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How did the children learn? A response from the underlying social constructivism within the current historical and sociocultural context

Danni Dexi Redondo Salas¹
Pedro Julio Puentes Rozo²
Clara Judith Brito Carrillo³

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Abstract

This article aims to analyze the learning of children in early childhood, based on the principles that govern the social constructivist theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky, within the current historical and socio-cultural context, also considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The methodology was based on a documentary review and on the dialectical and interpretative hermeneutics of various research studies and reports by international organizations that provide relevant information on the subject. Among the main findings, it became clear that the learning process of children left gaps and deficiencies that should be addressed in the future, because the fundamental factor for them to acquire knowledge, skills, abilities, and other behaviors is based mainly on social interactions, as well as cognitive and affective development, which was interrupted due to the pandemic. Among the conclusions, the challenge of assuming the leveling of children and the preparation that must exist to face this type of eventuality is highlighted.



Keywords: learning theory; social constructivism; social interaction; social and cultural context.



This article is the result of a research in progress entitled: *La interacción social y su relación con las prácticas pedagógicas en el contexto socio histórico actual*, carried out since June 2021 in Riohacha, La Guajira, Colombia, product of the doctoral thesis in Educational Sciences, Universidad Simón Bolívar, Barranquilla.

¹ Principal Investigator. Doctoral student in Educational Sciences. Universidad Simón Bolívar. Master in Education with emphasis in Early Childhood Education, Universidad del Norte. Teacher, Universidad de La Guajira. E-mail: dredondo@uniguajira.edu.co  

² Doctor in Psychology with a focus on Cognitive Neuroscience, Universidad de Maimonides, Buenos Aires, Argentina; Master in Neuropsychology, Universidad de San Buenaventura, Medellín. Researcher-Professor of Doctorate in Educational Sciences, Universidad Simón Bolívar. Researcher-Professor, Universidad del Atlántico, Barranquilla. E-mail: pedro.puentes@unisimon.edu.co  

³ Master in Social Enterprise Development and Management, Universidad Simón Bolívar; Specialist in Social Management. Social Worker. Teacher Universidad de La Guajira. E-mail: clarabrito@uniguajira.edu.co  

¿Cómo aprendieron los niños? Una respuesta desde el constructivismo social subyacente del contexto histórico y sociocultural actual

Resumen

En el presente artículo, se pretende analizar el aprendizaje de los niños en la primera infancia, a partir de los principios que rigen la teoría constructivista social propuesta por Lev Vygotsky, dentro del contexto histórico y sociocultural actual; además, teniendo en cuenta los impactos de la pandemia por COVID-19. La metodología se basó en la revisión documental y en la hermenéutica dialéctica e interpretativa de distintas investigaciones e informes de organismos internacionales que muestran información relevante sobre la temática. Entre los principales hallazgos, se evidenció que el proceso de aprendizaje en los niños deja vacíos y falencias que deben subsanarse prospectivamente, porque el factor fundamental para que ellos adquirieran conocimiento, destrezas, habilidad y otras conductas se basa principalmente en las interacciones sociales, así como en el desarrollo cognitivo y afectivo, el cual fue interrumpido por causa de la pandemia. Entre las conclusiones, se resalta el reto de asumir la nivelación de los niños y la preparación que debe existir para enfrentar este tipo de eventualidades.

Palabras clave: teoría del aprendizaje; constructivismo social; interacción social; contexto sociocultural.

Como as crianças aprenderam? Uma resposta do construtivismo social subjacente do atual contexto histórico e sociocultural

Resumo

Este artigo tem como objetivo, analisar o aprendizado das crianças na primeira infância, com base nos princípios que regem a teoria construtivista social proposta por Lev Vygotsky, dentro do atual contexto histórico e sociocultural, levando em conta também o impacto da pandemia da COVID-19. A metodologia baseou-se em uma análise documental e na hermenêutica dialética e interpretativa de vários estudos de pesquisa e relatórios de organizações internacionais que fornecem informações relevantes sobre o assunto. Entre as principais conclusões, ficou claro que o processo de aprendizagem das crianças deixou lacunas e deficiências que devem ser abordadas no futuro, pois o fator fundamental para que elas adquiram conhecimentos, habilidades, capacidades e outros comportamentos baseia-se principalmente nas interações sociais, bem como no desenvolvimento cognitivo e afetivo, que foi interrompido devido à pandemia. Entre as conclusões, destaca-se o desafio de assumir o nivelamento das crianças e a preparação que deve existir para enfrentar esse tipo de eventualidade.

