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VIGOTSKI AND THE HUMBOLDTIAN PHILOSOPHY OF SPEECH: AN INTERDISCIPLINARY DIALOGUE [1]

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ABSTRACT. This article aims to recover part of the dialogical context in which Vigotski built his theory on the relationship between thinking and speech. In this context, we discuss how Vigotski approached two core questions of the Humboldtian philosophy of speech, namely: the origin of speech and the relationship between speech and worldview. The analysis of these aspects allowed the demarcation of an interdisciplinary dialogical universe between Vigotski and Humboldt, indicating similarities and differences between their perspectives. We consider that Vigotski's cultural-historical psychology, based on the historical-dialectical materialism, promotes a dialectical reversal in Humboldt's philosophy of speech, emphasizing an understanding of speech as an objectified social practice. Thus, it is possible to indicate that the Vygotskian perspective of the origins of speech and of the construction of a worldview is a dialectical overcoming regarding Humboldt's propositions, since it considers speech as a concrete and objective element which changes as history develops and is closely related to the material basis from which it comes.
Keywords: Cultural-historical psychology; thinking; speech.

VIGOTSKI E A FILOSOFIA DA LINGUAGEM HUMBOLDTIANA: UM DIÁLOGO INTERDISCIPLINAR

RESUMO. O presente artigo busca recuperar parte do contexto dialógico no qual Vigotski construiu sua teoria sobre a relação entre pensamento e linguagem. Nesse contexto, discutimos a forma a partir da qual Vigotski trabalhou duas questões centrais da filosofia da linguagem humboldtiana: a origem da linguagem e a relação entre linguagem e concepção de mundo. A análise desses aspectos permitiu demarcar um universo dialógico interdisciplinar entre Vigotski e Humboldt, indicando zonas de aproximação e de afastamento entre as perspectivas desses autores. Consideramos que a psicologia histórico-cultural de Vigotski, fundamentada no materialismo histórico dialético, promove uma inversão dialética na filosofia da linguagem de Humboldt, ressaltando uma compreensão da linguagem como prática social objetivada. Assim, é possível indicar que a perspectiva vigotskiana acerca da origem da linguagem e da construção de uma concepção de mundo representa uma superação dialética em relação às proposições de Humboldt, uma vez que considera a linguagem um elemento concreto e objetivo, que se modifica no devir histórico e guarda estreitas relações com a base material da qual é proveniente.
Palavras-chave: Psicologia histórico-cultural; pensamento; linguagem.

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VIGOTSKI Y LA FILOSOFÍA DEL LENGUAJE HUMBOLDTIANA: UN DIÁLOGO INTERDISCIPLINARIO

RESUMEN. Este artículo tiene por objeto la recuperación de parte del contexto dialógico en el que Vigotski construyó su teoría sobre la relación entre pensamiento y lenguaje. En este contexto, se discute cómo Vigotski trabajó dos temas centrales de la filosofía del lenguaje humboldtiana, a saber: el origen del lenguaje y la relación entre el lenguaje y visión del mundo. Al examinar estos aspectos se ha podido señalar el universo interdisciplinario entre Vigotski y Humboldt, apuntando las conexiones entre las distintas perspectivas de estos autores. Consideramos que la psicología histórico-cultural de Vigotski, basado en el materialismo histórico dialéctico, promueve una inversión dialéctica en la filosofía del lenguaje de Humboldt, con sus énfasis en la comprensión del lenguaje como práctica social objetivado. De este modo, es posible indicar que la psicología de Vigotski sobre los orígenes del lenguaje y la construcción de una visión del mundo plantea una superación dialéctica da las proposiciones de Humboldt, al considerar el lenguaje un elemento concreto e objetivo que lleva en su desarrollo histórico una estrecha relación con la base material que la sostiene.

Palabras-clave: Psicología histórico-cultural; pensamiento; lenguaje.

