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

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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 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

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

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

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

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

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

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 *Calidoscópico* (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