Working with orality in teaching practice /
O trabalho com a oralidade na prática docente

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ABSTRACT

This essay aims to discuss the speech-writing continuum in teaching practice, highlighting the representation of orality in the conversational activity. The research examines the importance of the oral modality of language in teaching, rejecting the idea that writing is superior to speech (Brasil/MEC, 1998; Marcuschi, 2010; Fávero et al., 2005). To this purpose, it analyzes pedagogical practices and textual genres, arguing that orality is an interactive social practice for communicative purposes and manifests itself in various textual genres and contexts of use. Simultaneously, it states that writing is a mode of textual-discursive production, characterized by its graphic constitution. The essay emphasizes the need to incorporate the oral modality into the various social fields and stresses the importance of expanding these practices. It concludes that there is still a lack of practices focused on orality in schools, justified by the belief that oral uses of the language are automatically acquired in everyday life. The research recommends a pedagogical approach that integrates speaking and writing, recognizing their differences and unique contributions to effective communication. It suggests a reorientation of teaching practices to broaden students' communicative-interactional skills, enabling them to meet social linguistic demands with competence.
KEYWORDS: Orality; Speech; Writing; Practice; Teacher.

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RESUMO

Este ensaio tem como objetivo refletir sobre o continuum fala-escrita na prática docente, destacando a representação da oralidade na atividade conversacional. A pesquisa discute a importância da modalidade oral da língua no ensino, rejeitando a ideia de que a escrita é superior à fala (Brasil/MEC, 1998; Marcuschi, 2010; Fávero et al., 2005). Para tal fim, analisa práticas pedagógicas e gêneros textuais, argumentando que a oralidade é uma prática social interativa para fins comunicativos e se manifesta em diversos gêneros textuais e contextos de uso. Ao mesmo tempo, defende que a escrita é um modo de produção textual-discursiva, caracterizada por sua constituição gráfica. O ensaio salienta a necessidade de incorporar a modalidade oral nos diversos campos sociais e ressalta a importância da expansão dessas práticas. Conclui-se que há, ainda, uma carência de práticas voltadas para a oralidade nas escolas, justificada pela crença de que os usos orais da língua são automaticamente adquiridos no dia a dia. A pesquisa recomenda uma abordagem pedagógica que integre oralidade e escrita, reconhecendo suas diferenças e contribuições únicas para a comunicação eficaz. Sugere-se uma reorientação das práticas docentes para ampliar as competências comunicativo-interacionais dos alunos, permitindo-lhes atender às demandas linguísticas sociais com competência.
PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Oralidade; Fala; Escrita; Prática; Docente.

1 Introduction

Research by various authors (Brasil/Mec, 1998; Marcuschi, 2010; Fávero et al, 2005) states that opening up schools to the oral modality of language allows speech and writing to be placed on an equal footing in terms of their status of importance, a fact which helps to mitigate the view that the latter is superior to the former. In fact, we often come across mistaken views to the effect that speech has negative properties and writing has privileged properties. This is inconceivable, since speech and writing are modes of language representation that are presented in specific practices of use. According to Marcuschi (2010, p. 35): "[...] to postulate some supremacy or superiority of either of the two modalities would be a mistaken view, since it cannot be said that speech is superior to writing or vice versa"[1].

This view of the supremacy of one language modality over the other did not arise arbitrarily; there was a motivation for it to exist. From a chronological point of view, speech precedes writing; however, from the point of view of social prestige, this is not the "logical" sequence, since writing is taken as an object of social valorization. In this way, we're not just referring to linguistic parameters here; it's much more about an ideological position.

Another problem identified as generating this mistaken and sometimes prejudiced view lies in the choice of inadequate methodology, in which speech is seen from the perspective of writing, based on a grammar produced with the aim of establishing rules for the code, which has

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[1]Free translation by the author. In the original language, Brazilian Portuguese: "[...] postular alguma supremacia ou superioridade de alguma das duas modalidades seria uma visão equivocada, pois não se pode afirmar que a fala é superior à escrita ou vice-versa" (Marcuschi, 2010, p. 35).

resulted in a widely disseminated view of writing as structurally elaborate, complex and formal, and of speech as structurally simple, chaotic, unstructured and rudimentary.

