15 Bakhtin Circle's Speech Genres Theory: Tools for a Transdisciplinary Analysis of Utterances in Didactic Practices

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APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND LANGUAGE TEACHING—INTER OR TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH?

According to Bhatia (2004, p. 202), theories of speech genres raise a number of important themes and questions for research in Applied Linguistics (AL). Bhatia first asks "To what extent should pedagogical practices reflect or account for the realities of the world of discourse?" He later asks about research implications: "To what extent should the *analytical procedures* account for the *full realities of the world* of discourse?"

Recent debates about AL's research practices (Signorini & Cavalcanti, 1998a; Moita-Lopes, 2006a) have elaborated on such themes, which are so relevant to the applied linguists who work upon language teaching. These debates in particular (a) define the *primary interest* of research/studies in the field (AL) (Evensen, 1996); (b) discuss the *type of research objects* selected; and (c) debate the *inter or transdisciplinary*[1] nature of the studies carried out in this field (Evensen, 1996; Moita-Lopes, 1998, 2006b; Celani, 1998; Signorini, 1998; Rojo, 2006). According to Rojo (2006), there seems to be a consensus among authors as far as the first two aspects are concerned, that is, the primary research interest and the selected type of research objects/tools, while there is a conflict of positions (and definitions) regarding the inter, multi, pluri or transdisciplinary nature of the studies.

Several authors point out a *prospective* primary research interest among applied linguists in the last decade rather than a retrospective one. That is to say that, in high modernity[2], AL is interested in "understanding, explaining or solving problems," aiming at creating or "improving existing solutions" (Eversen, 1996, p. 91)—as well as several other research fields, applied (or not), on social or nature studies. According to Eversen (1996, p. 96), "the problem-oriented approach has gradually replaced theoretical orientation in AL."

To Rojo (2006), this is about examining problems of discourse and language use which are related to the concept of *suffered deprivation* (Calvino, 1988)[3], that is to say, that is a matter of looking into social problems that have social relevance and are contextualized, in order to construct useful knowledge to situ-

ated social actors. To the author,

> The main question is: it is not about "any" problem theoretical-
> ly defined, but it is about problems which are socially relevant
> enough to demand theoretical responses that bring improvement
> to social practices and its participants, in the sense of a better qual-
> ity of life, in an ecological sense. (Rojo, 2006, p. 258)[4]

Quoting Moita-Lopes (1998, p. 121), the *social responsibility* in academic research influences the choice of "what is worth studying, as well as the very structure of the research." Therefore, this primary research interest brings about more and more changes in the choice of research objects and the approach to them. Authors are unanimous in characterizing these research objects as problems of communication, of discourse, of contextualized language use in situated practices. Among them, we identify the use of language at school, the didactic discourses.

One of these problems is, for instance, this paper's opening question, which was brought to light by Bhatia (2004): to what extent should pedagogical discourses and practices at school represent the real functioning of discourses in society? The answer to this question surely demands another whole paper, but it is worth pointing out that it has already been outlined in the Brazilian Parameters for Basic Education (PCN, PCNEM, PCN+, OCEM)[5]: the contemporary school, the school of high or late modernity, has to account for the various discursive practices of the plural spheres of citizens' action in society.

It is at this point that the speech genres theory of the Bakhtin Circle (especially as exposed in Bakhtin/Voloshinov (1926, 1929), Bakhtin/Medvedev (1928) and Bakhtin (1952-53/1979, 1934-35/1975)) first appears in this discussion, impacting the Brazilian Educational Parameters when AL's research and academic knowledge proposes *speech genres* as the main object of reference to teach native language (Portuguese, in this case). This is one of the ways in which the primary research interest, that is, a specific social problem that demands solution—here, the problem announced by Bhatia—has an impact on the research object: the *speech genres* as objects of reference to teach and learn native languages.

Signorini (1998, pp. 101-103) calls our attention to the fact that, at the beginning of AL development as a research field, that is, in its applicationist phase, the research object is approached in a *residual* manner, in a Procustean way: AL focus lies on a disciplinary theoretical problem (of Linguistics, of Cognitive Psychology), so that the integrity of the conceptual and theoretical-methodological apparatus can be maintained. AL therefore turns the research object into a residue, by simplifying its complexity, by "disentangling the web lines," by purifying

an object of hybrid nature.

To the author, the AL of the last decades progressively gives up this residual approach as it starts changing its primary research interest and turns its focus to the "search and creation of new concepts and new theoretical-methodological alternatives from the redefinition of research objects." This redefinition

> Reflects a movement of leaning over what Latour (1994) has named as the "mixture that weaves the world," or the "single material of the natures-cultures," that is, the hybrid elements that weave the world of the objects and the world of the subjects, involved in the same woof or web by a fragile thread that the analytical tradition slices in "little specific compartments," so that in each of them we cannot mingle with the knowledge of things, the interest, the desire, the power, the human politics. (Signorini, 1998, p. 101)

Consequently, this is about studying the real language in its situated use, the utterances and discourses, the language practices in specific contexts, trying not to break this fragile thread that maintains the vision of the web, of the woof, of the multiplicity and the complexity of the objects-subjects in their practices. In a certain way, this perspective answers the second question placed by Bhatia (2004): "To what extent should the *analytical procedures* account for the *full realities of the world* of discourse?" Although the answer may sound simple, it is not: in the best possible way and in the broadest possible measure, it could happen by our "trying not to pull the object out of the tissue of its roots" (Signorini, 1998, p. 101). At this point, the Bakhtin Circle's enunciation and speech genres theories appears for the second time in this text, as a way of approaching the *full realities of the discourse world* that makes it possible not to break the threads of the woof.

