Literacy teacher education and portuguese language pedagogy: discoursive agency in Magda Soares work*[1]

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Abstract

The conceptual framework of letramento (sociocultural literacy practices) emerged in Brazilian academic discourse during the 1990s. In this context, Magda Soares' research and studies have gained notoriety for consolidating discursive strands, for reworking conceptions and concepts relating to basic literacy and functional literacy, as well as for promoting training actions for education professionals. With this in mind, this text aims to reflect on Magda Soares' perceptions about the training of literacy teachers and the teaching of the Portuguese language, within the scope of teaching action. To this end, it takes the theoretical and methodological perspective of Jean Bronckart's Sociodiscursive Interactionism, which guides the reflexive analysis of the concept of language, basic literacy and functional literacy, in order to give visibility to the discourses produced around the theme, in view of the repercussions of these concepts both in teacher training and in the context of reading and writing practices, specifically in literacy. The research is based on Mikhail Bakhtin and Valentin Volochinov's enunciative-discursive approach to language and Jean Bronckart's concept of acting in discourses. Based on the theme of meaning, three perceptions were identified that guided the speeches: the school and the social context, the delimitation of the concept of functional literacy and the discussion about the literacy teacher. These perceptions are guided by responsive action, in which acting through discourse becomes the central axis in Magda Soares' academic production.

Keywords

Language. Basic Literacy. Functional Literacy. Literacy Education. Discourse agency.

Introduction

The language that disobeys and is disobeyed: placing ourselves outside of ourselves, in this desolate existence, in this gap – sonorous and silent – that opens the possibility for the production of a meaning.
Carlos Skliar (2014, p. 17).

By considering language as a constitutive part of human action and formation, one enters into the complexity of discourses as verbal interaction (Bakhtin, 2003; Bakhtin and Volochinov, 2006), in order to transit between the writings of the professor and researcher from Minas Gerais, Magda Soares[3] (1932-2023), which, in various academic productions, give visibility to the ways of understanding language itself. In view of this, it is based on the premise of writing as an activity, as a way of acting concretely with and on discourses (Bronckart, 2008), in an act of disobedience to social, cultural and political impositions around literacy, in an act of "placing oneself outside ourselves", according to the epigraph, which opens a "gap – sound or silent –" to act in the dynamics of formative actions.

Over six decades of prolific scholarship, Magda Soares (1932-2023) left a legacy of research materialized in works, book chapters, scientific articles, lectures, interviews, among others, with a strong impact on the teaching of the Portuguese language, with an emphasis on literacy. Studies such as those of Maciel and Rocha (2023)[4] seek to inventory and understand the contribution of Magda Soares' productions to education; in addition, those of Rocha, Oliveira and Maciel (2023) highlight that the author's academic works, resulting from the Master's and Doctorate advisors, gained greater expressiveness from the 1990s onwards. These researches demonstrate that part of the author's work focuses on language teaching and encompasses discussions about school practices, public policies, historical aspects, teaching performance, professional profile, etc. It is a vast investigative production that "[...] demonstrates not only Soares' unique ability to guide, but also his relevant role in the direct and indirect production of knowledge on issues related to language teaching" (Rocha; Oliveira; Maciel, 2023, p. 16).

In the face of this vast academic production[5], one can ask: what do the discourses produced by Magda Soares point out in relation to the teaching of the Portuguese language? How does the understanding of the literacy teacher training appear in the author's productions? What perceptions regarding language and pedagogical practices guided your academic productions? In search of answers, this text aims to reflect on Magda Soares' perceptions regarding the training of the literacy teacher and the teaching of the Portuguese language, in the context of teaching action in the midst of the academic discourses produced.

3- "Magda Becker Soares was born in Belo Horizonte on September 7, 1932, where she died on January 1, 2023. She graduated in Neo-Latin Languages from the Faculty of Philosophy of the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG)" (Rocha; Oliveira; Maciel 2023. p. 2).

4- This is an inter-institutional project: "Magda Soares and literacy in Brazil: the state of knowledge", in progress, covering the period 2023-2025, coordinated by Francisca Izabel Pereira Maciel and Juliano Guerra Rocha, within UFMG and UFJF.

5- On the CNPq Lattes Curriculum Platform (http://lattes.cnpq.br/8530550473275266) the update date is: 03/09/2012. In an interview given to Revista Fapesp in 2015, he gave the following academic production data: more than 80 scientific articles, 26 books, he has supervised 62 master's degrees and 10 doctorates" (Soares, 2015).

To this end, the research articulated a reflective analysis, based on the assumptions of Sociodiscursive Interactionism[6] (Bronckart, 2008), from the enunciative theme of the training of the literacy teacher and the teaching of the Portuguese language. It is understood that this study is part of a network of complexity of investigative action, as it works with the theme of signification, marked by a system of signs – dynamic and complex – with the individualized stylistic characteristics of those who produced it. It is considered that the writings are loaded with intentionality, with voices from other discourses, which are demarcated by conditions of production referring to a given social and historical moment, since the "[...] theme is a reaction of consciousness in becoming to being in becoming", as described by Bakhtin and Volochinov (2006, p. 134).

