

VERBAL REGULATION FORMS USED IN THE CONTEXT OF WELFARE COMMUNITY CENTERS IN THE SOUTH SECTOR OF THE CITY OF POPAYAN

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Abstract

This article constitutes a study of diverse types of verbal regulations employed in the welfare community homes (“Hogares Comunitarios de Bienestar” –ICBF Program) in Popayán (Colombia); the study is carried out through the analysis of everyday verbal exchanges between the “community mother” and the children. The general aim is to have a look at the traits of a child’s social development in a specific context. To that aim, special attention is given to linguistic and psychological aspects which help discern the influence of the “care mother” over the sociability of the children that are in her care. An exploratory qualitative study was designed to give a faithful account of the verbal discourse that came as a result of the “care mother”-child interaction with reality examined later through psycholinguistic analysis.

Key words: *Development, linguistics, qualitative study, community homes.*

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This paper analyzes different forms of linguistic regulation within everyday communications between the children and the communitarian “mothers”, which takes place in the community centers ICBF located in the south sector of the city of Popayan. These centers, a state program of the Colombian Institute of Family Welfare (Instituto Colombiano de Bienestar Familiar, ICBF) offer immediate assistance especially to children under 5 during the day since they may be in danger left alone while their parents are away from home (i.e. at work).

Interest in this matter came from the wish to research the social development of children growing up in a marginal context, which in this case corresponds to strata 2 and 3. This paper regards the social and psychological processes that result of the relationship each subject has with its surroundings (Kutnick, 1990); the processes of socialization taking place in certain cultural and social situation to which each subject is exposed. This approach is known as the cultural mediation model, and its main representative is Vygotsky (1981).

The socialization process can be defined as the dynamics that result of the relationship between all the mechanisms, strategies, socializing agents and socialization contexts which in turn benefit the internalization of motives, values, knowledge and conduct patterns the subject needs in order to function adequately in a society such as the one in which these children live. The regulatory context is constituted by an assembly of norms established

with regards to the children. The socializing agent is the one responsible for the verbal forms of regulation that carry the statements released by the communitarian mother.

There is also some concern over how beneficial the community centers really are for the child's social development. This context (regardless of its adequacy) has such a big influence over the creation of behavior patterns in the child because it is an environment where the child spends most of his/ her time and therefore, everything provided there has a big potential of influencing the child, both positively and negatively. The person in charge of the children has a special status due to the authority appointed at them by the community, especially by the parents who trust them with their children's care. Because of the authority and the time they spend with the minors, one can expect them to guide and organize the children's behavior, transmitting them certain cultural and social competences they need in their socialization process.

The reason for choosing verbal regulation is that, according to Bruner (1990) (Wheterell and Potter, 1984, cited in Stubbs, 1987), language builds realities, which in society and in social life itself become a product of linguistics represented in acts of speech. This means that, more than a way to transmit information, language is a maker. It creates and constitutes forms of life, knowledge and reality, and a part of the language-built reality is the attitude the subject assumes towards culture and its rules. Thus, it is important to take interest in language as a starting point for the study of the child's social development.

Halliday (1978) believes that language is a way to introduce culture patterns in each child who socializes while learning his/her mother tongue, and the main form of lifestyle

transmission. Through it, the child adopts ways to think and act, as well as cultural beliefs and values; this happens indirectly, because of the accumulated experience of routine facts in which the behavior is regulated.

According to this, the study explores the regulating linguistic strategies used in community homes, the illocutive and perlocutive acts which underlie said strategies, and the way in which the regulations permit to internalize the norms and the analysis of the socializing competences transmitted.

To address the issue, I developed a conceptual framework focusing on psychological and linguistic aspects in order to assess the influence that the attending mother's discourse has in the children's socialization process. Discourse concepts were taken up from linguistics theories, as well as the relation between statement and sentence, and between language and socialization. The psychological concepts defined were play (and its relationship with the socialization process), the psychological value of some verbal regulations such as symbolic sanctions, orders, rules and recognitions. Here, the familiar structures to which the different forms of verbal regulation may lead are defined. Also mentioned here are the diverse psychological views regarding the role of the adult in the intellectual and social development of the child.

METHODOLOGY

Research process

The research aims to give an approximate vision of reality studied through the psycholinguistic analysis. With this purpose, an exploratory study with qualitative

orientation was designed, based on the detailed and accurate description of the events and on the discourse the communitarian mother uses while interacting with the child. The discourse is taking the statement as unit for the analysis. "Statement" here is understood as act of speech. Here, the syntactic organization (locative value), semantic component (illocutive value) and their effects in both the giver and the receiver of the enunciation (perlocutive value) are considered.

