

Critical Genre Analysis: Contributions to Language Teaching and Research

Désirée Motta-Roth

There is an increasing interest in the analysis of discursive practices in specific contexts that involve recurrent social activities and roles. The concept of genre has emerged as a tool for theorizing and explaining how language functions to create and recontextualize social interactions. The objective of this article is to present an overview of the research around the concept of genre in recent literature, especially relating to the delimitation, analysis, and interpretation of language as genre under a critical perspective. Contributions to language pedagogy are identified with reference to genre analysis, critical discourse analysis, systemic functional linguistics, and socio-discursive interactionism.

There is currently a growing interest in analyzing the genres related to different elements of social life that help constitute the recurring activities and social roles found across diverse cultural contexts (Al-Ali, 2006; Jorge & Heberle, 2002; Kaufer, 2006; Machado & Cristóvão, 2006). Based on this interest, in this paper I seek to construct an inventory of the theoretical-methodological contributions of critical genre analysis to language research and teaching. First, I position studies of genres in their historical context, then I summarize ongoing discussions in the literature, and lastly, I evidence some of the contributions of critical perspectives on genres for researching and language teaching.

Brief History

This historical overview is just *a* one-sided and limited version of genre studies in Brazil and abroad. I want to identify my positionality in the Genre Theories in Social Practices Caucus as a member of the Applied Linguistics Working Group of ANPOLL, the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Literature, Languages and Linguistics in Brazil. I write from a very restricted place: as a text and discourse analyst and language

teacher-trainer who is interested in the teaching of reading and writing and in the research methodologies we use to analyze genres (Motta-Roth, 2006a, b). This Applied Linguistics Working Group brings together researchers interested in three focal points: Theory and Analysis of Genres in Social Contexts, Language Teacher Training, and Language Teaching and Learning.

From this context, I lay out a small “cartography” of international studies of genre, comparing them and inventorying some of their theoretical and methodological contributions. Next, I situate genre studies in Brazil in relation to the recent history of the ANPOLL Genre Theories in Social Practices Caucus. Finally, I summarize some of the theoretical and methodological contributions of critical genre analysis to language research and teaching.

A Brief History of International Research

Although it has been explored since ancient times, in Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* and by different authors such as Mikhail Bakhtin (1952-1953/ 1992a, b) in *The Genres of Discourse* and *The Problem of the Text*, the concept of genre certainly took on a new role in applied linguistics in the 1980s, especially in anglophone contexts. From the beginning of the decade, authors dedicated to language education began to use the term frequently to theorize practices. Examples of theoretical frameworks of genre include John Swales’ (1981) work on article introductions, Carolyn Miller’s (1984) article on genres as types of social action, Gunther Kress’ (1989) book on genres as linguistic processes in socio-cultural practice, and Jim Martin’s (1985/1989) book on teaching composition in school as a concrete practice of exploring and challenging social reality.

These authors have shifted their focus of interest over time regarding the aspects of language they emphasize (lexicogrammatical elements, rhetorical structures, discourse contextualization) or have altered their theoretical perspective on the object of study, thereby reshaping their own representation of the concept of genre. Despite differences among the approaches of these authors, there is a common thread: the analysis of texts, their thematic content, and their rhetorical organization and linguistic forms according to the communicative goals shared by the people involved in social activities that surround them in specific cultural contexts.

Bhatia (2004, pp. 3-12) describes these historical shifts in genre research in the Anglophone context, identifying three chronological phases in the research of written texts which correspond to a large extent with studies on textual genres in Brazil. The first phase (Bhatia, 2004, pp. 4-8) included studies from the 1960s, 1970s, and the early 1980s, which verify the recurrence of lexicogrammatical elements at the sentence level. These studies focus on

textualization and lexicogrammar. The end of this phase bears similarities with textual linguistics authors such as Beaugrande and Dressler (1981), who sought to identify textual features on the surface of texts.

In the second phase (Bhatia 2004, pp. 8-10), in the 1980s and 1990s, research focused on the macrostructure of the text in order to identify regularities in the organization of discourse in terms of the rhetorical, schematic, and common textual structures. This emphasis was less on context and more focused on macrostructural elements.

The late 1990s and early 2000s witnessed the emergence of multiple perspectives on the phenomenon of genres, with frequent reference to the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin and Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. This third phase of research on written genres emphasizes the contextualization of discourse and the external aspects of genre construction (Bhatia, 2004, p. 11).

Each of these phases represents a milestone in the development of genre theorization, especially the second and third phases. The second phase stands out due to the emergence of genre theories of institutionalized texts, especially in educational contexts (Bhatia, 2004, p. 10). In this phase, three theoretical frameworks (Bhatia, 2004; Hyon, 1996) emerged:

1. The British English for Specific Purposes (ESP) school, established by authors such as John Swales (1990) and Vijay Bhatia (1993), focused on the rhetorical organization of "text types defined by their formal properties as well as by their communicative purposes within social contexts" (Hyon, 1996, p. 695).
2. The American school of genre studies, which adopted a socio-rhetorical perspective, with authors such as Charles Bazerman (1988) and Carolyn Miller (1984), focused on social contexts and the speech acts that genres perform in a given situation (Hyon, 1996, p. 696).
3. The Sydney school of systemic functional linguistics, represented by Michael Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan (1985/1989) and Jim Martin (1985/1989), focused on lexicogrammar and the functions it performs in social contexts.

Because of the current importance of genre studies in the Brazilian context, we should add to this description a fourth trend, the so-called Swiss school, represented by authors such as Jean-Paul Bronckart, Bernard Schneuwly, and Joachim Dolz. Taking the work of J. P. Bronckart as an example, one can say that socio-discursive interactionism (SDI) mainly theorizes the semiotization of social relations, drawing on the work of the Vygotsky Circle (Bronckart, 1999, p. 13; Bronckart, 2006, pp. 7, 9-10, 15) and the concept of

social action, developed in the dissertations of Gertrude Elizabeth Margaret Anscombe (1957) and Jürgen Habermas (1987) (Bronckart 2006, p.15, 46).

SDI contests the current division of human/social sciences by not subscribing to one or the other point of view, representing itself as “a stream; a branch of the science of the human” and postulating that the “problem of language is absolutely central or decisive for this science” (Bronckart, 2006, p. 10). In these terms, the SDI framework analyzes language action as an action performed by an agent, for a motive and with an intention, situated in identifiable social formations (Bronckart, 1999, p. 13). Language action is analyzed through the text, generated from discourse types (theoretical, interactive, etc.), sequences (narrative, argumentative, etc.), textualization mechanisms (logical connectors, nominal cohesion, etc.), and enunciative mechanisms (modalization, voice, etc.) (Bronckart, 1999, pp. 113-35).

The research developed in Brazil in the 1990s identifies itself to a great extent with these four schools of thought and originated a line of thought focused on pedagogical language practices. A theoretical framework based on these four schools was established in the country and serves as a basis for governmental documents that advocate for educational policies like the National Curricular Parameters (*Parâmetros Curriculares Nacionais*, PCN) (Brasil, 1997), which are influenced by SDI and Mikhail Bakhtin’s theorization (1952-1953/1992a, b), as well as curricular reforms, such as the one recently implemented in the Undergraduate Program in English Language at Universidade Federal de Santa Maria (UFSM) (Brasil, 2004), inspired by the theoretical frameworks of the American school of genre studies and Australian systemic functional linguistics.

Before delving into a discussion of the concept of genre within these four trends, I present an inventory of the research in Brazil from my own one-sided perspective.

