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## Writing, Memory and Association: Newly Literate Students and Their Poetry Creation Processes

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Derived from textual genetics and the linguistics of enunciation, this study analyzes the creative processes of newly literate dyads writing poetry in the classroom context. Data point to types of associative relations (Saussure, 1987; Suenaga, 2004) made by students and the ways in which these relations are articulated through memory. The co-enunciative process suggests the formation of complex and interrupted associative networks that indicate the genesis of the written poems. The final manuscript cannot retrieve the dynamics of this network, but preserves its result, erasing, in part, the connections between the elements that constituted it. Even though the properties of the textual genre and the possibilities of syntagmatic concatenation may impose limits to what will be written, the subjectivity of the writer (even of a new student), carries within it the unpredictable, inescapable dimension of what words say.

Cette étude, inspirée par la génétique textuelle et la linguistique de l'énonciation, analyse le processus créatif de deux dyades d'enfants ayant récemment appris à lire et à écrire qui écrivent de la poésie dans le contexte de la classe. Les données permettent de voir quels types de relations d'associations (Saussure, 1987; Suenaga, 2004) sont faites par les élèves et la manière dont ces relations s'articulent entre elles grâce à la mémoire. La procédure de co-énonciation favorise la formation d'un réseau complexe et interrompu d'associations qui renseigne sur la genèse des poèmes. Le manuscrit final ne peut restituer la dynamique de ce réseau mais il en préserve le résultat, faisant disparaître en partie les connections entre les éléments qui l'ont constitué. Même si les propriétés du genre textuel et les possibilités de concaténation syntagmatique

imposent des limites à ce qui va être écrit, la subjectivité du scripteur, fût-il un jeune élève, apporte avec lui l'imprévisible et incontournable dimension de ce que disent les mots.

Dans une foule de cas, il est difficile de classer une combinaison d'unités, parce que l'un et l'autre facteurs ont concouru à la produire, et dans des proportions qu'il est impossible de déterminer.

-- Saussure, *Tullio de Mauro*, p. 173

Textual Genetics (Grésillon, 1994; Biasi, 2011) argues that the literary manuscript is a semiotic object of double order, whose scriptural essence makes it, at the same time, a verbal and non-verbal object. Unity is achieved through the interaction of, on the one hand, what the writer has read, studied, lived, as well as his notes and designs, which are arranged in the successiveness of the linguistic elements linked in the syntagmatic chain of each word, each sentence, and each line, and on the other hand, the visual and fixed simultaneity of what was already written, the traces, scribbles, arrows, blurs, colors, and erasures.

This process implies that the writing is influenced by the actions of language and memory. Further, the manuscript is shaped by the special and recursive condition of its process—even processes through which a writer's intentions may not necessarily be fully realized. Yet, despite this ephemeral and heterogeneous character, every manuscript has in its horizon, essentially, an arrival point at which “textual” unity is achieved, simultaneously, through recursive and non-linear dimensions.<sup>2</sup>

The investigation of this processual character of the “text in construction” (Fenoglio, 2007; Maher, 2009) has been the focus of many studies on the written text at school (Boré, 2010; Doquet, 2011; Fradet, 2010; Fiad, 2013, among others) in Textual Genetics. Of particular interest, is the work of Fabre (1990), who highlighted the importance of the manuscript (*brouillon*) and of the erasure (*raturation*) of the student in the context of school writing, has more recently been extended to include literary manuscripts (Fabre-Cols, 2004).

Our study aims at advancing this perspective, highlighting newly literate students' creative processes in writing poetry. Through a less common methodological procedure, we have elected to study the writing “in situ.” Specifically, we have aimed to capture the dual nature of the literary manuscript through the observation and analysis of its process and production with recently alphabetized authentic writers in an authentic classroom context.

With this methodological approach, we will treat the process of school writing and its product as a unified object of study, existing within the dimensions of here (space) and now (time) during the enunciative process of talking

and writing in the classroom. To show how the dimensions of this object inter-relate, we will analyze the processes of the literary text creation through the associative relations (Saussure, 1987) as proposed by Suenaga (2004) and the speaker's memory.