The relationship between thinking and speech is a discussion that, for its interdisciplinary nature, has been placing several fields of knowledge in articulation. This debate is rooted in Philosophy and Arts and its results were fundamental to the constitution of modern science. In this field of problems, the Humboldtian philosophy stands out for being part of a set of studies that placed speech at the center of the discussion about the constitution of the individual by establishing, from a theoretical point of view, that speech has a constitutive role in relation to thinking (Marcondes, 2010). In this understanding, the results of the Humboldtian thesis were essential for the establishment and consolidation of different disciplines such as Psychology, Anthropology and Sociology – because, by understanding speech as a constitutive activity, said thesis establishes that the study of a people's language can be a methodological strategy for the comprehension of the thinking processes of such people (Taylor, 1985; Lafont, 1993).

The importance of Humboldt's philosophy for the delimitation of the social and human sciences and, in particular, for the constitution of Psychology, was object of investigation of theorists who sought to understand how his formulations influenced some thinkers of this field of problems. From this perspective, Jahoda (1992) states that the debate between Philosophy and Psychology gained even more complex theoretical nuances with the Humboldtian philosophy of speech, since one of its privileged themes was the relationship between speech and thinking and the construction of and access to a worldview in different cultures. Thus, the author argues that the Humboldtian philosophy anticipates some elements that form the basis of Wundt's *Völkerpsychologie* and its results also contributed to the establishment of Vigotski's cultural-historical psychology.

Contemporarily, a great effort has been made by a portion of a group of researchers (Markova, 1983; Van der Veer, 1996; Kozulin, 1990; Veresov, 1999; Wertsch, 2000, 2007; Zinchenko, 2007; Hardcastle, 2009; Bertau, 2011) whose main objective is to investigate the founding aspects of Vigotski's work, highlighting the dialogical context of its production. In this debate, the cited authors state, in unison, that Humboldt's philosophy of speech plays an important role in the delimitation of Vigotski's cultural-historical psychology, especially in his formulations on the nature of the relationship between speech and thinking.

It is this direction that Kozulin (1990), Van der Veer (1996), Veresov (1999), Wertsch (2007) and Zinchenko (2007) follow when stating that Vigotski assumed one of the basic assumptions of Humboldt's philosophy of speech by standing, theoretically, beside those who regard speech as a process, an activity that has as one of its goals the constitution of thinking. Bertau (2011), in turn, when discussing the importance of Humboldt's philosophy within the cultural-historical context in which Vigotski worked, says that the Humboldtian philosophy has found a fertile ground in the former Soviet Union, given that thinkers from that context questioned themselves about the different functions performed by speech in its dialogical dimension.

In his argument, Bertau (2011) emphasizes the importance of A. Potebnja for the dissemination and development of the Humboldtian philosophy in Russia, especially through his principal work, "Thinking and Speaking", which can be considered as a systematic discussion of the main theses advocated by Humboldt about the relationship between speech and thinking. Thus, the author states that the Soviet studies of speech of the early twentieth century were marked by the so-called Russian Humboldtianism, as they appropriate the understanding that speech is a dialogical activity and that the word is fundamental to concept formation, that is, speech is essential for the constitution of thinking.

To Van der Veer (1996), Kozulin (1990), Veresov (1999) and Bertau (2011) Potebnja's work aroused great interest in Vigotski, having contributed to his understanding that the study of speech is of fundamental importance for Psychology. Thus, Potebnja's theory acts as a link between Vigotski's cultural-historical psychology and Humboldt's studies of speech, since in Vigotski's texts references to Potebnja are more frequent than those to Humboldt – but they always bring central elements that define and sustain the Humboldtian philosophy. From this perspective, Bertau (2011) points that the core of Vigotski's empirical research about the relationship between thinking and speech is formulated as an echoing of Humboldt's romanticist philosophy – since the assumption that speech is a dialogical activity that constitutes thinking is central to his reflections.