Data Processing

In order to observe linguistic regulations in community centers in a simpler way, category charts were prepared and the total percentages and averages obtained in the centers were determined in different categories and subcategories. The percentages were calculated according to the number of statements per community center. With the results obtained and registered in each center a qualitative analysis was made where acts of speech were determined, leading to the following categories: sanctions, recognition of actions or conducts, orders (illocutive values), and the effects of the regulations (perlocutive value).

Afterwards, the information was analyzed based on the following psychological criteria: the referent of the child within the sanction, the characteristics of the norm, the type of structure and the role the child plays in the communication with the communitarian mother and the effect that the communitarian mother tries to have on the children.

Subjects

A group of communitarian welfare centers that shelter children ages 2 to 6 was chosen. These centers are all located in Commune six, in the south side of the city, which comprises

the following neighborhoods: Alfonso López, La Gran Victoria, Limonar, Barrio Colombia, Barrio Japón, El Lago, Plateado, Comuneros and Primero de Mayo, all of low socioeconomic level. There are twenty community homes, of which six were chosen randomly for the purposes of this study. For practical matters, they were numbered from one to six.

Instruments

Literature on the subject was revised, and the information was collected through *in situ* observations, which was registered in field journals. The *in situ* observations focused on the verbal interaction between the communitarian mothers and the children and the different behaviors that associate with said interaction. During the field work the observer was a non participant. The field journals were used at all times, and notes were taken during the activities observed. Since it was a matter of studying verbal speech, it was mandatory to achieve the highest fidelity possible in the registration of the expressions. Since no video footage was taken, gestures and actions that accompanied the verbal interaction of the participants were taken in to account in the field journals in order to allow a fuller transcription of the tapes.

TECHNICAL

A recorder and a wireless microphone were used in order to ensure the sequence and the fidelity of the expressions registered in the field notes. To lower the stress created by the recording and for the group to be familiarized with the recording process before the game, an initial recording of ten minutes was made (which was suppressed at the moment of the

transcriptions). Conventions were devised for the transcripts in order to faithfully preserve all aspects of the verbal interaction.

Procedure

After the trial observations, it was determined that games in which the “mothers” included a moment of learning would be the situation to register, despite the fact that there were two situations with differential characteristics (play time and learning time). Because of that, the study registered two fifteen minute situations, keeping in mind that the time employed in each community center for the situation of *free play* and learning oscillated between forty and sixty minutes. For each center, four registrations were done: two for the situation of *free play* and two for the moment of learning. This resulted in 24 registrations of fifteen minutes each. On the other hand, at the time to determine the number of statements that would be analyzed in each center per registration, saturation was the main criterion: center one, 129 statements; center two, 127; center three, 86; center four, 122; center five, 104; and center six, 95 statements.

Operational definition of the categories and subcategories of analysis

ELOCUTIVE VALUES

Acts of speech carry out or tend to carry out the action enunciated and focus in the intention of the message. Each regulatory strategy can vary its elocutive value depending on the context of the conversation. The elocution values in this study are the following: symbolic sanctions, recognitions of actions and orders with their proper indicators.

Symbolic sanctions: Understood as every statement that tries to silence the child's conduct without exercising physical damage on his/ her body. Some indicators are:

- *Reproach and disapproval.* The “mother” reproaches and censures the child who doesn't obey her order; in order to lead the child toward desirable behaviors.
- *Physical Exclusion.* The communitarian mother asks the child to leave the premises.
- *Embarrassment:* Seeks to disturb the child's spirit and to affect his/her self-esteem for having carried out an action disapproved by the mother.
- *To warn.* The adult subordinates the child in order to modify his/her behavior. There are two types of conditions that pressure the child to obey a verbal order: reward and punishment threats.
- *Comparison:* To reject the child's behavior; the mother estimates that it is convenient to compare him/her with another.
- *Negative Judgment:* The mother judges the child using derogatory towards the child or the child's actions.
- *To seek amends:* To make the child repair the damage caused or to reconcile with the offended.

