wouldn't make anyone feel sad, not even himself. **Adult:** What would you wish for? **Child:** I wish I could read with you all my life, to the infinite. **Adult:** I also like sharing these books with you. **Child:** How about we read 7 books today? **Adult:** How about two? **Child:** three. **Adult:** two. **Child:** okay, Two but many times.	The child generated other ways to name or refer to certain situations. For instance: "I think that with a bit of magic we can help the leaves of trees to change color and make the wind blow very strongly so the wolf will go and help the piggies make their houses. Fierce wolves like to blow and blow, so the wind could help him build the piggies' houses quickly".
Sharing one's mental world	The child developed the ability to consider the other's position to ensure that what he said would be relevant to his listener. For instance, "[xxx]"	The child took into account each character's position so that the stories would progress and problem situations would be solved. For instance, "[xxx]"
Changes in one's way of seeing one's experience	The situations experienced by the characters allowed the boy to analyze his experiences and establish relationships with his own life experience, leading to changes in his attitudes. For instance, the child used narrative to explain and modify his attitudes considering the other's perspective. "Now I draw softly with my crayons, I don't throw them around the classroom anymore, I don't lose them, I take care of them and share them with my friends at school. I understood that if I push too hard on the paper I won't be able to make pretty drawings anymore".	Language allowed him to rediscover the world by linking real and imaginary situations. For instance, he said "last night I dreamed I was a pirate and I could travel on a ship, now I want to make a little boat and create a story about a little boat that could travel anywhere it wanted. I discovered a treasure, the treasure was some crayons for painting. At Christmas, I was able to gift crayons to many children so they could draw pretty pictures like me".
Action planning	The child identified the aims of the characters' actions in the stories read. For instance, he said "in Stuck, the child wanted his red kite, and that's why he threw a shoe, a cat, a ladder, and other things as hard as he could until he later found his kite and he played and played".	The child was able to identify the aims of the characters' actions in the stories that he created. For example, the boy said "in the story of the cat that lost his whiskers, many animal friends helped him look for them until they found them and the kitty felt very happy when he found them under a bright red [xxx]".

*Source: Prepared by the authors.

Imagination in story creation often involved an embellishment of reality, introduced unexpected elements, and made it possible to discover other ways for the characters to act and interact. Table 5 presents the imaginative skills developed by the child when creating stories.

Table 5.
Imaginative skills in story reading and story creation

Imaginative skills	Story reading	Story creation
Adopting a variety of perspectives, which makes it possible to feel in many different ways	With the adult's help, the child was able to feel according to the perspectives of characters of the stories that he read. For example, he said "in Two Mice, a Rat, and a Piece of Cheese, I think the little mice were more careful and that's why even though they had to resist feeling very hungry, nobody ate them". "I also had to resist feeling very hungry because I needed to have a special test done and I couldn't eat anything, my tummy was rumbling but I didn't eat anything, I did as I was told, I only cried a little, but I was careful with what I had to do and I had the test done. Then my parents gave me a prize and I ate a delicious vanilla ice cream cone".	The child narrated imaginary situations based on real events from the perspective of the characters featured in his stories. For instance, "a horse galloped and galloped until he was sick and couldn't gallop anymore. So he called his son and he started helping him. Once a shooting star went by very near him and he made a wish and he wished he could gallop with his son. The next day he galloped and galloped and didn't feel sick anymore".
Imagining multiple strategies to solve problems through language	The child identified the situations that the characters experienced and proposed multiple strategies for solving problem situations. For instance, when reading "While the Cake Cools Down", the adult asked "What would happen if the cake disappeared?" And the child answered "well, they could make another, or maybe they could prepare another dish to celebrate, or maybe a guest could bring a cake" This enabled the child to consider several possibilities.	The child imagined strategies that allowed the characters in his stories to solve problems creatively. The boy started using the question "What would happen if…?" to choose the best option among many and thus help his characters overcome problem situations. For instance, he said "I'd like to be strong enough to break those padlocks and replace them with hugs for Mr. Rabbit, for Mr. Bear, for Mrs. Giraffe, for Mr. Centipede, but I'd also like them to be able to give each other many hugs and help all the animals so that they could always be happy and fine thanks to everyone's strength. Then I'd have the superpower of strength".