Thus, based on the understanding that Humboldt's philosophical perspective is important for the constitution of the Vygotskian theoretical framework, the objective of this article is to discuss how Vigotski comprehends two fundamental aspects of his philosophical system, namely: 1. The origin of speech, and 2. The relationship between speech and worldview. We consider that the analysis of these fundamental aspects for both theories can explain the dialogical relations between these two authors, stressing the importance of the dialogue with philosophy in the delimitation of the field of problems of psychology – and can point at some limitations in the claim that the cultural-historical psychology is rooted in Humboldt's philosophy.

In the context of this article, the importance of Humboldt's philosophy of speech for the delimitation of Vigotski's perspective, as indicated in Kozulin (1990), Van der Veer (1996), Veresov (1999), Wertsch (2007) and Zinchenko (2007), highlights the fact that the debate we want to develop must be understood as the recovery of part of the dialogue established between Vigotski and his interlocutors, putting in articulation his historical- dialectical materialistic epistemological basis, and having Humboldt's philosophy of speech, conceived inside an idealist philosophical context, as a privileged interlocutor. It is essential to emphasize, however, that our theoretical effort represents just one specific scope of the study of the complex theoretical-philosophical framework with which Vigotski dialogued in the delimitation of his theory, and cannot be taken as a final word about the questions approached herein.

In this way, we start from the need to understand the general theoretical lines that make up Humboldt's philosophy, especially his formulations on the origin of speech and its relationship with the construction of a worldview, since these elements act as a key to the reading of Vigotski's work. After the delimitation of these aspects from the German philosopher's perspective, the search for explicit and implicit references to the Humboldtian perspective in Vigotski's work constituted our main methodological procedure. Thus, we concentrate our investigative efforts on the works "Thinking and Speech" (Vigotski, 1934/2001b) – as well as on the text "The History of Development of Higher Mental Functions" (Vigotski, 1931/2001a), since these works concentrate the author's discussions about the genesis of speech and how Vigotski understood worldview construction process in individuals. In addition, we also seek the epistemological elements of the Vygotskian perspective in the text "The Historical Meaning of the Crisis in Psychology" (Vigotski, 1982/2004), since such assumptions provide the basic guidelines of the construction process of his theory.

With regard to the organization of this article, the first part will be the delimitation of the general lines of Humboldt's philosophy of speech in his formulations on the origin of speech as well as on the construction of a worldview; subsequently, we will discuss how Vigotski comprehends such questions. Thus, the methodology used to present this paper seeks to favor the understanding of the debate that we are proposing and cannot be regarded as a reproduction of the path taken in the delimitation and analysis of our object of research. In fact, the presentation of our analysis is part of the trajectory covered for the achievement of the objectives of this study, which takes Vigotski's theory as the start and end point of its development.

Wilhelm von Humboldt: A Brief Contextualization

Born in 1767 in Potsdam, Germany, Wilhelm von Humboldt was the eldest child of a family whose socioeconomic status allowed providing its children with a broad and rigorous education (Mueller-Vollmer, 2011). To Lafont (1993), his philosophical production is closely linked to the romanticist cultural movement, which places him among the most important philosophers of the passage from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries. In this regard, the author indicates that the Humboldtian philosophy composes a set of speech studies called as German expressionism, responsible for laying the epistemological foundations for a revolution in speech studies, which later began to be known as the linguistic turn – putting speech at the center of the philosophical discussion about human nature.

Robins (1967) points out that romanticism was one of the most important cultural phenomena for the intellectual production in the early nineteenth century, deeply marked by historicism and nationalism, especially in Germany. It is important to emphasize that, although Humboldt's theory keeps aspects that are quite common to the formulations of his time and is quite clearly influenced by Romanticism and Comparative Grammar, his theory differs from that of philosophers of his generation as he studies speech without a predominantly historical concern, avoiding the mere comparison between grammars to establish the origin of speech. It is in this sense that Milani (2012) argues that Humboldt stands out among his contemporaries by seeking, through grammatical comparison, a standard formula of intellectual development of linguistic process in different cultures.