Action Recognition: This category contemplates all the statements addressed at reaffirming the child's actions, to take into account and to rectify his/her conduct if it is necessary. Its indicators are:

- *Approval.* Regulation employed to accept and to support a proposal, opinion or behavior of the child.
- *Exhortation.* Words used to stimulate and encourage the child towards a desired and accepted behavior inside the community center.
- *Explanation.* To clarify some event or order received and make sure the child understands them. It includes the justification of actions and words on the mother's part.
- *To summon.* The mother uses this form of regulation to invite and make the children get together in order to develop a group activity.
- *To attend demands.* With which she lets the child know her interest in his/her opinions on the activity carried out.
- *To ask for suggestions.* This includes all the statements in which the "mother" requests the children's contributions while developing an activity.
- *To suggest.* Includes all the statements in which she insinuates or proposes an activity to the children and waits for their opinion about it.
- *Verification and follow up.* Statements the "mother" employs to determine if the children understand and follow her discourse properly.
- *To report.* Statements that seek to communicate a decision she has, either about school knowledge or about the procedure for the next activity to be carried out.
- *To request information.* It covers all the statements in which the "mother" asks questions.

- *To seek feedback.* All the statements in which the communitarian mother seeks the child's views regarding a certain activity.
- *To offer alternatives:* She tries to offer to the child the possibility to choose between options she has given.
- *To promise or negotiate.* Those in which the communitarian mother establishes a specific or implicit agreement with the child, in such a way that a commitment is acquired between the two parts.
- *To alert about consequences:* Those statements in which the child is told not to continue with an unwanted or dangerous behavior and warns on the possible consequences of showing contempt for what is being said.
- *Learning verification:* All the questions and affirmations with which the "mother" tries to assess if the child has acquired the knowledge she tried to offer him during the learning activity.
- *To focus the attention.* The "mother" seeks to persuade the child of an idea that he or she is not contemplating.
- *To acknowledge actions or conducts.* The "mother" flatters the child with words so that he/she assumes or continues to behave in a desired and accepted way.

Orders: This category contemplates all statements expressing some sort of mandate or procedure that needs to be followed. Orders can be expressed in different ways:

- *Direct.* All the mandates that appear in clear form. Generally its locative value is an imperative one or an affirmation.

- *Indirect*. The ones that appear in hidden form, i.e. questions and exclamations.
- Explained orders: Direct orders in which the “mother” presents the reasons to obey a mandate.
- Orders without an explanation.

Perlocutive Values

TO ACHIEVE OBEDIENCE

Here are all the statements in which the “mother” emphasizes her word and the corresponding obedience on the child’s part. In order to do so she uses possessive pronouns that focus the communication on her and her role as enunciator. She also uses expressions as "I have said that..." or “I have told you that...”, in which the first person is emphasized, acting on the one who receives such enunciation, in this case the child. Likewise, she gives special importance to obedience in order to use some illocutive values such as disapproval-recriminations, which censor disregards for the mandates. It is crucial to achieve obedience in the community centers as it serves some specific functions, which need to be categorized as well.

- *Promote learning activities*. It covers the statements that indicate the child his/her obligation to carry out activities which provide him/her academic knowledge, such as the visual recognition of vowels.
- *Control*. Statements in which the communitarian “mother” makes her word and position prevail over the child without any apparent justification; also,

when her statements show an attitude of inspection toward the activity of the children.

- *Maintaining discipline.* It contains those statements aimed at keeping the discipline, but in order to achieve it the “mother” emphasizes her discourse and the subordination of the child.
- *Promotion of non-school activities.* All the statements that force the child to intervene in game activities proposed by the communitarian “mother” or by other children.
- *Accepting conditions of scarcity.* Statements in which the “mother” leads the child to accept the scarcity of working material without taking into account the needs of the child.
- *Recognition of parental figures.* The statements included are characterized by being direct orders in which she asks the child to draw the parents and to recognize them regardless of the projective needs of the child.
- *Inhibit aggressive behaviors.* All the statements in which the “mother” stops aggressive expressions from the children but for this she emphasizes her power as an adult and the submission of the child.

ACHIEVING ACTIVE PARTICIPATION

Includes the statements in which the “mother” seeks to help the child take part in the different activities that take place in the center in order to keep him/her busy. The difference with the previous category is that it does not emphasize the authority of the adult or the submission of the child. It includes the following categories:

- *In learning activities.* Intervening in activities that have some relationship with the academic knowledge.
- *In non-school activities.* Representation, psychomotor, free play and undefined playful activities (in this last one the “mother” invites the children to play but the activity in which they are going to partake does not appear clear at the beginning). As for the definitions of the indicated activities of learning and playing are the following:
 - *To achieve organization.* Includes all the statements which seek to prepare the child for the different activities carried out in the center, either to learn or to play.
 - *To acquire knowledge.* It covers those in which the “mother”, regardless of any emphasis in her authority, tries to promote academic learning in the child by correcting, formulating questions or supporting his/her interventions.
 - *To introduce feelings of adequacy.* It contemplates the statements whose semantic components are the praises and flattery of the “mother” towards the child.
 - *Stopping violent expressions or outbursts:* Statements are used to stop aggressive behaviors without the “mother” recurring to the power of her words, or the submission of the child.
 - *Promoting cooperation and friendship.* Statements trying to promote such values in child’s behavior.

