EDITORIAL

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GENRES, TECHNOLOGY AND MULTIMODALITY: PERSPECTIVES FOR TEACHING AND LEARNING LANGUAGES AND FOR TEACHER DEVELOPMENT*****

Research around Textual Genres

Linha d’Água issue 33/2, aims at presenting articles that discuss research based on textual genres and developed in dialogue with other topics currently present,

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such as: i) the role of technologies and multimodality in teaching-learning of languages; ii) teaching work and teacher development; iii) the development of oral and writing skills by students in native or foreign languages in different contexts, including the university.

Research on textual genres has been developed in Brazil for several decades, since the last years of the 20th century. As Machado and Lousada (2010) point out, the teaching of through textual genres reaches the Brazilian context with the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) and ends up becoming a prescription, in the sense attributed by some of the Labor Sciences (GUÉRIN et al., 2001). In other words, genres start to guide educational policies, both from the point of view of teaching guidelines, in the PCN and in the National Textbook Program (PNLD), which guides the elaboration of textbooks, or, also, in teacher development. Thus, in different ranges, we have seen an increasing interest in what concerns textual genres coupled with the teaching, most importantly, the teaching of both native and foreign languages. This influence was translated into the elaboration of didactic materials, which have a wide dissemination in the national territory, as they reach, in some way, the classroom, and also in national programs, such as the Portuguese Language Olympics.

According to these authors (MACHADO; LOUSADA, 2010), however, due to the lack of scientific consensus on the notion of textual genre and knowledge built upon genres, there was what we can call “inverted didactic transposition”, to use the proposed term by Chevallard (1985). This term can be understood as follows: due to the lack of consensus on genres and scientific knowledge on the subject, guidelines, educational and didactic materials of the most varied forms were proposed, without a specific internal coherence, without clear theoretical bases and without a logical articulation of concepts and practices. The result was, on the one hand, a mismatch between the proposals for teaching materials and the development of teachers to use them. And, on the other hand, an inconsistency in the official guidelines for teaching, in the didactic material and or in the practices of teachers, precisely because there is no consensus on the concept of textual / discursive genre and on the ways to teach it. Ultimately, we can say that these inconsistencies and vagueness have not helped in the implementation of teaching
proposals based on textual genres, a reality that has increasingly stimulated studies on genres and their teaching.

Since the discussions regarding textual genres started in Brazil, several theoretical trends have been inserted and outlined, being them more or less focused on teaching. Some of those trends, according to Araújo (2004), are: socio-rhetoric, systemic-functional, socio-interactionist (encompassing the Bakhtinian strand and socio-discursive interactionism), critical discourse analysis, French discourse analysis. According to the author (ARAÚJO, 2004), at that time, there was more work on the socio-rhetoric trends (20.7%), in the socio interactionist line (36.9%), probably because it combines two aspects and also a blend of perspectives (24%). Although this situation has probably changed considerably more than a decade after the publication of the article, it seems to be important to pay attention to the amount of work that mixes more than one perspective, which seems to us to be a characteristic that still occurs in the Brazilian context, especially if we take into account the issues that arise in the study of textual / discursive genres in contemporary times. We will later return to this issue.

As Bawarshi and Reiff (2010) point out, many studies of textual genres in Brazil synthesize several linguistic currents, rhetorical, social / sociological tradition, also including the French and Swiss traditions, of Sociodiscursive Interactionism (ISD) (BRONCKART, 1999, 2006, 2008). These authors consider “instructive” and “rich” the way in which, in the Brazilian context, these traditions are combined to make it possible to understand “the functioning of genres and how they can be taught at various levels” (BAWARSHI; REIFF, 2010, p. 77). For these authors:

In so doing, Brazilian genre studies offer a way of seeing these traditions as compatible with one another and as providing analytical and theoretical tools by which to understand how genres function linguistically, rhetorically, and sociologically. (BAWARSHI; REIFF, 2010, p. 75).