Palavras-chave: teoria da aprendizagem; construtivismo social; interação social; contexto sociocultural.

Introduction

There are several contemporary theories of learning, where the process of knowledge acquisition occurs within a framework of theoretical guidelines that define the educational paradigms, which represent a set of theories, conceptions and conceptual postulates that explain the development of learning. The most relevant paradigms are: behaviorist, cognitive, environmentalist, constructivist, critical social, positivist and interpretive, which have defined the procedures followed by teachers to achieve the learning of children.

For example, in the behaviorist paradigm, people learn observable, measurable, and quantifiable behaviors (Posso et al., 2020); in the cognitive paradigm, they develop cognitive and affective processes in their learning process (Gil-Velázquez, 2020); in the environmentalist paradigm, its main proponents defend that what is fundamental is the scenario in which the interactions between social actors and the environment take place (Martínez and Mendizabal, 2019); in the constructivist paradigm, it is able to develop cognitive and affective processes within a scenario suitable for learning (Ortiz, 2015); in the social criticism, the person is not the only variable for learning, but the environment, cultural development and the historical moment also have an impact (Trujillo, 2017).

As for the positivist paradigm in the educational field, reality is already given and the subject can know it absolutely when he discovers the appropriate method (Millán, 2018); finally, in the interpretive paradigm, reality is built on the basis of observable facts, in an external space constituted by symbolic meanings and interpretations of the subject, product of the interactions he develops with others (Trujillo, 2017).

Now, the current historical and socio-cultural context shows the effects of a pandemic situation declared by the World Health Organization as a result of the spread of COVID-19, an emergency that immediately forced the application of

health measures to deal with it, among which social distancing, confinement to the home for quarantine, suspension of educational activities, etc., stand out. According to the United Nations (2020, cited in Naslum et al. 2020), "the closure of schools as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic caused an unprecedented disruption in the education systems of 1.6 billion students in 190 countries" (p. 3).

This situation caused an abrupt change; as a result, the teaching-learning methodology, which had traditionally been in the face-to-face mode, had to move with significant speed towards totally remote environments, using for this purpose any number of computer tools, virtual platforms, digital devices, among others. This has been a great challenge for educational systems in general to meet the learning and well-being of children (Naslum et al., 2020).

In this new historical and socio-cultural context, early education, the stage where children achieve cognitive development through the senses (touch, hearing, sight, taste and smell), the achievement of distance learning became a complex and difficult goal (Butcher and Plecher, 2016). Indeed, the measures adopted by the pandemic situation: social distancing and prolonged home confinement (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization [UNICEF], 2020), abruptly interrupted face-to-face attendance and, with it, the cognitive development that was normally obtained through the application of teaching strategies in the classroom, based mainly on social interaction.

In view of the above, the question arises: how did children learn during this long period of confinement, which prevented the application of the constructivist theory of learning, based on cognitive and affective development generated by social interaction? With this question in mind, it is necessary to inquire about the objectives that were actually achieved by the remote methodology used in most countries to face the contingency presented by the declaration of the pandemic and the measures adopted to counteract it.

Materials and Methods

To carry out the research, a large number of physical and digital documents socialized in the last two years were used, among them: scientific articles extracted from recognized databases; reports published on the web portals of important international organizations, such as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), UNICEF, WHO, among others, with the purpose of extracting recent data or information on some elements to be considered when delving into children's learning during the pandemic.

From this perspective, the study is framed within the hermeneutic approach; an interpretive dialectical technique was applied, using the theoretical contributions obtained from the documentary review (Muñoz, 2020). For this reason, the material includes secondary data obtained through research or contributions from other researchers. The data were analyzed, articulated, integrated and interpreted to respond to the main purpose of this study. In addition, the author's own experience in the field of education and her proximity to the subject were considered.

In this regard, Rodriguez (2020) emphasizes that comprehensive hermeneutics facilitates, among other processes, the questioning of thematic aspects of knowledge, the ways of questioning reality, and the making of interpretative critiques under the criterion of intersubjectivity as a person involved in some way with the reality under study.

