

**GÊNEROS: TEORIAS, MÉTODOS, DEBATES**

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***GENRE: THEORIES, METHODS, DEBATES***

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Addressing the topic of “gender” today has been a necessity for approximations and distancing in discussions and conceptualizations about it. However, it is necessary to know(acknowledge) the advances in the area that come from different theoretical currents. The book in question, “Genres: theories, methods, debates” was elaborated from the discussions of the Working Group - WG of the National Association of Graduate Studies and Research in Letters and Linguistics (ANPOLL, Portuguese initials). The members of the subWG "Gender theories (genre) in social practices" were responsible for organizing the book, namely: Luiz José Meurer (*in memorian*) and Adair Bonini, both PhDs in Linguistics and professors at the Federal University of Santa Catarina, followed by Desirée Motta-Roth, PhD in Letters and professor at the Federal University of Santa Maria. Arranged in 295 pages and published for the first time in 2005 by the publishing company Parábola Editorial, it presents the reader with twelve chapters from three important approaches: Part 1: Sociosemiotic approaches; Part 2: Socio-rhetorical approaches, and; Part 3: Sociodiscursive approaches.

The debates woven throughout the work have as main objective “to establish a mapping of the main concepts, terms and explanations available” (MEURER; BONINI; MOTTA-ROTH, 2005, p. 7). In a way, it proposes to systematize the basic debates, introductory to the gender theme, in their current and conceptual issues, also offering a

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critical look at the methods and theories, as well as intending to establish a direction regarding the development of researchers and new studies in the area. It reveals, therefore, that the theoretical contribution presented is also concerned with maintaining dialogue with the criticality of the methods employed and with the formation of the scientist-researcher. Corroborating the idea that there are gaps in studies in Applied Linguistics in the country, Rodrigues (2007, p. 249) points out that this book promptly fits the resolution of this problem by seeking to “mitigate the lack of the area in terms of publications that make feasible the dialogue between different approaches on the subject”.

Attention is given to the directions taken by the organizers in the preface when placing the reader as to the terms used for studies and works with genres. Therefore, the terms “discursive genres”, “discourse genres”, “textual genres”, “text genres”, as well as other uses used throughout the chapters, reflect the variety of understandings about the same research object: the use of language in social contexts and practices. These, at the same time that they distance themselves theoretically and conceptually, they approach and overlap, since there is no radical dissonance between scholars and neither an exact and immutable definition. In this way, there is a division of the discussions interwoven into three large groups located above, which converge from a social view of/to/about/with language and diverge with respect to the theory and its treatment regarding the analysis of the discursive/textual genre.

“*Part 1: Sociosemiotic Approaches*” consists of five chapters that focus on the organization of language and its relationship with use and the way in which language and the social context in which it is produced are interrelated, so that one accomplishes the other. In general, the socio-semiotic approach emerged in the 1970s from discussions about the concept of context. In this period, there is a turning point in the pragmatics of language, thus understanding the uses of language according to the context of performance (language as structure and function). The structuralists, Halliday and Hasan, main representatives of the Sydney School, migrated to the functionalism of the language, known as systemic-functional. Therefore, language is conceived in sociosemiotics based on a system of choices and its use occurs through a specific social environment, which the subjects (users) can interact with in the different spheres of human activity. Therefore, the concept of gender, previously understood by this School based on Textual Linguistics, starts to study the text, gender and discourse without separating them.

The first chapter, entitled “*The concept of 'potential gender structure' by Ruqayia Hasan*”, authored by Désirée Motta-Roth and Viviane Heberle, runs through theoretical

principles of Halliday and Bernstein, proposing to investigate the semantic component and the way in which its relationship linguistics varies. In this perspective, the social should not be ignored, as it is believed that social relations influence the patterns of selecting “what is said, when it is said and how it is said” (MOTTA-ROTH; HEBERLE, 2005, p. 12). Hasan integrates text and context, arguing that it is possible to perceive which elements of the textual structure are mandatory and which are optional from the analysis of the context configuration. Based on these concepts, Hasan defines that the Potential Gender Structure (PGS), in the functional relationship between language and context of the situation, would be related to how each gender corresponds to recurrent and contextual patterns. The mode, the relation and the field are responsible for the contextual configuration and allow to make predictions about any text in a given context. Therefore, any text can be considered as a potential example of a specific genre. The purpose of PGS is to account for the range of options of specific schematic structures potentially available to texts of the same genre, in such a way that the crucial properties of a genre can be abstracted and any example of that genre can be represented. The chapter also discusses the academic review genre and the theoretical and methodological application of the PGS. From this, it is possible to observe an approach to language as one that dialogues with the text, situational context and the cultural context.

