

The mediation of picture book reading and its intersections with children's artistic and playful creations

A mediação de leitura do livro-imagem e suas interseções com criações artísticas e brincantes das Crianças

La mediación de la lectura del libro de imágenes y sus intersecciones con las creaciones artísticas y lúdicas infantiles

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Resumo: O artigo explora a mediação de leitura e o brincar como meios de promover experiências significativas entre Crianças e livros contemporâneos voltados à infância. Inserido em uma pesquisa de mestrado em andamento, o estudo combina o Estado do Conhecimento com o método de estudo de caso para investigar como a mediação de leitura do livro-imagem pode criar condições para vivências brincantes. A pesquisa explora diversos elementos, incluindo a leitura, suas mediações e mediadores(as), as Crianças como receptoras ativas, as interações entre professora e Crianças, as relações Crianças-livro-autor-ilustrador, as interações entre as próprias Crianças e o brincar. Os resultados indicam que a mediação realizada por professores(as) da Educação Infantil com o livro-imagem é uma ação fecunda para mobilizar a imaginação, a expressão, o brincar e o estabelecimento de interações entre as Crianças, além de contribuir positivamente para sua formação leitora.

Palavras-chave: Mediação de leitura. Livro-imagem. Crianças pequenas. Educação Infantil.

Abstract: This article explores reading mediation and playful activities as ways of promoting meaningful experiences between children and contemporary books aimed at children. As part of an ongoing Master's research project, the study combines the State of Knowledge with the case study method to investigate how reading mediation using picture books can create conditions for playful experiences. The research explores several elements, including reading, its mediations and mediators, children as active receivers, interactions between teachers and children, relationships between children-books-authors-illustrators, interactions between children themselves and play. The results indicate that mediation carried out by early childhood education teachers with picture books is a fruitful action to provoke imagination, expression, and play as well as to establish interactions among children, in addition to contributing positively to their reading development.

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Keywords: Reading mediation. Image book. Small children. Early childhood education.

Resumen: El artículo explora la mediación lectora y el juego como medios para promover experiencias significativas entre los niños y los libros contemporáneos dirigidos a niños. Insertado en una investigación de maestría en curso, el estudio combina el Estado del Conocimiento con el método del estudio de caso para investigar cómo la mediación de la lectura de libros de imágenes puede crear condiciones para experiencias lúdicas. La investigación explora varios elementos, incluida la lectura, sus mediaciones y mediadores, los niños como receptores activos, las interacciones entre maestros y niños, las relaciones niños-libro-autor-ilustrador, las interacciones entre los propios niños y el juego. Los resultados indican que la mediación que realizan los docentes de Educación Infantil con el libro ilustrado es una acción fructífera para movilizar la imaginación, la expresión, el juego y el establecimiento de interacciones entre los niños, además de contribuir positivamente a su educación lectora.

Palabras-clave: Mediación lectora. Libro de imágenes. Niños pequeños. Educación Infantil.

Introduction/Presentation

Reading mediation with picture books in early childhood education is a fruitful activity for mobilizing imagination, expression, and establishing interactions among children. In this field, this article arises from an ongoing Master's research project that seeks to investigate how reading picture books can foster playful experiences and create conditions for those experiences to happen with various artistic languages. The central question guiding this study is: how can reading mediation with picture books in early childhood education create conditions for playful experiences?

To answer this question, the research adopts a qualitative methodology, based on the principles of the State of Knowledge (SK), combined with a case study. The analysis presented here includes reading mediation episodes conducted in 2022 at a preschool by the first author, which were used as preparatory reflections for the fieldwork planned for the following year.

The article presents a literature review that addresses the foundations of reading mediation in early childhood education and discusses the concept of picture books, considering their functions and potential in image reading in the educational context with young children. Picture books, understood as objects of contemporary art, not only allow for the practice of reading images/works but also mobilize children to engage in different types of play, the creation of meanings, and the practice of creativity. Thus, the article seeks to understand how picture books can be a catalyst for artistic expression and play and connect contemporary literature to the imagination of children in early childhood.

Methodological perspective

To meet the scientific requirements of this research, the methodology used is qualitative, based on the principles of the State of Knowledge (SK) combined with the case study method. A literature

review, which includes fundamental theoretical frameworks, supports the in-depth analyses of a specific subject: the experiences of the first author of this article with the mediation of picture book reading and the proposal of games for children in Early Childhood Education, at the time of the research

According to Robert Yin (2001, p. 32)³ “[...] a case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and the context are not clearly evident”. Therefore, the study is conducted using the case study methodology, a research strategy that aims to investigate an empirical topic according to a set of procedures. The unit of analysis or the case explored and analyzed, is related to the reading mediation practices with picture books, carried out by the first author of this article in Early Childhood Education, seeking to answer the research question: “How can picture book reading mediation in early childhood education create conditions for playful experiences?”