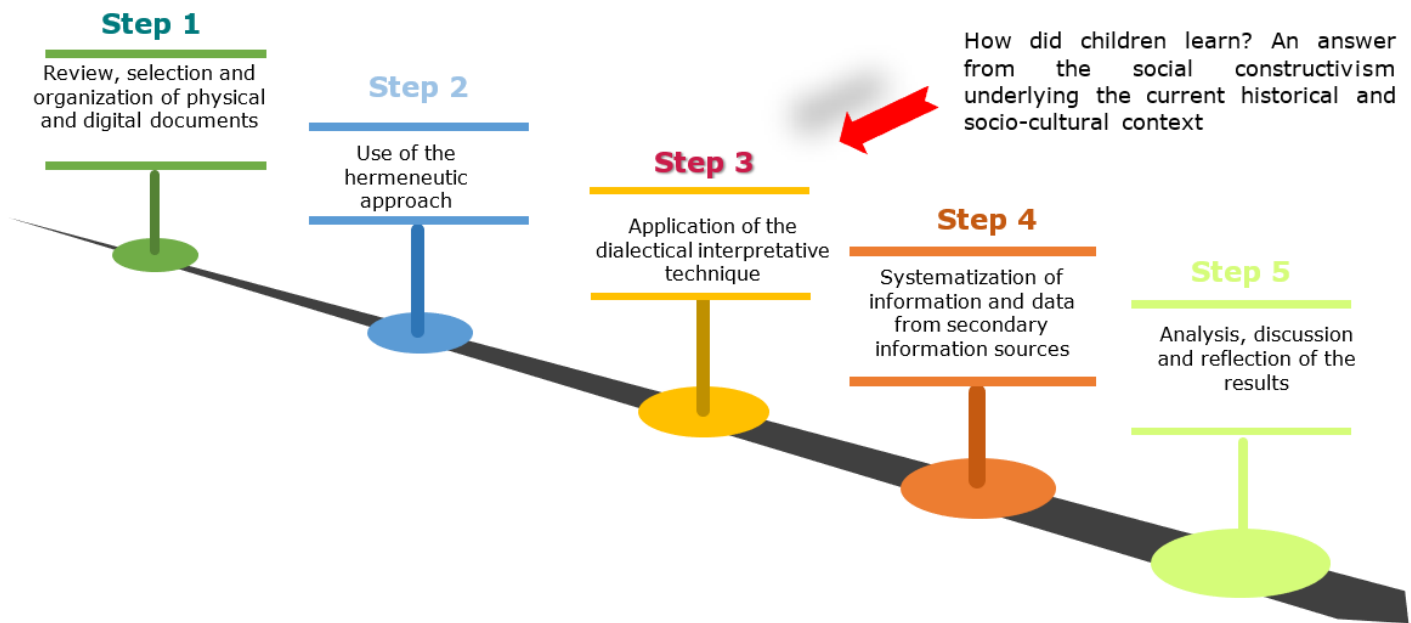
The method used to develop the document was the systematic review of scientific literature or literature review, defined as "a process based on the search, retrieval, analysis, criticism and interpretation of secondary data, that is, those obtained and recorded by other researchers in documentary sources: printed, audiovisual or electronic" (Arias, 2012, p. 27). In fact, the review involves a series of actions that must be carried out systematically in order to examine each category of studies and be able to put together a solid theoretical construct on which to contrast the results and generate new knowledge.

The type of sampling used was the non-probabilistic purposive type, as suggested by Hernández and Coello (2011): "In qualitative research, the non-probabilistic purposive technique is generally used to obtain the sample" (p. 96). That is, the researcher intentionally selects the group of documents needed to develop the research, usually as a result of very specific criteria that are fully valid in terms of the results. In this particular case, a sample of recent documents was selected (no more than ten years old), consisting mainly of scientific articles in indexed journals, reports from international organizations, and dissertation research products published in institutional repositories of recognized universities.

Figure 1 shows the methodology used to develop the research process.

Figure 1

Methodological route



Findings

The systematic review of the scientific literature allowed the development of a series of arguments that allowed a better understanding of the issue of children’s learning, under the approach of social constructivism, whose main exponent was Lev Vygotsky with his socio-historical and cultural theory, focused mainly on the reality generated by the declaration of a pandemic by the WHO with the appearance of COVID-19. From this declaration, the measures applied had a great impact on the educational system, with special emphasis on vital processes such as children’s learning.

Realities of the impact of the pandemic on learning

Currently, the documentary review brings a large number of studies that have emphasized the main effects that humanity has suffered with the pandemic situation, but also with the consequences generated by the measures adopted to deal with it, which have affected the personal and social development of individuals in all areas of action. In this regard, Gualdrón-Moncada (2021) stated: “the pandemic has

caused a crisis in all areas, and education has not been indifferent to this situation” (p. 336).

In fact, the education sector was one of the most affected by the whole situation. The World Bank Group (2020) points out that a number of consequences have been identified in the education sector due to the closure of schools as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; among them, it mentions mainly: interruption of learning, increase in inequality in learning, reduction of attachment to school, lower quality of education and teaching.

