

22 Negotiating Genre: Lecturer's Awareness in Genre Across the Curriculum Project at the University Level

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INTRODUCTION

It has been said that genres created in each “area of human activity” (Bakhtin, 1953-54) or by “discourse communities” (Swales, 1990) **are shared** by “participants in these various areas” or “expert members of communities.” However, at least in Argentina, researchers and post-graduate students are not fully familiar with the conventions of expected academic genres, as we have found in previous ethnological research (Moyano, 2000, 2001). Most new researchers realize they have difficulties in producing their scientific/academic texts, and MA and PhD students delay or do not complete their theses. Pre-university and undergraduate students, as well, show limited skills at solving writing tasks assigned by lecturers in Spanish as a mother tongue (Ezcurra, 1995; Ameijide, Murga, Padilla, & Douglas, 2000; Pereira & Di Stéfano, 2001; UNLu., 2001; Zalba, 2002; Cubo de Severino, 2002; Murga, Padilla, Douglas, & Ameijide, 2002; Moyano, 2003a).

It could be said, then, that this sharing of genres does not occur as a natural process, just by being in contact with them. As Swales (1990) suggests, new members of each community should be “initiated” by the experts. Or, as Martin and Rose (2007) emphasize, genres must be taught in the educational formal system or working places. According to these authors and other scholars of the Sydney School, teachers don't have genre consciousness. Then, the job of linguists is to identify and name the different kinds of texts that are found,

looking closely at the kinds of meaning involved—using global patterns to distinguish one text type from another and more local patterns to distinguish stages within a text. Recurrent global patterns were recognized as genres, and given names. . . . Recurrent local patterns within genres were recognized as **schematic structures**, and also labeled. (Martin & Rose, 2007)

Martin defines genre as “a staged, goal-oriented, purposeful activity in which speakers engage as members of our culture” (1984), or “—more technically— as

a particular configuration of register variables of field, tenor and mode” (Martin & Rose, 2003, 2007). “This means that genres are defined as a recurrent configuration of meanings and that they enact the social practices of a given culture.”

So, the global patterns of academic, scientific and professional texts are related to human activities and meanings in each of these cultures. These specific practices with specific purposes are realised in texts according to the institutions and the field of knowledge, the participants involved and the role played by language. To be part of these social areas, where language is constitutive of the activities with some participation of multimodality, the students need to know what kind of practices, relationships between participants and different kind of texts take place in each area, and what resources of language are available to construe meaning. So, students need to be taught different genres in the academy and “how they relate to one another” (Martin & Rose, 2007) to be members of these cultures.

Academic activity across the curriculum demands more complex discursive practices while students reach a new step in their careers. These practices are related to disciplinary contents and research, technological development and professional life. So, they have to deal with theoretical concepts and produce texts in various genres. These activities are new for them, so they need to learn new genres, in which language is the main important resource: not only construing meaning (disciplinary concepts and their relations) but realising practices as social activities. In written and oral texts in these cultures, language is reflective and constitutive of the genre, with different kinds and degrees of multimodality. If students at the end of their career cannot manage this kind of text, they will be excluded from the University, scientific activities and/or working places.

José Luis Coraggio (1994) identifies two kinds of causes for the undergraduate educational crisis in Argentina: poor skills in learning from reading texts combined with a lack of abilities for solving problems, and frequent disruptions in studies and attrition from academic programs. These two factors, the academic difficulties and the individual lack of continuity of studies, might be related to each other.

ACADEMIC LITERACY IN ARGENTINA: A BRIEF REVIEW

There are different proposals about how to do the work of teaching academic literacy at the University: to offer writing courses outside the subjects (taught by linguistics lecturers); to teach academic literacy inside the subjects (taught by the subject lecturer as member of the discourse community); to give special training to advanced students who become tutors. These proposals were developed in the Writing Across the Curriculum

movement, largely in the United States (McLeod & Soven, 1992; Marinkovich Ravena & Mirán Ramírez, 1998; Fullwiller & Young, 1982) and they are applied in some isolated practices in Argentina (UNLu, 2001). However, there are other approaches that focus on teaching genre in other traditions: ESP, applied especially in teaching academic literacy in English as a foreign language; and some SFL, applied in English in several universities and in Spanish in the Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (UNGS).

