



GENRE-BASED APPROACH POSSIBILITIES IN AN ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSE FOR BRAZILIAN ADULT LEARNERS¹

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Abstract: Language can be understood as a dialogic phenomenon that is fundamentally based on the discursive and interactional relationship between speakers (Voloshinov, 1986). In each context of human activity in which language is a constituent, it tends to settle into stable discursive forms, with specific conventions, which are called speech genres (Bakhtin, 1986). Thus, when considering the application of these ideas to the field of language teaching and learning, it appears to be pertinent to reflect on the importance of developing language education based on discursive practices (Cristovão, 2001). A possible answer to this issue is the adoption of genre-based approaches to language teaching (Swales, 1990; 1993; Hyland, 2004; 2007; 2019; Marcuschi, 2008; 2010; Tuan, 2011; Dirgeyasa, 2016). This work aims to investigate the effects of the implementation of genre-based approaches on an English as a foreign language course for adult learners. For this, we proposed this qualitative research to analyze the development of two genre-based lesson proposals and students' final productions of genre exemplars. It was possible to observe the use of genre-based pedagogy in these English language classes brought several benefits in terms of lesson outcomes, such as students' engagement in the class and the quality of the final productions. The experience also indicated to be advantageous for students' language learning process, who demonstrated the development of the expected understanding over the genres' conventions.

Keywords: Speech Genres; Genre-based Approaches; English Language Teaching; Adult Learners.

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Resumo: A linguagem pode ser compreendida como um fenômeno dialógico que se baseia fundamentalmente na relação discursiva e interacional entre os falantes (Voloshinov, 1986). Em todo contexto de atividade humana em que a linguagem é um constituinte, ela tende a se acomodar em formas discursivas estáveis, com convenções específicas, que são chamadas de gêneros do discurso (Bakhtin, 1986). Portanto, ao considerar a aplicabilidade dessas ideias ao campo do ensino e da aprendizagem de línguas, mostra-se pertinente refletir sobre a importância de desenvolver uma educação linguística baseada em práticas discursivas (Cristovão, 2001). Uma possível alternativa para sanar essa questão é a adoção de abordagens para o ensino de línguas baseadas em gêneros (Swales, 1990; 1993; Hyland, 2004; 2007; 2019; Marcuschi, 2008; 2010; Tuan, 2011; Dirgeyasa, 2016). Este trabalho tem como objetivo investigar os efeitos da implementação de abordagens baseadas em gêneros em um curso de inglês como língua estrangeira para alunos adultos. Para tanto, propusemos, nesta pesquisa de cunho qualitativo, analisar o desenvolvimento de duas propostas de aulas baseadas em gêneros discursivos, bem como as produções de exemplares de gêneros realizados pelos alunos. Foi possível observar que o uso de uma prática de ensino baseada em gêneros nas aulas de inglês trouxe diversos benefícios em relação aos resultados das aulas, como o engajamento dos alunos nas atividades e a qualidade das produções finais. Essa experiência mostrou-se vantajosa para o processo de aprendizagem dos alunos, que demonstraram desenvolver a compreensão esperada sobre as convenções relacionadas aos gêneros.

Palavras-chave: Gêneros do discurso; abordagens baseadas em gêneros; ensino de inglês; alunos adultos

1. INTRODUCTION

It is not exactly recent the theoretical framework that elicits language by its communicative sphere, as an element based on human social contexts of verbal interaction, and not only by its formal and linguistic elements instead (Hymes, 1972). Such a concept, broadly known as Communicative Competence, has been developed and brought many important clarifications over the nature of human language. Certainly, this would not be faced indifferently by scholars in the area of Foreign Language Teaching. Its appeal for a teaching practice that proposes to bring real-life communication to the classroom and aims to develop linguistic fluency would occasionally find wide acceptance among Language Education scholars. It provoked debates that brought up transformation in the field and in the way

Language Teaching and Learning is approached, rather pragmatically and epistemologically (Richards, 2006; Brown; Lee, 2015; Franco; Almeida Filho, 2015; Nunes, 2018).

It is important to conceive language not as a formal and static event, but as a discursive and dynamic event within human interaction. For this, we have to consider what defines language in terms of communication instead of relying only on the idea of formal linguistic aspects as the whole constituents of human speech. This character of language has already been highlighted by Bakhtin (1986) when considering all the diverse human activities are essentially pervaded by the use of language. Bakhtin (1986) presents the difference between the Units of language (words and sentences) and the Unit of Speech Communication, which he names Utterance. Under this perspective, the author defends that language is realized in the form of concrete utterances, oral and written, that are composed by a thematic content, a linguistic style, and a compositional structure which would reflect the specific conditions and goals of the diverse human areas in which they might be inserted. These utterances are developed in relatively stable forms within all the human areas in which language is used, and this is defined as Speech Genres (Bakhtin 1986).

Although all of these conceptions are not particularly recent, some teachers and educational systems still face some difficulties in materializing them in actual language teaching practice. This highlights the necessity for continuing to discuss means to make the classroom an appropriate environment for real communicative practice when it comes to Language Education, which, beyond grammatical instruction and formal linguistic concerns, should be founded on discursive practices (Cristovão, 2001).

For this purpose, it is valuable to consider adopting a genre-based approach to develop students' communicative competence, among other possible benefits. Especially, when we regard the fundamental communicative character of genres as social-cultural forms, that are embodied particularly in language, being dynamic entities of an interactive nature. In other words, human verbal communication can only occur through genres (Marcuschi, 2008). This perspective emphasizes the important role played by speech/textual genres in foreign language teaching practice, to make it possible for students to become communicatively competent.

This article arises from an experience of genre-based lessons, which were developed in an English as a Foreign Language course implemented in the city of Bragança, Pará, Brazil, an urban area located in the northeast of the Amazon region. This course was offered by the Federal University of Pará to the academic community, as an opportunity to develop English language learning. This work is based on the following research question: What benefits the use of a genre-based approach can bring to Brazilian students of English as a Foreign Language? We

propose to analyze students' productions over the development of genre-based lessons. Thus, we mainly aim to discuss possible effects of the use of this approach to the language learning process of Brazilian students, in the context of an English Language course. Our specific objectives are: a) to analyze the concepts of textual genres and genre-based approach in English learning; b) to evaluate students' production of textual genres made in English classes; and c) to elicit eventual advantages of the use of genre-based approach through the data resulting from the lesson analysis. About the outcomes of this research, we hypothesize that the use of a genre-based approach in EFL classes benefits students' learning by bringing them the chance to practice the language through real language use situations as well as keeping them engaged in producing the tasks required throughout its development.

This paper has been divided into three major parts. First, we present the theoretical framework about the concept of Genre and the principles that serve as a base for genre-based approaches. Further, we analyze and discuss the development of two genre-based lessons which are the scenario of this investigation, so as we the genre production made by students. Finally, in the last section of this article, we bring our final considerations about the outcomes of this research.

