Genre-Based Pedagogy in Paulo Freire's Country: Teaching Brazilian Students to Write Essays for the National High School Exam

Pedagogía basada en el género en el país de Paulo Freire: enseñando a estudiantes brasileños a escribir ensayos para el examen nacional de educación secundaria

Pédagogie basée sur le genre dans le pays de Paulo Freire : en apprenant aux lycéens brésiliens à produire des copies pour l'examen national d'enseignement moyen

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Abstract

From the perspective of the APPRAISAL system, this article discusses how 60 high school students from two private Brazilian schools align with their readers in texts written as preparation for the Brazilian National High School Exam. Adopting a mixed methodology, a corpus of 301 texts produced by the students was analyzed. Results showed that students' commitment to proposals for social intervention increased throughout the analyzed course, which meant that students started to adopt more critical and proactive stances in their essays. In addition, results showed how students align with their readers, confirming the paramount importance of mastering written language for the development of school literacies, as suggested by Halliday (1996). In terms of implications for pedagogy, the experience brought about new insights for course design and improvements in students' writing, as well as a better understanding of the role of language in literacy projects. Finally, it confirmed the possibility of building an interface between a genre-based pedagogy and Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy.

Keywords: essay writing; national exams; genre-based pedagogy; APPRAISAL system; critical pedagogy.

Resumen

A partir de la perspectiva del sistema de VALORACIÓN, este texto discute cómo 60 alumnos de dos escuelas secundarias privadas brasileñas se alinean con sus lectores en textos escritos durante su preparación para el Examen Nacional de Enseñanza Secundaria brasileño. Se analizaron 301 textos producidos por los alumnos mediante una metodología mixta. Los resultados muestran que el compromiso de los estudiantes con las propuestas de intervención social tuvo un

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aumento durante el curso, lo que implica que los alumnos comenzaron a adoptar actitudes más críticas y protagónicas en sus redacciones. Además, los resultados muestran una alineación con los lectores que confirma la importancia de dominar el lenguaje escrito para el desarrollo de la alfabetización escolar, como sugiere Halliday (1996). En cuanto a las implicaciones para los contextos pedagógicos, la experiencia aportó nuevas luces para la planificación de cursos y el aumento de la producción escrita de los estudiantes, así como una mejor comprensión del papel del lenguaje en los proyectos de alfabetización. Finalmente, confirmó que es posible construir una interfaz entre la pedagogía basada en el género y la pedagogía crítica de Paulo Freire.

Palabras clave: escritura de ensayos; exámenes nacionales; pedagogía basada en el género; sistema de VALORACIÓN; pedagogía crítica.

Résumé

À partir de la perspective du système d'ÉVALUATION, cet article retrace comment, lors de la préparation pour l'Examen National de l'Enseignement Secondaire, 60 élèves de deux lycées privés brésiliens prennent en compte dans leurs écrits leurs lecteurs. Sur la base d'une méthodologie mixte, 301 copies produites par les lycéens ont été analysées. Les résultats ont révélé une acceptation croissante de la part de ces lycéens des orientations d´intervention sociale ; cette acceptation se manifeste dans leurs écrits par des attitudes plus critiques et plus actives. De plus, les résultats montrent comment ils incluent leurs lecteurs dans leurs écrits ce qui confirme l´importance de maitriser le discours écrit dans le développement des littératies scolaires, comme l'a suggéré Halliday (1996). En ce qui concerne les implications pour les contextes pédagogiques, l´expérience a permis renouveler la façon d´envisager la programmation des cours et valoriser la production écrite des élèves ; elle nous a également ouvert à une meilleure compréhension du rôle du langage pour les projets d'alphabétisation et nous a confortés quant à possibilité de développer une interface entre la pédagogie basée sur le genre et la pédagogie critique de Paulo Freire.

Mots-clés : redaction d'essais ; examens nationaux ; pédagogie basée sur les genres ; système d'ÉVALUATION ; pédagogie critique.

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Introduction

Paulo Freire, the world-renowned Brazilian educator, coined the concept of *banking education,* a type of education in which "knowledge is a gift bestowed by those who consider themselves knowledgeable upon whom they consider to know nothing" (Freire, 2005, p. 72). Freire had to leave Brazil in the 1960s because a dictatorship was installed in the country. He eventually came back, and, through his experience in several countries around the world, he developed what has been spread around as critical pedagogy (Giroux, 1984; Giroux et al., 1988; Cox & Assis-Peterson, 1999; Pennycook, 2013; Vidal-Lizama, 2014), an alternative to fight banking education and implement a pedagogy of freedom and autonomy (Freire, 2004).

Based on critical pedagogy parameters, we approach aspects of the genre-based pedagogy proposed by Rose and Martin (2012), an educational approach to teaching genres within the Sydney School genre-based pedagogy. As Brazilian teachers and researchers, it is common practice to refer to the inclusion of the phases used in the Sydney School pedagogy within critical literacy programs due to our experience working with this approach and its relevance in the Brazilian context.

Inspired by Freire's critical pedagogy and, based on the Sydney School teaching phases, in this text we discuss the importance of working with the MODALITY system (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014) and its role in the National High School Exam (known as ENEM, which is the acronym in Brazilian Portuguese) in the fulfilment of the social intervention proposal that is required of the candidates. In their proposal, candidates must offer a solution to the problem presented in their text. We investigate modality occurrences in light of the discourse systems proposed by Martin and Rose (2007), focusing specifically on the APPRAISAL system (Martin & White, 2005) and on its ENGAGEMENT subsystem to find out how the text producers manage the voices in their intervention proposal in their essays.

