Writing Studies in Latin America

Seminal Works

Edited by
Federico Navarro
Valentina Fahler
and Jonathan Marine

WRITING STUDIES IN LATIN AMERICA: SEMINAL WORKS

INTERNATIONAL EXCHANGES ON THE STUDY OF WRITING: LATIN AMERICAN SECTION

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"Chapter 1. Writing in Higher Education," by Paula Carlino, was originally published in 2005 by Fondo de Cultura Económica in the book *Escribir, leer y aprender en la universidad. Una introducción a la alfabetización académica*. The original book can be viewed at https://fce.com.ar/tienda/estudios-literarios/escribir-leer-y-aprender-en-la-universidad-5811. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the author.

"Chapter 2: Written Genres: Towards a Comprehensive Understanding from a Socio-Cognitive Perspective," by Giovanni Parodi, was originally published in 2008 by Ediciones Universitarias de Valparaíso in the book *Géneros académicos y géneros profesionales: accesos discursivos para saber y hacer*. The original book can be viewed at https://servicios.ryasa.cl/EcommerceEUV/ProductDetail.aspx?ISBN=9789561706569. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the author.

"Chapter 3: The Impact of Peers' and Experts' Readership on the Revision of Thesis Excerpts," by Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux, was originally published in 2006 by *RLA: Revista de Lingüística Teórica y Aplicada*, https://revistas.udec.cl/index.php/rla/index. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the author.

"Chapter 4: Think Globally, Act Locally: How to Design an Academic Writing Course for Students Entering University," by Federico Navarro, was originally published in 2017 by Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú in the book *El desarrollo de las competencias básicas en los estudios generales* (Pablo Quintanilla and Augusta Valle, editors) The original book can be viewed at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1QwtbCV7vEXQ2qYPq7I30fi-NaOWRsriE1/view. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the author.

"Chapter 5: The Construction of Didactic Models of Genres: Contributions and Questions for Genre Teaching," by Anna Rachel Machado and Vera Lúcia Lopes Cristovão, was originally published in 2006 by *Linguagem em (Dis)curso*. The original article can be viewed at https://doi.org/10.1590/1982-4017-06-03-09. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the authors.

"Chapter 6: Academic Writing Throughout the Undergraduate Years: An Institutional Program," by Estela Moyano, was originally published in 2010 by *Revista Signos: Estudios de Lingüística*. The original article can be viewed

at https://doi.org/10.4067/S0718-09342010000500004. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the author.

"Chapter 7: Discursive Procedures of Knowledge Attribution in Linguistics and Philosophy Theses Across Two Academic Levels," by René Venegas, Paulina Meza Guzmán, and Juan Martínez Hincapié, was originally published in 2013 by *RLA: Revista de Lingüística Teórica y Aplicada*, https://revistas.udec.cl/index.php/rla/index. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the authors.

"Chapter 8: Reading and Writing in the Common Basic Cycle (CBC): A Memoir of Experiences in a Semiology Course," by María Cecilia Pereira, was originally presented in 2006 at the conference Congreso Nacional: "Leer, Escribir y Hablar Hoy." It is republished in translation with approval of the venue director and the author.

"Chapter 9: Teaching and Learning at the Undergraduate Level: Knowledge, Ideas, and Writing Practices in Academic Contexts," by Alicia Vázquez, Ivone Jakob, Luisa Pelizza, and Pablo Rosales, was originally published in 2009 by *Innovación Educativa*. The original article can be viewed at https://www.redalyc.org/articulo.oa?id=179414968004. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the authors.

"Chapter 10: Literacy and Its Implication for First Language Teaching," by Angela B. Kleiman, was originally published in 2007 by *Signo*. The original article can be viewed at https://seer.unisc.br/index.php/signo/article/view/242. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the author.

"Chapter 11: Critical Genre Analysis: Contributions to Language Teaching and Research," by Désirée Motta-Roth, was originally published in 2008 by *DELTA: Documentação de Estudos em Lingüística Teórica e Aplicada*. The original article can be viewed at https://doi.org/10.1590/S0102-44502008000200007. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the author.

"Chapter 12: Professional Literacy Instruction During the Undergraduate Years: Between the University and the Workplace," by Lucía Natale and Daniela Stagnaro, was originally published in 2014 by *Itinerarios educativos*. The original article can be viewed at https://doi.org/10.14409/ie.v0i7.4945. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the authors.

"Chapter 13: Writing Centers: A Retrospective View to Understanding the Present and Future of Writing Center Programs in the Latin American Context," by Violeta Molina Natera, was originally published in 2014 by *Legenda*.

The original article can be viewed at http://erevistas.saber.ula.ve/index.php/ legenda/article/view/5205. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the author.

"Chapter 14: Academic Writing and Student Agency," by Virginia Zavala, was originally published in 2011 by *Cuadernos Comillas*. The original article can be viewed at https://lecturayescrituraunrn.wordpress.com/wp-content/ uploads/2013/08/unidad-1-compl-zavala.pdf. It is republished in translation with approval   of the original publisher and the author.

"Chapter 15: Access to Written Culture: Social Participation and Appropriation of Knowledge in Everyday Reading and Writing Events" by Judith Kalman, was originally published in 2003 by *Revista Mexicana de Investigación Educativa*. The original article can be viewed at https://ojs.rmie.mx/index. php/rmie/article/view/1365. It is republished in translation with approval of the original publisher and the author.

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- Martín Álvarez, Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso, Chile. Translation of "Reading and Writing in the Common Basic Cycle (CBC): A Memoir of Experiences in a Semiology Course" by María Cecilia Pereira.

Knowledge, Ideas, and Writing Practices in Academic Contexts" by Alicia Vázquez, Ivone Jakob, and Luisa Pelizza.
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Prologue. What I Have Learned from Writing Studies in the Other Americas

Charles Bazerman

In the last few decades, writing programs and writing studies have been expanding in Spanish- and Portuguese- speaking Americas, to meet the needs of economically transforming and democratizing societies. The expansion and democratization of education have created space for long-time workers in writing education to share their experiences and for a new generation of committed writing scholars and teachers to emerge. This volume makes accessible to the English-speaking audience an influential selection of the growing literature from the region. These articles give a window into the ways of thinking and researching of some of the most prominent and influential educators, suggesting the larger climate of evolving thinking and practice in the region.

The articles translated here reveal lessons the writing scholars in the Spanish- and Portuguese- speaking Americas have learned from writing and language studies in the rest of the world. Some of these lessons are familiar to us in the English-speaking world but these articles also expand our view, from the situations and traditions of their countries, their broad intellectual eclecticism, their critical awareness, and their social commitment. While in the North writing scholars are primarily grounded in the humanities, in the South scholars bring tools from the social sciences such as linguistics, psychology, education, and semiology to the task of writing education.

North and South share core problems of serving students in expanding secondary and higher education, democratizing higher education, including non-traditional and marginalized students, and transforming traditional curricula to foster student creativity, critical judgment, thought, agency, and contribution. Histories of economic inequality, lack of access to schooling, social and racial marginalization for large groups are even more immediate and pressing in the South, with attempts to address the challenges more current. Higher education in the South is generally less costly for students than in the North, and often free. In further contrast, the higher education systems in

many of these countries are even more disciplinary and examination bound than in North America, with less attention to individual development and little general education, so writing needs are embedded in the major (or career, as it is called in a number of countries).

Two decades ago, like many North Americans, I had limited knowledge of the great variety, energy, and educational ferment in the rest of the Americas, but since then travels and friendships have opened my eyes to the great similarities that bind the Americas together, despite historical exploitation by the North. All of the countries of the Americas were formed by colonization and immigration, suppressing indigenous peoples, and oppressing transported slaves. Yet all gained independence of colonial European powers, in most cases by revolution. Since then, they have been experimenting with forms of government, haltingly moving towards democracies with few vestiges of royalty. All the countries of the Americas still are challenged by integrating the many peoples into citizens of modern multicultural nations and modern economies in an information age—while addressing historic inequities and genocidal crimes, and responding to the justified grievances of the those historically exploited, now finding their voice and political power. These countries forged in the last few centuries are creative, optimistic, and exploratory with vibrant traditional and contemporary cultures. Despite constant threats of regression to authoritarianism and rule by elites, both North and South struggle to create modern states out of these complex roots.

Social concern pervades the work of writing education in the region and is explicitly or implicitly present in most of these articles. We see here the great influence of Paulo Freire, but the impulse towards social justice runs even deeper within the histories of the countries and the educational systems. It is appropriate that the earliest work presented here, Judith Kalman's 2003 article, examines the role of literacy in everyday social life outside the confines of school. Working in Mexico and associated with CINVESTAV (Centro de Investigacion y de Estudios Avanzados del Instituto Politecnico Nacional), in this article she considers how the health difficulties of a child and the needs of a small store owner drew two women more deeply into literacy practices. Kalman's work is part of her long-standing community literacy engagement, previously visible in English through her important 1999 book *Writing on the Plaza*, one of the earliest works considering writing in everyday life, among people developing largely outside the traditional school system.

At the same time a number of writing scholars had been developing programs of different sorts to meet the needs of undergraduate and graduate students in higher education. Several chapters here represent this work. Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux, drawing on linguistic approaches, led a group studying

writing at Universidad de Buenos Aires and developing a course to meet the needs they identified. María Cecilia Pereira's article documents the history of this group and Arnoux's article describes one particular practical course she offered. Both date from 2006 and cite extensively from the publications of this group and their sources.

Paula Carlino, at Universidad de Buenos Aires and CONICET (Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas), drew on educational psychology to lead a team studying the writing needs of graduate and undergraduate students, and to develop resources for students and teachers. Her focus has been on how writing is tied to cognitive development within the context of academic disciplines and genres. She is represented here by a 2005 chapter describing a writing intensive course for education majors that helped students address the often loosely defined genre of "monograph," similar to the loosely defined "term paper" we are familiar with in the North.

Another longstanding group led by the late Giovanni Parodi in Chile focused on higher education genres, using linguistic tools within a sociocognitive framework. The 2008 article here is just one example of his extensive publications describing the reading and writing tasks of students at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso.

René Venegas and other authors, also part of the research group in Valparaíso, in their 2013 article offer a more detailed linguistic description of how student writers position themselves in the undergraduate and Master's theses in two different fields, philosophy and linguistics. Through examining the use of the first person and of citations of literature, they find the philosophy students predominantly present their work in their own voice and reasoning, while the linguistic students are more reliant on the literature and placing their work within it.

Within Brazilian education at all levels, reading and writing specialized genres had become a major priority as the social use of genres had been made a central component of the National Curricular Parameters (PCNs). There several scholars took up the challenge of drawing on international work on genre and interpreting and applying it to Brazilian education. Angela Kleiman at Universidade Estadual de Campinas, had long been a leader in language arts teacher education in Brazil, with many highly cited works in Portuguese. Here her 2007 article addresses how genre can be integrated into meaningful literacy practices and events realized within the life of students and the classroom, and not just reduced to the study of form. She argues for a focus on literacy projects and the kinds of text that most interest and engage students.

Désirée Motta-Roth from Universidade Federal de Santa Maria, Brazil over many publications has been a major theorist of genre. Her 2008 article

here surveys four approaches to critical genre theory going back to the 1990s (three of which are familiar in the North, but the Swiss socio-discursive interactionism school less so). She synthesizes and evaluates the different approaches to come up with an integrated understanding, as she has done in her other works.

Drawing more centrally on the Swiss school, Anna Rachel Machado (Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo) and Vera Lucia Cristovão (Universidade Estadual de Londrina) provide a useful explanation and overview of socio-discursive interactionism and its classroom application in pedagogic sequences. Viewing human cognition and consciousness as based on our social natures and use of language, this approach considers genres as facilitating students entering into the forms of thinking within professions, disciplines, and other social groups. Pedagogic sequences bring students into the use of new genres as ways of thinking and interacting, and not just compulsory forms. Machado and Cristovão have been central in introducing and popularizing this approach in Brazil and other countries in the region, and the 2006 article here indexes a number of the studies fostered by this approach.

Alicia Vázquez and her research group at Río Cuarto in Argentina in their 2009 article highlight the problem of students gaining deeper uses of writing when most of their practice is limited to reproduction tasks that require only low-level processing. They found that without reinforcement from writing assigned in subject areas, direct instruction in concepts of the constructive nature of writing have little hold in the abstract and even less on the quality of text productions or writing processes.

To develop more in-depth assignments by professors and to provide students with the linguistic tools to engage with those assignments, a number of scholars at Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento in Buenos Aires developed a project called PRODEAC (*Reading and Writing Skills Development Program Across the Undergraduate Years*), similar to what we in the North would call writing in the disciplines, but with a more decidedly linguistic focus. Estela Moyano in her 2010 article here describes a process of negotiation between the language specialist and the subject area instructor to develop assignments and to analyze the language skills necessary for successful completion of these newly ambitious tasks. This leads to a more elaborated specification of the tasks for the students and supportive language teaching by the language specialist to supplement the content teaching. This process provides more meaningful use of writing in the courses where students experience intellectual rewards, the subject teachers see improved work and understanding, and the language teachers become more focused on what students actually need for their academic work.

Lucía Natale and Daniela Stagnaro evaluate the PRODEAC project by surveying the workplaces that employ students and recent graduates of the university to determine what genres are used. Comparing these workplace genres with those encountered by the students during their actual work at these corporations, they found a strong match (23 out of 28), with 19 also encountered in their programs at their university. While this correspondence is higher than reported at other universities, these results suggest some additional adjustments to the university writing tasks and instruction. This article gives a window into work done on a number of campuses to correlate writing instruction with workplace needs.

While much work has sought to support students' writing to participate more fully in their societies, Virginia Zavala from Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú, has through many publications sought to understand and address the multilingualism and identities of indigenous students as they seek to find their place in the university. She has investigated the sociocultural and political environment of higher education and the stakes for social justice and social transformation when education is democratized. In the 2011 article translated here she contrasts the concept of agency with language deficit and other essentializing assumptions of typical linguistically based approaches to second language education. The focal students in this study form hybrid identities and language uses to integrate what they are learning into their own sense of values and priorities, while still doing their best to submit the kind of work their professors ask for. Zavala argues for a more open classroom discussion, inviting students' invention of their hybrid voices.

Two final articles indicate how far writing programs and writing studies have come in the last two decades. Each draws on the many programs that have developed to provide guidance for others who seek to initiate programs. Violeta Molina Natera from Pontificia Universidad Javeriana in Cali, Colombia has been one of the leaders in bringing Writing Centers to South American universities. In the 2014 article translated here she documents the rise of writing centers in the region by placing them in the context of the history and lessons of writing centers in North America, which have provided theory and guidance. She then identifies important moments and directions taken in the Latin American adoption and adaptation and provides a series of questions to ask in establishing new centers.

Federico Navarro (currently at Universidad de O'Higgins in Chile) in his 2017 article provides an overview of the higher education situation and the rise of writing programs. He identifies key considerations for creating new writing programs to meet the particular needs, conditions, and resources in different countries and universities, with their particular structures.

Ultimately, he advocates for writing campuses with writing embedded within all the activities and learning. He exemplifies his principles with the design of a program at Universidad Nacional de Quilmes in a working-class neighborhood of Buenos Aires.

Collectively these articles demonstrate that writing studies in the region are developing programs and literatures that respond to local needs, conditions, resources, populations, and cultures, along with the structures of universities. Both writing and education more broadly are understood as parts of societies, economies, and citizenry. While program goals and details are similar to those in the North, they bring a different repertoire of intellectual tools and social values that can challenge and expand our thinking. For me, communication with my colleagues in other parts of the Americas has led me to see and understand new things about writing. It has been an unexpected gift that has come to me in the latter part of my professional life. I recommend these articles to you as part of your journeys of discovery and commitment to our rich educational calling.

WRITING STUDIES IN LATIN AMERICA: SEMINAL WORKS

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Introduction. An Empirically Based Canon for Two Decades of Writing Studies in Latin America

Federico Navarro, Valentina Fahler, and Jonathan Marine

> That's why we now turn the map upside down, and then we finally have a fair idea of our position—not as they want it in the rest of the world. The tip of America, from now on, extending forward, insistently points to the South, our North.
>
> – Joaquín Torres García, *La escuela del sur*, 1935, p. 213

An Empirically Based Canon: The History of and Impetus for This Project

In an increasingly multilingual world, the dominance of English in academic publishing remains a barrier to the global exchange of ideas (Navarro et al., 2022). This is evident in the international field of writing studies, where research and theoretical frameworks from the Global North continue to shape the terms of discourse, while rich, innovative scholarship from the Global South continues to struggle for visibility (Donahue, 2009). This volume arises from the belief that our field, with its deep engagement in the power of language, is uniquely positioned to challenge the traditional center-periphery dynamic in scholarly language use and knowledge production and, in doing so, open new pathways for international scholarly dialogue in writing studies, and beyond.

The original intention of this book was to collect key U.S. writing studies works translated into Spanish as part of the *International Exchanges* book series in the WAC Clearinghouse. Such an editorial project would have contributed to making influential scholarship accessible worldwide. For example, the Spanish translation of *Reference Guide to Writing Across the Curriculum* (Bazerman et al., 2016) aimed to align with our field's commitment to fostering exchanges in languages other than English. However, some time into

this project, we came to realize that such a handbook, although useful, would just reinforce the center-periphery dynamic wherein Northern researchers produce and distribute theoretical models and knowledge about the world that Southern researchers adopt and apply (Mignolo & Walsh, 2018).

It was at this point that we recognized a more meaningful approach: translating key Latin American works into English in order to amplify less-visible scholarship on a global scale and open up pathways for the bidirectional exchange of ideas across international contexts. Moving away from an implicitly unidirectional, colonial pattern, this volume takes a different approach by *bringing scholarship in languages other than English into English* in order to foster a more equitable, multidirectional conversation across countries, contexts, and disciplines.

With this goal in mind, we assembled a team of editors from diverse backgrounds, holding different postgraduate degrees, using different language traditions, and with institutional affiliations from across the Americas to facilitate the kinds of dialogue and analysis necessary to advance this transnational exchange. By shifting the direction of translation, this project not only amplifies Latin American scholarship but also questions the asymmetries that have long shaped the field. This shift in focus could not only serve to amplify the value of knowledge elaborated in languages other than English but also to ensure its visibility and impact on a broader international stage.

A Brief History of Latin American Contributions to Writing Studies

Latin America has a tradition of teaching and researching reading and writing that spans at least half a century. For instance, Paulo Freire's work on critical pedagogy and adult literacy in contexts of social inequality dates back to the 1970s. Similarly, authors like Emilia Ferreiro and Delia Lerner have contributed to early literacy research since the 1980s, while pedagogical insights on guided creative writing at various educational levels were developed by Maite Alvarado and Gloria Pampillo in the 1980s and 1990s. Notably, the journal *Lectura y Vida. Revista Latinoamericana de Lectura*—a Spanish-language publication of the International Literacy Association founded in the early 1980s—was published for three decades and promoted systematic research on literacy, initially focusing on reading. Later, in the 1990s, the influential UNESCO Chair on Reading and Writing in Latin America was created, fostering research and teaching centers, national and regional conferences, and publications across the continent.

However, it was at the turn of the century that knowledge production on reading and writing by practitioners and scholars multiplied, coinciding with universities' efforts to support the learning processes of an expanded student body, the professionalization and growth of the scientific field in Latin America, and the emergence of study associations dedicated to writing in higher education. The terms used to name the field have varied, some linked to other parent disciplines—such as "critical sociolinguistics" or "language pedagogy"—and others referencing the specificity of the object of study—especially *alfabetización académica* or "academic literacy instruction" (Navarro & Colombi, 2022).

Yet, some members of the field argue that the term *writing studies*—similar to terms like discourse studies, media studies, or peace and conflict studies—allows for the inclusion of diverse disciplines with complementary interests in a shared object of study, while also enabling the field to break away from its original disciplinary and institutional affiliations (Bazerman et al., 2017) in search of a distinct body of knowledge. At the same time, the term writing studies implicitly asserts the scientific nature of the field, suggesting systematic methodologies and cumulative evidence, and helps to adopt a lifespan perspective which accommodates research on writing at school, in higher education, in professional settings, or in non-educational contexts.

Additionally, the strong Latin American tradition of university-based publishing companies and scholarly journals has created an active, alternative regional hub of Spanish and Portuguese-written research (Demeter et al., 2022). In the case of writing studies, there are currently three university-based, open-access journals in Latin America specifically dedicated to research on reading and writing across educational levels and contexts that have emerged during the last decade. *Traslaciones. Revista Latinoamericana de Lectura y Escritura* (https://revistas.uncu.edu.ar/ojs3/index.php/traslaciones), based in Argentina, is the official publication of the UNESCO Chair on Reading and Writing in Latin America. *Revista Electrónica Leer, Escribir y Descubrir* (https://digitalcommons.fiu.edu/leerjournal) is the official Spanish-language publication of the International Literacy Association, based in the Dominican Republic in collaboration with Florida International University in the United States. Finally, *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios de la Escritura* (https://wacclearinghouse.org/rlee/) is the official publication of the Latin American Association of Writing Studies in Higher Education and Professional Contexts (ALES), in collaboration with the WAC Clearinghouse.

This thriving realm of scholarship is little known or acknowledged beyond the borders of the Americas, let alone recognized as a source of theoretical

or methodological contributions of value (Navarro, 2022). Translations and quotations of such works outside the region remain rare, as scholars located on the periphery and working in languages other than English attract less attention from mainstream venues.

Selecting the Works for This Collection

Once our editorial team decided to undertake a collection of key writing studies articles published in Latin America and translate them into English for a global audience, the project faced another difficult challenge: how to select the works. As active participants in the field, our team could have curated a selection of works *we* deemed central to the development of the field. However, we did not want to create a canon that could be involuntarily influenced by our own positionality. Instead, we aimed to base the selection of these works on their actual influence within the scholarly community.

As a result, we initially explored the idea of an open survey. However, previous experiences have shown that surveys do not necessarily account for what people actually read and quote. In addition, a voluntary survey might end up being slanted toward certain groups, languages, or geographical zones that just happen to answer more.

Finally, we decided to do research to better understand the relative influence of traditions, themes, and perspectives in writing studies in Latin America. We focused on tracing the patterns of citation of Latin America-based authors in journals' special issues on reading and writing research published during the last two decades in the region. Such a decision would not only validate a selection of the most influential authors and works but also provide useful data to understand the configuration, dynamics, and influence of the field.

To identify the most influential authors with Latin American affiliations, we tracked 10 scientific special issues related to reading and writing, published in Latin American scholarly journals between 2000 and 2020: *Signo & Seña* (2006); *Revista Mexicana de Investigación Educativa* (2013); *Signos* (2016); *Grafía* (2016); *Ilha do Desterro* (2016); DELTA (2017); *Lenguas Modernas* (2017); *Signo & Pensamiento* (2017); and *Íkala* (2019, two volumes). We documented 335 Latin America-based first authors whose 655 works, published in Spanish or Portuguese (2000–2020), were quoted 875 times in the special issues. The most cited authors in Latin America, excluding self-citations, were Paula Carlino, Giovanni Parodi, Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux, Federico Navarro, Anna Rachel Machado, René Venegas, Estela I. Moyano,

María Cecilia Pereira, Alicia Vázquez, Angela Kleiman, Désirée Motta-Roth, Lucía Natale, Violeta Molina Natera, Virginia Zavala, and Judith Kalman.

Once we identified the authors, the project faced another challenge: how to translate their works into English while respecting the conceptual frameworks and terminological developments specific to the field, and at the same time engaging with a global reader. To address this issue, we decided to invite young scholars and literacy researchers familiar with the subject to participate in this process. We brought in translators from various locations in the Americas, proficient in English, Spanish, and Portuguese, who generously contributed the preliminary versions of these chapters.

Editing the Works for This Collection

The translations in this volume underwent an intensive and unique editing process. For example, we have updated references and adapted graphs and figures to ensure consistency in the translation across chapters. Our editorial team aimed to ensure the highest fidelity to the original works while also contextualizing various specifically Latin American concepts, assumptions, and institutions, but this was not always a straight-forward process. On the one hand, as editors we wanted to be faithful to the original works, and on the other, linguistic incongruities, dated terminology, and disciplinary divisions made complete fidelity difficult, an issue long raised by translators across disciplines (Montgomery, 2000; Venuti, 1995).

Further, as volume editors, we were in the unique position of reading the original works and their translations with an eye toward how this scholarship would be received by an international audience. We approached this process as a critical translation, focusing on the historical meanings of various concepts within the multi-disciplinary contexts of the field of writing studies in order to preserve the intellectual integrity of the original works while making them accessible and relevant to new audiences.

For example, "linguistics," conceived in Latin America as, broadly, the study of language, discourse, and literacy, refers in North American contexts to a much more specialized field of study, typically focused specifically on syntax, semantics, and pragmatics. Similarly, many active scholars and practitioners in writing studies in Latin America have received a BA in "letters," a common program in the European and Latin American tradition of philological studies, which combines knowledge of culture, literature, and language that simply does not translate well into the North American educational system. We also struggled with the concept of "alfabetización académica," which combines the strong tradition of initial literacy instruction in Latin America

with the emergence of higher education writing studies and has served as an umbrella term for the field. For each of these terms, and the many others not represented by these prominent examples, we had to negotiate meaning across contexts, cultures, and disciplines.

In some cases, we faced discomfort in retaining certain conceptualizations and their related terms and terminology that have not aged well, such as the concepts of "mother tongue" or "students' deficiencies." As a result, we decided to include translator's notes ("TN"). These comments written throughout by editors or translators attempt to provide context for global readers. In some cases, we consulted the authors themselves regarding unclear passages or difficult-to-find citations in order to ensure that we were staying faithful to the original works but also maintaining consistency across the chapters included in the volume.

The authors also played a key role in negotiating the republication rights of their works, which were granted by publishers and journals at no cost for this book. Accordingly, we invited all the authors to write a reflection on their works, their influence, and how they think about them differently now, and these reflections are included at the end of each chapter. There, each author could review what they perceived as the contributions that generated interest and impact in the writing studies community, but also reflect on which conceptualizations, proposals, and methodologies they would approach differently today.

Although the selection of the chapters in this book is based on actual citation dynamics and recognition specific to writing studies in Latin America, we felt it was necessary to incorporate critical perspectives that could explain why this book is worth reading for a global audience and what future developments we can expect in the field. With this purpose in mind, we invited a prominent senior U.S. scholar with deep international connections in the writing studies community, Charles Bazerman, to write the preface and discuss the landscape the book presents and the international discussions it establishes. We also invited an experienced and well-recognized Latin American scholar, Natalia Ávila Reyes, to identify the outstanding issues and the paths ahead.

In sum, this was a collectively constructed project, made possible through the generous and selfless contributions of authors, editors, and translators, all united by a shared purpose: to contribute to the conversations and exchanges on writing in the Americas and bring them to a broader global audience for the first time. Perhaps, if AI-based translation continues to gain traction, this volume will serve as an epoch-defining collection: one that purposefully sought to negotiate meaning across a broad network of scholars and scholarship through conversation and interchange.

Writing Studies in Latin America: Seminal works

The fifteen Latin American authors whose pieces are reprinted in this collection have all contributed different perspectives and methodologies while advocating certain themes and traditions to account for reading and writing in higher education. A qualitative and situated analysis of their most influential works might shed light on the regional bibliographical foundation of writing studies in Latin America.

Based on our analysis, Argentinian scholar Paula Carlino is the most influential author in the field of writing studies in Latin America. Twenty-three of Carlino's works received 68 citations from 30 different sources, excluding self-citations. Her book *Writing, Reading, and Learning in Higher Education: An Introduction to Academic Literacy Instruction* (2005) has strongly influenced policymakers, stakeholders, researchers, and teachers across disciplines to support institutional changes related to literacy at the university level. In this book, Carlino discusses the writing-across-the-curriculum movement (e.g., Russell), which was not well known in Latin America at the time, alongside sociocultural (e.g., Ivanič) and sociocognitive (e.g., Flower) approaches to writing and learning. She connects this well-grounded theoretical background to ongoing discussions and initiatives in Latin America, particularly discussing the influence of propaedeutic literacy instruction courses that were introduced in Argentinian undergraduate programs following the mass expansion of public, tuition-free universities in the 1980s.

The opening chapter of this volume, entitled "Writing in Higher Education", originally appeared in Carlino's highly influential 2005 book. It provides detailed accounts of pedagogical sequences and tasks developed in her education courses, which exemplify her theoretical claims. Most notably, Carlino argues that literacy serves as a means for learning within the disciplines and that writing varies according to disciplinary discourses and knowledge-making practices. Therefore, she advocates for the integration of literacy instruction into curricula across disciplines and at various stages of students' academic trajectories. Additionally, she asserts that subject-matter teachers should take responsibility for writing instruction—a controversial stance at a time when writing instruction in higher education was predominantly led by language teachers.

Chilean scholar Giovanni Parodi is the second most influential author in the field of writing studies in Latin America. Eighteen of Parodi's works are cited 36 times by 26 articles in special issues, excluding self-citations. Parodi's "Written Genres: Towards a Comprehensive Understanding from a Socio-Cognitive Perspective" (2008) is the influential introductory chapter

of his edited book *Academic and Professional Genres: Discursive Approaches to Knowing and Doing*, published in Chile. Parodi's contributions and influence in the field are twofold. On one hand, he was a tireless promoter of institutional initiatives for development and academic exchange. He transformed the journal *Signos* into the most influential and highest-ranked venue in Latin America for language and writing studies. He also established a graduate school and trained a cohort of students through his highly regarded MA and PhD programs in linguistics, many of whom are now influential figures in the field. Furthermore, he fostered international academic networks, regularly bringing global scholars to Latin America to participate in research projects, courses, and conferences, and he strengthened regional institutions such as the UNESCO Chair.

On the other hand, Parodi developed theoretical and methodological proposals within the framework of applied linguistics, drawing from both textual and cognitive perspectives, which have had a significant impact. In his chapter, he advances a conceptualization of genres—particularly professional and academic genres in higher education—that seeks to reconnect cognitive, contextual, and textual factors. In subsequent works, he investigated these aspects using methodologies such as corpus linguistics and eye-tracking.

Like Carlino's work, Parodi's contribution is both theoretical and programmatic, polemical and pedagogical in style, and widely cited as a foundational framework by other scholars in the field. They also share a focus on academic and professional genres and contexts, with a strong interest in innovating university education across different disciplines and ensuring access to the ways of thinking and communicating within academic disciplines. However, their theoretical foundations differ: Carlino is rooted in educational psychology and the sciences of education, while Parodi is grounded in discourse studies and applied linguistics.

Argentinian scholar Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux is the third most influential author in the field of writing studies in Latin America, with a total of 22 citations to ten works by nine different articles in special issues, excluding self-citations. Her article "The Impact of Peers' and Experts' Readership on the Revision of Thesis Excerpts" (2006) discusses both the theoretical foundations and the textual impact of a thesis writing workshop designed to help graduate students complete their MA theses. After gathering students' perspectives on writing challenges, the workshop's key pedagogical strategies include rewriting sections of their theses in response to both instructional guidance and peer feedback, as well as producing hybrid, epistemic genres such as the *thesis back cover*. This approach not only aims to improve the quality of students' texts but also familiarizes them with the expectations of their

respective scientific discourse communities, including refining their understanding of academic genres. Unlike the contributions of Parodi and Carlino, this chapter presents empirical evidence drawn from an action-research study framed within Arnoux's own theoretical approach.

Just as she pioneered first-year writing courses in Argentina and Latin America in the late 1980s—see Pereira's chapter for more details, Arnoux's 2006 article and a subsequent book published in 2009 were groundbreaking. They anticipated the current interest in graduate writing research, drawing from her experience implementing writing workshops in MA programs since 2004. Particularly noteworthy is her integration of French discourse studies (e.g., Maingueneau) and language pedagogy (e.g., Bronkart) with socio-cognitive writing studies (from Vygotsky to Bereiter and Scardamalia), resulting in a uniquely Argentinian, discourse-based, and critical approach to writing instruction.

Argentinian scholar Federico Navarro's "Think Globally, Act Locally: How to Design an Academic Writing Course for Students Entering University" (2017) is one of eight works he published during the 2010s that have been cited 18 times by 14 articles in special issues, excluding self-citations. The article contextualizes discussions and teaching proposals for reading and writing in Latin America, a region marked by socioeconomic inequalities in university access and completion, yet also by the recent expansion of higher education participation and the existence of partially or fully subsidized tuition at its most prestigious universities. Additionally, the chapter addresses and seeks to synthesize some of the tensions and conflicts between the field's foundational assumptions and the disciplinary traditions that have historically shaped writing studies in Latin America. It does so within a context where the field has reached greater maturity and self-recognition, with an increasing body of scientific research and the establishment of key milestones in its development.

In particular, the chapter provides operational and eclectic definitions—such as semiotic capital, academic language, epistemic potential, and writing campus—allowing any educator or language professional to conceptualize their role in writing instruction. It also outlines nine fundamental theoretical principles essential for those looking to develop literacy instruction programs. Lastly, it grounds its theoretical discussion in a concrete writing across the curriculum initiative at an Argentinian university, which included faculty training, curricular innovation, and the development of teaching materials. Ultimately, this is a programmatic and forward-looking text, aligning with the contributions of Carlino and Parodi, yet authored by a scholar belonging to the next generation within the field.

Brazilian scholar Anna Rachel Machado's article, "The Construction of Didactic Models of Genres: Contributions and Questions for Genre Teaching" (2006), co-authored with Vera Lúcia Lopes Cristovão, is one of her 16 works which are cited 18 times by nine articles in special issues, excluding self-citations. It seeks to develop a didactic approach to language teaching centered on discursive-textual genres, as they are commonly referred to in Brazil. It explicitly addresses diverse social contexts and introduces the concepts of transposition and didactic sequence (particularly those organized around genres) to construct didactic models of genre. This model focuses on linguistic elements—such as lexicon, textual sequences, and cohesion—to facilitate didactic interventions. The main theoretical framework adopted is the socio-discursive interactionism of Swiss origin, which has had a significant influence in Brazil and is widely applied to the teaching of Portuguese as a first language in the school system. In a characteristically Brazilian and Latin American eclectic gesture, this approach is combined with applied linguistics perspectives, particularly those oriented toward English as an additional language.

Unlike the previously discussed works, this chapter shifts its focus to the school system. Its engagement with discursive genres is not only theoretical and pedagogical but also extends to public policy, teacher training, and the implementation of national curricular guidelines that incorporate the concept—similar to the chapter by Brazilian scholar Ángela Kleiman. Like most chapters in this book, this contribution is both theoretical and programmatic. Notably, as in the other two Brazilian-authored chapters, this text demonstrates a strong interest in mapping writing research in the country, offering classifications, evaluations, and an identification of theoretical consensus and gaps that require further development.

Argentinian scholar Estela Moyano's "Academic Writing Throughout the Undergraduate Years: An Institutional Program" (2010) systematizes a pioneering writing across the curriculum initiative implemented at an Argentinian university. The program fosters collaboration between language experts and disciplinary professors to support student writing development. One of the chapter's most original contributions, as seen in other chapters of this book, is its situated eclectic approach: it integrates principles from the rhetoric and composition tradition in the United States with the genre-based pedagogy of systemic functional linguistics from Australia, all within the context of a Latin American public university with free tuition. In total, eight of Moyano's works are cited 12 times by eight articles in special issues, excluding self-citations.

Moyano's chapter advocates for a robust and functional theory of language—understood as a system of meaning-making resources in context—in

writing teaching. It places key linguistic concepts at the core of pedagogy and classroom practice—such as *hyper-Themes* and *Appraisal*. It highlights the role of linguistic awareness and genre awareness, promoting the progressive development of student autonomy in reading and writing tasks, with a focus on the discursive, lexicogrammatical, structural, and contextual features of academic genres. Like Parodi, Moyano calls for an expanded study of the academic and professional genres circulating in higher education. Additionally, the chapter transcends certain tensions in the field between discourse studies and educational psychology by advocating for peer negotiation and collaboration, where both disciplinary and language specialists learn from each other.

Similar to the approaches of Carlino, Arnoux, and Navarro, Moyano's proposal is programmatic: it combines eclectic theoretical frameworks with real classroom initiatives rather than presenting an empirical research study. Its influence in the Latin American context can be attributed, in part, to its rejection of remedial and deficit-based approaches. Instead, it establishes a model of writing support at advanced undergraduate levels.

Chilean scholar René Venegas' "Discursive Procedures of Knowledge Attribution in Linguistics and Philosophy Theses Across Two Academic Levels" (2013) is co-authored with Paulina Meza Guzmán and Juan David Martínez Hincapié. Following the call made by Parodi and Moyano, this chapter reflects the growing interest of writing studies in Latin America over the past decade in understanding the written genres produced by undergraduate and graduate students. Rather than adopting a deficit perspective, as was more common in the field's early developments, this work is driven by a genuine effort to better understand the mechanisms of knowledge construction and their variations across disciplines and educational stages. In total, six of Venegas' works are cited 11 times by six articles in special issues, excluding self-citations.

The chapter focuses on the often opaque and little-known conventionalized discursive practices of academic genres in specific educational contexts. It is the first strictly empirical chapter in the book, employing a quantitative methodology with a strong focus on textual analysis. While the research findings may have implications for writing pedagogy, as evidenced by the subsequent book published in 2015, this is also the first chapter that does not include questions about teaching and learning in its research design.

Argentinian scholar María Cecilia Pereira's "Reading and Writing in the Common Basic Cycle (CBC): A Memoir of Experiences in a Semiology Course" (2006) is a published conference paper that has circulated widely on the internet as a Word document corresponding to an oral presentation, which provides insight into the significance of oral exchanges in events that

are increasingly specialized in the teaching and research of writing in Latin America. Pereira authored four texts in the corpus, which were cited eight times across seven articles.

This chapter offers a first-person insight into the early stages of what may be the first and most influential first-year writing program in Latin America. The interest in teaching academic reading and writing in higher education emerged in a social and historical context marked by the restoration of democracy and demands for greater civil rights in Argentina in the mid-1980s. This period also saw the massification of university enrollment and the establishment of preparatory programs to support the transition from secondary education to university.

The "Reading and Writing Workshop" began to be offered in the 1990s, although it was only formally integrated into the curriculum a decade later. Unlike previous initiatives that focused on study techniques, comprehension, and learning strategies, this workshop placed emphasis on reading and writing. It emerged as a cross-disciplinary subject spanning various undergraduate programs at the University of Buenos Aires, reaching thousands of students each year. The course taught students to engage with theoretical texts from semiotics and discourse analysis to critically approach a variety of texts, including academic, journalistic, and literary works. This theoretical and methodological framework shaped some of the pedagogical choices, as well as the critical and metalinguistic approaches found in writing classrooms, influencing the later development of writing studies in the region.

Alongside the workshop, research was conducted to explore the so-called "difficulties" encountered by these new student populations in the context of free, non-selective university education—an inclusive phenomenon unique to Argentina. However, studies also identified the strategies of successful readers and writers. All in all, this chapter is not merely anecdotal; rather, it sheds light on how this experience served as a crucible for the emergence of a new generation of practitioners and researchers in Argentina and Latin America.

Argentinian scholar Alicia Vázquez's "Teaching and Learning at the Undergraduate Level: Knowledge, Ideas, and Writing Practices in Academic Contexts" (2009), co-authored with Ivone Jakob, Luisa Pelizza, and Pablo Rosales, is one of six of Vázquez's works which are cited eight times by six articles in special issues, excluding self-citations. The chapter presents systematically collected empirical evidence; however, rather than analyzing patterns of written language use, it investigates the relationship between writing and learning in higher education. The chapter presents four studies conducted over a decade aiming to assess the impact of writing-focused instruction on learning and the quality of student communication, and comparing different groups—e.g., high

performance vs. low performance students, or students writing about topics vs. students discussing topics. The research design explores various dimensions, such as tasks, conceptions, writing processes, and text quality, employing complex and creative methodologies to uncover underlying cognitive processes—such as interviews and rubric-based text analysis.

A particularly noteworthy aspect of this chapter is that it not only examines what students do but also investigates the tasks assigned by instructors and their connection to teachers' conceptions of writing. The chapter concludes with general findings derived from empirical evidence, offering valuable theoretical insights. Unlike the more common approach of using theory as a premise to justify educational initiatives or partial data, this study follows a logic in which theory is constructed, corroborated, or challenged based on empirical data. For example, the chapter points out that writing does not automatically promote learning in a linear fashion; rather, appropriate instructional contexts are necessary to achieve this goal.

Brazilian scholar Angela B. Kleiman's "Literacy and its Implication for First Language Teaching" (2007) is part of the eight texts she authored which were cited eight times by three articles across special issues, excluding self-citations. Like Machado's, this chapter focuses on writing in the Brazilian school system, although its theoretical framework is based on the new literacy studies (e.g., Street). Kleiman emphasizes the importance of non-school uses of writing and argues that the goal of education should be to address the multiple literacy practices of social life, viewing writing as a social practice rather than an individual skill. Her approach is rooted in an interest in genres and meaningful communicative situations in students' lives. She advocates for fostering experimentation and discovery when students write in a new genre for the first time.

Additionally, Kleiman urges language teachers to use meaningful social practices within the community—through literacy projects—as a guiding principle for instruction. However, she also acknowledges the challenge of this approach due to the sequential and segmented organization of school curricula. She argues that teachers, as literacy agents, should be aware of their students' cultural and literacy backgrounds and that the teaching of written language should not become a space of inequality and exclusion. In sum, this chapter stands out for its sociocultural, critical, and inclusive perspective on the teaching of written genres in school settings.

Brazilian scholar Désirée Motta-Roth's "Critical Genre Analysis: Contributions to Language Teaching and Research" (2008) is theoretical, programmatic, and eclectic, providing a cartography of ongoing research in Brazil. Alongside her influential textbook *Text Production at the University* (2010),

coauthored with Graciela Rabuske Hendges, Motta-Roth's work was cited seven times by seven articles in special issues, excluding self-citations. The chapter aims to articulate some of the most influential traditions in discourse studies and composition studies, which are often read together in the region. It exemplifies what scholars have termed the "Brazilian blend" (Bazerman, 2016), which, to a certain extent, also reflects a broader Latin American blend.

Specifically, Motta-Roth seeks to integrate various traditions, including applied linguistics, composition, systemic functional linguistics, socio-discursive interactionism, and critical discourse analysis, to support genre analysis and teaching across different cultural contexts. Drawing on Fairclough, for example, she emphasizes the importance of considering the sociocultural context of genres. Similarly, her advocacy for a holistic perspective on genres, which constitute the daily routines of individuals within specific environments, is particularly valuable.

Motta-Roth explores articles from the field to discuss methodological approaches, such as the necessity (or lack thereof) of direct contextual observation. She also situates her contribution within the international and local history of the field in Brazil, highlighting the influence of the concept of discourse genres on the Brazilian school curriculum (PCN). In sum, this chapter lays the groundwork for the necessity of a "hybrid perspective" to account for the complex and multidimensional nature of genres.

Argentinian scholar Lucía Natale's "Professional Literacy Instruction During the Undergraduate Years: Between the University and the Workplace" (2014), co-authored with Daniela Stagnaro, is an empirical study that seeks to map the discourse genres used by higher education students, following the call of Parodi and other scholars. The research is framed within a writing-across-the-curriculum program that follows students through different educational stages. This program could refine its approach and make curricular recommendations based on the collected evidence. In total, Natale authored four texts which were cited seven times by six articles in special issues, excluding self-citations.

The chapter's most significant contribution lies in its expansion beyond the educational context to examine writing and the experiences of advanced students in internships or graduates in professional settings. In doing so, it broadens the range of social contexts that can be explored through writing research.

Colombian scholar Violeta Molina Natera authored four texts which were cited seven times by five articles in special issues, excluding self-citations. Her chapter "Writing Centers: A Retrospective View to Understanding the Present and Future of Writing Center Programs in the Latin American Context"

(2014) historicizes and maps writing centers and programs in Latin America while linking them to the specialized North American scholarship on writing program administration. In doing so, this chapter—along with Molina's other works—introduces into Latin America and Spanish-language scholarship a research and administrative tradition that was previously little known in the region. This work later contributed to the proliferation of writing centers, particularly in Colombia and Mexico.

Furthermore, with its focus on the dynamics and culture of writing centers, the chapter engages in discussions with first-year writing courses and writing-across-the-curriculum and disciplinary writing initiatives, shifting attention toward student-centered tutoring and the training of peer tutors.

Peruvian scholar Virginia Zavala's "Academic Writing and Student Agency" (2011) is one of six works she authored which were cited seven times by four articles in special issues, excluding self-citations. Drawing from critical sociolinguistics and new literacy studies, Zavala places student agency at the center of her analysis, focusing on how students negotiate and challenge the hegemonic contexts and discourses of higher education. In Zavala's perspective, context is not merely an additional level or component; rather, racial, socioeconomic, and ethnolinguistic factors fundamentally shape the educational trajectories of writers. Understanding these trajectories, she argues, requires an ethnographic and qualitative perspective, with thick descriptions that capture their complexity.

To illustrate and substantiate her theoretical proposal with empirical evidence, the text presents two case studies of students who speak Spanish as an additional language at a Peruvian university and who develop vernacular forms of writing in academic settings (such as an "academic diary"). Additionally, the chapter highlights the tensions between the forms of evidence and knowledge construction required by academia and those valued by some students—issues often overlooked in more traditional approaches to writing pedagogy.

With this chapter, Zavala anticipates many of the contemporary concerns in the field while simultaneously problematizing concepts often taken for granted, such as language, culture, learning, and literacy. She emphasizes the notions of situated social practice and communities of practice, challenging the field's predominant focus on cognitive processes (skills) and linguistic products. Overall, the chapter lays the foundation for an inclusive pedagogy of writing, advocating for explicit instruction; recognition of student agency and resistance in creating alternative, hybrid, and original genres and discourses; promotion of rhetorical negotiation (as opposed to mere adherence to hegemonic norms); and the encouragement of students to develop their own academic voice, rather than imposing rigid rules and conventions.

Finally, Mexican scholar Judith Kalman's article "Access to Written Culture: Social Participation and Appropriation of Knowledge in Everyday Reading and Writing Events" (2003) focuses on adults' access to literacy. Like Zavala, this work embraces and promotes a strong sociocultural research tradition, in this case from Mexico, employing an ethnographic case study methodology that challenges hegemonic conceptions of writing, pedagogy, and learning. Kalman draws on Lave and Wenger, Bakhtin, Vygotsky, Rogoff, Wertsch, Chartier, among others, to explore intersubjective, situated, and active learning processes in reading and writing. In total, Kalman authored seven texts which were cited seven times by two articles in special issues, excluding self-citations.

This is the only chapter in the book that does not focus on the school system or higher education but rather on adult literacy, particularly among poor women in rural areas. It also establishes connections with Zavala's work by observing, characterizing, and theorizing participation in written culture in everyday language use contexts, such as reading religious texts or keeping inventory in a small neighborhood store, in contrast to school classrooms that are often unwelcoming and lack significance for non-traditional students.

Final Remarks

The selection of authors and texts in this volume provides a general overview of the development of writing studies in Latin America over the past two decades, and one that we hope can help point toward future directions for the increasingly global field of writing studies.

This collection integrates diverse theoretical traditions—including discourse studies, language pedagogy, educational psychology, educational management, and critical sociolinguistics—bringing them together in innovative and critical ways enabled by a peripheral perspective. References come from a range of languages and origins, both within and beyond Latin America, particularly from France, Switzerland, Australia, the United States, Spain, the United Kingdom, and Russia. Though the authors come from different countries—Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, and Peru—the social contexts they describe share similarities, set within a Latin American continent marked by inequality yet characterized by a history of advocacy for educational equity.

The issues and interests addressed within this volume primarily focus on higher education, but also extend to the school system, professional workplace, and through adult literacy. While some of the most influential texts are traditional empirical studies, the majority introduce, develop, and propose

theoretical frameworks, while also creating and advocating for programmatic visions in order to guide the field's development. Overall, critical perspectives, social commitment, disciplinary hybridity, and intercontinental dialogues serve as key defining traits of the field, and by extension this volume.

We hope that this book offers English-speaking readers an opportunity to engage with the rich tradition of writing studies in Latin America originally developed in both Portuguese and Spanish, translated by a team of translators and editors representative of the rich multilingual, multidisciplinary, and cross-cultural landscape of the continent. This translation process not only reflects the linguistic diversity of Latin America but also brings forward the unique theoretical perspectives and practical insights that have shaped the field of writing studies globally.

By offering this book to English-speaking readers, we invite them to consider how writing is understood, practiced, and taught across cultural boundaries in the hope of expanding the global conversation on literacy and composition across borders linguistically, disciplinarily, and nationally. At the same time, we hope this book will help to surface unresolved issues of interest and the future conceptual frameworks that the field will need in the coming decades, as a transnational effort with contributions from Latin American, and beyond.

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Writing in Higher Education

1

Paula Carlino

Why is it necessary to teach writing in higher education? Shouldn't students have developed writing skills by the time they reach this level? Is a first-year workshop enough? Who is responsible for teaching writing at the university? In what situations? In this chapter, I address these questions starting from the idea that writing is one of the most powerful learning "methods" and therefore, cannot be left for students to sort out on their own. I also work from the understanding that any subject is composed—in addition to a set of concepts—by specific modes of thinking linked to particular ways of writing; and that these forms must be taught alongside course content. As a sample of my pedagogical work, I analyze four pedagogical situations where writing functioned as a tool to work and re-work the concepts of a social sciences subject.

> Academic writing is influenced by life-histories. Each word we write represents an encounter, possibly a struggle, between our multiple past experiences and the demands of a new context.
>
> – Aitchison et al., 1994

Getting Worried or Getting Busy with Writing and Reading

"Students don't know how to write. They don't understand what they read. They don't read." These kinds of complaints, often raised by instructors, appear throughout the whole educational system. They start in elementary school and continue through college. And the responsibility always seems to be somebody else's: the primary school should have done something, and it didn't; parents should have done something, and they didn't, etc. Similarly, it is often said that secondary education (or introductory courses) should have prepared students to write, read, and study prior to reaching higher education.

This complaint is both a fallacy and a rejection of responsibility for writing and reading instruction across grade levels. This reasoning starts from a hidden premise; an assumption that, once revealed, is proven false. David Russell has shown that it is common to suppose that writing (and reading)

are generalizable skills, learned (or not) "outside a disciplinary matrix … and not related in any discipline-specific way to the professional" (p. 53):

> Writing thus came to be seen as a 'ding an sich', a separate and independent technique, something that should have been learned elsewhere, taught by someone else—in high school or in freshman service courses. Hence the almost universal complaints about students' writing and the equally ubiquitous denials of responsibility for teaching it. (Russell, 1990, p. 55).

This idea that reading and writing are separate and independent skills from the learning of a discipline is as widespread as it is questionable. Numerous researchers assert, on the contrary, that the kind of reading and writing demanded in higher education are learned when confronting the discourse production and text consultation practices particular to each subject area, and dependent on receiving orientation and support from someone who masters the subject and participates in these literate practices.

Without underestimating the valuable work performed by the reading and writing workshops that some universities include at the beginning of their undergraduate programs (for example, Di Stefano & Pereira, 2004), it would seem that this labor is intrinsically insufficient. That is, the nature of what must be learned (reading and writing the specific texts of each subject matter in the frame of each academic discipline's practices) demands an approach from within each subject area. A reading and writing course, separate from the literature, methods, and conceptual problems of a specific academic and professional field, serves the purpose of setting in motion a reflective attitude towards textual production and understanding. Simultaneously, it helps to create an awareness about what many academic genres have in common, but does not elude the discursive and strategic difficulties students face when confronted with the challenge of *thinking through writing* about what they study in each subject. According to Bailey and Vardi (1999), it is the specialists of each discipline who are best equipped to support writing at the higher level, not only because they are familiarized with the conventions of their subject matter (though often unaware of them), but also because they are experts in the difficult subject matter that students are trying to master. However, rather than constructing a dichotomy between writing workshops or disciplinary courses with integrated reading and writing instruction, the question worth asking is whether a single course, at the beginning of the undergraduate program, is *enough* to learn how to read and write for the years to come. Pedagogical movements such as writing across the curriculum (WAC) and writing in the disciplines (WID) argue that it is not. Instead, within the universities where these movements have gained influence,

they have taken collective responsibility for the production and analysis of texts found far and wide across the university cycles (Gottschalk & Hjortshoj, 2004; Hillard & Harris, 2003; Monroe, 2003).

That writing poses a challenge in higher education is not due, then, just to the fact that students come ill-prepared from previous educational levels. Difficulties are inherent to any attempt to learn something new. What must be acknowledged is that the form of writing expected by academic communities at the university is not an extension of what students have previously learned. They are tasked with learning new discursive forms that challenge novices and that, for many students, often become insurmountable barriers if they don't have mentorship and support to help them. Linda Flower, one of the researchers who has contributed the most to the study of writing processes, evolved her initially cognitive approach to account for the existence of substantive differences between different written *cultures*, cultures which outsiders are unaware of:

> Student writing is an act of border crossing—or of standing at a threshold trying to figure how to cross. As writers move from home to school, through kindergarten to college, and from discipline to discipline, they encounter a variety of discourse communities, with their special languages and conventions, with their standards for argument, evidence and successful performance, and with their own histories as a discourse from which has emerged a body of commonplaces, topoi, and "key" issues insiders share. (Flower & Higgins, 1991, p. 1)

As I wrote about in Chapter 4 of this volume, these conventions are called "genres" and constitute an important part of what students have to learn when they learn a discipline.[1] Therefore, it is necessary for instructors to integrate them into their classes as objects of teaching.

Taking Responsibility for Reading and Writing in Every Subject

There is yet another reason that justifies the inclusion of reading and writing as inseparable from the teaching of the disciplinary concepts of each subject. This

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[1] Translators' note: Carlino, P. (2005). Enseñar, evaluar, aprender e investigar en el aula universitaria de la mano de la lectura y la escritura. [Teaching, assessing, learning and researching in the university classroom hand in hand with reading and writing]. In: *Escribir, leer, y aprender en la universidad. Una introducción a la alfabetización académica* (pp. 151-181). Fondo de cultura económica.

reason appears outlined in the epigraph written by Aitchison, Ivanič and Weldon (1994) that opens this chapter. These authors point out that to write is to relate what one already knows to the demands of the current writing situation, and that this relationship is not easy, because it entails building a nexus between new and old knowledge. This nexus is not given to the student nor found in their writing context, but demands from the writer a personal connection and elaboration. In this process, old knowledge needs to be re-thought and organized differently, so that it becomes compatible with the requirements of the composition task. Now, the exigency is to build new knowledge that writing stimulates which coincides with the mechanisms that psychology has pointed out as implicated in all learning. In other words, writing sets in motion learning processes that do not always occur in the absence of writing. Hence, the other reason why instructors of any subject should occupy themselves with students' writing is that doing so directly contributes to students' learning of their subjects' concepts.

Therefore, given that there is no appropriation of ideas without re-elaboration, and that the latter depends to a great extent on the analysis and writing of academic texts, reading and writing are distinctive learning tools. And since it is not possible to take comprehension and written production procedures for granted, it is necessary for the instructor to guide and provide support so that students can implement them. Taking charge of teaching reading and writing in higher education is a way of teaching learning strategies (Chalmers & Fuller, 1996). Taking charge of teaching reading and writing in college is helping students learn.

Taking charge of teaching writing is also a way to increase student participation and engagement. I have experienced this myself as I explained in the beginning of the introduction to this book, as well as further along in this chapter and in the first point of the section "Main ideas that run through the previous chapters," in Chapter 4. But evidence for this type of engagement can also be found in a survey of a sample of 350 Harvard University students which asked them how they view their educational experiences at Harvard University. For these students,

> The relationship between the amount of writing for a course and students' level of engagement—whether engagement is measured by time spent on the course, or the intellectual challenge it presents, or students' level of interest in it—is stronger than the relationship between the students' engagement and any other course characteristic. (Light, 2001, p. 55)

In synthesizing all of these ideas, it is necessary to consider the teaching of reading and writing throughout higher education for several reasons. On

the one hand, learning the contents of each subject consists of a double task: to appropriate the discipline's conceptual-methodological system and also its characteristic discursive practices, since "a field is as much a verbal and rhetorical as a conceptual space" (Bogel & Hjortshoj, 1984, p. 12).[2] On the other hand, in order to take ownership of this content, students have to reconstruct it over and over again, and reading and writing become fundamental tools in this task of assimilation and transformation of knowledge. Therefore, students need to read and write in order to actively participate and learn. Is it not the instructor's job to help them achieve this?

In the two sections that follow, I delve into the idea that writing can be an instrument to understand, think, integrate, and develop new knowledge.

Writing's Potential to Impact Thinking

As opposed to spoken language, writing establishes a delayed form of communication. Writer and audience do not share space nor time. This feature of writing demands that the composer reduce the ambiguity of their text in order to minimize the chance that the reader will misinterpret their words. In other words, the author is not present at the moment when the text is read and cannot clarify what they meant to say. To be understood across this distance (spatial or temporal), it is necessary to use language in a particular way: affording it enough informative cues so as to guide the reader to the intended meaning. It requires anticipating the knowledge available to the audience, so as to not take for granted what they, by themselves, will be unable to guess. It requires the writer to use language in a way that is "dis-embedded" from its immediate situation (the here and now). For these reasons, it is necessary to produce a text that is as autonomous as possible.

But if writing poses these *exigencies*, it also offers *affordances* absent from oral communication. What are these? They are the means available to the writer to achieve the efficacy of their written text and to avoid being misunderstood. Firstly, and thanks to the fact that the author doesn't need to face an audience, the writer can take the time to think about what they want to say, why they want to say it, and how they want to say it: they can plan the content, clarify the composition's purpose, and anticipate the organization of

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2   As I develop in the sixth point of the section "Main ideas that run through the previous chapters" found in Chapter 4, "discursive" alludes to language practices (including reading and writing), to the situated *use* of language, according to specific intentions and ways of thinking. "Rhetorical" alludes to the context where that language is used, to the *relationship* between the speaker and the audience, and to the *purpose* each one expects to realize through the linguistic exchange.

the text. Secondly, they can revise: go back over the writing as many times as they may wish to re-read, think again, critique, and change it. They can decide to modify what they want to say and achieve with the writing: they can plan again. All of this, without the reader noticing, without anyone suspecting that behind the written product there was a recursive back and forth process of thinking and questioning.

Since writing is not a spontaneous language but a language that is anticipated and reconsidered, those who write professionally say that composing a text has an impact on the development of their thinking. This is expressed in the motto of the Writing Program of the University of Georgia, a U.S. university:

> A writer is not so much someone who has something to say as he is someone who has found a process that will bring about new things he would not have thought of if he had not started to say them. (William Stafford)

Writing stimulates the critical analysis of one's own knowledge because it allows one to maintain focus on certain ideas, which in turn is made possible by the stable nature of writing, as opposed to the volatility of thought and spoken language. However, researchers agree that this benefit is not an automatic consequence of written composition but a result of approaching writing from a sophisticated perspective. Writing has the potential to be a way of structuring and modifying thought, but we do not manage to take advantage of its epistemic function every time (Wells, 1990). There are ways of writing that do not lead to transforming the writer's knowledge but simply to transcribing it. What is the difference, then, between the process of a writer who modifies what they think when they start to write it, and the scribe who only puts down on paper what they already know about a subject?

According to Nancy Sommers, current director of Harvard's Expository Writing Program, composing opens doors to discover ideas, provided that the writing is revised by comparing the text produced with the text that a potential reader may require. In her study, experienced writers (journalists, editors, and scholars),

> …imagine a reader (reading their product) whose existence and whose expectations influence their revision process. They have abstracted the standards of a reader and this reader … functions as a critical and productive collaborator … The anticipation of a reader's judgment causes a feeling of dissonance when the writer recognizes incongruities between intention

> and execution, and requires these writers to make revisions on
> all levels. (Sommers, 1980, p. 385)

Linda Flower (1979) also understands that revision not only improves the written product but allows the development of the writers' knowledge every time they attempt to transform private prose into a text that takes into account the perspective and context of the audience.

Similarly, Scardamalia and Bereiter (1992) suggest that there are two ways of composing, which they model and call "knowledge telling," as opposed to "knowledge transforming." In the first model, the writer retrieves from memory what they know about a subject and expresses it on paper. In the second model, the writer considers the rhetorical situation in which they compose; that is, they analyze what they want to achieve with the text and anticipate the expectations of the audience. According to the writing purpose and depending on how they represent the informational needs of a potential reader, they (re)conceive what they know in order to adapt it to the communicative situation within which they are writing. In this way, they bring into interaction two types of problems: rhetorical (related to effective communication with the reader) and semantic (related to the content and ideas being addressed).

For these researchers, only one that writes according to the "knowledge transforming" model gets to change what they previously knew about a subject. This happens because in transformational writing they develop a dialectic process between their previous knowledge and the rhetorical exigencies to produce an adequate text (Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1985). The dialectic nature of written composition lies in the conflict the author faces between the limitations of their own knowledge and the need to produce an effective text. In other words, experienced writers have their reader in mind as well as the effect they want to achieve on them through their writing. That is, they pay attention not only to the subject on which they are working, but also accommodate it to the informative needs of their audience. In this effort to adjust the subject to what is supposed to be most convenient to both the reader and purpose of the writing, the writer must de-center from their own point of view and adopt the audience's perspective. In some cases, they will notice that there's a lack of information and will search for it themselves. In other cases, they will perceive certain ideas to be confusing, and will proceed to clarify them for themselves. They will understand that their text gains in clarity if the relationship between its parts are made explicit. They will be able to find instances of incoherence and will aim to remedy them. They will wish to persuade their reader and will search for

new arguments. They will group related notions that were previously scattered. They will produce a more agile prose (simplifying expressions, adding subtitles, using a variety of syntactic structures…) when in re-reading their text they anticipate a bored reader. They will decide to trim their text to strengthen the core ideas, painfully letting go of concepts that stray away from these. And during these revisions, they will probably discover that the attempt to modify aspects of form has led them to think about the content in novel ways.

In synthesizing all of these goals, writing with rhetorical awareness leads to the development and consistency of one's own thinking. Problematizing writing from the stance attributed to the audience entails questioning the available knowledge and putting in conversation the problems of content with the rhetorical problems, trying to adjust what the writer knows to what the reader needs, and thereby allowing for the transformation of the original knowledge.

The Challenge of Using Writing as a Means to Explore Ideas

The process explained before is an ideal model, a potential of writing enacted only by those who have experience writing within a discourse community where, to belong, it is necessary to compose with rhetorical awareness: anticipating the effect of the text on the reader. The planning and revision of writing, at textual levels that demand reformulating one's own knowledge, are not operations universally put into play.

Numerous studies (see Table 1.1) show that, under the usual conditions in which they write to be assessed, college students do not manage to make an epistemic use of writing; that is, as a cognitive tool to organize what can be thought about a topic. And they fail to do so because they approach the first revision as an exercise in proofreading but not as a means to reconnect with a subject, discover what is possible to say about it, and develop their knowledge. Students (and also many graduates) tend to keep the ideas present in their texts and, even when they revise, will modify only surface issues. It's as if they fell in love with what they have laboriously elaborated and cannot conceive of sacrificing it for the sake of a better, yet uncertain, future version.

In her research with university students and experienced adult writers, Sommers (1980) shows that the unit of analysis students perceive when revising their compositions are words or phrases, but not the text as a whole. They focus on their writing in a linear manner, as a series of parts. For

them, writing is translating thought into language and speech into prose. In this attempt at translation, "an original text already exists for students, one which need not be discovered or acted upon, but simply communicated" (p. 382). In contrast with professional writers, who measure their produced text against the expectations of an internalized reader, when revising students compare their writing with a meaning predefined in their original intention. That is, they don't consider revision an activity through which it is possible to modify and develop perspectives and notions. They consider it a mere corrective process to fix errors. According to Sommers, as instructors we must help them overcome this conception: we must *respond* to what students write with comments that encourage them to take the risk of changing their ideas:

> Our comments need to offer students revision tasks of a different order of complexity and sophistication from the ones that they themselves identify, by forcing students back into the chaos, back to the point where they are shaping and restructuring their meaning. (Sommers, 1982, p. 154)

When I first read this quotation, the idea of "chaos" seemed strange to me and even displeased me. Two or three years later, I began to understand it. Every time one writes with commitment about a subject and tolerates the uncertainty of what is not yet imagined, thought and language appear confounded in an apparent disorder that can be unsettling. Sometimes I wanted to flee from this chaos and quickly established a text that brought me nothing new, but closed the flank of uncertainty. But other times, with a demanding internalized audience, I learned to remain longer in this confusing phase of writing, where the blank page alternates with attempts and blurbs. At other times, when my work had taken shape, despite revising it over and over again, I could see no other shape than that of what was already written and could only reformulate it to optimize its substance by receiving the comments of a close colleague. The same thing usually happens to me when I send an article for publication to a research journal and the anonymous reviewers suggest that I revise some parts: at first, I begrudge this extra task, but always, after it is done, I feel satisfied with what I have achieved in the additional rewriting and grateful to the person who forced me to reopen my ideas. Having a text disassembled, malleable, subject to major changes, is distressing. I always doubt whether something good will come out after so much work. Then comes the discovery of what was not there before, some fertile idea in which the same thing is no longer the same, the connections between thoughts have been extended. I believe

Sommers uses the term "chaos" to describe this indeterminacy that allows for the emergence of the novel. And she proposes that instructors offer feedback with comments on student writing, comments that do not center on the surface but on the ideas behind the text. Hjortshoj (2001) also addresses this issue by employing an illuminating metaphor, which points to the premature solidification of student writing. This teacher-researcher at Cornell University, responsible for the Writing in the Majors Program, points out that:

> From the writer's perspective, every text "forges" at some point in the process, hardening like cement. Beyond that point, when language and thought have lost their malleability, something on the order of dynamite is required to promote profound change. More experienced writers delay this point of solidification and thoroughly reconsider and revise their work before a complete first draft is completed. Student writing, on the other hand, tends to forge almost as soon as it hits the paper.… First thoughts become last thoughts, and second thoughts seem destructive.

This early 'solidification' of an immature text appears as a constant in students' writing, who tend to revise their productions line by line and modify only surface features. They do it, in part, because no one has taught them otherwise, due to the tight time constraints assigned to writing in educational institutions, and because they only write for assessment purposes. If we want different results, we need different processes. Higher education requires that we as instructors also function as readers of students' texts. Readers with whom to put their writing to test. Readers who save for the end the comments on spelling and grammar and focus initially on how they receive the substantive contents of what they have written.

In sum, students lack a sense of audience and do not try to adapt their texts to what they assume their readers need. In fact, they tend to have few readers, because they are not in the business of publishing and because in the classroom they write mainly to pass their courses. The university needs to provide readers who give students feedback on the effect that their texts produce. Instructors need to teach students how to plan and revise writing and help to anticipate the recipient's point of view, so that in this process they not only improve the product, but also guide its authors to practice writing as a tool for thinking about the contents of each subject. Table 1.1 explains why most students do not know what and how to revise in the texts they write.

Table 1.1 On Why It Is Necessary to Revise Writing

Revising writing is not a self-evident procedure: it is necessary that the instructor brings it to light

When students make a draft to write a text, they do not usually make major changes in the passage from the first to the second draft. Research by Jackson et al. (1998), Lehr (1995), Schriver (1990), Sommers (1980), and Wallace and Hayes (1991) argue that college students, when revising the texts they produce, tend to focus only on local aspects (punctuation, grammar, etc.) and retouch them superficially.

I propose to understand this difficulty as an epistemic obstacle inherent to the relationship established between the subject and their attempt to learn to revise. Indeed, revision procedures, which in this case is to be learned, are not transparent social practices. On the one hand, the revisions made to texts leave no traces, that is, the final writings do not keep their history, they do not reveal to what extent they have been revised and changed. On the other hand, the cognitive task of the reviser is also concealed and difficult to interpret. Thus, when on a rare occasion we have the opportunity to observe someone revising their manuscript, we only manage to see that they read, cross it out, rewrite it, and, eventually, point out some transposition. It is opaque to look through the graphic marks left behind. It is not possible to discover which are the units of analysis and distinguish them from the textual modifications made. Nor is it possible to discern the reflection that leads to the desire to modify it. If the reviewer takes into account their audience, this goes completely unnoticed by an eventual spectator. To an even greater extent, everything becomes obscure when the reviewer uses a computer monitor: perhaps they spend more time rereading the text than when they write it, but little else can be noticed differently. Therefore, what is reviewed and how it is carried out is not discernible let alone an obvious fact.

There are two more reasons that explain the difficulties of revising and modifying texts in a substantive and global way. First, it is easier to consider parts of a text rather than the text as a whole. This happens because the whole not only contains the parts, but rather is constituted by their mutual relationships (in many cases, tacit) and attending to this structure entails situating oneself in a higher level of analysis. Second, there is a tradition in schools to correct students' texts linearly. Following the order in which they read, teachers mark orthographic and grammatical mistakes, and sometimes confusing disciplinary content. Therefore, students are often exposed to implicit models of detecting local problems in texts: they are rarely given global observations (in terms of the meaning and organization of the writing).

The combination of these reasons (the invisibility of the revisions underlying a text, the opacity of the know-how of the reviewer, the tendency to focus on parts instead of the whole, and the school tradition to mark texts line by line) indicates a starting point that needs to be reversed. Students need an instructor who will help them develop categories of analysis, beyond the local, to re-read and diagnose the problems in their writing in order to improve them comprehensively.

But there is an additional reason that justifies that, as instructors, we teach our students to revise their writing. Substantial revision (revising its content, structure, and effect on the reader) is not only a cognitive operation, but is part of a specific social practice for producing texts. This is carried out only in certain communities that use writing for specific purposes. Not everyone who writes revises in the same way as in the academic world. It is up to the university to teach the writing and thinking practices unique to the disciplinary contexts in which students write.

Experienced Writing Situations

The course "Theories of Learning," taught by the School of Humanities of Universidad Nacional de San Martín, was in my charge for six years.[3] When I started teaching it in 1997, I decided to multiply and include—within its explicit curriculum—activities focused on textual production and comprehension, as I was convinced that the appropriation of disciplinary content cannot happen in the absence of their written elaboration. In the following section, I will address four activities that I put into action in this course: a) rotating elaboration of class syntheses, b) tutoring for group writing, c) exam preparation, and d) written responses to questions about assigned readings. These situations share the principle of recursivity (see the second point of the section "Central ideas that run through the previous chapters" in Chapter 4): they require going back to what has been written and to the thinking that has been constructed through it. They also have in common the fact that they include moments of revision of the writing, in which, as an instructor, I intervene from the point of view of an external reader who demands an autonomously comprehensible text; that is, a text in which the ideas are developed and organized to facilitate the reader's task.[4]

Rotating Elaboration of Class Syntheses

Many things happen in a four-hour long class period. One part can be devoted to individual work, in pairs and/or teams of students, based on prompts prepared by the instructor. Another part corresponds to the "theoretical" exposition; with it, the instructor intends to help the students to elaborate on the topics within the subject. Teachers introduce concepts, take up notions developed in the assigned readings, explain them, clarify students' concerns, promote the linking of ideas, answer and formulate questions, make reference to issues addressed in previous classes, etc. The instructor knows, from the offset, what the core concepts are; that is, the elements that make up the heart of the issue under study. On the contrary, an important portion of the students' learning consists in re-constructing the topic of the class: realizing the key

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3   Weekly classes were focused on theoretical and practical concerns and lasted four hours, with a break halfway. To be enrolled in this major, the students had to be teachers of physics, chemistry, mathematics, or biology, and had to have graduated from a four-year teacher education program. They practiced as teachers in middle, high schools, and city colleges. Their age ranged from 25 to 45. Some of them had more than 20 years of teaching experience.

4   For other pedagogical writing tasks, see also Chapters 2 and 3 of this book. In practically all the teaching and assessment situations I have tested, reading and writing are interconnected.

ideas that were worked on, etc. This process involves inferences, generalizations, and the establishment of a hierarchy among the notions discussed. The writing assignment I propose brings this activity to the forefront and is in line with the idea that there is no one better to guide the writing of the synthesis of a class than the instructor who has taught it:

> Making notes from text, or from lectures, for example, are not detachable skills that can as well be taught by the counseling service or by a study skill expert. The effectiveness of good note-taking depends upon what it is you are taking notes of, and the best judge of that is the teacher, the content expert (Biggs, 1996, p. viii).

Deciding What Was Most Important

This activity involves having a pair of students keep written records of the development of the class each week; then, at their homes, they select the most important concepts and make photocopies to distribute among their classmates with an exposition—one or two pages—of what was covered in the previous class. The prompt is for the written text to be understandable by anyone who was absent from the class. For this reason, an autonomous text must be achieved (as opposed to personal notes). These syntheses are then read at the beginning of the following class in order to recover the thread of what was covered in the previous one. However, the text is not considered finished, rather, we collectively make comments to improve it. My interventions as an instructor focus on identifying the difficulties in understanding the topic addressed in the previous class. Thus, when there are unclear or erroneous concepts in the text (which is almost always the case, as is to be expected in a group that is learning), I take the opportunity to point them out, re-explain them and suggest reformulations in the text that is being discussed. In general, these confused ideas are almost always mixed with obscure or imprecise forms of expression. In other words, the reading of the class syntheses allows for a review and reworking of both their content and their written formulation.

To prevent the activity from becoming routine, after several sessions in class, the analysis of the synthesis is done at home, so that the students and the instructor contribute their observations and suggestions for change at the beginning of the following class in shared, whole-class discussion. The students keep the syntheses and use them to review the contents of the course. These syntheses provide students with an orientation of the reading of all the scholarship assigned to prepare for the final exam.

At the beginning of the course, before students are in charge of making these syntheses, I take notes myself during the first and second class, and in the third, I take and distribute copies of my records, one in narrative and one in expositive form.[5] We read and analyze them to reflect on the difference between narration and exposition, on the different functions of writing (mnemic, communicative, and epistemic) and on the spiral curriculum that this task favors, since it requires reworking the same contents. In this way, I propose that the students take turns recording/synthesizing for the remaining classes. My participation as the first "synthesizer" offers a text model and creates the conditions for the students to engage with the task as much as the instructor. We agree that, from then on, the synthesis will be made in a predominantly expositive mode, because this is the textual discourse that serves to put forward the contents covered (as opposed to narrative synthesis, that highlights who said what when). At the end of this chapter, in the appendices, I show the two first synthesis made by myself as well as one made by a pair of students in the seventh class.

There are several teaching objectives to this activity: to offer students a writing task with a real audience, to have them review the topics discussed in the previous class and to have them determine their relative importance, to give them experience with the collective revision of a text as a procedural model that they can transfer to other situations, and to make them aware of the textual levels involved in the evaluation criteria applied by the instructor. Lastly, the activity aims to normalize difficulties in comprehension, as something to be expected and not criticized, and to provide an opportunity for the concepts that pose difficulties to be explained again.

As a *writing* task, the activity puts the *planning* of the text in the foreground: the limited space forces those who make the synthesis to carefully select and organize the contents included, which implies determining the relative hierarchy of the concepts that were discussed in class. When the synthesis is read, the operation that the group of students puts into practice is *revision*. This is done at different textual levels (according to the problematic focus of the text produced). By virtue of this revision, the authors of the synthesis receive comments from real readers about their writing. In fact, this is one of the few writing situations within the educational context where the audience is not only the teacher or the student, but also authentic readers. Those who write the syntheses state that, in many cases, they have had to (re)read the scholarship so as to better understand

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5   As seen in Appendix I, the *narrative* synthesis puts forward the participants' interventions and structure of ideas in the form of a story about who said what throughout the session. The appendices II and III, on the other hand, show syntheses that are mostly *expositive* because they underscore the ideas discussed, instead of who contributed them. The ideas are organized based on their logic as opposed to the moment in time they were discussed.

what they have worked on in class and to capture in their synthesis an idea that is more comprehensible for the readers (and for themselves). The collective review serves as a model and guided practice that trains for the writing (or re-writing) of the actual exam. The students who voluntarily do the synthesis share that they learn a lot: to write and to understand the contents. One student, a middle-school physics teacher, was enthusiastic about this experience and decided to transfer it to his classroom to "enliven" the students.

As a *reading* task, the synthesis helps link what was worked on in class with what was read in the scholarship, and to recap the topics from the previous class. Students who were present in the recorded session contrast with their own notes and assess what content was the most relevant. If the readers were absent from the recorded session, they obtain information about what was covered in their absence. It also allows the teacher to assess what students understood from what was exposed in the session and to explain and clarify again in case there is a misunderstanding; it also allows the instructor to show in action their criteria for evaluating writing.

Delicate Balance

Below I list a series of dilemmas related to this activity which should be analyzed and considered by the instructor who wishes to carry it out:

- I cannot overlook the fact that this task takes up class time in which no progress is made with new topics. But I must also say that, without a doubt, it is a task that invites the class to take seriously the central content of what is presented by the instructor.
- Since revisions can extend for too long if they are exhaustive, it is the instructor's job to determine the focus of analysis for each synthesis so as to narrow and focus the revision.
- Elaborating a synthesis is very laborious; thus, not all students wish to be involved in writing, though those who do are thankful for it.
- As an instructor, I must devote a considerable amount of time at the beginning of the course to write the first two synthesis; but if I do without it, I deprive the students of necessary models and I diminish their commitment to the task.

Next, I analyze another of the writing assignments posed in my classes.

