ANALYSING THE RHETORIC OF DIGITAL GENRES

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ABSTRACT: *The focus of this paper is the language used in 3 genres in Portuguese and English from the digital world These genres include websites, as well as electronic networks of communication aimed at the exchange of information. However, in the case of two genres, the linguistic make-up of both digital and non-digital varieties are compared. To account for this range of genres the analytical research categories will glean from various genre-analytic perspectives, including those of Bhatia (1993; 2004), Hoey (2001) and Martin (2000). The initial selection of three genres was based on their potential to overcome pedagogic difficulties involving Brazilian female adolescent ESOL learners. This is why, in the discussion section, the analysis includes a digital genre, exclusively in Portuguese, as a means of illustrating the difficulties of Brazilian TESOL practitioners.*

KEY-WORDS: *digital genres; contrastive rhetoric; TESOL*

RESUMO: *O foco neste artigo é a linguagem usada em gêneros textuais em português e inglês no mundo digital. Os vários gêneros estudados em formas digitais incluem websites além das mensagens cujo objetivo é a troca de informações virtuais. Entretanto, no caso de dois gêneros analisados, a organização lingüística de variações de textos digitais e não-digitais é comparada. Para incluir gêneros distintos, a pesquisa examina aspectos da linguagem à luz de várias perspectivas: o estudo de gêneros de Bhatia (1993; 2004), Hoey (2001) Martin (2000). A seleção inicial dos primeiros três gêneros foi baseada no seu potencial para superar as dificuldades pedagógicas enfrentados por alunas adolescentes de Inglês. Por isso, na sessão de discussão, esta incluída a análise de um gênero digital sobre o ensino de inglês, exclusivamente em língua portuguesa.*

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Gêneros digitais; retórica contrastiva; ensino de Inglês.*

1.   Introduction.

1.1   Why digital genres?

It is clear that in the last two decades students, teachers and other researchers have begun to transmit, receive and exchange interests, information and knowledge via virtual genres on a daily basis. Experience, including that of academics, is now becoming divided between the physical world of a concrete, natural reality, and the abstract, virtual reality of a non-physical world.. And because of their novelty and ease of access, these genres may, in addition, provide a pedagogic means to overcome the lack of motivation among TESOL learners, especially Brazilian female teens, the target population of the research described in this paper. Thus, the genres in question might not only ensure up-to-date texts/ materials in the classroom, but also enable and encourage these learners to choose their own texts and extend their studies beyond the confines of the classroom.i.e., a form of learner independence.

1.2 Defining genres: The Systemic-Functional Grammar position.

This paper will focus on the analyses of four digital genres, each of which contains elements of descriptive, promotional texts. The theoretical basis for each of these analyses is that of Halliday & Matthiessen´s (2004) Systemic-Functional Grammar (henceforth SFG). This choice is based on two guiding principles for SFG analyses. First that each collection of messages may be considered a specific genre, and that a genre may be defined by its comunicative function within a specific set of contexts. Thus, in Halliday & Matthiessen´s (2004:xiii) view: *Every text, that is, everything that is said or written, unfolds in some context of use; furthermore, it is the uses of language that, over tens of thousands of generations, have shaped the system. Language has evolved to satisfy human needs –it is not arbitrary. A functional grammar is essentially a ´natural´ grammar, in the sense that everything in it can be explained, ultimately, by reference to how language is used."* The purpose of genre analysis, within the SFG perspective, is thus to identify that which   *"emphasises the crucial importance of rhetorical text structure* and also *how language is used within a particular context"* (Hyland, 2002:14-15). This is why the linguistic investigations and methodological procedures adopted in the four pieces of research described in this paper are attempts to exemplify the SFG precept, namely, that meaning and language are constructed through social

processes. However, the analytical starting point for the four genres in focus was the framework which Bhatia (1993:46-48) proposed specifically for ´promotional genre´, where the communicative purpose is to promote a service or an offer. In addition, a computational tool (Scott, 1996) was used in an effort to provide relevant information regarding the key lexical items chosen by all four genre writers. The researchers involved are all Brazilian ELT professionals and each of the genres studied have been chosen with female ELT learners in mind.

2. A first genre: Matos´ (2004) analyses of Brazilian EFL school homepages.

Research by Matos (2004) aimed at investigating the Portuguese discourse of 20 Brazilian franchise language schools, selected from their homepage genres in March, 2003, from their world wide web addresses. This research has been included in this paper because it is felt to provide an insight into the pedagogical difficulties faced by Brazilian ELT professionals, including those responsible for the analyses to be described below. Matos´ (2004) initial analyses attempted to identify where, within their homepage hypertexts, information relating to the schools' views on the teaching/learning process was concentrated. The analytical tack was to match the seven writer moves, proposed by Bhatia (1993:46-48) for his ´promotional genre´ framework, with the schools´ homepages. In Matos´ (2004) view, the organisation of the rhetoric on schools' homepages utilised the first six of Bhatia´s (op.cit.) writer moves. This is presumably because the homepages intend to promote services offered, and thus match the communicative genre function established by Bhatia (1993:42). This first analytical stage confirmed that the homepages are a promotional genre and there was a specific writer move within the organisational framework which revealed the schools' views of ELT concepts. The communicative purpose of this move was to indicate the value of the language programs. The research then focussed on those text sections which aimed at giving value to their respective language programs.