## 1. Associative relations and their types

From the linguistic point of view, Saussure, when discussing the matter of the arbitrary and the value, addresses the relationship between language and memory. The "limitation of the arbitrary," according to the author, depends on the associative syntagmatic relation and the associative association, as far as the first is delimited by the syntagmatic chain (horizontal associative relations), and the second one by the memory of the speaker (vertical associative relations). If the first delimits the arbitrary through the enchainment of the linguistic elements in the syntagm, the second delimits it from what is "in the brain" of the speaker.

The horizontal and vertical associative relations, in turn, are responsible for delimiting the arbitrary in the language, as demonstrated by Saussure through several examples. Maybe the most famous is the one represented on page 126, which uses the word *enseignement*.

Suenaga (2004), from this example, reinterprets these relations, proposing three types of combinations between signified and signifier:

Type 1, association by signifier and signified: the syntagmatic associative relation elapses from a morphologic movement in which there is a community or grouping of morphemes. This type of association may be exemplified<sup>3</sup> by:

"Enseigner," "enseignons" . . . which makes an association by sharing the same roots.

"Teaching," "carrying," "acting" . . . are associated by the suffix "ing" which nominalizes a verb.

Type 2, association by signified: when there is an association on the plan of the signified, which is when there is a relation of semantic contiguity between the terms:

"Teaching," "apprenticeship," "education," "school," "university" . . . are associated by synonymy or by part-whole relations.

Type 3, association by signifier: an association at the level of the signifier, when there is a community, or grouped by phonic similarities.

“Tent,” “element,” “circumvent,” “invent,” “descent” . . . when the association occurs only at the level of sonority.

We will not advance towards the delicate question of the “absolute arbitrary” and “relative arbitrary,” but I emphasize that delimiting the value of a term is given by:

- a) The relations of type 1 (syntagmatic delimitation) and of type 2 (associative delimitation), restricted to the “grammatical” character of the system, limitative of the arbitrary;
- b) The type 3 (phonic delimitation) has a “symbolic” character, allowing, according to the proposal of Suenaga, from the deliberation of Gadet (1989), the “widening” of the arbitrary.

From these considerations of the associative relations and the types of combinations between signified and signifier, we will discuss the role of memory in the new writers’ textual creation processes.

## 2. Processes and manuscripts in two poem productions proposals

The aforementioned affirmation on the double dimension of the investigation object chosen, involving the articulation between the process in real space and time and its product—the school manuscript—is mainly justified by the ethnographic method, developed and adopted since the early 1990s (Calil, 1994). Through the filming of the proposed text production in the classroom, when the students organized in dyads are solicited by their teachers to write a single text, we were able to recover the daily and spontaneous interactional dynamics between the speaker and what we characterize as “oral manuscript” (Calil, 2008, p.47). This oxymoron preserves one of the main properties of our object of study, mixing the apparent and delusive dichotomy of what is “written” and what is “spoken.”

### 2.1. “Poem of Each Day” and Its Collection

The didactic project “A Poem Every Day” was developed between 2000 and 2001, in a school situated in Maceio’s periphery, with 11-year-old students of very limited economic resources, who had already failed one or two school years. During the execution of this work, as part of the Portuguese Language classes, about 40 poems of diverse styles were read, recited, and interpreted (Calil, 2001). Every two weeks, on average, the teacher grouped the 2<sup>nd</sup> grade

elementary school students in dyads and requested the production of a poem.

Using a hand held camcorder we recorded 13 text production prompts. Each one of these prompts resulted in a text of an invented poem.

We have chosen two of these text productions (1st and 6th) to illustrate how the associative relations and the elements recovered from the memory are articulated during these students' textual creation.<sup>4</sup>

### 2.1.1. One verse from one poem

Valdemir and Antenor produced the first poem on 09/14/2000. The first four lines of the manuscript below were copied from the poem "Raridade," written by José Paulo Paes (2000), written on the blackboard by the teacher, but unknown to the other students. The prompt was that they continue writing the poem, creating other verses.

