

TOWARDS A HYBRID APPROACH TO GENRE TEACHING: COMPARING THE SWISS AND BRAZILIAN SCHOOLS OF SOCIO-DISCURSIVE INTERACTIONISM AND RHETORICAL GENRE STUDIES¹

EM DIREÇÃO A UMA ABORDAGEM HÍBRIDA DE ENSINO DE GÊNERO: COMPARANDO AS ESCOLAS SUÍÇA E BRASILEIRA DO INTERACIONISMO SÓCIO-DISCURSIVO E A SOCIORRETÓRICA

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Abstract: *Theoretical foundations of the Swiss School of Socio-Discursive Interactionism (SDI), North American Rhetorical Genre Studies (RGS) and the Brazilian School of SDI are reviewed, compared, and contrasted, and the similarities and differences in their key features and perspectives on genre analysis and pedagogy are discussed. The Brazilian School of SDI is identified as an expansion of Swiss SDI. The reviewed approaches are shown to be somewhat complementary. The recommendations are made for the future hybrid use of the Brazilian School of SDI and RGS in pedagogical applications.*

Keywords: *Swiss and Brazilian Socio-Discursive Interactionism; Rhetorical Genre Studies; hybrid approach to genre*

Resumo: *No artigo, revisitamos e discutimos comparativamente construtos teóricos de três escolas de estudos de gêneros, nomeadamente, a Escola Suíça do Interacionismo Sociodiscursivo (ISD), a Sociorretórica Norte-Americana (RGS) e a Escola Brasileira do ISD, e apontamos semelhanças e diferenças em suas características e perspectivas quanto à análise e pedagogia de gêneros. Avaliamos que as abordagens analisadas se mostram, de algum modo complementares, e que a Escola Brasileira do ISD se configura como uma expansão do ISD Suíço. A partir dessas considerações, propomos a possibilidade de uso híbrido da Escola Brasileira do ISD e a Sociorretórica em aplicações pedagógicas.*

Palavras-chave: *Escolas Suíça e Brasileira do Interacionismo Sociodiscursivo (ISD); Sociorretórica Norte Americana (RGS); abordagem híbrida de gênero .*

1 Introduction

In 1996, Hyon described three Anglophone research traditions in genre studies as English for Specific Purposes (ESP), North American New Rhetoric theory (more recently referred to as Rhetorical Genre Studies, or RGS), and the Australian Sydney school of genre based on systemic functional linguistics (SFL). However, in the 21st century, the list of various approaches to genre has expanded significantly. For example, Bawarshi and Reiff

¹ This paper was written during the first author's sabbatical leave spent at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada from September/2017 to February/2018, under the supervision of Professor Natasha Artemeva.

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(2010) and Swales (2012), proposed to add a fourth, Brazilian approach and described it as “[...] the Brazilian educational model or didactic approach [...] informed by the Swiss genre tradition and theories of ‘socio-discursive interactionism’” (BAWARSHI, REIFF; 2010, p.177). Both RGS and the Brazilian School of SDI were identified as *interactive* (BAWARSHI, REIFF; 2010) approaches because they emphasize the dynamic interaction between the writers’ mental representations of genre and the context of genre production.

The Brazilian approach to genre has been occasionally referred to as one monolithic approach. In fact, it is far from monolithic and includes a combination of several approaches, as demonstrated by Vian-Jr. (2015) who not only affirmed that there are different perspectives on genre within Brazil, but also positioned Brazilian approaches to genre as “ecological, hybrid, post-colonial, complex and rhizomatic perspective[s], in which text-context-language are interconnected” (p.108) and which “[...]blend a myriad of theories from distinct languages and different perspectives [...] and reformulate them according to their own socio-cultural variables and needs” (p.105). Vian-Jr. (2015, p. 105) has also introduced the notion of hybridity in Brazilian genre studies as “[...] useful for making sense of the ways studies of genres interface and overlap”. Here, we support Vian-Jr’s (2015) position regarding the variability and hybrid nature of Brazilian perspectives on genre and continue the discussion by describing and then comparing and contrasting the Franco-Swiss SDI School, North American RGS and the Brazilian School of SDI, demonstrating that the Brazilian school of SDI is an expansion on Swiss SDI, and indicating possibilities for a hybrid use of the Brazilian School of SDI and RGS. Such a discussion is important to better understand the approaches to teaching multiliteracies based on the Brazilian School of SDI, including the proposals for and development of pedagogical materials. Although we do not directly examine teaching practices, teacher education and/or the use of the SDI in teaching reading and writing, our discussion leads to the development of such an understanding, which can be drawn upon when exploring experiences reported in educational contexts.

We start our discussion by introducing the original Swiss School of SDI and its approach to genre.