All this consequently and necessarily implies a non-disciplinary treatment of the object. Nevertheless, the authors that have written about AL's contemporary research practices show divergence regarding such an approach.

Moita-Lopes (1998) following Eversen (1996), for instance, initially prefers the concept of *interdisciplinary approach* to describe the work of the researcher in the AL field, but they also discuss the possibility of the (non)development of AL as a *transdiscipline.* To Moita-Lopes (1998, p. 114), the applied linguist "seeks bases in several disciplines that can theoretically light up the focused question." According to Celani (1998, pp. 131-132), as well, "in a multi/pluri/interdisciplinary perspective, plural disciplines collaborate to the study of an object, a field, a goal (Durand, 1993), in an *integrated* way."

However, differently from Eversen and Celani, Moita-Lopes (1998) states

that we cannot see AL as a transdiscipline:

> We cannot work in AL in a transdisciplinary way. However, applied linguists can work with research groups of transdisciplinary nature that are studying a problem in a specific applied context and to which comprehension the internal visions of the applied linguist can be useful. (Moita-Lopes, 1998, p. 122)

Apparently, the author does not believe a field or domain of research itself can function in a tradisciplinary way, but prefers to reserve this qualification to transdisciplinary research teams which involves the participation of actors of different social spheres—not only of academic or scientific spheres (Gibbons et al., 1995). So, at first (1998), the author prefers to characterize AL as an *interdisciplinary* field and, in a later phase (2006), as an *indisciplinary* one.

On the other hand, Celani (1998) understands the transdisciplinarity of AL differently. Although she mentions "the active researchers' participation of involved fields" suggesting multidisciplinary teams, she also defines a transdisciplinary research perspective:

> However, a transdisciplinary perspective tries to highlight a *connecting thread* at the disciplinary collaboration and even an epistemological philosophy—the discovering "philosophy" . . . . A transdisciplinary approach involves more than juxtaposing some knowledge fields. It involves the *coexistence* in a *dynamic interaction* state that Portella (1993) named *spheres of cohabitation* . . . . New knowledge spaces are created, leading the researcher from disciplinary interaction to concepts interaction and then to methodologies interaction. (Celani, 1998, pp. 132-133)

Therefore, to Celani, it is the *dynamic interaction* between disciplinary concepts and methods seeking to solve a linguistic-discursive problem at a language practice that characterizes the transdisciplinary approach in AL. This dynamic interaction due to the research object complexity rescues the *connecting thread* of the discovery.

According to Signorini (1998), this complexity or hybridism of language practices defines the object as a *multiple* or *complex* one. Otherwise, I prefer to reserve the term *multiple* to inter or multidisciplinary studies and the term *complex*—in its etymological sense and not in its common sense as "complicated, difficult⁶"—to transdisciplinary studies. It means that interdisciplinary research practices focus on the object from *multiple* disciplinary perspectives, with or without interaction

between these perspectives, but they do not reshape the object in the AL's research field making them "complex," that is, they do not reshape and make them "as a sort of coherent whole, whose components keep a number of relations of interdependency or subordination among themselves."

The "transdisciplinary research routes, in their turn, create their own theoretical-methodological configurations, non-coincident or non-reducible to the contributions of its original disciplines" (Signorini & Cavalacanti, 1998b, p. 13). To the authors, this move implies "the required (re)constitution of the object in the applied field through its reinsertion in the web of practices, tools and institutions that make it meaningful in the social world" (Signorini & Cavalacanti, 1998b, p. 13).

Therefore, it can be said that transdisciplinary research routes produce theory—and not merely consume it—in the applied field. It is exactly what has nowadays happened within the AL field as far as the New Literacy Studies (NLS) or the applied research about identities, subjectivities and cultures are concerned, for instance.

Based on Bakhtinian concepts, Rojo (2006) adds two comments to the considerations placed by Signorini. The first is that what determines the (re)configuration of the object in the applied research field is the *evaluative appreciation* of the applied linguist from his social and academic position. The second is that, in this context, the disciplinary theories may function as a *vision surplus*[7] concerning the theoretical reconfiguration produced. As the author says:

> Even though these new theoretical-methodological configurations are dialogic, they are "of one's own" . . . . That is to say they are *articulated* from a unique point of view or *evaluative appreciation* towards the research object . . . in relation to which the configurations of disciplinary theories or knowledge may function as *a vision surplus* . . . in Bakhtinian terms. And it is exactly to articulate this point of view and this evaluative appreciation towards the problem or object that we need this *thinking lightness*[8] anchored on the *object weight,* which we call "transdisciplinary approach." (Rojo, 2006, p. 261)

Having stated these initial discussions about the contemporary applied linguist's procedures, we will go on, in the remaining parts, to carry out a transdisciplinary task, which consists of taking the "dialogic class[9]" as the object of analysis in order to show how the *multiple* contributions of several disciplines (conversational analysis, speech ethnography, interactional sociolinguistics, enunciation theories, education, didactics, psychology of learning) can be recon-

figured when based on an approach of classroom interaction as a *complex whole*, allowing us to articulate, at one time, the object, the theoretical concepts and the analytical methodology. This exercise will be mainly based on the contributions of enunciation and speech genres theories of the Bakhtin Circle and will take the dialogic class as a school speech genre.