The second chapter, entitled “*Martin's teleological perspective for the analysis of textual genres*”, by Orlando Vian Jr and Rodrigo Lima-Lopes, discusses a proposal that considers genre as a system structured in parts, with specific means for specific purposes, of a teleological character, changeable, since it is an open system subject to each human activity. Martin uses works by Halliday, Mathiesen and Bakhtin to formulate his theoretical perspective and proposes the expansion of the concepts of gender and registration, whose focus is on aspects of the context of culture and situation, observing their immediate context of realization. He also argues that registration would function as a form of gender instantiation, in which culture is taken as a system of genres, of social processes. That is, the genre is instantiated through choices of the registration variables, in which it pre-selects them and associates them with specific parts of the textual structure. As for the key concepts, it understands that gender is defined from the context of culture and registration (written or spoken / imagetic, which are the choices that depend on the context of the situation). Martin disagrees with Hasan as to his starting point being centered on registration, stating that it is necessary to study authentic and complete interactions, in which one can observe how people use language to achieve their culturally

motivated goals. As a representative of the Sidney School, Martin corroborates the concept of teaching by and of the gender, as culture ends up demanding this from the interlocutors, who, during communication, are inserted in a context of situation (record) and context of culture. The appropriation of gender occurs as a form of interaction. The authors conclude the chapter by presenting the reader with an analysis of “letters” from this analytical perspective.

The third chapter, entitled “*The notion of textual genre in the critical linguistics of Roger Fowler*”, by Sumiko Ikeda, brings an approach in which it is anchored in Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), using the precepts of “critical linguistics” by Fowler, Fairclough, Pêcheux and others. In this perspective, the discourse is socially constituted and permeated by ideologies and language is the one that starts to confirm and concretize the speeches of the organizations/institutions that permeate and shape them, according to the position that the subjects (language users) occupy in certain time and space. Therefore, Fowler's Critical Linguistics characterizes the text as the incorporator of ideologies that circulate socially, seeking to critically understand the social and ideological axioms that users make in their contexts of use, that is, their linguistic choices. Fowler focuses on the analysis and interpretation of language in the newspaper genre, stating that “any aspect of the linguistic structure carries ideological significance” (IKEDA, 2005, p. 48). Thus, the way in which what is said, carries meanings that can be interpreted by one or the other bias and lacks a critical eye to reveal the implicit meanings of the text. The author Ikeda resumes these discussions by bringing an analysis based on the CDAs precepts of the editorial “The fifth centenary” (Folha de São Paulo, 2000) as a discussion and application of the perspective presented here (IKEDA, 2005).

In the fourth chapter, “*Gunther Kress's discursive-semiotic perspective: gender as a representational resource*”, written by Anna Balocco, there is the presentation of Kress's proposal, which conceives genres as types of text “that encode the characteristic and the structures of social events, as well as the purposes of the participants” (BALOCCO, 2005, p. 65). Thus, the notion of gender is understood as a representational resource. He emphasizes that certain social events that take place in certain social institutions (a meeting, for example) differ in form, but converge in terms of practices. He also assumes the relevance of gender analysis associated with the non-verbal elements that constitute it, as these also represent ideological aspects marked in the text. This author uses a theoretical approach based on social practices and permeated by historical-cultural aspects, in addition to understanding language as a system of signs used to construct

meanings, which he calls a discursive-semiotic perspective. Another contribution is made in relation to the construction of meanings and their analysis in two fields: an immediate one (social events) and a more general one (that of culture). This perspective analyzes genres as types of text (oral/written), in which non-verbal and verbal elements must be studied together for/on/about the construction of meanings in various contexts of language use. The chapter ends with a discussion on the application of the theory in which gender is discussed in coming out stories.

Finally, the fifth chapter “*Textual genres in the critical analysis of Fairclough*”, written by José Luiz Meurer, closes the session of texts approached from the perspective of sociosemiotics, discussing the conception of text analysis as inserted in social practices and by them constituted, permeated and guided by ideologies, relations of power discourses and produced and consumed within that sphere of interaction. While criticizing several areas such as pragmatics, sociolinguistics, traditional linguistics, among others, Fairclough also incorporates aspects that he considers relevant to these theories. This author also considers language to be an integral part of social relations and as a process of social transformation. According to Meurer (2005, p. 82), the genre "occurs in a certain context and involves different agents that produce and consume it". Therefore, the use of language allows its (re)production based on the maintenance or change of social power relations. In other words, users (social actors) choose the genres they want and the way they will be used in their most varied contexts. The Critical Discourse Analysis is, therefore, based on three essential axes: text, discursive practices and social practices. In this chapter, Meurer distinguishes, for the didactic purpose, two aspects of the Fairclough proposal: one of a theoretical nature and another of a methodological nature, presenting theoretical assumptions for the analysis of text as a communicative event, discursive and social practice.