By tracing an investigative path with and about writing, the statements are assumed as the object and source of analysis. This places the research in a dialogical relationship marked by discursive complexity, as the reading of the texts produced is done from the singular perspective of a researcher, in a given social and cultural context, at the same time that it is directed to the understanding of a writing thought and elaborated, by an author, who produces in other social circumstances and in another historical moment. In this way, the interlocution transits between unique perceptions to give intelligibility to words published in different times and spaces.

The productions were selected based on the themes of meaning: the training of the literacy teacher and the teaching of the Portuguese language. Among Magda Soares'[7] many writings, interviews conducted in 2005, 2011, 2012 and 2016, scientific articles (Soares, 1985, 2002, 2004a, 2004b), book chapters (Soares, 2001) and books (Soares, 1986,1998, 2017, 2020) were chosen.

Acting with and through language

The investigative action enters into discourses produced with defined purposes and intentionalities, under which there is no intention of measuring or weighing particularized values, but rather of approximating ways of seeing, perceiving or describing conceptions and propositions on a given theme in common, put into circulation situated in a given time and space, in which "[...] language is a producer of objects of meaning" (Bronckart, 2008, p.71).

Soares' discourses function as meaning-making constructs, comprising intentionally crafted statements that reject ideological neutrality. These are texts produced with the demarcation of a theoretical, conceptual and methodological field on the teaching of the Portuguese language, specifically literacy, which establish a direct relationship with its reader. Thus, an academic production cannot be considered neutral or indifferent to social

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6- The term Sociodiscursive Interactionism (SDI), created by Bronckart, to name a field of theorizing about the conditions of human development, based on the studies and conceptions of Spinoza, Marx, Vygotsky and Bakhtin. The ISD approach considers the context of the subject's historicity, in terms of the conditions in which they develop, particular ways of organizing themselves in society and semiotic interaction, focusing on the process of human formation or constitution (Francisco; Goulart; Ferreira, 2020).

7- Magda Soares' academic productions include: academic-scientific books; articles in educational journals, newspapers and websites; texts in event proceedings; dictionary entries; prefaces and presentations; textbooks for teaching Portuguese and literacy. The authors present an overview of intellectual production, distributed by decades of publication, between 1958 and 2008 (Mortatti; Oliveira, 2011).

reality, since "[...] the work establishes links with the total content of the consciousness of the receiving individuals and is only apprehended in the context of this consciousness that is contemporary with it" (Bakhtin; Volochinov, 2006, p. 123). This is because the organizing center of the utterance does not come from within the subject of the discourse, but from its exterior, that is, it is supported by the social environment, due to the fact that the "[...] enunciation as such is a pure product of social interaction", which reveals in its structure a social nature, in which the stylistic elaboration, the choice, the organization and the delimitation of words trigger the "social phenomenon of interaction", Bakhtin and Volochinov (2006, p. 126-127) clarify.

From this perspective, it is understood that, by assuming the statements of the works as an object of study, this research is close to both an individualized discourse and the relationship with other previously produced discourses, because "[...] each utterance is a link in the complexly organized chain of other utterances" (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 272).

An academic production is constituted from dialogical relations. The discourse moves in a network of interlocution between already produced utterances. For this reason, a production brings in the expression of speech, in the case of writing, rather a joint construction, which cannot be considered a solitary action, since every speaker – writer – includes in his language project words, expressions, conceptions of other authors, as well as a possible prediction of the reaction of his interlocutor.

In this case, it is understood that the books, chapters, scientific articles, interviews, among other texts produced by Magda Soares, become dialogical spaces, which require or allow the interlocutor to act responsively in front of the writings, which incite a position, "[...] available for the response of the other (of others), for their active responsive understanding, which can take different forms: educational influence on readers, on their convictions, critical responses, influence on followers and continuators" (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 279).

The texts selected here, in addition to being full of "dialogical tonalities" and promoting a "responsive understanding" in the interlocutor, are constituted from the theme, which, according to Bakhtin and Volochinov (2006, p. 133), is "individual and not repeatable". The meaning of enunciation, on the contrary, "[...] can be analyzed in a set of meanings linked to the linguistic elements that compose it" (p. 134).

The written word becomes a common territory in which author and reader transit, and the reader is not passive or silenced in front of the text, but rather full of inner words, which demonstrate a mental activity, called by Bakhtin and Volochinov (2006, p. 154) as "perceptual background", so that "[...] in the framework of inner discourse that the apprehension of another's enunciation, its comprehension and appreciation, that is, the active orientation of the speaker, is effected".