2. A CONCEPTUAL REVIEW OVER GENRE

Language is essentially a means to interaction. The path on which humans have trodden, as social-historically situated individuals, has been paved by verbal interaction. This leads us to consider how the use of language is defined in terms of communication instead of being conceived as an isolated cognitive event. Under this perspective, Mikhail Bakhtin (1986) proposed the concept of Speech Genres. According to him, "Language is realized in the form of individual concrete utterances (oral and written) by participants in the various areas of human activity" (p. 60). The use of language surrounds all the spheres of human activity, and each sphere develops its own "relatively stable types" of utterances, which may be called Speech Genres. It shows us how language organizes itself into "types" that express specific communicative necessities and objectives according to the context of interaction. For Bakhtin (1986), the basic reality of language is realized in verbal interaction, and not in the abstract linguistic system. Thus, language is realized in real contexts of interaction, i.e., the concrete manifestation of language is a socially situated event that takes place within human activities. This way, language becomes a dialogic entity that emerges at the immediate moment of

communication in the form of utterances that are essentially passive of responsiveness (Bakhtin, 1986; Voloshinov, 1986).

Bakhtin (1986) states that these utterances are defined according to their thematic content, linguistic style, and most importantly, their compositional structure. Those elements represent the terms in which genres can be realized, which demand such endeavor to be analyzed. We shall discuss these features through the following reflection.

The thematic content refers to the subject that is the center of each utterance, which means what themes are commonly seen in the performance of a specific genre. Any context of human interactions demands special attention to “which” language we are using. It is just as inappropriate to use technical or scientific vocabulary when giving instructions to a child as it is to use slang in a business meeting. According to the genre we communicate through, we might use either formal or informal language, and specific lexicon and phraseological resources, this is the linguistic style. All utterances are organized in a way that makes them recognizable as belonging to a specific genre. We can distinguish between a news article and a recipe even if they are talking about the same subject. This is possible because of the elements that are part of the structure of each utterance. It is possible to identify a recipe by observing some elements such as its title, list of ingredients, and procedures. Bakhtin (1986) attests that the specific conditions and objectives of each area, conveyed by a genre, are expressed “above all through their compositional structure” (p. 60).

These features above mentioned are not randomly selected to be part of a genre, they actually reflect the communicative purposes and needs of each context of verbal interaction, inserted within the wide range of human activities. Genres are communicative entities that are realized in the form of an utterance. Utterances, for Bakhtin (1986), are real units of speech communication, and verbal interaction becomes possible through them. This conception sets boundaries between other important elements, which are the units of language (Bakhtin, 1986; Voloshinov, 1986). The units of language, which are the phoneme, morpheme, and syntagma, are part of the abstract linguistic system. These elements also compose discursive communication, and it is important to highlight that “behind each text stands a language system” (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 105).

Genres are understood as linguistic realizations defined in terms of their socio-communicative properties (Marcuschi, 2010). They can only be comprehended within a socio-cultural background, by individuals who share some communication conventions. Considering this, Voloshinov (1976, p. 101) also brings up this reflection by stating that utterances are “like a “password” known only to those who belong to the same social purview”. Its interactional

character as a communicative event is realized and validated in discourse communities by its proficient members, who are able to recognize the pattern of a genre (Swales, 1990; 1993). The participants and the context of use of a genre are highly important to comprehend the genre as a whole. That is the reason why a genre cannot be examined independently of its social context and its relationship with human activities (Marcuschi, 2008). Thus, language, materialized through the utterance, can only be understood considering its concrete contexts of use, such an aspect that is extraverbal. The extraverbal context is important to comprehend the whole event of verbal interaction, which means that “when we cut the utterance off from the real grounds that nurture it, we lose the key to its form as well as to its import-all we have left is an abstract linguistic shell or an equally abstract semantic scheme” (Voloshinov, 1976, p. 105).

The discussion so far leads us to approach speech genres as communicative entities, that differ from the units of language. In fact, it is possible to say that speech genres emerge together with communication, at the moment that units of language take place in the form of concrete utterances in real interactional situations. Genres can only be conceived in a context of concrete communication, which in turn, can only occur through a genre. Thus, Marcuschi (2010) defines textual genres³ as “forms of social action that are unavoidable in any communicative situation” (p. 19)⁴, considering that

it is impossible not to communicate verbally through a genre, just as it is impossible not to communicate verbally through a text. This is because all verbal manifestation always takes place through texts produced in a certain genre. In other words, verbal communication is only possible through a textual genre. Hence the centrality of the notion of textual genre in the socio-interactive discussion of linguistic production (Marcuschi, 2008, p. 154)⁵.

Genres are thus presented as patterns and models of communicative action. The utterances’ conventions are necessary for mutual comprehension in human interaction. Nonetheless, it does not mean that genres are sealed entities. On the other hand, as a communicative agent, they are flexible, plastic, and dynamic (Bakhtin 1986; Marcuschi, 2008).

³ Some authors use different terminology to refer to Genre, such as Speech Genres, Textual Genres, and so on. However, among the authors referenced in this research, there is no significant difference between the ideas concerning the concept of genre, especially when these authors come to the level of exemplification. Considering this, in this work we approach the different terms referred to Genre as synonyms.

⁴ São entidades sócio-discursivas e formas de ação social incontornáveis em qualquer situação comunicativa [original text].

⁵ é impossível não se comunicar verbalmente por algum gênero, assim como é impossível não se comunicar verbalmente por algum texto. Isso porque toda a manifestação verbal se dá sempre por meio de textos realizados em algum gênero. Em outros termos, a comunicação verbal só é possível por algum gênero textual. Daí a centralidade da noção de gênero textual no trato sociointerativo da produção linguística [original text].

Genres are susceptible to change and transformation, either by reason of the specificities of the context in which they are situated, the individuality of the speaker who produces the utterance (which depends on how much this individuality is allowed to manifest through this genre), or also in a quite visible way, because of the social and technological transformations that occur throughout history.

Humanity watched the rise of the telegram post, the letter, the e-mail, and more recently the instant text messages. The knowledge about a special dish could be transmitted whether through a written recipe or direct oral instruction, but nowadays we also have 3-minute online tutorials. This illustrates how genres can emerge, change, fade into oblivion, and even give rise to other genres. Textual genres are not formal entities, but communicative ones, whose analysis and interpretation demand attention to their communicative purpose and the functional aspect of the genre more than its form (Swales, 1990; Marcuschi, 2008).