This discussion arises because, in the Brazilian context, the teaching of writing in High School typically focuses on entrance exams that select students for the country's private and public (federal and state) universities. In most of these exams, one of the tasks is a written assignment, which is required to assess the candidates' writing skills and competencies. In addition, because it is a form of university entrance, the result of the ENEM obtained by the student has become a way of ranking them; and for this reason, the teaching of writing in Brazil has been emphasized. There are even specific courses aiming at preparing students to pass the exam by following rules of what is considered good writing practices.

Having this context as a starting point, we propose to teach writing from a perspective that is more consistent with reality. This perspective conceives writing as a literacy practice, not merely as a recipe in which formulas of how to use conjunctions and other connectives or cohesive elements are taught. To reach this goal, text genres are elected as objects of teaching. As it is not possible to construct a text nor build meanings in it without grammatical structure, we also consider that grammar plays an important role in a proposal of this kind.

Associating these elements, therefore, we present an experience in which these aspects are explored based on the notion of literacy as proposed by Halliday (1996). For the pedagogical implementation, we adopted the principles of the Sydney School's Genre-Based Pedagogy (Rose & Martin, 2012). Finally, to investigate the impact of the explicit teaching of grammar, we analyzed students' texts with the purpose of surveying the linguistic choices they made as well as the schematic structure of their texts.

In order to fulfill our objectives, we firstly present the theoretical framework on which the research is grounded. The first part of the section approaches the configuration of the teaching phases used in Sydney School's genre-based pedagogy,

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recontextualizing it in accordance with Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy. Secondly, we discuss both the MODALITY system and the APPRAISAL system, focusing on the ENGAGEMENT subsystem realizations. In the methodological section, we describe the steps taken, outlining the methodology, the context and its participants. We also describe the course, which functioned as the basis for data generation, and explain how the data were organized and analyzed. Afterward, data analysis is presented as well as the results related to MODALITY and ENGAGEMENT choices in the texts. To conclude, we will lay out what we believe to be the most consequential data discovered during our research.

Theoretical Framework

When we consider the pedagogy based on genres proposed by Rose & Martin (2012) from a Brazilian perspective, it is inevitable to refer to Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy. One of the reasons for this choice is related to the fact that Freirean educational theory criticizes traditional forms of education, a kind of criticism also present in Rose and Martin's approach for genre-based teaching. To establish this interface, we divided this section into two parts. In the first one, we relate the phases in the Sydney School pedagogy to Freire's critical pedagogy and add to this discussion the notions of *alfabetização* and *letramento* used in Brazil (both of which can be translated as literacy). In addition, we discuss the relationships between literacy and critical literacies, and how the Sydney School approach was adapted to be included in this context of practice. In the second part, based on MODALITY and APPRAISAL systems choices realized in the texts of the corpus, we discuss how students align with their readers by means of their intervention proposals, a requirement of the ENEM.

The Sydney School Genre-Based Pedagogy and Paulo Freire's Critical Pedagogy

In the Brazilian context, relating Freire's theory to the concept of literacy is a relatively simple task.

Since the 1960s, his works have been contributing to the understanding of reading practices and social uses of writing underpinned by educational activities targeted at the autonomy and empowerment of subjects involved in contemporary, language-mediated social dynamics. Since his first texts in the 1970s, Freire, whose method was accused of corroborating a Marxist doctrine, showed his concern for the learning of reading and writing by marginalized people such as illiterate Brazilian peasants and workers. The pedagogy proposed and implemented by Freire emphasizes education as a way of making a difference in learner's lives, later referred to as critical education (Freire, 1970, 2005; Giroux, 1984; Pennycook, 2013).

Reading plays an essential role in Freire's proposals. To the author, beyond being related to what is understood through the written word, reading also implies understanding "language, its relations to the context of the person who speaks and of the person who reads and writes; therefore, it implies understanding the relationship between world reading and word reading" (Freire, 2008, p. 21). Therefore, it can be inferred that the act of reading (Freire, 1982) should not be understood as mere decoding; rather, it implies understanding the context that creates and sustains the meanings of world reading, corroborating SFL's theoretical approach and its contextual, stratal and metafunctional theory of grammar.

Due to space restrictions and to the scope of this article, we cannot present the architecture of Paulo Freire's conceptions present in his vast work. Nevertheless, we can state that Freire (1970, 1973) discussed literacy practices without having coined this concept. Freire put forward the notion that the ethics of educator and learner mutual development constructs students as authorities. From this perspective, in Freire's terms, learners are seen as "agents" and "unofficial teachers" who educate the "official teacher" (Freire, 1970) at the same time in which they educate each other and are educated by the teacher, a never-ending learning process.

In the Brazilian literacy research context, Soares (2004) draws attention to the similarity and proximity between the concepts of *alfabetização* and *letramento* and argues that Freire, in his discussions about educational practices, was one of the first authors to point to the political and social aspect of the reading and writing practices. Despite the discussions held by Freire, the term *letramento* started to be used in Brazil only in the 1980s, by Kato (1986). *Letramento* is the translation of the English word "literacy," which covers, at the same time, the meanings of *alfabetização* and *letramento*. The use of these two terms is going to generate "an inadequate and inconvenient merge of the two processes, with prevalence of the concept of *letramento*," according to the Brazilian researcher Soares (2004, p. 36), a reference in Brazil for literacy studies.

The distinction between these two concepts gains strength in Brazil with Kleiman's (1995) publications. The author argues that *letramento*, on the one hand, is "a set of social practices that use writing as technology, in specific contexts, for specific objectives" (Kleiman, 1995, pp. 18-19). *Alfabetização,* on the other hand, is related to learning the orthographic system in the initial years of primary education. In light of this context, it is important to offer students the opportunity of establishing connections between their school learning and other domains of their life. To achieve this, teachers should develop pedagogical practices that allow the explicit teaching of language conventions adequate for teaching writing. This capacity to teach linguistic resources explicitly and to establish connections with important daily life literacy practices is the basis of the work with critical literacy.

