ABSTRACT: This article presents a reflection on academic writing produced by students in the university sphere based on data collected in the Laboratório de Leituras e Escrita Acadêmica, created 10 years ago at the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina, whose proposal focuses on the treatment of reading and textual production based on concepts of literacy from a discourse perspective. In light of the theoretical assumptions of Applied Linguistics and Discourse Analysis, the collected data are analyzed with the intention of producing a spectrum of issues that involve the production of texts in the academic sphere, guided by scientific discourse, however, crossed by pedagogical discourse, typical of teaching and learning processes. Finally, it is proposed to think about the authorship of academic writing by students in higher education as an effect of the unity of linguistic and historical materiality resulting from the practice of textualization.


* Professor at the Portuguese Language and Literature Department and the Linguistics Postgraduate Program at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC), and coordinator of LARW – Laboratory of Academic Reading and Writing. E-mail: sandrocombraga@gmail.com.

** Lecturer at the State University of Tocantins (UNITINS). E-mail: janaina.f.senem@gmail.com.
1 INTRODUCTION

The study of literacies has shown relevance to the reflection of written teaching and learning processes, particularly within the university context. It is frequent to hear the “failure perspective” directed to Higher Education students regarding their text productions often associated with a lack of recognition of the linguistic norms. Thus, this study aims to contribute to the debate about the challenges of creating and consolidating a reading and writing laboratory at the university based on a discursive perspective.

This paper highlights how university students engage with science discourse, the meanings they assign to the literacy practices within this domain, and the difficulties they face in reading and writing in college. Also, we point out one major complaint among university educators: the difficulties students face in writing tasks, often linked to challenges in reading comprehension. Research on New Literacy Studies has revealed that the problem consists of the student’s lack of knowledge about the functioning of the genres that operate in the academic sphere. This issue may generate conflict between what the teachers expect from the students and what they effectively produce in their texts. That is, upon entering university, students are expected to produce texts they have not been explicitly taught, yet are required to do so as part of their academic work.

To help mitigate this problem, the Laboratory of Academic Reading and Writing - LARW – was created in 2014 at the Federal University of Santa Catarina (UFSC) with the purpose of reflecting on reading and writing from the literacy conceptions following a discursive perspective. This approach considers reading and writing as discursive actions at the diverse intellectual activity spheres, i.e., directly related to the life and subjects placed in interlocutory relationships. Therefore, when reading and writing, the subjects can embody themselves in their reading and develop their writing skills.

We start from the assumption that every text establishes a relationship with a specific audience which allows a particular reading. Both reading and writing have their narratives, and university students need to build up their path within these practices. With that in mind, we proposed the creation of LARW. Its creation recognizes that the texts emerging from university have a specific function of social interaction, historically marked and situated in the production and dissemination of knowledge, and are also the focus of teaching and learning. Hence, reading and writing education should equip students with instruments to critically position
themselves within a text and understand that the effects of meanings are multiple. Moreover, writing, particularly academic writing, employs a language that is dominant in specialized communication spheres - environments that involve the confrontation of power and force relations.

LARW acts as an interface between the extension and research activities. As an extension project, it offers guidance to students who require tutorship to write academic texts. During the meetings, the project team collects data related to the students' questions and difficulties. In the research field, the collected data is analyzed by researchers involved in the project based on the studies of Applied Linguistics and Discourse Analysis. The analysis aims to build a spectrum of issues related to the production of texts in the academic setting anchored by scientific discourse. Thus, this double-faced project proposes to promote the extension through literacy practices and events involving academic genres while also inciting research around these practices.

The idea is that the Laboratory can be a space in which the written text is constantly under reflection in terms of reading, writing, and rewriting. Then, the Laboratory proposal is not grounded only in establishing a physical place where one can read and write; above all, we aim to consolidate an environment to reflect on these processes. The project does not intend to produce a recipe formula to teach (and learn) reading and writing. Instead, we focus on guiding reading and writing experiences so the group can understand the material and ideological production conditions that involve teachers and students in knowledge formulation and acquisition from reading and writing practices. More specifically, the work in the Laboratory focuses on the results of reading and writing processes in such a way that we can formulate comparisons of students reading and writing skills and (re)create other possibilities for these practices.