Based on the above, the measure of social distancing and home confinement generated that, approximately, more than one third of school-age students worldwide did not have access to distance or remote education during the time that schools were closed. Among the main reasons, the Organization of Ibero-American States (OEI, 2021) states: “This would be related to the lack of access to technology and the necessary tools to support distance learning, as well as the lack of support for studying at home” (p. 10).

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Similarly, Heredia et al. (2022) state:

In times of pandemic, academic learning was affected for children by the lack of technological tools; for parents, [by] assuming teaching roles with their children and the different time implications; and for teachers, by adapting their pedagogical practices for early childhood through digital means, creating emotional affectations during this time. (p. 1530)

Regarding the lack of technological tools, Murillo and Duk (2020) emphasize that, in the specific case of Latin America, only four out of ten households have an Internet connection, revealing the inequalities that exist and that increase when an analysis is made by socioeconomic level. Another important fact is provided by UNICEF (n.d.), an organization that published figures showing that only half of the students in public schools had access to distance learning, compared to three quarters of those in private schools.

Therefore, it is explicit that children's learning was hindered as a result of inequalities in connectivity and technological equipment; but in addition, there were other reasons, such as those exposed by Murillo and Duk (2020), from other areas; they add to the technological problem situations such as insufficient food, poor preparation of parents to assume a teaching role, lack of availability of educational resources, inadequate spaces for study, the digital gap between teachers, etc.

Learning through platforms: solution or new problem?

Dreesen et al. (2020) state that in Latin America, 90% of governments have adopted as their main educational response, the use and implementation of technological platforms to ensure continuity in studies. Similarly, Osorio and Cárdenas (2021) point out: "The possibility for children to continue their learning, playing and socialization processes remotely from home has been the main strategy of countries to cope with the pandemic" (p. 20). This decision was taken by educational institutions as a response to the health contingency presented, as a result

of the few alternatives that the health measures allowed to continue the educational processes, using the few teaching resources available, most of which depended on the technological factor.

Consequently, the actions carried out did not guarantee the acquisition of the knowledge that the children should acquire in each of the educational levels, since several determining elements in the context of virtuality or distance education were not made viable. In this regard, Kim (2020) notes the existence of limitations for online learning, such as the lack of teachers and children's ability to use online sites, which require technological skills; also, the use of devices such as computers or telephones, which require adult supervision at home to complete the learning process, especially for younger children.

On the other hand, the Instituto de Investigaciones sobre la Universidad y la Educación en México (IISUE, 2020) points out that the transformation of the home into a school has shown that teaching and learning are processes that require the training and professionalization of the people who carry out these tasks, thus justifying the teaching function. Among the main difficulties experienced by families in supporting their children's learning process, the following were identified: i) lack of knowledge about pedagogical strategies that promote learning; ii) complications in expressing their concerns about the process in a precise manner; and iii) poor understanding of the methods used by teachers in developing classes.