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1 This way, genre studies in Brazil offer a way to see these traditions as compatible with each other and as offering analytical and theoretical tools through which one can understand how genres work linguistically, rhetorically and sociologically. (Translation by the authors).
Although we do not fully agree with the above statements, since it does not seem to us that research on textual / discursive genres in Brazil systematically combines different traditions, as if they were always a synthesis, as the authors indicate, this interpretation finds support in some studies that, despite adopting a general theoretical framework, they combine other studies in order to find answers to emerging questions in contemporary times and in the Brazilian context. In the second decade of the 21st century, we have seen emerging issues that arise in the world and in the Brazilian scene, such as: literacies and multiliteracies, academic literacy, multimodality, distance learning and the use of technological tools and resources for teaching, not to mention themes that are always present, such as teacher development.

The theme of literacies and multiliteracies has been widely explored in Brazil in the last decade. Starting from the studies on literacies, proposed by Street (2014) and taken up by many Brazilian authors (for example, KLEIMAN, 2006), we see a series of works, many of them articulating the issue of literacies to the teaching of / through textual genres (BUENO; ZANI, 2019). Closely linked to those studies, we also have the issue of academic literacy (PEREIRA, 2019; LOUSADA, BUENO, DEZUTTER; 2019; LOUSADA, TONELLI, 2019), which expanded in Brazil in view of the difficulties in the production of textual genres by Brazilian students. In this regard, research in Brazil frequently returns to English-speaking or Latin American studies (PEREIRA, 2019), since in countries like Switzerland, for example, where there is a long tradition of research on textual genres, from the perspective of ISD, the problem of teaching-learning of academic textual genres is not an actual reality. Still with regard to literacies, we saw concerns with elementary and high school that seek to bring students closer to school, expanding the relationship between their daily life, highly connected to the internet, and the school environment, motivating them to learn. In this context, the proposal for multiliteracies or multiple literacies emerges (ROJO, 2013; ROJO, BARBOSA, 2015).

At the same time, in the Brazilian (and global) context, access to the internet and the emergence of Web 2.0 enabled interactions of various types that were not previously possible in the digital environment, and this boosted reflections on
multimodality that were already present before, but which gained new contours. A classic approach to multimodality is proposed by Kress and Van Leuween (2006), who start from the principles of Systemic-Functional Analysis (HALLIDAY, 1985/2004) and from their understanding of textual genres, to reflect on multimodal texts. Many other authors also explore the issue of multimodal genres (DIONÍSIO, 2011) and propose investigations on the role of digital technologies in the production of oral or written genres. Digital environments and the role of technologies (FERREIRA, 2012; FERREIRA; MELO, 2016) for teaching are themes that are also widely explored in the study of textual genres today and, therefore, studying their impacts and the transformations they demand has been a recurrent practice in research in Applied Linguistics.

On the other hand, studies on teacher education have always been present in research both in Education and in Applied Linguistics and, since textual genres have become a prescription for teaching in Brazil, thinking about teaching by / through genres and in how to teach instructors to do so has become inseparable. In the area of Applied Linguistics, many theoretical frameworks on teacher education have been developed in the Brazilian context, among which, we mention three, which seem to us most frequently cited in Brazilian research: Schön’s proposal (1995, 2000) about the reflective practitioner, the research on life narrative, inspired by Clandinin and Connely (2000) and, more recently, the aspects that consider teaching to be a work, rescuing the studies of some of the Labor Sciences (LOUSADA, 2006, 2017).

Returning to what was exposed by Bawarshi and Reiff (2010), according to whom, in the Brazilian context, there would be a synthesis of several theoretical currents about textual / discursive genres, we can say that addressing the complex issues that are emerging in the current scenario from a single theoretical framework is difficult, not only because of the fact that many of these theoretical approaches emerged a long time ago and do not necessarily have answers to current problems, but also because the Brazilian education scenario often creates different demands from those in other places and countries.