According to Halliday (1996), to be literate, individuals must master the written language, which means that they must be effectively employing the lexicogrammatical patterns associated with the written text, either consciously or unconsciously. Another characteristic of literate individuals as per the author is their awareness of the ideological strength of written registers, that is, individuals are aware of how society is constructed based on discourse, as well as they are aware of the dialectics between discourse and material dimensions.

From an educational perspective, this dialectical relationship is also present in Freire's theory. Moreover, Halliday states that the value of having some explicit knowledge of the grammar of written language is that it not only enables the analysis of texts but also serves as a critical resource that allows questionings such as "Why has written language evolved in this way? What is its place in the construction of knowledge, the maintenance of bureaucratic and technocratic power structures, the design and practice of education?" (Halliday, 1996, p. 350). Thus, it is possible to explore disjunctions and their potential for creating new combinations of meanings.

In the process of critical literacy, all the participants must, to some extent, and respecting the differences between them, be redeveloped as democratic and critical social agents. Therefore, critical teaching is not unidirectional and does not aim exclusively at the student's development; or, according to Shor (1999), "It's not a paternal campaign of clever teachers against defenseless students" (p. 13). From this standpoint, it is possible to think of a process conducted and justified by mutuality.

In this sense, using the Sydney School strategies to structure text production classes is a valid task, as it proposes a methodology that integrates the learning of reading and writing into the curricula of primary, secondary and higher education (Rose & Martin, 2012; Gouveia, 2014). In addition, the Sydney School genre-based pedagogy strategies may allow the development of the learner's awareness and help both educators and learners become more aware of their context and their condition as human beings. As a result, it may also reveal a politically viable theory in the search for the solutions of the theoretical and practical impasse (Giroux, 1987).

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When we consider that the objective of the phases suggested in the Sydney School pedagogy is to prepare students to read and write the school curriculum texts, applying what they have learned through reading to the writing activities, we can say that these strategies qualify teachers to support their students in reading and writing classes, enabling them to have a better performance at school when it comes to reading and writing in the disciplines across the curriculum. To fulfill this objective, the School proposes the cyclic stages of Deconstruction, Joint Construction and Individual Construction of texts (Rose & Martin, 2012), as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 shows the nine sets of strategies of the Reading to Learn program. Level 1, in gray, corresponds to the preparation for reading and comprises Preparing for Reading, Joint construction of the text, and Independent Writing of texts. Level 2, in red, is related to supporting students for reading and writing texts that are part of the school curriculum, with strategies for Detailed Reading, Joint Rewriting, and Individual Rewriting. Finally, Level 3, in yellow, is about essential reading and writing strategies for the texts in the curriculum,

Figure 1 Strategies in Reading to Learn.
Source: Rose & Martin (2012, p. 147)

including phases for Sentence making, Spelling, and Sentence Writing. These levels may also be related to the sfl's stratification and metafunction dimensions.

Based on these stages, the analysis of texts is a path for teachers and students to become capable of deconstructing a text and classifying it according to its social purpose. The main premise of this methodology is that students who read more write better. Accordingly, the proposed activities integrate reading and writing linked to the curricular contents of the respective school year. In the case of this work, the contents permeate the writing tests of the ENEM. For this reason, the reading, discussion, and deconstruction of essays from previous exams whose authors obtained the maximum grade are of paramount importance. This kind of practice fostered the development of the activities proposed during the classes, and the texts students wrote generated the data analyzed in the present research.

The texts used as examples in the activities developed with the students were retrieved from the 2017 ENEM Participant Handbook, which is available on the official website of INEP[1], the Brazilian agency in charge of the exam. With the purpose of making the developed activities even more significant to the participant students, texts produced by them during the Workshop were also used as examples in the following classes both to suggest improvements in comparison to texts whose authors passed the exam and to serve as examples of above-average essays in each of the competencies evaluated by the ENEM.

APPRAISAL and Writer/Reader Relationships

With the objective of observing how writers manage their voices in the text in order to put forward their intervention proposal, as required by the exam,
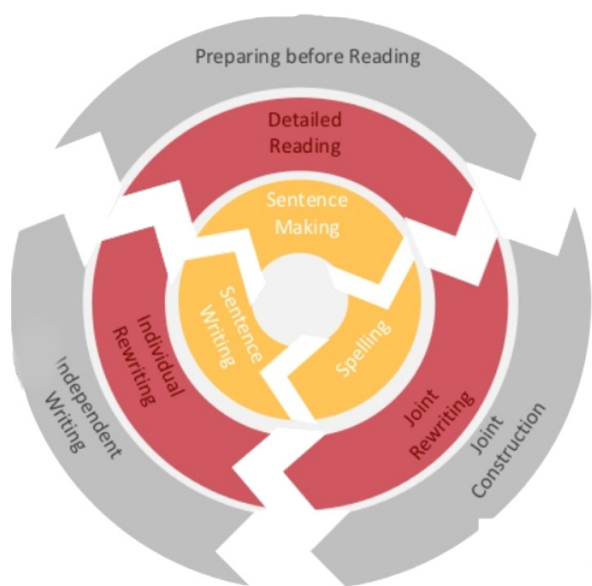
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1   Available from: http://download.inep.gov.br/ educacao_basica/enem/guia_participante/2017/ manual_de_redacao_do_enem_2017.pdf. Retrieved in May 25, 2020.

we will focus on choices in the ENGAGEMENT subsystem. The engagement resources used by writers, according to Martin and White (2005, p. 92), deal with the ways in which text producers adopt stances in their texts and in relation to their target audience. In this specific case, we are talking about Portuguese language teachers who are trained to evaluate students' essays according to the ENEM evaluation criteria. In this context, the ENGAGEMENT choices are extremely important, as the readers with whom the students must align to convince them of their proposal are the people who will correct their texts, which allows them to enter the scientific community (Lemke, 2001) as protagonists of their proposals.