Despite these initiatives, Carlino (2003) has said that the universities in Argentina have the tendency to ignore that written activities affect knowledge acquisition and understanding. Professors only assign writing to evaluate learning, but not to develop the learning process. To reach this conclusion, Carlino carried out exploratory qualitative research, analyzing students' discourse, teaching programs and papers offered in education and literacy conferences. She found, as a result, that there are 30 universities where some professors teach academic literacy in their disciplinary classes, but without institutional support. These proposals—she says—are based on Writing Across the Curriculum movement (WAC), Process Pedagogy (Murray, 1982) and ESP (Dudley-Evans, 1994; Swales, 1990).

In a similar review, conclusions of “La lectura y la escritura como prácticas académicas universitarias” Conference (UNLu, 2001) identify two kinds of proposals in Argentina, which are represented by two groups, and remark too about the lack of institutional support for these initiatives. The first group includes remedial courses in pre-undergraduate studies or for freshmen, oriented to fill in the gaps left by “defective” schooling. This perspective implies that secondary schools have to teach “general abilities” for writing, rather than discourse abilities in context. The job is assigned to Spanish professors or reading and writing specialists. These proposals are based on theories of texts as autonomous objects, cognitive processes, pragmatics and rhetorical discourse, ESP and New Rhetoric—following Hyland's classification (2002).

The second group is formed by university professors of different disciplines, who conceive of reading and writing development as strongly related to each discipline's knowledge construction. They assign students very complex tasks of reading and writing, but they only teach the concepts of the discipline. Others try to combine teaching discipline and literacy practices as socialization into the community. Again following Hyland's classification (2002) they apply cognitive theories, expressivist views of writing, writing as cognitive process, knowledge telling and knowledge-transforming models.

Carlino's approach is that students get into disciplinary contents through reading and writing practices: they interpret, assimilate and engage other cognitive processes to understand a specific field. It follows, in her view, that the

lecturer's duty is to work on academic literacy in their specific subject as a fundamental tool for learning (2005), but she lacks a linguist perspective to help students in this process.

However, it doesn't seem that disciplines' lecturers have got the tools for doing this job. In fact, although Carlino proposes very interesting and useful interventions and literacy practices with her students, it is obvious that her work needs more specific linguistic knowledge and specified techniques for consolidating student's learning in literacy.

THE PRODEAC PROGRAM

Taking into account students' limited literacy skills in Argentina—mentioned above—the Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (UNGS)² gives a compulsory introductory workshop in literacy for all students before they start their careers. Although the workshop lasts seven months, there is not enough time to teach all genres that students will face across the curriculum, nor is there time to develop a theoretically and technically grounded view of texts. So, we have selected to teach at this stage some “basic genres” that are often combined in academic macro-genres (Moyano, 2005) and a literature report (Pereira, Moyano, & Valente, 2005).

In the First Cycle of the curriculum, which lasts two and a half years, professors say that students have serious problems in reading literature recommended in their classes. This assumption is based on written examinations, in which students answer some questions about fundamental concepts and, sometimes, relationships between them. In the Second Cycle—2 and a half more years—lecturers complain about student's writing and oral skills in using academic language and structuring more complex texts. Therefore, in 2002, lecturers from the Instituto de Industria of the UNGS asked for our help as linguists, because professors have failed in helping students to improve their academic literacy³.

Based on theoretical assumptions about genres, teaching and learning, and taking into account lecturers' complaints and requests from students, we have designed a Project to Develop Literacy Across the Curriculum (PRODEAC) to apply in the Second Cycle (Moyano & Natale, 2003)⁴. This project was refused twice by the *Consejo Superior*—the collegiated government organ of the University. This fact indicates the lack of institutional support for these kind of programs in Argentina (UNLu, 2001; Carlino, 2003, 2004, 2005), against the general consensus in other countries, especially in the Anglo-Saxon context, like Canada, US, Australia and the UK (Carlino, 2001a, 2001b, 2002, 2003, 2006; Marinkovich Ravena & Mirán Ramírez, 1998).

Finally, the project was only approved as a University Program in a revised

version (Moyano and Natale, 2004) in 2005, after the three Institutes in charge of the Second Cycle of the diverse curricula joined to support and demand this project, under the condition that it had to be evaluated during its first application. In consequence, PRODEAC is the first Program of this kind in Argentina with institutional financial support necessary for its development.