During these ten years of working at LAWR, the students’ most repeated question is: “How can I produce something of my own if everything I say needs to be referenced and based on another author?”. From this seemingly simple question, our research has brought us to another issue: how can we handle academic writing – this writing that conveys the scientific discourse – not by itself but as a teaching and learning object? In other words, when one writes at university in the place and position of a student, the text - despite being based on the functioning modes of the genres produced in the science sphere - is, first of all, subject to the effects of the pedagogical discourse that guide and evaluate it. Thus, writing a paper to a teacher on a determined subject differs from writing the same paper for an academic journal. This is the topic we address next.

2 ACADEMIC WRITING AMID THE SCIENTIFIC AND PEDAGOGICAL DOMAINS1

With the prospect of characterizing academic writing, it is convenient first to delimit which type of academic writing we take as an object. From this point of view, it is necessary to identify who is the subject placed in this condition of text production, as well as the intended purpose and audience of the particular writing. In other words, it is critical to consider if the ones who write possess a researcher status (properly titled and professionally active) or if they are students (in this case, undergraduate or graduate?), and the objective of writing: whether it is meant for publication in scientific journals or theory books, or to meet the disciplines' demand regarding a text assessment and, consequently, a student's evaluation.

In light of these implications of "who writes?" and "what does one write for?", we highlight our interest in academic writing is with it as a product, a result of a writing mode developed by the subject in the position of a college student, with the ultimate goal of ascending to the scientific discourse. However, the way of the subject's appropriation and inscription to this science discourse - materialized from the traces of academic writing - occurs as part of the teaching and learning process of this writing. It means that the pedagogical discourse crosses this process. Therefore, to understand how academic writing operates, we propose to think of it as a practice that materializes itself between the pedagogical and the scientific discourses once the student writes with the aim to inscribe themselves into the scientific discourse that dominates the academic sphere.

1 In this section, we expand the discussion previously addressed in Braga e Senem (2017).
To comprehend scientific discourse, it is crucial to acknowledge Foucault’s (2008) assertion that science constitutes itself as “a field of strategic possibilities”, a principle of formation and dispersion of statements that can be said in a particular historical moment, that is, that compose certain discursive formations. From this perspective, science is understood as a principle with semantic and syntactic structural rules based on the conveyed object, and beyond that, it is a possibility to inscribe oneself in history. In other words, science as a discourse that consists of a group of statements that can be uttered in a historical moment (discursive formations) and which may not necessarily function the same way as earlier understandings of science.

With this in mind, we understand that scientific discourse can be thought from the procedures of control and delimitation of the discourse proposed by Foucault (2012 [1970]). We know these procedures constitute diverse discourses, but we believe that the internal and external procedures, pointed out by Foucault, portray science discourse above all since they are related to power and knowledge. The exterior procedures – prohibition, division and rejection, and the will to truth – control what can and must be said, determine the classifications and categorizations held by and at the discourse, considering the discursive place that is possible to occupy. For example, from the position of a university teacher, several things can be said about academic writing that the student imagines that can be said (in a correct manner), according to the constitutive imaginary of the university as a space for teaching and producing this writing. Also, from the students’ position, there are some utterances they cannot say because they supposedly do not yet possess the knowledge. Then, we highlight the will to truth as embedded in the scientific discourse since science is founded on the implication of the truth - under the illusion of a true saying, i.e., a saying that claims to convey the truth, and this truth builds the knowledge.

In addition, the internal principles – commentary, disciplines, and authorship – are identified by Foucault (2012 [1970]) as constitutive mechanisms of discourses that exert their control and characterize the scientific discourse. The commentary is comprehended as being from the order of a gradation between a first and a second text and is present in several scientific discursive practices. Authorship is seen as a principle of grouping discourses. Finally, the categorizations of disciplines emerge from the understanding that what can be said needs to be at the limit of what is true. Thus, these procedures within the scientific discourse operate in the interplay between power and knowledge, supporting the saying of science as an institutional one.

Regarding the academic institution and particularly its many demands of academic writing, it is fundamental to add that this knowledge field constitutes itself by the overlap of other discourses on the scientific one. About how students’ academic writing works in higher education, it is worth mentioning that this writing is guided by the words of science, but is also intertwined with the pedagogical discourse. That is because academic writing with scientific pretensions, in this specific scope, takes place at the point of confluence between the teaching and learning processes of this writing. For example, the production of a monograph, a typical academic literacy form of writing, aims to inscribe its sayings into scientific discourse, and this production is necessarily affected by the learning process marks. These marks can be seen as pedagogical discourse characteristics in the production of this writing. Differently, writing a scientific article may or may not be affected by the pedagogical discourse. When the article is taken as an object for the student to learn the characterization, constitution, and production mode of this textual genre, this process materializes academic writing guided by scientific discourse, but it does not detach from the pedagogical discourse. However, when the paper focuses primarily on its own production with the aim of publication in a scientific journal, it also sets academic writing as a possibility of communicating science; yet, it is no longer linked to the pedagogical discourse, not at least as the one that operates in the teaching and learning processes.