Tutoring Group Writing

The research paper (*monografía*, in Spanish) is a form of evaluation that has gained popularity in the university. However, the term *research paper* does not

designate a clearly identified textual entity. It has been observed that there is no consensus about what an instructor expects of a research paper; that it is situated between exposition and argumentation, and that the guidelines for its elaboration are often not made explicit to students, whose writing then reflects their own disorientation and inaccurate understanding (implicit and diffuse) of the task. However, it is clear that the research paper is different from a written in-person exam answer, due to its greater length, the ample time that instructors provide for its elaboration, and because it allows the consultation of scholarship during its preparation. In Table 1.2, I delineate the features of a research paper, listing the contents usually included in each part and the functions it fulfills.

Table 1.2 What a Research Paper Usually Is

What is a research paper?

When we say "research paper" it would seem that we refer to a single type of text. In reality, however, instructors conceive of this piece of writing in many different ways and students claim they don't really know what it is (Ciapuscio, 2000). It seems, then, that this term simply designates a written work to be evaluated, of varying length, that must cite sources, and which must be completed outside the limited and controlled time of the classroom. Beyond this, it is not possible to define what a research paper is, but only to point out what it could be. It will be the faculty who, according to their disciplinary and pedagogical interests, will have to specify the meaning of "research paper" that they use when evaluating students.

Though in some contexts the notion of research paper is used in a broad sense (including empirical research projects and analysis of practical experiences), its more general meaning refers to the analysis of scholarship. This is the meaning considered in the table below.

Structurally, there is agreement in conceiving the format and structure of the research paper as composed of an introduction, body, conclusions, and references; the problem emerges when students try to understand what they should write in each of these parts. Uncertainty increases regarding the body of the text, since different disciplines and also different faculty expect students to do something in particular in this section based on disciplinary conventions (Gallardo, 2005). Paradoxically, handbooks that address how to elaborate a research paper are more precise in regards to the introduction and conclusions than the body. For students, this constitutes a source of difficulty, because they do not have criteria to know what to do in the body of the research paper with the knowledge studied, nor how to write about it.

It is useful to point out to students what they have to do with language when writing a research paper. This requires alternating between two enunciative positions: exposition and argumentation (Arnoux et al., 2002). In other words, when writing a research paper, it is necessary to expose and to argue. There is exposition when explaining what the authors consulted have said, and there is argumentation when defending the thesis of the writing (position/idea/statement/answer to the prompt) based on reasons extracted from the analysis of what has been read.

In the following table, I indicate the functions and "textual segments" that the different parts of the research paper usually have, sometimes alternately.[6] Each instructor will be able to think of others. The important thing is to make them explicit in front of the students and, if possible, to show and analyze in class a sample research paper, i.e., a written work that meets the expected characteristics.

Section of the research paper	Main function	Possible textual segments (formulated as instructions to know what to do)
Introduction	Situate the reader in what they're about to read.	• Announce the objective of the work by presenting the topic. • Specify the problem in the form of a question to which the research paper will provide an answer. • Indicate the corpus of analysis, i.e., the sources (bibliographic and other) that will be used to address the question posed, justifying their selection. • Anticipate the central idea (the answer to the question posed, the main position statement or thesis) that will be supported in the body of the paper. • Outline the structure of the paper, i.e., the order of the subtopics to be dealt with.
Body	Support an idea through the analysis of a group of texts.	• Review a set of bibliographic materials on a topic, not only summarizing what they say but also establishing relationships between them; the product of these relationships should be likely to be synthesized in a statement or thesis about the topic and/or the authors consulted. • Argue in favor of a thesis, giving reasons based on the reviewed bibliography; this argumentation may consist of several sub-arguments linked to each other, in which the (bibliographical) "evidence" to support them is evaluated and may also include the presentation, evaluation and refutation of potential counter-arguments. • Analyze the literature, construct an original question that emerges from this reading and answer it based on the readings.

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6   I am following Alazraki et al. (2003), Arnoux et al. (2002), Ciapuscio (2000), Chalmers and Fuller (1996), Chanock (2002), and Coffin et al. (2003).

Body (continued)		• Examine a problem and take a stance based on the literature on the subject. • In all the previous cases, show the reader the reasoning that leads to the position assumed (= the thesis, claim, or answer), reasoning based on what was read, for which the references of the texts mentioned must be included, indicate what the authors say about the problem or question being discussed, compare their ideas (indicate similarities and differences), evaluate the contribution of each text, and state and support the thesis defended against the problem addressed in the research paper, which may include an example or case that illustrates it, or an analogy with another phenomenon.
Conclusions	Create a sense of "closure," finished work.	• Answer the questions provided by the teacher establishing relations between the visited readings. • Synthesize the thesis or central claim of the research paper and the main argument on which it is supported. • Assess what has been previously stated indicating scope and limitations. • Extract implications or elaborate further questions.
References	Show the sources.	• List the bibliography consulted, arranged alphabetically by author's last name and following one of the existing conventions, as specified.

In conclusion, a research paper can be many things. But students need to know what their instructor expects it to be. Let us not take it for granted that they understand what to do when we ask them for a research paper. Let us specify the meaning of what we require, not to restrict the students' "freedom" (we can offer different options) but to free them from their disorientation and confusion.

Finally, a piece of advice on the writing process, for students who read and read and then become terrified in front of the blank page as the due date approaches:

> Do you put off writing anything until you've done all the reading? And then there is too much to deal with, and it's due tomorrow? Instead of that, pause between the readings, and write a paragraph about how the reading you've just finished relates to the question you are working on. That way, you've got something down on paper, and you're ready to notice how the next reading is similar, how it's different, what it adds or what it questions. By the time you have to write a draft, you've done most of the thinking already. (Chanock, 2002, p. 35)

The writing-discussion-rewriting activity that I describe in the section that follows aims to orient students toward the text that they must produce, assist them in the difficulties they face, and make explicit that textual production is a process framed in a rhetorical context. It also offers an alternative to the usual assessment experience, in which students write and receive a numerical grade (and sometimes a comment) only at *the end* of the process, a practice that Leki (1990, as cited in Bailey & Vardi, 1999) describes as a "coroner diagnosing the cause of death."

A Reader that Cooperates Discussing Intermediate Drafts

When the number of students allows it, and as a form of assessment, I propose that students write a literature review in groups of three. As part of the writing assignment, I give them written guidelines for elaboration and the criteria with which I will grade them. But unlike the more usual situation, before turning in the final version, the group meets with me twice for about twenty minutes to discuss their drafts. During these tutoring sessions, I function as an external reader who is critical and committed to improving the text.

Since Bachelor of Science Education students are required to write a senior thesis to graduate, I introduce the writing of these research papers as a *simulation assignment* or practice: students will produce a text *as if it were* the theoretical framework section of their thesis and they will have to present the most relevant concepts of the learning theories that underlie pedagogical practices. In this way, the research paper is oriented towards a defined textual format, and towards an imaginary but precise audience and purpose; that is, it appears framed in a double rhetorical context (the simulation of the thesis, the real evaluation). I explain that their products will be the instrument with which, as a teacher, I will assess their understanding of the contents covered in the class, but that the writing process will serve as an experience for them to begin to build a picture about what writing a thesis requires: a theoretical framework that states the background upon which the problem to be addressed acquires its meaning.

In our first meeting, students consult with an outline of the text they will produce and my work as the instructor is to help them narrow down the topic, define the focus, identify the thesis or central claim, and foresee the relationships between concepts and the structure of the text in the form of sections with subtitles. In order to accomplish this, I pose questions, I propose to make the textual plan explicit, and point out the need to plan what ideas will be the central axis of the work and how they will be organized. In our second meeting, I browse the produced draft, ask the authors to define the main writing problem they face, and make suggestions accordingly, though my suggestion

never loses sight of the selection, hierarchization and organization of the concepts to be included. I highlight the need to create a text that is independent from the prompt and from them as producers, since—I teach—the reader must be able to reconstruct the thinking of the author in their absence through the clues inscribed in the text. I point out problems in the thematic progression[7] that impact the textual cohesion and coherence (conceptual jumps that need to be overcome with connectors, transitional sentences, subtitles, and with repositioning or with the suppression of disruptive notions), I question the relevance of certain parts in relation to the whole, I propose to re-organize some notions, I suggest to cut out others that weaken the text, I teach to use the paragraph as a thematic unit, etc.

The purposes of this pedagogic intervention are to promote the experience that writing is rewriting; to favor the planning and revision of the substantive aspects of the text—its contents and organization—at recurring moments of the process; to provide a procedural model of and external reviewer that observes the text from the perspective of the reader, not the author, so that, little by little, students can internalize it (see Chapter 3, where I develop this idea). Indeed, as instructor, I share with students my own writing experience, and relate that I myself still face the challenges intrinsic to all writing that entails reorganizing what you know in order to make it clearer, more communicable, more substantiated, more solid. Another objective of this assignment is to offer students orientation about what is expected from them as they produce, write, and face the inevitable problems, and not only at the beginning (when they still don't imagine the difficulties) or the end (when "the die is cast").

How is this tutoring received by students? The students report that meeting with an instructor-tutor before handing in their work to the instructor who assesses their work is an unusual but very formative situation for them. It is a mode of evaluation that they appreciate because it is in itself a fertile occasion for learning. The main obstacle to extending this pedagogic practice are over-crowded classrooms and the limited teaching time available to many of the teachers. However, I find the difference between this approach and the habit of requiring a monograph as assessment (group or individual) without any orientation during the process to be substantial. In my experience, the initial work that students hand-in presents multiple problems, and the dilemma between giving them a passing grade without taking those problems into account or failing them is unsolvable to me. For this reason, I only propose

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7   The "thematic progression" is the way that a text articulates an idea with the preceding one; in other words, the way that new information relates with information previously given in the text. It is how the topic addressed progresses, the way in which what's being said advances; the chaining of the concepts that are being presented throughout the text.

writing of greater scope than what is required by exam answers when I can take charge of teaching what I expect the final products to contain.

Exam Preparation

The written response to exam questions is one of the most widespread assessment practices in higher education, yet it is not without difficulties. Preparing to be assessed requires more than just studying. As an instructor, I have asked myself how I can help my students to arrive at the exam better prepared and I have included a series of tasks in my lectures that aim at this objective.

List of Questions, Grading Criteria, and Mock Exam

We start working on the exam early in the term. In the course of the weekly activities of "rotating elaboration of class synthesis" and "written answer to questions about the scholarship" (discussed in this chapter), students can become aware of the kind of things I look for as an instructor when grading a paper. In addition, a couple of weeks before the evaluation, students receive an extensive list of potential questions (about thirty), some of which will be the ones they will actually answer on the exam. These questions apply a focus to the reading of the bibliography that differs from the one that students have applied over the semester in preparation for lectures, and which included the help of reading guides that are closer to the texts (see Chapter 2). The exam questions demand a higher level of abstraction and generalization: they require establishing relationships between texts and authors, between the scholarship and the topics developed in class.

One week before the first midterm exam, I conduct a "mock" exam: students answer one of these questions in writing, under the same conditions (length, time, individually) as they will have for the real exam. They are not graded. I consider it a kind of rehearsal of the dynamics of the exam and a review of the doubts that may arise on the topics covered. As they submit their answers, I examine some of them and select those that contain common difficulties or those that exemplify virtues or issues worth commenting on. I read these selected answers to the group of students and propose to analyze them as if we were revising a text in order to improve its content and form. On the blackboard, we collectively construct the text plan of the ideal answer, i.e., we outline the contents and the structure it should have. Then I indicate to the students that I will grade the actual exams the following week, bearing in mind the criteria I showed during this collective review. Finally, I hand out in writing the correction guidelines that I will take into account when evaluating and a model of the ideal answer; the students read them, raise their doubts, and I clarify them.

The purpose of providing a set of questions in advance, from which the actual questions asked in the exam will also come from, is to help organize the study: to limit the infinite number of possible questions and to place the student in the analytic stance or perspective of the teacher. It could be objected that, in this way, students study less: perhaps this is the reason why it is customary to hand out the questions only at the time of the exam. I don't think this way, and neither do students: they say that they study in a different way, with a broad perspective all the same (there are thirty questions that require going back and forth among the texts!); some of them share the task and write the answers as a group. In the real exam they will not be able to use these notes since, in this case, I am proposing a "closed book" approach. What they will use is the knowledge that this reading, writing, and peer commentary have helped them to develop.

For its part, the "mock" situation pursues several objectives. First, it promotes reflection on a central but paradoxical feature of the assessment: the need to write as if they had to report on the topic studied to a reader (instructor) who pretends not to know anything about the topic, although the instructor does have that knowledge.[8] This impacts the selection of content and the planned textual organization. The simulation raises awareness of the need to construct an autonomous text and to control the thematic progression. It also helps students to start studying for the exam earlier than usual, to anticipate the way they will be evaluated (questions they will be asked and grading criteria) in order to be better prepared for what the instructor expects from them, to show their learning and difficulties without receiving a grade, and to take on the role of readers-evaluators during the review phase so that they can take it into account when they write the real exam.

Students value this activity. Studying for a mock exam from a list of questions, putting themselves in the situation of having to write an answer within given time and length constraints, obtaining feedback on the texts produced, observing the instructor's grading criteria in action, and having the exam questions, grading guidelines, and an ideal answer model available in advance all help to reduce students' uncertainty about the forthcoming assessment and diminish their anxiety. Participating in the analysis of peer responses puts the

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8   Atienza and López (1996) underscore that evaluative situations do not follow the "cooperative principle" (Grice, 1975) generally taken for granted in communicative exchanges; in these situations, the speaker avoids giving more information than what is necessary for the audience to understand, because they know that the audience can complete their understanding with their own knowledge of what the speaker is taking for granted. This "maxim of quantity" is not valid for evaluative situations, because the goal of these exams is to verify that the student has acquired certain knowledge. However, since students usually rely on this maxim, it is advised that the instructor makes explicit that the maxim does not apply to the evaluation situation and that they teach how to write without adhering to it.

student in the position of reader-reviewer-evaluator and helps them to keep in mind the criteria with which the instructor will grade, but it can also help them to consider the reader's point of view when writing for others. Finally, the instructor receives fewer questions about the grading of the exam because they have already shown the grading criteria and because the students have been able to represent the situation beforehand.

Written Response to a Question About the Scholarship

As I discuss in the following chapter, like writing, reading in higher education is not something that can be taken for granted. There are many different ways of approaching and understanding a text, and the ways of reading specific to higher education imply categories of analysis that incoming students have not acquired. To help students develop them, instructors can intervene by guiding their reading. But we also need to know what students "misunderstand"; that is, in what ways does their comprehension stray away from the limits set by the text and what do we expect as experts in the discipline in which they are newcomers? As instructors, we need the students' divergent interpretations to come to light. Only in this way will we be able to point them out, re-explain and help students find in the text what they have not found on their own. One opportunity with which to find out what students understand when they read is to have them write about what they have read in books. In addition, inviting them to write about what they read contributes to increase their cognitive activity on the text; that is, it requires them to put together a coherent interpretation, to relate what the scholarship says with what they think, and it also requires them to realize what they understand and what they do not understand. This is what studies on universities that have included writing in all subjects have shown, and what a student from such universities expresses:

> When you read something–Okay, you read it and you sort of understand it, but when you actually have to write about it and tell someone else, in writing, it forces your mind to think of it in a new way. You have to organize your thoughts, you have to make it into some sort of order … it forces you to think a lot sharper … it forces you to be even more analytical (Hawaii University Student, as cited in Hilgers et al., 1999, p. 343).

Writing to Understand

Several years ago, when I was a teaching assistant, I implemented a system that largely increased student participation in class. I simply "forced" them to

read.[9] This strategy stemmed from previous experiences that showed that students contribute to class when they understand something about the content being discussed, which usually happens only if they have read the literature containing the notions that the instructor is explaining. The procedure to achieve this is simple, but it requires some organization beforehand: students need to know which texts will be addressed class by class and then it is necessary to provide them with a syllabus of the subject that functions as a work schedule. It is also important to guide them through this document and it is the instructor's task to turn to the syllabus at the end of each class to point out what the assigned reading is for the next class and to what curricular content it is related. However, in order to promote the reading of texts, this indication is not enough. The instructor needs to: a) provide around three questions per text that point to what the students cannot fail to understand (i.e., direct attention to the most important ideas in the literature according to the view of the syllabus of the subject), b) require as mandatory that students answer two of the questions in writing (in 8-12 lines each), and request that their answers be handed in at the beginning of the class in which the texts read will be discussed/explained, c) commit to read, from one week to the next, a sample (four, five) of these answers and make observations on them, and d) at the beginning of the following class, comment on the answers read, point out the most frequent comprehensive difficulties and explain the topics that presented more challenges (topics covered in the previous class and in the scholarship on which the students have written their answers).

With this system, almost everyone comes to class having read the texts that will be discussed and developed. Though they know I will not analyze everyone's answers (but they assume that I will check that everyone has turned them in), they expect that my comments at the beginning of the next class will help in a general way, since the difficulties in understanding the scholarship are recurrent. Week by week, before commenting on the answers received in the previous class, I read aloud a couple of examples without mentioning their author and invite students to discuss their content; I also suggest commenting on the form of expression (if what is said is understood or if it could be said better). My intention is for the students to put themselves in the role of reviewers of their own work. Now, what kinds of observations do I make? While there

may be numerous problems, I try to help them analyze good as well as bad answers in terms of the understanding of the contents and the way they are expressed (in fact, these two aspects are often intertwined). That is, on the one hand, I read aloud to the group a good answer and I value it because it shows that its author has understood the fundamentals of the concept discussed in the scholarship. Or, I value the written form because it is "considerate" to the reader: the answer is well organized, points to what is being asked and explains what is being requested. On the other hand, I also read aloud answers with problems: I point out comprehension errors and explain the issues at stake (sometimes rereading aloud for everyone the part of the text that has been understood differently from what the professor intended). Moreover, in some cases, I show when an answer assumes content that the reader-instructor indeed has, but that the students, when evaluated, should not leave unexplained. In this way, I make explicit "the contract" of the written evaluation, according to which the student who writes cannot expect their instructor to collaborate in order to understand them, but must show them that they have mastered the topic they are being asked about (as I explain in footnote 8 above). On many occasions, together (orally or on the blackboard), we reformulate the initial answer to adjust it to the parameters of what would be a better answer in terms of its content and discursive formulation.

What do students say about this pedagogic situation that we implement throughout the term? They state that what at the beginning is an obligation becomes a habit of reading class by class. And they are grateful that their teacher reads what they are understanding, takes up the difficulties, explains again, and shows in action their grading criteria. But, mainly, they recognize two facts: that writing about what they have read favors studying in a different way—it requires them to realize what they understand and what they do not understand—and they also notice the difference that emerges with respect to other courses after several sessions and on the occasion of the mid-term exams: in those courses the unread scholarship has accumulated; on the other hand, with this system, they have already had a look at the texts of the course and feel that studying will mean re-reading materials with which they are already familiarized.

Similarities Between the Four Writing Situations

The rotating elaboration of class synthesis, tutoring for group writing projects, exam rehearsals through a "mock" exam situation, and the writing of reading responses are conceived as situations of coaching and orientation to students as they face

the task of writing in a subject they have not yet mastered. The dual nature of this steep learning calls for dualfold teaching on the part of instructors in order to help students enter a community of both specialized discourse and knowledge.

The four situations described above share the objective of making the revision of writing necessary, not only in terms of spelling and morphosyntax, but also at the level of ideas and their discursive organization. All four provide the opportunity to share with others the role of reader-reviewer. All four allow the revision of thought and language together, as a way of progressively approaching the concepts and writing of the discipline. Table 1.2 shows the university students' need for their instructors to make revision practices visible: to teach them what to look for in a piece of writing and how to change it if it is judged inadequate. In this sense, the writing activities recounted show a teacher giving feedback on early versions of a text and helping its authors to reconceptualize the content. And, as two Australian instructors point out, "this feedback can only come from the disciplinary insider. It cannot be provided through classes on writing or composition" (Bailey & Vardi, 1999).

The academic tasks analyzed in this chapter are also similar in that they are part of a "conversation" between students and teacher, a dialogue that helps newcomers learn the ways of structuring in writing the knowledge of a discipline according to the canons of the community that practices it. I think that these situations could be examples of students' need to learn to write (and think) "in the language" of the disciplines they study, with the help of interlocutors who master it, as suggested by Chanock:

> Language is acquired through dialogue (Vygotsky, 1978) and our utterances, including the silent ones of thought, are shaped by the experience of *conversation* (Danow, 1991, p. 84). If students are to develop an academic voice, they need opportunities *to try it out with a fluent conversation partner, and preferably a non-threatening one* [emphasis added] (Chanock, 2000, p. 82).

In the following section, by contrast, I address the reasons usually given by disciplinary experts for *not* implementing such practices.

Why Should We *Not* Address Writing in Every Subject?

I know of four arguments that explain why many instructors still don't address their students' writing: a) they have never stopped to think about the

convenience of doing so, b) they don't know how, as they are not specialists, c) they think that addressing student writing would restrict the students' freedom and autonomy, and d) they fear how much time it would take.

For instructors inclined to argument a), this chapter is itself a counterargument. There are at least two reasons that justify starting to take charge of writing in higher education: the fact that there are discipline-specific modes of writing that only an expert in the discipline can convey, and the fact that writing is one of the most powerful means for students to elaborate and appropriate the conceptual content of any subject. The four writing activities proposed in this chapter are also a first range of possibilities on how to start.

For those inclined to objection b), I can assure two things. On the one hand, writing specialists also do not know how to write the contents of each disciplinary field, since there are some conventions (where thought and language converge) that only experts in those disciplines understand fully. On the other hand, writing specialists do not master the subjects about which students have to write, and it would be difficult for them to guide their thinking through the writing of content from disciplines with which they are not familiar. In any case, writing specialists have much to teach us, the teachers of other subjects, but we must know how to ask them the right questions so that their answers are useful to our students.[10]

In my opinion, notion (c) vanishes if we consider that people who are disoriented cannot be free and take into account that we cannot be autonomous while ignoring the rules of the game. Creativity, which some feel is threatened when I suggest guiding writing through clear guidelines, does not usually occur unless there is a framework of certainty in which to feel safe. In turn, autonomy cannot be decreed by biological maturation, nor should it be conceived as a starting point. On the contrary, it is a point of arrival relative to familiarization with the expectations that each discursive community has for its already trained members; university students, on the other hand, are novices and need to learn from their instructors the modes of thought proper to a discipline, and it is through writing that it is possible to guide them towards those.

Lastly, I think it is convenient to subdivide the objection of those who assume position d). Taking charge of students' writing takes time; time that

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10   In my case, I come from the psychology of education, and thanks to my colleagues from the Linguistics Institute at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, I started to learn a few years ago what they have to teach. For those who wish to take the same route, I suggest reading Arnoux and colleagues (1998 and 2002). Also you may refer to Adelstein and colleagues (1998 and 1999), and Bas and colleagues (1999).

is taken away from the transmission of disciplinary content, and time that is added to the instructor's workload (to carefully read students' work, and make observations aimed at improving it). Regarding the first part of this objection, I do not think this is a serious critique: though it is true that in class there will be *less lecturing about disciplinary concepts*, without a doubt, students *learn more concepts* altogether, because writing is incorporated in the curriculum and because its incorporation contributes to students appropriating the notions imparted by the instructor, many of which—in the absence of writing—would not have been acquired at all. As for the latter, I have less to say and more to agree with. Helping students to write requires a workload from the instructor that does not exist if this task goes unaddressed (to plan and test writing assignments and, especially, to read and comment on the products written by the students). The only way to deal with this objection is to take the debate to the institutions and fight for a review of instructors' workloads and the number of students per class. A more personal and provisional way out is the one I started a few years ago: I began to engage with writing because I did not want to keep complaining, and because I was bored of always doing the same thing and, mainly, to develop myself as a professional through inquiry into my own innovative practice. I return to several of the themes in this section in Chapter 4.

The Pending Debate in Institutions

In this chapter, I have tried to show that dealing with students' writing in a higher-education course is not a *separate* task from teaching its concepts. On the contrary, it is a way of addressing those concepts: of making sure that they are not only transmitted by the instructor but also appropriated by the students. Constructivist approaches rightly warn that students learn only from their cognitive activity as mediated by the instructor as the representative of the culture. I think that in the previous pages I have shown a way of putting this principle into practice.

I would like to end this chapter by stating one of the challenges that remains open. The experience described in the previous pages has been positively valued by the students who have gone through it: although they acknowledge the demands it places on them, they are also grateful for the opportunities it provides. However, the reality is that this initiative turned out to be an isolated practice that did not transcend the courses in which it was carried out, nor did it have institutional support.

In order to extend this experience to instructors in other subjects that have no practice teaching writing, our institutions face a double challenge: they

must reflect on the value assigned to writing and they must also revise their structures to make place for teaching it. In other words: on the one hand, it is necessary to be aware of the cognitive function that writing plays and acknowledge that this role does not take place spontaneously. Writing as a way to rethink knowledge is not a natural ability but a potentiality that is actualized in certain academic communities through writing situations that allow revision, and in which the writer is aware of their audience. Students need to be guided towards this culture of writing; that is, instructors need to realize that their subjects, whatever they may be, need to reconsider the writing tasks they usually propose: contemplate their recursiveness, institute intermediate readers, and make room for the instructor to *respond* to (and not only grade) what is written by their students (Chapter 3 takes up this idea again).

Now, this reflection does not just concern individual instructors, but also the authorities and governing bodies, which set general objectives as part of their educational policies. Because taking charge of students' writing is not a matter of conceptions and good will only. It requires institutional changes that promote the integration of the teaching of writing in each one of the subjects, that foster collective reflection among instructors across the disciplines and experts in writing and learning, that create resources to guide instructors, that promote forums for discussion and presentation of papers on these issues, that recognize the professional development involved in engaging in academic literacy instruction, and that advocate for the reallocation of the necessary funds.

Despite the prevailing institutional disregard in the circles I frequent, I am partly optimistic because I have met many higher education instructors who are interested in helping their students learn. These instructors have seen for themselves that one way to do this is to intervene in the ways in which the content of their subjects is read and written by students. I hope that this chapter promotes these instructors' reflection, who want to stop worrying and start dealing with their students' writing. And I also hope that the arguments given in these pages will encourage them to raise this pending debate in their institutions.

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Appendix 1. Narrative Synthesis of the First Class, Prepared by the Instructor

Universidad Nacional de Gral. San Martín—BA in Science Education

Theories of Learning **Prof. Dra. Paula C. Carlino**

Synthesis of class 1 (8/7/00)

Getting to know each other: "we are a group of daredevils."

At the beginning of the class, the instructor (hereinafter Paula) wrote on the board the day's work plan:

We started the class with Paula's presentation.

- Introductions.
- Course administration (syllabus, literature, schedule, etc.).
- Small group assignment to reflect about the process of learning.
- Sharing.

Paula Carlino (PhD in psychology) did her doctoral thesis on reading and writing strategies at Universidad Autónoma de Madrid. She is currently a researcher at CONICET and her topic is writing processes in university students. She has been teaching this subject at UNSAM since the first semester of 1997.

Then, all the students introduced themselves and specified their major, the references they had or did not have on the subject, their expectations, and the level at which they teach.

Sebastián M. (Chemistry teacher) does not know what this subject is about, but he hopes that, like all subjects, it will help him to better communicate what he knows. He works in middle school and in 9th grade of high school.

Oscar T. (Physics teacher) is taking Educational Psychology (compulsory in the old study plan). This is his last course, and when he asked about the thesis, a classmate (Juancho) told him that this subject would be useful for him. He teaches middle school and high school. He is a fan of Independiente.[11]

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11   Translators' note: "Independiente" is an Argentine soccer team.

Marcela C. (Biology teacher) also took Educational Psychology but "did not get any news." For this subject she has other expectations. She knows that the instructor is very demanding. She teaches in high school, higher education, and in training courses. To graduate, she still has to complete this and another subject; her thesis is on assessment.

José Luis R. (Mathematics teacher) studied Educational Psychology. From this subject, he expects interesting work patterns, high demand, and, at the end of the term, having squeezed every drop of it; that is why he decided to stay when he was offered to take it with another instructor. He works in a math teacher education program, and as a consultant, in middle school and high school.

Paola P. (Biological sciences and chemistry teacher) has no previous references on the course. She is looking to boost the quality of her first college degree, and to her other certification. She teaches high school students and adults.

Patricia L. (Biology teacher) hopes that the subject will help her to improve her teaching. She teaches high school and natural sciences teacher education.

Rosa C. (Natural sciences teacher): "I came to look for answers to questions I've been asking myself since I was a student: how to change education to make studying more enjoyable." She teaches high school students and adults.

Paula O. (Biology teacher) seeks to improve what she does "probingly, by trial and error," to do it with more theoretical knowledge. This subject is covered in the teacher education program, but it is not put into practice: "all this is very theoretical, the reality is different."

Eraldo F. (Natural sciences teacher) is a park ranger and teaches environmental education. He seeks to professionalize his trade, teaching.

Gloria l. (Biology teacher) teaches middle school. She hopes that the course will provide her with new ways to teach.

Marta C. (Biology teacher) wishes that the course will not be merely theoretical, that it can be applied to practice, implemented in the classroom.

Silvana R. (Natural sciences teacher) is a high school teacher. Also she hopes to grow and find something to apply in day-to-day practice.

Julia S. (Chemistry teacher) has no previous references and coincides with the expectations already expressed by others.

Gastón F. (Physics teacher) teaches in high school. About Theories of Learning "I have no expectations"; "the little I know I learned it in introduction to pedagogy and that is still theoretical for me. As theoretical knowledge it's perfect, but it is inapplicable to the reality of the classroom. I would like

this to help me grasp how a student really learns. There're 10.000 theories that don't agree with each other; even when they propose didactic models, they all have good outcomes."

Pablo G. (Chemistry teacher) his expectations are unspecific: he hopes to learn something and take something away. In the past term he loved the courses. He is a high school teacher.

Sandra L. (Mathematics teacher) graduated last year. "I'm fresh." Her expectations are also very broad: to improve the teaching practice. She teaches high school and computing.

Liliana A. (Mathematics teacher) teaches high school. Has "very good references about the course, though it's tough because you have to study a lot." She hopes to improve her teaching practice.

Natalia Z. (Natural sciences teacher) she has been told that this is a good course "you study a lot but learn plenty." She hopes to be able to apply it and use it on the ground, with the kids, to improve the quality of education. She works in high school.

Andrés L. (Natural sciences teacher) teaches high school and middle school students, adults, and in the science club. He has been told that Paula is demanding, but that here you learn how to learn. He hopes to deepen what he learned in "Introduction to Pedagogy": "to illuminate what we have addressed more limitedly."

Mirna P. (Mathematics teacher) teaches high school. Her expectations for this subject coincide with the general ones for the whole degree.

Sergio R. (Mathematics teacher) works 72 hours a week in high school. On Theories of Learning with Paula Carlino, someone told him that "this is a massacre," but he decided to stay with the hope that "what doesn't kill you, makes you stronger"; this confession prompted another classmate to say: "we are a group of daredevils."

Hugo G. (Mathematics teacher) He has no references, but wants the course to help him "stop improvising in the classroom," to find a theoretical framework that will give an account of "where I'm moving and/or allow me to improve my improvisation." In the back of the classroom someone interpreted this musical metaphor with another one: "improvise, but know in which scale you are located: stop playing it by ear."

Claudia S. (Mathematics teacher) comes with "good references: it's one of the most beautiful subjects, you have to study a lot." She teaches in high school.

Mara B. (Mathematics teacher) heard that here: "you work and learn." She hopes to improve her daily work "on a professional level, not only in practice, but to enrich oneself, to learn new things."

Natalia V. (Mathematics teacher) brings the same references. She hopes to have more theoretical knowledge to improve. What she learned in pedagogy has helped her.

Patricia L. (Natural sciences teacher) confesses: "I am just now learning about the modality of this subject, about the demands" (glup). Although she adds, "I think I'm going to like it: I would like to know how the student knows, how what we teach impacts him." She wants to be an education professional. She teaches at the middle school, in high school, and professional development.

Paola C. (Natural sciences teacher) is a teacher of middle school and high school, in an institution in Moreno that is "private"… and "deprived": this is one of the reasons why she started her degree. She wants to increase her theoretical knowledge to see how she can apply it.

Carlos R. (Natural sciences teacher) Works at 7 schools: with high school students and adult students. He signed up for this undergraduate program as personal and professional growth, since when he transitioned to a new high school teaching modality, "the only book circulating in the teachers' lounge was an AVON catalog; either I do something or … start buying." He hopes to get answers to some of his doubts about learning: "am I failing or what is failing?." He confesses to being the material author of the phrase adopted by others: "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger." He claims to be single.

Marcela G. (Natural sciences teacher) hopes that the course will contribute to the topic of "mental models," a topic she has been introduced to in pedagogy. There she made some incomprehensible readings and she hopes that this course will help her to understand those texts.

Silvia T. (Natural sciences teacher) teaches in high school and dictates teacher development courses at the university level. She participates in a team that "tries to do research in the classroom." She wants to learn how her students learn to see how she can work better. Faced with the comment heard that the teacher is very demanding, she lashes out: "at this point, we don't come to waste our time."

Víctor B. (Biological sciences teacher) has similar expectations to those expressed by his peers. He teaches in high school, middle school, and adults.

At the end of this presentation, Paula contested the idea, implicit in the expectations expressed by several students, that learning theories *directly* serve to modify teaching practices. She argued that the ways of understanding the relationship between psychology and education have been diverse throughout the 20th century, but that it is now known that a teacher does not change their pedagogical practice by adopting a new learning theory. What a teacher does in class is not the sum of the corresponding disciplinary knowledge plus

a theory of learning. On the contrary, a teacher's way of teaching is modified more by the experiences that they had (or have) as a student and by the possibility of observing (and reflecting on) how other teachers teach (observation that occurs by being present in other teachers' classes or through the analysis of videos or written records of classroom activities). However, explicit knowledge of learning theories enables the development of analytical categories, which are necessary to carry out the observation just discussed. Without these categories, things cannot be "seen" because they cannot be given meaning. Therefore, studying learning theories only indirectly can have an impact on one's own teaching practice.

Paula then presented the syllabus for the course. She commented that the classes would focus on the analysis of the required readings, which appears in the syllabus marked with a special icon; each article is preceded by a cover page with a reading guide. The cover page has the function of providing the full bibliographical reference and the reading guide helps guide the analysis of the texts and the subsequent discussion in class.

Finally, the issue of the class start time was discussed and it was decided to start at 6:20 p.m. on time and work until 10 p.m., with an interval of 20 minutes in between.

In the second part of the class, a small group discussion activity was carried out in order to reflect on what learning is and what things are learned. We distinguished different types of things that can be learned and agreed to read Pozo's (1996) text "The learning system" in order to return to this topic in the next class.

Other assigned readings were Pozo's (1993), which offers an overview of the psychology of learning during the twentieth century, and Delval (1994) and Sebastián's (1994), which deal with the behaviorist tradition.

Appendix 2. Expositive Synthesis of the Second Class, Prepared by the Teacher

Universidad Nacional de Gral. San Martín—BA in Science Education

Theories of Learning   **Prof. Dra. Paula C. Carlino**
Synthesis of class 2 (8/14/00)
Types of learning and brief history of the ideas on how we learn

The class began when Paula wrote the work plan on the board:

- Pending issues from the previous class's small group activity sharing.
- Reconstruction of Pozo's (1996) article, "The Learning System."

- Conceptions about knowledge throughout history (Pozo, 1993).
- Behaviorist models of learning (Delval, 1994 and Sebastián, 1994). *
  *This topic was not discussed and was postponed to the next class.

Based on some issues that remained open from the end of the previous class, we addressed the different taxonomies about learning and went into detail on the one developed by Pozo (1996). According to this author, learning outcomes are not all of the same nature but are sufficiently distinct to constitute different types of learning: behavioral, social, verbal, and procedural. These types can in turn be divided into three subtypes each. The resulting matrix of twelve categories can be understood, for this author, if one considers a graduation from the less to the more explicit and from associative to constructive processes. Paula clarified that she thought Pozo's was heuristically interesting, but, in her opinion, forces concepts to maintain a neat taxonomy. The author's argument is that different types of learning are achieved through different processes, so that the different learning theories would not be mere rival explanations of the same phenomenon but would account for different types of learning.

In addition to these categories of what Pozo calls learning *outcomes*, the author proposes two other axes of analysis: processes and conditions. *Outcomes* refer to what is learned. They can be considered "content" only when learning takes place in an educational institution and is intentionally planned. *Processes* refer to the mechanisms internal to the subject that explain how learning takes place. *Conditions* indicate circumstances external to the subject, provided by the environment (or the teaching context, if there was one) that allow, favor, or hinder the subject to set in motion processes that lead him/her to achieve certain learning outcomes.

The axes and categories proposed by Pozo (1996) will be used to analyze each of the learning theories that we will address throughout the term; we will also examine the definition of learning provided by them, their epistemological affiliation and the behaviors and skills they consider innate.

In the second part of the class, we began to frame the psychological theories of learning developed in the twentieth century within the problem of knowledge posed by Western philosophy.

- A rationalist tradition was observed, starting with Plato —428 to 347 B.C.—(who had as a reference the knowledge of geometry of his time) and continuing, among others, with Descartes —1596 to 1650—.
- Another tradition is the empiricist, which was born with Aristotle—384 a 322 B. C.—(who had in mind his own research, especially in

biology) and continues with the British, Bacon —1561 a 1626—, Locke —1632 a 1704—, and Hume —1711 a 1776—, among others.

- Kant—1724 a 1804–, though he is close to rationalism, he takes into account both currents at the same time and deals with the conditions of human thought that make experience possible (the referent of his theory of knowledge is Newton's work —1642 to 1727—).
- In the twentieth century, emerges a line of research akin to empiricism: Watson's conductism —1878 to 1958—and Guthrie's —1886 to 1956—(theory of classical conditioning) and Thorndike —1874 to 1949—and Skinner's —1904 to 1990—(reinforcement theory or operant conditioning).
- Several authors that we will not cover would be continuators of innatism: Chomsky, Fodor.
- Piagetian constructivism can be related to some of the Kantian concepts, although it also presents differences with them.

Paula's synthesis.

Appendix 3. Expositive Synthesis of the Seventh Class, Prepared by Two Students [12]

Universidad Nacional de Gral. San Martín—BA in Science Education

Theories of Learning   **Prof. Dra. Paula C. Carlino**
Synthesis of class 7 (09/25/2000)
[We] adhere [to] Piaget's ideas, but ...
We better study Paula's definitions.®

The class began when Paula wrote the work plan for the class on the board:

1. Appointment of class note-takers.
2. Reading of class synthesis.
3. Pending topics:
   ✓ Functional invariants: adaptation and organization.
   ✓ Dialectic between conservation and change.*
   ✓ Schemes: differentiation and coordination.
   ✓ Relations between Piaget and Kant.
   ✓ What does Piaget study.

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12   The expressions in between brackets do not belong to the original text, but they were added by the instructor and discussed with the students during the session where the synthesis was read.

- ✓ Model of equilibration: perturbation, regulation, compensation.*
  * We analyzed the record of the fifth class, which motivated a series of recommendations[,] notably:
- ✓ Good titles anticipate the text, warning [anticipating] the readers about the topic they will read about.
- ✓ The narrative can be written in impersonal singular third person, used frequently in academic and scientific venues, it attempts an objective vocabulary, removed from the reader which makes sentences sound artificial, creating a dense reading. The use of the first person plural, which is more frequent nowadays, makes the reading more agile and pleasant. The use of the first person singular is not recommended [CLARIFY].
- ✓ The comma is a punctuation mark that interrupts the main line of speech [CAREFUL, EXPLAIN AGAIN]. It is a common mistake to use the comma to separate the subject from the predicate or the verb and the direct object, to avoid this we must keep in mind that it indicates short pauses [CAREFUL, EXPLAIN AGAIN] used to:
  - Separate the elements in an enumeration.
  - Insert clarifications and explanations.
  - Indicate the omission of a verb in a sentence.
  - Isolate the vocative.

We decided to leave the revision of the synthesis of the sixth class for the eighth class and we began addressing the pending topics.

Piaget studies how, as subjects, we construct logical norms; mandatory forms of reasoning to which we are subject at certain moments of our lives, and considers them as systems of thought necessary at one moment, but not necessary in another temporally previous explanatory system [CLARIFY]. He also makes, from his epistemological perspective, a parallel between the logical norms and the history of science. In the development of individuals one observes first a period of non-conservation, then an intermediate period in which the individual's implicit theory still prevails [CAREFUL, EXPLAIN AGAIN] and then a period of conservation,[; INSTEAD OF ,] the evidence criteria change.

We agreed, attentive to Paula's suggestions, on different definitions of basic concepts of Piagetian theory.

Schema:® A structured set of action characteristics.® What similar actions have in common that the subject repeats from one action [situation] to another.® Instruments with which the subject understands the world, in other word [s], with what gives it meaning.® Features of the action that tend to be stable, to repeat in the face of a new stimulus; to differentiate, to adjust

to the characteristics of the objects so that from one schema another one can be formed; to be coordinated, when two different schemas tend to function interrelated and compatible with each other, forming a structure.

Functional invariants:® Refers to the functional mechanisms to go from a minor state of knowledge to a later major one; they don't vary throughout the life of an individual.® They are organization and adaptation.

Organization:® Mechanism by which the cognitive system tends to function coherently, avoiding contradictions at any level of development.® Tendency to function as a totality, as a structure where each scheme agrees with the others and functions in solidarity. [Agreement of the thinking with itself.]

Adaptation:® Tendency for every cognitive process to have an instance of assimilation and another of accommodation.® It is the relatively stable equilibrium between assimilation and accommodation.® It is the dialectical relationship between conservation and change, between assimilation and accommodation.

Assimilation:® Transformation of the object according to the subject's schemas.® Active incorporation of the object to the subject's schemas.® Attribution of meaning to what is perceived by the subject according to the schemas into which it is incorporated.

Accommodation:® Action of the object on the subject.® Transformation that the object forces on the subject's action schemas [when the latter attempts to know the former].® Modification of the subject's action schemes according to the peculiarities of the object.

We compared Piaget with Kant, taking into account that the former tried to determine the genesis of the categories of thought of the Kantian subject, if they have always existed or if they undergo a development process. The *a priori* for Kant are the pure forms with which all subjects process reality (formless matter or noumenon), they are conditions of possibility of experience and prior to and independent of it. Piaget refers to two kinds of *a priori*, the *structural* and the *functional*. Structural a priori are the condition of possibility of experience, they are neither prior to nor independent of it, they correspond to the logical schemes and structures of the subject, which we modify throughout our life history according to the interaction with the objects of knowledge. Functional a priori are innate, prior to experience and independent of it, as opposed to structural a priori, they remain constant throughout the life of the subject, they are the functional invariants or mechanisms with which Piaget explains the transition from an initial, lesser state of knowledge to a subsequent, greater one. Regarding the possibility of knowledge, for Kant it is possible as long as the subject applies the categories to reality, objects cannot modify them [For Piaget, on the other hand, the categories progressively

adapt to the object]; for Piaget knowledge is possible through the interaction between the subject and the object, the former applies its schemas and structures (categories) to the latter, both are modified in this relationship of mutual adaptation.

Lastly, Paula presented us with the following integrative conundrum: why do we teachers tend to say that our students ["]do not assimilate a given content["], with the inverse meaning to that used by Piaget [for the term assimilation]?® Because we act with the implicit theories of common sense, as intuitive empiricists and naive realists, considering that students "swallow" without modifying what comes to them from outside, even what we teach them.

Synthesis made by Mafalda and Libertad (in fair tribute to our incentive vicars).

Note: The topics of the plan marked with * were left for the next class.

® Trademark registered by Dr. Paula Carlino.

Reflection

Considering today the contribution of the original publication of this chapter, I see that the book that this chapter belongs to included ideas that questioned the relationship between teaching, learning, writing, and reading in Latin America.[13] It underscored that learning a discipline "consists of a double task: to appropriate the discipline's conceptual-methodological system and also its characteristic discursive practices" (p. 25). It moved away from the traditional complaints of what students do not know; it moved away from the studies of that time that described the mistakes of student texts; it avoided the usual terms "deficit," "defects," or "lack of abilities." Instead, it focused on connecting teaching and what undergraduates do when they read and write in every curricular space. The book presented my experiences and reflections as an undergraduate instructor: it critically analyzed the sessions of a course (Theories of Learning) that was not specifically aimed at teaching reading and writing, but in which students read, wrote, and discussed reading and writing to help understand the disciplinary material. At the same time, it connected

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13   *Escribir, leer y aprender en la universidad. Una introducción a la alfabetización académica* consists of an introduction and four chapters: the first one dedicated to writing (translated to English in this publication), the second one to reading, and the third one to assessment—that includes reading and writing. The fourth chapter develops 10 theoretical principles that underlie the three previous chapters. The book was awarded "Best Education Book of the 2005 Edition," has been reprinted eight times, translated into Portuguese, and recently republished in a second, revised edition (2025).

the Spanish-speaking audience to ideas and authors of other latitudes and longitudes that rarely circulated among regional literature. The book also articulated theoretical frameworks from diverse disciplines (psychology, language sciences, rhetorics, pedagogy, language pedagogy) and insisted on the need for a multidisciplinary approach to the questions involved. It did not prioritize theory over practice, but relied on theory to analyze the classroom teaching. These intersections and this focus summoned the readers. I guess that the impact of these ideas also lies in how the book was written: in a style that sought to reach professors from all majors, and not only specialists.

What would I adjust if I were to write the book today? I would distinguish the study practices (reading and writing to study) from professional literacies. I would also redefine the concept "alfabetización académica," as I did in Carlino (2013). Moreover, I would add that the genres from our respective fields of knowledge, which we as instructors want our students to engage with, can foster specialized forms of thinking that go beyond what is typically understood as the "epistemic function" of writing (Carlino, 2023). Lastly, I would include results from GICEOLEM, the research team that I began to lead shortly before publishing the book in 2005: https://sites.google.com/site/giceolem/.

– Paula Carlino

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2 Written Genres: Towards a Comprehensive Understanding from a Socio-Cognitive Perspective

Giovanni Parodi

The concept of genre has been the focus of an important debate over the past ten to fifteen years. During this time, multiple alternative conceptions and classifications have emerged marked by divergent and at times extreme theoretical and empirical perspectives. In response, this chapter presents an interdisciplinary theoretical approach which strives for a comprehensive understanding of genres. Acknowledging social and semiotic factors, it offers a theoretical framework for and definition of genres which places a significant emphasis on cognitive perspectives and underscores the active role of individuals in genre construction. The chapter also provides empirically-based, robust support for the design and implementation of a specialized writing pedagogy emerging from the genres representative of disciplines.

What are genres, really? Are they self-contained units, easily defined and operationalized? Do they truly exist "out there," as some suggest, or are they "purely mental" constructs, as others propose? Are genres simply units of analysis constructed by radical empirical scientists? Is it possible to develop pedagogies or models of academic instruction based on genre theory, i.e., are they "teachable" or "merely employable"?

Many or all of these questions surround genre theory in an erratic way. Some appear overly exclusionary. But they all show diverse interests, purposes, origins, and natures.

Simultaneously, as readily observed, the elusive and divergent theoretical conceptions underlying the term *genre* offer a wide range of alternative options. Undoubtedly, this can confuse both novices and experts alike. Genre theory has been approached from an extensive spectrum of valuable perspectives, such as the new rhetoric, languages for specific purposes, systemic functional linguistics, semiolinguistics, and discourse analysis, among others.

In some cases, there are highly relevant contrasts both in the nature of the phenomenon and in the parameters of classification and of educational applications. Thus, in some cases, there are important variations in the points of attention and approach to the analysis, the types of categorizations or taxonomies, and the ways of conducting empirical inquiries. In certain cases, antagonistic principles make it impossible to reconcile approaches.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a comprehensive framework, reflective of my own perspective, which emphasizes, in particular, a sociocognitive approach to genres (with special attention to the written mode) from the principles of the *Valparaíso Linguistic School* (*Escuela Lingüística de Valparaíso* in Spanish) and an empirical exploration of certain academic and professional genres in certain scientific disciplines. This proposal is part of an on-going discussion open to revision and criticism. As noted, in this work I do not intend to identify nor compare the main approaches to genres. Nor do I intend to register a historical account of the evolution of the concept nor trace its progress or map its issues. There is already much fine scholarship in this regard (among others, Bhatia, 1993, 2004; Bruce, 2008; Devitt, 2004; Hyland, 2007, 2008).

This chapter is linked to the foundational developments of the Valparaíso Linguistic School (Gómez Macker, 1998; Parodi, 2007a, 2008a; Peronard, 2007; Peronard & Gómez Macker, 1985) and presents and advocates for a theoretical-empirical thesis that may be obvious to many researchers outside the field of linguistics (such as psycholinguists, cognitive scientists, evolutionary psychologists, and discourse psychologists) who usually embrace an interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary perspective. This theoretical-empirical thesis may be controversial to a significant number of researchers from communication theory, sociology, discourse analysis, critical discourse analysis, and, in general, certain areas of the humanities, social sciences, and computational sciences.

This topic pertains to the ontological and epistemological principles of our conception of human beings and language and, therefore, to our integral and multidimensional conception of genres. These principles are crucial for exploring a theory of academic and professional genres and for specialized disciplinary writing instruction. Thus, from our psycho-socio-discursive view of language (Parodi, 2003, 2005), in which a speaker/writer and a listener/reader play a central role (Parodi, 2007a, 2008a), genres are articulated comprehensively from a socioconstructivist approach across—at least—three dimensions: cognitive, social, and linguistic.

Undoubtedly, the cognitive dimension provides a fundamental, hitherto somewhat absent, component, which is articulated with the social through the linguistic dimension. In this way, the cognitive dimension posits the human being as a vital communicative agent, avoiding excessive reifications and

externalisms to account for genres. This thematic core will be a central point to develop in what follows in this chapter.

Genres as Cognitive Constructs

There is no doubt that the status of the cognitive dimension in language studies has followed an uncertain path. Therefore, the use of the terms *cognition* and *cognitive* has been scarce for the last 20 to 30 years. Of course, this does not include contributions by Noam Chomsky, nor what is called *cognitive linguistics*. The relative absence of cognitive terminology not only reveals little attention to these aspects, but also demonstrates that the focus of these concerns has taken other paths. However, what stands out is the continual presence of terms such as *knowledge, thought, experience, meaning, processing, concepts,* and *ideas*. This means that, in a way, there actually is what we might call a mentalist or psychological approach within linguistics, in which mental events are recognized in the process of language use, but in which there are limited inquiries into processes that are distinctly cognitivist. In this way, conceptual and definitional vagueness becomes apparent, and it is clear that there tends to be an exclusion of any matter involving the cognitive dimension of language (Parodi, 2008a).

The analysis of genres from a linguistic standpoint shows no major use of these terms and, when it occurs, it is sparse and vague. There are a few exceptions, and in recent years there has been increasing attention to the cognitive dimension of genres (Bhatia, 2004; Virtanen, 2004; van Dijk, 2008; Bruce, 2008). This lack of commitment and precision is widespread. It is then clear that genre theorists have tended to exclude the cognitive dimension or have denied, underestimated, or deemphasized the relationship between cognition and language.

In my opinion, a multidimensional conception of genres must display the different axes of which they are comprised. As Figure 2.1 shows, the cognitive dimension, social dimension, and linguistic dimension are all considered essential and thus shape genres. These founding axes are presented interactively in the figure.

From Figure 2.1 it is evident that the relationship across these three dimensions is not symmetrical. The linguistic dimension plays a fundamental and synergistic role among the three, but at the same time establishes a connection between the other two. For much of what happens in the social world to achieve a cognitive status, language as a central tool of human life conveys semiosis to a cognitive substrate and simultaneously reconstructs the same semiotic fact.
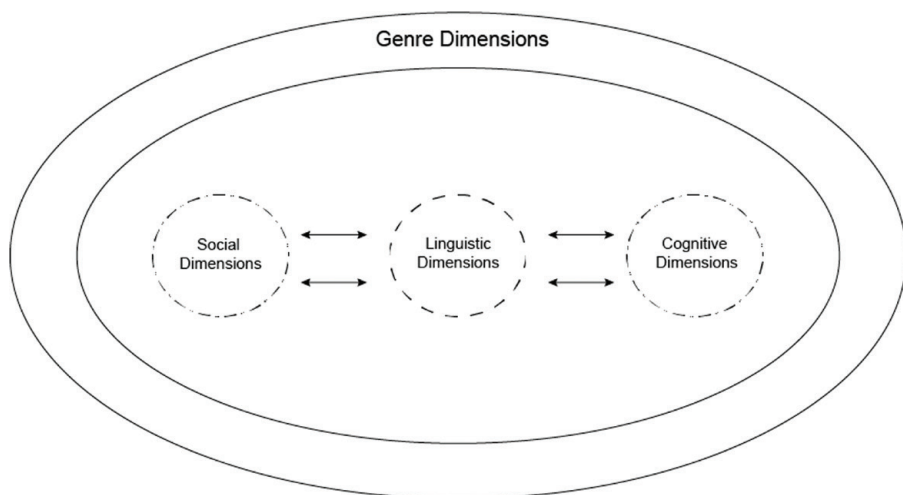
*Figure 2.1 Fundamental Dimensions that Interact
in the Construction of Genres*

However, without denying these three proposed axes and the various interactions involved in this concept of *genre*, I wish—at this moment—to highlight a conception of genres, preferably, as cognitive constructs. In my opinion, the dimension that I highlight has not been sufficiently considered, and there has been a tendency toward an excessive externalistic semiotic view of the concept of genre (Halliday, 1978; Kress & Threadgold, 1988; Martin, 1992; Stubbs, 2007). In any case, in no way do I seek to atomize the exquisite richness surrounding genres, but rather to introduce a dimension that I believe has been intentionally or inadvertently overlooked or neglected, and that to me is crucial to a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter (a more detailed discussion regarding the internalism-externalism *continuum* can be found in Parodi, 2008a).

That said, it is indeed true that each individual constructs knowledge in interaction with other individuals and in contexts that require diverse discursive instruments, but the fact remains that this knowledge, elaborated through ontogenetic processes, is stored in the memory of readers/writers and speakers/listeners in a complex representational format, not yet fully determined. In this regard, two particular concepts are relevant to the cognitive dimension of genres. In recent years, the so-called *situation model* (van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983) has become increasingly relevant as a high-level representational instance of knowledge in discourse processing. It is possible to claim that such a level of cognitive representation could also account for genre knowledge, since genres exist because the expert reader/listener has a mental representation of

the social situation in which the genres are produced and used. Furthermore, the concept of *context model,* recently coined by van Dijk (van Dijk, 1999, 2006, 2008), also accounts for this type of representational knowledge and highlights the cognitive character of the "context" construct in discourse processing. These two models account for diverse types of knowledge, some more procedural, others more declarative. Both models are offered as a pathway to better understand and explain the cognitive operation of genres, but empirical research is clearly required to support this claim (due to space constraints, I do not delve into detailed explanations of either model here. In this regard, see the previous van Dijk references). Figure 2.2 captures the proposal.

So, as seen in Figure 2.2, these two representational constructs provide unique cognitive scaffolding for a genre theory in which the cognitive component imparts stability to knowledge. On the one hand, it allows us to explain the psychological substrate of written discourse processing. On the other hand, it accounts for the fact that genres are not entities that exist exclusively "out there," but rather emerge from socioconstructively elaborated knowledge which is stored and activated from various types of memories. In this view, the linguistic dimension enables the cognitive construction of meaning through its interaction with the external social context.
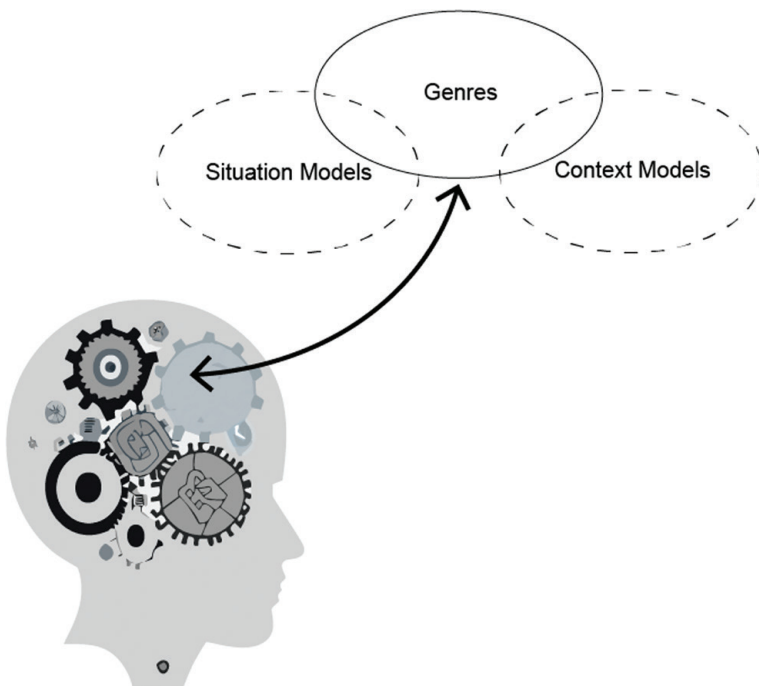
Figure 2.2 Genres and Situation and Context Models

This comprehensive conception accounts for a broader view and reflects the multidimensionality of the concept of genre. Accordingly, it is assumed that genres are more than mere social constants such as behavior and interaction patterns (defined solely by variables of social context: place, participants, etc.). With this in mind, I seek to contribute a more comprehensive perspective with cognitive substrate and, if possible, to overcome the reductionisms that emerge from extremely rhetorical or contextualist perspectives (Parodi, 2008a). Similarly, as mentioned above, I highlight the cognitive dimension of genres because with it I seek to point out the key role of the human being as a speaker/writer and a listener/reader within a highly dynamic and participative communication process. This subject is who—ultimately—constructs genres in their mind as communicative instruments as drawn from specific social contexts and situations and—of course—in interaction with others mediated through language. Thus, genre knowledge, constructed individually and socially, is stored as cognitive representations and, from this perspective, will be activated and materialized in specific texts, within social and cultural contexts.

As has been argued, I defend a comprehensive concept of genre and make no distinctions between social genres and cognitive genres (Bruce, 2008), or between more social approaches compared to more linguistic or cognitive ones (van Dijk, 2008). If what Bruce or van Dijk aim at is to distinguish dimensions within a comprehensive conception, it means that we are talking about the same thing. If what we borrow from any of these authors are different genres in different dimension, then I certainly do not agree with such an approach.

That said, from my perspective, the Bakhtinian concept of genre (although powerful in a sense and tremendously enlightening for the initial discussion) becomes narrow. In my view, the excessive contextualistic emphasis from a social semiotic perspective has led to a new theoretical and methodological reductionism. Thus, it becomes imperative to overcome these weaknesses in the conception of genres. Certainly, there are a series of social interaction mechanisms happening through genres that allow the construction of discursive actions, but these rely upon and are built and rebuilt through cognitive and linguistic constructs that, all together, are complexly articulated and interanimating. Ultimately, the genres' discursive context rests upon knowledge that is fundamentally cognitive in nature, since what gives permanence to the concept of genre is the person and their memory of previous events experienced in particular environments and interactions.

This same socio-constructivist principle is the one that allows for claims that genres evolve and respond to new communicative demands. Each individual organizes their knowledge dynamically through cognitive representation systems that have categorization and prioritization mechanisms. There

are diverse theories that account for the structuring of knowledge in specific domains, such as schema theory, frame theory, and script theory. Other theories integrate knowledge from multiple sources and seek to account for procedurally-based dynamic representation structures. A core issue that is currently highly controversial is dealing with the format and operating mode of the cognitive representations of knowledge: basically (and very succinctly) we have a propositional option, a connectionist option, and a hybrid option, as a combination of the first two (Kintsch, 1988, 1998; Rumelhart & MacClelland, 1986; van Dijk & Kintsch, 1983). For a brief review and critical analysis of these approaches, see Parodi (2005a, 2007a) and Ibáñez (2007).

In this context, my view of the term genre implies a progressive enrichment of my own conception of human language in concrete manifestations that operationalize situations and communicative interactions. In this sense, it is feasible that terms such as textual type or class allude to a slightly reductive and somewhat excessively linguistic perspective. In this way, I believe that the term genre accounts for a broader conception which reflects the multidimensionality of language in action. With this, I attempt—as mentioned before—to seek a more comprehensive and integral perspective of genre and to overcome, as far as possible, the reductionism involved in extreme internalist or contextualist views.

Thus, the cognitive dimension, the social dimension, and the linguistic dimension interact in a complex manner to shape genres. This integrative and comprehensive conception tends toward understanding a person and their language, but with a focus on the person and their social construction of knowledge. Within the three dimensions, the role of the linguistic dimension is relevant, as the conduit through which the other two dimensions mostly connect. Thus, the person interacts in a specific context and constructs their reality through situated cognitions and deliberately purposeful behaviors while in interaction with other subjects.

The cognitive conception of genres entails a direct connection with the processing, in this case, of written discourse. Thus, from this perspective, the relationship between types of genres, their respective linguistic structures, and their subsequent psycholinguistic processing opens many new scenarios for research. For example, the possible existing relationship between types of written genres and their degree of comprehension thereof is a highly relevant issue. In particular, the study of the connections between the cognitive organization of genres, the structure of specialized cognitive knowledge, the linguistic organization of texts, and the comprehension of those written texts offers a novel field of inquiry. These fundamental interactions are represented in Figure 2.3.
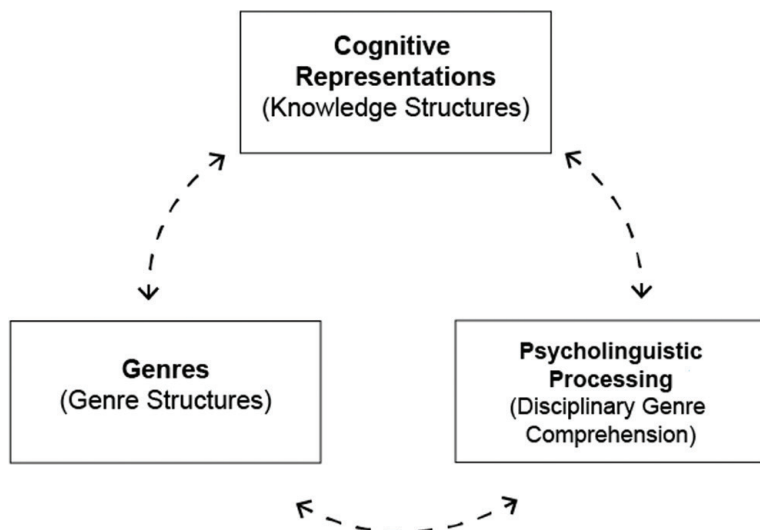
*Figure 2.3 Interactions among Linguistic Structures, Cognitive
Representations, and Psycholinguistic Processing*

Understanding written texts that convey disciplinary knowledge in relation to the lexicogrammatical structure and the reader's prior knowledge constitutes an underexplored area. This research space is necessary to investigate for a thorough understanding of the processes of specialized literacy instruction of disciplinary genres. As is known, diverse types of genres emerge to respond to and satisfy the different communicative demands of any situation and, thus, their rhetorical-linguistic structure and organization are arranged to respond to these demands. Figure 2.3 poses the question as to whether different genres involve and imply different types and levels of cognitive processing, which in turn materialize into diverse representations and demand different types of inferences.

From this point of view, it is not only necessary to investigate the specialized communicative demands required of students within a specific discipline, but it is also relevant to inquire if these demands vary between disciplines. Despite these statements of principle, it is crucial to clarify that the construction of theories must be scaffolded on a system of experimental empirical approaches that provide information to nourish new reflections. Whether these data corroborate the researcher's hypotheses or refute them, the permanent synergistic relationships between the theoretical and empirical axes constitute a mechanism for ensuring revision and continuous construction and reconstruction of some theoretical principles, scaffolded in progressive approaches to reality.

Genres: A Definition

Proffering a concise definition of genre is undoubtedly a complex matter. Indeed, there are a wide variety of definitions already available. Multiple disciplines have approached the construct theoretically, educationally, rhetorically, and grammatically. However, in my opinion, there is a tendency to overemphasize one component over another, or to focus on one dimension to the detriment of others, leaving the definition, in some cases, somewhat unbalanced and, in others, dangerously underdeveloped. On the one hand, this constitutes a matter of theoretical and methodological options and orientations; on the other hand, it points out that only one definition does not easily describe the richness of the concept. Whether a definition of genre is defended from the perspective of the new rhetoric (Bazerman, 1994, 2008; Freedman & Medway, 1994;), applied linguistics (Bhatia, 1993, 2004; Swales, 1990, 2004), discursive semiotic perspectives (Charaudeau, 2004), the Sydney school (Halliday, 1978; Halliday & Hasan, 1989; Martin, 1992; Martin & Rose, 2008), the German communicative perspective (Heinemann, 2000; Heinemann & Viehweger, 1991), or discourse analysis (van Dijk, 1997, 2002, 2008), the key requirement—from my perspective—is to be able to look at the phenomenon integrally.

In my opinion, genre constitutes a constellation of potentialities of discursive conventions, sustained by the prior knowledge of the speaker/writer and listener/reader (stored in the memory of each individual), based on contextual, social, and cognitive constraints and parameters. This knowledge—socio-cognitively constructed—is instantiated in sets of conventionalized selections, which present certain synchronically identifiable regularities but are also susceptible to observation as diachronic variations because they are not static but highly dynamic entities. In their concrete manifestation, genres are varieties of a language that operate through sets of linguistic-textual features co-occurring systematically throughout the threads of a text, and that are linguistically circumscribed according to communicative purposes, involved participants (writers and readers), production contexts, domains of use, discursive organization modes, medium, etc. These sets of linguistic-textual features can be identified in corpora representative of instantiations in particular texts, from which prototypical regularities characterizing a particular genre at a higher level of abstraction are projected.

Figure 2.4 captures some of the core features constituting genres. Through their combination and the operationalization of more specific variables, a singular genre emerges. When any of the core components is updated, the genre may in turn vary accordingly.
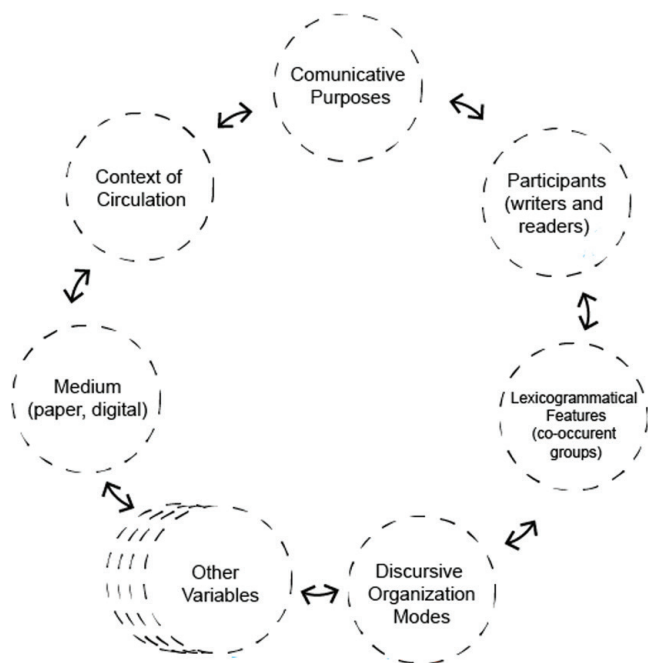
Figure 2.4 Components of Genres

As depicted, the figure is open to new core or satellite components, as greater precision and evolution of these components may bring about enriched variations. For further details and definitions, see Parodi, Venegas, Ibáñez, and Gutiérrez (2008).

From this perspective, genres, as structures of cognitive knowledge stored as dynamic mental representations, constitute a knowledge of conventions acquired interactively by a subject in their relationships with others. This conventionalized knowledge, cognitively constructed from cultural contexts, guides the discursive processes that participants implement in the social contract. For this to occur, from the perspective of an expert subject, a vital requirement is the participation of conscious subjects in their active role in the communicative interaction and the pursuit of the fulfillment of the purposes they seek. The subjects must plan, monitor, and review their participation to regulate compliance with the communicative act. Context and social roles shape and impose restrictions on genre; however, a subject in their discursive maturity (a product of ontogenetic recursive processes) and in knowledge of the possibilities and resources can choose discursive alternatives, make adjustments, propose changes, and vary the purpose, focus, etc. Undoubtedly, with these adjustments, it is feasible for a genre to vary and constitute another

genre altogether, but that is the prerogative of the participants in the discursive act. In brief, the expert person in discursive management is not constrained by context, but rather can and must freely decide to adjust to and act within that frame. Thus, a person may knowingly infringe upon or defy some of the conventions of a particular genre, but it will be their interlocutors who will assess the appropriateness of such a possible transgression.

Socio-Cognitively and Ontogenetically Constructed Genres

As I have argued and as a form of clarifying my standpoint even more, in the following figure I show part of the knowledge that a writer/reader will cognitively construct through complex ontogenetic processes in interaction with the physical, social, and cultural environment. This means that the subject must elaborate cognitive representations of—among other—diverse objects, processes, and mechanisms, and store them in diverse mnemonic systems. Many of the objects, mechanisms, processes, physical environments, etc., that the subject must grasp are obviously in the external world, and from those and from the interaction with others, the subject gradually processes and organizes a heterogeneous variety of knowledge. The linguistic dimension plays a fundamental role since it is precisely what articulates the social and cognitive dimensions; without it, the interaction between the two would be scarce and limited. Figure 2.5 shows the distribution, in our view, in which these external objects come to have a cognitive correlate.
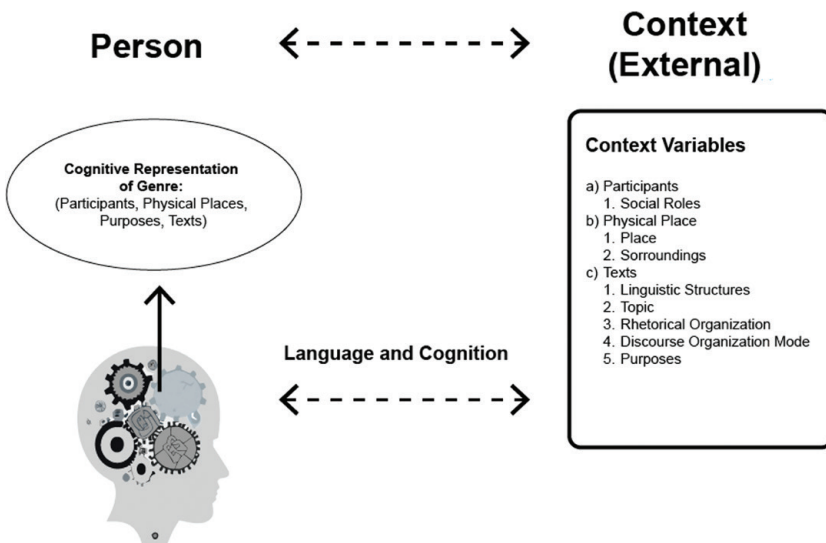
Figure 2.5 Interactions between Subject and Context

As shown in Figure 2.5, through processes of informal interaction and other formal and systematic educational experiences, subjects know, handle, and subsequently represent in their memories parts of these external objects. These constructs, once cognitive, are now highly dynamic, evolutionary, and variable over time stemming from the subsequent interactions of the subject with diverse environments and experiences. Many of these constructs are those that shape and constitute what we call *genres*.

From this approach, the external world is established as a starting point for the relative and intersubjective construction of individual knowledge. More specifically, concerning genres and, for example, the participants and their social roles, it is clear that they exist "out there." However, since the genre is a discursive tool of social interaction, there must necessarily exist a cognitive representation of these participants and their potential roles so that a writer and a speaker can understand what they are talking about and what communicative functions come into play through language. Certainly, it is the context that eventually can activate this knowledge, but if there is no prior construction of that knowledge stored in the subject's memory, social interaction will fail in its communicative objective.

Seeking to contribute greater details to my approach, in Figure 2.6 I attempt to account for the knowledge that a subject constructs based on language as it relates to society and culture and, of course, to other subjects; among others, genre knowledge, world knowledge, and discourse competence.
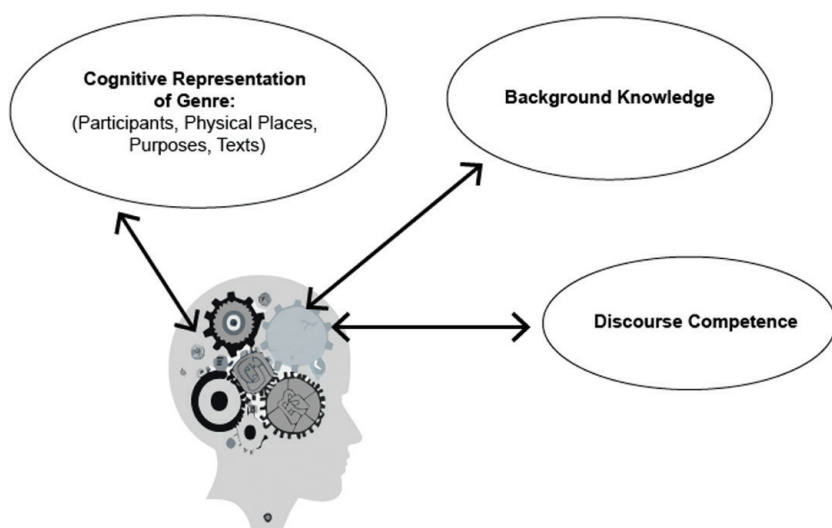
Figure 2.6 The Reader/Speaker and the Cognitive Representation of Genres

Certainly, the formal processes of instruction in certain disciplinary domains and the various processes of academic literacy instruction that a subject experiences during their lifespan are some of the sources that contribute to the construction of these and other multiple knowledges.

Now, the socio-cognitive construction of genre materializes in a purely cognitive genre. This is because the substrate of representation, storage, activation, and possible reorganization of all of this information is basically cognitive. The fact that it is achieved through social interactions and with people, social roles, and particular cultural objects that, for instance, comprise the physical environments in which a particular genre is displayed, may be fundamentally true, but that does not directly influence the type of format or mechanism used for cognitive information storage.

Academic Genres and Professional Genres

Genres, Educational Settings, and Scientific Disciplines

As we know, written language is the preferred medium through which disciplinary knowledge is created, established, and transmitted; specifically, through those prototypical genres that scaffold the initial construction of specialized knowledge and that, through their gradual establishment, integrate into a particular discourse community. From this context, in my opinion, academic and professional genres are operationalized through a set of texts that are organized along a *continuum*, linked from general school texts to university academic and professional texts. The progression below is based on a person navigating their way through academic education, during which diverse scenarios and genres must be gradually addressed. In Figure 2.7 I attempt to graphically capture this conceptualization under, among others, the medium and context of production and circulation.
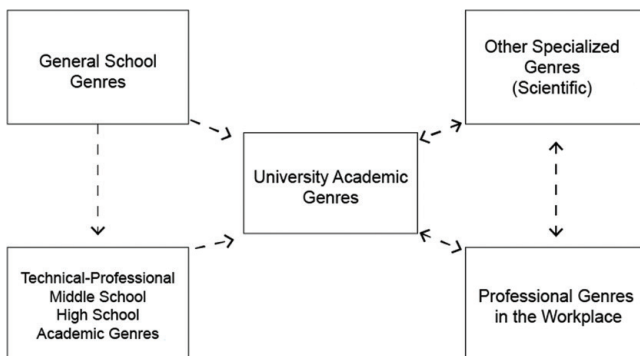
Figure 2.7 Continuum of Genres in Different Areas and Levels

The unidirectional arrows show the progression from certain alternative genres, which eventually an apprentice could bypass with optional exits (such as technical-professional education). However, it is clear that in elementary and secondary education these genres have a somewhat more mandatory character. For example, it is well-known that exposure to technical-professional genres is comparatively lower in Chile (Parodi, 2005) since students tend to focus mainly on completing primary or secondary education, with a progressive increase in Chile towards interest in university education.

The centrality of academic genres within this *continuum* as the axes between professional and other specialized genres (e.g., scientific genres) reveals its fundamental role in the construction of a specialized set of disciplinary expectations. Thus, this academic training space acts as an initial guideline, offering a repertory of genres that become access points to written specialized knowledge and practices, that is, to *knowing* and *doing*. These diverse relationships, represented in Figure 2.7, attempt to express my conception of the interactions a learner must experience to be able to construct a discursive domain in academic and professional contexts. This implies that a certain individual, through these possibly interlinked genres, should undergo a progressive development of their literacy.

That said, given my interest in academic and professional genres, two specific areas are relevant to this point. Among them, I hope to find certain genres that intersect and constitute epistemic anchors as communication vessels between an academic field and its professional counterpart. This passing between the university world and the professional world would provide niches in which knowledge progresses more fluidly, in such a way that the reader is expected to rely on an already known genre to explore new discursive scenarios. Figure 2.8 shows these interactions and overlaps, while also accounting for the possible transversality of certain genres throughout disciplines. Of course, these theoretical assumptions will be contrasted with subsequent empirical research.

This figure shows an intersecting region which is expected to have genres common to the academic and professional areas; likewise, there will be other genres that are more specific and prototypical. All this reveals a great dynamism in the construction, evolution, and circulation of genres. Thus, it is expected that there are some genres that circulate between the academic and professional worlds within the same discipline.