Regarding these modalities, Marcuschi reminds us of two important assumptions: firstly, "speaking and writing are communicative activities and situated social practices" and secondly[2]: "in both cases we have a real use of language" (2003, p. 21). Thus, in agreement with the linguist in this respect

> orality would be an interactive social practice for communicative purposes that presents itself in various forms or textual genres based on sound reality; it ranges from a more informal to a more formal realization in the most varied contexts of use... [Writing, in turn, shows us that] it is a mode of textual-discursive production for communicative purposes with certain material specificities and is characterized by its graphic constitution. (Marcuschi, 2003, p. 25-26)[3].

We can observe that the author has convinced us that writing, regardless of the context in which it is used, is a language modality that complements speech and is represented in graphic form, as opposed to orality, which is represented in terms of sound.

Faced with this reality, we are faced with social demands that require the use of the oral modality in various social fields and it is of fundamental importance to consider not only the implementation, but also the expansion of this context in schools and beyond their walls, with activities that contribute to the expansion of students' proficiency in orality, so that they can competently contemplate social linguistic needs.

Even in the context of such importance, it is not difficult to deduce the value that has been attributed to orality in the classroom, as we are faced with an almost non-existence of orality practices at school (Marcuschi, 2003; Magalhães, 2005/2006, Antunes, 2003), and this almost non-existence is justified by the naive belief that the oral uses of language are already contemplated in everyday life and do not need to be part of the content covered at school.

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[2]Free translation by the author. In the original language, Brazilian Portuguese "fala e escrita são atividades comunicativas e práticas sociais situadas" e segundo: "em ambos os casos temos um uso real da língua" (Marcuschi, 2003, p. 21).

[3]Free translation by the author. In the original language, Brazilian Portuguese "a oralidade seria uma prática social interativa para fins comunicativos que se apresenta sob variadas formas ou gêneros textuais fundados na realidade sonora; ela vai desde uma realização mais informal à mais formal nos mais variados contextos de uso... [a escrita por sua vez nos mostra que] seria um modo de produção textual-discursiva para fins comunicativos com certas especificidades materiais e se caracterizaria por sua constituição gráfica" (Marcuschi, 2003, p. 25-26).

As a result, we find ourselves with a lack of activities aimed at working with orality and when this does happen, we notice that activities are centered around informal orality genres, restricted to the informal register, such as "conversations with colleagues" and "exchange of ideas", without, however, giving priority to a more consistent analysis of the oral genres of public conversation, which require more formal registers, with more rigid lexical choices and textual patterns (Antunes, 2003). Thus, despite orality being so present in everyday life, it is still forgotten in school work and left aside as if it were irrelevant.

This position has been criticized by Dolz, Schneuwly e Haller (2004, p. 125):

> Although oral language is very much present in classrooms (in everyday routines, reading instructions, correcting exercises, etc.), it is often claimed that it is not taught, except incidentally, during diverse and poorly controlled activities. As didacticians, sociologists, linguists and teacher trainers have pointed out [...], the school teaching of oral language and its use currently occupies a limited place[4].

The authors clearly state that many teachers limit the teaching of orality in the classroom. But for many teachers, coming up with a teaching proposal, in a situated context, with the aim of addressing this language modality in the classroom is not an easy task, since many of them have not been prepared for this reality. What we often see is the teacher's attitude of ignoring the chapters in the textbooks about a particular oral genre, with the justification that there are "more relevant" things to work on in the classroom, as if the issue of orality didn't have the same importance as writing.