For a better comprehension of the idea of genre, it is important to point out the delimitation between the genre and the utterance/text. Eventually, these terms are interdependent, which does not necessarily mean that they are the same thing. This would be what Swales (1993) may call a “Gilbert Ryle category mistake”⁶ (p. 688). Under this perspective, the texts that we produce, comprehend, and eventually analyze are conceived as samples of a particular genre, but the text is not the genre itself. Overlooking the existence of this boundary might restrict our comprehension about the topic. The text, as an event of verbal manifestation, is conceived as an act of communication that can only be realized through a genre (Marcuschi, 2008; 2010). These considerations imply saying that “any kind of text can now be qualified in terms of genre, and every copy of a text may thus be considered as belonging to a given genre” (Bronckart, 1997, p. 75)⁷.

Although some scholars use the term “text” to talk about the materialization of a genre, that does not mean that only written utterances are being considered in the research field of genre. Indeed, since the emergence of the Bakhtinian conception of genre, it is emphasized that the idea of utterance, and the most recent ideas of text, include both oral and written

⁶ In his book *The Concept of Mind* (1949), Gilbert Ryle addressed the term “category mistake”, that criticizes Descartes’s dualism theory, which used to rely over the conceptual difference between mind and body. Ryle claims that the concept that the mind functions in a comparable but altogether separate manner to the body is because of a “category mistake”, which can lead us to conceive something as if they belonged to one logical order or category, or a variety of orders or categories, once they actually belong to another. Although this idea is addressed to the field of psychology, it was also approached from the perspective of other areas.

⁷ toute sorte de texte est désormais susceptible d’être qualifiée en terme de genre, et que tout exemplaire de texte peut donc être considéré comme relevant d’un genre déterminé [original text].

manifestations in the discussion. Considering, of course, the particularities that involve the context of production and comprehension of these kinds of speech.

As previously demonstrated, the discussion that surrounds the question of the speech genres took place not recently, however, it still plays an important role in the fields that study language, especially the ones that study language as a communicative act that is socio-historically developed in each environment of human interaction. The conception of genre has been assimilated by the studies of discourse analysis, and even by the field of applied linguistics. In this last case, the notion of genre is especially present in the studies concerned with Language Education, which are dedicated to developing approaches and methodologies that comprehend the use of language as a discursive practice, instead of a cognitive manifestation disconnected from real contexts of linguistic use: “to learn to speak means to learn to construct utterances” (Bakhtin, 1986, p.78).

3. GENRE-BASED PEDAGOGY

The idea of genre may have direct implications for the processes of language teaching and learning. Under this perspective, Language Education cannot be conceived as simply the acquisition of linguistic elements of a specific language, but as the development of means for social action through verbal communication. It does not mean disregarding the importance of learning about the units of language, words, and sentences; however, it is pertinent to consider that language is a discursive act, which consequently has to be based on discursive practices (Cristovão, 2001).

Genres represent concrete examples of language manifestation and, thus, inevitable entities within verbal interaction in any area of human activity (Bakhtin, 1986; Marcuschi, 2008; 2010). Therefore, in terms of language learning, “oral and written speech as forms of language manifestation can only be developed from their own realization and continuous use in meaningful situations”⁸ (Pinto, 2010, p. 47). This way, genres play an important role in Language Education, especially in terms of developing learners' communicative competence. For Canale and Swain (1980), in the context of second language learning, Communicative competence “is organized on the basis of communicative functions (e.g., apologizing, describing, inviting, promising) that a given learner or group of learners needs to know and

⁸ Fala e escrita como formas de manifestação da linguagem só se desenvolvem a partir de suas próprias realizações e do uso contínuo em situações significativas” [original text].

emphasizes the ways in which particular grammatical forms may be used to express these functions appropriately” (p. 2).

Genre-based approaches to language teaching arise, then, to fulfill this need for providing learners possibilities of meaningful language practice that represents actual situations of language use, whether in written or spoken speech, also making it possible for learners to develop consciousness about the existence and importance of the conventions that are part of the communicative interaction.

From this perspective, it is given considerable importance to the communicative purpose (Swales, 1990) as a prior constituent element of genre-based instruction (Dirgeyasa, 2016). This thought leads us to the idea that utterances/texts are not conceived without a goal to be achieved, and requires us to comprehend that there are social convention agreements that guide the language choices that we take to achieve this goal. This makes the choice of one genre instead of another in our discursive activity not just a random choice, but one commanded by specific interests (Marcuschi, 2008). Hyland (2004), when reflecting on teaching writing, states that

people don't just write, they write something to achieve some purpose: writing is a way of getting things done. To get things done, to tell a story, request an overdraft, craft an essay, describe a technical process, and so on, we follow certain social conventions for organizing messages, and these conventions can be described and taught (p. 5-6).

Language teachers must be able to reflect on the purposes that induct the choice for a specific genre in a context of verbal interaction, which requires the teacher to consider “how texts actually work as communication” (Hyland, 2007, p. 151), and consequently, to make possible for language learners to comprehend the contexts of production of certain discourses and understand how these contexts interact with the goals that lead a utterance. For this aim, genre awareness becomes an important tool for language teaching, as it allows a better understanding over the mechanisms for producing, consuming, and distributing texts in society (Ohuschi; Barbosa, 2011).

Producing adequate texts is much more than simply organizing comprehensible units of language in a statement. It demands to be able to situate ourselves into the context of production of a genre and comprehend the goal that orientates it. For this reason, mastering a textual genre does not mean mastering a linguistic form, but a way of linguistically fulfilling specific objectives in specific social situations (Marcuschi, 2010). In this perspective, being able to produce a particular genre means becoming aware that speech genres need to be comprehended

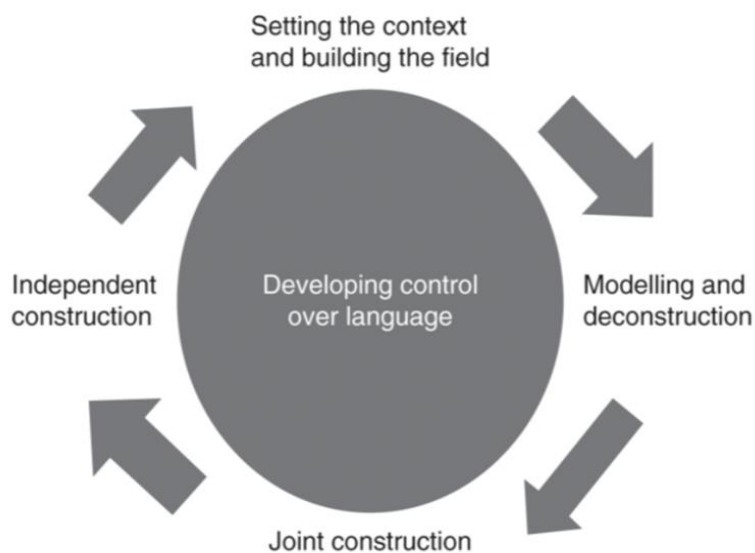
beyond their formal features, but above all, as interactional manifestations that emerge from contexts of social practice.