This article, as an ongoing Master’s research project at the Federal University of São Carlos, Sorocaba campus, was chosen to present part of the literature review combined with the analysis of two episodes of picture book reading mediation conducted by the first author in 2022. Reflection on past episodes was incorporated as an essential step in the research process, which supports a reflection on action and preparation for the field trip. The Master’s student will conduct a “[...] focus on a delimited system” (Rabitti, 1999, p. 29, our translation) throughout 2025, to carry out a detailed examination and deepen the understanding of the complexity of reading mediation in a public preschool located in the interior of the state of São Paulo.

The advice sessions and the dialogues occurred in them revealed, for both the advisor and the Master’s student, the importance of revisiting past experiences to deepen understandings of the principles of working with the arts, literature, and play with young children. Careful reflection on previous mediation activities proved crucial for the researcher to develop greater awareness of the concepts, values, and methods that underpin artistic mediation between children and picture books, such as the modes of interaction between teacher and children and peer relationships, based on the principles of play as a foundation. The reflection process allows the Master’s student and her advisor to reexamine the challenges faced, the questions raised, the aspects that respect the children’s perspectives, and those that proved inadequate, thus strengthening, so to speak, the commitment to a more conscious and informed practice. It is therefore noteworthy that the article explores two specific episodes that occurred in a specific preschool in 2022, highlighting how retrospective analysis contributes to a future respectful and ethical field study, not only in relation to the children, but also in relation to the research methodology itself.

³ https://archive.org/details/casestudyresearch0000yinr_i7i1/page/12/mode/.

First, we sought to establish a State of Knowledge, which is a type of bibliographic research that “identifies, records, and categorizes the scientific production in a given area, over a given period of time, bringing together journals, theses, dissertations, and books on a specific topic” (Morosini, 2014, p. 102, our translation). This methodology was chosen to create an investigative trajectory that has both scientific rigor and implies Mastery of the field under study by the researcher.

In this analytical proposal, this is achieved through the commitment to mapping and analyzing the field’s academic production, following the methodological path of defining the objective and search descriptors (keywords), researching the bibliographic material in the selected databases, and, subsequently, completing the constructive steps for organizing the corpus of analysis, namely: (i) annotated bibliography, (ii) systematized bibliography, (iii) categorized bibliography, and (iv) propositional bibliography (Morosini, 2014; Kohls-Santos and Morosini, 2021; Moraes and Morosini, 2023). Furthermore, the SK proposes going beyond categorization, as it is necessary to understand the context of the scientific production, such as its country, its location by region, and the institution in which it is inserted (Morosini, 2015). It is important to emphasize that this analysis process is ongoing in the corpus of analysis and is intended to generate further insights.

According to Kohls-Santos and Morosini (2021), the annotated bibliography stage refers to the identification and selection, based on descriptor searches, of the materials that will comprise the corpus of analysis. Systematized bibliography represents a cursory reading of the abstracts of the papers to select those that will be included in the analysis and writing of the State of Knowledge. Categorized bibliography involves reorganizing the selected material, regrouping it into thematic categories, while propositional bibliography is the organization and presentation of propositions present in the publications and emerging proposals based on the analysis carried out.

Taking that into account, Kohls-Santos and Morosini (2021, p. 125) explain that:

The State of Knowledge allows us to understand what is being researched and the approaches used in each area or topic. It can also be a strategy for broadening the scope of a given topic of study, as it is a way to discover perspectives that have not yet been addressed, points of view that have not yet been considered, and that could be innovative for conducting new research.

The bibliographic review of the research, understood as part of the construction of the State of Knowledge, involved the systematization of tables with the references that were selected when surveying two databases: (i) the Portal of the Coordination for the Improvement of Higher Education

Personnel – CAPES⁴ and the (ii) Catalogue of Theses and Dissertations by CAPES⁵. To search for works that are in continuous reading, the following descriptors were used: mediation AND reading; picture book; book AND illustrated; album book; book AND illustrations.

Based on the methodological approach, using descriptors, 41 Master's dissertations and 6 Doctoral theses were selected and grouped into tables, distributed within the stipulated time frame of 1991 and 2023. The selected works were published and developed in research linked to postgraduate programs in different Brazilian regions, distributed as follows: North Region (1); Northeast Region (7); Southeast Region (29); and South Region (10).