With regard to the epistemological foundation of Humboldt's work, those who study his theory have not provided a final word; however, they have underscore the importance of Kant's transcendental philosophy to its constitution. In this regard, the comparison between the contributions of Cassirer (1923/2001), Valverde (1954), Robins (1967), Lafont (1993), Losonsky (1999) and Milani (2012) is fundamental to the understanding of the epistemological aspects of the Humboldtian philosophy in that they allow stating that his philosophy represents a break and, at the same time, a continuity in relation to the transcendental philosophy. In this light, his contributions can be considered a continuation of the Kantian thesis – given that he also understands that the basis of knowledge is in the confluence between sensibility and reason – but are also a break in relation to Kant because he disagrees with this philosopher as to the existence of a pure reason disconnected from the creative use of speech and of the historical conditions that found it. In short, Valverde (1954, p. 27, free translation) indicates that "Humboldt remains within what is permissible according to Kant. That is, Humboldt settles himself inside the Kantian boundaries, in a criticism that restricts cognitive possibilities anti-dogmatically."

Humboldt's Philosophy of Speech: The Origin of Speech and the Construction of a Worldview

To conduct the debate we are proposing, we centered our research efforts on the work "On Speech: On the Diversity of Human Speech Construction and its Influence on the Mental Development of the Human Species" (Humboldt 1836/1990) because, although Humboldt's speech studies have been conducted in a series of specific works, it is in this one that the theme is found and given greater expression (Valverde, 1954).

In Humboldt's understanding (1836/1990), speech is deeply articulated with the spiritual development of mankind and can be considered as the expression of this process:

> Language[3] is the outward manifestation of the spirit of people: their language is their spirit, and their spirit is their language; it is difficult to imagine any two things more identical (Humboldt, 1836/1990, p. 60).

[3] For the purposes of this article, the term "language", employed throughout "'On Language': On the Diversity of Human Language Construction and Its Influence on the Mental Development of the Human Species", by Humboldt, will be herein treated as synonymous with "speech", which is used by Vygotsky. When "language" appears in fragments other than the quotes taken from Humboldt's work, it is being considered as synonymous with "mother tongue"

Thus, by understanding speech as a manifestation of the spirit of people, the investigation on the origin of speech cannot be referred to a historical process or analyzed by means of comparative grammar. Instead, Humboldt says that speech is an activity that is born by itself:

> Language, indeed, arises from a depth of human nature which everywhere forbids us to regard it as a true product and creation of peoples. It possesses an autonomy that visibly declares itself to us, though inexplicable in its nature, and, seen from this aspect, is no production of activity, but an involuntary emanation of the spirit, (Humboldt 1836/1990, p. 27).

The matter of the origin of speech is also related to the understanding that speech is a dynamic network in which each element is able to manifest in itself the wholeness of its content. In this sense, a word is capable of reflecting in itself the entire linguistic system to which it belongs, and the understanding of it presupposes the prior existence of speech as an articulated symbolic entirety. In this way, it is not possible to state that speech emerged through a long process of historical development. Actually, speech emerges all at once and in its entirety. In this direction, Humboldt (1836/1990) is quite critical in relation to speech theories that situate its emergence in the designative activity, as well as to those that establish its emergence through the need for mutual assistance in the face of danger. According to the author, these views:

> project mankind into an imagined state of nature. Both are among the most erroneous views that can be taken about language... Even in its beginnings, language is human throughout, and is extended unthinkingly to all objects of casual sense perception and inner concern (Humboldt, 1836/1990, p. 83).

Thus, Humboldt's argument (1836/1990) places the origin of speech – in its entirety – at the same time that man appears, as it is a defining element of human nature and cannot be reduced to any other element from which it could arise. Speech is not something that is built but rather something that develops, since it is already present in the man since his constitution.