A Brief History at the Local Level

In Brazil, in 1992, there was a research group at Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina (UFSC) that revolved around two professors: José Luiz Meurer and Carmen Rosa Caldas Coulthard (and, to some extent, Malcolm Coulthard). At that time, Meurer implemented a study program on genres with his master’s and doctoral students. Shortly thereafter, colleagues working at different Brazilian institutions went on sabbaticals and spread their work, theoretically and geographically, around the world. Many of these people are today part of ANPOLL’s Theories of Genres in Social Practices Caucus.

For this retrospective, I looked at my own research and teaching on genres and also at the work of these scholars.

The *résumés* of these members of the ANPOLL Caucus showed survey articles, books, and papers published in annals of events in Brazil containing the word “genre” in the title throughout the 1990s. From 1995 on, a wave of genre-based research and teaching of written language emerged in Brazil, especially at UFSC (Bonini, 1998; Motta-Roth, 1995), at UFSM (Motta-Roth & Hendges, 1996), at Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo (PUC-São Paulo) (Machado, 1998; Rojo, 1997), and at UECE-Universidade Estadual do Ceará (Araújo, 1998). These studies were based on different theoretical frameworks, as I will explain further ahead.

During the 1990s, colleagues from ANPOLL’s Caucus developed numerous research projects to try to map genres as diverse as editorials of women’s magazines (Heberle, 1995), academic presentations (Balocco & Dantas, 1997), self-help texts (Meurer, 1998), legal judgments in rape cases (Figueiredo, 1998), virtual chats (Braga, 1999), thesis abstracts (Biasi-Rodrigues, 1999), and genres in business and the workplace (Barbara & Scott, 1999).

The concept of genre became integrated into the normalized knowledge of the discipline. One significant indicator of its relevance in Brazil is the central role of the concept of genres in the Brazilian Educational Policy as put forth by the National Curricular Parameters (PCN) (Brasil, 1997), whose development entailed the participation of many of the colleagues mentioned above. The elaboration of the PCN was conceived as a continuous creative process: the parameters aimed at positively influencing teachers’ practice and, at the same time, as parameters which should be revised and improved based on that practice and especially on students’ learning processes (Brasil, 2000, p. 4).

Originally the purpose of the PCN was “to give meaning to school knowledge through contextualization; to avoid compartmentalization, through interdisciplinarity; and to encourage reasoning and learning skills ... [in order to] disseminate the principles of curricular reform and guide teachers, in the search for new approaches and methodologies” (Brasil, 2000, p. 4).

Despite controversies that have arisen about the adequacy or even legitimacy of these parameters, for many Brazilian researchers, the PCN is “the main guide for different educational activities in Brazil” (Bronckart & Machado, 2004, p. 140). By defending the concept of genre as the basis for elaborating language teaching proposals (Portuguese and additional languages), the document makes an important contribution to language research and pedagogical practice:

The perspective of language adopted in the National Curricular Parameters is oriented to social life and is a step forward

when compared to the structuralist view widely adopted in school until recently, in which a course syllabus was defined in terms of normative grammar categories to be taught in a decontextualized way, such as verbal agreement and use of adverbs (Motta-Roth, 2006a, p. 497).

The PCN adopted a social perspective of language by advocating for learning that goes

beyond the mechanical memorization of grammar rules or the characteristics of a given literary movement The student must have the means to expand and articulate knowledge and skills that can be mobilized in countless situations of language use that he or she experiences, among family and friends, at school, in the work world (Brasil, 2002, p. 55).

In the first half of the 2000s, the members of ANPOLL's Caucus on Genres in Social Practices produced many studies on genre in research centers throughout four of Brazil's five regions:¹

- Southern Region—Motta-Roth et al. (2000) at UFSM; Guimarães (2005) at UNISINOS; Baltar (2004) at UCS-Universidade de Caxias do Sul; Meurer (2000) at UFSC; Cristovão & Nascimento (2005) at UEL-Universidade Estadual de Londrina.
- Southeast Region—Vian Jr (2003) and Dionísio et al. (2002) at PUC-São Paulo; Balocco (2001) and Carvalho (2002) at UERJ-Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro; Silva (2004) at Universidade Federal de Juiz de Fora.
- Northeast Region—Biasi-Rodrigues (2001) at UFC-Universidade Federal do Ceará; Araújo (2004) at UECE.
- Midwest Region—Padilha & Barros-Mendes (2005) at Universidade Federal do Mato Grosso.

Throughout the 2000s, these research centers have shown vitality and produced research on a wide range of genres, both from daily life—such as the study by Jorge and Heberle (2002) on bank brochures and Rodrigues (2001; 2003) works on journalistic articles, and from academic life—such as studies by Machado et al. (2004a, b) and Motta-Roth (2001) on abstracts, articles, book reviews, and summaries.

1 At the time of this survey, the ANPOLL Caucus had no genre studies conducted at Federal Universities in the Northern region of Brazil, such as those in Pará, Acre or Amapá.

In 2003, the 1st International Symposium on Genre Studies (SIGET) was proposed as an interdisciplinary event that would bring together various perspectives from across the language-culture divide. The Postgraduate Program in Language Studies at UEL-Universidade Estadual de Londrina, under the coordination of Professors Adja Durão, Elvira Nascimento, and Vera Cristóvão, held the 1st SIGET with specialists in first and additional languages from all over Brazil and abroad. The 2nd SIGET, held at the Faculdade Estadual de Filosofia, Ciências e Letras, in União da Vitória, Paraná, under the coordination of Acir Karwoski, was a groundbreaking event in terms of discussions and propositions of new parameters for language teaching practices and research on discourse practices.

As of its third edition, held at UFSM in 2005, the event became more international, consolidating discussions around genres among Brazilian and foreign colleagues. This was most emphatically demonstrated in the regional variety and internationalization of the sessions, roundtables and plenaries of the IV SIGET, held at Universidade do Sul de Santa Catarina in 2007.

In 2006, the publication of the National Curriculum Guidelines for Secondary Education (*Orientações curriculares para o ensino médio*, OCN) by the Ministry of Education (Brasil, 2006) reaffirmed, in the Brazilian sphere, the role of the concept of genre as a resource for teaching how language works.

[T]he emphasis ... given to the work with multiple languages and with genres deserves to be understood as an attempt not to fragment, in the student's educational process, the different dimensions involved in the production of meanings (Brasil, 2006, p. 28)

[T]he privileged teaching goal consists of the processes of meaning production for texts, as materiality of genres, in the light of the different dimensions through which they are constituted. (Brasil, 2006, p. 36).

In the National Curriculum Guidelines for Secondary Education (OCN), genre is referred to both as a pedagogical resource and a teaching goal. This normalization of knowledge by means of official documents signals the existence of a well-developed research and teaching dynamic surrounding the concept of genre. As I will try to demonstrate later, this dynamic has created a rich interdisciplinary theoretical apparatus, fostering debate on discursive practices based on the concept of genre.

Due to limitations of space, I have cited only part of the references of written genre studies in Brazil, leaving aside several other authors who have contributed to the area and who would be pertinent citations in this paper.

Examples of relevant studies left out of this inventory are those by Oliveira, Oliveira, and Pereira (2005) and Ikeda and Dottori Filho (2006), which focus on oral genres. Nevertheless, I will have to remain restricted to offering only a limited version of genre studies in Brazil. Although differing in several ways, the four schools identified above also have many commonalities with regard to the concept of genre, which I will now discuss.²

Definitions for the Concept of Genre

The opinions of the authors from these four schools of thought concerning genre seem to coincide on at least two points:

1. Genres are uses of language associated with social activities.
2. These discursive actions are recurrent and, therefore, have some degree of stability in form, content and style.