2 Swiss Socio-Discursive Interactionism

In their *Manifesto*, Bronckart et al. (1996, p.74) introduced the notion of “human/social

sciences”⁴ as encompassing “all the sciences concerned by the organization and the functioning of human beings”. The term “a science of the human being” (BRONCKART, 2006, p.9) has been used by Bronckart (2008a) to describe Swiss Socio-Discursive Interactionism. He (BRONCKART, 2006) indicated that the Swiss SDI School originated with his research group’s concerns about the role of language activity in human cognition and development, and about language pedagogy. The group’s goal was to develop a theoretical model that would inform a practical approach to teaching French as a first language. In other words, Swiss SDI had not been developed as a genre theory and was only later adapted to the study of text genres.

According to Bronckart (2012), the theoretical proposals of Swiss SDI have been framed by three main texts: Bronckart et al. (1985) and Bronckart (1999; 2008b), which draw on such selected contributions from international scholars as: language as a signifying activity (Coseriu); the dialogical character of social interactions and the association between “[...] activities in general and verbal activity” (Voloshinov) (BRONCKART, 2012, p.34); signs as mental representations shaped in social agreements (Sausurre); genre as a somewhat stable utterance (Bakhtin); rejection of Cartesian dualism and acceptance of monism (Spinoza); human activity (Leontiev) and communicative action (Habermas) (BRONCKART, 1999; 2006; 2008b). These fundamental concepts formed the following key principles of Swiss SDI: i) the view of individual psychological capacities as constituted and developed both by language and human social history as well as by social collective activities of work and culture; ii) the view of human capacities as constituted in the interactions among biological, psychological, sociological and linguistic dimensions; iii) the monist and historical evolutionist position, and iv) the concern about the social usefulness of the theory, for example, its relation to education.

Some of the key Vygotskian views and concepts emphasized in Swiss SDI are: all human activity occurs within a socio-cultural-historical context and is mediated; higher mental functions are transformed by mediation; everyday concept formation affects academic concept formation and vice versa; the zone of proximal development (ZPD) is a key concept in learning, which is seen as inherently social. By drawing on the Vygotskian concepts of the socio-historical nature of human development, and both the symbolic and material nature of artefacts that mediate human activity (VYGOTSKY, 1986), Swiss SDI was able to significantly contribute to the development of writing pedagogy. For example, it developed a dynamic and dialogic (BRONCKART, 1999; 2012) approach to text analysis, which is not linear or sequential and includes both top-down and bottom-up types of analysis that focus on the conditions under which the *sociological*, *psychological* and *linguistic* systems emerge.

⁴ Motta-Roth and Heberle (2015, p. 3) translated this expression as “a science of the human being”.

Bronckart (2012) considers verbal activity as a psychological unit and the text as a communicative unit of analysis. In his discussion of a *sociological* system, he draws on Habermas' notions of *objective*, *social* and *subjective worlds* to describe the types of collective social representations one constructs and assesses. That *formal worlds* framework is used in the physical and socio-subjective investigation of the communicative situation constituting the production of a text, or the *micro context*. Bronckart (1999; 2012) refers to Vygotsky in his explication of the *psychological* system that relies on the concepts of consciousness and inner speech, and their role in a human being's interaction with collective representations and the formation of individual representations of context, situation, genre, architext (i.e., all the existing genres in the world), and activity. These two systems, sociological and psychological are analyzed in the *pre-textual* or *contextual* part, or *dimension*, of the analysis. Finally, the linguistic system comes into play in the *textual dimension* of the analysis, which refers to the analysis of individual texts or samples of genre.

Genres are defined by Bronckart (2012, p. 36) as “the various culturally oriented ways of constructing and organizing meanings (or sense)⁵”. By drawing on Bakhtin (1986), Bronckart sees genres as “relatively stable” utterances, which “undergo significant changes in time, because they are fundamentally linked to the evolution of human general activities and to the evolution of communication media⁶” (BRONCKART, 2012, p. 49-50). Genres can be analyzed so as to understand their conditions of use, relevance, efficacy and adequacy to the context, and to interpret the roles of genre features in the realization of human social actions. Bronckart's textual dimension of the analysis was originally viewed as composed of three levels: i) identification of the general text plan (cf. Bakhtin's speech plan), the predominant types of discourse, and the predominant phases of types of textual sequences, or the *infra-structure*; ii) analysis of connections, lexical and noun cohesion, verbal cohesion, or *textualization mechanisms*; iii) analysis of modalization, enunciative responsibility/positioning and occurrence of voices, or *enunciative mechanisms*⁷. Later, Machado and Bronckart (2009) restructured the textual dimension of text analysis by grouping some of the analytical procedures together and by adding another level⁸ and including the analysis of i) the *organizational type* (the procedures of the infrastructure analysis grouped with the

⁵ “[...] as variadas maneiras, determinadas culturalmente, de construir e organizar significações (ou significados).”

