

**Analysis of discursive and disciplinary characteristics in articles
on teaching of writing in the early years of elementary school
published between 2008 and 2018^{1 2 3}**

***Análise de características discursivas e disciplinares em artigos
sobre o ensino da escrita nos anos iniciais do Ensino
Fundamental publicados entre 2008 e 2018***

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Abstract

This bibliographical research exposes discursive characteristics of the “teaching of writing in the early years of elementary school” school content when taken as object of study and proposes reflections on its disciplinary configuration (Foucault, 2004). The analysis covered 15 articles, from two areas of knowledge, “Psychology” and “Education.” We focused on the characterization of the discursive genre “scientific article” (Bakhtin, 2011), and identified important disciplinary distinctions in the productions of each area of knowledge. Whereas Psychology publications exposed results from tests and tasks to verify writing knowledge and corroborate previous research in standardized articles according to the IMRD communication model, Education publications did not conform to this model and focused on teaching of writing processes based on different didactic practices. Identifying characteristics of legitimization of research results as teaching objects in the school sphere was also possible.

Keywords: teaching of writing, first cycle of elementary education, production of knowledge

Resumo

Esta pesquisa bibliográfica expõe características discursivas do conteúdo escolar “ensino da escrita nos anos iniciais do Ensino Fundamental” quando tomado como objeto de pesquisa, e propõe reflexões sobre a sua configuração disciplinar (Foucault, 2004). A análise abrangeu 15 artigos, advindos de duas áreas do conhecimento, Psicologia e Educação. Focalizou-se na caracterização do gênero discursivo “artigo científico” (Bakhtin, 2011), e identificaram-se importantes distinções disciplinares nas produções de cada área do conhecimento. Enquanto as da Psicologia expuseram resultados a partir de testes e tarefas de verificação do conhecimento da escrita e da corroboração de pesquisas anteriores em artigos padronizados conforme o modelo de comunicação IMRD, as da Educação não se apresentaram em conformidade com esse modelo e focalizaram os processos de ensino da escrita a partir de práticas didáticas diversas. Foi possível, ainda, identificar características de legitimação dos resultados de pesquisa como objetos de ensino na esfera escolar.

Palavras-chave: ensino da escrita, primeiro ciclo do ensino fundamental, produção do conhecimento

Introduction

In this article, we discuss discursive characteristics and aspects of the disciplinary configuration of “teaching writing in the early years of elementary school” when this school content is taken as the object of investigation in scientific articles published in specialized journals. The general problem⁴ that motivates this text is: how are teaching contents configured as research objects?

In this direction, we adopted Bakhtin (2011) regarding the discursive characterization of the genre “scientific article” and Foucault (2004) regarding the reflection on the disciplinary configuration that aligns scientific production to specific fields of knowledge.

To situate investigative contexts in which school writing is taken as an object of research in the production of knowledge, we mention Pietri (2007, 2013, 2014). Pietri (2007) points out the moment when the text written by the student began to attract the attention of researchers and became a research object. Thus, returning to the 1970s, when the first publications used university entrance essays as a focus of analysis in scientific papers. He highlights that incorporating this content, writing as an object of research meant a discontinuity in what, until the period previously mentioned, was validated in the field of modern linguistic studies as research data, which, in this case, were those departing from speech, whereas writing was limited to traditional studies.

When addressing this transition period, in which Brazilian linguistic science incorporated this new object of study, Pietri (2007) points out a path that goes from the almost total lack of subsidies from the linguistic theory to analyzing written texts, in the 1970s, to the predominance of a theoretical perspective, that of textual linguistics, in the context of the 1990s, in constituting school writing as an object of investigation (Pietri, 2007, 2013, 2014).

We observed that the research focused on the teaching of writing, historically, began with the analysis of university entrance essays, was configured around the writing of high school students, and, later, began to include writing from other schooling levels, to which this article contributes with the analysis of productions on writing as teaching content in the early years of elementary school (hereinafter, ES).

⁴ This article results from the doctoral thesis of the first author.

We also seek to contribute to systematizing data that portray the importance of considering the production conditions of a given knowledge in the discourses of (de)legitimation of knowledge. For this, we present analyses that show how the same object gains specific contours within a given area of knowledge. Thus, we show data that point to multiple reality covered by the same reference terminology, such as “teaching writing in the early years of ES.” When verifying this fact by analyzing the discursive and disciplinary characteristics in a set of publications – in Education and Psychology – we exposed elements that strengthen the need to evaluate the pertinence of a given research result in a contextualized way.

This evaluation increases the accuracy of the analyses when we deal with the interface between school contents and research results, which comprises the interest of reflection of this work, as we said earlier in the question that motivates this article.