These common principles can be abstracted from the following authors' definitions of genre:

3. Communicative event, in the instrumental perspective of genre analysis adopted by Swales (1998, p. 20) and Bhatia (2004, p. 54).³
4. Typical rhetorical actions, in the American school of genre studies adopted by Miller (1984, p. 151).
5. Culture-specific semiotic functions, in Halliday's *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (1978, p. 145); and recursive and progressive production of meanings to perform social practices in Martin (2002).
6. Texts with relatively stable characteristics in Bronckart's SDI (1999, p. 137).

2 My reviewer recommends the identification of a fifth direction of studies on genres carried out in Brazil, as developed by Rojo (2001), member of ANPOLL's Caucus on Theories of Genres in Social Practices. These studies are associated with M. Bakhtin's theory of enunciation and, therefore, could not be included in the same line as J.-P. Bronckart, who associates principles from L.S. Vygotsky, J. Habermas, and M. Bakhtin himself to elaborate a perspective on educational psychology. However, as Rojo is one of the central names in the process of spreading J.-P. Bronckart's work in Brazil and as many of the publications of this Brazilian author have the word "genre" in the title and allude to issues pertinent to SDI, I understand that her research is represented within the SDI current, as described in this paper. Moreover, the enunciative perspective of (and based on) M. Bakhtin is central to all four perspectives mentioned here.

3 Although I understand that all schools do genre analysis in one way or another, I adopt the term 'genre analysis' to refer only to works such as those of J. M. Swales and V. Bhatia, in the sense of the instrumental approach that prevails today, as popularized by the former's 1990 book *Genre Analysis*.

We can say, then, that genres correspond to relatively stable types of utterances (Bakhtin, 1952-1953/1992 a, b), used for specific purposes in a given social group. They are social processes that lead to recognizable and shared conventions and expectations (Grabe, 2002, p. 250).

These four genre schools are very present in the current Brazilian context, as shown in the collection of texts published in a book about theories, methods, and debates around the concept of genre published by Meurer, Bonini, and Motta-Roth (2005) (e.g., Motta-Roth & Heberle, 2005). In this volume, a group of Brazilian researchers first explain and then give examples of the analysis proposed by each of these theoretical frameworks in order to contribute to the understanding of the various dimensions involved in the production of meaning.

In the 2000s, therefore, we have a scenario of multiple perspectives on the phenomenon of genres. In this latest phase of studies on written text, identified by Bhatia (2004) as that of contextualization of discourse, there is increasingly frequent reference to Bakhtin's writings and to critical discourse analysis, such as that proposed by Norman Fairclough, among others, and the concept of genre is increasingly expanded beyond the boundaries of lexicon and grammar to encompass social context, discourse, and ideology (Berkenkotter, 2001; Giannoni, 2002).

This expansion of the concept demands an analysis that considers the conditions of production, distribution and consumption of the text and that focuses on the texts circulating in society against the background of the historical moment. They reflect on the purposes and economic organization of social groups, in terms of daily life, business, means of production, ideological formations, etc., which determine the content, style, and compositional construction of genres, as shown by the examples in the next section, reporting research on genres.

With this attention to the social context, authors from different viewpoints usually focus on, at least, three distinct aspects:

1. The institutional context and the existing variety of epistemologies and discourse practices in different areas, as in Swales' (2004) book on research genres in different areas and Araújo's (2005) article on discourse practices in applied linguistics articles.
2. The social-cognitive aspects and the social function of genres, as in Bazerman's (2005) book on written genres, typification and interaction, and Bonini's (2002) study of journalists' cognitive structures related to genres.
3. The forms of social control exercised by discourse in different genres,

such as the focus given to genres in Fairclough's book (2003), or in Furlanetto's (2004) and Meurer's (2004) studies.

The concept of genre has established itself as a tool for theorizing and explaining (Bunzen, 2006, p. 153) how language functions in association with goals and activities to create and recontextualize social interactions. Over the years, we have seen the idea of discourse (or text) genre changing in terms of how we view and employ it. The possibilities for analysis have expanded along the continuum from the extreme lower end concerned with the immediate instance of language use—from lexicon and grammar instantiated in phonology/graphology—to the higher and more abstract extreme—that of discourse, instantiated in genre and register.

By adapting a model generated in the systemic functional linguistics tradition,⁴ I seek to represent the chronological shift and the direction of studies, over time, from elements of language within the sentence toward elements of context, including activities, roles and relations and the discursive and ideological formations of society.

Figure 11.1 provides a visual analogy of the chronological development of genre studies in relation to the stratification of communicative planes. The upward arrow indicates the path of genre studies from a focus on the phonological or graphological instantiation of lexicon and grammar towards studies focused on the instantiation of discourse and ideology by register and genre. Each concentric circle recontextualizes the smaller circle within it (Martin, 1992, p. 496), as the analysis shifts to focus on ever larger units, from phonology to discourse. The thickest line demarcates the context that circumscribes the planes of phonology, grammar, and semantics.

In this representation, genre is a conformation of recurrent meanings, organized in stages and oriented toward the goal of performing social practices (Martin, 2002, p. 269). This conformation is culture-specific (Halliday, 1978, p. 145), so it is a broader unit than *text*—"language that is functional," that performs a task in some context (Halliday, 1985/1989, p. 5), "a real instance of language in use"—and less comprehensive than *discourse*—particular views of the world, constructed in and by language in use (Fairclough, 2003, p. 3).

The broadening focus of genre studies from lexicogrammar to discourse denotes the search for a richer understanding of the connection between text and context.

4 The model adopted by Martin and Rose (2003, p. 4) shows only three levels: the innermost circle of grammar, the outermost circle of social activity, and the intermediate circle of discourse, which interfaced with the other two.

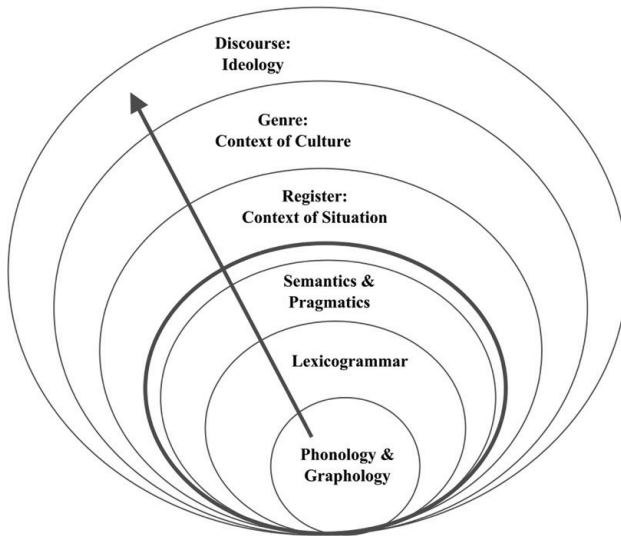


Figure 11.1 Chronological Development of Genre Studies in Relation to the Stratification of Communicative Planes (Linguistic and Contextual), as Adapted from Martin (1992, p. 496) and Hedges (2005, p. o6)

The Analysis of Language as Genre from a Critical Perspective

The Influence of the Sociological Analysis of Language

Generally speaking, in the current, third phase of genre studies, and specifically of written discourse studies, the concept of genre has assumed a central role and is enriched by concepts from Mikhail Bakhtin's (1929/1995) sociological or sociohistorical perspective, such as: 1) *heterogeneity* (the instability and fluidity of language uses); 2) *dialogism* (the interaction between reader and author in the space of the text); 3) *polyphony* (the ability of the text to evoke different points of view or social voices that polemicize, complement, or respond to each other), and 4) *intertextuality* (the ability of a text to evoke other texts existing in the culture) (Pessoa de Barros, 1994, pp. 2-5).