Until very recently, or even still for some, the conception of academic discourse tended toward a very unified set of genres, particularly within the domains of language teaching and learning (Hyland, 1998, 2000, 2004; Swales, 1990, 1998, 2004). My perspective in this regard, on the one hand, points out that some of these genres may vary greatly across disciplines and even within one same discipline (Bhatia, 1993, 2004; Parodi, 2005, 2007a, 2007b, 2008b).
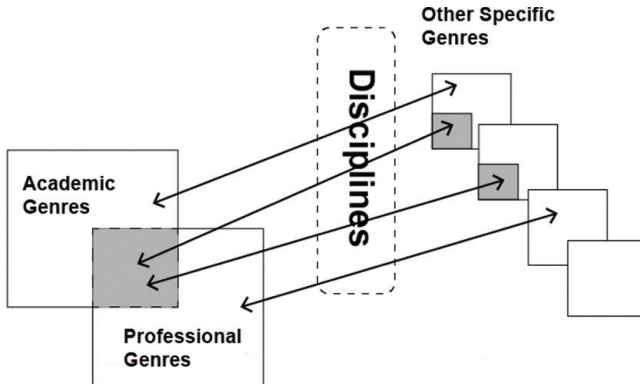
Figure 2.8 Disciplines and the Academic and Professional Genres

On the other hand, empirical research has also shown that other very specific genres can remain relatively homogeneous across various scientific disciplines (Venegas, 2006; Parodi, 2007a, b and c). As Bhatia (2004) rightly argues, genres cut across disciplines, even though it is feasible that, of course, there is heterogeneity within the same genre as well as between disciplines. The idea of sets of genres and systems of genres (Bazerman, 1994), colonies of genres (Bhatia, 2004), or macro-genres (Martin & Rose, 2008) seeks—in part—to account for this. Thus, genres can cut transversely through both academic and professional discourse, across one or several disciplines.

Returning to Figure 2.8, the bidirectional arrows show these possible intersecting points among academic, professional, and other specialized genres, as they all transit through diverse disciplines; both from the common areas and the highly specific areas within a discipline or between genres. Indeed, the marked intersecting area attempts to account for this. A new range of research possibilities certainly opens up. Among others, determining these discursive scenarios presents interesting scientific implications, in a theoretical, applied, and/or pedagogical terrain. Thus, from a linguistic perspective, it will be possible to explore and contribute grammatical, semantic, and discursive descriptions; from the processing of these genres, it will be possible to identify certain psycholinguistic processes; and from specialized literacy instruction, it will be possible to obtain information for the design of teaching materials, pedagogical procedures, etc.

Some of these genres will be prototypical of only one field, either academic or professional, or only contingent to one discipline. Others shall remain present in diverse contexts and in doing so acquire diverse forms and functions. In fact, the dotted lines of the academic-professional intersection in Figure 2.9 highlight the temporary character of the genres found there. It is a blurred line that can eventually be transgressed by genres in transition.

That said, seeking to refine the concept of academic and professional genres, in the following figure I illustrate the levels in which, I suggest, they interact, from a wider hierarchical framework in which specialized discourse acts as a higher level of abstraction.

In Figure 2.9, I show the hierarchical interaction between specialized discourse, academic and professional genres, disciplinary discourse, and the final instantiation in particular texts, as linguistic units but also as meaning units. All of them establish progressive degrees from a more abstract to a more concrete level, such as academic and professional genres and even texts. This *continuum* shows how the linguistic system offers multiple potentialities, which are selected and organized according to certain variables until becoming operationalized objects, that is, the texts themselves, such as—for instance—the *Organic Chemistry Textbook* from the Industrial Chemistry program and the *Teaching Guide No. 3* of the Organizational Psychology subject from the Psychology program.

This approach to specialized discourse organization, based on specific texts and reaching more abstract levels such as genres, is highly consistent with my research approach based on ecological and representative corpora from the principles of corpus linguistics (Parodi, 2008c) as a starting point and comparison for theoretical reflections. Thus, this approach includes progressive abstraction levels (genre and discourse) from particular data and particular realizations (texts). This way, a circular model of "theory-empiricism-application-theory" (Parodi, 2008a) which goes through diverse stages allows registering relevant information to theoretically and empirically inform educational approaches in specific disciplinary areas.
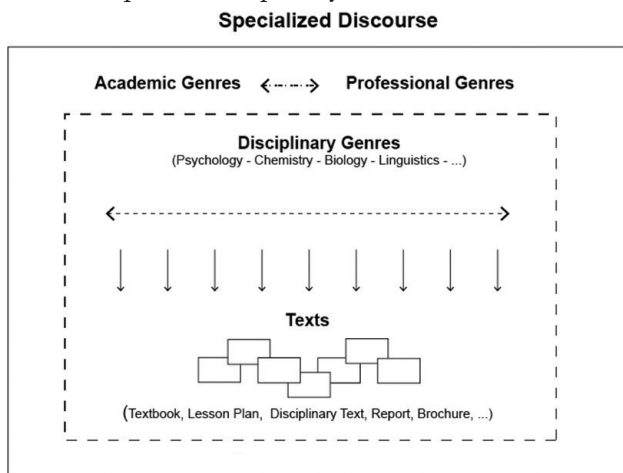
*Figure 2.9 Realization and Hierarchical Integration
Levels in the Genre Continuum*

Towards a Disciplinary Literacy Instruction Based on Genres

In an attempt to conceptualize the complex process of construction and learning from academic and professional discursive practices, I present a view of these processes as a circuit, given the highly synergistic nature in which diverse communicative instances contribute and re-contribute to the social construction of specialized knowledge. In this circuit, I try to capture a set of variables relevant to the process of construction and appropriation of disciplinary genres, as well as to highlight the directional and bidirectional connections in which I conceive the flow of knowledge and situated cognitive activities for both individuals and in connection to their communities. Figure 2.10 illustrates this circuit that is framed in the cognitive, discursive, social, and cultural context.

As shown in Figure 2.10, the dimensions involved in genres entail actions and binding relationships that lead to the construction of specialized knowledge. In this circuit of construction of specialized genres, a novice subject entering a discourse community at the university level must access disciplinary knowledge, preferably through reading the texts included in its curriculum. All of this in the context of a series of formal activities such as the courses of the curriculum, evaluation requirements, and interactions with professors and classmates. This novice is, thus, submerged in a set of oral and written genres that progressively sustain their construction of specialized knowledge.

Figure 2.10 shows how the focus in written discourse (the understanding of specific written information) becomes a fundamental axis for the academic education of a person. Thus, disciplinary genres are those that progressively make disciplinary knowledge available to the reader/writer and support them in their gradual access to the respective discursive communities to which they (seek to) belong.
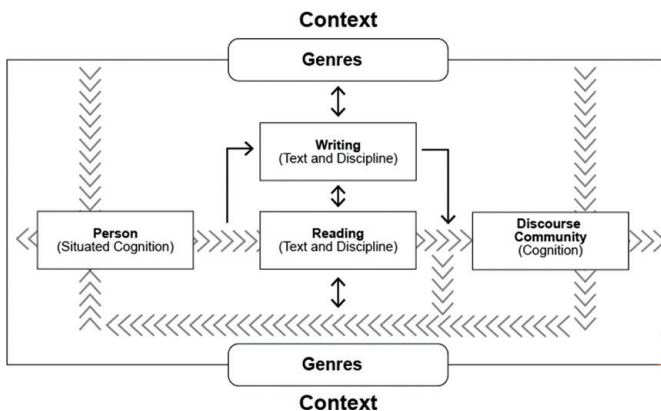
Figure 2.10 Circuit for the Construction of Academic and Professional Genres

In the context of this circuit of construction and reconstruction of discursive practices, the understanding of written materials is gradually supplemented through the practice of writing specialized genres. The synergistic relationships between both specialized reading and writing practices transform disciplinary knowledge, and the individual progressively acquires mastery of disciplinary genres through an ontogenetic process. Some of these genres will only be read as access to specific knowledge; others will become writing tasks to communicate specific information. Some of these academic genres must be initially read and, subsequently, will perform their maximum communicative function when the learner, upon becoming an expert, is able to write them adequately; thus, they will fulfill communicative functions relevant to social practices, both academic and professional. As noted, when the writer becomes competent in those highly prototypical specialized genres of the discipline and demonstrates full mastery of discursive practices within that community, they will have shown their effective participation in at least one disciplinary genre that allows them to communicate specialized meanings. In this way, reading is a fundamental step in accessing knowledge and the discursive structure of written material, but only the effective written production of the required genre reveals the maximum level of discourse competence of an expert member of the discipline. Reading and writing are thus synergistically linked and reveal their permanent connection (Parodi, 2003).

Concluding Remarks

I started the chapter by outlining a series of questions relevant to genre theory, although not necessarily seeking answers to all of them in the context of this chapter. I also emphasized the multiplicity of terminological and conceptual possibilities, as well as theoretical and applied complexities. I strived to limit my reflection to the development of theoretical principles particularly framed from a socio-cognitive and discursive perspective of language, emphasizing the cognitive dimension of genres. I also worked towards some principles for disciplinary literacy instruction based on specialized genres, both academic and professional. Thus, it is possible to access disciplinary knowledge encoded in specialized genres through the understanding and production of written texts. Therefore, the development of expert discourse competence that also incorporates the adequate management of academic and professional genres must be scaffolded at university and workplace contexts.

Based on these reflections and directly linked to specialized literacy instruction, the study of the interactions between linguistic structures, cognitive representations, and specific psycholinguistic processes emerges as of interest

both theoretically and applied. The understanding of written texts that convey disciplinary knowledge in their relationship to the lexicogrammatical structure of texts of those genres and the reader's previous knowledge constitutes an underexplored or unexplored area. Of course, any research addressing this niche should first carry out a meticulous collection and description of the genres that circulate in the area under study.

Exploring the cognitive aspects of genre theory remains an interesting challenge that continues to require theoretical reflection and empirical inquiry. The connection established between the situation model and the context model as cognitive representations of knowledge fundamental to genre processing is—in my opinion—an innovative path that can allow a better understanding of the multidimensional cognitive, linguistic, and social articulation of genres. Likewise, a comprehensive view of a theory of genres in which each dimension is articulated integrally without a greater emphasis on one over the other presents important challenges. Lastly, the variables in which each of these dimensions is operationalized in the more detailed formation of a genre constitute another timely niche.

In brief, in this chapter I have provided a reflection on genres, moving from a theoretical perspective to specialized literacy instruction and corpus-based empirical techniques, and returning back to theory. This model represents—in my opinion—a beneficial process that strengthens the construction of empirically-based theories which provide robust support for the design and implementation of specialized writing pedagogies emerging from the genres representative of disciplines. All of this rests on solid theoretical principles that highlight our underlying assumptions and thus allow for coherent progress toward more applied and experimental scenarios. I hope that these diverse and progressive connections will also become more evident and emerge empirically grounded through the rest of the contributions of the chapters that shape this volume.

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Reflection

The chapter published about fifteen years ago by Giovanni Parodi (1962-2020) aimed to offer a reflection about and proposal for the study of genres. After considering multiple different definitions of genre, he found that the majority of them took a socio-cultural approach while others used systemic linguistics. According to Parodi, there was an underexplored aspect mediating among these definitions: human cognition from a psycho-socio-discursive perspective. He developed this approach based on his previous psycholinguistic studies of written language and with an emphasis on the processes of comprehension of texts.

The chapter proposes a consideration of genres from a multidimensional approach. Under this perspective, the linguistic dimension mediates between the social and cognitive dimensions. In this way, the genre is not only an external abstraction of the subject, but also a part of the subject itself. Parodi argues that through a mental representation of the genres' patterns, the subject can understand and produce texts in specific contexts. He also proposes his own definition of genre. Of note is that his proposal led to international discussions regarding the understanding of genre as an object of study from the sociocognitive perspective and the many different approaches to analyzing genres.

Moreover, Parodi proposed how to apply this approach in the process of academic and professional development. In order to do so, he developed

the idea of a *continuum* of genres in different contexts and levels of people's development. In particular, this continuum focused on the interrelationship and impact of genres in academic literacy. Specifically, it focuses on the development of skills regarding written comprehension and production within a framework of social cognition, characteristic of discourse communities, and situated in the learning processes of the community's novice members. The operationalization of these ideas was presented in the book's second chapter. In that chapter, Parodi presented the variables and frequent markers necessary for the identification, description, and characterization of genres in the university context.

Parodi's later work stood out for focusing on the mental representation of genres, their lexical and grammatical features, and, more importantly, the multimodal dimension of professional and academic genres. Specifically, during his last years he stood out for his approach to experimental psycholinguistics using eye-tracking techniques and their relationship with the processes of comprehending written texts. In that sense, the cognitive dimension linked to the social and the linguistic dimensions of the genre were complementary with one another, especially in genres of economics.

What distinguishes Parodi's work is a comprehensive and complex approach to this discursive phenomenon, and his ability to outline a research path for both the process of comprehending the characteristics of genres and their role in the processes of academic literacy in diverse disciplines. The impact of his interdisciplinary research work was outstanding, and especially on the different current methodological approaches regarding genres in music, sports, economy, education, etc. His ideas and contributions continue to prevail and will continue to inform the work of colleagues from all around the world.

– René Venegas, on behalf of Giovanni Parodi

3

The Impact of Peers' and Experts' Readership on the Revision of Thesis Excerpts

Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux

This work focuses on the results of a thesis writing workshop designed to prepare graduate students to complete the writing of their graduate theses. Under the guidance of workshop coordinators, and in response to both didactic instruction and peer feedback and interaction, participants discuss and rewrite certain parts of their thesis work, including the title, subject specification (or abstract), and table of contents, as well as writing and revising the back cover of a possible book derived from the research. The structure of the workshop activities and exercises is outlined before I present my findings by highlighting the most common difficulties that graduate students face through the examination and comparison of their initial texts and subsequent revisions I propose that these workshops constitute an important support mechanism, helping participants become familiar with and adapt to the expectations of their respective scientific discourse communities.

The growing importance of graduate studies in recent years and the low percentage of students who complete them has prompted reflection on the process of composing theses, the difficulties that this activity presents for many students, and the most appropriate modes of pedagogical intervention.[1] Methodology workshops have attended to the consideration of writing problems in graduate theses, which are perceived as one of the causes of the abandonment of this stage of training by many students. Although in some degrees, such as those that correspond to Health Sciences, for example, the lack of explicit writing instruction in academic genres also affects the difficulties of completing the final thesis work, in others, from the humanities to the social sciences, the situation is different since students have

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been encouraged throughout their studies to compose essays or reports that can lead to conference proceedings or research articles. However, in all cases, the thesis, insofar as it is a more demanding text, forces the student to place themselves in the position of a writer responsible for producing new knowledge that must be displayed in a lengthy text which requires specific formatting and genre conventions. For this reason, various universities have implemented thesis workshops and writing workshops in which the texts produced—thesis proposals, presentations, summaries, table of contents, and chapters—are subject to various revisions based on critical reading by other students and instructors.

This collaborative interaction, which starts from the reading of different drafts of their peers' papers, advances the members of the group not only because they understand more fully the role of writing in the production and communication of knowledge and can in turn improve their own writing, but also because through this process they recognize the discursive strategies that they can apply to their own work in order to activate previous knowledge and consider varying research paths which offer different perspectives.

Theoretical Framework

Graduate capstone projects challenge the double dimension of writing, and of language in general, as a privileged semiotic tool for intellectual operations (Vygotsky, 1979) and as an instrument of communication. This inquiry is done in a new way not typically undertaken at previous educational levels. The many cognitive and discursive demands that the thesis writing process imposes on students requires systematic pedagogical treatment in learning spaces (Arnoux, Borsinger et al., 2004; Carlino, 2005; Pereira & di Stefano, 2007). At the graduate level, these spaces are in general workshops that typically combine theoretical reflection about discourse with reading and writing activities. In these spaces, the students progressively acquire genre knowledge, develop metacognitive strategies that allow them to regulate their work as writers, and acquire the expected ways of being within a scientific discourse community.

The main goal of these workshops centers around the mastery of genres including the "thesis proposal," "thesis," and the "thesis defense." For this reason, the workshop must ensure that students make the necessary and progressive revisions between the stages of research and textualization, characteristic of the process of composing an academic text (Rastier, 2003). Our starting point is to consider genres, following Bronckart, as "products of choices made among other possible ones, which are momentarily 'crystallized' or stabilized

by the use" (2004, p. 104)—in our case, of the academic community. Bronckart argues that all text production implies choices "relative to the selection and combination of structuring mechanisms, cognitive operations, and their linguistic modes of realization" (2004, p. 104). These choices, which are "the result of the work of social formations, seek to adapt the text to a given communicative medium or to make the text effective in a specific social situation" (Bronckart, 2004, p. 104), must be recognized by the students in order to respond to the demands of graduate writing. Learning the expected stylistic and compositional features of these institutional genres (Maingueneau, 2002) includes adapting to fairly rigid schemes that are regulated by the academic community, the mastery of which are required by students in order to produce an acceptable thesis.

Based on feedback to the drafts of sections of the thesis or of other similar texts which are assigned, the students reflect on the task, on the personal possibilities which are intertwined with their successful completion of the task, and on the revisions that must be made based on those established goals. The subsequent writing and revision stages are guided by the evaluations, reviews, and comments of peers and experts. This process tends to make the epistemic value of writing visible (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Flower, 1979; Flower & Hayes, 1996; Scardamalia & Bereiter, 1992) and to facilitate the development of metacognitive skills (Flavell, 1996; Peronard, 1999) in relation to the texts that must be addressed in the graduate course. However, beyond the evaluation and revision of the requested texts, what is fundamentally sought is the advancement of students in the configuration of an increasingly adjusted representation of the thesis. This representation should include a clearly articulated central theme that assigns relevance, and an evaluative dimension that highlights the contributions in relation to a field of knowledge, the research steps, and the thesis structure. This representation of the thesis is evoked, referenced, manipulated, reconfigured by students in these encounters with different interlocutors.

As at previous educational levels, the task of rewriting is essential. Even though rewriting could stem from the self-revision of these drafts, the observations and suggestions from other participants also shape this stage of the writing. The comments from others help in the transition from hetero-regulatory mechanisms to self-regulatory mechanisms (Cubero, 2005; Vygotsky, 1979). Daniel Bessonnat emphasizes that rewriting "involves interaction, intervention of the teacher-mediator or of the peers, who with their critical readings will relaunch the writing process" (2000, p. 9). In this way, these formative mediations, as Bronckart calls them, are deployed and focused on the teaching and learning of textuality, which inculcate newcomers

and contribute to the "emergence and development of individual processes of conscious thought" (2004, p. 99). In these formative mediations—in our case, of graduate studies—the student advances intellectually in carrying out their task not only due to the objections or contributions of others but also as a result of having to defend their points of view before an audience (Brown et al., 2000). This dialogic instance facilitates the subsequent representation of possible interlocutors when they must carry out their writing task alone; that is, it facilitates the internalization of intersubjectivity by considering and even integrating the points of view of others.

Claudine Dardy and colleagues (2002, p. 18), from a more anthropological perspective, warn that "a thesis is not just a one-on-one with a research project in which you have to find its Ariadna thread, but a long process of socialization triggered by 'inscription.'" In another moment of reflection, she maintains that "the complete journey of the thesis can be considered as an initiation rite to the university world, as progressive learning and mastery of the signs of belonging to that environment, that is, an initiation journey" (p. 28).

This journey attends to the insertion of the thesis writer into a scientific discourse community. Jean-Claude Beacco defines the discursive community in general as that "institution that gains coherence from its discursive practices, whatever the nature of its social and technical organization" (2004, p. 117). From this perspective, the student will become part of a discourse community that produces knowledge in a specific area and that is also a social space defined by the investigation of certain topics, the circulation of certain genres, the legitimation rituals of the producers of texts, and the institutional instances of evaluation. Moreover, this community is defined by the condition of access to the materials, the ways of processing them, the verification mechanisms, and the ways of evaluating or referring to sources. It is also characterized by the "genre chains" that it admits or stimulates, that is, by those "successive elaborations of the same 'semantic matter' that are carried out under different genre forms" (Beacco, 2004, p. 117). For example, a conference presentation or proceedings that become a specialized journal article, or the thesis that results in the publication of one or more books.

The workshop renders visible to the thesis writer the community in which they are going to enter, and gives substance to and fosters the cooperative links that will sustain many of their future academic practices. Thus, those who participate must commit to generously and critically read the texts presented to them as participants in a community-initiation process. The instructors, advisors, and experts summoned must assume the role of guiding and controlling this entry so that it is as successful as possible.

The Group Impacted by the Pedagogical Experience

The participants of this study were students who attended the thesis writing workshop in a master's program in discourse analysis during 2004 and 2005.[2] Nine students participated in the first workshop and twelve students in the second. The students had undergraduate degrees from the disciplines of letters, communication, arts, anthropology, psychology, and law. The average age of participants was 39 in the first group and 37 in the second group. The students who attend this graduate program rarely present difficulties for the production of a written text, but they must acquire in this workshop the skills to produce a thesis proposal, a thesis, and a thesis defense. This can be observed in the responses to a survey given to them at the beginning of the workshop that allows the instructors to make a first diagnosis and organize the topics of the introductory class. One of the questions reads: "Thinking about the tasks involved in writing a thesis, in which aspects do you feel a) confident and b) not confident and why?" We will consider how students perceive their difficulties in relation to the answers to option b, in addition to supporting quotes from an open-ended question ("Explain in a text of about 20 lines at what stage of the thesis project you are") where they develop their writing insecurities. We selected those that seem most significant for the purposes of our argument.

In this initial stage, few students state writing problems related to the thesis. However, as the following example shows, some responses highlight the problems of the textual plan, the hierarchy of the information, and the academic style:

> […] Lack of organization of ideas. What should be highlighted? What ideas are substantially more important? The writing progress around my thesis requires "polishing," finding its own place.

In general, the difficulties are related to global problems, which show that they are unable to have the initial representation of a possible thesis that allows the development of a research proposal. Added to this is the insecurity regarding the genre called "proposal," which is exposed when they refer to the possible elements:

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2   In the Master's in Discourse Analysis of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of the University of Buenos Aires, an 80-hour thesis workshop was planned and, when the plan was modified, a thesis writing workshop, also 80 hours, was added based on survey findings where students reported difficulty with writing.

- Present the hypothesis clearly / search for the state of the art (fear of not being able to specify or not being able to discover everything that has been done about the chosen problem / narrowing down the topic / methodology.
- In the delimitation of the hypotheses and its argumentation.

Some responses mentioned the difficulties of choosing a research topic based on the expectations of the graduate level, which requires reaching a certain level of originality, raising a relevant topic appropriate for a thesis, and making a contribution to the field of knowledge to their discipline (a problem that is accentuated when appealing to different disciplines). We emphasize that these are typical institutional requirements, particularly at the doctoral level[3] but such requirements reflect also on the master's level and have an impact on future thesis writers:

- Assess the originality of the contributions that my thesis can make / I am still at the moment of searching for relevant issues or a problem on which to focus my attention. In other words, I have a starting point but I still do not fully see the point of arrival.
- Find a topic of interest for law and for discourse analysis, with the appropriate interdisciplinary approach / in the planning of the work / in the writing of the thesis / in the theoretical framework.
- Consider questions and concerns about the definition of the work plan and the assessment of the difficulties that carrying it out may present to me / I think I have defined the topic or, rather, the area. However, I have many doubts about its relevance and the viability of the project.

Others point to theoretical and methodological difficulties, especially when defining the main research problem, which allows them to select readings and materials, define the scope of the work, ascribe to a specific area of knowledge, and evaluate possible progress.

- Regarding the analysis of the corpus since I have not found an adequate qualitative methodology. / There is a complex search for what I want to achieve, there is a lot of theoretical material. Sometimes I wonder if there is so much or if I am the one who thinks that everyone talks about the same thing. / On the other hand, I have gathered corpus despite not knowing yet what is the required amount of data.

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3   Umberto Eco, in his now classic 1977 manual, referred to these requirements, pointing out that a thesis has to say things that have not yet been said about an object or to review things that have already been said but with a different perspective.

- I have some problems of a purely theoretical nature / I lack sufficient awareness to define whether the theoretical support is always necessary.
- I feel insecure in the knowledge of the current state of the theories and empirical analyses/ in regards with the ways of verification of my methods of analysis and my conclusions / in the confrontation between the texts and the social practices in which they are inscribed.

All this increases when the field being addressed does not have either fixed ways for analysis nor established formats for research and communication of results in relation to most of the topics, as happens, for example, in STEM. Rather, there are many exploratory options on which students can base their first hypotheses, but in these instances students themselves have to find their own approach to them.[4] Students are forced to make methodological choices that are adjusted throughout their work. Many of these students are not even part of research teams nor collaborate with faculty members, and consequently must define the field and the problem of their project alone or with the sole support of their faculty advisor. Although the workshop includes sessions focused on methodology, and the students discuss with graduate students who are about to defend and with guest researchers who show different approaches, progress mostly occurs when students must produce texts by themselves. It is the articulation of these theoretical, methodological, and analytic perspectives that results in their peers commenting on and responding to their work in ways which help to guide how they approach revision and rewriting. Moreover, the majority of the students that take the course do not have an advisor yet; something that generates anguish:

- Constructing and working with a corpus. / I do not have a faculty advisor and I feel that I need one as soon as possible to have a qualified interlocutor who can assess what I have done so far.

Faced with this situation and as a preliminary step to assigning a faculty advisor, the workshop introduces audiences with differentiated expertise. In this learning instance, students interact with their peers, with specialists, with the workshop's instructor, with faculty advisors, with the students who have completed the thesis and are awaiting the defense, and with recent graduates or with experienced readers. This interaction enhances the acquisition and activation of knowledge in terms of genre and strategy, as well as the discipline-specific knowledge of the field in which the project is inscribed.

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4   In "El análisis del discurso como campo interdisciplinario" [Discourse analysis as an interdisciplinary field], Chapter 1 of *Análisis del Discurso. Modos de abordar materiales de archivo*, Buenos Aires, Santiago Arcos, 2006, I referred to methodological aspects of discourse analysis, an area in which the workshops that I review here are developed.

These interactions happen within the workshop and in various one-on-one meetings.

Modes of Intervention

In some graduate programs from other areas of knowledge, the first activities of the workshop focus on making students aware of the peculiarities of a complex written text and even on providing support tools for specific tasks with writing such as systematizing the use of transition devices, punctuation rules, citation practices, paragraph construction, footnote formatting, etc. In other cases, the primary focus is on the characteristics of discipline-specific texts. In all cases, it is considered that these learnings should lead, on the one hand, to automate some aspects so that in the writing process they leave free cognitive resources to attend to more significant tasks required by the text and, on the other, to solve more easily the rhetorical problems that may arise.

The study's participants attend a thesis workshop in a graduate program at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters. As a result, the pedagogical intervention has a particular focus: the written exercises that are designed and carried out are not intended to evaluate or advance academic written competence, but rather constitute support for the student to define their research and build a global representation of their thesis that allows them to integrate the results and feedback obtained. Although the genres which correspond to this educational level are addressed, beyond analyzing and reflecting on generic features of these genres, what is primarily sought is the ability for students to refine the cognitive-discursive operations necessary for the different stages of preparation and writing of the thesis.

The materials produced by the student writers are later read and discussed during the workshop or in one-on-one meetings with tutors. Typically, they consist of different genres associated with the thesis project or to a related pedagogical goal and allow for rewriting. This rewriting responds, to a large extent, to the interpretations, questions, and discussions made in one or another dialogical situation, which brings into play the knowledge of the participants and their perspectives on the problem addressed. The role of the diverse points of view at play within the framework of the workshop also has a positive impact, as previously noted, on the communicative dimension of the revision writing, as it facilitates the construction of imagined readers and the implementation of strategies that consider their expectations.

We must emphasize that, although the training in revision is developed throughout schooling (Arnoux, Nogueira et al., 2004), it requires a broad mastery at the graduate level. Students must be able to go through the various

strategies that make up the continuum that goes from explanatory revision—schematically, saying "the same" in another way—to imitative revision, or, in other words, saying something else in the "same" way (Arnoux, 2004; Fuchs, 1994). That is, they must be able to choose, at one point in the process, from among different possibilities within a paraphrastic family (Culioli, 1990) or to expand the excessively condensed segments of their text in an intradiscursive way by considering the discourses of another audience and the appropriate "ways of saying" of the discipline. But rewriting also requires the ability to re-shape your own text based on a tighter genre representation and on the potential objections from the intended audience. In this, the verbal interaction based on the writings in the framework of the workshop, in the one-on-one meetings with tutors, or in the written feedback of the readings are all essential.

To define the pedagogical sequence of the workshop, the team that I lead combines the results from two analyses: the results from the participatory observations of the members who collaborate with the workshop coordinator to assess the dynamics of each session and the analysis of the texts and revision strategies followed by the students. The latter constitute the textual traces, in individual work, of a collective effort. A relative mastery of academic writing that we have referred to allows us to better evaluate the impact of reading and rewriting in the intellectual process that will partially culminate in the thesis.

The function of the different activities planned in the workshop is intended to support this process by stimulating in the students a series of complex operations that are required to successfully master the genre of the thesis. These pedagogical activities simulate different parts of the thesis work, which requires considering a diverse array of texts and genres. I address, among other elements, title, specifications of the topic, literature review, research questions, objectives, bibliography, summaries, presentation, back cover, analytical table of contents, chapters, and the role critical readers play in these texts. This discursive diversity models the thesis from different frameworks and by readers who have followed the student writer through these different steps and who share the conversational history of the workshop.

When a thesis proposal or chapter is completed, an expert reader who has *not* participated in that conversational story is called to assess the text and provide feedback, which in most cases is written but can also be oral. We believe that for the pedagogical work of the workshop to be more effective, some types of feedback should be combined: written feedback in digital texts with their own interactive features, and oral feedback, via telephone or face-to-face exchanges. It is also worth noting that our workshops generally include the participation of three experts, all with different roles, in addition to the thesis supervisor.

Proposed Written Exercises: An Analysis of Some Results

In this section, I discuss and illustrate some of the pedagogical topics that the workshop focuses on, including developing titles, the back cover of a possible book, and the table of contents. What I hope to highlight is how the peer and experts' critical reading intervenes in what, to my knowledge, is fundamental in the workshop, that is the construction of a global representation of the thesis that allows integrating and prioritizing the final writing.

Title and Specification of the Topic

The title is especially important in specifying the topic and in defining the thematic axis of the text, which in turn lends relevance to the different sections of the project. The proposal of the title and its explanation of the thesis as well as the interpretations of the title made by their peers allow students to recognize imbalances between the global representation of the research and the textual segments that constitute it. These imbalances have to do, in general, with a foreseeable lack of clarity in the objectives of the task to be carried out. The title section of the text is changed the most as it undergoes a series of modifications until the moment of presentation of the project and even later when the thesis is delivered (in our graduate program, a quarter of the students request approval for changing the title when presenting the final work).

Below are some examples of title revisions based on the interactions promoted in the workshops with peers and coordinators or in the one-on-one-meetings with the tutors.

> (1)
>
> a. Discursive analysis of selected poems and the short story "Evita vive" by N. P.
>
> b. Poetry and body. The conformation of a poetic writing as a sensual body and the treatment of bodies in the poetry of N. P. (1980-1992).

The above example shows a transition from a broad title that resembles a school prompt (1.a) to defining a focus that already implies certain hypotheses about the importance of the body as it is represented in the poetry of N. P. and the links with other poetic writing (1.b). Thanks to the workshop interactions, two areas of improvement for the text emerged. The first one was regarding the limited integration of the story into the proposal, evidenced in the writer's difficulty to narrow the topic. The second one was about the need

to further delimit the corpus. These ideas led to the transformations that we see in 1.b in which the relationship between poetry and body constitutes the focus. This information is included in the subtitle along with the stage of the poet's production as indicated by the dates.

(2)

a. The legal discourse and the concept of interpretation in law in rulings on transsexuality (according to publication in the legal repertoires of the magazines "La ley" and "El Derecho" during the years 1952/2004).

b. Legal speech. Transsexuality in the repertoires of Argentine jurisprudence (years 1966 to 2004). From punishment to recognition of rights.c. Jurisprudence and doctrine. Analysis of the discourse on transsexuality in the Argentine legal repertoires (1966-2004).

Item 2.a shows how articulating the area of knowledge in the title can be a problem, especially for students whose undergraduate programs are more or less far from the graduate space. The initial segment, "the legal right," although it exposes the will to change, appears detached or, at least, not articulated with the rest of the title and is very broad—even more extensive than in the reformulations. Item 2.b seems to delimit the scope of the topic, however, the main question regarding the sources is not yet evident. It seems a simple thematic path with a prior delimitation of the field, in which the third phrase interprets the meaning of the path. The collective reading of the specification of the topic, which accompanied the revision of the title, permits the reader to understand vacillations and uncertainties. I present here the first specification:

The rulings to be considered, which constitute the jurisprudential discourse, address demands for a change of name and gender in the public registry and in the documentation (and in some cases the authorization to undergo sexual reassignment surgeries). Such demands are raised by people who define themselves as transsexuals insofar as they do not identify with the gender that the public documentation attributes to them in consonance with the genetic sex that is expressed in the genitals.

The rulings that are legally and socially relevant in relation to the various issues resolved by the Courts appear in the legal repositories. The chosen journals turn out to be the most

widely disseminated and consulted in the legal environment, and the ones that have had the greatest temporal continuity. The initial cut-off date coincides with the public diffusion of the first news from abroad on the subject. An attempt will be made to review all the material available to date.

The specification describes the materials to be addressed in the thesis, indicates that a first survey has been carried out, and then points to specific legal problems to which the thesis writer assigns significant importance. This leads to item 2.c, which shows a new specification in which to display the phrase "discourse analysis" intended to facilitate the recognition of how the research is represented and, above all, how the legal problem is still missing.

The initial revision of the specification of the topic shows the progress in reflection:

> This thesis seeks to examine the changes that legal discourse has introduced in the representation of transsexuality over a diachronic axis (1966-2004). The data sources will be the jurisprudence (rulings) and doctrine (comments on rulings) that contain the treatment of the issue raised by the transsexual, considering the specificity that sustains them as genres of the legal field. Finally, the study inquires into the underlying vision of law and justice present in the texts analyzed, that is, whether it reflects a formalistic/legalistic orientation or one grounded in principles of equity.

> (3)

> a. Actants, participants, or thematic roles in the historical school discourse.

> b. The first Peronist period in the textbooks of Argentine History: A linguistic-discursive study.

> c. The first Peronist period in the Argentine History textbooks (1980-2000): A linguistic-discursive study.

Item 3.a is an expression of desire, where an attempt is made to articulate the genre and the theoretical problems that interest the student but prior to the knowledge that resulted from the analysis. The second revision (3.b) already shows a refinement of the corpus and a more global perspective of the approach to the texts, which will allow the student to make other choices during the course of the thesis. In the third reformulation (3.c), the time

period is delimited, which results from the work with the corpus and the progress made in the representation of the thesis.

(4)

a. The technological imagination at the end of the 20th century: Robots, cyborgs and supercomputers in U.S. science fiction cinema.

b. Humanoid robots in transpositions from literature to U.S. science fiction film between 1980 and 2005: Semantic and ideological variations.

c. Humanoid robots in four transpositions from literature to U.S. science fiction cinema of the last three decades: Semantic and ideological variations.

d. Transpositions of four science fiction narratives to U.S. cinema in the last three decades: The case of the humanoid robot figure.

e. Transpositions of four science fiction narratives to U.S. cinema in the last three decades: Around the figure of the humanoid robot.

The collection under item 4 shows a shift and significant narrowing of the targeted topic. The writer has progressively defined the axis: from the study of technological imagination at the end of the 20th century, where it planned to address three cases, it went on to focus on humanoid robots within the framework of the transposition from literature to cinema before, finally, focusing on the problem of transposition. Robots became a case example and then, later, the figure to be privileged. The transpositions have been limited to four and the dates have given way to the "last three decades." All these changes arose from the dialogues with the peers, with the instructor, and the tutor, in which each phrase was being deployed and questioned.

The traces of this process are evident in the displacement and switching of places in the title of the two phrases that function as foci: "humanoid robots" and "transposition." In the abstract of (a) the central focus is the figure of the intelligent automaton whereas in (b) and (c) the transposition makes the focus more generic. However, the articulation is still missing. This is done in (d), since the robots are presented as the example, but from the reading carried out by the tutor who explicitly tried to interpret the task that the student was supposed to carry out, the last change was made and can be seen in title (e) with the revision "around the figure."

The two passages below illustrate this process with the extended description of (a) and (d). The description of the first title started in the following way:

> The figure of the intelligent automaton has a long history in Western culture, both in myth and in magic and in the origins of science such as in alchemy. The traces of that figure have been felt especially in literature. But it took on new forms and new meanings with the height of the industrial revolution and with the cultural predominance of modern science and technology, and with them it came to be incorporated into the imagination of the time, nurturing a new literary genre, science fiction.

This beginning requires a historical examination that would excessively expand the framework of the analytical work, although it may constitute an introductory section of the thesis. The specification of (d), on the contrary, focuses on a theoretical problem that will constitute the framework of the research:

> *Transposition* can be defined as the passage of a text from one medium to another (passage from literature to film, from film to literature, from literature to comic, etc.). In the study of this semiotic phenomenon, it is a matter of seeing mainly what happens with the *continuities* and *semantic variations*[5] that take place with these passages, of establishing how the text has been approached, if it has been looked through the lenses of genre or if another type of discursive chain has been implemented. My goal is to study a region of the contemporary mass culture, the U.S. science fiction genre, from this perspective of semiotic analysis, trying to see what kinds of readings are made of some classic texts of this genre in Hollywood cinema in the last three decades. I am going to limit the scope of the work to the study of a specific figure of the iconography of the genre, the humanoid robot, since this figure is central in what it does to the representations of the human in its relations with technology.

Based on these examples, we can see the procedures that the student writers must go through to define a topic whose first discursive expression is

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5   The text has been italicized by the student writer.

found in the title. At the beginning, students tend to draw the interest of their first readers with an essayistic, metaphorical title that seeks to attract attention. In the course of their interactions, however, they realize the uselessness of creating a title if it is not accompanied by a representation of what is going to be done in the writing. The successive revisions show a more complete understanding of the students' own work and, therefore, a significant advancement in the development of the thesis.

The Back Cover

In the second section of the workshop, after submitting the thesis proposal, the first exercises continue to emphasize the construction of a global representation of the thesis while stimulating the recognition of its constituent parts. One of the exercises is to write a summary for the back cover of a book and propose the table of content for the thesis.

The first prompt is to write a back cover for the publication of the thesis as a book. The value of this exercise is that the back cover summary is a synthesis work but one that exists within the framework of a genre that is not typical of the development of the thesis and that accentuates the argumentative dimension of the work since it is part of an editor's paratext designed to stimulate purchase of the book. Activating this rhetorical component is interesting because it must be present in the introduction, in the conclusions, and in the subsequent thesis defense as well. The almost fictional situation of making the back cover of a book written from a thesis not yet completed disinhibits the author and in doing so facilitates their entry into the workshop revision scenario and the acceptance of criticism.

The review of the initial back cover carried out within the framework of the workshop by peers and coordinators and the resulting revisions help to illuminate the central aspects of the mental representation of the thesis, a representation of great plasticity that will be modeled throughout the entire course of thesis work. This dialogue with and around the thesis allows the author to return to it by making the necessary adjustments in thematic orientation, which the title can only partially address. This action in part justifies the thesis and makes it valuable in the research process and as a part of the writing.

Let us observe, as an illustration, a back cover draft and its revised version (the places in which the observations of the colleague who made the first reading were focused are indicated with italics). The title is "Media cuisine: Food discourse in Argentine periodicals (1940-1970)" [La cocina mediática: el discurso alimentario en las publicaciones periódicas argentinas (1940-1970)]. I want to emphasize that the author had advanced considerably in his research

because he had received a fellowship, something quite exceptional in the Argentine MA graduate system:

> a. *Food customs in Argentina have changed a lot in recent years.* This study consists of a historical journey through the recipes and journalistic articles dedicated to food that appeared in the Argentine weekly magazines published between 1940 and 1970. As a result of this journey, *the discursive variations in the treatment of food in our country* can be appreciated. Taking into account contextual changes that occur in the period linked to technological developments (changes in the fuels used for cooking, the massive adoption of the electric refrigerator, among others) and food distribution (the appearance of supermarkets, for example), *the work inquires the processes that are reconstructed from the textual configuration of articles and cooking recipes.* These *processes* allow a glimpse of what Argentine society considered **appetizing** in its periodical publications. *The different modalities in which this sense is built* throughout 40 years of our history *are related to stylistic changes, the presence of citations to other media, and the matrices of the different intervening genres.*

The revision proposed after the shared reading and the questions, observations, objections of the participants in the workshop was the following:

> b. What did Argentine magazines consider appetizing 60 years ago? Was it the same as 30 years later? To account for these concerns, this study analyzes the recipe pages and journalistic articles dedicated to food that appeared between 1940 and 1970 in Argentine weekly magazines. Considering the contextual changes that occur in the period linked to technological developments (changes in the fuels used for cooking, the massive adoption of the electric refrigerator, among others) and food distribution (the appearance of supermarkets, for example), the author inquires about how and what the magazines talked about when they referred to food. The stylistic changes, the citations to other media, and the matrices of the different intervening genres constitute the main pathway of the thesis to describe the changes in the social representation of the individual and non-transferable *sense of appetite*.

The revision better defines an intended audience to whom a representation of the content of the text must be proposed in order to draw their interest

to the analytical process. The sections marked with italics in the first example were the places in the text where the class discussions centered.

In the first place, the readers noted that the opening sentence did not correspond to the selected historical time period, as the data points out, but rather sought a way to arouse interest simply by pointing out the study's relationship to the present. The discussion on what could be the main value of the study, which is central for the presentation of the research in different academic fields and, particularly, to *introduce* the thesis and to later defend the thesis in front of a committee, prompted the revision that led to the initial position *what is considered appetizing*, with the corresponding changes with respect to the years covered by the study.

Secondly, the result that is developed on the back cover ("to appreciate the discursive variations in the treatment of food in our country") was contested because it was too general and did not correspond to the scope of the investigation. In the revision, it was removed and replaced by the ending: "to describe the changes in the social representation of the individual and non-transferable sense of appetite." Likewise, "discursive variations" was replaced by "how and what the magazines talked about" that is more suited to the intended audience of an editor's paratext. It is worth emphasizing that the articulation of the thematic axis and the evaluative focus enable the student to build a global representation of the thesis. Symbolically, the fact that the most significant portions from that perspective open and close the reformulated text shows that this representation is being mentally defined.

Finally, the readers indicated the different meanings that stem from the passage "the processes that are reconstructed from the textual configuration of articles and cooking recipes. These processes allow a glimpse." In the workshop exchanges, the possible interpretations were discussed and the questions were highlighted: the textual configuration reconstructs the processes (What processes? Historical? Changes in representations?); or the processes are reconstructed by the researcher from the textual configurations (Do they uncover something? Or are they uncovered through analysis?). The overlaps of historical processes/changes in the representations/research process make the term "process" the place where the difficulty forms, especially because the transformations in social representations are slower than the related technological or commercial changes. This problem was partially solved in the decision to introduce the phrase "changes in the social representation of the sense of appetite." This revision separated the changes so that the core of the analysis—i.e., the discursive changes—were emphasized. The text orders the research process as follows: contextual data/survey of themes, styles, interdiscourse, genres/inferences from the interpretive activity based on specific aspects. The path that leads to this

order is also demonstrated in the last part of the back cover showing once again that "modalities," regularities, or representations are derived from the study of discursive aspects, which was hidden in the predicate "are put in relation."

Working on the written text allowed the student, in this case, to explicitly articulate the steps in the research process, which was what was really at stake and which the student writer seemed to hide under a discourse that only partially accounted for it. It is important to consider that insecurity or lack of confidence in methodological decisions, which in our example was crystallized in the term "process," can constrain the student writer. Hence, both the readers' responses and the one-on-one meetings with tutors are vital for helping students to understand how to express their methodological decisions. For a novice researcher who needs to show a certain expertise to others, the most fragile area of their image is that which has to do with methodology, particularly the type of research that dominates in the field to which I refer, in which there is no model to select and analyze the data. Thus, making the problem explicit and providing guidance for its solution is essential.

The Table of Contents

Regarding the table of contents of the thesis not yet written, to which I will refer briefly, the first presentation that the students make is a text or an outline full of potential chapter titles. The student must read it with the others, justify the sequence and proposed hierarchy, and synthesize the possible content of each section. This description and the questions from the other members of the group lead to a restructuring and significant changes in the subtitles as well as to an adjustment of the table of content that considers the thematic focus and the aspects that should be highlighted.

The first submissions, in general, do not account for the steps of the investigation or the writing, but after an initial critical reading of the table of contents, the most significant sections of one and the other are defined and the differences between the two orders are recognized. This is perhaps one of the most important functions of the tasks performed with the table of contents. On the one hand, the proposal that will guide the investigation is defined, which resulted from a topic and a main question. On the other hand, the writing schedule that will eventually lead to a more definite table of contents of the thesis is questioned based on the argumentative orientation, the construction of the figure of the enunciator, and the intended audience. The definition and differentiation of these two orders is a constant in the steps proposed by the literature about thesis writing (among others, Beaud, 1998). Some scholars have even proposed three steps (Fragnière, 1996): an indicative

proposal (based on the interview with tutors), a detailed operational proposal (after the first readings and which tends to plan the research tasks), and a writing proposal (which creates the final shape to the thesis).

Questions based on the first table of contents strengthen the journey, exclude unproductive directions, define the problem, and move toward what has not even been considered yet. On the other hand, these interactions activate the student writer's previous knowledge in relation to their subject, and help them recover ways of analysis, hypotheses, and interpretations that, because they were not yet mature, were left aside. Within the context of the workshop, the student is questioned by peers and experts about the points considered in the table of contents and this process helps to appeal to the knowledge and reflections that the student has made at different times about the subject but never considered up until that point.

Observe the first part of the following table of contents on "The female figure in Argentine graphic advertising:"

1. Female figuration and advertising

   1.1. Purposes

   1.2. Advertisements as a field of observation

   1.3. About periodization

   1.4. Approaches

Part 1

A journey through advertisements

2. Beverages

   2.1. The '50s

   2.2. The '70s

   2.3. The '90s

3. Cigarettes

   3.1. The '50s

   3.2. The '70s

   3.3. The '90s

4. Clothing

   4.1. The '50s

The above excerpt shows the process of preparing the plan for the table of contents and does not present a global representation of the thesis as a whole or a more or less consistent work. This is typical of the initial stage of the research, where the student encounters difficulty in recognizing problems, lines of reflection, and differences between research plans and thesis proposals. In Chapter 1, the author addresses some of the introduction issues but does not highlight the problem from which it starts. Just as 1) is more focused on the final draft, the rest is an indicative plan prior to the readings and analysis of sources. The first part of the table of contents illustrates a common approach of students who include a historical section: they choose the simplest path, in this case, that of repeated diachrony around different objects. The exchanges based on the written text made it possible, within the framework of the workshop, to articulate the writer's hesitations and to encourage the articulation of the progress achieved that was not evident in the draft, thereby enabling subsequent reformulation.

Conclusion

I have analyzed the work that the students performed and the progressive and necessary adjustments they undertook in relation to the task, objectives, and materials of the workshop. I have also demonstrated how their research possibilities developed as a result of writing proposals designed for a thesis workshop and evidenced through the contrast between successive versions of their texts. Throughout the article, my goal has been to highlight the importance of working on texts written at the highest levels of the educational system where students must occupy the position of producers of knowledge and generate texts of high conceptual and discursive complexity. In the scope of a workshop, cooperative work on the texts produced allows us to reflect on the discursive mechanisms that generate certain reading effects as well as on the intellectual processes that shape the proposed text. The learning that is achieved from the discussion of the texts by the student or their peers is then integrated into the critical reading of the texts themselves, thus advancing on the path of greater autonomy.

Thanks to these dynamic interactions, these workshops fulfill the function of making the writing process observable, developing in the students a semiotic awareness of the writing process, and demonstrating that writing is an object that can be modeled and transformed through the cognitive operations that the discursive space stimulates. Furthermore, these workshops constitute an important source of support for the student who is entering a scientific discourse community for which they must acquire mastery in areas such as

the disciplinary language, the accepted topics, the legitimate objects of reflection, and the ways of approaching them.

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Reflection

As I reread this article, I think that it provoked interest, first, because it responded to the concerns of an academic community worried, at that moment, about the problems of reading and writing in graduate education. During this time, there had been significant growth in graduate programs in different universities, which in turn required pedagogical strategies that would support the writing process of capstone projects. The difficulties that capstone projects generated were viewed as the major obstacle for the students to finish their studies. Secondly, the academic community was already sensitive to the need to reflect on the ways of impacting written production in higher

education—especially at the universities—and saw graduate education as a new challenge. Even though teachers could rely on the research and practice-based learning that had taken place since the beginning of the 1990s at the undergraduate level, graduate programs required catering to a different audience and the producing texts that exhibited greater complexity.

On the other hand, the field was also aware of the limitations of prescriptive initiatives and of the benefits of promoting interaction among writers that emphasized the epistemic function of writing. The workshop structure—the one that the article's experience replicated—had proven to be an adequate approach with which to address these concerns. Finally, the article expressed, once again, the importance of incorporating the knowledge developed by discourse analysis (DA), which many instructors ascribed to, and to make contributions to DA from a reflective and situated perspective that would respect the educational exigencies.

The article illustrates the results of a research trajectory focused on the analysis of the rewriting of students' texts, a process encouraged by the feedback of peers and experts. However, it is not limited to the feedback offered by the group members nor to the role of the instructors in the interaction. Instead, it demonstrates how using non-academic genres or sections of the capstone project could enable student writers to build a representation of the text that could orient the writing process.

Even though the pedagogical dynamics that I presented in the article are still productive (as are the synthesis activities based on different formats), subsequent opportunities have enriched my reflection and pedagogical interventions. These opportunities include collaborations with heterogeneous groups of people from different undergraduate backgrounds and areas of study or with diverse professional graduate students. These advances have led the field to explore how different disciplines and theoretical approaches choose to conceptualize knowledge. Another enriching opportunity has been creating alternative capstone projects beyond the thesis model (as subsequent ministerial resolutions have proposed). Last, we have benefited from critically reflecting on proposals for the internationalization of higher education and the regulation and control of academic discourse.

– Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux

4 Think Globally, Act Locally: How to Design an Academic Writing Course for Students Entering University

Federico Navarro

In the last two decades, the teaching of academic writing has become central to university administrators' agendas throughout Latin America, driven by the expansion of higher education. All students, not just those who are supposedly disadvantaged, need to master the communication forms specific to their programs. This mastery is essential for learning disciplinary content through reading and writing (epistemic potential) and for understanding the genres relevant to their fields as new members (rhetorical potential). In this chapter, I outline the key administrative, pedagogical, and linguistic principles that can guide the development of a writing course or program. These principles must consider the predominant theoretical and pedagogical traditions, the profiles of faculty and students, institutional resources, and available curricular spaces. First-year writing courses significantly impact incoming students but should be expanded through other initiatives across the curriculum and training levels to foster a comprehensive writing campus. To illustrate this perspective, I discuss the design of a writing course for incoming Economics and Administration students at Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (Argentina).

In the last two decades, the teaching of academic writing, composition and communication has become a central issue in the agenda of students, teachers and university administrators throughout Latin America. This theming or "concern" with writing has a twofold nature. On the one hand, it involves the *training of academic writers*, in other words, the teaching of academic writing to students who gradually enter the rhetorical and disciplinary cultures of their undergraduate program. On the other hand, it involves the *training of academic writing instructors* in a broad sense, i.e., instructors who employ the rhetorical and epistemic potential of writing in their classrooms to foster their students' academic literacy. In this context, it is essential to discuss the

necessary assumptions for designing an institutional initiative promoting a set of actions for teaching academic writing (Carlino, 2013); these discussions must take into account the material and curricular conditions of institutions and higher education systems, the previous trajectories and interests of the educational community, the successes and failures of experiences implemented in the region, and specialized reflections and research on practices and communicative competences and their pedagogy.

In this paper, I aim to review the topics referred to above and outline the conditions to design a writing course or program. Throughout the journey, I will discuss a number of key ideas that summarize my basic pedagogical and linguistic assumptions. Adopting—with some irony—a slogan from the marketing world, the main conclusion will be that initiatives for teaching academic writing must "think globally, but act locally". They must know the agreed upon expert knowledge of academic writing pedagogy and the administration of writing programs, as well as the successful experiences from other contexts and geographical areas. However, they must adopt solutions which are appropriate for the needs and possibilities of the specific institution in which they are writing.

Higher Education in Latin America: Opportunities and Challenges

Any discussion of the teaching of writing in Latin American higher education requires framing it in the appropriate social, historical, educational and curricular context. Nowadays, we can reflect on the design of a writing course or program only because certain conditions have arisen in the region that have given impetus, with slight differences in different countries, to a set of policies and willingness to support academic literacy instruction. Moreover, any proposal for teaching writing does not happen in a vacuum, only informed by certain theoretical assumptions or stakeholders' beliefs. Rather, it is intimately linked to the context in which it developed. This allows us to advance the main idea of this chapter:

> *Key Idea 1:* there are no general recipes or designs that can be applied to all contexts, but certain principles and experiences that must be adjusted to the predominant theoretical and pedagogical traditions, to the profiles of instructors and students, and to the institutional resources and to the curricular spaces available.

Therefore, the first question I will address is the situation of the higher education system in Latin America. I do not pretend to be exhaustive, and I

will not provide original data. My intention is to make visible contributions that, from the sociology of education, allow a better understanding of the institutional and educational context in which a proposal for teaching writing would be inserted, together with certain key concepts to justify its role.

In the recent decades, Latin America has experienced a transversal process of mass entry into higher education in addition to an expansion of the university system (Fernández Lamarra & Costa de Paula, 2011). This is not unconnected to a strong expansion of higher education systems worldwide (Ezcurra, 2011). Within Latin America, in little more than a decade (1994-2006), enrolment grew by 125.6%: it went from 7,544,000 to 17,017,000 students (UNESCO data cited by Fernández Lamarra and Costa de Paula, 2011, p. 14). In Argentina, the return to democracy in 1983 found the university education system with 48 universities and 416,000 students. By 2013, universities had grown by 110% (up to 101 institutions) and the number of students by 340% (up to 1,830,743 students, increasing to 1,975,007 when graduate students are included.) During that 30-year period, Argentinean institutions were evenly distributed between private and public, with a clearly predominant option for the public, free and unrestricted access system by students (78.5%) (Buchbinder, 2005; SPU, 2013). In 1984, Chile had a total of 189,151 undergraduate and graduate students; by 2016 that number had risen to 1,247,135 (MINEDUC, 2017). Thus, the Chilean higher education system expanded by 559% in just over three decades. These numbers include universities and community colleges. Furthermore, most of the students were enrolled in private institutions (60% in 2014) (SIES, 2014). In 1980, Peru had 255,000 higher education students, most of them in public institutions (around 79%). By 2013, the number of students had increased by 334% (to 1,107,424 students) and the distribution had reversed: 68.8% were enrolled in private institutions (Cuenca, 2015; INEI, 2016).

As described above, the configuration of the Latin American higher education systems differ from one country to another in several respects, such as the proportion and distribution of the type of institutions (universities, community colleges, etc.) and the distribution of students between public and private institutions, but also in other aspects such as the Gross Higher Education Enrolment Ratio (percentage of the population of young people that continue their studies at university), the percentage and inclusion strategies for traditionally excluded social groups, the selectivity of entry systems and the high or low disciplinary specificity of undergraduate degrees. These variables, among others, give each Latin American country its particular profile in higher education and determine its needs, possibilities and urgencies for setting up initiatives to teach academic, disciplinary and professional writing.

As this massive university intake far exceeds the total population growth of the countries involved, it has meant the enrolment in higher education of so-called "non-traditional students" or "first generation students in higher education". These students come from families and social groups that, due to their ethnic, geographical, educational or cultural background, have historically been excluded from the university. Many of the initiatives that support learning that have multiplied in recent years—including academic writing courses and tutoring sessions—respond to the need to scaffold the trajectory of these non-traditional students. Thus, for example, at Universidad de General Sarmiento (Argentina), a study of entry-level students concluded that they presented a profile "deficient in … certain study habits, attitudes and representations (for example, passivity, scarce autonomy, weak participation and low esteem of their own learning possibilities)" (Ezcurra, 2000, p. 4). These diagnoses helped to institutionally justify the creation of massive mandatory reading and writing courses at the beginning, in the first year, and during the advanced years of the undergraduate programs (Navarro, 2012).

The concept of cultural capital, developed by Pierre Bourdieu, can explain some of the difficulties and challenges faced by non-traditional students. Since cultural capital is defined in relation to a given field, higher education in this case, I believe it is more accurate to speak of *academic cultural capital*. According to Ezcurra (2011), cultural capital consists of critical academic habits (writing up an index card, using a dictionary, doing a document search, creating a table of contents, taking notes, preparing for an exam, using the library and computer tools, reading statistical tables and graphs, etc.), cognitive skills (analyzing, synthesizing, relating, judging and applying information, etc.), and metacognitive skills (self-monitoring one's own learning, study time management and awareness of assessment practices in higher education), in addition to information, concepts and conceptual frameworks. There are other factors that increase the likelihood of student dropouts, such as an intense out-of-school workload.

Traditional students, who come from family and school backgrounds with better academic cultural capital, are more familiar with many of these skills: they have and use a family library, they have studied in certain elite schools with certain teachers and peers, they have relatives who attended university and are involved in university-related practices, they belong to certain social groups and networks, they know what kind of educational options exist and how they are organized, and they have access to certain tools and experiences, etc. These differentiated opportunities and trajectories which extend beyond the school of origin and the family's income level—influence the possibilities of accessing and remaining in higher education, as they shape the type of cognitive,

psychological, educational, cultural and social obstacles that students will face when they enter (or attempt to enter) higher education. A key aspect, moreover, that differentiates students with more or less academic capital is the image and confidence they have of themselves and their chances of success at university, as well as the esteem they receive from their peers and instructors.

Unfortunately, it is not uncommon for non-traditional students to face stigmatization by themselves and the educational community. According to Ezcurra (2011), the weight of cultural capital influences the possibilities of success in the trajectories of non-traditional students. For example, 5.4% of students whose parents completed secondary education graduate, in contrast to 71.6% of students whose parents completed university education (ECLAC data for Latin America, 2007; Ezcurra, 2011). Thus, university graduation data show an inequitable distribution of opportunities for the inclusion of historically underprivileged social groups. Students from more affluent sectors and families with bigger cultural capital graduate. The massification of the Latin American higher education system offers no room for optimism since its counterpart incur high dropout rates, particularly in the first year of university and among students with lower socioeconomic status: in the words of Ezcurra, it is a process of "exclusionary inclusion" that produces "schooling inclusion and cultural exclusion" (p. 35).

Academic Semiotic Capital and Academic Literacy Instruction

Academic cultural capital, defined as a set of academic habits, skills and knowledge essential for higher education learning trajectories, is articulated with *academic semiotic capital*, understood as the set of communication skills and knowledge (oral, written and multimodal) specific to academic contexts, and linked to disciplinary enculturation (Prior & Bilbro, 2011) and professional acclimation. Some authors have tried to define what academic semiotic capital consists of, using different theoretical frameworks, methodologies and technical terms. For example, Thaiss and Myers Zawacki (2006, pp. 4-7), based on extensive research on the training of academic writers in a United States higher education institution, use the concept of "academic writing," restricting it to written production for educational purposes at university, and attribute three transversal features to it, regardless of the discipline concerned:

1. Clear written evidence that the writer has been persistent, unbiased and systematic in the study of the subject matter.
2. Dominance of reason over emotion or feelings.

3. An imagined reader who is purely rational, who reads seeking information and who can formulate reasoned objections.

As can be seen, these are rhetorical and epistemological features, with a focus on the practices of knowledge construction and connection with the interlocutor in the context of higher education, but not on the discourse and linguistic features that would materialize these practices.

In contrast, Snow and Uccelli (2009) integrate different theoretical perspectives from linguistic and pragmatic traditions to try to account for "academic language", beyond the educational level and mode (oral, written and multimodal). Adopting a pragmatic approach, they propose that the linguistic features of academic language are no more than conventional ways to respond to the communicative challenges specific to the school and academic context. Therefore, their proposal, shown in Figure 4.1, lists the communication purposes of academic language and its links to inclusion. These attempts to describe academic semiotic capital or academic language show the importance of linking the cultural, communicative and educational demands of the academic environment with the linguistic and discourse manifestations that convey them. These are communication practices situated in personal, situational and cultural contexts. Moreover, it becomes evident how writing—although it is the predominant mode and set of skills—is in permanent interaction with other modes and other communication skills. At this point, another key idea can be presented:

REPRESENTING THE SELF AND THE AUDIENCE

Acknowledging status of intangible non-interactive academic audience and its level of expertise

Displaying one's knowledge/ extending someone's knowledge

Emphasizing co-membership with an expert academic audience

Presenting a neutral, dispassionate stance on one's message

Selecting an authoritative voice

Explicitly acknowledging and clarifying when necessary the epistemological status of one's claims

REPRESENTING THE MESSAGE

Selecting one of the approved academic genres

Adjusting level of detail and amount of background information provided to level of expertise of the intended audience

Representing abstract, theoretical constructs, complicated inter-relationships, conditionals, hypotheticals, counterfactuals, and other challenging cognitive schemas

[Explicitly acknowledge sources of information/evidence]

ORGANIZING DISCOURSE

Using discourse markers to emphasize the integration of information, the causal, temporal, or inferential relations being emphasized

Expressing metatextual relationships precisely

Using reference terms that are approved within the discourse community, often technical

Figure 4.1 Nested Challenges Within a Communicative Event Calling for Academic Language (Snow & Uccelli, 2009, p. 123)

Key Idea 2: higher education trains disciplinary and professional readers, writers and speakers, three distinct but linked sets of situated competences that will shape the academic semiotic capital of university students.

Several issues arise from this statement. First, references here and in much of the current literature regarding writing and writing instruction do not imply that academic literacy instruction initiatives should focus exclusively on writing. Indeed, communication skills also include reading and speaking, with their specific disciplinary and professional features. It is not the same to read in Philosophy—that requires in-depth reading to deconstruct the layers of argument present in a short fragment of a classical author and to link it to previous readings of other scholars—than to read in History—a field that requires extensive reading from different sources, both primary and secondary, and that provides and contrasts exhaustive data, and frequently extensive footnotes. Thus, an expert reader of philosophy and an expert reader of history, two disciplines that are close because they are part of the humanities, read in markedly different ways. Consequently, reading and speaking are disciplinary and professionally situated competences, not general or transversal ones as frequently believed. They must be taught and learned in order to move through higher education and join the professional world. A course in academic, disciplinary or professional writing is necessarily also a course in academic, disciplinary or professional reading and speaking.

Second, reading, writing and speaking are not transversal, general or *soft* skills or competencies. Each of them is part of different competences linked to certain practices located, in this case, in the multidisciplinary spaces of university programs. Writing, for example, includes skills such as depersonalizing a text, creating a niche to justify the relevance of a research contribution, using technical language created through nominalizations, evaluating the contributions of other authors according to certain resources that generate effects of objectivity, providing certain types of evidence to validate hypotheses and reading positions, etc. This complexity of writing can be summarized in another key idea, complementary to the previous one:

Key Idea 3: academic writing simultaneously integrates different dimensions, such as regulatory, lexical, grammatical, semantic, discoursal, rhetorical, non-verbal, situational, social, historical, psychological, cognitive, identity, hegemonic and affective dimensions, among others.

Third, the predominance of writing over reading and speaking is due to the fact that written production represents a particularly complex rhetorical

and cognitive challenge for learners. Furthermore, academic genres written by students (Navarro, 2014; Nesi & Gardner, 2012) are instances of assessment and accreditation of learning, and therefore the difficulties in producing them are visible to the entire education community, including teachers, authorities and the students themselves. Finally, writing practices and instruction at all levels of education is rare, particularly when it comes to rhetorically complex activities, with intricate interlocutors and genres, and epistemically complex activities, linking different sources and experiences in order for students to achieve their own and novel knowledge. Therefore, the focus on writing involves emphasizing an aspect of academic semiotic capital that is not addressed enough in classrooms.

Cultural capital and semiotic capital involve competences that, in most subject programs and even more so in teaching practices, are part of the hidden curriculum (Schleppegrell, 2004), that is, they are not explicitly taught and learned. For example, it is extremely difficult for entry-level students to determine whether a source is scientifically reliable or not, whether it is academically relevant or not, how to survey and study it, and how to include it in a text and relate it to their own voice without committing unintentional plagiarism or reproducing it uncritically. Paradoxically, this is usually not taught, no feedback is provided nor is it practiced. This example shows how cultural capital and semiotic capital are closely related: students who are more familiar with the use of academic sources to argue and demonstrate their positions will write more appropriately regarding the expectations of their university professors. Another key idea can therefore be proposed:

> *Key Idea 4:* a writing course or program is not a set of teachings on language, grammar or writing as isolated competencies; it is a set of teaching objects linking linguistic and rhetorical factors with epistemological, cultural, methodological and institutional factors.

Academic reading and writing are often not integrated into the curriculum as teaching and learning objectives in course subjects, and instructors generally do not have the training, time or support needed to incorporate literacy instruction into their courses. Faced with the entry of non-traditional students into university and their difficulties to become familiar with academic and rhetorical practices and skills that are foreign to their previous educational and cultural backgrounds, it is common to hear accusations and complaints from instructors about the poor preparation of students, generally in contrast to an idyllic past in which students knew more and wrote better. One need only read a newspaper to come across catastrophic headlines, some

made by so-called experts. "It will take over a decade to reverse the educational crisis," says academic Pedro Barcia in a newspaper article headline from *La Nación* (Argentina). The article adds: "The academic warns about the poverty of children's speech" (Ventura, 2014). In another Argentinian newspaper, *Infobae*, the headline reads: "It is alarming how many university students do not understand what they read," and the article goes on to add that the academic José Luis Moure holds that "'it is unacceptable that the University, in this era of vertiginous progress of knowledge, should dedicate one minute of its time' to do what schools did not do in 12 years" (Infobae, 2012).

This is a reaction repeated precisely whenever the number of university entrants increased, as happened at Harvard University in the 1870s (Bazerman et al., 2016) or, with non-traditional students, at the City University of New York a hundred years later. Clearly, complaints about student writing, in contrast to the supposed ability of university students of the past, has been repeated for more than a century, at least in the United States (Russell, 2002). Therefore, the criticism of an alleged deterioration in the studying and writing skills of students, and their consequent blaming and stigmatization, is misguided. It hides an elitist and even reactionary position—and the pedagogical actions that should be carried out—of non-traditional students who face specific challenges to "enculturate" themselves in academic ways of communicating in a space historically reserved for a social and cultural elite. However, as Rose and Martin (2012) point out, if students are not taught to read and write independently, educational institutions will only reproduce the underlying social and cultural inequalities of their students.

The interesting thing about the perception of crises is that, behind the underlying conceptual errors, in many cases it not only led to institutional initiatives to teach writing, but also more importantly it frequently helped to make visible the fact that *all* students need to learn to read, write and speak the academic genres of their respective disciplinary fields. This is another key idea:

> *Key Idea 5:* all university students, not only supposedly disadvantaged students, need—and have needed in the past—to learn and exercise the forms of communication specific to their study programs in order to learn disciplinary content through reading and writing (epistemic potential) and also to learn the genres required in the fields they are entering as new members (rhetorical potential).

Given this perceived literacy crisis at the university level, in the last 20 years Latin America has experienced a remarkable expansion of initiatives of teaching and learning academic reading, writing and speaking in higher

education; that is, different types of institutional efforts to address the reading and writing challenges faced by students in university education (see *Reading and Writing Initiatives in Higher Education in Latin America*, ILEES, for more information). Many of these initiatives uncritically echoed the "writing crises narratives" and, in that sense, were not informed by some of the perspectives on the pedagogy of academic writing explored here. In many cases, they followed approaches that were either grammatical (teaching decontextualized linguistic features), generalist (teaching transversal features of writing) or remedial (teaching content and skills from previous school levels). But whether it is based on a nostalgic ideology of supposedly good university writing of the past or based on the belief that universities provide a different rhetorical and cultural space that requires new ways of learning communication, many Latin American institutions have launched several initiatives to improve the teaching of writing.

These initiatives vary in terms of levels, articulation and placement in study programs. They may be offered in pre-admission university courses, during the first years, or in advanced undergraduate, or graduate study years. Some institutions, such as Pontificia Universidad Católica de Chile (Ávila Reyes et al., 2013) and Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (Moyano, 2010), have implemented different types of courses covering a broad scope that are articulated to a greater or lesser extent throughout all stages of the university program. In terms of articulation, furthermore, they can be organized as specific transversal writing courses, as writing courses that are part of the program's curriculum or as disciplinary content courses that dedicate a specific amount of hours on writing, in a continuum that goes from more to less integrated into the classroom and to the epistemological frameworks and disciplinary content of each program. Finally, their inclusion in study programs shows mandatory, optional and other courses, with varying degrees regarding their mandatory nature, which are offered on a temporary basis.

At the same time, several institutional milestones can be mentioned as part of this development, such as the establishment in 1996 of the *UNESCO Chair for Improving the Quality and Equity of Education in Latin America based on Reading and Writing* (Navarro et al., 2016) or in 2016 of the *Latin American Association of Writing Studies in Higher Education and Professional Contexts*. A major incentive for these developments was the concept of "alfabetización académica" (Carlino, 2003), defined in a recent article by Paula Carlino as the "teaching process that may (or may not) be set in motion to facilitate student access to the different written cultures of the disciplines" (2013, p. 370). As an expanded translation of the English concept "academic literacy instruction," this designation which originated in Latin America made it possible

to give a name to the different initiatives for teaching disciplinary writing in higher education and thus promote its visibility, support, institutionalization, training and research. Furthermore, the use of the concept of "alfabetización" (literacy instruction) to refer to a training process in higher education implies prioritizing the need to continue teaching to read and write after primary and secondary education. In recent years, there has been significant production of scientific knowledge on the subject (Parodi, 2010) that does not emulate or reproduce supposedly successful experiences from other regions; instead the efforts aim to account for local and regional problems on the basis of Latin American traditions and a particular way of critically and eclectically linking itself to international traditions (Navarro et al., 2016). It would be a mistake to consider theoretical developments and experiences in other latitudes as successful models to be copied uncritically, not only because we know that they are not so successful or exemplary, but above all because they have been designed in educational systems, institutions, study programs, instructors and students that are not identical to ours. On the contrary, the interest of knowing and studying these models is to identify their peculiarities, to compare them with our own, to draw upon the successful experiences and contributions and to leave aside those that are not so successful. This is another key idea that is linked to the key idea #1:

> *Key Idea 6:* The initiatives and studies related to academic writing in Latin America have a history and a profile of their own that attempts to address the specific needs and conditions of the region.

Examples include the importance of public education for social inclusion, the interest in the critical education of students, the existence of a discipline-specific curriculum from the first university years, the influence of linguistics and discourse studies, and a historical interest in reading.

The Specific Nature of Teaching Writing at University

The design of a university writing *course* is different from a writing *program* in the region, that is, an articulated set of regular courses—with a common leadership and with consistent theoretical-methodological and evaluation objectives and criteria—taught throughout different years and different initiatives such as writing tutoring, training of writing teachers, interventions and collaborations in content courses, advice to academic units, action and research projects, workshops for writing articles, theses and grant applications, symposia and workshops for dissemination and discussion with the educational

community, etc. However, in one case or another, or even in the different intermediate or poorly articulated instances that may arise in any university, the design, delivery and institutionalization of an action intended to teach academic writing is a specific activity. This can be expressed as a key idea:

> *Key Idea 7:* Setting up a course in academic writing requires specific knowledge of administration, pedagogy and linguistics.

As in the design of a course in *Power Electronics* or *Philosophy of Science*, there are traditions, experiences, ways of teaching, teaching and learning objectives, sources and handbooks, budgets and basic contents, and professionals with expertise in the field. It seems obvious, but it is not: to be able to justify what to teach and how to teach in a writing course requires knowledge as specific and sophisticated as knowing what to teach and how to teach in *Power Electronics* or in *Philosophy of Science*. Some of the questions about language are as follows:

- Which language theory is employed? A language by levels that are integrated or decomposed into others or a language by layers that are realized in each other? An end-oriented language, with systematic options for different types of meaning, or a formal language that is constructed by sentences?
- Which teaching objectives are prioritized? The expert genres that students are likely to write upon graduation, such as protocols and research papers, or the school genres that students are expected to write during their undergraduate program, such as in-person exams and reading reports?
- Should a program be built around issues such as mechanics, punctuation, syntax, cohesion, genres, or rather questions linked to the activity systems and disciplinary cultures in which the texts are framed, such as the importance of validating empirical observations from the observer in an ethnography or of erasing subjectivity in biology's lab reports?

Nonetheless, various options regarding specific teaching and learning theories and strategies must be explicitly stated and addressed:

- Should you start with superficial textual aspects such as paragraph construction and the use of organizers, or follow a top-down approach that starts with objectives, genres and the communication situation and, from there, explain the rest of the writing options?
- Should you follow a workshop methodology in which model texts are deconstructed with an instructor's guidance or a more lecture-type class providing lists of resources and options and templates with the typical structures of the texts to be written?

- Should students be taught how to produce the academic genres of hegemonic scientific discourse or make room for students to express their identities of origin, their diverse cultural capitals, through more vernacular forms of communication?

Moreover, specific teaching materials are needed for instruction. Academic communication—although not learned by pure immersion and practice—requires many hours of practice and the question of what teaching materials to use in the classroom is perhaps more relevant than in courses of a different nature:

- Will writing handbooks be prepared for this initiative by the instructor of record, or will it be a collection of previous handbooks and different activity sources?
- What kind of texts will be read: texts selected by instructors or administrators for the course purposes, or by looking through texts that students actually read throughout their program or after graduation?
- Will the teaching materials emerge from research and practices of the expectations of disciplinary communities, or will they attempt to add to those practices and expectations certain knowledge about academic writing from a long tradition of applied and educational linguistics?

Last but not least, there is also the decision on institutional strategies for setting up a course or program:

- Should the prior experience and practices of university instructors be employed—many of them misguided or theoretically misinformed but enriching—or should a novel methodology and curriculum be proposed to modify certain entrenched habits that will generate resistance and a sense of menace?
- Shall an external expert be hired, with expertise in the subject matter but little institutional knowledge and networks, or shall an "in-house" teacher be selected and empowered?
- Shall a mandatory course or program be adopted, ensuring that all students and instructors will participate, or shall an optional course or program be chosen that offers a more gradual and negotiated establishment?

These are not simple questions, nor do they have absolute or identical answers in all contexts, but their answer is the core of the knowledge that a higher education writing educator must have. Whether explicitly formulated or left unsaid, agents in a writing course or program will always have to deal

with them. In other words, it is possible that the new initiative may attempt to answer these questions, generally from the specific knowledge of pedagogy and writing studies in higher education, or it may fail to answer them and continue to work following implicit theories, often based on common sense or on the knowledge of other disciplinary areas. Implicit theories consist of "certain basic principles or assumptions which, because of their implicit nature, often organize and underlie our actions or decisions about learning and teaching" (Pozo et al., 2006, pp. 95-96; own translation). To omit such questions is to let a course design respond to potentially uninformed and outdated implicit theories. This is undoubtedly an extremely dangerous option, because it can lead to courses that confirm the perceptions of crisis and consolidate the inequitable distribution of academic cultural capital and semiotic capital mentioned at the beginning. For example, by creating remedial courses focused exclusively on low-level skills—such as spelling—which are not only inefficient, but also stigmatize students required to take them. In short, the design of a writing course or program, or curricular innovation with respect to existing initiatives, requires a specific pedagogy of academic writing, including what to teach and how to teach it, and how to assess and accredit what has been learned.

In addition to specific knowledge about pedagogy and the selection and preparation of teaching material, writing courses and programs need a specific administration: in other latitudes, this has been called *writing program administration* since the 1970s (McLeod, 2007), a complex and demanding area that crosses across fields of professional practice and different types of knowledge:

- Linguistic and pedagogical knowledge (see questions above).
- Knowledge of training, selection, and development of teaching faculty.
- Knowledge of curricula, innovation and institutionalization of initiatives.
- Political knowledge, on building alliances and developing support between academic units.
- Knowledge of economic issues and of budget procurement, administration, and salary negotiation issues.
- Knowledge of accountability, assessment and research on the impact of interventions.

It is not an easy job, even though administrators of large courses or writing programs often continue with their other teaching and research duties, as institutions still fail to recognize the huge demands on their time and skills that the position requires. Moreover, since teaching writing as part of the

curriculum is a novel and specific activity, it often puts at risk other disciplinary areas with a longer tradition, and administrators must be proactive in ensuring that initiatives are created, expanded and institutionalized. Thus, the administration of writing courses and programs is an activity that complicates narrower decisions about what to teach and how, and it raises fundamental administrative and budgetary issues that may determine other pedagogical decisions that are more inherent to the classroom. Thus, writing administrators must work with the instructors available, specifically:

- With their implicit or explicit theories, sometimes with little information on current developments in the pedagogy of writing.
- With their training trajectories, very rarely linked to the teaching of academic writing and, more frequently, to other disciplinary fields.
- With their professional aspirations and needs, often far removed from a career as writing professionals.
- With the teaching positions available, often in low-level, precarious and poorly paid circumstances.
- With the classroom experiences and the use of previous teaching materials, an area where the most interesting, mobilizing and formative experiences and discoveries generally take place in order to build quality courses.

In short, as proposed at the beginning of this text, we can conclude that writing courses are designed according to the resources, people, habits and opportunities available to each institution. The possibilities and limitations of any discussion on the ways of teaching writing are built on the resources and capacities available. To conclude this section, I propose a key idea that addresses the previous dimensions:

> *Key Idea 8:* initiatives to teach writing at the university must aim to create a real writing campus.