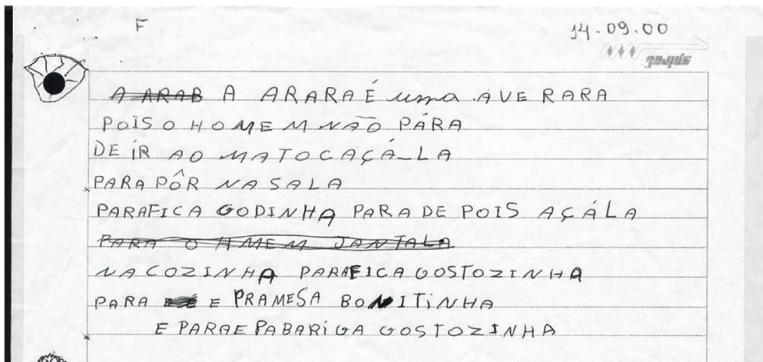


Figure 5.1. Manuscript "Raridade," from Valdemir and Antenor<sup>5</sup>

Valdemir wrote the verses created by the dyad. Some elements of this manuscript's creation process, for example, the erasure on the verse "para o homen jantá-la" (for man to have it for dinner) were analyzed in Calil (2008). Here, what interests us is the moment when the term "assá-la" (to roast it) and the associative relations generated prior to being written. What was said by other students and the teacher before its enunciation which could be related to the kinds of relations proposed by Suenaga? Who said "assá-la" for the first time? After enunciated, how was it written on the sheet of paper?

We will start with the last point. "Assá-la" was written as a single word and with "ç," composes the verse "para depois açá-la" and was graphed by Valdemir between 08:02 and 08:23. It rhymes with "caçá-la" and "na sala" presented respectively by the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> verses copied. The verse it belongs to was preceded by "para ficar gordinha" (to fatten up). The first oral occurrence of "assá-la" is not even after "gordinha" as the reading of the manuscript might suppose, nor did it coincide with the occurrence of its effective writing on the paper.

It was right at the start of the presentation proposed by the teacher to the class, that this student, Valdemir, established a first form for this verse and its rhyme. Next, we will describe the dialogue between the teacher and the students, which will activate different associative series, culminating in the association between the poem that was being written on the board and the verse created by Valdemir. In this case, it can be considered that when the prompt was presented, the process of collaborative writing actually began.

### Dialogic Text 1. Beginning of the presentation of the proposal “Raridade”

CONTEXT 00:00 - 02:36		After having recited to the students the poems “O passeio da poltrona” and “A traça” the teacher starts the presentation of the text production prompt, at which time the students should begin writing the poem. While the teacher recited the first 4 verses of the poem “Raridade,” he copied these same verses on the blackboard. At the end of the third verse, the teacher asked the students some questions and commented on some of the answers. The camcorder was operated by a research associate, at the back of the classroom. The focal point was open and the framing followed the teacher’s movement.
CT1 00:00 - 01:07	TEACHER	Now ... (The teacher is facing the students organized in a semi-circle, looking at them and walking in the classroom with a sheet of paper that contains the poem “Raridade”) <i>I will show you another poem ... another poem ... all right? Then we will discuss this poem ... then we will again ... I mean ... then we go to another writing activity, ok? This poem ... I will start ... I will read the beginning of the poem ... and you will continue writing the poem. All right?</i> (Going towards the board. Writing and speaking what he is writing. Some students repeat what the teacher says). A[a] <sup>7</sup> ... <i>a arara</i> [arara] ... <i>é</i> [é] ... <i>uma</i> [uma] ... <i>ave</i> [ave] ... [rara] (Reading the verse written on the board.) <i>A arara é uma ave rara</i> “The arara is a rare bird” (Initiating the second verse on the line below) <i>Pois</i> [pois]... <i>Because</i> [because]. <i>o homem</i> [o homem] ... <i>man</i> [man] <i>pois o homem não para</i> [não pára] ... <i>pois o homem não para</i> ... (Going to write the third verse in another line). <i>De ir</i> [de ir] ... <i>de ir</i> ... <i>pois o homem não para de ir ao mato</i> [ao mato] ... (Small pause. Stop writing, asking how he could end this verse). ... to do what? ... “
CT2 01:08 - 01:11	STUDENT 1	[Inaudible, but the teacher retrieves what the student said.]
CT3 01:12 - 01:25	TEACHER	(Retrieving and repeating what the student said and writing ‘caçá-la’) ... <i>caçá-la</i> [caçá-la]. <i>Very good</i> (Commenting on the rhyme). <i>To match, yeah?</i> (Rereading) ... <i>pois o homem não para de ir ao mato caçá-la</i> ... “because man doesn’t stop going to the woods to[para] ... (Repeating) <i>para</i> ... ‘to ... .” <i>pôr</i> [pôr na] ‘put it [put it in] ...
CT4 01:26 - 01:27	STUDENT 2	<i>Na gaiola</i> (In the Cage) ...
CT5 01:27 - 01:32	TEACHER	(Asking) <i>Does it match? In the cage?</i> (Brief pause) <i>Para pôr?</i> (To put)
CT6 01:33 - 01:34	VALDEMIR AND STUDENT 2	(Answering) <i>In the cage.</i>