With this perspective in mind, a symposium was proposed at the 10th International Symposium on Textual / Discursive Genres (SIGET) – 2019, which took
place at the University of Córdoba, Argentina, in which we sought, from the central theoretical framework of Sociodiscursive Interactionism (ISD) (BRONCKART, 1999, 2006, 2008) and its developments in the field of Didactics of Languages (SCHNEUWLY; DOLZ, 2004; DOLZ, 2016), to accept research that presented dialogues with other theoretical and methodological perspectives, such as: i) a Grammar of Visual Design (KRESS; VAN LEEUWEN, 2006) and its relations with ISD (LEAL, 2011; MELÃO, 2014; SUMIYA, 2017), to address issues related to multimodality; ii) the Clinic of Activity (CLOT, 1999, 2001, 2008, 2017) and the Ergonomics of the Activity of Education Professionals (AMIGUES, 2004; SAUJAT, 2004; FAÏTA, 2004), in order to discuss teacher development (LOUSADA, 2006, 2017); iii) authors such as Kembellec and Broudoux (2017), Burdick et.al. (2012), who investigate the impact of digital technologies on academic productions and text genres; iv) and also authors dealing with literacies (STREET, 2014), multi-literacies (ROJO, 2013) and academic literacy (LOUSADA, BUENO, DEZUTTER, 2019; PEREIRA, 2019; PEREIRA; BASÍLIO, 2014).

Some of the guiding questions that we hoped to answer with the symposium were: what is the importance of considering multimodality and what is its role in language teaching? How can technologies contribute to the teaching and learning of languages based on textual genres? How do digital genres transform academic writing, reading, and, consequently, teacher development? How to use the perspective of textual genres for teacher education? How to teach instructors to teach textual genres? We had in mind that the debate of the set of researches, concluded or in progress, could contribute to better understand the role of textual genres for the teaching and learning of languages today, as well as their interface with technologies and with teacher development.

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The articles selected in this issue, entitled Genres, technology and multimodality: perspectives for teaching and learning languages and for teacher development, take up the idea proposed at the Córdoba Symposium and, therefore, are intertwined links in a chain, sharing points in common and embracing new links
regarding literacies, multiliteracies and, multimodality, that is, teaching and teacher development, through different genres of texts, oral production, writing, in digital or performance mode.

In addition, they cover a wide spectrum in relation to international sources, participation and plurilingual linguistic concerns. This issue counts on the Genevan participation, represented by the researchers Joaquim Dolz and Antony Coppolla, as well as researchers from Portugal, a country represented by Audria Leal and Matilde Gonçalves; and from the United States, by Christopher Blackwell and Chiara Palladino. Nationally, the volume contains articles involving researchers from Rio Grande do Sul, Pernambuco and the State of São Paulo, in a partnerships with international institutions.

Coppolla and Dolz’s contribution bring relevant elements in today’s society about the challenge faced in the development of oral argumentative ability in French in the school environment and the equality of speech between female and male children. There we found the verification of the device aiming at the equality of the distribution of the oral expression in a regulated debate, between genders, in a Geneva school, of children between 8 and 10 years old. The difference in taking shifts between boys and girls is a phenomenon known in the scope of argument, as well as the concern to reduce distances (BAXTER, 1999). However, it is known that girls at kindergarten may have a exceptionally smart language brighter than boys in the first two years of development (SKEAT et al. 2010) and also higher scores in the vocabulary regarding the labeling of behaviors and lexical production in the French language (KERN, 2007). As they grow up, however, several factors can influence the development of language-related skills, including the practice of debate, and the differences that appear show greater chances for boys. The results show, on the one hand, that the device adopted in their research can show the mechanisms of domination by the students and, mainly, the difference in the taking of shifts between boys and girls. They also emphasize the importance of the role of moderators in interventions aimed at equality of speech and argumentative ability. Joaquim Dolz, as we know, is a professor and researcher at the University of Geneva traditionally linked to the didactic model of genres. Coppolla is a doctoral
student at the same university in Educational Sciences in the teaching of French and genre studies.

Still in the scope of the French language and speech, the article by Lousada, Silva & Dias brings an account of their research carried out in the academic context aiming at academic literacy and plurilingualism at the university. An initiative of the partnership between the Dean of Graduate Studies and the Academic Literacy Laboratory at the University of São Paulo (LLAC), the academic textual production course in French, which results are discussed in the article, shows the great need for increasing the level of oral presentations in different languages within the Brazilian scientific context, and this includes the French language, which, like every language used in its particular scientific context, involves rules related to the activity itself. The reader will have all the theoretical framework that surrounds the course, the preparation of didactic material and the analysis of the students’ production. Eliane Lousada is a CNPq productivity fellow, leader of the ALTER and ALTER-AGE groups at CNPq and works in the area of teacher development in French, text genres and academic literacy at USP. Silva and Dias are, respectively, doctoral student and masters from USP and researchers from the ALTER-AGE-CNPq group.