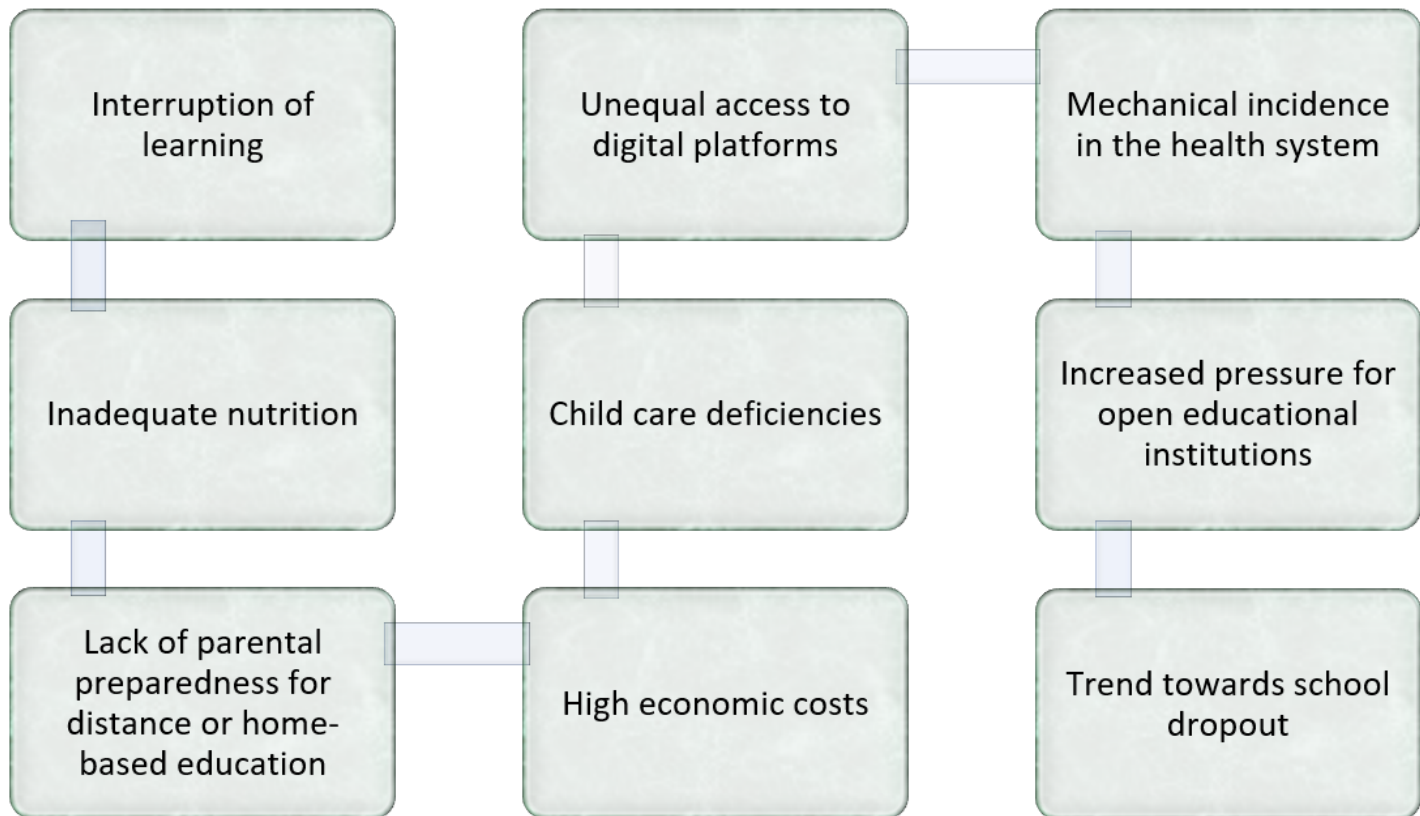
However, IISUE (2020) points out that these difficulties could be overcome if the parents or representatives of the students had a higher level of education, or also if dialogues were established at home that favored collaborative work to complete the activities assigned by the teachers, resolving any doubts or concerns by seeking complementary information or establishing effective interactions and communication with the teachers through the available channels.

On the other hand, Muñoz (2020) points out that the period of confinement generated moments

of anxiety for students, parents and representatives, where the main uncertainty was the date of return to normality. Then, despite the measures that the educational institutions took to comply with the teaching, there was the need to prioritize spaces for the tranquility of students and parents with specific communication. Figure 2 shows the main consequences of the situation created by COVID-19 in the educational environment, according to UNESCO (2020).

Figure 2

Main consequences of COVID-19 for education



According to UNESCO (2020), the elements shown in Figure 2 affect the learning of children and adolescents equally. This shows how the online education implemented by the emergency has revealed the digital divide that exists between different educational institutions, because it is not only about the technological capacity that they manage as an institution, but also about the teachers' own competencies to manage information and communication technologies (ICT) as a pedagogical resource for the learning of their students (Murillo and Duk, 2020; Weeden and Cornwell, 2020; Muñoz, 2020).

Naslum et al. (2020) state: "In virtual environments, young children lose interest in a lesson after 15 to 20 minutes, drastically reducing

the daily hours of interaction and learning" (p. 3). Then, considering the contributions of UNESCO (2020) and those of Naslum et al. (2020), it can be indicated that new problems have emerged with the transfer of normal face-to-face education to a remote, virtual, distance modality, being the most affected factors, social interactions and learning, adding also, the work overload, the shortcomings to work the computer platforms with the required agility, time management, among others.

Thus, the impossibility of establishing quality social interactions between teachers and students, students, and the interruption of learning, as stated by UNESCO (2020), show that children did not learn during the limited time in which virtual platforms were used, since

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“the lack of adequate interaction with teachers is also a major concern associated with online learning” (Muñoz, 2020, p. 36). Therefore, social interaction is an important foundation on which children’s learning development rests; moreover, the use of online education hindered the acquisition of meaningful learning.