The theoretical frame of this work is Genre & Register Theory, developed by Martin and the Sydney School in Systemic Functional Linguistics, and its pedagogical proposal (Martin & Rose, 2003, 2005, 2007; Eggins & Martin, 2001, 2003; Martin, 1993, 1999, 2000; Christie & Martin, 1997; Eggins, 1994; Martin & Rothery, 1993; Cope & Kalantzis, 1993; Halliday & Martin, 1993), adapted to our context and different educational levels in the course of research during 2004-2005. (Moyano & Natale, 2004; Moyano, 2007).

PRODEAC proposes that the joint work between language professors and professors in subject disciplines has central relevance in teaching academic/scientific and work place literacy. It could be said that this kind of joint work can guarantee the level of literacy development expected at the end of undergraduate studies. However, this multidisciplinary practice only can take place under some conditions:

- (1) Language professors must have some specialization in scientific discourse and related linguistic and pedagogical theories.
- (2) The scientific/academic and work place genres used need to be described and taught.
- (3) The pedagogy has to be oriented to the academic or professional contexts, and must help students develop from heteronomy to autonomy.
- (4) Disciplinary lecturers and linguists will work interdisciplinarily, sharing knowledge to design pedagogical activities for teaching genres, the teaching program, and evaluation and assessment.

This Program assumes that the students have to be introduced to common practices in the field by the expert members of the community. It allows, also, the improvement of communication via interaction between experts, to enrich the diversity of genres in the university. What's more, the modeling of joint-practice between experts of diverse disciplines could make a difference in the profile of graduating students who have the habit of working in inter or multidisciplinary groups to produce knowledge in co-operative work.

For achieving these goals, we have created the figure of an "assistant linguistics professor" who has the role of accompanying the process of teaching literacy inside the subjects. This means that the linguist has to (a) negotiate with lecturers the genres they want students to produce; (b) intervene in classes teaching

students not only genres' moves (Swales, 1990) or stages (Martin, 1992), but also the most relevant resources of scientific discourse; and (c) encourage students to deal with individual work, giving them the possibility of consulting in individual sessions. The texts produced are marked by both the linguist and the subject's professor in charge of the subject. This collaborative process provides a model for the specific subject's professor, so that they can do this job alone after three semesters of intervention, with the possibility of ongoing consultation with linguists.

Then, PRODEAC has three pedagogical goals:

- (1) To guide the improvement of students' academic development through teaching genres and their realisation through language in relation to their activity as university fellows.
- (2) To give assistance to specific subjects' lecturers in planning, assigning and evaluating written and oral tasks, in order to increase knowledge construed by their students about the field and academic and work place practices.
- (3) To increase specific subjects' lecturers awareness of their disciplinary genres and guide them in teaching these genres.

NEGOTIATING GENRES

Before interacting with students, the linguists have to deal with the different levels of professors' genre awareness. They often lack consciousness about genres as activity in the university or in working contexts, about genres as constitutive of social action, and about the concept of language as a resource to construe reality or technical or scientific knowledge.

The way we found to work with lecturers is called "negotiation." By negotiation we understand the discussion between linguists and professors about the tasks they want to assign their students to write. These texts—following Genre & Register Theory—are instantiations of a genre, so are social activities with a clear purpose that members of a culture relate to another in a specific context or situation. These texts are developed by stages and phases which the students have to recognize, as well as their realisation by language. So, the lecturers need to be aware of these aspects of genre to formulate the assignments and to explain the usefulness of genre awareness in learning the subject and the academic or professional practice involved.

The negotiation begins with private encounters between the linguist and the lecturer participating in the Program. They talk about the subject and how teaching and evaluation will be developed. Then, they discuss the written or oral texts the lecturer will assign to their students.

The negotiation can develop in different ways, depending on the lecturer's consciousness. Some professors have changed their teaching program and the way of evaluation as soon as they have been notified that are going to participate in PRODEAC. Doing this, they show commitment with the Program. One of them said:

Until the last semester, the evaluation of the regular course has been done through two individual writing exams, based on a few questions to answer. The student's mark in the subject was based on an oral examination, which consisted in an individual oral exposition about a special topic that integrates the contents of the subject at the end of the course.