Other articles discuss different aspects of the impact of multimodality and multi-tools in different genres of texts and teaching materials in the context of teaching. Zani, Bueno and Dolz, for example, add to the traditional language skills an investigation of multimodal capabilities around the video-lesson object. It is not a small contribution when talking about the importance of video lessons, especially after the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic, which placed everyone under the necessary social distance. With so many available resources and even different existing models for instructions passed on video, one more challenge comes to teachers who will have to make decisions on how to use those resources through didactic sequences. Because they argue that producing such material goes beyond achieving good communication or mastering the content. In the late 1980s, the comparative effectiveness of resources such as videotape, audiotape and telespeech was investigated (BEARE, 1989). The issue of precarious teaching was already alive in relation to those media as opposed to instructions provided live to students. Such opposition does not seem to be a problem in itself anymore, since
distance communication tools have evolved a lot in technology. Thus, synchronous pedagogy seems to be a viable and profitable alternative to a modality called blended-learning (HOGAN, 2019), made possible by online video classes. But issues in teacher development related to the appropriation of those artifacts continue to encourage research in the area. Luzia Bueno has a PQ/ CNPq productivity scholarship and is an accredited professor in the Doctoral Program in Education at the São Francisco University in the city of Itatiba-SP; She is also vice-leader of the ALTER-AGE group and leader of the ALTER-LEGE / CNPq Group, known mainly for the authorship of books on oral and textual genres. Juliana Bacan Zani is a young PhD researcher from the ALTER-LEGE / CNPq Group and Pedagogical Coordinator of the Instituto de Educação Terra.

Reis conducts his research, on which his article is based, in an area dedicated to the preservation of historical languages that have consequently left traces in modern culture and languages; a little-known area outside the Humanities university offices. We are talking about Languages, Linguistics and Classical Studies, which, in one hand, are far from school banks, and, on the other, have been reborn with the incorporation of new methods, with digital and not only digitized libraries, since the mid-90s (CRANE, 2000), and its effective dissemination for just over ten years (BODARD; MAHONY, 2008; CRANE et al. 2009; BLACKWELL; MARTIN. 2009; TERRAS; CRANE, 2010), causing an impact on teaching, research and production work of texts that make up the classicist activity to which the digital label adds. Reis brings up the discussion of this emerging teaching and researcher activity in the light of ISD and labor science concepts. Are texts becoming their genres within this area? Are we facing a new area or a new style and genre of activity? The way in which transformations affect the production of the object of study itself, its dissemination, its research and teaching can be demonstrated both in Reis’ research in a double lookup with a researcher representing the classicist professional linked to computing, and in the joint article of Ferreira, Blackwell and Palladino.

The latter is proof that there are particularities in literacy in the face of innovations in infrastructure development in the area of classics and the impact on the way of studying, researching and disseminating academic production.
Ferreira dos Reis has a degree in Greek and German, is a PhD student in Linguistics and Portuguese Language at UNESP and collaborator of Open Projects in Classic Digital coordinated by Anise Ferreira, both members of the ALTER / CNPq Group; all participate in the International Consortium Sunoikisis Digital Classics, based at the University of Leipzig. Chiara is a young doctor from Leipzig who currently works in the United States with Christopher Blackwell, a professor in the same department of Classics at Furman University, and is known for being one of the creators of CITE architecture for digitizing classical texts, the architecture on which he stands, among others, the Homer Multitext project at the Harvard Center for Hellenic Studies in Washington DC Although there is much discussion about the problems linked to the changing dynamics of digital technologies and their instruments, such as the use of open languages, the development of reliable algorithms, various consistent corpus annotation, storage permanence, etc., digital classicism is making its mark. By pointing out promising directions for the area to be sustained in a world that responds to the demands of education, production and the market (BERTI, 2019), it brings Web 3.0, the third wave of the Internet, to the debate on the genres of digital texts.