In the 2000s, we have seen Bakhtin's sociological thought have an impact on various niches of language studies through its alignment with contemporary views such as Norman Fairclough's critical discourse analysis. In the case of genre analysis, references to Bakhtin's and Fairclough's works, which were previously absent, appeared in the later books by Swales (1990; 2004) and Bhatia (1993; 2004). Reference to Bakhtin and Fairclough has

also become more frequent in works by systemic functional linguists, such as Martin and Rose (2003).

As the sociological or sociohistorical thinking represented by Fairclough has permeated discussions of genres, so too has Fairclough's use of the word "genre" become increasingly common. As a tool of theorization and explanation, "genre" has increasingly appeared in the index of Fairclough's works over the years. In the early 1990s, in *Discourse and Social Change* (Fairclough, 1992b), the word "genre" appeared on only twenty-one pages. A decade later, in *Analyzing Discourse: Textual Analysis for Social Research* (Fairclough, 2003), there were ninety-four pages in which some reference was made to genre.

Fairclough's critical discourse analysis (1989, p. 25) is characterized by a three-dimensional model that includes text, interaction (processes of text production and interpretation), and the broader social context (social conditions of text production and interpretation).

In Figure 11.2, I attempt to demonstrate a possible relationship between the discourse model proposed by Fairclough (1989, p. 25) and the model displayed in concentric circles adapted from systemic functional linguistics described in Figure 11.1. The level of the written text in Fairclough's model is equivalent to graphology and lexicogrammar; interaction corresponds to register and genre; and context is the broader plane of discourse and ideology, with genre (which constitutes culture) being positioned at an intermediate level between the situation and the broader social context.

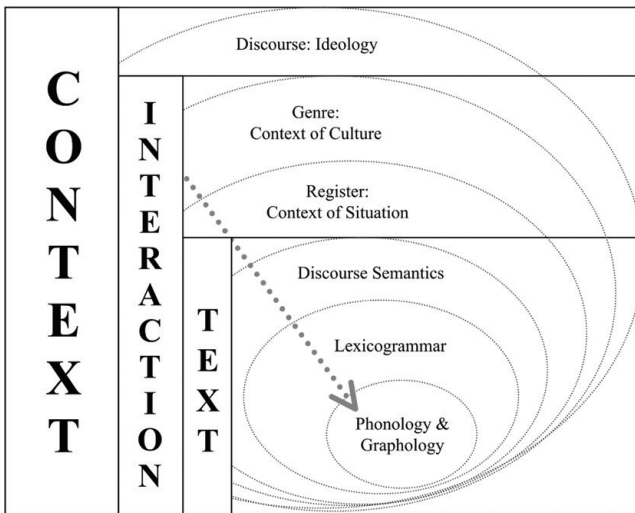


Figure 11.2 Combination of Figure 2.1—*Discourse as Text, Interaction, and Context* by Fairclough (1989, p. 25)—and Figure 7.3—*Language in Its Semiotic Environment* by Martin (1992, p. 496)

In the systemic functional linguistics framework, text and context lie within a metaphorical relation. Language is a metaphor for social reality (it performs a metafunction of representing social reality) just as social reality is a metaphor for language (Martin, 1992, p. 494). The semiotic dimension of a situation of interaction corresponds to a specific register of a genre (e.g., a research article genre in the register of chemistry or in the register of literary studies) and is constructed by the lexicogrammar of the text. This genre, in turn, structures the institutional context of culture (the academic culture of scientific publication), as shown in Figure 11.2.

A student of chemistry or a student of literature, each generates a different register of the scientific article genre. Together, these various instances of the article genre organize the activity of reporting research, central to the institution of academia, and thus contribute to the discourse of science.

The Theoretical-Methodological Order of Genre Analysis

It is interesting to note that in his 1929/1995 text, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, Mikhail Bakhtin (Volochinov in the Brazilian translation) refers to a theoretical-methodological order for the study of language that is inverse to the historical development shown above, going from text to context.

The theoretical-methodological order determined by Bakhtin (1929/1995, p. 124) starts by identifying the social context, passing on to the genre, and then to grammatical form, namely:

1. The identification of the forms and types of verbal interaction in connection with the concrete conditions in which they take place.
2. The identification of the distinct enunciations, isolated speech acts (or genres) in close connection with the interaction in which they take part.
3. The analysis of the language forms in their habitual linguistic interpretation.

Bakhtin's sociological methodology thus starts from the context and moves towards the text. According to Swales (2004, p. 97), the same direction from "macro" to "micro" structures is adopted in standard genre analysis. These approaches differ in terms of what they choose to analyze at each communicative plane (Figure 11.1) and in what order, whether "text first" or "context first" (Askehave & Swales, 2001). Some studies aim to examine "text first," without a concern for direct observation of context, such as the strictly textual type of genre analysis represented in Examples 1 and 2.

Example 1 (Samraj, 2005, p. 145)

3. Data and method

The introductions and abstracts from these two disciplines were analyzed using the models employed in previous research, namely, Swales (1990) for article introductions and Bhatia (1993) for abstracts.

Example 2 (Caballero, 2003, p. 149)

Metaphor identification and classification

The first step concerned identifying the metaphorical expressions in the corpus and classifying them into the metaphor types recognized in the literature. Expressions were tagged as metaphorical when they illustrated any domain incongruity in reference or attribution.

Examples 1 and 2 characterize genre studies that focus primarily on the analysis of the linguistic elements themselves and include some comments illustrating the cultures that produced the texts. The authors identify the analysis procedure by the name of the researcher who developed it, assuming that it is a standard procedure that will serve any text. Moreover, they look at the text for similarities and differences between text types (abstracts and article introductions in Example 1, aiming to analyze linguistic and textual aspects (of the metaphor in Example 2, without an initial and direct observation of the context. These studies seem to be in sync with the second phase of written genre studies, which focus on the macrostructure of texts.

Other studies examine the “context first,” such as Swales’ Textography (1998) (Example 3) or critical genre analysis (Example 4), which combines critical discourse analysis with genre analysis.

Example 3 (Swales 1998, pp. 23-24)

In my own case, if the primary intent of re-exploring the concept of discourse community was clear enough, the types of verbal evidence...were somewhat less clear. What should my occasional research assistants and I be looking at? ... Because my linguistics specialty is written discourse analysis, an examination of texts would be central. ... two aspects of the framing context already put to use have been the historical and pictorial. These were originally thought of as providing preliminary contextual background. ... However, the central and most time-consuming activity involved the construction of individual textual life histories. The basic procedure ... was to obtain a curriculum vitae and collect a number of sample publications, study the latter for quite substantial periods of time and from a number of angles, and then conduct one or more major text-based interviews with the chosen author. The resulting transcripts and draft sections then went back and forth with the authors, and ... outside readers, in the hopes that misunderstandings and obscurities could be ironed out.

Example 3 illustrates Swales' (1998) Textography, which begins by directly observing three communities in order to reconstruct the textual life history of its members. In Example 4, the researcher examines the role of broader sociocultural norms and values in shaping genre, as suggested by the research questions (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 693):

1. What discourse patterns typical of the genre can be identified in Jordanian wedding invitations?
2. How is the invitation text structured? What interests are emphasized by this textual formatting, and what interests are ignored?
3. Which elements of the sociocultural context are relevant in wedding ceremonies, and which elements have the most influence and power?
4. How does the concept of power (of domination and authority) work technically, and how is it conveyed in the wedding invitation genre?

These research questions show concern with the context, but emphasize reciprocity with the text, since the results obtained in the analysis of the context will help in the analysis of the text and vice versa.

Example 4 (Al-Ali, 2006, pp. 697-698)

4. Data and procedures

As far as data collection is concerned, a total of 200 written wedding invitations were collected by 45 ... English specialists taking BA degrees at Jordan University of Science and Technology, Irbid/Jordan.... I asked the students, who come from different regions in Jordan, to collect four or five wedding invitations each from within their own local circle of family and friends....