To elucidate the relevance of this type of reflection, we mention, for example, the recent *Relatório Nacional de Alfabetização Baseada em Evidências* (National Report on Evidence-Based Literacy) – RENABE (Brazil, 2020). This is a report coordinated by the Literacy Department of the Ministry of Education, which emphasizes the importance of scientific evidence in the sphere of public educational policies:

The importance of scientific evidence, as a quality criterion, is already evident in the very name of this report: the *Relatório Nacional de Alfabetização Baseada em Evidências*. The term ‘evidence’ concerns findings that result from scientific research. Evidence-based literacy is one that employs procedures and resources whose effects have been tested and proved effective. (Brasil, 2020, p. 28)

Thus, we see the articulation between school and scientific knowledge in a recent governmental context, in which scientific evidence is presented as a justification for the conception of literacy defended then. On this, we highlight that such debates, which relate science and literacy, are not limited to academia and the governmental sphere. Examples of this are documents prior to RENABE published on the Internet and published in other spheres of communication, such as the media. Thus, we mention the text of one of the experts mentioned in RENABE, published in the *Veja Magazine*:

A group of researchers in the fields of psychology, psycholinguistics, linguistics, and neurosciences sent the National Council of Education a note in which the MEC's proposal for the literacy curriculum is analyzed. The note, written in professional language, simple and objective, is devastating – it leaves no stone unturned. Highly qualified, the group is made up of people with publications in prestigious international scientific journals, some of which also have enormous practical experience in the area. (Oliveira, 2017)

Oliveira (2017) refers to what Seabra et al. (2017) affirms in his *Nota sobre a nova proposta de alfabetização apresentada pelo MEC ao CNE* (Note on the new literacy proposal presented by the Ministry of Education to the National Council of Education). *Version of December 18, 2017*. This document criticizes the theoretical posture related to literacy assumed in the BNCC and characterizes it as a misunderstanding “in the light of the available scientific evidence” (Seabra et al., 2017, p. 4), and states that: “the text [of the BNCC] states it ‘dialogues’ with certain linguistic theories, but certainly does not dialogue with the *evidence produced by the Cognitive Science of Reading* [our emphasis] on what literacy is and how it should be done” (p. 4).

Locating the answer to this note, signed by the writers of the Portuguese-language text in the BNCC version that was then criticized, is also possible. This text, which responds to the criticism received, states that “there is no way to ignore at least *30 years of scientific tradition* [our emphasis] in which this view of written language as alphabetic code has been dismantled” (Barbosa et al., 2017, p. 6).

Since in this article we do not focus on the specific discussion on literacy, our purpose in making brief mentions of RENABE and the other texts cited – which can be read in full online – was to highlight passages in which scientific knowledge is focused on argumentation to refer to the defended conceptions and justify the curricular options in the recent debate on literacy.

In this sense, and in view of the interface between scientific knowledge and school contents, we seek to problematize the scientific-academic knowledge that is incorporated as truth without being relativized and contextualized regarding the processes of knowledge production that delimit the achievement of these results.

Bibliographic studies such as that presented in this article contribute to maintaining a critical position in the approach of scientific knowledge, in the sense that Foucault (2000) gives to criticism when he argues that

criticism is the movement by which the subject gives himself the right to interrogate the truth about its effects of power and the power about its discourses of truth; criticism will be the art of voluntary non-servitude, of reflected indocility. Criticism would essentially have the function of unsubjecting the game that could be termed, in a word, politics of truth. (p. 173)

We highlight that the goal is not to dichotomize our reflection on scientific-academic articles, qualifying them as good or bad. We propose to indicate how, discursively and disciplinary, different policies of truth underlie the production of knowledge related to the “teaching of writing in the early years of ES,” when such teaching constitutes an object of research. Therefore, the results from scientific-academic investigations stem from their production contexts.

Note that, in the field of Portuguese teaching, Geraldi (1991) addressed the imbrication between school contents and the production of scientific knowledge. He discusses how school components are defined – highlights the teaching contents that result from scientific research and begin to make up the curricula of initial teacher education and will, therefore, integrate basic education classes. The author discusses the incorporation of some research results into teaching when, as they are considered as school content, they fail to account for the scientific reality – its specificities and delimitations – and are taken as absolute truths.

As we have exposed, regarding this interface between research results and school contents, this article contributes to systematizing data that show that the research results on teaching of writing can only be properly interpreted by considering the disciplinary configuration of investigations under focus. If this is not considered, “teaching of writing” starts being referred to as a definition and a homogeneous and one-way characterization, losing sight that, while part of scientific investigations treats this teaching as a result of tests, others consider it as a teaching and learning process. This distinction is demonstrated in this article, among other aspects, and signals the inadequacy of pointing out quantitative results or successful experiences in isolation, since this does not live up to the complexity of the theme, due to the specific research contexts whose results cover part of the reality under focus and leave another part uncovered.