CT7 01:35 - 01:36	TEACHER	<i>The poet used another word.</i>
CT8 01:37 - 01:39	STUDENT 3	<i>Comê-la. Caçá-la. (Eat it, Hunt it)</i>
CT9 01:40 - 02:00	TEACHER	(Repeating.) <i>Comê-la . . . caçá-la?</i> He put . . . (Reading.) <i>para pôr na . . . sala[sala] (to put in the living-room). Sala.</i> (Rereading the verses written on the board.) <i>A arara é uma ave rara . . . pois o homem não para . . . de ir ao mato caçá-la . . . para pôr na sala. "The arara is a rare bird . . . because the men don't stop going to the woods to hunt it"</i> (Asking.) <i>You know the arara, don't you?</i>
CT10 02:01 - 02:03	STUDENTS	<i>I know. I know. We know.</i>
CT11 02:03 - 02:04	STUDENT 4	<i>It's that blue bird, right?!</i>
CT12 02:05 - 02:06	TEACHER	<i>Yeah. Yeah. It's a big colorful bird, right? Beautiful.</i>
CT13 02:07 - 02:10	STUDENTS AND TEACHER	(Students talking and teacher repeating.) <i>Blue . . . red . . . yellow . . . green . . .</i>
CT14 02:11 - 02:15	TEACHER	<i>Cool, cool, cool. And the hunters go hunt it . . . To?</i>
CT15 02:16 - 02:17	STUDENT 1	(Answering.) <i>Put it in the living-room.</i>
CT16 02:18 - 02:21	TEACHER	(Repeating.) <i>Put it in the living-room.</i> (Suggesting) <i>To adorn the living-room. To put in the cage . . . to entrap . . .</i>
CT17	STUDENT 3	<i>To eat.</i>
CT18 02:22 - 02:23	TEACHER	(Repeating.) <i>To eat.</i> (Commenting.) <i>I don't know if arara's meat is good</i>
CT19 02:24 - 02:25	VALDEMIR	(Proposing a verse.) <i>Botar na sala para assá-la. (Put it in the living-room to roast it)</i>
CT20 02:26 - 02:27	TEACHER	(Looking and pointing to Valdemir.) <i>To put . . . Hub, what do you mean?</i>
CT21 02:28 - 02:30	VALDEMIR	(Repeating. Teacher looking and imitating the rhythm of the student's speech with his arm.) <i>Botar na sala . . . para . . . assá-la. Put it in the living room, to roast it'</i>
CT22 02:31 - 02:36	TEACHER	(Surprised.) <i>Frankly. Very good.</i> (Repeating.) <i>Botar na sala . . . para assá-la. (Praising.) Cool.</i>

Notes: CT = Clocked time; The terms between brackets indicate what the teacher writes on the board, while he speaks with the students.

The teacher read, out loud, the initial verses of the poem “Raridade,” while he wrote it on the board. After he copied the third verse, just after he had said and written “pois o homem não para de ir ao mato” (because man doesn’t stop going to the woods), the teacher asked “To do what?,” initiating an associa-



tive and creative game with the students. At 01:12 minutes (TC<sub>3</sub>) the teacher repeated the word “caçá-la” (“hunt it”), which seemed to have been said by a student coinciding with what the poet wrote [“de ir ao mato caçá-la”]. What we observed in this verse were two kinds of association that may be interfering simultaneously with his articulation: a semantic association between “caçar” (to hunt) and the terms “ave” (bird), “arara” and “homem” (man). The second association is phonic, in which the phoneme /a/, present in the words “arara,” “rara” and “para” is repeated in “caçá-la.” We also observed that the verb-noun form “caçá-la” keeps the syntagmatic solidarity with “ir ao mato” “going to the woods,” which could be associated with a form of association between a grammatically aligned signified and signifier.