Thus, speech is not only an attribute that qualifies human nature; it is also a capacity – an element that develops from the interaction between the various individuals of a nation. According to Milani (2012), the Humboldtian system represents a linguistic model in which the individual, through the exercise of thinking and creative speech, can achieve increasingly complex plans which are closer to an aesthetic ideal, that is, of a perfect linguistic formula. In this way, the language of a people is what binds the abstract thinking of their speakers, establishing a complex relationship between thinking and the language in which the constant discursive practice continues on, always improving.

Thus, it is possible to indicate that from Humboldt's perspective speech is, at the same time, an attribute and a human capacity, given that – although it is an element that does not allow the investigation of its origins and is rooted in human nature or in the depths of the human spirit – it is something that necessarily develops only socially. It is in this sense that the author argues on the diversity of speech, indicating a people's language as one of the products of the creative activity of speech, without, however, forgetting to refer such activity to the group to which the individual belongs, that is , his/her nation.

The considerations about the origin of speech, when showing its relations with language, are elements that point to the relationship between speech and the construction of a worldview, capital element in Humboldt's perspective (1836/1990). Thus, the author argues that speech is the element from which the strength of the human spirit goes into a ceaseless creation activity that, when constituting the human nature, moves beyond its communicative dimension, being

> indispensable for the development of their mental powers and the attainment of a world-view, to which man can attain only by bringing his thinking to clarity and precision through communicant thinking with others. (Humboldt, 1836/1990, p. 32).

According to Humboldt (1836/1990), one cannot consider each nation as the expression of a human individuality, but cannot understand a man, or his work, without the remission of his actions and

products to the nation to which he belongs. From his point of view, it is the awakening of the creator capacity of speech that enables the constitution of the individual and the construction of reality – processes which are inextricably linked: “just as no concept is possible without language, so also there can be no object for the mind, since it is only through the concept, of course, that anything external acquires full being for consciousness” (Humboldt, 1836/1990, p. 82).

By conceiving speech as the element that allows the construction of reality, Humboldt (1836/1990) conditions the process of ordering and understanding of the world to the awakening of the individual’s linguistic ability, that is, to the appropriation of his/her language. Thus, considering the dependence between thinking and speech, language is, first and foremost, a means of building reality and not just its representation mode.

Because speech is regarded as that which defines the categories of reason, responsible for the ordering and understanding of the world, it represents the element from which the individual inserts himself/herself in and appropriates culture – which leads us to understand the fact that from Humboldt’s perspective language determines the worldview of individuals as well as their way of thinking and configure their experience. From this perspective, the relationship between speech and the construction of a worldview to Humboldt (1836/1990) keeps a relativist character, since by considering that the language of a people determines their worldview and configures their experience; it is necessarily considered that for each language there is a different perspective of world. In this way, it is in this context that it is possible to indicate the romanticist idealism of Humboldt’s philosophy – in addition to the relativist character of his thesis – given that in his philosophy the real is subject to linguistic processes and does not have full existence except within the concept .

Another important question for the Humboldtian theoretical-philosophical system is that, just as there are differences in the thinking process and worldview between individuals who speak different languages, there is no unambiguous way to understand a concept within one same speech. Thus, one same word does not raise exactly the same meaning to different individuals: “Nobody means by a word precisely and exactly what his neighbor does, and the difference, be it ever so small, vibrates, like a ripple in water, throughout the entire language” (Humboldt, 1836/1990, p. 88).

In this sense, Humboldt (1836/1990, p. 88) states that “Thus all understanding is always at the same time a not-understanding, all concurrence in thinking and feeling at the same time a divergence.” In this way, it is through small differences in the meaning of words, which reverberate in the formal structure of the language and express their dynamic character, that the individual reacts in the same proportion and in the opposite direction to the power that speech has on himself/herself and, by reacting to such power the individual keeps the language of his/her Nation alive, changing it as history develops.

Having defined the main guidelines of how Humboldt (1836/1990) comprehends the origin of speech and its importance for the access to a worldview, the next topic of this article seeks to discuss how Vigotski addressed these aspects, setting the similarities and differences in relation to the Humboldtian perspective.