- *Taking care of the environment.* The communitarian “mother” seeks to create an ecological consciousness.
- *Establishing limits.* The statements in which she gives boundaries and inhibitions to the child’s motor and verbal reactions. Subcategories:
 - *School discipline.* It covers those in which order and in the observance of the regulations of the community center are emphasized. This regulation includes staying in one place, keeping quiet, taking care of the work material, etc.
 - *Non-scholastic discipline.* The statements included tries to lead the child to control himself or herself, as well as his/her actions and relationships with others.

DIFFERENT TYPES OF ENVIRONMENT

It was not possible to achieve one general structure of the environment in the studied centers that allowed one only characterization. However, some similarities were found that characterize the environments more or less like this:

- *Of rigid structure.* In which emphasis is placed in rules of obedience and school discipline and in the sanctions by punishment with the purpose to pressure and to submit the child.
- *Of flexible structure.* Characterized by the employment of rules such as participation, non scholastic discipline, sanctions by reciprocity and

other forms of regulation that take into account the viewpoints of the different speakers.

- *Weakly structured*: Where norms and sanctions by reciprocity, by punishment or any another form of regulation that make the child assume certain limits are absent.

Criteria for the psychological analysis

The following aspects were established in order to show how or if the linguistic discourse of the “mother” favors the socialization of the child, which includes some indicators:

- *The referent of the child in the sanction*. This can be the subject (child), the announcer (figure of authority) or the act; to determine this, the semantic components that constitute the “mother’s discourse are revised.
- *The attributes of the norm*: Outlined by the enunciated rules and the ways the orders were given.
- *The structure of the community center and the way the relationship is handled*. Outlined by the type of sanctions and rules the “mother” employs.
- *The role the child plays in the conversation*. These roles are determined from the elocutive values and the pronouns employed in the mother’s discourse.
- *The effect that the “mother” tries to have on the children through her statements*. Determined by the perlocutive values of each statement.

RESULTS

As was indicated, all the information was extracted from the registrations made in the community centers and is the consequence of vertically comparing the numeric data, where the total percentages and averages obtained in the different categories in all the centers were added up. Due to the complexity of the qualitative character and the extension of the data obtained, it is difficult to present it in this text and thus, only the most important information will be taken into consideration here.

Elocutive Values

SANCTIONS

With regards to the category “Sanctions”, the most common one in the community centers is reproach, at 27%, in community center number one. The sanction less employed (1%) is physical exclusion, in center number three.

Other sanctions, such as to embarrass the child, to compare him/her to other children and to pass negative judgments, are imposed mostly in center number one, with percentages under 4%. Warnings are used in centers one, two, three, and five in percentages under 2%; in turn, the search for separate repair is only employed in centers two and three, also in minimum percentages. The center in which the “mother” employs sanctions more often is center number one with 37% of these statements. In center number four these statements are imposed least, at 2%. The use of some sanctions varies according to the situation in which they are given, as it can be from learning or from playing a game.

In centers one and three the reproach is used more during learning time than during play time, with 24% and 15% of the statements, respectively; on the contrary, during play time, it is mainly employed in center number two (18%). Embarrassing the child is a sanction used by communitarian mothers in centers number one, five and six during the learning time, with percentages of 2%, 1% and 1%, respectively; nevertheless, during play time they do not use this sanction. To compare and to pass negative judgments are sanctions employed in center number one in 23% of the statements, during learning time but not during play time.

RECOGNITIONS

Exhortation is the prevailing form of recognition found in all the centers with percentages up to 26%. Less employed forms are: to request suggestions, to suggest, to recognize intentions, search for feedback and to promise negotiation. In general, these forms of regulation did not present individual percentages over 9%.

ORDERS

In all the centers, direct orders without explanation are at the lead over the ones with explanation. In center number five, orders prevail in 52% of the statements. Center number four, at 33%, is where orders are employed least.

Direct orders are mainly employed in center number five, at 45%; and given least in center number two (25%). Indirect orders prevail in center number one at 13% and they are almost absent in center number four (1%).