Regarding the Midwest region, no theses or dissertations were found in the time frame indicated. Among the articles selected for analysis, 10 were from the South Region; 8 from the Southeast region; 2 from the North Region; and 1 from the Northeast Region.

As regards the two pedagogical scenes presented, both are with children aged four and five years old, belonging to a private early childhood education school in the city of Sorocaba-SP, in the “Infantil 4” classes, in the morning and afternoon periods.

The pedagogical scenes are a mediated reading of the book “*Barbaro*” [Barbarian] by Renato Moriconi (2013) and the book “*Selvagem*” [Savage] by Roger Mello (2010). Recordings of the children's speeches were used for in-depth analysis, as well as the teacher's diaries, in which she documented both her own actions, her teaching practice, and those of the children. Finally, dialogues that were not recorded were used to contribute to greater possibilities of analysis of how her practice evolves. To ensure research ethics, letters were used in the transcriptions of the children's speeches, as well as the noun “teacher” to refer to the mediator, who is the first author of this article.

Robert Yin (2001) explains that it is very common to misinterpret research strategies as being hierarchical. According to the author, although each strategy has distinct characteristics and limitations, more than one strategy can be used in the same study, and methods can overlap. Indeed, when considering the research subject in question, several issues are involved. The notion of mediating picture book reading and creating playful experiences with young children makes it impossible to approach the problem based on a single method; given that it involves the diversity of reading elements, their mediations, and their mediators; children as non-passive receivers; the interactions between teacher and children, children-book-author-illustrator, and children-children; and playful experiences. Thus, in addition to using the SK and case studies to analyze reading mediation episodes, the basis is found in two other sources.

⁴ <https://periodicos.capes.gov.br/>

⁵ <https://catalogodeteses.capes.gov.br/catalogo-teses/#!/>

To contribute to the aspect of image reading carried out by children, with the aim of developing critical thinking and visual perception, it was based on Ana Mae Barbosa's Triangular Approach concept (2022), which considers individual reading, collective readings and re-readings done by children, with the guidance that mediation aimed at reading images be done through questions and not through prior interpretations by adults (Barbosa, Lima, 2024).

As categories of analysis, they were supported by Mira Stambak et al. (2021), who propose observing aspects such as: the degree of children's involvement, the degree of exploration of the picture book object and other objects/materialities in play, exchanges between peers, the types of play created (physical, dramatic, visual, musical, symbolic behavior, make-believe, etc.), and the children's speeches (listened to, written down, recorded) about book themes, imagined themes, and fictional inventions.

Stambak et al (2021) presents research by child therapists who investigate pedagogical practices with young children and work in the field, which became inspiration for reflecting on episodes of mediation in reading picture books.

It is imperative to state that, in addition to the work of the various authors found in Stambak (2021) referring to studies with young children in daycare centers (from zero to three years old) and this study focusing on work with preschool children (four and five years old), the principles that support the pedagogical work contained in the work are consistent with all the necessary reflections, so that we become capable, in the full research process, of being adult teachers who are accomplices of the children, who "[...] find the familiar strange and become familiar with the strange" (as the coordinators of that level Suely Amaral Mello, Maria Carmen Silveira Barbosa and Ana Lúcia Goulart de Faria put it), and of "[...] dismantling prejudices and turning the adult-centric world upside down to see the child from a very young age as a builder of children's cultures, contributing to the construction of social reality" (Mello; Barbosa; Faria, 2021, our translation).

Mediation of reading for children

Aline Bruniczac (2022) refers to Antônio Cândido (2011) and Yolanda Reyes (2012) to understand the dive into the fiction and poetry universe as a human need, essential to humanization and social balance.

Therefore, based on Cândido's (2011) statements, we reaffirm that just societies presuppose respect for the enjoyment of art and literature as an inalienable right. Reyes (2012) states that although reading literature does not transform the world, it can make it more livable, because seeing ourselves in perspective and looking inward helps open doors to sensitivity and understanding of ourselves and

others. Furthermore, Bruniczac (2022) reaffirms literature as an indispensable factor in human life and claims its place in school, and especially in Early Childhood Education, “Right there, where so many beginnings of humanity are found, of the being itself, of its creations, of its experiences, of the very contact with more intimate forms of narrating existence” (Bruniczac, 2022, p. 36, our translation).

Fiction, poetry, and dramatic action found in literary works represent possibilities of experiences that organize feelings, question our world views, enrich perceptions by using imagination, and the possibility of placing oneself in the situation described in those works, even in silence (Candido, 2011; Bajour, 2012; Bruniczac, 2022).