Then, we reach the crucial point in this discussion: academic writing taken as an object of the pedagogical discourse is not necessarily configured as a discourse of science; therefore, academic writing and scientific discourse should not be seen as synonyms. From this reflection, we point out that academic writing is not the scientific discourse; but rather, it is the materiality of science in which science constitutes itself as an object. Hence, we understand academic writing – when taken as a teaching and learning object – focuses on teaching the discourse of science and also on the process of knowledge production. At the same time, it may or may not constitute a scientific production.

It is also worth pointing out Orlandi’s (2003) proposition about the characterization of the pedagogical discourse functioning. This author differentiates three types of discourse: the ludic, the polemic, and the authoritarian. The ludic is interpreted by the total
openness of meaning, giving space to nonsense, without any control over meaning. The polemic discourse has controlled openness of meaning, enabling interlocutors to engage together, producing interpretative gestures. Finally, the authoritarian discourse leads to a closure of meaning and imposes a single interpretation - when the only explanation consists of “this is the meaning because it is”. Orlandi (2003, p. 15) suggests that the pedagogical discourse is characterized by the functioning of these three discursive typologies. However, considering the production conditions of the pedagogical discourse in a school environment, the author claims it works under the predominance of the authoritarian discourse typology. That is because, within the realm of pedagogical discourse, the imposing action of the enunciator (in the teachers’ position) in relation to the enunciatee (in the students’ position) is marked.

Finally, we reinforce the idea that the work carried out with written production in higher education occurs precisely at the confluence of the pedagogical and scientific discourses. Therefore, the writing practices at university are shaped once the subjects, in the university-student positions, inscribe themselves into academic writing. This process is guided by the pedagogical discourse, aiming at the production and effect of the discourse of science.

Taking as presuppositions the reflections that we propose on the conditions of production of academic writing, we proceed, in sequence, to the reflection on how the subject in the position of a student in higher education occupies the author-function at the confluence of the pedagogical and scientific discourses.

3 THE SUBJECT AND AUTHORSHIP IN ACADEMIC WRITING

For Discourse Analysis, the incompleteness is constitutive of the language and subject; however, the subject constantly looks for the completeness effect. Thus, Pêcheux (2014 [1988]) affirms the two forgetfulness2 of the subject (illusion of being the origin of the utterances and controlling its meanings) are necessary illusions for the position and constitution of the subject who communicates. Based on this proposition, we can infer that the author’s constitution derives from the subject’s function in producing an effect of unity and accountability for what is enunciated. That is why the subject positions themselves as the origin of what they say and define the meaning (unique) of their saying. Accordingly, ‘If the subject notion covers not a form of subjectivity, but a place, a discursive position (marked by its discontinuity in the multiple dissections of the text), the notion of the author is already a function of the notion of subject, accountable for the organization of meaning and for the unity of the text, producing the effect of the subject’s continuity. [our translation] (Orlandi, 1996, p. 68-69, author’s emphasis).3

In this perspective, according to Orlandi (2013), the subject engages within the text through dispersion, while the author-function searches for unity, continuity, organization, and cohesion to make the text intelligible. Then, it is possible to think that the subject establishes a direct relationship with the discourse while the authorship is linked with the text. While the subject and discourse are constituted considering the misunderstanding embedded within language, the author-function aims to produce an effect of erasing this misunderstanding.

The Discourse Analysis perspective has assumed and expanded the notion of authorship developed by Foucault (2001), but it also considers the author as a principle of discourse grouping, as proposed by the philosopher. However, to Foucault (2001), the authorship function is restricted to those who obtain recognition for a given textual production (a Shakespeare text, for example). On the other hand, to Discourse Analysis, “[... the very text unity is a discursive effect derived from the authorship principle [...] In

2 In forgetfulness number 1, also called ideological forgetfulness, the subject enunciates under the illusion of being the absolute creator and owner of their speech. This illusion leads to the erasure of everything external to its discursive formation. In forgetfulness number 2, known as enunciative forgetfulness, the subject enunciates under the illusion that the formulation of their speech has a singular meaning and that everything that is said will be understood by the interlocutor exactly as it was intended. For a more detailed view of this formulation, refer to Pêcheux (2014 [1988]).