What we have seen is a reality that is still present in Brazilian schools: that orality has been little explored in Portuguese language teaching. Antunes (2003) questions how to achieve a school that fulfills its social role, aiming at the full and conscious exercise of its citizenship. To do this, it is essential to focus on the teacher's actions in the classroom. It is therefore necessary "first and foremost to have the determination, will and commitment to want to change. This presupposes a broad, well-founded, planned, systematic and participatory action (of public policies - federal, state and municipal - of teachers as a class and of each teacher in particular)" (Antunes, 2003, p. 33-34), associated with a reorientation of teaching practice, with the teacher guided by a conception

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[4] Free translation by the author. In the original language, Brazilian Portuguese "Embora a linguagem oral esteja bastante presente nas salas de aula (nas rotinas cotidianas, na leitura de instruções, na correção de exercícios etc.), afirma-se frequentemente que ela não é ensinada, a não ser incidentalmente, durante atividades diversas e pouco controladas. Assim como denunciam didatas, sociólogos, linguistas e formadores de professores [...], o ensino escolar da língua oral e de seu uso ocupa atualmente um lugar limitado" (Dolz; Schneuwly & Haller, 2004, p. 125):

of language that underpins its objectives (what do we teach for?) through procedures (how do we teach?), aiming for a result: the expansion of the student's communicative-interactional competences in the various contexts of language use in its oral modality.

The development of these skills is based on some characteristics which, according to Antunes (2003), serve to intervene in the work with orality, in order to accept its interactional character and its realization in different genres and textual registers.

We'll start by mentioning that orality should be oriented towards global coherence, so that the student can recognize the thematic unit that makes up the text; it should be oriented towards the articulation between topics and subtopics of the interaction, based on the use of cohesive elements (such as repetitions, substitutions for synonyms, hyperonyms, semantic associations between words and conjunctions); it should be oriented towards its specificities, so that it is clear that speech is not opposed to writing, but that these modalities have similarities and differences; it should be oriented towards the variety of types and genres of oral discourse, since oral texts take the form of various genres and types and in various more or less formal contexts, and students need to be able to adjust to the various situations of interaction in oral discourse; it should be oriented towards facilitating social interaction, since it concerns the roles played by the interlocutors at the moment of interaction, in relation to the order of speech and who can interrupt, oriented towards recognizing the role of intonation, pauses and other supra-segmental resources in constructing the meaning of the text, bearing in mind that in addition to the morphosyntactic and semantic aspects of the text, there are others of a supra-segmental nature (intonation, pauses, hesitations, truncations, lengthening of vowels or consonants, syllabication, etc.), which help to construct meaning and the intended intention.), which help to construct meaning and the intended intention; oriented towards developing the ability to listen attentively and respectfully to the most different types of interlocutors, which means paying attention to listening to the other, listening carefully to what the other is saying. (Antunes, 2003).

In this way, there is no longer any room for the teacher who is merely a passive repeater. They need to be fully aware of the importance of well-founded theory over well-articulated practice, so that the two are mutually integrated. As well as being an educator, the Portuguese teacher must also be a linguist and a researcher, someone who observes, studies, reflects on and evaluates the facts of language, with the aim of creating, inventing and reinventing their way of approaching and explaining them, making their work more productive and relevant.

As you can see, there is a lot to do in mother tongue classes. Giving importance to what really matters is essential. Thus, if we pay attention to all these pedagogical implications, we will be presupposing knowledge and content that can and should be discussed in the classroom, anchored in texts and consistent reflections based on textual genres within a speech-writing continuum, which is what we will see in the following topic.