It is noteworthy that, researchers have found that the general perception of student learning is correlated with their sense of social presence in the course (Sintema, 2020). In fact, it has been observed that students in the online modality tend to receive lower grades than students who attend class daily (Basilaia and Kvavadze, 2020). Among the explanations commonly found in the literature are late submission of activities, misreading of instructions, technological problems, among others.

Constructivist paradigm

In the literature review, the plurality of paradigms that exist to explain learning processes in the educational field is observed. Currently, “a paradigm is described as a consensus in the scientific community on how to use the progress achieved in the past in the face of existing problems, thus creating universal solutions” (Trujillo, 2017, p. 7). Therefore, it is necessary to establish a paradigmatic position before the occurrence of a phenomenon, fact, event, or educational problem about which one wants to scientifically deepen.

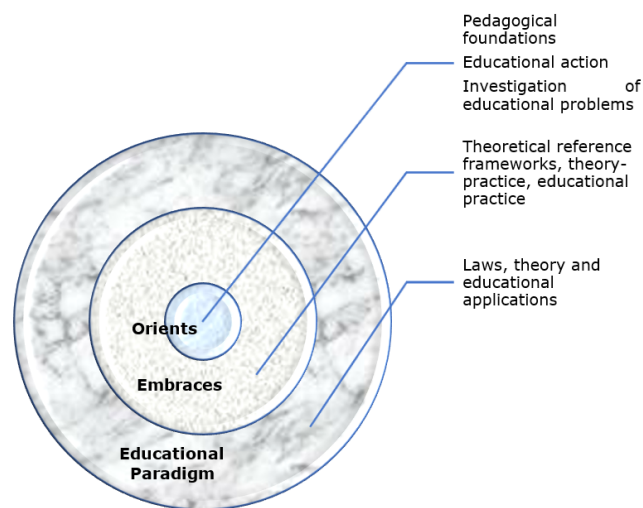
Then, “in general terms, a paradigm is a certain framework from which we look at the world, understand it, interpret it, and intervene in it” (Trujillo, 2017, p.07). On this premise, the question: how did the children learn? must be answered by establishing a position through the paradigm on which the process of reviewing, analyzing and interpreting existing knowledge is carried out, in addition to other information gathered from the literature socialized in the community in general.

In the case of educational paradigms, these are circumscribed in laws, theories and educational applications that include referential theoretical frameworks, theory and practice, and the

classroom performance of teachers, with the purpose of guiding the pedagogical foundations, educational action and scientific research of those problems that arise in the educational context. Figure 3 relates the above assumptions.

Figure 3

Conceptual framework of the educational paradigm



Note. In Trujillo (2017).

Lev Vygotsky’s Social Constructivism

The question: How did children learn during the pandemic? seeks to explain whether children were able to learn during this historical and sociocultural moment, considering that the consequences of this situation affected the learning process, as well as the acquisition of skills and abilities. The literature review allowed us to identify a variety of authors who support the thesis that knowledge is a product of social interaction and culture (Galán and Murillo-Esteba, 2020). This thesis refers to the social constructivism that, years ago, Lev Vygotsky exposed within the historical and sociocultural theory.

The theory of social constructivism emphasizes the influence of social and cultural contexts on knowledge and supports a discovery model of learning that emphasizes the active role of the teacher, while students’ mental abilities are naturally developed through different routes of discovery. In this regard, Quintero (2019) states:

The social approach makes it possible to understand how the student constructs his learning through interaction with his environment -his social environment- because the interaction that the individual establishes with society plays an important role in his intellectual functioning. (p. 327)

Based on the contribution of this author, it is stated that learning in general is a social process. Arias (2009) points out: "Social interaction is essential for learning, as it favors the development of human capacities, considering language as a mediating mechanism in this development" (p. 46). The above is confirmed by Cámara (2017), who asserts that learning is an active, intentional, collective and extensive process of meaning construction. The exercise of learning involves different processes that start from the interactions with the surrounding world, as it happens in the activities developed in the classroom.

Vygotsky (1978) stated:

In the cultural development of the child, each function appears twice: first at the social level, and later at the individual level; first between people (inter-psychological), and then within the child (intra-psychological). This is true of voluntary attention, logical memory, and concept formation. All higher functions originate as real relationships between individuals (p. 5).