Subsequently, Matos´ (op.cit.) analyses focussed on the information given within the 'Methodology' section of the homepages. This information was then matched against ten questions proposed by Larsen-Freeman (1986: 29-31), seen as crucial in defining foreign language teaching methodology. It was then discovered that the schools provided no more than a minimum of information about their ELT concepts, which suggested that these were not priority issues for the authors. In

response, the research approach adopted was to analyse the overall rhetorical organization of the schools' texts on methodology. This was, in turn, an attempt to determine the essential communicative function of the linguistic choices of the genre, given that the provision of information regrading the schools' positions vis-á-vis issues of teaching/learning were not a priority for the writers involved. The texts on methodology were found to be developed following writer strategies similar to those adopted by multinational corporations in their efforts to establish legitimacy (viz. Halliday, 1987). In other words, the language schools´ core concern is to legitimize their methodology and to demonstrate their credibility in the eyes of their potential audience. One specific legitimizing tool was detected in all instances of the data under analysis, namely, the strategy of offering compensatory gains to those potential customers who opt for the product.

The constant presence of these compensatory gains in the data, in addition to the peripheral role played by ELT concepts, motivated Matos (2004) to further examine the linguistic environments in which those compensatory gains were inserted. This investigation revealed that the advantages offered could be classified in three different ways. The first referred to speed and ease of short-duration programs: (the labels refer to the Language School Homepage Number):

 LS3: we accelerate the learning process(aceleramos o processo de aprendizagem); LS6: short-time programs (cursos a curto prazo); LS14: fast way (maneira rápida); LS16: learning becomes more accelerated (aprendizado torna-se mais acelerado); LS18: optimized time (tempo otimizado); quick activities (atividades rápidas); LS2: new and varied techniques (novas e variadas técnicas); new and varied didactic resources (novos e variados recursos didáticos).

The second involved the offer of (technological) support resources; the third was in evidence throughout the analysed data, namely, the attribution of certain qualities to determined components of the teaching/learning process, illustrated in Table 1, below:

Table 1: Evaluative Expressions

Dynamic, involving , easy, pleasant (dinâmico, participativo, fácil, agradável)	Dynamic, interesting, productive (dinâmicas, interessantes, produtivas)
Dynamic and interesting (dinâmicas e interessantes)	Pleasant, fun (prazeroso, divertido); Fun, efficient (divertido, eficiente)
Original;Well-oriented effort (esforço bem orientado) Approved (aprovado)	Efficient (eficiente); Dynamic, natural (dinâmico, natural)
Involving (participativo); Interesting Motivating (motivador, estimulante)	Adequate (adequada); Useful, functional (útil, prático); The best (o melhor); Pleasant, motivating (agradável, incentivadora)
Modern (moderno),the most relevant (o mais relevante)	Innovative, modern, efficient (inovador, moderno, eficaz); Pleasant (agradável)
The most modern, dynamic and efficient (o mais moderno, dinâmico e eficaz)	Modern (moderna); Motivating (estimulantes); Avant-garde (avançadas)

These expressions (Table 1), used to qualify essential components of the EFL process,   thus match Martin´s (2000) appraisal category, of (positive) *Valuation*:

Fun, functional, useful → Teaching;
Dynamic, easy, fun, involving, pleasant → Learning;
Efficient, innovative, modern, original, relevant -> Method

Matos´ (op.cit.) analytical findings led her to conclude that the core rhetorical organization /characterisation of the genre was that of a legitimizing discourse. The provision of information on ELT methodology is therefore based on merchandising and marketing strategies. In common with globalised multinational corporations, the essential communicative function of the homepages is to legitimise the selling of their products, by offering relative advantages for buying their products. Their teaching world may therefore be seen as firmly embedded within a promotional or consumer culture. The system of meanings related to this communicative function, i.e., the starting point of SFG analyses, may be demonstrated by both the linguistic choices, including, the Appraisal category of Valuation, the

legitimising discourse, as well as the promotional genre rhetoric.

3. A second genre: Velloso´s (2004) analyses of Agony Aunt/ Dear Abby Columns.

Velloso´s (2004) research aimed at investigating and comparing the rhetorical patterns and linguistic elements present in Agony Aunt/ Dear Abby Columns in both English and Portuguese. The initial data selected consisted of twenty-four texts published in 2003, from magazines for the female teenage market. There were, initially, 12 from the British adolescents' magazine known as *More,* and 12 from its equivalent Brazilian publication, *Horóscopo*. Thus the texts selected to analyse by Velloso for this genre were published in teenage magasines. Why, it might be asked, have they been included in an article focussing on digital genres? The simple answer is that these analyses were seen as a pedagogic starting point for ´whole group´ ELT classroom analyses of a genre which was certain to motivate and capture the attention of the specific target learners. At later stages in both the analyses and their pedagogic exploitation, digital genres were very much in force. Thus, in common with the two genres to be described later in this paper, initial choice of data was pedagogic. In the case of these Agony Aunt/ Dear Abby columns, the texts are authentically written to involve specific audiences of female teenagers, by focussing on their everyday existentialist problems. The essential language functions of the genre therefore involve pragmatic face-saving through the choices of Halliday´s SFG mood and modality categories. A mood analysis simply determines whether the clause is declarative, interrogative or imperative. The term modality refers broadly to a speaker/writer's opinion or attitude towards a proposition expressed by an utterance. It can therefore be expected that the experts/ advisers will exercise their judgements on both probability and obligation, two central elements in modality. And, thus, an understanding of modality may be arguably of direct relevance to these learners´ ELT communicative needs.

Velloso´s (2004) research tack was to first   identify   macro-organisational generic writer moves following the categories described by Bhatia (1993:46-48, op.cit.), although the genre was only considered ´promotional´ for the second section where the experts give advice. The analyses then concentrated on the various occurrences of modality in both languages. The pedagogic motivation was to provide ELT learners with insights and tools regarding potential rhetorical differences between

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Portuguese and English at several analytical levels. In this way the analyses were hoped to serve as a means of comparing and contrasting the two languages in focus and to pinpoint similarities or differences which may help or hinder the comprehension or production of the same genre in English by ELT learners.