The fact that speech genres are conceived as linguistic actions that are established in social conventions may lead us to a misconception about the application of genre-based approaches. It is possible to incur the error of conceiving genre-based language teaching as a deterministic and prescriptive practice that does not enable the possibility of creating texts that express any individuality on the part of those who produce them, inhibiting any creative traits. Moreover, genres could end up being used only as a pretense for teaching grammar, translation, and variation, instead of as means that are able to mediate actions socially elaborated by the subjects at the moment of interaction (Carlos; Bordini, 2012). This is what Freedman (1994) states as being “a recipe theory of genre”, which would appear more like a list of procedures that learners must memorize and follow in order to produce texts. Nevertheless, we must recover a feature of genres that is essential since the Bakhtinian idea of genre, its dynamicity. Genres are not static entities, but plastic and dynamic instead. This means that genres might change, or even evolve according to the needs of the specific socio-historical contexts in which they are performed. Although it is already known that genres can, on a certain level, limit unrestricted creativity and individuality, it does not prescribe strict forms to produce a text. It still enables the speakers to make choices, oriented by clear goals in the context of production. Thus, there is nothing inherently prescriptive about genre-based teaching (Hyland, 2004; 2007). Even though they have a high predictive and interpretive power for human actions in any discursive context, genres are not watertight and rigid instruments for creative action. They are characterized as highly malleable, dynamic, and plastic textual events (Marcuschi, 2008; 2010).

Genre-based approaches aim to develop in learners the ability to produce texts in real-life situations of communication. For this, it is essential to consider the process necessary to achieve this goal, which is gradual and supportive, especially in the early levels of linguistic proficiency. The teacher plays an important role in this development by conducting a cyclic “scaffolding” process of genre mastering. This idea relies mostly on the perspective of Vygotsky (1978), who states the importance of the collaborative interactions between teacher and students in the journey of constructing knowledge and improving learners’ confidence throughout this path. Considering that learners become aware of the skills used in social contexts through actual interaction, gradually internalizing them, by structuring and regulating their own learning strategies (Pinto, 2010). Hyland (2019) synthesized this process into four stages: 1) setting the context and building the field; 2) modeling and deconstruction; 3) joint

construction; and 4) independent construction. This demonstrates the notion of genre-based approaches' practice in the form of a teaching-learning cycle as it is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 – The Hyland's model of genre-based teaching and learning cycle.



Source: Hyland (2019)

The initial moment of a genre-based lesson is very significant to develop comprehension over the genre. To understand a textual genre, we must be able to develop consciousness about which situations the genre can be found, which also means analyzing the social practice that the genre is part of, allowing students to explore “the social and cultural context of language use” (Tuan, 2011, p. 1472).

After discussing the context of production of the genre, it is time to make it possible for learners to analyze the genre at its organizational level. This is the moment when “representative samples of the target genre are analyzed, compared, and manipulated” (Hyland, 2004, p, 132). Teachers must aim to develop students' perception of the elements that compose the genre and how they are linked to its functional character. The activities at this stage are focused on deconstructing and analyzing the rhetorical structure that constitutes the genre as a whole as well as its linguistic features. This stage of genre-based approach requires students to receive explicit grammar instruction, according to the genre necessity, to become able to develop an adequate production of the genre.

Considering the importance of the process of “scaffolding” the knowledge over the genre, it is valid to conduct students into a more practical contact and manipulation of the genre.

It is possible to make this through a moment of collaborative construction of the genre, in which all the participants of the process are involved. At this time, students are still reflecting on how language works in its contexts of social practice, and how it is presented in forms of textual genres. To help students materialize the knowledge acquired so far, part of the lesson can be dedicated to “teachers and learners work together to construct whole examples of the genre” (Hyland, 2004, p. 134). This way “students are encouraged to participate in the activities of meaning exchange and negotiation with their more capable people such as peers and teacher” (Tuan, 2011, p. 1472), which reinforces the character interactional of speech genres. Such experience can also bring learners the confidence they need to produce their own samples of the genre that they are learning about.

All these stages lead the lesson to a core moment in the genre-based approach, in which students are entitled to produce their own examples of the genre studied throughout the lesson. During students’ activities, the teacher’s support stands in a secondary space, allowing them to develop the autonomy needed to construct the genre, which means that to get to this stage, it is important that teachers “be sure that the students really understand the features of a certain genre (Dirgeyasa, 2016, p. 49), to make sure students are able to apply the knowledge constructed in the previous stages into an independent genre production (Hyland, 2004). This entire process allows students to gradually develop the ability to produce text genres, through a cyclic process that aims to develop learners’ control over the language which is realized into speech genres, from simple and dependent stages to a complex and independent moment of language production (Dirgeyasa, 2016; Hyland, 2004; 2019).

The guiding character of genre-based teaching learning cycle means that developing all four stages is not an established procedure to be thoroughly executed, and can be manipulated and adapted according to the context and the group that it is being worked with (Tuan, 2011). It becomes valuable to regard the plastic and dynamic characters that permeate the idea of speech genres, and how such characters may also reach the designing of genre-based lessons.

Concluding the sections of the theoretical basis related to genre and the approaches based on it. Next, we introduce the methodological part that orientates this research.

4. METHODOLOGY

This research was designed by employing a qualitative approach, following the principles of field research. To collect and analyze the data obtained, it was employed the participant observation method, specifically the perspective of “practitioner ethnography”, in

which the researcher is part of the context under investigation (Triviños, 1987; Hammersley, 1992; Phakiti *et al.*, 2018; Babbie, 2021; Mackey; Gass, 2022). The inquiry was conducted in an English language course which is part of an elective English course program developed at the Federal University of Pará (UFPA). The course is offered, free of charge, by the Department of International Relations of the university to members of the academic community, such as students, scholars, and staff. The course was implemented as a strategy to develop the academic community's linguistic competence for internationalization purposes. It is divided into four levels, in which students are meant to reach level A2 of language proficiency according to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages: Learning, Teaching, Assessment (CEFR).⁹

The class under analysis is situated on a college campus located in Bragança, a city in the northeast of the state of Pará, which is one of the Brazilian states situated in the Amazon region (IBGE, 2022). The class is composed a group of 25 individuals, who are diverse in terms of gender, ethnicity, and socioeconomic status. Furthermore, the first researcher of this work is also the tutor in charge of the class.

The qualitative data to be analyzed in this research are both the development of two specific classes which were designed under the perspective of genre-based approaches, proposed by Hyland (2004; 2007; 2019), Tuan (2011), Carlos; Bordini (2012), Dirgeyasa (2016), so as students' textual productions resultant of those lessons. This research examines the applications of two lessons that took place in the year 2023, each lesson lasting approximately three hours. Students' genre productions, which were developed as the final task of each lesson, were examined to assess their coherence with the features that constitute each genre. Grounded by the theoretical perspectives of Bakhtin (1986), Swales (1990; 1993), and Marcuschi (2008; 2010), students' productions were analyzed considering four aspects: a) thematic content; b) linguistic style; c) compositional structure; and finally, d) social practice, which means the human activity in which the genre emerges and the interactional purpose it fulfills.

