INTERACTION WITH SOUND-PRODUCING OBJECTS IN PRESCHOOL: REFLECTIONS BASED ON THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF ALFRED SCHUTZ[1]

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Resumen: En este trabajo presentamos algunas reflexiones sobre la interacción de niños preescolares (entre 3 y 5 años) con objetos productores de sonido. Implementamos el enfoque fenomenológico de Alfred Schutz, quien bajo la influencia de Edmund Husserl elaboró sus propias nociones sobre el *Lebenswelt* o mundo de la vida. Presentamos algunas situaciones de interacción con instrumentos musicales por parte de niños que han sido documentadas en diferentes investigaciones sobre educación musical en la primera infancia, las mismas que utilizamos para ejemplificar posibles análisis desde la perspectiva de la fenomenología del mundo social. Concluimos con algunas observaciones que conciben la teoría de Schutz como una perspectiva relevante para el análisis de las experiencias de los niños con objetos productores de sonido.

Palabras clave: educación musical, fenomenología de la actitud natural, Lebenswelt, niños.

Abstract: In this work we present some reflections about the interaction of preschool children (between 3 and 5 years old) with sound-producing objects. We implemented the phenomenological approach of Alfred Schutz, who under the influence of

Edmund Husserl, elaborated his own notions concerning the *Lebenswelt* or life-world. We present some situations of interaction with musical instruments by children that have been documented in different research on musical education in early childhood, the same ones we use to exemplify possible analyses from the perspective of the phenomenology of the social world. We conclude with some remarks that conceive of Schutz's theory as a relevant perspective for the analysis of children's experiences with sound-producing objects.

Keywords: music Education, Phenomenology of the natural Attitude, Lebenswelt, Children.

Introduction

We know that early childhood experiences play an important role in later musical learning (Ghirotto & Mazzoni, 2013; Trinick & Phohio, 2018; Yi, 2021). In kindergartens, it is common for music classes to use different sound-producing objects as children observe, manipulate and explore them in multiple ways. In 2021 we carried out research aimed at analyzing the interactions with musical instruments of 4 and 5-year-old children, specifically those children who were growing up in families of mariachi musicians in the city of Guadalajara, Jalisco. We analyzed the interactions of these children with common musical instruments at home, based on a video-hermeneutic analysis of recordings that had been made by the same parents in moments of daily life manipulating musical instruments. The theoretical framework of that work was based on the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz, in order to describe the meanings related to music that the children knew.

As a product of this previous research work, in this article we present some reflections on how the phenomenology of the social world could contribute to the analysis of the experience of preschool children in situations of manipulation and exploration of sound-producing objects. By sound-producing objects we mean those musical instruments or artifacts that are used in music classes with preschool children (e.g., bells, xylophones, drums or tambourines).

We believe that the analysis of children's interactions with sound-producing objects from a phenomenological point of view is relevant for two main reasons:

a) As researchers, it allows us to discover another way of studying children's experimentation with sound-producing objects for purposes aimed at developing musical skills such as rhythmic development or auditory discrimination.

b) As educators, it encourages design of educational activities that include, in a reasoned and justified manner, the implementation of different instruments or other objects in music lessons. This engages children in more enriching learning experiences for their musical education.

Although phenomenology has been present in studies on music education (Custodero, 2007; Bresler, 2010; Hourigan & Edgar, 2014), it has rarely been considered as a theoretical framework for the study of populations in early childhood, such as in kindergarten (Mercier-De Shon, 2012). In a recent literature review, Joubert and Van der Merwe (2020) study the academic production of five music education journals and the inclusion of phenomenological methodologies in some research papers. They maintain that phenomenological approaches are ranked third place with the greatest use in the field of music education, highlighting that these works reviewed the absence of specialized works in early childhood; rather, the most common populations explored from phenomenological approaches were adult populations.

In view of this deficient situation, we expose some potentialities perceived in the phenomenological legacy of Alfred Schutz, a theoretical perspective based on the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl, which the Austrian author enriched with the pragmatist contributions of William James (1950) and George Santayana (2011), the *durée* of Henri Bergson (2007) and the relative natural conception of the world [*relativ natuerliche Weltanschauung*] of Max Scheler (2008). The thesis we are trying to defend is that this phenomenology, concerned with pragmatic issues in the social world, allows us to reflect and understand the interaction of the child with these objects as a complex process of experimentation of the social environment, which is linked to learning processes of certain knowledge and the development of musical skills.

In the first instance, we briefly describe the role that sound-producing objects have played in some musical teaching methods that emerged in the 20th century, which are still being used in different educational contexts. Later we present some research in music education, which has been responsible for discussing the manipulation and exploration of sound-producing objects in preschool children.

Here we present the approach of Alfred Schutz, taking up in particular the notions of *Lebenswelt*, *natural attitude*, *stock of knowledge*, *typicality*, and *relevance*.

We present the descriptions of some research that have documented situations of interaction of children with musical instruments, in order to exemplify a possible treatment and analysis based on the phenomenological view of Schutz. We conclude by sharing some reflections on relevance from this phenomenological lens for the study of the child's experiences with sound-producing objects, trying to offer arguments that sustain the potential of the *phenomenology of the natural attitude* for research on this subject in music education.