This means that, ultimately, we must explore all the pedagogical options proposed throughout this chapter. Teaching and learning writing during the *shock* of university entry, in the lethargic transitional stages, at the difficult moment of graduation, when dealing with graduate dissertations. Teaching and learning writing in the writing classroom, in the articulated classroom between teachers of writing and of the disciplines, in the writing center, in regular content courses, in *ad hoc* courses for specific purposes. Teaching and learning writing to remedy heterogeneous prior learning trajectories, to prepare for the general demands of academia, to develop the academic genres that students must write for other courses, to prepare for the expert genres of

professional contexts. Teaching writing to peers, tutoring incoming students, training teachers about pedagogical tools, thematizing and disseminating the need to teach writing. Teaching hegemonic genres in academia, teaching how to denaturalize and criticize their features and circulation, validating the emergence of other genres and discourses where part of the students' identity is manifested. In other words, writing courses should tend to be institutionalized in a true *writing campus* through initiatives fostering learning opportunities and enculturation in disciplinary writing. These initiatives might need to be consistent among each other to a certain extent and may belong to different institutional units. This is an approach to teaching writing across the curriculum, across university levels of student classification at the university level, and across university roles (students, faculty, staff).

Designing Writing Courses: A Proposal

I will now present a case, implemented at Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (Argentina), to illustrate how the previous reflections can be translated into institutional elements or practices such as the profile of the faculty or pedagogical aspects such as the type of activities to be used in the classroom. Universidad Nacional de Quilmes is a public higher education institution located in the southern area of the suburbs of Buenos Aires. It was established in 1989 and it is divided into three departments (social sciences; science and technology; and economics and administration) and a university-based school. The university offers undergraduate and graduate degrees. Its faculty has been recognized locally and regionally for their research and it is a pioneer in Latin America for offering online education, a program that began in 1999. In 2013, the university had 1,015 faculty members and 22,451 students, 5,654 of which were incoming students (SPU, 2013). Since its origins and until 2016, the university has offered different course modalities of mandatory preparatory courses that were large, pre-admission, and transversal to all departments and programs and had no administrative or pedagogical dependence on the degree programs the students sought to enter. Some of these courses taught academic reading and writing.

This model of a general, very large first-year "reading and writing" course has been very popular in Argentina since the 1990s. Its strengths and advantages are manifold. Instructors tend to have informed, up-to-date and explicit theories and tools for reflection on language, because most of them have bachelor's and master's degrees in letters. The courses institutionalize the teaching of writing, thereby prioritizing and ensuring that the teaching of writing is part of the curriculum at the entry level and ensuring its continuity. The courses are intended to level out differences and inequalities in prior

learning, in particular by including non-traditional students, and preparing them in academic reading and writing skills for transferring to the new contexts students will face. The courses develop metalinguistic and metacognitive awareness in students as they read and reflect on language and writing. More importantly, they have enabled writing pedagogy initiatives to grow massively in scale, reaching tens of thousands of students in recent years, and in doing so building up a considerable mass of writing instructors.

However, the system also has many weaknesses. The fact that they are poorly linked to the practices, discourses, exigencies and needs of future programs, and that students are not yet full and entitled members of those programs, makes learning of little significance. "When are we going to start learning macroeconomics?" is a common complaint from students who, for example, enrolled in a program in Foreign Trade. Enculturation of students is limited, restricted to familiarization with aspects of academic life in general, as administrators, professors and texts are external to their programs.

Similarly, the directors of undergraduate programs have little influence on the curriculum design of the writing courses, a fact that can lead to neglect and political conflict between the different departments. Moreover, working and pedagogic conditions are often precarious: massive classrooms; young, novice, unqualified teachers, sometimes with little training in teaching writing; students who are not yet part of the undergraduate programs, who do not vote for their university representatives yet, who ignore habits and customs and the institutional organization, and who have few networks with other students. A more serious issue is that these courses frequently act as "filters" in practice since they operate as a kind of internal selection system whereby many students who fail or drop out are the ones with the least cultural and semiotic capital. Moreover, the courses may give the impression of "solving the problem" of writing at an institutional level, give the impression that no other initiatives need to be implemented at other stages with other objectives, and that there is no need to articulate them with content courses and update their curricular design and pedagogic materials. This contrast of strengths and weaknesses serves as a key idea, complementary to the previous one:

> *Key Idea 9:* First year writing courses have an important impact on the initial literacy instruction of entry-level students, but these courses should be continued, broadened and deepened in other courses and initiatives across the curriculum and across levels of training.

In 2015, Universidad Nacional de Quilmes' Students Affair Office, led by Dr. Sara Pérez, split up the traditional large pre-entry general writing course

into departments. The general course, which had consisted of two four-month courses for most students, was divided into courses for each of the three University Departments. Thus, the teachers, the incoming students and the curriculum linked to the teaching of writing became administratively dependent on the different departments. This change in the organization of the university curriculum had multiple consequences—in most cases preserving the strengths and addressing the weaknesses mentioned above. The design of the new courses included the instructors who until then belonged to the general writing course with instructors from the different disciplines in multidisciplinary teams. This new arrangement required offering ongoing training and development opportunities for all faculty. The administrators of the courses and contents, competences and readings included were defined by the departments themselves. Students started to enter the programs directly, taking writing alongside other courses of their interest, and dependent on the administration of their degree's department, which increased the commitment and interest of everyone involved in the educational community due to the impact of these initiatives.

In this context, the preparation of teaching materials, authored by some of the writing instructors in their new role and institutional affiliation, became a strategic process to train the faculty and to guide and articulate their pedagogical actions in the university's multiple writing classrooms. With a detailed and extensive writing handbook that includes models and activities on what to teach and how to teach it, the faculty could become involved in curricular innovation while having the option to choose the paths, exercises and emphases. Preparing teaching materials included a preliminary stage of research into the practices, demands, needs and diagnoses of the first-year courses of the different programs: what students read and studied, the difficulties they faced, and what aspects they had to learn. Furthermore, learning materials drew on the previous experiences and interests of the faculty who prepared the chapters, although the teaching objects were defined on the basis of the course curricula. Lastly, the learning materials were tested in the first year of implementation of the curriculum innovation (2016) and then revised for publication the following year.

As an external advisor, my role in this process was to define the contents and competences of the course syllabus, in collaboration with the department directors, administrators of the introductory courses and the writing course administrators; to train the writing instructors and the instructors of the disciplines who took on the responsibility of teaching the innovated courses; and, above all, to lead the preparation of some of the handbooks that would include these theoretical perspectives, pedagogical objectives and feasibility conditions of the courses. An illustrative example of the content of one such

course is provided: *Academic Reading and Writing*. This mandatory course is offered in the first semester of the programs at the Department of Economics and Administration, with a class load of seventy-two hours, distributed in two classes per week lasting two hours each. It is intended to have entry-level students broaden and develop general scientific and academic oral and written communication skills as a first step in university enculturation.

Therefore, the course focuses on teaching the reading, writing and speaking skills common at the university level and thus students read scientific texts written for the public and write basic academic texts. A thematic axis relevant to the department articulates the topics within the reading corpus: business, sustainability and social responsibility. To support the transition from high school writing and other forms of vernacular writing, reading is positioned midway between scientific discourse and other social discourses with which students may be more familiar, while writing includes common university genres (in-class exams, reading reports, encyclopedia definitions). Simultaneously, students are taught applied grammar content and the meta-skills of monitoring and reflecting on reading and writing. The latter is reinforced by reading texts on reading and writing (history, learning, strategic and cultural framing).

The course is divided into seven units that organize articulated and gradual training in academic rhetorical skills needed to prepare a complex and group writing: the *reading report*. This student genre seeks to have students select, contextualize, present and contrast different sources on the same topic drawn from academic or scientific texts written for the general public, an essential activity for any university student. Instructors assess the research and selection of a topic and relevant sources; the construction of a neutral, academic and informed authorial voice; the inclusion, reformulation and evaluation of quotations that proof the reading hypotheses; and the ability to negotiate collaborative writing with peers in a complete, articulate, cohesive and coherent piece of work. The work involves several submissions of general planning and specific sections drafts.

Unit 1: Reading and writing at university reflects on the specifics of reading and writing at university and of academic genres, and discusses the experiences and difficulties of both novice and experienced writers. In the following example, students describe their trajectories as writers, link them to the difficulties and needs faced by other students, and write an autobiography as writers.

> Write an autobiography as a reader and writer, reconstructing
> how the ways of reading and writing have changed over time.
> In addition to considering experiences in formal education,

do not forget that people read and write for many different purposes in different areas (on Facebook, for example)....

Read the testimonies of students at the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters of Universidad de Buenos Aires when asked about their training in reading and writing practices in their courses.

Discuss the following questions in small groups and then among the entire class:

1. What are the common features of the testimonies?
2. Do you identify yourself with any of them? Which ones? Why?
3. How could the situation they point out be reversed? (Romagnoli, in Navarro & Aparicio, 2018, pp. 52-3).

Unit 2: Planning a reading report explores ways to read and the basic features of reading reports as a genre and how to plan them. In addition, literacy and academic practices at university are investigated. The following excerpt shows a research activity outside the classroom in which students must investigate the literate and institutional culture of their university, department and program.

To begin this institutional journey, choose one of the following activities to discuss at future meetings. Compile all the information in a folder to be shared in the next class.

1. Consult the syllabus of a first-year course in your program, go to the Main Library (its physical or online space), select two or three mandatory readings, locate them and leave a record of their location for future reference.
2. Consult the university's publishing house; talk to and/or interview the people in charge and record at least two titles that relate to your program to determine their importance in your discipline. Record the details of the titles.
3. Consult the calendar of events and schedule events if the institution offers conferences, book presentations, interviews or other cultural events of your interest; record the details to attend the event and justify your choice.
4. Access your program's course requirements and plan a future pathway all the way until the degree conferral; you

may wish to interview your academic advisor or program director and record what you discuss.

5. Make a sketch of the common areas of the institution and the department to which your program belongs to (conference room, offices, laboratories, etc.); also include the current Student Resource Building and the services it offers. Explain the function of each place.

6. Inform yourself about meetings or research conferences to be held both at your own university and other universities and, if you have access to them, specify the call and/or rules for participating in these events.

7. Talk to and/or interview the Department of Extension and make a (synthetic) survey of the courses the university offers to the general public. Write a brief description of the courses and select two of your interest. Justify your choice in writing. This activity can also be done online. (Galván, in Navarro & Aparicio, 2018, p. 67).

In *Unit 3: Research your sources*, students learn the specific nature of scientific authorship, the criteria for finding and selecting appropriate academic sources and writing an introduction for a reading report, as shown below.

1. In groups, take one of the texts and classify the sources referred to according to the type of source. For classifying purposes, consider authorship (academic, public or private organization), subject (theoretical or current affairs) and genre (articles, chapters, books, web pages).

2. Specify where each source can be found when creating the reading report. (Moragas, in Navarro & Aparicio, 2018, p. 102).

In *Unit 4: Comparing and explaining sources*, students exercise strategies for connecting, contrasting and evaluating sources. The features that distinguish sources are identified and strategies and resources for citing are learned. The following excerpt is an activity of reading, contrasting and answering questions about three texts on forms of citation, thus encouraging the development of readers and writers through metalinguistic reflection on the processes of academic intertextuality.

Reyes, García Negroni and Marcial carried out works reflecting on the importance of citation in academic texts. Read the

following excerpts and complete the activity. Estimated time: 45 minutes.

1. In Marcial's text, mark the excerpts in which the author refers to other texts and those in which he does not.

2. According to the excerpt from Marcial's article, how does argumentation appear in academic texts?

3. Explain the following sentence in your own words: "The citation system is assumed to be a scrutiny of the scientific process aimed at improving the quality of research."

4. What role does the figure of the author play in Negroni's text? What is the relationship between the author of the text and the authors cited?

5. How can the following sentence be interpreted: "there will be a citation whenever the listener recognizes the speaker's intention to evoke someone else's utterance or thought"?

6. Considering the end of Reyes' excerpt, how does the sense of responsibility operate when writing an academic text?

7. Compare the forms of citation that appear in the three texts, what similarities and differences appear? (Eiras, in Navarro & Aparicio, 2018, pp. 157-9).

In *Unit 5: Building assertions*, students create definitions in the genre encyclopedia entry, and exercise reformulation and revision to improve consistency, punctuation and subordination, and the use of discourse organizers. In this exercise, that is part of a broader series of activities, students read definitions and encyclopedia entries on economic topics and write their own definitions and examples of the genre:

> Read the summary of "Chapter XV. Functions of money" from the book *Economics: principles and applications* by Francisco Mochón and Victor Becker. Then write an entry for the term "money" for inclusion in a specialized encyclopedic dictionary. To write the entry, please refer to the instructions below. Finally, share in class and make revisions. (Pisano, in Navarro & Aparicio, 2018, p. 186)

In *Unit 6: Building an authorial voice*, students learn to personalize and depersonalize discourse for the construction of scientific authority, mitigate and

emphasize to negotiate with the knowledge and expectations of readers, and produce a conclusion for a reading report. In the following exercises, students rewrite a text using depersonalization and analyze the impact of this change with regard to certain situations and disciplinary genres:

> The following text is an abstract of a conference proceeding not yet approved by the conference's organizing committee to which it was submitted. The organizers requested that the wording be depersonalized.
>
> 1. Identify and underline the personalized forms (verbs and pronouns).
> 2. Rewrite, using depersonalization strategies.
> 3. In groups, review the changes made to the text.
> 4. Compare both versions: what effect is achieved by depersonalization?
>
> Estimated time of the activity: 40 min. (Obregón, in Navarro & Aparicio, 2018, p. 231).

Finally, in *Unit 7: Oral presentation of a reading report*, students prepare a presentation script, roles are distributed strategically, and non-verbal resources for communication effectiveness are practiced. In the following activities, students must develop a script of topics to be presented orally, taking into account different presentation situations:

> 1. Review the completed report and make a list of all the issues covered.
> 2. Create a list of topics that can be included and the order and manner in which they should be presented, based on the three situations defined below:
>   - The potential audience has general knowledge of the chosen topic, but lacks up-to-date data. Students are allowed 10 minutes for the presentation.
>   - The potential audience has no prior knowledge of the topic. Students are allowed 10 minutes for the presentation.
>   - Presentation time is cut in half. Students now have only five minutes available. They must select one of the above points and perform the appointed task. (Russell, in Navarro & Aparicio, 2018, p. 264)

Some Conclusions for Further Reflection

In these pages, I have proposed a set of key ideas that can help to design courses for teaching academic writing. Through updated data, I have shown that Latin America is going through an explosion of student enrolment in higher education, but not one of democratization in terms of entry and graduation. Academic writing initiatives and studies in the region have their own history and profile, determined largely by the needs and conditions they face. There are, in fact, no general recipes or designs that can be applied to any context, but certain principles and experiences that must be adjusted to the predominant theoretical and pedagogical traditions, to the profiles of faculty and students, to the institutional resources and to the curricular spaces available.

Higher education has among its stated aims to develop readers, writers and disciplinary and professional speakers, three distinct but linked sets of situated competences that will constitute part of the academic semiotic capital of university students. All students, not only those who are supposedly disadvantaged, need—and have needed in the past—to practice the forms of communication specific to their programs to learn disciplinary content through reading and writing and also to learn to read and write (epistemic potential) so as to learn the kinds of texts specific to the fields they are entering as new members (rhetorical potential). Specifically, academic writing simultaneously combines normative, lexical, grammatical, semantic, discursive, rhetorical, non-verbal, situational, social, historical, psychological, cognitive, identity, hegemonic and affective dimensions, among others. Thus, a writing course or program is not a set of teachings on language, grammar or writing as isolated competences, but a set of teaching objectives linking linguistic and rhetorical factors with epistemological, cultural, methodological and institutional factors. For these reasons, setting up a course in academic writing requires specific knowledge of administration, pedagogy and linguistics.

First year writing courses have an important impact on the initial literacy instruction of incoming students, but these courses should be continued, broadened and deepened in other courses and initiatives across the curriculum and across levels of training. For this reason, initiatives to teach writing at university should aim to create a real writing campus. The case presented here, a writing course for students entering economics and administration programs at Universidad Nacional de Quilmes (Argentina), can illustrate some strategies to ensure that the teaching of academic writing, without losing its massive nature and taking advantage of existing resources, experiences and faculty, can be, to a large extent, situated, relevant, meaningful, complex, critical, consensual, creative and diverse.

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Reflection

This chapter grew out of a conference at Pontificia Universidad Católica de Perú (PUCP), an institution of significant influence in Peru that at that time was tasked with rethinking undergraduate curriculum design and organized an event aimed at authorities from universities across the country. In my case, I was tasked with addressing the development of teaching writing, while other colleagues addressed topics such as teaching reading or competency-based curriculum organization.

Within that particular context, writing this text allowed me to systematize a set of principles for addressing the teaching of academic reading, writing, and speaking in higher education, which I was contemplating at that time. This topic has developed rapidly in Latin America under the untranslatable term "alfabetización académica," a concept that combines notions of literacy, academia, instruction, but also establishes an intertextual and epistemological relationship with initial literacy instruction in school contexts. My chapter attempts to position itself within an important debate at that time: the implementation of large first-year writing courses led by language experts vs. the implementation of writing initiatives throughout the university curriculum led by literacy experts.

I believe that the contribution of the chapter, which remains relevant today, is that these two approaches do not constitute a dichotomy but rather two possible, complementary actions, with their own strengths and weaknesses, within a vision towards the development of a "writing campus" that takes advantage of all financial, institutional, and academic opportunities available to teach reading, writing, and speaking. Today, I can see that reconciling and articulating these positions is possible because we now share a history of at least a quarter of a century of researching and teaching academic literacy in higher education in Latin America.

Another contribution of the chapter is, it seems to me, that it draws from different theoretical traditions and educational contexts. First, the North American tradition of writing program administration. Second, the curricular and social configuration of higher education in Latin America, with its features of both inequality and state-funded or semi-funded high-quality and

prestigious educational offerings. Third, the field of writing studies in Latin America, with different trends and traditions depending on the country. This mix results in both a panorama and a roadmap for thinking about writing instruction that does not closely resemble what happens in the United States, Europe, or other regions.

Finally, it is inevitable to wonder what I would write differently today. I am happy to discover early signs of aspects that interest me today, such as a perspective centered on students' experiences and their right to education. This critical literacy perspective explores how to articulate the knowledge, practices, and reference worlds—rhetorical and epistemological—of students with the academic and hegemonic discourses and practices imposed on them in university contexts, sometimes in a violent and discriminatory manner. It would have served me well to think and claim, as I do today, that teaching should simultaneously give students critical access to the hegemonic discourses of the university while recognizing and accommodating their experiences of validation, resistance, and identity adjustment.

– Federico Navarro

5 The Construction of Didactic Models of Genres: Contributions and Questions for Genre Teaching

Anna Rachel Machado and Vera Lúcia Lopes Cristovão

The main objective of the article is to present an overview of Brazilian research studies aimed at building "didactic models of genres," their respective didactic sequences, and didactic intervention projects developed from this perspective. We will limit ourselves to the perspective of socio-discursive interactionism (SDI), focusing especially on the works carried out by former students supervised by Dr. Machado and later developed autonomously by different researchers. In this paper we will present the validity of using these theoretical and methodological concepts of the SDI, the genres analyzed, the different objectives established, and the theoretical, methodological, and pedagogical conclusions these works managed to arrive at, as well as the questions they left unanswered.

> The SDI is conceived as a constantly evolving frame of reference … a project that is collectively built
>
> – Bronckart, J.-P. (2004)

The main objective in this article is to map some of the Brazilian research and didactic works developed within the framework of socio-discursive interactionism (SDI), initially at LAEL (Applied Linguistics and Language Studies Program) at Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo—which had a pioneering role in introducing this approach in Brazil since the beginning of the 1990s. We will focus specifically on the works involving the construction of "didactic models of genres," their corresponding didactic sequences, and other forms of teaching interventions based on such models. According to Machado (2005), these studies started more strongly in that Graduate Program, around 1995 (therefore, before the publication of the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN), in 1998), with research developed

by Rojo, Magalhães, and Machado, even with differences in approach and aims. Since then, there has been an expansion to other research and pedagogical intervention groups, mainly after the PCN publication, which provided greater legitimacy and appreciation within our scientific community, either because of advocacy for or opposition to the principles that guide them.

However, in this article, we will limit ourselves to mapping research works initially developed and/or advised by Machado and, later, by different researchers who followed the same orientation in different centers throughout Brazil. In general, these studies typically investigated different genres in a wide variety of social contexts, with an interventionist characteristic in its broadest[1] sense, and especially, in the field of language teaching.[2] Another commonality is that they are based on contributions developed by Dolz and Schneuwly (1998) within the framework of didactics of languages and the direct intervention in Swiss education closely related to Bronckart's theoretical-methodological reflection (1999 and ss.) on human development issues and the role of language in that development.

To achieve our objective, this article presents the following structure: first, we provide the most general theoretical core of the SDI, which guided studies and didactic assumptions about the teaching of genres. Second, we discuss the problems that the didactic transposition of any object of scientific knowledge may bring us. Third, we focus on the need to develop didactic models of genre for the appropriate transposition of the concept of genre teaching, the foundations that guide this construction, and the steps we take to accomplish it. Next, we present the research studies and didactic interventions that have been developed using these principles in order to show their relevance and originality in relation to those developed by the Geneva Group. Finally, in the conclusion, we point out the contributions of this approach and the outstanding problems.

Socio-Discursive Interactionism and Language Teaching Focused on Text Genres

Socio-discursive *interactionism* is based on, integrates, and develops Vygotsky's

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1   We consider them to be "interventionist" in a broader sense, since they were not necessarily directed by a direct intervention in schools, but rather as preparatory work for possible interventions.

2   To conduct a more exhaustive survey, we would need to develop a much broader research project that could be carried out at another time.

psychological theory. It is based on five basic principles (Bronckart, 2005), which are summarized as follows:

a. Human sciences would have the conditions for the development and functioning of human behaviors as objects of study.
b. All the processes of human development would take effect based on human pre-constructions, that is, on different social constructions already existing in each society.
c. Human development would take effect within the framework of acting, that is, all knowledge built is always the product of an action that takes place in each social framework.
d. The processes of the construction of social facts and people's formation as individuals would be two complementary and inseparable aspects of the *same* human development.
e. Language would play a fundamental and indispensable role in human development, considering it is through language that a "memory" of social pre-constructs is built, and it is language that organizes, comments, and regulates human actions and interactions within which social and psychological facts are re-produced or re-elaborated.

In upholding these basic principles, Bronckart (2004) enumerates a series of research objects that should be considered and characterized by SDI studies, constituting a true research program for researchers who take this approach. These objects would be as follows:

a. The social pre-constructs, among which we would have social activities, social formations, natural languages, and genres of a given society.
b. The characteristics of educational and formation systems, whether institutionalized or not, which allow the transmission of social pre-constructs to new generations.
c. The mechanisms of appropriation and internalization through which individuals build their knowledge and identity.

Concerning text genres, Bronckart (2003) considers, like countless other authors, that when acting with language, every individual in a certain linguistic community is permanently confronted with a universe of pre-existing texts organized in "genres," which are always in a process of constant modification, and are theoretically unlimited in number. From the moment of birth, continuous exposure to genres builds an intuitive knowledge of the rules and specific properties of different genres in readers and producers, even if not consciously or systematically. These rules and properties end up being appropriated, and as in all social learning processes, they undergo continuous

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modifications, as Bakhtin (1992) points out when he defines genres as "relatively stable forms of utterances." Thus, it is only from a theoretical point of view that we can speak of "models of genre" because they are in permanent modification, derived not only from transformations of social activities but also from the transformations introduced by the producers themselves.

In working more intensively on the issues of Didactics of Language, Schneuwly (1994) mobilized the notion of genre for his research objectives, providing us with one of the most vigorous conceptions for the teaching and learning of genres and the production of suitable teaching materials. First, within the framework of Marxist epistemology, which is assumed by the Geneva group, the author reminds us that human activity is conceived as being constituted by three poles, involving a *subject* who acts on *objects or situations*, using specific socio-historically elaborated objects which constitute *tools* for acting. These tools would determine the individual's behavior, guiding, refining, and differentiating one's perception of the situation in which one finds oneself and the objects on which one acts. Secondly, the same author establishes an analogy between the use of material instruments in non-verbal activities with text genres, assuming these genres constitute true *complex semiotic tools* which mediate the language action, enabling text production and understanding.

As stated by the author, he started from the studies developed by Rabardel (1993) on "the instrumental genesis." Based on this last author's assumptions, Clot (1999) points out that society always provides a set of material or symbolic socio-historically constructed *artifacts* which constitute true *instruments* for their action if appropriated by the individual *for and to themselves*.[3] Therefore, we conclude that text genres are symbolic artifacts available for the subjects of a certain society, which can only be considered as true tools/ instruments for the subjects' action when they take ownership, on their own, of such tools/instruments, considering them useful for their action with language. So, in the teaching of genres, we can think that if learners do not feel they need a certain genre for their verbal action, there will be a much greater difficulty for its appropriation.

According to Schneuwly (1994), in the process of individuals' development, their participation in different social activities allows them to build knowledge about genres and the schemes for their use. However, if the most informal genres are appropriated during daily activities without the need for formal education, the most formal oral or written genres would then need to be learned more systematically, which is the school's responsibility. The school

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3   For example, in a factory, material instruments provided may be considered useless by the worker, who will not easily appropriate them.

would have the function of providing contact, study, and mastery of different genres used in society.

However, as Bronckart (2003) points out, the theoretically unlimited diversity of genres and the variability of their concrete manifestation in texts introduce a methodological problem—the specific definition of each of them, their classification, and the identification of their central features. For the author, we are always faced with a certain inevitable methodological circularity, since, to conceptualize genres, we must already have some knowledge about what they are. Nonetheless, it would be possible to carry out a study of these features from a set of texts intuitively classified in different genres, identifying their characteristics and building "models" that would characterize them. The comparison of different models could provide us with clues to find similarities and/or differences that we may not notice at first, which would lead us to reformulate the "genre models" or the "theoretical genres" initially constructed.

Following the same reasoning about genre teaching, it would be necessary to develop appropriate didactic materials that can provide the didactic transposition of scientific knowledge about genres to a level of knowledge that can be effectively taught, according to students' skills level. In other words, that would make it possible to carry out an appropriate *didactic transposition*, despite the problems it can bring. Such problems will be addressed in the next section, where we point out a possible way to overcome them.

Problems of Didactic Transposition and the Emergence of Didactic Sequences as a Way to Overcome Them

According to researchers from the French school of didactics whose reflections the Geneva group also uses and re-elaborates (Bronckart & Plazaolla Giger, 1998), the term *didactic transposition* should not be understood as the simple application of any scientific theory to teaching, but as the set of transformations that a certain set of knowledge necessarily undergoes when we aim at teaching it, always bringing different shifts, ruptures, and transformations to that knowledge.

At a first glance, we can consider that there are three basic levels within these transformations: first, we have the "scientific knowledge" itself which undergoes a first transformation process to constitute the "knowledge to be taught," which ultimately becomes "knowledge effectively taught," and which will inevitably constitute "knowledge effectively learned." In our opinion, research aimed at the study of didactic transposition could also detect other sub-levels interspersed with these three basic levels.

Applying these concepts to the didactic transposition of the notion of genre, we can say that, since the publication of the National Curriculum Parameters of Portuguese for fifth to eighth grade, we have come up against the first level of transposition. At this first level, in the passage from scientific knowledge to knowledge to be taught, a series of injunctions determines what can be considered an object to be taught among the countless objects of scientific knowledge. The choice of such objects is under social control, which is officially exercised by education authorities and, scientifically, by the specialists who work with government institutions, such as those who worked for the Ministry of Education in the elaboration of the National Curriculum Parameters.

Also, according to the didactic transposition theory, some problems may arise at this first level in relation to language teaching. The first one has to do with the selection of contents to be taught once this selection considers both scientific knowledge and social practices of language. The problem is that these social practices, like any other phenomenon, must have been the object of reading, understanding, and previous explanation. On the other hand, if the construction of knowledge about them has not yet been developed in the scientific field, the approach to teaching these social practices may be subjected to common sense and/or ideology. These were some of the problems faced in the consolidation of genre teaching in the Brazilian school, since the knowledge about this object, if not incipient, was not, nor is it, consensual in our scientific community.

Another problem that can arise from this first level of didactic transposition is the autonomization of certain objects of scientific knowledge, which are inevitably separated from the global theory and the scientific problem from which they emerged and gained their specific meaning. For this reason, when they are transposed to be teachable knowledge, it is quite common that other meanings are attributed to them. As a result, it is not surprising that different meanings were–and still are–attributed to the notion of text or genre at different levels of education.

In addition, certain concepts, which appear with the status of hypothesis or study proposal in the framework of basic science, can be assertively presented in official documents as absolute truths already established and consensually accepted in a given scientific field. This would be the classic phenomenon of reification or dogmatization of the notions selected to be taught. A classic example of this reification is the concept of a narrative scheme from structuralist studies for the analysis of Russian tales, which began to be used for any type of text that presented a report on the actions, which is not always, as we know, appropriate or relevant.

Another issue related to didactic transposition at the first level is the compartmentalization of the selected contents/notions, and the risk of reaching a global inconsistency in the official proposal. For example, as we know we currently do not have a single language theory capable of handling all issues of language or languages which can cover all their aspects. We do not have a stable and consensually recognized conceptual paradigm, but rather competing theoretical systems. This situation leads to a division of our scientific field into numerous subdisciplines that deal with objects which are restricted *a priori* (social, phonological, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic, textual, discursive aspects, and so on). In addition, as we know, the specialist committees assembled for the construction of general guidelines for teachers' work are made up of researchers with different theoretical and didactic positions, which inevitably leads to compromises between the parties.

From all these aspects, serious problems arise for the didactic transposition: for example, how to develop useful and adequate grammatical reflection activities for text production without separating the grammatical knowledge from the textual or discursive knowledge? In different educational reforms carried out in Brazil, at the first level of transposition, we have observed that those specialized in language teaching have been forced to use elements from different theories or different sub-areas, trying to build a modicum of coherence in the didactic field itself, which, unfortunately, cannot always be achieved.

It was precisely the observation of these problems and, mainly, the compartmentalization of knowledge in the language teaching field that led Francophone researchers to an attempt to overcome it with the development of the "didactic sequence" concept in 1996, assumed in the official instructions for language teaching in France. In such documents, the didactic sequence is defined as an approach that unifies discourse studies and the approach to texts, implying a logic of decompartmentalization of contents and skills: they should encompass writing, reading, and oral practices organized in the framework of didactic sequences (DS, hereinafter). Note that, in those instructions for French teaching, it was not yet about "didactic sequences of genres," but rather about sequences open to different objects of knowledge.

The DS is still considered a set of sequences of progressive activities, planned and guided by a theme, by a general objective, or by a final text production. The interest in this teaching procedure is usually justified for the following reasons:

- DS would allow global and integrated work.
- In its construction, it would be mandatory to consider both the teaching content set by the official instructions and the specific learning objectives.

- It would contemplate the need to work with varied activities and supports.
- It would allow to integrate reading and writing activities, as well as activities of language knowledge, according to a fixed schedule.
- It would facilitate building programs in continuity with each other.
- It would motivate students because it would clarify the different activity objectives as well as the general objective that guides such activities.

In Geneva, according to Bronckart (2006), the first didactic sequences were developed by the *Commission pédagogie du texte* in 1985 and 1988. However, it was only in the 1990s that they began to focus on teaching genres, especially with works aimed at teaching written genres; and, only later, they focused on formal oral genre teaching (Dolz; Schneuwly, 1998). These sequences would have the following characteristics:

- The schoolwork's goal would be the language activity related to a genre used in each communication situation.
- The work would be carried out within a class project, which circumscribes the elements that characterize the communication situation in focus.
- The starting point of the sequence would consist of, as far as possible, observing the students' skills and difficulties.
- The different components that would compose the language activity related to the genre being studied would be worked in isolation, through different activities, developing a metalanguage about such components and addressing the genre in its different aspects (structure, particular linguistic units, content elements, etc.).
- The different skills worked on in the activities would be reinvested in a more complex activity, that is, in the production of a final text belonging to the genre. New observations and analysis would be made, as well as the evaluation of the progress achieved, and the difficulties not yet overcome.

So, to fulfill this entire proposal of genre teaching, it soon became evident to researchers in Geneva that there was a need to develop teaching materials that would propose activities constituting the sequence. In Brazil, after the edition of the National Curriculum Parameters of Portuguese Language (Brasil, 1998), which already includes this type of study and activities, compliance with the Parameters also became a requirement for the approval of textbooks submitted to the evaluation of the National Textbook Program (PNLD). Therefore, in both cases, we are faced with a sub-level of transposing

scientific knowledge to knowledge to be taught, which is perhaps the most important level, because, in the Brazilian case, the document prescriptions and the teacher's real work are mediated by books and teaching materials. As a result, scientific and didactic works that aim to carry out this transposition become strongly relevant in such contexts.

Still in Geneva, the need for the previous construction of a "didactic model of genre" for the development of DS soon became evident. Consequently, this model could potentially guide the elaboration of DS activities, as we will show below.

The Necessary Construction of the Didactic Model of Genre

According to the researchers from the Geneva Group, to achieve the teaching-learning objectives of the genre the school practices of textual production must be guided by what they call the *didactic model* of the *genre* to be taught, that is, by "a descriptive and operational object built to understand the complex phenomenon of learning a genre" (De Pietro et al., 1996/1997, p. 108). This model of genre development would allow the visualization of the genre's constitutive dimensions and the selection of those that can be taught and the necessary ones for a given level of education.

As reported by the same authors, the construction of such "models" does not need to be theoretically perfect and "pure", if it has explicitly didactic objectives, and if the didactic transposition is a process with certain characteristics that cannot be avoided.[4] It opens up the possibility of using diverse theoretical references, from different studies on the genre to be taught, in addition to references obtained through the observation and analysis of social practices which involve the genre, together with specialists in its production.

In addition to considering all these references, the construction of the didactic model implies the analysis of a set of texts considered to belong to the genre, taking into account, at least, the following elements:

a. The characteristics of the production situation (who the sender is, what social role they are in, who they address, what role the receiver is in, where it is produced, in which social institution it is produced

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4   In this sense, we can say that educational models may have flaws or gaps when viewed from the perspective of any theory of text or discourse. However, in reality, researchers involved in their construction are not concerned with achieving an ideal scientific construction, as they have an immediate social concern, which is to provide support for teaching work and learning.

and circulates, when, on what support, with what objective, in what type of language, what is the non-verbal activity to which it relates, what social value is attributed to it, etc.).

b. The genre's typical contents.

c. The different ways of mobilizing these contents.

d. The genre's typical compositional construction, that is, the most common global plan which organizes its contents.

e. Its particular style, or in other words:
    - The specific configurations of language units that are constituted as traces of the enunciator's enunciative position (presence/absence of personal pronouns of first and second person, deictics, verbal tenses, modalizers, insertion of voices).
    - The textual sequences and the predominant and subordinate types of discourse that distinguish the genre.
    - The characteristics of nominal and verbal cohesion mechanisms.
    - The characteristics of the connection mechanisms.
    - The characteristics of the periods.
    - The lexical characteristics.

First, we would like to point out that these categories of analysis are outlined in the model of text production exposed by Bronckart (1999). Second, we emphasize that this analysis cannot be framed within the limits of structural textual analysis. All the textual levels we list must be seen in their dialogical value, as traces not only of the producer's acting, but also of the generic restrictions related to the activities and interactions within which this acting takes place. Third, we want to make it clear that our list of elements to be analyzed should not be exhaustive or rigid. We admit that when we find other elements that are fundamental for the characterization of a given genre during the analysis, they must necessarily be considered. Finally, we do not consider that we should stick only to what SDI's theory of language proposes via its main authors, but that compatible concepts from other theories can and should be incorporated into this analysis, just as we grant ourselves the right to create new concepts when necessary. In summary, what we mean is that we do not admit the concrete data to be "adjusted" to fit within the analysis model.

Summarizing this section, we affirm that it is necessary to know the state of the art of studies on a given genre for the construction of its didactic

model; the students' skills and difficulties when working with texts belonging to the selected genre; the teaching/learning experiences of that genre, and the prescriptions in the official documents concerning teachers' work (Dolz & Schneuwly, 1998). These points would help us define the type of didactic intervention to be developed and build a *model* where the genre teaching objectives are adapted to the students' level and the categories that will be explored in the DS are organized.

Thus, these sequences will be guided by a limited and precise number of objectives and will consist of a set of activities organized in a global project to appropriate some of the constitutive dimensions of a genre, according to the learners' level. Finally, the activities developed may require a return to the didactic model, so that it can be modified as necessary, which leads us to conclude that this model is never definitive, but rather it is in a continuous process of transformation.

Didactic Models of Genres in Research and Teaching Studies

As explained in the section above, the Geneva group developed the notion of "didactic model of genre" and the procedures for its construction, aiming to support first language teaching and students learning through activities aimed at developing the necessary skills to produce texts belonging to different genres. In the research and educational activities developed by our group, the use of this notion and the objectives that guided the development of didactic models of genre went well beyond the objective of developing the skills of text production in the first language, as we will see in the next two sections.

Research Developed by the Group

The first research developed within the SDI framework was Machado's doctoral thesis in 1995, published later in a book (Machado, 1998). The author did not work explicitly with the construction of a didactic model of genre, but instead evaluated a didactic experience carried out to develop the reading skills of university students. As a result, the notion of genre, and the survey of the characteristics of the "reading diary" genre based on the students' texts paved the way for other studies more directly based on the notion of didactic model. After this first publication, and especially with the release of the National Curriculum Parameters of Portuguese, the group research has multiplied in different directions which can be divided into three major types.

In the first type, we find all the studies that clearly show the need to build *didactic models of genres*, not only for teaching text production, but also for achieving other objectives, as listed below:

a. For the construction of DS for teaching text production in Portuguese (among others, Machado, Lousada, & Abreu-Tardelli, 2004a, 2004b) and DS for reading in English as a Foreign Language (Cristovão, 2005b; Cristovão et al., 2009); for the evaluation of DS for teaching textual production in Portuguese (Machado, 2001) and for teaching reading in English as a Foreign Language (Cristovão, 2002a; Freitas, 2003).
b. For the evaluation of didactic experiences and the development of language skills during the initial literacy development process (Souza, 2003).
c. For the analysis of the student's level of language skills in text production (Machado, 2003).
d. For initial and continuing teacher education (among others, Cristovão, 2002b, 2005a; Machado & Magalhães, 2002).

In the second type, we find research studies that sought to contribute, in different ways, to the subsequent production of the didactic model of a certain genre and of didactic sequences aimed mainly at the development of reading skills. For such purpose:

a. Coelho (2003), Cristovão (2002c), and Pompílio (2002), among others, developed a global description of different genres.
b. Muniz-Oliveira (2005), among others, analyzed a more typical aspect of a given genre.
c. Luca (2000) analyzed different types of texts used in schools in different disciplines.

Finally, in the third type of research developed within the SDI framework, the objective was to explain the theoretical framework that guides the construction of our didactic models and our position on this framework, as well as their use in language teaching, which can be seen, for example, in an article by Machado (2005).

More Specific Characteristics of the Research

In the studies conducted for the development of DS to teach text production and comprehension, the didactic models of genre served as the foundation for selecting teaching goals and developing language operations that could effectively contribute to the defined objectives.

On the other hand, the studies developed for the construction of a didactic model of a given genre for the evaluation of DS are divided into two large subgroups. In the first one, Machado (2001) presents this construction as necessary for the description and evaluation of didactic materials aimed at teaching text production in Portuguese, presenting, as an example, the evaluation of a DS for the teaching of the critical review. The author argues that the activities proposed by a given didactic material for the teaching of a genre can be analyzed and evaluated according to the language skills that these activities allow to develop: either practical skills, or discursive and/or linguistic-discursive ones. In this regard, the proposed activities are analyzed to determine which skills they promote in students and, consequently, which activities are feasible within the didactic model of the genre under discussion. According to the author, the appropriate material would be the one that, at least in part, would work with all skills in an integrated manner. Therefore, the use of the didactic model as an instrument for evaluating the materials would allow greater reflection and better orientation for the initial and continuing teacher education, since it would provide criteria for the selection, production, and adaptation of the didactic material according to the actual needs of the context in which they will be used. The originality of this work is apparent. Compared to the Geneva group, it expands the use of the didactic model for the field of didactic material assessment; compared to other research groups, it provides a new objective and coherent instrument for the evaluation.

Along the same lines of thinking and goals, Cristovão's doctoral research (Cristovão, 2002a) was unprecedented and innovative because, for the first time, it was possible to use the theoretical and didactic assumptions of SDI for English as a Foreign Language teaching-learning and specifically for teaching reading. This work sought to defend the use of didactic models of genres as a broader assessment instrument for didactic materials in general which aimed at teaching reading in English as a Foreign Language.

Other more specific objectives included: a) to present a conception of teaching reading under the general principles of the SDI; b) to demonstrate, according to this conception, that the didactic materials intended for teaching reading in English as a Foreign Language can be built around the notion of genre aiming at the development of language skills; c) to demonstrate that describing the characteristics of the genre to be taught to students allows for evaluating the relevance of the content and identifying the language skills that can be developed; d) to apply the principles of teaching reading under the SDI view as criteria to evaluate the proposal of pedagogical practice underlying the didactic materials.

This research brought practical, theoretical, and methodological contributions. Concerning the practical, Cristovão demonstrated the possibility of organizing English as a Foreign Language teaching based on text genres as instruments that constitute language actions. From a theoretical point of view, the author developed a decalogue for teaching reading in English as a Foreign Language, whose "commandments" can be successfully followed as general principles for activities in reading classes. Finally, as a methodological contribution, the author endorsed other research studies by the group which emphasized the validity of using didactic models of genres as an instrument for evaluation.

Just as in the research mentioned above, Freitas (2003) used didactic models as an instrument for the evaluation and production of didactic materials for teaching reading in Portuguese as a Foreign Language for war refugees in Brazil. Therefore, this study plays an important social role, given the need for these refugees' social integration, for whom the effective use of language is fundamental. The research aimed to analyze, but also to propose the reformulation of a didactic material based on genres—in this case, genres related to talking about oneself in a work situation (job interview and curriculum), which are necessary for these immigrants. The specific objectives were the following: a) to raise some of the central features of the job interview and curriculum genres; b) to characterize the language skills that can and should be developed to speak about oneself in foreign languages, using these genres; c) to carry out a more consistent evaluative analysis on the initial DS, based on this survey and characterization, and to suggest modifications for an effective work aimed at developing the ability to "speak about oneself" in public situations like these. At the end of the research, Freitas (2003) also concluded that the didactic model is fundamental for the elaboration and analysis of didactic materials based on genres.

The works developed for the analysis and evaluation of a didactic experience for initial literacy's best example is the research for a doctoral thesis by Lusinete Vasconcelos de Souza, which was extremely innovative. Bronckart's (1999) text analysis method was used to analyze texts produced by a group of children who were followed by the researcher for two years. The different situations of text production and the development of opinion text production in their argumentative and linguistic-discursive dimensions were examined during the didactic experience. Another great innovative finding was the demonstration that initial literacy can be developed in such a way that a teacher's work is not limited to text genres that are traditionally used in early childhood education, that is, the order of narration genres. The didactic experience carried out by Souza focused on argumentative genres using texts and

real situations in the children's daily lives, which led them to an exceptional development, not only of their language skills, but also of their critical skills in face of texts and facts. This thesis's value was soon recognized by researchers in the area, which led to its rapid publishing (Souza, 2003). Continuing in this same line of research, the author has developed different didactic experiences focused on initial school literacy, and reporting and evaluating new teaching-learning experiences of new text genres, continually confirming the validity of her approach.

As for research that focused on the analysis of the students' level of language skills in text production using a didactic model of genre, another example is the work of Machado (2003) who analyzes reviews produced by university students.

Regarding the use of the concept of didactic model of genre in the processes of initial and continuing teacher education, as an example, it is worth mentioning the study developed by Machado (2000) and by Cristovão (2002b, and 2005b). The first one consisted of the analysis of continuing education work, developed with university professors of Portuguese, in which the construction of the didactic models of the genres "opinion article" and "critical review" and their corresponding DS occupied the core of the teacher education activities. At first, the researcher and the teachers discussed the theoretical assumptions that guided this construction; then they were able to build the models and sequences together. In a second moment, Machado acted more as a reader and commentator on the materials produced by the teachers themselves, who adapted the initial sequences to different courses in which they taught classes.

In turn, focused on the initial education of English language teachers, Cristovão (2002b) developed an investigation focusing on the need to create instruments that help teachers to reflexively and critically expand, improve, and adapt their knowledge throughout their development. A fundamental step in this research was the discussion of the use of didactic models of genres as an instrument for initial teacher education programs. The results of the data analysis show that students (future teachers of English as a Foreign Language) have benefited from the study of the genre as an instrument for reflection, reinforcing the position that an approach based on the study of genre is suitable for initial teacher education. Whereas for teachers' continuing education, Cristovão (2005b) recounts her experience coordinating an extension project with the participation of English language teachers from the public school system and students from the Language course for producing didactic sequences based on text genres for basic education. In addition to researching to produce materials (study groups of theoretical and prescriptive

texts, objective setting, content selection, text selection, context analysis, the survey of the selected genre characteristics), the teachers involved developed activities of action research. Almost all of them presented communications at an event(s) and were involved in congresses, courses (extension and/or specialization), and Graduate Programs.

In the second group of research, firstly, we find those that focus on the global description of a given genre, as is the case of Machado (2002), Cristovão (2002c), Pompílio (2002), and Coelho (2003). The first study by Machado (2002) turned to the analysis of the "abstract" genre, distinguishing this genre from segments of texts in which a process of summarization also takes place, but which cannot be defined as an abstract itself. The author discusses and reinterprets the rules for reducing information and analyzes a corpora of abstracts published in different forms of media. Finally, the author concludes that, when abstracts are composed as autonomous texts, they can be considered as belonging to one genre but not when they are inserted in another genre (reviews, back covers, and reports, for example).

Cristovão (2002c) developed a description of the book back cover genre in English and points out some didactic suggestions for its teaching. In this article, the author draws attention to the claim that, once typical characteristics of texts belonging to a genre are taken as a teaching tool in a language classroom, we can provide more conditions and possibilities for students so that they can become conscious and critical citizens.

Conversely, Pompílio (2002) focused on the characterization of the reader's letters genre which allowed her to identify the production situation complexity of such letters and the resulting textual variability.

Finally, in her doctoral thesis, Coelho (2003) focused on the characterization of what we usually call legends and, more specifically, legends of the Amazon. From a theoretical and methodological perspective, the relevance of this work lies in the author's ability to demonstrate, through analyzing a set of texts considered legends, that the group's methodological procedures are effective tools for genre discrimination. This effectiveness is particularly evident when close relationships between textual and contextual characteristics are maintained. So, these procedures allowed the author to discriminate between two different genres: what can be called legends themselves and the indigenous stories on which they are based. From a didactic point of view, the author made a great contribution so that these genres can be teaching objects, especially for the development of reading skills, also contributing to the preservation of the regional original culture.

Considering studies that focused on describing a particular aspect of a genre, a typical example is Muniz-Oliveira (2005). She surveyed and classified

the different *reporting* verbs used in academic reviews written by linguists. This research had the significant merit of creating this classification in an original way, based on the language operations proposed by Dolz and Schneuwly (1998). The author's important conclusion for teaching how to write this and similar genres is that the difficulty in using the appropriate verbs to report the voice of the authors reviewed does not stem from the simple fact that they do not know how to use the voice insertion verbs. Instead, it stems from the students' difficulty to interpret the different operations developed by the author reviewed during the textual production process. Therefore, teaching the production of this genre necessarily implies a long work with reading, and, more specifically, with the identification of these operations.

Finally, concerning the third group of research, which focused on the analysis of different types of texts used regularly in other disciplines, the biggest example is that of Luca (2000), who had the following objectives in her master's dissertation: a) to analyze texts of genres used in the teaching of History (didactic, historiographic texts and period documents); b) to anticipate students' difficulties; c) to present reading procedures so that comprehension problems could be overcome. In her conclusions, the author emphasizes that the analysis of linguistic-discursive units must not be mechanical or dissociated from the analysis of the context of production. She also highlights the need to develop research and to build didactic models of specific genres for each teaching context.

Having reviewed the most relevant research on didactic models, let us explore below some of the didactic materials that were also produced based on the construction of didactic models of genres.

The Development of Teaching Materials with the Aid of the Concept of Didactic Model of Genre

Along with the studies carried out by the group, all these researchers have also developed a large number of teaching materials with support in the construction of teaching models of various genres. As a small example, we present some of those materials in Table 5.1.

In addition to those publications, researchers, teachers, and students involved in teacher education programs have developed an intense didactic activity in classrooms and in extension courses, taking the same theoretical assumptions for the construction of didactic sequences for first language and foreign language teaching.[5]

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5   For example, a systematic work on the development and evaluation of educational materials has been conducted for some time with great effectiveness in extension courses at

**Table 5.1 Examples of Didactic Publications Supported
by the Construction of Didactic Models of Genres**

Author(s)	Didactical material	Objective
Paraná, 1998	Didactical material with eight didactic sequences produced under Cristovão's coordination	Teaching English as a foreign language to students from the project Flow Correction in Paraná
Machado, Lousada, & Tardelli, 2004a	Didactic book: Resumo (Summary)	Teaching of reading and academic and technical text production for university students
Machado, Lousada, & Tardelli, 2004b	Didactic book: Resenha (Review)	Teaching of reading and academic and technical text production for university students
Cristovão et. al., 2009	Didactic material as didactic sequences prepared by public school teachers, students from the language program, and the coordinator of the project Didactical materials for language teaching for basic education at Universidade Estadual de Londrina.	Teaching of English for the basic education

Final Considerations

As we stated at the outset, here we seek to present a partial but significant survey of the research carried out in Brazil within the framework of SDI, investigating the procedures for constructing a didactic model of genre, whether explicitly or implicitly. Even though it is partial, this map allows us to outline the different contributions of a theoretical, methodological, and didactic nature that these studies have brought.

COGEAE—PUC/SP, aimed at educators in general and taught by doctoral students Eliane Lousada and Lilia Abreu-Tardelli. In these courses, numerous didactic sequences have been worked on together with teachers, such as personality tests in magazines for teenagers, "cordel" narratives (Brazilian folk poetry), game rules, structured public debates, interviews, personal presentations in recruitment and selection processes, chronicles, argumentative letters from readers, informative pamphlets, entries in Portuguese language dictionaries, political cartoons, regulations, news articles, movie synopses, editorials, comic strips (from newspapers and magazines), advertisements, and back covers of children's books. Courses developed by Baraldi focusing on reading have also explored these concepts.

For the development of the theoretical-methodological framework, different scientific and didactic activities have been developed, which led us to enrich the analysis model itself, or with the use of concepts from other authors compatible with the model or with the (re)-elaboration of the analysis procedures. Regarding the contribution to didactics, the scope of the original framework in which the use of didactic models of genres emerged was also expanded, because Brazilian researchers have extended their use to new fields, to the development of other language skills, and other languages. For the formative mediation processes, the contribution was made considering teaching-learning processes in schools at different levels of education, for text production and reading, as well as for the development of the processes of initial and continuing teacher education programs.

Nevertheless, although we are aware of such contributions, harkening back to our epigraph, we are convinced that SDI is a theoretical-methodological framework that is in continuous transformation, and that is collectively constructed.[6] Thus, the merits our research can present cannot hide many of the gaps Bronckart (2004) himself points out. Some of them derive from the gaps in the theoretical-methodological framework, but others derive from the fact that most of Brazilian researchers who adopt this theoretical framework have not yet appropriated the changes already introduced by the author himself in the model proposed in 1997/1999 (cf. Bronckart & Groupe LAF, 2004). Consequently, as suggested by Bronckart (2004), other studies and reflections must be developed to cover these gaps. Among them, we highlight the following:

- The need to remember about deepening studies on the linguistic properties of genres and the relationship between types of discourse, genres, and social formations.
- The need to re-discuss the concept of "language action"—due to the static character and the forgetfulness of its affective/emotional dimensions as shown in the 1997 model.
- The need to seek consistent procedures for analyzing the text content, which have been abandoned in the genre description and the consequent construction of the didactic model.[7]

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6   For a more comprehensive view of these works, as well as for Bronckart's evaluation of them, please refer to the special issue of the journal *Calidoscópio* (2004), which gathers contributions from most participants of the ALTER/CNPq Group presented at the group's first symposium during the XIV INPLA (2004). Another important publication that brings together contributions from our group is the journal Signum (2005).

7   The initial attempts at this content analysis can be seen in Bronckart and Machado (2004 and 2005a and b), as well as in Machado and Bronckart (2005).

Concerning intervention research in the didactic field, we believe that they should also focus on the study of the teacher's real work, as it is currently being developed with the help of the so-called Labor Sciences (in particular, Ergonomics and Activity Clinic). To that end, according to Bronckart (2004), a serious reflection on development processes would be necessary, not only regarding the development of different knowledge and practices, but, above all, about the global development of people and different factors that intervene in it. Moreover, we are aware of the ethical dimension of our interventions in the educational field considering that our actions and our scientific activities, like any others, produce effects on other people and on the world and that, therefore, they are, in principle, inherently interventionist and political, in the broadest sense of these terms. With this awareness, we passionately believe that it is the respect for this same ethical dimension that forces us to a constant theoretical deepening, without which, even with the best intentions, we can easily slip into inconsequential interventions which may produce the same effects that we want to avoid.

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Reflection

In this article, Anna Rachel Machado, who passed in 2012, and I reviewed the concepts involved in building a pedagogical model of genre and offered examples of research-based experiences that developed such pedagogical models. I believe this article has been cited because it:

- Offers the theoretical foundations of socio-discursive interactionism (SDI).
- Illuminates the issues involved in recontextualizing texts/objects to work in class.
- Investigates the foundations and procedures to construct didactic models of genre.
- Provides studies and interventions to illustrate the use of didactic models.
- Points out contributions and challenges.

Not only did we review the concepts involved in constructing a didactic model of a genre, but we also provided examples of research studies that developed such didactic models. It is also worth reminding that it was one of the first publications by Brazilian authors who had used such concepts in their own research and expanded the framework.

If I were to write the article again, I would emphasize the important contributions of the Brazilian school to socio-discursive interactionism. By bringing the results of so much research that has been developed in many different research groups and graduate programs, Brazilian scholars have contributed to the expansion of the theoretical and methodological framework of SDI. Since the time of the original publication of the article, many examples have emerged, as well as high-quality pedagogical models.

If I were to write the article again, I would also add the importance of articulating the SDI with rhetorical genre studies (RGS) regarding the analysis of genre systems and the macro context constituted by socio-historical, cultural, economic, and ideological elements in which genre systems work. Another procedure from RGS that can contribute enormously to the construction of pedagogical models is interviews with producers and/or consumers of the genre being studied. Since the time of the publication, I have used a wider range of combinations of theoretical lenses and benefited from the growth of our local and regional scholarship in my investigations.

– Vera Lúcia Lopes Cristovão

6 Academic Writing Throughout the Undergraduate Years: An Institutional Program

Estela Moyano

This article presents a genre-based pedagogy model for teaching genre in higher education which aims to promote students' literacy in institutional and professional contexts. Designed using a systemic functional linguistics perspective, this genre-based pedagogy seeks to influence knowledge construction in disciplines and empower students to engage in academic, scientific and professional social activities. This paper outlines a program for teaching genre across the second cycle of university curriculum, and the negotiation between participants as a critical tool with which to support students attempts to acclimate themselves to new genre conventions. This institutional program also demonstrates a high degree of commitment on the part of its participants: university authorities, professors of different disciplines and language teachers.

As training grounds for new professionals, universities are not only responsible for the transmission of theoretical and applied knowledge but also for the preparation of students for future action in social spheres that involve the production of new knowledge and the transformation of social and technological processes. In this way, implementing pedagogical proposals that focus on the objective of expanding the possibility of action across social spheres remains a fundamental challenge for institutions of higher education. On the other hand, especially in the context of the democratization of higher education, it is necessary to offer students tools which support their academic development throughout their undergraduate education.

The teaching of reading and writing academic and professional genres is central to theoretical perspectives that conceptualize learning as the expansion of meaning potential (Halliday, 1993) and different social activities as genres involving particular discursive constructions (Martin & Rose, 2008). From a Bakhtinian (Bakhtin, 1985) perspective, a new sphere of human activity will present those who engage in it with the challenge of new discursive

genres to tackle. And these new genres also involve the use of new language which must be learned by students.

At the international level, different proposals developed in diverse theoretical frameworks have given rise to a long tradition of teaching reading and writing based on the concept of genre (Bazerman, Bonini, & Figueiredo, 2009; Hyland, 2002; Hyon, 1996; Karwoski, Gaydeczka & Brito, 2006; Marinkovich & Morán, 1998; McLeod & Soven, 1992; Swales, 1990). Similarly, in Argentina there are courses and workshops that address the need for teaching genres typical of university activity, especially at the beginning of higher education (Carlino, 2006; Padilla, 2007; Pereira & Di Stefano, 2001; UNLu, 2001; Uslenghi, Padilla, & Singstad, 2002). Another related line of research advocates for the need to train students as members of a disciplinary community in which teachers from different disciplines, within the framework of teaching their respective subject matters, incorporate the teaching of disciplinary reading and writing (Carlino, 2005; UNLu, 2001).

At Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (UNGS), located in the suburbs of the city of Buenos Aires, the teaching of reading and writing is initiated in two independent curricular spaces: one as a requirement to enter the university (López Casanova, 2009; Pereira, 2006) and the other in the first year of all undergraduate studies (Adelstein & Kugel, 2005). The first of these spaces utilizes the concepts of genre and textual types to address the formal linguistic aspects of scientific disciplinary texts geared towards the general public. The second, based on a multilevel model of textual linguistics, encourages students to read scientific articles from different disciplines, so that they can approach them with the recognition of their disciplinary structure, function and prototypical linguistic traits.

As Parodi (2005) pointed out, in all these applications there is little or no mention of the teaching, from a functional perspective, of the specific uses of linguistic and discursive resources for the construction of meaning in different groups of disciplines. As Halliday and Martin (1993) contended, this is a key limitation of these experiences as it is the linguistic and discursive resources that build the knowledge and ideological foundations on which scientific practices rest. The combination of specific features of the language of science enables theoretical discourse, actively involved in the production of conceptual structures. It is in this way that a scientific theory becomes a linguistic construction of experience different from the one that builds the grammar of everyday discourse. If the students fail to master it, they will also not be able to understand those particular constructions of the world required by scientific disciplines. Moreover, the language of science has spread to other areas, such as bureaucracy or media, making its teaching and learning essential for participation as citizens.

Since students do not receive this kind of training at any educational level, and because of the demand from students, teachers, and academic directors, it has been necessary to generate other spaces at UNGS for the promotion of specialized reading and writing skills. This is how a program that aims to teach not only the structure and contextualization of the new genres that students must address, but also the discursive characteristics that have been developed in different disciplines for knowledge building was designed and implemented. This program is based on the concepts of genre, register, discourse and language of systemic-functional linguistics (SFL) (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004; Martin, 1992; Martin & Rose, 2007, 2008).

This theory understands language as a complex system organized at different levels or strata which are related to one another through realization. The theory allows subjects to give account of the meaning built in a text and of how this meaning is construed through analyzing the text at all levels, thus highlighting its redundancy between strata. In addition, the stratified model of context allows for an exploration of the relationships between genre and register, and their realization through discourse, as well as the identification and organization in systems of different genres in particular disciplines and cultures. Moreover, this framework provides a characterization of disciplinary discourse (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Martin & Veel, 1998; Wignell, 2007), as well as a theory about the role of language in knowledge building (Christie & Martin, 2007).

We adopted the pedagogical approach developed by the Sydney school (Martin, 1999) with some modifications (Moyano, 2007), that acknowledge Bernstein's influence on explicit teaching and essential understandings related to the redistribution of power through access to discursive resources. This way of working in classrooms does not focus on the formal characterization of genres or speech features, nor on teaching theoretical aspects of the language. Rather, the approach centers its attention on how texts construct relevant meaning in a given social sphere and how through explicit metalinguistic and metacognitive reflection it allows the development of discursive skills in reading and writing practices.

The Reading and Writing Skills Development Program Across the Undergraduate Years (PRODEAC)

The PRODEAC program (in Spanish, *Programa de Desarrollo de Habilidades de Lectura y Escritura a lo largo de la Carrera*) was designed after a lengthy institutional process and received approval from the UNGS' Academic Senate with recurring budget allocation in 2005. Its main pedagogical objective is to

promote the academic performance of students during their undergraduate studies and to prepare them for the professional activities they will carry out in the future. Since academic discourse construction is central to this type of activity, stimulating the development of specialized reading and writing skills is particularly important.

Representatives of the different perspectives of teaching of academic genres observed the importance for more expert members of the disciplinary communities to introduce or initiate students into the practices of the field. This task demands manipulation of the written texts that enable such practices, and thus it requires an expert's knowledge on linguistic discourse analysis, a contribution that can be made by an instructor with a BA in letters.[1] Instead of choosing a single professional to carry out this task,[2] we suggested assigning this responsibility to a team formed by both, a disciplinary expert and a language expert, through what was called a 'peer negotiation' process, in which every specialist provides different knowledge that complements each other in order to benefit the teaching process. Joint work involves sharing responsibility for planning, assigning and assessing the proposed written tasks to students as well as the implementation of the pedagogical proposal on which decisions are based. This joint work fosters the content-specific teachers' development of linguistic and genre awareness, and provides knowledge of the context and disciplinary and professional fields to the language instructors. Thus, participants gain increased training opportunities in areas of knowledge that have been outside their specialized path. Throughout this experience, these interactions improve content-specific teachers' ability to guide writing work.

On the other hand, incorporating reading and writing instruction within curricular spaces solves some difficulties posed by complementary workshops. Hyland (2002) points out that in their approach, the writing task is isolated from the activity that gives rise to it and results in a work of 'composition' which mostly focuses on the formal aspects of a type of text. Whereas the work within the content-specific courses involves the design of activities relevant to that particular context; that is, activities that meet the specific demands of the context in which they are carried out.

Moreover, it should be noted that given the amount of required courses of each undergraduate program in Argentina, it is not feasible to add more mandatory courses. As for optional workshops, they are not suitable for at

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1   It should be noted that the so-called 'instructors with a BA in letters' or 'reading and writing instructors' are mostly researchers-teachers from UNGS and a few other instructors with university training and research experience.

2   For further discussion of this issue see Moyano (2004a).

least two reasons. On the one hand, it is not only *some* students who require training in this area,[3] making it inappropriate to shift the choice to exclusively interested students. On the other hand, many of the students lack the flexibility to add activities to their university studies, as they distribute their time between study and work. Relegating such an important area of learning to a mere option would once again create differences in training based on students' socioeconomic position.

Institutional support has been recognized as a key factor in the implementation of university writing programs (Bazerman, 2007; Carlino, 2005; UNLu, 2001). In the present case, the challenge of incorporating joint work between teachers in two different areas without increasing hours spent on the curriculum has required a strong commitment not only of the immediate actors but of administrators who organize the work in each undergraduate program. This support has also ensured the necessary funding, which allows the program to be extended to all upper division students as part of the development of the graduate's profile.

In order to achieve its objectives, PRODEAC has been organized into recurring activities. Before the start of each semester, the courses in each undergraduate program are selected. These decisions are made together with those responsible for the Academic Training Area of each undergraduate program who use particular criteria for each case.[4] Once the courses are assigned, instructors are paired up into teams. The team is composed by the content area teacher(s) in charge along with the language instructor. They meet periodically throughout the semester of the intervention to plan, monitor and adjust the process. The language instructors participate in the sessions focused on writing.

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[3]   Acknowledgment of this need results in the progressive generalization of writing courses offered in graduate degrees or intended for novice professionals and researchers and the fact that external reviewers of university degrees insist on the need to include teaching communicative skills. The genres' specificity in terms of theoretical content implies that their teaching does not correspond to previous educational levels. It should be noted, however, that a first approach to scientific discourse is necessary in primary and secondary educational levels, so that students develop skills to understand and produce texts in the different fields addressed in school. This would also promote access to university and probably the workshops at the beginning of higher education.

[4]   The PRODEAC is part of all the undergraduate degrees taught at UNGS, with the exception of recently created Artistic Languages and Culture, which includes among its faculty numerous instructors in the language area. The degrees that are part of PRODEAC are Industrial and Electromechanical Engineering, BA in Industrial and Political Economics, Public Administration, Social Policies, Education, Political Studies, Communication, Urban Ecology and Urbanism, as well as the Teacher Education Programs of Mathematics, Physics, Philosophy, History and Economics. It should be noted that some of the selected courses are shared by several degrees, which is why they were chosen by the academic leaders of each Institute.

Peer Negotiation Between Partners

The interaction between the linguistics specialist instructors (from now on, the PRODEAC Instructor) and the teacher of the participating course has been called 'negotiation'. This negotiation is an exchange between peers who come together to work toward the shared goal of contributing different knowledge and experiences.

The teacher of the specific content area provides their content knowledge of the field to the negotiation: the one related to the disciplinary domain in question, as well as the academic and professional activities related to this knowledge. As to the degree of awareness in the use of language (linguistic awareness) and genres characteristic of the academic and professional field (genre awareness), there have been documented differences between the participating teachers in the program (Moyano, 2009; Natale, 2007; Natale & Moyano, 2006). Similarly, these teachers are not usually conscious of discourse as constituting social life, so they often consider that type of reflection on texts as completely alien to the program of a course linked to professional activity (Valente et al., 2008).

On the other hand, the PRODEAC Instructor, who lacks the specific knowledge about the disciplines and the professional practices in which the genres in question are framed, must have training for genre descriptions from the linguistic, discursive and contextual analysis that allows to select the contents to be taught, along with a certain degree of specialization in the discourse of science: knowledge of the context where academic and scientific texts are generated and circulate as well as their characteristics, not only in terms of the structure of different genres (Bathia, 1993; Cubo de Severino, 2005; Swales, 1990), but also regarding the particularities of the typical language of this activity (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Wignell, 2007). The PRODEAC Instructor also has pedagogical strategies to teach the reading and writing required by the Program.

Before the work with students begins, the instructors teaching the course negotiate and establish a series of pedagogical agreements. These agreements revolve around the following issues:

- *The role writing activities play in the process of learning the course's content knowledge.* At this point, it is necessary for the content area teacher in charge to treat the act of writing as an integrated task within the learning content, taking into account, on the one hand, the functions of language and writing in that process, and, on the other hand, their connection to the disciplinary or professional activities. Our experience in the implementation of this Program indicates that when the writing activities are considered 'additional' or 'formal' by teachers or

students, the objectives pursued will not be achieved.

- *Joint planning of the reading and writing activities that the student will carry out within each course.* This task should be left to the discretion of the teacher in charge who nevertheless should take into account the contributions that the PRODEAC Instructor can make about, for example, the degree of difficulty in terms of the genre selection and other pedagogical issues related to the writing or to the creation of prompts.

- *Description and characterization of the genres that students will produce, including their contextualization, structure, and prototypical discursive and linguistic features.* This is one of the key instances in the negotiation process. According to Martin and Rose (2008), the linguist's work within genre instruction is to detect those features that are relevant in a particular cultural domain and describe them across all strata of language and context. In the peer negotiation, the content area teacher—as a member of the disciplinary or professional community in which the student is intended to participate—is the one who selects the genre that students will be asked to compose, and the one who provides sample texts that the PRODEAC Instructor will analyze and later teach to students.

Based on their knowledge of the field of action, the content area teacher can provide key information about the contexts of disciplinary culture, especially when it comes to professional contexts: Who produces the focus texts? Under what conditions? Who is their intended audience? What's the relationship between participants? What type of activity is mediated by the text? What purposes are pursued? This information helps to control the interpretations that the linguist makes from the analysis of the texts and, in a pedagogical way, offers the student a situational framework of reference.

At this point, the role of the PRODEAC Instructor is to analyze the sample texts identified by the content area teacher, usually selected from prestigious publications frequently referenced by the professional community. Some of the chosen genres are selected based on their formal characteristics in specialized journals or institutional forms so they serve as a guide for content organization. These guides may not be enough, however, for those who have to compose these texts for the first time. The genre structure and the function of its parts must be described, along with the discursive organization of each part and some linguistic features, especially in the case of under-studied genres. Thereafter, the most significant features are selected to be taught, including the introduction of multimodal resources (graphics, figures, outlines, etc.), their characteristics, their function, and their relationship to the text. This selection implies that the Program will gradually scaffold relevant discourse features transferable between genres.

In some cases, it was not possible to have texts ready for analysis before the first intervention. In these cases, the peer negotiation revolved around discussing the structure of the text that was to be requested from students. Generally, this type of work has allowed the content area teacher to provide the necessary samples during the following semester of the intervention in the same course, which might indicate an evolution in terms of genre awareness. Another problem is that many professional genres are in part constructed by confidential documents, making it hard to access them. Again, it is the peer negotiation that allows an approximation of genre description in which the linguist displays their expertise by applying linguistic theory to point out regularities in the construction of culturally and disciplinarily situated discourse.

- *Planning the interventions of language instructors during the sessions.* An ever-present challenge is the decision regarding allocating class-time to writing instruction. Such time should be limited but sufficient and help to achieve the course's goals in relation to the specific undergraduate program. A central issue is the selection of the content to be taught with regards to the characteristics of the genre and the situated discourse, as well as how the pedagogical design will be applied in each particular case. At this point, the responsibility for the proposal to be negotiated must rest with the PRODEAC Instructor.
- *Joint elaboration of assessment guidelines that make visible the learning process of disciplinary content and discursive skills.* This stage of the negotiation often presents divergent points of view. Based on their own experiences as disciplinary learners, the content-specific instructors tend to consider that the formal features—such as mechanics and graphic design—are the ones that need to be prioritized. But from the theoretical perspective assumed by the PRODEAC Instructor, the focus should be on the functional aspects of the text and, therefore, those related to the construction of register and genre.

It is also necessary to negotiate expectations related to the degree of proximity or distance from the expert texts in order to control the evaluation process. This work—not fully achieved yet—involves the creation of rubrics that define expectations across three dimensions: the use of theoretical or technological information for the applied work, the adequacy of the text to the structure of the genre, and the expected grammatical and discursive features. These expectations will have to be adjusted for different applications in order to evaluate only what has been explicitly taught.

As with any tool that aids writing assessment, there is a risk of mistaking the features of the rubrics as norms. During the instruction session,

precautions should be taken to avoid this from happening. This is especially important because the selected theoretical framework conceives of genres as activities subject to diachronic and synchronic variation, and discursive and linguistic characteristics found with a high degree of frequency in the utterances are features best conceived of as resources, not as norms.

To explore this further, we have been carrying out several diagnostics and follow-ups with students that will hopefully allow us to establish not only the differences from expert texts but also development throughout the teaching process (Giudice, 2009a; Giudice & Moyano, 2009; Giudice, Natale, & Stagnaro, 2008; among others, in preparation as part of the research developed in the Program).

Ultimately, the 'peer-negotiation' protocol provides a space for discussions and agreements over non-traditional ways of teaching reading and writing skills. Reading and writing are seen in this Program as the key to learning disciplinary knowledge that has been textually constructed, as well as the social practices characteristic of the current and future spheres that students inhabit; in brief, as activities that enable social participation in institutional spaces. Thus, peer negotiation is the basis of a teaching process that will expand students' experience and cultural competence as long as they learn to recognize and realize a wider range of contexts, or—following Bernstein's socio-semiotic code theory in relation with the SFL (Christie, 1999)—if they modify the orientation of the code to make it more elaborate, expanding the potential for significance and social participation developed until the moment the process takes place.

Teaching Academic, Scientific, and Professional Genres

During the teaching phase, the PRODEAC Instructor adjusts the pedagogical model to teach reading and writing depending on the situation and university level (see Figure 6.1) that, as already noted, has been adapted from the one proposed by the Sydney school (Martin, 1999). The model proposes a sequence of steps for teaching that involves reading as a starting point for learning writing, then constructing a text as a critical resource for the organization of the task and its product, and, last, editing as a skill of every expert writer. Another goal of the sequence is to increasingly develop the student's autonomy in terms of critical reading and writing that favor the mastery of the available genres as well as the possibility of creating variations according to the needs of student performance. This autonomy will be achieved through joint collaboration between the instructor and the group of students that will gradually lead towards individual work. The instructor guides the task and

seeks to promote learning by explicitly modeling reading and writing, as well as stimulating collaboration between small groups of students so that independent work results from a shared experience.

The negotiation of the discipline and the definition of the context are central aspects of the activity that underlie the whole teaching process. The content area instructor is in charge of negotiating the discipline, since it is related to teaching specific curricular content. Any academic or professional activities that are mediated by texts are also part of the class discussion, and are usually jointly addressed by the co-instructors during the genre description, or by the PRODEAC Instructor until the joint instruction takes place. Context definition involves discussing the purpose of the genre in a specific culture, the roles played by those involved in that social activity, and its relationships with other genres within that field.

It is important to emphasize that there is a consensus among theoretical orientations dealing with the teaching of scientific and academic texts about the need to reflect on the context with students, either for students to become aware of the available rhetorical options that will motivate language choices (Bazerman, 1988; Hyon, 1996), or to make in-classroom writing meaningful (Hyland, 2002). The Program's framework encourages reflection to connect the texts with the cultural context and the goals that guide them, as well as a first approach to the composition of the field, tenor and mode (Martin & Rose, 2008).

Figure 6.1 Pedagogical Model for the Teaching of Reading and Writing (Moyano, 2007)

Following that first moment comes the deconstruction stage, which consists of identifying with students both the structure of the genre and the discourse and lexicogrammatical features that the PRODEAC Instructor has selected for the intervention. Again, it is desirable that the co-instructors work together at this point in the process. The topics to be taught address how texts are structured in each genre, how information is usually organized in the different steps of the structure, its function and the relationships between them. If a sample text to deconstruct cannot be found —and, as has already been pointed out, this frequently occurs in the first semester when the program is carried out—the PRODEAC instructors guide students in the joint development of a scheme of genre structure, following the agreements that may have been established among the teaching partners.

When students manage to organize their writing as expected—a goal that requires substantial in-classroom interaction—they have taken an important step towards the appropriation of that genre. However, it is also essential to reflect on the discursive and linguistic resources featured in the deconstructed text, since many of the students' writing problems happen at this level. The task's goal is to promote the awareness of writers' choices from a set of options for constructing meanings in the three metafunctions of language and their contribution to the construction of the register. Thus, the student's understanding of the field increases not only in terms of content but also in terms of the construction of the discipline as a dialogic space inhabited by different positions.

In this instance, under the instructor's guidance the students develop the course's specific reading and learning skills and acquire strategies to approach the texts. On the other hand, they get a relatively clear sense of what is expected from their own production. Even though deconstruction is essential, it is not enough in itself to teach writing, and still requires the fulfillment of the following pedagogical steps.

When we adapted the model to higher education, we had to eliminate the stage of joint writing, with the exception of sessions where specific disciplinary language and discourse features are introduced, and where the learning requires collaborative work. It is essential, on the contrary, to negotiate during the session with students the design of the texts to be produced. An extremely useful activity for students is to discuss writing schemes from their past experiences, especially when they have to produce texts within the framework of genres unfamiliar to them (Giudice, 2009b; Moyano, 2004), or when they are not used to organizing large amounts of information in texts. Moreover, this challenge has also been observed in previous experiences (Moyano, 2000) in graduate students as well as in researchers, and, in this context, the group discussion of textual designs has yielded positive results.

As shown in Figure 6.1, the pedagogical design includes a stage denominated text editing, that is located at the beginning of a collaborative work. This stage, more than a 'correction' in traditional terms, implies a new learning opportunity, where the student is guided to take a step that is usual in the experts' writing production. To perform this task, the instructor and the whole class together deconstruct one of the student's texts, which has been selected as exemplary of a genre from a specific field. Thus, it has been situated in its context and culture, to consider from that perspective whether linguistic and discursive choices are appropriate, taking into account the options that the system offers, and whether the expected schematic structure was achieved in the text, in line with the social expectations of realization of the genre as an activity, emphasizing the functional aspects (Eggins, 1994). In this process, the students will indicate what they consider can be improved in the text and will discuss collaboratively the possible alternatives. In the spirit of the model, the task's goal is to provide students with tools to progressively acquire autonomy at this critical stage of writing and develop transferable learning.

It has not always been possible to implement the collaborative editing of texts in the Program. On the one hand, this practice has been negatively impacted by the available time with the students; on the other hand, many instructors still hold to traditional practices, with the underlying belief that students would benefit more from individual corrections in their writing by the language instructor. However, such work, which could be called 'assisted editing', neither constitutes a learning opportunity nor promotes autonomy.

Assisted editing differs from collaborative editing in terms of the degree of participation of the students and the instructor in the plan to modify the edited text. In assisted editing, it is the instructor who identifies problems in each of the student's texts and suggests the modifications they consider necessary. In the collaborative editing, the whole group and the instructor evaluate a student's text to judge its adequacy and identify aspects that hinder the construction of meaning. In addition, the whole group offers options to solve the problems identified, which are then discussed in the class before being accepted or rejected. In this way, the instructor is modeling and guiding the editing task, so that then, in new collaborative experiences or in small scaffolding groups among peers, the student undertake individual editing with positive results.

It should also be noted that traditional marking or assisted editing requires excessive time for the Program's instructors, especially in cases where the assessment is based on writing and rewriting. In many cases, this task has been carried out via e-mail (Stagnaro, Natale, & Moyano, 2008), which results in a heavy workload for instructors and, consequently, a high institutional cost,

considering that each instructor is in charge of more than one course and that each student completes more than one written piece of at least 15 to 20 pages per semester.