Considering these aspects related to the interface between scientific production and school contents, we analyzed the discursive characteristics and disciplinary configuration of the “teaching of writing in the early years of ES” in research that takes this school content as the object of investigation. Thus, we question: 1) how are scientific publications that take this school

content as an object of investigation characterized? and 2) when this content of language teaching becomes the object of research, what configuration and delineations does it take in this other position?

To answer these questions, in the following we present the *corpus* and the analysis based on the conception of genres of the discourse, considering that “each particular utterance is individual, but each field of use of the language elaborates its *relatively stable types* of utterances” (Bakhtin, 2011, p. 262, our translation). From Foucauldian works dealing with the history of knowledge, we mobilize, in particular, the concept of discipline as “the possibility of formulating, and formulating new propositions, *ad infinitum*” (Foucault, 2004, p. 59). Such theoretical conceptions supported this research and will be specified as they are mobilized in the analysis process itself.

We developed this bibliographical research (Lima & Miotto, 2007) in view of the general objective of drawing an overview of scientific production that addresses the teaching of writing in the first cycle of ES, focusing on its discursive characteristics. As specific objectives, we define: a) to identify discursive recurrences; b) to analyze the scientific configuration of the research object in question; and c) to evaluate the effects of meaning of this production in terms of influence on the school content “teaching of writing.”

To this end, we reviewed 15 articles published between 2008 and 2018 in different Brazilian online journals in the areas of Psychology and Education. To constitute the *corpus*, we defined the Scientific Electronic Library Online (SciELO)⁵ as a database of data collection. We delimited as object articles published in Portuguese, in the cited period, that thematize the teaching of writing in the early years of the ES. In the search process, we used the descriptors “*ensino de escrita*” (teaching of writing), “*ensino de produção de texto*” (teaching of text production), and “*ensino de produção textual*” (teaching of textual production) in the Abstract index and, from the abstract reading and/or the global reading of the articles, we located those who discussed the teaching of writing in the early years of the ES. The results showed that most articles that corresponded to our research criteria were in journals of Psychology and Education; thus, our analysis material comprised publications of these two areas.

⁵ Our online data collection at SciELO took place between May and July 2019.

1. The genre of the discourse “scientific article” itself

From Mikhail Bakhtin’s extensive and complex work, some concepts have notoriety for the way they are repeatedly cited and discussed in research with various themes. One of these concepts is the “genres of discourse” (Brait & Pistori, 2012), which is often referenced by the essay of the same name that integrates the collection *Aesthetics of Verbal Art* (Bakhtin, 2011).

Unlike the classical theory of genres, situated in the field of poetics and rhetoric, Bakhtin (2011) turns to the various spheres of use of verbal language, and covers multiple discursive productions, belonging to private or public contexts:

The richness and diversity of discourse genres are infinite because the possibilities of multiform human activity are inexhaustible and because in each field of this activity the repertoire of genres of discourse, which grows and differs as a given field develops and gains complexity, is integral. (p. 262, our translation)

From this quote, we will stop at two aspects for reflection: repertoire and diversity. Each sphere of discursive, artistic, sociopolitical, journalistic, among others, constitutes, socio-historically, its relatively stable types of utterances, that is, the genres of discourse that are proper of itself. We recall that “the spheres of use of language are not an abstract notion, but a direct reference to concrete utterances that are manifested in discourses” (Machado, 2016, p. 156) and in them is constituted a repertoire of genres that integrates each of the fields of human activity, as occurs in the case of the scientific sphere, in which scientific articles compose a typical and standardized discursive production. When we mention the writing pattern, we consider that it is not configured in a single way, hence the diversity that characterizes the genres of discourse that are flexible in their fundamental elements: compositional construction, thematic content, and style of language (Bakhtin, 2011).

Given the importance of the scientific article among the genres in the repertoire of the field of Science and in search of contributing to the discussions related to the production of knowledge, we turned, from the enunciative-discursive perspective of Bakhtin (2011, 2015), to the analysis of legitimate articles in its sphere of circulation, to identify discursive characteristics. In our analysis, we evaluated, in particular, how the indissociability between compositional structure, thematic content, and style was consolidated, a fundamental factor for understanding the dialogical relations tensioned between the stable and the relative in the constitution of genres.