*Source: Prepared by authors.

Both in story reading and in story creation, dialogic language was used to organize information and contribute to the reconstruction of stories. During these interactions, the adult helped the child participate by asking questions and expanding his utterances. Table 6 presents an example of the use of dialogic language in the creation of a story.

Table 6.

Example of the use of dialogic language in the creation of the story "The Dinosaur Who Saves Everyone Else"

Dialogic language	Drawing created as part of the story
Child: I'd like to create the story of a dinosaur. **Adult:** A dinosaur that could have a special power. **Child:** Invisibility, also strength, moving volcanoes. **Adult:** How do you imagine that dinosaur would be? **Child:** I imagine it's big, with spikes on its head and inside his body because of the powers it has. **Adult:** And where did the dinosaur live? **Child:** in a forest.	This dinosaur has the power of invisibility, that's why I painted him green so the flying animals can't see him. He's also very strong and can help others lift very heavy things.
Story A dinosaur was in the forest with his older brother, his dad, and his mom. The dinosaur went for a slow walk because he was sad, very sad. The dinosaur played and walked, walked, and played. All of a sudden, a big bear asked him: Are you lost? Would you like to play with me? The dinosaur went to the bear's house. In the bear's house, after playing for a long time, they both fell asleep. It was getting late and the dinosaur woke up, he felt hot and started blowing. In that moment, everything started flying around in the bear's house. –The bear woke up and said: What are you doing? – I'm only blowing because I feel my legs are hot. – Aha! But you have some really strange powers... I can hear you but I can't see you –said the bear. – Well, sometimes I can become invisible. Then, a grumpy lion-gorilla arrived to eat them both. The dinosaur used his superpowers and did not let him eat anyone. The lion started to cry and apologized. Then the dinosaur's parents arrived and invited them all to dinner, then they had some chocolates, and then they slid on the snow with other forest animals.	 This dinosaur also transforms every time he blows and blows. He can make volcanoes move and make little snowflakes fall so animals can have fun using tree trunks as sleds. When he's very angry, a storm comes that can flood any place.

*Source: Prepared by the authors.

Table 7 presents an example of the use of dialogic language in joint reading, in story creation, and in the identification of how narrative creation in the preschool age can impact school-age development.

Table 7.

Example of dialogic language use in the activities conducted as part of the study

Stages	Dialogic language use - example
1. Joint reading of traditional stories and picture books	**Child:** Look, a kitty climbed a tree. **Adult:** Do you think he's scared? **Child:** Yes, he's very scared, he looks scared (the child gestures and conveys fear through his facial expressions). **Adult:** And now, what do you think that kitty could do to get off the tree? **Child:** Maybe he'll ask a giant bird for help, and with his wings he can help him climb on its back or maybe his mom will come and calm him down with a hug or maybe his friend below will call an adult and he'll climb the tree and rescue him.
2. Joint creation of stories	**Adult:** How about we start our story with a wish. **Child:** Yes, I like wishes. I wish my birthday would come soon. When is my birthday? **Adult:** In two days. Should we create a story with your birthday wishes? What do you say? **Child:** Yes!. I want my wishes to come true. I want a chocolate cake, I also want my friends to come, I want a pet to come to my house on my birthday. **Adult:** What kind of pet? **Child:** I'd like a small white puppy, they are so cute. **Adult:** And what could be the problem in the story? **Child:** That the little dog breaks everything. **Adult:** And what else? **Child:** That I cry a little, but then the little dog learns not to make a mess.
3. Identification of the impact of narrative creation during the preschool age on school-age development	**Child:** I love reading, I really like to create stories. I imagine the stories in my mind. I imagine the stories they read to me and I also imagine the stories they tell me and I also imagine the stories I create. I like to draw my stories. **Adult:** Why do you like stories so much? **Child:** Because with you I learned many new things, with the stories you read me. **Adult:** Why do you like to create stories? **Child:** Because with the stories I create I can invent games and also with the games I invent I can create stories.