Music education methods

The use of sound-producing objects as supporting resources has been present in several methods of musical teaching that currently maintain some validity. Relevant examples are the generated methods of Michel-Richard Delalande, Émile Jaques-Dalcroze, María Montessori, Satis N. Coleman, Zoltán Kodály, Edgar Willems, Carl Orff and Shinichi Suzuki.

In the first dialogue 'Which music – which pedagogy?' from Delalande's (1984) book *La musique est un jeu d'enfant,* the importance of children's first experiences with musical instruments has been emphasized:

> Because toddlers in a kindergarten class are "concrete" musicians, they discover utensils, unspecified sound bodies and they have towards these "instruments" an attitude very close to that of a musician locked up in a studio to do a "sound recording." They explore the device, they see what can be learned from it, they try to generate a whole family of sounds that seem alike (Delalande 1984, 22-23).

Despite the Eurhythmics method by Jaques-Dalcroze (1912) having been developed by this pedagogue for students at the Geneva Conservatory, it had a special reception in children's music education due to the playful activities that it proposes (Capistrán-Gracia, 2019). One of the important foundations of this method, in addition to rhythm and music theory, is improvisation, wherein Jaques-Dalcroze proposes carrying out activities with sound-producing objects. Although Jaques-Dalcroze's Eurhythmics activities emphasize the role of the

body in all activities for music education, he maintains the importance of using musical instruments that allow the learner to create and express their own musical ideas through these objects.

Maria Montessori, one of the great early childhood educators, also included the implementation of sound-producing objects for different activities proposed in her method (Montessori, 1916). Supported by experts, she developed some materials for musical education in children, an example of these materials being a table in which bells tuned in different tones and semitones were placed contiguously based on the diatonic scale. Her purpose was to involve the child in activities based on listening games of different tones, in order to involve them in what she called "sensory exercises" (Montessori 1916, 481).

Another pioneer educator in the implementation of sound-producing objects for purposes related to music education is Satis N. Coleman (1922). Based on her experience as a music educator and researcher with children, she developed a proposal for music education that is recognized as 'Creative Music.' She believed that before the child learns music through sight, the child experiences it through voice and listening; an additional part of her musical education proposal was based on what she called "seeking attitude" (Coleman 1939, 14).

She implemented the use of sound-makers for exploration through the child's improvisation. These objects were made by the children themselves by hand or they could be those that they discovered in their own environment. In one of her books (Coleman, 1922), she narrates how a girl played a melody for her, upon discovering that the thorns of a cactus that was in her house generated sounds by making them vibrate.

Zoltán Kodály considered the use of Hungarian folk instruments as accompaniment to singing (Houlahan & Tacka, 2008), the latter is a core aspect in his pedagogy that involves the implementation of choral ensembles. In his writings on the musical initiation of the child, Edgar Willems proposes the use of these resources in order to encourage in the child the development of rhythm, and to encourage active listening for the sound qualities of these objects (Willems, 1987).

Carl Orff focused mainly on instrumental ensembles embodied in his work *Orff-schulwerk*: music for children. In these ensembles bongos, drums, tambourines and metallophones are used, among other instruments (Orff, 1976).

A central aspect of Shinichi Suzuki's method is a musical education based on the teaching of the instrument, with the assumption that music is learned in a manner similar to how the child learns the mother tongue (Suzuki, 1983). Initially this author began developing a method for teaching the violin, and later Suzuki methods were published for other instruments such as cello, piano, flute and guitar.

These approaches in contemporary musical education seem to value the use of sound-producing objects for their physical qualities, which contribute to designing attractive musical activities in the kindergarten where the manipulation or exploration of these objects is proposed. It seems that these proposals for musical teaching in children have tacitly considered the use of this type of material, with the aim of succeeding in those children acquiring certain knowledge. However, we have not delved into the meaning of the experimentation of these objects. We consider that reflecting on this topic will lead us to the study of the operation of the child's consciousness that would result in generating valuable contributions to musical education, which would imply providing a more solid pedagogical foundation for the use of such materials in the music teaching process.

In addition to these pedagogical proposals, it is worth taking a look at the academic contributions in music education, since the interaction with sound-producing objects is an aspect that has already been discussed in this field, but not from a phenomenological approach.

The use of sound-producing objects in preschool music education: a brief review of academic literature

Early childhood as a stage of special importance in the human being ranges from birth to 8 years of age (UNESCO, 2017). Within early childhood, preschool or kindergarten is included as a school stage considered in different educational systems around the world and that frequently covers ages 3 to 5 according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) (2011) (UNICEF, 2018). In music education, this same conception of early childhood has been adopted, in which preschool is included.

The UNESCO (2023) has highlighted the importance of multidisciplinary work in early childhood education, while in music education the importance of assuming a holistic approach has also been pointed out (Young & Ilari, 2019). In early childhood music education, the interaction with sound-producing objects has had a special relevance in kindergarten, though it has normally been studied from psychological approaches. For this reason, we believe that introducing a phenomenological analysis on this topic can contribute to this multidisciplinary vision.