Velloso´s (op.cit.) findings, in terms of the macro-level writer rhetorical moves (i.e., Bhatia, 1993, op.cit.) revealed a striking similarity between the genres published in the two languages. Thus, in both languages, 5 moves were found to be consistently present; the first 4 moves were therefore identified as ´compulsory´, with Move 5, a *Warning*, retained as optional. Moves 1, 2, 3 and 4 are regularly present in every text. Move 1, the original letter from the advisee adolescent, contains a description of her problem. This move is the natural starting point as it provides the advisors/ experts with the necessary information for attempting to soothe or diminish the advisee's agony. Move 2 is the adolescents´ explicit plea for help. Moves 3, 4 and 5 are contained in the expert advisors´ replies. Move 3 consists of the provision of a basis or justification for the piece of advice; in two cases, the advice proper preceded the justification or support; it thus serves as a moderator, in that it may prepare the advisee for the experts´s recommendation(s). Move 4 contains the actual advice. This latter move may be realised through modalised, modulated or imperative sentences. Move 5 is present at the sentence level on those occasions when the writer attempts to warn or alert the advisees regarding the danger or potentially negative consequence of continuing the existing situation. In summary, the following moves were present in the texts in both languages:

*Move 1 * - Describing the ´agony´ or problem;
Move 2- Pleading for help;
Move 3- Providing a basis for the advice offered;
Move 4- Presenting/ Giving the specific advice;
Move 5- Warning (optional).

In order to illustrate the similarities between the moves in both language, examples from the moves have been selected from Appendices 1 & 2 (numbered in brackets). Move 5 consists of a warning, introduced either by the lexical verb '*remember'* or by the coordinator '*but'* in English:
"Remember that although he's been honest with you, he has a girlfriend" "But the longer you hang around, your feelings will get stronger, and they'll be in the hands of a man who can't be trusted" (2) In the texts in Portuguese, Move 5 is usually introduced by the adverb 'no' (não) or by the lexical verb 'remember' (lembrar) or an

alternative lexical verb indicating caution: *"Lembre-se: homens comprometidos têm muita dificuldade de romper laços..."* (1)

Velloso (2004) argues that the study of ´mood´, an element within Halliday and Matthiessen´s (2004) SFG ´Interpersonal Metafunction´, may reveal a writer/speaker's manipulation of the subject-verb relationship. She claimed that a central function of the Agony Aunt/ Dear Abby genre, in both Portuguese and English, is to provide information. This was based on her findings that the texts largely consist of declarative sentences, with averages of 80.33% and 86.58%, respectively, hence their largely descriptive roles. Thus, the adolescents´ pleas for help contain detailed descriptions of their problems; the advisors' sections are also mainly made up of declarative sentences, providing the reasons and a commentary on the advice offered, and also avoiding demands generally realised through imperative sentences. There is an insignificant number of interrogative sentences in both languages, as most requests are realised through imperative or declarative sentences.

The number of imperative sentences texts in Portuguese (14.5%) differs significantly from those in English (8.75%). However, these uses of imperatives are driven by different purposes. In the texts in English imperatives occur when the advisor is more straightforward towards what are extreme situations. In these cases, the advisor makes no effort at face-saving and endeavours to be as firm as possible, in order to prevent the advisee from acting foolishly or making the 'wrong' decision. The texts in English also appear to have a defined pattern in terms of the occurrences of mood with a consistently balanced mixture of declarative, imperative and interrogative sentences. In short, the specific incidences of imperative sentences in the texts in English would suggest that the writers are making conscious linguistic choices. The analyses therefore provide evidence that when the advisors are dealing with delicate situations they tend to avoid the use of imperative sentences. However, when these same counsellors perceive a need to be firm and straightforward, imperative sentences are often preferred.

In contrast, Velloso (2004) found that the texts in Portuguese include advice mainly expressed through imperative sentences. However, these choices are appropriate as they do not signal speaker/writer assumptions of power or assymetrical discourse within Brazilian culture. Pragmatically speaking, the use of imperative in Portuguese does not involve the loss of face associated with its choice in English. Thus the imperative will not of necessity signify offence. In the same texts there is a high occurrence of declarative sentences throughout the advice-giving

sections. Thus recommendations are realised through imperative sentences, and their justifications largely realised through declarative sentences. This explains why the occurrence of modalisation as face-saving is lower in Portuguese than the texts in English. These difference may be noted in Appendix 1, in English, *"I´m his other woman"* , in contrast with Appendix 2, in Portuguese,   *"Namoro um cara de 24 anos"*.

In the text in English, *"I´m his other woman"* (Appendix 1), Velloso´s modality analyses revealed that 56% of occurrences were ´modalisation´, also labelled ´epistemic modality´. For example, in sentences 5 and 6 the advisor avoids assertions and hedges: *"...it could be he doesn´t want to tell her..."* (4); *"...or maybe he´s guilty about what he has done..."*. In sentence 10 the expert provides a definite assertion: *"I reckon you should take control of the situation"* . However,   the impact is often softened by the inclusion of the personal pronoun *I*. In sentence 11 the comment adjunct provides evidence of the advisor´s attitiude towards the proposition: *But he´s obviously a lying cheat"*   and the same sentence demonstrates indignation and disapproval of the situation: *"... a lying cheat"*   Again an attitudinal epithet is used in sentence 16: *"You´ve got the common sense to suggest..."*.   In sentence 11,   the choice of deontic (modulation) modality strengthens the argument: *" I reckon you should take control of the situation."*

In the text in Portuguese, *"Namoro um cara de 24 anos"* (Appendix 2), the modality analyses revealed that 57% of occurrences were of a modalisation or epistemic modality type: *" acho que esta com a pessoa errada... rapazes solteiros que possam lhe oferecer muito mais afeto... aproveito que você é jovem e tem a possibilidade de fazer escolhas mais interessantes... invista em pessoas que poderão fazê-la mais feliz."*

A further variation between the two languages, in addition to the regular use of imperatives in Portuguese to provide advice, already cited, was the exclusive use of vocatives in the texts in Portuguese, (see Appendix 2) aimed at diminishing the distance between the advisor and the adolescents.