The center that presents the highest use of orders without an explanation showed 52% of the total of its statements as orders. Orders with an explanation are mainly given in center four, 7%, and they are almost absent in center number one (1%). Orders without explanation are most common in centers one and five, at 44% and 49%, respectively.

PERLOCUTIVE VALUES

The data indicate that the dominant statements were: to achieve obedience, to keep the child busy, to promote organization and to establish limits. According to the data, they are most common in center number five, with 47% and are less in center number 2. Generally, the prevailing subcategory is the promotion of non-school activities, with percentages that go up to 41%. The most popular game, with percentages up to 33% is the theatrical representation.

ACHIEVING ORGANIZATION

Centers one and five show a higher emphasis on organization, with 18% and 19%. In all the centers, to achieve organization is a dominant perlocutive value in the preparation of non-school activities; however, it fails to predominate over the remaining rules.

ESTABLISHING LIMITS

Participation is most important in centers four and five with 44% and 46% respectively. Again, it is least important in center number two at 10%. Center number three showed the highest emphasis at 26%, and centers five and six the lowest (10% each). There is a higher emphasis in scholastic discipline over non scholastic discipline. Concerning the normative

rules, the data indicate that obedience prevails in center one at 35%. The lowest emphasis given to this rule is in center four at 1%.

OBEDIENCE

The enunciation of the normative rules in the centers varies depending on the situation; there is an emphasis in obedience during learning time and not during play time, as shows: centers one (33%), three (14%), five (13%) and six (24%). In center two, on the contrary, obedience received a priority of 9%, during play time, and none in learning time. In all the centers there is priority over participation during play time.

Regarding the perlocutive values of the statements the tendency found in the centers is to achieve obedience, and the highest percentage in such topic (35%) corresponded to center number one.

When it comes to scholastic discipline, it was emphasized during learning time in centers one (9%) and three (22%) and during play time in center number two (13%). About the non scholastic, the percentages are neither significant nor differentiated between the two situations (learning or play time). Discipline is the dominant rule in center number three, at 27%. The one that less emphasizes it is center number five, at 10%. The recognition of parental figures is present in centers three and six in percentages, under than 6%.

When it comes to moral rules, none of the centers show a higher regard for them, if the referent is the percentage reached in the normative rules. The most enunciated rule is "no

aggression and respect for the other", which was present in all the centers in percentages under 10%.

The data about the role of the enunciator in the conversation show that in all the centers one-way relationships with a passive enunciator; showing percentages up to 81%; centers one and five have the highest values, 74 and 81%, respectively. The lesser predominance (52%) is in center number four.

One-way relationships with active enunciators are most common in center four, with 38%, and are least present in center number one (9%).

On the other hand, the promotion of learning activities reaches percentages that go up to 31%; however, to promote non-school activities is the dominating perlocutive value, with an average 22% of the total. The game activity that most used is the playful representation, at 18%.

Perlocutive values such as to "make the child feel bad" (centers one, two, three, five and six), to promote cooperation (two and three), "to make the child feel pleased" (centers one, two, three, four and six) and "to avoid expressions of violence" (two, three, five and six), among others, reach minimum percentages, and their averages do not reach 5%, for which they were grouped the category "Others".

The enunciation of normative rules varies according to the situation: it is emphasized in obedience during learning and not during play, like this: centers one (33%), three (14%),

five (13%) and six (24%); in this case, there is an exception in center number two, where the opposite occurs: obedience during play time was priority at 9%. Active participation during play time is a priority in all the centers, at an average 28%, followed by obedience (20%) and discipline, 16%. The rule less enunciated is "cooperation and friendship" with an average 2%.

The data about the role of the enunciator in the communication indicate that "one-way relationships with passive enunciator" are common in all centers, at an average 67%. Relationships during the communication process vary, depending on the situation: centers one and three emphasize more in a one-way relationship during learning time (49% and 53%), than during play, 25% and 20%. The opposite happens in centers two and five, which promote one-way relationships during play time but not during learning time. Except for center number three, two way relationships, are more common during play time than at learning time in all centers.

DISCUSSION

Regarding the type of sanctions employed in the centers there is a tendency to use reproaches; next are warnings, comparisons, negative judgments, physical exclusions, sanctions that seek to shame and sanctions that seek repair. This may indicate that one of the purposes of the communitarian mothers is that all their requests be observed according to their expectations.

