




The importance of storytelling in the construction of children's cultural identity in Tamandaré (PE) Brazil

A importância da contação de história na construção da identidade cultural das crianças de Tamandaré (PE)

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ABSTRACT

The present research, whose theme is the importance of storytelling about the municipality of Tamandaré in the construction of children's cultural identity, investigates the following problem: What is the importance of storytelling in the construction of cultural identity? What is the importance of working on a work that tells the history of the municipality, in a children's language? The present study began with the research of bibliographic review, made in storytelling books, doctoral theses, master's thesis, monographs, articles and specific websites. From this perspective, the book *Tamandaré esse é meu nome, essa é minha história*, brings cultural memories and works on the sense of belonging of the citizens. When this story is narrated, children sharpen their imagination, learn by playing and, in their imagination, create the tribe of the Caetés. One of the goals of storytelling is the personal and social formation of the child, and is closely linked to the development of cultural identity and the process of socialization and socialization. Storytelling is important because it stimulates children's imagination, creativity, socialization, socialization, criticality, brings children closer to children's literature, sharpens curiosity, enhances participation in oral culture, promotes intellectual and social experiences, expands vocabulary and makes the class more dynamic. The work corroborates the sense of belonging and the appreciation of the historical and cultural roots of the children about the municipality.

RESUMO

A presente pesquisa, cujo tema é a importância da contação de história sobre o município de Tamandaré na construção da identidade cultural das crianças, investiga o seguinte problema: Qual é a importância da contação de história na construção da identidade cultural? Qual é a importância de trabalhar uma obra que conta a história do município, em uma linguagem infantojuvenil? O presente estudo iniciou com a pesquisa de revisão bibliográfica, feita em livros de contação de história, teses de doutorados, dissertação de mestrado, monografias, artigos e sites específicos. Sob esta perspectiva, o livro *Tamandaré esse é meu nome, essa é minha história*, traz memórias culturais e trabalha o sentimento de pertencimento dos municípios. Quando a referida história é narrada, as crianças aguçam a imaginação, aprendem brincando e, no seu imaginário, criam a tribo dos Caetés. Uma das metas da contação de história constitui-se na formação pessoal e social da criança, e está estreitamente ligada ao desenvolvimento da identidade cultural e ao processo de socialização e socialização. A contação de história se mostra importante porque estimula, nas crianças, imaginação, criatividade, socialização, socialização, criticidade, aproxima as crianças da literatura infantil, aguça a curiosidade, potencializa a participação na cultura oral, promove as experiências intelectual e social, amplia o vocabulário e dinamiza a aula. A obra corrobora com o sentimento de pertencimento e a valorização das raízes históricas e culturais das crianças sobre o município.

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Introduction

Over the years, storytelling has proved to be a very important tool in social and educational circles, presenting itself as a way of renewing and preserving oral tradition, demonstrating a direct link with the culture, ancestry and memory of the people, since the evolutionary process of human beings, especially *Homo Sapiens*. According to Magalhães (2023), *Homo sapiens* is the scientific name for modern man, the term derives from the Latin “wise man, man who knows”.

According to Bedran (2012, p. 25) “since the world was a world, man has always been at the side of his narratives, around the fire, through cave writings interspersed with guttural sounds until the elaboration of language”. For the author, the history of oral narratives is intertwined with the development of the human species and, at certain historical moments, human beings have used oral narratives to tell their own story and that of the world, thus creating a vital and fundamental resource for sociability and the development of civilization.

Oral narratives have changed according to society, transcending to the present day, although there is no precise date when oral language emerged. Conceição (2014, p. 14) tells us that “the art of storytelling has been passed down from generation to generation and, even if this art has already been perpetuated in a written version, it receives countless contributions as it is told”.

The aforementioned researcher adds that even when telling stories that have already been published, the speaker is keeping the oral tradition alive. This implies that, in a storytelling, the person telling the story can make changes to what they deem important, taking into account the historical context, geographical location or age.

In this context, this research sought to investigate: the importance of storytelling about the municipality of Tamandaré in building children's cultural identity; the importance of working with a work that tells the history of the municipality in children's language, and the influence of storytelling on children's inclusion in the literary world.