In previous experiences in writing courses near the beginning of the degree program, applying the strategy of moving from a collaborative to an individual editing process yielded outstanding results, not only in the improvement of texts, but also for increasing the autonomy of students (Moyano, 2007).[5] It is therefore necessary to increase and extend this practice in PRODEAC, by carefully working to implement it so that the program's cost in terms of the time required from each teacher is reduced while simultaneously encouraging students to aim for greater autonomy.

As an additional intervention, at the request of some academic leaders, the implementation of what is often referred to as a "writing center" was included in the Program, namely a space in which students receive advice for the production of the texts requested by their instructors. In the case of PRODEAC, this has been a space to "reinforce" the teaching principles of the program. Attendance was voluntary, in order to make consultations at any time during the composition of the text. Like assisted editing, the resource was costly in terms of instructors' time and did not yield desirable results, with the exception of some isolated cases.

Moreover, the students did not always attend the center, except per instructor's request. When the center replaced the peer negotiation activities, no student attendance was recorded. Thus, it is possible to state that when the content-specific instructor does not participate in collaborative work, their attitude is interpreted by the student as a sign that the academic or professional writing and the disciplinary content are separate types of learning which have different hierarchies.

In light of these experiences, we decided to cease the center and strengthen the class discussion strategies. However, it is possible to think about keeping the center with some modifications, so that it offers a space to work more systematically on aspects related to the language of the disciplines, once they have been discussed during class time, and bearing in mind that it may replicate the workshop work that the PRODEAC Program tried to avoid when it was created. Therefore, it is necessary to emphasize that the process must be carried out following the pedagogical model designed for its application to groups and avoiding individual teaching. It will also be necessary to study how to encourage students' attendance per content-specific instructors; an aspect that will require specific work in terms of the negotiation. Finally, considering

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5   There is a research-based study underway on the results of this practice at PRODEAC.

the affordances of remote working, the chance to hold it via digital teaching platforms may be explored, if they enable peer scaffolding in group activities.

Assessment of Achieved Goals

Five years after its creation, the goals accomplished in the framework of PRODEAC are related to different critical aspects such as institutional implementation, fulfillment of pedagogical objectives, learning and development of students, design evaluation and improvement of each phase, and in a more general sense, research-based information production.

The implementation conditions in UNGS have allowed, as an institutional achievement, the PRODEAC to expand beyond the six courses that initially participated during the program's first semester, to include between 14 to 20 courses taught per semester during the most recent term, covering all the undergraduate programs offered except for the latest programs created. The institutional commitment determined not only the appropriate execution of the program depending on each department's specificities, but also the creation of new teacher-researchers positions for the Program's faculty. This process increased the number of positions from two to seven in the course of five years. This development also enabled the formation of a group that distributes their time between pedagogical practice and research in order to permanently monitor the Program and develop strategies that improve the intervention, as well as produce specific knowledge on the subject matter. Some of these have led to new research projects, either in the context of UNGS, in collaboration with national and international universities, or in doctoral theses. Finally, to promote the communication of what has been done and in order to generate on-line interaction, a Program website was built.

The students showed improvement in the development of writing skills that can be detected in their texts. Tracing the students' development has highlighted their improvement in the ability to structure texts according to the genre expectations, and an advancement in its discursive construction. While much of the information produced is based on small-number instances per student, it has been observed from following-up students beyond one semester that they develop skills that transfer to new situations (Giudice, 2009a, 2009b; Giudice et al., 2008). They are also able to make requests that reflect growing linguistic awareness, starting with an intuitive first recognition of the difference between expert discourse and the one they produce by themselves.

Achieving autonomy in writing is a difficult task, but students tend to improve in this regard as they navigate their undergraduate years and approach

graduation. On the other hand, there is an increase in student engagement in this process, evident in the attendance to the intervention sessions, consultations and writing-related work.

Throughout their involvement in the Program, the instructors in charge of the content courses developed in terms of their linguistic and generic awareness, a consequence of the peer negotiation space. As for their pedagogical knowledge, they not only reached very strong agreements with their partners, but also achieved increased awareness of the need to teach specialized reading and writing skills, and increased autonomy in decision-making and generation of strategies for teaching genres linked to their courses: they became involved, participated in joint classes and contributed to the improvement of the process, as well as produced changes in terms of writing assessment and in the what they require in the Program. All of these important changes illustrate their increased commitment.

Although the years of experience in this task of the members of the team PRODEAC differ, it can be said that their appropriation of the proposal occurs faster each time. There has been an important development of these agents in conducting the negotiation process with their co-instructors, where each of their contributions enriches the practice and development of the intervention. They also provide a distinctive implementation of every phase of pedagogical design that is shared with the other team members in discussion spaces. These periodic discussions lead to a progressive improvement in implementations, and also serve to illuminate the aspects that require further investigation. On the other hand, thanks to the negotiation between co-instructors, there has been a growing knowledge about situations that are solved by writing within professional spaces, as well as with particular scholarly practices that are specific to each teaching space.

The different research projects that stemmed from the Program have contributed to the advancement of genre descriptions; it has also led to an increasing availability of information about the discursive characteristics of each step of the generic structure, as well as about the language characteristics of disciplines in Spanish.

The Current Challenge

So far, PRODEAC's main focus has been on teaching the schematic structure of the genres that students are asked to write, in addition to teaching some linguistic features, with relative progress in looking at the disciplinary specific discourses. However, it is necessary to develop more activities which consider the problems already identified and that enable more systematic instruction

about the lexical-grammatical and discursive features of genres (Giudice & Moyano, 2009). While there are some previous studies on this topic (Ravelli & Ellis, 2004), there is not enough available information about such initiatives at the undergraduate university level in Spanish.

To move forward in this regard, as Parodi points out (2005), it is essential to have a greater knowledge of the object of instruction, namely, more research is needed on the different academic and professional genres found in different disciplines in Spanish. Since its origin, PRODEAC's goal was to generate a space to advance research that characterizes specialized discourses in Spanish applying the developments of SFL—especially those of Martin and Rose (2007, 2008) used for the analysis of discourse and genre and those on the development of specialized discourse in the sciences and the humanities (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Martin, 2007; Wignell, 2007).

Halliday and Martin observe that the language of science "occupies an extended space, a region whose boundaries are fuzzy and within which there can be considerable internal variation. But it can be defined, and recognized, by certain syndromes, patterns of co-occurrence among features at one or another linguistic level" (1993, p. 4). With regard to the construction of experience (ideational metafunction), Halliday and Martin recognize the formation of taxonomic hierarchies of specific technical lexicon and the use of certain grammatical resources in the formation of genre conventions—such as, for example, very complex nominal groups and clauses constituted as identification or which cause relationships between nominalized processes. These clauses are also combined to construct particular forms of reasoning. Both features (one morphological and the other syntactic) are considered interdependent—different aspects of a single semiotic process: at the lexical-grammatical level, as a syndrome of the feature of the clause; semantically, as a feature of discourse. In this type of analysis, it is not so important to recognize the presence of these resources, but instead how they interact in the text to construct meaning to interpret the knowledge building (field of register).

The particular forms of reasoning to which these authors refer to involve other systems of discourse, especially those that construct textual meanings. Introducing and tracking participants (identification) is often problematic for students, so it is necessary to work to support students' development in this regard. This periodicity is—for those who want to acquire skills to organize information in a text, particularly if it is long and contains abstract content—a critical aspect: the concepts of macro and hyper-Themes and macro and hyper-New are very useful tools for both the understanding and the production of complex texts. Finally, it is important to identify patterns in the construction of the method of development in different parts or sections of the text, as well

as the recognition of "two layers Themes", as it will allow us to understand interactions with other important systems such as voice (Moyano, 2010).

The texts' appraisal should also be a subject of instruction, particularly with regard to the system of engagement (*involucramiento*[6]) used to analyze the rhetorical effects of the combinations of linguistic resources by which an author positions themself against others referred to in the text, as well as with regard to their audience (Martin & White, 2005). It is also interesting to analyze how attitude in writing works, particularly the construction of judgment, graduation and focus on the disciplinary discourse as well as on different stages or sections of the genres which attend to it (Hood & Martin, 2005). In addition to other lexical-grammatical resources at play, it will be of interest to address some interpersonal Themes that have a role in this regard. The resources available in the appraisal system allow us to build the figure of the author and their relationship with readers from an intersubjective perspective, hence the interest in exploring relationships both in the field of science and professional spaces.

The interaction between these aspects of discourse enables the elaboration of the disciplinary field, as well as that of the expected tenor, in terms of both author construction and negotiation of the legitimation of constructed knowledge (Moyano, 2005). In this way, it contributes to the construction of the genre as a particular configuration of the three variables of register.

Finally, it is essential to design teaching materials to support students at this educational level, so that the work on the discursive features outlined before increases in future PRODEAC instances.

Final Comments

This article has presented a program designed with the aim of influencing not only the proper development of students within higher education, but also their future acclimation to professional contexts. These objectives, in line with the theoretical and application principles of SFL on language, culture, learning and knowledge building, have a direct relationship with the students' development of reading and writing skills in new social contexts. Hence its complexity and the relevance of its completion are crucial for social acclimation into institutional contexts.

The program implemented at UNGS is original not only in its design characteristics, but in that it actively involves a number of institutional agents

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6   The term 'involucramiento' is used to translate 'engagement' into Spanish because it is considered more appropriate than that commonly used 'commitment' to refer to 'intersubjective positioning [linguistic] resources' (Martin & White, 2005).

from different hierarchies and specialties, which has resulted in an unusual degree of institutional support. This has also been achieved because in its founding documents this university recognizes the relevance of pedagogical tools and especially the teaching of language that contributes to instructing students who, for the most part, come from underprivileged social sectors (Corraggio, 1994).

With regards to the accomplishments throughout the five years of its development, it is important to highlight not only those related to the degree of institutionalization in terms of the interest and commitment of those occupying individual or collegiate hierarchical roles, but also in terms of the construction of the joint work of the co-instructors, the progress in students' learning, the enrichment of the Program through the instructors' experiential learning, and via the reflection produced through research. Each of these aspects are critical in themselves, but also in terms of their reciprocal impact.

As has been emphasized, there is still a lot of work to be done. At the moment, the most pressing tasks are: to advance the genre descriptions and understanding of disciplinary discourses in Spanish through research, and to produce teaching materials for students.

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Reflection

The article "Academic Writing Throughout the Undergraduate Years: An Institutional Program" was written in Buenos Aires in September 2009. At that time, the program had been installed for five years in the second segment of the different degrees offered at Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento.

I think that the article can be considered influential because it gives an account of the first writing across the curriculum program (WAC) in Latin America. The paper formulates an educational problem and proposes a solution which was original at that time. The proposal combines resources of two different trends: Writing across the curriculum (WAC) and systemic functional linguistics (SFL). It proposes to establish a program across the curriculum based on an adapted version of the genre-based pedagogy generated by the so-called Sydney school that applied SFL in the analysis of the texts that instantiated the genres selected to be taught. Unfortunately, there was not enough space to explain how to do this analysis, but this topic has been discussed in other papers published after this one.

The paper also sketches an idea for a research program, suggesting different lines of inquiry: the description of genres and macrogenres to be taught, taking into account previous research on analyzing discourse and on the features of the language of the disciplines; the results of a program in different aspects, including the evolution of the students in writing; and aspects related to the institutionalization of the program.

During more than a decade, many aspects of the program were re-elaborated in other initiatives in two institutions—Universidad de Flores and Universidad Nacional Guillermo Brown, e.g. the extension of the program from the first year through the last year, increasing institutionalization. These innovations have been published or are in process of publication, as well as different aspects of the research program proposed (e.g., Moyano, 2023, 2024).

Other publications authored by various researchers that work particularly in the last two institutions mentioned give accounts of the changes applied in the new versions of the program described, as well as applications in different experiences of teaching genres in those contexts. In some presentations in scientific events, results of these experiences have been shown and commented on. In a subsequent article (Moyano, 2017), I reflected on principles and strategies to consider when creating WAC programs. Many of these aspects had been unexamined in the article translated here. The newer article was published in 2017, but I still think that there are some aspects in which more reflection is needed. There is a long way ahead to improve the proposal and to communicate different aspects of the research in progress. So we will keep working!!!

– Estela Inés Moyano

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7 Discursive Procedures of Knowledge Attribution in Linguistics and Philosophy Theses Across Two Academic Levels

René Venegas, Paulina Meza Guzmán, and Juan Martínez Hincapié

Several authors interested in the field of academic writing agree that knowledge attribution is a discursive process that indicates responsibility for the content presented in academic discourse. Knowledge attribution is commonly conceived of as evidence of author's position in his/her writing (Beke, 2008; Bolívar et al., 2010; Hyland, 2004a). The aim of this paper is to compare the discursive process of knowledge attribution in undergraduate and MA theses in linguistics and philosophy. In order to accomplish this goal, we have focused on two categories of analysis: the use of first person and the use of external citations. The corpus consisted of 20 theses (5 BA in linguistics, 5 MA in linguistics, 5 BA in philosophy, and 5 MA in philosophy). Overall, the results indicate that there are differences between disciplines and degree levels in the way authors carry out knowledge attribution. Our results also reveal a range of subtypes of citations not found in previous investigations. In conclusion, the field is urged to consider the many ways in which authors attribute knowledge and how those ways differ across discourse communities and genres.

In recent years, the number of studies focused on academic writing research and interested in the different genres produced by students has increased (Bunton, 2002; Carlino, 2005; Hyland, 2002; Samraj, 2008; Thompson, 2005). In this context, several authors have used different approaches to study how writers position themselves within their own compositions (Beke, 2008; Bolívar et al., 2010; Hyland, 2004a; Meza & Martínez, 2011; Samraj, 2008), as can be attested by studies related to the linguistic markers of the author's positioning (Bolívar et al., 2010), to the way the writer-reader relationship is established through the

use of different linguistic strategies (Hyland, 2005), and to the teaching and use of the various linguistic devices that authors employ in order to introduce themselves both explicitly or implicitly (Montolío, 2000).

Even though there is considerable research into this issue, studies on undergraduate and MA theses that center on knowledge attribution (as proposed by Hyland, 2004a) are rare. Therefore, we set out to investigate the extent to which writers display authorial presence in their work and the ways in which they attribute the ideas of other authors in their writing. In this context, our goal is to compare the discursive function of knowledge attribution in undergraduate and MA theses written by linguistics and philosophy students. For this reason, we established a contrast across both disciplines (linguistics and philosophy) and academic degree levels (undergraduate and MA).

To achieve this goal, we have used two linguistic-discursive categories to account for knowledge attribution: the use of citations, on the one hand, to learn how other authors are introduced in student theses; and, on the other, the use of the first person to know how student authors establish their own authorial presence. Using these categories helped us identify the possible similarities and differences associated with academic degree levels and/or disciplinary fields. In this article, we first introduce the object of study and develop the theoretical framework that guided our analysis. Then, we present the results of the study. Finally, we discuss the findings obtained from the textual analysis of our corpus in order to put them back into conversation with the theoretical framework we used before concluding the article with a discussion of potential future directions.

Academic Writing

Academic writing is defined as the activity of composing written texts by people who belong to the academic world and whose main audience is members of the same field (Carlino, 2005). Consequently, both the topics addressed in academic texts and the register possess particular features that make them considerably different from other genres, such as news articles or op-eds (Pak-Tao, 2008).

In academic writing, writers typically seek to answer research questions that emerge from their professional field and are of interest to researchers, professors, and experts in that field. Additionally, academic writing constitutes a set of highly formal conventions that can be found in different academic genres, such as dissertations, research articles, or handbooks (Parodi et al., 2010).

On the other hand, an important concept directly related to academic writing is academic discourse. Bhatia (2002, p. 25) defines it as "a unified register

in applied linguistic literature, especially in language teaching and learning." Academic discourse, then, occurs within university academic communities in order to train undergraduate and graduate students in discursive disciplinary practices (Bhatia, 2002). Such practices develop following the discursive traditions of a specific academic community (Kabatek, 2001; Kayser, 2002; Koch, 1997; Schlieben-Lange, 1983). These traditions manifest themselves at the different linguistic-discursive levels (lexical, syntactic, semantic, pragmatic) across the different genres that are used to communicate within any one particular discourse community. In the present study, we claim that the thesis genre is one of the most important textual-communicative instances where students have to demonstrate specific knowledge to their communities by relying on the specific features of their disciplines' discursive practices.

Another concept closely related to academic discourse and, in turn, to academic writing is genre, a concept that has been studied by a wide range of theoreticians and researchers. One of the most recurrent definitions of genre was proposed by Swales (1990), who regarded it as a communicative event with specific purposes that have been identified and defined by the members of a determined academic or professional community, who construct genres based on particular forms and contents. In the following section, we describe in further detail the thesis genre.

The Thesis

The key discursive practice in the transition from university student life to the academic-scientific life is the production of an undergraduate thesis (Bunton, 2002; Moyano, 2000). Through this genre, novice writers demonstrate their mastery of the expected rhetorical structures of the texts that are a part of their field, and in doing so, their inclusion in the discursive community of interest. Therefore, those who pursue a BA, an MA, or a PhD degree must demonstrate in written form research that accurately articulates the discursive practices expected in their academic field.

Koutsantoni describes this genre and its close relationship with the research article, identifying both as academic genres. She claims that "both genres are produced at advanced stages of individuals' enculturation in disciplinary communities and present original research which aims to persuade the academic community to accept new knowledge claims" (2006, p. 19). Hyland defines the thesis using a more social approach, pointing out that "the dissertation is a high stakes genre at the summit of a student's academic accomplishment. It is perhaps the most significant piece of writing that any student will ever do" (2004b, p. 134).

For Moyano (2000), the thesis is a genre whose aim is to inform and grant academic advancement and whose content is the result of a research study. Consequently, if approved by the academic community, this genre gives students the opportunity to transition from university student life to academic life by allowing them to become new members of their disciplinary discourse community. For this transition to be granted, thesis writers need to create authorial presence in their work and demonstrate knowledge of other authors by means of inscribing their own persona and that of the other authors in their writing. This is what has been named knowledge attribution (Hyland, 2004a; Swales, 1990).

Knowledge Attribution

Knowledge attribution is a feature that is typical of scientific research articles and other academic genres (Hyland, 2005; Sabaj & Páez, 2011; Swales, 1990). This concept refers to responsibility for the content presented, either attributed to the writer-researchers' own voice or to the voices of other authors who were brought to the text. Thus, this discursive technique shows the writers' efforts to choose from among various linguistic and discursive options in order to demonstrate disciplinary knowledge, even though academic scientific genres have traditionally been presented as objective and neutral (Beke, 2008; Kaiser, 2002). According to Bolívar, Beke and Shiro, the decision that writers make to select this or that voice satisfies "on the one hand, the need to be explicit on the degree of accuracy of the information reported, and on the other hand, the need to manifest how committed to the information they are, what is their position and their evaluation" (2010, p. 109).

Knowledge attribution can be identified through two discursive devices. On the one hand, we can use the citation to examine other voices included by the writer-researcher to present their contribution to knowledge as part of a continuous disciplinary conversation. On the other hand, we can use first-person linguistic markers to analyze how the authorial presence is created using the authors' own voice in their research. In the next sections, we examine how citations and first-person linguistic markers help demonstrate knowledge attribution in linguistics and philosophy BA and MA theses.

Citation

According to Reyes (1996, p. 9), citation is defined as "a linguistic representation of a text... This representation can be full or partial, accurate or approximate." Consequently, the degree of similarity between the original text and

the one that reproduces it depends on a variety of factors that are determined by the speakers' communicative intention.

Several authors agree on the fundamental role that citations play in academic research. In fact, referencing other authors has been considered one of academic writing's essential features (Hyland, 2004a; Sabaj & Páez, 2011; Samraj, 2008; Swales, 1990). Hyland observes that citation is one of the main means that academic writing has to attribute content to other sources, and its importance lies in that "[it] is central to the social context of persuasion as it can provide justification for arguments and demonstrate the novelty of one's position" (2004a, p. 20). He further adds that citing is a procedure of ratification of what the writer states, since through it the cited authors become a kind of justifiers, that is, "peers who provide the social justification which transforms beliefs into knowledge" (Hyland, 2004a, p. 20).

One of the most important functions of this type of discursive procedure is to help define either the specific context of the knowledge or the issue to which the study is contributing (Hyland, 2004a). Beke (2008) adds that evoking other authors' voices has three essential functions: (a) to show how the textual information fits into what the experts already know about the topic; (b) to contribute to the writers' argument by reinforcing an idea; and (c) to demonstrate knowledge on a specific topic and that the study is worth reading. Beke also points out that "from a pragmatic point of view, through the references and citations of other authors we reinforce our arguments, and, at the same time, we position ourselves as versed in the subject matter; we justify the newness of our contribution to a broader narrative about the topic we are researching" (2008, p. 16). Moreover, from a rhetorical point of view, references and citations help us to contextualize our research and scaffold our contribution to both the topic and the discipline.

All of the authors reviewed here agreed that there are numerous ways to cite other work and, therefore, numerous ways with which to classify different types of citations. Thus, in this study, we divided these citation classifications into two major groups. On the one hand, we present a classification depending on how citations are incorporated into the text (using either direct or indirect speech). On the other hand, we present a classification according to the presence or absence of the author cited in the syntactic-semantic structure of the sentence (using integral and non-integral citations). It is worth noting that covert citations are also included in the first classification; however, they are not considered in this study, as their identification requires specific disciplinary knowledge. Using these two classifications, we sought to identify all of the direct integrated and indirect integrated citations in our corpus.

In the following section, we describe our research procedures and methods.

Direct and Indirect Speech

This division between direct and indirect speech is often referred to as literal and nonliteral citations (Calsamiglia & Tusón, 1999; Massi, 2005; Reyes, 1996).

- **Direct speech:** The inclusion of this type of citation maintains two enunciative situations, since it entails a rupture or discontinuity between the main discourse (D1) and the cited discourse (D2), in which two different speakers are held accountable (Calsamiglia & Tusón, 1999). Generally, this type of citation is introduced with a colon and quotation marks to indicate that another person's words (or those of the writer) are being reproduced and presented in the identical way they were originally pronounced or written (Reyes, 1996).

Santander (2002, p. 86) points out that this procedure is the "type of linguistic behavior that seems a hundred percent objective," in the sense that it has no need to select from a set and also because it maintains the dissociation between the "I" and the discourse. According to Santander, this type of citational practice extracts the discourse of another figure and then frames it within the context of the new discourse. Moreover, in utilizing direct speech, speakers are not only reproducing a text produced by others, but also carrying out an assertive speech act, as you only quote what you consider relevant (Santander, 2002).

- **Indirect speech:** It is used to introduce one discourse into another. In this case, it is presented as a single speaker that integrates a single deictic center, using an introductory citation-related referent (Calsamiglia & Tusón, 1999). Likewise, the second discourse is represented with deictic marks corresponding to the same speaker as the first discourse, maintaining only one utterance. This causes the narrated words to undergo some changes because the original text is paraphrased, thus adjusting it to the communicative situation. In this sense, according to Reyes (1996), this type of citation cannot retrieve the original discourse.

Integral and Non-Integral Citations

Swales (1990), within the framework of his CARS model, distinguishes between integral and non-integral citations, which result from "a decision to give greater emphasis to either the reported author or the reported message" (Hyland, 2004a, p. 23). This distinction has been used by several authors interested in citation procedures (Beke, 2008; Hyland, 2004a; Sabaj & Páez, 2011; Samraj, 2008). Similarly, Weissberg and Buker (1990) use the terms *prominent author* for integral citations and *prominent information* for non-integral ones.

- **Integral citations:** The cited author appears within the referential sentence; namely, the cited source fulfills a syntactic function in the text where the author has been cited (Swales, 1990). For Thompson (2005), this type of citation is used when the focus is on the researcher, the cited text, or the cited study. Beke clarifies this point by describing it as:

  > a research report where the reported author is named within the sentence and has a syntactic-semantic function. In fact, the cited author can fulfil the function of a verb's subject in active and passive constructions, or it can be included in a noun phrase, a prepositional phrase, or an adjunct. In the citation, the author's full name and the date may appear in between parentheses (Beke, 2008).

  For example: "Hyland (2004) points out that…," "Academic discourse has been described by Hyland (2004)"]

- **Non-integral citations:** The name of the cited author appears between parentheses or in a footnote, so it does not fulfill any syntactic function in the sentence where it is referenced (Swales, 1990). According to Thompson, this type of citation is used to emphasize the proposition (for instance, a finding or an important concept) and de-emphasize the author or the research. For example, "…it is one of the main characteristics of academic discourse (Hyland, 2004)."

For Beke, the main function of this type of citation is to "attribute to another author a proposition that the article writer can indicate as true or question it in their argumentation" (2008, p. 19). To this, she adds that by using this type of citation, the author-researcher generally intends to show that they do not commit to or share the cited author's point of view (Beke, 2008).

Inclusion of the Author

The writer's demarcation of their own voice can be understood from different points of view. In enunciation theory, speakers use a formal linguistic mechanism in order to enunciate their position as speakers through specific cues (Benveniste, 1999).

From a text linguistics perspective, Calsamiglia and Tusón (1999, p. 139) argue that "the use of 'I' in public becomes a compromised, risky choice." For this reason, speakers are unlikely to refer to themselves explicitly and prefer to use the first-person plural (in Spanish) so that they can integrate their voice into a group, thus acquiring the authority and legitimacy associated with a collective. Moreover, the act of obscuring the speaker can be taken

even further when choosing the third person or impersonal constructions (Benveniste, 1999; Calsamiglia & Tusón, 1999; Smiko, 1992).

Within academic discourse, Hyland (2002) observed that the representation of the "I" in academic writing is as important as the content presented; for that reason, authors establish their authority by evaluating and committing to their ideas. One of the clearest manifestations used to reveal authority is the first-person singular pronouns. However, although these manifestations are a powerful rhetorical strategy, not all authors dare to use them. Hyland's argument is that authors representing themselves in their own work is central to the construction of a credible researcher profile to influence their audience. Therefore, the use of the first person allows authors to emphasize their own contributions by clarifying their own points of view to the reader or readers. Therefore, this grammatical form becomes a powerful means to express identity and authority, two key aspects of successful academic writing (Hyland, 2002).

Other research into academic discourse has revealed that scientific research article writers primarily use the first person to set the objective or purpose of the article, to delineate the procedures that were carried out, and to assert knowledge (Harwood, 2005; Hyland, 2001; Kuo, 1999). Writers position themselves according to the content they express; hence, they use the first person when they intend to show individual contributions to the discourse, and at the same time, assert that they are considered members of the community (Hyland, 2001, 2002). Cherry (1988) points out that writers often write themselves into their work with two main goals: to gain credibility by showing themselves as competent members of the discipline and to display the rhetorical qualities of a credible and trustworthy individual. In this sense, the linguistic choices that writers make not only affect the conceptual content but also influence the readers' impression of the writer (Hyland, 2001). The present article addresses the inclusion of the "I" to determine how and to what extent writers use the first person to show authorial presence in their work. It is worth noting that the English language identifies the inscription of the first person through pronouns required by the language. In Spanish, however, there are many other possibilities (see subsection 5.2) that must be considered when studying this variation of academic discourse.

Methodology

In this section we present the methodology used to carry out this study, which follows a quantitative approach with a descriptive scope. We include a description of objectives, the corpus, and analysis procedures.

Our first general goal was to compare the discursive process of knowledge attribution between theses in linguistics and philosophy at the undergraduate

and MA level. To achieve this, we identified and described both the types of citations and the different uses of the first person. Using the results from the analysis of these categories, we subsequently compared the discursive processes of knowledge attribution in the disciplines of linguistics and philosophy at both the MA and undergraduate levels.

Corpus Description

The corpus is made up of twenty theses written between 2000 and 2009, which are divided as follows: five linguistics undergraduate theses (64,763 words), five linguistics MA theses (121,425 words), five philosophy undergraduate theses (85,284 words), and five philosophy MA theses (17,571 words). These texts were randomly selected from a larger corpus that contained theses on linguistics, philosophy, psychology, and literature from both undergraduate and MA degrees granted by Pontificia Universidad Católica de Valparaíso. These theses make up part of the *TFG-2010 Corpus* collected for the 1101039 FONDECYT Project (Venegas, 2010). For the purposes of our study, it is worth noting that all the analyzed theses were single-authored by students.

Procedures and Analytical Tools

First, it is important to note that the analysis procedures were fully applied to each section of the theses comprising the corpus. The categories that guided the analysis were the use of citations and the inclusion of the first person, which, in turn, enabled the description of how authors position themselves and others in their own work.

The first category of analysis—the use of citations—was manually created, i.e., by reading all theses and identifying both the type of citation and the way they were integrated into each thesis. To analyze the second category—the inscription of the first person—we relied on the computer tool El Manchador de Textos. This tool helps calculate and show the frequency of occurrences of one or more sequences of linguistic features in digitalized corpora (Venegas, 2008). We used the tool in two ways: first, to identify all verbal endings that indicate the use of the singular and plural first-person; and, second, to locate the pronouns and adjectives that correspond to those uses. Accordingly, we established six sequences:

- **Sequence 1:** first-person singular pronoun in the dative and accusative form (me) [me, to me]
- **Sequence 2:** first-person possessive pronoun in its singular, plural, masculine, and feminine forms (nuestro, nuestros, nuestra, nuestras) [our]

- **Sequence 3:** possessive adjective in its shortened form, singular, and plural (mi, mis) [my]
- **Sequence 4:** feminine and masculine possessive adjective (mío, mía) [my]
- **Sequence 5:** first-person singular pronoun (yo) [I]
- **Sequence 6:** shortened first-person plural personal pronoun (nos) [us, to us].

We carried out the analysis procedures based on all of these categories and then orchestrated statistical tests in order to establish whether the differences obtained were statistically significant.

Analysis and Discussion

Analysis of the Citation Practices

Even though direct, indirect, integral, and non-integral citations have been extensively studied, citations that have not been described in previous studies emerged in our results. We named these emergent categories *subtypes of citations* because they are part of the broader categories of citations already described. Additionally, it should be noted that in one discipline we found subtypes of direct citations, whilst in the other only the subtypes of indirect citations were found (see Figures 7.1 and 7.4). Because these subtypes of emerging citations have not been described in other studies, we explain each below and provide examples from the corpus. We included in between brackets the code from the thesis where the example has been taken.

Table 7.1 Emerging Types of Citations in Philosophy

Type of Citation	Definition	Example
Direct speech (DS)-Integral - Traditional (DSI-T1)	This citation includes the author and year of publication with a syntactic function in the sentence in which another person's words (or the author's own words) are reproduced identically as they were pronounced or written.	"Stephen Hawking (1988) … la última interrogante: '¿Por qué el universo va a tornarse la molestia de existir? ¿Es tan imperiosa la teoría unificada que conlleva su propia existencia? ¿O necesita un creador, y, si es así, tiene Él algún efecto en el universo aparte de ser responsable de su existencia? ¿Y quién le creó?'" [TfL2_2009] ["Stephen Hawking (1988) … the ultimate question: 'Why does the universe bother to exist? Is the unified theory so compelling that it brings about its own existence? Or does it need a creator, and, if so, does He have any effect on the universe apart from being responsible for its existence? And who created Him?'"]

Type of Citation	Definition	Example
DS- Integral - Compound (DSI-Co)	This citation is divided into two parts: one is presented in the text and the other as a footnote. These tend to be lengthy citations.	"Como señala Kripke (1995) 'A veces (la necesidad) se usa de una manera episte-mológica y bien podría entonces querer decir simplemente a priori'… de dos áreas diferentes: la epistemológica y la metafísi-ca" continúa a pie de página "Considérese por ejemplo … le pertenece por necesidad" [TfL1_2008] ["As Kripke (1995) points out, 'sometimes (necessity) is used in an epistemological way and might then simply mean a priori' … from two different areas: epistemological and metaphysical," it continues in the footnote, "Consider, for example … it belongs to it by necessity."]
DS-Integral - (DSI-So)	Made up of an excerpt of an author's text, which is the thesis' subject of analysis.	"Por esto, Hegel (1992) afirma más adelante: 'Quien mira racionalmente el mundo, lo ve racional. Ambas cosas se determinan mutua-mente'" [TfL2_2008] ["For this reason, Hegel (1992) later asserts: 'Whoever looks at the world rationally sees it as rational. Both things determine each other mutually'."]
DS-Integral - Partial (DSI-Pa)	The author of the citation is mentioned, but not the year of the publication from which it was taken.	"Aristóteles argüía: '[es] realmente extraño que algo pueda estar encerrado por nada'" [TfL2_2009] ["Aristotle argued: '[It is] truly strange that something could be enclosed by nothing'."]
DS-Non-Inte-gral - Epigraphic (DSNI-Ep)	Epigraph at the beginning of some chapters.	"'A teacher who enchanted and inspired the brightest youth of Greece; a public figure who lived a turbulent life in a turbulent world. He bestrode antiquity like an intellectual colossus. No man before him had contributed so much to learning. No man alter him might aspire to rival his achievements (Jonathan Barnes)'" [TfL1_2009]
DS-Autonomous (DS-Aut)	Direct speech citation without a footnote, or year or author, i.e., only the cited text is included.	"La naturaleza está totalmente sometida a los preceptos de la geometría" [TfL2_2009] ["Nature is completely subject to the precepts of geometry."]

The frequency of appearance of each one of these subtypes of citations at the different university levels is presented in Figure 7.1.
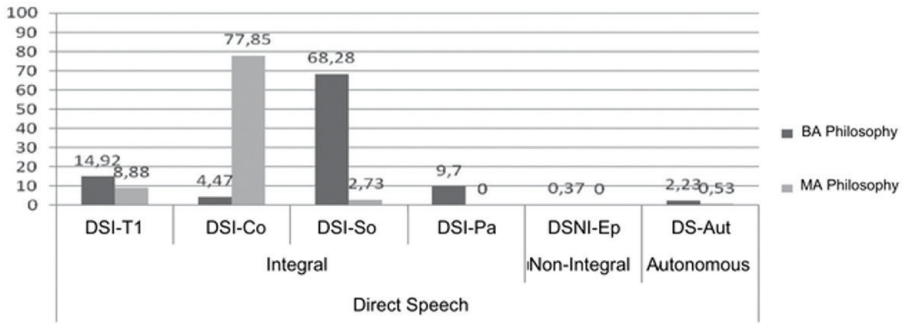
Figure 7.1 Frequency of Appearance of Direct Speech Citations in Philosophy

It is important to highlight that the previously presented types of citations emerged only from the undergraduate and master's philosophy theses. With respect to each one of these subtypes, it is possible to say, first, that the DSI-T1 occurred more often in undergraduate than in master's theses (14.92% vs. 8.88%), a difference that, according to the Z-test for proportion comparisons, turned out to be statistically significant (Z=2.68; p=0.008). This type of citation was used as an argument to justify what has been stated; that is, the text is introduced identically to how it appeared originally, but now using the speech utterance in a different context. For this reason, as Santander argues (2002), direct speech citations are considered a hundred percent objective; thus, there is absolute trust in attributing knowledge to the cited author. As Santander adds, in using direct speech, speakers are not only reproducing a text enunciated by others, but also they are carrying out an assertive speech act because they are including only what they consider relevant.

It must also be clarified that the ideas in the previous paragraph are not universally applicable because direct citations may be used to contradict what has been enunciated. However, in the present study, cases where citations contradicted or criticized the author were absent. Additionally, it is worth noting that in philosophy theses, direct speech citations were rarely commented on; that is, the voice of the cited author is seldom accompanied with a comment by the thesis' author. From these results, it can be asserted that when writing an argument in philosophy, students rely more on other authors' voices, and that this happens more frequently at the undergraduate level than at the MA level. This might happen because undergraduate students' body of knowledge is more limited, as well as their authority to attribute knowledge to themselves.

The DSI-Co citation is used when the author of the thesis indicates that the cited excerpt in the body of the text is more relevant than the one in the

footnote. In this sense, there would be a lesser degree of commitment to what is said, since, although these elements are brought into the work, they are not integrated into the main body of the text. This type of citation is more used in MA theses than in undergraduate theses (Z=20.874; p=0.00); in percentage terms, 77.85% and 4.4%, respectively. It should be mentioned that, although both academic degrees include extensive citations (even two or three pages), MA students tend to break down such citations in order to emphasize only one part of them—that which is included in the body of the text. In that sense, we think that at the MA level, there is much more precision in selecting the outside information included in the writing of the thesis.

The use of DSI-So is also noticeably higher in the undergraduate level than at the MA level (68.28% vs 12.73%); resulting in a statistically significant difference between them (Z=17.454; p=0.00). This might be because, in earlier academic levels, students need to rely more on the text being analyzed, which demonstrates that the analysis is appropriate and is backed up by the cited source. This type of citational practice appears only in philosophy, and we think the reason for this is that philosophy students tend to engage with a particular author's ideas, a less frequent occurrence among linguistics students.

The DSI-Pa is absent from master's theses. Thus, its use might indicate a more limited demonstration of knowledge in terms of the thesis genre and the forms used to include sources, or, alternatively, it might simply be a sign of careless writing. In fact, it is interesting to note that, according to the available data, this phenomenon is not present in the master's theses because they are supposed to have more experience with these features or with academic writing.

Another emerging subtype is the DS-Aut, where there is no bibliographic backup (work, year, or author), which assumes a reader with solid disciplinary knowledge. Thus, if readers come across the citation "I think, therefore I am," for example, they must know that Descartes said it in 1637 in *Discourse on Method*. These citations are rarely included across both academic levels, although they are more frequently found in undergraduate theses (Z=6.35; p=0.0001).

Finally, we included the DSNI-Ep, because it is another way of attributing knowledge to others. The occurrence of this type of direct citation is minimal: it was present in only one thesis.

Figure 7.2 depicts the emerging citations in philosophy theses.

Moreover, it should be noted that in linguistics' theses, only indirect speech citations emerged, in contrast to philosophy, where we found multiple subtypes of direct speech citations. We define and provide examples of the subtypes of citations found in our linguistics corpus in Table 7.2.
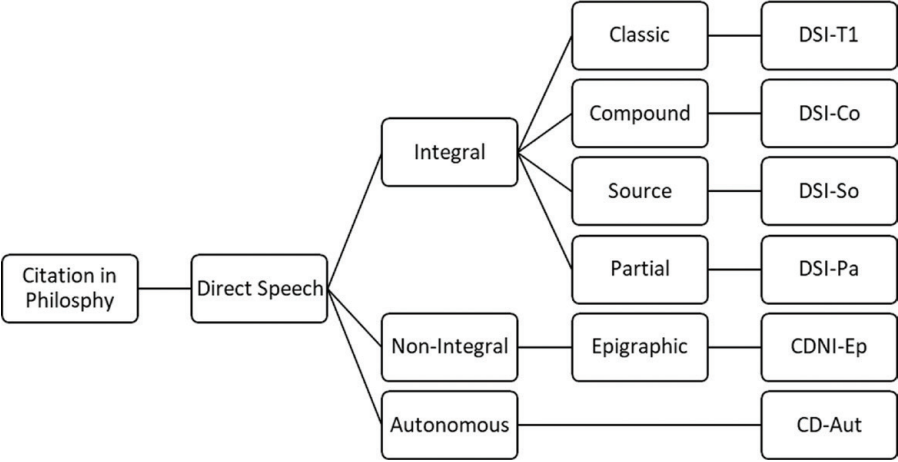
Figure 7.2 Model of Emerging Citations in Philosophy

Table 7.2 Types of Emerging Citations in Linguistics Theses

Type of Citation	Definition	Example
IS-Integral - Traditional (ISI-T)	When the author of a text and its publication date are indicated in between parentheses in the body of the text.	"Por su parte, Rosenblatt (1978) hace una distinción entre dos modalidades en la experiencia de la lectura: la lectura estética y lectura eferente." [Tesis: TLingM2007 1, pág. 8]. ["For his part, Rosenblatt (1978) distinguishes between two modes of reading experience: aesthetic reading and efferent reading."]
IS-Integral - Incomplete (ISI-I)	The author's name is integrated into the body of the text, but the publication date is not provided.	"Esta definición de García y Barragán involucra la complejidad de fenómenos que encierra el concepto 'cultura'." [TLing 2008 3, pág. 24]. ["This definition by García and Barragán involves the complexity of phenomena encompassed by the concept 'culture'."]
IS-Integral - Open (ISI-Op)	The author and the text's publication date are placed outside of the parentheses.	"El primer trabajo que consideró un grupo de variables fue el realizado por Gardner y Lambert en 1959, cuyos resultados mostraron…" [TLing 2008 3, Pág. 23]. ["The first study that considered a group of variables was conducted by Gardner and Lambert in 1959, whose results showed …"]

Type of Citation	Definition	Example
IS-Integral - Analogous (ISI-An)	When there is no direct reference to the author, but a co-referent is used, and the year of publication is missing.	"Siguiendo esta última línea de investigación, Johnson-Laird (1983) ha abordado el problema que él denomina 'competencia inferencial' y 'actuación inferencial.' Él niega la existencia de una 'lógica mental'" [TLingM 2008 4, pág. 12]. ["Following this latter line of research, Johnson-Laird (1983) has addressed the problem he calls 'inferential competence' and 'inferential performance.' He denies the existence of a 'mental logic.'"]
IS-Non-Integral - Incomplete (ISNI-I)	The author's name is included, and the year of the text's publication is missing.	"…integrar las ideas del procesamiento de la información (Stenberg) y el interaccionismo social (Vygotsky y Feuerstein) para identificar el potencial de aprendizaje." [TLing 2008 3, pág. 40]. ["integrating ideas from information processing (Stenberg) and social interactionism (Vygotsky and Feuerstein) to identify learning potential."]
IS-Non-Integral - Traditional (ISNI-T)	The author and the date of publication are included in between parentheses.	"…la orientación, el ángulo de visión y las características del usuario (Dillon, McKnight y Richardson, 1988)." [Tesis: TLingM2007 1, pág. 6]. ["the orientation, viewing angle, and user characteristics (Dillon, McKnight, & Richardson, 1988)."]

In Figure 7.3, we show the model of emerging citation in linguistics. Figure 7.4 illustrates each of the subtypes of citations in the model.
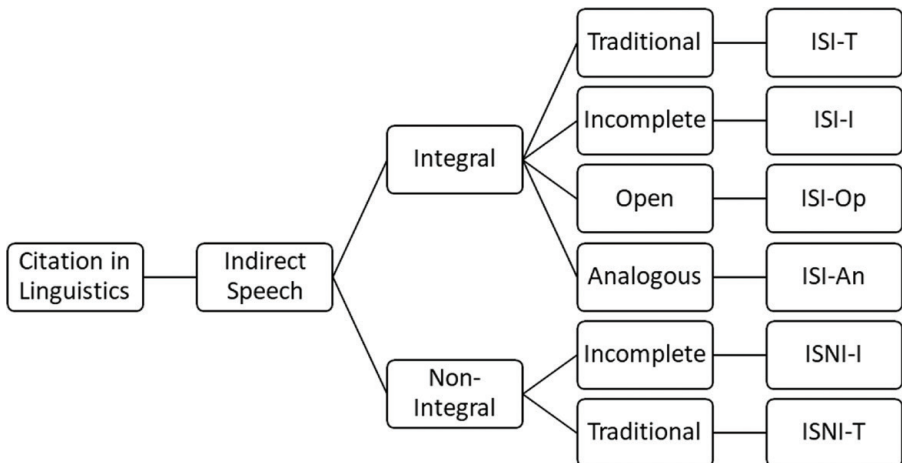
Figure 7.3 Model of Emerging Citation in Linguistics Theses
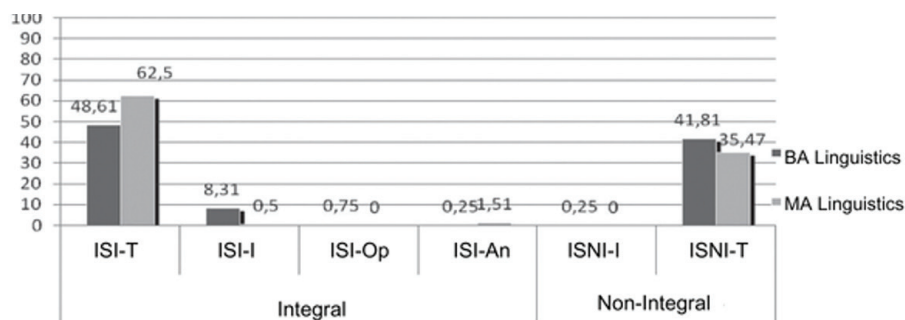
*Figure 7.4 Comparison Between the Subtypes of Emerging Indirect
Speech Citations in Linguistics' Undergraduate and MA Theses*

Figure 7.4 illustrates that two of the emerging citation categories occur at a very low percentage in the undergraduate level and are nonexistent in the master's level. This has been the case for the ISI-Op citation (which was detected three times in only one undergraduate thesis) and for the ISI-I citation, which occurs in one other undergraduate thesis. Therefore, these two cases are unique forms of citation.

It was also observed that the ISNI-T is used in MA theses more than in undergraduate theses (62.5% vs 48.61%). This difference turns out to be statistically significant (Z=4.512; p=0.00). Following Swales (1990) and Sabaj and Páez (2011), it is possible to suggest that the writers of master's theses tend to show a weaker commitment or closeness to the message conveyed in the citation. Likewise, this type of indirect speech citation, as compared to the other emerging types, is the most frequent in both academic degrees; however, as has been pointed out, the percentage of use is higher in MA theses. In other words, among the indirect citations, which are argumentatively less strong than the direct citations because they are presented through the filter of the author's perspective, those with greater argumentative force are used in both academic degrees, but the percentage of use increases in master's theses. This suggests that, in linguistics, when researchers choose how to present citations in a communicative situation with the purpose of attributing knowledge to others, they distinctly choose the one with greater argumentative force to strengthen their work (Krestel, 2007; Ruiz, 2006; Smirnova, 2009).

Another citation type identified is ISI-T, which is significantly more frequent (Z=2.062; p=0.039) in the BA than in the MA corpus (41.81% versus 35.47%). Thus, we can assert that undergraduate researchers choose not to commit to the other voices presented, maybe because of a lower level of disciplinary knowledge compared to the master's students. In this sense, we might be able to conclude that the author introduces in their work non-integral

citations to attribute knowledge, but to which they do not necessarily commit or fully agree (Beke, 2008). From another perspective, non-integral citations are used to emphasize the message over its author (Castelló, 2007; Gallardo, 2010; Hyland, 2004a; Swales, 1990). Consequently, when combining integral and non-integral citations with direct and indirect citations, we can create a *continuum* across which the integral direct speech citation evidences a closer proximity to the author of the source text and the citation. On the other hand, non-integral indirect citations convey a further distance between text and author (Sabaj & Páez, 2011).

The citation ISNI-I is almost nonexistent in master's theses; in fact, it only occurred in a single thesis (four times). In undergraduate theses, this number increased to 33 and occurred in 4 of the 5 theses. According to Bolívar, Beke and Shiro (2010, p. 109), this happens when "the cited authors belonging to the discourse community' share the knowledge." Nonetheless, it is surprising to identify more confidence in shared knowledge in undergraduate theses than in MA theses. This may be due to students at lower educational levels assuming that readers and thesis evaluators already have vast knowledge.

Finally, we also identified the citation ISI-An. In this type of citation, we found a double paraphrasing of the citation and the author, since the author's name is replaced with a referent. This technique shows more manipulation of the citation on the part of the writer. This citation occurred six times more at the MA level than in the undergraduate theses.

Therefore, based on the analyses of Figures 7.1 and 7.2, it is worth recapping that in linguistics, subtypes of indirect speech emerged, while in philosophy, the opposite occurred; namely, all the citations that emerged were subtypes of direct speech. Following our theoretical framework, these results are interesting because the writers are the ones who decide how to position the other authors and how they include those to whom they attribute knowledge. This raises the question: why does a writer in a discipline and of a specific discourse community choose to attribute knowledge to another author in a particular way that's different from writers from another discourse community?

Figure 7.5 synthesizes the previous information so that the data can be visualized in a more globalized way. In the figure, we can see that in the undergraduate philosophy and in the undergraduate and postgraduate linguistics theses, the use of indirect speech citations is pervasive; that is, knowledge is attributed to other authors mostly by paraphrasing what they have said. Moreover, when analyzing each variable separately, starting from the academic level, it is possible to observe first that in the philosophy undergraduate theses, the number of indirect citations is almost double the amount of direct citations.
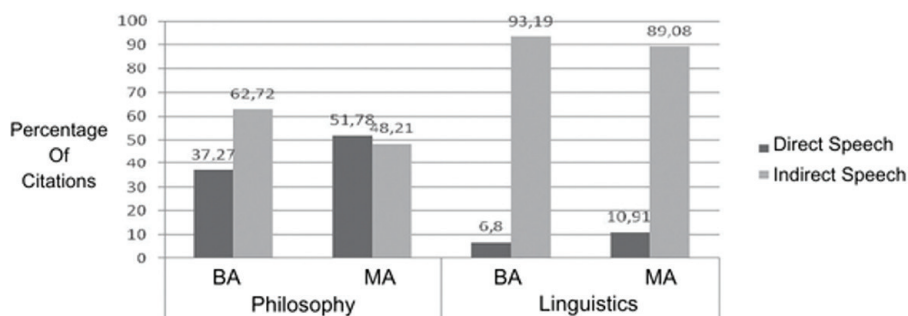
Figure 7.5 Comparison of the Use of Direct and Indirect Speech Between the Undergraduate and Master's Theses in Linguistics and Philosophy

On the contrary, in the MA theses, the percentage of their use is almost the same, with a slight tendency favoring the use of direct citations. This may be due to the type of work done in philosophy, where, generally, the object of study is either a particular author or the specific topics addressed by that author, thus inviting the direct voice of the cited author.

In undergraduate linguistics theses, the use of indirect speech citations dwarfs the use of direct speech citations, whose frequency of use is quite limited (93.19% vs. 6.8%), this difference being statistically significant ($Z=25.145$; $p=0.00$). This predominance slightly decreases in the linguistics MA theses, although the gap is still very wide: 89.08% of use of indirect citations as compared to 10.91% of direct ones (a statistically significant difference: $Z=32.918$; $p=0.00$). This suggests that when researchers attribute knowledge to others, they make the citation suit their own communicative situation in order to maintain only one enunciation, one deictic center, and one speaker.

As for the comparison between disciplines, we noted that in both disciplines, the use of direct and indirect speech citations was twice as much at the MA level. In the undergraduate philosophy theses, the total number of citations was 719, while in the MA theses, it was 1,456 (66.9%). On the other hand, there were 426 total citations in the undergraduate linguistics theses and 889 (67.6%) in the MA theses. Therefore, we can assert that at the master's level, writers from both disciplines try to support their ideas by bringing in the voices of other expert authors on the subject. In other words, the construction of disciplinary knowledge is supported by the contribution of other authors through attributing knowledge to experts rather than strictly through or from the researcher-writers themselves. The cited authors then act as justifiers (Hyland, 2004a); as a result, the more justification from experts, the more argumentative force is found in the thesis by means of the so-called

arguments of authority (Perelman & Olbrechts-Tyteca, 1989; Hyland, 2004a; Toulmin, 2007). In our study, argumentative soundness in linguistics is evidenced through attributing knowledge to others regarded as experts. Even though this happens in both disciplines, there is a difference between the two. In general terms, in philosophy theses, a citation is included but is not commented on. Conversely, in linguistics, every time a citation is included, it is commented on and put in relation to the work itself.

In this sense, we consider that in linguistics knowledge is not only attributed to others as a way of providing argumentative strength to one's own foundations, but there is also discursive interaction with the cited author. Consequently, in linguistics, the construction of knowledge is evidenced on the part of the one who employs the citation, drawing upon the prior ideas of other authors.

In summation, we can assert that the many different ways of citing help differentiate ways of constructing and communicating knowledge in diverse disciplinary communities. Likewise, although the selection of one or the other types of citation depends on the author's rhetorical purposes (Thompson, 2005), our findings indicate that such purposes are shared within a discipline; that is, there are common textual practices within one single disciplinary context of production.

First Person Use

Figure 7.6 shows the results of the analysis of the use of the first person in Spanish using verbal endings, pronouns, and adjectives typical of the grammatical first person. This will help complete the description of knowledge attribution in the theses on philosophy and linguistics at these two academic levels.
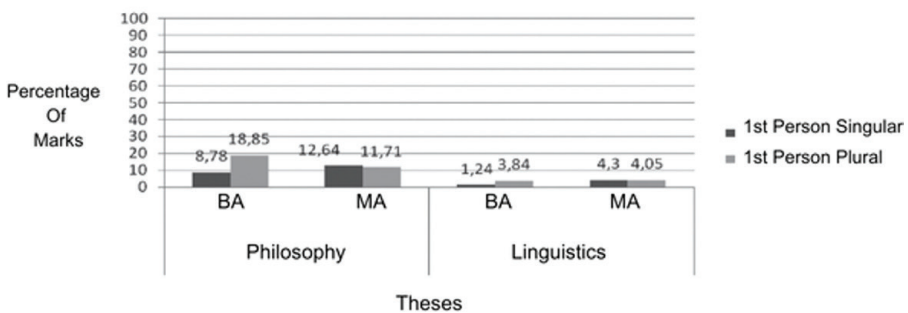
Figure 7.6 Use of the First Person in Undergraduate and Master's Linguistics and Philosophy Theses

Firstly, Figure 7.6 shows that in both disciplines the use of verbal forms in first-person plural predominates, which suggests that, in accord with the literature (Bolívar, Beke & Shiro, 2010; Montolío, 2000), authors seek the support of the scientific community to which they belong. In other words, the researcher attempts to demonstrate that there are other researchers who would say the same things they say. Every time researchers wish to attribute knowledge to themselves, they do not risk or compromise their personal reputation as they would if using the first-person singular. Instead, they join a group to seek the necessary support to engage since, as when using this first-person plural verbal form, they try to find legitimization within a group of experts. It is also worth remembering that all of the theses were single-authored. Secondly, first-person plural forms are often used to define concepts: "entendemos" (we believe), "hacemos referencia" (we refer to), among others. It also occurs when interpreting or comprehending some other linguistic aspects: "reconocemos" (we admit that); in other cases, these verbal forms structure the text and the procedures to be followed: "describiremos" (we will describe), "analizaremos" (we will analyze), among others. A closer analysis shows that all these concepts are actions that writers will perform, so it would make sense to use the first-person singular. However, instead, they prefer to use the first-person plural to protect their reputation and demonstrate support from their community of experts in order to gain more credibility for their arguments (Hyland, 2001).

With respect to the use of the first-person singular, which is an indicator of knowledge attribution to oneself, the data showed that it has a very low occurrence at both academic levels and in both disciplines. The use of the first-person singular in public gets compromised and, therefore, at risk; because of this, writers make use of this type of verbal form very few times. They would rather not expose, let alone compromise, their reputation as researchers (Calsamiglia & Tusón, 1999). This is probably because they do not feel they have the authority to do it, or simply because they favor objectivity rather than knowledge attribution to themselves.

Another salient feature was the occurrence of the first-person singular far more in philosophy than in linguistics theses. In fact, in linguistics theses, knowledge attribution to the authors themselves is almost nonexistent. In this sense, although the percentage of use of the first-person is quite low in both disciplines, proportionally, the authors of philosophy theses expose and put at risk their reputation much more than the linguistics authors. Thus, in the philosophy undergraduate theses the difference is 8.78% in philosophy versus 1.24% in linguistics, a statistically significant difference (Z=74.52; p=0.00); whereas in the philosophy MA theses is 12.64% versus 4.3% in

linguistics MA thesis, a variation that turns out to be statistically significant as well (Z=82.75; p=0.00). This suggests that philosophy writers compromise their reputations as researchers considerably more by attributing knowledge to themselves. What is more, undergraduate writers attribute knowledge to themselves much more than the master's writers. This conflicts with the findings from previous investigations (Samraj, 2008) that confirm that the higher the academic level, the more knowledge attribution to oneself is found.

Among the different ways of including the first-person, most frequently used in both disciplines and academic degrees is Sequence 6, i.e., the shortened first-person singular pronoun: "nos" [we/us]. This suggests, first, that objectivity is prioritized when presenting the data in all the analyzed theses and, second, the writer seeks the support from the scientific community to which they belong. It is interesting to note that in the linguistics MA theses, half of the first-person indicators are absent, which suggests that as the academic level increases, there is a greater degree of objectivity and a reduced inclusion of the author's own voice and self-attribution of knowledge.

Moreover, we found a more frequent use of the first person in philosophy as compared to linguistics, an idea that we previously commented on when analyzing the verbal forms of said grammatical persons. Overall, the analyses and discussion of the results suggest that there is a common pattern in both disciplines and academic levels.

Conclusions

Our first conclusion is that in the discourse communities from the social sciences and the humanities, there is evidence of statistical variation in the way writers attribute knowledge through citations in theses. This accords with Beke's (2008) claim that writers resort to various linguistic and discursive options in order to position their knowledge before a discourse community with established expectations. Consequently, in the philosophy theses, for instance, a variety of subtypes of direct speech citations emerged; on the contrary, in linguistics theses we found several types of indirect citations. Despite the differences in the use of citations, there is also evidence of similarities in knowledge attribution. For example, we found that knowledge attribution does not focus on the writers themselves, but that the writers instead favor others' knowledge and voices over their own. This is confirmed by the analysis of data from both disciplines and applies when the writers are master's students. At this academic level, writers might be more aware of the functions of others' voices in a text, so they might be using that knowledge in their advantage. One of these functions concerns the use of arguments by authority, whose

main purpose is to make the research findings more convincing. Through these types of citation practices, writers demonstrate knowledge of the topic and of academic conversations, thus giving credit to a greater body of knowledge at the master's level than at the undergraduate level. Similarly, using citations reinforces the writers' research since through the use of others' voices they communicate the theories that support their findings.

Another important point is that the thesis writers not only make use of citations to demonstrate knowledge of the topic, but also to construct knowledge. This is especially true in linguistics theses because the researchers use citations and then comment on their content, which emphasizes the argumentative force that the citations may have.

The emergence of citation categories seems to be a relevant finding because it yielded novel results. This is evidenced, for instance, in the philosophy theses. Samraj (2008) found that in philosophy theses, the knowledge attribution was almost completely given to the writers because the corpus they analyzed had very few or virtually no citations. This may be because Samraj's (2008) did not consider the citations that we included in our study under the label of Source Integral Citation, since they constitute the research object itself. However, in considering this category, the results of our study dramatically changed.

In regard to the use of first-person, the first-person plural is generally favored over the first-person singular, a choice that speaks of the writer's preference to give an account of the knowledge as part of a group whose main function is to legitimize the results presented. In other words, writers do not attribute knowledge to themselves in particular, but they attribute it to a group that they belong to and where knowledge is validated. From this, it follows that both in philosophy and linguistics, the writers engage less with the knowledge they convey; their stance toward knowledge attribution is taken on using a group approach, not on an individual basis.

Philosophy writers tend to attribute knowledge from a first-person perspective as compared to linguistics writers. In this sense, it can be asserted that among the philosophy theses, greater subjectivity is exhibited than in linguistics since authors of that discipline tend to communicate their theories, ideas, and results from a personal perspective or as an individual belonging to a group recognized by the discursive community.

Summing up, thesis writers turn to various discursive options to both construct disciplinary knowledge and persuade their readers that their work has validity and that it should be accepted.

This study contributes to linguistics and, particularly, to discourse analysis, because as we mentioned earlier, there are no significant developments in the

study of the analyzed genre. The existing studies, for example, Samraj (2008), focused on the writers' positionality only in theses introductions. In other studies such as Bolívar, Beke, and Shiro (2010), this positionality is described in a different genre, the scientific research article. Even though the analysis of the use of the first person has been studied a little further, it has not been studied as a mechanism that indicates knowledge attribution in the context of academic discourse.

Future research should consider the study and analysis of the ratio between the length of the works cited and the length of the thesis because, after reading the theses, we observed that a great portion of the philosophy theses in both academic levels contain a considerable number of sources, which in some cases occupy one or more pages. On the other hand, it is important to triangulate our findings with interviews of students and their thesis advisors in order to know, for example, whether the subtypes of emerging citations showing a very low percentage of occurrence are due to the students' lack of knowledge or to drafting errors or if they are actually indicative of the discursive community to which they belong. In this study, we adopted a descriptivist stance; however, if the results were to have a pedagogical application, the emergence or rejection of certain subtypes on the part of the disciplinary community should be investigated. In that sense, we assert that any pedagogical application concerning thesis writing derived from this study possesses great value because it would consider the disciplinary differences.

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Reflection

The development of this study and subsequent publications were motivated by different factors. Firstly, it is necessary to point out that knowledge attribution has been defined (in brief) as a mechanism that evidences the interaction that the author of a text, either oral or written, establishes with other authors by means of the use of citational mechanisms (e.g., direct, indirect, etc.). Clearly, there are ways to indicate to whom the creation of knowledge or knowledge of a subject is attributed; that is, the stance of the author of the text expressed through pronouns. There are also other strategies of the rhetorical-discursive type by means of which authors reveal their participation in the construction and communication of knowledge.

Citing allows authors to bring voices to the text using ideas and information from other authors through following the principle of acknowledging the work of others and their contributions to a certain field. Citing helps to retrieve and update other authors' voices as well as the positionality of their ideas. Granted, the citation mechanism is not homogeneous; citations are a part of a broader system of attribution which is composed of various sources all of which show the many different ways the argumentative force and integration of knowledge that the author of a particular text constructs or communicates.

At the time this article was released, there were no other publications that gave an account of the sources employed for citing nor that empirically

investigated the citational techniques of theses in the humanities. What began as de-structured intuitions and observations grew into the construction of a corpus made up of BA theses written at a Chilean university. This corpus helped both confirm those initial observations and come up with new categories with which to investigate citational practices further. This study opened up the possibility of research into potentially new categories of citational mechanisms supported by and subordinated to the particular genre in which it takes place, a practice that, in turn, is defined according to the discipline, and the historic, social, and cultural contexts where it circulates or in the discursive community to which it belongs.

– René Venegas

8 Reading and Writing in the Common Basic Cycle (CBC): A Memoir of Experiences in a Semiology Course

María Cecilia Pereira

Over the past decades, the Semiology course at Universidad de Buenos Aires, led by Dr. E. Narvaja de Arnoux, has evolved significantly in its approach to teaching reading and writing. Initially introduced in 1985 as "Semiology and Discourse Analysis," the course aimed to foster theoretical reflection on languages and textual analysis within the first year in the social sciences and humanities undergraduate majors. Early challenges included updating faculty training to align with emerging discourse analysis theories and addressing gaps in students' reading and writing skills. In response, a research project was launched to diagnose and address these issues, leading to the development of a 'Reading and Writing Workshop' integrated into the curriculum. This workshop, now a mandatory part of the course, focuses on improving students' analytical skills through diverse texts and discourses. Ongoing research and pedagogical adjustments have expanded the course's scope, including collaborations with regional universities and continued faculty development to enhance teaching practices in reading and writing.

Over two decades, the course of Semiology, part of the Common Basic Cycle (CBC) of Universidad de Buenos Aires and led by Dr. E. Narvaja de Arnoux, developed a systematic approach for teaching reading and writing.[1] This approach was based on research and theoretical discussions of the practices that are central for student learning at the beginning of higher education. This work reviews the story of how this space was collectively built.[2]

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1   Translators' note: The first year of studies at the Universidad de Buenos Aires, Argentina, which is introductory and preparatory in nature. It includes some subjects common to the entire university, along with others that are specific to different degree programs.

2   This memoir was part of the panel "Teaching and Learning in Higher Education Institutions in Relation to Reading, Writing, and Oral Practices" and specifically reviews aspects related to the panel's theme.

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First Stage: Retaking the Critical Line in Language Studies

This course started in 1985 under the name "Semiology and Discourse Analysis" as part of the initial requirements for programs in the social sciences and humanities. Its main objective was—and still is—to promote:

- Theoretical reflection on languages and discursivity, and
- Textual analysis from the perspective of the sciences of language.

The first period of working on the course was marked by two institutional issues that needed to be addressed as a result of the context surrounding the course when it began. On the one hand, we had to deal with several different sections largely taught by novice instructors who were trained in grammatical reflection and in the description of phenomena characteristic to sentence-based linguistic analysis, or under the framework of literary theory and criticism.[3] The majority of the instructors did not have previous academic training with textual problems, the connection between discourse practices and social practices, or the contributions made by discourse analysis to understanding historical processes. This situation led us—during this initial era developing the course—to implement permanent updates and reflections for the faculty, who during annual colloquiums advanced their initial training on the contributions of the sciences of language to understanding social discourses.

Faculty training was connected to a society which was moving away from a period of dictatorship and therefore during those years was very committed to public universities. The expectation of both faculty and students was that the university should resume the educational practices with the quality and critical thinking of the pre-dictatorship period. In our case, we had to recover the research traditions on diverse languages, which had been crystalized in a journal whose objects of study ranged from comics to political discourse—the journal *Lenguajes*,[4] where Oscar Traversa, Oscar Steinberg, Eliseo Verón, and Sofía

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3   Some instructors conducted studies on discursive problems or about different languages, but those were the minority.

4   The journal *Lenguajes*, published by the Argentine Association of Semiotics, began publication in 1974. Juan Carlos Indart, Oscar Steinberg, Oscar Traversa, and Eliseo Verón formed its editorial committee. The journal defined its specific field as that of the "social languages," the field of social production of meaning, with a particular emphasis on "mass communication." Against the so-called "sociology of culture" or "mass communication research," *Lenguajes* claimed that "The so-called 'cultural' phenomena cannot be considered as isolated domains. If, instead of using one of these expressions, we talk about the social production of meaning, it is because we think that meaning-making … cannot be isolated from the functioning of society as a whole" (*Lenguajes*, Editorial Committee, 1974, p. 8). In this context, they developed a critique of what they considered four reductionisms: contentism, aestheticism, technologism, and economism.

Fisher, among others, participated. It was also important to recover the first theoretical outlines on discourse analysis in Argentina, developed in 1973–74 by the faculty from the General Linguistics course, led by Luis Prieto, from the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters.

This double demand, with the theoretical framework of these courses at its core, put the initial focus of the faculty on elaborating materials in the form of booklets. These booklets presented a selection and adaptation of theoretical texts that, in turn, put instructors and students in contact with the discursive universe of the sciences of language, along with proposed examples and exercises. Among the latter, we favored texts reclaiming the historical path brutally interrupted by the dictatorship. Both were aimed at supporting the faculty's labor and were useful for conducting a critical review of the recent past to recover the different traditions of resistance through analytical tools developed in the 1970s and the 1980s. As for the study of literature, at the time it was preferred to work with primary sources and a selection that promoted an ideological reading of the material, seeking to deconstruct the discourse's own mechanisms.

This task involved not only selecting appropriate literature but also adapting certain sources, translating texts for internal circulation and, lastly, disseminating the theoretical frameworks with which we wanted to work among other contexts and national universities so that the conversation on language and discursivity could also be held beyond our course.[5]

In broad terms, the same criteria are still being applied. Comics, journalistic, political, and historical discourses, and manifestos are included for students to read and analyze. The selection of this range of discourses is based on the idea that social sciences and humanities students—who are the target of our course—need to be readers of more than just academic discourses—included in the theoretical literature of the course. Importantly, they also need to be readers of social discourses relevant to studying various disciplines, including historical documents, media content, and cultural texts. These are essential for training future graduates to be critical readers in their respective fields.

New Challenges Posed by Reading and Writing Issues

This first period of work on this initiative, between 1985 and 1987, was very rich in discussions and debates, especially regarding research. Its challenges are now a matter of colorful discussions with our current faculty, many of whom were

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5   In these first years, alongside disseminating literature, the course's faculty taught training courses at the Argentine universities of Morón, Mar del Plata, San Juan, La Pampa, and Comahue.

our first students back in those days. However, despite the positive valuation of our efforts, the work in the classrooms forced us to deal with problems for which we were not sufficiently prepared. They were mainly problems with reading literature along with writing problems arising from exams.

With the aim of finding appropriate answers to such problems, at the same time that the continuous faculty training process took place—in 1987—part of the faculty began the first research project.[6] The goals were to elaborate the tools necessary to diagnose our students' problems with reading and writing and to develop a framework for a pedagogical proposal to address reading and writing as practices in higher education.

In theoretical terms, the contributions from cognitive psychology that dealt with reading and writing processes were, at that moment, insufficient to approach complex texts. In our field, most studies were oriented towards early language acquisition and the dominant paradigms did not provide many answers to guide the complex cognitive and discursive processes faced by novice university students. The contributions from the science of education were not very specific; we believed that the text comprehension techniques, which in those years were dominant in the field—e.g., synaptic pictures, content diagrams, concept maps, and underlining—should be complemented with specific knowledge related to the texts that students must read and produce in their courses. At this level of schooling, however, reading and writing could not be taught in an exclusively *operational* way. On the contrary, we believed that they should be supported by reflections on practice and with dialogue that utilized theories which describe the socio-discursive functionalities of the texts read and written by university students. Lastly, from the domain of empirical research, there were no exhaustive diagnoses systematically describing students' difficulties. Based on these aspects, the first research project was aimed at defining those difficulties, categorizing the problems, and starting to systematize the ways of collaboratively solving them while broadening existing approaches and theoretical frameworks.

In those years, the issue of reading and writing in higher education was addressed, in the CBC, in an initiative from the University Extension Division called "Study Skills Workshop." Students of all the programs had the option to attend this space, led by faculty from science of education and semiology. As a result of the previously mentioned research project, they incorporated

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6   UBACyT project "Applying principles of textual linguistics and psycholinguistics to reading and writing instruction in high school and higher education." Principal Investigator: Prof. Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux. Members: Mariana di Stefano, Analía Reale, and María Cecilia Pereria. Executing Unit: Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, Institute of Linguistics, Universidad de Buenos Aires. Project No.: UBACyT FI-031. Years: 1987-1989.

contributions from textual linguistics, linguistic theory of enunciation, and psycholinguistics into the existing paradigm of study skills. We assessed the descriptions provided by these disciplines and analyzed the processes of production and reception of academic discourse in order to develop a pedagogical approach that would promote reflection on the discursive features of texts. This initiative also recovered the long-standing tradition that workshops had in our country, especially the projects produced for other educational levels or focused on other genres, among which we want to emphasize Nicolás Bratosevich's work and that of the group Grafein—formed by, among others, Maite Alvarado. The work of the research team also resulted in the elaboration of pedagogical materials for students (di Stefano et al., 1987) and the activity's name being changed to "Reading and Writing Workshop."

Additionally, the results of the first diagnoses and the theoretical reflection which emerged from its analysis led us to conclude that there was a need for this optional, extracurricular workshop space to be progressively incorporated into the course of Semiology. That is, the curricular space within the Common Basic Cycle focused on reflecting about language; in that way, the workshops were to be framed within a disciplinary field and be mandatory for all the students of social sciences and humanities programs, not only for those students who had serious difficulties. The research reports submitted to the administration of the Common Basic Cycle enabled the implementation of the workshop space within the course—in 1990, one of the university's site was selected and the course was administered to all of its students. The scope of this experience grew every year, as well as the number of university sites where the workshop was taught. This process ended in 2001, when the CBC assigned six credit hours to the course. Since then, all our students have a Reading and Writing Workshop, taught in parallel to the lectures, but in smaller groups for a more personalized experience.

While the development of this workshop was occurring, it is important to note that the 1990s were marked by the growth of existing research initiatives and the elaboration of specific pedagogical and reading materials on the problems and topics addressed in the course. On the one hand, we began the publication of, among other works, what today is known as *Enciclopedia Semiológica* [Semiology Encyclopedia], whose first volume was *Paratexto*, by Maite Alvarado, published in 1994. It was a joint publication by the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters and the Semiology faculty of the Common Basic Cycle. This collection, which is still published by EUDEBA, now has thirteen volumes, some of which have been written by our faculty-researchers, such as the work *La Explicación* [The Explanation], by Bertha Zamudio and Ana Atorresi.

On the other hand, new research projects were also initiated during this period. A group led by Bertha Zamudio and later by Roberto Marafioti studied argumentation and its teaching.[7] Another interdisciplinary team, formed by researchers from the Institute of Linguistics (Faculty of Philosophy and Letters) and Psychology faculty of the CBC, resumed the studies of reading and writing problems experienced by new students.[8] This work, as well as subsequent projects led by E. Narvaja de Arnoux,[9] allowed us to design tools which focused on certain discursive aspects used for assessing students' performance and to define more precisely the existing difficulties of students in order to test different strategies for solving them.

Contributions of Reading and Writing Research

Some studies addressed students' *note taking*. They examined how previously trained students recorded information in reading notes of polemic argumentative texts. In their notes, some students selected excerpts that allowed them to recall the argumentative structure, while others developed a narrative, demonstrating two ways of representing the texts in question (Arnoux & Alvarado, 1997). Additionally, after comparing the behavior of more skilled with less skilled students, they found that the former were able to develop a complete note entry, displaying confronted positions through various graphic tools, while the latter stopped writing the entry note in the parts that were most controversial—the densest parts of the text. This work allowed us to

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7   UBACYT U016 project "The role of social representations in learning argumentation for the development of critical thinking." Principal investigator (PI): Bertha Zamudio; Co-PI: Roberto Marafioti. Three-year Project (2004-2007). UBACYT–U017 "Rhetorical skills and critical thinking in learning argumentation." UBACyT Two-year project UO17, RS 5027/2000. UBACYT–AU14 project "Self-reflective learning of argumentative skills." Universidad de Buenos Aires. PI: Bertha Zamudio. RS 3435/2000. UBACYT AU-01 Project "The impact of orality in the development of argumentative skills." Universidad de Buenos Aires. PI: Bertha Zamudio. Project No.: CB001, File 3880/97, Appendix 8.1. (1998-1999).

8   1992/-94. UBACyT Project "Reading and composing programs in the first year of undergraduate. An Interdisciplinary psychological-semiological approach." PI: Prof. Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux and BA Jorge Freiría. Executing Unit: Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, Institute of Linguistics, Universidad de Buenos Aires. Project No.: UBACyT CB-005.

9   1998/2000. UBACyT Project "Reading and writing: psycholinguistic processes and social practices." PI: Prof. Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux. Executing Unit: Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, Institute of Linguistics, Universidad de Buenos Aires. Project No.: UBACyT: TL-02 1995/-97. UBACyT Project: "Impact of metadiscourse operations in the processes of reading comprehension and writing production." PI: Prof. Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux. Executing Unit: Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, Institute of Linguistics, Universidad de Buenos Aires. Project No.: UBACyT CB-002.

identify those parts of the text which posed the most difficult grammatical challenges for students, which were those related to the domain of negation. In those segments, highly skilled readers unfolded their notes and went back through them; the other students, in turn, misinterpreted the text or excluded those parts from their notes (Arnoux & Alvarado, 1998).

The study of *underlining* of argumentative texts revealed a tendency to select segments that, as a whole, enabled a rather expository or narrative representation of the text organization, as if students thought of it as a textbook (Arnoux & Alvarado, 1999).

Other studies on reading issues requested students to write presentations about the sources read. On that occasion, we assessed *the impact of previous knowledge.* Despite working as a facilitator in some cases, when previous knowledge differed from what the complex argumentative source was presenting, students tended to project their previous knowledge without considering the new information provided by the text, thus misinterpreting the sources (di Stefano & Pereira, 1999).

In all cases, reading was assessed upon *writing*, but we also conducted *evaluations focused on writing itself*. Research on the *student notes genre* uncovered differences between notes from a narrative text and notes from expositive texts (Arnoux & Alvarado, 1999).

Other studies were centered on *source integration*, a common practice in university. A part of this work was focused on students with little past training in producing expositive-argumentative texts based on readings. We examined the difficulties for assigning enunciative responsibility in polyphonic discourses and the problems for building argumentative orientations. In terms of sequential structuring, we found a tendency by students to incorporate excerpts of the assigned texts without providing an articulation of the propositions therein or indicating hierarchical relations among them. Moreover, in general, the writings did not suggest the existence of a textual plan guiding global organization and revision processes, or previous knowledge on genre models (Arnoux et al., 1996).

A subsequent investigation also related to source integration showed how students with important previous training achieved integration through the transformations demanded by the activity, while less-trained students summarized the texts separately or integrated segments from one source into another with no further reformulation (Arnoux et al., 2001). This research showed the impact of previous school experience on students—in some cases, they stuck to the requested genre (in the exam, an encyclopedic entry) and were extremely careful about introducing previous knowledge based on "objective" criteria. In other cases, the student showed a strong presence, polemicizing

even with the information from the sources and entering knowledge uncontrollably (Arnoux, Nogueira, & Silvestri, 2002).

Another set of research focused on *the impact of the students' social representations in their reading and writing practices*. The representations of the task of reading a corpus were specially examined. Students tended to read in a mostly decontextualized manner, and were prone to accumulate data indiscriminately, to fail to establish relations between texts, and to add information rather than confronting or comparing it. These attitudes could not be linked to lack of previous knowledge on the texts' topics or ignorance of their authors. Instead, it was shown that students thought that reading a corpus did not imply establishing relations between texts or between text and context (di Stefano & Pereira, 1997). Regarding the representations related to writing practices in university, the study found that students were extremely concerned about creating arguments to dissent from a read text, indicating their perception of written language as the bearer of unquestionable authority. Contrastively, formal, graphic, or orthographic aspects were not found to be an area of concern (di Stefano & Pereira, 1997).