4. A third genre: Juaçaba´s (2004) analyses of Personal Online Dating Profiles.

Juaçaba´s (2004) research also focussed on data of potential interest to female TESOL learners, namely, personal profiles of males from the Online Dating genre, in both the English and Portuguese languages.

Online dating is a recent computer-mediated activity which is claimed to involve more than 20 million and over ten times that figure in capital expenditure (viz Jonassen, et.al. 1999:37) The genre is spawning several creative discourse forms which undoubtedly warrant linguistic investigation. This is because the sites in question provide a range of varied functional interactions for their potential participants, including communication by e-mails, private chats and scheduled chats. (viz, Souza, 1999: 169) Thus social interaction may well form an amalgam of digital genre systems and a combination of sub-genres (viz. Menezes, 2001). Juaçaba´s (2004) analyses focussed on profile segments, posted on Match.com, Yahoo!, of online male members from both the Brazilian and the International website versions. These segments are, specifically, three sections completed by male members under the headings: introductions, personal presentations, and physical descriptions. The data chosen were six profiles completed by New Yorkers, and six by *cariocas,* the latter living in the comparable urban metropolis of Rio de Janeiro. The data was also restricted to males between 35 to 40 years, in an attempt to ensure data cohesiveness and homogeneity and channel linguistic register variation and potential social diversity.

This research sought to define personal online dating profiles as a genuine digital sub-genre within the wider genre system of Online Dating. To achieve this end, the rhetorical moves and conversational tactics in the descriptive texts, in both languages, were matched with the set of functional promotional genre categories described by Bhatia (op.cit., 1993). In an effort to identify key lexical chocies common to the same descriptions, but at a micro level, the in English and Portuguese was analysed using Scott´s (1992) WordSmith tools for corpus analysis. The individual descriptions included by the senders within the Online Dating sites could reasonably be argued to aim overtly at promoting the profiled person, and thus pertain to Bhatia´s (op.cit., page 59) wider concept of 'promotional genre'. The purpose of the online profiles was met by seven rhetorical moves similar in make-up to those proposed by Bhatia.

 However, Bhatia´s Moves 1 and 2 were collated by Juaçaba (op.cit.); a novel opening move was also identified, and adaptations were made for both Move (4) and (7). The initial move was seen as a type of ´attention-getting starter", achieved by the use of shocking, funny or unexpected statements:
American looking for beautiful and intelligent international friends!
Príncipe Encantado busca bela Rapunzel para amar e honrar para sempre

Bhatia's (1993) three moves, namely, *Establishing Credentials; Introducing the Offer* and *Offering Incentives* were collated into a single, second, pervasive move labelled "Describing the Self": *I'm an easy-going, open-minded, sincere, caring, sensitive, romantic and honest guy who likes to have fun. Não sou super em nada, apenas um cara comum.*

A second additional move describes the attributes of the prospective partner, i.e., the ´object of desire´ and has thus been labelled by Juaçaba (op.cit.) as "Describing the Desired Other": *Just looking for a woman who appreciates Sunday picnics, baseball games, fine French dining, Broadway shows, casual BBQ dinners on my porch, and a little imperfection every now and then.*
Esperar uma pessoa perfeita é uma ilusão, todos nós temos qualidades e defeitos.
Como conviver com isso? Com amizade, carinho e compreensão. Difícil? Só tentando, saberemos.

The first adapted move refers to the optional insertion of a photograph, rather than Bhatia´s (op.cit.) ´enclosed documents´. The second refined move is a substitute for Bhatia´s ending politely . Here a a pleasant and frequently persuasive and seductive closing statement or question designed to persuade and/or seduce the reader, was newly labelled as "Attention-getting Codas" . In short, the moves identified by Juaçaba (op.cit.) for all twelve descriptions in the Online dating were: (1) Attention-getting Starters: (2) Describing the Self: (3) Enclosing Photos: (4) Describing the Desired Other: (5) Soliciting Response: (6) Using Pressure Tactics; (7) Attention-getting Codas.

Juaçaba´s research also   focussed on the most frequent attributes or tokens (viz. Martin, 2000) used by Brazilian and American males in describing themselves and the desired partner. Thus, the frequencies of occurrence for each attribute used to describe the self in both American and Brazilian texts were also identified.   Tables 3 and 4, below, present the semantic distribution of attributes for both nationalities. Attributes related to personality traits in general were subdivided by Juaçaba (op.cit.) into five categories first described by Shalom, 1997:

Table 2: Attributes of the self by Americans

PHYSICAL	MENTAL	AFFECTIVE	SOCIAL	EROTIC
Nice lips (2)	Intelligent (2)	sensitive (2)	Charming	sexy (2)
Nice legs (2)	mature (2)	romantic (2)	Non-jealous	Sensual
Well built	hard worker	caring	easy-going	Manly
not fat	Talented	loving	open-minded	
good looking		touchy	Sincere	

muscular	Honest
Nice eyes	Faithful
Nice smile	Special
Nice dimples	
Nice skin	

TOTAL: 30 different qualifiers

Table 3: Attributes of the self by Brazilians

PHYSICAL	MENTAL	AFFECTIVE	SOCIAL	EROTIC
magro (3)	Criativo	calmo (3)	bem humorado (2)	
Em forma (2)		romântico (2)	companheiro (2)	
pernas bonitas (2)		observador	esportivo (2)	
bronzeado (2)		sensível	simpático	
alongado		neurótico	mente arejada	
Definido		legal	delicado	
nariz fino		carinhoso	sincero	
rosto fino		generoso	extrovertido	
Forte		amigo	normal	
cabeludo		paciente		
elegante		compreensivo		
rosto bonito		Cuidadoso		
Esbelto		Curioso		

TOTAL: 37 different qualifiers

With these two tables, Juaçaba (2004) was clearly able to demonstrate that the largest variety of attributes are `physical´ for both American and Brazilian profiles. However, it is also evident that the Brazilian profilers make use of many more affective attributes as compared to Americans. The somewhat surprising findings highlighted were that only one mental attribute and not a single erotic was found in the Brazilian corpus segment.