Research shows that storytelling stimulates children's imagination, creativity, cognitive learning, the formation and cultural repertoire of every human being, the development of ways of intervening and interacting in the world, a taste for reading and the child's entry into children's literature. And when the storytelling work is done on the history of the municipality of origin, learning becomes significant (Melo, et al., 2020).

In this way, reflection on the researched topic is extremely relevant, from the perspective that it dialogues with the curricular organization of Early Childhood Education in

the National Common Curricular Base (BNCC). In the field of experience “the self, the other and the we”, oral narratives represent connectivity between generations. Even today, we enjoy listening to short, long, humorous stories that convey, in simple language, a simple message about generosity, virtues, kindness and care (Aesop, 1994). Researching and deepening this theme will highlight the benefits of storytelling in social, cultural and historical aspects.

This study began with a literature review on the importance of storytelling and the construction of cultural identity, carried out in specific books, doctoral theses, master's dissertations, monographs, articles and specific websites. In addition to Romero Silva's vast experience, he has been working with a variety of themes since 2010, during various storytelling sessions held in various rural and urban areas of the municipality. His extensive knowledge of local culture enabled him to produce his first children's book - *Tamandaré esse é meu nome, essa é minha história* - whose content praises the indigenous population that existed before the arrival of the Portuguese.

This article is structured in two parts: The first is dedicated to reflecting on the work that tells the story of the municipality of Tamandaré and the construction of cultural identity; the second deals with the importance of storytelling for children. The main objective of this study was, based on the literary work *Tamandaré esse é o meu nome, essa é minha história*, to analyze the importance of storytelling in developing the cultural identity of children in the municipality of Tamandaré. The specific objectives were: To verify the importance of storytelling for children; to identify the contribution to the development of their cultural identity; to analyze the contribution to the cultural identity of the municipality.

Storytelling about the Municipality of Tamandaré - PE: Building Cultural Identity

On April 18th, 2021, in the municipality of Tamandaré-PE, the children's book entitled: *Tamandaré esse é meu nome, essa é minha história*, by writer Romero Silva de Albuquerque, published by *Editora Ser Poeta*, was launched. The work is a re-reading of the book “*Tamandaré - a história de um município*”, by author Maria do Carmo Ferrão Santos, published in 2000, the first literary work about the municipality of Tamandaré.

The self, the other and the we - It is in interaction with peers and adults that children develop their own way of acting, feeling and thinking and discover that there are other ways of life, different people with other points of view. As they go through their first social experiences (in the family, at school, in the community), they build up perceptions and questions about themselves and others, differentiating themselves and, at the same time, identifying themselves as individual and social beings. While participating in social relationships and personal care, children build their autonomy and sense of self-care, reciprocity and interdependence with the environment. In Early Childhood Education, it is necessary to create opportunities for children to come into contact with other social and cultural groups, other ways of life, different attitudes, techniques and rituals for personal and group care, customs, celebrations and narratives. In these experiences, they can broaden the way they perceive themselves and others, value their identity, respect others and recognize the differences that constitute us as human beings (Ministério da Educação, 2018).

The book was the result of research by the author, who was born and has always lived in Tamandaré. The daily events were also narrated by several elderly Tamandareans, who passed on their experiences and what they heard from their ancestors, as there was little bibliographical material and official documents. This work was of fundamental importance for better understanding the life of the municipality and its inhabitants (Santos, 2000).

In light of the above, we would like to point out that the methodological basis for the book was the recording of the narratives of the elderly, in other words, the pioneering book on the municipality of Tamandaré was also constructed in the light of the stories told. According to Santos (2000), the concern was not to let the history of the municipality of Tamandaré be forgotten or for the current generation not to be able to tell it.

Following this line of valuing identity, author Romero Silva has used figures and children's language to tell us about the historical and cultural greatness of the Municipality of Tamandaré. In this book, the author seeks to emphasize one of the main historical facts, that is, the roots of the original peoples embedded in the municipality, the struggle for its political-administrative emancipation, and the civic symbols (Albuquerque, 2020).

The construction of the book *Tamandaré esse é o meu nome, essa é minha história (Tamandaré this is my name, this is my history)* was intended to provoke reflection among the local residents about their ancestry and to draw attention to the importance of the historical relationship with the original peoples. The main idea is to emphasize the cultural and historical contributions left by the Caetés peoples who lived on this coast for centuries and were exterminated by the Portuguese between the 1550s and 1560s. Among the legacies they left behind is the name of this town - Tamoindaré - which means the repopulator. This name was later changed to Tamandaré (Santos, 2000, p. 13).