According to Bruniczac (2022), reading mediation in early childhood education expands human relationships between adults and children, since teachers’ perceptions are modified and become more sensitive, “[...] understanding all possible universes brought about by literature and the richness of experiences made available to children through it” (Bruniczac, 2022, p. 85, our translation).

For that reason, that researcher defends that the consistent constitution of a mediator teacher occurs upon the combination of their role as a reader of several literary genres, being aware of how much of oneself exists in interaction at the moment of reading. Having meetings with literature and multiple experiences with reading is what, firstly, will inspire the mediation act. Next, being aware of the experiences lived in one’s own childhood, the baggage that transformed them and that will be revisited while mediating, leads teachers to “[...] create bridges, not only thinking about crossing, but also about linking, between teaching and mediation” (Bruniczac, 2022, p. 16, our translation).

Therefore, the children’s role in mediation, from the meeting between text and child, is established in relation to what Kivia Faria (2014) states has been happening since the 1960s due to the new ways of understanding literary reading, which grant status to the reader’s perspective, rather than only understanding literary works from the author’s perspective.

Gradually, literature analyses start to be concerned with the interaction between the work and the receiver, considering the communication dynamics, the possibilities of interpretation and construction of meanings at the different extremes, that is, art, author, aesthetics and reader.

In such context, when considering text/reader interactions, they start to be highly relevant in the mediation of reading to the children’s understanding of their own meanings, and processes of resignification of texts by them, as co-authors and co-producers that inaugurate new understandings. With this focus, the reinvention of narratives by children is valued as well as their playful creations originated in fables, cracks and gaps that children find in histories and complete with other indeterminate facts, never concerned with certainties (Faria, 2014).

Which readings are provoked by the image-book?

We understand that children have access to a wide variety of images in several environments, which contribute to their cultural, artistic and cognitive development. Images are seen in public environments such as streets, parks, supermarkets, stores, and malls, in domestic and virtual environments, in daycare facilities, and preschools. One fact sometimes neglected is that contact, even if superficial, with diverse types of images plays a relevant role in the interpretation and creation of meanings to things by children. Taking that into account, the National Common Curriculum Base – BNCC (Brasil, 2018) refers to how important it is for children to develop aesthetic and critical skills, knowledge about themselves, the others, and the reality around them, which occurs through languages, and the visual language is one of them. The document points out children's right to the appropriation of cultures, broadening of repertoire and exercising reading and interpretation of visual elements that are inserted in their contexts, not only through written texts, but also through images. In Alba Lessa's (2023, p. 31, our translation) view, "[...] the school is the entrance door for visual literacy".

Therefore, one of the tasks of early childhood education is to promote visual literacy, which can be carried out in a playful and artistic way, by means of picture books while objects of contemporary arts. The teaching job developed with literature in Early Childhood Education, both by telling stories and by reading mediation practices, can be highly enriched by providing meetings with picture books or illustrated books.

A picture book is a work where words can appear at specific points in the narrative, but images are protagonist. The word appears in the book title, in the back cover data, in the catalog card, the author's and illustrator's names, and depending on the origin of the work, it might also have the translator's name and the publisher's identification. According to Lessa, the configuration of a book whose plot is told by means of images provokes curiosity about how the mediation should be carried out, how to introduce the book to the children and the kind of reception it will have from them. That researcher points out, "From the clues, we can understand and carry out the reading of plastic elements that tell the story. Each book's graphic project and format present a different proposal and require from the children and the mediator adult singular ways of feeling the narrative" (Lessa, 2023, p. 13, our translation).

When addressing the Triangular Approach in art teaching, Ana Mae Barbosa (2022) explains that the dimension of image reading, alongside doing and contextualizing, aims at developing children's perception and imagination to capture the reality around them, the criticism to analyze images, objects, and the perceived reality, as well as stimulate creative action, "[...] not only to materialize what was imagined, but also to respond in a suitable way to the reality perceived and analyzed either changing it

or transforming it” (Barbosa, 2022, p. 2, our translation).

It seems relevant to emphasize that for that author, reading as cultural identification, need for recognition of oneself and construction of reality, must be the center of education. Therefore, she states that reading cannot be only developed by words, but also “[...] reading of gestures, actions, needs, desires, expectations, images and objects” (Barbosa, 2022, p. 2, our translation).

Researcher Celia Abicalil Belmiro (2014) explains that the picture book is a genre, as well as a way to operate fictional reality, which does not mean a collection of images in a book, as in a photo album or exhibition catalogue. In the context of children’s literature, adult individuals are included as possible readers, exploring visual resources and particular characteristics of images, sometimes in the presence of verbal resources.