Vigotski’s Cultural-Historical Psychology: Dialogical Relations with Humboldt’s Philosophy

Written in the early twentieth century in the former USSR (Union of Soviet Socialist Republics), Vigotski’s work discusses on theoretical, methodological and epistemological aspects fundamental for Psychology and, despite its immense heuristic and innovative value, it went through a long period of obscurantism in his country of origin – having been banned by Stalin after a decree in 1936, and reissued only in 1956 after the death of the Soviet dictator (Prestes, 2010; Prestes & Tunes, 2012; Friedrich, 2012).

The return of the Vygotskian thinking to academic circles put Vigotski, once again, as one of the main supporting pillars of the discussion about the formation of the individual through the analysis of the historical development of higher psychological functions. In this regard, the importance of his contributions to Psychology lies above all in the explicit effort to overcome the constitutive dichotomies of this field of problems, as the split between nature and culture, society and individual, which culminated in different perspectives of analysis within this discipline (Pino, 2005).

The discussion about the Vygotskian understanding regarding the genesis of speech and the construction of and access to a worldview – mediated by discursive practice – can be considered a way to explain the epistemological bindings of Vigotski's formulations, highlighting the way from which his theory seeks to overcome the stalemates established by the material-idealistic split within this field of problems. In this debate, the Vygotskian remarks about the origin of speech can also be considered one of the core points that defines in what his theory differs from the Humboldtian perspective, as he considers that

> The rational, intentional conveying of experience and thinking to others requires a mediating system, the prototype of which is human speech born of the need of communication during work (Vigotski, 1934/2001b, p. 11).

To Friedrich (2012), the need for a historical look over the development of thinking and speech is a key element for understanding the Vygotskian proposal within a materialistic historical-dialectical proposition of investigation. In this sense, Vigotski (1934/2001b) goes beyond the assertion that human speech arises from the need for communication resulting from work and expands such discussion by anchoring his perspective on the phylogenetic and ontogenetic study of the development of these psychological functions.

In this way, Vygotski (1934/2001b) indicates that, from both the phylogenetic and the ontogenetic viewpoint, thinking and speech develop in different genetic lines. With respect to phylogeny, the author supports himself on Köhler's and Yerkes' experiments and indicates that in their origins both thinking and speech have different roots and their development follows different genetic lines that do not depend on each other. It is in this sense that the Soviet psychologist points out the existence of a pre-linguistic stage in the development of thinking and a pre-intellectual stage in the development of speech.

Although Kohler's and Yerkes' researches are fundamental to Vigotski's conclusions about the genetic roots of thinking and speech in phylogeny, Vigotski (1934/2001b) states that such conclusions are no theoretical novelty for scholars of the historical-dialectical materialism. Such argument highlights that when analyzing Kohler's and Yerkes' researches, Vigotski was seeking for experimental evidence that confirmed what he already knew through Marx's and Engels' philosophy.

With regard to ontogenesis, Vigotski's argument is based on the same principle; he states that, also in the development of the individual, the genetic roots of thinking and speech are different. However, regardless of any parallelism between phylogeny and ontogeny, and given that the functional and historical relations that found human consciousness occur by means of dialectical leaps that radically change its structure, Vigotski (1934/2001b) points out that at a certain time of an individual's development the genetic lines of thinking and speech, until then separate, intersect and form a new mode of behavior: verbal thinking.

It is important to stress, therefore, that the search for the genetic roots of thinking and speech performed by Vigotski (1934/2001b) puts him in opposition to the Humboldtian perspective, since he understands the need for communication in work processes as a major factor for the development of speech and for a qualitative leap that changes how man acts in the world. In this direction, the phylogenetic and ontogenetic investigation of thinking and speech marks a theoretical and epistemological position different from that defined in Humboldt's idealism (1836/1990), and shows that the cultural-historical perspective cannot be characterized as a mere materialistic adaptation of the Humboldtian philosophy. Rather, Vigotski supports himself on a realistic epistemological perspective, the dialectical historical materialism – which involves changes in both its formulations regarding the origin of speech, as in the author's conception on the construction of a worldview.