The teacher continued to copy the poem on the board and spoke the beginning of the following verse “para por . . .” (“to put . . .”). Another student, keeping the previously initiated associative game, completed the verse proposing “na gaiola” (in the cage). At this point another associative series was opened, again with the terms “ave” and “arara” as a semantic stabilizing axis.

We emphasize that the associative relations formed by the types of relations around “caçá-la” (“hunt it”) and “na gaiola” (“in the cage”) retrieve a cultural practice that is common among students. Both “caçar” and “gaiola” are terms connected to the semantic memory of these students in Maceio’s periphery who customarily “hunt birds” to lock them in “cages.” This practice is illustrated below with images captured in the streets of Maceio.



*Figure 5.2. Boys walking around with birds in the city of Maceió (images registered by the author)*

The teacher refused this semantic association saying that it “doesn’t match,” followed by: “the poet used another word.” One student reframed the



associative series with “caçá-la” adding “comê-la” (eat it). By keeping the use of the pronoun “la” (it), there is not only a signified associative relation (type 2) between “caçar” (hunt) and “comer” (eat), but also an associative relation by signified and signifier (type 1), in which there is a syntagmatic solidarity between the verb-noun form “caçá-la” (hunt it) and “comê-la” (eat it).

At the end of this TC9 (01:40—02:00), the teacher highlighted the term “arara,” and, right after, its characteristics: “big bird,” “colorful,” and “beautiful.” This semantic association with “arara” opens a new series of associations, which occurred between the TC11 and the TC13, with all the students giving continuity by saying the colors of the “arara,” a well-known Brazilian bird: blue, red, yellow, green.

Right after repeating what the students said, the teacher replaced “homem” (man) by “caçador” (hunter), resuming the associative game from “caçá-la para.” This enunciation was completed by a student and by the teacher until TC18, by terms that maintained the ongoing associative series which culminated in the enunciation “I don’t know if arara meat is good.” This leads to the following associative series:

- Associative series a: “ave” (bird), “arara”
- Associative series b: hunt/catch it, capture it, eat/eat it, meat . . .
- Associative series c: in the living room, in the cage . . .
- Associative series d: colorful, beautiful, decorate . . .

These associative series cannot be interpreted separately, as if they were established term by term, or in a single direction. To understand the process that generated them, the ongoing enunciative and textual process has to be taken into account. They are constituted from the flux of words and undergo the simultaneous interaction of three types of association. The last association we will analyze illustrates this assertion in a particular manner.

Lingering on the meaning between “comer” (to eat) and “arara” the teacher highlights the semantic association with “food”: “I don’t know if arara meat is good,” an enunciate that seems strange compared to the association made by the student. At this moment, at 02:23 (TC19) Valdemir (the student whose manuscript process we will analyze), proposes a continuation of the poem, from what is being said by the teacher and his colleagues: “E os caçadores vão caçá-la para . . . botar na sala . . . para assá-la.” (And the hunters will hunt it to . . . put in the living room . . . to roast it), the student, contrary to what the teacher has previously suggested, does not seem to be proposing that it must “roast” and “eat” the arara—let alone “assar a arara na sala” (roast the arara in the living room), which clearly would not make much sense.

This verse, and particularly, “assá-la” (roast it) concentrates the associa-

tive series established previously, with the creative gain of having a phonic association with “na sala” and “caçá-la,” answering not only to the semantic literacy of the action of “assar a arara” (roasting the arara) but to one of the most important characteristics of this textual genre: the homophony. The syntagma “para assá-la” (to roast it) was registered during the constitution of this “oral manuscript” still in the first minutes of the presentation of the proposal made by the teacher and the interaction with his students. However, it was graphed almost 6 minutes later, practically with no alteration: “par depois assá-la.”

It is the associative relation of type 3, association by signifier that seems to impose itself in the enunciation of this term. Otherwise, this relation, just like types 1 and 2, does not occur disjointedly or separately. It seems to be the result of the articulation between the previous associative series, integrating itself in the syntagmatic chain and preserving, to a certain extent, the sense of text unity.

## 2.2. Two Poems in One Poem

The filming of May 31, 2001, registered the 6th writing process of an invented poem, in which Valdemar and Roberto participated. In the production proposal, as suggested by the didactic project “A Poem Every Day,” the teacher retook the poem “A Traça” from Guto Lins (1999), already known by the students, and copied in on the blackboard. This poem served as reference to the poem to be created.