Teaching

These studies oriented the task of teaching reading and writing in the workshops and allowed us to address teacher training, the development and reformulation of material for teaching reading and writing, and the elaboration of a conceptual framework for approaching these topics.[10]

Regarding this framework, research led us to incorporate into our pedagogical approach the contributions on reading and writing made by different disciplines, that is:

1. Those contributions that consider reading and writing as *cognitive processes*—cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics—and that enable a reflection on the planning and revision processes, among other concerns.
2. At the same time, the contributions made by discourse analysis, enunciation theory, and argumentation theory, on the one hand, and by social psychology and sociology, on the other hand—disciplines that all conceive of reading and writing as *social practices*. In order to do this, we sought to:
   a. Consider the particular features displayed by these practices in the institutional contexts where they are used. In the case of

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10   Among others, di Stefano, & Pereira (1995), Arnoux et al. (1996), and di Stefano & Pereira (2001).

reading, we worked with extensive corpora of disciplinary texts, including diverse texts. For writing, we focused on the production of texts derived from previous readings, with the aim of developing skills for complementing and confronting sources.

b. Consider the discursive dimension over the propositional one. This involves changing the traditional order of topics: we began by reading argumentations, where the speaker's subjectivity and stance were staged through traces that are more evident for students, and then we continued writing and reading presentations where the writer often hides their perspective in order to create a sense of objectivity.

c. Make explicit the students' social representations in order to intervene in them when they create obstacles for understanding or producing texts.

d. Include the sociological and historical reflection in the contents of the workshop, since they allow understanding the logic of scientific discourse production in a field, as well as the changes and conventions governing it through time (Arnoux, di Stefano, & Pereira, 2002; di Stefano & Pereira, 2001, 2004).

In relation to faculty training, our course teaches 5000 students. Therefore, expanding the activities of the workshop demanded a significant effort to orient the faculty training towards the teaching approaches that were being developed. Given that undergraduate programs do not have a specific space for reflecting about reading and writing practices, the initial efforts involved professors who not only were a part of the research team but also taught internal colloquiums, oriented the observation activities of the courses, and created guidelines for faculty to know how to address the teaching activities.

Instructor training continues up to today, because new instructors are incorporated, but we also have a specific graduate space for systematizing this important form of training. In 1996, the UNESCO Chair on Reading and Writing in Latin America was established, Universidad de Buenos Aires joined its regional network and, afterwards, implemented the Specialization Program in Reading and Writing Processes as part of an existing program of the Master's degree in discourse analysis. Both initiatives were under the authority of the Faculty of Philosophy and Letters and directed by Dr. E. Narvaja de Arnoux. Other national universities have also joined the regional network (such as La Pampa, Comahue, Rosario, Tucumán, Cuyo, and Córdoba) and other undergraduate, postgraduate, and MA programs have been created, like the Master's Program in Reading and Writing at Universidad de Cuyo.

The Current Period

Nowadays, the space of Semiology at the CBC has expanded and diversi-fied—there are now three faculty groups, one led by R. Marafioti, another by A. Rubione and the last one by E. Narvaja de Arnoux, as well as many research teams focused on reading and writing. Beginning in 2001, with the develop-ment of its workshops, a change in the global contents of the course began to brew in the courses taught by Narvaja de Arnoux. Indeed, the studies and the institutional demand related to students' reading and writing problems led us to prioritize the reflection about oral and written codes, thus adjusting the articulation between the lectures and the workshops.[11]

As for the faculty, many of them are part of research teams, study or stud-ied in these same graduate programs, and the youngest ones are either un-dergraduate research assistants for faculty who teach courses related to the sciences of language or instructor-researchers who conduct action research in their own courses. All of them actively bring their contribution to course planning, general meetings of the campus and faculty, as well as conferences and internal colloquium. Some of them have formed work teams in their teaching location, which have led to publications;[12] others work in our new research line, focused on transfer: the articulation between secondary school and university, the issue of teachers' training,[13] and the problems of reading and writing in graduate school.[14]

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11   The space for audiovisual language was postponed to subsequent curricular mo-ments in each program.

12   Di Stefano, M. (Ed.) (2006). *Metáforas en uso* [Metaphors in use]. Biblos; Klein, I. (Ed.) (2007). *El taller del escritor universitario* [The university writer workshop]. Prometeo; Reale, A., & Vitale, A. (1995). *La argumentación. Una aproximación retórico-discursiva* [Argu-mentation. A rhetorical-discursive approach]. Ars Editorial; Vitale, A. (2002). *El estudio de los signos. Peirce y Saussure* [The study of signs. Peirce and Saussure]. EUDEBA; Zamudio, B., Rolando, L., & Ascione, A. (Eds.) (2002). *Argumentación, pensamiento crítico y cognición* [Argu-mentation, critical thinking, and cognition]. Oficina de Publicaciones, CBC, Universidad de Buenos Aires; among others.

13   2004/2006. UBACyT Project of Social Urgency "Towards a systematic teaching of reading and writing in high school and in the first year of the teaching education programs in areas with vulnerable populations in the City of Buenos Aires and its surroundings." PI: Prof. Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux. Executing Unit: Faculty of Philosophy and Letters, Insti-tute of Linguistics, Universidad de Buenos Aires. Project No.: UBACyT F-703. 2005-2007. Project for Supporting the Development of Secondary Education "Reading and writing in high school: Design and implementation of differential lesson plans." Program of Secondary Education Enhancement, Ministry of Education of Argentina. PI: Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux.

14   2005-2008. PICT Project "Writing and knowledge production in graduate educa-tion". Agencia Nacional de Promoción Científica y Tecnológica [Agencia Nacional de Promoción Científica y Tecnológica], SECyT. Project No.: 04/14084. PI: Prof. Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux.

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Reflection

The article—with the omissions and constraints imposed by the brevity of the work—narrates the story of a semiology course of the Common Basic Cycle at Universidad de Buenos Aires, led by Dr. Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux. The course began in 1985 and was still running in 2006 when this article was presented at Universidad Nacional del Centro.

The article focuses on approaches to reading and writing practices, something that was a challenge for the university in the context of the return to democracy and that continues to be central to the critical development of young adults. The research activities, development, and teaching described in the article helped to strengthen the reflection on discourse and gave birth to courses and workshops that continued to be updated and used in proposals in other universities' graduate and undergraduate programs in the country and across Latin America. The article also describes the important pedagogical material and research produced by the course's faculty, who always strove to articulate theory and practices regarding teaching education, research, and students.

With time came new developments, so it is appropriate to complement this commentary with the proposals that respond to current cultural changes. That semiology course, today led by Dr. Mariana di Stefano, has faced several challenges over the intervening period. Reading practices have diversified and the academic discourse that young adults need to master in university life is increasingly distanced from their everyday interacting modes and their communicative practices. As well, new technologies demand approaches that take the specificities of multimodal discursivity into account and that address the specific conditions of production and circulation.

These and other developments have caused faculty to deepen the study of discursive practices from a conceptual framework that takes into account the

contributions from discourse analysis and glottopolitics, a framework that enables the questioning of social discourses, genres, and expected norms, while also considering the historical dimensions and the political values. Recent studies from this same team of researchers also deserve to become part of the global synthesis of new teaching and development proposals.

– María Cecilia Pereira

9 Teaching and Learning at the Undergraduate Level: Knowledge, Ideas, and Writing Practices in Academic Contexts

Alicia Vázquez, Ivone Jakob, Luisa Pelizza, and Pablo Rosales

The objective of this paper is to share a series of studies that we have carried out over the past ten years about students' written production and its relationship with learning at the undergraduate level. We have been engaged in a recursive research process in which the initial findings led to the postulation of new research questions that allowed us to continue the investigation of other dimensions related to the same problem. In this way, we were able to obtain a more ample, complete and complex perspective of the issue of undergraduate writing and learning. Results indicate that the relationships between writing and learning are not straight, linear or simple and that it is necessary, from a pedagogical perspective, to create new instructional contexts that encourage students to develop their writing skills and, at the same time, write with the purpose of learning.

Disciplines like cognitive psychology, linguistics and psycholinguistics have examined the effects of writing on learning, the processes that students go through when writing, the features of students' texts and the discursive strategies that students use to produce them. Findings of studies within and across these research areas have contributed to the design of teaching strategies aimed at improving students' performance in the production of academic texts (Carlino, 2005; Mazzacaro & Oliva, 2008; Morales, Tona, & Tonos, 2007; Peralta, Dell Elicine, & Nothstein, 2008; Valente & Moyano, 2006; Vélez et al., 2007; Vázquez & Jakob, 2007, among others).

Several studies have shown that the writer's internal and external conditions affect the quality of the processes and products of academic writing; to name only some examples, the type of writing task requested; the type of text demanded by the task; the rhetorical situation; thematic knowledge; knowledge

about written language; cognitive strategies; students' representations of the task and the way in which they approach it; and teachers and students' conceptions about reading and writing and their relationship with learning (Applebee, 1984; Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987; Hayes & Flower, 1980; Langer, in O'Looney, et al., 1989; Tynjälä, 1998; Vázquez & Miras, 2004; White & Bruning, 2005).

In light of the above contributions, this paper aims to share four studies developed over the last ten years about writing and its relationship with learning at the undergraduate level. The research process has been recursive in nature, in which the initial findings led to the formulation of new research questions that allowed for an examination of other dimensions of the issue of writing and learning at the undergraduate level to obtain a wider, more complete and complex perspective.[1] Here, we share the questions that gave rise to the studies, the designs developed for their investigation, and the ways in which the results were interpreted.

The first three studies took place in natural undergraduate classroom environments where disciplinary contents were taught. Participants in the studies were students of different cohorts who were enrolled in the third-year course 'Didactics I' of the educational psychology program at Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto. Only a few modifications were made to the composition of the student groups for the purposes of this research. The fourth study included the teachers from the same program. While it is acknowledged that the learning tasks that require students to compose a text are based on reading reference sources, our research was focused on written production.

Effects of Writing Academic Texts on Learning Scientific Concepts (Study 1)

Studies that have addressed the relationship between writing and learning argue that writing can promote learning, as long as the writer engages in the higher-level cognitive processes that allow them to delimit, produce and refine knowledge instead of simply reproducing information that is already available (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1987).

Tynjälä, Mason and Lonka (2001) observe that previous theories considered the content that was readily available in the writer's long-term memory. However, from a learning standpoint, it can be argued that writers may reproduce or restructure their own mental representations based on incoming information from texts.

Based on this idea, the initial research sought to evaluate how writing academic texts influences learning scientific concepts (study 1).[2] For this purpose, two groups of 36 students each were exposed to different conditions, all of whom were enrolled in the third-year course 'Didactics I' of the educational psychology program at Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto. One group (group A) carried out a series of writing tasks on topics that were listed on the course description, while the other (group B) participated in commentary and oral discussions around the same topics. Students of both groups worked independently on a writing task before and after the treatment period. In all cases but the first implementation,[3] writing tasks involved the integration of information selected from the source material. Thus, the activity entailed, or, at least encouraged, participants reading multiple sources so they could create their own texts, that is, operations that are typically involved in discourse synthesis (Segev-Miller, 2004; Spivey, 1996; Spivey & King, 1989; Vázquez, 2008).

The data was exposed to a categorical analysis that allowed for a quantitative treatment. The purpose was to detect conceptual change between students' pre- and post-treatment written products. As concepts were extensively developed in each student's text, an initial decision to segment the data was to identify and define *units of linguistic-conceptual significance*, that is, a textual unit of variable length that encompasses different levels of linguistic structure (phrase, sentence, paragraph) and that contains definitions and thematic developments linked to the conceptual axes pre-established in the writing tasks.

To compare the pre- and post-treatment writing task, the treatment of the concepts of *literacy*[4] and *acquisition of the alphabetic system* were examined, both of which were developed in 72 student texts, 36 of each group (A and B), 18 corresponding to the pre-treatment writing task and 18 to the post-treatment writing task. The categories used to define each concept were constructed on the basis of the related, specialized literature and the units of linguistic-conceptual significance developed while analyzing the pre- and post-treatment writing tasks. Scores (0-3) were established for each category and the highest value was considered the best score, that is, the response that illustrated the best conceptual level. The categories are shown in Tables 9.1 and 9.2.

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2   For a complete version of the study, see Vázquez, Pelizza, and Jakog (2001).

3   The first task had a diagnostic function of inquiring into students' previous knowledge in relation to the topics under study.

4   Translators' note: In the context of this article, 'literacy' serves as the most approximate translation of the concept of 'alfabetización' in Spanish, which, as inferred from the criteria included in table 1, the authors characterize as reading and writing processes that respond to a rhetorical situation, fulfill a communicative purpose, involve the control of notation forms and communication technology, and are subjected to broader socio-historical conditions.

Table 9.1 System of Categories and Indicators for the Concept of Literacy

Dimension	Categories	Indicators	Score
Literacy	Complete description	Definition of reading and writing processes. Communicative function and discursive situation. Control of notational forms and communication technology and/or discussion of the concept. Socio-historical perspective.	3
	Incomplete description	Control of notational forms and communication technology and/or discussion of the concept. Socio-historical perspective.	2
	General competences and abilities	Knowledge of reading and writing. General communicative competence. General competences (another knowledge).	1
	No answer		0

Table 9.2 System of Categories and Indicators for the Concept of Acquisition of the Writing System

Dimension	Categories	Indicators	Score
Acquisition of the writing system	Constructivist model complete description	General constructivist thesis and description of the process of acquisition of the alphabetic system.	4
	Constructivist model partial description	General constructivist thesis or description of the process of acquisition of the alphabetic system.	3
	Constructivist model incipient description	General statements without specification of the constructivist thesis nor of the process of acquisition of the alphabetic system.	2
	Environmentalist/ maturationist	Ambientalist and maturationist conceptions.	1
	No answer		0

The comparison between pre- and post-treatment writing tasks revealed that both groups made considerable progress in incorporating new concepts, which means that no specific gains were identified for the group that participated in successive and numerous writing tasks. Still, it was not possible to claim that a complete conceptual organization had taken place in all cases, but rather that students' previous ideas, which first surfaced during the pre-treatment stage, were restructured to varying degrees throughout the process of the experiment. These results provided evidence that the relations between writing and learning are far from direct, linear and simple, as shown by the contradictory findings obtained by numerous studies (Rosales & Vázquez, 1999).

The quantitative analysis of students' texts that was aimed at estimating the influence of writing in learning made it possible to identify other dimensions of the problem and repurpose the initial research questions. Among the dimensions of the research issue that were eventually cut out were first, those related to the linguistic-conceptual aspects of students' texts (study 2); secondly, those concerning students' approaches to the writing task and to the chances that they may change them through instruction (study 3), and lastly, those related to the instructional contexts in which writing tasks are required (study 4). Each of these aspects will be discussed below.

Quality of the Text and Learning (Study 2)

Considering the findings of study 1, it is legitimate to ask whether students are capable of enacting the linguistic and conceptual procedures necessary to write their own texts by drawing content from source texts, as they were requested to do in study 1. It was expected that the analysis of students' written productions would shed light on this question.

Thus, the following question arose for study 2: what are the features of students' texts when they are asked to compose a text by using operations of selection, organization and integration that are typical of discourse synthesis? (Segev-Miller, 2004; Spivey, 1996; Spivey & King, 1989; Vázquez, 2008).

To answer this question, a qualitative analysis of 12 texts, 6 from group A and 6 from group B, randomly selected from the set of 36 post-treatment writing tasks of study 1 was carried out using a set of pre established dimensions and categories (Vázquez, 2005) that articulated conceptual and linguistic aspects; these included the text's intrinsic quality, that is, its visible structure and textual resources, and the text's linguistic construction as resulting from the use of source texts, which considered literal reproduction and/or reformulation.[5]

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5   The system of dimensions and categories presented in this study is a reformulation

The analysis revealed two levels of textual organization: fragmented texts—the majority—of which students generally reproduce in order to juxtapose information, and integrated texts, in which students achieve more advanced levels of linguistic-conceptual elaboration of information (Vázquez & Jakob, 2006, 2007).[6]

Fragmented texts are characterized by students' literal reproduction of source texts or by paraphrasing in the form of cumulative juxtaposition of information; in them, a textual structure is barely outlined. In terms of thematic progression, there are frequent disconnects between the paragraphs and even within them. There is a fragmented treatment of certain issues, which are addressed in a discontinuous fashion throughout the text without making explicit the necessary links. Frequently, the transition to the conclusion is introduced by a word that does not logically correspond to what was developed in previous parts of the text, which means that the last paragraph, which should serve as the conclusion of the work, instead presents a new problem that was not discussed in the paper previously. Strategies intended to lend coherence to the text are not always well used, for instance, anaphoric references are affected by the lack of agreement between the references and the pronominal forms used to replace them.

Integrated texts present two levels of integration: partial and complete integration. Partially integrated texts present problems with the organization and the treatment of the information. Regarding the organization, they show discursive disruptions, either between the constituent parts of the text or between consecutive paragraphs. In what pertains to the treatment of information, they present conceptual errors and problems related to linguistic-conceptual processing of the kind described above for fragmented texts. The biggest difference between fragmented and partially integrated texts is the predominant use of paraphrasing and the sometimes successful attempts to establish links that ensure the thematic progression of the text in the former.

Texts that are fully integrated reorganize the information contained in the sources in a clear structure; the content of each of the parts matches the structure of an academic text. Transition paragraphs between different topics allow the ongoing flow of the information provided by the text. Most paragraphs are constructed in a way that represents previous information in order to develop it in the following paragraph. Abundant and diverse transition words are identified, most of them accurately used at the beginning and inside the

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of the one presented in Vázquez, Pelizza, and Jakob, 2001.

6   The characterization of the texts presented in this study is a reformulation of a that presented in Vázquez, Pelizza, and Jakob, 2001.

paragraphs. There are no major issues with cohesion, but some difficulties persist with the hierarchical organization of the information inside the paragraphs due to the excessive use of subordination without punctuation that clarifies the reading. The text presents both relevant and adequate content that responds to the problems stated in the prompt.

In most texts, knowledge is accumulated in the form of poorly articulated information and the almost literal reproduction of the topics of the source texts, which coincides with findings of numerous studies (Alvarado & Cortés, 2001; Fernández, 2006; Lahoz & Cuadros, 2006; Riestra, 1999; Rosales & Vázquez, 2004; Salvo de Vargas, Isuani de Aguiló, & Montes de Gregorio, 2002; Zalba, 2002, among others).

The data from these studies suggests that undergraduate students do not usually engage in productive work with source texts, an activity that would allow them to appropriate knowledge in a constructive and meaningful way and that facilitates cognitive reorganization.

Effects of Teaching on Students' Approaches to Writing and the Texts They Compose (Study 3)

Studies 1 and 2 revealed that writing tasks, as numerous, diverse and demanding as they may be, do not guarantee in and of itself the production of high-quality texts; thus, it can be assumed that the weaknesses observed in students' texts resulted from the use of inadequate procedures and from the lack of awareness of the features of an academic text.

Thus, study 3 sought to answer the following questions: how do students approach the writing tasks? What strategies do they employ to respond to assignments that ask for the production of a written document? Is it possible to teach and learn writing strategies in the undergraduate classroom? Does the acquisition of these strategies impact the quality of texts? These questions triggered another research process whose purpose was on the one hand, to inquire into the strategies that students use to compose texts in which they are asked to integrate and reorganize source texts, and on the other, to evaluate the effects of an instructional intervention that is aimed at promoting the acquisition of strategies that may positively impact the quality of the texts.

These research questions and goals build on Hayes and Flower's (1980) conceptualization of the writing process, which discriminates between writing processes and subprocesses, and which other authors have conceptualized as self-regulation strategies (Graham & Harris, 1996; Zimmerman, 1989, 1998; Zimmerman & Bandura, 1994; Zimmerman & Risemberg, 1996). Based on this perspective, it is possible to identify differences in the ways in which

undergraduates approach the task of writing academic texts depending on the specificities of these strategies. Different ways of approaching the writing task can be interpreted as writing approaches (Biggs, in Lavelle & Guarino, 2003).

The methods of study 3 consisted of assigning a writing task before and after an instructional intervention.[7] Before the intervention, participants were asked to compose an academic report[8] with the purpose of obtaining empirical evidence about the ways in which they approached the task of composing a text and about the text's quality. During the instructional intervention, a series of tasks were developed to promote the learning of strategies for composing a text. Post-intervention made it possible to access the ways in which students regulated the texts at this stage and the progress they made in their products.

Both at the pre- and post-intervention writing stages students produced texts in pairs, which were formed according to their overall academic performance. Two groups were high performance, two were medium performance and two were low performance. The purpose was to gain access to the writing processes adopted by the groups by analyzing the verbal exchanges during the act of composing; exchanges were recorded and then transcribed for analysis. Protocols were obtained and segmented in episodes to account of the writing processes and subprocesses (Camps, 1994; Hayes & Flower, 1980). Both pre- and post-intervention writing tasks were carried out during four-hour sessions and were part of class assignments.

Data analysis made it possible to identify planning and translating strategies used by the students when writing reports, which were categorized as three distinct approaches to the regulation of the text, that is, as three particular ways in which students tackle the writing task.[9] These approaches were named as follows: a) improvised-reproductive; b) anticipatory surface-level weak development, and c) anticipatory deep-level strong development (Vázquez & Jakob, 2006). These approaches were elaborated on the basis of antithetical pairs combining three dimensions: the absence or presence of planning strategies (improvised-anticipatory), translating modes (reproductive-developed) and the level of information processing (superficial-deep).[10]

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7   For a complete version of the study, see Vázquez and Jakob, 2006.

8   An academic report is understood as an expository kind of writing that requires the integration of diverse source texts built around a central topic.

9   In alignment with the study by Torrance, Thomas, and Robinson (1999), it was observed that the process of revision runs almost simultaneously with that of translation. Any process that was used in the final version of the text was centered on superficial aspects. This study did not find differences in the process of revision depending on the adopted approach.

10   A later study found student narratives that reflect the same three approaches (Vázquez, 2008; Vázquez & Jakob, 2007).

The first approach (improvised-reproductive) is marked by ideas that are discovered randomly as students explore the reference texts. The process of translating is characterized by students copying or reproducing the information they select from the source texts. The second approach (anticipatory surface-level weak development) presents scarcely elaborated and conceptually imprecise planning strategies, which evidence weak relationships between the statements; a paraphrasing strategy is adopted in the translating stage. Despite the fact that the protocols show an attempt to establish links between the parts of the text, notorious distortions and conceptual confusions were found and seem to be indicative of a superficial treatment of the content.

The third approach (anticipatory deep-level strong development) is marked by the elaboration of more complex plans, as evidenced in the greater number of conceptual units and in the kind of relationships established between them; students make use of a planning strategy throughout the writing process as a control mechanism. A paraphrasing strategy and a concern for obtaining an integrated text predominate during the translating process. The fact that the texts produced under the third approach present a greater adjustment to the conceptual meaning of the sources may be indicative of a deeper treatment of the information.

The planning and translating processes in which students engage at pre- and post-intervention periods were comparatively analyzed in order to account for the progress they made in the approaches to writing as a result of the instructional intervention; likewise, the quality of the resulting texts at each stage was compared according to the categories developed for study 2.

Regarding the approaches to the writing task, it can be stated that all groups made progress regardless of their level of performance. Students who wrote a text according to approach 1 at pre-intervention (the two groups with low-performance and one with medium performance) adopted approach 2 at post-intervention. Similarly, those students who adopted approach 2 at the pre-intervention (one with medium performance group and the two groups with high-performance) used approach 3 at the post-intervention.

Results pertaining to text quality were mixed. Although some groups made noteworthy progress, others made no changes. At the pre-intervention writing stage, all groups produced a fragmented text, except one high-performing group who wrote a partially integrated text. At the post-intervention writing stage, the two low-performing groups produced texts that were partially integrated; of the two medium-performing groups, only one made progress towards a partially integrated text, while the other showed no changes. Lastly, one of the two high-performing groups made remarkable progress

towards producing a fully integrated text, while the other remained at the level of partially integrated textual organization.

Although findings indicate a link between progress in the approaches to writing and students' level of performance, this does not seem to be correlated with an improvement in the quality of the texts. Considering the three approaches, low-performing students make progress from approach 1 towards 2, while medium and high-performing groups move from approach 2 towards 3. In terms of the quality of the texts, however, progress made from fragmented texts at pre-intervention to partially integrated at post-intervention was observed across all levels of performance. Likewise, absence of change between pre- and post-intervention is visible in groups of different performance.

In conclusion, it could be argued that the instructional intervention facilitated a clear progress in terms of the approaches that students adopted to regulate the writing task; however, this progress did not translate into differences in the quality of the final products.

Based on these findings, proposals of pedagogical innovation intended to develop strategies for composing texts were drafted, reinstating the value that writing has as a means for learning specific disciplinary content (Vázquez & Jakob, 2007). At the same time, new research questions were raised about the type of writing assignments that are demanded of students at the undergraduate level, considering that the type of writing task seems to be critical for fostering learning opportunities, as shown by numerous studies that have examined the relationship between writing and learning (Applebee, 1987; Schumacher & Nash, 1991; Tynjälä, 1998, among others).

Writing Tasks: Types of Assignments and Teachers' Conceptions (Study 4)

Reading and writing tasks that stimulate active thought processes and lead to transformations of information have the potential to generate constructive learning. It is in this sense that Tynjälä (2001) argues that different forms of writing and writing assignments implicate different types of activities and thought processes, which in turn promote different (and diverse) types of learning. On the other hand, the type of writing task that teachers assign is shaped by the way in which they conceive of writing, teaching and learning. That is, if teachers think that teaching is about transmitting information and learning is about reproducing it, it is likely that they will assign writing tasks that involve repetition; if, on the contrary, they understand learning as a constructive process, it is likely that they will promote tasks that involve restructuring the information in the texts (Tynjälä, Mason, & Lonka, 2001).

With this in mind, study 4 targeted the courses of an undergraduate program with the aim of answering the following questions: what type of writing assignments are usually required of undergraduate students? Which writing products are more frequently demanded? Which cognitive processes do the assigned writing tasks promote? What specificity of instruction do they offer? The main purpose of this study was to characterize the writing assignments that students are required to do in an undergraduate program and to analyze teachers' underlying conceptions about the tasks and the cognitive processes demanded by them.[11] The study was designed in two phases; the first involved data collection and the analysis of the writing assignments that demanded the production of a written text. The second phase made use of interviews to access teachers' perceptions.

During the first phase, assignments that were required as part of the undergraduate program in educational psychology at the School of Human Sciences at Universidad Nacional de Río Cuarto were collected; each assignment met the following characteristics: a) it was provided to the students in a written format or read aloud for them to write it down, b) it demanded the production of an academic text, and c) professors considered it to be typical in the context of the courses that they teach.

Around 100 writing tasks from first to fifth year were analyzed, which were not equally distributed across the cohorts of students nor across the set of undergraduate courses. The unit of analysis was the writing assignments required by the teachers. Three dimensions were delimited for the analysis: the level of cognitive processing, the specificity of instruction for the task, and the text type required.

The literature in composition and reading comprehension and the work on information processing by Miras, Solé and Castells (2000) agrees that cognitive processing exists on a continuum whose opposite ends correspond to the lowest and highest levels. Those assignments that require the reproduction of information demand less cognitive work than those that require the organization of information; the former presumes a superficial type of processing whose goal is to increase knowledge by literally repeating information, a process that is linked to knowledge telling strategies. Instead, assignments that demand reading comprehension and are oriented towards the construction of meaning entail a deeper approach and are linked to knowledge transforming strategies. The specificity of instruction for the task refers to the level of detail regarding the work that the student must carry out, whether the steps that

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11   A preliminary version of this study was presented in Vázquez, Pelizza, Jakob, and Rosales (2006)

the student must follow are clear and whether the final product is explicitly defined or not in the task (Gimeno Sacristán, 1988).

Based on these remarks, the following categories were attached to the three dimensions of analysis above mentioned: a) level of cognitive processing demanded by the task: recognizing, recalling or reproducing information; establishing internal relations by reorganizing elements or preexisting and explicit information; producing new information and ideas by transforming their own knowledge (Miras, Solé, & Castells, 2000); b) specificity of instruction for the task: specifications about the content, topic of and source texts and about procedural, rhetorical and contextual requirements, including the context of enunciation, procedures, expected product, evaluation criteria, composing conditions, time and length (Miras, Solé, & Castells, 2000); and c) type of text declared or implied in the assignment: answers to questions, reports, monographs and projects, among others.

As was expected, the results shown in table 3 indicate that the most frequently demanded tasks are those that require the reorganization of information in the form of answers to questions and reports, and which included scarce specifications about the expected process and textual product (Vázquez et al., 2006).

The data suggests that answers to questions or prompts are most frequently requested in first, second and fourth year, usually asking students to reorganize information and for the most part lacking orientations for the resolution of the task.

Reports are most frequently demanded in third year, where they usually prioritize reproducing information over reorganizing it, and in fifth year, where both levels of cognitive processing coexist. In most cases, assignments include specifications about composing conditions, the length of the text, the topic, and the textual product, the last two in very general terms.

Findings from the first phase of the study revealed qualitatively different writing assignments, some of them involving a superficial level of cognitive processing and some of them entailing a more complex conceptual processing; it was also possible to identify which courses demanded them. Building on that, the second phase of the study conducted interviews with six professors who taught undergraduate courses at different levels. Each of them facilitated writing assignments that were in contrast; that is, two professors of freshmen courses proposed assignments that were different from each other and so did the two professors of intermediate and senior courses.[12]

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[12] Preliminary results of this phase of the research were presented in Vázquez, Pelizza and Rosales, 2007a and 2007b.

Table 9.3 Most Frequently Requested Texts, Level of Processing, and Specifications by College Year

Text type	Level of processing	Specifications
Responding to prompts or questions (first year)	Mostly organizing/reorganizing To a lesser extent, reproducing and generating.	None
Responding to prompts or questions (second year)	Mostly organizing/reorganizing To a lesser extent, reproducing and producing.	In only one case specifications are made about time, composing conditions, textual product (short statement) and procedure (general indications).
Writing a report (third year)	Predominance of reproduction over reorganization. To a lesser extent, production.	Predominance of specifications about composing conditions, length, topic and textual product (the last two in very general terms).
Responding to prompts or questions (fourth year)	Predominance of organization/reorganization	None
Writing a report (fifth year)	Predominance of reorganization and reproduction. To a lesser extent, production.	Predominance of specifications about composing conditions, length, topic, and textual product (the last two in very general terms).

Data analysis sought to examine the purposes of the writing tasks, the relationships between writing and learning, the textual products and cognitive processes triggered by the task, and the representation of the problems in students' texts. It was also aimed at gaining access to the orientations that teachers provided for the fulfillment of the task.

The analysis revealed that teachers agree in their aim of promoting reflection and thought processes in the students, although they word it with different levels of precision in relation to the writing task. On the other hand, despite a general agreement, two different conceptions of the writing tasks arose from their narratives:

1. *The writing task as a means to record and evaluate information.* Under this conception, writing is considered only as a means for recording information and support for students' study; for teachers, it works as a

means to control and evaluate students' learning. Teachers who align with this conception propose writing practices that are underpinned by teaching traditions, on which they scarcely reflect and whose potential cognitive processes they cannot clearly envision. Accordingly, writing assignments do not provide specifications for the resolution of the task nor orientations or interventions on the production and revision of the written text. Writing tasks of minimal complexity stem from this conception, for example, answers to questions or prompts.

2. *The writing task as a tool for conceptual transformation.* Without disregarding the previous understanding, writing is also conceived as a tool for the promotion of meaningful and deep learning. Teachers who adhere to this conception propose conceptualized writing practices, which are part of the pedagogic apparatus of their courses, and which are coherent with the approaches and content adopted in them. Accordingly, assignments provide more specifications about the writing task. Teachers, on their part, develop actions aimed at supporting the resolution of the task, they are more aware about the textual and conceptual aspects demanded by the assignments, and they intervene on them during the writing process. Out of this conception grows highly complex writing tasks that imply deep information processing, like monographs, reports based on the analysis of research papers, research projects, and professional projects and reports.

Conclusions

The results of these studies suggest that multiple factors are implicated in the relationship between writing and learning, on which the following remarks are made:

1. *The process of acquiring strategies to compose the text is constructive in nature*; it develops in an interaction between the teacher, the student and the task. Students assimilate regulation activities gradually as they assign them meaning and pertinence for the task (Martí, 2000). Because this process involves time and cognitive effort, partial acquisitions that do not immediately reflect in the quality of the text are to be expected.

2. *The act of composing academic texts requires writers to control linguistic skills.* Academic texts show specific requirements regarding the organization, prioritization, and integration of ideas; as well as the use of formal language to express expository, explanatory, and/or argumentative sequences (Arnoux, Di Stefano, & Pereira, 2002). Although composing texts is a very frequent demand at the undergraduate

level, the reflection on the prototypical features of the academic text, particularly in what pertains to its micro and macro structural aspects, does not seem to be promoted enough.

3. In regard to *teachers' conceptions of writing and tasks,* findings indicate that only those teachers who conceive of writing as a tool for promoting meaningful and deep learning assign writing tasks; in them, they clearly specify the requirements that the text must fulfill, they make the processes they intend to promote explicit, they identify textual problems of conceptual and linguistic order, and they develop systematic interventions to orient students during the writing process. This link between conceptions of writing, the writing task, and learning has been noted by other studies (Mateos, Martín & Villalón, 2006; Tynjälä, Mason & Lonka, 2001).

4. In what pertains to the *most frequently requested texts*, findings suggest that answers to questions and reports are the most prevalent texts at the undergraduate level, as shown by other studies (Solé, Castells, Gràcia, & Espino, 2006). Nonetheless, each text presented an internal variation whose nuances should be further examined in a more detailed analysis.

5. It is fair to note that the *representations that students make of the task* inform the strategies that they use, which then have an effect on the quality of their texts. Multiple factors inform those representations, such as the writer's previous experiences, the conditions of production, the expectations, the author's purposes, and the commitment to the activity. While it was not an object of these studies, it would be convenient to examine how the immediate context of production of the task affects its interpretation (Castelló Badía, 2000; Flower, 1990; Vázquez & Miras, 2004).

The series of studies presented in this article underline the need to address priorities that range from educational actions to the complex relationships between writing and learning, creating instructional contexts that would allow students to learn to write, and at the same time, to write with the purpose of learning.

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Reflection

This article tells the story of a ten-year research project focused on the relationship between writing and learning. In it, we advocate for gaining a deeper

understanding of the particular ways in which the relationship between writing and learning becomes evident within the typical academic writing activities of a university classroom.

What's interesting to emphasize is that although the preliminary results obtained in each of these studies did not meet the initial expectations we set, they nonetheless opened up new questions, leading to new ideas, and suggesting new approaches to research design. This paper describes a journey that began with the analysis of students' written products and which allowed us to discover how students organized their texts in more or less adequate ways. These findings led us to then inquire about the different approaches that students take to address these tasks, and we relied on these approaches to define the strategies used in student written production. In a follow up study, we found that some students struggled to apply these writing strategies. We then created an instructional sequence that emphasized the teaching of these writing strategies, and then analyzed the impact of applying the written strategies on conceptual learning.

Our findings suggest that the application of productive strategies and the quality of the resulting texts are mediated by the type of task solicited of the students. These tasks contain underlying ideas that instructors hold about writing, learning, and the relationship between both processes.

Fifteen years after having written the article, and using a dialogic approach between the theoretical framework and empirical data, we contend that the relationship between writing and learning are not direct nor linear, and that:

1. The progress in the acquisition of the strategies is gradual.
2. It is possible to find advances in the strategies of production that do not immediately reflect in the quality of texts.
3. Pedagogical interventions are necessary because applying effective strategies is not a spontaneous process.
4. Promoting learning through writing depends on the type of task that students are solicited.

Given the impressive advances in digital technologies and multimodal texts in recent years, it would be interesting to analyze in future studies if these phenomena have modified the writing practices, the conceptions of students and instructors regarding writing practices, and also the relationship between writing and learning.

– Alicia Vázquez

10 Literacy and Its Implication for First Language Teaching

Angela B. Kleiman

This work discusses the relevance of the concept of literacy (*letramento*) for the teaching and learning of the first language at all school levels in Brazilian schools. The article argues against the dichotomy that limits the relevance of literacy studies to the practice of basic literacy (*alfabetização*). This dichotomy suggests that while some early literacy teachers aim to introduce their students to literate society, first language teachers aim to find the best methods to teach genres to their students. However, this dichotomy does not consider the fact that students in the fourth, sixth, or eighth grade of primary school, as well as high school students, are engaged in a continual process of literacy learning. The paper presents examples of curricular activities centered on linguistic and discursive content or on literacy projects and discusses their respective implications. Lastly, the article discusses the implications of the literacy approach for teacher education.

Literacy studies (*estudos de letramento*) focus on the social aspects and impacts of the use of written language (Kleiman, 1995).[1] Initially an academic concept, "literacy" (*letramento*) gradually infiltrated school discourse, contrary to the original intention of the new term, which was to separate the study of written language from school practices to highlight the ideological nature of all written language use (Street, 1984). Additionally, the new term aimed to distinguish the multiple literacy practices (*práticas de letramento*) from the singular and general practice of basic literacy (*alfabetização*),[2] which is just *one* of the many literacy practices in our society, although possibly the most important one, particularly because it is carried out by the most important literacy sponsor: the school institution.

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1   This paper is an extended, revised version of a handout for early childhood education teachers, prepared at the request of the Pedagogical Department of the Municipal Education Department of Campinas, in February 2007.

2   Translators' note: The word originally used for literacy, "*alfabetização*," related to the word for "alphabet," generally means early literacy, while "*letramento*" refers to socio-cultural, critical, multimodal and situated practices of using written language. This separation emphasizes that learning to read and write does not end when students have learned the alphabet and its rules and codes.

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Perhaps it was the contrast established between basic literacy (*alfabetização)* and literacy (*letramento*), ever since the concept began circulating in Brazil in the mid-1980s, that limited the relevance and impact of the concept of literacy for teaching and learning to the early years of a student's contact with written language. In other words, it became associated with the period when a student is acquiring the basics of the written language code. Thus, while early literacy teachers focus on the best ways to make their students literate, first language teachers are concerned with the best ways to introduce genres, creating a false dichotomy. This is because students in the fourth, sixth, or eighth grade of primary school, as well as high school students, are also engaged in a process of literacy development throughout their education. In fact, all individuals who use written language in their daily lives are involved in this process. When faced with new writing demands due to a promotion or a job change that requires them to produce texts they have not written before, an employee might ask colleagues if there are templates for such texts in the archives, analyze the available examples, and thereby form some understanding of what is involved in producing the required text. Based on this material, they attempt a first draft of the text, show the result to colleagues, listen to their feedback, and revise if necessary. In this process, the professional is forming a representation of the unfamiliar genre, which is both social and individual, and therefore unique. Genres serve as socio-cognitive and cultural frameworks (Matencio, 2003) that enable participation in literate activities that one has never engaged in before. This way of acting in new situations, characteristic of learning, should be particularly true in school learning environments, as schools offer (or should offer) opportunities for experimentation that are absent from more tense and competitive contexts, such as the workplace. For example, Tápias-Oliveira (2006) reports a training experience in which first-year students in a language program were asked to create learning diaries, record key moments of their process: impressions and feelings about the most difficult, interesting, or incomprehensible aspects of the lessons. Faced with the task of virtually having to invent the genre, some students produced works closer to a personal and confessional diary, as exemplified by the following excerpt:

> I have a certain difficulty in listening to what another person thinks, especially when they think differently from me, and letting them finish, allowing them to complete their reasoning … This is something that distressed me a little during the course, and I know this is something I need to work on, because it will be important for me to feel like a member of the group (Tápias-Oliveira, 2006, p. 82).

Some students looked for a model in epistolary genres: "Dear E [name of university instructor addressed], I would like you to perform more activities like this one (exploratory reading), because of their importance. Through these analyses, I am better understanding all the material taught" (Tápias-Oliveira, 2006, p. 95); while others found in texts closer to reports a satisfactory model for recording their impressions: "[the debate is] of utmost importance, as through this debate we can clarify many existing doubts and make connections with concepts already studied" (Tápias-Oliveira, 2006, p. 144).

In the context of basic education, Guimarães (1999) reports a three-year-long project (from 5th to 7th grade in the Brazilian educational system) in which students, faced with a communicative situation of having to endorse or disapprove a book they had read for the benefit of their classmates, tried different genres until they arrived at what may be recognized as a standard review (summary, critical analysis, recommendation, or disapproval). In their first attempts, the fifth graders produced texts with many oral remarks, cataloged by the researcher as small notes, as in

> I laughed a lot while reading the book, especially when he runs away from home.
>
> What? You don't know what I am talking about?
>
> So, hurry up to a bookstore to buy the book and find out what I'm talking about. You'll love it. (Guimarães, 1999, p. 77)

In the third year of the project, the seventh graders could produce reviews, as the following excerpt illustrates:

> Aidan MacFarlane and Ann McPherson, writers from England, specialists in health problems in school life, were very successful, even turning the stories from their books into an English TV series.
>
> "Susie's diary" describes a diary of a 16-year-old teenager who wanted to outdo her brother …. In her diary, she writes about many things. We will highlight some of them, such as family and school problems, passions, sex, and drugs.
>
> "Susie's diary" is a good read for people of different ages because there is a lot of material with different subjects that could appeal to everybody. (Guimarães, 1999, p. 88).

I believe that it is at school, the main literacy agency of our society, that space must be created for experiencing forms of participation in literate social

practices and, therefore, I also believe in the pertinence of assuming literacy, or rather, the multiple literacies of life, as the structuring objective of school-work in all cycles.[3] In this article, I will examine some of the implications of this assumption for teaching, ending with implications for teacher education and training.

Curricular Contents from the Social Perspective of Uses of Writing

Assuming literacy as the goal of teaching in all school cycles implies a social conception of writing, as contrasted with the traditional role of literacy that considers learning to read and write text as the learning of individual skills and abilities. The difference between teaching a practice and teaching the student to individually develop a competence or skill is not just a terminological difference. In institutions such as schools, where the conception of reading and writing as a set of *skills* predominates, the activity of reading and writing is viewed as a set of skills that develop gradually until reaching an ideal level of reading and writing competence, i.e., the proficient use of written language. Literacy studies, on the other hand, start from a conception of reading and writing as discursive practices, with multiple functions, inseparable from the contexts in which they develop.

In the social perspective of writing we have been discussing, a communicative situation that involves activities that use or presuppose the use of written language—a literacy event (Heath, 1983)—is not different from other situations in social life: it occurs as a collective activity with several participants who have different bodies of knowledge and mobilize them (generally cooperatively) according to individual interests, intentions, objectives, and common goals. This conception contrasts with the underlying practices of using written language within school, which generally involve the demonstration of individual ability to perform all aspects of certain school literacy events, no matter whether they involve spelling, reading aloud, answering oral or written questions, writing an essay, writing down dictated words, analyzing a sentence, or researching a theme. Thus, it is not uncommon to find reports of school activities involving writing a letter of complaint to some authority, or a petition to the community (school, neighborhood, city) to which the class

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3   Translators' note: In the 1990's, several school systems were reorganized in two- and three-year cycles in order to eliminate or decrease students having to repeat grade levels. Nowadays the cycle has been adopted nationwide as an alternative form of evaluation and of curricular organization.

belongs, in which each student individually writes their own letter, instead of joining efforts to produce collectively a letter signed by the whole class. This is because, even when focusing on a relevant problem to citizenship and civic life, the objective of the activity is not the resolution of the problem—getting the government to address the request. Rather, it was simply learning the genre of the argumentative or petition letter.

Social practice as a starting and ending point implies, in turn, a *different* question regarding the structuring and planning of classes from the traditional, curricula-centered perspective: "What is the most appropriate sequence of content presentation?" The importance of content for teacher education cannot be sufficiently emphasized.[4] However, the content is the target: they represent the behaviors, procedures, and concepts that the student is expected to learn. They should not be understood, it seems to me, as an organizing principle for curricular activities. Let us see why.

Early elementary education aims to introduce the learner to all aspects of the Portuguese orthographic, linguistic system. This does not mean, however, that the teacher should plan their classes in order to present the alphabet first, then the open syllables (*ba, be, bi*), then syllables with consonant clusters (*bra, bre*) and next closed syllables (*bar, ber*) and so on, based on a script for presenting the various elements of this system from the simplest syllables and regularities to the "orthographic difficulties" of the traditional Brazilian primer (which every teacher knows).

In this cycle, other contents correspond, basically, to the set of knowledge required in literate social practices such as measurement, volume calculations, building models, maps, and blueprints (i.e., mathematical concepts) and those necessary for participation in the discourse practices of text reading and production in different genres. To be able to read and write, the student needs to recognize and use components related to the mastery of the code, such as word and phrase segmentation, regular sound-letter matches, spelling rules, and the use of capital letters, as well as components related to the textual domain, such as the set of cohesive resources of connection, temporal relations, and causal relationships. None of this would be relevant if the student were unable to also attribute meanings to the texts they read and write according to the parameters of the communicative situation (Brazil Ministry of Education, 1997).

However, in every communicative situation that involves the use of written language—in every literacy event—there is a need for all these skills and

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4   It is not without reason that Paulo Freire (1976) says that the progressive educator and the conservative one are similar when both are serious, because they both know which content is worth teaching.

therefore there is *always* an opportunity for the teacher to focus systematically on some content; that is, to present material for the student to perceive a pattern, to practice a procedure repeatedly, and to seek an explanation. In this case, the movement will be from social practice to the "content" to be enacted in order to participate in the situation (procedure, behavior, concept), never the other way around, if the student's literacy is the objective that structures teaching.

When the contents (whatever they are) do not constitute the curriculum structuring element, the question that guides the planning of teaching activities will no longer be "what is the most appropriate sequence for the presentation of linguistic, textual, or enunciative materials?" because the teacher, as long as they have full knowledge of what is to be taught in the cycle and is aware of its importance in the curriculum, may then begin by asking a question that is charged with socio-historical and cultural import: "what are the significant texts for the student and his community?"

In fact, in the teaching of reading and writing texts representative of a particular social practice, the ease or difficulty of learning do not merely depend on letter-sound relationships or on the presence or absence of diphthongs, consonant clusters and other "orthographic difficulties," or on the presence of more or less familiar cohesive elements for the student. It depends, above all, on the student's degree of familiarity with the texts belonging to the genres enacted to communicate in activities and events which materialize that social practice. Letters, syllables, words, and sentences are not perceptible units when the system is taught starting from salient elements, both verbal and non-verbal, that stand out in the texts (headlines, titles, illustrations).

In this perspective, the specific "most difficult" elements taught late in the traditional progression may appear at any stage of the process if they are learned within a meaningful context. The digraph ("ss") and diphthong ("au") in the Brazilian Portuguese word "dinossauro," for example, are not the elements that will prevent a child from carrying out school research on that animal if the child is in fact interested in dinosaurs and if the activity is well oriented.

The results reported by Guimarães (1999), in which fifth-grade children gradually learned how to write a *review* using the appropriate genre, also point to the pertinence of a social practice literacy approach as a structuring objective of curricular activities for students in later elementary school cycles. In this experience, it is obvious that the main content goal was the *review* genre, but the true structuring axis of the activities was the social practice—recommending books to classmates—which is typical of that educational institution. If the genre had been the structuring element alone, students might have been subjected to classes about the genre, with explanatory sequences

and demonstrations on how to approach the themes, what type of language to use, how to structure the text, and what the genre's compositional elements were (Bakhtin, 1979).[5] Instead, students started experimenting based on their knowledge of other genres and step by step came to infer the relevant elements for writing reviews, relying on their book reading practices, practices of informal recommendations or criticisms made to a well-known audience, listening to and reading critical comments from their classmates, reading published reviews, revising their own texts, rewriting them based on comments from classmates, and, above all, from the teacher, who certainly had the targeted subject matter in mind while guiding them through this process.

In the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) for Portuguese language teaching in the same cycle (5th to 8th grade), procedural points considered relevant to "the constitution of the student's linguistic and discursive proficiency" are also detailed (Brazil Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 53).[6] An example of content matter related to the practice of reading is the "selection of reading procedures according to the students' different objectives and interests (study, personal formation, entertainment, task performance) and according to the genre and support characteristics" (Brazil Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 57). Among the possible procedures, various types of reading are detailed, such as:

- Inspection reading: using files to choose texts for later reading.
- Scanning: identifying specific information in the text, locating entries in a dictionary or encyclopedia.
- Revision reading: identifying and correcting, in a given text, certain inadequacies according to an established standard.

In regard to the case currently under discussion, students necessarily develop and use different reading strategies according to the demands of the situation. Various types of knowledge, values, ideologies, meanings, resources, and technologies, including strategic knowledge, need to be mobilized in

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5   In correspondence, moreover, with one of the contents of linguistic analysis practice, as proposed in the National Curriculum Parameters (PCN) for the teaching of the Portuguese language in the second cycle of elementary education (5th to 8th grades): *Recognition of the characteristics of different text genres in terms of thematic content, compositional construction, and style* (Brazil Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 60).

6   Translators' note: The National Curriculum Parameters for two cycles of fundamental education (from 1st to 4th and from 5th to 8th grades), were published in 1997 after the approval of federal legislation for the basis and guidelines for National Education, in December 1996. They had a big impact on the curricular organization of all "areas of knowledge": Portuguese language, mathematics, natural sciences, history, geography, art, and physical education. They were elaborated by the Federal Government and had as their main objective to orient teachers through the standardization of the subject matter of each discipline.

literacy practices (Baynham, 1995; Kleiman, 1995; 2006a; Scribner & Cole, 1981). The student who writes a note recommending a book and justifying their recommendation presumably makes an *inspection reading* when they select a book in the library, or when they look for a book review in the newspaper's children's page; they also *scan*, looking for details, when they reread some part in the book to copy specific information they want to include in their recommendation or review; they also do a *revision reading* when they read their own text before making it public.

Social practice makes the teaching of genres feasible, since it is their knowledge that allows an individual to participate in the events of different institutions and to carry out the activities of these institutions with any degree of legitimacy. In an institution like school, which as Heath (1986) points out overestimates analytical activities, the adoption of any linguistic, textual or enunciative concept for structuring curricula and instruction almost inevitably leads to the transformation of the activity involved—i.e., learning the genre to be able to act in society—into a metalinguistic activity: analyzing the texts belonging to the genre in order to learn their form or to use them as a model in order to learn to write texts of that genre. Knowing how to prepare a review according to the parameters of the communicative situation is a type of knowledge very different from knowing what a review is about, or what the degree of formality of the language used is, or what its parts are. The first presupposes the second, but the opposite is not true.

Thus, the teacher who adopts social practices as the organizing principle of teaching will face the complex task of determining what those practices are, and consequently what constitutes a meaningful text for the community. The activity is complex because it involves starting from the diverse cultural backgrounds of students who, before entering school, are already participating in routine activities of groups; these groups already belong to a technology-oriented literate society[7]—centrally or peripherally, with different degrees and modes of participation (more or less autonomous, diversified, and prestigious).

One of the great difficulties in implementing a program aimed at students' linguistic-discursive development through social practice lies in the incompatibility of this conception with the dominant, traditional conception of the curriculum as an inflexible, segmented programming of content organized sequentially from the easiest to the most difficult.

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7   In this article, we are ignoring the aspects of acculturation and symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1975) resulting from teaching written language to groups that come from families with little or no schooling, in which written language plays almost no role in their children's initial socialization. Certainly, in these cases the job is more difficult and potentially conflicting.

What content should be taught first when the structuring element of the curriculum is social practice? Literacy practices certainly change the traditional logic of organizing knowledge. Genres are not necessarily units that can be ordered according to the idea that certain contents are necessary for the understanding of others, although it might be argued that there are oral genres that may help learn written genres, or that the genres which Bakhtin (1979) calls primary should be understood in their unaltered forms, prior to their use in complex secondary genres, when, according to the author, they lose their immediate relations with social reality.

The answer to the question of content elements and their progression, so urgent for the teacher's daily life in the traditional school, is not clear.

A possible answer is typological. The social perspective cannot refrain from focusing on the social impact of writing, particularly the social changes and transformations resulting from new technologies and new uses of writing, with their effects on the common person. This focus necessarily broadens the conception of what the object of reading will be, previously reserved for literary texts—in fact, the extraordinary texts of the privileged few—and permits the inclusion of the ordinary texts of everyday life. In fact, such texts have outstanding pedagogical value when they are used as pedagogical resources to build students' self-confidence in their ability to read and write: lists, tickets, recipes, notices, "outdoors," street signs, name tags, t-shirts and *buttons worn by passersby*. In short, the writing surrounding students during their everyday lives, in its enormous variety, significantly expands the students' set of readable texts, due to their short length and the meaning-making possibilities derived from accessible and immediately recognizable images.

Another aspect that seems relevant to me for curricular selection is the function of the text in the student's social life, also inviting the expansion of the set of texts to include genres specific to the student's daily life. Clearly, texts from prestigious public institutions should constitute the main focus, but texts that circulate in other domains, such as those of domestic intimacy (notes, messages, and personal letters; bills, statements, and checks; exams, reports, and vaccination cards, report cards, and diplomas) may be included: students may write their family history by making captions and notes for and about the photos in a family album and by consulting birth and death records; they may read and crop advertisements to help the family weekly food budgeting; they may keep health or education records of family members, if they are learning ways to file and record information; they may keep schedules, label items. The functions of writing in everyday life, even if limited and finite, introduce archival, identity-based, content and communicative practices, as well as genres that will be very useful in many other social practices.

Aiming to expand the set of texts circulating in the classroom, Costa (2001) carried out an experiment with pre-school children using texts belonging to two genres from school and family life, well before the time when these texts would be introduced in traditional classroom teaching.[8] The project introduced five and six–year-old illiterate children to reading encyclopedia entries and newspaper news for children with the purpose of familiarizing the children with reading (by the teacher, in reading circles) and collective text writing (with the teacher as scribe).

The children used their fairy tale knowledge to appropriate the new genres: when making hypotheses about a news item from journalistic photos, for example, they slipped from the factual account as portrayed in the photo accompanying the news ("she is an old woman with dogs, she is going to the fair") to the fairy tale world: "grandma was going out to buy dog food and on the way she found a big bad wolf, who ate everything, all that was left was her hat" (Costa, 2001, pp. 134-136).

A similar transition took place when children were going over the pages of the children's animal encyclopedia in alphabetical order: the figure of the elephant on the page motivated the beginning of a story about this animal ("once upon a time there was an elephant that …"), then came the giraffe and another character was introduced, followed by the hippopotamus, and so on. The plot started to bother the child as new entries with new animals appeared, forcing the child to introduce more and more "characters" in the oral tale. We know that it is precisely these moments of discomfort between the previous knowledge and the new that detonate the perception of differences (in the example, between genres) necessary for learning (Vigotsky, 1984).

Genres that circulate in these two domains—home and school—are strong candidates for basic, fundamental blocks of knowledge for curricular progression. However, more than using the logic of fundamental (basic, first) blocks in the construction of knowledge, what interests social-practice-based curricular organization are general principles that conceive of classroom activities which are based on teacher-student(s) and student(s)-student(s) interactions that involve a variety of social and personal factors the results of which are unpredictable.

In the social conception of writing, it is not the progression from the easiest to the most difficult item that facilitates or hinders learning, especially because it is not possible to say with any degree of certainty what makes something easy or difficult for any given individual. If, in social practice, the student is faced with non-simplified texts, in a classroom where social practice

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8   Both of them have been pointed out as appropriate content for elementary school cycles (Brazil Ministry of Education, 1997; 1998).

is the structuring element, the student should also be faced with texts that circulate in real life. Facilitation, so that students can overcome the obstacles that reading such texts may present, is the product of collective work: working with classmates, who have different bodies and types of knowledge, as well as different weaknesses and strengths, under the teacher's guidance.

From Social Practice to Literacy Project

Participation in a given social practice is possible when the individual knows how to act discursively in a communicative situation; that is, when they know which genre to use. Therefore, it is natural that representations or models that enable communication in social practice—genres—are important units in planning. This does not mean, however, that class activity should be organized according to which genre to teach.

If second-year students, just beginning to read and write, are curious about the extinction of dinosaurs, this curiosity can propel them to venture onto the internet, read entries in encyclopedias, visit science museums, or interview scientists. To carry out these activities, they will need to become familiar with the reading of digital texts, dictionary or encyclopedia entries, and develop ways to ask questions. The teacher can draw attention, explain, and exemplify the text characteristics when orienting them on how to read and write texts belonging to those genres. This is quite different from defining in advance that this hypertext, dictionary entry, and interview (etc.) will be taught, in this order, regardless of the interest shown by the student and any other particular circumstances that point to the desirability of a change in planning.

Flexibility is crucial. In an initiative for continuing teacher education in basic school (middle and high school levels) in the interior of São Paulo state, we proposed a project to get a library, based on indications from the principal and the school pedagogical coordinators.[9] After half a dozen meetings between the university team and the school team of teachers, it became evident that most teachers had no interest or time to participate in a teacher training process designed to reach its goal through activities centered on their students' scientific, mathematical, and digital literacy, each working according to their specialty, resources, and knowledge. The initial planning was then abandoned, because any work based on the conception that all teachers are literacy teachers no matter what their subject matter is, would require other impracticable formation activities at that time.[10]

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9   The Teacher Literacy Group team, coordinated by Angela Kleiman.

10   In fact, a course along these lines would have duplicated a project from the Secretary

We continued this project with only the teachers of Portuguese; this time, we believed that, united around the idea of mobilizing the school community in order to make the school library a reality, we would have the participation of students in several literacy practices towards this goal. However, during the meetings with the Portuguese teachers, it became clear to us, from the university team, that there were two conceptions of the pedagogical project at stake. For us, the project was an initiative that would integrate the subjects in the Portuguese language curricula with the various participating grades; for the teachers, however, the project was a complementary activity that came in addition to the curricular activities already planned: the teachers would continue to develop their programs, and the library project would be carried out whenever the programmed curriculum allowed it.

Once again, the university team had to change the plan. Assuming that the school newspaper is an instrument that allows curricular integration through student participation in civic life (Cunha, 2007; 2008; Freinet, 1976), we suggested to the Portuguese teachers to engage students in the production of a school newspaper with the first issue focusing on the school library. In this issue, they would write texts from the planned genres; thus, the newspaper would be the tool that would enable both the insertion of students in diverse literacy practices and the mobilization of the community around the need for a school library.

There were material conditions for the project to be carried out: the school newspaper was a familiar genre for the teachers, the school had computers and many students were familiar with them, and we had a free-access program for the elaboration of newspapers. The idea was immediately accepted by the teachers, who presented the proposal to the students, who, in turn, immediately embraced it (Cunha, 2007).

In the conception of the newspaper that the two teams—school and university instructors—discussed, the different sections of the newspaper would be geared towards community efforts to acquire a library. Such genres as news and reports, interviews, opinion articles, advertisements, letters, and notes would revolve around themes related to that goal, such as the history of books and libraries, sustainable architecture, ergonomic furniture, catalog design, contact with publishers, among others. The specific objectives of the university team—teacher training through the practice of literacy projects—and those of high school teachers—teaching of various types of genres through established didactic sequences—would be fulfilled. Finally, we had a viable plan with which we were all in agreement.

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of Education of São Paulo state, aiming to train teachers of any discipline to teach reading as well. The course, Reading to Learn, was being offered across the state in that period.

However, when the discussions to organize the students' work for the first newspaper issue began, the high school students were outraged over a series of disciplinary measures taken by the school management that in their view were unjustified. Continuing with the library project became unfeasible for the teachers and, thus, school rules, norms, and responsibilities became the overall theme that motivated the reports, interviews, debates, and opinion articles of that first issue. The first issue also allowed the teachers to present the argumentative sequences at which the activities were aimed, among other aspects of the opinion article genre, and concomitantly, allowed students to participate collectively in an activity, according to their individual interests and abilities.

The choice of genre as a relevant concept does not mean that it should become the structuring element of the social practices in the project because it runs the risk of reducing the goals of teaching and schoolwork to its formal and analytical aspects, as we have already mentioned.

The difference is significant. The program "Writing the Future," financed by the Itaú Foundation and coordinated by the São Paulo NGO Cenpec (Center for Studies and Research in Education, Culture and Community Action), organizes a yearly contest that, in 2006, awarded prizes for the best opinion article, memoir, and poem written by fourth and fifth graders from schools all over the country. Once the genre was chosen, several formative actions for the teachers involved ensued, such as sending didactic materials for teaching the genre to the participating teachers. Accurate descriptions of the genre and its didactic sequences (Schneuwly & Dolz, 2004) thus became known to teachers nationwide.[11] These materials fulfilled their objectives with excellence. For teaching the opinion article, for example, one of the guidelines was to choose, as the theme for that article, some controversial subject that was affecting the community to which the students belonged.

In a sample of 160 analyzed texts (out of a total of one thousand submitted in 2006), most of them adequately reproduced some of the compositional aspects of the genre: for instance, there was an expression of an opinion, in general about some problem, which implied taking a position on a subject. However, not every subject is controversial and raises the need to defend an opinion. Taking a stand against the problem of violence, or poverty, or wasting energy sources, is not controversial (or should not be). The students who managed, to different degrees, to approach the proposal and write an opinion article were those whose choice of theme was an issue that was disturbing the

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11   Translators' note: An important question in Brazil, with its continental dimension and with enormous differences from one region or city to another, is teachers' access to university-produced knowledge, as was the case at the moment, when the notion of text was being replaced by the notion of genre as the relevant language unit for teaching Portuguese at school.

social fabric in their community. In other words, they were the students who, confronted with a situation that divided the class, the school, or the city, managed to put the genre at the service of their need to take a stand and express themselves politically, thus turning the exercise of using—or attempting to use—the genre into a social practice.

The literacy studies' conception of writing assumes that people and social groups are heterogeneous and that the different activities among people happen in many different ways. This heterogeneity does not align well with traditional classes where students interact with the teacher only. In traditional teaching, the teacher is the privileged speaker as well as the focus of everyone's attention. Moreover, the teacher gives the lesson according to a curriculum defined for all classes in the school or municipality, because one day in that semester or school year all of the students in the class will be evaluated according to parameters—also supposedly representative of the knowledge to be reached in the series or cycle—defined for the entire nation.

On the other hand, literacy studies show—in a way that is very important for curricular reflection—that literacy events require that participants draw on their diverse resources and knowledge. This means that some literacy events aimed at resolving the goals of social life will undoubtedly create countless learning opportunities, all different from each other, reflecting the differences among the participants. It is up to the teacher to highlight and systematize the aspects that are part of their semiannual or annual planning as many times as necessary for the student to acquire confidence and autonomy towards the targeted knowledge.

Any proposed pedagogical project (Dewey, 1997; Hernandez & Ventura, 1998), which may range from a large interdisciplinary school project that meets the interests of different classes up to the work of a small group of students in a class, can offer heterogeneous students—with different levels of writing proficiency and diverse reading and text production experiences that they bring to school—an opportunity for differentiated participation. For this reason, school projects are, in my opinion, an ideal didactic approach to organize schoolwork that takes the heterogeneity of students seriously and that gives up prerequisites and rigid progression regarding the presentation of curricular elements.

Although the school organizes its activities around relevant themes, it is interesting to think of projects as *literacy projects*: activity plans aimed at student literacy. Thus, a literacy project would be constituted as "a set of activities that originates from a real interest in the students' lives and whose realization involves the use of written discourse, that is, the reading of texts that, in fact, circulate in society and the production of texts that will be actually

read, through the collective work of students and the teacher, each according to their skills" (Kleiman 2000, p. 238). This means that, whatever the project's theme and immediate objectives, it will be analyzed and evaluated by the teacher according to its potential to enact knowledge, experiences, skills, strategies, resources, materials, and technologies for the use of written language by different institutions whose literacy practices provide the models for the students' uses of texts.

This is what distinguishes a literacy project for recycling aluminum cans from a can recycling campaign carried out by a neighborhood association. In the first, the number of cans collected may be the motivating force behind the students' action, but for the teacher the motive to carry out the activities lies in the opportunities that the project creates to make calculations, compute, represent data in graphs, make advertising campaigns, prepare ads for the radio, i.e., to motivate students to participate in different literacy practices and to use written language. Clearly, the neighborhood association is driven by other interests, focused on environmental and/or financial issues.

To Conclude, Teacher Education: The Same Principles

It is evident that the role of the teacher changes within this new perspective on literacy instruction, where the focus is placed on social practice, regardless of whether the teaching involves initial alphabetic practices or essay writing in Portuguese. A socially contextualized approach can grant the teacher autonomy in the planning of teaching units and in the choice of teaching materials.

In this case, the teacher assumes a place in the educational system as a professional who decides on a course of action based on the observation, analysis and diagnosis of the situation. When the teacher also chooses to work with projects, they begin to decide on issues related to the selection of knowledge and practices that are local, functional for life in the students' immediate community and relevant for the student's participation in the social life of other communities and that, one day, may be used to change and improve the student and their group's future.[12] The teacher may decide about the inclusion of what should be part of the school's daily life, because it is legitimate and/or immediately necessary, and, on the other hand, about the exclusion of unnecessary and

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12   Paulo Freire's commitment to knowledge transformed in subject matter is even greater. Neither project teaching nor social practice emphasis release the teacher from the obligation to teach concepts, procedures and relevant scientific genres to the subject. Decreased emphasis on contents was one of the limitations that Macedo (2005) observed in project centered classes, counteracted by an increase in the number of literacy events, which resulted in a major diversification of written language functions.

irrelevant material in order to insert the student in the literate practices that, it seems to us, persist due to inertia and tradition. Finally, they also decide on the negotiation of what may not be of interest to the student at the moment, but needs to be taught because of its relevance in our society.

A change in a teacher's performance necessarily depends on changes in the university's formative courses. One such change is the conception of writing; another, the acquisition of new attitudes towards literacy, which undergoes a naturalization process as schooling progresses. These transformations include a political-ideological dimension, since naturalizing uses of written language obscures the fact that such uses are not neutral toward power relations in society and may in fact contribute to inequality and exclusion.[13] Therefore, learning the written language can become one more social barrier for students who have not participated in literacy practices in their primary socialization, with the family. Teacher education courses must function as a space for denaturalization, for the attainment of a gradual process of weakening or eliminating the ideology of neutrality regarding written language.

One of the objectives pursued in this process is the self-questioning about one's own practices, which is necessary to perceive the difficulty of written language activities and to avoid tasks that may not make sense to the student but are considered universal by schools and other prestigious institutions.[14] For example, in recent years, recipes, notes, and labels have become common in textbooks and classrooms, often used for literacy purposes. However, teaching a group of children to read or write a recipe or a label without having built a context that justifies reading or writing such material, in activities that could perfectly be done orally or with other texts—we do not need a condensed milk can label to learn the letter *m* in the word *moça*,[15] for example—is a meaningless task. Such activities could therefore be much more difficult than simply reading words beginning with the letter "M" in their primer.

Contrary effects can also sometimes be produced when the student is asked to read or write a recipe or instruction when, in the first place, it is perfectly possible to *show* how to make the recipe or how to set up a toy without a given justification in writing it, and, secondly, this is the common practice in the student's community. Writing texts such as recipes and instructions may seem natural to highly educated groups, but they are not actions that belong

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13   It is important to remember that teaching how to read and write is not a technical but a political issue, as Freire always maintained. We do not operate in a void.

14   The universalist conception, typical of school literacy, is known as autonomous literacy (Street, 1984).

15   Translators' note: The best-known brand of sweetened condensed milk in the country has a picture of a girl ("*moça*," in Portuguese) accompanied by the word in highlight.

to the natural order of things: they are non-universal conventions for recording an action. Predicting these potential difficulties is not easy for the teacher or for anyone who has already naturalized writing as just one more semiotic system (in addition to the gestural, oral, imagery etc. systems).

Starting from literacy practices and functions of writing in the student's community means, among other things, distancing oneself from ingrained beliefs, such as the "superiority" of all literacy over orality; it also means learning and teaching how to live with heterogeneity and plurality, valuing the different and the singular. It involves acting as a privileged facilitator between groups with different literacy practices, and planning activities aimed at the organization and participation of students in the literacy events of prestigious institutions, such as reading literary, scientific and journalistic texts, watching theater plays, writing a book(let), making an art exhibition, organizing a soiree or an autograph night.

An important discipline for such transformation in the undergraduate teacher education course was suggested by Heath (1983), when she proposed to regard the work of a teacher as the work of an ethnographer, particularly when they teach students from communities with very different written and oral language traditions from those of the dominant groups—the latter very well represented at school. Observing students in their great heterogeneity provides valuable clues about their social practices of origin, which may assist the teacher when diagnosing, planning, and evaluating teaching and learning processes. Knowledge based on an accurate observation of classroom settings may help avoid generalizations and value each student's individuality when they formulate a hypothesis, give an answer, question a piece of information, or demonstrate knowledge, understanding or skills that seem to counter the information and knowledge provided by the school.

Knowing that students have diverse cultural backgrounds as participating members of a literate society, it becomes easier for the teacher to allow students to take part in different situations, to create different tactics to deal with their limitations or potentials in the situation, to reach different understandings, all due to their extremely varied learning, even before occupying school benches and despite the homogenizing practices learned at school. It is more difficult for the teacher who learns to listen and record the culture of the other to deny the existence of different cultural practices and to reject them *a priori*. In turn, this makes class interaction less conflicting. Hence the relevance of teaching, in early or continuing teacher education courses, principles and techniques for conducting participant observations and analyzing observed interactions and minimizing the graphocentric filters we impose on our interpretations of the social world.

The relationship between the types of content learned in the teacher education courses may also change. More than specific concepts to be learned, the course should aim to support the teacher's workplace literacy, thus understanding writing as an identity element of their undergraduate course (Kleiman, 2001). This means that, more than the learning of certain analytical-theoretical concepts and procedures, which change with shifts in linguistic and pedagogical theories, it is essential to equip the teacher to continue learning throughout their life and, in this way, to keep up with scientific developments related to their discipline and teaching methods. Thus, the teacher's relationship with the curriculum is transformed: the curriculum is no longer the straightjacket of schoolwork; instead, it may be viewed as a dynamic—and possibly changeable—pedagogical organization of subject matter that is worth teaching, that takes into account the local reality of the class, school or community, and that is organized according to relevant social practices.

In university education, as in the other levels of education discussed in this article, literacy projects provide a means to supply the pedagogical organization the teacher will need to perform their new functions: at the university, just as in other educational contexts, projects are organized in terms of the social practice significance for academic and professional life, as pointed out by reports of projects in teacher education undergraduate courses and in-service education courses using project-based pedagogy (Oliveira, 2008; Tinoco, 2006a; 2006b).

Tinoco (2006b) reports on 14 projects focusing on the patrimony of cities in Rio Grande do Norte, Brazil, carried out by groups of teachers who were completing their teacher certification requirements.[16] These teachers, all of whom were lead teachers with extensive classroom experience, were encouraged to register their classes for the National Treasures of Brazil Contest, open to all elementary and high school students across the country, aimed at valuing Brazilian heritage (historical-cultural, natural, artistic, emotional).

The literacy project of each group of teachers consisted, therefore, of the necessary learnings—concepts, reading and writing practices, and genres—to guide the projects of their classes. For example, once the specific city patrimony was chosen, teachers had to guide the search for data in photos, maps, leaflets, newspapers, in short, in all kinds of pertinent documents. In order to teach their elementary and high school students how to choose or take

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16   Translators' note: As required by a new teaching certification decree of 1996, that demanded that basic, initial level education teachers, up to then mostly graduates from a professional 2-year training course (*Escola Normal*), complete the 4-year requirements for teaching certification at the university. The activity here described was part of a course in a Program for Professional Qualification at the Universidade Federal do Rio Grande do Norte.

photos, the teachers needed to understand how multimodal texts work. To register the classes in the contest or to guide their research, they needed to learn how to use the internet, and so on.

Pedagogy and Language courses that achieve their students' professional literacy through explicit models, resignified in projects, help to support teachers who may be described as social agents: individuals who stand out because of their skills to enact the abilities, resources, and knowledge of the community of apprentices where they act (Kleiman, 2006a, 2006b). These are skills that complement and may even replace the mastery of potentially obsolescent knowledge and theories.

A literacy agent is capable of articulating interests shared by the learners, organizing a group or community for collective action, assisting in making decisions about certain courses of action, interacting strategically with other agents (teachers, coordinators, parents), and modifying and transforming their action plans according to the group's on-going needs.

Training a teacher to act as a literacy agent places new and different demands on university educators: academic knowledge and familiarity with various literacy practices, including academic ones, are still important, but essential is the attitude of a teacher who, knowing they are in a continuous process of literacy, dares to experiment and, in doing so, continues learning with their students through literacy practices that motivate the entire group and, at the same time, meet individual interests and objectives. This way, they form readers, spark curiosity, and give confidence to beginner writers. For the teacher to act this way one day in their practice, we must today, in their training process, provide models of this kind of work.

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Reflection

The editors' request to reflect on the reasons why this article was widely read and cited, and what, if anything, would be changed, added, or taken out today in view of new research allowed me to read critically a text that otherwise I would have never reread, for it is with the greatest difficulty that I can bring myself to read an article of mine already published. "Out of sight, out of mind" seems to be my motto.

My thought is that this text has been frequently read in both initial and continuing language teacher education courses because it contributes to the understanding of concepts such as genres, writing as a social practice, and

literacy projects as integral parts of a didactic organization that offers an alternative to traditional (prescriptive and instrumental) language teaching practices. The text discusses the implications of such an approach as well as presenting a set of systematized 'ways of doing' in order to further competence in reading, writing, and oral practices from a social practice perspective.

Although official Brazilian education documents have for some time stressed the importance of approaching language work as an interactional process, teachers' courses have not, in turn, highlighted the ways through which such an approach may be brought about. Therefore, pointing at ways that break away from more traditional perspectives, the article in question acts as a guide for how to teach language starting with students' actual needs and desires and exemplifies, in the process, what a difference that student-centered teaching makes. It also points out both didactic and methodological ways for breaking away from a rigid curriculum where teaching contents, such as genres, are taught prescriptively, by showing that literacy projects allow not only the teaching of curriculum contents, but also the incorporation of multiple literacy practices into school life, considering the different socio-cultural spheres or domains that intercross students' lives.

If I were to write this text today, I would focus more on teaching vulnerable groups who, in spite of some efforts and programs to improve their school performance, have become even more vulnerable, as the recent pandemic has shown. It is not possible to treat all students as if they have the same needs. And I would emphasize a critical approach to this issue, similar to the one I currently adopt regarding the concept of multiple literacies, which in our official documents is addressed with a predominantly digital bias. It is not worth teaching all types of genres when we think of the less privileged: memes or fake news may actually attack their self-esteem, whereas considering an emergent genre of a quilombo group (Afro-Brazilian residents of settlements first established by escaped slaves in Brazil) as a proto genre, related to the genre demanded by school or government officials, makes the learning of the target genre more meaningful. In a project, multiple literacies are justified as long as they make sense. It is not possible to make such decisions without a critical stance. As the pandemic has also shown us, it is not about what technologies to teach, but about why and for what purpose we teach them.

– Angela B. Kleiman

11 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 sociocultural 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 teach-
> ing 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 Curric-
> ular 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.

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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).

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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.