We will end the paper discussing how the Bakhtinian concepts themselves are reinterpreted in this transdisciplinary enterprise.

THE BAKHTIN CIRCLE—CONCEPTUAL AND METHOD-OLOGICAL TOOLS FOR THE ANALYSIS OF UTTERANCES IN DIDACTIC PRACTICES AND DEVICES

At this point, we will use some Bakhtinian conceptual tools to study situated utterances, especially the concepts of *sphere*, *speech genres*, their dimensions (*theme, thematic content, compositional form, architectural form, style*) and some other important related concepts, useful to detect the generic flexibility of utterances, as well as their ideological reflection/refraction, like: *dialogism, multilingualism, polyphony, voices, quoted discourse* and *active reply*. Because of that, in what follows, we present a brief and superficial definition of these terms, trying to make the analysis in the next sections more comprehensible to the reader. As stated in other papers (Rojo, 2005, 2006, 2007; Bunzen & Rojo, 2005), there is a historic process of construction of the concept of *speech genres* in the Circle's work and it is regrettable that the major part of AL's academic texts about the topic should be based exclusively on Bakhtin (1952-53/1979). Already in 1929, in "Marxism and Philosophy of Language[10]," the Circle announces that:

> Later, in connection with the problem of enunciation and dialog, we will face also the problem of *linguistic genres*. Regarding this, we will simply make the following observation: each period and each social group has its repertory of *discursive forms in the socio-ideological communication*. To each group of forms belonging to the same genre, that is, to each *form of social discourse* there is a corresponding group of *themes*. (Bakhtin/Voloshinov, 1929, p. 42, added emphasis)

In this quotation, we can note the primitive state of elaboration of speech genre's concept, imprecisely named as *linguistic genres* and imprecisely defined as "discursive forms in the socio-ideological communication." On the other hand, we can also see that the concept is already present and complemented by what later will be its conceptual pair: *sphere of communication* ("each period and each

social group").

In fact, the elaboration of the concept seems to begin at Bakhtin/Medvedev's (1928) work, where the Circle confronts Russian Formalism. In this work, the Circle approaches *literary or poetic genres* and begins to extend the concept to other discursive spheres[11], suggesting the idea of *speech genres.* In the book, the Circle already sustains the central role of the concept of genre[12] and already distinguishes their definition and the Russian formalist one[13], describing genre by its double dialogic orientation towards reality and life:

> An artistic whole of any type, i.e., of any *genre*, has a two-fold orientation in reality, and the characteristics of this orientation determine the type of the whole, i.e., its *genre*.
>
> In the first place, the work is oriented toward the listener and perceiver, and toward the definite conditions of performance and perception. In the second place, the work is oriented in life, from within, one might say, by its thematic content . . . .
>
> Thus the work enters life and comes into contact with various aspects of its environment. It does so in the process of its actual realization as something performed, heard, read at a definite time, in a definite place, under definite conditions. It . . . occupies a definite place in life. It takes a position between people organized in some way. The varieties of the dramatic, lyrical, and epic genres are determined by this direct orientation of the word as fact, or, more precisely, by the word as a historic achievement in its surrounding environment. (Bakhtin/Medvedev, 1928, pp. 130-131, added emphasis)

Consequently, in the late 20s, the Circle's concept of speech genres shows already some of the main theoretical characteristics defined in 1952-53/1979: its relation to the concept of *sphere of ideological creativity;* its *two-fold dialogic orientation* which determines the genre as well as the generic utterances; the central role of *themes* to the *forms*, especially to its *completion*. In this basic text, Bakhtin (1952-53/1986, p. 60) reaffirms these characteristics that assume the form of the definition we can read everywhere: "each sphere in which language is used develops its own *relatively stable types* of these utterances. These we may call *speech genres.*"

Regrettably, similarly to what happened in Russian Formalism and to what was contested by the Circle, it is the genres' *stability* and *regularity* that people often emphasize in this definition, despite its relative nature, ignoring the *het-*

erogeneity that is emphatically pointed out through the same part of Bakhtinian text:

> The wealth and diversity of speech genres are boundless because the various possibilities of human activity are inexhaustible, and because each sphere of activity contains an entire repertoire of speech genres that differentiate and grow as the particular sphere develops and become complex. Special emphasis should be placed on the extreme *heterogeneity* of speech genres (oral and written). (Bakhtin, 1952-53/1986, p. 60)