In this sense, the theoretical discussion of language as a process of verbal interaction is close to the approach proposed by Bronckart (2008), who brings the notion of language as a discourse activity. The conception of language is outlined as an active and creative process under two strands: one that conceives that language is a producer of objects of meaning, which also constitutes "[...] the representative units of thought", another understands that "[...] to the extent that language is a social activity, the thought to which it gives rise is also, necessarily, semiotic and social" (p. 71).

Regarding the notion of acting through discourse, Bronckart (2006; 2008) presents a general conceptual framework. To this end, the author points out two aspects to be considered: the first concerns non-verbal action, called general (praxiological) action, related to general activities, from the angles of collective activities (cooperation/collaboration frameworks that organize the relations between individuals and the environment) and action (referring to the relations between singular individuals). The second refers to verbal action called "language action" (understood from the angle of language activity, whose responsibility is conferred on singular individuals), as Bronckart (2006) asserts.

Similarly to the studies of Francisco, Goulart and Ferreira (2020), it is understood that the constructed texts, whether verbal or non-verbal, provide us with subsidies for a better understanding of the discourse produced on Portuguese language teaching. These are discourses that often demarcate concerns in relation to the teaching practice or even demonstrate the reasons for pedagogical practices related to the use of language and language in a given learning context. In addition, such discourses can indicate ways of understanding the nature of the discursive aspects intrinsic to the conceptions of teaching, teaching and learning. Such a perspective mobilizes the entry into the academic production of Magda Soares, especially with regard to the theme of the Portuguese language and the training of the literacy teacher.

Perceptions that intersperse the discourses on the teaching of the Portuguese language and the formation of the literacy teacher

For a better organization of the themes of signification, we opted for the theoretical assumptions that constitute the model of discursive textual analysis developed by the ISD (Bronckart, 1999, 2006, 2008). In this way, texts are the object of analysis, in which the thematic content establishes a relationship, directly or indirectly, with the author, with the readers, with the place and/or moment of production, "accessible to the coordinates of the language action" (Striquer, 2014, p. 317). In this sense, the investigative path was redesigned at different times, based on the verification of the representations constructed in different academic productions.

The methodological procedure was divided into two moments, in which, initially, the themes of meaning were identified: literacy teacher training and teaching of the Portuguese language, among Magda Soares' many writings. Under this direction, interviews conducted in the years 2005, 2011, 2012 and 2016, scientific articles (Soares, 1985, 2002, 2004a, 2004b), book chapters (Soares, 2001) and books (Soares, 1986, 1998, 2017, 2020) were gathered.

Consequently, it was verified which perceptions regarding the teaching of the Portuguese language and the training of the literacy teacher permeated the selected texts, which led to a careful and questioning reading based on the "socio-subjective" context (Bronckart, 1999).

By considering texts as products of human activity, it is understood that there is a relationship with the needs, desires, expectations and conditions of functioning of social actions (Bronckart, 1999). In view of this, the analysis was guided based on the representations, or rather, on the perceptions about the social place in which the texts are produced and circulate, on the social position of the producers, as well as on the objective or intended effect of the text on the recipient (Francisco; Goulart; Ferreira, 2020). This approach made it possible to define perceptual axes for a better understanding of acting through discourse.

From this perspective of the themes of signification, three perceptual axes were identified that guided the discourses analyzed, grouped as follows: *the school and the social context; the demarcation of the concept of literacy and the discussion about the literacy teacher*, which will be explained below.

The school and the social context

At the end of the twentieth century, the discussion about methods gave way to the discussion about the concepts of literacy and literacy, with an emphasis on the process of knowledge construction (Frade, 2005). As a result, there was a change in the discursive aspect in relation to the didactics of literacy, that is, the discussions began to question how it teaches how to read and write from the perspective of how such practices are learned, which directly led to a rethinking of pedagogical actions and interventions. A discourse that redirected the theoretical and methodological bases of literacy, shifting the gaze centered on how to teach to understand the process of writing acquisition (Ferreiro; Teberosky, 1985; Ferreiro, 2001).

Soares (2004b, p. 98) considers that the 1980s were a differential milestone for discussions on literacy in Brazil, as:

> In the 1980s, the psychogenetic perspective of written language learning, disseminated among us, especially by the work and formative work of Emilia Ferreiro, under the name of "constructivism", brought about a significant change in assumptions and objectives in the area of literacy, because it fundamentally altered the conception of the learning process and erased the distinction between learning from the writing system and effective reading and writing practices.

In this period, academic discussions on the process of teaching and learning written language, in the field of psycholinguistics, highlight the child's cognitive processes based on studies on the psychogenesis of written language (Ferreiro; Teberosky, 1985). This theoretical approach suggests a discourse directed to the acquisition of language as a process, in which the child is seen as a thinking and acting subject, who builds knowledge about writing.