> The study of preschool child interaction with musical instruments seems to have its origins in the 1920s, with the first behavioral studies conducted in the United States in the preschool research department at the Iowa Child Welfare Research Station, and the Pillsbury Foundation Studies in Santa Barbara (Harris, 2009). Inspired by the progressive educational movement of the time, Moorhead and Pond generated some of the first research on musical behavior in early childhood at the Pillsbury Foundation Studies; generally these researchers were interested in learning how children created music in an environment prepared for carrying out musical activities, in which sound-producing objects were included. From the outputs of this foundation, Moorhead recognized a particular musical culture, different from that of adults in terms of musical expression (Kierstead, 1994). However, it was only in the 1980s that we could concretely identify the introduction of this theme about childhood interaction with musical instruments in the field of musical education, in kindergarten, not just as a specific research topic, but as an implicit aspect of so-called musical play (Andress, 1998; Littleton, 1998).

'Musical play' is an approach proposed by Barbara Andress. It proposes the pedagogical importance of play within music lessons at an early age, and a part of this play involves the manipulation of sound-producing objects for the development of the child's musicality. The pedagogical foundations of these works on musical play are rooted in the psychological perspectives that dominated much of the studies of childhood during the second half of the last century, from the contributions of Mildred Parten, Charlotte Bühler, Sarah Smilansky, Jean Piaget and Lev S. Vygotsky.

At the beginning of the 21st century, research on musical play would continue and the interaction with musical instruments continues to be implicitly present in this theme, although without focusing exclusively on the manipulation or

exploration of physical objects (Berger & Cooper 2003; Young, 2008). In recent years we can identify works that have begun to provide a greater emphasis on child interaction with sound-producing objects in music education. Dansereau (2015) proposed documentation and analysis of the spontaneous and adult-free musical behavior of children, with objects such as cabasas, rain sticks, drums and claves. Her study sought to understand the nature of situations of interaction with instruments, noting that:

> Despite the popularity of providing sound-producing objects to young children, we are left with an incomplete view of the many ways children interact with these objects and a clouded idea of what constitutes musical play. This causes difficulty when attempting to determine the extent to which these objects elicit behaviors that may be considered musical, and—perhaps more importantly—whether adult expectations for children's interactions with sound-producing objects are appropriate (Dansereau 2015, 30).

Her findings describe the need to delve into the extent to which the shape of sound objects can influence how the child engages in exploring them, because in some cases situations were observed where children manipulated objects for purposes that could be considered as non-musical, for example, using instruments as if they were hats, instead of using them to imitate playing music.

Koops (2017) tries to study the experience lived by children of preschool age from the phenomenological perspective of Moustakas (1994) in episodes of play through interviews, in order to analyze what happened during situations defined as musical enjoyment. He argues that, rather than trying to elaborate a definition of musical play, she sought to elaborate a description that would allow constructing possible interpretations for understanding the enjoyment experienced by children. She carried out activities aimed at children between 4 and 7 years of age, in which boomwhackers, ukuleles, harmonicas, as well as recorders were implemented. Her results argue that musical enjoyment is a constitutive part of musical play. With respect to the interaction of children with these objects, she points out that this activity is an important part of the development process of musical creation.

Recently Rodríguez and Vicente (2017) carried out a study that reveals the challenges of the implementation of musical materials in early childhood musical education contexts in Spain. This work considered as musical material different objects that produced different sounds, whether or not they were aimed

at teaching music. Thus, printed materials such as textbooks or work guides were also considered, in addition to resources supported in Information and Communication Technologies (software, computers, videos and video games).

They offer different recommendations to school administrators, in order to improve the effectiveness of implementation of these objects in teaching. Specifically concerning musical materials, they point out the low use of these resources, in addition to indicating that music teachers have little knowledge about current educational materials.

As can be seen, the meaning that the manipulation of sound-producing objects in music lessons has for the children seems to be an unclear matter. It is noteworthy that sound-producing objects have been investigated as an aspect of musical play in early childhood and the same explanations have been postulated from psychological perspectives. Koop's work (2017) is particularly relevant because of its approach to the subject from a phenomenological approach; however, it seems that it only describes the experience of enjoyment without specifically addressing the subject of the manipulation of sound objects. In view of this, we believe that the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz can contribute to a deep understanding of the meaning the child is attributing when exploring or manipulating this type of material. We believe that this way we can identify different structures of consciousness involved in the child's experience with sound objects and related to the musical learning process.

The influence of Edmund Husserl on Alfred Schutz

Concerns related to the social sciences, and specifically with sociology, would lead Alfred Schutz to approach phenomenology in an unconventional way (Schutz, 2011). Schutz would continue the phenomenological legacy of Husserl (1983) not in terms of his transcendental project, but by resuming his contributions on the phenomenology of the *natural attitude* or also called 'phenomenological psychology' (Schutz 1932, 42).

Husserl's transcendental phenomenology was framed in an eidetic philosophical project, oriented to the description of the human experience and, therefore, to discussing aspects related to consciousness in transcendental terms. This aspect of Husserl's phenomenology was considered by Schutz as the main basis

for undertaking a thorough analysis of meaning within the sphere of mundane sociality [*mundane Sozialität*]: 'to analyze the phenomenon of meaning in mundane sociality does not require the achievement of a transcendental knowledge that goes beyond that sphere or a further sojourn within the area of the transcendental- phenomenological reduction' (Schutz 1932, 42).