Nevertheless, people focus on the stable and regular aspects of speech genres, and do not pay attention to the previous contributions of the Circle to speech genre theory, especially the text "Discourse in the novel" (1934-35/1981). In this text, Bakhtin points out two very important processes to generic heterogeneity, flexibility and richness: *hybridism*, not only of voices, intonations and styles but also of genres, and the phenomenon of *incorporated genres* (insertion of genres in the novel). The author defines *hybrid constructions* or *hybridism* in the novel as:

> An utterance that belongs, by its grammatical (syntactic) and compositional markers, to a single speaker, but that actually contains mixed within it two utterances, two speech manners, two styles, two "languages."' two semantic and axiological belief systems. We repeat, there is no formal—compositional and syntactic—boundary between these utterances, styles, languages, belief systems; the division of voices and languages takes place within the limits of a single syntactic whole[14], often within the limits of a simple sentence. It frequently happens that even one and the same word will belong simultaneously to two languages, two belief systems that intersect in a hybrid construction—and, consequently, the word has two contradictory meanings, two accents[15] . . . . (Bakhtin, 1934-35/1981, pp. 304-305)

Another generic way to echo different voices and ideological perspectives is *incorporated genres,* for instance, letters, journals, confession in the novel. To Bakhtin (1934-35/1981, p. 320) this way is "one of the most basic and fundamental forms for incorporating and organizing heteroglossia in the novel." In the case of *incorporated genres*, the boundary between the genres is compositionally and syntactically marked.

> Such incorporated genres usually preserve within the novel their own structural integrity and independence, as well as their own linguistic and stylistic peculiarities. (Bakhtin, 1934-35/1981, p. 321)

Because of that they are able to resound heteroglossically and multi-vocalically.

It is therefore the *heteroglossia* and the *double-voiced* nature of an utterance within a genre that enables it to echo different ideological perspectives, sometimes *polyphonically*. Bakhtin defines heteroglossia as "*another's speech in another's language*, serving to express authorial intentions but in a refracted way." To him,

> Such speech constitutes a special type of *double-voiced discourse*. It serves two speakers at the same time and expresses simultaneously two different intentions . . . . In such discourse there are two voices[16], two meanings and two expressions. And all the while these two voices are dialogically interrelated, they—as it were—know about each other (just as two exchanges in a dialog know of each other and are structured in this mutual knowledge of each other); it is as if they actually hold a conversation with each other. Double-voiced discourse is always internally dialogized[17]. (Bakhtin, 1934-35/1981, p. 324)

Consequently, according to Bakhtin, generic and enunciative flexibility, creative forms and refraction of senses are due not only to the *style,* i.e., the "selection of the lexical, phraseological and grammatical resources of the language" (as stated in Bakhtin, 1952-53/1986, p. 60), but also by the heteroglot forms in utterances, a greatly varied and complex phenomenon.

Also, since 1924/1975, Bakhtin insisted on distinguishing between genres' *compositional form* and the *architectural forms*[18], the first having the characteristic of stability, being "practical," "teleological"—although "restless"—"available to realize the architectural task." On the other hand, *architectural forms*

> are the forms of moral and physical values of the aesthetic man, the forms of nature as his environment, the forms of happenings in his aspect of particular, social, historical life, etc. . . . are the forms of aesthetical being in its singularity. . . . Architectural form determines the choice of compositional form[19]. (Bakhtin, 1924/1975, p. 25)

It also determines the choice of the forms of introduction of multilingualism, even when they cause breaks to the stability of compositional form.

In the same way, the author treats the concept of *theme*. To Bakhtin, "theme" is not merely the topic of the discourse or the main idea of an utterance. The theme of an utterance or a word is unique, non-repeatable, exactly because it is its meaning plus its ideology or point of view. So, the theme of a word like "negro" is not the mere meaning of the word, referring to "black color," but it is its meaning plus the speaker's ideology, appreciation or point of view: depending on his/her ideology, it can carry prejudice or not to the utterance. Also, in the same direction as the distinction between architectural and compositional forms, Bakhtin also distinguishes thematic contents and themes: the theme is the concrete and situated significance of an utterance whereas the thematic contents are the possible allowed contents that the ideological field of a specific sphere of human activity admits. Thus, thematic contents are predictable whereas themes are situated and irreproducible.

Having explored, though briefly and superficially, some key-concepts of the Bakhtin Circle that will be used to describe the dialogic class as a school genre in the next sections, it is important to point out that this exercise will not be realized as a new application of the Circle theory to a new object, but will be developed in a transdisciplinary way, trying to unify, in a complex whole, a number of theoretical artifacts of different disciplines that study the dialogical class as a didactic space. To do so, we will adopt the *sociological method of utterances analysis* proposed by Bakhtin/Voloshinov (1929, p. 124).

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO A DIALOGIC UNDERSTANDING OF CLASSROOM SPEECH GENRES

Rojo (2007, p. 339) suggests an interdisciplinary approach to a dialogic understanding of classroom interactions and justifies this approach:

> Classroom talk is described by researchers either as a didactic activity (Educational Sociology, Psychology of Learning, and so on) or as a specific type of face-to-face interaction or conversation (Ethnographic Sociolinguistics, Micro-Ethnography of Speech, for instance). In the first approach, researchers focus on the objects and teaching methods, its organization and its impact on learning. In the second, the interactional patterns, the participation structures, the conversational interchanges in classrooms are described. Thus, the tendency is to put aside the analyses of the themes and the

formal (conversational) organization of classroom interaction . . . .