⁶ “[...] sofrem mudanças significativas com o tempo, pois são fundamentalmente ligados à evolução das atividades gerais humanas e à evolução dos meios de comunicação”.

⁷ According to Bronckart (2012), such detailed and complex procedures for the analysis of the textual dimension have much in common with the SFL framework.

⁸ Each type of analysis is described and explained in the original publications (BRONCKART, 1999) and Machado e Bronckart (2009). For an English version, one can refer to the synthesis provided by Denardi in her doctoral dissertation (DENARDI, 2009).

textualization mechanisms); ii) the *enunciative type* (the original procedures of this type of analysis complemented with the identification of actors); iii) the *semantic type* (the identification of actors in relation to the context of the interaction and its socio-historical conditions, and the identification of the individual and collective elements of action, including intentionality, motive/motivation, and resources).

In the restructured version (MACHADO; BRONCKART, 2009), the contextual dimension of the analysis, focusing on the socio-interactional context of production, remained the same, so that at the macro level, it investigated the historical, cultural, social, and economic contexts in which an interactional or communicative situation took place, and, at the micro level, it investigated the physical and socio-subjective parameters of text production. In order to conduct an analysis of the contextual dimension of a genre, the researcher needs to seek as much information as possible, relying on any data available. If no information can be located or accessed by searching the text production or circulation contexts, the researcher needs to explore the context by developing a representation of the communicative situation, in which the text(s) is(are) used. The two levels of analysis within the contextual dimension are vital for the analysis of the textual dimension since language use (i.e., language actions) always occurs in a specific communicative situation within a specific context, which determines text production and serves as a basis to the referential content (i.e., an agent's mental representations of different facts, phenomena, and knowledge) used by an individual to construct meanings (BRONCKART, 2004).

This method of text analysis⁹ is one of the three procedures constituting the SDI *pedagogical approach to genre*¹⁰. According to De Pietro and Schneuwly (2003, p. 37), the purpose of the pedagogical approach to genre “is about defining – or even creating, if necessary! – an object that can be taught.” The pedagogical approach to genre includes a description and explanation of the genre, its communicative context, specific genre content, general textual structure of the texts belonging to the genre, rhetorical choices and linguistic resources. Thus, it consists of the analysis of a specific pedagogical context, including students' language capacities (DOLZ; PASQUIER; BRONCKART, 1993) and school practices; a literature review, which includes a compendium and synthesis of previous genre studies; and an analysis of selected reference texts (contextualized social practices) appropriate for the specific pedagogical situation analyzed.

⁹The different levels of language analysis can uncover the functions in the use of language rhetoric and linguistic resources underlying text production and comprehension; thus, the results of such analysis work as a reference for the planning of the procedures and construction of the material to mediate the learning process in education.

¹⁰ In French, *le modèle didactique du genre*, and, in Portuguese, *modelo didático de gênero*.

The move from the pedagogical approach to genre towards a method of genre teaching relies on the transformation of a specific content to be taught through classroom activities, which leads to the students' construction of meaning and knowledge appropriate to the genre. The activities constitute what is known as a *pedagogical*, or *didactic*, *sequence*, a teaching method and/or procedure developed by Dolz, Noverraz and Schneuwly¹¹ (2004) on the basis of Swiss SDI. A didactic sequence is defined as a set of planned classroom activities working with oral or written texts and focusing on one genre as a mediating instrument for student knowledge construction. Such sequences of activities are produced using a bottom-up progression, based on the students' existing language capacities and their level of development, which are assessed by a diagnostic assessment called the *initial production*. A didactic sequence is composed of several stages: presentation of a situation and proposal for acting in such a situation; initial production, and exploration of students' difficulties diagnosed in the initial production in different units regarding both the contextual and textual dimensions of the social action; and the final production.

Now we turn our attention to RGS, an approach to genre developed in North America.

3 Rhetorical Genre Studies or RGS

Over the past 30 years, there has been a large number of publications (e.g., ARTEMEVA; FREEDMAN, 2006, 2015; BAZERMAN; BONINI; FIGUEIREDO, 2009; FREEDMAN; MEDWAY, 1994) focusing on Rhetorical Genre Studies, an approach originally used in genre research in English. RGS was developed on the basis of the Miller's and Bakhtin's seminal publications. Miller (1984) proposed that genres can be viewed as social actions that respond to recurrent social situations and as "an open, evolving class" (p. 57); Bakhtin (1986) defined utterance as a unit of communication and genres as "[...] relatively stable and normative forms of the utterance" (p. 81), and suggested that genres, once mastered, may be creatively reformulated to adapt to the changing context.