3 Original passage: “Se a noção de sujeito recobre não uma forma de subjetividade mas um lugar, uma posição discursiva (marcada pela sua descontinuidade nas dissenções múltiplas do texto) a noção de autor é já uma função da noção de sujeito, responsável pela organização do sentido e pela unidade do texto, produzindo o efeito de continuidade do sujeito.” (Orlandi, 1996, p. 68-69).
other words: a text may not have one specific author, but, through the author-function, it will always be attributed authorship to it.” [our translation] (Orlandi, 2013, p. 75).

It is also worth mentioning that the author-function is perceived as a discursive function of the subject, and the authorship is a constitutive component of the text; consequently, they are present in every discursive practice that raises the subject’s accountability for what they say.

Based on the proposition of the enunciative heterogeneity developed by Authier-Revuz (1990) Gallo (2001) contributes towards the expansion of the authorship concept when she proposes to understand it in two levels: “First, in a discursive-enunciative level, that is the case of the author-function: that is related to the enunciative heterogeneity, and it is a condition to every subject; therefore, it is embedded in any discursive event. Second, at the discursive level, that is the case of the author-effect, which concerns the confrontation of discursive formations with a new dominant. [...]” (Gallo, 2001, p. 03, our translation).5

Thus, the author-function requests an analysis of the enunciative dimension related to the other of the shown heterogeneity - despite being embedded in the Other. Yet, the author-effect operates on a discursive level; i.e., it is not within the subject’s reach and is formed by the confrontation between two (or more) discursive formations that result in a new discursivity. We highlight both the enunciative and discursive dimensions interact with the closing effect and the accountability of the subject’s saying. Then, to understand the comprehensive dimension of authorship, it is necessary to consider these two levels. Moreover, according to Gallo (2008), once the author-effect is founded, it tends to reverberate in the sayings that constitute this founding production. For instance, we consider the diverse writing practices of the college student; these productions are constituted, at least, by two overlapping dominant formations: the scientific discourse and the pedagogical discourse’s formations. Each one will operate to determine the subject’s sayings. In other words, everything that characterizes the scientific discourse echoes into the academic writing and reaches the student through the pedagogical discourse. Consequently, these two discursivities converge on the university-student authorship constitution, even though this writing is still too restricted to paraphrasing relations within what constitutes the two discourses. In this approach, the author-effect produced is not one exclusively from the scientific domain, nor only from the pedagogical one, but an author-effect from the scientific discourse as a result of the textualization practice at the university.

In considering the discursive dimension, we have brought these elements to base our reflection on the act of writing in higher education, given the functioning mode of these two processes. That leads us to question how subjects are interpellated into scientific discourse under the effects of the pedagogical discourse; then, we can understand one’s inscription in academic writing, considering the author-effect production. We emphasize that both the author-effect and the author-function can be recognizable in a text once - for the Discourse Analysis - there cannot be a text devoid of authorship. As Gallo (2008, p. 213) claims: “[...] there is always a recognizable zone so the meaning can be interpreted.” [our translation].

In general terms, we comprehend that the assumption of authorship is characterized by a process in which a subject who occupies a determined position is accountable for what and how they say something at both the enunciative and discursive levels. In this approach, we do not posit that every saying act necessarily implies authorship. Instead, authorship is inherent within every act in which the subject seeks to organize their speech, in a coherent and cohesive mode, with the unity and closing effect also assuming the responsibility for this organization (Orlandi, 2013), which constitutes the discourse of writing. Moreover, following Orlandi (1996), we understand authorship as an interpretation gesture of the subject who organizes their sayings based on “what was previously said”; that is: “The subject is only an author if what he produces is interpretable. He inscribes

---

5This relationship occurs in the sense that the subject makes use of the heterogeneity shown in an unconscious negotiation with the constitutive heterogeneity, consciously or preconsciously, since the use of markings such as direct quotes, references, and glosses, among others, presupposes that the subject, constituted in the author-function, considers the other and marks them in his saying. That is why, when making the relationship with Authier-Revuz’s (1990) proposition, one thinks at an enunciative level, because one realizes how the shown heterogeneity operates in the formulation of the saying (and not the constitutive one) and works in another level of interlocution (in the interdiscourse mode).