As a Jordanian, the researcher is an active participant in wedding celebrations in the Jordanian community; thus, via observation and participation in various wedding events, I have been able to observe the weddings carried out by families, and that has formed a rich background for my understanding of the people, their life, customs and habits. This in turn gave me, as a researcher, the information I desired about the effect of socio-cultural rules and norms in wedding invitations. When it is a question of understanding the discursive practices characteristic of culture, we are obliged to seek explanations of their socio-cultural norms through the eyes of those who know the people thoroughly or else incorrect judgments and justification will easily occur.... For Bhatia (2004: 113-14), in order for anyone to claim sufficient experience in genre analysis, one needs to have some understanding of the context of text-external aspects of the genre in terms of the broader context in which the genre is to be constructed, interpreted and practiced in real-life situations. ...

Following Ventola (1987), Swales (1990), and Bhatia's (2004) move structure analysis of texts ..., the wedding invitations were analyzed for their component moves to determine how the inviters accomplished the overall purpose of their wedding invitations as socio-cultural activities. This involved scanning the texts to identify text units expressing particular functions

Example 4 (continued)

.... Through recursive passes through the corpus texts, checking all cases, I developed **eight functional categories** to include all text units in the corpus. To validate my analysis of the component moves the inviters used, **I asked a second rater, who worked as a re-search assistant, to code independently half of the text corpus ... there was an 85 percent agreement.** ...

The next two sections present a genre analysis of the corpus at hand in terms of the surface-level generic cognitive features, complemented with a CDA analysis of implicit socio-cultural norms teasing the ideology in each generic component of the ritualized wedding invitation. Used together, these two approaches are capable of yielding a clear description, interpretation, and explanation of discourse.

In Example 4, the researcher discusses the linguistic data against the backdrop of the Muslim religion and the text of the Quran to demonstrate ideological markers in the language. Thus, the structure and lexicogrammar of such a ritualized and abridged genre as the wedding invitation reveal the Jordanian sociocultural context.

The structure and lexical choices of this invitation (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 706) are organized according to a canonical order of names: at the top, immediately following a passage from the Quran, appear the names of the groom's and bride's tribes, followed by the names of the fathers or guardians of the groom and the bride (but not of the mothers), then the name of the groom (but not of the bride).

This order reveals two issues about Jordanian society: (1) religion plays the most important role, followed by tribal power and family ties; and (2) the hierarchical differences between old and young and between men and women are well demarcated.

Table 11.1 presents a structural analysis of the rhetorical moves of a Jordanian wedding invitation (Al-Ali, 2006). The name of the tribe at the top, just below the text of the Quran, hierarchically dominates the name of the groom's father, which in turn dominates the name of the groom. This rhetorical organization of the genre signals the high degree of dependence of the individual on the family (kinship culture).

Unlike the male figure of the father who appears with his full name and all titles, the names of the mothers of the groom and the bride and the bride herself are often not even included, as they are less important figures in this cultural context. The woman is not seen as an independent entity, but rather is always identified in relation to a male figure: daughter of, sister of, wife of, mother of, widow of, etc. This genre reveals how Jordanian society emphasizes male authority and erases the female gender identity (Al-Ali, 2006, p. 707).

Table 11.1 The Structure of Rhetorical Movements of a Jordanian Wedding Invitation (Al-Ali, 2006)

Movements	Wedding invitation text
Introduction	And among His Signs is this, that he created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them. And he has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are signs for those who reflect. (Surah Al Rum, verse 21)
Title	Weddings of [Name of groom's Tribe] and [Name of bride's Tribe]
Identification of the hosts	[X] & his wife and Doctor [Y] & his wife
Invitation to the guests	request the honor of your presence at the wedding ceremony of
Identification of the groom (and bride)	(His son Doctor) (His daughter) Ali
Location of the ceremony	----
Conclusion	----
Optional elements	----

Examples 3 and 4 illustrate the third phase of written genre studies, with its emphasis on the contextualization of discourse, the cultural aspects of genre construction.

From a research standpoint, it can be seen that these two directions, “text first” or “context first,” refer to the theoretical perspective adopted and to the object of study.

Analyses that primarily consider the linguistic structures of the text, such as strictly textual genre analysis, will occasionally look at the context to interpret the text. On the other hand, analyses that primarily consider the text's conditions of production, distribution, and consumption, and the historical moment, such as critical genre analysis or Textography, will look at the text to interpret the social practice in which it takes part.

Insights from Critical Genre Analysis for Teaching

If critical ability consists of “perceiving the relations between text and context,” as Paulo Freire (1992/2000, p. 11) writes, then sociological approaches to language, such as those of Bakhtin and Fairclough, are vital because, in principle, they presume an examination of the historical moment and the economic organization of society for a more adequate analysis of the text

(Bakhtin, 1929/1995). They are also vital because, by recognizing the heterogeneity of discourse (Bakhtin, 1929/1995, 1992a, b; Fairclough, 2003), they problematize fixed structures of language practices.

Fairclough (1989, p. 5) especially contributes to critical thinking because he has an interventionist and emancipatory goal when seeking to unveil the elements of the system of social relations present in discourse and trying to assess the effects of these elements on social relations.

The various schools and historical developments in research mentioned above have contributed to the exploration of context and text from different angles and at different levels. In relation to teaching, they can provide pedagogical and conceptual contributions to a critical approach to genres. I will specifically mention the concepts of genre systems and genre sets from the American school of genre studies, the proposal of the wheel and the reading and text production cycle elaborated within systemic functional linguistics, and the idea of Didactic Transposition from the SDI school.

Genre Systems and Sets from the American School of Genre Studies

The so-called communicative turn of genre analysis, influenced by Bakhtin's work, is characterized by an interest in the intertextuality and interdiscursivity of institutional genres; that is, characteristic ways in which genres are produced and mediated by their relation to previous texts (Berkenkotter, 2001, p. 326-27). Resulting from Bakhtin's sociological influence on genre studies, the concepts of genre system and genre set were described by Devitt (1991) and developed by authors such as Swales (2004), Bhatia (2004), and Bazerman (2005), bringing with them an important pedagogical contribution to academic text production.

Let us take as an example the university environment and network or system of academic genres. To interact in this community, the junior members must understand the totality of interaction among communicative events that exist within this context or linked to it: activities in research laboratories, researchers' offices, graduate programs, publishing houses/journals that publish researchers' books/articles, bookstores that sell them, libraries that buy them, etc.

Genre systems instantiate the participation of all parties in the knowledge production process: researchers, colleagues, students, coordinators, editors, vendors, librarians, target audience, etc. (Bhatia, 2004, p. 54). They highlight the importance of interaction among various texts, such as research projects, advising sessions, lectures, articles, books, and book reviews, for the constitution and functioning of specific communities (Devitt, 1991, p. 340).

For graduate students and novice researchers, the concept of genre system (or network for Swales, 2004) is even more important because it helps to

understand how each text performs its part in this network, how the texts together delineate the activities of the social group, enabling them to better participate in the academic system. It is also important diachronically because it helps to comprehend how the various genres result from previous texts and influence future texts (Devitt, 1991, pp. 353–4). The system is the history of all discursive events associated with distinct genres, as intertextual occurrences, each as an act in relation to previous and subsequent ones.

Thus, the system of genres constitutive of my workplace at REWRITE—Reading and Writing Research and Teaching Laboratory (LABLER—Laboratório de Pesquisa e Ensino de Leitura e Redação) at UFSM, represented in Figure 11.3, can be described as a continuous and non-linear intertextual flow between a research project, the product of this research (in the form of a book, for example), and its evaluation (in the form of a review of the published book).