RGS scholars interpret genres as both constraining, in that their conventionalized features established in response to one context may be seen as limiting if the context changes, and enabling, in terms of serving as a novice's pass to a new community and in terms of the possibilities they foster for creative responses aimed at achieving a particular purpose. Devitt and Bazerman have contributed to the RGS development by introducing such notions as genre

¹¹ The original French text is a chapter in DOLZ, J.; SCHNEUWLY, B. *Pour un enseignement de l'oral: initiation aux genres formels à l'école*. Paris: ESP Éditeur, 1998.

sets (DEVITT, 1991), defined as genres produced by a writer occupying one position (e.g., a tax accountant), and genre systems (BAZERMAN, 1994), defined as complex networks encompassing multiple, interconnected genre sets. More recently, by drawing on compatible and complementary social theories of practice and learning (see ARTEMEVA, 2004), RGS has incorporated such concepts as activity (LEONT'EV, 1978) and activity system (ENGESTRÖM, 1987), thus further developing into what is often called *activity-based genre theory* (cf. RUSSELL, 1997). As well, RGS has been productively combined with theories of situated learning (e.g., LAVE; WENGER, 1991), multimodality (e.g., ARTEMEVA; FOX, 2011), Bourdieu's social theory of practice (e.g., SCHRYER, 2000), and with the Swalesian English for Specific Purposes approach to genre (e.g., TARDY, 2011).

Several guidelines for conducting RGS genre analysis have been proposed (e.g., BAZERMAN, 2005; DEVITT; REIFF; BAWARSHI, 2004; YATES; ORLIKOWSKY, 2007). The guidelines include the following main steps, which may not be executed in the same order: collect samples of the genre; identify the genre (including the recurrent social situation in which the genre is used, the purpose(s) of the genre, the social action the genre performs, genre participants, etc.); identify the topic/issues the genre addresses, patterns in genre content, and genre set and systems; identify rhetorical, lexical-grammatical and other patterns in genre form and format; and evaluate the attitude towards the world, or the worldview, implied in the genre.

Methods used in the RGS genre analysis are largely naturalistic, including, but not limited to, collection of corpora of genre samples and ethnographic observations of and interviews with genre producers and users. These methods allow researchers to investigate both the recurrences and irregularities in genre production and consumption (e.g., PARÉ; SMART, 1994). In other words, RGS analysis includes the investigation of both contextual and textual dimensions of genre with an emphasis on the analysis of the social context.

In the first ten or so years of the RGS development, there was not much discussion of RGS pedagogy, even though Miller (1984, p. 165) clearly defined the direction for “rhetorical education” by noting that “[...] for the student, genres serve as keys to understanding how to participate in the actions of a community”. In the 1990s, the discussion of RGS pedagogy started in earnest with the publication of Freedman's article “Show and Tell? The Role of Explicit Teaching in the Learning of New Genres” (1993a) and the ensuing debate about the possibility of teaching genres explicitly (e.g., FAHENSTOCK, 1993; FREEDMAN, 1993b; WILLIAMS; COLOMBO, 1993). This discussion was triggered by the view of genre as part and parcel of the social context to which it responds (MILLER, 1984), which it forms (cf. BAWARSHI, 2000), and with which it changes (PARÉ; SMART, 1994). From this perspective,

genres “do not constitute a neat, mutually exclusive taxonomy” (MILLER, 2015, p. 57), cannot be treated as unchangeable, and cannot be taught as stable models that need to be followed. In other words, “explicit discussions, specifying the (formal) features of the genres and/or articulating underlying rules” (FREEDMAN, 1993a, p. 224) may not only be unnecessary but could harm students by seducing them into the view of genres as templates to be followed. Freedman further suggested that only those teachers who use specific genres routinely outside of the classroom context (for example, in their own work) and know them intimately—that is, those who themselves are members of communities of genre users—can teach them.

Later, Devitt (2009) observed that “rhetorical awareness can lead to critical awareness and to more deliberate action” (p. 337) and, thus, may help students to make informed genre choices and successfully participate in the social practices of the groups that use the genres. She also suggested that by focusing on genre contexts and ideologically embedded constructs, learning from prior (antecedent) genres, and developing awareness about the genre conventions for language and form, students might begin to appraise genres critically and, if necessary, to be able to change existing genres successfully in response to the changing contexts. Devitt’s (1991, p. 349) proposed genre pedagogy that could be implemented in the classroom through asking students to: analyze a familiar, everyday genre together and learn the techniques of rhetorical analysis; write the now familiar genre differently, with a major shift in the treatment of purpose, audience, subject, or setting; analyze a genre from another culture or time and learn about its historical or cultural context; analyze an academic genre chosen as a potential antecedent genre; write the chosen academic genre within a specific writing task for the class; critique that genre and recommend specific changes that might better meet each student’s needs; analyze, critique, and write flexibly another potential antecedent genre chosen individually to serve each student’s needs. This *interactive genre awareness pedagogy* (BAWARSHI; REIFF, 2010) was further developed by Devitt, Reiff, and Bawarshi (2004). Genre awareness pedagogy, with more or less emphasis on explicit teaching, has been used in a variety of pedagogical contexts, including First-Year Composition in American universities (e.g., BAWARSHI; REIFF, 2010), disciplinary communication courses (e.g., ARTEMEVA, 2009), and others.