With this type of sanctions the adult presents herself to the child as either the person directly affected by the child's faults or as the one in power, which may lead the young one

to infer that an action becomes a fault only if it affects the adult and provokes his/her recriminations and disapprovals. That is to say, the child's judgment is centered in the effects but fails to recognize the faults until he/she links them to their consequences. With these sanctions the mothers can place the children in a position of dependence toward them, without letting him/her take responsibility of their actions. Here are some examples:

In center number one, Alexander does not carry out the activity of the proposed learning, which consists of recalling the vowel *a*; instead of it he is entertained in something else. The "mother" reproaches his behavior:

"Please look at it, see where the "a" is: this is why you do not paste anything, you are cutting out drawings". "Alexander, please listen to me. See? All this week I have worked with the A".

In center number two, the moment the communitarian "mother" begins to distribute toys Nacho tries to snatch them from the "mother"; she then censures the boy: "Let's see, Nacho. You want everything for yourself and nothing for the others. Give some to Kewin". The boy insists and the "mother" disapproves of him again, "Is everything just for you?"

In another situation, the children begin to stand up from their places and take the toys. The "mother" disapproves of these behaviors: "Let's see, let's see! Who said you could take the toys? I'm going to distribute them".

In center three, Jefferson takes a flute that the “mother” had forbidden to take. When she sees him says, "Oh! Not like that! Go over there (to the yard) and remain there because you did not pay attention. I told you not to take it and you took it, disobedient.”

In all the centers, some sanctions are used in which the child and not the act is the reference, which in turn can affect the child’s image, such as sanctions that seek to shame, to compare him/her or to pass negative judgments at him/her. Here are some examples:

In community center number one, Diana does not carry out the activity proposed by the “mother”, who sanctions her: "Diana, I have not given permission for that. Diana you are already four years old and should do what I have told you" (to shame). Then, "Look at Fat who is two years old and is already able to do the balls and the sticks. And you cannot" (to compare). Diana responds to the interventions of the communitarian “mother” by tearing and throwing the worksheet to the floor. The “mother” intervenes, saying: "Ugh! Diana is very rude." (negative judgment).

In center number five, Jimmy does not carry out the proposed learning activity. The “mother” intervenes: "Jimmy, you have not pasted yet. You are so big and have not been capable of sticking the wool" (to shame).

In center number six, John does not play the proposed game and jumps outside of the circle that he and his classmates have made. The “mother” intervenes, "John Angel, let’s see, let’s see (she claps). You are a bit crazy, aren’t you? (negative judgment).

A boy pronounces badly. He says, "I do not fit". The "mother" corrects, "I do not fit. Your nose does not fit!"

Except for centers four and six, warnings are also employed, in which the "mothers" press the children to obey the norm, thus subordinating them. The warning most used is the threat of punishment. Examples:

Center number one: "Javi, you are going to do the work. You don't do the work. If you don't do the work, you will not go to school". Center number five: "Let's see. Play or I will give you work to do". Center number three: the children take work material without the adult's permission. The "mother" intervenes the following way: "Not like that or else I take away the clay and we won't do any work. Let's see, the toys?"

When it comes to corrections, cases like the following were found: In community center number one, some of the children and the "mother" are playing a directed game, in which the "mother" tells the children to each one touch their own leg, right or left according to the order given. This in turn should mean that they are able to distinguish right and left. In this situation, most of the children in the center do not touch the corresponding leg according to the order and the "mother" begins to correct: "Diego is wrong! Daniela is wrong! Carolina is wrong!" she says.

Of all the sanctions employed, it can be pointed out that though the "mothers" reject and punish the inadequate actions of the children, they can also refrain from providing the tools necessary to create a social conscience which allows them to perform adequately in the

group to which they belong. On the other hand, there may be a contribution to focus the child in the consequences at the moment of determining if an action is or not a fault.

Through the sanctions, the “mothers” do make the rules clear enough for the child; it is also possible that they don’t let the child take full responsibility for his /her actions. The message transmitted with these types of sanctions is that the task to be carried out or a certain type of behavior is something the child does for someone else and not for himself/herself. It is possible that despite the constant sanctions by the “mother”, the child does not do the task, perhaps as a form of opposing the adult. Revisiting Piaget (1974), it can be pointed out that the type of sanctions employed in these centers is solely for the purpose of punishing the child; hence the lack of precision in the educational character of the sanctions by reciprocity.

It is important to take into consideration the emphasis the mothers give to the attitude of obedience the child should assume during the learning situation, which shows they assume a higher level of responsibility when it comes to teaching school tasks. This in turn can lead to the alteration of the objectives of the community center program and to obstruct the execution of other activities which can favor the child. Besides, it can affect the child’s social development by removing all responsibilities. To this, Kutnick (1990) states that the inhibition of social development can be the result of the perception that the child’s responsibility to learn is only controlled by the adult.