*Source: Prepared by the authors.

Discussion

The aim of this study was to analyze how narrative awareness emerged in a preschooler through the use of dialogic language during story reading and story creation. In addition, we analyzed the development of imaginative skills in the child during story creation. Lastly, we analyzed how story creation during the preschool age influenced early literacy learning in the school stage.

Narrative awareness sprang from the interaction between the adult and the child, who used children's literature and had conversations enriched by their language use. This narrative development enabled the child to clarify thoughts, feelings, and actions, talk about language, express himself orally and in writing (drawings and words) using sequences of actions, adopt a personal point of view, generate new meanings, negotiate

meanings, share his mental world, change his way of seeing his experience, plan actions and situations from multiple perspectives, and imagine a variety of strategies to solve problems through language. In addition, the child's narrative development allowed him to link elements –with one idea leading to the next through associations–, identify the characters' actions and adventures in a well-organized manner, and propose an ending based on the conflict presented at the beginning.

In the intervention, we analyzed the strategies (encouragement, conversation-dialogic language, examples) that the adult used to identify the child's zone of proximal development both in joint story reading and in story creation. In joint reading, initial encouragement was important because the child had not yet had the chance to participate in activities of this type before the study. After a month, the child started to invite his school friends to read with him the stories that he enjoyed. This means that this activity became his zone of real development. For instance, with "Sylvester and the Magic Pebble", the child started reading and rereading its images and the action sequences independently and involving other people. In story creation, examples were needed. This means that the adult opened the story with hints such as "I have a secret…" and "one day my wish came true…", also proposing characters and problem situations. Afterward, the child started proposing beginnings, stories, situations, problems, and ways of solving problems.

The most salient strategy (in shared reading and in story creation) was the use of dialogic language as a symbolic means for thinking and talking about the stories read and those created. This helped the child become aware of the structure (sequences of narrative actions) and functions (social, cultural, aesthetic) of the stories that he read and of those he created (emotional experience) together with the adult.

Dialogic language in the participants' interactions made it possible to propel words and images during story reading and in the gradual creation of stories, characters, and various imaginary situations, as proposed by Rodari (2006). This means that the stories did not fall apart; instead, they moved forward by appealing to the memories and emotions conveyed by the stories read and those created.

Repeated story reading made it possible to develop the social use of dialogic language as an external source of help for planning, regulating, anticipating, and verifying the child's actions during story creation. This is exemplified by the child's utterances "I want to invent a story with little animals", "I'd like to be able to combine the little animals, like an elephant-giraffe", "if the little animals could be combined then they could have super powers to do everything they want in a magical place".

In addition, this repeated story reading allowed the child to own the stories, adopt a personal position of intersubjective exchange, and construct a representation of the world around him, while also enabling the child and the adult to work jointly as proposed by Turin (2014). The child was moved by the characters in the stories, which allowed him to transform his actions. Now he displays more solidarity toward children at school, caring more for the children who need something and always helping them. This suggests that the contents of the stories shared with the child configured actions that the child imagined and then turned into real actions.

Another finding of this study is that reading children's literature laid the groundwork for the child to increase his narrative experience for the joint creation of new stories. For their part, these experiences allowed the child to expand his imagination and perceptive skills beyond their current limits, as proposed by Colomer (2005). Children's literature allowed the child to discover that words can be used to describe both the external and the internal world, while also enabling him to talk about language itself (Colomer, 2009). The child required the adult's help to analyze language during story creation. Language thus became an object of reflection. For instance, the participants said "that's a weird word", "with these words I can show you the way", "one of my teeth came loose, so that means the Little Mouse will come with a little gift".