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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.
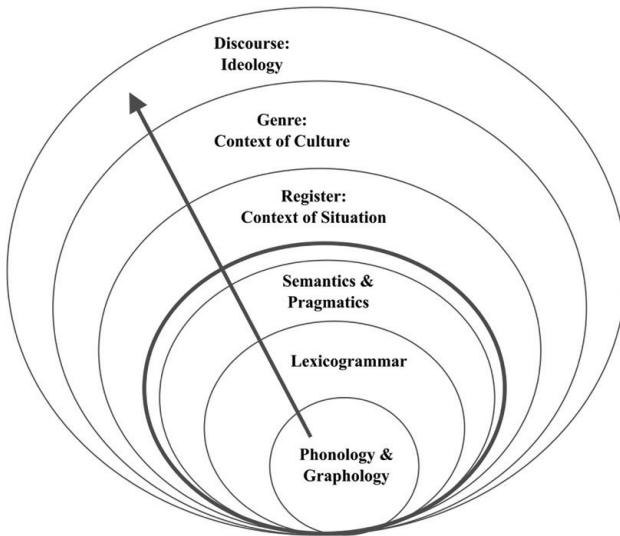
Figure 11.1 *Chronological Development of Genre Studies in Relation to the Stratification of Communicative Planes (Linguistic and Contextual), as Adapted from Martin (1992, p. 496) and Hendges (2005, p. 06)*

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 *Analysing 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.
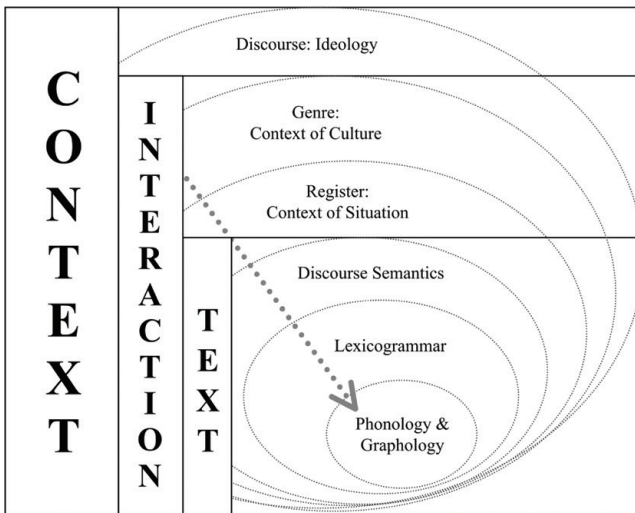

Figure 11.2 Combination of Figure 2.1—Discourse as Text, Interaction, and Context by Fairclough (1989, p. 25)—and Figure 7.3—Language in Its Semiotic Environment by Martin (1992, p. 496)

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 (Volochínov 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 research assistant, to code independently half of the text corpus … there was an 85 percent agreement.** …
>
> **The next two sections present** <u>a</u> genre analysis of the corpus at hand in terms of the surface-level generic cognitive features, <u>complemented with a CDA analysis of implicit socio-cultural norms teasing the ideology in each generic component of the ritualized wedding invitation.</u> 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.
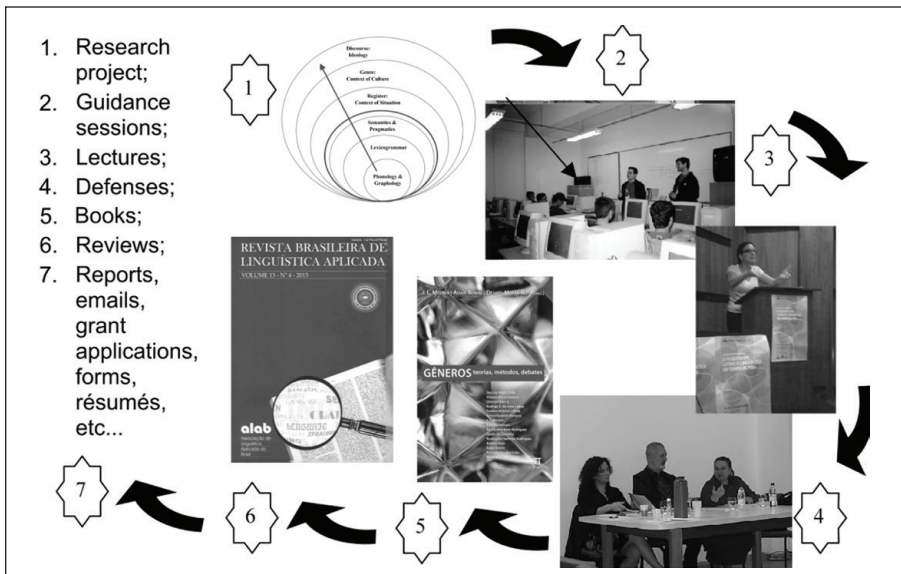

Figure 11.3. LABLER-UFSM's Genre System

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 & Hortons, 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

12 Professional Literacy Instruction During the Undergraduate Years: Between the University and the Workplace

Lucía Natale and Daniela Stagnaro

Writing practices and the teaching of writing have become a key area of interest for various disciplines that have contributed to shaping this emerging field of study. This paper aims to present partial findings from a research project focused on writing practices within the field of industrial engineering. As part of the activities of the Reading and Writing Skills Development Program across the Undergraduate Years (PRODEAC) developed at a public university in Argentina, we examined the genres used in business contexts through surveys conducted with engineers. Additionally, we consulted students engaged in both academic and professional settings about the genres required in each domain. This approach allowed us to assess whether the curricula aligned with the writing competencies expected in students' professional lives. In contrast to previous studies conducted at universities in Spain and Chile, our findings indicate that, out of the thirty-three business-related genres identified, the university curriculum addresses 20 of them during the second half of the Industrial Engineering program. Furthermore, we have identified genres that require further description and inclusion in the pedagogical design of relevant courses.

Since the last decades of the 20th century, there has been a significant increase in research and proposals to develop what is often referred to as academic or disciplinary literacy instruction. Although the origins of the field are linked to the interest of addressing perceived writing difficulties among students from the so-called "new university publics," recent research has acknowledged the specific ways in which language operates across different disciplines (Hyland, 2000, 2002).

This acknowledgement is in large part why institutions have developed instructional programs to support academic and disciplinary literacy (Carlino, 2002, 2003, among others), and also why a linguistic perspective has become a central or integral part of how reading and writing skills are taught in higher education. In this respect, linguists and scholars of language can contribute to discussions of the genres or text types that students should master during their undergraduate studies, as well as those relevant to the professional environments in which they will work after graduation. Furthermore, as linguists do not have access to the disciplinary and vocational spaces where professional writing is taking place, it is necessary to articulate the views of these disciplinary communities and their members in order to construct comprehensive genre descriptions that account for both contextual and linguistic features.

In this article, we review the main conceptualizations of literacy practices in higher education and present the preliminary results of an ongoing research project conducted by the Reading and Writing Skills Development Program across the Undergraduate Years (PRODEAC, for its acronym in Spanish), an institutional program at Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento (UNGS). The research aims to identify and describe the genres circulating in the professional field of engineering. This information will help teachers and administrators devise pedagogic materials and adjust the writing assignments undergraduates should complete during their time in the Industrial Engineering program. The study's findings are expected to contribute to aligning the writing activities in the specialized phase of undergraduate education with those required in professional practice upon graduation.

In the paragraphs that follow, we review some concepts surrounding teaching reading and writing practices in higher education. We then present the methodological design of the research along with some preliminary findings. Our initial observations indicate that, although previous studies (Cassany & López, 2010; Parodi et al., 2010) suggest a disconnect between university writing practices and those required in professional settings, the differences between the professional genres assigned in the Industrial Engineering program at UNGS and those used in various companies by early-career professionals are not substantial. Nonetheless, our results suggest the need to implement some pedagogical adjustments and set the course for further research. To this end, in the final section of this paper we will present some reflections surrounding these two interconnected ideas.

Evolution of the Concept of *Alfabetización*

The establishment of a research field focused on university writing practices and their teaching (Lillis & Scott, 2007) has given rise to a great deal of

specific terminology. One of the terms coined has been *academic literacy instruction* ("alfabetización académica"). The various definitions of this concept reflect, on the one hand, different theoretical positions and, on the other, the evolution of approaches within the field. In the following section, we will address the differences and the changes in the conceptualization of this term.

Academic Literacy Instruction

An initial conceptualization of academic literacy associated the term with a set of skills, including reading and writing abilities, deemed essential for success in academic communities. This perspective is reflected in definitions such as those proposed by Hyland & Kamp-Lyons (2002) and Paula Carlino (2003), the latter having significant influence in Latin American contexts. According to Carlino, academic literacy can be defined as:

> the set of ideas and strategies needed to take part in the discursive culture of disciplines, as well as in the activities of text production and analysis required for learning at the university level. It thus points to the language and thinking practices typical of the academic field. It also designates the process of becoming a member of a scientific and/or professional community, by having appropriated its established forms of reasoning as expressed through specific discourse conventions (Carlino, 2003, p. 410; our translation).

The definitions formulated in the first decade of the new millennium address a set of "necessary" knowledge—a kind of repertoire that students must acquire beforehand to effectively engage in a disciplinary culture. In this sense, Carlino's definition of academic literacy can be framed within a pragmatic approach, based on skills and student-centeredness, as Carlino acknowledges in a later text (Carlino, 2013, p. 371).

Recently, Carlino proposed a reformulation of the concept, suggesting an important turn. She claims,

> I suggest calling *academic literacy instruction* ("alfabetización académica") the educational process that can or cannot occur to facilitate students' access to different disciplinary written cultures. It is the dauntless effort to include students in the literate practices, the actions taken by the instructors, supported by the institutions, so that students learn how to present ideas, argue, summarize, search for information, organize and relate it, evaluate reasoning, engage in debate, etc., in accordance

with the conventions of each discipline. It entails two related objectives that need to be set apart. On the one hand, it aims to teach how to participate in the genres of a specific field of knowledge and, on the other, teach adequate studying practices that enable learning. The first involves training students to read and write as specialists do; whilst the latter is about teaching reading and writing to acquire the knowledge produced by experts (Carlino, 2013, p. 370; our translation).

This redefinition of the concept demonstrates a change in the focus of attention. Whereas the 2003 definition focused on the processes that students went through, in 2013, the definition centered on the role of the faculty and university. On the other hand, the activity that appears as paramount for the development of academic literacy is teaching.

Academic Literacies

The process of academic literacy instruction in higher education has also been addressed from other perspectives. The academic literacies model, or ACLITs (Lea & Street, 1998, 2006; Lillis, 2003, among others) understands literacy not as an individual, cognitive process that can be observed through "skills," but a social, cultural, historical and institutional practice. Given this perspective, we can infer that academic literacy is neither universal nor univocal but diverse and socially situated. This recognition implies the existence of different approaches. Lea and Street (1998) distinguish three of them: study skills, academic socialization, and academic literacies. Among these, the first two are the most commonly adopted. The skill approach presupposes that writing is essentially a cognitive and individual phenomenon because it focuses on grammatical and lexical features, and builds up to the idea that these general skills are applicable to any compositional context. In contrast, the academic socialization model prioritizes the process of students' enculturation into different disciplines through reading and writing practices the most commonly used genres, which are regarded as stable and unquestioned.

The two literacy models described above are characterized as monologic because pedagogical and institutional practices promote the reproduction of official disciplinary discourses (Lillis, 2003). For that reason, a third model was proposed, called *academic literacies*, which is not only concerned with language and knowledge in different disciplines but also with the established epistemology and the power relationships within each community, and the construction of the writer's identity. This perspective adopts a complex,

dynamic (Lea & Street, 2006), critical, and dialogic view of literacies, while also recognizing their ideological nature (Lillis & Scott, 2007). It is directed toward challenging the established practices in order to show the existing heterogeneity and the diversity among the members of a community (Lillis, 2003).

According to Lea and Street (1998; 2006), the three literacy models are not mutually exclusive. Rather, the academic literacies model encompasses the previous two, but from a critical perspective, which is reflected in the use of the plural form to acknowledge the diversity of literacy practices present in academic institutions (Hamp-Lyons & Hyland, 2005; Lillis & Scott, 2007).

Disciplinary Literacy

Lately, the notion of disciplinary literacy has surged in popularity as an alternative concept.[1] It is an emergent pedagogical approach applied at the pre-college level that shares many of the same basic principles of academic literacies while introducing some modifications (López-Bonilla, 2013). Beyond emphasizing the role of reading and writing, disciplinary literacy focuses on two components: learning processes and different disciplinary practices, taking into account the tools and knowledge that students require to access the construction and transformation of disciplinary knowledge (Moje, 2007).

Thus, disciplinary literacy is not only concerned with teaching reading and writing practices. It also promotes students' participation in activities similar to those performed by disciplinary specialists in order to gain "deep learning" of the disciplinary knowledge and its epistemologies (López-Bonilla, 2013; Moje, 2007). In this sense, it seems to be a broader view than the definitions that relate literacy with reading and writing disciplinary texts. Following Ford and Forman (2006, p. 1), the concept entails a "turn towards practice," correlated with Lave and Wenger's (1991) notion of "participation in practice."

This turn is in line with Vijay Bhatia, a renowned specialist in the field of language for specific purposes. He has recently suggested that the study of disciplinary languages is entering a new phase, in which it is acknowledged that mastering the knowledge developed in a discipline and its discursive conventions would not suffice to become an active member of a professional community and, instead, requires participation in the professional practices

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1   The term "literacidad," a translation from the English word "literacy," is frequently used as a synonym of "alfabetización." The same happens with other words such as "letrismo," "literacia," and "alfabetismo." According to Parodi, this terminological diversity "seems to point to the same phenomena" (2010, p. 11).

which constitute membership. However, Bhatia admits that this addition is not simple. Given that mainstream studies in the field have been mainly based on text description, recognizing the relevance of situated practices constitutes one of the most significant challenges for language specialists. It implies attending to other epistemological frameworks and adopting new research designs to understand why discourses are constructed in specific ways (Bhatia, 2008).

In summary, this overview of the various concepts developed to describe the teaching and learning processes of disciplinary reading and writing reveals multiple shifts that have taken place over a relatively short period of slightly more than a decade.

The first shift deals with the actors involved in the process. Hyland and Hamp-Lyons (2002) and Carlino (2003) focus on students, even when they acknowledge the social dimension of literacy. Later, the axis moved toward instructors and institutions (Carlino, 2013) and the sociocultural contexts of the disciplinary communities seen as actively involved in the processes of ACLITs and disciplinary literacy approaches. Thus, the notion of literacy evolves from being an individual process to being framed as a fundamentally social one. A second, related shift focuses on the learning process in the first version of the definition, whereas in subsequent ones, mainly influenced by Carlino (2013), instruction was favored. A third shift can be found in the plane where learning and teaching are considered. These first two definitions encompass the skills, ideas, and strategies that should be learned, situating literacy at the cognitive and mental level. In contrast, ACLITs and disciplinary literacy approaches focus on concrete practices. In other words, they consider literacy as an action, more external and more linked to the participants, tools, and contexts. A later shift can be found in the adjective that qualifies literacy. While the first definitions refer to academic activity as an overall category in which the differences among the different "tribes" (Becher, 2001) are not emphasized, disciplinary literacy focuses on the specific literacy demands of each field.

PRODEAC

Since 2006, the Program for the Reading and Writing Skills Development Program across the Undergraduate Years (PRODEAC) has been implemented at Universidad Nacional de General Sarmiento, Argentina. This institutional program aims to support disciplinary literacy instruction throughout undergraduate education by taking part in the teaching process in courses of different programs. The sessions related to text production are delivered by a

team of instructors composed of a specialist in the disciplinary area and an instructor in reading and writing. In other words, this initiative represents a genre-based, interdisciplinary, curricular, systematic, and gradual approach to writing instruction, grounded in research (Natale & Stagnaro, 2013).

Concerning the notion of disciplinary literacy and the developments put forward by Bhatia (2008) that see the need to include the practices and genres used in real contexts, we consider it essential to collect and describe the text types actually used by engineers in the professional sphere. Namely, we wanted to research the professional genres and their uses. Following Parodi and others (2010), "in order to make pedagogic interventions grounded in disciplinary literacy and guided by genres, a fundamental prerequisite is to have a detailed description of the texts that are read and circulate within specialized domains" (p. 249). This research aims to contribute specifically in this regard.

Overall, we define professional genres according to their context of production (the companies and firms in which they are written) and their purposes as defined by their organizational aims. Each organization has a particular culture, more or less defined boundaries, and, to some extent, shared features: history, myths, values, structure, management procedures, and discursive practices (Cassany, 2004). Professional communication takes place "in complex oral, written or mixed situations, with transactional and interpersonal interactions, that demand effective and efficient communication to perform assertively, give commands, inform obligations or roles, and constantly communicate information and decisions, establish negotiations, or to orient, consult and control activities or performances and to manage information on different media using information technology" (Aguirre Beltrán, 2000, p. 36).

Collecting and describing professional genres can undoubtedly contribute to initiating future students into the written practices of their future professions.[2] Moreover, we believe that this study can shed light on our knowledge of formal written genres in authentic professional contexts, which has to this point been focused on merely academic ones.

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2 The literature agrees on the pivotal role of genre as a culturally specific means to communicate with peers and colleagues: "understanding the genres of written communication in one's field is … essential to professional success" (Trosborg, 2000, p. VII). For this reason, genre is considered "the most operational unit for needs analysis, objective formulation, and learning in Spanish for Specific Purposes," because it encompasses all the relevant dimensions in teaching and learning specific practices in reading and writing (Cassany, 2004). Following Bhatia (2002), the specific discursive competencies are one of the pillars in professional expert knowledge. In particular, written practice plays a central role as "efficient writing has become a professional skill across the different knowledge areas" (Montolío & López, 2010, p. 218).

Methodology

Firstly, we aimed to gather data on the repertoire of professional genres used in business organizations where advanced Industrial Engineering students and alumni work. We surveyed 15 informants with a structured survey. They were mainly instructors and alumni working in these workspaces. We collected data about the frequent genres in which they wrote, covering both contextual and textual aspects. Contextual aspects included information about the company, the situations in which the genres are used, the participants involved in the production and reading circuits, and those responsible for reviewing and approving the texts. Textual aspects involved the designation of the texts, their objectives, medium, length, and typical structure, among other characteristics. We also asked informants to gather authentic sample texts of the genres in question so as to describe their linguistic features in a future instance. Our informants found it difficult to provide us with those texts due to confidentiality issues.

After collecting the data, we cataloged the kinds of texts which we found. We asked the 17 students participating in the 2012 Supervised Professional Practice Workshop[3]—who were in their last semester of the undergraduate program and simultaneously worked in the profession—to describe: 1) which genres had been required throughout their course of study and 2) which were required at the onset of their professional career.

Results

A Repertoire of Professional Genres

Based on the analysis of the 15 initial surveys, we identified a set of 33 genres. They are presented in alphabetical order in Table 12.1, following the names of texts given by the informants.

Besides giving information on genres in the business field, the surveys yielded other exciting data for linguistic analysis, which will begin in the next phase of the research. Following a preliminary assessment, the genres listed on the table showed some variations in specific contexts. These variations were related to the different components in the communicative situation: the purpose, the addressee, the code, the topic. Thus, for example, the genre *letter*

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3   The Supervised Professional Practice Workshop is a recently created curricular course delivered in the last semester of the Engineering program. It aims to articulate and accompany the student's transition from the academic to the professional environment.

could serve various purposes in varying contexts.[4] We found, among others, that the award letter, the thank-you letter, and the cover letter in a report all had remarkably different communication goals. The recipients varied significantly, including the board of directors, the company president, bidders, other sectors, and customers. On the other hand, we found a great diversity of semiotic systems in business genres, such as linguistic forms, numerical language, graphics, tables, and maps. Finally, in terms of topic variation, some genres—such as flowcharts—differ based on their function; flowcharts can describe operations or provide information, i.e., operation flowcharts and information flowcharts.

Furthermore, various relationships between the identified text types have been observed. Undoubtedly, recognizing variations among instances of the same genre, identifying and analyzing the functions that semiotic codes serve in achieving generic goals, and examining the relationships between different text types are aspects that warrant a more in-depth analysis. As these considerations exceed the objectives of this study, they will be addressed in future research.

Table 12.1 Genres in the Business Field

Letter [carta]	*Trial/ test report* [informe de ensayo]	*Action plan* [plan de acción]
Notice [circulares]	*Trial results report* [informe de resultados de ensayo]	*Blueprint* [plano]
Contract [contrato]		*Bids* [pliego de condiciones]
Job description or profile [descripción o perfil de puesto de trabajo]	*Quality handbook* [manual de calidad]	*Budget* [presupuesto]
Turtle diagram [diagrama de tortuga]	*Skills handbook* [manual de competencias]	*Annual training plan* [plan anual de capacitación]
Method and timing study [estudio de métodos y tiempos]	*Procedure handbook* [manual de procedimientos]	*Procedures* [procedimientos]
Performance assessment [evaluación de desempeño]	*Mission* [misión]	*Logistic protocol* [protocolo logístico]
Flowchart [flujograma]	*Security norms* [normas de seguridad]	*Environmental report* [reporte o informe ambiental]
Flyer [folleto]	*Trial request* [pedido de ensayo]	*Sustainability report* [reporte de sustentabilidad]
Principles guideline [guía de principios]	*Company profile* [perfil corporativo]	*Environmental management system* [sistema de gestión ambiental]
Report [informe]	*Contingency plan* [plan de contingencia]	*Vision* [visión]
Annual report [informe anual]		

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4   The names of the genres are written in italics.

Professional Genres in University Education

In the second stage of this research, we delved into the influence of university education on professional performance. With this aim in mind, we surveyed students attending the Supervised Professional Practice Workshop who participated in the academic and labor fields simultaneously. Unlike previous research (Cassany & López, 2010), the results show that there were essential connections between the discursive forms required at the onset of professional life and those required in the university courses in the last section of the Industrial Engineering program at UNGS. Table 12.2 shows the genres the students reported having written in each context. Data is organized from the highest to the lowest frequency in the professional field so as to easily identify the intersection points and the genres that should be addressed in the formative stage.

Table 12.2 Genres Written by Students Pursuing the Industrial Engineering Degree in the Academic and Business Fields

Genres	At University	In the Professions
Report	15	9
Flowchart	7	6
Action plan	2	6
Blueprint	6	6
Contract	0	5
Job description or profile	3	5
Budget	1	5
Notice	0	4
Method and timing studies	6	4
Flyer	4	4
Procedure handbook	1	4
Trial request	0	4
Procedures	3	4
Performance assessment	1	3
Trial report	4	3
Trial results report	3	3
Annual report	3	3
Security norms	2	3
Annual training plan	0	3

Genres	At University	In the Professions
Contingency plan	0	3
Special report	0	3
Thank-you letter	1	2
Quality handbook	0	2
Principles guideline	0	1
Logistic protocol	0	1
Environmental report	1	1
Vision	4	1
Mission	4	1
Sustainability report	1	0
Turtle diagram	0	0
Skills handbook	0	0
Company profile	0	0
Environmental management system	0	0

The surveys revealed that, among the 33 genres mentioned by engineers working in companies, students nearing graduation who are already integrated into the workforce reported having produced 28 of these genres in their professional environment. This data suggests that novice professionals engage with professional genres almost immediately when they join professional life, even before their graduation. This might indicate that students should be trained in those genres at the university to support or optimize their participation in future professional contexts.

The engineers in the group suggested four genres that were not known by the students in their workplace, nor were students trained in those genres in the university. They were the *turtle diagram*, the *skills handbook*, the *corporate profile*, and the *environmental management system*.

In parallel, during their university coursework, the informants acknowledged having written 20 professional genres, 19 of which were also used in the workplace. The *sustainability report* was the only professional genre studied in the university, but not addressed in the companies where the students worked. However, it is a genre that most larger companies produce and publish on their websites.

Figure 12.1 compares the genres that students reported having produced in each context.
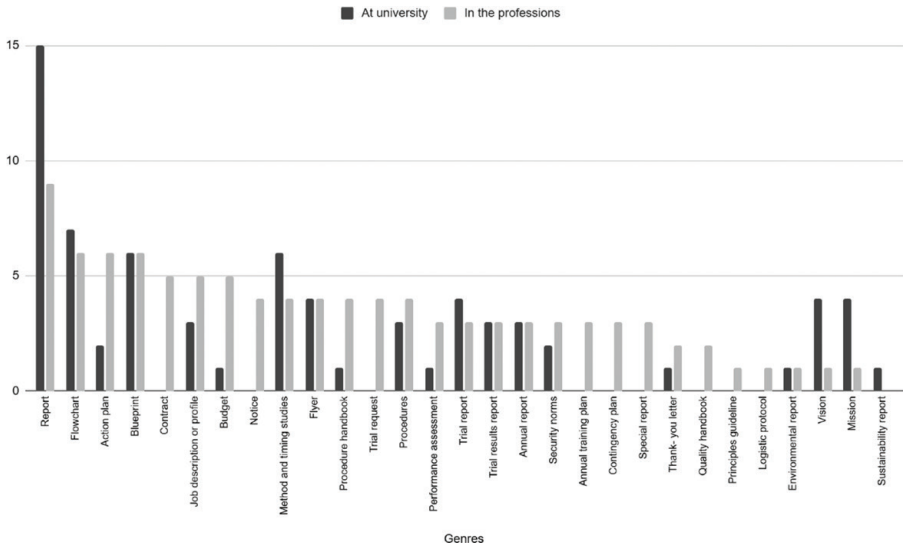
*Figure 12.1 Comparison Between the Genres Required
in the Professional and Academic Fields*

Figure 12.1 shows that the texts most frequently written by members of this group of students in the workplace were the *report,* the *operation flow-chart,* the *action plan,* the *blueprint,* the *contract,* the *description or job profile*, and *the budget.* A great majority of genres circulating in the workplace were addressed at the university. In this sense, the survey results provide valuable insights into identifying the genres that graduates need to master but that are not currently covered in their academic training.

On the other hand, Figure 12.1 shows that there were nine genres produced in the workplace but not addressed in the university: *contract, notices, trial request, annual training plan, contingency plan, specifications, quality handbook, principles guideline,* and *logistics protocol.* This data can be helpful to assess the relevance of including these genres in university courses. However, although the students commented on not having learned some of these types of texts during their academic trajectory, it can be observed that they have had some exposure to genres embedded within broader genres. For example, although there was no affirmative answer for the genre *procedure handbook* in the academic field, three positive responses were given to the genre *procedure*, which is an essential component of the handbook (Stagnaro et al., 2012). Therefore, we could say that analyzing the latter can contribute to laying the foundations upon which the future graduate could build a *handbook.*

Final Reflection

Up to this point, we have initially reviewed the development of conceptualizations of writing and teaching practices in university settings. We have pointed out a transition from the notion of *academic literacy*, centered on the students' individual cognitive process and their abilities, to *academic literacies*, understood in terms of diverse and socially situated practice that is cultural, historical, and institutional in nature. Finally, we have identified a shift towards practice through *disciplinary literacy*, which shares many principles with *academic literacies* but emphasizes the students' learning processes and the particular practices of the discipline.

Then, we briefly presented PRODEAC. From this program stemmed the need for research aimed at detecting the genres used in the professional engineering field, thus enabling universities to assume the responsibility to teach them during academic education. Thereafter, we shared that the surveys of industrial engineers made it possible to identify a set of 33 genres used in the corporate world. Finally, through the data obtained from the survey of students in the last semester of the Industrial Engineering program, we found certain trends and divergences related to previous research findings which claimed that the university does not deal or scarcely deals with professional genres. In Spain, Cassany and López (2010) found that universities require fewer genres than the ones written in the professions by alumni. Similarly, Parodi and others (2010) in Chile acknowledged a reduced variety of genres in the university context—only nine—compared to the greater breadth and diversity in professional contexts. These Chilean researchers suggested that the lack of variety could become a stumbling block in transitioning from the university to the professional world. In contrast, we have found that out of the 33 genres identified in the workplace, the university has addressed 20 of them halfway through the Industrial Engineering Program, meaning that it has taught almost 70% of the genres with which novice professionals will have to interact.

This difference could be due to two reasons. On the one hand, the vast majority of faculty members in the program have worked as engineers in companies, which has provided them with insider knowledge of the field, enabling them to apply this expertise to the design of their teaching and assessment plans. On the other hand, the Education Coordinator of the Institute of Industry, housing the Engineering program, believed that the interaction between the course instructors and the PRODEAC faculty has contributed to identifying and selecting the professional genres linked to the theme developments in the courses from a perspective that considered students' future

professional life. Finally, the analysis has also allowed us to identify the genres required in the engineering workplace but not addressed in the Engineering program. Consequently, more research is needed to describe the following genres: *contract, notices, trial request, annual training plan, contingency plan, special reports, quality handbook, principles guideline,* and *logistics protocol*.

It seems crucial to keep researching the writing taking place in the professional world in order to identify and describe the main genres required of students in this context after they graduate, and to develop pedagogical resources to be included in the education of our engineers.

Another important point is to determine whether the traits of genres at university align with those circulating in professional environments. This requires analyzing the discursive features of both sets across different dimensions, such as textual organization, the semiotic systems in use, and the appraisal and interpersonal resources employed, among others that may emerge from further exploration.

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Reflection

The original article presented the preliminary findings from an interdisciplinary research project.[5] The project stemmed from a concern about the development of Engineering undergraduates and their need to know the genres demanded in professional contexts so as to incorporate them in undergraduate education curriculum and instruction. In that sense, we believe that the main contribution of this publication lies in offering a repertoire of professional genres that can potentially be included in the teaching of the discipline in relation to the content and professional profiles of engineering degrees. Moreover, it extends the invitation to investigate professional writing in other disciplines to improve teaching practices and professional development during the undergraduate degrees, as it relates to the needs of the students' future professions. In the case of Engineering degrees, this question becomes even more relevant because it is directly related to the region's economic and productive development.

Something that was not addressed in this first article of the research project on writing practices in the field of industrial engineering is the description

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5   The research project was titled "Professional writing practices in the business context" [Prácticas de escritura profesional en contexto empresarial] and took place between 2013 and 2015.

of what surrounds the texts and practices that they are part of. Based on the advancements in the field of writing studies and our concerns, we believe that nowadays it would be essential to inquire about the forms of participation and the agency of the novice engineers; particularly in the practices realized by genres and in the pedagogic design of the teaching proposals that address the critical dimensions of literacy. Another element related to the critical dimensions of literacy practices is the development of the appropriate ethnographic perspectives in the study of writing that nowadays are widely accepted in our field compared to when we carried out our study. We believe that ethnographic approaches would enable us to broaden this investigation with tools and perspectives that have been tested by adapting and specifying them to address contemporary problems.

– Lucía Natale and Daniela Stagnaro

13 Writing Centers: A Retrospective View to Understanding the Present and Future of Writing Center Programs in the Latin American Context

Violeta Molina Natera

Writing centers are a collaborative effort aimed at the development of writing skills, especially in higher education. While these programs first emerged in North American universities, they can now be found on a global scale. This article examines the historical trajectory of writing centers since their first appearance in regions outside of Latin America to their current status. In the last five years, Latin America has seen a Writing Center "boom" and the establishment of several writing centers focusing on a diverse range of topics and pedagogical approaches. This article also draws attention to the differing forces that led to the emergence of writing centers in Latin America, and where they are now in comparison to their North American counterparts. Through this examination, the article develops an understanding of the concept of writing centers and the practice of peer-tutoring, which serve as a core to these initiatives. As a temporary conclusion—conscious that writing center history is ongoing—I finish the article with a reflective prospect of how this type of teaching might shape the development of higher education in Latin America. While the impact of writing centers is already felt in this locale, the growth of this approach to literacies is still in consolidation. Therefore, there is great potential for the development of an academic community interested in writing centers.

In recent years, Latin America has seen several initiatives emerge offering alternative approaches to supporting students at the college level with their struggles in reading and writing.[1] Little was known about how these issues

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1   Translators' note: We have avoided formulations that suggest a deficit perspective on

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were addressed in North American universities and other regions until the publication of Paula Carlino's research on the strategies implemented in colleges in Australia, Canada, and the US (Carlino, 2002, 2003a, 2003b, 2003c, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, among others). In many cases, these works cultivated curiosity in some Latin American colleges wanting to undertake projects or programs that could better promote reading and writing practices amongst students. One such project is that of writing centers, which mainly function on the practice of peer-tutoring, to support a collaborative academic writing process outside of the classroom. This article offers a retrospective view on the historical trajectory of writing centers in order to better understand their emergence and potential implications in the Latin American context.

Background: Writing Centers in North American Universities

In North American higher education institutions, there is evidence of writing tutoring long before the appearance of writing centers. Waller (2002) identifies the following three historical references contributing to the origins of writing centers. First, in the 18th century, North American universities saw the birth of extra-curricular *literary societies*, whereby students engaged in lively debates and student-led literary exercises that today characterize much of the work led by writing centers. The labor is centered on students, who must work cooperatively with others, including their peers, as well as professors, emphasizing the writing process.

Second, tutoring as a service was offered to university students in need of specific academic support. Initially, tutoring services were offered by scholarly-minded individuals outside of the university on a hire basis, but during the 1950s universities began to offer free tutoring services to student-athletes and World War II (WWII) veterans, very much in the manner that we see in the 21st century. Later, during the 1960s, this form of institutionally led and paid tutoring service was offered to students categorized as low-income.[2]

The third historical antecedent of writing centers arose with the implementation of college composition courses, which in the North American educational context is often a part of general course requirements. Since the

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students. For more on this issue, see "Reflection" later.

    2   Translators' note: This change has been generally associated with the open admissions movement that took place during the 1960s. During those years, U.S. universities and colleges incorporated open admissions. This change in admissions policy radically modified the access to higher education, diversifying the demographic of the undergraduate student body.

early 19th century, North American English and Rhetoric departments have offered composition courses. In fact, shortly after their inception, composition courses were linked to a "conference" method of instruction. This approach involved personalized conversations between the professor and the student about the texts being developed (Bouquet, 1999). This individualized tutoring approach was later implemented in writing centers. In this manner, the institutionalized labor of writing centers is not necessarily foreign to the university (Waller, 2002).

Actual writing center programming is thought to have originated in the US toward the mid-twentieth century. And while there is no established agreement as to where exactly writing centers first appeared, what is known is that they quickly boomed throughout U.S. universities because of the new incoming body of students, who were viewed as underprepared in relation to the average college student of the time. Given the shifts in student demographics and the newly identified students' educational needs, colleges across the US responded with a variety of approaches, including composition courses built with a "writing laboratory" method (Buck, 1905). This method consisted of composition classes that were supported with a "laboratory hour" outside of classroom time. These writing laboratories promptly demonstrated their efficacy to the extent that, in the 1950s, seventy percent of North American universities drew on this method (Carino, 1995). Furthermore, several universities made it part of their programming to offer free individual tutoring services to students in need of writing support. The main advantage of this approach was that these were not "remedial" courses where students might feel as if they were being isolated and ostracized due to their writing practices, but instead spaces of voluntary assistance, although in some cases assisting these services was suggested by a professor (Boquet, 1999).

Besides the changing student population across college campuses after WWII, the US began to emerge as a world power, and this shift demanded that the nation reckon with its positionality in all regards. For this very reason, research and graduate programs in major universities developed in a way never seen before. More so, several distinguished European scientists fled their home countries to avoid armed conflict, and they found the US to be a favorable new home for the cultivation of the varied branches of knowledge.

To become a world power, the US understood that it needed to develop leaders who could generate the changes of a modern society. Because of this understanding, the nation then became deeply invested in optimizing effective learning methods, especially as connected to professionalization (Russell, 2002). Among the many proposals that emerged from this desire was that of improving reading and writing at the college level, a proposal that has

developed considerably since its emergence. During the 1970s and the start of the 1980s, scholars focused on the assumed cognitive processes of people who write, and these were seen as tasks that a person could individually take up and resolve a writing issue; during the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s, they began to pay attention to the implications of context in the process of writing, and specific strategies were taken up to address these varied differences. During the 1990s there was a recognition of the differences in writing genres and disciplines at different schooling levels, such as high school writing vs. college writing, and this led to the conceptualization of what today is described as *academic cultures*. This concept, which has now gone through a number of iterations in the last 20 years, argues that "there is not one form of academic literacy, but instead literacies come in multiplicities and in plural forms" (Molina, 2012, p. 96). The 1980s and 1990s then gave rise to pedagogically oriented movements that focused on "writing across the curriculum" and its derivative of "writing in the disciplines" (Bazerman et al., 2005). This shift had particular momentum in Western and English-dominant contexts, especially the US, and sought to integrate the teaching of writing in different disciplines (Carlino, 2007).

In this manner, the following points present a historical trajectory which highlights several reasons that propelled the launch of writing centers:

- **As an extension of the classroom.** Initially these writing initiatives were launched as "writing laboratories." Carino (1995) explains that these laboratories started in the classrooms, more as a method than a place, in which the labor was focused on the grammatical improvement of writing. But later, during the 1940s, the labs physically transferred to outside of the classroom, following the scientific model of the laboratory as an extension of the classroom.
- **Remediation.** Several historical events, such as World War II, the civil rights movement, and the so-called literacy crisis of the 1970s, including the move to open admissions, shifted the student population in U.S. universities. This new student population was seen as underprepared and in need of further support and instruction (Boquet, 1999). The former led to the rise of remedial programs, which were presented as responding to a set of academic needs; of these programs, writing laboratories or clinics became most prominent (Moore, 1950).

One of the first writing centers, at Iowa University, started as a writing laboratory in which underperforming students would attend to improve their writing skills. What made the Iowa Center different from other programs (Buck, 1905; Cady, 1915) was that students attended voluntarily, or at the

suggestion of their professor, and received individualized support, as opposed to being obliged and having to complete generic paper handouts, although eventually attending the writing center would become a part of consequence of having failed a writing assessment or evaluation (Waller, 2002).

The various waves of new student enrollments, which occurred as a result of open admissions, strengthened the impetus for writing center labor. The first wave of new students took place after the Second World War when many veterans returned home from war and attended college campuses with new educational needs. The second wave happened toward the end of the 1960s and beginning of the 1970s, with the advent of the actual policy of open admissions, which resulted because of the pressures exercised by racialized and minority communities, who had been excluded from entry to the university. Taking an "accomodationist" approach, universities then launched remedial and basic writing courses for this new body of students, but these courses were soon viewed by community groups as discriminatory; in this manner, writing centers presented an alternative that did not carry the same basic writing and remedial course stigma (Boquet, 1999).

During the 1970s, the results of the SAT exams showed that students required further support with reading and writing skills.[3] Identifying this "need" became known as a "literacy crisis," which then propelled the labor of writing centers as they were in part trusted to undo the exam results. Therefore, writing centers took on the task of improving writing scores for those students who scored low. The focus of their writing support mainly looked at grammatical and structural aspects of writing, as well as guiding students in evaluating their ideas through writing (Yahner & Murdick, 1991).

- **Extension.** Some writing centers, like those at the University of Delaware and Widener College, first started their work as a service to local companies whose workers needed support with writing.
- **Writing across the curriculum.** When writing across the curriculum (WAC) and writing in the disciplines (WID) programs began to emerge, writing centers became their main support, and in some cases, even took on the role of coordinating them. Waller (2002) highlights how, in this WAC programming context and during the 1990s, writing centers sought to develop thinkers and writers. "Ideally, most writing centers want to be seen as places where all writers within the university community can find thoughtful, competent readers of their writing" (Waller, 2002, p. 6).

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3   A standardized exam used to assess and determine college admissions in the United States.

Writing Centers Today

Nowadays U.S. writing centers receive ample support and recognition in most institutions of higher education, including 2-year colleges, often referred to as *community colleges*. In fact, writing centers have also gained traction in places of secondary education, as they are often seen as spaces and programs that contribute to the formation of writers in all fields and at all levels. Writing centers are anchored regionally, nationally, and internationally, and some such anchors are based in conventions and around annual conferences. The International Writing Center Association (IWCA, https://writingcenters.org) is the largest and most prominent world organization supporting this multifaceted work. One of the main efforts that IWCA leads is the publication of the two journals: *The Writing Lab Newsletter* (https://writinglabnewsletter.org), which amplifies the application and practice of writing center work, including that of writing center tutors, and that of *The Writing Center Journal* (https://docs.lib.purdue.edu/wcj), which presents and theorizes on current research in writing centers. This organization coordinates annual meetings, summer workshops, and professional development opportunities for its members. The organization also awards recognition to outstanding individuals in the profession, as well as materials, like peer-reviewed articles and books that have made crucial contributions to the writing center community.

The vast number of publications focused on writing centers demonstrate how these spaces constitute research (Babcock & Thonus, 2012), generating a multitude of knowledge, including writing instruction (Murphy & Law, 1995), administration (Murphy & Stay, 2006), assessment (Schendel & Macauley, 2012), peer-to-peer learning (Rafoth, 2000), the relationship between writing and meaning-making (Murphy & Sherwood, 2011), interculturality (Greenfield & Rowan, 2011), the use of new technologies (Hewett, 2010), among others. All these publications have helped establish and empower an academic community, which is consistently fortified through its knowledge-making practices its members produce and disseminate.

As for the tutoring practices, which are at the heart of writing center work, in several U.S. universities, this work is advanced by graduate students or instructors in specific disciplines, but in many writing centers, undergraduate students perform this work. Tutor training, as Waller (2002) explains, is treated as institutionally sanctioned labor, since those participating receive academic credits often in addition to their paid hourly labor. This demonstrates how universities recognize the collaborative work that writing centers lead.

Furthermore, writing centers have developed robust regional associations, which plan and conduct annual conferences and events for both the program

directors and the tutors. These regional writing center associations are formed so that everyone, especially tutors, can gain opportunities to get together, exchange experiences, draft academic papers, discuss ongoing research, or work proposals, which can then be shared in conferences or academic events. As of now, the US has 10 regional associations, Europe has one (https://european-writingcenters.eu), and the Middle East and North Africa share one (http://menawca.org).

The History of Writing Centers in Latin America

As mentioned earlier, in most countries in Latin America very little was known about writing centers until the early 2000s when Carlino started publishing on the successful practices carried out in U.S., Canadian, and Australian universities. However, prior to these publications, there already was a writing center in Puerto Rico: The Multidisciplinary Writing Center (*Centro de Redacción Multidisciplinario*), in Recinto at Universidad Internacional Iberoamericana (UNINI) of Puerto Rico (http://web.metro.inter.edu/facultad/esthumanisticos/crem_intro.asp). This center emerged as an initiative by two professors and received institutional support both for its research phase, conducted at North American universities, and for its implementation. The center was formulated as an answer to "a worry and a commitment with the teaching and practice of writing across the curriculum" (Quintana et al., 2010, p. 37), and it was consolidated through the institutional support that the various writing strategies and initiatives received. Quintana and García-Arroyo (2012) also note that their institution, being a UNESCO site, has also contributed to the initiatives that the center has led.

The second writing center in Latin America is that of the Center for Learning, Writing, and Language (Centro de Aprendizaje, Redacción, y Lenguas, CARLE), of the ITAM university of Mexico (http://carle.itam.mx), which opened its doors in 2005 in a space that combines the various modalities of learning, writing center, language center, and multimedia (Ormsby, 2015). CARLE is a proposal that, in addition to traditional learning strategies mediated by a professor or peer tutor, incorporates a variety of multimedia resources to support guided, semi-guided, and open learning of writing and languages. This program, from its inception, proposed technology as a learning resource for writing and language instruction.

After the establishment of these two writing centers, several new proposals were launched. In South America, the first one was that of the Centro de Escritura Javeriano, which was established in 2008 in Cali, Colombia, with three main approaches for writing center work: peer-tutoring, writing

mentorship, and virtual consultations (Molina, 2007). Without a doubt Colombia has established itself as a writing center and programming leader in the Americas. As of now it has eight different working sites (Centro de Escritura Javeriano Cali and Bogota, Centro de Español Universidad de los Andes, Centro de Escritura Universidad del Cauca, Centro de Escritura ICESI, Centro de Escritura Universidad del Norte, Centro de Escritura Universidad Minuto de Dios, and Centro de Escritura Universidad de Ibagué). Additionally, currently three writing centers are in the design and formulation stages (Universidad del Trópico, Universidad Nacional Abierta y a Distancia, and Universidad Santo Tomás).

In addition to the centers already mentioned above, writing centers have been established in Puerto Rico (Centro de Redacción Interdisciplinario Recinto Metropolitano Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico, Centro de Lectura y Redacción Universidad del Turabo), Mexico (CARLE), Argentina (Centro de Escritura de Posgrado Universidad de Buenos Aires and Centro Virtual de Escritura Universidad de Buenos Aires), Chile (Centro de Escritura Universidad de Tarapacá), and Uruguay (Centro de Escritura Universidad Católica de Uruguay), as far as is currently known.[4] A current trend in establishing writing centers is that of writing programs being formed with the writing center as a central component of their design, as is the case for the Programa de Español at Universidad de los Andes, in Colombia; others have first instituted a writing program and once consolidated added the writing center as a supporting component of their writing work and administration. There is also the case of writing center work being established and amplified because of actions beyond that of peer-tutoring, for instance, writing work related to professional development, writing across the disciplines, as a collaborative partnership with faculty teaching specific courses, to name a few. An institution that exhibits this model is the Centro de Escritura Javeriano in Cali and Bogotá.

These different writing center modalities have been analyzed in Núñez's (2013) study on a number of writing centers across several distinct countries, including Spain. It is important to clarify that several of the initiatives analyzed by Núñez (2013) actually correspond to virtual resource centers rather than what this article defines as a writing center. In this investigation, Núñez (2013) concludes that the main goal of these writing centers is promoting

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4   Only writing centers are listed here. Other forms of writing programming and curricula initiatives, although important to the growth of writing, do not constitute the work that generally characterizes that of writing centers, such as that of peer-tutoring and personalized writing consultations.

communicative skills across the university, especially among students, which they do through several approaches. According to the author, the main functions of these programs are "training, information, advising, promotion, and research" (p. 93), with the first being the most important of all. This training is carried out through three modalities: intensive writing courses, writing tutoring, and workshops. Information, meanwhile, is provided through distinct types of resources and materials conceptualized for self-learning. Advice consultations take root in the possibility of offering writing services to people in the academic community or those outside of it, and with a monetary cost. Promotion activities are varied, and their goal is to promote reading, writing, and any other communicative skill. Lastly, research and investigative activities are those that are least disseminated by these programs, although in some cases they are essential to their establishment.

Overlapping Patterns with Writing Centers in Other Regions

Latin American writing centers share several of the same motivations for their creation as their North American counterparts:

- **Attending to a diverse population and establishing access.** Inequality is a phenomenon that characterizes most nations in Latin America, and this makes it so that some students arrive at college with enough resources and skill to respond to the demands of the university and others do not have the same ability or opportunity to face these demands. This makes it so that communities from rural sites and from ethnic communities, such as Indigenous and Afro-descendant people, in many cases, are considered as underserved and having needs that the university must attend to. Cases like that of the Centro de Escritura at Universidad de Tarapacá in Chile are examples of centers that have conceptualized writing as a supportive mechanism to the significant number for students they serve from rural regions.
- **Remediation.** The scholarly research assessing the state and practice of literacy (reading and writing) (e.g. Pérez & Rincón, 2013) has shown the multitude of practices that students struggle with and need support for in order to face the demands imposed by the university. The consistent institutional concern is that "students don't read or write" (Molina, 2008), and at the forefront of this claim are those initiatives that seek to remediate the problem. These remedial approaches are motivated by the idea of deficiencies on the part of the student, and they rarely

study this phenomenon of struggle as something connected to administration and faculty instruction. Despite this, these are demands from administrators that must be addressed through initiatives like these. However, in many cases, remediation becomes the perfect pretext for proposing comprehensive actions with shared responsibilities.

One of the main reasons for creating these writing programs and initiatives is students' results on standardized state exams that seek to assess the quality of higher education in different countries, such is the case of the exam Saber PRO (Knowledge PRO) in Colombia.[5] In general, the results in reading and writing competencies are discouraging, prompting a call to take action to improve students' performance on these assessments.

- **The amplification of the writing classroom.** An increasing number of universities have established institutional policies mandating an introductory writing course in the first semester (in some cases extending it to the second semester as well). More recently, however, an integral component in the rise of writing centers has been that of writing across the curriculum in the form of reading and writing intensive courses, which are coordinated and supported with faculty in linguistics (for instance the E (W) courses at Universidad de los Andes in Colombia). Writing centers then surge as a support system to these courses in which a tutor accompanies the processes proposed in the classrooms (Moreno & Baracaldo, 2016).
- **Amplification—with Professional and Technical Personnel.** This is a practice less often observed. As of now a writing initiative that speaks to this motif is that of the Centro de Producción Textual at Universidad del Trópico in Colombia, which works to offer business and technical writing consultations to individuals, or established programs and organizations seeking support, because of a need that was not met in their region.

In addition to the noted trends that have motivated the surge in writing centers in Latin America and in relation to North American universities, there is one other approach that seems to be part of the ongoing synergy of writing programming evolution: the need to consolidate an academic community. In the US, Europe, North Africa, and the Middle East, writing centers grew out of the desire to amplify the production of knowledge. In 2013,

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5   Translators' note: Students usually take this standardized exam as they are proximal to their college graduation. The general exam design includes 5 modules: critical reading, quantitative reasoning, citizenry practices, written communication, and English (https://www.icfes.gov.co/en/acerca-del-examen-saber-pro.)

Cali, Colombia held the first Latin American Congress on Writing Center and Programs (Molina, 2015), which resulted in the recognition of the many writing centers and programs' members across Latin America. This network of members—known as Latin American Network of Writing Centers and Programs (RLCPE, *Red Latinoamericana de Centros y Programas de Escritura*)—seeks to generate an academic community that can mutually benefit the experiences of its participating writing programs, as well as members, and cultivate dialogues and professional development for writing tutors, and participate in the production of research-based knowledge conducted in these different centers. RLCPE also seeks to increase the visibility of the work led by its affiliated programs and members.

Even though this network is still young, it already has the representation of 28 universities across Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, Puerto Rico, Uruguay, and Venezuela.[6] A short-term goal that RLCPE established is building a website offering information on the ongoing activities of the network; as an intermediate goal, RLCPE hopes to establish biannual meetings in which members, including tutors, writing center and program directors/coordinators, and administrators. In the long term, it is expected that a publication on writing centers and programs will be established to begin producing knowledge on these topics in our language.

But What Really is a Writing Center?

Finding a unique and precise definition of writing centers is a difficult task since they often adopt and implement their own particular approaches depending on their institutional context and the people establishing the center. Perhaps the most representative work on the notion of writing centers is that of "The Idea of a Writing Center," by Stephen North and published in 1984. In this article, directed to writing tutors-in-training, the author concludes that a writing piece reflects the process that precedes it, instead of a product that must be reconstructed to meet a set of standards or corrections. North argues that tutors should centralize students in the writing process and not the texts, and this has become the basic writing philosophy that grounds writing centers.

Different from the traditional writing courses in the university, the focus of writing centers is not to correct issues in the text; writing tutoring is fundamentally centered on the intellectual and individual skills that a writer puts at play

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6   Translators' note: By 2025, RLCPE's membership has surpassed 180 institutions from 22 countries and has held five international conventions. Additionally, RLCPE has a website (https://sites.google.com/site/redlacpe/?pli=1) and a bulletin named *Andamiajes*.

when writing. According to North (2001), the main responsibility of a writing center, with a student-centered pedagogy, is to "talk to the writers."

A decade after publishing this paradigmatic article on writing centers, North, in a gesture of both greatness and humility, proposed to revisit his own idea of a writing center. The main difference in his revision was to reconsider and complicate the relationships on which a writing center is based. The first instance is that of the tutor with the writer, the primary scene of tutoring. Next, the relationship between the tutor and the course instructor, fundamental to the development of the tutoring sessions. Lastly, the relationship between the tutor and the institution (North, 2011). The most forceful and clear way, in my view, in which North (2011) expresses these relationships is as follows: "an hour of talk about writing at the right time between the right people can be more valuable than a semester of mandatory class meetings when that timing isn't right" (p. 67).

Another paradigmatic work on the concept of writing centers is that of Muriel Harris's (1995) "Talking in the Middle: Why Writers Need Writing Tutors." Harris proposes that a writing center's main responsibility is that of working one-on-one with writers, which does not mean duplicating, taking away from, nor supplementing the work of writing classes. Writing centers are also not supposed to compensate for poor writing classroom pedagogy, crowded classrooms, or instructors' lack of time and engagement with students. The individual nature of tutoring sessions allows students to "gain kinds of knowledge about their writing and about themselves that are not possible in other institutional contexts" (Harris, 1995, p. 27). Some of the ways in which this gets accomplished, according to Harris (1995), are by cultivating independence in collaborative conversation, supporting the acquisition of strategic knowledge, assisting with affective concerns, and making meaning of academic language.

Harris (1988) has also offered a conceptualization for writing center through the labor that these programs undertake:

- Tutoring sessions take place in a one-to-one context.
- Tutors act as mentors and fellow collaborators, not professors.
- The focus of tutoring sessions is that of meeting students' individual needs.
- Tutoring sessions cultivate writing experimentation and practice.
- Tutors work with a variety of writing courses.
- Writing centers are available to students of all levels of writing proficiency.

As noted above, the core of writing centers is the tutoring sessions, which are centered on developing the writing skills of students. Something that

differentiates writing centers from the writing classroom is that the job of the tutor is not to demonstrate their knowledge—given that sessions take place in the moment and as they go—nor to make the student copy strategies that work for the tutor; instead it is about figuring out which are the writing strategies that best work for each student (Bouquet, 2002). As previously noted, one of the main factors in the development of writing centers is the selection and professional development of tutors. In Latin American writing centers, tutors are typically outstanding undergraduate students who demonstrate an ability for helping others to become successful writers. Similarly, writing tutors ought to demonstrate patience and strength in offering feedback, motivation, and praise (Gillespie & Lerner, 2003).

Tutoring sessions support writers in all steps of their writing process: from brainstorming and organizing ideas, to drafting and writing, to revising, and proofreading (or editing). Although there is no single way of conducting a tutoring session, it is important to be familiar with several strategies to effectively assist in the different possible scenarios (Ryan & Zimmerelli, 2010). One of the main premises of paired tutoring sessions is that the writer remains responsible for the writing project at all stages—before, during, and after the tutoring session. Additionally, the grade obtained on the project is not the tutor's responsibility. It is not the tutors' role to "fix" or "clean up" the text, but rather to teach writers how to do it themselves (Geller et al., 2007). On the other hand, tutors first identify what is working in the text, before focusing on what must be improved.

An aspect of tutoring sessions that can create controversy at the beginning is that tutoring may be offered by people who have different disciplinary training from that of the writer. At the front of this controversy, it is important to establish that it is not the job of tutors to be experts about the topic of the text at work, nor grammatical correction. Instead, tutors should focus on establishing a healthy tutoring environment, having a sense of what to attend to first, hearing about the text in its totality, and formulating open questions, allowing the writer to make decisions, and knowing when there is more work needed (Molina, 2011).

Provisional Conclusion

Writing centers are an educational initiative with demonstrated efficiency in the development of reading and writing skills. Although they were originally conceived in North American universities and have undergone significant evolution there, in the Latin American context, some similarities can be observed in the reasons that led to their creation. This article makes the case that the increasing number of writing centers indicates a growing interest in this

type of initiatives. This article has demonstrated that many universities today are showing increasing interest in these initiatives, as most writing centers have emerged only recently. This rise in interest in writing centers also indicates a shift from targeted approaches—mainly remedial courses designed to address what is perceived as a problem—to more comprehensive solutions with an institutional impact, where any member of the academic community can feel included, not just students viewed "as struggling."

To this point, it is important to highlight the success that many existing writing centers have had, because their impact can create the kinds of reach and support that other initiatives can't always reach, like that of remedial courses. The very form in which work is done in writing centers, as explained here on the conceptualization of writing centers, marks a profound difference with traditional courses, given that a student attends voluntarily for help, and does not receive any form of assessment. The one-on-one interaction and the establishment of a collaborative, empathetic work environment—centered on the student's needs—ensure an understanding of their own writing practices. This is necessarily the first and most important step toward improving those practices.

Another advantage that writing centers offer is that they can be assessed relatively easily, and therefore results and impact can be reviewed accordingly. These outcomes can serve as the foundation for developing institutional policies that position reading and writing as central components within universities. This is the case for writing centers in North American universities, where writing centers have become a key component for the support of writing policies across the university (Bazerman et al., 2005; Russell, 2002). Among some of the models in which writing centers can work to support writing policies, and which are already at work in the Latin American context, are those of the programs focused on faculty professional development, ranging from support in writing scientific articles, to certificate courses on writing strategies across the curriculum. Writing initiatives on intensive reading and writing have also been effectively advanced, and have been accompanied by tutors and/or instructors from the writing center. In some cases, the design and implementation of college-entry exams have also been placed in the hands of writing centers, and these centers have also conducted research on these exams and their results. And many more options could be listed for how writing centers have been (or can be) institutionally tied to writing initiatives.

Writing centers, then, are an emerging and rapidly growing academic community. In the case of Latin America, this community is consistently incorporating new members into the Latin American Network of Writing Centers and Programs (RLCPE). The consolidation of these centers as an academic community can offer possibilities for improving the quality of

academic work as institutions of higher education and can also bring a much more powerful learning experience to not only tutees but also tutors.

The hope of this was to raise interest and curiosity rather than offer answers. In particular, it looks to generate the curiosity of other institutions to imagine a formative space for the development of reading and writing practices—open to all members of this academic community, not just those perceived as "in need." For those who are willing to experiment with a paradigm change, which is already on its way in our region, the Appendix offers a brief guide on how to initiate this process. The pathway is mapped, and the real experience lies in walking it.

> If writing centers are going to finally be accepted, surely they must be accepted on their own terms; as places whose primary responsibility, whose only reason for being, is to talk to writers. That is their heritage, and it stretches back farther than the late 1960s or the early 1970s, or to Iowa in the 1930s—back, in fact, to Athens, where in a busy marketplace a tutor called Socrates set up the same kind of shop: open to all comers, no fees charged, offering, on whatever subject a visitor might propose, a continuous dialectic that is, finally, its own end. (North, 2001, p. 78).

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Appendix. Basic Steps to Start a Writing Center[7]

1. Visit other writing centers to have firsthand experience with scaffolding writing. Search and research a variety of approaches in order to have options to choose the model that best meets your needs.

2. Read the resources offered by IWCA (www.writingcenters.org) and the existing literature about writing centers.

3. Seek institutional support for your initiative and ensure the support of at least one director.

4. If a regional association exists, join. You may also join the international association. You will be able to meet the members and ask them as many questions as necessary.

5. Subscribe to *The Writing Center Journal* and *The Writing Lab Newsletter* or check the available online journals.

6. Join WCenter, the mailing list of the writing center community (not officially part of IWCA).

7. Answer the following questions:
   a. What will be the mission and goal of the center?
   b. Where will it be located?

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7 Based on International Writing Center Association (2014).

    c.   What staff will be in charge of its functioning?

    d.   How will the staff be remunerated?

    e.   How will the staff be trained? Who will do it?

    f.   How will the staff be evaluated? Who will be in charge of the evaluation?

    g.   Where will the budget come from for the center? Institutional funding? Subsidies? A mix of both?

    h.   Where will the materials and equipment come from? What materials will be needed?

    i.   Who will make decisions in the center? What will be the mechanisms to make decisions?

    j.   Who will be served by those decisions?

    k.   What will be the policies of the center?

    l.   How will the center be led?

    m. What will be the responsibilities of the director?

    n.   What data will be recorded? What information will be gathered? Who will do it? With what goals? How frequently? How will that information be stored and distributed?

8. Write out the goals and purposes of the writing center to clarify how it will fit within the mission, vision, and hierarchical structure of your institution.

9. Create a list of objectives for various years (might be five years), to reach those goals every year of operation. If possible, you may do strategic planning with short (one year), medium (three years), and long term goals (five years).

10. Be passionate and carry out your proposal: it is the only way to convince others.

Reflection

Writing this article took me around three years. It emerged as a result of a research study that I carried out to create what I thought was the first writing center in Latin America. However, during the process, I found out there were already two other writing centers established in Latin America. So, when I started to study writing centers, it was important to me to learn the reasons behind their emergence, their history, and the influences—sociopolitical, educational, etc.—that helped to turn writing centers in Latin America into a movement. I was fascinated by their history, especially because at first the emergence of these three different writing centers appeared disconnected from one another. Over time, however, commonalities emerged and they

slowly started to connect with each other, later forming an association together that would go on to grow significantly over time.

The idea to track the emergence of these writing centers inspired me to develop the article's hypothesis, where I state that, while in the US the development of writing centers has been influenced by the country's socio-political circumstances, Latin America has its own unique conditions and characteristics. Therefore, these unique characteristics need to be taken into account when implementing new writing centers in Latin America, but without ignoring the existing field of knowledge which can help to guide these efforts. Those engaged in developing new writing centers in Latin America should "cut across" disciplines and traditions in order to learn from experiences in other contexts. When I wrote it years ago it was an innovative hypothesis which may in turn help to explain the positive reception of the article.

Nowadays, I still maintain that it is necessary to know the history, theory, and the field's current research base in order to ground the practices that are implemented in Latin America. However, after ten years doing research in the field, I also think that we should include the critical perspectives that have emerged from writing center studies. For example, social justice approaches, anti-racist practices, and guidance against other ideological forms that, involuntarily, might emerge during tutoring sessions in writing centers and that can in turn reproduce hegemonic discourses, as is the case with academic writing. Similarly, I would explicitly mention in my article that deficit discourses have no solid foundation. These discourses claim that certain students—especially those from historically disadvantaged and discriminated groups—lack preparation or have deficiencies. While these ideas have often led to the creation of writing centers and initiatives, they are fundamentally flawed and should not be accepted.

The emergence of writing centers in a large number of Latin American countries, as well as other parts of the world, should lead to the construction of a common approach to the concept of tutoring, one that incorporates the academic and non-academic cultures found in all contexts. Consolidating these approaches would enable the exchange of knowledge in a progressive and equitable way, and I contend that this should be the role of writing center associations.

Lastly, I could have saved a couple of words in a title that now looks very lengthy to me.

   – Violeta Molina Natera

14 Academic Writing and Student Agency

Virginia Zavala

In this paper, I discuss the notion of agency and its place (and importance) within a sociocultural and critical view of literacy, and of academic literacy specifically. In the first part, I frame the problem of academic literacy within a critical paradigm that has been adopted by diverse disciplines and that has recently influenced applied linguistics. I also explain the connection between the new literacy studies and a theory of situated learning as participation in communities of practice. In the second part, I present two brief case studies about Quechua-speaking students from Universidad Nacional de San Cristóbal de Huamanga (Ayacucho, Peru) in order to show the strategies that they develop in the process of appropriating academic literacy (specifically writing) and as part of a display of agency. These case studies show that individuals do not constitute mere effects of their "cultural characteristics," but that they are actors in the world, who participate in communities of practice and who often negotiate with institutional expectations. Finally, I end with a more applied discussion about the teaching of academic literacy and with an argument in favor of a negotiation model that questions the neoliberal sociolinguistic view which is still prevailing in our field.

The goal of this paper is to introduce the notion of *agency* in academic literacy and argue that this concept should occupy a central place in this type of writing. Agency has become a ubiquitous construct in several disciplines, but it is sometimes fuzzy. In general, it refers to individuals' socioculturally mediated ability to act and choose within the framework of the effects of the ideological forces that have shaped their subjectivity (Ahearn, 2001; Ashcroft et al., 2000). This definition emphasizes the social nature of agency and distances itself from more cognitive perspectives that highlight autonomous individuals' freely exerted volition (Ahearn, 2001). From a theory of practice, which sees agency and structure as mutually constitutive (Bourdieu, 1977), subjects are neither totally free to choose nor completely constrained by structural variables. Rather, under certain circumstances, they can act in ways that transgress

the social structures that influence and constrain them. This phenomenon is apparent in social class and gender, but also in literacy practices.

In the first section, I will frame this issue regarding this type of literacy within a critical paradigm that has been influential in other disciplines, such as applied linguistics. In the second section, I present two short case studies focused on students at Universidad de Huamanga at Ayacucho, Peru, who are native speakers of Quechua. My goal is to show that the strategies they develop in the process of appropriating academic literacy (specifically, writing) constitute deployments of their agency. These case studies reveal that the participants are not mere effects of their "cultural features." Instead, they are agentive actors in the world, that they participate in communities of practice, and that many times they resist institutional expectations.

Connecting Paradigms and Concepts

When we find an essay that differs from the "typical" academic essay and, moreover, is written by a student who speaks a minority language, we tend to associate these differences with the possible interference between the student's first and second language. These interferences may occur at the grammatical level but also at the rhetorical or discursive level.

Since the 1960s, contrastive rhetoric has emphasized cultural variation and negative transfer from the first language in the academic writing of students who speak English as a second language (Connor, 1996). On the one hand, this perspective has assumed that each language has its own rhetorical conventions that stem from culture-specific thought patterns. On the other hand, it has been established that the rhetorical conventions of the students' first languages interfere with or are negatively transferred to their second language academic writing. For example, while standard English is said to promote linearity, deductive logic, critical thinking, individuality, clarity, and reason, other languages are supposed to display alternate rhetorical patterns different from those of English (Kubota, 2010).

This perspective assumes an equivalence between *learning styles* and *ethnic groups*, as in "Asians have a deductive style" or "Americans have an inductive style." This focus on "cultural traits" promotes the idea that behavioral patterns derive from an individual's or a group's *essence*, as if they were permanent and static features of the individual or group. This, in turn, obscures the connections between individual learning and the practices of cultural communities because individuals engage in situated, participatory learning within specific practices and such participation changes throughout their lives (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). Therefore, the relationship between *learning* and *culture* must

not be essentialized; instead, it must be framed within the concept of *practice*, which I will address later.

Moreover, by constructing a dichotomy between English and the "other languages" (which are defined in opposition to English), this perspective implicitly conveys the superiority of the hegemonic language at this historical moment (English) and the inferiority of the rest. In doing so, it reproduces a colonial discourse that exoticizes and "otherizes" the language (and culture) of the "other," meaning the non-English-speaking speaker. Finally, the explicit and mechanical teaching of the conventional rhetorical structure of English attempts to integrate students to the hegemonic academic community. However, recent critical perspectives within contrastive rhetoric have paid more attention to the plurality, complexity and hybridity of a language's rhetorical patterns and have rejected ahistorical, rigid, and reductive definitions of cultural rhetorics (Kubota & Lehner, 2004).

All things considered, these discussions about students who learn English as a second language in English-speaking countries like the US or former British colonies are productive and interesting in attempting to understand the Latin American situation of students who are native speakers of indigenous languages and learn Spanish as a second language.

We now know that many variables can influence a student's writing and cultural rhetorical differences are not at the center stage. Other dimensions to be considered are students' writing experiences in their first language, second language fluency, their experiences writing specific genres in both languages, the instructional approaches they have been exposed to, their beliefs about cultural differences, and their agency as reflected in their rhetorical intentions and preferences. The latter is the focus of this paper.

What follows is a reflection on academic writing, one that is based on theoretical developments that have emerged in several disciplines in the last decades. Postfoundational critiques (e.g., postmodern, poststructuralist and postcolonial) have played a central role in revealing the sociopolitical construction of knowledge and denaturalizing taken-for-granted assumptions that have obscured the issue of power. Within the so-called linguistic turn of the social sciences, a critical applied linguistics approach has developed (Pennycook, 2001); that together with a sociocultural situated view of learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991), now has renewed notions of learners' "culture," "language," and "agency," and of the role that these categories play in written communication (Canagarajah, 2003; Gutierrez, 2008; Kubota, 2010). This approach sees student writers as agents who negotiate rhetorical norms and their subjectivities as they write in their first and second language, within different communities of practice (Kubota & Lehner, 2004). It is, then, an applied

linguistics that politicizes and problematizes the definitions of *language*, *culture*, *learning*, and *literacy*, among others, in order to shed light on the power dynamics that underlie those definitions and thus seek social transformation.

Now, why are these definitions problematized? Because the postfoundational critiques assume that all knowledge—including any definition—is a social construction based on discursive practices (or in the ways we use language). It follows that any definition of "language" or "culture" has emerged from looking at the world from a certain vantage point and serves specific interests. Knowledge is not based on an objective, neutral observation of the world. Therefore, the categories we use to apprehend reality—such as language, culture, or literacy—do not reference "real" divisions. From this approach, it is important to cast a critical gaze on knowledge that is taken for granted and ask ourselves what power dynamics have contributed to its construction.

Thus, in contrast to viewing a specific language as a self-contained, closed system that is clearly different from other languages, critical sociolinguistics prefers to see language as a practice that is part of a complex network of social activities, where individuals, as social actors, deploy different linguistic resources to achieve concrete purposes in specific situations (Heller, 2007). The ways that, for example, Quechua and Spanish are delimited in relation to each other or the characterization of *quechuañol*[1] as an undesirable language variety are ideologically charged practices that serve oppressors' interest and contribute to perpetuating social inequality.

A similar gaze can be applied to the definition of culture. It must not be assumed that cultural differences exist as tangible, real entities; rather, it must be assumed that they are perpetually negotiated subjective processes that are discursively constructed and influenced by a wide range of power structures. Street (1993) rightly argues that, instead of attempting to define what culture *is*, we should examine what it *does* in order to discover the definitions that are constructed in specific circumstances and to particular ends.

"Othering" processes are just one example of how cultural differences between "us" and "them" are constructed in order to continue reproducing social exclusion. Thus, if we use culturally predefined categories as a basis for our research, we could be reproducing the discourses (or representations) that circulate in society, instead of analyzing them critically (Piller, 2007).

Within this perspective that highlights the social construction of knowledge, a new sociocultural approach to reading and writing has been developed:

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1   Translators' note: *Quechuañol* refers to the practice of code-switching between Quechua and Spanish.

the *new literacy studies*. This approach has produced numerous publications in English (Barton, 1994; Gee, 1996; Street, 1984) and, more recently, in Spanish (Cassany, 2008; Zavala et al., 2004). A line of inquiry within this approach is the study of *academic literacy* that focuses on higher education (Boughey, 2000; Haggis, 2003; Hendricks & Lynn, 2000; Hirst et al., 2004; Ivanic, 1998; Lillis, 2003; Turner, 2003). This literature, which analyzes ways of constructing knowledge in academia, agrees that academic literacy, traditionally assumed to be a transparent, neutral means to transmit knowledge, is actually no more than a particular way of using language that has been developed within the Western intellectual tradition.

According to Turner (2003), even though academic literacy has existed for a long time, it has cloaked itself in a "discourse of transparency" as it has been widely taken to be the best *vehicle* for the formulation, transmission, and comprehension of academic content in the clearest possible way. We must see that beyond this technical discourse lies an "objectivist" way of constructing knowledge that purports to reflect the product of a "rational" and "scientific" mind attuned to the conventions of the dominant intellectual tradition. The use of impersonal forms instead of the first person or nominalizations instead of active verbs are but two examples of the fact that the conventions of academic literacy are neither natural nor neutral.

Academic literacy is conceived as that which is "understandable by everyone." This confirms the "discourse of transparency" that cloaks this kind of literacy. In previous studies, many Peruvian students have said that academic writing in the university is "formal" and has the following features: "the language is *clear*, precise and concrete," "it uses *clear* and known terms," "everything is *clear* and pertains to reality and there is not subjectivity" and "it is *understandable* by the general population" (Zavala & Córdova, 2010). These ideas "naturalize" the conventions of academic literacy; we know, however, that far from being natural, it is a socially constructed discourse that is not easily accessible by all.

Nevertheless, it is not enough to question and deconstruct academic literacy and hold that it is a historical creation of certain power dynamics. From the perspective of sociocultural studies, literacy is a *social practice*, with social practices understood as "habitualised ways, tied to particular times and places, in which people apply resources (material or symbolic) to act together in the world" (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 21). *Practice* is a central notion in a theory of literacy because it connects abstract structures and concrete events, or between "society" and people living their lives (Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999, p. 21). In that sense, practices do not merely reproduce a collection of representations of reality but also construct new representations thanks to

subjects' "agency." As Werstch (1998) reminds us, the unit of analysis of interdisciplinary work in a new social theory is not the mind, the individual or society seen from a macro-perspective, but *social practice* (or activity), where individuals and society meet.

The concept of "practice" is central to sociocultural studies of literacy but also to a theory of situated learning, of which speech and writing are only one part. The theory of social practice (Lave, 1996) has influenced the development of a notion of learning as *participation in communities of practice* and, therefore, as an integral part of social practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991). This means that, in any process of learning, as part of situated activities, people develop abilities but also participate as actors in the world and develop identities that make them members of specific communities. Therefore, while engaging in social practices, people make commitments, construct identities, develop social relationships with other members of the community, use specific artifacts, reproduce implicit values within a particular ideological system and, thus, make society and culture. While contrastive rhetoric sees culture as an independent variable or disconnected from the processes that constitute it, a sociocultural perspective sees culture as immersed in activity systems, artifacts, and other types of symbolic forms. Speech and writing are parts of these systems.

This social theory of learning rejects the cognitive vision that construes learning as a mental process detached from other sociocultural dimensions (like identity, social relationships, or artifact manipulation) and as a process that privileges individual cognitive activity or, at best, interaction with one other subject. People learn within practices, not in the sense of mechanical exertion, but in the sense of activities in the world through which identities and memberships in collectives are forged. Subjects are "constituted" and "constitute" themselves in these activities together with others who share goals, interests, commitments, resources, knowledge, and skills. In other words, people become specific kinds of subjects through specific ways of participating in the world.

I would like to highlight that what defines this theory is the type of relationship it posits between the subject and the world. Giddens (1995), a central figure in the debate about the relationship between "agency" and "structure," proposes that people's actions are developed from social structures, which are in turn reinforced or reconfigured by the effects of those very actions. Actors are not totally free agents, nor are they social products completely determined by structures. Under some circumstances, they can transform the systems that produce them. This dialectical approach avoids the risks of overemphasizing the social determination of social practices or assuming the discursive constitution of reality as produced by the free play of ideas in people's minds rather than by real, structurally, and materially grounded social practices. We must then keep

in mind that, within the structures that constrain actors, they can open new social possibilities from the practices in which they engage. As pointed out by Lave and Wenger (1991): "learning as increasing participation in communities of practice concerns the whole person acting in the world" (p. 49).

This discussion leads us to the notion of *agency* and its importance in academic literacy scholarship. Student agency situates them as individuals with diverse competencies, subjectivities and educational experiences who act on writing rather than merely transferring the rhetoric of their first language to their second language. Subjects are not mere effects of their cultural features; rather, they are volitive agents capable of generating social change. When students learn academic literacy, they not only acquire knowledge and complacently accept literate activity. They also act on the world and deploy actions within the framework of the effects of the social structures that have shaped their subjectivities (Ashcroft et al., 2000). From this perspective, agents, activity, and the world are mutually constitutive (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

We are then situated in a new understanding of writing, not as an object but as an activity. Writing is no longer just a (linguistic) product or (cognitive) process, but a situated practice that is social, material, ideological and historical (Canagarajah, 2003). Within this framework, scholars have shifted from examining *texts* as finished products to exploring the *strategies* that students deploy as they appropriate academic writing. Thus, studies of writing in multilingual contexts show that students use several strategies to learn academic writing. These range from the unchallenged adoption of dominant rhetorical conventions to the creation of a "third space" to resolve some of the conflicts produced by the learning of the dominant discourse (see Canagarajah, 2003; Cassany, 2011; Gutiérrez, 2008). The concept of *strategy* is tied to subjects' deployment of agency as they attempt to cope with socially dominant ideological impositions and representations.

Learning academic literacy must then be understood as a process that implies participation in the literate sociocultural practices that define an academic community. However, even though participation is a crucial condition for learning, not every case is equally successful (Lave & Wenger, 1991). Obstacles related to access can arise, as well as others regarding difficulties gaining legitimacy as "new" members in a community of practice. Moreover, sometimes novices' learning is inhibited when instructors (such as professors) act in authoritarian ways and believe that students are to be "taught" rather than being peripheral participants in that community of practice. Indeed, instead of inviting, encouraging, accompanying, and supporting students in integrating into a specific community, many times instructors may be unwillingly excluding students without asking ourselves what is underlying the issue.

Furthermore, the official discourse regarding the reading and writing abilities of university students from linguistic-cultural minorities is often imbued with a deficit discourse that asserts the need for remedial intervention. A deficit discourse is that which judges non-mainstream cultural forms as less adequate, without examining them from the perspective of its own community (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003). Casting those students as incapable of reading and writing academic texts obscures the agency they deploy as they develop strategies to challenge—either consciously or unconsciously—academic discourse. Some of the judgments about such students are "they can't read," "they don't know how to underline important ideas," "they can't find main and supporting ideas," "they can't systematize information and then communicate what the teacher says," "they don't have any study skills," "they don't have reading habits," "they are unmotivated," "they don't talk or write much," "they can't make inferences," or "they struggle with reading because of their limited vocabulary" (Zavala & Córdova, 2010).

Two Cases

Conducting research from students' perspectives affords a more systematic and detailed observation of the complex strategies they develop as they learn academic writing and the level of agency they deploy during that process. It is not enough to ask whether students can use academic writing, as they may be competent but harbor negative views toward this literate practice. Indeed, many students across several contexts experience internal conflicts as they read and write within academic communities. Instead of reacting passively, they develop strategies to negotiate power, identities, and the sense of belonging that are at play in intercultural communication (Canagarajah, 1997). These are processes of *appropriation* in which young people use certain forms of academic discourse to articulate their own identity (Ashcroft et al., 2000).

In this section, I will present two case studies of young speakers of Quechua who, at the time of the study, were first-year students at Universidad de Huamanga at Ayacucho, Peru. Almost 90% of the population of this region speak Quechua on a daily basis (ENAHO, 2001).

Emilia is a Law student; Félix is a Journalism major. Emilia's family migrated to Huamanga fleeing political violence when she was a child. The fact that she has lived in the city since that early age explains that her command of Quechua is limited despite the fact that she can communicate in that language. By contrast, Félix's family still lives in their rural village despite having been exposed to the same violence, and he is fluent in oral Quechua. Both Emilia's father and Félix's father managed to access higher education,

which is not common among families from rural communities. Emilia's father dropped out of college but was able to complete his degree through a special professionalization program. Félix's father never graduated. Unlike both fathers, the mothers did not complete elementary school. It is important to point out that both Emilia and Félix are thus the first generation of their families that are likely to attain undergraduate degrees.

As we will see, Emilia and Félix's writing are framed within social practices of resistance toward the prototypical ways of "being a college student" imposed by the institution and, at the same time, to construct an alternative identity that is different from what society expects. In Emilia's case, she fights to be accepted for who she is without having to become the person society wants her to be: "There is a loss of a part of yourself in order to be accepted, in order to adapt." Emilia does not want to stop being herself; she wants to be a college student but also wants to "keep eating *yuyo*" (a typical dish from rural areas), "keep speaking Quechua to *mamitas*" (indigenous women), "keep walking around the places I used to walk or keep going to the market with my mom."

In this sense, the students that come from rural areas know that when speaking Spanish with Quechua interferences, when they listen to *huayno* (typical Andean music), or when they dress informally when delivering classroom presentations, they are at risk of being excluded and, moreover, inferiorized because they are performing an identity that does not conform with the social expectations. Besides, being a college student involves reading and writing in a manner that is "academic," that is also connected with everything that was previously mentioned, and associated with a specific way of building knowledge, developing learning, and assuming a sense of belonging to a community with which students do not always feel comfortable.

Emilia and Félix have developed several vernaculars or self-generated writing practices (Ivanic & Moss, 2004) in order to reflect on topics that they are interested in or concerned about in a way that is not allowed by academic writing: in building knowledge "in their own way" in order to project an identity they desire.[2] Emilia uses an "academic journal" each term to write about academic topics that are discussed in her classes: "all those academic topics

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2   The sociocultural perspective on reading and writing establishes a distinction between dominant or official literacy practices and self-generated or vernacular literacy practices. The latter refer to reading and writing that are not regulated by formal laws and socially dominant institutional procedures, and that have their origin in daily life (Barton & Hamilton, 1998). The dominant or official literacy practices are associated with formal organizations such as education, religion, law, bureaucracy, and work (among others), in the way that they are institutionalized and valued. Nonetheless, it is important to point out that this division between self-generated literacy practices or vernacular and dominant or official is not a rigid one.

about social conflicts, university changes, social reality, I make them personal, and the result is a text that is no longer academic but emotional that expresses that reality and shows mostly what I think about it." She writes about the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Amnesty International, politics, conflicts, legal ethics, the usefulness of laws, and other topics pertaining to her degree program. Emilia writes her journal mostly while she is attending lectures or reading in the library. While in the classroom "questions arise and, since I cannot challenge the professor, I challenge the paper sheet." While in the library, questions arise about the texts she reads, and she feels the need to write comments about them.