2 Relevant aspects for understanding the speech-writing continuum

The teaching of orality cannot be thought of as "divorced" from writing, since they have a mutual relationship. In this way, it becomes impractical to consider orality without reflecting on its relationship with writing, disregarding its uses in everyday life, since both are indispensable for interaction in society, from the most to the least formal contexts. Marcuschi (2004) enlightens us on these important concepts:

> Speech would be a form of textual-discursive production for communicative purposes in the oral modality [...] It is characterized by the use of language in its form of systematically articulated and meaningful sounds, as well as prosodic aspects, also involving a series of expressive resources of another order, such as gestures, body movements and mimicry.
> Writing would be a mode of textual-discursive production for communicative purposes with certain material specificities and would be characterized by its graphic constitution, although it also involves pictorial resources [...]. (Marcuschi, p.25-26)[5]

Speech and writing go far beyond their formal, structural and semiological aspects, representing language as a code in its sound and graphic aspects. Speech and writing here encompass all textual-discursive manifestations of the oral and written modalities, respectively. It's about going beyond the oral or the graphic, it's about broadening the reflection with regard to discursive and communicative aspects, it's much more about processes and events than products.

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[5]Free translation by the author. In the original language, Brazilian Portuguese: "A fala seria uma forma de produção textual-discursiva para fins comunicativos na modalidade oral [...] Caracteriza-se pelo uso da língua na sua forma de sons sistematicamente articulados e significativos, bem como aspectos prosódicos, envolvendo, ainda, uma série de recursos expressivos de outra ordem, tal como a gestualidade, os movimentos do corpo e a mímica.
A escrita seria um modo de produção textual-discursiva para fins comunicativos com certas especificidades materiais e se caracterizaria por sua constituição gráfica, embora envolva também recursos de ordem pictórica [...]"(Marcuschi, p.25-26).

It is no longer news that speech and writing are two forms of language which, although they use the same linguistic system, have their own characteristics, i.e. writing is not merely a transcription of speech, as many people think it is (Koch; Elias, 2009). There are many studies and trends that focus on the relationship between speech and writing. Among these trends are the dichotomy perspective, the culturalist phenomenological trend, the variationist perspective and the socio-interactionist perspective (Marcuschi, 2010) - which interests us in this essay.

The socio-interactionist perspective treats speech and writing from a dialogical, interactive and dynamic perspective with regard to the uses of language and is based on a discursive and interpretive line of thought on the relationship between orality and literacy.

Table 1: Speaking and writing

Fala e Escrita apresentam
dialogicity
strategic uses
interactional functions
engagement
negotiation
situacionality
coherence
dynamism

Available at: Marcuschi (2010, p. 33).

Despite realizing that this perspective is not immune to problems, Marcuschi recognizes that it is fertile ground for the analysis of textual-discursive organization strategies in spoken and written language, since it is concerned with the processes of producing meaning in the text, without disregarding its socio-historical context, taking linguistic categories that are constructed interactively and sensitive to the cultural factor. This perspective is also concerned with the analysis of textual genres and their uses in a situated way, perceiving, from cognitive phenomena and textualization processes, whether in orality or in writing, the development of the production of coherence as an action of the reader/listener in the text.

The relationship between speech and writing is not so clear and evident, since it reflects a constant dynamism that is revealed between these two modalities of language, since "the differences between speech and writing occur within a typological continuum of the social practices

of textual production and not in the dichotomous relationship of two poles [...]"[6] (Marcuschi, 2010, p. 37).

Marcuschi (2004) draws up a graph representing these relationships:

Graphic 1 - Representation of the continuum of textual genres in speech and writing[7]
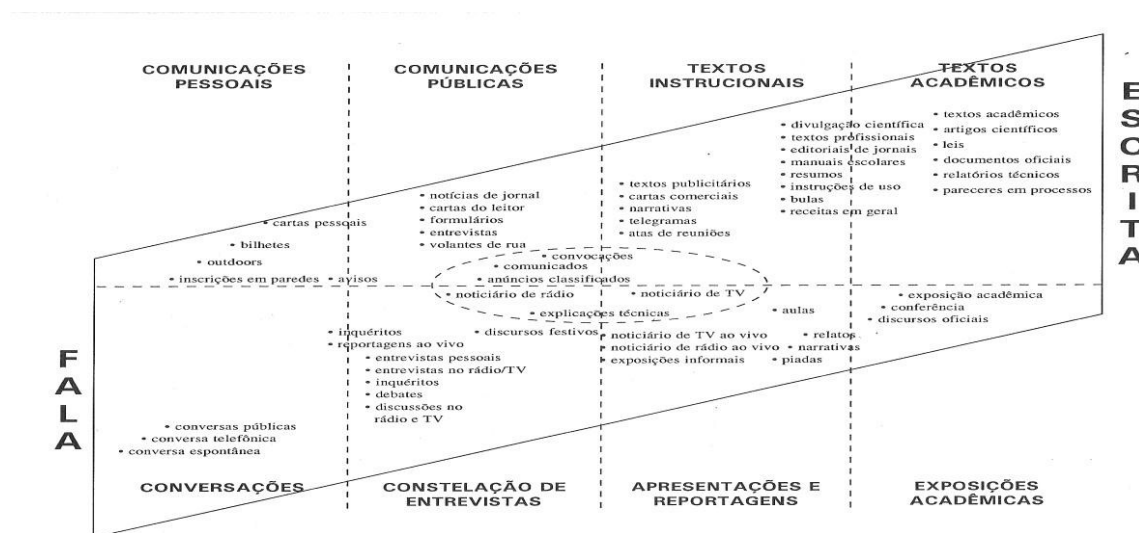
The author groups the genres, both oral and written, suggesting them along the continuum, in an attempt to fit them into their respective spheres of social or institutional life, called discursive domains by the linguist. The scholar draws attention to the intermediate circle in the center of the graph and points to some genres that are difficult to locate in the modalities presented. These genres, from the point of view of modality, are called mixed or hybrid.

The relevant aspects for observing the relationship between speaking and writing need to be seen and analyzed based on the uses of language and not exclusively on the system of the linguistic code, pointing to a continuously gradual distinction. This will reveal a non-dichotomous view of language, in that it will show that the manifestations of speech and writing take place on a continuum of textual genres.

Even in the face of a vast theoretical framework, various studies and reflections pointed out by various researchers, about new methodologies for teaching Portuguese Language (LP), in which

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[6] Free translation by the author. In the original language, Brazilian Portuguese: "as diferenças entre fala e escrita se dão dentro de um continuum tipológico das práticas sociais de produção textual e não na relação dicotômica de dois pólos [...]."(Marcuschi, 2010, p. 37).

[7] The referred Graphic is written in the original language, Brazilian Portuguese. Available at: Marcuschi (2010, p. 41).

the intention is to base language teaching on a solid theory, capable of encompassing, not the predominance of a metalinguistic study, with an end in itself, of innocuous content and practices of grammatical exercises of inconsistent and sterile analysis, with only the cultured norm being valued as the only "allowed" variety, but above all, a methodology that shows the existence of a plurality of discourses and, in this way, brings the text, in whatever form, to the center of the entire classroom process in discourse-based LP teaching, whose focus is reflection on the use of language. In the next subsection we will reflect on the representation of orality in the conversational activity.

3 Representation of orality: organization of conversational activity

Analyzing how conversation takes place is of fundamental importance for spoken language studies. According to Fávero, Andrade and Aquino (2012), conversation is defined as an activity aimed at interaction between two or more interlocutors who constantly alternate on a given topic, with their speeches organized in alternating turns without a fixed setting, which distinguishes between symmetrical and asymmetrical encounters. While the former is reflected in the interlocutor who has the privilege of the floor, and is responsible for initiating the dialogue, leading it and changing the topicalization, the latter is reflected in both interlocutors who have the rights to take the floor, choose the discursive topic, direct it and define the time for participating.

Conversation is structured on two different levels: local and global. While the first establishes the conversation through turns, with interlocutors who alternate and develop their speech, and may contain hesitations, overlapping or assault of turns, the second, in addition to establishing the organization described in the first, establishes global rules that need to be respected in textual formulation, especially with regard to the conduct of the discursive topic, because even if it is diverted (digression) within the discursive interaction, soon after the interlocutors try to resume it.