An umbrella research project [1] is built based on other texts previously read or written by the group or by other authors. The project is then studied, implemented, changed and adapted, and the resulting ideas are honed, through: guidance sessions and [2], lectures [3], graduate student dissertation defenses [4], and may culminate in the publication of a book chapter [5], which, in turn, may trigger the publication of a book review [6], which may influence new texts, and so on, in a flow of primarily discursive institutional activities oriented toward different goals.

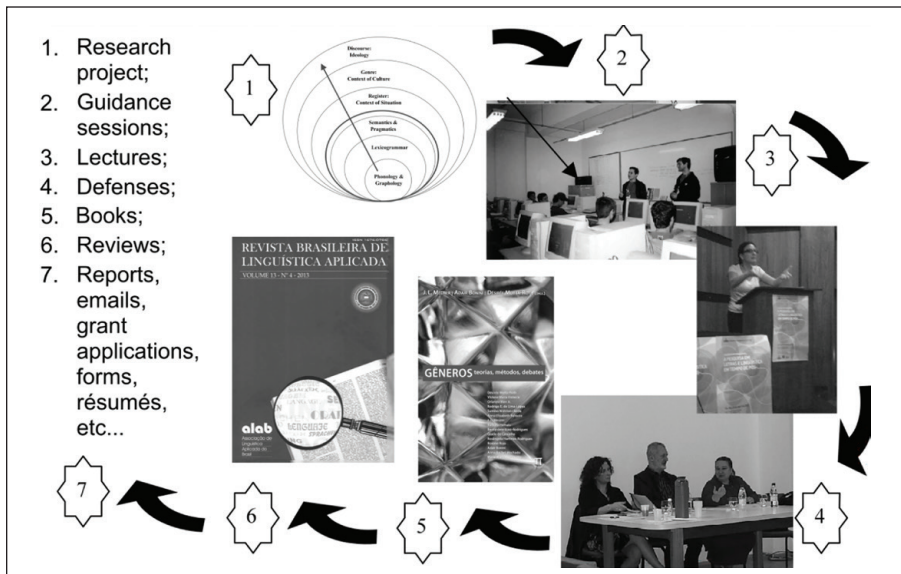


Figure 11.3. LABLER-UFSM's Genre System

Interrelated genres follow each other in specific contexts because they generate the necessary conditions for discourse actions to occur, so each genre will have consequences for the other genres (and corresponding speech acts) that follow in the process of achieving our goals (Bazerman, 1994, p. 98).

At LABLER/UFSM, this set comprises genres that the group produces during its routine, such as e-mails, requests for leave of absence, letters, *curricula vitae*, electronic forms in the UFSM Educational Information System which stores and manages information about institutional academic productivity, etc. In the course of a day, parts or the entirety of an abstract, review, article, research project, book, book chapter, volume of proceedings, etc., are produced by a social group whose members share common interests.

The concept of genre set is important for understanding the university research environment and the role each text plays in the maintenance of the scientific institution. Graduate students can position themselves more aptly in academic interactions and produce more suitable texts by understanding the system of social interactions and intertextuality among the genres that structure the community in which they participate (Motta-Roth, 2001).

The Wheel: Reading and Text Production Cycle of the Australian School

Another important contribution to academic writing pedagogy is a proposal from the Australian school to teach genre-based text production. The proposal of *the wheel* emphasizes the explicit teaching of lexicogrammar structure and the way in which meanings are produced through language.

The cycle comprises three types of activities: Modeling (exploratory group reading of genre exemplars), Negotiation (class discussion about the genre and deconstruction of the texts) and Text Construction (individual text production). The connection among these activities is represented by a circular-shaped model, proposed by Jim Martin and colleagues of the Australian systemic functional school, within the Department of Education Program of Genre Literacy Pedagogy at Disadvantaged Schools, with a focus on language education in elementary and middle school (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993, p. 11). This teaching approach is designed in terms of the social functions that language serves, so language is taught as text that is part of a context.

This approach has been criticized for being too form-oriented and for reinforcing a reader-centered view by emphasizing the idea that the text must meet the expectations of an ideal academic discourse community. The counterargument is that to be able to interact in a social context, students need to learn socialization practices of that target community (Raimes, 1991, p. 412).

Without systematized, in-depth knowledge about a community's rhetorical traditions, inexperienced writers rely on luck to learn from experience how to participate in a given genre (Devitt, 1993, p. 583).

Cope and Kalantzis (1993, p. 8) emphasize that, although it draws attention to the form of language, systemic functional genre pedagogy differs from formalist approaches that focus on grammatical rules as a value in themselves. The project of genre pedagogy is political in nature because it aims to enable historically marginalized groups in literate and technologically developed societies to have equal access to the genres of power and to the cultural and social benefits of such access (Kress, 1993, p. 28). This access demands the explicit teaching of form and content, which includes the analysis of genre exemplars by the group of students and teacher, and the production of texts by the students (Cope & Kalantzis, 1993, pp. 10-11).

In Brazil, the OCN, as well as different teaching proposals (Machado, Lousada, & Abreu-Tardelli, 2004a, b; Motta-Roth, 2001, 2006a, b) have shown that genre-oriented pedagogies are desirable because:

They point toward paths for leading the student to become engaged in a text production activity as a way of being in the world, of acting with a purpose and a motive. Some suggestions will have more effect than others. ... Teaching genre-based text production demands a detailed description of specific contexts and a consideration of linguistic elements which have a systematic relation to the social behavior or events we wish to explain (Davis, 1995, p. 434). By learning the genres that structure a social group of a given culture, the student learns ways to participate in the actions of a community (Miller, 1984, p. 165). Figuring out how to do this consistently in the classroom seems to be our challenge. The language classroom may be the place where we must analyze, critique, and/or evaluate the various instances of human interaction in situated cultures, in which language is used to mediate social practices. I agree with McCarthy and Carter (1994) when they state that to teach languages is to teach one to be a discourse analyst, so I believe that classroom discussions should focus on language practices in specific actions of the relevant social group. (Motta-Roth, 2006a, p. 510)

Pedagogical actions that are planned based on the notion of genre also contribute to classroom practices. Brazilian researchers who adopt an SDI approach have advocated the construction of "didactic models" of genres as a

form of intervention in teacher training, which results in the improved quality of language teaching (Machado & Cristóvão, 2006).

The Proposed “Didactic Models” of the Swiss SDI School

The third contribution to academic writing pedagogy that I review in this paper is the aforementioned idea from SDI of didactic models or didactic transposition (Machado & Cristóvão, 2006). Similar to the wheel, didactic models of genres aim to promote the analysis, reconstruction, and appropriation of genres in communicative pedagogical activities and practice in specific cultural contexts. Didactic models are useful in writing and reading classes, since they allow the “visualization of the genre’s constitutive dimensions and the selection of those that can be taught” at a given teaching level (Machado & Cristóvão, 2006, p. 557).

The construction of the didactic model presupposes the analysis of a set of texts considered to belong to the genre to be studied/taught, in Bakhtin’s analytical order mentioned above, starting from the context and moving towards the text. This construction is based on the following elements (Machado & Cristóvão, 2006, pp. 557–558):

- a. The characteristics of the situation of production: who the producer is (what social role he/she plays), who the potential reader is (what social role he/she plays), where and when the text is produced, the social institution in which the genre is produced and circulates, in which medium, for what purpose, what social value it is assigned, etc.
- b. The typical contents of the genre.
- c. The different ways of mobilizing this content.
- d. The compositional construction of the content characteristically associated with the genre.
- e. The particular style of the genre: the specific configurations of language units in terms of the enunciative position of the enunciator (presence/absence of first- and second-person pronouns, deictic elements, verb tenses, modalizers, insertion of voices); the textual sequences (descriptive, explanatory, argumentative, narrative, injunctive, dialogical) and the types of predominant and subordinate discourse (interactive, theoretical, interactive report and narration) that characterize the genre; the characteristics of the mechanisms of nominal and verbal cohesion; the characteristics of connective mechanisms; the characteristics of sentences; lexical characteristics.