Thus, when we consider the importance of the dialectical historical materialism as an epistemological ground that supports Vigotski's theoretical work (Zanella et al, 2007; Romanelli, 2011; Friedrich, 2012), it is important to emphasize that – if speech has its origins in the need for communication, conceived inside work processes, it should be necessarily understood as an objectified social practice – and not as the work of the spirit according to Humboldt's proposition (1836/1990). With regard to the epistemological basis underlying his scientific production, Vigotski (1982/2004) disregard any eclectic perspective of reconciliation between the idealist and materialistic perspectives within

Psychology and establishes two fundamental theses. The first one refers to the material basis of scientific concepts:

> Every natural-scientific concept, however high the degree of its abstraction from the empirical fact, always contains a clot, sediment of the concrete, real and scientifically known reality, albeit in a very weak solution, i.e., to every ultimate concept, even to the most abstract, corresponds some aspect of reality which the concept represents in an abstract, isolated form... As Engels demonstrated, even such an abstract concept as the series of numbers, or even such an obvious fiction as zero, i.e., the idea of the absence of any magnitude, is full of properties that are qualitative (Vigotski, 1982/2004, pp. 232-233).

On the other hand, if the first thesis defends the argument that every concept – be it scientific or not – is linked to the objectivity of the social mediation from which it comes, the second thesis presented by Vigotski (1982/2004) is its antithetical pair. From this perspective, every empirical fact is already a product of an abstraction:

> The second point that we need to make in order to present a fundamental analysis of the problem of the general science is the opposite of the first. Whereas the first claimed that the highest scientific abstraction contains an element of reality, the second is the opposite theorem: even the most immediate, empirical, raw, singular natural scientific fact already contains a first abstraction… Physical body, movement, matter – these are all abstractions. The fact itself of naming a fact by a word means to frame this fact in a concept, to single out one of its aspects; it is an act toward understanding this fact by including it into a category of phenomena which have been empirically studied before (Vigotski, 1982/2004, p. 234).

The above quotes indicate that the Vygotskian perspective is supported on the epistemological ground defined by Marx and Engels, since the theses established by the author composes a dialectical opposition that defines some basic principles in the production of knowledge, emphasizing the relations with its objective and material basis. Inside this ontological and epistemological perspective, speech development, linked to work relations, presupposes its objectivity and acts as a concrete element of mediation between the individual and society – which changes the way that Vigotski understands the different forms of thinking.

Thus, if on the one hand, Humboldt's perspective (1934/1990) states that the diversity of speech structure implies different forms of construction of reality, on the other, Vigotski's perspective (1934/2001b) argues that the objective conditions of existence determine linguistic processes and, consequently, different thinking processes. In this sense, it can be affirmed that, just as Marx reverse Hegel's dialectics by indicating objectivity as the driving element of historical development, Vigotski also promotes a dialectical reversal in the Humboldtian philosophy, indicating the objective and material character of speech. According to this understanding, it is not speech that determines reality, rather, it is (objective) reality that determines speech and, ultimately, thinking processes. Thus, the dialectical reversal between speech and reality carried out by Vigotski (1934/2001b) is an epistemological element that promotes the overcoming of the linguistic relativism present in the Humboldtian theory.

However, Vigotski draws himself close to the Humboldtian perspective when arguing that, in communication processes, a word does not mean exactly the same thing for two speakers of a language. In the work "The Psychology of Art" (Vigotski, 1965/1999), in one of the few explicit citations to Humboldt present in his work, Vigotski states: "As Humboldt quite rightly put it, any understanding is a non-understanding; that is to say, the thinking instilled in us by someone's speech never coincide entirely with the thinking in the mind of the speaker." (p. 49).

The discussion about the different thinking processes raised in the individual from the dialogical relationship is also present in Vigotski's argument in "Thinking and Speech" (1934/2001b). In this sense, his formulations regarding the development of the meaning of words evidence that, although adults and children can communicate and understand each other, there is no identity between the concepts raised by the words spoken by either of them. In fact, what enables the communication and understanding

between adults and children is the coincidence of concrete references involved in the context of the communicative action and not their actual meanings.