In the next section, we focus on the principles, genre analysis, and pedagogy as developed by the Brazilian SDI approach to genre.

4 Brazilian SDI approach to genre as an expansion of Swiss SDI

In Brazil, as part of the 1990s major neoliberal reforms including educational transformation in the country, SDI was introduced both as a method of genre analysis and as the basis for an approach to genre teaching (i.e., borrowing didactic sequences from Language Pedagogy) (MACHADO; GUIMARÃES, 2009) in Portuguese as a mother tongue and additional languages classes. According to Dolz (2009), the Brazilian School of SDI is based on Bronckart's work (1999, 2006). Although some directions in Brazilian research continue the original line of investigation as developed at the University of Geneva, some leading Brazilian genre scholars, such as Machado, have expanded the Swiss SDI approach to genre and introduced innovations. Hence, Dolz (2009) has recognized that the Brazilian School of SDI is developing investigations in four different directions: pedagogy, teacher education, language at work, and the articulation of different theoretical frameworks for these three areas.

In the Brazilian context, Bronckart's method of text analysis has been largely used in order to develop a pedagogical approach to genre to assist in-service and pre-service teachers (cf. MACHADO; CRISTOVÃO, 2006) to understand how language functions in the target genre and plan teaching interventions. Within this pedagogical approach to genre as applied to Teacher Education, Bronckart's method of text analysis has served as a useful tool (e.g., CRISTOVÃO, 2002; STUTZ, 2012) and, more recently, has been incorporated as part of the development of pedagogical genre projects (GUIMARÃES; KERSCH, 2012; 2014; GUIMARÃES; CARNIN; KERSCH, 2015). In Brazil, this pedagogical approach to genre studies has taken social practices as a reference.

Within the Brazilian School of SDI, Cristovão and Stutz (2011) proposed an expansion of the concept of *language capacities* (LC) - which had originally consisted of the action, discursive, and linguistic-discursive capacities (DOLZ; PASQUIER; BRONCKART, 1993) - by introducing the concept of *signification capacities*. These may be defined as representations and/or knowledge one constructs about social practices and ideological, historical, sociocultural, and economic contexts, which form different spheres of human activity; praxeological activities (in which one performs social actions), and content in different human experiences (CRISTOVÃO, 2013). This expansion on the concept of language capacities (CRISTOVÃO, 2013; CRISTOVÃO; STUTZ, 2011) has emphasized that the contextual dimension of genre analysis is seen as directly related to the action and signification capacities.

In terms of the textual dimension, Barros (2012)¹² developed questions about the discursive and linguistic-discursive capacities to guide genre analysis conducted specifically for pedagogic purposes, that is, in order to identify genre elements to inform the development of teaching units so that one can use language to achieve one's aims in the classroom context. It is important to emphasize that Brazilian SDI approach assumes that explicit knowledge of the lexical-grammatical features and textual organization plays an important role in genre performance; that is, the lack of this type of knowledge may prevent individuals from participating in specific communicative situations due to their inability to act socially through the use of appropriate language actions. The teacher must conduct the genre analysis *prior* to developing didactic sequences and teaching the genre. Understanding how language functions within a genre is a condition for the use of the SDI-based genre approach in teaching. That is, learning genre analysis procedures is an inherent part of a teacher's planning activity.

The genre pedagogy, which views genre as a mega-instrument for teaching (SCHNEUWLY, 2004/1994) and includes tangible procedures for teachers, is what has made SDI so popular in Brazil.