To determine the type of structure present at the centers, the type of sanctions and the rules in which emphasis is made were taken up again as indicators. There is a tendency to present

a disciplinary structure similar to the one that functions in the school environment, because the statements the mothers use refer to the school discipline: to maintain order, silence and attention (Correa and Calonje, 1995).

On the other hand, a rigid structure fluctuates to a flexible one and vice versa, depending on the situation, even though a rigid structure is more common. It allows an organization according to certain norms and regulations, which are found relate to what the community “mother” considers important. To achieve it, she usually employs forms of regulation that bring a less reflexive observance of the norms as consequence on the part of the child, without them necessarily integrating to the children’s lives in order to make them feel responsible for their actions.

In a rigid structure environment, “in order to exercise authority” the “mothers” tend to offer external referents to the child, sanctions by punishment and normative rules that highlight the place of authority of the adult. This suggests that the moral judgments which may organize the children from these forms of regulation are connected with the consequences and magnitudes of the faults and not to the intentions and motivations that the people when they carried out an action. This affects the child’s socialization process socialization as he/she remains focused in himself/herself and without enough opportunities to reconcile with others’ points of view, to know their thoughts or their feelings at the time they evaluate their actions.

According to Lautrey (1980), it can be pointed out that the rules enunciated in the centers do not suffer exceptions and that its stagnation is standard, not placing an emphasis in the

circumstances that obstruct the norm and by being inserted in a rigid structure. The cognitive effects of this situation are the lack of open-mindedness in the child left in the care of these community centers and the absence of opportunities to find elements that mediate their relationship with the rules, the ones that will possibly end up being conceived as dogmas and not as channels to facilitate their relationship with the environment.

In synthesis, in the studied centers the employed regulations offer the child a predictable and organized environment, but usually from the outside, limiting their possibility of construction, since the children are not given many opportunities to organize by themselves a system of rules and values that guide their conduct.

As for the different aspects of the norm, normative rules are prioritized, which indicates that the “mothers” are very worried about how to control the child’s behavior, which in turn gives way to the asymmetric relationship and unilateral respect that comes along with it. This does not allow any emphasis in the rules that promote an adequate relationship of the child with his/her environment.

In this research the analysis of the norm focused in the way the orders given by the communitarian mothers were taken. It was found that the predominant orders in the centers are the direct ones without an explanation that enunciate the rule but not its justification. This does not allow the child to understand nor to build on the norm, which, according to the approaches of Bruner (1986), means he or she does not possess the two necessary grammars for the comprehension of the rule. The child fails to integrate the norms he/she

hears mentioned, that is to say, he/she fails to transcend the specific moment in which he/she learned them and thus fails to apply them to every moment of his/her life.

For example, in center number one Diana does not participate in the proposed activity by the community “mother”, who goes to the girl and tells her, "Diana, your worksheet is here resting. Work! ” Or, a group of children is speaking aloud and the “mother” tells them to keep quiet: "Let’s see my little merchants, what do you sell there?" In center number two, the children make noise; the “mother” reprimands them: "Who are the ones that are shouting?" Brayan hits a classmate. The “mother” tells him, “Careful!" The boy continues and the “mother” intervenes yelling at him, “Brayan! Brayan!" In center number three, during an activity of learning a child stands up from his position. The “mother” tells him, "Good, and did you already do the train?"

In the situations presented the children obey the order for a few seconds and then they slip back to their former attitude, which suggests that the rules may not be truthfully integrated. The conduct is intended to please the adult or, perhaps, as a form to express his/her fear of retaliations. It can be pointed out that the communitarian “mothers” handle the concept of an asymmetric relationship as adequate and due to this; they privilege the sanctions by punishment and the normative rules as a mechanism to preserve the authority.

When it comes to the role of the child in the communication, it was found that in the centers "one-way relationships with passive enunciator" prevail, and therefore there is an average 67% of the mother’s discourse maintained by this type of relationship, where the child is the passive enunciator. This shows an asymmetric relationship according to which

the adult mostly seeks to be obeyed and the child has no voice, since he/she does not have an active position in the communication. The findings indicate that one of the criteria the “mothers” have for educating the children consists of keeping the observance of the norms, with a precarious position of the children as speakers.

It is important to point out that the ways the relationships develop in the communications, as well as the enunciated norms vary according to every situation, and thus in centers one and three one-way relationships are emphasized during the learning situation. In contrast, during play time, the relationship mentioned diminishes considerably, leading to one in which the “mother” takes the child as a more active enunciator in the communication.