From the moment we started working with PRODEAC, this lecturer decided to change the strategies of evaluation: he assigned a written exam to do at home, a second one of the traditional type and a final written work to do at home with an oral defense. He expected to get written academic texts with characteristics similar to professional or scientific ones. Then, we could say he trusts in the action of the Program to improve the literacy abilities of his students.

Other professors showed high expectations about the goals their students could achieve, asking, as a final work, for texts for presentation in academic conferences or for publication. In this kind of work they expected the students to write a "scientific essay," using the course contents to solve a related issue.

It can be said, then, that some of the lecturers were very interested in the Program at the moment we started to work with them. Sometimes, their expectations were too high for the first time of application, but after several interventions through the semesters with the same group of students, they obtained some results that met those expectations.

EXPLORING NEGOTIATION

In this part of this paper, I will try to show the process of negotiation with different lecturers and to analyze their point of departure and their development through the 2nd semester of 2006⁵.

Case 1

In this first case, the subject lecturer was a very experienced professor and researcher who was assisted by two very young graduated fellows. They wanted the students to write an academic text similar to a research article, based in field experiences and incorporating technical and scientific concepts included in literature. The first activity consisted in reading some literature and writ-

ing resumès, which they could do well at this level of the curriculum. Then, the second assignment—designed by one of these young assistants—consisted of determining, after observation, variables affecting an ecologic site and their indicators. When the assistant linguist asked the professor what he thought the students would write, he said “two lists linked by arrows.” The assistant linguist didn’t contradict the proposal.

In most cases the students made two lists of elements linked by arrows. The professors marked these resolutions with 7 points and appraised them very much. These products were evaluated considering only the content, such as two lists of elements related “in some way” by the arrows. But, what did those arrows mean? Why did they choose those variables and what did they mean? There was no explanation. The variables were well selected, as were the indicators and the links between them. But they weren’t texts. Only a few students tried to write an introduction.

Then, the linguist suggested the professor ask students to transform this kind of schemata into a full and cohesive text, which could be a “case analysis.” For this purpose, the linguist asked for an article that instantiated this genre, so that they could collaboratively analyze an example in order to identify the schematic structure, the register and discourse-semantics and lexico-grammar resources. But the professor couldn’t identify a good example: he brought different articles about the same topic, but none was an instantiation of a “case analysis.” This means that he couldn’t recognize the genre, although this is one of the most common in this research area. The linguist, then, outlined by herself the schematic structure to show it to the subject’s professors, who found it very adequate for the task. Finally, the linguist made the negotiation of genre with the students, in a joint construction of the schematic structure of the genre and the possibilities of choices the language system provides in that context, unless the students were not aware of scientific language or genres. As a result of these actions, they produced case analyses from 14 to 25 pages long, well enough written.

After this experience, during the second part of the subject course, the written examination was prepared by the second young assistant. As she made a sequence of tasks to guide a short research, the linguist suggested that the students could write a research article (RA). The subject professor suggested that the linguist give the students another schemata, but the linguist proposed that students themselves analyze an RA—oriented by the linguist herself—taking into account not only the schematic structure but also variables of register and some discursive and grammatical resources. Without conviction, the lecturer agreed to read with students a paper, which was jointly analyzed with active participation of the three subject professors especially about the discipline’s conventions and topics.

For the last week of the semester, the students completed texts from 8 to 17 pages long. It's very important to say that in the past the students have never presented the final work on time, but this time they all did it. It's necessary to say here that one of the purposes of the Program is that students don't delay the final works, because it delays their graduation too.

Case 2

In previous meetings, the subject professor of this case showed his teaching program to the assistant linguist. Surprisingly, it included an uncommon assignment: a publishable paper. It could mean that this lecturer had some previous consciousness about the role of language in learning processes, or, at least, that the students need to acquire some writing resources before finishing undergraduate studies.

During the meetings, the linguist manifested worries about students' lack of enough information on the field's domain to write a publishable paper and their lack of training in writing RAs. This clearly shows that she doubted that genres may be learned without reflection, by just being in contact with them—in coincidence with Sydney School (Martin & Rose, 2007)—and that giving them brief instructions as in expert reviews is not enough to achieve the goal.