However, it should be made clear that, according to Fávero, Andrade and Aquino (2012), conversational text is made up of four basic elements: the turn, the discourse topic, the conversational markers and the adjacency pair.

A turn is taken to be the production of a speaker while he or she is speaking, including the probability of silence, with the interlocutors alternating roles, either speaking or listening, i.e. any intervention by the participants during the interaction. A discursive topic is defined as the general meaning of the subject addressed in the sequence of turns. According to Aquino (1991), it

is "the meaning constructed while speaking and also generated by activities which mobilize it and mark its segments"[8] (p. 65-66).

Conversational markers are taken not only as verbal elements, but also as prosodic elements with an interactional function, produced by both the speaker and the listener. They are:

(i) Prosodic markers, which include intonation adjacencies (ascending [↑], descending [↓], constant [→]); pauses (silent or filled); pitch, rhythm, speed, vowel or consonant lengthening, etc;

(ii) Non-linguistic or paralinguistic markers which have the function of establishing, maintaining and regulating contact between the interlocutors. These include laughter, glances, gestures, etc;

(iii) Prosodic or suprasegmental resources which, although linguistic in nature, are non-verbal. These include pauses, elongations and tone of voice;

(iv) Verbal markers, which include a variety of particles, words, syntagms, stereotyped expressions and clauses of various types. Marcuschi (1987) proposes a subdivision into four groups:

1) Simple marker: made up of a single word: interjection, adverb, verb, adjective, conjunction, pronoun, etc. E.g.: now, then, there, pick up, sure.

2) Compound marker: displays a syntagmatic character converging to the stagnation of the term.
E.g.: then from there, then afterwards, I mean, let's put it this way..

3) Orational marker: this takes the form of short clauses that are presented in a variety of tenses and verb forms or orational modes (assertive, inquiring, exclamatory).
E.g.: I think, I mean, so I think.

4) Prosodic marker: this is part of a verbal marker, but is realized through prosodic resources. This group includes intonation, pauses, hesitation, tone of voice, etc.

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[8] Free translation by the author. In the original language, Brazilian Portuguese:" o sentido construído enquanto se fala e gerado, também, por atividades as quais o mobilizam e marcam os seus segmentos" (Aquino,1991, p. 65-66).

Conversational markers, as well as being elements of articulation in conversational texts, guaranteeing the cohesive linking of words and expressions, ensure the continued development of the linear sequence. Another function worth highlighting is that these markers try to fulfill, in a way, the role of punctuation in speech. In this way, they promote the direction and permanence of the discursive topic, establishing the conversational link between the interlocutors, insofar as they provide a dynamic performance that keeps the interaction going (Fávero, Andrade & Aquino, 2012).

The adjacency pair is considered the basic element of interaction. These are types of dialogic pairs that indicate one of the units for studying conversational text (question-answer, invitation-acceptance or refusal, request-agreement or refusal, greeting-salutation). It can be established as an introductory element of the discursive topic, organizing the conversation and controlling the connection within actions.

Among the pairs presented, we will focus on the question-answer adjacency pair (henceforth, P-R), since it is the most used in discursive activities. According to Fávero, Andrade and Aquino (2012), the adjacency pair and the discursive topic are deeply related, in those topics organize conversation and these topics can be established through adjacency pairs. Thus, P and R do not appear randomly in conversation, they are strategies used by the interlocutors and can serve to:

(i)   Topic introduction - When starting a conversation, it's common for speakers not only to start it with a P, but also to use other Ps when introducing new super-topics. This strategy is recurrent in order to establish the introduction of the first topic to be developed by the interlocutors.

(ii)   (ii) Topic continuity - In order to continue a certain topic, Ps and Rs are also used. The development of the topic depends on the nature of the P formulated, since it can appear with the purpose of asking for information, clarification or confirmation.

(iii)   Topic redirection - When the interlocutors notice the deviation from the initial topic, they can redirect it through a P, reintroducing the initial topic.