The *phenomenology of the natural attitude* was intended to deal with problems in the *Lebenswelt*, where the subject takes his or her social reality for granted as everyday reality where interaction with others occurs. Husserl argued that this kind of phenomenology could give a foundation to the empirical sciences such as psychology (which at the time had adhered to the positivist approach).

This Husserlian view aimed at discussing the factual seems to have attracted the attention of Alfred Schutz, who was interested in exploring problems of the 'mundane sphere' (Schutz 2011, 230) when perceiving knowledge gaps in Max Weber's comprehensive sociology that did not clarify notions concerning subjective meaning and the process of understanding (Schutz, 1932). The *phenomenology of the natural attitude* was intended to resort to the transcendental sphere to describe the features of human consciousness operating in situations of the life-world, with support of a philosophical basis.

> The transcendental reduction is important for phenomenological descriptive psychology not only because it reveals the stream of consciousness and its features in their purity, but, above all, because some very important structures of consciousness can be made visible only within this reduced sphere. Since to each empirical determination within the phenomenological reduction there necessarily corresponds a parallel feature within the natural sphere and vice versa, we can always turn back to the natural attitude and there make use of all the insights we have won within the reduced sphere. (Schutz 1970, 6).

In this way, the *Lebenswelt* would constitute a notion that Schutz recovered to try to explain problems of a pragmatic nature, in order to describe eidetically those invariable structures of the subject's consciousness and intervening in its process of understanding the pre-established social reality.

The intersubjectivity of the *Lebenswelt*: the experience in the *natural attitude*

The *Lebenswelt* implies the world into which we come at birth. Phenomenological theory considers it as a predetermined world, because it is constantly before our eyes and it is an eminent reality in which we live routinely in the *natural attitude*, that is, in a budgetary way:

> […] I assume that objects of the outer world are in the main the same for my fellow-men as they are for me […] in the natural attitude of everyday life the following is taken for granted without question: (a) the corporeal existence of other men; (b) that these bodies are endowed with consciousness essentially similar to my own; (c) that the things in the outer world included in my environs and that of my fellow-men are the same for us and have fundamentally the same meaning; (d) that I can enter into interrelations and reciprocal actions with my fellow-men: (e) that I can make myself understood to them (which follows from the preceding assumptions); (f) that a stratified social and cultural world is historically pre-given as a frame of reference for me and my fellow-men, indeed in a manner as taken for granted as the "natural world"; and, (g) that therefore the situation in which I find myself at any moment is only to a small extent purely created by me (Schutz & Luckmann 1973, 4-5).

The handshake, birthday parties, the celebration of Christmas, the celebration of Hanukkah, the English, Spanish, German or Mandarin language and the values of socio-cultural background are examples of the features provided by *Lebenswelt,* and which we face in the course of life, dominating them through subjective experiences. This implies the experience of situations that the subject is presented with in a unique and unrepeatable way in their field of operation in the social world. Subjective experience is always linked to the corporality of the subject, to a space and a time. In this same idea about subjective experience, we find a key aspect of phenomenological thought: intersubjectivity.

To understand the intersubjectivity of the *Lebenswelt*, it should be clarified that Husserl's thought follows the conception of intentionality of consciousness based on by Franz Brentano. The term intentionality is used in phenomenology to describe that our consciousness always participates in some of our experiences with a consciousness referred to something. Intentionality can be difficult to

briefly describe, however, for the analytical purposes of this work, we will focus on the intervention of consciousness in certain types of experiences: *intentional experiences*. These experiences can be exemplified in our experimentation with physical objects in the *Lebenswelt*, as happens in our perception of sound-producing objects (such as a piano, accordion or a flute).

If we experience an object while taking a walk on the street, imagine a trumpet player performing on the street, our consciousness plays a role in interpreting an experience. This can lead to the association of the experience with a musical genre, a memory, a fantasy, a person, or some other element. That is, the consciousness is referred to something (intentional) and the object itself is immersed within a context of experience. The act of meaning making is a necessary element of intentionality in sensitive experiences, such as the example above, my interpretation of what we see or observe is based on my life of consciousness. In this example, the trumpet is an intentional object, the element is not what enables this interpretation, is my consciousness operating within the experience, where other elements of the context may interfere.

This approach to the intentionality of consciousness is also present in Schutz's thought, but with emphasis on the facts experienced by the subject in the intersubjective social world. Intersubjectivity is a phenomenological position in which it is assumed that what we consider to be "objective" or "subjective" constitutes *intersubjectivity*. That is to say, the personal experiences of people are not isolated from the environment in which they find themselves, but rather are linked to what those of others are, generating consensus among individuals about things within culture and society. In language it is possible to observe this intersubjective feature of the social world more clearly: for example, human beings use written and phonetic systems in each language that are intersubjectively agreed upon and allow us to communicate. In this way we have words and sounds to refer to objects related to musical practice such as the saxophone, guitar, piano or drums. Speaking a language means effectively using an intersubjective way of communicating with others.