The focus of the classes during the Writing Workshop was the teaching of the MODALITY system; thus, the lexicogrammatical stratum was emphasized. Based on the occurrences found in the texts, we investigated, from a discourse perspective, the ways in which the students align with their readers in the texts. Taking the MODALITY system as the point of departure for the classes, we considered, firstly, the fact that this system is quite broad (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014). Therefore, to present it in this article and for educational purposes, we restricted it to the phenomenon per se and its possibilities of modulation and modalization. Those who are interested in further details about the system may refer to Chapter 4 of Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, pp. 143–150), in which the systems of POLARITY and MODALITY are approached.

It is important to mention that, although Halliday's functional grammar was elaborated for the English language, it is possible to apply it, with adaptations, to texts in Portuguese. The polysemic nature of the modal verbs in Portuguese (Neves, 2000), though, should be taken into account.

Generally and broadly speaking, we can say that the MODALITY system construes "the region of uncertainty that lies between 'yes' and 'no'" (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004, p. 147). In this

"region of uncertainty", there are two types of modality: modalization and modulation.

By means of the modalization mechanisms, the text producer exposes his/her opinion about what he/she is expressing, and by means of the modulation mechanisms, the speaker/writer argues about the obligation or inclination of the propositions. Moreover, modalization is related to certainty; it is related probability when one expresses the possibility/likelihood of something happening and to usuality when one expresses judgements as to the frequency with which something happens.

Investigating the lexicogrammatical choices in texts, we can see, based on the discourse systems (Martin & Rose, 2007) and focusing on the APPRAISAL system, that modality plays an essential role in the ENGAGEMENT subsystem, more specifically in the way in which voices are managed in texts and how possibilities are opened up for other voices to participate in these texts. Therefore, our specific focus, through the angle of the lexicogrammatical stratum, will be on modality as a mechanism. From a discourse-semantic perspective, we will investigate how the meanings related to the ENGAGEMENT subsystem are constructed, in the specific scope of the APPRAISAL system, conceived from three universes that try to account for the stances taken by the author and the potential APPRAISAL meanings in his or her text, as illustrated in Figure 2.

APPRAISAL is concerned, as pointed out by Martin and White (2005, p. 1), "with how writers/speakers construe for themselves particular authorial identities or personae, with how they align or disalign themselves with actual or potential respondents." Therefore, there is an extremely important meaning when one produces a text with the objective of, as requested in the ENEM, making an intervention proposal. Thus, the APPRAISAL meanings will play a significant role in this activity.

As we mentioned above, the APPRAISAL system is very broad. It has been exposed in detail in Martin and White (2005), Hood (2010, 2019),
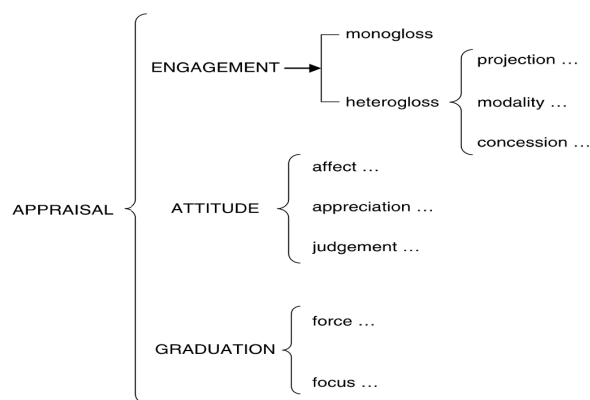
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Figure 2 Model of APPRAISAL.

Source: Martin & White (2005, p. 38); Hood (2010, p. 24)

and Oteíza (2017). *The Appraisal Website*[2] offers online material about it; thus, the readers who want to have more information about the system can access these resources, for we will focus here on Engagement mechanisms and heteroglossic realizations. With them, students create the possibility, by using linguistic resources in their texts, of aligning with the reader so that their intervention proposals resonate and they receive a response to their authorial stance and their identity.

When we consider the APPRAISAL system from the perspective of teaching practice, it is important to mention that the student seems to seek alignment also with society as a whole; and as it is an intervention for a social problem, students propose to present a solution that is corroborated by other members of society, other citizens. We are clearly in an evaluation context; but when students write, they play two roles: they are both candidates to enter university and citizens who need to reflect on a problem.

According to Oteíza (2017, p. 464), the APPRAISAL system "theorises the degrees of heteroglossic space of a proposition that are more or less open in the discourse." This, in turn, opens up spaces for the writer, when presenting his/her intervention proposal, to enable the determination of his/

her "degree of commitment in relation to the APPRAISAL that has been expressed," as pointed out by Oteíza (2017, p. 464). In other words, when we undertake an APPRAISAL analysis, we are able to understand and recognize our positions as readers, based on what is proposed by the writer "since evaluations are always influenced by the institutional position from which one is standing," as emphasized by Oteíza (2017, p. 464).

As we mentioned above, we reduced the scope of the APPRAISAL system and focused on the ENGAGEMENT subsystem, as presented in Figure 3. Modality resources are a powerful tool for students to position their intervention proposals in relation to the theme proposed by the ENEM. Thus, they can be more effective in putting their suggestions across if adequate language choices are made.
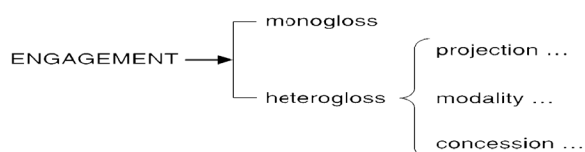

Figure 3 Model of the ENGAGEMENT subsystem.