This misleads data interpretation to analysts whose main presupposition is that language and discourse are basic materials to the teaching-learning activity in classrooms.

In the paper, the author tries

To create tools and analytical devices able to surpass this division and this partial focus, based on previous studies (especially Batista, 1997; Schneuwly et al., 2005), on Bazerman's (2005) approach to classrooms interaction as activity systems and genre systems, as well as on the Bakhtin Circle's theory of enunciation as a reference for data interpretation. (Rojo, 2007, p. 339)

Figure 1 exhibits the main disciplinary concepts suggested by the author, adopting an interdisciplinary approach that presupposes dynamic interaction between these disciplinary concepts and methods:

Figure 1 assumes the *synopsis* shape, a methodological tool to analyze classes developed by Schneuwly et al. (2005), trying to focus, in a systematic way, on the teaching objects constructed in classes (*teaching objects*). In this model, didactic activities are viewed as *founding professional gestures* of the teacher, who *elementarizes* the teaching object[20] by focusing on some of its aspects and, as a result, constituting the object effectively taught in classrooms. So, the synopsis tries to reproduce the essential didactic moves in class and allows for a whole vision of the teaching object. In the synopsis, the highest level of analysis (1.) corresponds to *didactic activities* carried out by the teacher and the students defined by its goals. In a certain way, the concepts of didactic activity are remotely related to the concept of *speech event* or *episode*[21] proposed by Gumperz (1982) and adopted by the interactional sociolinguistic and the ethnography of speech applied to classroom interaction. If we consider the thematic progression of speech events as aspects of the teaching object focused in class, the two approaches may be viewed in a complementary way.

However, Rojo (2007) chooses to divide language action into didactic activities not only by considering the aspects of teaching objects focused, which can lead us to ignore and eliminate other themes brought to class, but also by accounting for the *themes*[22] carried out in interactions. She adopts the notion of *global sequence* (Batista, 1997) to define the thematic progression (level 1.1.) and of *local sequence* (Batista, 1997) to focus on the existing turn taking/utterances (level 1.1.1.). The author suggests that this approach/model should also take
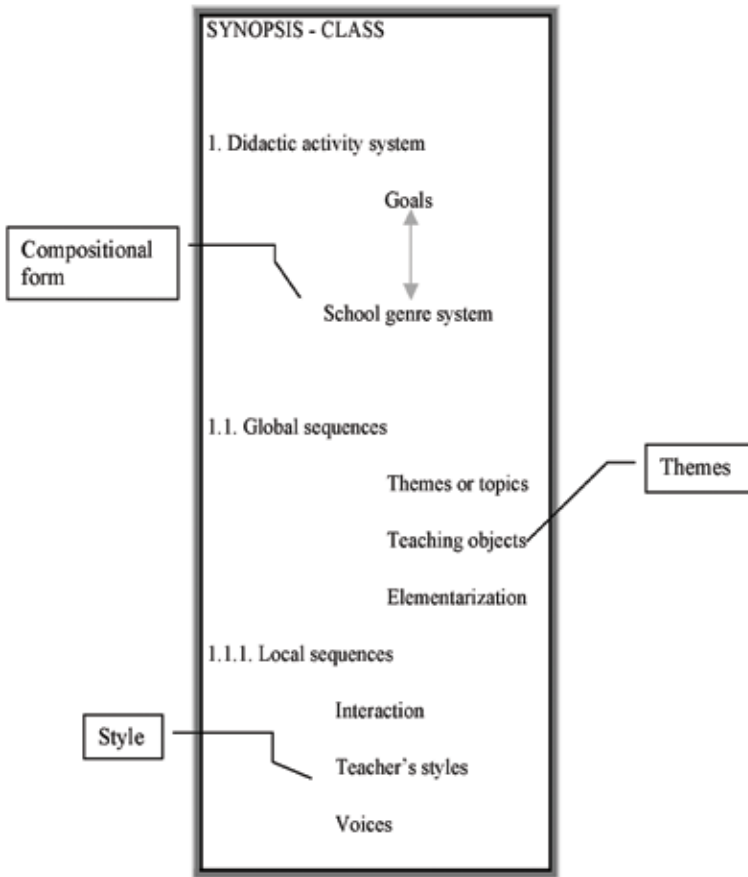
FIGURE 1: ANALYSIS PROPOSAL (ROJO, 2007)

into account and therefore be shaped by the *teachers' styles* (Mortimer & Scott, 2000, based on Bakhtin, 1934-35/1975) and by the *voices* (Bakhtin, 1934-35/1975) mobilized in class.

Additionally, Rojo (2007) sees the sequence of didactic activities of class not as a linear sequence, one placed after the other, but as a *system* of articulated activities, which calls for a specific *genre system* to function, according to Bazerman (2004, p. 23), who states, "in classroom, the teacher's work often serves to define genres and activities and, in so doing creates learning opportunities and expectations[23]."