The following two sections of this article consist of an analysis of the genres worked in the lessons, continued by the description of the activities carried out and the assessment of students' textual production. In the end, we present and discuss the insights provided by the results.

⁹ The CEFR organises language proficiency in six levels, A1 to C2, which can be regrouped into three broad levels: Basic User, Independent User and Proficient User, and that can be further subdivided according to the needs of the local context (COE, 2014).

5. GENRE-BASED EXPERIENCES IN A BRAZILIAN ENGLISH LANGUAGE COURSE

5.1. An Experience with The Genre Timeline

The first class that composes the experience studied in this work was developed centered on the genre timeline. The class occurred in the middle of the second level of the course. It was designed aiming the production of a timeline at the end of the lesson. Timelines, as a speech genre, are not widely described in the academic literature. Nonetheless, it is present in several spheres of textual production in either physical or virtual contexts. Indeed, any history or story might be summarized in the form of a chronological visual line. This way, timelines can contain information about, historical, social, political, cultural, educational, and biographical events (Karlo-Gomes; Muniz; Souza, 2021), as well as describing relevant events within a fictional novel.

In stylistic terms, Karlo-Gomes, Muniz e Souza (2021) point out that a timeline “is a short narrative, using only a few words to summarize the main information about the historical events outlined” (p. 12)¹⁰. Timelines have a particular informative aspect, however, their textual development is mainly narrative, which is demonstrated throughout the text by the short statements in it, pointing out the succession events of a story that are delimited by a temporal frame. Timelines are not addressed to scrutinize the events related, on the other hand, their production requires the ability to synthesize ideas. Thus, the interlocutor takes place as the reporter of the events highlighted and assumes the role of narrator, whose speech is marked by the predominance of indirect speech, whether using past or present verbal tenses.

Timelines have a singular visual appeal in terms of composition. The events narrated are disposed sequentially throughout an actual line, in order to represent the chronological order in which the events take place. The text usually comes entitled with something that overviews the narrative in its general perspective, whose theme is commonly a macro event, which is fragmented along the timeline. There are time markers such as days, months, years, or both, which specify the temporal frame that is between the delimitation, “setting a linear narrative

¹⁰ É uma narrativa curta, com o uso restrito de palavras para resumir as principais informações sobre os acontecimentos históricos delineados [original text].

that provides the reader with punctual information on a particular theme, built in a time progression” (Karlo-Gomes; Muniz; Souza, 2021, p. 11)¹¹.

The timeline can be diverse in terms of design and visual elements, which allows it to be very adaptable to different supports. It can be found in books, newspapers, the internet, textbooks, etc.

For the above-mentioned reasons, they might be valuable for educational context, by supporting the preservation of the memory of events that have marked history. Its objective character makes it important for contextualizing historical facts (Karlo-Gomes; Muniz; Souza, 2021), assisting the comprehension of complex events and narratives.

In light of the preceding considerations, we present in Chart 1 the description of the procedures taken in the class. Those steps were developed considering the theoretical support given by Hyland (2019), and the considerations of Tuan (2011, and Dirgeyasa (2016), about the genre-based teaching learning cycle.

Chart 1 – First lesson procedures

<p>Stage 1 Setting the context</p>	<p>Initially, students were presented to the life story of the prestigious scientist, Marie Curie.¹² They were introduced to relevant facts about her life and career, her contributions to more than one scientific field, achievements, etc. For this, students watched a video that introduced the information.</p>
<p>Stage 2 Modeling</p>	<p>Students had an initial contact with a timeline sample. At this time, the genre was discussed with the group to comprehend how familiar students were with this kind of text, what they understood to be the purpose of producing a timeline, and what themes could be approached through it.</p>
<p>Stage 3 Deconstructing</p>	<p>The elements that compose the timeline, in terms of content, language, and structure, were analyzed by the group in order to elicit the parts that structure the timeline as a whole, and what would be necessary in the timeline design as a visual representation of a chronological narrative. It was also discussed the linguistic conventions present in timelines.</p>
<p>Stage 4 Independent Construction</p>	<p>Students were invited to produce a timeline about Marie Curie’s life story. The group was previously instrumentalized to use the platform Canva^{®13}, in order to use it for their productions. Students would be able to choose their own</p>

¹¹ se configura em uma narrativa linear que oferece ao leitor informações pontuais sobre determinado tema construído em progressão temporal [original text].

¹² Marie Curie was a Polish scientist She was the first woman to be awarded with a Nobel Prize, and also the first person at all to win two Nobel prizes in different fields, Physics (1903) and Chemistry (1911). She was chosen to be the topic of this class by considering her importance for female emancipation, and also her prominent role in the academic scenario.

¹³ Canva is a graphic design platform that allows users to create a variety of graphic content. The platform is available online and as an application.

designs to develop the task since they observed the aspects discussed in class for the production of a timeline.
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Students were well involved in the initial moment. Marie Curie was already a well-known personality for most of them. This stage was essential to guarantee students' engagement throughout the class.

Since it is a group of adult students, they were all quite acquainted with the genre timeline. Most of them were aware of what constitutes the genre and what are its characteristics. The following two stages counted with good interaction among the group. Although it was a familiar genre, analyzing it from a language learning perspective was intriguing to students and motivated them to comprehend how even a summarized narrative, as is the timeline, emerges within a social practice; has stable features that orientate its production and allows us to recognize their manifestations. In the second moment, it was considered important to point out to students that genre conventions were not fully prescriptive and that each model of the genre can have some particularities due to the author's style. For this, students were invited to reflect on which elements they would consider essential when producing a timeline. Students gave some responses such: as the visual design of the timeline, which reminds an actual line and brings the idea of sequentially; the elicited time periods, which marks the chronological aspect of the genre; the short texts, which recount the narrative in an objective way.