To a paradigmatic and theoretical shift, now with a focus on *constructivism*[8], "[...] allowed us to identify and explain the process through which the child constructs the concept of written language as a system of representation of speech sounds by graphic

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8- "Historically, the theoretical foundations that support 'constructivist' pedagogical approaches were structured in the first decades of the 20th century, represented by the Genetic Epistemology of the Swiss Jean Piaget and the Socio-historical Psychology of the Soviets Vygotsky, Luria and Leontiev" (Bregunci, 2014, p. 73).

signs" (Soares, 2024b, p. 98), which required an interaction that favored the direct and diverse relationship with the reading materials, for the consolidation of the process of conceptualization of the written language.

However, overweight fell on the cognitive process to the detriment of pedagogical action, which led to "[...] absence of direct, explicit and systematic teaching of the transfer of the sound chain of speech to the graphic form of writing that has motivated the criticisms that are currently being made of constructivism" (Soares, 2024b, p.98).

This perception mobilized discourses that problematized the issue of the social use of reading and writing (Soares, 1985; 2004a, 2004b). The research of Soares (1986), guided by the social perspective of language, directs studies related to sociolinguistics[9]. In this work, the author brings a critical reflection on what could explain school failure, based on different perspectives. It also emphasizes the vision of a transformative school, which aims to "[...] to guarantee to the popular classes the acquisition of knowledge and skills that equip them to participate in the process of social transformation" (Soares, 1989, p.73). Such discourses are shown in dialogue with other authors, such as Freire (1989, p.42) who defends a liberating education, in which "All Peoples have culture, because they work, because they transform the world and, by transforming it, they transform themselves".

Soares (1989) emphasizes the relationship between school and society, in which the teaching of the Portuguese language can be committed to the fight against social inequalities, for this the author defends an articulation between knowledge produced in different fields (Linguistics and Sociolinguistics; Sociology and Sociology/ Philosophy of Language; Psychology and Psycholinguistics). This interrelationship between different theoretical perspectives, which underlies the teaching of the mother tongue, is supported both by the methodological perspective and by the political and ideological perspective of the discussions that encompass education as a process of social transformation.

> When theories about the relations between language and social class are chosen to support and guide pedagogical practice, the option that is being made is not only a technical option, in search of a competence that fights against failure in school, which, in fact, is the failure of the school, but is, above all, a political option. which expresses a commitment to the fight against social inequalities (Soares, 1989, p. 79, emphasis in the original text).

The writings of Soares (1989) point to a concern with the school and the social context, a strand that accompanied the author's academic production, which motivated her, later in her career, to voluntarily dedicate herself to training actions of the *Alfaletrar Project*[10] (a literacy initiative in Lagoa Santa, Minas Gerais, Brazil), from 2007. In this excerpt of the interview, published in the Jornal Letra A, in 2005, this perception is evident:

9- Soares (1986) provides an annotated bibliography in which he presents the basis of theoretical discussions on sociolinguistics based on works such as: Norbert Dittmar, in *Sociolinguistics*; John Edwards, in *Language and Disadvantage*; Richard Anthony Hudson, in *Sociolinguistics*; Dino Preti, in *Sociolinguistics: the levels of speech*; by Michael Stubbs, in *Language, schools and classrooms*; by Fernando Tarallo, in *Sociolinguistic research*; by Peter Trudgill, in *Accent, dialect and the school and Sociolinguistics: an introduction*.

10- "When the Alfaletrar project began in 2007, the municipality had low literacy rates among its students. Magda had retired from the Federal University of Minas Gerais and wanted to return to school and the public sector. She felt she owed it to society" (Cassiano; Rocha; Goulart, 2023, p.339).

> In my entire academic life (which was not short), I have never been able to disconnect from school, from teachers, from boys who have to learn to read and write. My research has always been focused on this, and my anguish is trying to solve, even a little bit, the problem of the school, of the students' learning, of the teacher who doesn't know what to do to teach literacy... I don't know if, fortunately or unfortunately, I inherited a religious family mark: I was raised as a Methodist Protestant, a doctrine that leaves a very strong concern with social commitment, social responsibility. I can't disconnect from it. The social problem in the case of education calls me so much and impresses me so much that I want to work in schools. All my academic production is of this nature, it is linked to the problem of public schools, of public education in the area of language, particularly.

Such sayings indicate the school as an environment for the realization of language, in a perspective of formative action, which encompasses the political, social and cultural dimension, of active, active subjects and producers of written culture. Thus, his writings reveal an investigative perspective based on practice, committed to a transformative education, which starts from the collectivity to the singularity, in which the "[...] the most immediate social situation and the broader social environment completely determine, so to speak, from within itself, the structure of the enunciation" (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 117).

A vision that finds in the creative art of writing the conceptual resignification of school and educational practice, based on the formative work of more than 15 years in the municipal school network of Lagoa Santa, the result was the production of the work Alfaletrar: todo criança pode aprender a ler e a escrita. In relation to this work, Soares (2020, p. 322) states: "[...] after this long and enriching involvement in the reality of teachers guiding children in the process of literacy and literacy in public schools, I feel that I have been fulfilling the warning of my master Paulo Freire". Perhaps Freire's warning (2000, p. 17) inspired Soares to say: "[...] I am not in the world to simply adapt to it, but to transform it."