Belmiro (2014, n.p, our translation) states that picture books:

Constitute a visual narrative approximating two basic conditions for its realization: the time dimension (linear sequence of images) and the spatial dimension (the spatial organization logic of elements that make up the images). The possibility of a picture book telling a story, penetrating in the world of enchantment, makes real time and that of magic coexist, for example, on the same page, being able to alter the time and space logic, all that only using images.

When questioning whether every book that contains illustrations can be considered a picture book, Moraes (2019) explains that the picture book is a contemporary narrative form that would be, as understood by most scholars of the subject since the 1980s, not simply a book that contains words and images simultaneously, but rather one that has its own way of ordering them, achieving the effects of a hybrid narrative, based on two different codes that, in addition to constituting a specific territory of language, requires a different stance from the reader/viewer. It contains invitations to other modes of reading.

According to Moraes (2019, p. 18, our translation), the Illustrated book has “[...] double orientation, that is, the possibility of saying different things with images and with words by the simple difference of each of these languages”.

At the same time, if image reading represents the construction of knowledge, art becomes not only a source of delight but also a basis for the exercise of cultural and social criticism (Barbosa, 2022). Picture books can be a powerful means of awakening the senses in early childhood education and fostering learning. After all, as Moraes (2019) points out, this type of book, which originated within the world of children and is recognized and studied for the complexity hidden behind apparent simplicity, enables the exploration of the language of imagery, with its mysteries and ambiguities.

Belmiro (2014) emphasizes that imagery (colors, lines, volumes) emphasizes the narrative and will be read. However, she asserts that this reading does not need to be simplified, since the image is

not merely descriptive, tied to the external reality of the objects' existence. That author asserts that it is semantically enriched to provide reading conditions with time for reflection, a space for the maturation of meanings, and relies on the reader's "reading ability". Similarly, Ana Mae Barbosa (2022) emphasizes that reading images is not merely reading formal aspects in terms of line, color, space, etc., but rather an interpretative, critical, and contextualizing reading from a social perspective.

According to Moraes (2019), in Illustrated books, words can even leave the scene and let everything else occur in silence, with images that are narrated, as protagonists. Inspired by this idea, the picture book is seen as a powerful way of visual communication, which might provide young children with possibilities of reading its materiality, the characters, the scenes, the narratives, which can be recreated by children's inventiveness. Time and space are made available to children so that they can complement the work, with their creative reading since due to the features of this type of work, "[...] picture books are an invitation to a kind of authorship" (Ramos, 2011, p.109, our translation).

Reading and playing with "Bárbaro"

The mediation experience for the book "Bárbaro" by Renato Moriconi (2013) took place in a corner beyond the park, a very pleasant place conducive to mediating the book as a subject for children. It is a quieter space, where it is possible to enjoy the birdsong amidst two large trees that welcome children in their generous shade. There is a green garden with purple flowers and two low walls for children to sit on. This place became so beloved by the children for their experiences with books that they decided to call it the book corner.

The teacher begins the activity by inviting the children. The first invitation is in the form of a catchphrase, a practice that is part of her art as a storyteller: come and spark your imagination with the power, super, hyper, mega, Master, plus, advanced, power! The second invitation, also related to activating the imagination and creativity, is for them to play literary detectives - that is, to seek clues in the story, paying close attention to every detail of the book, including the sequence of the visual narrative.

In the mediation process, the next step for the teacher is to introduce the children to the name of the book, seeking to spark their curiosity and interest in the work. Upon learning that the book's title is "Bárbaro", the children became curious and expressed a desire to share their opinions. With this in mind, the teacher has already initiated the intentional act of listening. Mediator-teachers who practice listening change the course of children's relationship with textual and visual narratives.

Therefore, from the very beginning of the mediation, it is important to listen to what those children want to express.

Cecília Bajour (2009, 2012) reinforces how listening has a great value in the teaching relationship with the link between teachers and children in diverse reading practices. For that author, listening and reading are linked to the desire and availability to receive and value the words of other people in their complexity, that is, not only what is expected, what is soothing or in agreement with our feelings. It goes beyond that to reach what challenges us and deviates from the different world interpretations. She also asserts that “[...] when we listen to the unique way children name the world, we put our interpretive fibers in a healthy tension, attitude that might be interesting and productive if seen in the perspective of possibility and trust rather than deficit or need” (Bajour, 2009, p. 55, our translation).⁶

Next, the dialogues with the participating children start once their interest in the book title is noticed, even before starting the reading, the teacher asks: “What kind of story is in this book?”