Similarly, it was also observed that, during interactions for story creation, dialogic language became a symbolic means to decipher the other and his/her intentions (sharing experiences). Thus, it can be asserted that, in each interaction, both participants expressed their intentions. Also, particularly through the creation of a variety of characters, the child discovered who he wants to be and who he can be by identifying the genuine meaning of human relationships, as noted by Reyes (2016). For instance, the child frequently

mentioned that he wanted to be a good friend to help others.

At the same time, through the stories created with the adult, the child transformed his interpretation of the world, giving meaning to it via language, which he used to imagine various situations. This is exemplified by his use of expressions such as "I'd like to paint the world with colors so children everywhere can be happier all the time".

Likewise, another finding was that, in all the stories created, the actions were simplified and arranged into a scheme of beginning, causal development, and conclusion, which allowed the child to assimilate them as suggested by Colomer (2005). Also, the link between the implementation of strategies involving images and the asking of questions was useful because it emerged as an external means for organizing ideas and creating new stories. To create stories, it was necessary to imagine a variety of situations and enact them using words and images. The images used allowed the child to play with graphical language, which gave life to the stories created using verbal language. "Imagination allowed us to be other people and also be ourselves, showing us that we can think about, name, dream, find, shock, and decipher ourselves to give meaning to our experience" (Reyes, 2016, p. 15).

It is necessary to highlight the quality of the interactions between the child and the adult, who sought to use dialogic language for the benefit of narrative development (open questions, adding information, and expanding the contents of the child's utterances). These interactions were characterized by the reinforcement of the child's interests, conversations, and linguistic expression. Likewise, these interactions made it possible to establish an emotional connection among the child, the adult, and the stories read or created. In this study, the child used dialogic language to narrate and think about interactions, while the adult modified her interventions to maximize the child's participation. In addition, these interactive relationships allowed the adult to identify –through questions– what the child thought, knew, or believed would happen. Also, it was possible to detect what the child thought about what the characters in the stories felt: bravery or need for protection. By reading stories, the child was able to reflect on the characters' emotional states, which constitutes an essential aspect of his psychic development. For instance, the child said "that wolf feels angry, very angry, because he's hungry and fell into the river".

Thus, as proposed by Bruner (2007), the creation of imaginary stories in the preschool age influenced the meaning that the child ascribed to the acquisition of reading and writing skills in the school age. This means that language use also enabled the child to think narratively and create situations orally, through drawings, and in writing. Similarly, we observed that the stories read and created contributed to the child's literacy learning, because they allowed him to imagine everything with words despite being far from the contextual situation, as pointed out by Wells (1988). This is reflected in the creation of various imaginary situations expressed through written stories during his school age. It was observed that the child, as a schoolboy, used enriched linguistic expressions and sequences of actions. This can be explained because the child had many things to express both orally and in writing. In addition, the child became a motivated reader, which enabled him to develop skills to understand and interpret the meaning of the texts that he reads and the situations that he experiences daily.

Presumably, the itinerary of activities generated in this study allowed the child to explore new possibilities for understanding the world and enjoying life through the joint creation of stories using dialogic language. For instance, during story creation, the child revisited characters or situations featured in the stories read to analyze personal situations or events close to him in various spheres (family, school, social).

It can be concluded that story creation became possible thanks to the relationship established with the other, as each participant proposed a set of permanent exchanges of meaning. This means that interaction is dynamic and systemic, which enables the participants to engage in a complex set of psychic activities that involve intersubjective relationships and meaning negotiation. In addition, it can be concluded that narrating stories constitutes a useful activity for developing narrative language skills while also encouraging the child's emergent literacy, as proposed by Heppner (2016).

As for the limitations of this study, and regarding methodological challenges for future research, it would be advisable to consider a larger population to add robustness to the data and the analyses. This article shows that research of this type plays a relevant role in the educational domain given its impact on children's development and learning processes.

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