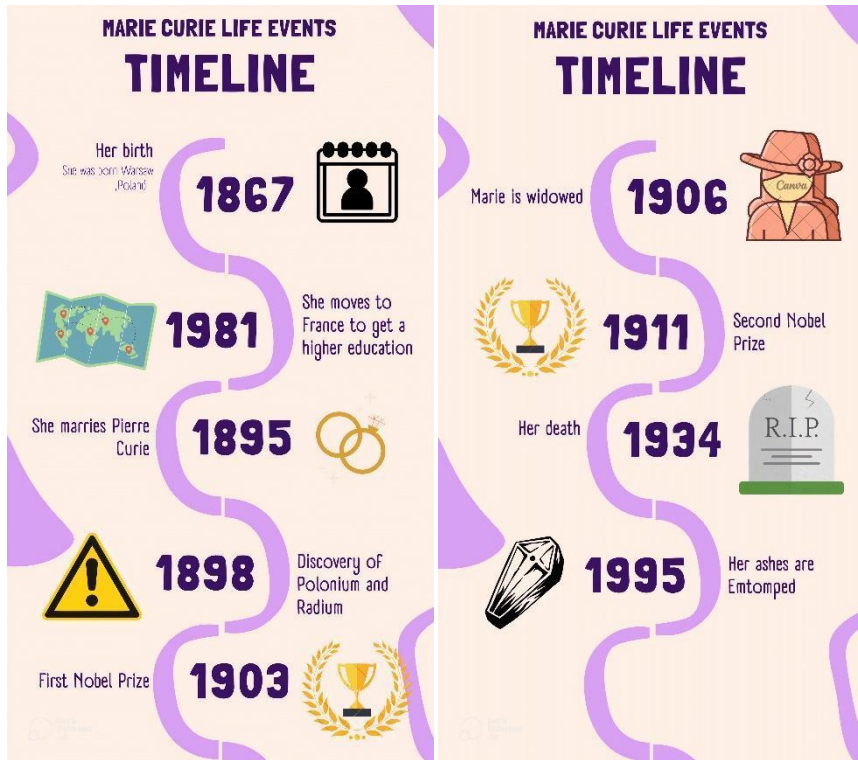
At the production stage, students did not seem anxious or insecure about the task, on the other hand, they expressed being motivated, which demonstrates the importance of the previous stages of analysis and discussion of the genre to pave the way to the production moment. This highlights the aspect of explicitness and supportiveness within genre-based instruction and how appropriate genre instruction can play an important role in developing in students' a positive attitudes toward the genre production (Hyland, 2004).

Students were previously instructed about the use of the Canva[®] platform and its basic functions, such as looking for templates and graphic elements, editing the fonts, and setting colors, and shapes. For their productions, the students were provided with the use of tablets, which are part of the resources made available by the institution for the development of the classes.¹⁴ After that, students started their production of a timeline about Marie Curie's life,

¹⁴ The teaching laboratory, in which the classes occur, count with something about twenty tablets that can be utilized upon prior request.

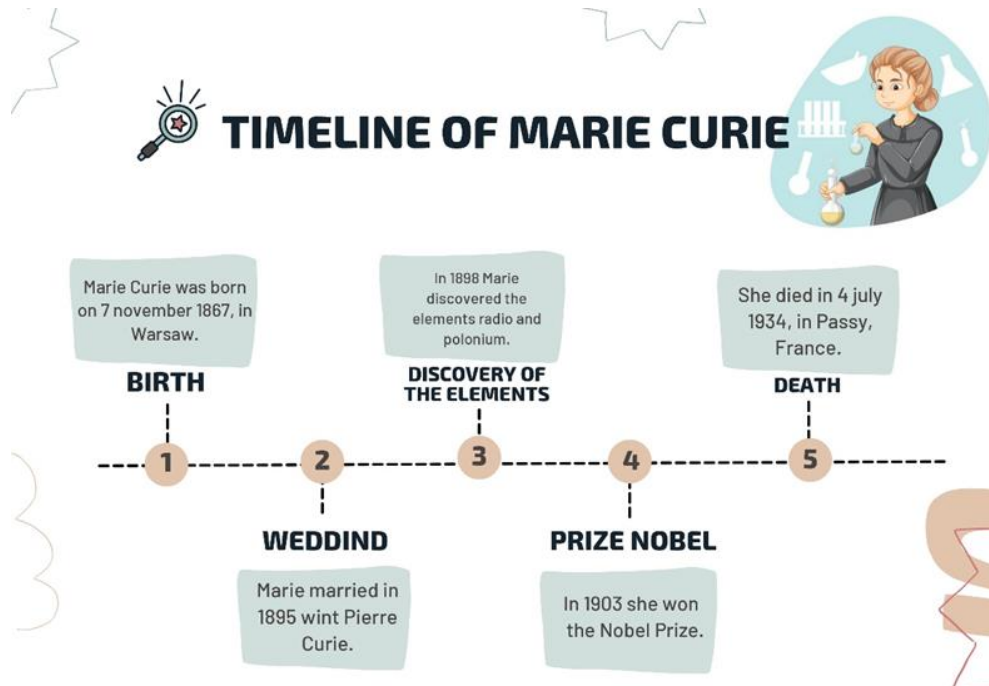
which was developed until the end of the class. Considering the limitations of this work, we bring here two samples of timelines produced by the students.

Figure 2 – Students' timeline production I



Source: personal file.

Figure 3 – Students' timeline production II



Source: personal file.

In Figure 2, the timeline was divided into two pages, relating the main events of Marie Curie's life (birth, important events, relationships, achievements, and death). It is possible to attest the conventions indicated by Bakhtin (1986) were approached compatibility with its needs for the production of the genre, considering the objectivity that is part of it. Initially, it is possible to observe that the thematic content of the timeline is coherent with what was requested. Regarding the linguistic style, the authors decided to use present tenses in the writing construction, which can be seen in both passive and active voice. The productions also contain some statements, such as "Her birth", "First Nobel Prize", and "Her death", which can be considered more expositive than narrative, as are the other written excerpts. However, these occurrences seem to work when considering the whole context of textual production, which counts with more than just the writing part. In terms of compositional structure, the genre is started by a title referring to the theme, followed by the timeline itself. The time markers (years) are disposed along the "line" with the writing part aside. The authors seemed to be concerned about using graphic elements that reference the events mentioned, which enriched the production.

The second production brought in Figure 3 is developed on one page with the information considered relevant by the authors. The authors decided to select a few events to mention (birth, marriage, achievements, and death). Although students decided to describe better the events mentioned, they still kept the objectivity required for the text. The authors developed the writing parts of the production all in past tenses, which is possible to consider as clear and direct, making it understandable and didactic. Most of the text is written in active voice, except for "Marie was born", which is essentially in passive voice. The timeline is disposed in a straight "line" which is numbered from 1 to 5, with the events attached to it. The authors chose to insert the time markers in the text, which highlights the narrative intention of the production. The timeline's design is quite clean. Authors seemed to be more concerned with making a comprehensible text than filling it with many graphic elements. It also counts with elements that make it appear nice and enrich the production though.

Both productions meet coherently the conventions that involve the production of the genre timeline. Further, they contextualize and summarize a narrative in a punctual and objective way, disposing of chronological events in a visual representation. This way, it is possible to highlight the consistency of the productions with the context of social practice in which this genre production is inserted.