Then, the agreement between the professor and the assistant linguist was that they would do joint reading activities with the students and assign them a resumé, before choosing RAs to make a joint analysis. In this case, the assistant's intervention in the subject was facilitated by the professor, who worked with the linguist in joint analysis of the RA to help students in their approach to the genre and their specific characteristics in the discipline. They identified the IMDC structure and the linguistic resources to construe meaning in this genre as well as in multimodal forms: charts, maps and graphics. The students made their texts with linguist and lecturer assistance taking one by one the phases recognized during the analysis and including multimodal resources. The students had some difficulties during the process, but finally wrote texts very close to the genre, assisted by both the linguist and professor through email or consulting.

Finally, the professor suggested working with these students the next semester in the co-relative subject. At the same time, he decided to include in the bibliography of his teaching program more RAs to be read and analyzed by students from the beginning of the next course.

Case 3

Some lecturers believe that they cannot require more than one written assignment each semester because more writing would not leave students enough time to read the literature, which—they affirm—is the most important task in

the course. However, in some cases writing is as important as reading, because through writing the students can relate concepts and apply them, as in a case analysis or a project.

One of these lecturers planned to assign what he called “report of changes in an enterprise.” When the linguist asked if the students would visit companies to gather data for the report, the lecturer answered that they wouldn’t. Then, the assistant linguist suggested the students could better make a “*project of change*,” if the professor gave them an example of a specific issue in context. Then, the lecturer understood the idea of the Program and accepted this change. He negotiated with the linguist the genre, defining stages and phases, taking into account his experience in this area of professional work. After that, both participants of the negotiation prepared the task. The “project of change” should be a text presented by a professional for a specific purpose, e.g., a change in the production system.

The process of negotiation was very difficult with the subject professor, who didn’t trust in the capability of students to write this kind of text. The subject professor and the linguist looked for models, but couldn’t find any, except those that have confidential information. So, the negotiation was made by designing the structure schemata:

PRELIMINARY GENRE DESIGN

Purpose of the text:

Suggesting to authorities of a Company a “Project for a Production Plan and Control.”

Genre:

Project of Change in a Company

Hypothetical Participants:

- (1) Writer: Industrial Engineer making a proposal.
- (2) Readers: Company’s directors, professionals, mechanics and workers.

Information given to students:

Characteristics of an actual or hypothetical Company.
Problems faced by the Company in a specific time in its trajectory.

Schematic Structure:

- (1) Company’s situational description at the moment of the Project presentation:

- What's going wrong and why?
- Recognizing and describing problems/difficulties etc.
- Identifying possible causes.
- Identifying and describing possible present or future consequential problems.

(2) Proposal of Change:

- What kind of changes could solve the identified problems?
- Proposing changes for solving problems.
- Anticipating benefits those changes might produce.

After giving these schemata to students, the subject lecturer had to give some orientation for them. So, he proposed working with the *Just in Time* system, successfully applied in two actual companies. Then, the linguist suggested asking the students to define and describe the *Just in Time* system from the literature provided by the professor, which demanded changes in the first schemata:

RE-DESIGNING THE GENRE

Genre:

Project of Change in a Company

Social space:

Company work place

Hypothetical Participants:

- (1) Writer: Industrial Engineer making a proposal.
- (2) Readers: Company's directors, professionals, mechanics and employees.

Schematic Structure:

Introduction

- Anticipating the development of the text.

(1) *Just in Time* system

- *What's the Just in Time system?*
- Definition with application samples.

(2) Proposal for interaction between Company's sectors

- *How might the interaction be between productive and commercial sectors?*

- Factorial explanations and procedures.
- (3) Benefits of applying the Just in Time system
 - *Why will this system benefit the Company?*
 - Exposition. The student has to mention the benefits and disadvantages.

Conclusion

- Synthesis.

During the genre presentation class, the linguist explained the schematic structure and resources of discourse and different genres involved. The subject professor collaborated giving contextual information: the internal communication's relevance in a company, its style, the kind of relationship between the interactants, etc. This was a very useful resource for students. Although they delayed the presentation of the final text, at the end of the course after lot of work with the linguist in private encounters, they made proper texts.

Case 4

In another case, a professor assigned a "literature report" not giving time for negotiation with the linguist, nor between the linguist and the students. The students made separate resumès of each text, and the lecturer accepted these resumès as though they completed the task correctly. The linguist expressed the view that the genre was not realised, and the lecturer answered she didn't know indeed what a "literature report" was, that she had heard the name and decided to assign it to the students.