6Original passage: “Primeiramente, em um nível enunciativo-discursivo, que é o caso da função-autor, que tem relação com a heterogeneidade enunciativa e que é condição de todo sujeito e, portanto, de todo acontecimento discursivo. E em segundo lugar, em um nível discursivo por excelência, que é o caso do efeito-autor, e que diz respeito ao confronto de formações discursivas com nova dominante [...]” (Gallo, 2001, p. 03).
his formulation in the interdiscourse, he historicizes his saying” (Orlandi, 1996, p. 70) [our translation]. Within this framework, repetition enables interpretation, and the latter takes place through historical possibility. Hence, the concepts of paraphrase and polysemy act in the discourse constitution and formulation. While the first one is related to the interdiscourse – the maintenance of the same – the second fosters the new, instigating movements of meaning and interpretation (Orlandi, 2013). Therefore, we can state that the author constitutes himself/herself within a paraphrase and polysemy relationship between what was already said and what is yet to be said.

Besides this relationship between paraphrase and polysemy, the author-position is implicated by the Other – as interdiscourse effect – and by the other that constitutes the sayings, as aforementioned when we referred to the enunciative heterogeneity proposition by Authier-Revuz (1990). Accordingly, the assumption of authorship is determined by these relations (paraphrase and polysemy; Other and other), so it becomes interpretable, i.e., so it can constitute itself. As pointed out by Orlandi (1996, p. 97, our translation): “What characterizes authorship is the production of an interpretation gesture, i.e., in the author-function the subject is responsible for the meaning of what he says; in other words, he is responsible for a formulation that makes sense. The mode he creates it is what characterizes his authorship. How within what makes sense to him, he makes sense. How he interprets what interprets him.”

The mode the subjects inscribe themselves in their sayings is what characterizes their authorship, both in the author-function that involves the enunciative heterogeneities and in the author-effect that becomes effective from the closing effect. The latter mode is what Orlandi (1996) attributes as the interpretation gesture. This gesture constitutes the authorship in both levels (enunciative and discursive) and is only materialized by what is possible to be said at a determined historical moment.

The understanding of the text concept is intertwined with authorship, as Lagazzi-Rodrigues (2015) asserts, “[...] authorship is not a quality, but a practice in the configuration of a text.” (Lagazzi-Rodrigues, 2015, p. 109) [our translation]. In this framework, the text is not seen under the transparent view of language in which the meaning is in the text, and the reader must figure it out, but as an empirical object resulting from the practice of textualization. In addition, for Discourse Analysis, the text is a historical materiality, and it must be comprehended in relation to other texts, as well as within the conditions of its production and the interdiscourse.

Thus, to think of academic writing produced by college students from a discursive perspective requires considering the text as a unity, a historical and linguistic materiality that produces effects of meanings and results from the textualization practice. In other words, it is through the analysis of the text’s effects of meaning that one can perceive the functioning of the discourse, that is, the discursive, the imaginary, and the ideological formations that operate there. Therefore, the text is no longer characterized as a standalone element for content verification and subject evaluation. It starts to be understood in its historicity, in this case, also constituted by the history of the subjects who write them, in order to reverberate the imbrication of scientific, pedagogical, and cultural discourses, among many others…

4 FINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

In these ten years of LARW functioning, the project has supported students from diverse undergraduate courses at UFSC (Languages, Oceanography, Physics, Psychology, Education, Librarianship, and Philosophy, among others). Students from graduate courses in Linguistics and Literature also received assistance, even though the project was not initially aimed at this level of study. There was also an Engineering lecturer who attended LAWR for an entire semester. This reading and writing work at LAWR revealed the subjects’ heterogeneity in the activities; therefore, students’ demands were various and required different reading and writing strategies by the mediators of this process. During and after these meetings, the mediators raised questions within the group and recorded data that could be transformed into specific research issues. As a result of LAWR’s reflections, numerous academic outputs have emerged, including eight doctoral theses, five master’s dissertations, and scientific initiation…

6 Original passage: “O que caracteriza a autoria é a produção de um gesto de interpretação, ou seja, na função-autor o sujeito é responsável pelo sentido do que diz. Em outras palavras, ele é responsável por uma formulação que faz sentido. O modo como ele faz isso é que caracteriza sua autoria. Como, naquilo que lhe faz sentido, ele faz sentido. Como ele interpreta o que o interpreta.” (Orlandi, 1996, p. 97).
reports aimed at undergraduate students in Portuguese Language studies. Moreover, the work at LARW has triggered presentations on the topic at scientific events, and book chapters and academic articles have been published in specialized journals. Overall, we have pedagogical discourse materialized into academic writings and putting scientific discourse into circulation.

REFERENCES