### THE MOTH

Guto Lins

The moth gnaws everything  
That it finds on his way  
Your velvet pants  
Your overall coat  
And what there is to gnaw  
It only does not gnaw you dirty sock  
That weird stuff  
You forgot to wash

At 04:44 Valdemir and Robert told the teacher they had chosen “The ant.” A sheet of paper and a pen was given to the dyad. By 17:56 Valdemir, with Roberto’s help, had written:

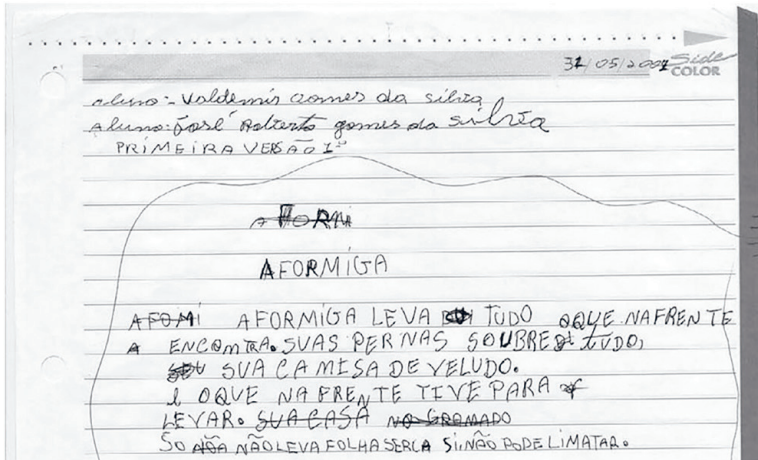


Figure 5.3. Fragment 1 of the manuscript "A Formiga," by Valdemir and Roberto. The items underlined in the normative transcription below and in the reference poem cited highlight the similarity between these two poems.

### A FORMIGA

Valdemir e Roberto

A formiga leva tudo  
O que na frente encontrar  
Suas pernas sobretudo  
Sua camisa de veludo  
E o que na frente tiver para levar  
Só não leva folha seca  
 Senão pode lhe matar.

### THE ANT

Valdemir and Roberto

The ant takes everything  
 It finds  
 Especially your legs  
 Your velvet shirt  
 And all that is there to take  
 It just doesn't take dry leaves  
 Because it can kill it

The relations between the poems "A traça" and "A formiga" are evident.

Besides repeating many lexical elements and syntactic structures, there are semantic relations between “traçar” (to trace) and “levar” (to take), between “calça” (pants), “pernas” (legs) and “camisa” (shirt), as well as homophonic relations between “só não” (not only) and “senão” (if not) and between the verbs “traçar” and “lavar” (to wash) from the students’ poem. To some degree, the unity of the poem “A formiga,” is still sustained by the presence of the term “folha” (leave), in the next to last verse, which maintains a relation of semantic contiguity between these terms. Lastly, what the school manuscript shows until this moment is a paraphrase of the reference-poem.

After writing the last verse, Valdemir and Roberto reread out loud the whole poem, as if they had already finished writing it. However, an unexpected association arose right after its reading, which concluded at 18:22, highlighting the creativity of the writing process and the entry of a song in the poem “A formiga.” We will show the moment this happened and its effects on the final configuration of the manuscript.

## Dialogal Text 2. The little ant

CONTEXT 18:25-19:15		After finishing reading the poem they wrote “A formiga” (The ant), the students decide to continue by inserting other verses.
CT1 18:2518:27	ROBERTO	(With emphasis.) <i>It's finished!</i>
CT2 18:2518:28	VALDEMIR	(Rereading the last verse.) <i>If not . . . if not it can kill me.</i>
CT3 18:2918:33	ROBERTO	Put it like this . . . the . . . the ant cuts the leaves and carries it.
CT4 18:3318:36	ROBERTO E VALDEMIR	(Pause.)
CT5 18:3718:42	VALDEMIR	(Repeating.) <i>And the ant cuts the leave . . . and carries it inside the hole. One leaves . . .</i>
CT6 18:4318:45	ROBERTO	. . . the other takes.
CT7 18:4418:46	VALDEMIR	One leaves . . . and the other takes . . .
CT8 18:4618:49	ROBERTO	And nobody can . . . and nobody can leave.
CT9 18:5018:57	VALDEMIR	(Rereading the last two verses) <i>I only doesn't take dry leaves . . . if not it can kill it . . .</i>
CT10 18:5818:59	ROBERTO	If not . . .
CT11 18:5919:01	VALDEMIR	E quando uma . . . formiguinha deixa . . . (And when . . . the little ant leaves . . .
CT12 19:0219:05	ROBERTO	. . . when one leaves . . . when one leaves . . . the other takes.