Source: Hood (2010, p. 24)

There are two dimensions for Heterogloss in the system (dialogic expansion and contraction), which allow writers to acknowledge other voices in their text. Within these dimensions, the writer is able to work on dialogic expansion, opening up possibilities for Entertaining, Acknowledging, and Distancing. Entertaining options allow the writer to propose something based on his/her experience and/or subjectivity. That is, the authorial voice presents a proposition with alternative possibilities. Acknowledging, on the other hand, allows the writer to cite authorial voices in his/her text, by using verbs such as *argue, cite, say, report, state*. Distancing, the third option, is a tool to help writers to distance themselves from their position, by using scare quotes, for example. Based on Martin and White (2005), Figure 4 outlines the

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2   Available from www.gramatics.com

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possible heteroglossic resources in the system of ENGAGEMENT.

Based on these choices, we look at students' modality choices in their texts in order to try to apprehend the voices they orchestrate to put across their intervention proposal, as required by the ENEM. We analyze discourse choices based on the APPRAISAL system, as this system is concerned with "the kinds of attitudes that are negotiated in a text, the strength of the feelings involved and the ways in which values are sourced and readers aligned" (Martin & Rose, 2007, p. 25). Aligning with readers is an essential authorial stance to take so that writers can show their commitment to the theme proposed through an adequate management of voices. Heteroglossic choices are an important resource to reach this objective.

Method

The textual excerpts discussed here were extracted from data generated by the study carried out by Faria (2019). A qualitative and quantitative document-based methodology (Lankshear & Knobel, 2004) was adopted as we performed quantitative analyses of the modality occurrences in the intervention

proposals and, subsequently, analyzed them qualitatively in the texts where they occur. From the point of view of discourse, we investigated how text producers align with their readers to project their proposals and what choices characterize the heteroglossic and the dialogic expansion of their voices.

We decided to use this method to analyze the data because the texts required by the ENEM are an analogical production about a social, political, scientific, or artistic theme; and the candidate must develop the theme and create an intervention proposal to the presented problem, without disrespecting human rights. In this proposal, however, students should not merely criticize the situation; they must outline a public policy to solve the problem, which is in line with Paulo Freire's critical pedagogy. This is what mainly distinguishes the writing test of this exam from the writing tests of other university entrance exams existing in Brazil.

As the writing workshop that generated data to the research had a short duration, we created, based on the analysis of themes from previous exams, three original themes for the students to produce their
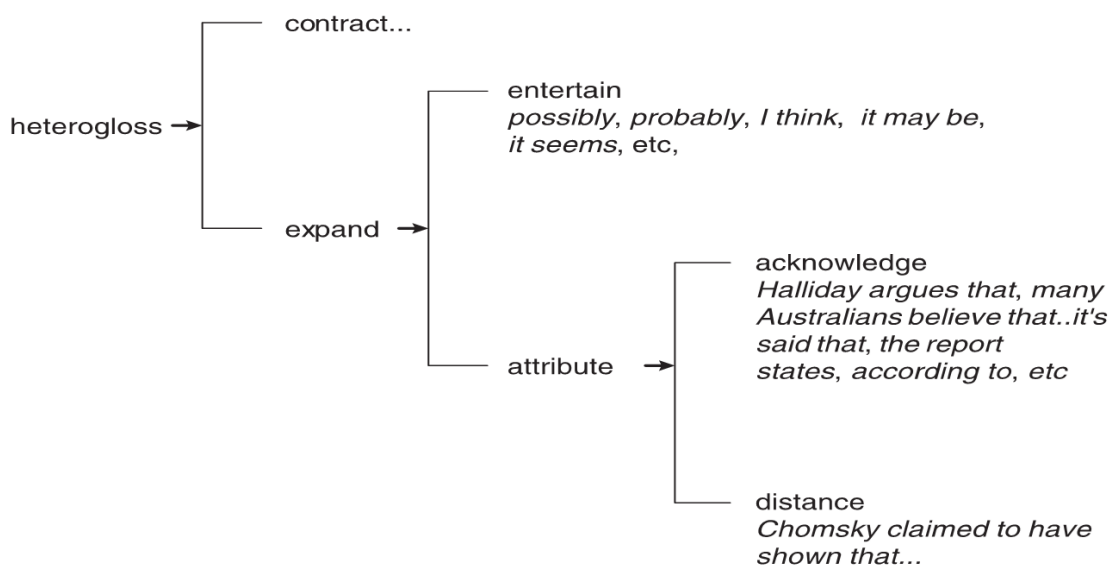
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Figure 4 Possibilities of Heterogloss.

Source: Martin & White (2005, p. 117)

texts during the classes: (1) The increase in life expectancy as a challenge in Brazil; (2) alternatives to combat violence against children in Brazil; and (3) the complexities of the fight against homophobia in Brazil.

In the ENEM, the correction grid of the writing test has an item called Competency V. According to the Participant Handbook (Brazil, 2016), to fulfill the objective of this competency, the candidate is expected to develop "an intervention proposal to the presented problem, respecting human rights."

Context and Participants

The writing workshop was held in two inland cities of the State of São Paulo (in the southeastern region of Brazil) that are close to each other. In the city of Campinas, 21 students participated in the study, and in the city of Indaiatuba, the total of participant students was 39, all from two private schools. This totals 60 students from the 2nd and 3rd years of high school and from courses that prepare students to take university entrance exams. Following institutional ethical procedures, the project was approved by the Research Ethics Committee. A written document informing consent was also signed by all the participants.

The students from the School in Indaiatuba (CI—the acronym is in Brazilian Portuguese) produced, including writing and re-writing for the three themes, 91 texts, while the students from the School in Campinas (CC) produced 210, totaling 301 texts. In addition, it is important to mention that, as these students are enrolled in private schools, whose objective is, among others, to ensure that they pass Brazil's main university entrance exams, the research participants were familiar with the ENEM exam guidelines. For this reason, the first class of the Workshop focused on the writing of the first version for Theme 1, considered a diagnostic writing. From the first version of the text, we selected the main contents to be developed in the subsequent classes.