The demarcation of the concept of literacy

From an ethnographic field research in an Iranian village, Street (1984) recognized that there was a range of social practices in people's daily lives that involved the use of written language that he called "literacy practices". However, some of these literacy practices were seen as legitimate and recognized, while others were subject to the social, cultural and political ideology that defined what was recognized as the "practice of literacies" or what characterized being literate or not. In view of this, Street (1985) perceives that reading and writing were not social or cultural practices that occurred in certain social and cultural contexts, but constituted a set of autonomous skills and strategies. Street (1985) calls this perception of literacy practices an "autonomous model" and contrasts it with an "ideological model" of the social use of reading and writing. Street's research (1985) gained international repercussion, which began to be studied by many researchers.

In view of the technological, economic, and political development of society, other demands or needs for the use of reading and writing in social and professional practices

have been generated, with direct repercussions on the school institution – responsible for ensuring the success of such learning. What was at stake was not only to endorse that these learnings would happen, but to develop reading comprehension skills, to produce texts from a wide and varied range of textual genres, that is, from the social uses of the written language.

This was, perhaps, the motto for the need to understand literacy in a broad context, not only as a mechanical act of mastering the linguistic code, but rather as a concrete action of written language, which requires use and social applicability, emerge in academic discourses and, consequently, in the educational community. It is a "social situation in which perception is insinuated" (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 118), to be dissected by the discourse, which determines the themes and modes of organization of the utterances. Such discursive action explores the condition of the subject who dominates and uses the linguistic code in different social contexts, named "literacy" (Soares, 1998), which was initially associated with the term literacy.

In this argumentative context, the studies of Soares (1985; 1998; 2003; 2004a; 2004b; 2017; 2020) stand out in relation to the perspective of literacy with the insertion of the term "literacy". The author presents as a reflexive point the need to include a terminology that signals another perspective of initial learning of the written language, which could not be restricted only to the acquisition of the alphabetic system, as an act of memorization and reproduction of its conventions, but which had as an urgency the insertion of the child in social practices of a literate culture.

The discussions proposed by Soares (1985; 1998; 2003; 2004a; 2004b; 2017; 2020) resize the perspective of reading and writing in schools, which required a rethinking of educational practices, in order to ensure both the process of acquisition of reading (mastery of the reading technique) and the actions of use and social insertion of reading, that is, to ensure that literacy is encouraged. Soares (1998)[11] brings a detailed explanation of the insertion of the word literacy in the context of the Portuguese language, demonstrating the need for a word to name the state or condition of those who use reading and writing, since illiteracy was used to designate those who did not make social use of these activities; however, the word literacy did not have repercussions in its use.

Discussions about "literacy" and literacy are not limited to conceptual issues, but to rethink the way reading and writing are taught in schools. In such an approach, the author argues that literacy requires knowledge of linguistics, psycholinguistics, as well as textual linguistics, in order to take the text and discourse as an object of learning, exploring the cognitive processes of reading and textual production, in the development of skills that would enable understanding and use in the "[...] different personal, social and school situations in which we need or want to read or write different genres and types of texts, in different supports, for different objectives, in interaction with different interlocutors, for different functions" (Soares, 2014, p. 180).

This perspective opened the doors for the entry of discussions about the different textual genres in the classroom. Textbooks began to consider the text under another

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11- Cf. Soares (1998, p. 17) "Certainly, then, we didn't look for the term letramento in the 'letramento' dictionary published by Caldas Aulete, which he considered to be an old, outdated word. Where did we get it? It is undoubtedly the Portuguese version of the English word literacy".

dimension of pedagogical work, now with a broader reading proposal, with actions that should explore more elaborate reading comprehension and textual production skills. The activities of reading and writing came to be seen and recognized as forms of language expression, which motivated Magda Soares to produce didactic works[12] for the initial and final years of elementary school, with a focus on the text.

The mobilization of discussions on literacy reflects concerns about the method of teaching reading and writing, which is later consolidated in the work *Literacy: the question of methods*, in 2016. Other discursive concerns were directed to the uses and social practices of this learning or to the dimension of the experiences of a written culture, which brought the need to insert a word to express the relations of reading and writing in social practices, called "literacy", defined as a set of knowledge, attitudes and skills, necessary to use the language in social practices (Soares, 1998). So that the subject-reader would be able to make use of reading and writing in real and concrete situations of his daily life. Such discussions were resumed and redefined, conceptually, from the perspective of *Alfaletrar* (Soares, 2020).

The insertion of the concept of literacy has broadened the understanding of literacy. In view of this, the challenge faced by literacy teachers was to reconcile these two processes, in order to ensure the appropriation of the alphabetic writing system and the full condition of use of the language in social practices. The reflection on how to integrate literacy and literacy in the classroom, according to Soares (1998), referred to four components of learning to write: (1) the comprehension and appreciation of writing, (2) the appropriation of the writing system, (3) reading and (4) the production of written text. Reading and writing come to be perceived as socially constructed actions, which involve different processes, so the teacher needs to understand the plurality of action that involves such activities.