Finally, Vigotski's proposition about the construction of a worldview also points to a dialectical overcoming of the Humboldtian philosophy. If, from Humboldt's perspective (1836/1990), speech is the only factor involved in the constitution of conscience – concurrently constructing reality, worldview and the cognitive possibilities of the individual –, Vigotski's perspective widens this understanding by indicating the appropriation of social objectivity as a defining criterion of subjectivity. To Vigotski (1931/2001a), worldview is all that which characterizes the global conduct of men, the cultural relationship of the child with the external world. Thus, the author expands the Humboldtian understanding of the construction of a worldview and argues that all psychological functions are important in this process. In his words,

> If we looked at the work as a whole, as they say from the height of a bird's flight, there would appear before us the very complex and confused threads that connect and interweave all the chapters together. Thus, speech, that principal means for developing personality, leads us to the pointing function of signs of attention. The word is a direct tool for the formation of concepts. Speech appears as the basic means of thinking and is connected with the development of the gesture, the picture, play, and writing. Attention also provides a real basis without which the development of concepts would be obscure, and we would never take up writing the history of personality and worldview of the child if these intricately interwoven threads were not already noted in the whole preceding presentation (Vygotski, 1931/2001a, p. 329-330).

Thus, worldview to Vigotski is a historical and social element constructed from inter-functional relationships in which speech is a means by which the individual appropriates culture, besides being constituted as an element of mediation between the other higher mental functions. In this way, Vigotski also expands and dialectically overcomes Humboldt's contributions by emphasizing that worldview construction cannot be limited to a specific psychological function. Rather, one should return to the set of psychological functions, evidencing the historical and social character of the complex inter-functional relationships which, symbolically mediated found human consciousness.

Final Considerations

The discussion about the dialogical relations between the Humboldtian philosophy of speech and Vigotski's cultural-historical psychology developed throughout this article involved the consideration of epistemological, methodological and theoretical aspects – made explicit from the comparison between these two theories. Thus, when we discussed the main aspects that make up the Humboldtian theoretical system, especially those related to the origin of speech and to the construction of a worldview, in articulation with Vigotski's formulations about the same questions, it was possible to indicate some limits in the claim that the cultural-historical psychology has its roots in Humboldt's philosophy system.

Specifically, it is possible to point out that the Vygotskian perspective on the origin of speech and the construction of a worldview mediated by discursive practice represents a dialectical overcoming regarding Humboldt's propositions, since it considers speech as a concrete and objective element that changes as history develops, and is closely related to the material basis from which it comes and on which it is supported amid diverse social practices. In this argument, the analysis of the origin of speech from the Vygotskian perspective was an important element to resume some epistemological questions that compose the theoretical system proposed by Vigotski and represent a point at which the Soviet psychologist radically differs from Humboldt's perspective.

If the analysis of the treatment given by Vigotski (1934/2001b) in relation to the genesis of speech represents a detachment from his perspective in relation to the Humboldtian idealism, Vigotski's formulations about the construction of a worldview indicates different nuances in the dialogue between the authors. Thus, although Vigotski does not consider speech as the only element responsible for the construction of a worldview, he does not disregard its participation in this process, since he highlights

the importance of symbolic mediation for the development of higher psychological functions which, in turn, participate in the process construction of a worldview in individuals as well.

Lastly, we believe that the dialogical relationship between Humboldt's philosophy of speech and Vigotski cultural-historical psychology can only be understood if we link its analysis to the epistemological basis from which Vigotski developed his theory. In this way, we consider that the historical-dialectical materialism directs Vigotski's creative work and implies an understanding of his theory that goes beyond the summarization of the theoretical and philosophical assumptions that served as his basis, bearing a great critical potential in his task of guiding the thinking towards a transforming social practice.

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