(iv)   Change of topic - This strategy occurs because the topic is exhausted, or simply because you don't want to talk about it any more. A P can occur, leading to a change of topic. This change can be at a local level (change of subtopic) or at a global level (change of supertopic).

According to Fávero, Andrade and Aquino (2012), we will now present situations that trigger some problems in understanding these oral interactions. These are: hesitations, paraphrases, repetitions and corrections.

(i) Hesitation - this situation is classified as a "problem" that is perceived at the moment of its formulation, which is characterized by what comes afterwards, i.e. the speaker hesitates, sometimes stutters, until he finds a suitable term for the desired purpose.

(ii) Paraphrase - this is the reformulation (good or bad, in whole or in part) of something that has already been said, but which seeks to maintain a relationship of equivalent meanings. This formulation activity always refers to a text produced previously, with the aim of reaffirming or clarifying it, thus showing a link of intertextuality.

(iii) Repetition - according to Marcuschi (1996), this process is one of the most common formulation activities in orality. It can take on various functions, including the organization of what is said and the maintenance of textual coherence, as well as the organization of topics and the development of more comprehensible sequences.

(iv) Correction - this formulation activity is based on the reformulation of a previously constructed utterance considered to be "wrong". It is a retrospective formulation, since the speaker has the opportunity to use a structure they have just produced and reformulate it in a more satisfactory way.

As you can notice, formulation activities play a fundamental role in the constitutive process of spoken texts, since the speaker resorts to these activities in order to formulate processes for the development of their own constructions and also those of their interlocutor. This is fertile ground for reflecting on the various literacy practices, based on social contexts situated socio-historically. This approach has brought with it many contributions to language teaching.

Brief Considerations

This essay has presented the reasons why it is important to approach oral genres in the classroom. In this sense, we brought a discussion about orality to mother tongue classes, given that, in most cases, the school relegates this work to the background. We looked at the continuum of the speech/writing relationship and the way in which conversational text is organized, taking into

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account that both speech and writing have "their own way of organizing, developing and transmitting information, which allows them to be taken as specific phenomena" (Marcuschi, 1993, p. 4).

It should be noted that studies on language teaching have been highlighted on the Brazilian scene, with their attention no longer focused on classificatory, prescriptive and decontextualized teaching, but on teaching that privileges the interactional and discursive dimension of language, based on an approach focused on teaching genres in the classroom. This paradigm shift has the precondition of preparing students to master the language, with the aim of participating actively and critically in everything that happens around them.

As you can see, formulation activities play a fundamental role in the process of forming more formal spoken texts, since the speaker uses these activities to formulate processes for developing their own constructions and also the constructions of their interlocutor. It is important to note that the school must enter the spaces in which students move around with intense skill, resourcefulness, familiarity and motivation - using this to support a methodology that inserts them into more formal contexts of language use.

So, when we refer to the speech-writing continuum, what we are really looking for is a reflection by the teacher on the practices, training and theoretical contributions used to update them, which reverberate in their teaching practice, in their discourse without prejudice, in their classes, focusing on all the axes of Portuguese language teaching.

In this way, the results obtained in this study allow us to affirm that the role of the school is precisely to provide students with experiences aimed at their insertion into activities for social advancement. It is to provide opportunities with the literate world, from a simple informal conversation to the preparation of scientific texts; from basic family experience, such as an order, to the experience of talking to an authority, taking into account the relationship between the text itself and its purpose, its communicative purpose, its support and, above all, its ideology.

In this way, knowing how to present a scientific paper in an oral communication, or participating in a study group and interacting with it, represents having the opportunity to ascend socially; knowing how to listen to a news report and weave your own points of view, represents observing the world in a critical way. This is exactly what is required of students: literacy. By this, we don't mean that teachers have a cloudless sky; on the contrary, they need to recognize that there are many "stones in the middle of the road", however, it is their fundamental role to remove

all these obstacles that have hindered the continuity of their journey, especially with regard to the oral modality of the language.

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