The notion of the didactic model of genre and the procedures for its construction seem to meet their objectives: “to support teaching and learning of the first language through activities aimed at developing the necessary skills for the production of texts belonging to different genres” (Machado & Cristóvão, 2006, p. 559).

One of the positive points of the didactic models proposed by SDI is that their construction does not need to be theoretically perfect and “pure” and should mobilize the various references relevant to the context of the teacher who is proposing the didactic model. Thus, it enables the use of various theoretical references, from different studies, on the genre to be taught, in addition to references obtained through observation and analysis of social practices involving the genre, with specialists’ feedback on text production (Machado & Cristóvão, 2006, p. 557).

The belief that there is a grand theory of genres that accounts for language in all its complexity is questionable, as has been pointed out by Swales (2004, p. 3). In my view, the possibility of adopting a hybrid perspective by using diverse theoretical references and thus maintains an intertextuality with authors from various schools is the most remarkable quality that the genre studies perspective has to offer to language studies. It is the most remarkable quality especially considering that each context of language teaching and research has a particular time and space profile, so the process of teacher education and teaching itself should be thought of as a particular intellectual construction, in which the teacher should be prepared to make proposals that meet the needs of his/her context of teaching practice, rather than, for example, adopting ready-made textbooks. In this sense, genre research and teaching encourage critical thinking, as argued below.

Perspectives for Research and Teaching

Putting “Criticism” (Back) on the Genre Research and Teaching Agenda

In Brazil, our trajectory is particular and global. On one hand, we have a line of thought rooted in the pioneering work of Paulo Freire, who, in the late 1950s, spoke of ideas associated with “empowerment” (*empoderamento*) and “awareness” (*conscientização*) through literacy, critically reflecting on education (Freire & Hornton, 2003, p. 100). Long before critical awareness became popular worldwide in language studies in the 1980s, Freire proposed adult literacy in marginal areas of the Brazilian state of Pernambuco:

It would have to be based on an awareness of the reality of everyday life as experienced by the students, so it may never be

reduced to a simple knowledge of letters, words, and phrases.
(Araújo Freire, 1996, p. 35)

Freire drew the world's attention to a reasoning about language characterized by simplicity. For him, education is a collective and historicized act, typified by principles of interaction.

- a. One cannot bring ready-made, ahistorical material to educate a group located in time and space, for it needs material associated with its local, concrete reality, the immediate place where people live and where they will learn to read (Brandão, 1986, p. 24; Freire & Horton, 2003, p. 102). Teaching and learning are established dialogically, so the word is essential: authentic education is not achieved from "A" to "B" or from "A" over "B," but from "A" with "B," mediatized by the world, for students and teachers "learn together", after all, only dialogue, which implies critical thinking, is also capable of generating [authentic education] (Freire, 1981, p. 98). One learns to read by reading; the practice is important for the act of knowledge (Freire, 2000, p. 46); the path is built by walking (Freire & Horton, 2003).
- b. One learns the language in which one interacts, by interacting through language—a principle adopted by the authors in the Vygotsky's Circle, which influenced Paulo Freire (Freire & Horton, 2003, p. 62); because it is a historically and socially situated process, literacy is critical and intersubjective, thus one learns to read and write in the school classroom, as long as it is an interactive learning space.
- c. Literacy is developed through the use of generating words and themes from the known universe, the keywords that characterize students' daily life (Brandão, 1986, pp. 27, 32-34) as scaffolding. It is impossible "to work in a community without feeling the spirit of the culture that has been there for many years" (Freire & Horton, 2003, p. 138). On the other hand, having respect for that local culture does not mean that the educator does not question, criticize or bring the possibility of change to the table (Freire & Horton, 2003, p. 139), in that sense education is a process of intervention (Freire & Horton, 2003, p. 143).
- d. Knowing how to read the word presupposes knowing how to read the world, to read social reality; critical thinking is the ability to ask serious questions to the points of view and theories that are set forth (Freire & Horton, 2003, p. 228); critical

reading is the act of relating the text to its socioeconomic conditions of production and consumption, which implies perceiving the relationships between text and context (Freire, 2000, p. 11) and understanding this context. (Freire & Hor-
tons, 2003, p. 159)

On the one hand, us, Brazilian researchers, benefit from the theoretical and pedagogical legacy of Paulo Freire. On the other hand, we are attentive readers of developments across the globe, engaging with various theoretical schools that continue to emerge and take shape. We make use of these theoretical resources and put them to use in our practice, adapting them to our context, feeding back into the cycle of academic debate. The PCN and the OCN are examples of hybrid documents because they maintain an intertextuality with authors from several schools.

The critical perspective advocated by Paulo Freire—and currently disseminated by so many other contemporary authors—seeks to reestablish the relationship between the text and its conditions of production, distribution, and consumption, and in doing so brings three main contributions to language research.

First, by proposing the analysis of linguistic and rhetorical elements of the text (as in strict genre analysis) in combination with the analysis of ideological elements of the context (as in critical discourse analysis), critical genre analysis lends itself to an analysis that is both detailed, because it explains and locates the linguistic elements in time and space, and problematizing, because it denaturalizes the values that are put forth.

Second, by bringing a concern with social practices to text analysis, critical genre analysis clarifies the significance of texts for individual and group life and the structuring role of genres for culture:

Using Meurer's (2004, pp. 137-144) description of the principles of Anthony Giddens' sociological theory, we can say that the social system is organized in terms of socially recognized activities (social practices such as customer service in a bank, the university class, the doctor's appointment, the job interview) and social roles (and the power relations between manager and customer, teacher and student, doctor and patient, employer and job applicant) performed by the participants of each activity. Activities and social roles are constituted by a third element, language (rules and resources of meaning-making). Language functions as a structuring element of the first two elements. All three are articulated in

genres—social practices mediated by language, shared and recognized as components of a given culture. This concept of language, which articulates social life and the language system, bears assumptions about language teaching: to teach a language is to teach how to act in that language. (Motta-Roth, 2006a, p. 496)

Third, by enabling an analysis of the social values of textual elements and inscribing the text within a system of activities, critical genre analysis allows for a more accurate understanding of the relationship between language theory and social practice. Analogously to Vygotsky's postulations (1984/2007, p. 102) on the relation between abstract thought and concrete experience, I believe that the reference to the concrete experience of the system of activities that texts structure is a necessary part of our learning of genres—that is, of the intersubjective development of abstract representations about the way we communicate, when, where, and with what (more or less stable) forms. Involvement in everyday practical activities serves as a basis for the social and cultural formation of the mind:

human practice is the basis for human cognition; practice is that process in the course of whose development cognitive problems arise, human perceptions and thoughts originate and develop, and which at the same time contains in itself criteria of the adequacy and truth of knowledge. Marx says that man must prove truth, activity, and power, and the universality of his thought through practice. ... In reality, the philosophic discovery of Marx consists not in identifying practice with cognition but in recognizing that cognition does not exist outside the life process that in its very nature is a material, practical process. (Leontiev, pp. 12-13)

Two of the questions to be answered by future research on genres are: 1) How much context (historical, social, material, personal) do we need to account for (Swales, 2004, p. 3) in order to appropriately understand genre exemplars? 2) How much text do we need to account for, and at what level of detail, in order to understand and participate discursively in what happens around us? These are central questions that researchers and critically based language teachers will eventually have to answer.