Child A – I think there is a beard.

Child B – Aaaaaah! I think he has a giant beard that goes up to the sky.

Child C – I think the book has a moustache.

Child D – A very high beard that gets to God.

Child E – A reaaaaaallyy big beard.

Child F – I think the book has beard and moustache.

Child G – It might be a small beard.

Child H - Hummm it must be a big beard.

Child A – It is really a beard.

Child G- The small Beard might be white.

Next, the mediator-teacher shows the book cover, describes the image and ask the children a question: “After seeing the cover, which story do you think he book tells?”

Child C – I think the book is about horses.

Child D – It seems that the king rescued the princess from a monster.

Child E – I think the princes saved the king.

Child A – I think this horse belongs to a king who saved a person.

Child L - O príncipe que tem cavalos.

Child B – I think that the prince saved the little mermaid.

Child N – The horse saves the princess and the prince.

Child M – Horses.

Based on these two questions, the teacher continues her mediation, encouraging the children to observe the shape, size, materiality, and colors that compose it. The work tells the adventure of a

⁶ Translated by the authors from the original “*Cuando escuchamos la manera singular en que los niños nombran el mundo ponemos en saludable tensión nuestras fibras interpretativas, actitud que puede ser muy interesante y productiva si se la mira desde la posibilidad y la confianza y no del déficit o la carencia*”.

knight who faces many adversities, such as fire, heights, carnivorous plants, one-eyed monsters, and frightening beings. The teacher uses body movements. According to Bajour, “[...] listening extends not only to what is expressed in words, but also to the signs conveyed by eloquent gestures. Listening also involves reading what the body says.” (Bajour, 2012, p.44, our translation).

The teacher moves the book up and down in a playful way, following the rhythm of the book's image: if the character is high, they climb up the wall; if they are low, they climb down. This back-and-forth movement of the teacher, who plays with the book's image, was a silent invitation that the children quickly accepted and followed with their gazes.

The mediation generated attention. The children pay attention to the details that make up the visual scene and talk about being literary detectives, tasked with finding clues in the book. Curious eyes watch the movement of each page, and spontaneous conversations occur, expressing their feelings, describing how the work affects them, and asking about countless things the visual narrative might signal. Different perspectives on image narrative emerge.

Child F – I see a man and a horse, but I want to say that I saw a little train on the cover.

Child B – The man is on one page and the horse on the other.

Child C – Because the background is all white.

Child D – There is a horse that seems to be carrying a rug.

Child E – The horse's hair is black.

Child O – The rug is yellow and green.

Child P – Is the horse sad?

Child C – The man has a shield.

Child Q- He has a sword too.

Child H – It is a cliff.

Child I – For me it is a cobweb.

Child K – I think it is a statue.

Child D – These are mountains!

Child F – Because there is this part in white.

Child D – Is this tall grass?

Child A – He wears a skirt!

Child B – And boots with shoelaces.

One child questioned where the knight and horse were going and also noticed that the knight was carrying a shield. Another child was intrigued by the protagonist's head and asked if he wore a ponytail. Some responded that it was a helmet, collectively constructing a visual narrative based on their perspectives. In the scene of the knight jumping from one mountain to another, one boy thought the image depicted a deep valley and, after observing it in greater detail, concluded that it was a skate park. A girl claimed it was a cliff, and another boy added that it was a giant statue. As they turned the page, some children shouted: “those are evil birds”, “those are alien eagles”, “that is an eagle with an open blue beak”, “that is a heart”. The next page turned, and one boy described snakes with their

hands opening and closing, while another considered that the snake in the corner of the page looked like a “little dinosaur”.

The discussion grew and became another collective narrative, which said there was a magic woman on the cloud that send electrical rays through her hands, and that was a “little power” coming out of her hands just like the smoke in a barbecue place. Then a child asked: “Why Renato Moricone left so much white space?”

At this point, a pause occurred, and then a storm of ideas and dialogue began among the children. They understood that the illustrator forgot to illustrate; that he must have been tired, which was why there were so many uncolored pages; that if he was tired, he should just rest and continue the next day; that he did not color all the pages because he was getting his beauty sleep, brushing his teeth, and forgot; that he fell asleep and when he woke up, he could not remember how to color; that he left the pages blank because he was lazy. They also hypothesized that the pencil tips fell off and he did not have a sharpener. At the end of the book, amidst the suspense of who the large hands in the image were, many opinions arose: could it be the father, a giant, Renato Moriconi, a grandfather, the “Christ the Reinventer”. The outcome was surprising and caused a stir and surprise among the children.