This was just one example of a professor's lack of commitment to the class and the university during two semesters' work. After that, this professor left the university, which might explain her lack of engagement, but we do not know this for certain.

This lecturer's lack of commitment was a negative influence for students, who didn't engage with the Program during this time. In other subjects involving PRODEAC, the more engaged the lecturer was, the more the students were engaged. However, if the students showed too much resistance, the lecturers were more reluctant to negotiate.

It is in this kind of situation that institutional support is very much needed. The university's strong commitment—in this case of the Instituto de Industria—led this conflict to a good ending: lecturers had to negotiate and students had to accept their participation in the Program.

Case 5

We will refer now to another subject professor, who gradually understood the Program during her participation. Before starting, she was already enthusiastic about giving written activities to her students. These activities were proposed for closing units of the teaching program, to help students think about the concepts of the subject and to evaluate learning. She called these activities “fresh” or “spontaneous” writing, “not being exemplars of a genre.”

The first step for negotiation was to make a diagnosis, asking students to make a resumé of a text from the literature given. Both the professor and the linguist marked these texts and found that the students could accomplish this activity very well, as they were used to writing them in the First Cycle of the curriculum. Problems in writing emerge when the professors assign the students to write a literature report or a more complex text.

The second activity in this first edition of the joint work was to expose briefly some concepts about tensions in economics and politics during the 70s, applying them especially to the Argentinean case. The subject professor didn't want to analyze a text of this kind, so the linguist tried to recover the experience in literacy the students had had in a previous course they took prior to their studies as university fellows. The linguist proposed a kind of schemata for the text to be elaborated. The results were not as the professor expected, so the linguist negotiated to do a joint-editing work in the class, to explain to the students the common difficulties they had with the assignment.

The third task was defined as a “case analysis.” The students had to take from newspapers a case related to concepts in the literature and analyze it in a “proper way,” with students developing criteria for applying concepts from the literature. The linguist suggested it was very difficult for students to develop their own criteria at the 6th semester of the curriculum, because they were never asked to do a similar task in the First Cycle. So, they needed some guide to develop a critical view of the literature and how to relate it to a case.

As the subject professor didn't provide a text for analysis and as she saw that the results of the first case analysis weren't as expected, she agreed to work with the linguist to develop a schematic structure of the genre and help the students to develop the criteria for literature application. In her class, the linguist made special emphasis on the plan for the text and the students had to present their plans to the group for discussion. Only after that they were allowed to write the text. The results were better than before, so the subject professor accepted the need to define the genre, describe it and guide the production at this level.

During the second application, in 2006, the subject professor was more open to the linguist's suggestions. She changed the teaching program, enlightened by the first experience, and had better results.

It's relevant to say that she gave support to PRODEAC in front of the students, so they were increasing their participation in classes and working harder with their texts. We can say, again, that this support is very important for the developing of the Program. As was said before, when the professor is engaged, the students are too. For every assignment of the second edition of this experience, the professor had a clear idea of the genre she was asking for. The students not only understood what genre they had to produce but also how to construe criteria for analyzing the case. So, both professors advanced in the description of genres, taking into account its schematic structure, register, discourse-semantics and lexico-grammar patterns.

Case 6

The process of negotiation with an economics professor will be analyzed now. At the beginning of the intervention, the professor said that natural language doesn't intervene in teaching this subject: he projected on the board some charts with economic data and selected some numbers to put into relation for making conclusions with the students. So, he agreed to participate in the Program with the idea that "he hasn't anything to offer to it." As can be seen in this assertion, the subject professor thought that he had to give something to the Program, instead of seeing it as a multidisciplinary activity which would affect the learning of his subject and the specialized literacy development of students.

The assistant linguist decided to be present in his classes just to observe them, and, after some, showed to the subject professor in private that he in fact used natural language to construe meaning from the related data of the chart. Finally, at the end of the semester, the lecturer understood how language functions in interpreting data to make conclusions. Then, he looked for some reports from the Center of Studies for Latin America (CEPAL) for analysis, and then the students produced a brief report as a final work for the course. It's important to say that this is one of the last subjects the students have to complete before graduation as economists, so they need to learn how to write professional genres.