5.2. An Experience with The Genre Biography

After the first class discussed in the previous experience, a second class was developed, but this time centered on the genre biography. This means that one class was dedicated to each genre. At the end of the class, students produced a sample of biographical text as a final activity of the lesson.

Biographies are present in several spheres of circulation, from literary and artistic to academic and historical (Esper; Hila, 2015), such aspects promote this genre to a wide and diverse public. The theme of this genre is concerned with the pertinent facts about the life of a socially relevant, or famous personality (Habinova, 2022). In a biography, characters, events, and life processes that played an important role throughout the life of that person are put in evidence, e.g., their birthplace and date, family, education, career, achievements, and relationships.

This genre recounts narratives about a person's life, which are authored by another person according to their knowledge (Sousa, 2021; Habinova, 2022), thus, it is a text produced in 3rd person. The author provides many descriptions of elements present in the narrative which demands a considerable use of adjectives and adverbs. The development of the biographical text is in chronological order, being marked by the use of textual organizers. Considering the historical character of the genre, the past tenses are predominant throughout the text, although present and future tenses can also be used. It is known that speech genres can, to a certain degree, allow the presence of the author's individual style. However, the biographical text requires the author some level of impartiality over the events narrated, which, linguistically, is usually demonstrated by the absence of modals in the text (Esper; Hila, 2015).

The first part of the biography structure is the title, which can even be the name of the personality whose life's story is the theme of the text. The initial part of the text can contain a presentation of the person, as well as a description of their early life. The second moment in text composition is marked by the recount of the most remarkable facts of the person's life. According to Esper e Hila (2015, p. 106), "in the first and second part, other characters may appear, such as parents, children, friends, and others. However, they cannot receive more attention than the protagonist does". The third part can vary according to whose story is being biographized. In case it is a living personality, this part can elicit some prepositions and aspirations that the person has about the future. Otherwise, this moment can be dedicated to relating the late events in the person's life.

The biography as a genre emerges from the importance of narrating and describing the life stories of notable people who marked society in some way. These texts allow us to have access to such historical facts by registering and disseminating them across space and time. Because of biographical productions, we can learn about/with someone’s life (Habinova, 2022). The biographical text “not only recounts the events that compose it, but also recreates the image of him as he was, was, and is” (Sousa, 2021, p. 89716).

As in the preceding lesson, its procedures were developed considering the theoretical basis provided by Hyland (2019), and the reflections of Tuan (2011), and Dirgeyasa (2016) about the cyclic development of genre-based teaching and learning. In Chart 2, we present and describe the procedures executed in the lesson.

Chart 2 – Second lesson procedures

<p>Stage 1 Setting the context</p>	<p>Students were invited to reflect on relevant personalities, such as artists, activists, scientists, politicians, etc. By considering their perspective of what makes someone become an important person and who they consider relevant and admirable.</p>
<p>Stage 2 Modeling and Deconstructing</p>	<p>The teacher presented the students with the biography of Martin Lither King Jr.¹⁵ Before this, it was discussed about what constitutes a biographical text in terms of content, language, structure, and purpose. Then, a reading activity was developed by using an online article that recounts the biography of Martin Luther King, which allowed students to interact with a real biography sample after reflecting on it. Through this activity, students were able to identify the rhetorical structure of a biography, demonstrated in the sample.</p>
<p>Stage 3 Deconstructing</p>	<p>The prosaic character of biographic texts is complex and operates through formal speech. Considering this, it was dedicated a moment to study deeper linguistic elements pertinent to these texts, such as prepositions used to relate events chronologically, verbal tenses, and so on.</p>
<p>Stage 4 Independent Construction</p>	<p>To close up the lesson, students produced a biography referent to a person of their own choice. Students did all the necessary research for this production and were allowed to choose the visual design they considered more interesting, always observing the characteristics that compose the genre.</p>

The initial stage continued the tendency to discuss important personalities. This time, by requiring students to share their thoughts about what it means to be an important and relevant

¹⁵ Martin Luther King Jr. was a prominent activist in North America who dedicated his life to the civil rights movement, advocating for the liberation of Black people. In his fight for emancipation, he won a Nobel Peace Prize in 1964, being the youngest person to be awarded with the Nobel Peace Prize. His biography was chosen for this lesson considering the importance of his contributions for black American civil rights.

person. Such reflection, which considers students' points of view, would become important to the final production at the end of the class.

After that, students participated in a discussion about the genre biography and seemed to be familiar with it. It was discussed about the characteristics of this genre, whose initial focus was on the context of practice in which the genre is situated and what the communicative purpose is. This discussion was followed by a reflection on the aspects that constitute the genre in terms of thematic content, linguistic style, and compositional structure. Within this discussion, students had a significant interaction.

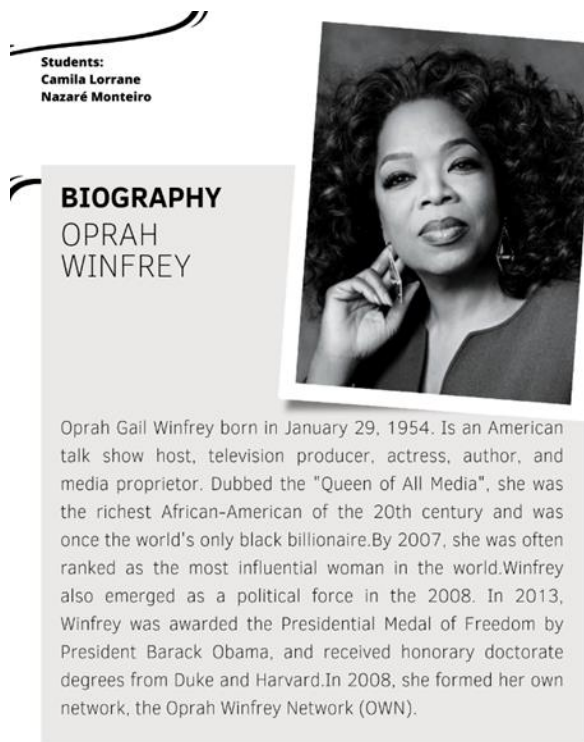
The text chosen to be approached as the model of the genre was a biographical text of Martin Luther King Jr. It was chosen at this stage to promote in students the consciousness about how some personalities are relevant and famous because of the positive impact they caused in society, which is a reason for having their history perpetuated through a biographical text. This choice was made considering that "working with discourse genres in the classroom, more than being a legal advice, should allow students to develop language practices in order to offer them a real participation in society" (Esper; Hila, 2015, p. 105). Students, then, were invited to read the text and analyze the aspects previously discussed about the genre. Furthermore, students were required to point out the important events mentioned in the text, after the reading moment.

A biographical text is prosaic and demands writing with cohesion. Considering this, a moment was dedicated to study and practice, such as prepositions of time, to provide students with an appropriate linguistic background. Students did not show difficulty in this language-focused stage, which was productive in terms of exploring linguistic conventions of the genre, without deviating the focus of the class toward the grammar and vocabulary content.