The *didactic sequence*, a concept which has been defined and intensively researched (e.g., MAGALHÃES; CRISTOVÃO, 2018) in Brazil, serves as a teaching method and a pedagogical tool in this genre pedagogy. The name itself and the figure that was used to represent a didactic sequence by Dolz, Noverraz and Schneuwly (2004) (Fig. 1a) may suggest a linear approach aiming at the use of only one genre and, therefore, ignoring its genre set or systems. However, the notion of didactic sequence is based on the Vygotskian thought and, hence, comprises a dynamic progression of language activities. Therefore, some reconfigurations to Figure 1a have been proposed in order to emphasize the dynamic nature of the didactic sequence and the key elements that constitute it (Fig. 1b). Figure 1 contrasts the original didactic sequence representation with its reinterpretation in more recent Brazilian research. Figure 1b), proposed by Cristovão (2015a), emphasizes that:

- i) The first stage is pivotal with the presentation of a communicative situation and the proposal of a text production in order to carry out the proposed social action in the situation presented. This stage is also present in the original Swiss figure (Fig. 1a) but it is revisited in the concluding stage of the Brazilian reconceptualization of the didactic sequence as the circulation of the text, which is a condition for social participation in the situation proposed at the initial stage;
- ii) Both proposals rely on the initial production as a diagnostic assessment, but the Brazilian

¹²Barros's (2012) questions in her dissertation approach the action, discursive, and linguistic-discursive capacities.

didactic sequence includes the process of revising and editing the language action (rewriting(s) of a text or new recording(s) of an oral text), which is materialized in a text whose final production circulates for social participation of this agent;

iii) Different stages of the didactic sequence in the Brazilian reconceptualization are linked by the needs of the social practice in question, hence fostering the language action (writing, or speaking, or reading, or listening) and the language capacities to be developed;

iv) Finally, while the Swiss representation of a didactic sequence reflects a linear consecutive set of activities (Fig. 1a), the spiral representation proposed by Cristovão (2015a) emphasizes a continuous merging of the language capacities at different stages of the didactic sequence, as well as a dynamic movement within it (Fig. 1b).

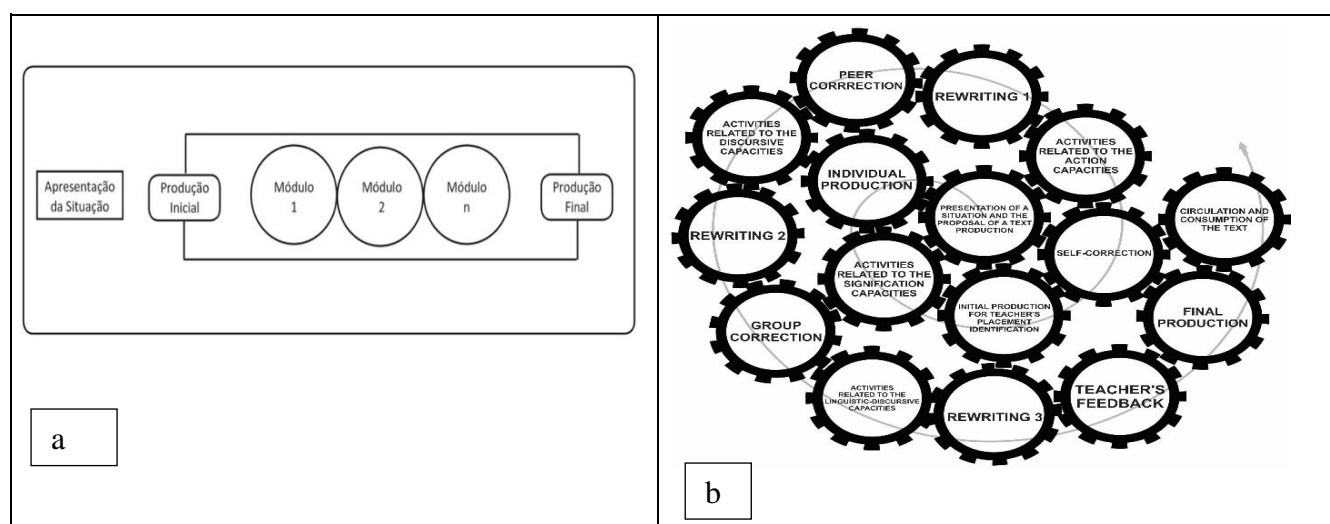


Figure 1 - The didactic sequence as a) represented by Swiss researchers (DOLZ; NOVERRAZ; SCHNEUWLY, 2004, p.98) and b) reconfigured by Brazilian researchers (CRISTOVÃO, 2015a, p. 416).

Now that we have briefly described the three approaches to genre, namely, Swiss SDI, RGS and Brazilian SDI, we proceed to their comparison.

5 Comparing the Swiss SDI, RGS, and Brazilian SDI approaches to genre

A striking similarity among the three approaches to genre is their firm footing within the so-called “social turn”, in other words, “[...] away from a focus on individual behavior (e.g., the behaviorism of the first half of the 20th century) and individual minds (e.g., the cognitivism of the middle part of the century) toward a focus on social and cultural interaction.” (GEE, 1991, p. 61). Within this theoretical framework, the most recent versions of these approaches share their reliance on such social theories as the Bakhtinian view of human communication,

Vygotsky's perspective on human learning and development, and so on. An additional similarity is that both Swiss SDI and RGS were developed to address mother-tongue issues, with the Swiss School focusing on French and RGS focusing on English, and that Brazilian SDI also includes mother tongue (Portuguese) within its focus.