5. A fourth genre: Pontes´ (2005) analyses of novel blurbs.

Pontes´ (2005) research provided a contrast between digital and non-digital blurbs for popular, romantic novels, available in both Portuguese and English. Once again, the motivation for choosing the specific genre was largely pedagogical, as the blurbs are short, interesting and designed to encourage reading among young, female EFL adults. Kleiman (2002:10) has claimed that the blurb genre has several potentially

positive pedagogic characteristics, for *"...besides being highly readable because it is short and accessible, it also has the social function of seducing the reader into further reading*". The specific choice of the author, namely Danielle Steel, was based on the results of questionnaires given to the target group of young female adult EFL students. The data chosen for analysis included twenty blurbs on Steel´s novels, ten in each language, six of which were found on the internet. (See Appendices 3, 4 & 5). The categories selected for contrastive analyses were from Labov (1972) and Bhatia (1993), in addition to the appraisal elements described by Martin (2000).

Pontes´ (2005) findings were that writers in both languages, and of both virtual and published blurbs, may be said to have organised their information in a series of moves, initially identified as compatible with those of Bhatia´s (1993, op.cit.) ´promotional genres´. However, further analyses revealed a closer match of the blurb data with elements described in Labov´s (1972) ´oral narrative framework´, namely: *Orientation, Complication, Resolution* and *Evaluation.* The text examples of these moves will be taken from Appendices 3, 4 and 5, identified in brackets below. A first move, present in each of the texts selected as data, in both languages, was labelled ´Grabbing the Reader´s Attention´. This well-defined move, serves as a type of preview, in two ways. First, by providing positive facts on the success of the author, Danielle Steel, matching Bhatia´s move of *Establishing Credentials :* *Exímia contadora de histórias e conhecedora da alma humana, Danielle Steel penetra....*(5) However, this first move may also be seen as foregrounding information on the story narrative itself, in common with Labov´s (1972) *Abstract* , by presenting elements of a puzzling nature, aimed to ´hook´ the potential reader, as exemplified from Appendices: *On a June day, a young woman in a summer dress...part of a story you will never forget.(3) Nada de bonecas ou cantigas de roda.... (4)*

A second stage matches Labov´s (op.cit.) *Orientation* and includes a brief, positively evaluated narrative synopsis. Here the circumstances and the protagonists are introduced : The *time is the 1950s, when life was simpler* (3); (…) *o pai, veterano da força aérea na Primeira Guerra Mundial* (4)*; no ambiente familiar e compõe um trama da vida moderna.* (5) A further, central, obligatory stage is marked by negative evaluation signals, *within* the narrative, whereby a ´complication´ is established, clearly signalled in these examples: *A happy home is shattered by a child's senseless death* (3); *À revelia do pai, aprende a pilotar* (4); *Adultério, problemas de adolescência....* (5)

Within this hypothesised narrative sequence, a hint at a response to the complication is presented. From the examples in below, these are no

more than partially resolved. The complete answer will only be available by reading the entire work. However, the use of verbs, indicating positive responses, are employed in both languages. Thus, in English, Pontes (2005) identified: *stand fast against; face; determine; avoid; decide; chart; pursue; contront; went back; searching for; finds; frees; leaves; escape.* In Portuguese, she cited: *reviram; procura; repensar; enfrentados; refazer; não esmorece; luta; foge; alcançar; resolve; acertar de contas.*

The blurb writers in both languages, and in both media, were found (Pontes, op.cit.) to shape their messages interpersonally, in a constant effort to ensure reader acceptance of their arguments. Thus all four blurb types were written almost entirely in full declaratives, together with mood adjuncts, in describing their respective products. In this way their confidence and certainly that readers will find the story worthwhile is explicitly displayed. This commitment and conviction, noticeably free of writer distancing, is expressed by a range of epistemic modals, e.g. *poderia* in Portuguese, and *must; will; can´t* in English. Following Martin´s (2000:6) appraisal parameters, the books are therefore consistently presented as positive pleasurable experiences *(Five Days in Paris will change your life forever)*; they are socially valued by citing the author, Danielle Steel; their discourse is one of authority: ... *não faltam os igredients que consagraram Danielle como...*; while a specific community is constantly cited : *seu público fiel.* Efforts to maintain this bond between writer and readers are consistently made: *Exímia contadora de histórias e conhececedora da alma humana; a autora mais lida dos EUA...* and by distinctive evaluative nouns devoid of hedging: *honor; commitment; integrity.*

Thus the language of appraisal in the blurbs published in English are examples of what Labov (1972:47) defines as ´internal evaluation´, i.e., `internal´ to the narrative itself. And these (see Appendix 3) are almost exclusively petaining to Martin´s (2000) category of `appreciation´, specifically `evoked judgement´ related to the `American Dream´. In contrast, Pontes (op.cit.) analyses of her blurbs in Portuguese, indicate that ´external evaluation´ of the author, matching Martin´s (2000: 155) categories of judgement: ´social esteem´ and ´social sanction´ are more common: *Danielle Steel se supera neste livro, uma história de romance e aventura.* (4) *Em Acidente, não faltam os ingredientes que consagraram Danielle Steel como a autora mais lida dos EUA* (5).