Through the mediation of the book “Barbaro” and the children’s stories, it was possible to observe the importance of having experience with picture books in order to practice visual literacy alongside a mediator who guides, provokes, instigates curiosity, and encourages detailed observation of the image narrative. This process of literary development fosters their autonomy and creativity as readers.

According to Alberto Manguel (2001) the importance of image in society appears

When we read images - of any kind, whether painted, sculpted, photographed, constructed, or staged - we ascribe them the temporal character of narrative. We expand what is limited by a frame into a before and after, and through the art of storytelling (whether of love or hate), we grant the image an infinite and inexhaustible life (Manguel, 2001, p. 27, our translation).

After the mediation, the children were invited to play, inspired by the teacher’s invitation to “warm their imagination and their hearts”. Desire and pleasure, which are inherent in the literary experience, can lead to play. The dramatic games that emerged included running like warriors; riding on the swings as if they were barbarian horses in combat; and building swords and shields with various objects available in the outdoor space. One child swung with her eyes closed, rubbing her hands together, seemingly immersed in a barbarian adventure, while another worried about finding holes in the path and whether her horse would be able to jump. One child said to another, “Help! I can’t find

my horse!” And others pretended to ride, focused on their adventures. Another group of children pretended to escape snakes; two boys, imagining themselves as barbarians, commented that they were worried about rain; and some girls dodged carnivorous plants. The park became a space of battle and adventure for the little barbarians.

To finish the moment of literary play with “Bárbaro”, the teacher proposed a workshop to build carousels, with different types of paper, glue, scissors, colorful pencils and paint, so that the children created horses, inspired by the story of the brave knight that left in a dangerous journey on horseback and played creating their own stories. The children that were involved in the process of building the carousel named the horses and created new narratives while cutting and painting.

The time the child experiences the picture book from the conversations, provide sharing that expand their experience into playing, strengthening their imagination that was nurtured by the image narrative.

According to Aline Pereira and Rosângela Gabriel (2018):

The possibility of going beyond images, words and the situations described [...] evokes, from the book reading, other situations that are not in the book, but which are related to it [...] In addition, reading enables us to experience, transmit, and talk about what we feel and listen to what the others feel, as well as expand imagination, emotions, and experience other situations and other contexts, both real and imaginary (Pereira; Gabriel, 2018, p. 163).

This experiment with picture books and playful activities aimed to observe whether the children would promote possibilities for co-authorship and their own readings. Adriana Friedmann (2020, p. 90, our translation) asks: “[...] what can a book provoke in the reader? Is it alone capable of creating experiences? And, what else can we do from the reading experience?”

By carrying out this experience with the mediation of reading images in connection with playing, it was possible to observe that the picture book opens up a universe of imagination that raises all sorts of themes, which, according to the author, “[...] can support children in their emotions, curiosities and lead them to explore unknown dimensions” (Friedmann, 2020, p.90, our translation).

Reading a picture book aims, among other things, to provide varied experiences with the book and its images as a way to awaken and stimulate children’s imagination, both individually and in collective playing. This enhances the possibility of reinterpreting the world, its knowledge, new meanings to what has been given, and children’s perspective.

It was also possible to observe that the children were interested in the teacher’s action of reading the book title and telling who wrote/illustrated it. The teacher shared a curious fact about the author’s biography and showed his photo, a practice that fostered a connection between the children and the book, which generated conversations related to the author and created a connection between

the children and the artistic object. The children expressed that Roger Mello is cool because he made a fun book; another child reported that the illustrator intrigued him during the book image reading.

Playing with “Selvagem”

The book *Selvagem* by Roger Mello (2010) is an invitation to the materiality of the vibrant colors of the cover, the variety of grey shades in the composition of the narrative and the movement of coming and going of the characters. Mello's illustrations are marked by bright colors and traces that provoke imagination. It is a kind of visual narrative that surprises readers with changes of perspective of scenes since there is a photo frame from where a tiger comes out and where a man goes in, turning the work into something provoking to be seen from different angles and have different endings created by the children.

The first mediation took place in an open space, covered with trees and a green wall and small purple flowers in the background. The children sang folk songs and sat on the wall to participate. The teacher suggested playing literary detectives, to playfully engage their attentive and meticulous eyes to the work.

The children engaged in the literary game from the very beginning of the mediation process, which quickly sparked lively conversations.

Child L: What is this thing holding the lamp?

Child B – It is only grey.

Child C – Doesn't it have words?