Note that the Bakhtinian concept of dialogism is not restricted to the concrete dialogue between people who are willing to talk, since, for Bakhtin (2015) the authentic means of enunciation is dialogized:

The living utterance, which emerged consciously in a given historical moment in a determined social environment, cannot fail to touch thousands of living dialogical lines ensnared by the socio-ideological consciousness around a given object of enunciation, cannot fail to be an active participant in social dialogue. (p. 49, our translation)

As Brait and Pistori (2012) point out, the concept of “genre of discourse” is discussed in different works of the Bakhtin Circle. We understand that the breadth of these discussions leads to readings that contribute to deepen analyses that take the triad “form of composition, thematic content, style of language” as a basis. Thus, we proposed considerations about the indissociability between these three elements regarding achieving the desired sense effect. In the case of our *corpus*, meaning effects inherent to scientific production stood out, among which we can mention the scientific reliability and the interlocutor’s adhering to the defended results, which was different given the specificities of these areas of knowledge.

In the analyses, we also try to consider the dialogical relationships that participate in the constitution and circulation of genres. Such relationships are thus defined in Bakhtin’s *Problems of Dostoevsky’s poetics* (2010):

a much broader phenomenon than mere rejoinders in a dialogue, laid out compositionally in the text; they are an almost universal phenomenon, permeating all human speech and all relationships and manifestations of human life-in general, everything that has meaning and significance. (p. 40)

In the case of scientific articles, the analyses we present systematized data that indicate how, within a scientific field of knowledge, the anteriority and posteriority between the discourses are put into dialogue by the reiteration of the same *modus operandi*, which, in addition to characterizing the production of the area, functions as a seal of disciplinary type, taking the Foucauldian notion regarding the production of new scientific knowledge (Foucault, 2004).

2. Preliminary information about the *corpus*

In the analysis of *the corpus*, there were important distinctions between 15 articles produced in more than one area of knowledge, published in five journals in the area of Psychology and four in the area of Education.

We started by discussing the difference in the compositional structure of the publications. The seven articles in the area of Psychology were presented in accordance with the communication model comprising the sections of introduction, methods, result, and discussion, better known by the acronym IMRD. On the other hand, of the eight publications of Education, only one article was structured in this format.

Aragão (2012) discusses the scope of the IMRD scientific communication model. One of the data he considers is the hegemony of this pattern and its variants in Psychology publications. In the *corpus* we analyzed, the seven articles linked to the area of Psychology followed the IMRD model – despite some variants in their structural configuration, especially regarding the section dedicated to the method, which was subdivided into more than one item, such as participants, instrument, procedures. These are, therefore, punctual changes that do not escape the IMRD structure, and are identified as variants of this model.

Regarding the eight articles published in the journals of the area of Education, seven of them did not materialize the IMRD model. In these articles, except for the Introduction and Final Considerations, the sections were organized differently, configured according to the particularities of each research, so that the titles of the sections already indicated the specificities of the publication in question, such as: “*Escrita e trabalho docente*” (Writing and teaching work); “As entrevistas com as professoras” (Interviews with the teachers), among other subtitles. The only article published in an Education journal that presented a variant of IMRD as a compositional structure was Barrera and Santos (2016).

Considering the above, we take up the concept of “discourse genre” (Bakhtin, 2011) and discuss discursive choices consonant to the structure of articles under the logic of indissociability between compositional form, content, and style.

3. Approximations and distinctions in the characterization of scientific articles under focus

When it comes to texts from the scientific field, their production has known patterns that culminate in a certain homogenization of this type of writing. It happens that, since we worked with articles from more than one area of knowledge, we could evaluate the discursive specificities of the *corpus*. Thus, we refer our investigation not in the sense of restricting the analyzed production to the classification as a research of quantitative or qualitative approach, or to other categorization of this type, but in the perspective of treating these articles regarding the gender of the discourse that effectively constitutes them as such in the specific field of communication.

We observed that, in the case of Psychology publications, the texts were standardized – both in their structural aspects and in their approaches and research methodologies, as seen in the following data.

Of the seven Psychology productions, one presented an approach on the importance of family interaction for the construction of writing by the child (Maciel & Munhoz, 2008), whereas the other six studies approached children's writing and presented it as a result of one or more tasks. In Pessoa et al. (2010), distinct situations of writing were portrayed – one from the request for free textual production and another of reproduction of a short story. Similarly, Santos and Barrera (2015) presented the results from three different situations where writing a text was requested of children. Nobile and Barrera (2016) exposed results that came from different writing conditions, which included, for example, different requests for textual production and a dictation with different levels of orthographic difficulty. In the three scientific productions, tables were exposed with the quantification of the results.