However, there are some important differences in how the approaches have been conceived and developed. For example, Swiss SDI was not originally proposed as a genre approach; rather, it was proposed as a theoretical platform for understanding human linguistic communication as socio-historical (BRONCKART et al., 1996, p. 79). Nevertheless, Swiss SDI was from the very beginning concerned with “educational interventions” and developed a pedagogical approach to genre (DOLZ; SCHNEUWLY, 1998). In contrast, RGS was not conceived as a pedagogical approach and focused originally on workplace and public genres (MILLER, 1984), but it was later applied to the teaching of First-Year Composition university courses in the USA. Brazilian SDI was used for pedagogical purposes from the beginning and expanded the original Swiss SDI focus on mother tongue to include additional language education.

All three approaches focus on both contextual and textual dimensions of genre. In the investigation of the genre's contextual dimension, the approaches address similar questions regarding the social situation of the genre, genre topics, roles of the genre producers and users, etc. And yet, there are differences in how the reviewed approaches analyze genres. As mentioned earlier in the paper, the Swiss SDI genre approach relies on the methods of analysis predominantly focusing on the genre's textual dimension, including the discursive and lexical-grammatical features, while its analysis of the contextual dimension is based on a researcher's representations and interpretations of the context, inferred from the available information. It is notable that in those cases that the information about the genre's social context cannot be found or is incomplete, the Swiss SDI genre approach permits researchers to rely on their own (informed) representations of the context. Such a reliance on the researcher's own representations of the social situation linked to the genre production and use is also accepted by the Brazilian SDI School but is contrary to the view of context as part and parcel of genre development and use, which RGS espouses. As noted above, unlike Swiss SDI genre analysis, RGS emphasizes the contextual dimension of genre, and studies it by using such naturalistic methods as, for example, ethnographic observations, interviews with genre producers and users, and collection of written artefacts. The RGS analysis of genre focuses on its rhetorical dimensions and the context and does not offer a specific method of textual analysis. Brazilian SDI, similarly to RGS, was used for genre analysis from the start (the second half of the 1990s),

contributing to the expansion of the criteria of analysis of the contextual dimension of genre, as well as developing hybrid approaches to genre analysis by drawing on other theoretical frameworks, such as RGS (e.g., LABELLA-SÁNCHEZ, 2016). For example, such combined perspectives may be developed in order to look at multimodality and digital genres.

In terms of genre pedagogy, Swiss SDI, “RGS and Brazilian models¹³ promote multiple, overlapping methods that develop [...] genre awareness” (BAWARSHI; REIFF, 2010, p. 188). In addition to this overall similarity in pedagogical approaches, the two SDI schools and RGS explore the genre’s context, be it macro or micro, and share the view of genre as a mediational, psychological and symbolic tool (based on Vygotsky’s ideas) necessary to construct meaning and help get things done in the world. Consequently, all the three approaches value student engagement with social context. As well, the pedagogies developed within these two SDI schools and RGS pay attention to rhetorical conventions of genres and address the issue of appropriate linguistic resources. At the same time, there are important differences among the pedagogies developed. Thus, SDI pedagogies promote explicit teaching of genre in order to emphasize the importance of content and provide room for students’ growing awareness, creativity, choices, and adaptability. In its pedagogical approach, SDI offers teachers a checklist that may be viewed as a template; however, it is proposed to be used as both constraining and enabling. It is constraining so as not to leave the student in the dark not knowing what is acceptable, obligatory, and optional in the genre that is being taught, and enabling because it always leaves room for creativity. SDI defends the supposition that with a conscious and informed view of the genre use, one can not only create but also import the genre from its original context and adapt it to other situations. For both schools of SDI, early production of the genre is based on producers’ previous knowledge for diagnostic assessment and self-assessment with the use of checklist(s) and guidelines for one’s independent production.

Classroom applications of RGS are reflected in the genre awareness pedagogy (DEVITT, 2004) based on the study of antecedent genres, socio-cultural-historical context of genre production and consumption, genre as an appropriate rhetorical response to a recurrent social situation, and the variability of genres in response to changing contexts. Just like in the SDI approaches, genre awareness teaching starts with the students’ knowledge of antecedent genres and may include explicit teaching of textual features when it is necessary.