For Bedran (2012), oral narratives are important in the construction of cultural identity.

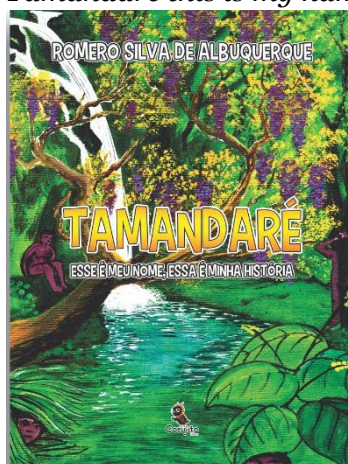
Children who listen to everyday stories awaken their curiosity and creative imagination and, at the same time, have the chance to dialog with the culture around them and, therefore, to exercise their citizenship. The encounter of their imagination with the world of such diverse characters belonging to tales, whether traditional or contemporary, is a factor of great psychosocial enrichment (Bedran, 2012, p. 25).

For this author, storytelling is extremely important for children's development, as it provides cultural memories, stimulates the imagination and social and cultural interaction.

From this perspective, the book *Tamandaré esse é meu nome, essa é minha história* (*Tamandaré this is my name, this is my story*) brings back cultural memories and works on the sense of belonging among children and young people. The way the author tells the stories and the resources used in the book contribute to arousing the interest and participation of the audience, as well as personal reading experiences.

Figure 1.

Cover of the book Tamandaré this is my name, this is my story



Note: Personal archive.

TAMANDARÉ THIS IS MY NAME, THIS IS MY STORY

In a large village
There lived a very wise shaman
He gathered the curumins
In front of your oca
He lined the mat on the floor and sat down
To tell a beautiful story

Today it was the origin of the word Tamandaré
And the history of the municipality
Do you know the origin of the word Tamandaré?

The shaman told the curumins
The origin of the name Tamandaré
It comes from Tupi, an indigenous language that was spoken here
Originated from tamoiindaré
Meaning the repopulator.

So he continued the story:
- A long time ago, the Caetés Indians
They lived in harmony with nature
And all they needed
Nature offered him plenty:
Clean water, fresh food, shelter and medicinal plants.
They were also known for being warriors
And for making their boats
For sailing on rivers and beaches.

The beautiful beach of Tamandaré
It was where the Caetés lived
They have always fought
Against the invaders
To protect the beloved village
And the land from which they got their food.

Over time
The beautiful beach has become a
Small fishing village
The people who lived there
They came from indigenous peoples
Africans and Europeans.

The fishermen lived in straw houses
And they took from the sea and the mangroves
The family's livelihood
Treating nature with great care
After a long time....
That beautiful beach, which was once a village of the Caetés Indians
Fishing village and district of the municipality of Rio Formoso
It became a beautiful city
To this end, the residents fought hard
They had to campaign
To pay for the emancipation process.
With the victory of the people
Tamandaré became
A beautiful town on September 28th, 1995.

There was a big party for the residents
To celebrate the long-awaited emancipation
After its independence, the new municipality
I needed the civic symbols
A coat of arms, a flag and an anthem
Something that the new political administration
Then he decided to do it.

They organized a big contest
To choose the coat of arms, flag and anthem
The sociologist, heraldry expert
Teacher Dr. Amaro Matias Silva
He was responsible for
Organization of the coat of arms and flag
The chosen anthem
It was written by historian
Teacher Dr. Maria do Carmo Ferrão

After telling this whole story
The shaman finished by telling the children
The Indians were the first inhabitants, they were already here.
They are the real owners of the land
They deserve every respect.
Then he thanked her and said goodbye
He picked up the mat and entered the hollow
To think about the next story (Albuquerque, 2020, pp. 4-16).

The above story features Pajé Tamoiñaré as its protagonist, the fishing village and the beaches as places of social, cultural and economic development. The story also emphasizes the origin of the word Tamoiñaré which, according to Santos (2000, p. 13), “comes from the Tupi word Tamoiñaré which means the repopulator”.

When this story is told, children sharpen their imagination and learn through play, creating in their imagination a tribe of Caetés, a fishing village, clean and unspoiled beaches, the social movement of the people fighting for political emancipation, and getting to know the characters who created the civic symbols. In this way, they build up their cultural identity and nurture a sense of belonging with a more vivid imagination.