Finally, Pontes (op.cit.) briefly compared her published book cover blurb data and their virtual counterparts on the web. In her view, the essential

criteria for the virtual blurb writers is that of efficiency in terms of visual space. The writers´ creativity was therefore seen in restricting or limiting their discourse, avoiding ambiguities and, therefore, the teasing element, so often used on the published book cover. However both media blurbs were said to have far more in common: the crucial exemplification in encapsulating the story itself; the attention-catching heading or title; the positive value given both to plot and theme. However, one noticeable difference in the virtual texts in the two languages relates to what has been consistently thematised. In the the virtual data selected in English, the setting and characters were thematised, while reference to the author is minimal. In contrast, in the Portuguese virtual blurbs, the name of the author is constantly highlighted. (see Appendices 3 and 5).

6. Discussion.

6.1 Implications for Learning within Brazilian TESOL.

Matos´ (2004) findings underline the fact that Brazilian TESOL is arguably a two-sided discourse community representing very different interests. Thus, on the one hand, Brazilian TESOL teachers are part of the educational, formative sector of society, where the objectives are, presumably, to enhance the abilities of learners to be active, thoughtful, contributory citizens (viz, Freire, 1972:18). However, the profession is also very much part of the entrepeneurial world of business, represented by some of the largest, most lucrative enterprises in the world, namely the aformentioned Brazilian TESOL franchise schools, the focus of Matos´ (2004) research. Here, TESOL is part of the business, profit-making world, adopting a client-based sales jargon (viz, Olher, 2000). At its worst Brazilian TESOL may been seen as succumbing to the four horseman of the new apocalypse: merchandising, marketing, management and money.

And, because, in order to survive financially, many Brazilian TESOL teachers function in both the public and the private sector; they often suffer from *"contradictory imperatives"* (Wagner, 1988:111), or what have been termed *"mental knots"* (Laing, 1970). Mental knots are, put simply, the contradictions and ambiguities inherent in all our behaviour, actions, beliefs and lives. In other words, TESOL practitioners in Brazil, find it difficult to reconcile these two contradictory sides of the ambivalent nature of our professional make-up (viz. Maley, 1992:99). In fact, by misleading the potential clients into believing that learning a

foreign language can be quick and easy (viz. Matos´ data above) the private franchise schools have undermined and deprofessionalised Brazilian TESOL teachers. The net result of these conflicting natures is that teachers will often opt for the easy way out in pedagogic terms. Thus, the genuine needs of TESOL learners, both short-term and long-term, based on local educational settings, following the educational precepts described by Freire (1972), are often ignored in favour of global, contemporary fashion. And faced with these dilemmas, teachers often opt for the use of the latest technological gadgets, or the easy way out: the use of *fun, songs and games,* a stance well-documented in the relevant literature (dos Santos, 1970:27; Ilich, 1971:34; Pennycook, 1989:609). By opting for these approaches TESOL practitioners have turned their backs on the essential formative nature of their profession, which has, in turn, alienated and distanced them from the dialectic for multi-disciplinary learning advocated in the Brazilian "Educational Guidelines" (*"Parâmetros Curriculares: LE"*, 1998).

By concentrating on songs, fun and games, TESOL teachers have also opted for exclusive development of language as a right-brain function involving holistic thought, intuition and creativity. Over the past 40 years a majority of TESOL teachers have been influenced, to a greater or lesser degree, by movements such as *suggestopedia*, accepting Lozanov's (1978) research, which demonstrates the power of a pleasant setting, music and comfort, for the learning of foreign languages. Other approaches, including Moscovits'(1982) *Sharing and Caring,* Roger's (1983) *holistic learning,* Krashen & Tyrrell's (1983) *Natural Approach,* Edge's (1992) *Co-operative Learning*, and those described by Stevick (1976), have influenced TESOL practice in prioritising the affective learning factors for adults. All these scholars have encouraged a constant focus on the holistic thought skills of the *creative* right-side of the brain, with subsequent neglect of the *analytical,* logical, left-side functions. They have, albeit unwittingly, reinforced the arguments for the priority of the 'fun n' games' factor, aptly demonstrated by the following extract from an interview with a Brazilian TESOL teacher of tweens: *"I give them songs, video clips, hypertexts. I play with them, tell jokes, basically make them laugh. But when this doesn't work I make use of the traditional methods"*. (Pontes, 2001:19)

However, recent educational, medical and neurolinguistic findings in the UK may provide surprising different insights for learning. Thus, medical researchers at the University of Warwick, led by Oxford (2001), have (I quote), *"found that happy people use reasoning strategies*

similar to those patients who have suffered damage to the frontal lobes of the left side of the brain...". This would suggest the exact reverse of the dictum that happy learners make good students. Similarly, Williams (2001), a neurologist at the University of Birmingham, claims *"Our research suggests that the acquisition of analytical skills would be better induced by a negative mood state".* This is a somewhat surprising research finding, given the long-standing belief, partially intuitive, of the crucial central position of the affective filter in langauge learning (viz Krashen & Tyrrell, 1983). Williams' position is partially explained by Smiley (2001) from Kings College, Cambridge, whose studies demonstrate that *"... being in a good mood makes you less critical... but self-criticism is an essential part of all logical thinking... if you are in a good mood you just do not want to study".*

The *analytical,* logical, left-side functions, include those abilities which these UK research findings have specified as meaningful for teenagers. Little wonder that Brazilian TESOL teachers have enormous problems of motivation teaching post-puberty adolescents, using classical humanistic approaches, at what may now be seen as essentially analytical   stages of their development, apparently requiring serious, logical focus.