Leal and Gonçalves, in their contribution, highlight specific processes for the teaching / learning of reading dual-directed multimodal texts: in a macro way, in terms of the contextual level, and in a meso / micro way, in terms of the configurational level. For the authors, the reporting text genre is suitable for teaching multimodal texts, as it is a genre in which different semiotic modes interact and for meeting the recommendations of Basic Education in Portugal and Elementary Education in Brazil. The article thus brings the steps of analysis both to the contextual level and to the configurational level, considering the non-textual elements articulated to the text, contributing methodologically to the ISD Genre Didactic Model. Áudria Leal has been working on didactic models based on genre with multimodal texts, such as cartoon, for some years (LEAL, 2011; LEAL; SILVA-HARDMEYER, 2019), and Matilde Gonçalves with text and modalization genres. Both are teachers and researchers at the Linguistic Research Center at Universidade Nova de Lisboa.
Leitão, a professor at the Federal Institute of Pernambuco, on the Garanhuns campus, researches multiliteracy through the literary corpus, aiming at poetic understanding and authorial production. The input, two pieces by Martins Pena; the production, four comic stories based on the plays that 36 students of the 2nd year of Integrated High School in Informatics had to do. The use of comics in the classroom is something established as a means of disseminating characters and classic works (BORGES, 2017). But his article properly emphasizes not only the valorization of the literary text in the Portuguese language classroom, but also, at the same time, the development of language skills with regard to the visual, gestural, spatial, etc., through a retextualization. His work shows that a lot can be done for literacy also with accessible resources, and what seems simple in terms of procedure might be something very sophisticated. With a degree in Literature, André Alexandre Padilha Leitão holds a doctorate from UFPE, works in the teaching of Portuguese and English languages, mediated by computer and web services, with a focus on digital literacy, and is the author of books that contemplate literary texts.

Tognato and Butler contribute to this issue with a tool for teaching work, an analysis of the reviews of Portuguese language textbooks approved by the Guide for the National Book and Didactic Material Program 2020. The concern of the authors is to highlight how the reviews are related to the development of language skills and reference is made to working with different language/discursive practices of different genres. Maria Izabel Rodrigues Tognato is a professor in the Department of Linguistics and Classical Studies at the State University of Paraná and coordinates the research group Language, Development, Education and its Relations and the Pedagogical Advisory Center. Daniella Barbosa Buttler, with teaching experience in private schools, is a professor at the SENAC University Center of the Santo Amaro Campus and at the São Paulo State College of Technology, FATEC. She is dedicated to teaching the Portuguese language.

Closing this issue, there is a review by Thiago Jorge Ferreira de Santos on the recent publication of the work The Socio Discursive Interactionism in focus: reflections on a theory in continuous construction and a praxis in movement. Santos presents how its organizers (GUIMARÃES, CARNIN, LOUSADA) brought together chapters by great exponents, founders and distinguished ISD researchers,
namely Jean-Paul Bronckart, Bernard Schneuwly and Rita Hofstetter, from Geneva; Dora Riestra, from the Universidad Nacional de Rio Negro; and Rosalice Pinto, Carla Teixeira and Audria Albuquerque Leal, from Universidade Nova de Lisboa. Brazilian authors, with outstanding production in the area, have their origins in universities in the states of São Paulo, Minas Gerais, Rio Grande do Sul, Paraná, Paraíba and Ceará. The review offers the reader unfamiliar with ISD a clear view of the thematic, methodological and representative distribution of ISD, in its VI International Meeting, held in July 2019, at the University of Vale do Rio dos Sinos (UNISINOS). The reader already familiar with the approach, in turn, has at his fingertips a rich overview of the trends and directions of the ISD.

We close this editorial by presenting a balance sheet regarding the presence of national and international authors and institutions in this issue. Eight texts by 18 authors were gathered, representing 9 different institutions from 4 countries; and we have three French translators, which have allowed greater access to Swiss research. With this issue, we invite everyone to read the articles and reviews with significant research results.

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The Journal has a large group of ad hoc reviewers and the Editorial Board and a body of Portuguese-speaking reviewers of excellence, which guarantees its high quality. It also counts on the translation revision work, carried out by professor Roseli Serra, from the Catholic University of Pernambuco.

With this issue of the Journal the Editorial Board seeks the internationalization of the journal, since we receive articles from authors from foreign universities, seeking to respond to the requirements of the University of São Paulo and international agencies. _Linha d’Água_ thus becomes an open space for publications linked to Portuguese language studies, linguistic-discursive studies and
their relationship with teaching, maintaining a constant dialogue with research developed in Brazil and abroad.

References