Thus, Rojo (2007) in large part adopts Bazerman's vision of class as an articu-

lated communication *activity system* of the educational sphere, in which *specific* non-random genres are also needed for its functioning. As far as the concept of genre itself is concerned, however, Rojo (2007) prefers to adopt the discursive/enunciative approach of the Bakhtin Circle rather than Bazerman's view, which is more pragmatic and socio-cognitive.

Nevertheless, it is important to point out that Rojo's (2007) suggestion has an interdisciplinary nature instead of a transdisciplinary one, in the sense discussed at the beginning of this paper, since the author uses a number of dynamically interrelated concepts and definitions of various disciplines (theory of enunciation, language didactics, interactional sociolinguistics, communication ethnography, education) to compose a multiple and more complete vision of class. However, she does not redefine or recreate the enunciative object of dialogic class in the AL field, as demanded by the definition of transdisciplinary approach adopted in this paper. The next section aims at fulfilling this intent.

THE DIALOGIC CLASSROOM DIALOGUE AS GENRE AND AS A COMPLEX ENUNCIATIVE CHAIN—A TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH

In a transdisciplinary approach of dialogic classoroom dialogue, we can first describe it as a discursive school genre—a complex secondary genre that merges other genres and presents a hybridism of voices and social languages.

To describe class as a genre, we will adopt the methodological social order proposed by Bakhtin/Voloshinov (1929, p. 124), which at first leads us to focus on the functioning of the school activity sphere, that is, "the forms and types of verbal interaction related to the concrete conditions under which they take place."

School as a social institution is a sphere of activity with a particular way of functioning. It functions by using secondary speech genres exactly because it is a sphere of the social superstructure related to the official ideology, as well as to the establishment and reproduction of ideologies. According to Bourdieu & Passeron (1977), school provides a pedagogical work which, by means of the appropriation of a "cultural arbitrary," produces a "habitus" that is perpetuated in the practices out of school.

School originates from the division between work and non-work as "skole"— "study leisure" to the Greeks—that is, the time free from work and politics dedicated to intellectual activity. It means that it is a specialized social space detached of other social spaces where these other spaces become objects to be studied, which are, in their turn, objectified, made literate and open to contemplation, analysis, comparison (Schneuwly, 2005; Lahire et al., 1994).

School as we know it today was created in the 19th century while Nation-

States developed. It happened mostly because of the constitution of new social forms of relations that Lahire et al. (1994) named "school forms," which implies a rupture with daily life ("skole") and turns knowledge into something objective and literate, so that it can be taken as explicit teaching objects (in parameters, syllabus, school books). These objects will then be "elementarized," analysed, and divided into unities to be accessible to learning. These unities or elements are then progressively arranged in *cursus*[24], syllabus and disciplines. Disciplines are, thus, at the same time an organization of knowledge (teaching objects) and of ways to teach it. Additionally, according to Chervel (1990, pp. 178-180), the word "discipline" is related to the idea of "intellectual gymnastics," aiming at "disciplining the children's intelligence," imposing rules to approach "the different domains of reasoning, knowledge and art." Therefore, by aiming at "disciplining" minds and the world, school forms and their "habitus" establishes and perpetuates several practices, activities and their own forms of didactic discourse—the school genres.

In spite of such a brief and almost schematic presentation of the forms of functioning of the school sphere, it is possible to see that the themes of the school utterances are not disconnected, incoherent or random. The thematic content of the majority of school utterances is related to the elementarized teaching object made concrete in the discourses (of the teacher, of school books) and determined by an enunciative intention or will—a discursive project that in didactics we refer to as "didactic goals." For instance, in a class aiming at producing a dissertation, the teacher, according to his/her evaluative perception of this object (dissertation) and about the capacities and knowledge of his/her interlocutors (the students), can construct a discursive project that includes (a) providing, elaborating and discussing possible topics to be developed (text content); (b) providing some information about dissertation structure; (c) asking for the text production (procedure); and (d) revising collectively the text, focusing on structure, spelling and content. This teaching project is also a discursive project determined by an enunciative will to teach and produce a dissertation. This enunciative choice is also determined by an ideology about the speech genre "dissertation" and its relevance to teaching writing, which includes ideas like "text is form and content," "texts may obey norms of standard language," "dissertation disciplines logical reasoning" and so on.

In this sense, we can view these five activities—with their global sequences (Batista, 1997) that elementarize the teaching object and use several ways to teach—as an "activity system" (Bazerman, 2005a) articulated to fulfill an enunciative will, and not simply as sequential activities as suggested by Gumperz. From the perspective of the Bakhtin Circle, this way of organizing class as genre, the architectonic that selects this specific compositional form to class, will also

select the incorporated genres (instruction, request, order, question-answer, genres of the texts people read, dissertation) and the hybrid voices (of Science, of the author of school book, of the teacher, of students) that will integrate the compositional form of the class and its themes.