In the second semester this professor worked with PRODEAC, he modified the teaching program, including activities of joint analysis to show how the expert writers use the economic data of charts to construe their texts as expositions, as the students will have to do as professionals. Then, the students wrote their own texts; the linguist could do the joint editing of one of them, and the students wrote another text of this kind as a final evaluation in the subject.

Case 7

The last case I will take for this paper is a subject from the Industrial Engineering curriculum, where the students must design an industrial product,

justify its need for the society and make the product itself as a prototype. The negotiation with the lecturers in charge was very difficult, because they understood that they needed to change the goals of the subject to work with PRODEAC. The assistant linguist made an effort to do this negotiation, and it was difficult, as she needed the assistance of the director of the Program.

First, she asked the lecturers if the students had to write any texts during the semester, and they said that students had to write weekly progress reports. After arguing that these texts varied greatly, the professors provided last semester's progress reports so that the linguist could study them.

After studying the texts, the assistant linguist proposed a complex schematic structure of the genre, because—as a macro-genre—it includes different types of texts: one to tell how the idea was generated; a second one to justify the need of the product in the market; a third one to describe the product and the materials used for making it. For designing the schematic structure of the genre, the linguist took into account the forms that professionals have to fill in to request finances for innovative projects in competitions organized by the government or companies. Finally, the linguist had to include in the schematic structure some elements asked for by the subject professors in order to evaluate the performance of students in the activity. The genre was called “designing a product project.”

When the negotiation reached an agreement between the lecturers involved, the linguist had the opportunity to intervene in some classes to describe the genre and give some instructions to write it. In this case, the joint evaluation had the most relevant function, because it helped the students to work with their texts through final revisions.

Finally, the students were interested in oral presentations of the products, which required the linguist to teach how to make a Power Point presentation and how to give a talk supported by this resource. In this task, the academic evaluative aspects of the genre were removed, turning it into a professional one labeled “proposal of a new product.” The presentations were made to the public—students and engineers who teach at the university—and were very well received.

This case was very interesting, because it represented a hard challenge: how to obtain an understanding about the genre within real material and social activity. The professors themselves increased their understanding and now ask assistance from linguists to make their own presentations to government or commercial competitions.

LECTURER'S EVOLUTION

To sum up, at the beginning of the Program, we have detected in the subjects' lecturers three degrees of awareness of the role of language in knowledge

construction (Vigotsky, 1978) and the value of the conceptualization of genres as social activities (Martin, 1984):

(1) The first group appreciates language practices in science and recognizes some scientific genres, but doesn't have pedagogical resources to teach them. In general, they are experienced writers and researchers who have also guided post-graduate theses, so their consciousness about academic and working practices is high.

Negotiating with this group is not very difficult: the professors allow the linguist to assist the students through joint analyses of academic genres and/or joint editing of their texts. In cases in which it was not possible to find a text for analysis, the linguist made a schemata with students (based on previous consensus with the professors), to guide the production. This group of lecturers participate in the linguist's classes, making comments and explaining matters about the discipline and the way to make decisions about what kind of contents should be included in the texts and why. When the students have written their texts, the linguist, the lecturer and the students jointly revise one or two texts written by the students. Sometimes, this is the first text they have produced in the genre, so the next activity could be to produce the same genre about another topic as final evaluation. The linguists make suggestions to the students about possible solutions to the proposed task, or about what else might be needed in the final, more complex assignment.

The negotiation includes discussion of different points of view between linguists and lecturers, but in most cases they gradually agree. In these cases, for the second experience, the lecturers included in their teaching programs' literature texts to analyze and to make genres familiar to their students.

(2) The second group also appreciates language practices, but doesn't know clearly how they could help their students to learn better the subject's concepts nor what kind of texts they might assign students for achieving this purpose. They are not aware about the concept of genre, although they know the more complex ones which they, as academics or professionals, are used to writing.

This group is indeed the most difficult to work with. At the beginning, some lecturers were not very interested in our proposal because they thought that we were going to put the emphasis on

norms and “beautiful writing.” They presented some resistance but some of them (not all mentioned here) have grown in understanding of the purpose of the Program after the first application. As we have shown, some of them didn’t collaborate at all. In one case, after the first participation, the professor decided to give up the Program. But one year later she asked to rejoin it because she found that the students produced better texts and learned the subject better when she worked with PRODEAC. At this moment, we are working again with her.