6.2 Focussing on contrastive rhetoric of digital genres in TESOL.

One possible implication of the three pieces of research described above (Velloso: 2004; Juaçaba:2004; Pontes:2005) appears relevant here. For TESOL teachers might well be advised to activate the the analytic, left-brain functions by developing awareness-raising of the learners´ own experience of specific genres (e.g., Agony Aunt/ dear Abby Columns, OnLine Dating, Novel Blurbs) in Portuguese. They may then be encouraged to analyse, and compare, the same macro and micro elements in the equivalent genres published in English. This activation of knowledge of previously experienced genres in Portuguese may provide a principled means of empowering both Brazilian TESOL teachers, and their learners, towards independent analysis and learning. Carrell's (1984: 83-84) research has demonstrated that one type of schema which humans possess is *"background knowledge about the formal, rhetorical, organizational structures of different kinds of texts. In other words, part of our background knowledge includes information about, and experiences of, differences among rhetorical structures, e.g., differences in the structures of fables, short sories, scientific texts, newspaper articles".* In a similar vein Rinvolucri (1996: 39) has made

certain concrete claims, based on his analyses of neuro-linguistic patterning. He believes that focus on wider thinking patterns can provide a starting point for new ways of looking at language, which are both intellectually stimulating, as well as demanding, and yet enjoyable. White (1999) has also made a plea for using the concepts of text types, genres and contrasts of rhetoric from different, first language cultures, before tackling the same texts in TESOL classrooms. All three scholars argue for focussing on topics which demand using the left-side skills of the brain. Transferring to our own Brazilian context, TESOL learners might be encouraged to enjoy the excitement of discovery, by activating their previous experience, using, as a pedagogic starting point genres, including those analysed above, in Portuguese., from the range of subjects which are their everyday 'reality'. They might then be carefully guided towards naive ´contrastive rhetoric´, involving their native language and the target foreign language texts, selceted by the learners themselves from the web.

To exemplify, Velloso´s (2004) pedagogical tack was to select examples of Agony Aunt letters from female teenage magazines. These were specific ´whole group´ analyses of a genre in Protuguese and English, which was certain to motivate and capture the learners´ attention. This was followed by the students´ contrastive rhetoric of the same magazine genres However, at later stages in the analyses and pedagogic exploitation, digital genres were very much in force. In the first case, following the initial presentation in class, of texts in Portuguese, the learners selected the Agony Aunt/ dear Abby letters which appealed to them personally, from various websites. At a later stage, the didactic tack would be for the learners to write their own pleas or calls for help on emails to learners in other classes or branches of the same institute, at a higher TESOL proficiency. And this provides a natural entry into describing the various pedagogic manners in which the results of the rhetorical contrastive analyses may be used in TESOL classes in Brazil. The folowing stages may be followed:

1. The teacher provides an analysis/ framework of genric macro-patterns and micro elements signalling these patterns,using a text in Portuguese in class (OHP?).
2. Learners then look & find other examples of the same genre from WWW.
3. In class, the original framework is matched against the WWW genre examples.
4. Follow 1, 2, 3 with texts from the same genre published on the WWW in English.

5. Learners compare Portuguese & English versions.

In addition, a judicious choice of digital genres may also enhance a professional exchange on text selection and curriculum planning with teachers of subjects other than foreign languages, as advocated by Allen and Widdowson (1974). Approaches which highlight the wider, global organisation of texts would dovetail into two of the "Characteristics of the Objective of Teaching", published by MEC for Foreign Languages, (Moita Lopes, 1999), namely, " Learning languages learning to know how they are used" and "The socio-interactional nature of language". These are the underlying starting points for activities on learning about genres, whether in English or Portuguese, advocated by Holmes (1999): "Three tests for identifying a genre:
a)   What is its purpose, its reason or its communicative function?
b)   How typical an example of the genre is it?
c)   Do we have a specific label or name for this genre?"

These classroom tasks may also avoid the danger of presenting TESOL materials or utterances in contextual voids, or in make-believe situations. The same activities may also ensure that the initial take-off focus is the communicative function of the utterances, the ´why´ things are being said, an aspect highlighted by Meurer (1999). The net result is that when learners are faced with an authentic text they may be more likely to be able to '*see the wood from the trees'*. In other words, their awareness of the overall purpose of the genre may means that they can be encouraged to approach the text using their previous experience and knowledge at a global level. In this manner learners may develop potential ways through the forest of words surounding them when reading or listening to texts in English. The classroom use of authentic genres together with pre-reading or pre-viewing or pre-listening activities would also match another of the official Brazilian Educational Guidelines (*Parâmetros Curriculares,* 1998:27). This is the "learner´s world background knowledge" ("o conhecimento de mundo do aluno"). Thus teachers may brainstorm a topic, activate the students background knowledge or previous experience (known as activating *'content schemata',* Carrell, 1984) and develop a mind map of the key lexical items of a topic. Nuttall (1996:154) has provided several practical examples. There is, it must be said, nothing new in this pedagogic tack of using pre-reading activities. One of Saint Augustine's dictums, in his treatise on teaching, was to establish what the student knows and use this as a platform for extending knowledge. Dewey (1938: 33) the American educationalist stressed the importance of using learner

experience as the pedagogic strating point, and Smith (1978) made his strong pleas for the use of prediction in the teaching of reading in English more than 30 years ago. However, what may be considered as relatively new, is the recourse to our learners' previous experience and background knowledge of a range of text types and genres from their everyday exposure in their Portuguese language. Freeman and Medway (1994:4) argue that genre analysis provides *"a systematic basis for a process pedagogy which could help students with the decision and strategies necessary in the course of writing."* Similarly, in this paper, therefore, it has been argued that the activation of learners´ *"rhetorical schemata"* through contrastive rhetoric will enhance both reading and writing in TESOL. This is exactly what the Brazilian Guidelines for foreign languages (Parâmetros Curriculares: Língua Estrangeira, 1998:29) refer to as "a knowledge of textual organisation" ("o conhecimento da organização textual"), which is one parameter for describing and exploiting genres. It is described as follows: *"written texts may be classified into three basic types: descriptive, narrative and argumentative... The learner may rely .. on the text types (s)he already knows, for example, that when faced with a story, a specific type of organisation may be expected."*