Since literacy also requires the appropriation of linguistic knowledge and understanding of the alphabetic writing system, it therefore requires systematized teaching, organized and planned by the teacher. However, when it comes to literacy, it is not possible to prescribe a systematized teaching, but rather it requires clarification, involvement and stimuli of actions for the social use of reading and writing, that is, the child needs to understand why one learns to read and what one learns to write for, and also to understand in which social situations we use these practices. For this, it is important to experience literacy events[13].

Thus, when the teacher has an understanding of this complexity, it is possible to offer pedagogical situations in which literacy and literacy are articulated, both in the work with the text and on it. (Soares, 2020). For this reason, it is necessary that both be contemplated in the process of teaching and learning the written language, through

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12- "In all, Magda has published five collections of textbooks: Portuguese through texts (1967), Communication in the Portuguese Language (1973), New Portuguese through texts (1982), Portuguese through texts - a reformulated collection that was published in the 1980s with the same title as the first edition - and Portuguese: a proposal for literacy (1999)". (Special edition of Jornal Letra A, 2012).

13- "The expression literacy events refers to the most observable elements of activities involving reading and writing, while the concept of literacy practices distances itself from the immediate context in which the events take place, in order to situate and interpret them in institutional and cultural contexts from which the participants attribute meanings to writing and reading, and to the events in which they participate" (Street; Castanheira, 2014, p. 258-259).

pedagogical actions that stimulate distinct aspects and processes, while making them complementary and inseparable (Soares, 1998).

Discussions about this binomial - literacy and literacy - had great discursive repercussions in academic productions (Street, 1984; Kleiman, 1995; 2005; Tfouni, 1995; Rojo, 1998; Soares, 1998; 2003; 2004b; 2017; Mortatti, 2004; Saints; Mendonça, 2007). They were constituted as a dialogical movement around the axis of thematic signification, signaling modes of understanding, in a "combination of many voices", in which "understanding itself is already dialogical" (Bakhtin, 2006, p. 327).

These discussions were dedicated to weaving explanations about the origin of the term, its interdependence with literacy, the school context, and the ways of insertion in educational practice, even though its definition is complex. (Ribeiro, 2023). However, the understanding of what literacy would be and the possibilities of pedagogical work from this perspective still seem obscure and little recognized in contexts of pedagogical practices, or even in guidelines provided in official documents.

The discussion about the literacy teacher

If, on the one hand, the conceptual dimension of literacy has been disseminated in the academic sphere, demarcated by the insertion of the theme in the curricula of initial training and in continuing education programs, on the other hand, its appropriation in the school context, in the implementation of concrete practices by literacy teachers, does not seem to have obtained the intended repercussion (Ramos; Goulart, 2017; Azarias; Goulart; Cabral, 2023; Goulart; Ramos; Cabral, 2023).

This perception dialogues with the studies of Kramer (2010) on the challenges faced by literacy teachers when incorporating the contributions of theoretical studies on the acquisition of writing, establishing a relationship between pedagogical practice and the situations of the children's social context. This is a crucial point to be considered, because, as Goulart (2023, p. 206) questions, "[...] To what extent, in fact, did there be an understanding and implementation of a pedagogical work in literacy based on the perspective of literacy, considering the reality of Brazilian public schools? "In dialogue with the issue of literacy teacher training, Magda Soares' discourses are based on the defense of integration between different theoretical perspectives, as highlighted in her 2005 interview with *Jornal Letra A*:

> I think that even today there is a lack of integration between research on literacy. Each researcher studies a facet of the teaching or learning of the written language, privileging one of the aspects of the process. However, in the classroom, when the child becomes literate, everything happens together, all these aspects are present, simultaneously. What is missing, for pedagogical purposes, is an integration of the results of the different researches that enables their translation into a didactic, teaching performance, capable of guiding the child in his learning. Perhaps the lack of this integration of research results and their translation into a literacy pedagogy is what explains the difficulties we are currently facing in literacy.

The integration between the theoretical perspectives appears in the studies of Soares (1985, p. 23) when he points out that the complexity of literacy could not be reduced to a single theoretical conception, since it encompasses the "[...] psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and linguistic facets, it is necessary to add the social, economic, cultural and political factors that condition it". This discourse brought the author notoriety in the conception of literacy, by arguing that a "[...] coherent theory of literacy will only be possible if the articulation and integration of the various facets of the process is socially and culturally contextualized", ensured by a public policy (Soares, 1985, p. 23).