The Course

As a literacy intervention, the Writing Workshop, based on the Sydney School genre-based pedagogy, aimed to help students in the development of knowledge about the linguistic system of meaning production and to explain to them the characteristics of this test and the types of knowledge it considers important.

The classes were held in the morning period for students who attended school in the afternoon and in the afternoon period for students who studied in the morning. They attended a weekly session of 90 minutes for seven weeks, totaling ten and a half hours. In addition to the linguistic focus on the MODALITY system as a way of developing, in the texts, their intervention proposals, during the classes we also approached the five competencies evaluated by the ENEM, based on the texts produced by the students and associated with critical literacy practices aimed at developing their social position and proactivity, in parallel with the Reading to Learn stages.

Data Analysis

To select the modality choices for data analysis and discussion, we used lexical quantification mechanisms and concordancers of the AntConc 3.5.6 software. It is freeware with tools to analyze word frequency and keywords, among others. Developed by Laurence Anthony, from Waseda University in Japan, it is compatible with the Windows, MacOS X, and Linux systems.

The 301 texts produced by the students were digitized and, subsequently, organized electronically, according to the two groups that participated in the research. This organization complied with the criterion of naming each text to indicate the group to which the student belonged. That is, the texts produced by the students from the school in Campinas received the initials CC, and the texts produced by the students from the school in Indaiatuba received the initials CI. The names of the texts

also indicate the theme selected for the Writing Workshop: they include T1, T2 or T3 for the first production of each theme. When the texts were rewritten, they received the initial R. Thus, we have the indications T1R, T2R, T3R. Finally, all the texts digitized in Word were saved in the txt format, so that they could be used in the AntConc software.

Analysis, Discussion, and Results

The central focus of our analysis will be on how students, by means of resources in the ENGAGEMENT subsystem, more specifically, their choices of linguistic mechanisms for dialogic expansion, align with their readers to put their intervention proposal across, a requirement of the ENEM.

An element prior to this discussion, however, is the issue related to the literacy events and practices developed during the course, based on the Reading to Learn program strategies, and the possible and necessary interface with students' critical literacy based on Freirean conceptions.

Within this proposal, we organized our analysis in three stages, beginning with the pedagogical issue of the Sydney School pedagogy in critical literacy practices. After it, we analyze the choices in the MODALITY system in the lexicogrammatical stratum and the heteroglossic choices made by students to align with their readers in the ENGAGEMENT system. These choices are extremely important, as the readers with whom the students must align to convince them of their proposal are the people who will evaluate their texts, which enables them to enter the community as protagonists when they make their proposition.

The Sydney School Genre-Based Pedagogy Included in a Critical Literacy Intervention

When Rose and Martin (2012) present the genre-based pedagogy in their work, they explain that, although the levels are shown in a sequence, this is a flexible methodology. According to the authors, the teacher must analyze which level he or she

will approach in each class and in what way the strategies will be distributed. With this freedom and aiming to fulfill the objectives of the Writing Workshop, the work with the Reading to Learn levels started in the second class of the Workshop, with the steps of Level 2 (see Figure 1). However, to direct this analysis to the issue of the modality present in the social intervention proposals required in Competency V of the writing test of the ENEM, we describe below the development of the three steps of Level 3 of the Reading to Learn program, performed during Class 6 of the Writing Workshop.

In the first step of Level 3, the teacher worked with the construction of the period. The first activity of this strategy, as preparation for period construction, was the reading of three examples of social intervention proposals so that students could recognize both the structure and the elements necessary for this part of the text. Based on the examples, the students were asked to list the elements that constituted the social intervention proposals. In the end of the activity, they concluded that all the examples showed at least one of the proposals with the following elements: (i) agent—responsible for performing the action; (ii) action—what must be done so that the problem is totally or partially solved; (iii) mode—how the action should be put into practice; and (iv) effect—the objective of the proposed action, as well as (v) provision of details concerning at least one of these elements.

It was possible to see, based on the reading of the examples presented to the students, that there may be more than one social intervention proposal in each text. In addition, another important aspect is the finding that there is no fixed order for the presentation of the elements identified as constituents of the proposals.

In the second step of Level 3 of the program, the teacher worked with orthography. In the activity, the students were invited to analyze the grammatical structure of the social intervention proposals and

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to observe the mode of functioning of language in the composition of the genre ENEM essay.

The analysis of the examples with the students showed that, when the candidates present the action, they choose modalization. Thus, structures composed of metaphors of modality like *"É preciso..."* (It is needed...) or *"É necessário..."* (It is necessary...) are common. The same is true for *"modal verb+impersonal infinitive"* as in *"Cabe aos cidadãos repudiar [...]"* (Citizens <u>should reject</u> [...]), *"... o governo <u>deve promover</u> campanhas"* (... the government <u>must promote</u> campaigns), and *"[...] a escola <u>deve promover</u> palestras"* (...the school <u>must promote</u> lectures). The structures identified in the examples influenced the participants' text production of Theme 3, which presented a high incidence of social intervention proposals constructed with the modal verb *dever* (must).