7. Concluding remarks.

Warschauer (1999:77) has argued convincingly that the Internet is the technological innovation which has had largest influence on both the study of language interactions and genre types, and on foreign language learning and teaching. Several authors, including Souza (1999) and Marcuschi (2004:26-31),   have identified digital genre systems and matched these with   non-virtual generic counterparts. These major generic innovations have been aptly illustrated by the data selected and described above by both Matos (2004) and Juaçaba (2004). However, the analyses presented by Pontes (2005) and Velloso (2004) have equally demonstrated that virtual counterparts of pre-existing genre have not suffered major linguistic alterations, either in terms of their macro organisation of information, or in the writer choice of micro elements at the level of the clause. This means that analyses of non-digital texts of specific genres can be used in class, and that those learners who have access to websites can follow-up by accessing digital equivalents. Clearly, for those TESOL professionals working in the Brazilian public sector (the case of Pontes and Velloso), the advantages of the internet for TESOL learning cannot assume access to computer technology in the classroom. On the other hand, the pedagogic implications of the four

pieces of research described above match the wide range of advantages for digital texts cited in the relevant literature (Dionísio, at.al., 2002; Johns, 2002; Kelm, 1999; Menezes, 2001; Moran, 2001; Paltridge, 2001). Finally, the major research insight is that the internet can be used as a contemporary, motivating source for specific text genre, chosen by both teachers and learners, to match specific learner interest and needs and, in this way, adhere to the guidelines provided by the Brazilian educational authorities (Parâmetros Curriculares, 1999) for foreign language education. Finally, all four researchers on the digital genres in question concluded that it was the writer goal or communicative function, namely, in all four cases, selling a product, which dictated the articulation and language choices.

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APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Agony Aunt/ Dear Abbey text in Portuguese (Selected by Velloso, 2004)

 Namoro um cara de 24 anos e eu tenho apenas 16. Nos gostamos muito, mas ele está comprometido com outra mulher e tem um filho. O que devo fazer? Loirinha- Satuba, AL

Se o rapaz já está comprometido com outra mulher, Loirinha, o que você está esperando desse namoro?

No caso de querer ser "a outra", sua opção está correta, mas se deseja estabelecer um relacionamento sério, acho que está com a pessoa errada. Tente se aproximar de rapazes solteiros, que possam lhe oferecer muito mais afeto, atenção e companheirismo. Lembre-se : homens comprometidos têm muita dificuldade de romper laços, por isso, não é bom contar com eles. Aproveite que você é jovem e tem a possibilidade de fazer escolhas mais interessantes. Invista em pessoas que poderão fazê-la mais feliz: nós mulheres merecemos isso!

Appendix 2: Agony Aunt/ Dear Abbey text in English (Selected by Velloso, 2004).

About two months ago I started seeing this guy who had a girlfriend he'd been with for six months. He says he really likes me but can't decide who he wants. When I suggest finishing, he says he doesn't want to finish with me. What can I do?

Rachel, Cornwall.

Remember that although he's been honest with you, he has a girlfriend. But he's obviously been a lying cheat to her and hasn't decided who he wants because he's scared to own up to his two-timing. It could be he doesn't want to tell her because she's the one he 'thinks' he loves. Or maybe he's guilty about what he's done for the past two months and doesn't want to upset her. But it could just be that for as long as he can get away without upsetting either of you, he'll keep things exactly the way they are. Whatever the reason, I reckon you should take control of the situation. You have the common sense to suggest ending things, so this time stick by your guns. If his feelings for you are strong enough, they'll make him confront his current girlfriend and make a decision. But the longer you hang around, your feelings will get stronger, and they'll be in the hands of a man who can't be trusted.

Appendix 3. Internet blurb in English (Selected by Pontes, 2005).

On a June day, a young woman in a summer dress steps off a Chicago-bound bus into a small Midwestern town. She doesn't intend to stay. She is just passing through. Yet her stopping here has a reason, and it is part of a story you will never forget.The time is the 1950s, when life was simpler, people still believed in dreams, and family was, very nearly, everything. On a tree-lined street in the heartland of America an extraordinary set of events begins to unfold. A happy home is shattered by a child's senseless death, a loving marriage starts to unravel, and a stranger arrives – a young woman who will touch many lives before she moves on. She and a young man will meet and fall in love. Their love, so innocent and full of hope, helps to restore a family's dreams. And all of their lives will be changed forever by the precious gift she leaves them.

Appendix 4: Non-digital blurb in Portuguese (Selected by Pontes, 2005).

Nada de bonecas ou cantigas de roda. Enquanto outras meninas se divertiam fazendo comidinhas de brincadeira, Cassie O'Malley preferia acompanhar o pai, veterano da força aérea na Primeira

Guerra Mundial, nos passeios ao aeroporto. E é justamente entre o ronco dos motores, o vento das hélices e a sombra das asas dos aviões que ela cresce. À revelia do pai, aprende a pilotar e torna-se uma estrela de fama internacional, depois de um casamento sem amor com um magnata. Mas um acidente interrompe a aventura mais ousada – a turnê do Pacífico – levando Cassie a repensar os valores de sua vida. Danielle Steel se supera neste livro, uma história de romance e aventura.

Appendix 5: Digital blurb in Portuguese (Selected by Pontes, 2005).
Exímia contadora de histórias e conhecedora da alma humana, Danielle Steel penetra no ambiente familiar e compõe um trama da vida moderna. Adultério, problemas de adolescência, a decisão de ter ou não ter filhos, esterilidade, separação conjugal e problema no trânsito das grandes cidades são alguns dos assuntos tratados aqui. A escritora nos põe ainda diante das dificuldades e dos preconceitos enfrentados por uma mulher quando é obrigada a refazer sua própria vida. Em Acidente, não faltam os ingredientes que consagraram Danielle Steel como a autora mais lida dos EUA: personagens corajosos e determinados, e o amor, que está sempre em primeiro lugar.