Although this discourse has echoed for almost four decades, literacy policies still seek an integration or articulation between different theoretical perspectives. In the midst of comings and goings in theoretical discussions, Magda Soares (2012) points out that science does not always reach the apex of its efficiency, since "[...] it is always advancing, and the more it advances, the more it improves, expands and, sometimes, even denies what was being done. Thus, in terms of the transposition of research and theories into practice, there is always a lag". The author ponders that reinventing does not mean going back to actions that have already been overcome, so she proposes "[...] a reflection on the risk of reinventing literacy. Although it really needs to be reinvented and it is necessary to recover its specificity, we cannot go back to what has already been overcome. Change should not be a setback, but an advance" (Soares, 2003, p. 23).

There is a dissonance between theory and practice, which reveal different perceptions and interests, because "On the one hand, there are scientists who are concerned with investigating the literacy process and who, in general, are not in a hurry. On the other hand, there are teachers who are concerned with guiding this process in the daily life of the classroom, and they are in a hurry." In this excerpt from the interview, Soares (2012) points out that the teaching practice acts in circumstances of a different time from the researcher, since the curricular requirements establish the school year as the deadline for literacy.

In this sense, the literacy teacher cannot expect ready-made pedagogical proposals to be followed as prescriptions or instructive manuals, which is evidenced in the excerpt from the Interview, conducted in 2005, *Jornal Letra A*:

> The fundamental issue in Education is to reverse this expectation that the answer to everything lies in a recipe. It is to break with this tradition, of decades, that teacher training is this: to say how to do it. It is to be interested in knowing why and how things happen. It is to convince ourselves that, knowing this, we will know how to act. Above all, we need to abandon the anxiety that leads us to the expectation that we will find a magic formula that will solve all the problems of the classroom, school, education... Solutions are also "built" in the interaction with the objects of knowledge: theory and practice.

To develop a more consolidated and effective literacy practice, the teacher needs to be clear about the conception of language.

> To define her pedagogical action in the direction and orientation of the development of the child's textual skills, the teacher needs to have understood and assumed a conception of language as

Educ. Pesqui., São Paulo, v. 51, e282427, 2025.

12

discourse, of writing as an enunciative activity, needs to have a clear notion of what text is, what textuality is, what coherence, cohesion, informativeness are, needs to know the principles that govern the relationship between author and reader, author-text, reader-text, needs to master the characteristics and peculiarities of the different genres of written text, the requirements of different text carriers (Soares, 2001, p. 72-73).

The dimension of practice needs to be guided by the teacher's understanding of the literacy process itself.

Thus, in order to define her pedagogical action based on the analysis of the child's spontaneous writing, it is necessary for the teacher to know well the relations between the phonological system and the orthographic system, to understand writing as a representation and not as a transcription of the oral language, to be able to identify the linguistic variety spoken by the child and, thus, not only to predict the problems that this child will face, due to the greater or lesser distance between its pronunciation and orthographic conventions, but also to understand these problems and, by understanding them, to know how to discuss them with the child (Soares, 2001, p. 72).

Knowing the process by which the child learns is based on the perception that teacher training needs to be anchored in theoretical knowledge, which will subsidize and direct practical actions, that is, will provide conditions for safe and assertive interventions in the literacy process. When talking about the paths that the literacy teacher should have as a reference, Soares highlights in an interview with Ceale[14], in 2016:

The pedagogical action thus becomes a bit impressionistic, in the sense that what is happening to the child is not seen with a clarity that allows the identification and understanding of the development and learning processes that he is experiencing, in order to be able to guide these processes safely. To have this clarity, the literacy teacher needs to have basic knowledge, on the one hand, of the psychogenesis of written language and the cognitive processes that the learning of written language demands, and this refers to the child's processes; On the other hand, since learning to read and write is to learn the representation of speech by graphic signs, the literacy teacher needs to have basic knowledge of the phonology of the language, of the processes of development of phonological awareness in children, needs to know the phoneme-grapheme relations in the orthography of Brazilian Portuguese, the orthographic norms that govern this orthography, the syllabic structures of this orthography.

Training for working with literacy is outlined by specific knowledge about the acquisition of writing. Soares (2005) considers that the "[...] Literacy teacher has to know the object of learning and also the process by which this object, the written language, is learned. Unfortunately, this knowledge has not yet entered the training of literacy teachers".

14- This is an interview conducted by Poliana Moreira in 2016 with Magda Soares, in which the author is invited to present to the Ceale Portal her recently released book (Soares, 2017), in which she proposes a new look at the issue of literacy methods.

Although initial training courses have mobilized actions to insert notions directed to the specificities of literacy into the curricular matrix, Goulart's studies (2023) demonstrate that most Pedagogy courses at federal universities in Minas Gerais have curricular components that emphasize conceptual and practical aspects related to literacy and literacy, based on the works of Magda Soares. However, this knowledge does not cover the totality of the courses or the complexity that involves the processes of apprehension of reading and writing, because the studies of linguistics and cognitive psychology prioritize the acquisition of writing, without interlocution with sociocultural and discursive studies of language. This distances initial training from the context of educational practices, as "they have not reached teaching, because researchers are concerned with investigating the cognitive process and its object, and rarely turn to the implications that result from it.". In this same interview, the author warns that the responsibility of bridging the gap between research and pedagogical practice is the responsibility of teacher trainers.