After the analysis of the examples, the teacher called the students' attention to the fact that the linguistic choices they made reflected the desire to indicate an action that would interfere in the problem that was presented. Furthermore, these structures, among others, are also capable of indicating the different levels of the author's commitment to and responsibility for the content of the issued message. To emphasize this content, Examples 1, 2, and 3 were presented and analyzed:

> (1) **Torna-se evidente**, *portanto, que falta protagonismo entre os idosos.* (**It has become evident**, therefore, that there is no proactivity among the elderly.) (T1CI3SA39)
> (2) *[...] o governo **deve** investir em empregos para a população [...]* ([...] the government **must** invest in jobs to the population [...]) (T1CIPVA44)
> (3) *[...] também* é necessário *que o governo faça um planejamento para que não falte verba [...]* ([...] **it is** also **necessary** for the government to plan so that there is sufficient budget [...]) (T1CIPVA57)

The structure used in the construction of Example 1 cannot be considered a social intervention proposal, as the desire to interfere in the situation is not explicit. Structures like those of Examples 2 and 3 clearly present the student's intention to propose an

intervention. Finally, in Step 3, the writing of periods was approached. In this stage, the objective was to help the students of the Writing Workshop to construct the social intervention proposals of their texts. To achieve this, the teacher presented a table with verbs and modal metaphors and their classification according to the degree of modality they imply.

Based on the analyzed examples, extracted from the 2017 ENEM Participant Handbook and from texts written by students in the Writing Workshop, the expectation was that the students would incorporate the elements presented and discussed in the Text Deconstruction stage into the structure of the intervention proposals of their texts and, consequently, would obtain good results in the exam.

The work with Level 3 exemplifies the first level of the analysis performed for this study, related to the literacy events and practices developed during the course based on the levels and stages of the Reading to Learn program and their contribution to the promotion of critical literacy practices among students.

Modality for Intervention Proposals

The second level of analysis refers to the grammatical aspect, in which the modal operators that occur in the 301 texts that compose the corpus are analyzed. As we mentioned above, Competency V of the exam requires the creation of a social intervention proposal related to the problem presented in the essay proposition. Proposing an intervention to the problem presented by the theme means suggesting an action to tackle the problem in some way—an aspect that can foster, in the classroom, critical literacy practices.

In light of this, it is relevant to highlight that students must express, textually, the clear desire to indicate an action that interferes in the problem. In addition, it is important to bear in mind that, as the themes for the ENEM essay approach complex social problems that can be hard to solve, the student is not expected to present actions that

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effectively solve them. He or she can simply indicate an intervention action that aims to combat or mitigate the problem situation that was presented. Thus, it is necessary to create proposals with an interventional character, that is, that present the desire to intervene in a given situation with the purpose of modifying it.

In this process, some linguistic choices reflect this desire and are capable of helping to identify this proposal. This is the case of the modal auxiliary verb *"dever"* (must) or some constructions like *"é necessário"* (it is necessary), *"é preciso"* (it is needed), *"é importante"* (it is important), among others. These structures are capable of indicating the different levels of commitment and responsibility of the student who is the author of the text towards the content of the issued message. Thus, a structure like the one in Example 4 below just presents a fact, a finding, while structures like those of Examples 5 and 6 present the student's clear intention of proposing an intervention:

> (4) *"Torna-se evidente, portanto, que falta protagonismo entre os idosos"* (**It has become evident**, therefore, that there is no protagonism among the elderly) (T1CI3SA39)
> (5) *... o governo **deve investir** em empregos para a população...* (... the government **must invest** in jobs to the population...) (T1CIPVA44)
> (6) *... também é necessário que o governo faça um planejamento para que não falte verba...* (... **it is** also **necessary** for the government to plan so that there is sufficient budget...) (T1CIPVA57)

In Examples 5 and 6, we can see that the students employed a high degree of modality to persuade their readers. These two examples show the students' high degree of commitment to the proposals presented in their texts, leaving less space for disagreement. Expressions like *"deve investir"* (must invest), which indicates modality in its strongest level, are still less extreme than the unequivocal "it is" or "it is not". In this case, these expressions help to construct the urgency meaning of the command that was presented.

The analysis of the 301 texts produced during the Writing Workshop enabled us to see the increased use of modal operators and metaphors of modality, revealing that the work developed with the Reading to Learn Program levels had a positive result in the construction of argumentation. This helped students to position themselves critically in relation to the social problems presented by the essay proposals, which permeate, directly or indirectly, the social contexts of which the students are part. This proves that mastering written language, as proposed by Halliday (1996), plays an important role in the development of students' critical literacy.

Engagement and Writer/Reader Alignment

From the perspective of the ENGAGEMENT subsystem, we can see that the student who produced the text reveals the idea that students' position on the intervention proposal is open and his/her voice is one among many others that can attribute meaning to what was presented, opening up possibilities for negotiating meaning with the reader. By using dialogic expansion, the student assumes responsibility for the authorial voice, shown in the use of probability entertaining resources.

The resources most employed by the students and which show the heteroglossic mechanisms in the ENGAGEMENT subsystem are modal auxiliary verbs and metaphors of modality, which correspond to 0.61 % of the recurring words in the corpus texts (575 occurrences). Of this quantity, in the texts produced by the students of Group 1, 0.52 % are modals (155 occurrences) and, in the texts produced by Group 2, modality corresponds to 0.65 % of the words (420 occurrences).

The 575 occurrences are lexicalized in different ways and expressed in different verb tenses. In addition, they represent different degrees of commitment. In Group 1, the most used modals by students in the construction of the social intervention proposal were the modal operator *dever* (must; 94 occurrences) and *precisar* (need; 18 occurrences). In Group 2, the

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most employed modal operator in the construction of the proposals was *dever* (must; used in 285 cases), followed by *poder* (can; 43 occurrences each). The examples below show the probability entertaining resources, the type that the students who produced the texts most employed:

(7) *E, para que possa haver um maior respeito com esse público, desde cedo, as escolas **devem** promover atividades e palestras que expliquem o processo pelo qual o Brasil tem passado e a sua relação com os idosos, para que assim, haja uma diminuição dos desafios com o aumento da expectativa de vida e o Brasil esteja mais igualitário e preparado para acolher e lidar com a nova população idosa.*