This allows one to glimpse the coordination of consciousness flows in the life-world in a certain context; from it, the individual gives meaning to what happens around him or her, bases meanings or objective meanings on things in the social world; that is, where our conscious self is connected with the self of others, generating agreements or consensus on the elements in the pre-given reality.

The intersubjective *Lebenswelt* can be experienced by the subject in the *natural attitude* and through processes of explanation derived from the structure of consciousness called *relevance*. The *natural attitude* consists in a posture in which the human takes for granted his immediate world without making a greater judgment on it, in which he or she does not assume a critical or reflective position about what is presented to the consciousness. It is a non-problematic sphere due to the familiarity or habituation that is already in the social sphere. We experience the *natural attitude* every day, in those routine tasks that we have already mastered and do on a daily basis, such as going to work, attending school, driving, reading, running, among other activities that do not involve deep reflection.

The subject lives in that *natural attitude* until something within that environment is presented to him or her different from what he or she usually knows; in this way the *relevance* of experience is used, and at this moment, the consciousness of the subject becomes problematic. For Alfred Schutz, relevance refers to the degree of attention we give to the *Lebenswelt*. For example, suppose we find ourselves practicing a piece of music on the guitar for a concert, it is possible that in a *natural attitude*, our attention is focused on my playing the instrument, even though we hear everyday or common sounds in at home such as the TV, the sound of birds or of trees moving in the wind outside. However if we hear an explosion, that is to say, an unusual sound in our home, this event will be problematic for our consciousness according to my degree of attention to the life-world. This means that we undertake a process of making explicit that which in the experience appears to us outside of what we commonly experience, seeking to dominate it to integrate it into our *stock of knowledge*.

In the constant confrontation with the *Lebenswelt* we do not need to be explicit about the facts and elements that we already know (*natural attitude*). Until something within this sphere is presented to us differently, we seek to make it explicit based on the structure of *relevance* to incorporate it into our previously conceived notions. In this way we manage to have a mastery over a novel experience that occurred in the life-world. When there is a discrepancy between what I know previously and what happens to me in my experience, the situation turns out to be problematic, thus presenting an experience that is certainly unknown and not compatible with my previous knowledge.

In Schutz's thinking, relevance is the concept of a system that operates in consciousness and articulates itself based on the most striking features that I perceive in the social world experiences (*Lebenswelt*). He argues that "system

of relevances by which man within his natural attitude in daily life is guided" (Schutz, 1962, 228). In a *natural attitude*, like when we listen to music on an audio device, drink coffee, and read a book in the afternoon inside our home, depending on what's most important, we can give differing amounts of attention to what's happening. The abnormal noises we hear outside our location may be more important depending on the situation. Maybe it's more striking that our coffee is either very hot or has cooled, or certain aspects of the music I listen to draw my attention more. The experience are linked to the system of relevances in consciousness, to our daily lives, previous experiences, the present situation, and anticipations of it. *The system of relevances* of consciousness in Schutz's phenomenology maintains that we cannot understand a certain element of *Lebenswelt* if it does not present itself to us as significant within experience (Schutz, 1962).

Natural attitude and *relevance* are linked to two important phenomenological conceptions: *stock of knowledge* and *typifications*. The *stock of knowledge* is a structure made up by subjective experiences. That is to say, those situations in social life that we experience in a particular way, such as the experience of listening to a song, is different from one person to another. Schutz argues about the *stock of knowledge* that: "it is related in many ways to the situation of the experiencing subject. It is built on sedimentations of formerly actually present experiences that were bound to situations" (Schutz & Luckmann 1973, 99).

At all times in our daily living, the *stock of knowledge* emerges as an element that forms part of our actions and our conscious ego within the life-world. We constantly resort to this structure in our life because it is a structure founded on past experiences for mastering new or relevant experiences in the *Lebenswelt*. In this way, possibilities of assuming a situation (experience) are generated, and it is possible to have an estimate of the possibilities of certain elements in the social world. For example, if we are familiar with a jazz standard like 'Autumn Leaves,' it is possible for me to identify and anticipate the moments in which the improvisations of the quartet of musicians performing that piece will be performed. Children usually recognize the chorus of popular songs from their context, because they have sediments of experience about those songs, as a result of frequent experimentation with these themes, having listened to them on multiple occasions.

Stock of knowledge is associated with *types* or *typifications*, that is, elements that refer in a homogeneous way to a whole network of sedimentary experiences.

This means that we perceive things in a familiar way; they are given to consciousness by their typical character. Schutz offers an interesting example to understand what *types* are: "I may have never seen an Irish setter but if I see one, I know that it is an animal and in particular a dog, showing all the familiar features and the typical behavior of a dog and not, say, of a cat" (Schutz 1962, 8).