In this training path for teaching, there is, on the one hand, conceptual and practical training, which refers to consolidated knowledge and know-how; on the other, the issue of self-identification: the "know-how" (Tardif, 2014). Such perception refers to the acceptance, the recognition of the teaching performance in literacy. It is not enough to know the processes of acquisition of reading and writing; The teacher needs to recognize himself as a literacy teacher and have an affinity and taste for this activity. In the interview given by Soares (2005), the author explains that the research sought to characterize the literacy teacher. The studies showed a variety of training, methods used, pedagogical postures, ages and times of teaching, but there was a common point: the identification with what they did. In the words of Soares (2005), "[...] They all liked to learn to read and write, they liked children, they believed that children were capable of learning, they did their best to make them learn. It is a conclusion that deserves reflection...".

Final considerations

Moving through Magda Soares' discourses was a daring act, because, through her own language, she dared to explore themes, cut out utterances and emphasize certain discourses, in order to understand representations, which "[...] proceed from and come from a certain type of experience of disobedience of language", according to Skliar (2014, p. 17).

Guided by the themes of signification, the study addressed discourses imbricated with perceptions about issues involving school and education, the conception of literacy and the formation of the literacy teacher, allowing an active and responsive understanding. However, it is noteworthy that the meaning was not in the selected words, nor in the one that produced them, but was made effective in the "[...] effect of *the interaction of the speaker and the receiver produced through the material of a given sound complex*" (Bakhtin; Volochinov, 2003, p. 137, emphasis in the original text).

For this reason, the selected excerpts promoted reflections and contributed to the construction of knowledge, by establishing an interaction focused on perceptions around the theme of literacy teacher training and the teaching of the Portuguese language. Such

a cut made it possible to dialogue in the "[...] framing of the other's utterance by the dialogical context" (Bakhtin, 2006, p. 329).

These insights reflect responsive agency, positioning discourse became as the cornerstone of Soares' scholarship. Based on the themes of signification, the excerpts were grouped into perceptual axes that guided the discourses: *the school and the social context; the demarcation of the concept of literacy and the discussion about the literacy teacher*. Thus, discussions about the school and the social context appear as a keynote in Magda Soares' discourses, since the concern with education is linked to the social and political aspects that involve it; which demonstrates an active responsive action in the face of so many other studies and research in the area, there is a positioning through language in which each word becomes the link "[...] in the complexly organized chain of other statements" (Bakhtin, 2023, p. 272).

The discussions on the demarcation of the *concept of literacy* give scientific notoriety to Magda Soares' research, in which the articulation of acting through discourse is effective in a dialogical network with research in the area. Thus, words become "verbalized garments", because "[...] words of others bring with them their expression, their evaluative tone that we assimilate, reelaborate and re-accentuate" (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 294).

In relation to the *discussion about the literacy teacher*, the writings are demarcated by the understanding of teaching, based on a direct relationship with their interlocutor, writings that aim at a real and direct dialogue with the teacher, in which the "consideration of the recipient" occurs (Bakhtin, 2003, p. 302). There is a concern to know and identify these teachers: their work reality, their characteristics and the knowledge necessary to teach more safely, among other aspects. The selected statements point to an action through discourse, since "[...] involves motivational and interactional dimensions furnished at the collective level" (Bronckart, 2008, p. 121).

The writings about the literacy teacher start from the social and political context that constitutes them. In addition to pointing out the limitations and potentialities of the formative dimension, the statements show the perception of a teacher committed to literacy, who needs to know the process of writing acquisition and deserves a more conceptual and effective training. This teacher likes what he does and dedicates himself to teaching in search of a quality education, because, according to Soares (2005), "Nothing is more gratifying in education than teaching a child to read and write".

Thus, more than recognizing that no knowledge, by itself, is formative (Tardif, 2014), and that no theoretical basis can guarantee, in isolation, the effectiveness of teacher training, Magda Soares demonstrates a discursive action by discussing, questioning, problematizing, conceptualizing, describing and analyzing the school reality, with a focus on the teaching of reading and writing. These discourses require a responsive act and a dialogical and reflective positioning, expressed in formative actions that cover both undergraduate and graduate courses and training in context, articulating theoretical and practical dimensions related to literacy.

By conceiving written language as a social activity, dialogicity becomes the mobilizing basis of the formative process, manifesting itself in action-reflection-action, in the resumption of conceptual conceptions or discussions, as well as in the construction,

reconstruction or deconstruction of inner dialogues (Goulart, 2016) about know-how and educational practices. In this way, it seeks to ensure that subjects are formed and transformed by promoting literacy.

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Educ. Pesqui., São Paulo, v. 51, e282427, 2025.

19