The other three articles were based on the students' ability to graph the words, with analyses related to: phonological awareness and knowledge of the letters (Barbosa et al., 2016); knowledge and orthographic performance (Santos & Barrera, 2012); and morphosyntactic awareness (Guimarães, 2011). All of them presented quantitative analyses of the results presented in tables.

In all these scientific publications, children's writing, in a school context, was characterized as a response to a task or a writing test, with subsequent quantitative

demonstration of the results obtained. In dialogical terms, the recurrence of the same reverberated meaning is analyzed in these publications, since, over the course of a decade, the content themed in the discourse was configured with a view to recognizing, on the one hand, the children's written knowledge already consolidated or lagging behind in terms of graphic representation and, on the other hand, the evaluation of the conditions of production of written texts that favored student performance.

This same ordering of the senses of a given object of discourse is characterized as a response to previous utterances in interaction with those that come later:

As monological as the utterance can be..., as concentrated as it is in its object, it cannot fail to be to some extent also a response to what has already been said about a given object, a given question, even if this responsiveness has not acquired a clear external expression: it will manifest itself in the tone of meaning, in the tone of the expression, in the tone of the style, in the subtler hues of the composition. The utterance is full of *dialogical tones*, and without considering them understanding the style of an utterance to the end is impossible. Because our own idea – whether philosophical, scientific, artistic – is born and formed in the process of interaction and struggle with the thoughts of others, and this cannot fail to find its reflection also in the verbalized forms of expression of our thought. (Bakhtin, 2011, p. 298, our translation)

Regarding the modes of expression, we did not find elements that discursively situate the analyzed production to what Brait (2016) calls “evaluation via form” (p. 84), – that is, expressive accents that appear in the very way the author manifests himself regarding the evaluative tones he exposes, not by the content, but by the way it is expressed. This gap does not cause strangeness, considering that “the neutral-objective styles presuppose a kind of triumph of the recipient over the speaker, a unity of his views, but this identity and this unity cost almost a full refusal to expression” (Bakhtin, 2011, p. 304, our translation).

Regarding the tone of the style, psychology publications demonstrated an important characteristic related to the discourse cited. We identified in productions of the area the same stylistic trait in the mode of insertion of the discourse of the other. In this case, we observed the dissemination of the results of the research itself in parallel to the corroboration of the results of other studies, as shown in the following excerpts:

Note that the results of this study *corroborate* [our emphasis] those found in the study by Correa and Dockrell (2007). (Guimarães, 2011, p. 31);

Anyway, and *corroborating* [our emphasis] results of previous research..., the results obtained showed that the aid of supports can help in the production of more elaborate narrative texts. (Nobile & Barrera, 2016, p. 8);

The results showed a relationship between orthographic performance, quality of transgression and ability to explain spelling rules. These results *corroborate* [our emphasis] those of previous research... and suggest that explicit knowledge of the spelling rule is related to orthographic performance. (Santos & Barrera, 2012, p. 262);

These results indicate that visual support is not the determining factor in the quality of the elaboration of the narrative structure... These results *corroborate* [our emphasis] those obtained by Lins and Silva and Spinillo. (Santos & Barrera, 2015, p. 259)

Considering the seven publications of Psychology, we observed that in four of them the information about the results of the research itself appeared related to the dissemination of results of other publications, being textually recorded with the verb “corroborate,” as seen in the transcribed fragments. On this, we go back to Bakhtin (2011), when he states that:

The style is inseparable from certain thematic units and – what is of particular importance – of certain compositional units: of certain types of construction of the set, of types of its finishing, of types of the relationship of the speaker with other participants of discursive communication – such as listeners, readers, partners, the discourse of the other, etc. The style integrates the gender unit of the utterance as its element. (p. 266, our translation)

Therefore, in the analyzed production of Psychology about children’s writing in the school context, we observed a set of elements that interrelate compositional structure, thematic content, and style in the sense of presenting a text that takes place “in a block,” that is, the articles of the decade studied demonstrated a discursive chain effected via recurrences.

Although part of this production has the same authorship – as indicated by the fragments of the *corpus* previously transcribed –, we evaluated that the characterization of this set of works is not explained simply by individualizing aspects, but points to the configuration of the genre “scientific article” by the reiteration of the same discursive choices. In this case, stood out: a) the characterization of the thematic content based on responses to writing tests and also with tasks that considered different conditions and requests for the production of texts; b) the structural composition of the texts in the IMRD model and their variants; and c) the incorporation of the cited discourse related to the research results themselves by corroborating

previous results. These are indications that point to the discursive configuration of the production of the area in the sense of uniformity and contiguity.