CT13 19:0619:11	VALDEMIR	(Looking and pointing with his pen to the line below the last written verse) <i>The little ant . . .</i> (Rereading the previous verse.) . . . <i>if not it can kill it . . .</i> (Looking to Roberto) <i>The little ant . . . cuts the leave and carries it.</i>
CT14 19:1219:13	ROBERTO	When one leaves . . .
CT15 19:1219:15	VALDEMIR	<i>When one leaves . . .</i> (Looking to Roberto.) . . . <i>the other takes. .</i>

Soon after his classmate Valdemir read the poem they had written at TC<sub>1</sub> Roberto said “*It’s finished*,” which seemed to constitute enough unity to conclude the poem. However, it is Roberto himself who proposed the poem’s continuity, enunciating “*Then put it like this . . . the . . . the ant cuts and carries the leave*,” as if it were the proposal of a new verse to be added in the already written poem. The repetition of the nominal syntagm “the ant” is related to the semantic and syntactic parallelism characteristic of poetry generally. The entering of “cut” would have, in turn, an associative syntagmatic relation with “leave” and also a relation by semantic continuity with “cutting leaves,” one of the insect’s characteristics clearly known by these students.

However, what is surprising at this instant (TC<sub>3</sub>) is the entry of a fragment of another known text. When Roberto proposed “ . . . *cut the leave and carry it*,” the content of a religious song was retrieved from memory. Valdemir, after a brief pause (TC<sub>4</sub>) recast the verse and complemented it with “*And the ant cuts the leave . . . and carries it down the hole. One leaves . . .*” and Roberto finished “ . . . the other takes.” Both students knew the children’s religious song that was being remembered.<sup>6</sup>

A formiguinha  
(The little ant)

A formiguinha corta a folha e carrega,  
(The little ant cuts the leaves and carries it)

Quando uma deixa a outra leva! (bis)  
(When one leaves the other takes!)(2 times)

Coro (Chorus)

Deus não quer preguiçoso em sua obra,  
(God does not want the lazy in his work) (3 times)

Porque se não, o tempo sobra!  
(Because if not, time is wasted!)

Oh! que mistério glorioso,  
(Oh, what a glorious mystery)

A formiguinha ensinando ao preguiçoso! (bis)

(The ant teaching the lazy) (2 times)

When the teacher approached, Valdemir reread what they had written and told the teacher what he would continue to write. (These verses are written between 20:02 and the 25:45.) The excerpt “inside the hole,” despite being semantically associated with the students’ knowledge of ant behavior, and having syntagmatic continuity with the term “carries,” in a manner similar to the relations between “leave” and “cut” indicated above, was excluded from the final poem, leaving only the known verses of the gospel song. At this time, the verse “The little ant cuts the leave and carries it,” was erased 3 times, before being, finally, written. “The little ant cuts the leave and carries it / One leaves, the other takes.”

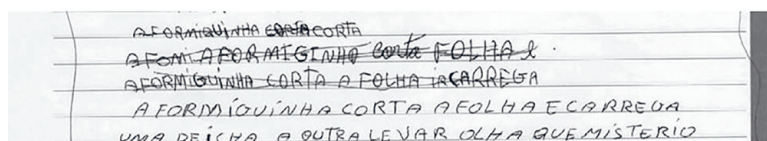


Figure 5.4. Fragment 2 of the manuscript “The ant,” by Valdemir and Roberto<sup>7</sup>

The presence of the word “ant,” despite being written in its diminutive form, strengthens the imposition of this association between “the ant” from the poem’s title and the “little ant” of the gospel song. It is necessary to call the attention to the fact that these two verses have emerged “in block,” between TC<sub>11</sub> and TC<sub>12</sub>, without hesitation, reinforcing our interpretation that they were already part of these students’ repertoire. The retrieval of the gospel song continued until 27:35, when Valdemir, singing it, concluded the writing of the last two verses “look what a glorious mystery / the ant helping the lazy,” as the fragment below shows:

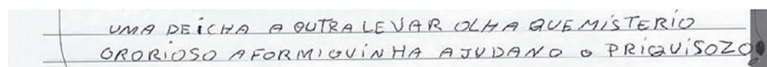


Figure 5.5. Fragment 3 of the Manuscript “The Ant,” by Valdemir and Roberto<sup>8</sup>

In the school writing of the poem “The ant,” given to the teacher at the end of the textual production assignment, what is observed is the presence of two poems known by the students. In the first part there is a paraphrase of the poem “A traça,” retrieving elements of the verses written on the blackboard. In the second part, it was written after setting the semantic and homophonic associative relations introduced by the term “ant,” causing the dyad to retrieve from the shared long-term memory, the verses of the gospel song “The little ant,” taught at their church.

## Conclusion

In the creative dynamics of these poems, some points deserve to be highlighted:

- The importance and complexity of the associative relations in the cultural universe and of the writer's memories in the textual creation process in the classroom.
- The ways how types of associative relations interact between themselves, suggesting the impossibility of there being only one type or an associative series during these textual production processes.
- The co-enunciation created during the collaborative writing in pairs, in the school context, which inter-subjectively establishes associative links that are distanced, approximate, are interrupted, change the textual direction . . . through the types of relations that overlap over the others.
- The final manuscript cannot retrieve the dynamics of this network, but preserves its result, erasing, in part, the connections between the elements that constituted it.

Finally, even though the properties of the textual genre and the possibilities of syntagmatic concatenation may impose limits to what will be written, the subjectivity of the writer (even of a new student), carries within it the unpredictable (Felipeto, 2008), inescapable dimension of what words say.

## Notes

1. Text translated to the English language by Bruno Jaborandy, brunojaborandy@gmail.com. Later revised by B. V. Young bv2@terra.com.br.
2. Since the early 1980s (Lebrave, 1983), the status, the difference and the border between "manuscript," "draft," and "text" have been put into question. More recent discussions can be found in Fenoglio (2007) and Mahrer (2009). In this work, following the argumentation presented in Calil (2008), we will treat the text produced in the classroom as "school manuscript."
3. We have decided to preserve some of these examples in French, when a corresponding example is not available in the English language.
4. We have chosen these processes, because they illustrate, in a significant manner, the objectives of this chapter.
5. Normative transcription, without the erasure marks:

"A arara é uma ave rara / pois o homem não para / de ir ao mato  
caçá-la / para por na sala / para ficar gordinha / para depois  
assá-la / na cozinha / para ficar gostosinha / para ir para mesa



bonitinha / para ir para barriga gostosinha.”

(The arara is a rare bird / because man doesn't stop / to go to the jungle to hunt it / to then roast it / in the kitchen / to be yummy / to go to the table yummy / to go to the belly yummy.)

6. These lyrics, accompanied by its song, can be found in many websites of children's gospel music: <http://letras.mus.br/musica-infantil-gospel/1988191/>; <http://musica.com.br/artistas/musica-infantil-gospel/m/a-formiguinha/letra.html>; <http://www.ouvirmusica.com.br/musica-infantil-gospel/1988191/#-mais-acessadas/1988191>. It was not possible to find the author of these lyrics but they are sung by different interpreters (Sandrinha e a Garotada; João Neto & Frederico; Lélia & Sônia), whose repertoire includes several children's gospel songs. Many of these interpretations can be found in these websites, and also on YouTube.

7. Normative transcription:

“A fomiguinha corta corta / ~~A formiguinha corta a folha e~~ / ~~A formiguinha corta a folha e carrega~~ / A formiguinha corta a folha e carrega / Uma deixa, a outra leva.”

(The little ant cuts cuts / ~~The little ant cuts the leave and~~ / ~~The little ant cuts the leave and carries~~ / The little ant cuts the leave and carries it / One leaves, the other takes.”)

8. Normative transcription:

“uma deixa a outra leva / olha que mistério glorioso / a formiguinha ajudando o preguiçoso”

(One leaves the other takes / look what a glorious mystery / the little ant helping the lazy).

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