Types have their origin in subjective experiences that make up the *stock of knowledge* and, like the latter, are in constant transformation. Following the example previously cited by Schutz, it can be said that if we had never seen a setter in our life, having an experience with a dog of that breed, it is possible that the dog *typification* within our *stock of knowledge* will be modified, because of the physical traits of the dog that we have captured in my experience and that we have perhaps never seen before in the breeds that we already know. This implies taking into consideration that the subject does not face experiences in the world of life devoid of a previous experiential referent. A child recognizes an object based on the typical features that he has experienced related to it. This suggests that an object such as a spoon, for the child who already knows how to communicate through words, goes beyond being a written word or a phoneme, and preserves structures in consciousness that have been configured based on the way in which he himself has used a spoon, or that he has seen other people use one, such as his parents or older siblings.

In this case, the child in his consciousness recognizes the object based on the typical character of use that he has previously experienced in the *Lebenswelt*. The child who knows how to use a spoon effectively to eat had once experienced the object for the first time, perhaps in a more rudimentary way, but later acquired greater mastery over the object by having used it routinely at mealtimes. In this way, his consciousness will preserve sediments of experience (in the stock of knowledge), organized according to its typical character.

Stock of knowledge, *types* and *relevance* are some of the concepts that appear in Schutz's work as notions that attempt to explain the operation of the subject in the *natural attitude*. His reflections focused on explaining the structures that invariably operate in human consciousness, in any cultural contexts and in any historical period, for apprehending that pre-established reality. The contributions that this phenomenological theory provides have been discussed in different fields of knowledge; Barber and Dreher (2014) have compiled a variety of works that present different approaches to artistic research based on Alfred Schutz's phenomenological legacy. More recently, Dreher (2021) exposes the reflections

of various authors regarding the phenomenological conception of the structures of the life-world as an analytical focus which is still valid for the basis of qualitative research. On early childhood musical education, we have identified few phenomenological approaches from Schutz's point of view. This is another reason which justifies our interest in considering phenomenological thought as useful in the study of children's experiences.

In a preliminary way, we believe that this phenomenological theory could be used as a theoretical framework for the interpretation and analysis of the experiences of children involved in a process of teaching and learning music. For example, we could analyze the observations of children interacting with musical instruments using the notions proposed by Alfred Schutz. This would imply a qualitative research approach, which deepens the understanding and meaning that experimentation with music has for the child, which can later help improve the interventions of music educators. Authors such as Bresler (2010), Van Manen (2017) and Smith (2018) have pointed out that phenomenological research approaches treat the phenomenon of experience differently from other qualitative research approaches, providing a rigorous study of experience.

Analysis of the child's interaction with instruments through the *phenomenology of the natural attitude*

Schutz's varied concerns about meaning and the social sciences from the perspective of phenomenology also covered the study of music; some of his works on this topic were: *Making music together: a study in social relationship* (1951 pub. 1976), *Mozart and the philosophers* (1956 pub. 1976) and *Fragments toward a phenomenology of music* (1944 pub. 1996). Despite the *relevance* of these articles, we consider that his work around the structures of the life-world, exposed more clearly in his posthumous work: *The structures of the life-world* (Schutz & Luckmann, 1973) have also made important contributions, that from our point of view can help to characterize the operation of consciousness in experiences related to the musical learning process in childhood, such as the manipulation of sound-producing objects. Although we know that in the essay *Making music together: a study in social relationship*, Schutz had already explored some applications of the *stock of knowledge*, we consider that this work can be the first step to demonstrate another aspect of the potential of Schutz's legacy (which is open to criticism) and using a theoretical framework to study certain types of child experiences.

Below we present some situations of interaction with sound-producing objects or musical instruments by children, descriptions that have been documented by research carried out in children's populations but that are not based on a phenomenological approach. Through them, a possible analysis parting from the notions of *Lebenswelt*, *stock of knowledge*, *types* and *relevance* is realized. In these interpretations of the child's interaction with such objects, it is important to note that they are permeated by the intentionality of consciousness, the development in the subject of a *natural attitude* and the intersubjective feature of the social world.

Tara and Holly and their experience with the violin

Littleton (1991) recorded different interactions of preschool children (4 and 5 years old) with musical instruments. One of her descriptions consists of a description of two girls interacting with a violin:

> Holly complained, "Don't play that violin, it's squeaky!"
>
> Tara: "It isn't squeaky. I've tested it. Here, let me show you this thing." (She takes the rosin from the violin case and rubs it on the bow.) "This is fun!"
>
> Holly: "I KNOW!" I have a violin at home."
>
> Tara: "Do you take lessons?"
>
> Holly: "NO."
> Tara: "I want to take lessons."
>
> Holly: "I've played Jingle Bells on my violin before."
>
> Tara: "Well, I've never seen a violin before, so I need to play it." (Littleton 1991, 81)

This description shows that Tara, despite expressing that she had never seen a violin before, does retain some knowledge about the violin, since she knows what the wax is used for by rubbing it on the bow. She has probably seen at some point in her life how wax is used, although she may have never held one in her hands, this has allowed her to have sedimentations of experience in her *stock of knowledge*. Instead, she (Holly) expresses that she already has some familiarity with the instrument, being an everyday object at home. Both girls experience the situation on the violin based on their experiences in the *Lebenswelt*.