In centers two, four and five, one-way relationships with passive enunciator predominate during play time and they diminish considerably during the situation of learning. In center number four the total percentage of "relationship with passive enunciator" is lower in contrast to the other centers. In center number six, one-way relationships with passive enunciators are emphasized as much during play time as in the learning period.

In all the centers, hierarchical authorities are favored, as the community “mothers” emphasize on the exercise of rules of obedience and school discipline. Indirect orders with no explanation are frequent, the coordination of points of view is absent, and the attention of the mothers is focused in controlling the group and to achieve the observance of the norm.

Regarding the promotion of different types of relationships which favor the child's intellectual development socialization process, (for which the perlocutive values of the statements and the verbal regulations such as sanctions and rules employed during play time and learning time are taken up again) it was found that verbal regulations are used basically to achieve observance of normative rules on the part of the child, without bestowing them with enough cognitive elements (i.e. cognitive confrontation, the explanation of the sense of the norm) needed for his/her social development. Even if the child assumes the expected behaviors, this does not mean he/she has the necessary social and moral bases that support him/her; it only means he or she complies with the situation. According to Lautrey (1980), one may consider that from the cognitive part it is important to promote the coordination of points of view, the negotiation and the consensus, because they offer disruptive elements of imbalance in the child's structures, and that leads the child to relate his/her ideas, to take into account the intentions that underlie his or her actions, to put him/herself in the position of another and to understand their reasons. According to the theory of Piaget, all of this puts into function the processes of assimilation and of accommodation of the structures and leads to a greater equilibrium.

Differences also exist between what play really is, and the activities proposed as such in the community centers where there is a shortage in playful interaction, since there is no promotion of symbolic capacities, of invention and of representation, which in turn does not favor the social development of the child. This happens whenever the rules and their comprehension are conceived to suffer changes depending on the state of cognitive development in which the child is in (Piaget, 1974).

Anyway, there are exceptions to the findings: for example, in center five, where the “mother” invites the children to play “blind chicken”: Upon the non-completion of the rules of the game she tries to enunciate them but within the same game with a language that maintains the child inside the symbolic thing: "You cannot be caught by the chicken". In the game of the *arracachas*, "Hold on tightly so that you cannot be plucked. Two have been pulled out". Or, the children play the "wolf" and they are disorganized. The “mother” tells them, "That wolf must be properly in the center".

Regarding the previous examples, it is considered that a playful approach of the child to the rules consists of the possibility to agree with the knowledge and comprehension of the rules that define his/her games. From there, he/she acquires his/her own resources to extend his/her comprehension to the rules that regulate the relationship with the environment.

To finalize, the communitarian mothers who helped the realization of this study conceive learning as an activity of conditioning and of preparation to writing and reading, associated to the development of the fine motor coordination and the eye-hand coordination. Nevertheless, within cognitive psychology, learning to write does not consist of the acquisition of written signs but in the development of hypothesis that comes, little by little, to the comprehension of the rules of the writing system.

Here is an example. The communitarian “mother” asks the children to cut the vowel *a* and one of them confuses it with the letter *o*; this situation leads the “mother” to correct, besides doing recriminations by the quantity of time employed in that activity and the little learning of the child.

CONCLUSIONS

Linguistic regulation is the function of the language to which priority in the studied community centers is given. On the other hand, the forms that assume these regulations (sanctions by punishments, indirect orders without explanations) are not sufficient for the children to internalize the norms or to organize a system of values and patterns of conduct, as to allow them certain strategies such as the confrontation of points of view, among others.

In general, the mothers employ verbal regulations to influence the child and to increase the observance of their requests; from there, the effects sought with these are frequently to achieve obedience, discipline and participation in proposed activities by the adult.

As for the structuring of the environment, in all the studied centers it was impossible to find a homogeneity that allows an absolute definition of each one of the structures. Similarities were found that more or less allow a characterization of the environments.

On the other hand, the studied community centers present a similar disciplinary structure to the one that functions in the school. Because of this they give priority to the normative and regulatory rules on morals and constitutions besides the one-way communication with passive enunciator and the relationships of authority.

To finalize, it can be pointed out that in the practices of learning and playing underlies a theory that is common to all. Playing, learning to write and the norm are conceived as

perceptive and motor activities, and the child is contemplated as a receiver of the impressions of medium. This conception influences the forms that linguistic regulation takes, that of controlling the child not taking at all into account his/her capacities of reflection and of comprehension.

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