Continuing, “*Part 2: Socio-rhetorical approaches*” presents two chapters that discuss the influence of the rhetoric of Swales, Miller and Bazerman regarding gender analysis. Initially used only in the field of strategy and persuasion, this approach later expanded its scope for teaching argumentative composition and incorporated aspects of Bakhtin's Circle studies that enriched, mainly, the discussion about purpose and context and social action. In general, the North American School emerges at the end of the 19th century as a response to the teaching of writing as it was put, in which it was based on a classic rhetoric, that is, focused on the teaching of beautiful-letters and literary works and, therefore, more focused on stylistics, on syntactic/grammatical correction, without

considering rhetorical or pragmatic characteristics. Therefore, the positions of the students of this School, provoked discussions leading the teachers to (re)think about their educational practice, as well as, to elaborate other teaching/learning procedures/methodologies that considered the context in which each student was inserted. Genres come to be understood in this context as textual types presenting linguistic-textual regularities and are defined as actions responsive to/in diverse social contexts and in a given culture (the focus is not on the structure of the speech/statement, but on the effective practice from the genre chosen/in use).

The sixth chapter, entitled “*John M. Swales's socio-rhetorical proposal for the study of textual genres*”, written by Barbara Hemais and Bernadette Biasi-Rodrigues, discusses the study and analysis of textual genres under the theoretical-methodological approach proposed by Swales, who conceives that the text is not and cannot be completely understood and interpreted in its context using only linguistic aspects, since the written production of the genre in a given social sphere needs knowledge that exceeds this aspect and depends on the communicative purpose. The whole theoretical proposal of Swales is influenced by the idea that there are classes of communicative events, in which these are constituted by the speech, by the participants, the function of the speech and the environment. And, in these classes of communicative events (or sets of communicative events), there are communicative purposes that direct towards objective ends. Prototypicality is also relevant in this proposal, since the genre will only be constituted as a genre if it has characteristics that determine it as such. Swales also proposes that genres have an “underlying reason”, recognized by members of the convention community, as it serves a specific communicative purpose and has their own terminology developed by the discursive community. The chapter's authors emphasize that gender for Swales is the result of several dialogues between/from different fields of study (Anthropology, Ethnography, among others). The chapter ends with an analysis based on the Create A Research Space (CARS) model of research article introductions.

The seventh chapter, “*Gender as social action in Miller and Bazerman: the concept, a methodological suggestion and an example of application*”, presented by Gisele de Carvalho, discusses notions such as recurrence and rhetorical action based on the studies by Miller and Bazerman. Genres are understood here as typified social actions (types or ways of acting socially in different contexts), defined by the following purposes: functions, intentions, interests. Bazerman also places his work in the perspective of gender as a social action, in which the texts present regularities in form and content. In

this chapter, the author brings a theoretical and methodological application with the academic review genre as the closing of the session.

The last session, “*Part 3: Sociodiscursive approaches*”, consists of five chapters that start from a perspective more directed at the Geneva School, with Bronckart, Schneuwly and Dolz as main representatives. It emerged in the 1980s and defends a “didactic of diversification”. Therefore, this School breaks with the traditional system of language teaching in the school, that of grammar, decoding, focused on the language, which did not consider the uses of language as social and historical, using Socio-Discursive Interactionism (SDI) which is based on the types of discourse, that is, the typologies and the elements that constitute it.

Chapter eight, “*Discourse genres in the dialogical perspective of language: Bakhtin's approach*”, written by Rosângela Hammes Rodrigues, conceives discourse genres from the Bakhtinian perspective as those that are historically constituted in the experiences, in the relationships between subjects, based on language usage practices in different spheres of human activity. Using the studies of the Bakhtin Circle, it uses the concept of primary genres (which are expressed in spontaneous communication: in the family, from letters, notes, for example) and; secondary genres (more complex and evolved and constituted by the primary ones, such as the novel, the review). The genres, therefore, have specific discursive purposes in/for each social sphere based on the thematic content, composition and style they present based on dialogical/verbal interaction relations. In this proposal, historical, social and ideological concepts of language, utterance and human activity permeate, which contributed to the theoretical and critical bases of many other approaches that sought to understand and analyze genres and their manifestations in society and in the interaction. Of a very theoretical nature, at the end, the author also brings a genre analysis based on an article from the journalistic sphere as a way of exemplifying the theoretical and methodological application of this perspective.

Chapter nine, “*Discourse genres and textual genres: theoretical and applied issues*”, by Roxane Rojo, seeks to critically rescue studies on literacy, dated from 1995 in Brazil, circumscribed to the spheres of academic production in areas as Applied Linguistics and focused on language teaching. Thus, it divides the studies into two strands: theory of discourse/discursive genres under the conception present in the Bakhtinian work and theories of text/textual genres based on the proposal of the Geneva group of language didactics (Bronckart, Schneuwly, Dolz). Thus, it intends to

conceptualize these two aspects from a theoretical and methodological point of view, bringing its main concepts and scholars. Conceives a dialogical analysis of a family conversation and ends the chapter emphasizing the question of the positioning of Applied Linguistics within this field of research.