Figure 2.

Storytelling in a school in the municipality of Tamandaré - PE.



Note: Personal archive.

The importance of storytelling

One of the goals of storytelling is the personal and social formation of children, and it is closely linked to the development of cultural identity and the process of socialization. Looking at the culture of the Brazilian people, especially that of the indigenous peoples, we find in the book *História de índio* - by Munduruku (2016, p. 51), that “myths are always fantastic ways of telling how things happened at the beginning of the world”.

According to the aforementioned author, storytelling had the function of bringing the will of the gods into everyday life. The stories told by the ancestors explain the “origin of the universe, of day and night, of health and sickness, of the sun, the moon, of life and death”, in short, they explain everything in order to order people's lives in the community (Munduruku, 2016, p. 51).

The oral narratives were usually passed on by the older members of the community, while the younger ones gathered to listen to the stories that brought with them various lessons and life experiences. Santos (2014, p. 13) reveals that “the storyteller became a respected member of his community, as he was considered the wisest, where everyone asked for his advice”.

When it comes to storytelling for children, Santos (2014, p. 13) tells us that:

When a child listens to a children's story, their imagination goes beyond the boundaries of the imaginary and takes them into the enchantment of their child's world, which only exists in their mind. Children's stories have the power to help children with their fears, traumas, injuries, challenges and difficulties. That's why it's so important for children to have contact with the imaginary world of stories.

This author's comment highlights the importance of storytelling for children, since they can overcome the barriers of imagination and find themselves in their own childhood world. Considering this statement relevant, we sought to analyze the first stage of basic education, early childhood education, in the BNCC, a normative document that defines the organic and progressive set of essential learning for students. We found that:

In Early Childhood Education, it is important to promote experiences in which children can speak and listen, enhancing their participation in oral culture, because it is in listening to stories, participating in conversations, descriptions, narratives elaborated individually or in groups and the implications with multiple languages that the child is actively constituted as a singular subject and belonging to a social group (Ministério da Educação, 2018, p. 42).

Following the guidelines of the BNCC, we realize that storytelling promotes experiences in various areas, including intellectual, social and behavioral. It also promotes an interest in reading, stimulates the imagination, social development and strengthens communication between children. According to Silva (2021, p. 3), “stories and fairy tales in early childhood education are extremely important, because within them there is always a problem or drama to be solved”. In storytelling, children learn to face life in a playful way, realizing the challenges, difficulties and achievements of the characters.

According to Silva (2021, p. 3):

Stories and tales have many different functions and importance, both in early childhood education and in the other stages and modalities of education, so educators need to make these practices present in everyday school life, this will make learning more dynamic and will create more cultured beings who are interested in literature from an early age.

For the author, storytelling provides a safe environment for sharing points of view, debating, questioning and expanding vocabulary, developing children's imagination without direct exposure. As well as stimulating reading and bringing children closer to children's literature, storytelling also makes the classroom more dynamic.

Stories and tales create very rich spaces for their listeners to get to know new words, ways of positioning themselves, new contexts and new meanings, so they provide pleasant memories for children.

Final considerations

We have reached the end of this work and found significant results regarding the analysis of the importance of storytelling in the development of the cultural identity of children in the municipality of Tamandaré - PE.

Storytelling proved to be important because it stimulated the children's imagination, creativity, socialization and criticality, brought them closer to children's literature, piqued their curiosity, boosted their participation in oral culture, promoted intellectual and social experience, broadened their vocabulary and made the class more dynamic.

The analysis of the oral narrative of the book *Tamandaré esse é meu nome, essa é minha história* shows that the construction of cultural identity takes place in the details of the story. When the narrative tells of the Caetés indigenous people as the first inhabitants of the small fishing village, and the evolution of the place transformed it into the important city of Tamandaré, the children travel through history and overcome the barriers of thinking about our ancestors. Thus, in their imagination, they create a special scenario, as well as various questions about their own history. The work corroborates the sense of belonging and the appreciation of the historical and cultural roots of the people of Tamandaré. Therefore, by learning about an important part of the municipality's history, children grow up building an important identity with the territory/community where they live and where their ancestors lived. From this perspective, they tend to fight for its fair and democratic development.

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