Brazilian SDI has focused on teaching both mother tongue and additional language(s) and contributed to the proposals for the expansion of the concept of didactic sequence, as

¹³When the authors use the plural form, we understand they are referring to other Brazilian genre approaches, which merge or articulate different frameworks.

reported by Magalhães and Cristovão (2018). A key expansion of the didactic sequence consists of the inclusion of the textual production circulation (by the students) within the target social practice, as well as multiple revisions and rewriting in order to achieve the target genre (Fig. 1b). The activities that were developed by the process writing movement (e.g., ELBOW, 1998) are often relied on in the RGS genre awareness pedagogy (DEVITT, 2004) and have been largely adopted by Brazilian SDI.

As the comparison of the Swiss SDI, RGS, and Brazilian SDI approaches to genre has indicated, even though there are some important differences among the three schools, there are sufficient similarities in their sources and theoretical foundations that warrant a productive combination for the purposes of both genre analysis and teaching. Bawarshi and Reiff (2010, p. 188) have noted that “RGS and Brazilian models promote multiple, overlapping methods”, and a recent study by Bork-Godke (2016) has demonstrated how the Brazilian SDI and RGS pedagogies can be productively combined.

Another research study that used both the RGS and Brazilian SDI frameworks was carried out by Labella-Sánchez who concluded that “the relation of intersectional complementarity between the study of activity systems (BAZERMAN, 2005) and the proposal of didactization of SDI have potential to inform the design of learning material for the teaching of languages for specific purposes” (LABELLA-SÁNCHEZ, 2016, p. 8). Table 1 illustrates the areas of intersection of the RGS and SDI approaches used for genre analysis.

Table 1: Intersection of RGS and SDI in genre analysis

Author – year	Unit of analysis	Object of analysis	Main Procedures of analysis from RGS and SDI	Complementary frameworks
Labella-Sánchez (2016)	- System of activities and genres - Language capacities	- Survey, semi-structured interviews, documents, samples of texts of the genres	-Identification of the system of activities and genre sets and systems -Identification of language capacities based on interview transcripts	-ESP for needs analysis -Grounded Theory for coding the data

Source: the authors

Table 1 and figure 1 indicate that both contextual and textual dimensions covered in the genre analysis process are approached in different stages and involve diverse activities. Cristovão (2015b) reported on a pedagogical initiative wherein undergraduate students participated in the Global Campaign for Education by writing opinion articles on the Campaign theme and circulating these pieces either on their blog (<https://letrasinglesuel.wordpress.com/>) or on Teen Ink (http://www.teenink.com/opinion/school_college/article/556126/Every-special-child-has-the-right-to-learn-too/, for example). The production of the texts was mediated by the

use of an approach that used a hybrid of SDI and RGS. The latter helped the students identify the sets of genres in each of the different spheres that played an important role in this meaningful social experience. That is, first, by drawing on the journalistic sphere, two sets of genres were used: i) an opinion page with editorial, editorial cartoons, opinion articles, readers' letters and ii) information sections with reportages and news. Second, a set of research papers and book chapters was used from the academic sphere; and third, from the civic sphere, the Campaign homepage and the campaign package booklet were chosen among others. SDI, therefore, provided the undergraduate students with the concept of didactic sequence, which they experienced through the activities, and learned about the theoretical framework underlying the approach.

6 Looking Forward

The purpose of this paper is to compare and contrast the Swiss SDI, RGS, and Brazilian SDI approaches to genre in order to a) demonstrate that Brazilian SDI serves as an expansion on the Swiss SDI approach to genre and b) propose a possible hybrid use of such approaches for pedagogical purposes.

We have shown that SDI researchers in Brazil have expanded the theoretical and methodological framework of the Swiss School of SDI to encompass both mother-tongues and additional languages, proposed to combine genre approaches for teaching, and explored some of the expansions of the Brazilian SDI in both genre analysis and pedagogy. By identifying and unpacking the theoretical underpinnings shared by the three approaches and their common view of genre as a mediational means essential to human communication, we have indicated the way to the future hybrid use of the discussed approaches, specifically, the Brazilian SDI and RGS, for teaching.

It is important to note that the hybrid use of the Brazilian SDI and RGS approaches in both research and pedagogy, sometimes complemented by other theories, has already begun (CRISTOVÃO, 2015b; LABELLA-SÁNCHEZ, 2016; BORK-GODKE, 2016). Such hybrid uses of compatible theoretical and pedagogical approaches allow researchers to see beyond what they can see by limiting themselves to only one framework. However, we would like to conclude with a word of caution: hybrid approaches can benefit teachers only if there is a clear and well substantiated understanding that the approaches one intends to combine do not contradict each other. To ensure that the approaches are, indeed, compatible, researchers need to conduct a comparative analysis, an example of which we have provided in this paper.

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Data de recebimento: 31 de janeiro de 2018.

Data de aceite: 27 de abril de 2018.