In line with the above, Cisternas and Droguett (2014) state:

One of Vygotsky's fundamental propositions about development is that mental processes develop first on a shared level, that of socialization, and are then internalized, which implies a journey from the inter-psychological to the intra-psychological level. (p. 8)

Vygotsky was interested in analyzing how children learn semantics as they develop. For him, children construct the meanings of words through a shared activity that he called the 'zone of proximal development'. Therefore, the social constructivism he proposed underlies the process of social interaction that children experience in

the classroom because it allows them to first build knowledge from the relationships and communication they experience daily with the teacher and with other children, and then to internalize all that learning to form knowledge that will serve them throughout their lives.

In this regard, Osorio and Cárdenas (2021) state: "During the first years of life, children learn to walk, sit properly, interact with others, communicate, and develop basic cognitive skills, which are essential elements for their future development" (p. 19).

Social constructivism as a learning theory gives relevance to social cognition produced in shared spaces of interaction. In this regard, Sahakian et al. (2021, as cited in Gualdrón-Moncada, 2021) point out: "Not only is social cognition important and therefore necessary for success in school settings, but children's personal relationships are essentially based on emotional reasoning as a whole" (p. 338).

The authors point out, for example, that if children do not play or spend leisure time with their peers, they are likely to have difficulties in learning, showing empathy, sharing, managing their emotions, developing language and the ability to communicate socially; consequently, they will be vulnerable to its effects in the future as a result of not experiencing social interactions with their peers.

In summary, the social constructivism presented by Vygotsky assures that children's learning is the product of the integration of cognitive development and affective and emotional development within an appropriate context to interact with both teachers and peers in the classroom. Arias (2009) affirms Vygotsky's approach as follows:

The role of social interaction with others (teachers, parents, older children, peers) is considered fundamental for socio-affective development and is essential for the development of the teaching and learning process in accordance with the current times. (p. 50)

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Likewise, UNESCO (2020) reinforces the role of social interactions within the learning process when it states that access to school in early childhood allows children to interact more easily with others of their age and to find an environment that stimulates not only cognitive but also social and emotional capacities. Then, learning should be understood as a social activity and not only as a process of individual realization (Amayuela, 2017). This conception reinforces the importance of facilitating spaces for social interaction as an entry to learning, and also spaces where the child internalizes learning individually.

In addition, Lev Vygotsky emphasizes the link between education and communication, which is a process that favors the formation of the student's personality, the acquisition of knowledge and the appropriation of culture, which is generated by the interactions that take place in the classroom and in other educational spaces. Amayuela (2017) states: "It is very significant the value that communication has in the educational influence that the teacher must exert on the student and in the assimilation of learning, as well as in their formative process in general" (p. 10).

It is then necessary to understand that communication and education are processes that cannot be separated, but are related and complementary (Amayuela, 2017). When this complementarity is subjected to the current context experienced by children in times of detention, it can be inferred that learning, as part of educational processes, and communication, established in social interactions within the classroom, left empty spaces in their continuity; therefore, from the perspective of social constructivism, children did not achieve the expected learning with the use of virtual platforms.

Socio-Historical and Cultural Theory

First of all, it is important to quote the contributions of Quintero (2019): "Sociocultural theory emphasizes the active participation of the subject in its social context, since the development of thought is the product of the interaction between the two" (p. 327).

Similarly, Castellanos and Castro (2017) emphasize that "the best teaching and the most significant learning of the human being comes from the context itself, where he creates his social life" (p. 78).

The above contributions are derived from Lev Vygotsky's sociohistorical and cultural theory, which refers to the transcendence of the context in which individuals develop for learning. Galán and Murillo-Esteba (2020) express that, from his socio-cultural perspective, Vygotsky (1978) stated that all learning is the product of interaction with the social environment and always has a previous history, experiences prior to the institutionalized training phase that are characteristic of socio-cultural interaction.

Vygotsky's theory emphasizes the role of the individual as a social and cultural being within the framework of a history that develops over the course of his or her life, starting from the interpersonal to the intrapersonal. Castillo and Gibert (2021) express that Vygotsky's theory is based on the gradual construction of learning from the first years of the child, under the influence of the social context, because learning is acquired through social interaction, in addition to developing new and better skills, as well as immersion in a routine and familiar way of life.

The documentary review of the socio-historical and cultural theory proposed by Vygotsky significantly highlights the interaction of children with their teachers and classmates, in addition to other adults who at some point become facilitators of learning. Based on the above criteria, it is possible to understand that the learning process in the current socio-historical and cultural context has affected the normal learning process of children, severely hampering the pedagogical strategies used by teachers to achieve academic goals. Consequently, new actions should be implemented that, in some way, allow to recompose the void left by the pandemic during the last two years.