In the production of the Education area the *corpus* pointed out different aspects. Regarding these publications, the structural composition of the articles portrayed, from the titles of the sections, elements that refer to the investigative development of the research itself. Thus, in Val and Marcuschi (2010), by way of example, the non-obedience to the IMRD format was configured in sections that referred, from the titles, to the specificities of the research, such as “*O gênero textual no contexto didático: possibilidades e limites*” (The textual genre in the didactic context: possibilities and limits) and “*O PEF 2006 e as orientações do fascículo Poetas da escola*” (The ES teacher 2006 and the guidelines of the *School’s Poets* issue).

Regarding content, in the articles of Education, the approach differed, to present the writing of children from different perspectives, as we cite: presentation of children’s texts produced in a specific didactic situation (Borges & Borges, 2017) with quantification of the results (Val & Marcuschi, 2010); texts produced by the children according to the teacher’s planning, photocopies of parts of the children’s notebooks and responses to the interview made by the researcher (Dalla-Bona & Bufrem, 2013; Gusso & Dalla-Bona, 2014); transcription of statements and description of class moments, focusing on the interaction between teachers and students (Gomes-Santos, 2010); answers of the teachers to the questions that comprised the interview script of the research (Spinillo & Correa, 2016); results of children’s writing in response to some task(s) – related to different conditions of request for the writing of the story – with quantification of the results (Barrera & Santos, 2016); and transcription and analysis of children’s texts, written in a didactic situation that took place during the class (Pinheiro & Guimarães, 2016).

We observed that, in education publications, the theme of school writing demonstrated diversity regarding the focus of the analysis of the reality investigated and the data collected, which included children’s texts, notebook photocopies, interviews, and recording of didactic situations in a regular teaching context, among other aspects. Meanwhile, in the Psychology production, homogeneity and contiguity were highlighted in the elements we analyzed, considering what has been presented and discussed so far.

Regarding the style consolidated by the forms of mention of the discourse of others, we verified the phenomena of citation, both direct and indirect. If in the Psychology production

the recurrence of a certain verbal linguistic use was identified, in the Education publications, the forms of mention to the cited text were more different. Note that, among the articles published in Education journals, only one brought the use of the verb “corroborate” in reference to other research. Namely, it was the article by Barrera and Santos (2016), who also appeared as authors of articles in the area of Psychology in our *corpus*. The use of the verb was identified in:

In general, our *results corroborate* [our emphasis] the results presented by Lins e Silva and Spinillo (2000) and Santos and Barrera (2015), that is, the type of production request, especially when there was the suggestion of conflict, was an important factor in the writing of well-structured narratives. (p. 81)

We evaluated that the repeated presence of these authors in the *corpus* demonstrates, first, that, regarding school writing in the early years of ES, the researchers have presented continuous publications; and second, that, in this production, they both update the *modus operandi* of scientific dissemination of the area and influence it, to the extent that such publications also serve as a reference for future discussions. As Brait (2016) points out,

the conception of style in the Bakhtinian sense... implies subjects who institute discourses from their concrete utterances, their forms of enunciation, which make history and are subjected to it. Thus, the singularity will necessarily be in dialogue with the collective in which texts, verbal, visual, or verbal-visual, allow to see, as a whole, the other participants of the interaction in which they are inserted and that, by force of dialogicity, reaches the past and the future. (p. 98)

The analysis related to the Education production also attests to the organicity between compositional structure, thematic content, and style, since all three axes showed diversity, despite not escaping levels of standardization regarding parameters of scientificity and neutrality.

The results we reached by the discursive genre analysis of the *corpus* of publications showed different ways of commencing these texts. Whereas those from Psychology were characterized by standardization in their structure, in the approach of thematic content and in aspects related to style, the productions concerning Education demonstrated diversity both in the form of organization of the textual structure and in the thematic approaches and in the style they print to writing.

Considering the above, we resume the question: when the school content of teaching writing in the early years of ES becomes the object of scientific research, what configuration and delineations does it assume in this other position?

4. Contours of a research object: the school content “teaching of writing in the early years of Elementary School” on the agenda

In the *corpus*, we identified characteristics that configured scientific production in different ways, considering the area of knowledge in which the knowledge was situated and related to which it will be legitimized. Foucault (2004), in *The Order of Discourse*, deals with the acceptability of scientific knowledge, considering, among other factors, those that he will treat as internal conditions of production and circulation of scientific discourse.

One of these conditions is carried out in the format of disciplines, understood as groupings of guidelines that delimit what will constitute or not the scientific production of a given area of knowledge, and that, despite having this delimiting character, allow deepening the investigations at stake.