(3) The third group hasn’t any awareness of the role of natural language in knowledge construction, whether they consider that “numbers speak on their own”—as some economists said—or, as some engineers said, they only teach “activity” or “how to do things” in professional life. But, after seeing the results, they appreciate the Program and propose other ways to work, like producing materials for students to reinforce what is done in classes. This is a job in progress now, and it will be extended to other subjects, through writing a book which will describe the genres used more frequently.

It is necessary to say that the evolution of the lecturers involved in the Program is not as fast as it looks in this presentation. It requires slow and subtle work from the linguist, since the proposal is not clearly understood from the beginning. Some of the professors feel the process is invasive, and put up barriers, avoiding encounters or being absent in the linguist’s classes. But after a period of interaction, things change: the lecturers start to see how the Program can help the teaching-learning process and the help it gives to the students’ texts for their university and future professional lives.

CONCLUSION

To sum up, the negotiation consists in guiding the lecturers to define clearly, in interaction with the assistant linguist, genres the students need to learn. They make explicit for each genre the stages and phases, and the linguists help them to be conscious about the kind of language that realise the meanings each genre construes, the kind of relationship between interactants in the text and its realisation, the organization of these meanings in a text, and the information flow as well as the function of multimodality, sometimes represented by the use of charts, schemata, graphics, maps, etc.

In consequence, the lecturers acquire consciousness of genre, generally in the

second time participating in the Program, when they work positively from the first moment and make proposals as alternatives. They also grow in comprehension of the possibility of teaching genres and take the habit of working in this way, recognizing that the students' productions show deeper reflection about theoretical contents and their application.

Now we reach the moment to discuss if this negotiation procedure is theoretically acceptable. It is supposed that the members of a community share genres that achieve their own communicative purpose (Swales, 1990), or that in each area of activity the speakers-listeners know genres as they know the system of language (Bakhtin, 1952-53). The fact is that in the academy this is not automatic, as we try to show through the cases analyzed before. So, in the theoretical frame we have chosen (Sydney School's G&R Theory), it is possible to say that a linguist can increase the awareness about genres of the members of a certain social activity institution in a culture. Negotiation seems to be an adequate procedure for this purpose, as is shown in this paper.

The work of the linguist is, as Martin and Rose (2007) said, to detect genres, describe them in all the strata of language and context and label them. In the case of academic and workplace genres, the experience with the subject professors is very useful. They are not aware of this necessity but increase in comprehension and collaboration as they work with the associated linguist of the Program.

About the legitimacy of this practice I can say that almost all the university community has shown interest in this Program to accomplish the foundational purposes of the university. The professors increase their awareness about the importance of genre to teach academic literacy, and the role of language in constructing knowledge. The students improve their skills in academic literacy and can manage better the concepts of the different subjects they study. Genres are negotiated from the perspective of professional and academic activities in each field, the interpersonal relationships and the role language plays in the process of writing and learning.

Of course, there are many things to do in order to realize the Program and its impact, but we are still starting this process: in 2005 we worked in six subjects and in the second semester of 2007 we are covering 20 with more success than before. Now professors and students ask to participate in PRODEAC, so we try to cover their requests in different ways.

I have to remark, finally, on the importance of institutional support, not only financial but also the administrative determination to expand the application of the Program. It's important to say that the University is helping to form a stable group of linguists to carry out the work, creating posts for this purpose and giving support for publications or other means to increase students' and subject professors' interest in participating.

During the last months of 2007, UNGS is extending the Program to provide linguists to work with advanced students who are writing grant proposals and making presentations of their research. This means one step forward and a new challenge to expand PRODEAC.

NOTES

¹ I want to thank especially Dr. Charles Bazerman for his patient reading and his valuable help.

² The *Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento* is located in the 2^o *Cordón del Conurbano Bonaerense*, “the second line of Buenos Aires suburbs.” The main population comes from disadvantaged schools and workers’ families, so in terms of Bernstein, they have restricted codes.

³ The use of language has been seen as a relevant practice in our University since its foundation (Coraggio, 1994).

⁴ This doesn’t mean that we don’t think that this Program should be applied all across the curriculum, including the First Cycle, but political issues didn’t allow us to do a complete design.

⁵ These different cases recount the experiences of linguists working as assistant professors: Lucía Natale, Silvia Mateo, Elena Valente and Oscar Amaya.

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