Discussion

Therefore, the teacher is responsible for the processes of "education, teaching and learning of students in accordance with the social, cultural,

ethical and moral expectations of the family and society" (Law 115, 1994, art. 104). In order to offer a quality educational service, teachers must constantly update their knowledge, know the advances of the educational system, the new trends in the design and implementation of teaching strategies that allow them to keep pace with the changes of the educational community and respond effectively to its needs.

The current socio-historical context, explained in detail in previous sections, redefines the role of the teacher in the learning processes under the criteria of social constructivism provided by Lev Vygotsky within the learning theories. In this regard, Loaiza and Duque (2017) point out: "The teacher's work once again assumes a leading role, since he/she is the one who, through his/her training and experience, must guide the formative processes of the school and be constantly updated in his/her disciplinary, pedagogical, curricular and didactic knowledge" (p. 67).

Therefore, the children's learning was largely dependent on the forms and strategies that the teacher used through non-conventional teaching methods to accomplish this formative and stimulating task of learning. This is based on Vygotsky's (1982) premise that "the greater the social interaction, the greater the knowledge" (p. 20). Undoubtedly, the main argument in support of his learning theory lies in the social interactions that children experience from their earliest years in school.

In support of the above, Inga (2020) emphasizes that school learning spaces are conducive to establishing social interactions because they are specifically designed to promote the child's learning. So, these conditions will be necessary for children to be autonomous, with the capacity to solve any situation, but remembering that in early education they are still looking for their own identification, as well as their place in the world. Social interactions are the way that allows them to take on roles and internalize them in their daily activities.

However, the above theoretical principles have not been fulfilled in the current historical and sociocultural context because "children who remain at home are also deprived of the important

social interactions that are essential for their development and well-being" (Naslum et al., 2020, p. 3). This confirms social constructivism's answer to the question: How did children learn? They could not learn according to the postulates of the learning theory proclaimed by Vygotsky, precisely because the lack of social interactions interrupted learning (UNESCO, 2020).

On the other hand, Quintero (2019) states:

The development of the individual's cognitive processes depends considerably on social interaction, affirming that children develop their learning through the relationships they establish with the environment around them and, from there, they build and reconstruct their knowledge, acquiring new cognitive skills, which allows us to assert that the transformation of learning is based on the social context in which the individual develops (pp. 327-328).

The panorama caused by the health contingency, influenced by the measures adopted to face this threat, has unfortunately generated dissonances in the learning processes when educational institutions have opted for online, distance or remote education. Although for Arias (2009) "what is essential in learning is to conceive the learner as capable of constructing his own knowledge and not as a passive entity that learns only by transmission" (p. 48); the lack of preparation that this strategy had in the new modality did not allow the expected results; it only became a circumstantial solution for the continuation of studies, but without achieving the learning objectives.

From this perspective, Khati and Bhatta (2020) and Toquero (2020) mention that among the factors that condition access to quality online education are: social class, race, ethnicity, geographic location and the type of educational institution to which they belong. However, none of these factors could be considered within a consensus strategy and with the depth of its implementation in terms of training teachers and students, ensuring the availability of the necessary technological tools, dedicating time and developing new methods of learning assessment.

Conclusions

The current socio-historical and cultural context has left a void in the continuity of children's learning, from the perspective of the learning theory proposed by Lev Vygotsky, mainly due to the untimely changes caused by the closure of schools and the general state of confinement, which undoubtedly influenced all social actors involved in educational processes. Children did not learn enough; only distant activities were carried out in order to justify the continuity of studies and the transition to a higher level, a fact that leaves a large number of shortcomings that must be worked on in subsequent levels in order to achieve an adequate formation of the students.

The theoretical foundations of social constructivism indicate that the children did not acquire any significant learning during the two years in which the schools were closed or alternated between attendance with health measures and distance learning. Therefore, the educational community faces great challenges in finding solutions to somehow remedy the lack of learning that they were exposed to during the long period of confinement, especially in early childhood, which is so dependent on the social interactions that take place in the classroom.

Finally, this experience leaves deep reflections on the application of traditional pedagogical strategies, since the emergence of this circumstantial stage revealed the innumerable shortcomings of the educational system and, therefore, of the institutions. It is necessary to be prepared for future events that may once again affect learning processes; therefore, alternative responses must be developed in order to try to maintain educational continuity and normality.

Conflict of Interest

The authors of this article declare that they have no competing interests in the work presented.

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Contribution

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Pedro Julio Puentes Rozo: co-author. Thesis director, advisor.

Clara Judith Brito Carrillo: co-author. Final revision.

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