Chapter ten is entitled “*The notion of textual sequence in the pragmatic-textual analysis of Jean-Michel Adam*”, by Adair Bonini, who discusses questions of the notion of textual sequence by Jean-Michel Adam, which is related to Textual Linguistics and Discourse Analysis of the French line. Adam categorizes genres based on the features that they present and that they share with the sequences, understood by him as prototypes and “thought from the basic concepts and type of text and textual superstructure” (BONINI, 2005, p. 210). Bonini emphasizes that Adam's works sought to build a theoretical reflection by integrating formal and enunciative orientations. The sequences would then be grouped into: narrative, description, explanation, argumentation and dialogue and thought from basic concepts and text type, textual superstructure, planning and structuring. From this, Bonini brings the application of these assumptions in the analysis of the genre of film critics and discusses the notion of sequence (or type of text) and the teaching of text production (reading and listening to texts).

Chapter eleven, by Anna Rachel Machado, is entitled “*Bronckart's sociodiscursive interactionist perspective*” and brings up a discussion based on the psychosociological precepts of the genres, in which socio-discursive interactionism (ISD) runs through Bronckart's ideas. But, as defended by Machado, these epistemes also come from Dolz and Schneuwly, with Vigotsky as a reference. Machado, characterizes text as materiality, gender as social activities and discourse as the attitudes we provoke against each other, effects of meaning through genres and texts. Bronckart together with the Geneva researchers, Schneuwly and Dolz, categorize genres as an instrument for acting discursively in a socio-historical context. In this view, genders are mediators of discursive actions (individual capacities) that take place between subjects and relate to the linguistic activities of/in the different human spheres. In addition, Machado criticizes ISD by pointing out that it does not analyze text genres, starting only from verbal and non-verbal actions conducted by specific epistemological objectives. This chapter is partly theoretical, conceptualizing text genre, type of speech, type of sequence, activity, language activities, action and presenting a model of text analysis and its practical application based on the *corpus* of reviews.



Chapter twelve, the last chapter of the session and, ending the book's theoretical and methodological discussions, is entitled “*Discourse genre as a component of the archive in Dominique Maingueneau*”, by Maria Marta Furlanetto. This chapter discusses the contribution of Maingueneau and Discourse Analysis of French tradition to the studies of genres. Maingueneau points out that, although initially proposing to define typologies, the French Discourse Analysis starts to theorize the studies of discourse genres as a means of reaching the “enunciative identity” that historically constituted it, calling this aspect of “archive”. In addition, the author defines discourse, text, genre and archive, as objects of investigation in this theoretical-methodological perspective. Therefore, genders are understood here “in their historical constitution, circulating in the immediate and mediated society of the subjects”, according to the position they occupy in a given time and space from the various institutions to which they affiliate/enroll themselves (FURLANETTO, 2005 , p. 261). Still, the author of the chapter describes the theoretical positions about interdiscourse, interdict, discursive formation, discursive universe, discursive field and discursive space, among other concepts. Furlanetto closes this chapter and the last session of the book with the analysis of a text, based on the Analysis of the French Discourse, called “Woman's Chemistry”.

From the above, it is observed that the reviewed work is coined by different views, theories and methodologies about the notion of the textual/discursive genre, which embraces and also reveals, in a clear language, relevant issues that now unify and sometimes distance between/from the approaches presented here: socio-semiotic, socio-rhetorical and socio-discursive. Therefore, this book stands out for the relevance of the theme, since there are still few productions in the area regarding the discussion about genres, namely, since its publication. Furthermore, the resumption of the concept of gender constituted from a heterogeneity of views, be they epistemological and/or methodological, take language as a social action. It is, therefore, an indispensable reading for students, teachers and researchers in the area of Language and Education Sciences.

The reader thus has access to a broad overview of the concept of gender, whether it is understood by Bakhtin (2011 [1979]) as a discourse genre, or seen as types of discourse, as stated by Bronckart (1999), or discursive attitudes, as stated by Baltar and Costa (2010), or even typification activities (speech acts), named by Bazerman, Dionísio and Hoffnagel (2005). Therefore, this heterogeneity of possibilities is considered of great importance with regard to studies in the area of language, as well as the multiple paths that can be taken from now on. Thus, to the adherents of proposals based on genres, it is

necessary that the criticality proposed by the theory also permeates the practice, be it in research, in pedagogical practice or in the most diverse spheres of human activity.

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