As for Félix, he writes "monographs in a poetic style" about the story of his father and his community, the political violence of the 1980s, the earthquake that damaged the city of Ica, and other topics. He also writes emails where he analyzes socio-political topics "from a subjective perspective" and personal reflections where he uses literary strategies.

Emilia

As stated by Boughey (2000), composing an academic text is like singing a song with a choir in the background. The need to have these other voices to sing with or against them is a kind of rule in academic knowledge construction. A scholar cannot sing alone because the other voices must provide the evidence for what the scholar is singing. Therefore, an academic text contains multiple voices, "It contains the voices of the authorities that the author cites and it also contains the voice of the author that appears in relation to these other voices as a soloist backed by a choir" (Boughey, 2000, p. 283). Understanding this interplay of voices is a lengthy process that involves "scholarly" ways of knowing and examining the world, ways that might be in conflict with some people's way of building knowledge.

In Emilia's case, there is a tension between the evidence she values and that is valued by the academic community. While scholars consider reliable sources to be those found in the literature, for Emilia—and many of her fellow students—reliable sources to build knowledge are found in their lived experiences or "what they have seen with their own eyes." As Emilia puts it "the professor relied on what the law stated, while I was relying on what I had seen. So, I feel that's where the emotional aspect comes in, and I wasn't basing my argument on what the professor said about the laws." Canagarajah (1997) found evidence of the same practice among African American students, for whom the best evidence for knowledge building was in rap, movies, TV shows, and other pop culture sources.

While in a scholarly text the author builds knowledge on the basis of sources from the literature, articulating their voice with those of the authors they cite, many students often misunderstand this convention and think that citing a source and saying what they think about the source are mutually exclusive practices. As Emilia puts it: "if teachers want me to write emotionally then I rely on my own thoughts, but if they want me to cite authors then that is what I must do." She points out that teachers instruct their students to back up any opinions with the law or published sources: "they tell us 'Please, I don't want fluff' and from there we know we must cite and support a thesis." However, because the processes of academic knowledge building and communication are not clear to her, Emilia figures that citing other authors excludes the possibility of saying what she thinks: "they don't say it explicitly. They say 'how do you support your point? Do you cite Cicero? Pythagoras? Do you agree with them?,' 'no professor, for whatever reasons,' 'it's not about what you think.' Then I have to understand and do as they say."

As Emilia feels unable to express her own thoughts, she develops self-generated texts to freely state her opinions about the scholarly sources she reads:

> In my texts sometimes emotions come up and I say: "I disagree with Cicero's ideas about the law. I think it should be this other way" and that's my position and I write it. But I do it because I have internalized that concept, it's not alien to me anymore. It has had an impact on me, and I think "how can he think that way, it was the time of the Romans, another culture, another context, things change." So, I argue with myself, and I begin to write about it with my own position.

> A lecturer was talking about politics. During a break I wrote up my thoughts. My classmate told me "Is there really so much to say about politics? I don't understand what politics is." Here I wanted to explain that students say they are political because Aristotle says so. We are mistaken about students' roles when we say we are political simply because Aristotle says so.

As seen above, Emilia writes in her journal in order to state her opinions about the topic of a class or presentation she just attended. In this way, she feels she can appropriate the concepts ("I have internalized that concept, it's not alien to me anymore") and put forward her own voice without it getting lost amidst the sources' voices ("students say they are political because Aristotle says so.") Emilia writes her own opinions that question Cicero's definition of law, Aristotle's definition of politics, or laws about children born out of

wedlock, strikes, or statutory rape. When confronted with the imperative to cite other authors' ideas, Emilia always interrogates herself: "When can I state my point of view, what I think, the way I understand this?" This interrogation "motivates me to write and stand up for what I think, maybe not addressing a person but an empty page where I can say that this is my struggle, and this is what we do about these issues." Thus, instead of suppressing her voice, she writes it in her journal: "I won't get anywhere by showing my anger, so I let the page deal with it."

Likewise, when doing research projects, Emilia draws a distinction between what she needs to hand in to the instructor ("what's in the survey responses") and what she writes in her journal ("my stance on what I noticed when interviewing the lawyer, when seeing the way the judge acted, when seeing the organization of the court, that goes here in the journal"). This is how she explains it:

> They tell you the goal and that it has to be well written. The problem statement is such and such. The survey: 20% think this way. Right, but maybe you saw the lawyer fill out a form with a "yes", but you saw an expression on his face that said "no." Or you noticed that he was lying; he knew that something wasn't true. And the way to deal with your emotions about it is to write it. Because in my text they'll say "Young lady, what is your evidence? Did you record it? Did you take a picture?" They'll say this because that information is not in the survey, so how can you explain it? "No, professor, it's just my perception, what I saw in his face, what I noticed." You can explain this superficially but not what you truly think. Then I just explain what I have found through formal data collection.

What Emilia is perceiving is the dichotomy between two kinds of knowledge. On the one hand, there is "scientific knowledge," purported to be "objective" and "truthful." On the other hand, "everyday" or "personal knowledge" (itself diverse), supposedly "contaminated" by subjective positions. Underlying this dichotomy is the idea that "science" as a way of making knowledge and "scientific knowledge" as the cumulative mass of "scientifically produced" knowledge are "universally" valid, that is, true and applicable anywhere, anytime, and that other types of knowledge are not valuable in the university. Although I cannot issue any opinion on how this division of ways of knowing operates in the context of physical laws, I can say that in the social sciences and the humanities (and also the health sciences, ecology, and other disciplines) the ways of constructing knowledge have been changing and redefining the division

between "science" and "not science" (Mato, n.d.). Despite the fact that critical theory continues to challenge the existence of a "reality" that is independent from subjects' representations thereof (Foucault, 1995), the data above show that "the objective" and "the subjective" are still at odds in the academic space in focus. Therefore, restrictive views of knowledge making are still prevalent.

Félix

Félix also feels a need to build knowledge in a manner that is different from academic conventions. He identifies with a literary, poetical language, and feels that there is a tension between the imperative to produce academic texts and his desire to do so in a "literary" or "emotional" manner. He claims that his "sweet" and "melodic" writing style manages to attract and move people so that they can engage in "deeper thinking" and achieve a "greater understanding" of the text:

> Literary language is deeper, it brings creativity and life to the text, and that promotes thinking, so it's not boring, dense, or hard for the reader. And literary language is important when trying to find more significance and dig deeper into a topic. Each idea provided makes you think, it introduces you to that deeper path that is subjectivism, but without ignoring reality. Through that you can think and better compare reality, you contextualize it in a more sensitive way.

For his courses, Félix tries to write academically but just "to get it done," because he thinks that kind of writing is "shallow" and "cold"; "I don't like to do things that way. I would like for all my writing to be lyrical." Félix's aversion to academic writing is not due to lack of skill; rather, it is due to an attitude toward a specific type of writing, reflecting aspects of an identity he seeks to project: "I don't feel like doing it; I don't like it." In his own words: "when I write academic texts I feel the need to write in a style with which I feel comfortable with, something I like, and something I like so that I can make readers like it." As suggested by Haggis: "People who are learners [of academic reading and writing] may be resisting, or unable to engage with, what higher education assumes, for reasons to do with a sense of alienation (Mann, 2001), perceived risk or personal cost, or contrary philosophical or cultural perspective." (2003, p. 98) This is what seems to be going on with Emilia and Félix.

Even though Félix has tried many times to "enrich" academic texts with a literary style, in general, instructors won't accept this. They have told him:

"you must be concrete, practical, this is not a literature class, that kind of thing. Talk about everything you see, be realistic." Félix describes this situation in detail:

> The professor told me that our writing must be synthetic, go straight to the point without meandering. He explained to me that he won't allow other kinds of writing because it takes longer to read. That's one of the main factors: the time it takes him to review the text. Another reason that he only told me privately is that faculty don't like it when our descriptions are that deep and poetic. I asked him why and he said that professionals must be straightforward.

This excerpt shows an "institutional practice of mystery" (Lillis, 2003) as it is assumed that academic writing is part of "common sense," when it is actually a linguistic convention, as any other, that is unfamiliar to students like Félix. When the professor states that Félix must be "direct," "synthetic," "realistic," "concrete," or "practical" without explaining why, he fails to communicate the reasons why the student should follow these conventions. This may be due to the instructor's lack of awareness of such reasons. The result is that Félix can't understand how he is supposed to write and why.

This situation prompted Félix to start writing long emails to people he trusts, where he tried to analyze reality including his "subjective" opinion: "I do it my own way with what I feel; if I'm feeling bitter about the topic I write in a way that the bitterness, the melancholy comes across in the text, and my reader answers like 'I can see you are very concerned about this' or 'your analysis is very good and it's an important topic, let's talk about it.'" Félix says that writing this way is satisfying to him because he feels that he is present in his writing and can thus connect with his interlocutors and have an impact on them. Besides, no one will scold him for writing this way because the medium of writing is private emails.

Félix also produces "poetic monographs," in parallel to his college writing. Here he uses a style "that makes you feel and suffer" and, to achieve that goal, he takes excerpts from poems or novels by his favorite authors—mostly those that "lament about life"—and pastes them into his monographs in order to develop his ideas from there. In these monographs, he takes stances about topics from his undergraduate program: political violence or the Ica earthquake. As is the case with Emilia, these are attempts to engage in practices that he deems incompatible with academic writing. These attempts show a clear deployment of agency. If the academic text demands "rationality," "objectivity," and detachment from the text's propositional content, both Emilia

and Félix can't think of a text without getting involved with what they are writing, communicating their voice in a way that shows their involvement and emotions.

In his study of the scientific imaginary in sixteenth century European cartography, Mignolo (1995), argues that one of the features of the *coloniality of power* is the generation of knowledge that is presented as objective, scientific, and universal. This kind of knowledge is devoid of the affective dimension alluded to by Emilia and Félix. Such human knowledge gives for granted that the observer is not part of the observed, that can see the world without being seen or without having to interrogate—not even to themselves—the legitimacy of such observation. The assumption is that we can distance and detach ourselves from the observed and produce truly "objective" knowledge about it. This hegemonic perspective of knowledge production—or *point zero hubris* (Castro Gómez, 2005)—is what Emilia and Félix react against, although they are not sufficiently aware of it to engage in a critical debate about the matter.

Literacy, Identity, and Learning in Emilia and Félix

Emilia and Félix's discontent cannot be reduced to an alternative way of building knowledge; rather, they assert themselves as being certain kinds of people while resisting a college student identity that they simultaneously reject and desire. As indicated by Ivanic (1998), many students consider academic reading and writing to be a kind of "game" where they are asked to perform an identity that "is not me," and does not reflect their self-image.

As an alternative to her voice getting lost in academic writing—and to the continual "loss of herself"—, Emilia deploys other ways to build an alternative identity as a law student that is not the university's ideal one:

> Sometimes I feel more comfortable writing what I feel, what I want, and when I just copy-paste stuff I feel that it is not mine, because anyone can copy-paste text. You go online, find a pretty text and copy-paste it, you move on to another website and find something nice that fits your text and you copy-paste it, and at the bottom of the text you make connections across pieces of other texts, and you put your name on it in the end. But what I try to do is to be disciplined in order to understand the ideas, I must understand.

In Emilia's case, her way of writing and building knowledge is a part of the conflict she feels about the academic identity of a law student that is established in her community of practice. When writing academically, Emilia feels that her

voice is drowned by those from the literature. For her, this symbolizes a passive behavior in relation to the kinds of values and principles she must embrace as a law student. Thus, her self-generated writing is a strategy to channel the "fight" that happens in her mind when she disagrees with the scholarly sources used in her undergraduate program: "The coursework says: 'what are laws? They are norms, but what are they for? To establish order.' 'But that is not real, professor, why is there so much conflict? Why was that law repealed?', in my mind, I fight in my mind." Her vernacular writing enables her to distance herself from the typical law student profile, who "is calm and expresses a more rational and appropriate opinion," and come closer to someone who lets herself be driven by "feelings of sadness and joy," as when she says: "I disagree completely with injustice, and I feel consumed by rage and impotence."

As for Félix, his vernacular writing is also framed within a social practice of permanent construction of his identity as a journalism student. As he puts it: "journalism is much more than just informing or interpreting; above all, it is about being involved in the problem as a whole and being the protagonist; I don't know, to come up with proposals or solutions, and it worries me that none of that kind of research is done." Through his writing, Félix engages in the continual creation of a voice that is present in the text in order to move and have an impact on readers so that his journalism studies become meaningful.

Therefore, reading and writing lie at the core of the search for meaning and identity in spaces of secondary socialization or in those institutional contexts that precede the primary socialization experienced at home—like work, school, or church. It is through literacy practices that people give meaning to their lives and even construct and project desired identities across several situations. For Emilia and Félix, writing, thinking, and feeling are interconnected activities to develop social practices of resistance against adopting a university identity officially imposed. Canagarajah (1997) found a similar connection across reading, writing, and identity among African American students, for whom academic reading and writing were associated with *acting white*.

A final point I would like to highlight is that Emilia and Félix do not establish a dichotomy between university academic writing and self-generated, vernacular writing. They produce the latter kind of writing to better understand scholarly discussions and to clarify questions pertaining to their studies. They thus deploy their vernacular writing as a learning strategy to succeed in college. As Emilia puts it: "When I write and I read it again this clarifies my ideas and brings up more questions and I can go deeper into the topic. I understand it better. I try to make it clearer and I get it, and that makes me relate to the topic." Emilia thus claims that her "emotional" writing helps her

to discover the meaning of a text or "discover her own understanding." In that regard, her writing is a strategy to appropriate concepts and increase learning: "when I write something with an emotional basis, I re-read it and this makes ideas clearer to me. When I write something personal prompted by the literature about it [statutory rape, for example] I can find my own opinion and take it to the course [Child Care Law] and then the idea is developed."

Emilia feels that her "emotional" texts help her to appropriate course content. This is why she disagrees with those of her classmates who think that emotional opinions are worthless. For her "we mustn't restrict ourselves to writing only what is based on the literature in an organized way because that is limiting. If you allow your ideas to come up, you can create another idea, you can come to a conclusion and find the truth."

Likewise, Félix claims that his vernacular writing helps him gain a deeper understanding of what he learns at university. Like Emilia, Félix says that writing "about what I have already studied, but putting my own opinion or analysis into it, is a way that has helped me to develop ideas well enough that I can ace tests." Further, for him, learning about a topic involves sharing what he knows with others because "that feeds into your idea." Félix sends emails to the people with whom he has had previous oral discussions about the topic at hand, but sometimes things happen the other way around too, with written discussions preceding spoken ones.

The above examples show compellingly that examining isolated texts without considering their context of production is not enough to understand how reading and writing work. Reading and writing are connected to specific ways of believing, valuing, and feeling, and also to speech and other sensory modalities and ways of using objects, instruments, technologies, symbols, spaces, and time (Gee, 2001). Félix's case takes us, in turn, to the notion of learning as contextualized, situated practices rather than as an individual process; learning is thus constructed through social interaction with people and tools in the learner's environment (Rogoff, 1990; Vygotsky, 1998).

The two cases above show that the strategies deployed by Emilia and Félix somehow constitute a "third space" that attempts to resolve the conflict that arises as they try to learn academic writing, while simultaneously failing to successfully negotiate dominant conventions to acquire or create an alternative, legitimate space (Canagarajah, 2003; Gutiérrez 2008). They illustrate how students deploy their agency to negotiate academic literacy and develop new practices and discourses to gain a voice. Although Emilia and Félix are not necessarily aware of it, through their actions related to academic literacy, they engage in the exercise of power, in the sense that they deploy their ability to generate effects and (re)constitute the world.

Concluding Remarks

In recent decades, an *agentive turn* has emerged in different disciplines from postmodern and poststructuralist critiques that challenge impersonal narratives that leave no space for tension, contradiction, or opposition, either from individuals or collectives (Ahearn, 2001). Taking discourse as a form of social action and a cultural resource, we have seen that students are not passive subjects that receive and mechanically reproduce the imperatives of academic literacy. Instead, they deploy actions to generate changes in dominant social representations.

The case studies above show that agency is complex and ambiguous; its scope should not be restricted to empowerment, resistance, or opposition (Ahearn, 2001). Thus, Emilia and Félix resist academic literacy but also accommodate it (assisted by their vernacular literacies) and desire it as part of their university education. Likewise, although their vernacular literacies are empowering initially, they later lose legitimacy due to the force of academic discourse. Then, agency can be of different kinds, issue from different motives, and change and evolve with time.

I will now discuss several implications which follow from what has been discussed so far. First, regarding the "institutional practice of mystery" in academic literacy, I think it is essential to teach this kind of literacy in a much more explicit way so that students won't have to walk the typically painful path leading to its appropriation, a path that is confusing, full of tensions, and lacking clear orientation.

Second, it is important to point out that it is not enough to teach academic writing explicitly if such teaching silences, hurts, and discredits students' alternative ways of expressing themselves. Such forms of expression are social practices that are not only important to young people but sometimes essential to their survival and existence as actors in the new spaces they must negotiate. Yet, these forms of expression are at best ignored by faculty because they assume that students are unable to produce texts at the required level. This deficit discourse obscures students' agency because it construes them as passive subjects lacking the skills to appropriate academic literacy.

Third, I would like to put forward a potentially controversial claim that has been made by other scholars (Canagarajah, 2002). Teaching writing is not only about respecting the self-generated writing practices that students may develop in parallel to academic writing, but about teaching strategies of rhetorical negotiation. If we assume that texts and genres are dynamic and changing rather than static, we shouldn't impose uniform principles and rules of textuality. Rather, students must be allowed to find a voice within academic

writing that reconciles their different identities so that they can be motivated to join communities of practice as rightful participants. It is only in this way that students like Emilia and Félix can *appropriate* academic discourse and creatively change, resist, or reorient existent conventions in accordance with their own goals (Canagarajah, 2003).

Although the deficit model discussed before has been largely abandoned (Gutiérrez & Rogoff, 2003), the "crossing model" and its relativist perspective aren't exactly a good match to a critical approach to the relationship between language and society. In relation to the dichotomy between the vernacular and the academic—similar to the contrastive rhetoric perspective——this model establishes the need to build bridges to help students transition from local or vernacular literacies to canonical academic discourse (Canagarajah, 2002). Thus, the two literacies are assumed to be mutually exclusive, and a split subjectivity is promoted: students are asked to be different people in different communities or contexts. Yet, as the two case studies have shown, Emilia and Félix's vernacular texts are not opposed to their academic texts. Instead, the two kinds of texts feed on one another.

At the same time, the "crossing model" corresponds with the argument of "appropriateness" that has been developed in the last decades in "liberal" sociolinguistics in relation to the standard variety and academic literacy (Fairclough, 1995; Pennycook, 2001). From this paradigm, the idea is to teach "appropriate" forms at "appropriate" times from a normative perspective that assumes the dominant conventions of appropriateness to be natural and necessary. Along these lines, it is suggested that students keep their home discourses at home and join academic discourse with a new identity and a new sense of reality. A sociolinguistics of this kind merely reproduces dominant ideological arrangements with a new discourse in favor of "respecting" students.

Several scholars suggest a *negotiation model* where difference is seen as a resource (Canagarajah, 2002). This is a *perspective of empowerment* that—like the notion of funds of knowledge (Gonzales et al., 2005)—assumes that academic texts will be modified creatively in accordance with the strengths that students bring to the table. As a matter of fact, extant research has shown that many students refuse to abandon their cultural practices when they learn academic literacy. And this model requires students to confront the various discourses they face to creatively craft alternate discourses and literacies that can better represent their values and interests. After all, writing is closely linked not only to a sense of belonging to specific communities, but also to social struggle, inequity, cultural differences, and power relationships.

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Reflection

In this text, written more than a decade ago, I tried to share a sociocultural and critical perspective on writing (and learning), which was perhaps not very widespread at that time in the Latin American context. The perspective of writing as a social practice not only implies situating writing within social activities or relating it to the sense of belonging to specific communities, but also conceptualizing it as traversed by ideologies and power relations.

Based on two ethnographically surveyed case studies, I questioned the deficit discourse so deeply rooted in the teaching of writing, which erases the possibility of seeing students with agency. Using case studies of Emilia and Félix, first-year university students from Ayacucho (Perú), and bilingual Spanish/Quechua speakers, I showed that they were not passive subjects incapable of appropriating academic writing, but agents who acted in the world within the social structures that had delimited their subjectivity. For them, learning academic writing at the university was closely linked to ways of believing, valuing, feeling and being. From the analysis conducted, I questioned a normative perspective in the teaching of academic writing and proposed the development of strategies for rhetorical negotiation, with the aim of students finding their own voice in academic discourse.

Looking back on this work after so many years, and contrary to what is sometimes believed, I realize that case studies can be powerful, in the sense that they can be used to problematize phenomena and even rethink theoretical categories. When I remember everything I learned from (and with) Emilia and Felix, I reaffirm my commitment to the ethnographic approach as a counter-hegemonic methodology that allows us to build dense interpretations,

develop an intense collaboration with social actors, and denaturalize taken for granted notions. Perhaps today I would try to look at these phenomena longitudinally in order to have access to these processes over time and not be left with an 'x-ray' that only gives an account of a particular moment. I would like to know what happened to these students when they advanced in their careers and after they graduated. I would like to know what kinds of agentive literacy practices they developed, in what kind of contexts, and for what kind of citizenship.

   – Virginia Zavala

15 Access to Written Culture: Social Participation and Appropriation of Knowledge in Everyday Reading and Writing Events

Judith Kalman

This paper looks at the influence of access to the social practices on which attaining literacy is dependent. The paper begins with the story of a young woman who only had two years of schooling, Carolina, the limited access to literate materials with which she grew up, and the social motivations which pushed her to achieve literacy in adulthood. Then a sociocultural discussion of the conceptual relationships among the appropriation of, participation in, and access to social practices and literate materials is presented. In the third section, the investigative methods used to contextualize the example that follows are described. The fourth section is a case study of Ana, a woman who lives in one of the communities studied, and her journey to access, participate in, and appropriate the literate materials available to her as a part of her social context. In the final section, the results of this work and its implications for research on community access to literate materials are discussed in order to make the recommendation that to better understand the distribution of reading and writing resources in a social context, it is necessary to develop a research agenda that takes a closer look at learning to read and write in the social world.

I just learned about the thermometer. Because I would look and say, "Well, how is my son?" I told [the nurse] 'Gustavo had a high fever.' 'What was it?' 'It's very important for you to know how high it was.' She told me, 'Look, here, you can take this thermometer.' What I still need to buy, but they say it's very expensive, is a monitor, so I can check his blood pressure.

– Carolina, 36 years old

As a little girl, Carolina attended school for only a couple of years and learned very little about reading and writing.[1] When one of her children was diagnosed with chronic renal insufficiency and doctors identified him as a candidate for a renal transplant, Carolina began an intensive learning process concerning renal physiology, procedures, dialysis care, and asepsis as well as medicine administration. The public hospital offered her courses to help her understand her son's health condition, the risks associated with a transplant, and the care he would need. To properly care for her child, Carolina learned how to read instructions, verify medicines, and complete specific procedures, such as reading the thermometer, monitoring mobile dialysis equipment, and regulating intravenous fluids. She successfully cared for her child because she was surrounded by people who were knowledgeable about her son's health condition and who offered her the support she needed as she learned how to use medical equipment, administer his medication, and evaluate his symptoms.

Accessing social practices depends, in large part, on the possibility of participating in them with the support of people who know about and utilize them on a regular basis. For this reason, this article examines the concept of access to social practices from the perspective of sociocultural theory and presents a case study analysis to illustrate the analytical possibilities of the concepts of *appropriation, participation, and access*. Specifically, this work explores access to writing as a social process where interaction among people is a necessary condition for learning to read and write. Additionally, it takes a theoretical perspective that conceptualizes literacy (*alfabetización*) as something more than the learning of rudimentary reading and writing practices; to be literate (*alfabetizado*) refers to people who use written language to participate in the social world. In this way, to become literate (*alfabetizarse*) means learning to navigate written language—genres, discourses, meanings, words, and letters—in a manner that is deliberate and intentional to participate in events that are culturally valued and to relate with others (Dyson, 1997; Heath, 1983).

First, it is important to establish the difference between the material conditions related to reading and writing practices—the *availability* of written culture —and the social conditions required to make use of and appropriate reading and writing practices—the *access* to written culture. Both terms are used to distinguish the distribution of the materials pertaining to written

language from the social processes underlying their appropriation, dissemination, and use. *Availability* refers to the physical presence of printed materials and the infrastructure to distribute them (libraries, bookstores, magazines, newspapers, post offices, etc.) while *access* refers to the opportunities available to participate in events related to written language (situations when the person positions themselves in front of other readers and writers) to learn to read and write (Kalman, 2004). The mere presence of books in a library, for example, does not promote reading; it is the circulation and use of books among readers that promotes reading. To think about access to reading, it is necessary to comprehend what encourages users to visit libraries, to learn about the conversations between the librarian and the users, and understand what happens amidst bookshelves and reading tables. In this way, we can talk informedly about access to written language in the context of a library. Similarly, the availability of a literacy program that is open to anyone in the community suggests merely a physical presence. Access to reading and writing, however, involves what happens during study sessions, the significance of the activities, the relationships among participants, the interpretative options for texts, and the ways in which individuals appropriate written language (Andrade et al., 2000; Chartier, 1997; Kalman, 2004; Purcell-Gates & Waterman, 2000; Soifer et al., 1990).

This conceptualization assumes that the availability of printed materials influences the development of opportunities to access reading and writing practices and vice versa; however, it also assumes that the physical presence of printed materials is not sufficient to disseminate written culture. In the same way, schools are often perceived as privileged spaces in which to access reading and writing, but they are not the only places where access to literate materials occurs. For that reason, it is important to recognize other contexts where reading and writing are used in communicative situations, considering them as places for learning these skills. Access to written language occurs not only in formal education settings but also in everyday use. In all communities, spaces exist where reading and writing are communicative activities interconnected to day-to-day social practices. In these spaces, there are expectations for who reads, who writes, and how and when one engages in these practices. Moreover, it is possible to find writing practices long-established in these communities as well as newer writing practices which foreshadow emerging uses of written language (Kalman, 2004).

This work is divided into four sections: the first section includes a theoretical discussion with the goal of understanding the conceptual relationship among appropriation, participation, and access; the second section briefly describes the investigative methods used to contextualize the example that

follows; the third section is a case study of Ana, a woman who lives in one of the communities studied; and the final section, via the conclusion, presents a discussion of the many issues raised and their implications for research on community access to literate materials.

Access to Writing: A Sociocultural Perspective

A sociocultural perspective helps us understand the relationship between human activity in the social world and the processes embedded in the appropriation of social practices. According to Wertsch (1991, p. 6) "the basic goal of a sociocultural approach to mind is to create an account of human mental processes that recognizes the essential relationship between these processes and their cultural, historical, and institutional settings." While classical theories propose that the individual mind can dominate cognitive processes through internalization and manipulation of structures, sociocultural theory situates learning processes in the context of participation in social activities while emphasizing the construction of knowledge mediated by the different perspectives, knowledge, and abilities that participants bring with them to interactional events. Literacy (*alfabetización*) is an excellent example because it involves an individual's different related levels of cognitive processes, cultural technology, and social instructions where different forms of reading and writing are used and developed (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990).

Sociocultural studies of literacy generally seek to describe and explain phenomena related to written language practices in specific situations, the learning processes and appropriation of reading and writing, the historical transformation of using written language, and the relationship between writing and society. In all of this, an emphasis is placed on debates related to power relations, literacy discourse ideologies, and the social distribution of written language. One of the most relevant findings in recent scholarship is an analysis of the differences in the various uses of reading and writing, which are linked to the particularities of the context, the purpose, the intended effects, the readers' position in relation to other readers, and the ideas and meanings that guide the participation. In this manner, the concepts which undergird written language practices consider the social uses of reading and writing as well as people's perceptions of these practices (Barton & Ivanic, 1991; Besnier, 1995; Canieso-Doronila, 1996; Ferdman et al., 1994; Kalman, 1999, 2001, 2004; McDermott & Tybor, 1995; Moss, 1994; Street, 1993, 1995; Stromquist, 1997; Wagner, 1993).

Within the current scholarship, there are several studies about written culture that have been carried out in Mexico. Gloria Hernández (2003), for

example, has studied writing practices among adolescents where marginalized writing practices, such as graffiti and tags or "bombas," which are used to identify gang members. Farr (1994) and Vargas (2000) have investigated writing and reading appropriation within immigrant communities emphasizing the importance of letters. Elsie Rockwell (1992) centers her analysis on the links between orality and writing in the narrative practices of a rural area, highlighting how writing influences oral interaction and is used as a resource for negotiations and controversy.

Discussions about the plurality of forms, uses, practices, purposes, and beliefs about writing focuses on the organization of reading and writing as social activities. The analysis delineates different opportunities to participate within these social activities as well as diverse intervention modalities that readers and writers construct. This interest in analyzing characteristics and complexities resides in comprehending the importance of the multiplicities of written language and the processes that lead to the appropriation, distribution, and placement within the broader organization of human social activities.

In schools, teachers organize activities for the teaching and learning of written language. In contrast, reading and writing events that emerge in daily life often have communicative purposes and for this reason, they are important contexts for the appropriation of a variety of uses of written culture. It is through participation in these events that an individual learns non-school related uses of reading and writing. As a theoretical notion, participation refers to the process of intervening in a social activity, in addition to the relationships established between different individuals. In this manner, the significance of actions encompasses both the actions of the actors in social contexts and the connections between them; participation is intertwined with the context insofar as it denotes the various ways of intervening in a specific situation and, at the same time, in its construction. These two concepts, context and participation, are suggestive theoretical tools for understanding access to written language and some aspects of its appropriation (see Dyson, 1997; Lave & Wenger, 1991; McDermott & Tybor, 1995; Street, 1993; Wenger, 1998).

Studies published by sociolinguists like Gumperz and Cook-Gumperz (1984), Gumperz and Hymes (1986), Cook-Gumperz (1986), Duranti (1992), Heath (1983), and Saville-Troike (1982) offer substantial insights with which to comprehend how reading and writing are carried out in specific interactive social contexts and how to analyze different forms of participation. They argue that, in collective situations, various participants contribute knowledge and awareness, use cultural, material and mental tools, and collaborate, in one way or another, to achieve a communicative goal where written language plays a central role.

From this perspective, it is through interaction that a context is built, understood as the specific circumstances that result from the dynamic interaction between participants in a communicative situation. The fundamental concern underlying the study of interventions in reading and writing events emerges from the interest in understanding them as social practices more so than a conjunction of discrete skills that center on the mechanical manipulation of isolated elements in a text. Instead, a series of questions arises regarding who reads and writes, when they do so, and what their motives or purposes are. How are readers and writers defined in relation to texts? Why do they read and write? What are they in search of when they do so? What are the institutional constraints that govern their reading and writing? How do they read and write? What are the social and cognitive processes that define their practices? (Resnick, 1990).

In communicative events that involve reading and writing, there emerge opportunities to access written language. These events illustrate how social life shapes reading and writing and, in turn, how reading and writing shape social life. Similarly, access depends on the particularities of reading and writing practices discovered through events; when participating in the use of written language, nuances are revealed, and the processes of meaning construction are distinguished; knowledge circulates, the use of technologies is demonstrated, and skills, information, and language resources flow.

Lave and Wenger (1991) propose that social practices are composed of peripheral and substantial activities. Through gradual engagement, the apprentice gets closer to the nucleus of an activity and fully appropriates the practices. In this type of analysis, the focal point is the tension that exists between social agents and cultural tools (Wertsch, 1998). Until now, an important part of these studies has focused on how the social actor accepts these tools and learns how to use them. However, Wenger (1998) cautiously points out participation is not synonymous with collaboration: these relations can be troubled, harmonious, intimate, political, cooperative, or competitive.[2]

Thus, access to written culture is constructed within an interactive context which makes appropriation possible. Vygotsky's (1978) theory emphasized that participation in social activities mediates knowledge development. Through interaction with others, the apprentice gains access to social practices and

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2   Wertsch (1998, p. 144) also highlights the complexity of intersubjective relations: "Cultural tools are not always facilitators of mediated action, and agents do not invariably accept and use them; rather, an agent's stance toward a mediational means is characterized by resistance or even outright rejection. Indeed, in certain settings this may be the rule rather than the exception. Resistance and rejection still constitute a relationship between agent and mediational means …, they still may have a major impact on the development of the agent."

internalizes external social processes as an organic component of the practice. In this sense, learning occurs, first, on the level of social experience mediated by cultural symbolic systems, particularly human language, and second, on the level of individual cognition (Hicks, 1996).[3] In the learning process, the apprentice appropriates the interactive process in order to extend the knowledge to social interactive participation within the intersubjective space; this is a constitutive part of intrasubjective understanding (Cazden, 1996; Hicks 1996; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990; Wertsch, 1991).

Language (oral and written) has a central role in this conceptualization of learning and Vygotsky considers it one of the most powerful cultural tools. Hicks (1996) highlights that the movement from the exterior to the interior implies an active transformation process and not a mechanical copy of the experience, as a part of the process of construction of thought or interior voice. As the social actor internalizes the social discourse, they reorient it toward their own experiences and purposes.

For Bakhtin (1981), learning implies the appropriation of discourses, that is, the process of making other people's words one's own. He posits that language always belongs, even partially, to others:

> It [the word] becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language…, but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word, and make it one's own (pp. 293-94).

This author's theory highlights the dialogic nature of human thought by noting that "for the individual consciousness, [language] lies on the borderline between oneself and the other" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 293). For this reason, one of the premises in sociocultural theory is that individual thought and knowledge are also social as they are products appropriated from diverse discourse forms and shared experiences filled with the meanings and statements from others. Hicks (1996, p. 107) observes that

> Whereas in Vygotsky's writing *internalization* emerges as a central theoretical construct, a process by which developmental

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3   Vygotsky (1978, p. 57) wrote that each aspect of development appears two times: "first, at the social level and then at the individual level; first between people (interpsychological) and then within the individual (intrapsychological)."

change occurs, in Bakhtin's work *appropriation* emerges as a similarly important construct. However, appropriation for Bakhtin entails something more along the lines of conversation, entailing active response. As the individual speaker-thinker engages in activity that involves the discourses of her culture, she also forms a dialogic response to those discourses. Individual thinking, therefore, exists on this rather fluid boundary between the self and the other, between social discourses and one's active response to them. Appropriation engenders a dialogic form of consciousness…; the individual constructs new forms of response at the same time that she appropriates the discourses of her social world.

The process of appropriation, then, is also intersubjective: in the acquisition of literacy, the knowledge and the use of cultural written practices are constructed via interaction with other readers and writers in situations where oral language is key to achieve closeness to reading, writing and their eventual understanding. The acts of reading and writing occur in socially organized contexts where written language is a necessary tool to achieve communicative purposes. In Bakhtin's theory, appropriation is the subject's response to social interaction and not a mechanical reproduction of it: it's the product of an active mind that reconstructs and creates meaning of events from a subjective history and position.

Chartier (1997, p. 89) suggests that to understand appropriation one must concentrate on concrete conditions and processes as appropriation is the result of multiple uses and ways of approaching texts, including their placement within the original social and institutional demands that gave rise to their creation. In accordance with this suggestion, I present the following excerpt from an observation to illustrate the concepts of participation, access, and appropriation as well as the relationship among them:[4]

It was 10:00 in the morning and Beatriz, the volunteer instructor, had not arrived yet. The six participants had entered the classroom and they sat in chairs surrounding the table, they greeted each other and chatted as they waited. Five, ten, fifteen minutes pass until finally at 10:20, Beatriz arrives. She says hello quickly and starts having one-on-one conversations with each of the women. With the first one, she stops for a

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4   Observations carried out during a literacy group session with elderly participants in an urban area west of Mexico City.

moment to look over her exercise book and later assigns the task from the following exercise on another page and gives her a brief explanation. She then moves to the next woman and goes through the same process. While she is with one woman, the rest waits or talks with each other. One of the women, sitting near me, takes out of her purse printed pages of a simplified version of the first books from the Old Testament and tells her neighbor that she was reading "my Ten Commandments, chapter VIII on Heuristics and Analogy of faith." She shows the text and discusses a bit on what it says. Another woman tries to resolve some of the problems in the math book but becomes distracted and begins talking with her neighbor who is also passively waiting for the instructor to review her homework and assign a new page. The women who are reading the Ten Commandments continue commenting on it and the owner of the text places it near her neighbor so they can read it together.

Another woman, to my right, waits for the instructor without doing anything. After almost 20 minutes since the class started, the instructor meets with her and assigns a page with problems. She asks about how to resolve them. One of the women from the "Ten Commandments" now is without a task and yawns. The instructor runs to help another participant.

Beatriz, the instructor, now approaches the woman sitting to my right and assigns a Spanish exercise. An excerpt of the exercise is as follows:[5]

> **For each sentence, select an appropriate synonym from the list. Check for agreement between words. Note the example.**
>
> 1. Lupe liked _____ flowers.
>   *red*
>
> 2. When I was _____ I had fun at the carnival.
>   *a little girl*
>
> 3. On All Saints' Day, we went to the _____ to take marigold flowers.
>   *graveyard*
>
> *(An example and a list of synonyms were given)*

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5   Only a fragment from page 153 of the textbook is reproduced (INEA-SEP, 1994).

The instructions from the book signal that the user should write the synonym to the word located under the line. For example, in the first line, *red* is synonymous with *crimson*; in the second line they should write *child* as a synonym to *little girl*. The woman was unsure about what to do. She reads with much difficulty the word *red*. Finally, she begins pronouncing each letter /r/ /e/ and ends up copying it on the line. She proceeds to the next sentence but doesn't know how to solve it. She needs help from the instructor and waits several minutes until she has her attention. Beatriz reads the phrase and the instructions out loud and tells her, "just write there, *child*, *child*." She leaves the participant and proceeds to help another. The woman copies *child* and later for the third sentence, she copies, with difficulty, *graveyard*, taking about an entire minute.

While brief, this example allows us to put into action several of the theoretical points developed previously. The women, once gathered in class, wait for their instructor's arrival to begin learning activities. Once the instructor arrives, all of the students (with the exception of one) wait for Beatriz to visit with them one-on-one, to revise their homework (if applicable) and to assign a new activity. For logistical reasons, Beatriz cannot dedicate much time to each of her students; she is barely able to provide a quick explanation, indicate what needs to be done, before proceeding with the next student.

In this description of the study session, there are two small reading and writing events taking place. In one, two women read and discuss together a simplified version of the Bible. They begin by commenting on the "Ten Commandments" and end with reading and pointing out the text together. In the other, one of the participants struggles to complete a grammatical exercise but does not understand the instructions very well nor the purpose. The instructor, due to the speed with which she must execute her work, also does not catch nor understand the purpose of the exercise. Thus, an attempt to expand the user's vocabulary turns into a copying exercise where reading the full sentence becomes unnecessary. In this case, the significance of the text is limited to the procedures asked of the student: the instructional materials, through their directions, isolate the lexical aspect, while the instructor gave it meaning through mechanical and exact reproduction.

In the case of biblical text reading, the participants are the ones who define the activity. While it was not possible to capture their conversation, they looked engaged and interested as they talked, flipped through the text, pointed out, and placed it in such a way where they could share it. The owner gave her peer access to the text through conversation and shared reading. Both intervened equally as participants, exchanging knowledge, discussing nuances, signaling written excerpts, and reading together. In this case, the construction

process of meaning-making centered on the text and what each participant could interpret from it according to their own readings and knowledge of the religion more than from the fragmentation or manipulation of some parts of the language.

In the previously described event where the teacher was in charge, the asymmetry between the participants is evident: the woman waits for the instructor to instruct which activity she will complete and later, when she encounters difficulties resolving the problem, she needs the instructor again. Through this exercise, the woman accesses a version of written language that is different from the readers of the "Ten Commandments;" in this case, written language is an objective that is manipulated for specific pedagogic ends that result in its fragmentation to isolate the use of nouns and synonyms. Apparently, due to her scarce knowledge or familiarity with the exercise, the student depended on the instructor to resolve it; and the instructor, due to lack of time (or understanding) did not respond to her students' questions and resorted to copying as the writing activity.

Focusing on the tensions between the agents and the cultural tools allows us to see the forms of intervention, the accessibility of written language, the relationships among participants, and the different ways of approaching and resolving reading and writing situations. With this stark example it is not possible to know with certainty the specific appropriation of each participant, but we can speculate that the readers of the "Ten Commandments" experimented with reading in a very different way than the woman with the exercises book. Without a doubt, the differences are highlighted in relation to the dependence or independence of the readers; the use of the materials; the purpose of the activities and ways of resolving them. Considering that it is the experience with the materials and benefits of interacting with other readers and writers where the construction of knowledge about the culture of writing occurs, it is valid to assume that the participants' learning was different and that they appropriated distinct versions of written culture.

Brief Description of the Project

The information and data used in this study is from a series of group studies from the Instituto Nacional de Educación para los Adultos (INEA, *National Institute of Adult Education)* in a place that I will call Aguazul in the community of Santa María. This work began as a basic research project with the goal of learning about written language practices in a semi-urban community in Mexico City. My intention was to explore from there the different social spaces where reading and writing happen. I immersed myself in the community

by forming connections with the instructor with the goal of meeting some of the women in the group and through them, gaining access to and learning about different aspects and members of the local community. My presence was justified as support to the instructor from INEA; I was there to assist her with the work of the group.[6]

In 1998 and part of 1999, almost every week, I attended the meetings and met with the women in the group for between two and three hours. I observed their classes, talked with them, and assisted the instructor as needed.[7] Through these interactions, the women in the group and I developed a friendly and trusting relationship. They called me "maestra" (teacher) and with a sense of trust, they showed me the work they developed in the class. They also invited me over to their houses to have lunch as well as take part in their parties and celebrations.

During this time, six of the women participated in the sessions, but only four of them attended on a regular basis. By the time I began my visits, they had already been meeting, with some regularity, for a span of 18 months. Their efforts to learn to read and write had been repeatedly frustrated, in part due to the continual turnover of instructors; an instructor would visit, help them for one or two months, and then disappear. Each time a volunteer would abandon them, the INEA would take weeks and at times months to send another volunteer instructor. When a new instructor finally arrived, they would start all over again from the beginning by teaching the names of the letters, how to trace them, how to arrange them together to form direct syllables (ba, be, bi, bo, bu) and how to read typical sentences intended to decode syllables ("A big bird boiled a banana"). Previous to my participation in the group, four different instructors had joined the group and at times the interval of time between one and another was four months.

The age of the participants was between 30 to 55 years old. Their years of previous schooling also varied; however, in general terms, there were two

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6   In the study groups organized and supported by INEA instructors are volunteers. If they oversee literacy groups, they must have at least six years of schooling; if they support people in their primary or secondary studies, they must have at least nine years of schooling. The volunteers do not have any formal training to teach, not even as community educators, nor do they receive regular guidance from INEA. They arrive to the groups to achieve their work as best as possible; on occasion, they attend meetings where general information about new orientations or a change in curriculum is provided. INEA also does not own or provide physical spaces for classes to take place; this depends on the community members who can lend a room, a patio, a hallway, or any other appropriate space.

7   The recording of data through these visits consisted of observation notes, transcription of the audio recordings in the classes, the gathering of handwritten and printed materials, as well as photographs.

groups: those who lacked schooling or attended school for one year and those who attended school for more than three years. When this study group started, some participants were unable to write their name and others could but did not know the different letters of the alphabet. There were two women who, despite having precarious prior schooling, were able—according to them—to spell and write simple texts. Two of them would sell products from a catalog and had to register their sales and complete order forms. All the women, without exception, possessed knowledge about some reading and writing uses and used written language by themselves or with the help of a mediator (Kalman, 1999).

An important indicator of the women's economic situation was their domestic economy. Their income was rather limited, and they had to make do with little money. They needed to be cautious with their expenses: in fact, at the start of the group, not everyone had pencils and notebooks, and they did not have the resources to purchase them. The head of the family—the husband, if there was one—usually earned a minimum wage as a salesperson or in some cases, had two jobs, as a construction worker or driver. Some of the women complemented the household income with small businesses (vegetable stands, small stores, catalog sales, knitting sweaters or sewing clothes to sell); others depended on the monetary income their husbands or children would send from working in the United States of America.

"I Knew How to Write Them, Crooked, But I Wrote Them": The Appropriation of Written Practices in Daily Contexts

The protagonist of this case study is Ana, a resident of Aguazul, a community that surrounds Carolina's village—the woman described in the beginning of this article. In her native Veracruz, as a little girl, Ana never attended school as her father believed this activity was only intended for men; according to him, women who attended school inevitably ended up with problems. Thus, Ana considered herself foreign to the uses of written language and to schooled individuals.

When she built up the courage to talk, she confessed timidly, that she could follow instructions found in knitting magazines, review her children's report cards, and write lists to purchase merchandise for her little store. Via postal mail, she received and recognized the formatting of public services bills and commercial advertisements and in her house she had a special place where she stored important documents. She was also capable of interpreting posters and other announcements located on walls around her neighborhood.

In her daily life, Ana demonstrates a series of highly subtle and meticulously crafted written language practices, almost invisible to an untrained eye. Evidently, her reading and writing practices did not align with the majority of the clear and expected signs of a literate person, such as reading the newspaper, producing and interpreting documents in professional contexts, regular reception and sending of correspondence, and reading of literary works like novels, stories, and poetry. However, she is fully capable of responding to the demands posed by the texts she encounters in her everyday life. Throughout the years, little by little, reading and writing moved into her life, occupying small niches or activities where written words gain social relevance and meaning.

The following paragraphs present situations related to written culture that Ana encountered and illustrate the different forms of social interaction in which she participated. With each one, I seek to emphasize the access to written culture (the opportunity to learn the uses and nuances of writing, of approaching to reading and writing, reading and writing with others, as well as the circulation and fluidity of knowledge, information, and resources) and to infer some of the aspects related to its appropriation, especially those related to the conditions and processes of meaning-making revealed in its use. I draw on excerpts from the records elaborated on during the visits with the study group or from the interviews I conducted. I present her words in a textual manner while adjusting transcriptions only to facilitate reading. In the codification of interactions, I only left what was strictly necessary while editing irrelevant parts noting the absence with ellipsis … and eliminating filler words ("Um" and "like," etc.).[8]

Wenger (1998) argued that learning is the result of personal trajectories from different social situations, resulting in personal differences in learning development. The examples noted from Ana's life do not constitute her complete life trajectory as many experiences were omitted; however, a couple of aspects from her childhood are noted in relation to school and important life experiences are explored between 1995-1998.

Ana grew up in a rural community where from an early age, she began to participate in domestic chores. Her work was hard, money scarce, and her family's well-being depended on all of their family members contributing to the household. According to Ana, her parents valued family-related work rather than a formal education and believed that "those who attended school only wasted their time." In her town, girls did not typically attend school because parents believed they would become lazy. Barbara, Ana's niece and a

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8   For the extension of syllables I used double colon (::); ellipsis in parentheses to signal omissions of phrases or repetitive commentary or irrelevant; and brackets to clarify ([ ]).

participant in the group, often received this message from parents: "you only go to school to do who knows what. It's better for you to do this or that instead of learning meaningless things."

As an adult, Ana wishes for her children to have opportunities to attend school and believes that a formal education could provide a better life. She shares that she sends her children to school to

> be better than us, go, because we didn't have schooling, we didn't have the tools to defend ourselves. I tell my children, "if you don't take advantage of what is given to you … it's on you." I tell them, "we wish we would have been told 'homework! Sons, what did you do or what will you do?'" But, no, not this … I tell my children, "you, you protest, you even talk back to us." I tell them, "you should have grown up in the times we grew up, we couldn't even make eye contact. If they gave us an order and we would get up, and look them in their eyes, oh man! [they'd hit us] with whatever object. Okay, what are you looking at? Walk!" And like that.

For Ana, the decision to not be sent to school was a part of the hard life she endured where children lived in fear of their parents who exercised their authority with intransigence and violence. Ana wished to distance herself from her town and on various occasions her father owed money and would send her to work in the city to assist the family with economic hardships. This did not worry Ana because she preferred domestic labor in the city over staying in her rural town because in her home town the labor was exhausting and without pay. Ana preferred urban life: "I was over here because I found it easier. I would work but I found it more… yes, more beautiful and easy." She married when she was still a teenager and once she had two small children, she decided to live in Aguazul.

Her life continued at home with her children and with the chores expected of a young mother. She never shared that she needed to read or write. Perhaps her most important concern in this regard was reading public transportation billboards. She would rarely travel out of town and her husband could read and write sufficiently well to resolve any situation that would arise. However, when her children started school, she encountered a new situation: signing report cards. Each month the teacher would schedule a parent-teacher conference to discuss their children's academic progress. The teacher would turn in the report cards to the mothers who needed to sign them. Ana attended the meetings and participated in them in a particular way as she narrates in this excerpt from the interview:

Ana: You walk in and the teachers tell you how your child is doing and all that. Well, later the signing of the report cards comes up … well, they give it to you and tell you that in such a month you need to sign.

> Researcher: And, you look over the grades?
>
> Ana: Yes.
>
> R: and how do you look over them?
>
> Ana: I only, only understand the red ones, those are failing … I, my son, is only in second grade and failed one class. This one... math.
>
> R: How did you know it was math class?
>
> Ana: Because he told me... I told him that I saw the little five in red. And yes, he told me
>
> …
>
> R: And what happens if you don't sign it?
>
> Ana: Well, nothing happens. It's just that, well, they write that the child doesn't have someone to support him.
>
> R: Well, and if you say "I am not signing this because my child tells me it is incorrect."
>
> Ana: Oh, well, they deduct points from his score.
>
> …
>
> R: And how would you sign?
>
> Ana: When I didn't know, I would ask one of my classmates to sign it for me and she would write my name and that's it. Now, thank God that I can write my name.

By participating in parent-teacher conferences, Ana learned about the importance of attendance and signing report cards. Although she did not physically do it, she intervened in a socially relevant way to receive her child's evaluations and leave a signature indicating her awareness. She learned the color codes to differentiate the classes her child passed from those he failed. And, she resolved the issue of signing by seeking assistance from another person who could sign on her behalf, providing the role of mediator of written language. She also learned that the different ways that mothers participated could have social consequences for the kids: if a mother did not sign the report card, the child was designated as lacking support; if she questioned the teacher's judgment or the assigned grade, she believed her child would receive negative consequences based on her actions and attitude.

Ana fully appropriated the situation and acted according to her understanding of it: for her, it was very important that her children attend school and she oriented her participation in such a way that she did not make decisions or take actions she believed would put their education at risk. In this context, the exigencies of reading and writing were well-defined and she resolved them satisfactorily. Her criteria for reading report cards centered on differentiating between pass/fail without considering the specific passing grades or an average. She verified that the report card contained her printed name in the space indicated without worrying whether the signature should be written specifically by her or on her behalf. The appropriation of this practice is unique to Ana because she needed to satisfy a specific language requirement in her daily life. She determined the nature of her task and resolved the situation using various resources: the mediation of the other women and her son, their attendance and participation in meetings, and the decoding of colors. She began to read report cards through her participation in a specific social situation, thereby appropriating necessary practices and expected ways of interacting.

In 1995, when Ana was approximately 36 years old, she joined a study group from INEA for the first time. She attended classes for several months and began to learn how to trace letters, assign sounds to letters, and formulate syllables. During this time period, she became pregnant again, and she said that it became "shocking," so she stopped attending classes. When her son was a couple of months old, one of her sisters-in-law, who owned a little store in town directly in front of Ana's house, decided to leave the store to Ana. Since starting her new job, she encountered several new situations that required the use of reading and writing. As the manager of a store, Ana had to perform specific functions, such as responding to customers and stocking the store. The first function was typically not an issue for her if customers paid her immediately because she was able to calculate their total mentally, especially if the customers only purchased a couple of items. However, if they asked for merchandise on credit, she needed to record it in some manner. On these occasions, she usually asked her children to write the credited account, but if they weren't home, she needed to remember what the customer had taken until one of her children was available to help her. Generally, she had a good memory, but there were times Ana omitted items when she tried to remember and dictate the list later on.

She also needed to make the list of merchandise she needed to stock her store when distributors delivered products to her home, and she also needed to review and check the order and number of the items when they were delivered. In the first instance, Ana dictated the lists to her children and in the second, when deliveries were made, she relied on the delivery person to check the merchandise. The delivery person provided an invoice and Ana read it alongside him

(to review how many products were being delivered and at what price)

In 1998, she joined a study group again and attended classes regularly. In this class, study lessons and activities from INEA books were followed and it was an active group where there were a lot of conversations, solidarity, and mutual help among members. The members possessed diverse knowledge and reading and writing abilities and deployed them throughout the duration of the session. Because the instructor believed that everyone knew the letters and sounds, she began to teach materials from an elementary school level: she reviewed diverse content in Spanish, math, social studies, and science. They worked on exercises from the book, and at times the instructor dictated and at others she allowed them to write freely, without copying from the book or writing from dictation. They read collectively out loud and wrote together on the chalkboard. Ana participated actively in the class and completed her assigned homework. Her daughter, at times, reviewed her homework and pointed out when letters were missing or when she couldn't understand what was written. She would recommend she make copies so that she could begin "learning how to write words." Ana began to make copies at her store:

> Ana: Then, I would take ... this one, for example, this thing and I would copy it … yes, because I only knew the letters or I knew how to write them, crooked, but I wrote them, but I didn't know how to read … they would ask for soap or a drink, and when the customer would leave, well, I would take the drink and I would copy the name … I was embarrassed as the store is fast, the customers come and go quickly. Mrs. Nora would say, "don't be afraid, you should write for you."
>
> R: and being afraid of what?
>
> Ana: Embarrassed, for example, that I miss letters and the customer is just there, waiting and (laughs).

In the context of the store, Ana developed a system to keep the accounts of neighbors who asked for store credit. In the first couple of classes at INEA, she learned to trace letters and she knew the conventional sound for most of them, although, as she mentioned, she would write them "crooked" or she might forget some. In the classes she was taking at the time of the interview, reading and writing were used for school activities (take dictation, complete activities in the notebook, and make a couple of copies) and, occasionally, they would write a letter, a list of ingredients, or a memory from their town of origin. Her daughter pointed out her mistakes in detail, where a letter was missing or where it wasn't understood clearly.

Figure 15.1 A List Written by Ana in Her Store

In the store, she already had a notebook where her children would make lists of the merchandise on credit and these served as a model so that Ana could also write her own lists. At first, she would wait to write until the customers left the window through which she sold items so that she could take each product to copy the name onto the list and write the price. She wasn't comfortable writing in front of others as she feared they would point out her errors; later, her friend Nora encouraged her to write while the customers were still present. One component that Ana added later to her list was the date (something she would write each time she attended her study group) as in some cases customers who received a pension or were wired money paid back the entire items credited once per month, In these cases, she would write the date: "to mutually remember what day the account started."

Ana actively intervened in the different practices linked with running her store with or without the ability to read and write. When she didn't read or write independently, she would seek mediators—her children and those who delivered her merchandise as informal notaries, which was a similar approach to how she handled her children's report cards (Kalman, 1999). Diverse situations converged so that she started using written language through self-initiative: her children, as they grew, could support her efforts to write by

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providing specific information about correcting errors. She also used copying techniques for her own purposes, attended classes with her neighbors where they reviewed and produced different types of texts; in doing all of this, she learned a new way to use a known practice (copying) for authentic and necessary uses (recording items taken on credit). During this time period, she also traveled 30 minutes to a large warehouse where she would take the list of merchandise needed to stock her store. When companies sent products for delivery, she began to review the invoice in detail.

For Ana, the store turned into a socially important space where she began to gain access to significant texts (merchandise), the format and process of list productions, and specific and detailed information about writing. In this context, she drew on the necessary materials and opportunities to write. Ana's appropriation of this practice is characterized by her autonomy to complete the activity: she decided what to write and when and controlled the activity and determined when she completed each list. The value of her lists resided in using them to charge her neighbors and not an external evaluation of written conventions.

She gradually assumed responsibility and direction over this activity, moving from the periphery to the center of the activity where more substantial actions were carried out (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In this case, she appropriated the practices of making lists, reconstructing them as a response to the concrete exigencies of running a store. Her appropriation of copying practices, the lists and dictations were not mechanical in nature but rather she enacted them and gave them their own meaning (Chartier, 1997). These symbolic practices organized the use of cultural tools, writing, and allowed Ana to develop new activities (Vygotsky, 1978).

Conclusion: New Pathways

In this work, I examined the notion of access to written language from a sociocultural theoretical perspective and I argued that access to written language is constructed through participating in distinct contexts where interaction with others makes the appropriation of reading and writing possible. The examples presented here illustrate the analytical possibilities of the concepts of appropriation, participation, and access, emphasizing the relation among the three. Here, the theoretical proposal is that through social interaction one has access to different aspects of written language. In other words, one can achieve proximity to the distinct dimensions within written language through which appropriation is made possible. In this way, access signals the social conditions needed for the appropriation of writing (the processes of interaction and concrete modalities

of meaning), and this is distinct from the material availability of written objects, either printed, manuscripts, or electronic.

The analysis of the examples presented illustrates various characteristics of access and appropriation, which deserve a more detailed investigation. First, the process of Ana's appropriation of the production and use of the lists to operate her store did not signal dominance of the practice (Wertsch, 1998). In a quick overview of her notebook, we can see her writing is tentative, her knowledge of conventional orthography emerging, and her control over the formatting is unstable: not all of the letters are perfectly formed, sometimes she did not write prices, and there are misspellings. However, we cannot question that Ana indeed knows what a list is, the various functions that it has in her store, or that if necessary she can produce one effectively. To appropriate this practice, Ana participated in multiple social situations where she had access to the necessary knowledge in order to learn.

Second, the process of appropriation of Ana's list suggests that learning the practices of reading and writing requires that the learner understands the conjunction of actions integrated within an activity while appreciating, from different perspectives, the practices in all their complexity. Her approach to the list was not through a fragmented and artificially sequential understanding of its components: Ana learned about the use of the list and its function as a whole and began to develop the formal skills of list writing through a gradual process in response to specific situations and concrete conditions. She began to integrate the format, the tracing of letters, the awareness of brand names and products, the time of production, and the date of the list in accordance with her possibilities and the need to produce the list independently. This suggests that we should investigate in detail how learners construct various reading and writing practices, understand their processes of engagement with them, and examine how these practices connect to their daily lives. It is essential to identify the core components of these practices for learners, the challenges they face, and the decisions they must make. As we construct a detailed knowledgebase of the process of appropriation, the conditions that result in access, and the different forms of participation in writing events, we will gain greater clarity on the social mechanisms behind their distribution and how to influence them.

Third, access to writing culture occurs in a social space and involves the enactment of practices, the transparent use of materials, participation in meaning-making processes, the flow of pertinent information, and the circulation of various types of knowledge and expertise. The mere presence of written materials is necessary but not sufficient to grant access to reading and writing: access implies the coexistence and interaction with other readers and

writers—social processes that make practices and meanings visible. It is the possibility of encountering them that favors appropriation, which occurs as a result of multiple and varied experiences. These experiences culminate with the internalization and transformation of practices in service of learning purposes as illustrated in Ana's case.

It is necessary to understand how the different aspects of an activity become accessible to a novice user. Ana's example demonstrates that she integrated knowledge and procedures from different contexts and she mobilized them around her interest in writing lists required to operate her store. Apparently, access is not an exclusionary process, a complete replication of the diverse uses of written language; instead, it looks like a gradual recomposition of the different components dependent on communicative necessities. We know that in reading and writing events, practices are demonstrated for novices, and what is learned depends on what is made visible. An important question that we must explore is in what ways access is organized to promote appropriation and how do different aspects of a practice converge in the learning process.

Finally, it is important to note implications related to pedagogical reflection and action in this line of scholarly inquiry. For a long time, we have known that the way a beginner reader approaches reading and writing does not necessarily align with the fragmentation used by experts or language scholars (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1979). Understanding the various forms of participation, the construction of access, and the processes of appropriation of reading and writing from the perspective of those who engage with written language practices in everyday situations will enrich our pedagogical imagination. This, in turn, will help enhance the situations and activities intentionally designed to teach reading and writing. It should provide new elements to think about the use of teaching materials, further elaborate on new ways to interact around them, and to identify activities that are authentic and meaningful for learners, integrating them into both formal and informal educational settings. To more equitably distribute the richness of written culture, we need to make it accessible to everyone.

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Reflection

Looking back at my paper from 2003, I was pleasantly surprised to find ideas that I still consider relevant to the study of literacy today, although I admit I blushed a bit at some of my writing. This self-consciousness is evidence of what I have learned since I wrote this article and has to do with the papers

and books I have read, the conversations I have had with my colleagues and students, and where my work has taken me.

Recently I have been documenting the different ways researchers talk and think about access. I found that while scholars such as Jan Blommaert (2008, 2017), Jean Lave (2019), and Jennifer Morrell and Ernest Rowsell (Rowsell et al., 2017) discuss different types of access, they don't specifically conceptualize what it means. They seem to go with our everyday notion of access as "a means of approaching or entering a place or the right or opportunity to use or benefit from something" and construct their discussions from there (https://www.wordreference.com/definition/access).

In my work, however, starting with the book *Saber lo que es la letra* (*Discovering literacy*) and my 2003 paper, I offered a conceptualization of access. I defined it as the social conditions for participating in and appropriating social practices, and these conditions centered on the opportunities to interact with others and participate in situated activities. In conjunction with access, I proposed a conceptualization of availability, the material conditions necessary for appropriating practices. In 2003 it was important to me to distinguish the existence of a school from the social processes involved in education because some policymakers and some researchers in Mexico used the term "access" as simply having a seat in a classroom. The idea that the presence of a school in a community was enough to *give access* to education was widespread. It covered up the need for more nuanced analysis and critique about what goes on at school. The same with literacy: teaching the alphabet or distributing collections of books does not guarantee solid, inclusive, expansive appropriation of literacy practices. For that, we must attend to what we do with reading and writing. So, at the time, distinguishing the distribution of material goods from the social processes involved in learning (always recognizing they were tied together somehow) was helpful for me.

This is where my thinking has grown. I still believe it is necessary and essential in our analysis to have an eye on social processes and materialities, but now I understand that access and availability are dialectically linked and can only be grasped by looking at availability through the lens of access and access through the lens of availability. They are indistinguishable, and our material world is the result of complex social processes, and our social processes employ and often depend on culturally produced artifacts.

Access and availability are powerful concepts for examining the contexts, processes, and material conditions in play when acting in the social world. They provide pathways for understanding how knowledge is constructed and circulates in appropriation processes. In the context of literacy research, these ideas shed new light on reading and writing events.

– Judith Kalman

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Epilogue. Present and Future of *los estudios de la escritura*

Natalia Ávila Reyes

What's in a Name?

The title of this epilogue to *Writing Studies in Latin America: Seminal Works* was no trivial choice. Epilogues come from theater; it was through the epilogue that spectators learned the fate of the characters after the plot. Whilst original epilogues sought to give closure to the story, the history of a field does not simply come to an end—at least, that is what we hope for when engaging in disciplinary work, like this book. Disciplinary work, ultimately, seeks to contribute to the identity, professionalization, growth, development, and expansion of a field. I hope that this volume can make a useful contribution to that end.

At the risk of tokenizing the Latin American experience, I have chosen to name our field in this title in one of our languages, Spanish: *estudios de la escritura*. This translingual choice aims to capture at least several layers pertaining to the naming of the field. By using *estudios de la escritura* I tried to account for a shared interest in *escritura* (writing) as an object of *estudios* (studies), in a vast array of manifestations and perspectives, and to stake a disciplinarity claim around it, just as this book does. But, by deliberately naming our field in Spanish I try to acknowledge the place from which we are creating knowledge, in reference to one of the central premises of the decolonial perspective: to dismantle the supposed universality of knowledge produced in the North as well as the supposed locality of knowledge produced in the South. Indeed, this book is about studies on writing—a universal concern—that happened to be produced in Spanish or Portuguese in Latin America. In other words, the works in this book do not theorize writing in Latin America; rather, they contribute from Latin America to a global conversation on writing.

Additionally, by using *estudios de la escritura*, I was also trying to avoid the risk of signifying that this book is a sort of Latin American version of the tradition forged in the United States, called writing studies—which, incidentally, was the tradition in which I was trained in my doctorate and which is itself a non-univocal and contested designation for the field of writing research.

In this light, I celebrate the book's momentum in shifting the traditional direction of knowledge flow, enabling anglophone scholars to engage with an

entire research tradition from the South—one that enriches and may help address its existing knowledge gaps. Thus, the conceptual bias that traditionally understands the North as an epistemically "unmarked" space—where universal knowledge is produced—could be challenged, fostering a more nuanced understanding of this knowledge as also inevitably local. I imagine that a desired effect of this book could be not only the recognition and citation of these traditions by colleagues from different locations—a movement that, perhaps, may help scholars from the North reciprocate the citations received from the South—but also the possibility of true dialogue, and future collaborations on equal standing. Such collaborations would contribute to a truly universal understanding of our object of study, building from different localities toward a pluriversality.

Alongside many other Latin American colleagues, in one way or another, we have undertaken various actions to contribute to disciplinary work, and the term *estudios de la escritura* has assisted us with versatility in this endeavor. Some examples include the *Asociación Latinoamericana de Estudios de la Escritura* (ALES) and the *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios de la Escritura* (RLEE). I cannot say with certainty to what extent this name has fully taken root in the field, nor whether other disciplinary homes or labels might make more sense to researchers and practitioners. What I do maintain, however, is that *estudios de la escritura* allows for unity in an inclusive manner, bringing together work on writing without being confined to any particular approach, as this very volume attests.

This group of seminal works holds a crucial place in our disciplinary history, not only because they are among the most cited and have formed an initial canon, but also because they played a key role in bringing unity to the diversity of approaches that, around the turn of the century, began to take an interest in the phenomenon of writing in the region.

Thus, by the 2010s, those of us concerned with writing-related issues—mostly driven by the growing interest in undergraduate academic writing furthered by enrollment expansion and student-centered policies—were able to rely on a body of references specific to the field upon which to build and expand our scholarship, something that many of these pioneers did not have as clearly available. For many of us, reading these works allowed us to recognize ourselves as part of a community with shared interests. And on a personal level, reading some of the titles in this volume helped me, at their time, to grasp the complexity of the layers underlying writing, transcending the somewhat naïve need to "improve" students' writing that drove many of us, some twenty years ago, to shift from our original disciplines (education, psychology, or linguistics) to becoming scholars of writing.

Therefore, this book comes to share with new audiences the seed of what is today a consolidated field. Evidence of this consolidation is the valuable reflections that accompany the chapters, which reposition many of the initial perspectives in today's view, identifying further gaps to pursue. Hence, although my charge in this text was to speak about the future of *estudios de la escritura*, I cannot do so without briefly examining our present.

Present

If I were to say a defining feature of our field today, I would mention a strong theoretical eclecticism, a topic I have had the opportunity to discuss elsewhere and that is exemplified in several of the chapters compiled in this volume. This eclecticism is, in part, a search for complementarity among perspectives. For example, there is an effort to recognize that writing is both an individual and a social phenomenon; thus, cognitive or textual approaches could easily be combined with sociocultural ones. This is also a historically-rooted phenomenon—as the field was initially informed by linguistic and discourse studies, as well as by cognitively oriented research on reading, there is a tendency in the region to shift from a more textual and cognitive approach to one that is more situated and sociocultural, in some cases, integrating them. I have recently observed this eclecticism firsthand through my experience editing a book and a journal special issue, as well as in my role as editor-in-chief of the *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios de la Escritura*. Thus, it is not uncommon to find co-citations of perspectives that might even seem incompatible.

But beyond my personal experience, it is useful to resort to some data to depict the present more thoroughly. Recognizing that any selection is necessarily partial, I would like to follow this book's approach and examine some special issues published in the region after 2020. This will help ground our claims about how the field is currently configured epistemologically. As a reference, I will draw on eight recent volumes: "*Escritura e identidad,*" edited in the journal *Enunciación* (Colombia) by Ana Atorresi and Laura Eisner in 2021; "*Estudios de la escritura na educação superior,*" edited in *Revista DELTA* (Brazil) by Celia Macedo, Federico Navarro, Orlando Vian Jr., and Marília M. Ferreira in 2021; "*Letramentos Acadêmico-Científicos no Ensino Superior,*" edited in *Signum* (Brazil) by Federico Navarro, Vera Lopes Cristovão, and Viviane Bagio Furtuoso in 2021; "*Writing research across borders,*" edited in *Literatura y Lingüística* (Chile) by Chris Anson, Jonathan Marine, Federico Navarro, and Paul M. Rogers in 2022; "*Más allá de los textos: investigaciones situadas de la escritura,*" edited in *Pensamiento Educativo Latinoamericano* (Chile) by myself and Lina Calle-Arango in 2022; "*Miradas sobre la alfabetización académica,*"

edited in *Cuadernos del Sur Letras* (Argentina) by Daniela Palmucci in 2024; and "*Estudios de literacidad académica y educación: abordajes desde/hacia la justicia social en América Latina,*" edited in *Magis* (Colombia) by Emilce Moreno and Luanda Sito in 2024 and 2025.

This proliferation of special issues in local journals reflects the significant growth and development of the field in recent years—especially considering that I have excluded from this review potential special issues from *Traslaciones*, *Leer, Escribir y Descubrir*, and *Revista Latinoamericana de Estudios de la Escritura*, as these are journals entirely dedicated to writing studies. Along with strongly recommending the reading of these special issues, I would like to offer a brief analysis that provides a more comprehensive understanding of the current state of writing research in the region.

The first aspect I would like to address is that of approaches. Of the 57 articles published between 2021 and 2024, 42% explicitly adopt a sociocultural / literacy as a social practice approach (e.g., academic literacies, new literacy studies, critical sociolinguistics). These qualitatively oriented studies appear to be mainstream in the region today. Next, 26% of the studies demonstrate the theoretical eclecticism I previously mentioned. These works frequently combine approaches that offer theoretical complementarities. The most common case are studies that complement two sociocultural approaches—sociohistorical and social practices. However, in only one of these cases does the author explicitly acknowledge that they are drawing on two theoretical frameworks with different epistemologies. On the other hand, there are three instances in which epistemologically incompatible frameworks are combined—for example, integrating situated or critical perspectives on writing with analytical concepts from structuralist traditions or individual cognition. Although these cases are few, it is noticeable that this kind of theoretical eclecticism—which we might call "uncritical eclecticism"—is present in special issues of recently published, peer-reviewed journals.

Third, 9% of the studies fall under linguistic-textual analysis, incorporating perspectives such as corpus analysis, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), metadiscourse, or genre analysis. Finally, 7% of the studies align with a sociocultural / sociohistorical paradigm, linked to activity theory or situated cognition. All other perspectives identified—such as socio-discursive interactionism, systemic functional linguistics, cognitive processes, and multimodality—appear only once or twice in the sample.

Regarding the educational levels addressed, it is important to acknowledge a bias in these data, as three of the special issues specifically focus on higher education or academic literacy. Even so, it is interesting to note that 46% of the studies center on undergraduate higher or tertiary education, 12%

on postgraduate education, 11% on school-level education (primary or secondary), 9% specifically on teacher training, and 7% on researchers or academics. Less frequent areas of interest include adult education, professional fields, multiple educational levels, and early literacy, each represented by one or two articles. Additionally, although two articles refer to society at large (one historical and one theoretical study), none in the sample explore literacy in non-institutionalized contexts.

In terms of the countries of affiliation of the first authors, Argentina leads the list (21%), followed by Chile (19%), the United States (12%), Brazil and Colombia (11% each), the United Kingdom (7%), and Mexico and Spain (5% each), not counting other countries with one or two appearances (France, Belgium, Peru, and Uruguay). In total, affiliations of first authors outside Latin America account for 30%. This progressive internationalization of research produced in the region is notably linked to the existence of multilingual publications. At the same time, there are several cases of non-Spanish-speaking authors publishing their work in Spanish. This trend reflects the gradual internationalization of local journals—a highly positive development, as it opens the door to future cross-regional collaborations. However, for now, such collaborations remain limited. In the sample, only five articles involve international collaborations, four of which are between different regions.

This data-grounded analysis appears to offer a useful synopsis of the current state of the field. It is characterized by a predominant interest in studying writing at the undergraduate level, a prevailing approach that views writing as a social practice, a strong tendency toward eclecticism, and a growing trend toward the internationalization of its academic venues. With the exception of one essay, all the articles are either empirical studies or data-driven theoretical works. They draw on a diverse range of data sources, with a clear predominance of qualitative methods. In my view, this is an accurate picture of our present reality—at least of the writing studies community that coalesces around these special issues—one that reflects a field with a distinct identity and which is now well-established.

Despite this disciplinary consolidation, certain challenges remain. The first concerns a noticeable slowdown in the enthusiasm we experienced ten years ago for establishing writing initiatives in the region. While the academic output analyzed in the special issues reflects a thriving, expanding, and well-rooted research field, cutting-edge teaching practices are constantly at risk due to the challenges of securing institutional funding and preventing the precaritization of well-informed initiatives across various educational levels. In a similar vein, the fragile disciplinary identity of *estudios de la escritura*—much like in other parts of the world—makes it difficult to access

external research funding, which must often be sought within more recognizable disciplinary fields, such as education or applied linguistics.

Future

The fate of the characters in this story remains open. The growth and professionalization of the field over the years, from the original publication of these Seminal Works to the present, suggest a promising future for *estudios de la escritura*.

First, it is important to stress the unique contribution that the epistemological eclecticism of research in our region can offer—potentially leading to a more comprehensive understanding of the object of study and more integrative methodologies. However, for this to fully materialize, eclecticism needs to be a conscious and explicitly articulated choice, rather than a loosely defined blend that accommodates incompatible perspectives on the nature of writing. Thus, a key task for our Latin American field could be to further develop its "critical eclecticism."

Critical eclecticism can also be a step toward decolonization, in the sense that it does not necessarily conform to the epistemic borders and theoretical boundaries imposed by perspectives that have emerged from the Global North. Articulating different dimensions of writing phenomena has been a staple of past and current work of *estudios de la escritura*, and emerges as a productive avenue for future developments.

In this same vein, I want to insist on the value of this book in its effort to position these seminal works—many of them theoretical—globally, enabling more fluid conversations. Our future work will be to continue aggregating knowledge on writing based on our own developments, while also hoping that, in a similar way, knowledge from other parts of the world aggregates and builds upon what we produce in Latin America.

In this regard, an important direction for future work is cross-fertilization—that is, ensuring that traditions from both the North and the South read, learn from, and cite each other, developing and expanding their ideas. At present, this is not the case; rather, there remains a strong tendency in the region to adopt theoretical frameworks from the Global North, with little to no tendency for the North to engage with theory from the South. Similarly, the space that our journals have begun to offer for more international scholars to gain visibility among researchers in Latin America is extremely valuable. However, it is crucial that this growth occurs with reciprocity, increasing Latin American representation in global journals, which are currently dominated by the anglophone North. Ultimately, one outcome of these processes

of cross-fertilization should be both the decolonization and epistemological diversification of global writing studies, as well as a greater number of transnational collaborations between different regions—particularly by breaking through linguistic and geopolitical barriers between Latin America and the Global North.

A penultimate challenge for the future falls upon us—the mid-career researchers who are now responsible for training the next generation of scholars. It is crucial that we ensure a highly prepared new generation capable of addressing the epistemological, theoretical, methodological, and geopolitical challenges ahead. It is an ethical imperative to train undergraduate and graduate students to the highest standards—with dedication, care, and the genuine hope that they will soon surpass their (temporary) mentors.

And finally, there is no possible future unless we collectively take responsibility for some of the central challenges facing the world today: the rise of increasingly divisive discourses, climate collapse, threats to peace, alternative truths, and the erosion of diversity. The study of literacy in general, and writing in particular, is more relevant than ever in a time when full social participation is at risk. Writing studies must adopt a teleological commitment to social justice. In other words, the knowledge we produce about writing should seek to ensure the best possible living conditions for all people as its defining purpose, through the most diverse means and approaches. This ethical challenge, which transcends regions, should be at the forefront of our efforts in the years to come and can guide a common goal for the field worldwide.

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Writing Studies in Latin America

This edited collection arises from the belief that the field of writing studies, with its deep engagement in the power of language, is uniquely positioned to open new pathways for international scholarly dialogue in writing studies and beyond. Integrating diverse theoretical traditions—including discourse studies, language pedagogy, educational psychology, educational management, and critical sociolinguistics—the editors have brought together work from key Latin American scholars published over the past two decades. The result is a book that points to future directions for the increasingly global field of writing studies. The collection includes work by Natalia Ávila Reyes, Charles Bazerman, Paula Carlino, Valentina Fahler, Ivone Inés Jakob, Judith Kalman, Angela B. Kleiman, Vera Lúcia Lopes Cristovão, Anna Rachel Machado, Jonathan Marine, Juan David Martínez Hincapié, Paulina Meza, Violate Molina Natera, Désirée Motta-Roth, Estela I. Moyano, Elvira Narvaja de Arnoux, Lucía Natale, Federico Navarro, Giovanni Parodi, Luisa Pelizza, María Cecilia Pereira, Pablo Rosales, Daniela Paula Stagnaro, Alicia Vázquez, René Venegas, and Virginia Zavala.

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