There are, at least, two paths to be pursued by research and teaching that reciprocally support each other: stimulating authorship and valuing dialogism and intertextuality.

Stimulating Authorship and Valuing Dialogism and Intertextuality as Theoretical and Methodological Contributions to Teaching

From a critical perspective, authorship is fostered so that students become authors of their own texts in order to connect the educational learning of their texts with interaction in daily life (Halliday, 1991, p. 13). Authorship is constituted insofar as the choices regarding the purpose of writing, the content and style of the text, as well as the target audience, become the prerogative and responsibility of the writer (cf. Ivanic 1998: 26, 219, 341), in relation to the culture of the social group for whom the text is intended. From a social perspective, learning is seen as a dialectic process:

The reflection of reality arises and develops in the process of the development of real ties of cognitive people with the human world surrounding them; it is defined by these ties and, in its turn, has an effect on their development. (Leontiev, 1987, pp. 12-13)

The dynamics of authorship, which identify the need for writing and reading and locate it in everyday life, empower the producer of the text, build the author's identity, and make predictions about the potential reader.

The acclamation of dialogism and intertextuality situates a text in the flow of discourse. Genre pedagogy offers a discussion about the circumstances of text production, distribution and consumption, the texts themselves and their effects. By proposing this engagement in the ongoing dialogue between the text and the world, genre pedagogy eschews the "pedagogy of thematic exploration" (Bunzen, 2006, p. 148), in which the student is urged to write a school dissertation on a topic chosen by the teacher without a specific purpose, without a social-interactive engagement, and evaluated essentially for its normative and/or structural aspects, read by a would-be audience—the teacher (Bunzen, 2006, pp. 147-8). In order for students to participate in discourse, text production must be conceived of as a social practice. To this end, it is necessary that students and teachers develop a rich view of the act of writing itself: writing presupposes not only the production of the text, but also its planning (before), its revision and editing (after) and its subsequent consumption by the target audience, so that author and reader can achieve their goals of symbolic exchanges:

It is important that students and teachers know (or learn about) the social situation of genres relevant to their lives in the target communities. To this end, it is fundamental to ask questions such as: What is this genre for? How does it work?

Where does it manifest itself? How is it organized? Who participates and in what roles (who can, should, or must write and who can, should, or must read)? (Motta-Roth, 2006a, p. 505)

Stimulating authorship and valuing dialogism and intertextuality are some of the elements that can point to paths for students to engage in text production activities as a way of being in the world, of acting with an aim and a motive. The teacher's role is to enable the development of authors who produce texts for circulation/publication, where before there were students who merely wrote texts to be turned in to the teacher, for the sole purpose of being assessed (Motta-Roth, 2006a, p. 507).

Final Remarks

It is relevant for us to question whether the problem to be tackled by formal education is, indeed, students' lack of knowledge about the rules of the standard language. Perhaps this is not the problem, but rather the lack of access to activities in hegemonic genres and social contexts. Students know their first language. Students live their lives in the language, they date, get jobs, write messages on their cell phones, write on *Orkut* [a social networking service], compose poetry, but they don't have a rich repertoire of elements of the privileged language variety, in hegemonic genres or the activities associated with these genres. Genre pedagogy provides an opportunity for a teaching practice that legitimates "students' social practices in specific cultural contexts" (Bunzen, 2006, p. 158). However, because of the economic and cultural alienation of Brazilian public-school students, they lack engagement in a wider range of discursive social processes and situations considered hegemonic.

To teach language from a genre perspective is to work "with an understanding of its functioning in society and in relation to individuals situated in that culture and its institutions," "with the kinds of texts that a person in a particular role [in society] tends to produce" (Marcuschi, 2005, pp. 10-12).

The field of language education also lacks a deeper understanding of the role of metalanguage and metacognition. There is no reason to shield the student from discussion about language metacognition or metalanguage to refer to language categories. As Halliday (1991, p. 13) writes:

In arithmetic, everyone accepted that the children had to learn to talk about their number skills, like adding and taking away; but they were expected to master highly complex language skills without any systematic resources with which to talk about them.

In the same way, I don't see how we can learn language without talking about it and using the terms related to the field of knowledge in which it is understood.

Analogously to Bakhtin's description of how we are able to participate in discourse because we construct a mental model of the situation in which we find ourselves based on our life experience in society, Halliday (1985/1989, p. 28) discusses social and linguistic practice in terms of three behaviors. When we enter a situation, 1) we determine a field (i.e., what people are doing), 2) we note the relationships between them, and 3) we identify the mode (i.e., what is being accomplished through language). So, we enter a situation with an alert mind, with certain elements of language ready to be accessed cognitively, and we make predictions as to the kind of meanings that will be produced so that we can participate in the interaction in that situation.

If learning language is the same as analyzing discourse, then for both research and teaching, representations about the situation of language action are a starting point for any action. These representations are a guiding basis in which to make judgments about the genre of the text, the discourse types, sequences, textualization mechanisms, and enunciative mechanisms that compose the text (Halliday, 1985/1989).

In regard to language education, Halliday (1991, p. 2) raises some relevant questions. What do people read and hear, speak and write when they are experiencing the effects of a certain action, when they are in a certain context of situation? What objective do they hope to achieve through language? And how do they know whether the objective has been achieved?

It is up to the school to provide access to an explanation and understanding of the way in which situations of more or less institutionalized social interaction occur, are organized and developed, and how and by whom the participant roles are determined and the meanings made available in language. Only by understanding what happens can we understand what is being said or written, for the situation creates the text and the text implements the situation, materializes it, and makes it a possibility (Halliday, 1991, p. 15).

In the field of research aimed at describing and interpreting discursive practices, critical genre analysis combines the theoretical framework of genre analysis, that of systemic functional linguistics and that of critical discourse analysis. This combination offers a rich theoretical structure that allows: a) description of speech acts (the communicative action) performed in a text representative of a genre, b) identification of linguistic exponents mobilized in the performance of these acts and that make reference to the contexts of situation and culture that define the genre, and c) interpretation of the

discourse(s) that permeate the text and that constitute the social relations and tensions in a given discursive event.

In summary, the research and teaching accomplished so far point us in certain directions, but the challenge remains to refine the concept of context relevant to diverse language uses (Meurer, 2004) so that we can understand, describe, and teach language uses as situated practices rather than as systems of rules and truths.

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Reflection

The editors of this volume have asked me to write about possible reasons why this paper has been cited by colleagues from the literacies and language studies community. I think they cite the paper for its broad historical outlook, covering different theories and significant chronological developments in the research of various genres—language as a social practice in specific contexts.

In addition, the paper describes possible connections and conceptual overlaps among various genre theories and points out the importance of

adopting critical perspectives in literacies and language teaching and research. In writing this paper, I wanted to design a landscape of concurring genre theories that were under discussion at the time (2008) by indicating similarities and differences among them with regard to the concept of genre and the approaches available to its study and analysis.

If I were to write it today, when much of its historic background is well-known, I would deepen my discussion of textography and ethnographic approaches, so that I could add a more detailed debate of contextual features and highlight the importance of connecting such features to the theory and practice in genre literacies and pedagogy. I would not consider these adaptations as “changes” in my teaching/research methods and interests, but would actually see them as a further development made possible by the body of knowledge produced, in the last 15 years, by the collaborative efforts of genre researchers that hold a social perspective on language as social practice.

The importance of viewing genres as situated literacy practices, of proposing thick descriptions of the specific contexts in which a given genre constitutes social life, of taking into account the specific forms of life and epistemes of academic contexts in order to propose any approach to genre analysis and literacies pedagogy are three examples of issues I would tackle further were I to make additions in revising my article.

– Désirée Motta-Roth