At this point, we are at the second moment of the Bakhtinian sociological method, when we describe

> The forms of different utterances, of the isolated speech acts strict-ly related to the interaction of which they are elements, that is, the categories of speech acts in life and in ideological creation that are determined by verbal interaction. (Bakhtin/Voloshinov, 1929, p. 124)

It is important to highlight that themes, their meaning effects and com-positional forms of class are central to the appropriation of discourses that students can make in the learning process, because they correspond to the ways of teaching and to the ideological refraction about the teaching object determined by the different voices that are present in utterances. The *style* of the *genres* and of the *authors* of utterances (authors of school books, the teacher, the students) are also very important to the meaning effects. In this sense, the choice of genres that teachers have made to merge in dialogic class is not a neutral one, as nothing is neutral in language use. To choose orders and instructions in local sequences (Batista, 1997) is to adopt a genre style similar to military style, which demands a reception attitude of acceptance, of obedi-ence, of revoicing, i.e., an *authoritative style*. On the other hand, the adjacent pair question-answer often viewed by the interaction research as an authorita-tive style (I-R-A pattern), depending on the type of question we make and on the type of answer we induce, can adopt an *internally persuasive style* that suggests an active reply of the students. For instance, WH-questions ("who?", "when?", where?") tend to induce revoicing whereas questions or instructions like "how?", "why?", "explain," "justify" tend to induce active reply. At this point, we are at the third moment of analytical method suggested by Bakhtin/Voloshinov (1929, p. 124): "the examination of linguistic forms in its com-mon interpretation."

In spite of the shortness of the analysis we believe we have presented, consid-ering the limits of this paper, we hope we have succeeded in showing how the interdisciplinary analysis of dialogic class previously shown can be reconfigured and articulated in an object, not multiple, but complex on the grounds of the Circle's speech genre theory. In the following and last section, we will conclude this paper discussing why this type of analysis is a transdisciplinary one, from an

internal and an external point of view.

CONCLUSION—TRANSDISCIPLINARY APPROACH AS A *VI-SION SURPLUS*

From an internal point of view, the presented analysis can be first called trans-disciplinary, as already stated, because viewing class as a complex enunciative chain which brings in an also complex genre makes it possible for us to recon-struct the vision of the object in the AL field based on a specific *language* theory capable of examining *language in use* in *discursive school practices.* The selected theory—understanding the ideological echoes in didactic utterances—is power-ful enough to be applied to reduce "suffering deprivation" at school, to make quality of life better there. So, by allowing the reconstruction of the object in the specific field of AL, the theory keeps the dialog with the constructs of other disciplines, but also produces its own knowledge.

Changing now to an external perspective, able to reach a *vision surplus*, we ask: why and where is this analysis not a mere application of Bakhtinian con-cepts to a new object? Why is it not a mere applicationist exercise of "ordinary science"?

A simple—but not simplistic—answer calls for pointing to the fact that the Circle had never examined the genres of this sphere of activity and that, as a re-sult, in the Circle's work there are very few passages where they mention school utterances, genres or discourse. Because it is a simple answer, it is not sufficient. A stronger answer may be suggesting that the analysis of school dialog or dialog-ic class, i.e., of classroom conversation (Interactional Sociolinguistics, Ethnogra-phy of Communication), can increase or even review the Bakhtinian approach of dialog as genre. Consequently, it is powerful enough even to reconfigure some Bakhtinian analysis.

Usually, when early Circle's works refer to dialog, they are either referring to the broader "social dialog" between utterances as it is configured in dialogism or dealing with the concept of daily dialog, which at this time begins to be studied[25]. Bakhtin/Voloshinov (1929), for instance, sustains that "the replies [of dialog] are grammatically separated rather than integrated in a unique context" (p. 147), or that

> There are no grammatical ties between them [the units of internal speech], as well as between the replies of a dialog; ties of another order rule them. . . . They are tied and subsequent not by the rules of logic or grammar, but following the laws of *appreciative convergence* (emotional), of *dialog concatenation*, etc. . . . in a nar-row dependency on social situation historical conditions and on all the pragmatic course of existence. (Bakhtin/Voloshinov, 1929,

pp. 63-64)

Therefore, in 1929, the Circle tends to view indistinctly the replies of the dialog and the dialog itself as genre; it is not very clear how they are related. In the text of 1952-53/1986, the approach of dialog moves forward:

> Because of its simplicity and clarity, dialogue is a classic form of speech communication. Each rejoinder, regardless of how brief and abrupt, has a specific quality of completion that expresses a particular position of the speaker, to which one may respond or may assume, with respect to it, a *responsive position* . . . . But at the same time rejoinders are all linked to one another. (p. 72)

Nevertheless, they do not make explicit the type of existing relation between different replies and they do not even view these replies as integrated or merged in a complex genre—the dialog. They only exemplify these relations as "relations between question and answer, assertion and objection, assertion and agreement, suggestion and acceptance, order and execution, and so forth" (p. 72).

As a result, as affirmed by Bakhtin/Voloshinov (1929) himself, it seems that the study of the forms of dialog in different spheres of activity and ranges can bring new theoretical elaborations that are of interest to the Bakhtinian enunciative theory itself.