Child E – The man's head is small...

Child F – is it a person or a monkey holding the lamp?

Child B – There are drawings, but they are mostly grey.

Child D – Yes, dark and light grey!

Child E – The tiger is in the photo.

Child B – Only the tiger is colorful.

After the first meeting, two more sessions were held with the same book, as their interest in the work did not fade; on the contrary, they continued to discover new ways of seeing it. According to Marly Amarilha (2001), when experiencing mediation, the child significantly goes through the imaginary process as a receiver, becomes involved in events different from those they are experiencing in real life and, “through this intellectual, emotional, and imaginative involvement, experiences facts, feelings, and reactions of pleasure or frustration” (Amarilha, 2001, p. 19, our translation).

In one of the following moments, in the amphitheater, the children watched the book projected on the screen, with large images, providing a new visual experience. Together, they developed several hypotheses about the story and characters: they discussed who the main character was, who held the

supposed lampshade - which could be a pet monkey, a spy - that the man could be a hunter, and that the tiger had a touch of magic, among other interpretations. In another meeting, each child received the book in their hands, which again sparked curious glances and new interpretations, further enriching their perceptions of the work.

Given the children's deep involvement with the picture book, ways to experience its reinterpretation through playful activities were proposed, which is an essential and powerful way to bring literature closer to children's worlds. The teacher suggested a workshop on creating picture frames, a significant object in the visual narrative of the book "*Selvagem*". Throughout the story, the picture frame appears several times in different positions: one moment, the tiger is in the framed photo, but soon leaves it and the frame, as if coming to life; in another, the man initially in the scene ends up inside the frame. These visual transformations inspired the children to explore the narrative with creativity and engagement.

From reading the book's visual narrative, the initial idea emerged to play with explorations of movement, entering and exiting environments and large objects, and going from inside to outside and back again. Next, they were provided with orange and black paper (as in the book) so the children could incorporate this movement into their creations in the picture frame, using cutting, collage, drawing, and painting. They learned to glue a strip of paper to the figures of the characters they created, allowing them to move back and forth within the frame. Interestingly, they all chose to create a tiger, which in the book initially appears inside the frame and later comes out freely.

Considerations

Regarding the scientific production raised and analyzed based on the theme of reading mediation with picture books, we identified, in most of the research found, that the importance of reading images is highlighted among the pedagogical possibilities of reading development for young children, with a view to expanding perceptions, understanding the meaning of things and critically think about the image texts that make up everyday life.

After analyzing the artistic-pedagogical experiences, we found out that the mediation carried out by teachers working in early childhood education with picture books can have a significant impact on children's general reading development, as well as enable the creation of inventive paths authored by them. The episodes demonstrate that children's narratives do not need to prioritize rational logic but rather express their corporeality through playing. This pedagogical action aims to promote creative thinking and the appreciation of different opinions, which teaches a love of exploring other points of view and then returning to one's own. It is an exercise established through the movements of listening

to the story, thinking, expressing one's ideas, listening to other children, reflecting on the ideas of others, ensuring a process of questioning, creation, and play, fostered by the story and the book.

The reflections developed reveal that mediation with picture books, as a cultural, artistic, playful, and pedagogical activity, has aspects that should be improved when the case study is conducted next year in a public preschool. One of the aspects that will be considered is the appreciation of the ethnic, regional, and gender diversity of the authors selected for the mediations.

Another important aspect being studied is how teachers can better align their practices with the guidelines mentioned by Stambak (2021), which is that the mediation approach should be playful, with the body in a state of play, rather than predominantly "directive", allowing each child to speak when they wish and answer questions if they feel confident. Stambak calls "undirected presence" a type of attention focused on the children's actions, expressing interest in their speech and achievements, but allowing them greater freedom to mobilize, through play and imagination, an authorial attribution of meaning to the readings. Furthermore, a more extended time is considered, allowing for greater peer exchange, as well as allowing children to take a leading role in proposing playful experiences.

It is essential that teachers aim to make books accessible to children through careful curation that values ethnic, regional, and gender diversity. Considering this diversity when choosing picture books for preschool helps ensure that all children can see themselves represented and explore different perspectives. Furthermore, the literary universe should be presented in a respectful, affectionate, and playful way, promoting attentive listening during mediation. This listening, according to Bajour (2012), should be nourished by reading and knowledge about world-building through words and images, so that children develop the everyday art of talking about books. This integrated way of reading and playing creates space in the school routine for enchantment, for reading images, and for the spontaneous reflections that arise from children themselves, thus strengthening their reading, artistic, and playful development.

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