Note that Michel Foucault discussed, in part of his work, about the “regimes of truth” prevalent in certain historical moments and the power relations then engendered in these regimes. In *The Order of Things* (Foucault, 1999), for example, this problem was addressed by the author regarding the constitution of knowledge that themed man as an object and as a subject of knowledge.

In this work, the author discusses how modern thought put an end to the metaphysics of life and stopped at the man as an object of knowledge. These interruptions in the history of ideas are discussed in this work by the bias of their discontinuity (Foucault, 1999). The identifiable discontinuities in the constitution of knowledge also appear in the analyses present in *History of Madness* (Foucault, 2010) and *The Birth of the Clinic* (Foucault, 2011).

As Machado (2004, p. X) points out, Foucault undertook an investigative project on the constitution of knowledge and its transformations. In this project, he situated what was, to some extent, invisible in the production of knowledge and how it began to have visibility, that is, it gained the status of scientific object. Thus, from a turn in the prevailing regime of truth, what was on the fringes of scientific discourse became a clipping of the reality about which a specific knowledge began to be enunciated.

In the analyses of scientific articles published between 2008 and 2018, as opposed to changes in the modes of scientific production, what was indicated is a *modus operandi* that is maintained when considering the same area of knowledge. In the comparison presented here

between different areas of knowledge, in this case Psychology and Education, the circulation of discursive productions that respond to very diverse regimes of truth is latent.

Initially, we verified that, in Psychology productions, “the teaching of writing in the early years of ES” turns to what has already been, or not, apprehended by children and constitutes an object of knowledge by quantifying results derived from tests and/or writing tasks. In Education publications, however, this same object of research is configured in the analysis of the teaching contexts themselves or what appeared as their unfolding. These contexts referred to didactic situations in which such teaching was focused. As developments, we mention articles in which the teaching of writing gained visibility from the responses of students or teachers to interviews conducted by researchers.

Thus, the publications of Education brought elements that turned to the teaching and learning process and the articles from Psychology were held back in the evaluation and discussion of what the children already mastered. Thus, the focus was on the knowledge of the written language that had already been learned, until the moment of the research.

Finally, we consider the recipients of the articles examined. According to Bakhtin (2011),

the so-called neutral styles or objectives of the exhibition, concentrated to the maximum in their object... involve, after all, a particular conception of their recipient. Such objective-neutral styles produce a selection of linguistic means not only from the point of view of their suitability to the object of the discourse, but also from the point of view of the proposed imperceptible background of the discourse recipient, but this background is considered in an extremely generic way and abstracted from its expressive aspect. (p. 304, our translation)

In fact, the texts of the *corpus* focused on the object of research and, therefore, the effects of objectivity were several. Among them is the discursive practice with predominance of referential language, which makes its target interlocutors less noticeable. However, although overall the articles did not show their recipients, at specific moments it was evident they were the teachers. Figure 1 exposes fragments in which teachers show as recipients, by direct reference to them or to teaching and pedagogical practices.

Figure 1

Recipients of scientific publications under analysis

(1) the results of this study suggest that, in the teaching-learning process of written language, the teacher should seek [our emphasis] the development of the students' morphosyntactic awareness, since the empirical data presented here indicate that this ability allows a greater orthographic domain. (Guimarães, 2011, p. 31)
(2) Such learning requires systematic and explicit teaching to lead the student [our emphasis] to a reflection on the orthographic restrictions of the written language, encouraging him to explain his/her knowledge on a conscious level. (Santos & Barrera, 2012, p. 262)
(3) considering the results obtained, it is possible to argue that pedagogical practices focused on the production of texts should [our emphasis] be characterized both by activities that enable implicit learning by contact with different genres of text, as well as by the explicit teaching of the textual structure. (Santos & Barrera, 2015, p. 259)
(4) it is essential that teachers [our emphasis] have a broad knowledge about intervention proposals in learning strategies aimed at exploring the metatextual, metadiscursive, and metapragmatic dimensions involved in text production. (Barrera & Santos, 2016, p. 82)
(5) These results contribute to understand the factors that are essential for learning [our emphasis] of writing and reinforce the need to work with phonological awareness and knowledge of letters systematically in early childhood education. (Barbosa et al., 2016, p. 674)
(6) Thus, the importance of explicit teaching [our emphasis] of linguistic aspects with a view to developing metalinguistic skills is highlighted, since the ability to read and write is intrinsically related to self-control and conscious manipulation of linguistic treatments. (Pinheiro & Guimarães, 2016, p. 89)
(7) The results obtained point to the need for changes in the teaching [our emphasis] of spelling... such teaching should [our emphasis] also include attention to metalinguistic skills related to phonological and morphosyntactic awareness. The teaching of spelling should [our emphasis] be offered systematically, given the conventional character of the system. (Nobile & Barrera, 2016, p. 9)
(8) working with the written production at school, for more benefit [our emphasis], aimed to allow, by the activities of retextualization, the recognition and production of different genres of discourse, to show students that, in the production and interpretation of texts, information such as 'for whom you write,' 'for what purpose,' and 'what effects they intend to achieve' is much more relevant [our emphasis] than knowing how to list and classify textual types or genres. (Borges & Borges, 2017, p. 1331)