Therefore, to see how dialogic class chains together rejoinders-utterances that, however, are organized in a form and a style that attend to a unifying enunciative project or will can theoretically contribute in a new and productive way to the disciplinary theory adopted. Further, this perspective shows how the will is related to the sphere's determinations and is also a determining factor of an architectonic that suffers a returning influence of form and style, constituting a complex genre—the classroom dialogue or the dialogic class.

NOTES

[1] As Moita-Lopes (2006) says, ***in**disciplinary*.

[2] In the sense of Giddens (1991). The author does not follow the orientation of some others that name contemporary society "postmodern" or "post-industrial." On the contrary, he prefers the terms "high or late modernity," to indicate that the dynamic principles of modernity are still present in actual reality. So, high modernity, late modernity or reflexive modernity are defined by the author as a post-traditional order that instead of disrupting modern parameters makes their basic characteristics more radical and enhanced.

[3] Italo Calvino speaks about the nexus between *desired levitation* and *deprivation suffered* as an anthropological constant in societies.

[4] All translations of Brazilian authors from Portuguese to English are my

responsibility.

⁵ In its 90ᵗʰ year, the Brazilian Ministry of Education has redefined its orientation for Basic Education, publishing some official documents—the National Curriculum Parameters—addressed to Primary (PCN) and Secondary Education (High School, PCNEM). The latter, the documents addressed to Secondary Education (High School) were complemented by some explanatory documents and orientations (OCEM, PCN+), due to its concise nature.

⁶ In Latin *complexus*, past participle of *complecti* means "to comprise, to enclose, to understand." "It applies to a group/collection of parts, viewed as a more or less coherent whole, whose components function in a number of relations of interdependency or subordination which are very often difficult to understand and that generally present multiple aspects" (Houaiss, 2001, p. 776).

⁷ Obviously, disciplinary theories only can function as a *vision surplus* if there are ethical relations. "The interdisciplinary approach involves interest and respect for the other's voice, interest to listen to what the other says in order to see how his ideas match with one's own perspectives. As Tannen (w/d) says, at university, the most common practice is to listen the other to destruct his argument as we do in private life when we are upset with someone" (Moita-Lopes, 1998, p. 117).

⁸ Calvino (1988).

⁹ "Dialogic class" here refers initially to the classroom interaction shaped in speech turns. Later, we will redefine "dialogic class" as the classroom discourse constituted by a complex set of genres packaged as a larger genre or a genre system. Evidently, with the "expository class" we need another type of analysis, closer to the "academic conference" analysis (see Rojo & Schneuwly, 2006).

¹⁰ All translations of this text from Portuguese to English are my responsibility.

¹¹ For instance, when they compare the completion of poetic genres and of the utterances of other ideological spheres as the scientific or religious one (Bakhtin/Medvedev, 1928, pp. 129-130).

¹² "Poetics should really begin with *genre*, not end with it. For *genre* is the typical form of the whole work, the whole utterance" (Bakhtin/Medvedev, 1928, p. 129, added emphasis).

¹³ "The formalists usually define genre as a certain constant, specific grouping of devices with a defined dominant. Since the basic devices had already been defined, genre was mechanically seen as being composed of devices. Therefore, the formalists did not understand the real meaning of genre" (Bakhtin/Medvedev, 1928, p. 129).

¹⁴ Later in the same text, the author will show that also *quoted discourse*, i.e., "the forms to transmit the character discourses," is able to cause this same

hybridism and mix of accents and voices, but in this case showing formal and syntactic marks of the frontiers between the utterances of each speaker (Bakhtin, 1935-35/1981, p. 320).

[15] A good example of generic hybrid construction that resounds different accents and voices is popular songs. For instance, "My dear friend" by Chico Buarque de Hollanda (1976), which is, at the same time and without frontiers or rupture between utterances, a letter, a poem, lyrics and a song.

[16] According to Bakhtin, *voices* are always ideological perspectives, index of evaluative appreciation.

[17] To Bakhtin, this double-voiced discourse only is *polyphonic* if there is ideological conflict between voices.

[18] He does also the same kind of distinction between *theme* and *thematic content*.

[19] Our translation.

[20] *Elementarization* is defined as the process to divide complex objects into small and simple parts to simplify the teaching topics and constitutes the lower levels of didactic activities' analysis in the synopsis (1.1., 1.1.1.).

[21] To Gumperz (*apud* Prevignano & Di Luzio, 1995, pp. 7-10), *speech events* are defined as "interactively constituted, culturally framed encounters, and not attempt to explain talk as directly reflecting the norms, beliefs and values of communities seen as disembodied, hypothetically uniform wholes. To look at talk as it occurs in speech events is to look at communicative practices. . . . [It is] sequentially bounded units, marked off from others in the recorded data by some degree of thematic coherence and by beginnings and ends detectable through co-occurring shifts in content, prosody, tempo or other formal markers."

[22] In the Bakhtinian sense of thematic content of utterances, not cleaned of its ideological refractions and reflections, of its evaluative accents.

[23] Our translation.

[24] In Latin: route, trip, march.

[25] For instance, by L. P. Iakubinski, "O dialoguítcheskoi rietchi" (About dialogic discourse), in *Rússkaia rietch* (The Russian speech), Petrograd, 1923.

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