Daniel and the guitar

In music education research it is also possible to find experiences of interaction with instruments in young children, which are susceptible to being analyzed under the phenomenological lens. In his work *Music, Mind, and Education*, Swanwick (2005) describes the case of Daniel (three years old), a child who interacts with musical instruments:

> A frequent visitor, he makes himself at home with toys and has a fairly delicate improvisation on the piano. Then he asks for the guitar, which has been put away. He sits himself on a little stool and manages to hold the instrument in more or less the orthodox position, though it is rather big for him. He has handled it before and seen people play, both at home and on television, and he knows what it is to hold a guitar. As usual, he strums with his thumb across the open strings, occasionally putting his ear to the body of the instrument and over the sound hole to listen to the dying resonances. He also draws his thumb across at different speeds, sometimes gently, sometimes striking the strings and throwing his right arm up into the air; a dramatic gesture which, we wonder, he might have seen guitarists do (Swanwick 2005, 51).

Swanwick points out that Daniel had previous experiences with the guitar, therefore, in his *stock of knowledge* there are sediments of experiences that possibly have fostered the imitation that the child does. Daniel is interested in exploring the instruments at his disposal (piano and guitar), which may involve the intervention of the system *relevances*, since the child seems to express the typical way in which that instrument is used within its social context. It is important to mention here that for Schutz, the classifications are formed from the relevance system. Husserl was criticized by Schutz for not acknowledging the genesis of typification in the system of relevances (Schutz, 2003, Gros, 2017).

Cameron and the drums

Berger and Cooper (2003) observed preschool children in the United States for a period of 10 weeks, in contexts where a music program was carried out that also involved the children's parents. Of some of the situations that were documented by this investigation, the case of Cameron is described, a child who explores some drums that have been provided:

> Cameron moves to a box full of hand drums. Cameron takes out all the drums and sets them around him like a drum set. He also includes two cymbals. He then goes and finds two mallets. He alternates playing from drum to drum and often ends his phases with a cymbal. After playing a few minutes, he rearranges the drums and places the higher-pitched ones next to him and the lower-pitched drums on the outside. He is intent on his play and remains uninterrupted (Berger & Cooper 2003, 160).

Schutz's phenomenological view allows us to appreciate that Cameron probably preserves within his *stock of knowledge* a *typicality*, probably related to some percussion musical instrument. This *typification* of the experience would be derived from previous experiences of the child, which have become sedimented in the *stock of knowledg*e, possibly having seen how these objects were played, as he arranges the drums similar to how they are placed on some percussion instruments such as drums or cymbals.

It is also possible to appreciate certain features of a comprehension process related to the *relevances*, since after a period of time, the child rearranges the initial order of the drums; this seems to suggest that Cameron intends to look for other ways to play the drums.

Regarding this, it is important to mention that sometimes there are sounds found in objects within the reach of children (Coleman,1922), that is, those occasions in which children discover sounds in objects not related to musical practice, and using them as musical instruments, for example, playing a rhythm by hitting a plate with a spoon.

We consider that the notion of *typification* allows us to enter into the discussion of how in consciousness we order knowledge about objects from the use of these in the life-world, that is, the child orders knowledge about objects from their experiences with them based on their habitual or typical implementation in the social sphere. This has already been discussed from psychological approaches such as Vygotsky and Piaget, however the phenomenology of the social world allows us to identify that the concept of learning by imitation has an experiential emphasis that is not only restricted to behaviors based on memorization. This same notion may help to clarify the dilemma that Dansereau (2015) has already exposed, regarding at what moment something can be considered a musical behavior with sound-producing objects compared to one that is not.

Jenny and the jingle bells

In her research on the interaction of children with sound objects, Dansereau (2015) shows an interesting episode in which a girl (Jenny) uses bells while singing: 'Jenny has all of the jingle bells on her arm, stands up and starts singing and shaking her arm to accompany her singing [with another girl]. She sings, "Jingle bells, jingle bells, jingle all the way"' (Dansereau 2015, 40).

The relationship that the girl conceives between the sound-producing objects and a song is linked to the intersubjective *Lebenswelt*. The song 'Jingle bells' is often associated with the Christmas season, refers to a certain social consensus that prevails over the song linked to a widely recognized holiday in different contexts worldwide, that is a piece of music related to Christmas and that Jenny already knows. In the girl's *stock of knowledge*, there is a link between the jingle bell *typification* and a song that is socially considered to be a Christmas carol. In this way it can be perceived that objects beyond the physical or functional character in daily life retain a close relationship with the intersubjective feature of the life-world.

Considerations for further reflection

So far, we have tried to highlight some contributions that we consider can be transferred to research in music education. More specifically, we resort to a phenomenological current inspired by the Husserlian legacy: the phenomenology of Alfred Schutz. Phenomenology of the *natural attitude* can be used to try to understand a pragmatic aspect identified within the musical educational process of young children: the situations of interaction with sound-producing objects.

The phenomenology proposed by Alfred Schutz seems to be viable for our concern centered on the interaction with sound-producing objects, because it is aimed at elucidating the meaning that the child gives to the facts in his or her *Lebenswelt*, in which physical objects are involved. In this way, it allows us to recognize the musical learning process as a fact in the life-world, made up of experiences in which situations of exploration of sound objects can be included, as in music lessons.