Figure 1 presents fragments showing that teachers are among the recipients of these publications. In italics, we emphasize the passages that demonstrate linguistic choices that characterize the discourse of authority by the modal “should” and with qualifiers and names that indicate the importance, the indispensability of what is being proposed by the school or demanded of it and the teacher.

The data from Figure 1, extracted from part of the analyzed publications, show that these articles, by legitimizing the “teaching of writing in the early years of ES” as an object of

research, with different methodological excerpts and theoretical contributions, will represent it in the discourse that seals its research results so that they are incorporated by teaching practice.

From what we present, we found that the scientific production on the school content “teaching of writing in the early years of ES” also assumes in its *modus operandi* statements of proposition and demand regarding what and how to teach. Thus, a cyclical logic is presented in which the teaching content assumes the status of research object, which, in turn, will return as teaching content legitimized in a given theoretical-methodological perspective. Also regarding the explanation of the recipient “teacher,” the articles cited did not defend a teaching content based on the results obtained, but they proposed a given teaching performance. For example, we cite the following passages:

Thus, we conclude *it is essential that the teacher* [our emphasis] help students understand the weaknesses of their texts. (Dalla-Bona & Bufrem, 2013, p. 200);

the *importance of the teacher* [our emphasis] is evidenced to resize his role to the one who permanently establishes dialogue with students and stimulates partnerships between them. (Gusso & Dalla-Bona, 2014, p. 73)

Considering what was exposed, we identify that the contours of the research object “teaching of writing in the early years of ES” suggest, first, the theoretical-methodological specificities that respond disciplinarily and differently to the fields of knowledge from which they originate, understanding the meaning of discipline as one of the conditions of production and control of scientific discourse (Foucault, 2004). Secondly, they expose a characteristic of research that initially elects a teaching content as its object of investigation and then represents it to the educational sphere as a valid knowledge, that is, legitimized by a given scientific perspective.

Final considerations

In our article, the central point was the analysis of the discursive and disciplinary configuration of the “teaching of writing in the early years of ES” in scientific articles published between 2008 and 2018, in which this school content was taken as an object of research. The constitution of the discursive genre “scientific article” differed according to the area of

knowledge to which it was linked. Those produced in the field of Psychology, showed traces of standardization and recurrences that were not observed in the Education productions.

Although scientific production is characterized by its objectivity effects, expressive traces can be located in it that contribute to the analysis of its socio-historical production conditions and its dialogical circulation. Thus, we analyzed the scientific discourse of legitimizing authority of the research results that were then defended as valid teaching content to be reincorporated into the educational sphere, in view of the theoretical-methodological perspective defended. This aspect showed in the articles in which the teacher appeared as the recipient of the texts.

The analyses undertaken and the discussions presented in this article were oriented towards answering the two questions listed earlier, when we questioned the discursive characteristics of the school content “teaching of writing in the early years of ES” when taken as the object of research, as well as its disciplinary configuration. From the investigative path carried out, we conclude with the following considerations.

In the analysis of the *corpus*, discursive regularities characterizing the mentioned productions were exposed. In what we have exposed, we identified that: a) the articles in the areas of Education and Psychology materialized different compositional and stylistic choices and thematic clippings; and b) when the teacher was evidenced as the recipient, part of the analyzed productions recommended and/or required their research results to be a legitimate teaching content.

Regarding this last point, we observed that defending this school content from a single bias, the one that was consistent with the specificities and results of the research itself, created a contradiction with the investigative making itself, in which the results are limited to the *modus operandi* of the research process itself.

We evaluated that the data systematized in this article contribute to the reflection on the loss due to considering the results apart from their theoretical-methodological research contexts. This results in the loss of essential information that demonstrates whether the teaching of writing is being investigated, for example, as a result of tests or from specific didactic practices. We, therefore, argue that considering the disciplinary configuration of research results is essential for the proper circumscription of the knowledge in question.

We warn that accepting certain research results includes considering the *modus operandi* of the given investigative process and that taking into view the disciplinary configuration of such results brings the necessary relativizing regarding the legitimation of scientific knowledge as school content.

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