At the end of the class, students were required to produce an exemplar of the genre biography. Students would be able to choose who they would write about. The production did not need to be very long, and students were instructed to focus on events that they considered more important throughout the person's life. The personalities chosen by students varied from pop music singers and actors to human rights activists. In this activity, students were allowed to choose the platform they preferred to produce their texts.

Considering the scope of this work, two productions (Figures 4 and 5) were selected so we can discuss students' productions.

Figure 4 – Students' biography production I



Source: personal file.

Figure 5 – Students' biography production II



Source: personal file.

The first production (Figure 4) is about the life story of Oprah Winfrey, whose title is: Biography: Oprah Winfrey. Considering the framework given by Bakhtin (1986): the thematic content developed in the text is focused on her several various achievements in different fields, whether artistic, academic, or political; the linguistic style kept by the authors was the formal aspect of the text. The production is mainly developed in past tenses and is marked by the presence of many time markers that may help in situating readers. There are some language and typing mistakes in the text. However, these mistakes do not interfere significantly with text comprehension or deviate from the language conventions of the genre; the compositional structure of the text is organized in chronological order, considering important events in Oprah's life as referential points, since her birth to more recent achievements. The production also showcases a picture of Oprah Winfrey as a visual reference.

The second production (Figure 5) begins with a particular title: Who is Lélia Gonzales? The biographed personality chosen for this production was a Brazilian activist, who fought for gender and race causes throughout her life. Considering that the person who is the theme of this text has already passed away, the text is mostly elaborated in past tenses, except for part of the

last two paragraphs that highlights Lélia's legacy. The production uses time markers to point out important events in her life, with a particular focus on her education and career. The text counts with some vocabulary referent to ethnic identity to develop the narrative of the character's life, which may help readers to comprehend better the roots of Lélia's construction as a human rights activist. The authors begin the text with a question that expresses the informative aspect of their production. The text contains a picture of her to provide a visual reference to the readers. The body of the text is organized as a narrative that recounts the life events of Lélia Gonzalez chronologically. This production, especially, has a particular element in its composition: after relating the end of Lélia's life, the authors chose for continuity the text by highlighting her legacy and positive impact on the society. This part is written using present genres, which might demonstrate the authors' perspective on her contributions as being remarkable even nowadays.

Producing a biographic text is a relatively challenging task, due to the amount of research it requires and also because of its prosaic format. However, both productions were able to develop the conventions that are expected for the performance of this genre. Biographies go beyond recounting someone's life events, but demand the author to transcribe the history and legacy of a remarkable personality. This requires a certain level of caution. Both texts could elaborate a clear narrative about the characters' life, by elaborating a production that can also provide some learning about an important personality.

Both experiences, with both the genres, provided pertinent insights into the use of genre-based approaches in English as a foreign language classes. Considering this, we proceed to analyze how the described experiences relate to the theoretical frameworks of genre and genre-based approaches, as well as to discuss the implications for the field of foreign language education.

5.3. Towards Possible Implications

Speech genres are entities that surround all spheres in which language is situated, this means that they constitute any communicative interaction (Marcuschi, 2008; 2010). However, producing an utterance from a specific genre is an act grounded in a range of conventions that make them suitable to each context of production (Bakhtin, 1986). This way, learning a new language cannot be oriented by only assimilating the norms that lead to the formal character of language, but also demands comprehending the appropriate discourse that is required for any interactional situation in which the speaker may be inserted.

This need can be supported by the use of approaches that consider the role of learning genre's conventions in the development of learners' communicative competence. Such conventions are possible to be made explicit and taught (Hyland, 2004).

The experiences presented in this work have shown that the use of genre-based approaches can be positive for several issues related to teaching language practice. In an initial view, it is possible to observe that students' attitudes have been positively affected throughout the lessons, by having contact with actual language manifestation. They faced the lesson activities as something significant in terms of learning. In other words, something that could be used in real situations of language practice. This perspective was highlighted during the production stage, in which students kept motivated throughout it, and demonstrated a significant endeavor in producing appropriate genre exemplars.

In terms of production, students indicated a satisfactory understanding over the genre's features pointed out by Bakhtin (1986). It was possible to elicit, in the productions, the aspects that were studied throughout the lessons. In this respect, the procedures proposed by Hyland (2019), in the genre-based cycle, demonstrated to play an important role, especially when we consider that it allows students to have a detailed and wide comprehension over the genres before it requires its production. This way, these findings suggest that the integration of genre-based approaches to the teaching practice is not just important to the development of students' communicative competence, and the understanding of genre conventions; but also, a possible strategy to maintain their engagement, motivation, and class interaction, which may be advantageous in helping them to achieve their linguistic goals.

6. FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Genre-based teaching is a topic studied by many scholars, who bring up the importance of considering this construct a pertinent subject in terms of language education. However, there are several possible learning contexts in which the implementation of such perspectives can be explored and described. For this aim, educators must be aware of the interactional and discursive needs that are inherent to the language learning process.

Focusing on this educational reality, this study proposed to investigate and discuss genre-based approaches in a Brazilian context of English language learning, whose public was adult learners. To achieve this end, we analyzed the theoretical basis of the notion of genre, the leading concept of this research, and also the literature referent to genre-based approaches, which guided the practical sphere of this experience. Such analysis provided essential guidance

to the development of this work. It also permitted the understanding of the role played by speech genres in language teaching and learning. The classes' development and the students' final productions analyzed in this research produced stimulating insights into the theme of this research. As we aimed, it was possible to elicit possible advantages of the implementation of a genre-based approach in the context presented. This study demonstrates that this approach can result in beneficial outcomes, such as the maintenance of students' motivation throughout the lesson, the provision of better comprehension of genre conventions as unavoidable elements in verbal interaction, and the fomentation of the development of students' communicative competence.

We emphasize that it was not our goal to present a model for the integration of genre-based approaches to English classes. The objective was to demonstrate possible ways and ideas for the application of this perspective to the English teaching and learning process. We point out that the generalizability of these results is subject to certain limitations. For instance, the reduced quantity of participants and the absence of a control group. This research design was chosen considering the context in which this study was carried out.

In light of the aforementioned considerations, further research on this topic should explore a more general scenario of genre-based pedagogy implementation with different participants. Future investigations could also analyze the development of oral genres' lessons, which were not approached in this study. Such inquiries can potentially bring more clarification on the theme.

The insights gained from this study may be of assistance to a range of educators, who aim to provide students with learning practices that are significant and related to concrete uses of language. We are convinced that the use of genre-based approaches in English classes has a lot to contribute to the English as a foreign language education field, in terms of supporting teachers to develop practices that approach language as a social practice, as acts of verbal interaction.

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