We consider that this opens the opportunity to deepening the substrates of the experience that is linked to the use of sound-producing objects in the

learning process in childhood: such as the socialization of musical knowledge through the *stock of knowledge*, *typifications* and *relevance*. This contributes to understanding some more facets of music education that do not seem to have been fully clarified: How does the child experience the sound-producing objects within reach? How do these kinds of experiences relate to learning music?

These situations of manipulation or interaction with objects may seem obvious however, from the phenomenological view, they appear as a more complex aspect than what from common sense allows us to recognize. The situations of interaction with instruments that we have recovered here from childhood research are only a few examples from which we have conceived a value in the phenomenology of the social world, nevertheless it is necessary to continue to reflect on the most appropriate ways to make a thorough analysis of the operation of the child's consciousness, by taking up the legacy of Schutz.

Although we have opted for examples of the intervention of consciousness structures of the child when manipulating sound-producing objects, it will be necessary to continue to study the potentiality of Schutz's phenomenology in relation to the writings that the same author deals with regarding the musical phenomenon. For now, these same structures of consciousness turn out to be contributions of the phenomenology of the *natural attitude* that can be seen as a way to access the background of the experiences of the child with musical instruments, in the understanding that these experiences are indeed an important aspect of the learning process. In principle, we believe it is appropriate to point out two aspects as starting points to explain their potential in the subject we have discussed here:

Interaction with sound-producing objects as an experience in the life-world: whether it is a kind of music in a school environment or not, where such objects are accessible, it is necessary to recognize that these are experiences that involve processes of domains of meaning in the child in social life situations, in which consciousness intervenes. Regarding school environments, it is possible to assume that this meaning domain involves and is inserted into the learning process that the teacher seeks to guide in the child. This also implies the socialization of different knowledge and the development of skills in the child, such as aural discrimination or rhythm playing, which in turn, delineate the basis of music education that the child may eventually receive. Regarding non-school environments, we can refer to other surroundings where children either through the family or the

community where they grow up, are related to some kind of musical practice. These places can be exemplified by John Blacking's (Campbell, 2000) research on Venda culture, in which he described how some children sat next to adults to observe how percussion instruments were played.

2. The intentional consciousness in the experiences with sound-producing objects. This foundation of the phenomenological tradition, present in the thought of Schutz, implies that we consider that the child experiences objects that are given to their consciousness from structures that are constantly changing. In a school context of music education, this would be implicit in activities that use instruments such as tambourines or bells, in activities aimed at laying the foundations of the development of rhythmic or aural skills. This argument would be further supported by the fact that Schutz, in following the phenomenology of Husserl's *natural attitude*, focuses on pragmatic projects undertaken by the subject, as we can characterize the experiences of manipulation and exploration of sound-producing objects.

These interactions with objects from this phenomenological perspective are experiences that are associated with the structures of consciousness described by Alfred Schutz and with which we can have an approach to how the child dominates different situations within his life-world. From the *system of relevances*, we can see that the child lives processes of apprehension and comprehension in school environments, in which different instruments can be used to perform different activities for musical educational purposes.

The challenge for educators in this type of school environment, by making use of sound-producing objects in their music lessons, is to offer activities that are highly attractive to the child. For example, the use of musical instruments from cultural backgrounds other than those familiar to children can involve such processes to dominate experiences that require the operation of consciousness from the systems of *relevance* of children. It seems that Schutz' reflections on *relevance* resemble what in the field of pedagogy has been discussed from the perspective of cognitive psychology, with contributions on the meaningful learning of David Ausubel. However, we believe that the contributions from phenomenology could complement what has already been described in cognitive terms about children's experience with sound-producing objects.

Through the *stock of knowledge*, it is possible to consider that within the experiences of interaction with physical objects, the child takes sediments from

previous experiences to develop in the life-world; in this way that generates a comprehension of problematic aspects that can be presented in the process of musical teaching, as for example, during lessons in which they are involved and which involve learning new rhythmic patterns from the use of sound objects such as claves or castanets. The *typifications* linked in the *stock of knowledge* as organizers of sediments of experience allow us to consider that sound-producing objects like musical instruments are not perceived by the child as physical objects devoid of meaning, but they are experienced as objects based on different determinations that are intersubjectively shared in the *Lebenswelt* into which the child is born and socialized in music lessons.

One of the most important challenges of music education at different ages is to achieve the socialization of musical knowledge, and Schutz's point of view allows us to demonstrate more clearly the value of experience in musical learning. This experience can involve first contact with musical instruments at home, music lessons, the development of an instrumental technique, or the internalization of different theoretical musical notions.

Our reflections thus far open the way for new topics to be addressed in future research work. For example, it would be interesting to investigate further from this phenomenological perspective with respect to other experiences besides the manipulation or exploration of objects, as in dance or singing in childhood. For now, we can assume that the potentiality of the phenomenological legacy of Schutz that we have proposed to highlight here allows us to conceive the need to discuss different topics of music education from multidisciplinary research. We think that a phenomenological discussion about experiences in childhood in situations oriented to music learning can complement what has been said from other theoretical approaches regarding the interaction with sound-producing objects in childhood and their musical educational implications. The complementarity between contributions from different fields of knowledge would generate a deeper understanding on different issues in the field of music education.

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