[And, so that there is more respect for this public, the schools **must**, as early as possible, promote activities and lectures that explain the process Brazil has undergone and its relation to the elderly, so that there is a reduction in the challenges posed by the increase in life expectancy and Brazil becomes more egalitarian and prepared to embrace and deal with the new elderly population.] (T1CC3SA5)

(8) *O governo, sendo representado pelo Conselho tutelar, em parceria com o Ministério da Educação, com subsídios tirados de pequena parcela dos impostos, **deve** criar campanhas de conscientização, tanto para as crianças na tentativa de mostrar para elas que podem pedir ajuda, quanto para os pais.*

[The government, represented by the Child Protective Council, in partnership with the Ministry of Education, with subsidies extracted from a small portion of the taxes, **must** create awareness-raising campaigns, both to the children, in an attempt to show them they can ask for help, and to the parents. (T2CCPVA15)]

(9) *Portanto, o Governo Federal **deve**, por meio de campanhas e propagandas, incentivar a denúncia de casos de agressões, além de criar um modelo de atendimento especializado para as vítimas, transmitindo segurança e confiança ao agredido. Além disso, as escolas e a mídia também **devem** promover campanhas que estimulem o respeito a essa minoria, resultando em uma sociedade na qual todos terão seus direitos respeitados.*

[Therefore, the Federal Government **must**, by means of campaigns and advertisements, encourage the report of cases of assault and create a model of specialized service to the victims, transmitting safety and reliability to the person who was assaulted. In addition, the schools and the media **must** promote campaigns that stimulate respect for this minority,

resulting in a society where everybody will have their rights respected. (T3CC2SA4)]

In the examples above, it is possible to perceive the expansion of voices performed by the student-writer. In Example 7, for instance, "the schools" are cited as possible agents that will promote the expected change, the solution to the presented problem; and their actions are promoted by means of activities and lectures, with the results affecting Brazil as a whole, but mainly the elderly population, the most affected group by the problems presented in the essay proposal. In Example 8, we have "the government" as the agent of the action, and the expansion occurs by means of the presentation of the "Child Protective Council" and the "Ministry of Education." In this case, the consequence of the actions affects children and their parents, involved in cases of violence against children. Finally, in Example 9 we have the "Federal Government" as the agent of the action and the expansion of this voice by means of "campaigns and advertisements" as well as "schools and the media," with the action benefitting the entire society, which will have "its rights respected."

In each one of the examples, the reader has the possibility of interpreting the utterances as a sign that the student-writer's knowledge of the theme approached in his/her text is, somehow, limited and insufficient for him/her to formulate a categorical assertion (Martin & White, 2005) expanding the dialogic potential.

Finally, the examples reveal the students' engagement when they produced their essay. The emphasis is on the predominant presence of probability entertaining resources, which allows us to investigate and analyze how the students bring to their texts the social agents they recognize as the ones responsible for the problems approached in each proposed theme and how they articulate these voices to their own, opening up potentials for dialogic expansion. While approaching social problems, students are playing social roles and showing, through language, their engagement with their contexts. According to

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critical pedagogy, schools should offer opportunities for development, freeing them from the stigma of being considered simply places of instruction (Giroux, 1984).

Conclusions

Our main objective in this article was to present and discuss aspects related to the planning and implementation of a course in which the genre "essay" of Brazil's National High School Exam was used to teach written production based on the Sydney School genre-based pedagogy (Rose & Martin, 2012). Due to space restrictions, we presented some general aspects of the experience. The theoretical framework centers on the MODALITY system (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2004) and on the notion of literacy proposed by Halliday (1996). As Brazilian researchers familiarized with the notion of consciousness-raising proposed by Paulo Freire (1970, 1973, 2008), as well as other elements of his critical pedagogy, we included Rose and Martin's proposals in a broader perspective of critical literacy.

Based on the essays that compose the corpus, it was possible to perceive that the students used, in their intervention proposals, modal auxiliary verbs, among which *dever* (must) was the most frequent (used 379 times) to put forward students' intervention proposals. They also used interpersonal metaphors such as *é necessário* (it is necessary) and *é preciso* (it is needed), mainly with the function of modalizing the presentation of the social intervention proposals. In addition, it was possible to see, in the texts, that the number of occurrences of modal operators indicating a high degree of commitment to the social intervention proposals increased during the development of the course. The high commitment reflected by the modal choices also indicates an alignment with the readers, as the students need to persuade them of their intervention proposals, and to achieve this, they use engagement resources by means of dialogic expansion and by bringing other voices to their texts.

An important issue that emerges from the data is the fact that, when teachers prepare course materials and select texts that function as models for the deconstruction stage of this specific type of Brazilian exam, they must consider the role of modality in intervention proposals, as well as the way in which these choices activate engagement mechanisms and how text producers align with their readers. The analysis of heteroglossic mechanisms, in turn, enables the teacher to perceive the importance of models so that text producers align with their readers for their intervention proposals, construing, as Martin and White (2005) suggest, *personae* that can align with the examiners that will evaluate their texts, and engaging to social issues, which require a proactive and critical stance.

Therefore, the discussions and results presented here strengthen the aspect proposed by Halliday (1996) that mastering written language plays an important role in the development of literacies. Another highlight was the productive dialog between the Reading to Learn program strategies and the lexicogrammatical and discourse-semantic aspects of systemic functional linguistics, as well as the interface with Freire's critical pedagogy in the Brazilian context. From the practical point of view, one of the most revealing results is the fact that students adopted more critical and proactive stances in their texts, reflected in the increase in the number of modal verbs in their texts.

The reflective exercise we presented in this article, in which we included strategies proposed by the Sydney School's genre-based pedagogy in a typically Brazilian educational practice, based on critical literacy in Brazil and on Paulo Freire's conceptions, may inspire other educators to search for new interactions and interfaces as required by their contexts and practices.

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